ABSTRACT

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HISTORY PLAYS AND HISTORICAL STUDIES THROUGH COMPARING THE DRAMAS AND THE AUDIENCE RECEPTIONS OF 
YI SANG COUNTS TO THIRTEEN AND OUR JOYFUL YOUNG DAYS

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With this thesis I explore the relationship between history plays and historical studies. In order to look at this relationship, I chose a Korean-American play Yi Sang Counts to Thirteen and a Korean play Our Joyful Young Days, both of which deal with the 1930s Korean poet Yi Sang and his love conflict. The comparison of the two plays reveals that the narratives of the history plays echo the historical studies of each linguistic world. However, preference of the audience to a certain theatrical aesthetic causes the audience reception not to follow the boundary that the languages draw. Thus, I address how the history plays represent two different relations with the historical studies, in their production and consumption.
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A Thesis

Submitted to the
Faculty of Miami University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
Department of Theatre
by
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Miami University
Oxford, Ohio
2010

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Introduction

What is the relationship between history plays and historical studies? Considering that a play, as a genre, is defined by its fictional characteristics and that historical playwrights often justify their works as primarily fictional, history might function just as a subject matter for the playwright. However, it can be difficult for playwrights to avoid the influence of historical studies since historical subjects exist in the rhetoric of historical studies; whether playwrights pursue historical authenticity or not, they would be influenced by the perspective of the historical studies available to them; they would inevitably come to absorb the perspective of these historical studies. Then, can history plays and historical studies really be so compacted? If they show more similarities than differences, would the customers of the two be satisfied with the similarities? In other words, would audiences of history plays and readers of historical studies have similar expectations to the products that they consume? If not, could the different expectations of these two types of consumers be their point of departure? That is, would the audience responses reveal reasons why history plays look to conveying different messages from the historical studies? With those questions, I will look into two plays – a Korean-American play and a Korean play – and the audience receptions of their productions.

The Korean-American play Yi Sang Counts to Thirteen (1999) and the Korean play Our Joyful Young Days (2008) adopt Korean historical poet Yi Sang as their main character and a love conflict surrounding him as their main plot. They are based on Yi Sang’s literary works, which are called “romance reports.” Yi Sang (real name: Hae-kyeng Kim) was born in 1910, when Korea was annexed by Japan, and died in 1937 before Korea was liberated at the end of World War II in 1945. Spending his whole life under Japanese colonial rule of Korea, he wrote many recondite poems and he has been acclaimed as the most experimental poet of modern Korea. However, as a versatile genius whose talents were not limited to the poems, Yi Sang also

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2 Our Joyful Young Days is written by Korean playwright Ki-woong Sung, who has been writing and directing about colonized Korea for years. He is called a “1930s Korea specialist” (Ilsong Kim, “Our Joyful Young Days: The Second Part of ‘Kyengsung Triology’ of Ki-woong Sung of ‘Details,’” In Our Joyful Young Days’s Program: 24). The play is published in its program. See: Ki-Woong Sung, Our Joyful Young Days, in Our Joyful Young Days Program (2008): 49-67. The English version is translated by me.
3 En Go defines Yi Sang’s literature (especially his prose works) as Yi Sang’s romance reports. In Go’s opinion, Yi Sang did not have any other things but his life, so Yi Sang could not help keeping writing about his own life. See En Go, Critical Biography of Yi Sang (Seoul: Hyeongyoun, 2009): 227-234.
wrote several prose works; Yi Sang wrote semi-autobiographical short stories, based on his own life, especially his romances with women. Yi Sang Counts to Thirteen (henceforth Yi Sang) and Our Joyful Young Days (henceforth Joyful) both of which center on a love conflict around Yi Sang are based on those short stories.\(^4\)

Regardless of this similarity of the plays, the heroines of the two authors are considerably different. In the Korean-American (Sung Rno) play, the woman looks to be a prostitute, pacifying men’s hopelessness with sexual love. In the Korean (Ki-woong Sung) play, she looks to be an intellectual café-maid, stimulating men’s creativity with sensible discussion. Where does the difference come from? This is the question that I raise in Chapter I. That is, would the differences of the two heroines be said to reflect differences of historical studies in their two respective societies, i.e. America and Korea? To answer this question, I will analyze the two plays, focusing on their female characters. I will review what American and Korean historical studies have argued about women in the colonial era of Korea. By comparing theatrical portrayals and academic portrayals of the women in colonial Korea, this research may show in what kind of relationship history plays and historical studies share. Furthermore, if some kind of grouping is shown in the comparison, it may show based on which factors (for example, authors’ nationalities, genders, or languages) the boundary of the history narratives (including both history plays and historical studies) is made.

If I look into how the plays were produced by focusing on the narratives of the plays, in Chapter II, I will examine how the productions themselves are consumed by exploring the audience receptions. The question that I raise here is whether the different perspectives on history are acknowledged by the audiences; if not, on what in the performances does the audience focus? Since the Korean-American play, Yi Sang, has been staged not only in America but also in Korea, we will be able see how its perspective is understood by the two audience groups. However, one thing we need to consider here is the characteristic of the contemporary Korean audiences; can we say that they are recognizably different from American audiences in


\(^5\) The plays reveal their strong relevance to the real people. In Joyful, characters use real historical names like Yi Sang, Taewon Park, Intaek Jeong, and Younghee Kwon, whereas in Yi Sang the characters have fictional names of Blue, Red, and Green. Still, Yi Sang makes clear connections between the historical people and the characters. Especially in the Yi Sang’s case, Blue, in Scene 2, introduces himself as Yi Sang and tells Yi Sang’s biographical information.
terms of how they perceive the theatre in this globalization era? If the Korean doesn’t reveal
critical differences in perceiving a theatre piece, which characteristic of the theatre would have
subtracted the differences in the narratives and let the Korean audiences similarly react to the
theatre with the American audiences? Would it not be aesthetics? In fact, Yi Sang and Joyful have
drastically different styles: whereas Joyful is a play linked to realism, Yi Sang is a play linked to
surrealism. Thus, I will research on the reviews of the performances of the plays, focusing on
whether the general evaluations of the performances are linked to their narratives or to their
styles. Furthermore, I will examine whether the Korean and Asian-American academia have any
preference on a certain style by researching on their opinions on realism and non-realism; that is,
the two plays’ stylistic traits. This research may show then on what factors groupings of theatre
receptions are based; if the grouping of theatre receptions is not identical with the grouping of
history narratives, this may tell why the history plays and the historical studies cannot be
compacted into each other. In other words, by adopting the audience responses to the plays as a
measuring factor, I will delve into the departing point that history plays take from historical
studies.

In this fashion, this thesis primarily aims at clarifying the relationship between historical
researches and history plays. However, at the same time, I believe we cannot grasp how a
playwright writes a play and how an audience receives the play without researching social
backgrounds in which the play and the audience are situated; the play and the audience are not in
a vacuum. Therefore, I believe that the research on Yi Sang and Joyful, and the research on their
performances require all of what I will do in this thesis: not only play analysis and performances
review analysis but also the trends of historical studies and theatre aesthetics. With this belief, I
hope this thesis can fulfill my modest hope to give a better understanding of the two plays and
their receptions.
Chapter I. Dramas and their Relationships to Historical Plays

In Yi Sang, the female character Green says that she can’t read Tolstoy because she “deals with men” every night (Yi Sang, 7). By contrast, Younghee, who is the heroine of Joyful, says that she is reading Thomas Mann. Why does one woman (Younghee) enjoy literature, when the other (Green) can’t, or vice versa? In other words, how do the two playwrights come to create critically different heroines for their plays when both of them write about a poet Yi Sang? One possible answer for the question would be that the playwrights created their female characters based on two different women among historical women with whom Yi Sang had relations. Considering that Yi Sang’s reputation as a “debauched genius,” arose from his endless scandals with women, it is actually more reasonable to regard the two female characters as different people. In addition, it is not difficult to find the two real women for the female characters since the playwrights disclose their sources of Yi Sang’s novels, which are based on his real experience. That is, the semi-biographical feature of three art-works – Yi Sang’s, Sung Rno’s, and Ki-woong Sung’s – facilitates our detective work to find the original female models for the plays. However, in tracing back their models for the heroines, we discover that the two real women (Keumhong and Younghee Kwon) had a similar job: as a café-maid. Therefore, the difference of historical women can’t be enough to justify the different portrayals of the female characters, including their job description. Then, where do the playwrights find different understandings of the café-maid of colonial Korea?

It is likely that the playwrights researched 1930s Korea, if not for the female characters

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6 Since both Yi Sang and Joyful are not published in a book yet, I will put the scene number (instead of page number) when citing from the plays.
8 Yi Sang follows a plot of The Wings, in which “I” lives with “my wife.” When “I” finds that “my wife” does what he should not have seen, “I” goes to the department store roof just Blue does in Yi Sang. In the case of Joyful, the playwright clarifies that he writes the play based on Hwansigi (a diary about illusionary seeing), which Yi Sang wrote after Younghee married with Intaek Jeong. Also, about the relation between Yi Sang’s life and his works, see: En Go (2009).
specifically, then at least for the plays generally. Since the plays include the story of Yi Sang and his surrounding life, which is not in his novel, it would be difficult to deny the possibility of the extra research. Then, do their different choices result from a difference between historical sources that each playwright uses or would be able to use? Historical research conducted in Korea and America can reveal considerable differences in quantity, quality, characteristics and so on. However, at the same time differences can result from the gap of written dates of the two plays – 1999 and 2008. That is, it is possible that between 1999 and 2008 there happened to be revolutionary research on colonial Korea. As a matter of fact, it is quite true that Korean historians produced revolutionary research from 1999 to the first couple of years of the 2000s. Then, would a time difference of 1999 and 2008 and not a spatial difference of America and Korea be the main factor to bring out the differences between the two plays?

Tracing back American and Korean historiography of colonial Korea shows that where the plays are written mattered more than when they were written. That is, the difference of each play’s production place – America and Korea – keenly influenced the different portrayals of the female characters. This is because the American and the Korean history publications reveal differences in interpreting women in colonized Korea, including specifically 1930s café-maids; and this difference continues until now. Researching not only American publications before 1999 (when the American play was written) but also publications after that time exposes the essentially different understandings of American and Korean studies about women in colonized Korea.

In this Chapter, I will examine the job of the heroines’ historical models and analyze the two plays, Yi Sang and Joyful, looking at how the job of the two female characters are described in

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9 Yi Sang has an architect character (Red) for Blue (Yi Sang)’s friend. This architect is presumed to be Bonwong Gu, who was Yi Sang’s one of the best friends. In the 2009 Seoul performance, he is introduced as somebody who can be “Bonwong Gu or Taewon Park or not.” Any episode around Bonwong Gu or Taewon Park is not mentioned in The Wings. Also, Joyful has a scene in which Taewon Park and Younghee Kwon talk about their previous dates. This is not narrated in Hwansigi. This scene seems to be created based on historical fact of Younghee Kwon and Taewon Park’s later marriage: Younghee Kwon remarriages with Taewon Park after Intaek Jeong died.

10 Baekyoung Kim offers a list of Korean history books about colonized Korea, which are published between 1998 and 2003 in his article, “Re-discovery of Modern Korea through Public’s Eyes,” Creation and Criticism 125 (2004): 369-383. He introduces six publications: Permit a Dance Hall in Seoul (Jinsong Kim), A Modern Boy Walks through Kyeongsung: Modernity though Comic Essays (Meongjik Shin), The Fascination and the Fast, Modern Crossing: Modern Scenery though Railroads (Chunhong Park), Modern Temptation, Modern Tear (Hyengsuk Noh), An Era of Love: Culture and Trends/Fashion in the Early 1920s (Podurae Kwon) and Modern Books in the Modern Period (Jeonghwan Chun). In my paper, I will mainly use Permit a Dance Hall in Seoul, which is regarded as the first “revolutionary study” and An Era of Love, which is dealing with women in colonial Korea.
each play and what kinds of roles they function in the plays’ plots. After that, I will explore what kinds of historical resources would influence the playwrights’ characterizations of the women. In doing so, I argue that the playwrights were influenced by or shared the direction of historical studies of societies to which each playwright belongs. My analysis will reveal that American and Korean historical studies have different foci on women in colonized Korea and that this difference is shared by the respective playwrights. I also hope this Chapter reveals the process of how a different focus brings different choices and arrangements; the difference in juxtaposition influences (and even changes) the view on the historical facts in both historical studies and theatre works. Therefore, the interdisciplinary approach between theatre and history may present a better understanding not only about the two plays and the women in colonial Korea, but also about the relation between historical studies and history plays, both of which are the products of societies.

1. *Kisaeng Keumhong versus Café-maid Younghee Kwon*

Yi Sang, as a person whose fame in the public was always connected with his endless scandals with women,\(^{11}\) had never stopped relationships with women since he began an affair with a Japanese woman when he was 16. Three women are considered the most influential to him. They were Keumhong (no second name), who lived with Yi Sang from 1933 to 1935, Younghee Kwon, who dated with him in 1935, and Donglim Byeon, who was Yi Sang’s wife though their marriage lasted just for one year in 1936.\(^{12}\) The heroines in *Yi Sang* and *Joyful* seem to be based on the first two: Keumhong (Green in *Yi Sang*) and Younghee Kwon (Younghee in *Joyful*). This is because *Yi Sang* and *Joyful* are mainly based on Yi Sang’s short stories (*The Wings* (1936) and *Hwansigi* (1939)),\(^{13}\) which are based on Yi Sang’s relationship with the first two respectively.\(^{14}\)

Keumhong (Green) was a *kisaeng*, until she met Yi Sang and came to work in Yi Sang’s

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1. En Go, 10.
2. I refer to Yi Sang’s time line provided by En Go: See En Go, 376-381.
4. En Go clarifies that “my wife” in *The Wings* and historical person Keumhong are the same by citing from Bengik Kim’s *History of Korean Literature* (En Go, 264). As for *Hwansigi*, as a novel written after real person Intaek Jeong’s suicide attempt, talk about Yi Sang’s own emotional loss, though using fictional names, Sungyoung and Mr. Song.
café. The kisaeng, a female job from Chosun Dynasty until the Japanese annexation, had the reputation for talents in dancing, singing, and composing. Isabella Bishop, who visited Korea in 1894, describes kisaengdle (plural form) as women who “are trained from a very early age in such accomplishments as other Korean women lack, and which will ensure their attractiveness, such as playing on various musical instruments, singing, dancing, reading, reciting, writing, and fancy work [needlepoint].” That is, the appellation referred to their talents, not their bodies. They were, most importantly, possessors of traditional arts. In this regard, some differentiates kisaengdle from prostitutes: “[t]hough it was not uncommon for a kisaeng to have sexual relations with her customers, she was not considered to be in the same category as prostitutes.”

However, some rebuff this idea; they argue that kisaengdle were just slaves to exist for palace banquets or frontier soldiers. Their point is that kisaengdle could not avoid offerings from their clients, considering their social rank, which was one of the lowest in the Chosun Dynasty.

Some newspaper reports in 1920s support the link between kisaengdle and prostitutes: kisaengdle and changgidle (prostitutes) were described equally as “monsters like devils” and “families in a red-light district to live by men’s purses.” So, to many a kisaeng was similar to a prostitute, but equating the two terms in meaning or in translation ignores their aesthetic role.

Younghie Kwon, the model of Younghee in Joyful, was a café-maid. Cafés were actually new workplaces for kisaengdle and café-maids were their new incarnation. They began to appear

15 En Go, 245-246.
17 I cite this Information for a foot note in an English translated compilation of Yi Sang’s work: Yi Sang (2004), 42.
19 Private slaves, monks, butchers, shamans, clowns (actors), bier bearers, and artisans belonged to the lowest social status in Chosun Dynasty (1392-1910).
20 Dong-A Ilbo, February 15, 1927. From now on, unless otherwise indicated, all translations are mine.
21 Dong-A Ilbo, May 24, 1924.
22 Specifically speaking, the ambivalent characteristic of kisaeng seems to be a historical product rather than an essential one. After changgi (prostitute) were officially approved in the early 1910s, entertaining women were divided by changgidle and kisaengdle. However, from around 1920s, the two terms began to be mixed and the distinction between the changgi and the kisaeng disappeared. Haeyoung Jeong provides possible reasons for this transformation. As the Japanese policy to exploit Korean economy drove women to prostitutions, increasing number of prostitutes would be problematic. Also, kisaengdle would be contrary to the reformists’ idea to make the modern Korea. Thus, kisaengdle began to be defamed. In addition, the Japanese policy to obliterate the Korean traditional culture would join defaming kisaengdle. See: Haeyoung Jeong, “Creating Modernity and Fall of Kisaeng: Focusing on the Images of Kisaeng in Modern Literature,” Korean-Chinese Humanism Research 20 (April 2007): 235-256.
in the 1920s Korea as Korea became modernized. A magazine article in 1930s describes the circumstance:

A café is a market to sell a free love, though it is not real love. Whether a café-maid sometimes sells more than a free love or not, she can sell at least the free love overtly. Alcohol is just the processing fee; the tip becomes the price for the free love.\(^{23}\)

Another article presents a clearer view on café-maids. A café-maid “works for erotic services that customers ask without any provisos as long as their quest is not beyond certain boundaries.”\(^{24}\) After all, café-maids sold more than coffee or alcohol. However, at the same time, they could have close relationships with intellectuals and cultural celebrities because cafés were considered to be modern places and the intellectuals pursued the modernity.\(^{25}\) Therefore, the job of café-maid also had an ambivalent feature of modern intellectualism and prostitution.

Younghee Kwon, as a café-maid, and Keumhong, as a kisaeng, did similar jobs: they engaged in what would be called as “prostitutions” in English but they were not “prostitutes” exactly; their unique talents can’t be captured by that English word. With the equally ambivalent feature of kisaeng and café-maid, historical people Keumhong and Younghee Kwon didn’t have any great difference in terms of their jobs. However, the heroines of the plays look considerably different. While I analyze the two female characters, I will look into how their job is portrayed in each play. In doing so, I will examine which aspect among the ambivalent feature of their job is highlighted and how the highlight is made in each play.

2. Green in Yi Sang Counts to Thirteen versus Younghee in Our Joyful Young Days

In Yi Sang, Green is joined with two male characters: Red and Blue. She is introduced as working in a teahouse and appears as a performer. Green performs a show.\(^{26}\) Green opens a Diet Coke can, pours it to a glass, puts a straw in it, and sips it very slowly. The stage direction asks the actress to act like “a religious act” (Yi Sang, 7). Far from engaging only in “religious” performances, as I quoted from the play, Green reveals herself as a prostitute when she explains her job: “[w]hat do you think I deal with every night? You think I’m having witty conversation

\(^{23}\) “Scenery of Kyengsung’s Streets,” Haesung (November 1931).
\(^{25}\) Jinsong Kim, Permit a Dance Hall (Seoul: Hyonsil Munhwa Yon Gu, 1999), 219.
\(^{26}\) Yi Sang doesn’t follow a timely order. In the first scene, they have already known each other. This “Watching Diet Coke” is Scene 6. However, in this scene, the characters say that they have just met.
about Tolstoy? No, I’m dealing with men” (Yi Sang, 16). After all, she is a café-maid, having the ambivalent feature of its archetypical job, kisaeng; she engages in prostitution and performance of her artistic talents at the same time.

In Joyful (having four main characters: Yi Sang, Taewon Park, Intaek Jeong, and Younghee Kwon), Younghee is a café-maid and portrays her literary ability for her modern intellectualism. Younghee’s first appearance is made with a conversation with Taewon Park on the library roof. They meet each other accidently in a reading room of library. Taewon Park says that Younghee always has the most valuable criticism to his novels. Though this can sound like just a meaningless compliment, the fact that her advice is meaningful to the novelist is shown through his later mentioning of her advice. However, before her appearance she has been already introduced through Yi Sang and Taewon Park’s conversation as a “Kollontai” girl, which is explained as “a girl following Aleksandra Mikhailovna Kollontai, a Russian Marxist activist who was famous for a liberal free love” (Joyful, 1). This follows with Yi Sang’s comment about Younghee’s “splendid men-traveling”: “People say that she crosses two or three men even in a night” (Joyful, 1). In this way, she discloses the ambivalent feature of the café-maid, whether it is called prostitution or free love.

Regardless of their sexual proclivity, until what I have described, Green and Younghee still looks to be sustaining two values that Koreans in the Japanese colonial situation pursued: Green can have the nationalists’ value of traditional arts and Younghee can have the reformists’ value of modern intellectuals. Though the nationalism and modernism look contradictory to each other, Koreans at the time believed that both of them were the way to the independence. However, the potential values that Younghee and Green can have are dealt with differently through different details in the plays. For Younghee, her working place café functions for promoting her modernity. Taewon Park promises Younghee to visit her café “in order to collect data about new customs of the café” (Joyful, 2). Cafés are portrayed, in this context, as a vault of the modernity which the intellectuals of the time should pursue; Younghee’s value of the modern intellectual is confirmed like this. On the contrary, Green’s performance is portrayed as losing its genuine value of national arts. As Daphne P. Lei describes it: “Diet Coke, the symbol of modern Western

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27 This information is rendered to the readers through the foot note and to the audiences through the subtitle.
capitalism and imperialism, is drunk in the style of the traditional Japanese tea ceremony.” Actually, Green’s performance is Diet Coke Ceremony, and the stage direction asks the actress to perform “slow, stylized movements like Noh movement” (Yi Sang, 7), using Diet Cokes. Therefore, her performance is far away from the Korean traditional performance, which kisaengdle had developed with dignity. Green, after all, doesn’t have the nationalistic value, which is the only positive aspect that her job can produce. Instead, she becomes a passive object seized by the imperial powers. The reason why Younghee doesn’t look like a prostitute is not because of her physical activity but because of her value that the “prostitute” fails to capture. In the opposite way, Green, losing her unique value, becomes just a “prostitute.”

In the structures of the plays, they perform a similar plot but with different details. Green and Younghee flirt with more than one man, creating love conflicts and driving men to suicide attempts. In Yi Sang, right after Green’s show, Blue decides to talk with Green. Later, when the two of them meet alone, Blue proposes marriage to her and Green agrees. However, Green starts cheating with Red just one day after that day and their cheating continues. Blue’s suicide attempts follow the reiterations. In Joyful, Younghee dates with Yi Sang, alludes to her affection towards novelist Taewon Park, and marries with Intaek Jeong. Originally, Younghee has dates with Yi Sang, but reporter Intaek Jeong attempts a suicide and through the suicide happening he acquires Younghee’s love. Younghee and Intaek Jeong decide to marry. Yet, Younghee suggests Taewon Park to leave with her after the marriage decision. Taewon Park and Yi Sang attempt a double suicide after Younghee’s marriage. Then, are both Green and Younghee femmes fatales, who bring death or death-like problems to men attracted to them? Looking into their specific functions in the men’s suicide attempts will offer a clearer view on the female characters.

In Yi Sang, Blue tries suicide attempts three times. His two suicides (except the last one) happen around fake water (like Diet Coke and sea water) when he can’t have true water (like fresh water from a mountain). Blue’s first attempt of suicide is made with a great amount of Diet Coke. The reason why he drank up the coke was that Green and Red committed a suspicious act while Blue goes to a mountain to get fresh water for Green; Green asks Blue to get “really cold,

29 Yi Sang describes Younghee in his novel Hwansigi as “though she is not a virgin, she is more valuable than a virgin for she read complete works of Gorki.” See: Yi Sang, Hwansigi, in Complete Works of Yi Sang, ed. Youngmin Kwon (Seoul: Bbul, 2009): 147.
clean, pure spring water” (Yi Sang, 11). In this course, Green not only makes Blue angry but also deprives a chance to have true water from Blue. His second suicide attempt is also made when he loses a chance to have true water and instead drinks too much fake water. Blue, after the Diet Coke suicide, craves for water and so asks Red to bring some fresh water from a mountain. However, Blue doesn’t get the true water; while Red goes to the mountain, Green leads Blue to the sea for a double suicide attempt. Like this, true water and fake water flow in and ebb out over Blue’s life; Green takes the true water out from Blue and offers the fake water to him. The problem is that fresh water is not just water but something true which “makes [him] feel like a new person” (Yi Sang, 11) and Green is the person who knows this more than anybody; the above line is spoken by Green. After all, Green’s (intentional) interceptions of fresh water are deprivations of a chance to be new. Thus, the structure of the play built around Blue’s suicide attempts to make Green look like a femme fatale.

If there are exchanges of true water and fake water in Yi Sang, Joyful has exchanges of true sleeping pills and fake sleeping pills. After Intaek Jeong attempts a suicide with sleeping pills and achieves Younghee’s love, Taewon Park asks each person about the sleeping pills. This would be because he had given some sleeping pills to Yi Sang before; in the first act, Yi Sang asks Taewon Park (whose family runs a pharmacy) to give him the sleeping pills (in a bottle). About the pills that Intaek Jeong takes, Yi Sang testifies that what he saw in Intaek Jeong’s room was one in a pillbox and guesses that Intaek Jeong would get them from Younghee, who might have worked as a nurse before. However, Younghee and Intaek Jeong state differently: they testify that the sleeping pills are the ones in a bottle, and Yi Sang gave them to Intaek Jeong. More important, Intaek Jeong tells what he hears from a doctor who cleanses his stomach: “[the doctor] was sorry for cleansing my stomach when I took a lot of healthful medicines” (Joyful, 6). The pills were fake sleeping pills and actually vitamins; Taewon Park gives Yi Sang the vitamins, and Yi Sang gives them to Intaek Jeong.

In the last scene, Yi Sang and Taewon Park meet each other on the roof of a department store. There, Yi Sang asks Taewon Park to bring back the remainder of the pills. Taewon Park suggests taking the pills together and then “be reborn,” “revive,” or “promote a new life” (Joyful, 7). For the perplexed Yi Sang, he adds, “Don't worry. I heard Taeyang (Intaek) also got a new life after taking these pills” (Joyful, 7). The fake pills enable Intaek Jeong to have a new life with Younghee, and now help Yi Sang and Taewon Park, by confirming their supporting relationship.
In this course, Younghee turns out to be a main motive for the “revival” trials rather than the suicide attempts, even though Intaek Jeong attempts a suicide because of Younghee at the first hand. Since she starts the circle of the pills’ travel, which eventually doesn’t harm anyone and instead confirms their friendships, Younghee looks like a femme sauveuse (saviour).

While Taewon Park and Yi Sang dream about the new life on the department store roof in Joyful, Blue thinks again of suicide in Yi Sang. Blue, in this last monologue, says that he saw “something that [he] definitely should not have seen” (Yi Sang, 20). The stage direction, in this part, indicates Green’s cheating by the sound of Green and Red’s laughing. After that, he comes up to the roof of the department store. The drastic differences in the last scenes, which happen even in the same place, illustrate who is a femme fatale and who is a femme sauveuse. Green, losing the value of her job, plays a critical role in Blue’s two times of suicide attempts and continues her fatale role to the end of the play; so, she is a femme fatale. On the contrary, Younghee, though she has similarities with Green and men around her try suicide attempts, turns out as a femme sauveuse: the suicides attempts, which happened “because of her,” were actually a way of recovery.

Like this, though both job descriptions and the structural functions look similar at the first hand, the two café-maids come to walk in different roads. As the different description about their jobs in each play situates Green and Younghee in different positions, their different roles in the plots bring them to the different spots, influencing the audience’s impression about the two women; in this course, we lose one aspect of the ambivalent job characteristic of café-maids. We don’t so much imagine Younghee as selling her body and Green as selling her talents any more. Instead, the prostitution for Green and the intellectual talent for Younghee are underlined and remembered.

3. Context of “New Women” versus Contexts of “Comfort Women”

As the two plays provide the audiences with different pictures of the café-maid by highlighting one aspect and blurring the other, the question on Korean and English-speaking historical scholarships would be whether they echo the differences of the plays. In other words, I wonder whether the historical publications written in Korean and English lead us to remember or forget what the Korean and the American play choose to do by focusing on different aspects.
That is, do the Korean publications lead the readers to regard the café-maids as intelligent? And do the readers of the English publications come to grasp an idea that the café-maids were anything but the prostitutes? Thus, in this part, I will explore Korean history publications and English history publications containing the topic of café-maids. Since these publications don’t discuss café-maids in isolation, we will be able to understand their rhetorical differences by looking into not only how the café-maids are explained but also with what kinds of social groups they are discussed. That is, I look for the inter-texts as well as the texts.

Korean history publications discuss café-maids in the contexts of “new women.” For an example, Jinsong Kim, in his book Permit a Dance Hall in Seoul, deals with café-maids in the chapter of “Advent of New Women.” 30 Kim opens this chapter by pointing out the significance of women’s changes in Koreans’ journey to modernity: “women’s change became a motive to lead the whole change – of man, family, institution and society.” 31 According to Kim, the women’s importance ironically came from their vulnerability. As for female students who were exposed to western-style education, Koreans’ lack of experience in women’s educations made Koreans cast more suspicion on the female students. Therefore, the female students should sharply cut themselves from their feudal life styles, as they needed to thoroughly absorb their new education in order to avoid castigation. A similar irony characterized the situation with the café-maids. Many café-maids used to be kisaengdle. Cafés, as modern places, embraced the kisaengdle, who were already familiar with the concept of “free love,” one of the major new thoughts imbued by the western influence, and thus were less reluctant than housewives to espouse a new lifestyle. Because they were already being criticized, they could be bold and daring. Working in the cafés, the café-maids had close relationships with intellectuals and cultural celebrities, who came there to pursue a quest for modernity. In this way, the café-maids could enter the core of the new modern lives in 1930s. 32 Actually, “Permit a Dance Hall in Seoul,” which Kim uses for the title of his book is a petition to request a dance hall, submitted by kisaengdle, actresses, and café-maids to the Japanese Governor-General of Korea in 1937. 33 Kim

30 Jinsong Kim, 202-243.
31 Ibid., 202.
32 Ibid., 202-223.
33 “Permit a Dance Hall in Seoul” is written by many women with one man, Sugu Yi, who was a chief director of Japanese music record company. The women were kisaeng Eunhee Oh, kisaeng Okjin Choi, kisaeng Kemdo Park, film actress Dosill Oh, Dongyang theatre actress Sunhwas Choi, café ‘Venus’ madam Haesuk Bok, and Bar ‘Mexico’ maid Eunhee Kim. Jinsong Kim also mentions that this petition reveals the irrationality of the Korean process toward modernity, which leaned only on superficial
argues that the petition episode reveals who were at the core of the most drastic changes toward modern Korea: “kisaengdle and new public culture producers.” Kim ends this chapter by saying that “a group of women who experienced modernity in their daily life and formed modern culture were kisaengdle and new public culture producers, even though a few educated female students appeared to adopt modern ideas” (like free love).

Podurae Kwon’s An Era of Love: Culture and Trends/Fashion in the Early 1920s focuses on dynamics between kisaengdle and female students during the early 1920s when cafés were not yet popular. Kwon provides a detailed picture of how kisaengdle and female students imitated and competed with each other. Kwon says that their intersection was reasonable considering that both groups were under the stress of developing new ways of survival. For example, female students needed to create their parlance, gait, and customs as part of their new identity. For kisaengdle, a new era asked them to get through a serious transformation: the Gabo reform of 1884 forced kisaengdle to leave the palace and start their own business. Both kisaengdle and female students adopted a western style of fashion like short skirts, short hair and parasols. More importantly, they shared not only their appearance but “free love,” with which Kwon defines the era: “An Era of Love.” After all, both kisaengdle and female students played leading roles in the Korean journey to modernity, if we agree with Kwon that “free love” was a unique social phenomenon popularized on the way to modern society in 1920s Korea.

If the Korean publications juxtaposed café-maids or kisaengdle with “new women,” English publications dealt with café-maids (or kisaengdle) and “new women” separately. If we talk about the “new women” first, English scholarship defines “new women” as graduates of newly established Western-style schools and underlines their effort to transverse the moral system of Confucian patriarchy, which discriminated against women. For example, Jihang Park argues that the female students at Ewha, the first women college in Korea, were the core of the women’s movement to challenge traditional gender role and she concentrates on interpreting the Ewha

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34 Ibid., 222.
35 Ibid., 222-223.
36 The Gabo reform of 1994 is a reformist and modernizing movement conducted largely by pro-Japanese officials under pressure from Russia, Japan, and the United States to open the Chosun Dynasty.
37 Podurae Kwon, 19-53.
students: their social backgrounds, religions, and jobs they chose after graduation.\textsuperscript{38} Since the women college students are the main focus for Jihang Park, it seems reasonable that she mentions only the female students. However, even in the case that an article deals with “new women” broadly, English publications mention only the female students. Insook Kwon’s article is one of them. In “‘The New Women’s Movement’ in 1920s Korea: Rethinking the Relationship Between Imperialism and Women,”\textsuperscript{39} Kwon defines “new women” as “early twentieth-century intellectual women”\textsuperscript{40} and leads her argument with the examples of three outstanding women, Haesuk Na, Wonju Kim, and Myungsoon Kim, who studied in Japan. Although she claims that “new women” endeavored to challenge the moral system of Confucian patriarchy with notions of “free love,” “free marriage,” and “the destruction of the dominant feminine chastity ideology,” she doesn’t look into the broader group of women who shared those notions.\textsuperscript{41}

The reason why both of Jihang Park and Insook Kwon don’t include how the new thoughts, introduced by the female students, were spread and who adopted and practiced the modern idea seems to be connected with their research purpose. Even though they talk only about the Korean case, their respective research agendas have a feature of comparative studies. This is because those English writing scholars consider English speaking scholars as their potential readers and try to form a dialogue with previous scholarship in the English-speaking world. In the case of Jihang Park, she often compares the Korean situation to the British one throughout the article\textsuperscript{42} and more critically, she concludes her arguments with the sentence comparing the Korean with the English speaking world: “If the American and British women established a tradition of social reform, the Korean women put their energies to the struggle against Japanese rule.”\textsuperscript{43} In the case of Insook Kwon, she more overtly reveals that her potential readers are western feminist scholars: she starts her discussion by diagnosing the previous feminist scholarships’ limitation to explain the Korean women in the colonial state. In her opinion, previous feminist scholarship regarding

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 382.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 381-405.
\textsuperscript{42} Jihang Park clarifies that she will compare the Korean case with the British one in her introduction: “… along the way, I will make some comparisons, drawing on my knowledge of the experience of Western women, particularly British women” (534-35).
\textsuperscript{43} Jihang Park, 554.
Imperialism focuses on disclosing that colonizers used liberating colonized women from their patriarchal customs for their pretext for imperialism. According to Kwon, this is not applied to the Korean situation because Korea was colonized by the non-western country Japan; adopting western views was not directly connected to compliance with imperial Japan.\footnote{Insook Kwon, 381-382.}

In this way, the scholars examine whether western discourses on women in colonized countries applied to the Korean situation or not. And their approach leads them to pay attention to the direct relation between Korean women and Imperialism. In this regard, the female students become a unique topic as an object of the influence of Western imperialism in a country physically colonized by a non-western country. Accordingly, the detailed phenomenon inside of colonial Korean society becomes relegated in order to provide enough room for the people who were in a battlefield of Imperial influence. After all, their drawback of not looking into broader groups of women is reasonable in that they deal with the Korean situation, while bearing other western scholars’ discussion on other countries’ situation; they talk to western feminist scholars in English through the American journals. Yet, their scholarship ends up with writing about a tiny number of elitist women. And following their arguments, in Korea, modernity was granted only to those elitist women at least in terms of women, whether it was a tainted gift from imperialism or not. And kisaengdle and café-maids or the like (who are not mentioned in their articles) come to remain in the pre-modern context.

In fact, the Korean publications mentioned above were a new style of writing: they appeared in a boom of studies about the colonized Korea from the late 1990s to the early 2000s. Before this boom, colonial Korea was portrayed only with Japanese oppression, economic exploitation, and anti-imperialism movements. Since the publication of Permit a Dance Hall in Seoul in 1999, more detailed lives of ordinary people or cultural elements in the period have been highlighted. While evaluating several books published in this boom, Baekyoung Kim says that “the public starts to find the history inside of them as the change of historical studies itself allows history to find the public inside of the history.”\footnote{Baekyoung Kim, 371.} Sunghee Kim also interprets the Korean trend of historical studies as a new phenomenon in 1990s. She says that it reflects the influence of micro-history as a study against modern grand narrative:

The postmodern sentences a death upon ‘\textit{History}’ with a capital letter; the grand narrative
of ‘History’ is sentenced to be a fiction made under the spirit of modern time. Therefore, micro-history pursues small narratives excluded and oppressed in a grand history, in other words, the detailed lives of ordinary people. And the discussion around “new women,” including café-maids and their trends, are recently studied for reviving the ordinary people from forgetting. As the two scholars reveal, if the way of Korean publications is new even in Korea, would the difference between Korean and American publications be a transitional phenomenon in 1990s? Would the American publications be changed after experiencing the Korean new stream of studies about colonized Korea?

Theodore Jun Yoo, having micro-history style Korean publications in his bibliography, maintains the American way of researching on colonized Korea: just like other English articles written before this book, this book also focuses on the relation between the colonized women and imperialism and underlines the role of the female students with the respect of “new women.” In his introduction, he argues that colonialism profoundly arbitrated the process that Korean women adopted modernity during the colonial period. That is, Japanese imperialism implanted its own type of modernity on Korean women’s ideas, relationships, social behaviors, and bodies. He deals with “new women” in chapter two, “The ‘New Women’ and the Politics of Love.” He clarifies the importance of new women in that they were active representatives in molding their identity. Also, he gives a warning to somebody who would undervalue the “new women” with the reason that the “new women” were a few “elitists”: “[t]hough one can easily dismiss them as elitists, it is important to understand that these women had the choice of accepting the status quo.” After all, this warning indicates Yoo’s concept about “new women”: he also regards “new women” as the female students.

In the case of Yoo’s book, it is mysterious that he doesn’t explore the intersection between the female students and kisaengdle or café-maids. Actually, he opens his chapter with introducing a 1930s newspaper article to report a young woman who disguised herself as a man and attended

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46 Sunghee Kim, “Theatrical Representation of the Colonized Korea, What is the Problem?” Theatre Criticism 32 (Spring 2009): 78-87, at 79.
48 Ibid., 1-6.
49 Ibid., 58-94.
50 Ibid., 93.
a men’s school. She was Hayang-nan Kang. After failing in “free love” with a scholar (she was discarded), she bobbed her hair and took a class in the men’s school. Interestingly enough, Hayang-nan Kang used to be a kisaeng. This report, in my perspective, invites the possibility that kisaengdle or café-maids were inclined to expose themselves to the Western education instead of just imitating the appearance of the female students. Yet, Yoo contends that he will explore Korean women’s identity during 1920s and 1930s “within the context of the new spaces created by education.” After all, Yoo, like other previous English publications, focuses on “the first generation of educated women, mainly graduates of protestant missionary schools” – that is the female students, and articulates the importance of the “new women” with their progressive endeavor to subvert traditional gender roles.

Then, do not American publications mention kisaengdle or café-maids? If they do, where do they put them and with what social groups in colonial Korea do they deal with kisaengdle or café-maids? Surprisingly to one who becomes familiar with the Korean publications, kisaengdle and café-maids are discussed with comfort women, being forced by Japanese military as a form of sexual slavery. Yuki Tanaka, in her book Japan’s Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery and Prostitution during World War II and the US Occupation, clarifies the necessity to look at “the trafficking of young women,” practiced before the military brothel system, in order to understand the comfort women system. And the café-maid is mentioned as a victim of the trafficking. They, consciously or unconsciously, were sold to cafés or bars, operating stealthy prostitution businesses, leaving advance payment to their families who suffered chronic poverty.

According to Tanaka, the licensed prostitution system established by the Japanese

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51 Ibid., 58-59.
52 Ibid., 59.
53 Ibid., 73.
55 The Government – General of Korea endeavored to control the entire affairs of Korea and thus carried out a new land ownership system. This resulted in depriving lands from illiterate peasant and petit-famers, who were more than 80 percent of the whole Korean population at that time. From here, a vicious circle rolled to increasing prostitutes. The peasant and petit-famers losing their lands gathered in urban areas, which made chronic unemployment. Thus, they went Japan and Manchuria to earn money. Women left in their home should get a job to support their families losing men. In this unexpected situation, the unprepared women could not help getting odd jobs. Many of uneducated, unskilled rural women became prostitutes to survive and to make their families survive. Also, labor brokers deceived women with a false promise of employments as factory works, which turned out as prostitution. Restaurants, cafés, and bars, which operated stealthy prostitution business, were among the places where the women were sold (Yuki Tanaka, 33-35).
Government-General functioned to foster a class of collaborators. She argues that it was not a coincidence that the prostitution proprietors moved to Manchuria and started brothels near Japanese military camps even though the direct reason for their moving was economic problems from the world depression.\textsuperscript{56} In the same vein, Youn-ok Song casts a profound question that “[i]f there had been no modern state-managed system of prostitution in Korea under Japan’s colonial rule, could so many Korean women possibly have been mobilized so quickly as ‘comfort women’?”\textsuperscript{57} Her point is that it cannot be said that Japanese colonial authorities were irrelevant to the prostitution and the prostitution like business in cafés, bars, and restaurants, though military authorities had not fully intervened in procuring women for the comfort women until around 1943.\textsuperscript{58}

In this way, the café-maids were dealt with in the discourse about the comfort women and portrayed as victims of the dreadful tragedy of colonization. It cannot be rebuffed that the Korean women under Japanese rule were oppressed both economically and physically, especially when talking about the comfort women. However, one critical point for comparing the rhetoric of the American and the Korean historical studies is that café-maids as a research topic in English speaking scholarships are explained in terms of how they were directly influenced by Japanese Imperial power, as the female students were. In the end, we can reach the conclusion that English materials mainly focus on the struggles that the Koreans experienced, exploring the mechanism of the Japanese Imperialism. Thus, when they talk about the women, they find the place that women and the colonial mechanism directly confronted. Therefore, the American publications cannot help becoming different from the Korean publications, which concentrate on recovering more detailed Koreans’ lives. The difference between the two might not be the difference between the perspectives in the facts, but they simply focus on different points in a historical moment. Still, their different perspectives in choosing what is more important to discuss end up making something to be forgotten like what are missed in the two plays: intellectual talent for Green and prostitution for Younghee.

### 4. History Plays versus Historical Studies

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 36-37.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 202-203.
Younghee in *Joyful* and Green in *Yi Sang* are figures who walk out from the history books published in the places which bring them from the past to the present; the femme sauvage café-maid Younghee would be a woman among the café-maids who promoted and exercised the modernity as the Korean history scholarships explain; the femme fatale prostitute Green would be a woman among many Korean women who became engaged in the prostitution, which was clandestinely prevalent in the cafés as the English speaking publications explain as the prelude of the comfort women. When synthesizing them together, none of them look incorrect in terms of the fidelity to the truth. Either part doesn’t seem to intend to distort or fail to present the historical facts. Rather, the difference in the two parts of historical studies comes from different selection and juxtaposition. Yet, the difference in the rhetoric produces drastically different images as much as the differences between the two heroines in the plays.

The interesting point is that the Korean historical studies and the Korean play shed light on one aspect together and the English written historical studies and the American play on the other aspect together. Then, do I mean that each playwright read each historical publication that I have mentioned? If tracing back each playwright’s bibliography⁵⁹ and their language proclivity,⁶⁰ we would be able to earn what they earned from their historical researches precisely and how they applied them to their plays. However, as I showed, the historical studies of each society – America and Korea – have essentially different perspectives on café-maids in colonial Korea and their differences are echoed with the difference of the two plays; therefore, I think it tells us that each society itself bears a different attitude towards colonial Korea. That is to say, I believe that the historical plays don’t reflect the historical studies passively only but their consistent differences reveal the fact that the history plays and the historical studies share the concern and the purpose, which are precedent to the direct effect relationships.

I said that the English speaking scholarships deal with the women in colonial Korea in

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⁵⁹ Sung Rno mentions in his play that he referred to the magazine of *Muae* for information about Yi Sang. *Muae* deals with Yi Sang for *The Portfolio* in its first edition. Along with several Yi Sang’s works translated in English, the magazine introduces three different approaches to read Yi Sang: the anti-colonial, psychosexual, and intertextual. Except in slightly abridged translations, this is the first time to introduce Yi Sang in English. See: *Muae: A Journal of Transcultural Production*1 1 (1995).

⁶⁰ An interview with Sung Rno reveals that Sung Rno speaks awkward Korean. His Harvard and Brown University diplomas must be enough to prove his English abilities. See: “I Want to Feel the Inner Sides of Yi Sang: Sung Rno, the Playwright of *Yi Sang Counts to Thirteen*,” *Korean Theatre* (October 2000), 89. In case of Ki-woong Sung, as *Joyful* shows, he is strong at the Japanese.
respect of how they were influenced by Imperialism and find women who were in the battlefield of imperial influences for their topics. Their point or their starting point is the grand story of “imperialism,” “colonialism,” and “colonizer/colonized.” Considering the harsh reality of the colonized Korea and the Koreans’ inexhaustible struggles, their choices are reasonable. Actually, even Korean historians mentioned above confess their sympathy. Especially, Podurae Kwon says in her introduction that she feels sorry when she thinks about national independence activists or communists who died in hunger and pain.  

Also, Jinsong Kim names his introduction as “Apology for this Book.” Nevertheless, they try to recover the inner lives of Korea through “trivial or insignificant looking sources” and what has not been recognized so far. Otherwise, the Korea in history books can’t represent more than 10% of the whole population. After all, though it is true that the intelligent café-maids look anachronistic, the Korean scholars write about them because the majority of the population lived their lives “anachronistically.” Eventually, if avoiding them, one fails to explain the Korean present modernity constructed with ironic anachronism of the colonized period.

As expected, people who staged these plays confess similar purposes and concerns.

The Korean actress Inyoung Joo (who plays for Younghee in Joyful):

“Younghee is a typical modern woman in that she has not felt certainty about her love until the moment of farewell. Just like me in 2008. Thus, I worry that I would unconsciously speak out my thoughts during my lines.”

The Korean playwright (also director) Ki-woong Sung:

“I think that 1930s Kyengsung as the birthplace of modern city Seoul. All problems that we have now, I believe, originated at that period.”

Like this, they pay attention to their present lifestyle while looking at 1930s Korea.

In contrast, Lee Breuer, the director of Yi Sang says that “[I] still ponder about imbuing a political interpretation that “I” is representative of a slave, “my wife” is of a prostitute, and

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61 Podurae Kwon, 9.
62 Jinsong Kim, 7.
63 It is said that female students were just about 50,000 in the whole population of 8,600,000 in 1920s. After all, the female students were just 0.6% of the female population. See: Research Group “Suyu & Beyond,” New Women: Modern Women Culture History though Medium (Seoul: Hankyoreh Newspaper Press, 2005), 16.
65 Heesun Kim, “Director Ki-woong Sung is Fascinated in the 1930s Kyengsung,” Yonhapnews, November 11, 2008.
“guests” are of Japan in Yi Sang’s novel of The Wings.”66 That is, he thinks about the possible metaphor in Yi Sang’s novel (the source of Yi Sang) in a way to clarify the relation between the colonizer and the colonized.67 Breuer’s approach to the play is connected with the playwright’s reason for choosing the colonized Korea. Sung Rno mentions in a newspaper interview that this play, “though governed by Yi Sang’s soul, is not Yi Sang’s biography but a story of a Korean-American living in New York” since “Yi Sang is an archetypical artist exits anytime and anywhere.”68 That is, the 1930s Korea is a similar place to New York to the playwright who has written about double identity of Korean-Americans69; Sung Rno sees Yi Sang as a person driven to the in-between positions in a time-space where the Koreans could not fully belong to but also could not escape from, that is “colonized” Korea.

The plays’ different approaches to colonial Korea lead the plays to reverberate the differences of the historical studies of the Korean and the English speaking world. The echo between history plays and the historical studies would tell us the relation between the two: they are similar than what their definitions of fiction and non-fiction indicate. In fact, as Freddie Rokkem says, history plays and historical studies have a lot in common in sense that both of them try to communicate with their potential readers/audiences with past stories.70 After all, both of them are writing, one way of communication, with a topic of the past. In addition, they come to reflect the present because what and how to remember the past would be chosen based on the present view. This would be the reason why the history plays and the historical studies, as a communication, share their societies’ present concern and build their purpose based on the

67 This political interpretation is the one in Sung Rno’s bibliography. While reading The Wings as an anti-colonial allegory, Henry H. Em says that “what used to be a grand house (the nation) has been transformed into a brothel, with all of its occupants either prostituted or made accomplices to that act” (106). See: Em, Henry H. “Yi Sang’s The Wings Read as an Anti-colonial Allegory,” Muae: A Journal of Transcultural Production 1 (1995): 104-111.
69 The best-known play among Sung Rno’s plays is his first play Cleveland Raining (1990) about a Mid-western Korean immigrant family. Daphne P. Lei explains that this play is about “a dysfunctional Korean American family.” Depending on Lei’s reading, his following plays also have a topic of Korean-American identity: Konishini, Mon Amour (1994) about “representations and misrepresentations of Asians in the U.S. mass media, New World (1994) about “various aspects of colonization and exploitation.” His other plays also contain Korean-American characters: Isabella (Gravity Falls from Trees (1994)) and M (wAvE (1999)). See: Daphne P. Lei: 293-4.
Then, what is their “society”? The American play is written by the Korean-American and the historical studies that I mentioned with the terms of the “English written” or “English speaking” are written by Koreans, Korean-Americans, a Japanese (or Japanese-American). That is, the interpretations on the café-maid in both the plays and the historical studies are grouped based not on the creator’s nationality (or cultural origins) but more on the languages that they use.71 This would be because the languages choose with whom they will talk. After all, the language of story tellers – playwrights and historians – prepares their “society” by indicating their potential communication partners. The “society” asks the story-tellers to focus on a certain aspect, which ends up forgetting another aspect. In this procedure, different pictures come to be circulated and the circulated pictures become “the fact.” In the end, the comparison between historical plays and history plays originated from the two different societies reveals that what factors prescribes the “society” and how the societies produce the “facts.” That is, the society is constructed based on the condition of the communication – languages – and the facts are born in relation to the societies’ present concern on the past.

71 Sung Rno’s play can make confusion because Yi Sang premiered in Seoul. However, his play was staged as a stage reading in Mabou Mines Workshop in New York in 1999 first. That is, it is not far-fetched to think that he did wrote the play minding the New York audiences more than the Korean for his potential audiences when he wrote. Above all, in an interview in 2000, he says that he “[doesn’t] know that [he] could perform in Korea really, though [he] hoped so for long. So, [to perform in Korea] is surprising and very good.” See: “I Want to Feel the Inner Sides of Yi Sang: Sung Rno, the Playwright of Yi Sang Counts to Thirteen,” Korean Theatre (October 2000), 89.
Chapter II. Audience Reception and Performances Aesthetics

As I demonstrated in the previous Chapter, if societies are divided based on linguistic conditions, each production of Yi Sang and Joyful would have been received more favorably in their own linguistic fields, the English speaking world and the Korean speaking world respectively. However, when examining audiences’ receptions of the two plays especially in Korea where the both plays were staged, we come to see unexpected results; Yi Sang was favored more than Joyful by Korean audiences when comparing their most recent performances: Joyful’s 2008 and Yi Sang’s 2009.72 To make matters more dramatic, the venue for 2009’s Yi Sang was at the Sam-il-ro Warehouse Theatre which many directors are reluctant to use because of its small size (70 seats) and remote location,73 whereas Joyful was staged at Space 111 (250 seats) in the Doosan Art Center which is located in just near Daehak-ro (Korean Theatre Street)74 and has good facilities after its 2007 remodeling.75 As for the length of their runs, they don’t reveal a critical difference: Yi Sang was staged for almost two months (from May 1 2009 to June 28 2009) and Joyful for a little longer than a month (from November 25 2008 to December 31 2008).

If, as in this case, the external conditions of the two performances don’t help to explain the result, would the internal conditions do more so? In fact, the result could have come from Yi Sang’s better marketability connected with the fact that it was directed by the world famous director Lee Breuer; the marketability that Breuer had would be undeniable especially after he staged A Doll’s House in Korea in 2008. However, if the name of Lee Breuer was the only factor to attract the Korean audiences, contents of Korean reviews of Yi Sang would be different from the American ones since Yi Sang in America was not directed by Breuer but by the playwright Sung Rno himself. However, the reviews of Yi Sang in Korea and America do not utilize

72 Since there can be many other factors to influence audience receptions between 2000 and 2008, it would not be plausible to compare Joyful’s 2008 receptions to Yi Sang’s 2000 receptions. About each one I will talk later in this Chapter.
74 Daehak-ro literally means a “college street.” It is said that in this street are located 121 theatres, having 19,667 seats in total. See: Jongwon Lee, “800 billion Korean Won (approximately, 700 million U.S. Dollar) is Circulated in Daehak-ro Theatre,” Dong-A Ilbo, January 14, 2010.
75 So-min Kim, “Yeongang Hall Reopens as Doosan Art Center after its Remodeling,” Herald Saengsaeng, August 24, 2007. This remodeling is said to proceed as a part of Mécénat activities of Doosan Corporation, spending around twenty five thousand million for all.
recognizably different rhetoric in speaking highly of the show. Then, what would be a reason for the Korean audiences, just as the American audiences, reacting positively to Yi Sang, which is based on the English-speaking world’s perspective on Korean history? What factor would deconstruct the “society” of history narratives based on the linguistic elements, and reorganize the “society” of theatre receptions in a different way?

It is likely that the theatrical forms of the two performances had influence on their receptions; Joyful is a realistic play proceeding structurally mainly with dialogues, whereas Yi Sang is a surrealist play; as Daphne P. Lei explains it, with “[an] experiment with the surrealist theatre tradition.” Then, would the different degree of excellence in using the respective style bring the different level of the audiences’ enthusiasm on the two performances? What if the style, or the aesthetics, is believed to have its own values? In this Chapter, I will trace back the audience receptions of the two plays and I will argue that the “societies” of theatre reception are divided based on aesthetic form, rather than on the linguistic element of the story. Furthermore, I will re-examine current perspectives on the theatrical forms by looking at Korean and Asian-American scholars’ discussions on realism and non-realism in theatre; if the theatre scholars (or critics) grant different values, or at least different preferences to the theatrical styles, the different forms of the two plays themselves could function in causing different receptions.

1. Audiences Reception of the Two Plays in Five Performances

Whereas Joyful has just one production history of staging in Korea in 2008, Yi Sang has been staged more than once in both America and Korea. As a script that Sung Rno wrote while participating in the 1998 Mabou Mines residence program, Yi Sang was first opened to the public as a staged reading in the Mabou Mines Workshop in 1999. Lee Breuer then staged it at the 2000 Seoul Theater Festival. After the Seoul performance, Sung Rno himself directed it at the 2001 New York Fringe Festival, which awarded the play as best overall production, and once again at the Kraine Theatre in New York in 2002. In the summer of 2009, Breuer directed it in Seoul.

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76 Daphne P. Lei, 294.
77 General audiences would be argued to be distinguished from theatre scholars or theatre critics. However, in the Korean theatre field case, theatre audiences has become attuned to showing similar tastes with theatre scholars, with some exceptions like general audiences in some plays adopting TV or film stars, or musicals.
again with Korean actors. Thus, for tracing the audience receptions of Yi Sang, I will look into American receptions through the two New York performances in 2001 and 2002 and Korean receptions through the two Seoul performances in 2000 and 2009.

In the two performances in New York, Yi Sang received generally favorable criticism. Adam Klasfeld gives the 2001 production a general critique that “Yi Sang is as accessible as the Diet Coke that provides one of its ongoing metaphors: It is sweet, not too heavy, and it has the right amount of fizz to shake things up.”

About the 2002 production, Dan Issac from Back Stage uses a stronger expression of “state of wonder, high marks all around.” To be specific, both critics focus on how non-conventionally theatrical Yi Sang is. Issac comments that the performance is partially similar to “a dance piece”: “[t]here is a dark beauty in the way these three characters move each other about, and the actors create taut mechanical rhythms with their bodies, so that at times the show looks like a dance piece.”

About Green’s part, Issac mentions her dance of “A Chorus Line” (which is performed after she accepts Blue’s marriage proposal) as the funniest event of the whole performance.

Adam Klasfeld, who watched the 2001 performance, more focused on Yi Sang’s dramaturgical elements in terms of its post-structural characteristics. He points out that Yi Sang is constructed with non-consistent vignettes: “[t]he play jumps from one non sequitur to the next.” Connecting it with the play’s subject, Klasfeld defines the whole play as “a celebration of the surrealist form.”

According to him, Blue’s saying that “[t]he harsh light of the world burned [the wings] off of me” (Yi Sang, 19) means that “realism destroys wings” and thus “too much structure confines the artist.” In his comment on Green, the actress’s acting (Deborah S. Craig) is read to blur what her character implicates in the script’s base.

Deborah S. Craig, in a sexy green dress, plays up her character’s exotica stereotype, sporting exaggerated Geisha garb in one scene. It’s a fine line to walk, but Craig treads the sensitive subject matter with ease, embodying the notion of exotic beauty only to knock down its racist implications.

81 Ibid.
82 Adam Klasfeld.
83 Ibid.
84 Ibid.
85 Ibid.
It appeared that, according to the two critics, Yi Sang’s performative characteristics like choreographic and surrealistic elements neutralize its textual connotations. As a result, what the audience comes to receive – that is, the performance’s denotations – could be expected to be different from the text reading.

Those kinds of perspective that read Yi Sang as a post-structural performance repeat in reviews of 2000 and 2009 performances in Korea; though there were many interviews with Lee Breuer, what were written in performance reviews were not so different from the American reviews. Korean reviews in 2000 use “performance poem” (a term initiated by Lee Breuer) in describing the performance. Breuer says that “performance poem embodies poem through actors on stage, whereas a theatre simply utilizes poetic lines.”86 In order to achieve the “performance poem,” Breuer mentions that he tries to create a great “picture, which will change a person’s thinking after 10 years.”87 Reflecting the director’s intention and endeavor, critics report the performance’s strength in images: “By using a combination of real presentations on stage and pre-produced film clips, Yi Sang shows a magical and lyrical beauty which has never been felt in Korean stages before.”88

There is also a negative remark about the performance: its stories are scattered without a flow to follow. Yi Sang, constructed with around twenty diverse vignettes, baffles audiences “as if it were an indecipherable table of random sampling numbers.”89 Simultaneously, however, the reporter shows her sympathy about the intangible script: “it would be an unreasonable quest to ask for a concise plot or logical consistence when dealing with Yi Sang’s strange life and his recondite poem.”90 Furthermore, she admits that several scenes, like blood falling onto the white canvas and Diet Coke cans falling from the ceiling, were impressive enough to feel the director’s eminent talents.91

The receptions of Yi Sang in 2000 Korea can be summarized by this: the script or its dramaturgical characteristic was considered incidental; instead, its pictorial images were

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87 Yoon-jeong Han, “American Breuer is Ready for Presenting Yi Sang Counts to Thirteen,” Kyenghang Newspaper, September 27, 2000.
90 Ibid.
91 Ibid.
captured by the audience. In fact, Korean theatre scholar Sunja Heo diagnoses that language or linguistic parts are the weakest part of Yi Sang. However, she embraces this weakest point; in her sense, the play itself refuses to become a literary script. The play is aimed at achieving “visual and aural humor, and sparking theatrical amusements.”

In this vein, the critics are in consent that the most beautiful moment is when the blood falls down to the white canvas reflecting a flower tree. When a camera focuses only on the white paper, red tincture appears there. The red tincture is read as symbolizing Yi Sang’s expectoration of blood. When the expectoration comes to the peak, Green comes out to the stage and hugs spiritless Blue. Therefore, if this scene was the most memorable moment, Green remembered after the show would become different from the one remembered after reading the play script.

However, this kind of staging doesn’t continue to the different performance-based reading of Green. Instead, it contributes in reading the play script as a deconstructive piece within twenty some vignettes arranged in a chaotic way. Heo articulates diverse dramaturgical ways used in the script under a deconstructivist’s term of pastiche:

Grotesque shadow play performed by crooked joints, fragmented clichés of popular cultures, silent tableau, direct audience address, a scene of spectator responses watching a play in the play and repeating the “play in the play” to the audience, scattered junk food and byproducts of modern civilizations (ramen, Diet Coke, Calvin Klein, Armani and so), excessive fondness on water, Möbius strip motive, free exchanges among characters, conclusion returning to the beginning…

That is, she thinks that the script refuses to be analyzed and therefore that the conventional way of analysis (to try to bring up a semantic core which includes every single element of the whole text) cannot be applied to this piece.

This kind of tendency continues to reviews of the 2009 performance. Mee-won Lee explicitly proclaims that “summarizing the text would be meaningless since [Yi Sang] is not a biographical narrative about Yi Sang but a subjective attempt describing abstract, absurd, and moreover strange imagination of Yi Sang.” After that, she also lists pictorial characteristics of


93 Ibid., 240-241.

94 Ibid., 240-242.

95 Mee-won Lee, “An Intelligent Free Man, Transcending his Own Time, His Freedom to Fly, and His Innocent Experiment on the Self-consciousness: Lee Breuer’s Yi Sang Counts to Thirteen,” Korean Theatre
the performance, focusing on its directing. She mentions how well Breuer uses a small theatre space: small parts of stage in the center rising up, a movable flight of steps in the back left, and a lift on the right have a crucial role in making various ways of moving, fertilizing the performance.  

As a matter of fact, the encomia about the efficient usages of stage are the most critical and repetitious feature of theatre reviews about the 2009 performance. Green’s Diet Coke ceremony scene is also read in a relation with how well the small space was used: “the audience guffaws when Blue and Red (seating themselves among the audience) in the small theatre of 70 seats chat while watching Green performing a tea ceremony. As the two men shrink with a groan when Green opens a Diet Coke can, it reveals sexual codes in the tea ceremony or arts in general.” In fact, the script around this part is changed when performed in 2009. Originally, “Watching Diet Coke” (the scene of Blue and Red) preceded “Drinking Diet Coke” (the scene of Green’s performance). In the 2009 performance, however, those two separated scenes became performed together. Thus, the focus of the audiences doesn’t lie on one scene by one scene but became distracted between the two actions happening at the same time. After all, instead of focusing only on Green as a passive object seized by the imperial powers through the Japanese style of performances and her props of Diet Coke, the audience comes to experience the relationship between the stage (where Green performs) and the audience seat (where Blue and Red watches her with themselves). That is to say, the directing accompanying the change of the script diminishes the meaning that each scene can provide. Nonetheless, this change in the script was not mentioned; instead, the directing techniques are underlined in the Korean reviews. In addition, if the script revision is one of the factors meant to pacify the Korean audiences, there would have been some comment on the previous script in 2000, which was not the case in Korea.

If linguistic elements are the least important parts of the performance in Yi Sang, Joyful shows the exact opposite result: its linguistic elements are strong but it doesn’t present grand spectacle. One review articulates that Joyful is constructed in seven acts only with dialogues, without any theatrical effects. However, this result comes from the intention of Joyful’s director (who is also the playwright): he puts more importance on its linguistic elements than on

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96 Ibid., 63.
visual effects. From his previous work, *Novelist Mr. Gubo and Kyengsung People* (which deals with Yi Sang and his novelist friend Gubo Taewon Park), he tried to recover old Seoul dialect and represent it with English and Japanese. The coexistence of three languages not only reflects the customs of 1930s Korea and the reality of intercultural contacts produced by the colonization\(^9\); it also offers aural amusements to the audiences. All of three languages are not identical with contemporary Korean, English, and Japanese. English and Japanese mispronounced, in the contemporary Korean sense, and their Korean, which sounds like an understandable foreign language, trigger laughter from the audience. Furthermore, the research of linguistic characteristics of the time requires the use of subtitles, offering visual amusements to the audience by presenting a humorous note from time to time. The director’s concentration on the linguistic parts would be indispensable for portraying 1930s Korea; but at the same time, it creates theatrical enjoyments.

Like this, the visual and aural effects of the stage of *Joyful* are chosen to serve the play. The backgrounds of the theatre, that is roofs (a department store roof, a library roof, a café roof, a hospital roof, a cinema roof, and a newspaper company roof), are read to be adopted for revealing “demoralization and vanity of the intellectuals of the colonized country, losing their roots.”\(^100\) Also, according to the production dramaturg Hwa-jin Lee, the actions not shown but told; that is, continual dialogues of a pair of characters about what has already happened comes from a dramaturgical strategy meant to show that “the real is sunken and the fake is floating.”\(^101\) Therefore, the theatre becomes a banquet of small sizes of spectacles chosen and staged carefully for the narratives.

Since the play doesn’t require spectacular happenings, Sung’s modest directing can be said to be fairly reasonable, if not great. However, focusing on a stage which cannot help being modest in spectacle, theatre critic Jae-min Shim evaluates drawbacks of *Joyful*:

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99 The characters use English and Japanese to show their witness and intelligence, usually in a formal conversation; but when they reveal their genuine thoughts and sorrows, they use Korean. It arguably shows the coexistence of the languages is not horizontal one but vertical one. Therefore, intercultural contacts accompanied with colonization don’t necessarily bring a mixture of the cultures contacted but a coexistence of the cultures with a hierarchy reflecting and reproducing the power of each culture.


Since the play puts dialogues first in importance..., stories that the play provides, at last, cannot help being in a center of its narrative. Of course, a theatre with solid and delicate speeches should be evaluated as valuable enough. Still, relatively monotonous forms that the plot has, in Our Joyful Young Days, cannot be handled. That is, in Shim’s eyes, the stage of Joyful, looks to be nothing more than a roof where nothing happens; and this monotonous flame is the impassible hurdle of the whole production.

This kind of criticism mixed with worries is similar to the evaluation that Sung received from his previous work Novelist Mr. Gubo and Kyengsung People. When he staged this piece in 2007, a review whose title was “An Unripe Experiment Showing Only a Potentiality” followed the production. Theatre scholar Meong-hwa Kim attentively articulated both its merit and demerit. The merit mentioned is that Sung was delicate enough to explain unfamiliar language (to contemporary Korean) by using subtitles; the demerit is that Sung could not provide detailed theatrical methods to visualize his keen research. In short, in her impression, the theatre became “a study room instead of a theatre.” About Sung’s two pieces, the excellence in using language has been admitted but it has not been evaluated enough for building a good play.

If synthesizing the receptions of Yi Sang and Joyful, we can conclude that a play having visual and aural strength (Yi Sang) is highly evaluated regardless of seeming linguistic weakness, whereas a play having linguistic excellence (Joyful) is evaluated as failing to overcome its stylistic drawback. It would be a truism to argue that evaluation on a theatrical piece should include the evaluation on how its theatrical style strengthens its narrative whether in a supporting way or in a modifying way. However, more than that, the receptions of Yi Sang and Joyful indicate that the theatrical style is not a supplement to assist the narrative but a central factor in the theatre receptions. This would be the reason why the division of societies shown in historical narratives can’t apply to the division of societies in theatre receptions. The linguistic elements deciding the boundary of historical narratives don’t function critically in theatre receptions; rather, the audience responds to the aesthetics of the performances. Therefore, groupings of societies in the theatre receptions can be said to be based on aesthetics: a society preferring realism and a society preferring non-realism regardless of whether they are Korean or American,

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103 This script was selected for ‘Free Young Theatre Project’ of Seoul Arts Center.
or whether they speak Korean or English.

However, even when admitting that the theatre receptions are more based on the aesthetics, it doesn’t fully explain the result that Yi Sang was more favorably received by both Korean and American audiences; the American and Korean audiences’ enthusiasm only toward Yi Sang seems to reveal an unified social embrace: a society preferring non-realism. Moreover, if reflecting that what is praised in Yi Sang’s imagistic strength is non-realistic happenings (like using a camera to visualize the fallen flowers and hundreds of Coke cans fallen), the preference to the play having imagistic strength is read to be a preference to non-realism itself rather than its stylistic excellence. Like this, if there is the preference to the non-realism in current theatre fields, the preference itself (instead of the significance of theatrical aesthetics in theatre as the essential characteristic of theatre) can be a genuine reason to trigger the result that Yi Sang has been received favorably across the two different linguistic worlds. In other words, the audiences’ expectation to the theatrical aesthetic might not be an essential factor to divide historical plays from historical studies.

In order to look at how the theatrical forms are discussed, I will trace Korean theatre scholars’ general opinions on realism and non-realism. After that, I will introduce American theatre scholars’ opinions on the genres briefly, though it cannot be argued profoundly here because Joyful has not yet performed in the U.S; the absence of Joyful’s performance in U.S. means an absence of comparable performances having a similar topic but in different perspectives and in different styles. Nevertheless, under the circumstance that the Asian-American theatre academia focuses on the shift toward the non-realism, the Korean case can provide a different lens to read the American phenomena.

2. Discussion of Realism and Non-Realism in Korean and Asian-American Theatre Studies

1) Korean Theatre Scholars’ Discourses on Quotidian Play and Realism

I believe that recent discussion about the Korean “quotidian play” through one Korean academic theatre magazine Theatre Criticism will help us to approach to the Korean audiences’ or Korean theatre critics’ proclivities. The paper-based debate started with that Sung-hee Kim and Sung-hee Jang published two articles about the quotidian play in the Theatre Criticism 2007
summer edition. If talking about the definition of the quotidian play first, according to Sung-hee Kim, it means “plays dealing with everydayness, more specifically unremarkable facets of our lives, trite and tedious daily lives, or trivial events around us.”\textsuperscript{105} She mentions, as its merits, that the quotidian play helps us to make “recoveries of individuals and daily lives which have been ignored by a grand subject like ideologies, [grand] histories, or gigantic goals of lives.”\textsuperscript{106}

However, criticism of the quotidian play was the larger part of the two papers. Especially, Sung-hee Jang criticized the Korean trend of the quotidian plays, including director Sung-hoon Chae’s production; this brought Chae’s repudiation in its 2007 autumn edition. In the 2008 winter edition, theatre critic Lola Baek published her article, mentioning the previous discussion between Jang and Chae. Finally, \textit{Theatre Criticism} held a colloquy with a title of “Korean Theatre’s Presence and Future: Acting, Beyond the ‘Naturalness’ and ‘Everydayness,’” and published the colloquy note with Yi-jeong Noh’s article, “21\textsuperscript{st} Century Korean Theatre: They Are Quotidian, But Do They Reach at Realism?” in its 2009 spring edition. As can be felt from the continual publications, the discussion on quotidian theatre has been a hot issue in Korean theatre academia; but more importantly for the discussion on the Korean theatre critics’ inclinations, it implicatively reveals the authors’ expectations to the theatre on the whole. Not only that, but \textit{Joyful} fits into the critics’ definition of the quotidian play in some point, though \textit{Joyful} as a history play was not mentioned in any of them.

For a clearer understanding of the quotidian play, the scholars compare it with realism and explain it with its differences from the realistic play. Sung-hee Jang says:

If realism makes [theatre audiences] to be not only observers but also anatomists, “everydayness” appeals the audience by emotional identifications and situates theatre places as sentimental ones to confirm emotional communities.\textsuperscript{107}

Sung-hee Kim also tries to differentiate “quotidian play” from realism plays. She points out that the distinctive characteristics of the quotidian play rest on that it doesn’t have logical structure like a plot of a “well-made play.” In this respect, she sets the quotidian play in a category of postmodernism: “with inconsistent and collage-like structure, quotidian plays present polysemy

\textsuperscript{105} Sung-hee Kim, “Expression Aesthetics and Thoughtfulness of Everydayness,” \textit{Theatre Criticism} 25 (Summer 2007): 63-72, at 63.

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., 64. In terms that \textit{Joyful} pursues for micro-stories to be revived from forgetting, \textit{Joyful} can be said under the discussion of “quotidian play” though \textit{Joyful} is a history play.

(having multiple meanings) or diverse relationships like that of a scattered individual. Therefore, they are connected to the avant-garde though they are similar to revised realism in that they talk about minute facets of daily lives.”

Chae’s refutation starts by attacking those definitions based on the quotidian plays’ differences from realism. Chae argues that Kim and Jang’s definition doesn’t reveal any differences from a definition of a realistic play: “emotional identifications,” “situating theatre places as sentimental ones,” and “confirming emotional communities” (from Sung-hee Jang) are the very definitions of realism plays; “presenting polysemy or diverse relationships like that of a scattered individual,” (from Sung-hee Jang) and “dealing with unremarkable facets of our lives” (from Sung-hee Kim) are not different from Anton Chekhov, who certainly does not belong to post-modernism. This theatre practitioner’s rebuff is approved by theatre scholar Lola Baek. Her point is that “inconsistent and collage-like structure” along with fragmented scenes and decentralized story is not a common factor that the quotidian plays performed so far have, and more than that, only with those characteristics would it be more persuasive to discuss the quotidian play in its relationship with the revised realism, rather than with the avant-garde. That is, it is not reasonable to regard the quotidian play as a different genre from the realistic play on the base of its subject matter or how to deal with it in the dramatic base.

In fact, “quotidian play” is not explained only with its dramatic traits. Rather, characteristics of its production realities and its staging style, more specifically scenic designs, are also mentioned for explaining the quotidian plays by the first two critics (Kim and Jang). Moreover, the quotidian play’s staging style is the part toward which the harsh criticism directs itself. That is to say, the quotidian play is explained to be usually made by theatre practitioners who write and direct at the same time (just like Ki-woong Sung), to focus on language and narratives, (just like Joyful) and to be staged in small theatres. Without visual spectacles offered by tremendous sets and heavy make-up, they are performed in small spaces. After all, it is argued to be abandoning spectacle for the sake of narrative. However, Sung-hee Jang cynically asks whether

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108 Sunghee Kim, 64.
111 Sung-hee Kim, 63 & Sung-hee Jang, 73.
the emptiness is chosen for pursuing genuine narratives or for handling poverty of a theatre: “it is true that the quotidian plays can be staged without lots of money”\textsuperscript{112} since they are usually performed with plain sets and cheap costumes like actor’s own clothing. She even raises a question whether the ragged spectacles of the quotidian theatre would be the reason for Korean theatres to lose their audiences. The quotidian play is, after all, categorized based more on similarities of appearance than their dramaturgical traits, and more than that, it is criticized in that it doesn’t present sight-stealing stages.

Since Lola Baek redeems the quotidian play as a sub-genre of realism, the quotidian play has not been mentioned as a distinctive genre. This is because even when looking through the lens of its production realities and its style, it is unreasonable to divide it from the realism though it can be different from 1990s Korean realism plays; the 1990s Korean realism plays were featured by 1) being director-centered, 2) excessive theatricality, and 3) negligence of scripts.\textsuperscript{113} Even if those three characteristics are not captured in the 2000s quotidian plays, the quotidian play can be said a sub-genre of realism, in the respect that the definition of realism in the theatre doesn’t necessarily include the three features of 1990s Korean realism plays. Still, it is criticized; after the Lola Baek article, “the realistic plays having a feature of quotidian” began to be criticized.

Theatre critic Yi-jeong Noh criticizes the realism plays themselves without spending time in selecting some under the term of the quotidian play; she publishes her article, “21\textsuperscript{st} Century Korean Theatre: They Are Quotidian, But Do They Reach at Realism?” which is the last paper (among papers published until now) for the series of discussions. In her paper Noh reveals her negative view on recent Korean realism plays by naming them as “date theatre” in sense that they are easily chosen for a date by young couples. After that, she argues that the plays should not be called as realism though the theatre practitioners highlight the realistic qualities of their works with terms of hyper-realism or detailed descriptions; in her opinion, they don’t have the “spirit” of realism which is “theatre as a movement” along with “theatre as an art.” According to her, historically the realistic plays like Ibsen’s and Chekhov’s were aimed to discomfort the audience by uncovering the hidden; realism began as a movement against melodrama which provided its audiences with familiar convention and sensual satisfaction. In contrast with historical realism the quotidian plays, according to Noh, are created just to meet the audiences’

\textsuperscript{112} Sung-hee Jang, 87.
\textsuperscript{113} Sung-hee Kim, 64.
tastes. To be specific, for appealing the contemporary audiences who are familiar with TV and film they pursue TV and film-like everydayness, instead of endeavoring to provide theatrical illusion. This point is also mentioned in the colloquy: Director Byeng-hoon Lee points out that recent trend of Korean acting focusing on naturalness and everydayness comes from that both actors and audiences have become accustomed to TV and Film. In a strong voice, Yi-jeong Noh diagnoses that the present Korean theatre is a result of “post-modernism and globalization that degrade culture to a pure subject of consumption.”

Then, what would they suggest to do instead of chasing only audiences’ familiar sensual experiences in TV and film? Though Yi Sang’s critics are not identical with the critics on the quotidian and the realistic trend of the Korean theatre, Yi Sang can be seen as reflecting their suggestions, since Yi Sang received a good reception from the Korean theatre critics. Then, is Yi Sang one of these works which is against being “a pure subject of consumption” while not just trying to meet the (American and Korean) audiences’ tastes? If it is problematic for the Korean realistic plays not to pursue the “spirit” of (historical) realism, does Yi Sang pursue the “spirit” of the avant-garde — at least the American avant-garde in which Yi Sang’s director Lee Breuer belongs to?

An interview with Sung Rno reveals that he is not different from the Korean theatre practitioners in that all of them consider their potential audiences’ flavor and try to meet their tastes. The following is what Sung Rno said in 2004 Playwrights’ Week hosted by the Lark Play Development Center:

I think the younger generations is more in tune, more adventurous… For instance, music videos are actually more surreal and cutting edge than a lot of art. [My show] had a Korean-American focus, but it was interesting because the audience didn’t divide along ethnic lines; it actually divided along aesthetic lines. A group of housewives from Michigan loved the play and responded to it in a totally different way.

From his statement, we can see that he thinks that his potential audiences look for aesthetics that music video or the like has, i.e., “surreal” more than a subject matter like Korean-American foci.

116 Yi-jeong Noh, 32.
Connecting with his “surrealistic” play Yi Sang, we can be certain that he tries to satisfy his potential audiences. The difference from the Korean theatre practitioners situates only on that he gives his attention on “music video,” i.e., “non-realism” rather than “TV or Film,” i.e., “realism” as the audiences desire. Then, should he be criticized because he indulges his audiences? Or, is he exempt from the criticism because the endeavor to respond to the audiences’ tastes fits into the spirit of the American Avant-garde?

Yi Sang’s stylistic elements can be said to belong to American avant-garde, which may be said to have started from Black Mountain College, Living Theatre, John Cage, and Allen Kaprow, and reached at its peak with Open Theatre, Performance Group, Robert Wilson, Richard Foreman, and Mabou Mines (where Yi Sang’s director Lee Breuer is found). Certainly, Yi Sang frequently reveals “eliminating dialogue from drama,” “reorganizing audience and performing space relationship,” and “dominated by (visual and aural) images,” all of which Bonni Marranca used when she explains the advent of “theatre of images” as a style of American Avant-garde theatre. However, it doesn’t tell that Yi Sang meets the spirit of Avant-garde. According to David Savran, the American avant-garde created “radical, experimental, and non-commercial” voices. Also, Arnold Aronson points out that the essential meaning of the Avant-garde is in invoking radical changes in audience perceptions, which will bring a following change in how the audiences perceive the world. Like this, if the spirit of the Avant-garde was in raising provocative voices ultimately for impacting on the society, it would not fair to say that Yi Sang, which Sung Rno would write after understanding his potential audiences’ inclination toward the non-realistic expression, is praised as an avant-garde theatre. In other words, if following Marranca, Savran, and Aronson’s views, Yi Sang can be said to show only superficial semblances with the avant-garde without its birth-place spirit. Therefore, Yi Sang should be criticized by the Korean critics because they criticized the realistic plays in a perspective to evaluate a performance with a comparison to the “spirit.”

I don’t mean to criticize Yi Sang by comparing it with the American Avant-garde’s birthplace intention. Rather, I argue that the Korean critics’ criticisms on the quotidian and realistic plays

are not fair since they show the double standard in the case of Yi Sang. In fact, reading their responses of the two plays produces suspicion on the Korean critics’ genuine reason for the antipathy toward the quotidian and realistic plays. That is, if what they say as their logical development to evaluate whether the quotidian theatre belongs to the realism or not and what they show as their evidence of antipathy like having no birth-place “spirit” have paradoxical characteristics, where does their opposition toward the quotidian or the realistic plays come from? Simply put, what would be a real reason that the Korean critics shed their harsh criticism on the realistic plays?

Their suggestions to Korean theatre practitioners seem to offer an answer. While Sunghee Jang suggests alternatives to the quotidian plays, she mentions “surrealism, expressionism, futurism, cubism and so on” to obtain various kinds of styles. With more specific examples, Noh also tells what she thinks as the alternative ideals is a theatre which is “uncomfortable but presenting contemporary human beings’ ontological tragedy and a new vision on the genre of theatre.” For the examples, she presents three performances staged in Seoul Performing Arts Festival, which is regarded as a fest for multidisciplinary arts: Long Life (directed by Latvian director Alvis Hermanis) introduced as “an anthropological report on the old” and featured with “without uttering any single lines;” Death of a Salesman (directed by Belgian director Luk Perceval) introduced as “invoke sensation in Europe with provocative interpretation about the classics” and “unique stage design looking like a jungle;” and La Historia de Ronaldo, el Payaso de McDonald’s (directed by Spanish director Rodrigo Garcia) introduced with “half-naked actors rolling and having homosexual activities on a messy stage with Coke and Hamburgers). All in all, their suggestion is to do with non-realistic, non-conventional, and avant-garde theatre in its form. After all, their reluctance toward the Korean realistic trend of theatre seems to come not from their degree of accomplishments or their attitudes toward the audiences but the fact that they are realistic, conventional, and non avant-garde.

As a matter of fact, Noh’s article starts from reviewing “the” history of theatre. In the Western world, modern theatre began with realism, went through the avant-garde movement, and has arrived at now having various kinds of post-modern aspects. Mirroring this path, Korean

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122 Sung-hee Jang, 83.
modern theatre was also initiated with realism, and in following years were also evaluated and appreciated based on similar criteria. However, the present Korean theatre fields make her confused. She asks, “does our theatre come to the future after bypassing the realistic modern theatre? Or does not it go back to the past? Are we in the phrase of realism or even before this starting point of the modern theatre?”\(^{124}\) If connecting with Noh and Jang’s suggestion lists, their subtext turns out to be blaming Korean theatre for not going toward the future. Considering realism as out-dated, they persuade the theatre practitioners to come out from the past and be on the track of the future. Since realism and non-realism are not regarded as two genres coexisting in the present by Korean theatre scholars, it is easily understood why the Korean critics were disinclined to praise the realistic play; in their mind, realism seems to be a past product which should have vanished. And so, an audience society for realistic plays cannot be formed in Korea.

2) American Theatre Scholars’ Discourse on the Shift Toward the Non-realism of Asian-American Theatre

If the Korean receptions of Yi Sang and Joyful are connected with the Korean theatre scholars’ predilection to non-realism, what can we know about the American reception of Yi Sang? That is, would any general feeling about the non-realism in America contribute to this non-realistic play Yi Sang receiving its favorable criticism in its two New York performances? Since the shift from realism to non-realism is noted in the Asian-American theatre fields in the1990s, we can look at how the Asian-American theatre scholars interpret and react to the phenomena: the Asian-American theatre is argued to be transformed from a realistic aesthetic to “lyrical, abstract, and postmodern approach[es] to narrative constructions of experience.”\(^{125}\) Furthermore, the Asian-American theatre scholars argue that the shift is “more than a simple aesthetic shift.”\(^{126}\)

Firstly, this shift is read to reflect increasing skepticism on realism; the theatrical realism is argued to end up reproducing dominant ideologies. Hyeng-sik Lee clearly states that it is a widely known concept in minority theatre movements for the theatrical realism “to embrace and

\(^{124}\) Ibid., 29.
\(^{126}\) Ibid., 382.
support Western, White, male, and patriarchic ideologies” rather than simply mirror the real. Josephine Lee also points out that this kind of suspicion on realism also resides in the Asian American theatre academic discourses; as an example, she introduces James Moy’s scholarship. In Lee’s interpretation of Moy, Moy’s Marginal Sights borrows Jill Dolan’s spine logic of The Feminist Spectator as Critic reading relationships between spectators and events occurring on stage as “a binary opposition of the masculine active spectator and the passive female object.”

It is true that Moy criticizes Asian-American portrayals in American theatre, including Asian-American playwrights’ self-representations: his one chapter of “Flawed Self-Representations” demonstrates how Asian-American characters in David Henry Hwang’s M. Butterfly and Philip Kan Gotanda’s Yankee Dawg You Die degrade into “exotic” and “good evening entertainment” even though they are adopted to subvert the existent stereotypical representations of Asianness. However, Moy doesn’t name his targets as realism; moreover, his examples of M. Butterfly and Yankee Dawg You Die don’t belong to realism. Therefore, precisely speaking, even though Josephine Lee asks to reconsider the politics of realism by demonstrating that Laura Mulvey’s film theory, which Dolan borrows for showing the binary relationship between the stage and the audience, can’t explain dynamic of the theatre stage, she ironically reveals the current negative perspective on realism; “realism” is criticized in behalf of all kinds of disappointing endeavors which intend to tell the truths but fail to fulfill the initial intentions.

The shift is also explained to reflect changes in Asian-American realities in America. That is, the second and third generations of Asian immigrants don’t have direct memoirs about their mother lands; rather their existence is surrounded by “heterogeneity, hybridity, and

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multiplicity,”¹³¹ which fit more into the non-realistic aesthetics. Esther Kim Lee defines this trend as the third wave Asian-American theatre and explains it:

Unlike the earlier writers, the new playwrights view their ancestry as remotely relevant, if at all, in explaining who they are. Most characters in the plays confess a sense of not belonging to any particular culture, and such isolation becomes a metaphor for the human condition in all of its multiple forms and heterogeneity.¹³²

In fact, Lee mentions another play of Sung Rno, *Cleveland Raining*, as an example to reveal a new reading about the Asian-American identity and to represent it in a different way from previous first and second wave playwrights who pursued staging authentic history and ancestry in the realistic way.

More specifically about the Sung Rno’s play, Karen Shimakawa explains that Sung Rno’s aesthetic choices implicitly reflects Asian Pacific American contemporary experiences, while naming Sung Rno’s *Cleveland Raining* as an “index of contemporary Asian Pacific American performance”¹³³; in the play, invisible ghosts haunting visible characters function not only for animating the theatrical space but also for foregrounding essential conditions of three Korean-American characters’ existences. That is, in her interpretation, the invisible ghosts are “trauma of self-effacement through assimilation to white, middle-class, heterosexual ‘Americanness’ experienced by many Asian Pacific Americans,”¹³⁴ despite their identification as actual people of “father,” “mother,” and an adoptive “granny” leaving the three visible characters. That is, the more complicated and diverse immigrants’ stance and experiences than before lead the Asian-American playwrights not to write directly about Asian-Americanness but “from a racialized perspective”; this change makes them to abandon the 1960s and 1970s strategies of telling the truth to more ambiguous way of telling its own “truths.” If applying to the Sung Rno, the strategic shift can be articulated from the straightforward accusation of assimilation experiences in America to the haunting of the ghosts, if following Shimakawa’s reading of *Cleveland Raining*.

However, in the outsider’s eyes, Sung Rno’s aesthetic traits are only captured as being undistinguishable from its contemporary American playwrights’ style. Hyeng-sik Lee says that the second and third generations of Asian immigrant playwrights “implicate and circumambulate

¹³³ Karen Shimakawa, 383.
¹³⁴ Ibid, 396.
issues of race, identity and diaspora with American styles and post-modern and surreal staging techniques.” More than that, taking Sung Rno and Julia Cho’s plays as examples, he mentions that the dramaturgical style that off-stage people directly and indirectly influences on-stage characters is “important phenomena shown in the American mainstream theatre.” For his evidence, he brings Tennessee Williams’ The Glass Menagerie, Sam Shepard’s True West and A Lie of the Mind, Marsha Norman’s ‘Night Mother, and Beth Henley’s Crimes of the Heart.\textsuperscript{135} That is, to the Korean scholar, the characteristic argued to reflect changing stances of Asian-Americans is read to follow the formula of the American mainstream theatre.

As a matter of fact, Karen Shimakawa notes that “the Asian Pacific American population experiences themselves [to] have grown increasingly varied” for the reason of “participation in a larger move away from western realism.”\textsuperscript{136} However, the former can’t be the reason for the latter; the former tells that the Asian-American playwrights’ dramaturgical styles would become more diverse than before, but their styles can still include realism. Then, why do Asian-American playwrights choose more non-realistic strategies than any other? Or, if the styles that Asian-American theatre practitioners adopt have become just varied, why do the theatre scholars put more interest on non-realism among this variety? Would this kind of result be a reflection of their predilection for non-realism, just like Korean scholars? Regardless of whether American scholars prefer non-realism to realism or not, their positive feelings towards “the shift from non-realism to realism” in Asian-American theatre field can be conceived; some extent of logical flaws detected when they deal with realism and non-realism could be evidence of their emotional responses towards the genres. Moreover, the expression of “shift” itself pushes the realism behind the contemporary.

3. Societ(ies) of Theatre Reception in the Era of Globalization

The reason for the better receptions of Yi Sang might be simply said that Yi Sang is a better art-work than Joyful. However, “better in what?,” “why better?,” and “better to whom?,” are reasonable questions following the simple sentence. In other words, what are pointed out as Yi Sang’s comparably better components? Why do the better components guarantee Yi Sang as

\textsuperscript{135} Hyeng-sik Lee, 156.
\textsuperscript{136} Karen Shimakawa, 382.
better on the whole? Who thinks it is better and why is it better to them? In summarizing the theatre critics and scholars’ seeming perspectives, unlike the historical studies, theatrical pieces are evaluated based on their aesthetic values and non-realism is regarded as better since it is considered more futuristic than realism. Moreover, the enthusiasm toward non-realism seems to be applied to everyone, at least including South Korean citizenry and American citizenry regardless of their heritages; Yi Sang is praised by both the Korean audiences and the New York audiences. The fact that the aesthetics of theatrical forms are considered in evaluating the theatrical pieces is not quite surprising; but the specific evaluations based on this fact are still debatable. That is, what factor would be a goal in urging a triumph of non-realism over realism, impelling realism back to the past? At the same time, how can this factor collect everyone, who has been divided with several reasons, into a community to react to the theatre similarly rather than differently?

If societies of historical narratives are decided based on the fact that each society – in my argument, each linguistic world – has a different present concern on the past, the reason why non-realism can collect all societal groups seems to come from that the societal groups share the present concern on the future: that is, the broadening market. The futuristic goal of the broadening market is expressed in slightly different ways in Korea and America; if talking about Korea or the Korean speaking world first, globalization is the Korean incarnation of the broadening market. Under the circumstance that the Korean economy has highly relied on foreign trades and that China and other Southeast Asian countries have grown over Korea in manufacturing industries with their relatively low labor costs, the globalization of culture industries including the theatre industry would be considered crucial for Korea’s survival. That is, globalization would be considered not just as a goal but an essential survival strategy.

In this vein, Guang-jo Ahn, who is the producer of the 2009 Yi Sang says that Yi Sang would be a “step towards globalization of Korean theatre.” That is to say that Yi Sang, made with the collaboration between the American director and the Korean actors, would provide a chance to predict whether Korean theatre can have competitive power when performed overseas.

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137 The Korean Ministry of Finance announced that the 2009 degree of dependence upon foreign trades is higher than 90 % of the general Korean economy. See: Jongtae Jung, “Korean economy: Degree of Dependence upon Foreign Trade Soars up over 90 %,” Korean Economy, November 13, 2010.

and would be able to examine what factors the Korean theatre should possess to do so. This suggests that, in order to launch into a global market, Korean theatre should be made like Yi Sang. More broadly, theatre scholar Mee-won Lee mentions globalization as a reason for looking at even all Korean-American plays:

Researhing the Korean diaspora can be a significant step toward the globalization of Korean theatre. This is because investigating the Korean theatre in America is crucial in exporting Korean theatre. (…) Especially in that the Korean-American play builds the foundation for our theatre, it makes Korean-American theatre established and can be read as spreading Korean literature. In addition, playwriting can be more focused because it can create a basis for popular culture like games or videos that have risen up recently. In that the playwriting is connected with digital industries over the theatre, its influence will be tremendous.

After all, globalization is pointed out as the future to Koreans. Thus, the value of a performance in Korea is decided based on its potentiality for export to the global market. The theatre scholars’ predilection for non-realism, including Yi Sang, would also have been developed based on this criterion: non-realism is believed better in attracting the international market.

In the respect that, comparing to realism, non-realism helps pacify a restriction of language barriers, the choice of non-realism as a strategy to attract a global market would be reasonable in Korea. However, what would be the relationship between non-realism and the broadening of the market inside of America to the Asian-American theatre practitioners and scholars? The American (more specifically New York) audiences’ reception of Yi Sang to mainly praise for its stylistic strength, and Sung Rno’s interview comments stating that his audiences come for his aesthetic choices of the surrealism rather than for his Korean-American foci, reveals that in America as well the choice of non-realism works for attracting more audiences. Moreover, broadening the market to more audiences would not simply mean increasing numbers of audiences; rather it would truly determine whether the play attracts audiences who don’t have a concern with Korean-American issues. Connecting Hyeng-sik Lee’s comment to indicate the stylistic similarity between Sung Rno’s Cleveland Raining and American mainstream theatre, those audiences who are indifferent to Korean-American matters could be called the mainstream

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139 Ibid.
audience. After all, the audience reception of Yi Sang tells that the choice of non-realism offers an opportunity for the Korean-American theatre practitioner to enter the mainstream, while attracting more audiences with the style.

Actually, Sung Rno says in an interview that he is against assimilation, but at the same time he thinks assimilation is indispensable in U.S.\textsuperscript{141} While mentioning this interview, Mee-kyeng Jeong explains Rno’s attitude as understanding that the assimilation to the mainstream as an American dream and the pursuit of Korean identity are not incompatible to each other. Moreover, she explains that making a peace between the two—what Rno tries to accomplish—is “not a theoretical aim but more like a strategy for survival.”\textsuperscript{142} After all, Rno’s choice to deal with a Korean subject in a non-realistic style would be a way to launch his works into the mainstream while at the same time talking about his Korean origin\textsuperscript{143}; this is argued to be a way chosen solely for survival as a minority theatre practitioner in the U.S.

In short, broadening markets are considered indispensable for the survival in Korean and in U.S Korean-American theatre fields, and non-realism is suggested as its realistic strategy. This reveals how theatre critics and scholars, at once audience members and agencies between theatrical pieces and public audiences, respond to an individual piece of play and their aesthetics. That is to say, their view on the play or the aesthetics is not based solely on inner-theatre traits but more on outer-theatre (social and economic) concerns. This would be why the critical theorist Susan Bennett argues that audience reception should be considered to be constructed in an intersection between “dramatic production in a particular playing space” (in Bennett’s words “inner frame”) and “all cultural elements which create and inform the theatrical event” (in Bennett’s words “outer frame”).\textsuperscript{144} However, more specifically from my research, we can see that the inner frame and the outer frame do not exist separately and confront each other in a point; rather the outer frame transforms the inner frame by evaluating the latter based on the former’s sake.

\textsuperscript{141} Sunmo Yoo, \textit{On Korean American Playwrights} (Seoul: Shin-ah-sah, 2004), 175.
\textsuperscript{143} I would like to make sure that this does not say that Asian-American theatre scholars have the exactly same intention with Sung Rno when they reveal their positive feeling toward non-realism. I admit that I left a question to be answered: does the Asian-American theatre scholars’ positive attitude on non-realism reflect their hope that the Asian-American theatre practitioners survive, while attracting more diverse audiences instead of talking only to a (relatively) small fraction of Asian-Americans?
Then, when the theatre critics and scholars reveal their concerns from the outer frame of theatre and when their preference to the non-realism is its incarnation of those concerns, what can we say about the relationship between history plays and historical studies? That is, would my argument – that theatre audiences’ aesthetic expectations and their consumption of theatrical forms make history plays depart from historical studies and that the extra-narrative elements deconstruct groupings of people in the historical narratives and reorganize groupings of people in theatre receptions – be an eternal truth transpired by a certain specialty of the genre of theatre or a contemporary phenomenon being constructed recently? In this point, I would like to make sure that my argument is more like the latter: a report on the current phenomena. That is, I argue that the theatrical styles, not the theatrical excellence, would not be essential all the time in evaluating historical plays. The de-essentialization of the departure of the history plays allows me to ask questions for a change: would we not need to acknowledge the necessity of the historical narrative written for a small group of audience? Would we not lose some valuable narratives on the way towards blurring the distinctiveness of the societies that have divided based on languages? What would the survival pertained this way bring us even when considering broadening the theatre market as indispensable (beyond necessary) for survival in the capitalistic economic systems, especially in this globalization era?

145 Though Susan Bennett diagnoses that researching theatre audiences has been mainly conducted “outside the scholarly domain,” i.e., the theatre themselves and other cultural agencies, my research reveals that scholastic works made “in the scholarly domain” have influenced audiences’ receptions of an individual play and a collective aesthetics in a form of seemingly pure aesthetic evaluations. See: Susan Bennett, “Theatre Audiences, Redux,” Theatre Survey 47.2 (November 2006): 225-230, at 226.
Conclusion

I argued that languages and theatrical forms as media prescribe to consumers that the narratives and the theatrical pieces meet. As the languages lead the authors to write differently by designating their potential readership, the theatrical forms decide with whom the theatrical pieces can communicate. More specifically, a certain theatrical form like non-reality allows the theatre practitioners to approach to the audiences who originally don’t share cultural backgrounds with the playwrights. This helps us to understand Yi Sang’s success in both Korea and America. However, the reality of an enlarged market as a unified social embrace of audiences that non-realism allows remains a question. The reason that non-realism is believed to have a potential to make its market larger than the language of scripts allows is that non-realism makes less distinction of the narratives of the theatrical pieces, which limit the audiences to the specific linguistic worlds. Then, does the style of non-realism really blur the narratives? Don’t the theatrical pieces having non-realism have a certain narrative to grasp?

Let’s go back to the narrative of Yi Sang. I certainly use “narrative” with an intention; I believe that the Yi Sang’s style of the non-realism cannot entirely get rid of the narrative that its playscript has. For an example, Blue in Scene 2 says that his name is Yi Sang but this is “open to interpretation”: he can be a character of Yi Sang or a character of Yi Sang’s art-works. After that, Blue informs the audiences of Yi Sang’s biographical information; “I spent my entire life as a Korean living under Japanese rule – actually, I was born in 1910” (Yi Sang, 2). Even though he says he can be “non Yi Sang,” that is, though the playwright deconstructs the real to something unclear, it is hard for the audience to clearly cut a strong relationship between the character Blue and the real person Yi Sang. In other words, the deconstruction doesn’t entirely dispose of the narrative existed.

Green, the female character on whom I focused while analyzing the script, also looks to keep her characteristic of a femme fatale, even when acknowledging that the staging deconstructs her in a large degree. The text-based meaning would be modified through the staging; as I described, if Green is carved in the audiences’ eyes when she takes care of the spiritless Blue, she would not be seen as a toxic woman. However, this short moment can’t vindicate her from what she has done in the plot of the play. I analyzed her role in the play with
how she steals from Blue chances to absorb true water – which is the metaphor of a chance to become new – and brings to him chances to be absorbed in fake water – which brings him to dangers of death. In fact, this is not irrelevant to the play’s main plot. The blocked desire for the true water is the spine of the play. Not only is it that Green’s blocking the water is repeated in the play as I mentioned, but also all of the vignettes of the play are hatched inside of the conflicts about the true water; the play starts with arguing about water and this scene is repeated one more time in the penultimate scene of the play. Thus, no matter how the theatrical aesthetic rescues her from being a negative figure from time to time, it can’t entirely change her role, which is tightly entangled with the play’s main plot. After all, whether the play is praised with its style, the narrative remains and is consumed by the audience.

When the narrative of Yi Sang is circulated under the protection of its highly-evaluated style, the narrative of Joyful becomes retreating. Though the two are different stories reflecting different perspectives on the history, one of them (Joyful) becomes evaluated as inappropriate in the theatre. One might say if Joyful is translated into other languages like English, the two stories would have a fair chance to meet the audience. Or, if the theatrical style is problematic, one might suggest creating a new piece with Joyful’s narrative in the non-realistic style. However, Joyful is a narrative written with concerns on the present Korea and its realistic style is adopted for serving this goal; Joyful’s language of Korean and its theatrical form of realism are properly adopted for its potential audiences: the Koreans. Therefore, changing its language and form is not a way to fulfill its original intention. The problem is not that Joyful cannot be performed outside of Korean societies but that it is not widely circulated in Korea. As Joyful’s case implies, if following the scholars who show their preference to non-realism for the broadening the market, a narrative written for and staged for small groups of people like Koreans cannot survive; though the broadening the market is argued to be concerned for the survival of the narrative’s society, at least economically.

Then, can we say that the theatrical form of non-realism enables an embrace of all societal members and organize the big market, i.e., the global market or the main stream of American theatre? Would it not make narratives of, from, and for small groups of people diminished? That is, though the theatre scholarship around non-realism appears constructive of an enlarged market

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146 In the personal interview with me (July 2008), Ki-woong Sung says he doesn’t expect that he can have another chance to stage Joyful; he has received lukewarm receptions.
for theatre practitioners, it functions as a deconstructive of various narratives, some of which might not intend entering the big market. As I clarify in Chapter I by saying that both of Korean and English written historical studies are not incorrect in terms of fidelity to historical facts, I do not argue that the theatrical forms themselves have any innate problems; rather, the circulation process of what is chosen, and how it is perceived, and how it becomes “the fact” is a problem. This is because the “survival,” which appears as all human beings’ ultimate goal, seems to end up bringing a big loss; I do not believe the survival without diverse memoirs of the past could bring us a genuine future; especially without history narratives to explain the present, we cannot help constructing a vain future having no way to explain its present.
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Appendix: Translation of *Our Joyful Young Days* from Korean to English

*Our Joyful Young Days*

Playwright & Director: Ki-woong Sung  
Dramaturg: Hwajin Lee  
Translation: Youngji Jeon  
Translation Supervision: Howard Blanning

"Lies and poems are art.  
As Plato understood, they are the art connected to each other."  
– Oscar Wilde

"To a human,  
having no secret is as poor and empty as having no money."  
- Yi Sang

Cast:  


Jeong, Intaek, the classmate of Park, Taewon at primary school and at Kyeongsung First High School. Born in Seoul, 1909. Now a reporter of Maeil Sinbo (a newspaper company). Prior to high school, his name was Taeyang (meaning "sun").

Kwon, Younghee, a Café-bar waitress. Born in Chungju, 1913. She is called "Yaeiko"(a Japanese name) in the café.

A waitress of a tea café in the roof garden of the Mizicoshi Department store.

Sooyoung, who works at the café Jaebi.  
Sukyi, an errand girl of Maeil Sinbo.

**Time and Space:**  
Sohwa the Tenth (Japanese dating of 1935), from January 2nd to December 25th.  
Roofs of several buildings in Kyengsung (the old name of Seoul).

* This play is based on the real story of four real people but is fictionalized; their lives in the play are different from their real ones.
Scene 1.

January 2nd Wednesday 3:20 p.m.
Tea café in the roof garden of Mizicoshi Department store in Bonjung Dong.

Gubo| Yi Sang| Waitress.

Gubo enjoys coffee alone at the tea café in the roof garden of the Mizicoshi Department store. Gubo wears a double jacket and a necktie. There are a couple of books and a notebook that Gubo always takes with him, and a cigarette on the table. Gubo's cane and his coat are set on the empty chair next to him. Gubo reads Chosun-joongang Ilbo evening edition, looks through the window, and then jots down something. Yi Sang enters, carrying his favorite Japanese magazine, Serpang, under his arm. Yi Sang wears his worn-out western suit and his dirty white shoes. His hair and beard look like birds’ nests.

Yi Sang: ふん、ここにいたんだ。 (Hm, you were here.)
Gubo: あ、君か。 (Ah, hi there.)
Yi Sang: You don't look glad to see me.
Gubo: I don’t?

Pause

Yi Sang: May I sit here for a while?
Gubo: Whether I allow it or not, you’ll seat yourself, wouldn't you?
Yi Sang: ....Well then, I will for a while.

Yi Sang seats himself on the opposite side of Gubo.

Gubo: How did you know I’m here?
Yi Sang: I didn't intend to run in to you...
Gubo: You didn’t?
Yi Sang: I came here to be exposed to the breeze. Then I saw you over the kalass window.
Gubo: Hmm...
Yi Sang: (pause) Why are YOU here?
Gubo: What?
Yi Sang: What are you sitting here for?
Gubo: Well, it’s cold outside.
Yi Sang: .... Do you think so?

147 Serpang: The Japanese magazine on avant-garde literate. It dealt a lot with foreign trends of arts. It is said that Yi Sang loved of reading it.
148 Yi Sang is said to wear only one worn-out western suit all the times; though there are also some records that he wore corduroy jackets.
149 (Translator’s foot-note) When actors are supposed to speak in Japanese, I will put the Japanese line first and its English translations beside of the Japanese ones.
150 (Translation’s foot-note) Yi Sang uses Japanese pronunciation of English word “glass.”
Gubo: Kyengsung's winter is too cold.\textsuperscript{151}
Yi Sang: You say that all the time.
Gubo: So, did you come up to see the snowy scenery of grand Kyengsung?
Yi Sang: Grand Kyengsung? No, what's there to see in this city?
Gubo: I felt quite lively since this auspicious snow started falling down from the early morning of New Year's Day.
Yi Sang: Did you?
Gubo: Speaking of which, isn't it the first time to see each other after the year changed?
Yi Sang: Probably.
Gubo: Ah. then... (adjusting his dress and with a humble bow). 新年、明けましておめでとうございます. (a Japanese new year greeting).
Yi Sang: ...... Bonne année. (French new year greeting).
Gubo: Yes. “happy new year” (in English) to you, too.

After finishing their greetings, the two look at each blankly and smack their lips. Yi Sang, trying to find a cigarette in his pocket, picks one from Gubo's cigarette case and starts to smoke. He inhales the smoke of the cigarette and coughs. He snuffles and then spits in an astray. After that, he picks a water glass in front of Gubo and drinks as if the water were his own. A waitress comes, bows, and puts a new water glass for Yi Sang.

Yi Sang: Ah, "Thank you" (in English).

The waitress goes back, after bowing again. Yi Sang drinks water from the new water glass and returns Gubo's glass to the front of Gubo. Gubo gives a glance to Yi Sang, and reads the newspaper again.

Yi Sang: Any interesting news?
Gubo: Interesting news?
Yi Sang: Chosun-Joongang Ilbo... You’ve became a devoted reader of the newspaper recently.
Gubo: What a devoted reader... Anyway, the newspaper is quite noisy since New Year’s Day.
Yi Sang: Noisy?
Gubo: Yes. The ominous Chinese situation, a rumor that Italy will attack Ethiopia, maybe signs of a Japan-USA war....With these situations, it doesn't seem an exaggeration to think World War Two is coming.
Yi Sang: ·υυυ, ῶ重工… (Hm... whatever.)
Gubo: (pause) What?
Yi Sang: Hey, Gubo. You should know journalists reported the same repertoire last year, and the year before the last year.
Gubo: Hm... Did they?
Yi Sang: I would like to suggest you this kind of NEWs, rather than to keep focusing on that kind of OLDs, selling the old news mixed with a few new scandals.

\textsuperscript{151} In the Gubo Park, Taewon’s novel, \textit{One Day of Novelist Gubo}, its protagonist Gubo says “Kyeongsung's winter is too cold.”
Gubo: What? Did Serpang’s New Year edition already cross Genkainada? (Genkainada)?

Gubo looks at the cover of Serpang.

Gubo: This is the last edition.
Yi Sang: What's the matter with the last edition? It is full of "messages" (in English) from the future.
Gubo: "Messages" (in English) from the future? Do you mean these poems which sounds like aliens' sleep-talking?
Yi Sang: Aliens' sleep-talking? Huh! You, the most promising novelist in Chosun, how can you say that old-fashioned crap about Serpang?
Gubo: "Messages" (in English) from the future? Do you mean these poems which sounds like aliens' sleep-talking?
Yi Sang: Yeah, but do you mean reality dries up with the newspaper ink?
Gubo: When did I say that? I just try to see how the world goes, in my own humble way.
Yi Sang: That's your very problem: your fixation on writing about the languid life.
Gubo: Languid life?
Yi Sang: Even detached far away from it like this.
Gubo: O.K. Is that the reason why you always fling yourself into the middle of others’ lives and then become their gossip?
Yi Sang: Their gossip? Me?
Gubo: Don't you know?
Yi Sang: Well, that seems better than to go around listening to gossip, like some old grandpa?
Gubo: Huh!... you---Let's stop babbling right from the beginning of the new year. (pointing at menu) How about drinking something?
Yi Sang: .... Hm... Shall we?
Gubo: Since it is cold out, let's have a hot コーヒー (coffee) to warm our bodies.
Yi Sang: (pause) それじゃまあ、新年のお祝いに、一杯おごってもらうおうか。
(O.K. Then, how about buying a coffee in commemoration of the new year?)
Gubo: Huh... you, you seem to keep your begging habits for the new year, too.

Gubo raises his hands and calls the waitress.

Gubo: Ah, do you want to read this? (showing the page of newspaper, having his article) They published my article. This is for poor literary men like you.
Yi Sang: (showing indifference to the newspaper) Now I see that you’re living in clover here with the fee for that article, which was just begging openly.
Gubo: Begging openly?

152 玄海灘 (Genkainada): a sea passage between South Korea and Japan, now called as Korea Strait in English.
Yi Sang: "We don't have a life. Society, give us life, we literary souls in Chosun." If that isn't begging, I don't know what is. Instead of enticing more youthful brains to come our way, you let them know that we really are starving.

Pause.

Gubo: You already read that?
Yi Sang: What?
Gubo: My article published here.
Yi Sang: Hmhm.
Gubo: Then, why did you pretend not to?
Yi Sang: When?
Gubo: Forget it. I know it’s because you envy me.
Yi Sang: Envy you?
Gubo: Don't you?
Yi Sang: I just said you give me great anxiety.
Gubo: Anxiety?
Yi Sang: Yes. If you keep selling your articles with those kinds of indecent writings, when will you write a real art work?
Gubo: Hu, now, are you criticizing me saying there’s been nothing readable in my novels published so far?
Yi Sang: あー、まぁまぁ。 (Ah, calm down.)

The waitress approaches and gives a bow.

Waitress: 何をお召し上がりになりますか。 (What would you like to have?)
Gubo: 何にする？ (What do you want to have?)
Yi Sang: まぁ・・・普通に、コーヒーで結構だよ。 (Hm... Coffee is fine.)
Gubo: コーヒー、一つお願いね。 (A cup of coffee, please.)
Waitress: はい。 (O.K.)
Gubo: お水も一杯ね。新しいコップで。 (And one more water, in a new cup, please.)
Waitress: はい、申し訳ありません。 (O.K. I will take your order.)

The waitress is going to go back, after bowing.

Yi Sang: あ、ね、ね。えっと・・・氷、あるかな。 (Hey, there, do you happen to have ice?)
Waitress: はい? (Pardon?)
Yi Sang: 氷、ない? (Don't you have ice?)
Waitress: 氷・々・ですか。 (Ice?)
Yi Sang: つまり、アイスコーヒーが飲みたいだよ。 (Yes, I would like to have ice coffee.)
Waitress: 氷は・・・ありませんが。 (I am sorry but I don't have ice.)
Gubo: あたりまえだろ。氷なんて、夏じゃないんだから。(Of course they don't. Where would they find ice in January?)
Yi Sang: うん、やっぱり・・・じゃあ、しょうがないな。(Hm... after all... there is no way.)
Gubo: まぁ、普通にホットでお願いね。(Just a hot one, please.)
Waitress: はい、畏まりました。(O.K.)

The waitress goes back after a bow.
Pause.

Gubo: Why did you expect them to have ice-coffee in the middle of winter, even if it is the roof garden of Mizicoshi?
Yi Sang: Hm, because my inside is a little hot.
Gubo: Your insides are hot?
Yi Sang: やっぱり、偽物だから、しょうがないんだな。(After all, the imitation is the imitation.)
Gubo: 偽物? (The imitation?)
Yi Sang: This place is, after all, supposed to be the imitation of Tokyo Mizicoshi.
Gubo: Even in Tokyo they don’t have ice-coffee in January.
Yi Sang: You don’t think so?
Gubo: Of course not.
Yi Sang: Did you often visit there?
Gubo: Yes, I did.
Yi Sang: Even the tea café, like this, on the roof over there?
Gubo: (pause) No, I couldn’t visit the tea café over there because I didn't have enough money over there.

Yi Sang: How needy.
Gubo: Yes, I was. But I was a little better off than you at present.
Yi Sang: I am having coffee here, now, aren’t I?
Gubo: Isn't that because you have a generous friend like me?
Yi Sang: .... Hm.
Gubo: Ice coffee in the middle of the winter; you’ll have to wait for the next century’s Mizicoshi for whatever like that.

Gubo laughs off.
Yi Sang smacks his lips or pulls out the hairs of the nostril.

Gubo: Anyway, did you meet her?
Yi Sang: Who?
Yi Sang: Keumhong?
Gubo: Yes. Were you able to do what you said you would do?

Pause.
Yi Sang: Well... as expected, she had another man.
Gubo: Did she? What kind of man this time? Like the gold miner again?
Yi Sang: No.
Gubo: Then, just a pimp?
Yi Sang: Noooo.
Gubo: Then, what?
Yi Sang: He was wearing a student's outfit.
Gubo: Student's clothes? A mother's-milky smelling student? Or a rake?
Yi Sang: Hm... I heard he's a sportsman.
Gubo: A sportsman? What kinds of sports?
Yi Sang: Boxing.
Gubo: Boxing?
Yi Sang: Yes.
Gubo: .... So, did you step back obediently?
Yi Sang: What on earth can I do? ... A welter weight boxer.
Gubo: Huh... that's a very pitiful "situation" (in English).

Pause.

Gubo: How about forgetting her this time? Isn't it a little strange for an avant-garde poet heading towards the 21st century to have a 19th century style kisaeng for a wife? Anyway, didn't you say you have a string of modern girls waiting in line for you? Girls who would jump at the chance to have you untie their coat strings? Ah, no: since they're modern girls, you'd be unbuttoning instead. Why don't you tempt yourself with any of them?
Yi Sang: Any of them?
Gubo: Whoever.
Yi Sang: There are principles in luring a woman. It’s not right to choose one randomly.
Gubo: ... You're right.

The waitress brings a coffee.

Waitress: お待ち遠さまでした。(You wait for a long time.)
Yi Sang: Ah... no, it’s fast.

The waitress puts down the coffee.

Yi Sang: ええっと・・・君は見覚えがない顔だな。(I think I haven't seen you before.)
Waitress: は？ (Pardon?)
Yi Sang: ふんん、朝鮮の子？(Are you a Chosun girl?)
Waitress: あ、はい。(Ah, yes.)
Yi Sang: やっぱり。(As I expected.)
Waitress: は？ (Pardon?)
Yi Sang: いや、君、日本語、うまくいね。(Never mind. You speak Japanese very well.)
Waitress: あ、ありがとうございます。(Ah, thank you so much.)
Yi Sang: いくつかな? (How old are you?)
Waitress: は? それは・・・? (Ah... that's a little...)
Yi Sang: いや・・・なんかちょっとね、僕のいとこに似ているからさ。(No, you just look like my cousin.)
Waitress: はぁ・・・(Yes...)
Gubo: The water, please.
Waitress: Yes? あ、はい。(Ah, here you are.)

The waitress puts down the water.

Yi Sang: あのさ・・・(By the way...)
Gubo: It's O.K. to go. “Thank you” (in English).
Waitress: あ、はい。(Ah, yes.)

The waitress goes after a bow. Gubo pushes back the water glass from which Yi Sang drank before and drinks water in a new glass.
Pause.

Yi Sang: Anyway, somebody has been asking about you.
Gubo: Hm... who?
Yi Sang: That girl... the one who goes back to her hometown because she doesn't like Kyengsung any more... is her name Yaeiko?
Gubo: Yaeiko? You mean Miss Kwon? The girl who works at the Nakwon café-bar in Jongrno 2?
Yi Sang: Ah, Yaeiko is originally Miss Kwon?
Gubo: Miss Kwon is asking about me?
Yi Sang: Yes.
Gubo: You’ve been keeping in touch with Miss Kwon?
Yi Sang: Yes, she sent me a New Year post card.
Gubo: Did she?
Yi Sang: Don't feel sorry. She said that she would have sent you one as well, but she thought it might harm your happy new marriage. So instead she asked me about you.
Gubo: You’re married, too.
Yi Sang: My case is different. I didn't get married legally. And I have another address at a café.
Gubo: That’s convenient. Really convenient; even though you tried to show Keumhong what a good spouse you are.
Yi Sang: I don’t find any of this convenient.
Gubo: Haven't you been sending wild geese to Miss Kwon?153
Yi Sang: To Yaeiko?
Gubo: Isn't it your old habit to have two women at once, to ensure your love life?

153 “Sending wild geese” means “sending love letters” or “trying to seduce a woman.”
Yi Sang: What! What would I be doing bringing a country girl addicted to fresh air?
Gubo: Do you think so?

*Pause.*

Yi Sang: I don't like Yaeiko. Am I crazy enough to make my own tomb by luring a Kollontai girl?¹⁵⁴
Gubo: A Kollontai girl? Miss Kwon?
Yi Sang: Didn't you know?
Gubo: No, That's news to me.
Yi Sang: I heard both her working at the café and going back to her hometown are a part of the Kollontai organization movement.
Gubo: *(pause)* What?
Yi Sang: Besides, I don't want to be the bottom part of her splendid men-traveling. Of course, I don't.
Gubo: Splendid men-traveling?
Yi Sang: Yes. People say that she crosses two or three men even in a night.
Gubo: What!?

*Pause.*

Gubo: Don't be silly. You shouldn’t talk about a noble and genteel girl like Miss Kwon so unthinkingly.
Yi Sang: That’s an ignorant saying. One can’t know about the essence of a woman before experiencing her whole body.
Gubo: Huh...

*Yi Sang, while sipping a coffee.*

Yi Sang: Anyway, can you ask for more of it?
Gubo: What?
Yi Sang: That... hm... medicine to make me sleep.
Gubo: Why, does your virulent disease come back?
Yi Sang: Yes, it seems so.
Gubo: You shouldn’t rely on soporifics. You’ll develop a resistance.
Yi Sang: I already have. So bring a lot.
Gubo: I can't do that anymore.
Yi Sang: The son of a great pharmacy owner is so uncharitable?
Gubo: Thanks to you, my family thinks I am still neurasthenic and insomniac.
Yi Sang: Can't you sacrifice yourself that much for a friend?
Gubo: So, does the medicine work?
Yi Sang: What did I just say? It doesn't work anymore.
Gubo: Really?
Yi Sang: Anyhow, please bring not only the pills but also the bottle.

¹⁵⁴ Kollontai girl: a girl following Aleksandra Mikhailovna Kollontai, a Russian Marxist activist who was famous for a liberal free love.
Gubo: What for?
Yi Sang: It is a little confusing because I take so many kinds of medicines. What happens if I take some thinking they’re just vitamins?
Gubo: ... You’re right.

_Yi Sang drinks a gulp of coffee._

Yi Sang: うっ、まずい。(Mm; it is tasteless.)

_Long pause._

Gubo: Hey, Yi Sang.
Yi Sang: What?
Gubo: Let's become lucid and transparent from this year on. Like the pure white snow falling on this city.

_Pause._

Yi Sang: The pure white snow?
Gubo: Yes.
Yi Sang: It’s already dirty.
Gubo: Really?

_Pause._

Yi Sang: In this city, there isn’t a trickier thing than the snow. Though it looks perfect when it falls down, it reveals its dark inside after melting. On that “pavement” (in English).
Gubo: ... Well, so it is.

_Pause._

Gubo: …Then, we shouldn’t be like city snow, right?
Yi Sang: .... Of course, not.

_Pause._

_Yi Sang drinks one more gulp of coffee._

Yi Sang: まずい。(It tastes bad.)

_Gubo gives a short glance to Yi Sang, and then turns his sight to the wind again._
Scene 2.

March 8th Friday 11:45 a.m.
Jang-Gok-Chun-Jung Kyeongsung Prefectural Library roof.

Gubo | Kwon, Younghee.

_Gubo and Younghee have a conversation on the roof of the Kyengsung Prefectural Library. The two meet each other accidentally in a reading room of the library and then go up to the roof together. Each has a bottle of lemonade and drinks it from time to time._

Gubo: I’d heard you’d come back to Kyengsung, but I didn't expect to see you here. How long has it been?
Younghee: Five months... less than six months.

_Pause._

Gubo: Anyway, what did you do while you were in your hometown?
Younghee: Nothing special. I just was there.
Gubo: You must have had some activities.
Younghee: What activities can a village girl do...
Gubo: Village? Isn't Chungjoo a city?
Younghee: It is definitely a village, compared with Kyengsung. Kyengsungers like you wouldn’t know.

_Pause._

Younghee: Actually, I saw you before.
Gubo: Uh, did you?
Younghee: Yes, from far away.
Gubo: Why didn't you present yourself?
Younghee: I couldn't.
Gubo: Why?
Younghee: You were with your wife.
Gubo: And?
Younghee: It matters, anyhow.
Gubo: Ah, does it?

_Pause._

Gubo: Anyway, it seems to be the same: Miss Kwon's preference for books. Given that you came to the library in the morning.
Younghee: Your preference for the roof seems to be the same.
Gubo: Ah, does it?
Younghee: Yes, you said instantly, "let's go to the roof."
Gubo: That's because...
Gubo laughs.
Pause.

Younghee: Isn’t the weather so good?
Gubo: Yes.
Younghee: Now it clearly begins to be spring.
Gubo: Yes, though it is still cold.
Younghee: Do you feel cold?
Gubo: No. No. But Kyengsung’s spring comes too late.

Pause.

Younghee: So; what happened? You used to write your articles in the library near Jongrno before.
Gubo: Yes, I did.
Younghee: Then?
Gubo: Then... This place gets new books from inland much quicker, so I can have more for the reference.
Younghee: In that case isn't the government-general library the best?
Gubo: Yes, it is... but the problem is that too many acquaintances are there.
Younghee: Hora (Aigo), in the meantime, your avoidance “list” (in English) becomes longer, right?
Gubo: How do you know that?
Younghee: あらら、冗談ですね。(Oh, it was just a kidding.)

Younghee laughs.
Pause.

Younghee: You just started to publish a full-length novel serially in Chosun-Joongang Ilbo, haven't you?
Gubo: Yes, I have.
Younghee: Youth Song. You made a good title. It seems like your style.
Gubo: Ah, do you think so?
Younghee: Yes.
Gubo: Have you read the novel?
Younghee: Ah...
Gubo: I need to take some “advice” (in English) this time, too... You always have the most valuable criticism to my novels.
Younghee: I didn't read it yet. My café doesn't subscribe to the Chosun-Joongang Ilbo.
Gubo: Ah, really?

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155 Inland: Japanese mainland.
156 This is a fictional setting, apparently where the Chosun government-general library received new books from Japan more quickly than other libraries, and had more visitors.
Younghee: Still, it is so good that you became such a famous novelist.
Gubo: No way. What famous novelist...
Younghee: Everyone knows you. Even waitresses at my café want to see your, unique appearance.
Gubo: No... More people don't recognize me than do.

Gubo laughs.

Pause.

Younghee: The day before yesterday, your friends visited my café.
Gubo: My friends?
Younghee: I saw everyone except you.
Gubo: Ah, I’m focusing on my novels nowadays....
Younghee: あらら、ずいぶん、真面目になったのね。(Ah, you become quite sound.)
Gubo: いやぁ、そんな訳じゃないけど。(No... I don't think I am...)
Younghee: じゃあ、結婚なさって、愛妻家になりました？ (Then, have you become a devoted husband after your marriage?)
Gubo: Pardon?

Younghee laughs.

Pause.

Younghee: Who visited your café the day before yesterday?
Gubo: Um. Mr. Cho, Mr. Gu, and...
Younghee: Ah, Mr. Cho and Painter Gu?
Gubo: Yes. Mr. Yi brought them...
Gubo: Mr. Yi? Ah, Yi Sang?
Younghee: Speaking of which, stories about you often come up there.
Gubo: What, did they backbite about me?
Younghee: No... They said you had quite a hard time nowadays.
Gubo: Do I?
Younghee: Yes. I heard there were many who made a lot of noise about your novel. Am I wrong?
Gubo: Ah... I thought you were talking about another thing.
Younghee: The literary world says your book is a void, having no thoughts or ideologies. And readers complain that it doesn't have any interest or stimulus... I heard you get anonymous notes telling you to quit. Even worse, you're troubled with groundless criticism.
Gubo: Criticism?
Younghee: Yes.
Gubo: That I am flattering Sanghuh? By flattering, I get to have more and more space in Chosun-Joongang Ilbo? Huh... My friends were busy in degrading me while pretending to worry about me.

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157 Sanghuh Yi, Taejun (1904-?): Novelist. The literary section director of Chosun-Joongang Ilbo at that
Younghee: No, no. Mr. Jeong really felt sorry.
Gubo: Who?
Younghee: Mr. Jeong, who works at Maeil Sinbo.
Gubo: Ah, you mean Taeyang.
Younghee: No. On his name card...
Gubo: Intaek is Taeyang. He was my classmate in primary school...
Younghee: Yes. I heard he and you were also through a lot together when you studied in Tokyo.
Gubo: Yes, we were.
Younghee: He seems quite sentimental and emotional.
Gubo: Yes. He is tenderhearted.
Younghee: He thinks much of you.
Gubo: He courts me more or less. Anyway, was it your first time to see Taeyang?
Younghee: Yes. I heard he is also a novelist.
Gubo: Hm.. Since one of his novels was chosen in Joong-yaе Ilbo a couple of years ago.
Younghee: Yes...
Gubo: It got second prize.
Younghee: And, he graduated from Kyengsung empire university.
Gubo: He entered, but gave up in the middle.
Younghee: Why?
Gubo: That's why people call him a fool.
Younghee: I heard that his Japanese is not bad.
Gubo: Really excellent. He was in the mainland for 3 or 4 years. Ah, even though he’s been working at a little embarrassing newspaper company for a living, he used to be a youth devoting himself to that ideology.
Younghee: That ideology?
Gubo: Yes. His debut work was about that...
Younghee: Do you mean socialist ideology?
Gubo: Yes. So, the two of you can be in sync with each other.
Younghee: Why?
Gubo: Doesn't Miss Kwon have a preference to Russian thoughts? You like Gorki.
Younghee: Are they the same? I only like to read the literature.
Gubo: Ah, are they a little different?

Pause.

Gubo: Did you happen to have a friendly feeling toward Taeyang?
Younghee: What?
Gubo: Then, did Taeyang show the feeling toward you? He is likely to do, considering his habit.
Younghee: You're puckish.
Gubo: Huh, huh, do I bark up the wrong tree?
Gubo laughs.

Younghee: Anyway, you must be quite tired with that kind of jealousy.
Gubo: Ah, what can we do when the stage of art in Chosun is so low? That’s why lately I’m isolated here in an idle space and focus on writing.
Younghee: Oh my! Then, you are having a quite similar trouble with what Mr. Yi had last year, right?
Gubo: With Yi Sang's case?
Younghee: Yes.
Gubo: Yi Sang and I... are a little different. I mean the case.
Younghee: How?
Gubo: Yi Sang's Crow's-Eye View series are... well... what most normal people can’t decipher. So, when they were published, the tumultuous response was inevitable. But in my Youth Song’s case, my intention was to attract the public's taste with just a step, no, just a half step farther from the normal. With a language of this city, which everyone can understand. So, it is quite different.
Younghee: Still, the situation that this old-fashioned country harasses writers is the same. Don't you think so?
Gubo: But.... Let's stop here. I don't feel it appropriate to preach my thinking about literature to Miss Kwon whom I haven’t seen for so long. Just one thing to add... the reason why Yi Sang's poet was not welcomed in the literature world is not just because it was too avant-garde.
Younghee: Then, why?
Gubo: It was suspected to be an “imitation” (in English) of somebody in the mainland.... I don’t want to say more today since I am in the position where I should protect my friend.

Younghee slightly smiles.

Younghee: You seem the same.
Gubo: What do you mean?
Younghee: I mean you and Mr. Yi fight each other.
Gubo: Fight? Who?
Younghee: Quite cute. Both of you...
Gubo: Huh...

Pause.

Younghee: Well...
Gubo: Yes?
Younghee: If your novel has a lack of something, I think it wouldn’t be either thoughts or interests.
Gubo: .... Then what?
Younghee: It might be yourself.
Gubo: Myself?
Younghee: Honestly, yourself.
Gubo: No way. Look at *One Day of Novelist Gubo*, for example, published last summer....

Younghee: Yes.

Gubo: Didn’t I boldly expose one day of my life? Even in the title, I exposed my nickname. Its concept was what nobody had tried before in the Chosun literature world.

Younghee: But you, even when you describe yourself, um.... you try to keep too much of an objective coldness.

Gubo: That's because art is objective. Like somebody's poem; if it is just for self-satisfaction, it would be troublesome. Sure, it is. The critical point of novels especially is to have a certain kind of objective distance. Without that kind of attitude, anyone's diary can be a novel. Ah, if I take an example of Anton Chekhov, he was a surgeon as is well-known. So, didn't he coolly and keenly observe human beings as he did his surgery with a scalpel?

Younghee: But you never let readers hear a particular voice that the readers really want to hear.

Gubo: Voice?

Younghee: Yes.

Gubo: What kind of voice?

Younghee: Well.. That's the same with how you are, as a real person.

Gubo: Me as a real person?

Younghee: Yes. Though you are a quite diligent and genteel person, it is often difficult to figure out your real intention. Like an onion. *(pause)* So, I was quite surprised by your wedding news. How a deliberate person like you decided to get married all of sudden. What your partner is like... I wondered.

Pause.

Younghee: Just now, I was reading Thomas Mann.

Gubo: Ah, Thomas Mann?

Younghee: I heard he said, "A novelist is a person who can't help telling his beating secrets." If it is so, what would be your secrets in your novels?

Gubo: My secrets?

Pause.

Younghee: I'd better ask for my café to prescribe Chosun-Joongang Ilbo.

Gubo: What?

Younghee: In order to read your *Youth Song* everyday night.

Gubo: Ah...

Younghee: 楽しさですわ。(I am quite excited.)

Gubo: Ah, really?

Younghee: I will explore your secret inside of your novel.

Gubo: Yes?

Pause.

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Younghee: I think I'd better leave now.
Gubo: Ah, do you think so?
Younghee: The sky clock of Kyengsung Prefectural office is going to strike 12 O'clock soon. Before long, the afternoon siren will ring, right?
Gubo: Ah... It is already...
Younghee: Oh, did I interrupt your writing too much?
Gubo: No, no, it's O.K. My head wasn't working just now anyway...
Younghee: Then, that's good.

Pause.

Younghee: Will you stay here more?
Gubo: Well, then, will I?
Younghee: 先生は屋上が本当に好きなんですね。(You seem to love the roof.)
Gubo: Ah, yes...
Younghee: Then, I will excuse myself first.
Gubo: Yes, of course.

Pause.

Gubo: Where is the café where you recently started to work?
Younghee: If you come to the back side street of the Insadong Chosun cinema, you can see the sign of "SSRU" with the Chinese character 鶴.
Gubo: “Okay” (in English).
Younghee: Will you visit some time?
Gubo: Sure. I will stop by soon.
Younghee: When you come, please tell us about your new family.
Gubo: What would be the story to tell...
Younghee: No, no. I have a lot to ask.
Gubo: Hm.... Actually, I need to collect data about new customs of cafés. I will ask you one thing after another.
Younghee: Ah, yes.
Gubo: I was thinking to ask to have a lunch together, but you seem to have an appointment.
Younghee: Yes.
Gubo: Then, a “lunch” (in English) “Rendez-vous” (in French) with somebody?
Younghee: ... Yes.
Gubo: Then, with whom? With somebody whom I would know? Huh, huh.
Younghee: Yes.
Gubo: Who is the one?
Younghee: Mr. Yi.
Gubo: Mr. Yi? Yi Sang?
Younghee: Yes.
Gubo: I thought he was working as a model at Painter Gu's atelier now.
Younghee: Yes. It's really pitiful.
Gubo: Why?
Younghee: That he should stay stagnant for a whole day... How can he withstand it with his character?
Gubo: So, will you buy lunch for Sang?
Younghee: Yes.
Gubo: Why?

Pause.

Gubo: So, will you have “Rendez-vous” (in French)? With Sang?
Younghee: Yes, probably.
Gubo: Why?
Younghee: .... Shouldn't I do so?
Gubo: No... You can.... but what on the earth is the reason?

_The midday siren rings long._
_The sky clock of Kyeng-sung Prefectural office indicates 12 O'clock._
_The street under the building is busy with electric cars and cars._
Scene 3.

May 18th Saturday 10:30 p.m.
Jongro 1 (Chungjin Dong), The roof of the Chosun Mining Scriber's office building (two-story building) where the café Jaebi is.

Gubo | Jeong, Intaek | Sooyoung

_Druken Gubo and Intaek are on the roof of the building where the café Jaebi is located. There is a full moon in the sky._

Gubo: What? Can't I write the novel interesting enough to make everyone roll on the floor? Shouldn't it be at least as interesting as a gossip column in the social page? What on earth is the interest! Look with wide eyes! Listen with strained ears. If you say it is flat, or insipid, if you say that so easily, it is embarrassing... About something which has just started, if you say that continuously, what can I do...

Pause.

Gubo: Yes. I went out without looking back once after tearing my papers in two in front of the editors of the literary section of Chosun-Joongang Ilbo. I kicked their door. Or did I bang on the door? So, my Youth Song becomes a baby who can’t get out of the womb. What did I do? How come I did it? Three bags full, sir; I’ll shut up. Chosun has no taste: no taste good enough to listen to my song in praise of youth.

Pause.

Gubo: When I came out to Jongro from the newspaper company, a marathon match has just started. There I saw Son, Ki-jung at last. You, have you ever seen Mr. Son? Today I saw him for the first time. He was leading the way with an imposing attitude. He broke a world record, didn't he? Two hours twenty-four minutes twenty eight seconds? It is really awesome, isn't it? How can a human run 42.195km just in a little more than two hours? No, before that, it is a wonder to keep running that much distance in any amount of time without a stopping. Yes, it is a real wonder. But I heard the record doesn’t count as a new would record.... What a pity...

Pause.

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158 See Chosun Literature 4:3 (June 1935): 126. _Youth Song’s_ serial publications in the Chosun-Joongang Ilbo were dismissed due to readers’ complaints and stopped at the 18th of May. Following this, the director of the literary section of the Chosun-Joongang Ilbo (Sanghuh Taejun Lee) was fired with the reason that he gave Gubo a chance to publish his novels in serialization.
Gubo: There is nothing we can do. It was just our Chosun Marathon match. No matter how magnificent one becomes in this small world of Chosun, nothing happens, right?

Pause.

Gubo: But, who knows whether Mr. Son will win a gold medal in the Berlin Olympics next year. The first in Chosun is the best in the world. If our literature becomes like that... Shit! Chosun-Joongang. Damn! Third grade newspaper!

Pause.

Gubo: Taeyang, let's go now. Sang doesn’t seem to be coming back here today. Where would he have gone out to again?

Pause.

Gubo: He’s probably chatting up a woman somewhere. Or he’s being chatted up by a woman somewhere. So, how can his café business go well? –And his employee is just as bad: where on earth did Sooyoung go? Locked up and gone home...or somewhere.

Pause.

Gubo: Hey, Taeyang. Let's go back home. It’s getting colder than colder.

Pause.

Intaek: Taewon.
Gubo: What?
Intaek: If you don't have anything more to say...
Gubo: What?
Intaek: I would like to ask you one thing.
Gubo: O.K. Go ahead.

Pause.

Intaek: Do you really know nothing?
Gubo: Of what?
Intaek: Younghee has already a date.
Gubo: Younghee? Ah, it is also about Miss Kwon.
Intaek: Yes, Kwon, Younghee.
Gubo: You are really pitiable. How many times do I have to tell you? I had no idea, at all.
Intaek: But you’ve been visiting there frequently these days.
Gubo: Visiting where? The café where Miss Kwon works? When! I haven’t been hanging out with anybody recently. Besides, I quit visiting those kinds of places. Don’t you know I was really busy? Busy in writing, damn the serial novel.

Intaek: But I heard you often stopped by there alone and had some “beer” (*in English*).

Gubo: Did I? Did I?

Intaek: Younghee said you came not long ago.

Gubo: Ah, that's because Miss Kwon was a devoted reader of my *Youth Song*. I listened to her opinion as a report: something like that. As I said, Miss Kwon and I feel more like a friendship among the same sex.

Intaek: So, you heard about her love affair at least once.

Gubo: I never heard about it. Why do you think I’d pry into her personal life?

*Pause.*

Intaek: Then, you really don’t have any idea?

Gubo: About what really don't I have any idea?

Intaek: Who she's been seeing?

Gubo: I don't know. How should I know that?

*Pause.*

Intaek: Do you want to know?

Gubo: No. Stop it. What do I need to know for?

Intaek: I hope you know.

Gubo: I don’t want to know. Period.

Intaek: Even when it is someone you know well?

Gubo: Whether it’s a man I know or a woman I know, I don’t care. It probably would be a man I know. Chosun is a small world.

Intaek: If I tell you, you'll be surprised.

Gubo: Surprised? By what? I experienced too many things recently, so I don't have the heart to be surprised anymore.

Intaek: Then, I will tell you.

Gubo: Don't tell me. I don't want to hear.

Intaek: I’m telling only you.

Gubo: Hey, why don't you keep it a secret? I don't want to follow this at all.

Intaek: Please listen to me! You spoke alone to me for more than an hour just a while ago. But you can't listen to only one word from me?

*Pause.*

Gubo: Ah... Who the hell is the guy?

Intaek: Mr. Yi.

Gubo: Mr. Yi? Yi Sang? (*pretending to be surprised*) Is it true? How... it’s really unbelievable.

Intaek: What did I say? I said you would be surprised.

Gubo: Yes. It is really surprising.
Intaek: Doesn’t it sound like a lie?
Gubo: Yes, indeed.

Pause.

Intaek: Taewon.
Gubo: What again?
Intaek: How did Younghee become attracted by Mr. Yi?
Gubo: That's what I was going to say.
Intaek: Why, of a lot of men...
Gubo: Didn't I steer you away from Miss Kwon? Didn't I say to give her up? She is not an ordinary type. I gave you that advice because I’d heard some things.
Intaek: I tried to give her up many times.
Gubo: Then, what?
Intaek: I tried; but at the same time I found such a strong mind.
Intaek: If you were her, would you go to concerts and the museum with a man you hate?
Gubo: Concerts and the museum? Just the two of you went there?
Intaek: Yes. Sometimes we went to Maruzen bookstore to buy books.\(^{159}\)
Gubo: Huh... You would be quite happy.
Intaek: ... Yes.

Pause.

Gubo: So, did Miss Kwon lead you on?
Intaek: No.
Gubo: Then.
Intaek: I led her on.
Gubo: Hah! I didn't know you had any talent in that field. Did Miss Kwon meekly accept your proposals?
Intaek: She sometimes refused and she sometimes accepted.
Gubo: In the latter case, she might have done so because you teased her too much...
Intaek: But she was very, tender when she was with me.

Pause.

Gubo: Taeyang, don't you think it’s just her professional manner?
Intaek: Professional manner?
Gubo: I mean to be fair and tender to everyone.... maybe it comes from her job.... professional attitude...
Intaek: No, I don't think so. She gave me really special treatment.
Gubo: What a fool. Do you think I haven't had such a special treatment?

Pause.

\(^{159}\) Maruzen: A bookstore located in Choong-Mu-Ro, selling various kinds of foreign books.
Intaek: What would be the purpose?
Gubo: Purpose? Whose purpose? Miss Kwon's?
Intaek: No, I mean Mr. Yi's.
Gubo: Ah, Sang?
Intaek: Just a couple of days ago, he forced me to seduce Younghee, or even get married with her.
Gubo: What?
Intaek: Yes. He said that Yaeiko likes a decent man like you or me...
Gubo: Why do I appear in this?
Intaek: Because you're already married, I am the right person to take care of Yaeiko, he said.
Gubo: What the hell... What did I say? 0.999 of what Sang says is a lie or just idle talk. So, we'd better be suspicious first. Though, I still end up being cheated all the time.

Pause.

Intaek: He’s challenging me to a battle, now.
Gubo: Battle?
Intaek: He intends to set up a certain game involving me.
Gubo: A certain game? What game?
Intaek: He wants to enjoy the winner's satisfaction. Without a loser, there can't be the winner. So, he puts me on the starting line while he is just before the finish.
Gubo: No way...
Intaek: If not, what else can it be? Yes, I joined in a competition where only the second prize is left for me.
Gubo: Huh...

Pause.

Intaek: Last night I went spying.
Gubo: Spying?
Intaek: Yes.
Gubo: On whom? Miss Kwon?
Intaek: No.
Gubo: Then, Sang?
Intaek: No.
Gubo: Then who were you spying on?
Intaek: Both of them.
Gubo: Both of them? Did they have a “Rendez-vous” (in French) last night, too?
Intaek: Yes. They took the trolley toward Chung-Ryeol-Ri.
Gubo: Chung-Ryeol-Ri? Huh, they went to the end.
Intaek: What?
Gubo: They went outside of Chung-Ryeol-Ri, didn't they? To have a romantic “rendezvous” (in French) in a room borrowed from a temple building... that is Sang's favorite “course” (in English).

Intaek: “course” (in English)?

Gubo: So, until where did you follow them?

Intaek: I couldn't follow them anymore.

Gubo: Why?

Intaek: Mr. Yi seemed to know from the first that I was there. When he took the electric car, he looked back over Younghee's shoulder.... and smiled at me.

Gubo: Huh...

Pause.

Intaek: Taewon?

Gubo: What?

Intaek: Why should men knock down one another? Even when it isn’t a boxing match.

Gubo: Well....

Intaek: In marathon competitions, prizes aren’t only given to people who are first. Even in the olympics there are silver medals for the second, and bronze medals for the third.

Gubo: So what?

Intaek: If Younghee conferred a silver or bronze medal upon me... I would be satisfied just with that....

Pause.

Intaek: Today, I received a rumor and a fact.

Gubo: A rumor and a fact?

Intaek: Which one do you want to hear first?

Gubo: Just tell me the fact. I don't care about the rumor.

Intaek: Do you know the owner of SSRU?

Gubo: SSRU? The café where Miss Kwon works? Who is its owner?

Intaek: Mr. Yi.

Gubo: What? Does Sang own the café?

Intaek: It is said that Kim, Hae Kyeong is clearly typed in the written permission of business published by the Jongnro police station.

Gubo: Kim, Hae Kyeong? Isn't it Sang's real name? What a goblin-like guy he is! Does he manage a bar as well as a café? Where did he get the money to open the bar? And why did he completely hide that fact from us? Ah, that’s why he seems to be trying to promote sales. So, he drank and asked us to drink as if he were also a guest. Ah, didn't you say that he often bought drinks unlike what he does in other places? So he just moved his money from the left pocket to the right?

Pause.

Gubo: Alright then, what is the rumor you heard?
Pause.

Intaek: The rumor is Mr. Yi set up housekeeping recently.
Gubo: What! With whom?
Intaek: Whom do you expect?
Gubo: .... That cannot be. With Miss Kwon? Where? Really; here again? Here in Sang's attic room? What the hell happened?

Pause.

Gubo: Oh my! Then, did he bring her back with that intention from the first? Bring Miss Kwon to Kyeng-sung? Instead making Keumhong the Madame of a café, did he make Miss Kwon the Mistress of a bar? So, did he take Miss Kwon as his wife now, instead of Keumhong? Is it really real?

Pause.

Sooyoung, working at the café Jaebi, appears.

Sooyoung: Did you wait for long?
Gubo: How did know we were here?
Sooyoung: I saw the note you posted on the café door.
Gubo: You’ve mastered all the characters?
Sooyoung: Though I falter over... Yes. Thanks to you.
Gubo: So, where did you go after locking up the café?
Sooyoung: Ah... I went just to see the night market for a while...
Gubo: Oh... the night market? With whom?
Sooyoung: With Chilsung in the billiard room over there. (Pause) So, did you come to have a tea, in this late night?

Pause.

Intaek: Sooyoung.
Sooyoung: Yes?
Intaek: May I ask a question?
Sooyoung: .... Yes.
Intaek: You should tell the truth to my questions, heart to heart, from now on.
Sooyoung: Well... shall we go down first? As for me, if I go up high like here, I can't stand it for long. My legs are trembling.
Intaek: No. You should answer me now.
Sooyoung: Pardon?
Intaek: Where is Mr. Yi now?
Sooyoung: I don't know...
Intaek: Why don't you know?
Sooyoung: Well... how about going down in advance?
Gubo: To where? You should stand upright there and answer Mr. Jeong's questions. O.K.?
Sooyoung: .... Yes.

Pause.

Intaek: Sooyoung, does anyone live in the café's attic room now?
Sooyoung: What?
Gubo: See how much she is surprised.
Intaek: Yes. You can't help being ignorant of who stays in the attic room.
Sooyoung: Ah...
Gubo: Don't use your brain.
Sooyoung: What do you mean? I am too dizzy to think.
Sooyoung: No. To me... I mean... (trying to go down).
Gubo: Uhhuh... Come back quickly!

Gubo and Intaek block Sooyoung.

Intaek: As soon as you answer you can go. I’ll buy something tasty for you.
Sooyoung: ....
Gubo: Just tell what you know. If you don't, you won’t be happy.
Sooyoung: Well... What would I know?
Intaek: If you don't know, who would?
Sooyoung: Well... who would?
Intaek: What did you say?!
Gubo: You would be able to sense it. Now, you’ve learned to know everything... Japanese characters... how to see the night market.
Sooyoung: Well... So... Um...
Gubo: She knows. She just pretends not to know. Huh...what will she become when she is old...
Sooyoung: But... I was firmly cautioned this time.
Intaek: Caution? What caution? Cautioned against telling the truth?
Sooyoung: .... Yes.

Sooyoung is about to run away. Gubo and Intaek grasp her.

Intaek: You’d better say right now! What an insidious girl!
Gubo: Do you need a whipping to open your mouth? If I give you a good beating, would you tell the truth?
Sooyoung: Please take your hand off me. Please let me go.

Sooyoung suffers, struggling and wriggling.

Sooyoung: Help me. Please help me. Sooyoung gonna die.
Pause.

Sooyoung: (reluctantly) Madame!
Intaek: What?
Sooyoung: My madame returned.
Gubo: Your madame? Which madame?
Sooyoung: Pardon?
Gubo: This café's madame? That bar's madame?
Sooyoung: I mean, Keumhong.
Gubo: Keumhong?

A full moon is still in the night sky.
Dogs in the neighborhoods bark, bow-wow, bow-wow, bow-wow.
Scene 4.\footnote{\textsuperscript{160}}

June 30\textsuperscript{th} Sunday 1:00 p.m.\footnote{\textsuperscript{161}}
The roof of So-kyeok Dong Kyegsung Medical School hospital.

Gubo | Yi Sang

\textit{Yi Sang and Gubo have a conversation. Gubo comes in a hurry after hearing that Jeong, Intaek tried committing suicide by taking poison. Yi Sang looks tired from staying up all night and thus has sunken eyes. Behind them, several bed sheets or something like that hang on the laundry string. The sky is clear after last night's rainfall.}

Yi Sang: So, I won’t tell you how badly Mr. Jeong blustered to Yaeiko and me yesterday night in SSRU, since he didn’t die yesterday.

Gubo: So, then?

Yi Sang: I thought I couldn't endure any more. So, I called a rickshaw and persuaded him to go back to his rented room.

Gubo: Hm, to Guanchul Chung?

Yi Sang: No, he moved to Suhajung recently. I didn't know the exact address. And worse, Mr. Jeong couldn't tell us because he was tongue-tied or brain-tied. But Yaeiko said she’d helped him find the room. So, she let the rickshaw man know the address. So, we sent him off in the rickshaw.

Gubo: And then?

Yi Sang: And then, since it was quite late, I asked Yaeiko to drink a tea somewhere.

Gubo: Not liquor, but a tea?

Yi Sang: Yes. Because I was quite drunken and I didn't want to show slovenly behavior around Yaeiko anymore. So, I declared my love to Yaeiko again for the last time with a tea between us in the café Mexico.

Gubo: The last time?

Yi Sang: Yes. Because Mr. Jeong had poured out a lot of words before, and also because I felt I needed to make a conclusion of my relation with Yaeiko in some way. I said, though I pretended not to love you and did bad things in my habitual way, I love you deeply; I will not love Keumhong anymore. So, I don't have anyone except you. I will live only for the love....

Gubo: Then?

Yi Sang: I felt she didn't listen to me carefully. Her sight didn't stay with me but kept going to somewhere else or the clock. And once the clock hand indicated midnight, she asked me to go to Mr. Jeong with her.

Gubo: To Taeyang?

\textsuperscript{160} For Jeong, Intaek’s suicide attempt in scene 4, I refer to Yi Sang’s posthumous novel \textit{Hwansigi} which is based on his own relationship with Jeong’ Intaek and Kwon, Younghee (\textit{Chungsakgi} 1, June 1938) and some recollections of Yi Sang’s literary friends, Youn, Taeyoung and Cho, Yongman.

\textsuperscript{161} The wedding of Jeong, Intaek and Younghee Kwon was held on June 29\textsuperscript{th} of 1935, which was less than 15 days after Jeong’s suicide attempt. However, in this play, the attempt is set up two months before the wedding.
Yi Sang: Yes. Even though I said that it would be enough to send him there on the rickshaw and thus there would be no reason to visit his room, she just refused flatly. For some reason or other, she felt greatly worried about Mr. Jeong.

Gubo: So?
Yi Sang: So, we walked to his new room in Suhajung, sharing an umbrella. I didn't know it would be my last walk with Yaeiko....

*Pause.*

Gubo: So, Taeyang?
Yi Sang: I thought it would not be appropriate to bring nothing, so I bought a buckwheat paste from a seller who passed by just that time. And with that buckwheat paste, I went to Mr. Jeong's room as Yaeiko led and opened the door...

Gubo: Then, did you see Taeyang fainted?
Yi Sang: Yes. There was vomit... and bottles... His room was in a mess with books scattered all over as if a book shelf fell down. Mr. Jeong was there with a lot of sleeping pills in his hands.

Gubo: Huh...
Yi Sang: And he had a note in his hand. So, I unfolded his hand and saw it. The note had Yaeiko's name and address in clumsy characters.

Gubo: Couldn't you find any written will?
Yi Sang: Written will?
Gubo: Yes. If he intended to kill himself, he might have left a will.
Yi Sang: There was nothing like that, but don't you think the memo itself is the same as a will?
Gubo: Ah...
Yi Sang: Yaeiko went out first to call a car, but she didn't come back. And Mr. Jeong's host family had left home to travel to some hot spring... There was no one I could ask help from and I didn't have any idea of which house had a telephone though I wanted to call somewhere... Then Mr. Jeong twisted his body and made some sounds... I felt I had to do something, whatever it is. So, I came out first carrying him on my back without knowing what I would do. I meant to bring him to the street but I couldn't do anything because it was pouring down rain. Anyhow, I barely made it out of Jongno.... there was nothing there; just like a ghost town in a film. I felt dizzy and was so exhausted that my knees were giving out.

Gubo: Then, what?
Yi Sang: Just then, two rickshaws approached from over there. So, I waved my hands and shouted, "Here, here. Somebody’s dying here." And, the two rickshaws stopped just in front of me...

Gubo: What fortune.
Yi Sang: And out from one of the rickshaws comes Yaeiko.
Gubo: Miss Kwon? Aha, the rickshaws Miss Kwon caught?
Yi Sang: Yes, they were. And Yaeiko took on one of the rickshaws again and I took on the other holding onto Mr. Jeong. And I thought I should take him to hospital run by his cousin.
Gubo: Ah, the doctor cousin?
Yi Sang: Yes. So, I shouted to go Anguk since the hospital would be near Anguk. But Yaeiko argued we shouldn’t go there because it would not be good to show his poor situation, especially when Mr. Jeong was not in good terms with his cousin.
Gubo: That's quite reasonable.
Yi Sang: What! I was baffled. "Shouuldn't we save him from this danger first? Don't you think his cousin would try the best to save his brother?" I shouted. But even the rickshaw men agreed with Yaeiko and said that the emergency room here would be the best in this kind of case. And since I couldn't tell the exact position of the hospital of Mr. Jeong's cousin...
Gubo: You brought him here?
Yi Sang: Yes.
Gubo: So, the doctor on duty cleaned Mr. Jeong's stomach?
Yi Sang: Yes.
Gubo: And gave him a stimulant?
Yi Sang: Yes, right.
Gubo: That's what happened?
Yi Sang: Yes, it is.

Pause.

Gubo: Where did he get the sleeping pills? Since he had the pills in a bottle, he hadn’t collected them one by one.
Yi Sang: A bottle?
Gubo: Yes.
Yi Sang: Who said that?
Gubo: .. Did Mr. Cho say... I heard somebody say it in the patient's room.
Yi Sang: The pills weren’t in a bottle but in a pillbox.
Gubo: Pills in the pillbox?
Yi Sang: Yes.
Gubo: Then, Calmochin?
Yi Sang: Yes, probably.
Gubo: Really? Where are they?
Yi Sang: Where? Maybe now shapeless since they traveled through Mr. Jeong's stomach and came out?
Gubo: I mean, the Calmochin pillbox or the leftover pills. Didn't you bring when you came to the hospital?
Yi Sang: I couldn't... I had no time to worry about such things.
Gubo: Hm... Then, it would still be in Mr. Jeong's room.
Yi Sang: ... The pills... didn't he get from his cousin?
Gubo: Ah, the cousin owning the hospital?
Yi Sang: Yes.
Gubo: But Mr. Jeong hasn’t been on good terms with him recently...
Yi Sang: If not, Yaeiko could get them from somewhere.
Gubo: Miss Kwon?
Yi Sang: Yes. Since she worked as a nurse when she went back to her home town…
Gubo: Really? Didn't you say Miss Kwon may have participated in some movements in Chungjoo one day?
Yi Sang: Hmm. A superficial job for the movement...
Gubo: Really?

Pause.

Yi Sang: This morning, Mr. Jeong woke up and then formally checked himself into the hospital... And then moved to the third floor room. That was when Yaeiko said we’d take care of him in turns, and forced me to go back home and change clothes and that sort of thing.
Gubo: Then, Miss Kwon?
Yi Sang: Her lodging house friend Misayae came with Yaeiko's clothing and towels... though I can't get how Misayae knew.
Gubo: Ah...
Yi Sang: So I went out from the hospital and crossed the road in Kwanghwamoon... Sunny and clear, as if last night's rainfall never was.... I felt everything was a dream.
Gubo: Yes... You underwent a lot of trouble last night. But you're the hero who saved Taeyang's life. Without Miss Kwon and you, today we might have met at a funeral rather than in the hospital...

Long Pause.

Yi Sang: Hey, Gubo.
Gubo: What?
Yi Sang: Don't you find anything strange in all this?
Gubo: Anything strange?
Yi Sang: Yes.
Gubo: It was strange from the first: how could the timid Taeyang swallow so many sleeping pills.
Yi Sang: And... anything else?
Gubo: And... well...

Pause.

Yi Sang: As for me, I feel that this tremendous love-story... is a well-planned play.
Gubo: What? A play?
Yi Sang: And I just went down from the stage after acting in a small role.
Gubo: Then, who's a leading role?
Yi Sang: Of course, Mr. Jeong and Yaeiko, this pair. Besides, the play might have been written by both of them.
Gubo: Written by them?

Pause.
Yi Sang: Hey, Gubo.
Gubo: Yes?
Yi Sang: Keep this as a secret; I’ll tell what’s been bothering me.
Gubo: Bothering you?
Yi Sang: Yes.
Gubo: What's that?
Yi Sang: Why did Yaeiko so insist on us visiting Mr. Jeong's room last night? How could she have predicted Mr. Jeong's suicide attempt?
Gubo: Huh.
Yi Sang: And Mr. Jeong also... Why did he go back home so carefully bringing his salary envelope if he decided to kill himself?
Gubo: Ah, did he?
Yi Sang: There are so many suspicious things: That Yaeiko's pace to the Mr. Jeong's room was in a hurry: that she scolded me for buying a buckwheat paste: moreover, that she was so calm even in a big event: that she insisted not to go to the hospital of Mr. Jeong's cousin.... That's not all. How about paying money for the emergency room as if you prepared for it? And How about Misayae bringing Yaeiko's clothing as if she waited from the early morning...

*Pause.*

Gubo: But whether she prepared for it beforehand, do you mean that they took such a dangerous gamble with a life of a living person?
Yi Sang: They could write a very careful script.
Gubo: No... I can't believe...

*Pause.*

Yi Sang: Maybe,--no: definitely, I felt they made an agreement with this place.
Gubo: This place? What place? This hospital?
Yi Sang: Sometime in the early morning, a policeman from Jongrno police station came to inspect... Though I don't know how they heard about the suicide attempt... He came here with a Jongrno police reporter from Donga Ilbo or Chosun Ilbo...
Gubo: Ah, really?
Yi Sang: I had no idea how to keep everything quiet from them. If such a news that Maeil Sinbo Reporter Mr. Jeong tried to kill himself because of love problems were to be published in the newspaper this morning, it would be really troublesome.
Gubo: Then, what did you do?
Yi Sang: If I’d had some money with me, I would have covered their mouths with some bribe... but I couldn't do anything since I was penniless...
Gubo: Then, what happened?
Yi Sang: I was embarrassed... The doctor on duty stepped forward and brought them to the corner over there. Before long, he mollified them enough to return just with some words....
Gubo: You mean even the doctor was a part of it? Even the doctor who cleaned Mr. Jeong's stomach? Huh... Oh dear...
Pause.

Yi Sang:   When I came back to the hospital from home...
Gubo:     Yes, yes.
Yi Sang:   I saw really a spectacle through the chink in the door.
Gubo:     What on the earth did you see?
Yi Sang:   Mr. Jeong tightly grasped Yaeiko's one hand... Yaeiko felt Mr. Jeong's forehead with the other hand as if he was her own husband and checked a thermometer taken from Mr. Jeong's armpit. As if a guy who tried to prove his love by his death should be treated that way.\textsuperscript{162}
Gubo:     Hm…
Yi Sang:   And I couldn't help hearing...
Gubo:     Hearing what?
Yi Sang:   Yaeiko saying, while grasping Mr. Jeong's two hands together, “I don't need to go away any more. I don't need to go somewhere like Tokyo or Moscow. So, let’s lead a happy life here in Kyengsung.”
Gubo:     Really? Then, what did Taeyang say?
Yi Sang:   Mr. Jeong just cried. Then, Yaeiko said, "Why do you cry on this joyful day" and wiped his tears…

Pause.

Yi Sang:   So, I couldn't endure any longer and entered the room. Then, and then... Mr. Jeong looked at me and smiled with saying, "Oh, Mr. Yi. Did you come?" Smile... with those red eyes…

Long pause.

Yi Sang:   Gubo.
Gubo:     What?
Yi Sang:   What should I do? What on the earth should I do?

Pause.

Gubo:     What's on your mind?
Yi Sang:   If I don't do anything in this heroic comedy finale, I will become a quiet loser. Right? Was it the beginning of my failure that I left it alone though I knew well that Mr. Jeong passionately courted Yaeiko?
Gubo:     Then, didn't you do anything to defend Yaeiko?
Gubo:     In your style?
Yi Sang:   I didn't know the situation would proceed so fast like this. Now, I’m sure the two already have been, giving and taking their bodies.\textsuperscript{163}

\textsuperscript{162} See Yi Sang, \textit{Hwansigi}.
\textsuperscript{163} Borrowing from Yi Sang’s \textit{Epigram}.
Gubo: What? How did you know that?
Yi Sang: Just I know.
Gubo: So, how?

Pause.

Yi Sang: Hey, Gubo.
Gubo: What?
Yi Sang: Now I... What should Yi Sang, who stands on the roof of this Kyungsung Medical School hospital in the afternoon in June 30th Sohwa 10th, do? Is it right to disclose the crude falsehood and tricks of friends whom I believed in? Or, should I rush back to the stage in order to receive a curtain call at the end of this droll comedy? But in any case, Yaeiko, Yaeiko cannot be my girl any more. …So what should I do?

_Gubo just blinks his eyes without saying anything._
_White laundries flutter in the wind._
_The sound of summer cicadas._
Scene 5.

August 16th Friday 9:05 p.m.
The roof of the Naniwakan cinema near Meongchijeong (Now Meong dong).

Gubo | Kwon, Younghee

Gubo & Kwon, Younghee have a conversation on the roof of cinema building. They went there to watch "One Night of Love" but they came to the roof because an accident in which the film was cut kept them from watching it to the end. Gubo walks with a cane and Younghee has an unfolded parasol and a handbag.

Younghee: Bad timing. Why was the “film” (in English) cut there of all occasions?
Gubo: I must say the same.
Younghee: Ah... I am anxious to know the end.
Gubo: Was it that funny?
Younghee: Yes, quite. And to you?
Gubo: Ah... yes. It was...
Younghee: How do you think it ends, for the main characters?
Gubo: Well, what do you expect?
Younghee: そうね・・・きっとハッピーエンドになるでしょう。(Well... Probably, they will have a happy ending?)
Gubo: それは、どうして？(Why do you think that way?)
Younghee: そりゃあなた、こういう映画の結末は大体そうですよ。(Because this kind of films usually go that way?)
Gubo: ふんん・・・二人の恋の行方でいうと、ハッピーエンドにはならないのさ。(Um... If I tell you this film's ending, it is not a happy one.)
Younghee: あらら、そうですか。 (Ah, really?)
Gubo: うん。残念ながら。(Yes, unfortunately.)
Younghee: How do you know that? Did you happen to watch this film before?
Gubo: No, no.
Younghee: Then, how?
Gubo: Actually, I read it in a magazine. I mean, the “story” (in English).
Younghee: What? Why did you do that?
Gubo: Pardon?
Younghee: Then... you can't feel interested while watching the film.
Gubo: Ah, can't I?

Pause.

Younghee: それじゃあ、二人の恋の行方は、これからどうなるんです？(Then, what happens to their love?)
Gubo: そりゃ、まぁ、恋に落ちるでしょう。(They fall in love.)
Younghee: それで？(Then?)
Gubo: それから、たぶん別れるでしょう。(Then, they will separate from each other.)

Younghhee: ふんん・・・悲劇ですか。(Um, it is a tragedy?)

Gubo: さ・・・でもね、グレース・ムアは結局、ニューヨークへ戻り、メトロポリタンオペラの世界で大成功するのだ。(Well... but Grace Moore has great success in the world of opera after going back to New York.)

Younghhee: あ、それは良かったわ。(Ah, it sounds good.)
それで、彼女は幸せになったんでしょうか。(So, do you think she ends up happy?)

Gubo: さ・・・どうだろう。(Well, I suppose so.)

Younghhee: 幸せになったんなら、それもそれで、ハッピーエンドですよね。(If she becomes happy, wouldn’t it be a kind of happy ending?)

Gubo: あ、まあね。(Ah... You seem to be right.)

Pause.

Younghhee: あれ？でも、この映画の題名は、なぜ「恋の一夜」なんでしょうか。(Then, why is the title "One Night of Love"?)

Gubo: さ・・・(Well...)

Younghhee: Wasn't there also... 「一夜のなんとか」って映画、ありませんでした？(a film whose title is "One Night" of something?)

Gubo: あ、それは「ある夜の出来事」ね。(Ah, that was "It happened One Night.") That film got the Academy award this year.... I heard Clark Gable's acting was exceptional. え・・・英語でいうとね、(In English...) its title is "It happened One Night" (In English). The one we watched half of just now is "ONE NIGHT OF LOVE (In English)."

Younghhee: ワン・ナイト・・・(One night...) One night is a problem. What would happen in that night?

Gubo: One night is enough time to change the destiny of two people.

Long Pause.

Younghhee: Anyway, what would be the best way to show my gratitude?

Gubo: Huh, you already told me enough.

Younghhee: It would not be excessive no matter how many times I say, thank you.

Gubo: No, it becomes excessive.

Younghhee: Once I decided to marry... I didn't know there are so many things to prepare.

Gubo: Since a marriage makes new family... it can't help necessitating many things...

Younghhee: I appreciate all you do and others who help... even when the groom, Intaek, seems so disinterested.

Gubo: What disinterested? He’s a hardworking company employee. Besides, he moves to a new department these days....

Younghhee: But you, a busy person, help us a lot. Also, you, like today,映画までお付きあいいただいて・・・(accompany me to the cinema.)
Gubo: No, I’m not busy. Recently, ah! How free I am!
Younghee: Really?
Gubo: Yes. Since I don’t have a paper to write for... naturally...
Younghee: What? Are you still struggling against difficulties for the sake of vengeance after the discontinuance of the last novels?
Gubo: No... no vengeance... I’m just busy in entertaining myself.
Younghee: Aren’t you continuing that work?
Gubo: That work? Youth Song?
Younghee: Yes. Didn’t you decide to complete writing the novel even without publishing?
Gubo: Yes. I did.
Younghee: Then?
Gubo: Then... it wasn’t so easy to do as I thought.
Younghee: Um... why?
Gubo: Well.. isn’t it because I couldn’t find my own voice yet?

_Gubo laughs as if he were vigorous and valiant._

Younghee: So, are you busy now in studying films instead of novels?
Gubo: Ah.. yes...
Younghee: You can transfer your efforts to the cinema.
Gubo: Sure enough; I feel like going to study it somewhere.
Younghee: Ah, where? America?
Gubo: Huh huh, well... As I’m not so confident about my English, maybe Tokyo?

_Pause._

Younghee: れなら今日、こういう普通の映画よりは、透明人間を見た方が良かったかしら。（Then, it would be better to watch "The Invisible Man" instead of this sort of film.）今日、封切りでしょう。（Today was its opening.）
Gubo: No way. Such a grotesque film. It isn’t proper to watch something like that with you.
Younghee: Why? あたしも、そういう映画、意外に好きですわ。（Contrary to your expectation I enjoy that kind of film.）
Gubo: Still... To be the film for us to watch together after a long break...
Younghee: Ah...

_Pause._

Gubo: As I suggested before, you ought to wear a western dress.
Younghee: I will think about it.
Gubo: You don’t need to think any more. The more modern, the better. If you get a picture of yourself in a traditional costume, you won’t want to look at it later.
Younghee: Ah... What a word...

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164 In reality, The Invisible Man opened at Daishokan on the 16th of August in 1935.
Pause.

Gubo: By the way...
Youngee: Yes?
Gubo: The matter of moderator...
Youngee: Yes.
Gubo: Do you really plan to make Sang in charge of the moderator?
Youngee: That's because it is decided that way, with Intaek.
Gubo: So, I mean I want to know your opinion about it.
Youngee: I don't care.
Gubo: You don't care?
Youngee: No.

Pause.

Youngee: What do you worry about?
Gubo: I just... don't you think Sang is a guy like a “rugby” (in English) ball that we can't expect where and how it will bounce?
Youngee: Really?
Gubo: No, I mean... ten to one...
Youngee: Do you think he will upset the wedding ceremony because of some antipathy towards me?
Gubo: Ah, yes... so to speak...
Youngee: I don’t believe anything like that would happen.
Gubo: How can you be so certain?
Youngee: If you worry so much, how about becoming a moderator yourself?
Gubo: What? Me?

Youngee smiles.

Youngee: 兀談よ。(Just a kidding.)

Pause.

Youngee: Mr. Park?
Gubo: Yes?
Youngee: Did you really not know?
Gubo: Not know what?
Youngee: Were you also just one of the audiences of the last play?
Gubo: Last play? Do you mean Taeyang and the sleeping pills?
Youngee: Yes.
Gubo: Then, why was it the play?

Pause.
Younghee: Mr. Yi had known everything from the first. No, maybe he was in charge of writing the script.
Gubo: What? Sang?
Younghee: Also, directing and a supporting role.
Gubo: What? Then, the leading role?
Younghee: It must be Intaek.
Gubo: Taeyang? Then, Taeyang and Sang?

Pause.

Younghee: The soporifics.... that Intaek took that day.
Gubo: Yes.
Younghee: The pills probably were from Mr. Yi.
Gubo: How did you know that?
Younghee: One day, Mr. Yi took out the same bottle in front of me.
Gubo: What do you mean by that? Do you mean Sang suggested you to commit suicide together?
Younghee: He just made a “pose” (in English) of death.
Gubo: Huh... So, did you swallow the pills together?
Younghee: No, if we did, how could Mr. Yi and I be alive until now?
Gubo: .... Ah, right.

Pause.

Gubo: Anyhow, did you say it was a bottle?
Younghee: What?
Gubo: Were the sleeping pills which Taeyang took... Calmochin?
Younghee: Calmochin?
Gubo: Yes. The pills in a white pillbox...
Younghee: No, it was a brown bottle.
Gubo: If it was a brown bottle.... Aronar?
Younghee: .... I don't know the name of the pill.
Gubo: Then, where is the bottle now?
Younghee: Well, I don't know. It vanished after that night.
Gubo: Vanished?
Younghee: It might be taken back.
Gubo: Who took it? Then, Sang?

Pause.

Younghee: The next evening, when I brought Intaek back to his room from the hospital, I felt somebody had visited there. And there was a letter on the desk.
Gubo: Letter?
Younghee: Yes.
Gubo: What kind of letter?
Younghee: It was written in Sang's handwriting.
Gubo: Sang's handwriting? Well then, what was it about?

Younghee: 「夕べの君はすばらしかった。君にこそえいこを愛する資格がある。太陽君よ、太陽のごとく、えいこを暖かく照らしてください。それこそ、君の義務であり、運命である。云々。」

(Yesterday, you did a great job. You deserve Yaeiko’s love, Taeyang. Throw light on Yaeiko warmly as the sun does. From now, it is your only duty and destiny.)

Pause.

Gubo: If this was the case, why on the earth did Sang connive that kind of play?

Younghee: Well… what would be the reason?

Pause.

Younghee: Around that time, Mr. Yi often encouraged me to get married to Intaek.

Gubo: What?

Younghee: He did the same that night too. Even just before it happened. After sending Intaek back in the rickshaw, I planned to take a rest at home. Because I was quite tired. But Mr. Yi forced me to the café Mexico by all means and said that I would not be able to meet a guy who gives me more innocent love than Intaek...

Pause.

Younghee: What do you think this love is? Two friends of yours started this dangerous play because you think love is what? For what did Mr. Yi plan that kind of mischief and for what did Intaek willingly adventure his life on such a risky gamble like an idiot?

Gubo: Then, you... why did you embrace such a kind of love from Taeyang?

Pause.

Younghee: When Mr. Yi took out the bottle in front of me and when he asked whether we could love so much as to die.... at that time some thought came to me. I just want to be happy. I just want to pursue happiness from living: a happy life. But I can't have a happy life if I'm dead.

Pause.

Younghee: The word of “happiness” often appears in your novels. All characters you make are always lonely but at the same time they do pursue happiness. As if happiness must be somewhere but not here.

Gubo: Ah, really?

Younghee: Mr. Park. Do you think the happiness is a product that we can get only when we crave and love something? If not, would it be like a sudden visitor?

Gubo: Well...
Pause.

Younghie: Mr. Park. Last summer, when you walked with me in Jeong Dong street, Wonnam Dong new street, Nam Mountain park, what would it be the emotion which you had for me? When you asked me to go to Tokyo and live there together one day, did you make that plan for happiness? Then, why didn't you hold on to me instead of letting me go back to my home?

Long Pause.

Younghie: Mr. Park. If you, at present, yourself are unhappy, if you can't find your happiness here in Kyengsung at all as you always say... do you want to go to Tokyo with me even now?

Red and blue light shines under the street. A shout of joy from somewhere and gay music. Also we can hear a singing voice. The night sky teems with stars.
Scene 6.

October 21st Monday 5:50 p.m.
The roof of Maeil Sinbo (Newspaper).

Gubo | Jeong, Intaek | Maeil Sinbo errand girl, Sukyi

_Gubo and Intaek have a conversation. Gubo comes to earn some pages in the literary pages by Intaek's recommendation. And Intaek finishes publishing an evening newspaper. Gubo looks into the evening newspaper of Maeil Sinbo, which is just published. Intaek has a camera with him and sometimes takes photos._

Gubo: It said fifty-two country committees determined to restrict economic activities and eighteen country committees are adopting a boycott... Then, Italy can't brazen it out? Since everybody's pushing them? Don't you think so?
Intaek: But it won't work.
Gubo: Why?
Intaek: All of them are just powerless countries. Unless powerful countries do something....
Gubo: After all... Then, why was the league of Nations made?
Intaek: That's what I want to ask.
Gubo: Huh... only Ethiopia becomes pitiful.

_Pause._

Gubo: Where is Ethiopia, then?
Intaek: Isn't it in Africa?
Gubo: I mean around where in Africa
Intaek: East part of it, maybe.
Gubo: East of Africa...
Intaek: Why?
Gubo: Both Italy and Ethiopia are really far away...
Intaek: They're far away from here. Did you think they were near?
Gubo: No, I mean... all of the world is too far away...
Intaek: Do you think so?
Gubo: Since you work in the newspaper company, you would know how things go in the world.
Intaek: Do I?
Gubo: Sure. I wander around Kyengsung everyday; you think I can see anything? But the world... changes ceaselessly.

_Pause._

Intaek: Then, do you want to switch with me?
Gubo: Switch?
Intaek: You work in the newspaper company. I write novels at home.
Gubo: Do you mean for me to take in charge of Maeil Sinbo's family section? (pause)
Would I?

Pause.

Gubo: No, forget it. You don't know how hard a writer in Chosun lives by writing.
Besides, if you tell your wife that you want to quit, she’d feel cheated.
Intaek: Younghee said she doesn't care.
Gubo: What?
Intaek: She told me once that she would take care of me, getting a job again once I
made up my mind.
Gubo: Ah, really?

Long pause.

Intaek: So, when will you bring us your writing?
Intaek: Ah... good news.
Gubo: Yes. I appreciate your help.
Intaek: Don't mention it. I just introduced you.
Gubo: Whatever.
Intaek: So, what will be published?
Gubo: Just a children's story and an essay.
Intaek: Ah.

Pause.

Intaek: You should publish often, whatever you publish. Your name needs to catch
others' eyes... to get more requests...
Gubo: Yes. You're probably right.
Intaek: So, please do well in your meeting today. Who knows whether they might ask
you to write a long novel serially next year.
Gubo: A long novel?
Intaek: Yes.

Pause.

Gubo: Do they really drink that much?
Intaek: Yes.
Gubo: I heard they keep drinking at least in five and six different places a night.
Intaek: Yes, they did in former days.
Gubo: Ah... I’m gonna die today. Do I need to stay to the end? If I take off in the
middle, will it be bad?
Intaek: Well, it wouldn’t be good.
Gubo: If you could be there with me, it will be better.
Intaek: I think so, too.

Pause.

Gubo: You probably helped Sang when he had some of his writing published some time ago.
Intaek: What a help. Since his structure is so good, he had a reputation in the literary section. They even asked for another of his pieces.
Gubo: Really?
Intaek: One of them said that a new stylist had appeared.
Gubo: What an undeserved word.
Intaek: Why! It seems outstanding to me.
Gubo: Do you think so?
Intaek: Weren't you inspired after reading it?
Gubo: Inspired?

Pause.

Gubo: To me, it sounded a little bit like nonsense.
Intaek: Nonsense?
Gubo: He pretends to be stuck in a village and to describe the village's nature, but there is no story about the village. "Flowers like a leaf of asparagus in a vegetable salad": what a ludicrous metaphor. Where in any Chosun village is there that kind of flower?
Intaek: He might miss the city even if he’s in the village. And don't you think it’s true he writes it in his own voice?
Gubo: What? Sang's own voice?

Pause.

Gubo: To me it sounds like something I’ve heard before.
Intaek: Where?
Gubo: For my part, it looks like an imitation of Oscar Wilde.
Intaek: Oscar Wilde...
Gubo: Yes.
Intaek: Then, what? What's matter with that?
Gubo: What do you mean?
Intaek: Anyhow, Mr. Yi wrote it for Chosun's sensibilities.
Gubo: What?
Intaek: If you say it that way, who wouldn’t be an imitation of someone else?

Pause.

Gubo: You two seem to be in good terms after the last summer.
Intaek: Good terms?
Gubo: Have you two been getting closer to each other? You support him now. And, Sang corresponds with you more frequently than with me.

Intaek: Really?

Gubo: So, is he your hero who saved you from dying?

Intaek: Hero?

Pause.

Gubo: Taeyang? I have something I’ve wanted to ask you for a long time. Even though it’s just an old story.

Intaek: Yes?

Gubo: The sleeping pills you swallowed. Where’d you get them?

Intaek: The sleeping pills?

Gubo: Yes.

Intaek: Why?

Gubo: No reason. It was just hard to believe that you’d been collecting them and all at once decided to swallow them.

Intaek: It was hard for me to believe, as well.

Gubo: Did you get them from your cousin?

Intaek: My cousin?

Gubo: Yes. Your doctor cousin.

Intaek: Why? Are you suffering from insomnia?

Gubo: Ah; yes.

Intaek: If you need some, why don't get them from your pharmacy?

Gubo: I don't feel like asking my cousin for sleeping pills. Especially when I’m not entirely welcome at home.

Pause.

Intaek: Then, why don't you ask Sang?

Gubo: Sang?

Intaek: But we don't know when he will come back to Kyengsung.

Pause.

Gubo: So, you got them from Sang.

Intaek: Well, I am not sure I got them from Sang... Anyway, Sang left them.

Gubo: Left?

Intaek: If I think now... it was a kind of game.

Gubo: A kind of game?

Intaek: Or, a kind of play?

Gubo: Play?

Pause.
Intaek: A couple of days before that day, Mr. Yi came to me and asked me to die together.
Gubo: Die together?
Intaek: So to speak, it was that kind of asking.
Gubo: For male friends?
Intaek: He said, it would be better than fighting for a woman. He also said I could attain two advantages at one move because my name would remain in Chosun literature history forever by dying with a genius poet like him.
Gubo: Huh, what an idiot. So, what did you do?
Intaek: What else could I do? I told him to leave. And I said I would hold the pills.

Pause.

Gubo: So, after that, it was with those pills you feigned trying to kill yourself?
Intaek: Feint?
Gubo: Why, was it not a feint?
Intaek: Well... was it a feint?
Gubo: Then, you really did intend to commit suicide?

Pause.

Intaek: Actually, I don't know.
Gubo: Don't know what?
Intaek: I don't remember.
Gubo: Don't remember, what?
Intaek: Hm... In a cinema, films are sometimes cut down, and then the screen becomes completely dark...
Gubo: Yes.
Intaek: That night was just like the screen becoming dark. The memory after drinking more in my home is not projected...
Guco: Why?
Intaek: I don't know the reason.

Pause.

Intaek: But when I left the hospital in the next day…
Gubo: Yes.
Intaek: I accidently met the doctor who was on duty at the last night.
Gubo: Yes.
Intaek: He asked me to smoke together and said... that he was sorry for cleansing my stomach when I’d taken so many healthful medicines.
Gubo: Healthful medicines?
Intaek: After saying that, he left there, smiling mysteriously.
Gubo: Then, the sleeping pills were actually healthy pills?
Intaek: Probably...
Gubo: The pill bottle?
Intaek: The pill bottle was Aronar.
Gubo: But inside of it, there were the fake sleeping pills, like vitamins...
Intaek: ... Probably.
Gubo: Huh! Then, I guess you lost your chance to be healthy.

Pause.

Gubo: Did Sang know that the Aronar was a fake? When he asked you to take them together, did he know that?
Intaek: Well, what do you think?
Gubo: If he believed they were real when he asked you, isn’t that unforgivable?
Intaek: Well...
Gubo: So, haven't you asked Sang about the pills?
Intaek: What do I need to ask him for? It is just an old story. Also, it was after all that Younghee came to me.
Gubo: Huh...

Long Pause.

A newspaper company errand girl, Sukyi comes up to the roof in search of Jeong, Intaek.

Sukyi: Mr. Jeong.
Intaek: Yes.
Sukyi: I was looking for you for long time.
Intaek: Were you?
Sukyi: Your wife called. She asked why you haven't come back home and whether the newspaper was already in print.
Intaek: Ah, really?
Sukyi: Also, did you forget today's meeting?
Intaek: O.K. I’ll go down soon.
Sukyi: Yes.
Intaek: Hey, Sukyi.
Sukyi: Yes?
Intaek: Can you pose for a picture?
Sukyi: Pardon?
Intaek: Just standing there.
Sukyi: Ah...

Intaek takes a photo of Sukyi.

Intaek: By the way, has the literary section director come back?
Sukyi: Ah, he is not still in his office.
Intaek: Isn’t he?
Sukyi: Yes.
Intaek: O.K. Thank you. Do your job.
Sukyi: Yes.
Sukyi goes away after a bow.

Gubo: Do you have a plan to go somewhere with your wife?
Intaek: Yes.
Gubo: Ah, where?
Intaek: Seo, Jeongkwon's match, it is today.
Gubo: Seo, Jeongkwon? Boxing match?
Intaek: Yes.
Gubo: A match with a Filipino?\(^{165}\)
Intaek: Yes.
Gubo: Did you have a hobby in such a thing?
Intaek: Ah, Younghoe likes to see boxing so much.
Gubo: Does she?
Intaek: Didn't you know?
Gubo: No.

Pause.

Intaek: So, do you want to stay here more?
Gubo: Yes. Because the literary section director hasn't come yet. Go first. Your wife seems to wait for you.
Intaek: Then, may I?

Pause.

Intaek: How much longer?
Gubo: Around two months.
Intaek: It’s due next year?
Gubo: Yes.
Intaek: So, her belly becomes quite big.
Gubo: Yes. quite.
Intaek: How big?
Gubo: Well... around... (putting his hand on his belly) this big?

Pause.

Gubo: You don’t have any news?
Intaek: No, not yet.
Gubo: The later, the better.
Intaek: Do you think so?
Gubo: Yes.
Intaek: Why?
Gubo: Well....

\(^{165}\) On the 21st of October in 1935, at Kyengsung Stadium, Seo, Jeong Kwon, the #6 boxer (international ranking at the time, had a match with Rash Joe (?). Both of them had been playing an active part in America. Some records say that Rash Joe was from Spain, others say that he was from the Philippines.
Pause.

Gubo: On the day of your housewarming, I felt jealous of you.
Inteak: Why?
Gubo: Well... because your house seems so modern.
Inteak: Did you think so? Why? Isn't your house quite modern?
Gubo: No. She's just a Chosun woman.
Inteak: No. So my wife is. She used to wear western clothes, but now she adheres to Korean ones.
Gubo: Does she?
Inteak: She insists there are no western suits to wear at home.
Gubo: She's right.
Inteak: Yes.
Gubo: But I feel cheated.
Inteak: So do I.
Gubo: But does Mrs. Kwon have a short hair?
Inteak: Yes, she does.
Gubo: Yes, she has a cheerful feeling.
Inteak: Does she?
Gubo: My wife wears her hair in a bun.
Inteak: Ah..

Pause.

Inteak: When will you set up a separate family?
Gubo: I should do next year...
Inteak: Near Jongrno 5th street?
Gubo: Yes.

Pause.

Inteak: It's near.
Gubo: Uh?
Inteak: It's near from my house.
Gubo: Ah...
Inteak: Visit my house frequently.
Gubo: Ah, O.K.

Pause.

Inteak: Tae Yang.
Gubo: Yes?
Inteak: Be happy.
Gubo: What?
Pause.

Gubo: Please be happy. Along with your Younghee.
Inteak: Why do you say that all of sudden?
Gubo: It is not a sudden. Because happiness is the thing that we... everyone always wants to have.
Inteak: Is it?
Gubo: Of course, it is. Unless we dare to want to die... we should pursue happiness, a happy and cheerful life.
Intaek: A happy life?
Gubo: Yes.
Inteak: ... happiness in the life?
Gubo: If you say that way, I feel a little...
Intake: A little what?
Gubo: Well.. too...
Inteak: Become too old?
Gubo: Yes, probably.

Intaek exits.

The glow of sunset behind Gubo remaining alone is red.
Smoke goes up from chimneys of houses far away from there.
Gubo opens his notebook and starts to take a note.
Scene 7.

December 25th Wednesday 8:00 p.m.
Tea café in the roof garden of Mizicoshi Department store in Bonjung Dong.

Gubo| Yi Sang | Waitress.

*Gubo and Yi Sang have a coffee in the tea café of the roof garden of Mizicoshi Department store after a long time passes. Yi Sang wears a good suit and his hair is neat, unlike his usual style.*

Gubo: It is quite strange. You drink coffee gently, with a gentle appearance.
Yi Sang: Do you think so?
Gubo: Surely. I expect that you’d show up as a man of real wild nature since you were stuck in a village.
Yi Sang: A man of real wild nature?
Gubo: Yes. I heard you have a hard time in the village. Why did you stay there so long where nobody welcomes you?
Yi Sang: Just for promoting my health.
Gubo: Why did you decide to promote your health? I recall you trying hard to harm your health once.
Yi Sang: Well.. because I also need to live.
Gubo: Live? You were anxious to die earlier.
Yi Sang: As I am born, don't I need to live long?
Gubo: Live long? For what?
Yi Sang: Well... Shouldn't I write a masterpiece that will remain in Chosun literature history before I die?
Gubo: Huh! Well, your ego isn’t dead yet.
Yi Sang: No?

*Pause.*

Yi Sang: Hey, Gubo.
Gubo: Yes?
Yi Sang: I’ve experienced a lot this year and have felt not a few new feelings. So, I am thinking to live differently.
Gubo: Differently?
Yi Sang: Yes.
Gubo: Differently how?
Yi Sang: To regain my lost life... in a healthy and cheerful way.
Gubo: In a healthy and cheerful way.
Yi Sang: Yes. Also to get married with someone in a proper way....
Gubo: Married? With whom?
I heard a rumor that you’re enticing an Ewha college student these days... Then, do you really intend to marry her?  

Yi Sang: Hm... What do you think?  
Gubo: Huh... What made you make the decision?  

*Pause.*  

Yi Sang: What would you think if I wrote a novel next year?  
Gubo: Novel?  
Yi Sang: Yes.  
Gubo: I should be tense.  
Yi Sang: Why?  
Gubo: I was thinking to head towards the cutting-edge avant-garde, something the Chosun literature world hasn’t seen yet.  
Yi Sang: Were you?  
Gubo: Yes.  
Yi Sang: I am thinking to write just some mundane thing.  
Gubo: A mundane thing?  
Yi Sang: Yes, just a typical novel? Not necessarily ahead of the time... though I don't like rustic. But just something sincere.  
Gubo: Really?  

*Long pause.*  

*Yi Sang takes out a brown Aronar bottle from his pocket.*  

Yi Sang: Will you take it back?  
Gubo: What?  
Yi Sang: This one, which you gave me before.  
Gubo: Isn't it Aronar?  
Yi Sang: Yes.  
Gubo: Then, why?  
Yi Sang: Actually, I brought this with an intention to die some day.  
Gubo: Did you?  
Yi Sang: Yes.  
Gubo: Then?  
Yi Sang: Now, I feel like throwing away the mindless gesture.  
Gubo: Really?  
Yi Sang: Yes.  

*Gubo looks into the Aronar bottle.*  

Gubo: Then, why is there so little left?  
Yi Sang: What?  
Gubo: The total numbers of pills left in the bottle are, roughly, 20. Give me the rest.  

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166 Possibly Byeon, Donglim who married with Yi Sang in 1936. In reality, Yi Sang seemed to meet Byeon in a café around this time.
Considering that I gave you such a dangerous thing—a whole bottle, I was really silly.

Yi Sang: If I keep this, I don't know what problems I'll make. So, please hold it. When I really want to die, please give be back then.

Gubo: .... Shall I?
Yi Sang: Yes, please.

Long pause.
A waitress refills water into the empty cup.
Gubo intently looks the bottle and the cup in turn.

Gubo: Rather than that, let's swallow all of them here.
Yi Sang: What?
Gubo: If we live with keeping it aside with us, won't we feel an urge to suicide? Rather than leading such a miserable life, why don't we become reborn after swallowing all of them here.

Yi Sang: Reborn?
Gubo: Yes.
Yi Sang: Do you mean to die together?
Gubo: I mean to promote a new life that way.

Yi Sang: A new life?
Gubo: Yes, a revival.

Yi Sang: Are we Jesus? How can we revive?
Gubo: Why can't we revive?

Gubo takes pills from the bottle and divides them into two parts.

Yi Sang: It is too sudden.
Gubo: Everything always goes that way. We would die just in the way that we are born, all of sudden.

Pause.

Gubo: Let's hold our cups. The writer Gubo and the poet Yi Sang's joint suicide on the Christmas evening, probably will be reported in the next morning newspaper. No, it should come out in an extra edition this night. Shouldn't Chosun treat its literature at least this much? This event is so big that foreign reporters can deal with it as an international topic. There's been nothing like this even in Tokyo, which likes suicides so much. Don't you think so?

Gubo drinks water first and swallows a pill.
Pause.

Gubo: Why don't you take one? Don't worry. I heard Taeyang also got a new life after taking these pills.
Long pause.
Yi Sang smiles and bites a cigarette.

Gubo: Didn't you say that you quit smoking?
Yi Sang: That was when I decided to live long.

Pause.

Gubo: By the way, I feel sorry that you can't give your “fiancé” (in French) a note before dying.
Yi Sang: I feel sorry too.
Gubo: How about leaving a written will?
Yi Sang: Hm... shall I?

Gubo tears a paper from the note and gives it to Yi Sang.

Yi Sang: Anyway, your wife will be a widow.
Gubo: She will.
Yi Sang: How about leaving a written will?
Gubo: I was thinking to do.

Gubo and Yi Sang take fountain pens quite seriously and are worried about what to write in each will.

Yi Sang: I feel sorry about your expecting baby.
Gubo: Huh, I didn’t think about the baby.
Yi Sang: Thoughtless. (pause) It’ll be a boy with no father.
Gubo: It might be a girl with no father.
Yi Sang: What?
Gubo: We don't know whether it is a son or a daughter.
Yi Sang: You're right. Do you want a son, or a daughter?
Gubo: Well, a daughter?
Yi Sang: Do you?
Gubo: Yes. I want to raise her to be an outstanding modern girl who has not been in Chosun before.167
Yi Sang: That's a great ambition.
Gubo: Sure it is.

Pause.

Yi Sang: How about your novel that you're publishing serially? You were happy with the chance that visited you after a long break, weren't you?
Gubo: You're right. Besides, I recently got a couple of requests.

167 In the editing epilogue of Poem and Novel (1936.3), Yi Snag said, “Last month, Taewon gets a first daughter. He says that she is so lovable. To raise her as a wonderful modern girl is his grand hope and plan.”
Yi Sang: Did you?
Gubo: Don't you also have several requests for your writings?
Yi Sang: Yes... The day before yesterday, I conceived an idea about a magnificent novel.
Gubo: Did you?
Yi Sang: Yes. It would be able to a masterpiece reported in the history of world literature, if I finish it.
Gubo: Really? What is it about?
Yi Sang: Hm... It's about a man who wanders around Kyengsung. In the end, he gets wings and flies up into the sky in the roof of Mizicoshi.\(^{168}\)
Gubo: What a wonderful prediction!
Yi Sang: Prediction?
Gubo: Yes. Once you swallow these pills, you can get wings and fly up here. In order to ascend to heaven with angels. Wow, the angels are coming down there.
Yi Sang: (Oh, they are fast.)

Long pause.

Gubo: Then, what will you do if you’re born again?
Yi Sang: What?
Gubo: I mean, when and where do you want be born?
Yi Sang: Well... how about you?
Gubo: Well... as for me... sometime in the 21st Century...
Yi Sang: New York?
Gubo: No, I don't like it there.
Yi Sang: Why?
Gubo: New York is actually not 本物 (a real).
Yi Sang: Is Europe really real after all?
Gubo: Of course.
Yi Sang: Then, where in Europe?
Gubo: Well... Would France be better than England? Germany and Italy, I think, will be marred by Hitler and Mussolini. I don't like Russia because it is too cold.
Yi Sang: Indeed.
Gubo: How about doing films rather than literature?
Yi Sang: Films?
Gubo: Yes. Since cinema is a really modern and synthetic art...
Yi Sang: Then, please cast me as an actor.
Gubo: Actor?
Yi Sang: I think I have a talent in acting.
Gubo: Yes. You seem to.

Pause.

Gubo: Do you also want to be born again, following me?
Yi Sang: What?

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\(^{168}\) This is about the ending of Yi Sang’s famous novel *The Wings* published in 1936.
Gubo: It's a little boring.
Yi Sang: Of course, it is.
Gubo: So, though I am sorry to ask you... please be born in a different time and place.
Yi Sang: In a different time and place?
Gubo: Yes.
Yi Sang: Where would be good?
Gubo: Well... wherever.

Pause.

Yi Sang: Then, I just want to be born again.
Gubo: So, where?
Yi Sang: Just here.
Gubo: Here?
Yi Sang: Yes. In August of the lunar calendar of Kyengsul year Kyengsung. Under the same parents again.
Gubo: Why?
Yi Sang: I just to want to lead a new life after being reborn. A little more sincerely.
Gubo: Sincerely?
Yi Sang: Yes, I have spent my life uselessly until now.
Gubo: Do you?
Yi Sang: I don't mean to live a boring life. I should live more interestingly. But just... when I feel happy I will show my happiness sincerely and when I feel suffering, I will say it sincerely. I should live that way. My life has been so so all the time.

Yi Sang drinks water from the cup and swallows a pill.
It snows outside of the window.

– Fine –