

**Shifting South Korean Theatre:
Jo-Yeol Park's *A Dialogue Between Two Long-necked People*
and Taesuk Oh's *Chunpung's Wife***

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Why is *Waiting for Godot* the most frequently staged Western play in Korean theatre history? Why are the absurdist Beckett, Pinter, and Ionesco among the top twelve most staged Western playwrights?² Further, why is it that Korean scholar Junseo Im³ goes so far as to say that almost all South Korean plays since the 1960s have been more or less influenced by the Theatre of the Absurd, and that absurdist theatre can be regarded as a short cut to understanding Korean contemporary theatre?⁴ Beginning with a 1960 production of Ionesco's *La Leçon* (*The Lesson*, 1951) by *Sireomgeukjang* (Experimental Theatre), numerous small Korean theatre groups staged Western existentialist and absurdist plays in the 1960s and 1970s.⁵ Korean director Young-Woong Lim has staged *Waiting for Godot* steadily for about forty years since 1969, and his 1988 production was lauded by Martin Esslin.

In "The Reception of the Theatre of the Absurd and Korean Theatre," Miy-he Kim analyzes this extraordinary engagement with Western absurdist theatre in South Korea, and traces the history of its reception. Kim departs from certain scholars' criticism that Korean theatre artists had received Western absurdist theatre and its aesthetics "uncritically" even when Western realism was not "adequately understood" in Korean theatre, thereby "possibly shaking the foundation of realistic theatre" in Korea. Instead, she argues that Korean theatre's "active" reception of absurdist theatre should be respected because it has fostered the development of Korean theatre, although Korea should have approached absurdist theatre more judiciously and systematically.⁶ I would add that there is also no reason why non-realistic experimental theatre should have been explored only after Western realistic theatre⁷ had been thoroughly founded in Korea, especially given that, as my essay will show, non-realistic theatre is closer to Korea's indigenous performance aesthetics. The suggestion that Korean theatre should follow the same artistic trajectory as the West (from the achievement of realistic theatre toward anti-realistic experimental theatre) implies an uncritical logic that privileges Western theatre history. As it has done thus far, Korean theatre must simultaneously negotiate the pluralities of global theatrical trends.

Kim's essay on the significance of Korean theatre's reception of Western

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absurdist theatre is my starting point. However, departing from Kim's focus on the production of Western absurdist plays, I will concentrate on Korean plays that sometimes controversially evoked absurdist styles, and will situate a notable aesthetic shift in Korean postcolonial theatre from the 1970s in its local and global contexts. Korean theatre of the post-colonial⁸ period emerged in the 1950s and 1960s, and thus converged with the Theatre of the Absurd. This took the form of a unique and significant global and local aesthetic interpenetration in Korean postcolonial theatre. When an aesthetic grown from one cultural location migrates to another domain, it is bound to undergo adjustments and alterations, develop different emphases and unexpected additions, and/or demonstrate resistance. In this essay, I will first treat Korean theatre's active engagement with absurdist theatre in the 1960s not as a West-centered case of evaluation and imitation, but as a significant *glocal* aesthetic phenomenon; it is from this perspective that I will approach Jo-Yeol Park's *A Dialogue Between Two Long-Necked People* and Taesuk Oh's early plays. However, when it comes to Oh's later theatre from the 1970s and onwards, I will discuss a specific mode of glocality, which I call "glocal-locality"—that is, the intersection of the global, the local, and the *restored local* cultures from the past within the larger *local*.

Glocality: Jo-Yeol Park's *A Dialogue Between Two Long-necked People*

Although Kim draws attention to the need for scholarship on Korean plays that reveal absurdist elements, she does not discuss these plays in her essay because she believes that "no Korean playwrights can be called absurdist playwrights in the true sense [of the genre]" and "absurdist elements are shown fragmentarily in works by many Korean playwrights who experimented with anti-realistic techniques."⁹ Similarly, Yon-ho Suh writes, "the creation of Theatre of the Absurd . . . did not succeed in putting down its roots in Korean theatre largely because Korean theatre tended to focus obsessively on absurdist theatre's playfulness."¹⁰ If I were to use Western absurdist theatre as the standard by which to evaluate plays written by Koreans, I would agree with Kim's and Suh's statements. However, given that Western absurdist theatre is a genre that specifically grew out of the European World War II geopolitical context, I believe it is culturally and historically unrealistic to expect Korean writers to adopt the same patterns as, say, Beckett, Pinter, and/or Ionesco. Further, given the short and troubled history of Korea's reception of either drama as written literature or theatre mainly as indoor proscenium theatre, as well as the long history of censorship in Korea, it is rather unproductive to discuss South Korean plays of the 1950s and 1960s evaluatively by the standard set by Western avant-garde theatre of the period.

While Korea has rich and diverse oral performance traditions (including but not limited to shamanist rituals, story-singing performance, and various types of mask theatre), the modern Western concept of theatre and drama, as well as

Chinese and Japanese indoor theatre, was new to Korea in the late 19th century.¹¹ Furthermore, Western theatre was introduced in Korea during Japanese colonial rule.¹² Korean theatre's interaction with Western theatre was thus part of Korea's *colonial* modernity by way of Japan; it was not introduced into Korean culture by independent Koreans. The desire to prove artistic validity through evaluative comparison with the West is not unusual for a nation whose cultural identity was severely undermined by Western hegemony (by way of Japanese colonialism until 1945 and more directly afterwards); however, Korea's historical and cultural specificities must also be considered. Furthermore, because absurdist theatre was not a conscious movement (with an artistic manifesto), and because Martin Esslin's *The Theatre of the Absurd* was not prescriptive but rather an inductive theory of the global theatrical aesthetic trend, the "absurdist" label can be used to describe aspects of Korean playwrights' works when their artistic inspiration and/or their historical and sociopolitical situation point specifically to this genre. Local playwrights can incorporate absurdist aesthetics into their own specifically local visions, thus "claiming" and transforming the nuances of the label.

Jo-Yeol Park's *Mogigin Dusaramui Daehwa* [*A Dialogue Between Two Long-necked People*], was written in 1966 and premiered in 1967 by the Theatre Company *Tal* [Mask]. The similarities between Park's play and *Waiting for Godot* are hard not to notice, and the expression "long-necked" in the title implies earnest waiting in Korean. The playwright notes in the preface that the fundamental inspiration for this play came from a dream in which he had a "symbolic conversation" with two strangers, but he also acknowledges in the afterword that he was able to complete this play only after reading *Waiting for Godot*, the play that gave him a "revelation" and "self-confirmation."¹³ In this sense, *A Dialogue Between Two Long-necked People* might be called a Korean version of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. Like Vladimir and Estragon, Park's characters (named A and B) bicker, play games, and kill time while waiting. They are waiting not for Godot but their bosses, who are supposed to come for their "conferences." The bosses never appear. Only Character C, doomed never to sit down because he must straddle the partitioning line on the stage, briefly appears from the back of the stage and exits.

While this much of the play follows the basic plot structure of *Waiting for Godot* and the overall *mise-en-scène* of the play is as minimalist, Park's play is a more specific and overtly political allegory—that of a partitioned Korea since the day of its liberation from Japan in 1945. A partitioning line, one of the few stage props in the play, signifies the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) that crosses the Korean peninsula. Further, the games that A and B play are politically significant. At the beginning, and then later in the play, A keeps moving a red strap from his right pocket to his left pocket, and B keeps shifting a piece of candy in and out of different pockets. The red strap and the piece of candy might seem arbitrary, but in Korea's political context the red strap recalls the outward signifier of North

Korean communism, while the piece of candy can easily be read as a metonym for South Korean consumer capitalism. Clearly, the bosses' failure to show up for their conferences allegorizes a continuously deferred resolution for the partitioned Korea, which remains even today in the tense truce of war.

Beyond these easily discernable, one-to-one allegories, *A Dialogue Between Two Long-necked People* stresses scatological images of bodily abjection, frustration, and the desire for physical release. A and B giggle, addressing each other as befouled insects:

A: A wasp [referring to B] that has shit on it . . . laughed at . . . a grasshopper [referring to A himself] that has piss on it.

B: The grasshopper [referring to A] that has piss on it made the wasp [referring to B himself] that has shit on it laugh.

A: Are we then tied?

B: One to one, . . . again, zero.¹⁴

These mutual and self-deprecating images express the sense of abjection, powerlessness, and absurdity of the partitioned Korean national body, whose unambiguous desire for independence as a unified nation was crushed soon after Korea's liberation from Japan.¹⁵ The national partition stems from Korea's having been a Japanese colony at the time of the Pacific War and the Soviet Union's last minute intervention. The 38th Parallel that initially partitioned Korea before the Korean War was another arbitrary line in world history, hastily drawn by the United States with no relevance to Korea's regional formation. Bruce Cumings writes that around August 10-11, when "the atomic bombs had been dropped, and the Soviet Red Army had entered the Pacific War . . . John J. McCloy of the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC) directed two young colonels, Dean Rusk and Charles H. Bonesteel, . . . to find a place to divide Korea," giving them thirty minutes. General Douglas MacArthur's "General Order Number One for the Japanese surrender on August 15 . . . includ[ed] in it (and thus making public) the thirty-eighth parallel decision."¹⁶ In the play, Character C recalls Korea's liberation day as the day he lost his hometown. With the partition, not only Character C, but the playwright, and millions of other Koreans, lost their hometowns.¹⁷

In a crude departure from *Waiting for Godot*, one of A & B's main activities on stage is to urinate. They take turns urinating at the back of the stage, their backs turned to the audience. In a phrase resonant with the famous Beckettian "nothing to be done," B says, "Eat and sleep and wait . . . all that is left here is to excrete."¹⁸ In accordance with Fredric Jameson's argument about third-world literature's overt national allegories, the characters' bodies in the play stand in for the stunted, obstructed national body, which festers and bulges with unpurged colonial and neocolonial legacies. As Cumings writes, South Korea did not have

sufficient opportunities to take care of the immediate Japanese legacy—such as complaints about the “unequal land situation and the collaboration of landlords with the Japanese”—because the immediate U.S. military government perpetuated the privileges of former Japanese-collaborators; the U.S. favored educated Korean conservatives, as it construed those who resisted U.S. desires in the South as pro-Soviet.¹⁹

Park’s play brings to the fore the political aspect of Beckett’s plot structure of perpetual waiting, and dramatizes national abjection, absurdity, and postcolonial hope, while his play is less concerned than Beckett’s with the ontological sense of the absurd. It further deviates from the classical European absurdist paradigm(s) because the ending of the play shows wholesome, fable-like qualities, likely a result of Park’s attempt to avoid South Korean censorship of the time. Park writes in the afterword that he had to write a play of “ambiguity” and “abstraction” because it was regarded as a “taboo” to write about “re-unification issues” at that time.²⁰ While some assess Park’s play as an “imitation” of *Godot*,²¹ it is crucial to note that Park’s play reveals his negotiation and identification in his particular global and local circuits. His play was more locally relevant to, more endurable in, and more symptomatic of the politically frustrated, partitioned Korea of the 1960s, a nation with the added frustration of censorship and extreme anti-communist ideology under the Bak Jeonghui (Park Chung-hee) dictatorial regime (1961-1979).

Kim and Suh both point out that absurdism, the major anti-realistic theatre of the period, worked well with the experimental spirit of the emerging small theatre groups in South Korea,²² and that it was particularly appealing to Koreans because the existential philosophy and absurdist outlook were well matched with a Korean psyche that had just endured a series of national traumas.²³ Furthermore, as Park was possibly attracted to *Waiting for Godot* for its capacity to camouflage political themes in allegory, Kim connects the vigor of Western absurdist theatre in the Korea of the 1960s and 1970s to absurdist plays’ latent political energy during the dictatorship in South Korea. Kim writes that, through covertly allegorized political signifiers, absurdist plays offered a sort of “catharsis” to South Koreans who did not have enough freedom to express their thoughts on politics.²⁴ Im lists other Korean plays of the late 1960s that show absurdist elements: Dae-seong Yun’s *Chulbal [Departure]* (1967), Taesuk Oh’s *Wedding Deureseu [Wedding Dress]* (1967) and *Hwanjeolgi [Change of Season]* (1968), and Jae-hyeon Lee’s *Je Sipcheung [The 10th Floor]* (1969).²⁵

Taesuk Oh’s Early Plays and the “Absurdist” Controversy

The early plays of Taesuk Oh, who also directs most of his plays, have been controversially associated with absurdist aesthetics. In his interview with Oh, which is collected in *Oh Taesuk Yeongeuk [Taesuk Oh’s Theatre]*, Yon-ho Suh mentions the following plays that he thinks evoke absurdist elements: *Wedding Dress*; *Change of*

Season (especially evocative of Pinter's *The Birthday Party*); *Yeowang-gwa Giseung* [*The Queen and the Strange Monk*] (1969); *Yudayeo, Daki Ulgijeone* [*Judas, before the Rooster Crows*] (1969); *Gyohang* (1969); and *Yukgyowie Yumocha* [*A Baby Buggy on the Overbridge*] (1970).²⁶ When Suh asks Oh about Western absurdist theatre's influence on the six plays above, Oh denies any particular relation. In the interview, Oh maintains that if his plays appear to have Western absurdist elements, it is perhaps because he has "instinctively avoided moving [his] plot in a [conventionally] expected direction" and has employed the "indirect" and "roundabout" Korean traditional mode of communication. Traditionally in Korea, Oh says, the speaker's "omissions and leaps" are understood to be crucial unspoken pointers of meaning for the listener, although contemporary Korean audiences are not well practiced in this type of communication. When Suh encapsulates what Oh has said, saying, "So your theatre is not much related to absurdist theatre," Oh answers, "Right, I don't think it is, although I did have the feeling that language is misleading."²⁷

While Oh denies any direct Western absurdist influence, Oh's comment on his sense of the limits of language and his explanation of how he came to write his debut play, *Yeong-Gwang* [*Glory*] (premiered in 1962), suggest his relationship, though indirectly, with the global and local popularity of absurdist theatre. Saying that the thread for all his early plays is the "limits of communication," Oh explains the main theme in his early plays: "Reaching a meeting point with another person is difficult; we are bound to be strangers to each other no matter how long we stay together; whenever we meet, we are always strangers, that is it." Oh says that he wrote the eccentric debut play when he was in his third year of college, wanting to win the award money in a play competition. Downplaying it as his amateur "play on words," he says that he mixed what he "perfunctorily" had heard about Ionesco with his "then merely burgeoning understanding" of O'Neill and some "basic familiarity" with the *Pak Cheomji* version of *kkokdugeuk* (Korean traditional puppetry).²⁸ Oh's understanding of absurdist theatre might have been, as he said, perfunctory. When he denies Western absurdist elements in his theatre, he says:

Because I am more familiar with Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, and Arthur Miller, I have not been willing to acknowledge absurdist influence. To use the analogy of a mathematical equation, this way [referring to the three playwrights he mentioned], is at least a linear equation or a quadratic equation, isn't it? If I fell in the direction of absurdist theatre, I wonder if things could have been precarious later on. In some sense, I am quite conservative.²⁹

The connection Oh draws between absurdist theatre and precariousness suggests that Oh, like some Western and Korean critics, may have thought of absurdist theatre as something akin to theatre of nihilism and meaninglessness—a rather reductive assessment of plays that are called absurdist; for instance, Ionesco's *Rhinoceros* (1959) is, according to Ionesco himself, an “anti-Nazi play” and has socio-political meaning. It is clear that Oh was neither directly influenced nor inspired by absurdist plays. However, his debut play's Ionesco-evoking *non sequiturs* and his early works' preoccupation with signature absurdist themes of alienation, discord, and miscommunication couldn't have been merely incidental and accidental. When Oh was working on his theatre in the 1960s and 1970s, Western absurdist plays were often staged as new and exciting theatre in Korea; and he also professed his “perfunctory” exposure to (global) Ionesco. In addition to Oh's own personal and (non-realistic) artistic inclinations (including his use of Korean traditional modes of communication), the *zeitgeist* of post-colonial Korea of the 1960s, which intersected with that of post-World War II Europe, must have also contributed to Oh's early plays on some, if limited, levels. In this regard, it is worth noting Hyun-sook Shin's analysis that Western absurdist plays provided points of identification for South Koreans who were generally experiencing a sense of loss, anxiety, and alienation, owing to rapid industrialization in the 1960s and 1970s.³⁰

Glocal-locality, or Re-centering on the Restored/Being-Restored Local Cultures within the Larger Local

From the 1970s onward, Oh's approach shifted to Korean traditional performance aesthetics, and any single stylistic category becomes insufficient for describing Oh's theatre. In the 1970s some Korean theatre artists began to seek their artistic identity in traditional performance aesthetics, myths, legends, classical literature, and folklore.³¹ Hyeon-Cheol Kim points out that this effort in Korea has connections with the global discourse of postcolonialism.³² As Kim rightly notes, Korean theatre's attempts to revive and incorporate its traditions are postcolonial. Since the 1905 Eulsa Treaty (a.k.a. the “Protectorate Treaty”),³³ Japanese Resident-Generals and later the Japanese Colonial Government's policies promoted Japanese culture in Korea while suppressing Korean history and traditions (including Korean indigenous performances), subjecting Koreans' artistic activities to Japanese colonial censorship. Japan's assimilation policy was the severest during the later years of the colonial rule, banning all suspected Korean nationalist activities, forcing the Japanese religion Shinto on Koreans, and prohibiting the use of the Korean language in numerous venues, especially in schools. In this context of colonial modernity, Korean indigenous performances seemed “boring” and “outdated” to many Koreans, whereas Japanese *shimpa*, *shingeki*,³⁴ and Western realistic theatre were presented as “advanced.”³⁵ Japanese colonialism, in conjunction with Korea's

Confucian condescension to theatre-related activities and the continued Western hegemony in South Korean society, all contributed to many Koreans' distance from Korean indigenous performance traditions even up to the present day. Increasingly, however, efforts are being made to redress this situation.

In the light of postcolonialism, Oh's disavowal of Western absurdist aesthetics, claiming his relation to it as no more than perfunctory, is significant, as is his articulation of his own aesthetics as distinct from Western and Japanese aesthetics. In Western theatre, Oh says, audiences peep at the stage through the fourth wall, sitting in the "darkened" auditorium; however, in the theatre of the East, the audience is located "at the same height as the theatre stage . . . placing actors and audiences on the same level in height" and "enabling them to see the other under light."³⁶ As for Japanese traditional theatre, Oh repeats what he said at the conference for Korean and Japanese directors in what he recalls to be 1992 or 1993:

There I briefly mentioned, "When I first saw *kabuki* and *noh* in Japan, I was very surprised [because] there are theatrical grammars, standards, and something exact. . . [While the] Japanese had made something excellent like this, what did our ancestors do? That's what I thought at first. However, over the following decade, I had come to realize that it was not that [our ancestors] couldn't; our [Korean] temperament by nature defies getting into exact molds. That is why they chose not to make it, it was not because they didn't have the wisdom to make it"[;] this is what I said to my Japanese friends.

He goes on to explain to Suh what he believes Korean performance aesthetics are:

That is what I previously mentioned—going off the beat, not on the beat. When a leading gong-player in a folk band is expected to hit the gong, he does not. . . . But the audience can hear it. In other words, this is the same idea as omissions and leaps, which I mentioned earlier. That kind of space in the margin, that elasticity, ironically gives more persevering life force.³⁷

Chunpung's Wife (premiered in 1976) was one of Oh's most representative and successful plays to draw on various Korean traditional performance aesthetics. In what follows, I will delineate some noteworthy literary, embodied, and cultural components in *Chunpung's Wife* and analyze how Oh employs them, thus providing context for my discussion of Oh's syncretism in relation to Western avant-garde theatre styles and other types of culturally and stylistically syncretic theatre. The characters and major events in *Chunpung's Wife* draw on *Yi Chungpung-Jeon*,

an anonymous novel of the late period of the Joseon Kingdom (1392-1897). Chunpung's wife, in the novel, is a strong and fascinating female character, atypical of women represented in literature of Confucian and patriarchal Joseon society. Chunpung, who has a strong appetite for pretty women, batters and leaves his wife, only to waste all his money on a *gisaeng* (female entertainer) named Chuwol in Pyeongyang. Chuwol takes all Chunpung's money and kicks him out. Without any money to live on and too ashamed to return to his wife, Chunpung begs Chuwol to use him as her servant. Hearing of this, Chunpung's wife disguises herself as a man, goes to Pyeongyang as an aide to Pyeongyang's Governor, punishes Chuwol, and returns the money to Chunpung. When Chunpung returns home, he then finds out that his wife was the aide to the Governor and feels remorseful.³⁸

Although Oh builds on the characters of Chunpung and Chunpung's wife from the novel, he adds new characters and alters the plot of *Yi Chunpung-Jeon*. Significantly, Oh's play pushes the life of Chunpung's wife to extreme abjection, dramatizing the wife's sense of *han* (Korean tragic sentiment).³⁹ For example, in the original novel, Chunpung's wife becomes the aide to the Governor by gaining the favor of the noble lady in the household of Pyeongyang's Governor. The wife works hard with her sewing skills to earn enough money to prepare nutritious food for the noble lady, who used to be sick, but recovers thanks to the care of Chunpung's wife. In Oh's play, however, Chunpung's wife is not given these resources. Iji and Deokjung, two mythical reptile characters similar to the title character of the Turtle in *Byeoljubu-jeon*,⁴⁰ tell the wife that the only way left for her to achieve a higher social position is to use her body to give birth to a baby for someone else.

In a performance video-recorded in August 1999,⁴¹ Chunpung's wife, recognizing this wretched situation, weeps miserably at the dilemma of having to give up her body to someone else in order to get to her husband and ultimately to gain his love (which, it turns out, she will never have). Prompted by Iji's words, "Let's live tough. Life is only once,"⁴² the wife begins to give up her body, which is symbolically portrayed on stage. Iji and Deokjung quickly bring a small round dark metal pot to the center stage, repeatedly singing the first half of "Gujiga,"⁴³ the most ancient ritualistic conjuring communal verse extant in Korea. The dark round pot represents the dark, hard shell of the turtle, and, as they bring it in, they call out, "Turtle! Turtle!" With the continued traditional percussion music in the background, the wife flings herself down and lies on her back, holding the dark round pot with her feet, and thrusting it in and out between her legs, slowly but forcefully. The scene ends with her screaming, mixed with sobbing, as she laboriously collapses from her prostrated position with her raised buttocks—as if she is, in a weird logic, giving birth to the dark pot. The first half of "Gujiga," chanted by Iji and Deokjung, goes, "Turtle, Turtle/ stick out [your] head."⁴⁴ While there are different interpretations of "Gujiga,"⁴⁵ Byeong-uk Jeong reads the head of the turtle as representing new life and as a phallic symbol.⁴⁶ Based on Jeong's

interpretation, it is significant that Iji and Deokjung do not sing the other half of the verse (“If [you] don’t stick out [your head], [I/ we] will roast [with fire] and eat [you]”²⁴⁷). Citing Sir James George Frazer’s *Myths of the Origin of Fire* and Gaston Bachelard’s *La Psychanalyse du Feu*, Jeong argues that the last line of “Gujiga” could have originated from ancient women’s burning sexual desire and thus could be a metaphor for female genitalia.⁴⁸ Structurally, then, the second half of the verse provides a threatening or balancing power to the first half that evokes the phallic symbol. The omission of the second half accentuates Chunpung’s wife’s abjection, sacrifice, and life of inequity, from which she, however, has to move forward, as she ironically gives birth to the “turtle” thrust upon her body.



Front row, left to right: Hwajo (Eun-Young Lee), Chuwol (Mi-Hye Jo), Husband (Kyeong-Jae Yoon). Back row, far left: Chunpung’s wife (Jong-Min Hwang). *Chunpung’s Wife* (2000 production, similar to recorded 1999 production analyzed here.). Photo by Do-Hee Lee. Photo Courtesy Mokwha Repertory

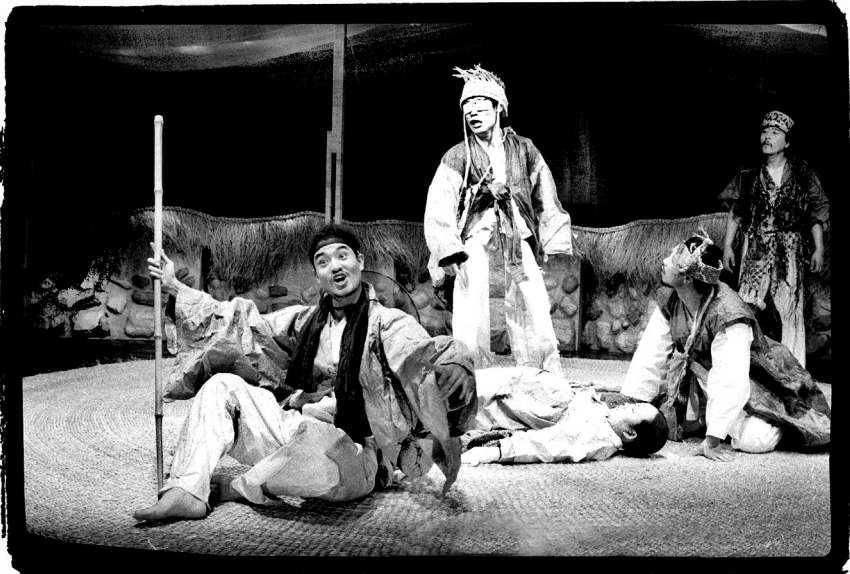
While the 1999 production stressed the pathos of *han* (with the wife and other characters wailing, sobbing, and screaming protractedly), it is also strongly peppered with comedic elements drawn from various traditional performances such as *pansori* (one-person story-singing performance), *talchum/talnori* (mask dance/mask performance), and *kkokdugeuk*. All the characters exaggerate their facial expressions, and, most of the time, they deliver their lines facing the audience like actors before a film camera, even when they are talking to one another—a common directorial choice in Oh’s theatre. Further, the production incorporates *talchum* and *kkokdugeuk*, with characters frequently bursting into traditional-style songs and dances. These directorial and theatrical choices contribute to the impression that the characters are acting like puppets. In the inserted court scene,

in which Chunpung's wife as a newly appointed aide to the Governor plays the role of a judge, another character who is also the wife of an unfaithful husband acts coquettishly toward him, moving her lips in a cartoonishly exaggerated, fast-paced manner. This wife, who elicits much laughter in the auditorium, springs to sit down suddenly and shakes her body like a doll as she lies down, evoking the general images of puppets in *kkokdugeuk*.

Oh gives grotesque twists to some mask and puppet images as well. Unlike in the original novel, Chunpung's wife in Oh's play is characterized as ugly with "bumpy skin" and "a warped face," and with six fingers on one of her hands. Thirsting for her husband's attention and love, she even springs up from death to engage in a sexual dance with Chunpung, who mistakes her for Chuwol because she is covered in Chuwol's wrap skirt. In the 1999 video-recording, the wife frantically hides behind and covers herself with Chuwol's flower-patterned red silk skirt, so as to keep dancing orgasmically with her husband (who she knows takes her to be Chuwol), and this renders the character of Chunpung's wife poignant and even pathetic. Evoking the ending of her sexual scene with the turtle pot, Chunpung's wife, at the end of this dance, looks down at her husband under her body, and shouts, with a maniacal smile, that she has just given birth to a big son. Hyeon-Cheol Kim points out a more specific puppetry reference in this piece, that characters in Oh's play headbutt each other, which is a frequent method of solving conflicts (e.g., by punishing another person) in Korean traditional puppetry. For instance, Kim writes, when Chunpung's wife needs to pretend to her husband that she is dead, the reptilian character Deokjung makes her faint by simply giving her a headbutt.⁴⁹ Headbutting, drawn from *kkokdugeuk*, is one of the main theatrical techniques used in this play to advance the plot and give it twists. This technique exemplifies the four key concepts of Oh's theatre, which are extracted from Korean traditional performance aesthetics: "omissions, leaps, unexpectedness, and spontaneity."⁵⁰

Besides "Gujiga," *talchum/talnori*, *pansori*, *kkokdugeuk*, and *Yi Chunpung-Jeon*, *Chunpung's Wife* also incorporates elements of *gut* (Korean shaman ritual), Korean funeral rites, and Buddhist chants. The 1999 production of *Chunpung's Wife* makes a humorous reference to an aspect of Korean contemporary culture, inserting a short scene in which actors and actresses suddenly stop playing their characters and decide to take a photo at the play's critical moment, reflecting many Koreans' fondness for photo taking. In many of his plays, Oh addresses Korean contemporary issues overtly or covertly, sometimes incorporating actual unbelievable accounts of inhumanity from the newspaper.

Because of the use of the aforementioned four concepts (which cause narrative disruptions), combined with the twisted mask and puppet images, a mixture of tragicomedy and grotesquerie, and traditional rituals, *Chunpung's Wife* and Oh's other later plays, could possibly evoke for some audiences a range of Western avant-garde theatre styles—absurdist, Brechtian, Artaudian, and post-Artaudian,



Left to right: Chunpung (Myung-Ho Lee), Chunpung's wife (Jong-Min Hwang), Father (Hai-Jin Yoo), Son (Sung-Man Yoon), Deokjung (Hyun-Sik Kang). *Chunpung's Wife* (2000). Photo by Do-Hee Lee. Photo Courtesy Mokwha Repertory Company.

etc.—at different moments of the performance. It is of course clear that Oh's theatre, centering on traditional performances, draws its main artistic energy from Korea's indigenous repertoires. As Oh explained, the logic of Korean traditional performances goes "off-beat," Korean mask dance, puppetry, and oral literature, for instance, are non-realistic and often magical and surreal, like many other non-Western traditional performance repertoires. If theatre like *Chunpung's Wife* evokes Western avant-garde labels, it is fundamentally because the rigid essentialist binary of Western avant-garde/non-Western experimental theatre is inadequate. Because much Western avant-garde theatre appropriated non-Western sources, especially in the first half of the 20th century, there has already been cultural syncretism between "West" and "non-West." If there is a tendency to resort confusedly to Western avant-garde labels for theatre primarily drawing on indigenous repertoires, it has to do with the dominance of Western theatre labels as academic categories and practices. While there could be stylistic similarities, the imposition of Western labels could potentially be a colonialist or colonized practice when non-Western artists' works have nothing much to do with the Western categories, but are reflecting local and indigenous, pre-colonial theatrical traditions. On the other hand, I also see that, when used diplomatically and strategically, dominant labels could also function as analogies to help quickly translate a lesser-known work to others, or in some cases have a certain "advertising effect" to draw a larger number of audiences to the new work. But these labels must not be used to reduce the original to mere imitations

of globally recognized and dominant theatrical styles.

Chunpung's Wife as a whole, however, defies categories, partly because of its use of indigenous repertoires⁵¹ but, more importantly, because of its syncretic nature, which shares its particular process of global navigation with much other postcolonial and indigenous theatre. In the case of *Chunpung's Wife* and much of Oh's later theatre, neither the concept of syncretism nor even "glocality," as used by Eng-Beng Lim in "Glocalqueering in New Asia: The Politics of Performing Gay in Singapore,"⁵² adequately describe Oh's juxtaposition of Korean traditional performance repertoires, literary sources, contemporary cultural references and issues, as well as non-Korean references.

In his article, Lim argues that *Asian Boys Vol 1* (2000), an English-language queer play produced in the globalized city-state Singapore, demands an epistemic shift from the dominant Western interpretive paradigm of "global queering" to a glocal paradigm that defies the singular West/East binary. Lim points to the "conglomeration" of intra- and inter-Asian cultural references in the production, such as "Indian gods, Japanese pop icons, Chinese rickshawmen, samsui women, and Malay online chat addicts."⁵³ Oh's use of various Korean (and sometimes non-Korean) cultural elements, while still syncretic in its own way, is distinct from this postmodern syncretism of disparate Asian local cultural references. As Oh confesses, in order to write and direct a play like *Chunpung's Wife*, he had to educate himself first, reading Korean classical texts and the few fortunately archived materials about Korean performance traditions (e.g., *pansori*, traditional puppetry, and mask dance), thereby acquiring the vocabularies and rhythms of the Korean language practiced, for example, in the Joseon Period. Oh recalls that *Shoettugi Nori* (*Shoettugi's Play*, premiered in 1972)—the first project in which he had to translate/adapt a Western play (Molière's *Les Fourberies de Scapin*) into Korean traditional performance aesthetics—was a significant learning experience that later enabled him to write *Chunpung's Wife*. Certainly, Oh has been a pioneer in the growing movement of postcolonial Korea's re-discovery of its traditional heritage. His effort to give his theatre a distinct Korean identity through Korea's pre-colonial memory is *postcolonial* in its artistic spirit because that memory has been policed and suppressed through colonial history. Thematically, even such a covertly sociopolitical play as *Chunpung's Wife*, compared to Oh's many other plays, captures postcolonial energy because it dramatizes Chunpung's wife transforming her most abject situation of *han* into (pro)creative moments. Further, the way he creates his theatre, and what he does with the various Korean cultural sources in his plays, suggest that Oh's theatre is not merely a product of glocal circuits, but, more precisely, a result of what could be called *glocal-locality* for the convenience of shorthand.

By "glocal-locality," I mean a particular glocal situation which prompts one to look further inwards into one's local (ethnic/tribal/or national) identity, leading

one to take a journey to encounter various local cultures from the past—cultures whose transmission has been obstructed through history (including colonial history and such experiences as forced migration, rapid “modernization,” and industrialization). Oh’s glocal encounter—i.e., with Molière’s play (global) as a Korean playwright (local)—led him to research, for example, Korean mask dance, *pansori*, and classical literature (traditional local cultures from the past which also have internal regional diversities). Of course, Oh cannot go back to B.C.E. 42 to hear “Gujiga,” the ancient ritualistic communal verse, nor can he see *kkokdugeuk* as it was practiced exactly during the Goryeo (918-1392) and Joseon Periods. What he encounters are local cultures *restored/being-restored*⁵⁴ from the past, via archives, photos, reprinted lyrics collected by scholars, and restored repertoires of performances traditionally passed on through what Diana Taylor calls “embodied practice/knowledge.”⁵⁵ To put it another way, glocal-locality—distinct from strict restoration or preservation of tradition—prompts one to encounter one’s own cultural heritage (which has become what Nigerian theatre scholar Awam Amkpa might describe as alienated or residual⁵⁶) *in the present*, and to employ it *in a contemporary (artistic) frame*—which already brings levels of hybridity to one’s work—for the *contemporary audience*. Glocal-locality requires a *conscious* effort to encounter one’s own heritage because that cultural memory is no longer easily accessible in everyday life and culture. Glocal-local practices are thus embedded in their colonized or postcolonial cultures, or related to other cultures whose heritage has been repressed/suppressed in other manners. Globalization that respects true diversity, it seems to me, would consider active forms of “glocalization,” or perhaps more importantly “glocal-localization,” both placing a fundamental emphasis on local specificities while having a global reach.

Oh’s glocal-local theatre, then, prompts his Korean audiences to experience glocal-local spectating as well. They encounter Oh’s aestheticized expression of the restored local traditional cultures from the past in the glocal context. However, because the Korean performance tradition has been distanced from contemporary Korean quotidian reality in varying degrees, many contemporary Korean audiences, if they want to fully understand Oh’s theatre, will find themselves having to interact with restored Korean classical literature and embodied performance traditions through self-, mentored-, and/or institutional education.

The Pluralities of the Global and the Local

Glocal-locality, while it re-focuses on local cultures, is a product of navigating the pluralities of both global and local cultures. Suh’s extensive interview with Oh and the history of the Korean reception of Western absurdist theatre provide insights into the various manners in which an individual in a local culture navigates global trends, using, for example, 1) the “perfunctory” global (as in Oh’s relationship

with Ionesco); 2) the “partial,” “fragmentary,” or even “incorrect” global (e.g., fragmentary and imperfect translations of Esslin’s *The Theatre of the Absurd* into Korean until Miy-he Kim’s complete translation in 2005)⁵⁷; 3) the global that is to be differentiated or distanced (e.g., Western realistic theatre and Japanese traditional theatre for Oh); and 4) the global that is admirable or inspirational. In Oh’s case, examples for the last category would be Eastern European theatre and possibly Shakespeare. In the interview, Oh mentions that, while he was not without doubts about how best to employ Korean traditional performance aesthetics, he acquired a strong conviction about the value of his approach and a clearer vision for his future direction after watching two Eastern European theatre pieces in the U.S., which he recalls as “the best works.” About Tadeusz Kantor’s *Dead Class* (1975), in particular, Oh comments: “The overall structure, form, and theatrical logic was just like *talchum* [Korean mask dance].” Oh has also produced Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* and *Macbeth* in his style and “borrowed” a little bit of Brecht for his play *Jine wa Jireong-i* [*Centipede and Earthworm*] (2001). Oh comments that getting inspiration from, and even “borrowing bits” from others’ works, is part of all artistic processes and is thus salubrious; he says he lets these bits “ferment” (as in Korean fermentation-based food culture) and then incorporates them into his theatre.⁵⁸

Through this glocal navigation, Oh makes sure to place traditional performance aesthetics at the center of all of his later work. Also, he has produced and is interested in continuing to produce his plays in different regional dialects, thus reviving and in a sense re-creating them. To reiterate, various global theatre repertoires stimulated Oh to define and invent his own theatre, inspiring him to look further into the diverse local cultures and languages of Korea. Further, many of his plays’ themes, though diverse, are about historical issues related to Japanese colonialism and issues of post-colonial Korea, or colonial legacies—including national partition, the Korean War, and the extreme pro-Japan/anti-Japan or leftist/rightist internal division among contemporary Koreans, which he views as self-destructive.⁵⁹

Shifting South Korean Theatre

While some Korean theatre artists and playwrights began to seek their traditional heritage in the 1970s and more actively in the 1980s, Korean plays showing absurdist elements persisted in the 1970s. According to Im, Korean plays in the 1970s that show absurdist elements are: Jo-byeong Yun’s *Gunneolmoksappa* [*A Tale of a Railroad Crossing*] (1970), Yong-rak Kim’s *Bujeongbyeongdong* [*Non-virtuous Hospital Ward*] (1971) and *Dwaejideului Sanchaek* [*Pigs’ Stroll*] (1972), Jae-hyeon Lee’s *Elibeiteo* [*Elevator*] (1972), and Hyeon-hwa Lee’s *Nuguseyo?* [*Who’s There?*] (1974) and *Swi-Swi-Swiit* [*Sh-Sh-Shush*] (1976). Im writes, however, that since the late 1970s, Korean absurdist plays seem to have “withered” because of new types of avant-garde theatre, musicals, and playwrights’ experiments

with traditional performance aesthetics, although some absurdist elements can still be detected in the works of several playwrights in the 1980s.⁶⁰

My examination of Park's play and the trajectory of Oh's theatre, with a close analysis of *Chunpung's Wife*, illuminates the pluralities of both the global and the local as well as the interaction of Korean theatre with shifting global theatrical trends. Roughly speaking, this was a shift from the concentrated popularity of Western absurdist theatre in the 1960s and 1970s⁶¹ to more creative attention to traditional heritage from the 1970s and onwards, along with new interests in musicals and other avant-garde theatre. Of course, the addition of different stylistic focuses and other playwrights would certainly reveal more dynamics and diversity in the theatre of post-colonial Korea. Although this essay shows only part of the whole picture, I have limited my analysis to Korean playwrights who I see as best representing two notable trends in Korean postcolonial theatre: 1) localization of absurdist theatre, the type of Western theatre that South Korean theatre engaged actively, if controversially, and 2) a shift to creative attention to Korean indigenous/pre-colonial memory.

My research and analysis suggest that Korean postcolonial sociopolitical reality—including, national partition (1945), the U.S.-military government (1945-1948), the Korean War (1950-1953), rapid industrialization in the 1960s and 1970s, and a series of dictatorial regimes (1948-1987)—and Koreans' certain predisposition for tragicomedy (or traditional inclination for using humor to compensate for *han*) as indicated in some scholarly writings,⁶² as well as Koreans' desire and predisposition for non-realistic (experimental) theatre, contributed to an environment congenial to absurdist aesthetics. Park's play and, arguably, Oh's early plays are creative examples. On the other hand, Oh's later theatre shows that his interaction with multiple global theatres inspired him to search restored/being-restored local cultures and dialects in Korea. To varying degrees, Korean theatre has always localized non-indigenous cultures—whether it be Japanese *shimpa* as Korean *sinpajo*,⁶³ Japanese *shingeki* as Korean *singeuk*, or Western realist theatre and absurdist aesthetics as Korean versions. These forms surely departed from their "original" forms, but they suited Koreans better in their troubled sociopolitical circumstances, and thus they were culturally and aesthetically unique. The playwrights' various ways of engaging with global and local artistic modes contribute to the diversity of Korean theatre. However, in the spirit of postcolonialism, the notable move from *glocality* to *glocal-locality* indicates a new era in which Korea's indigenous/pre-colonial memories, or the restored local cultures from the past, are finally in the spotlight.

Notes

1. I am grateful to Yon-ho Suh, Miy-he Kim, Hyeon-Cheol Kim, and other scholars of Korean theatre, literature, and history. Without their critical and foundational work, this essay wouldn't have been possible. I am also grateful to the guest editor, Evan Winet, and the other editors of this journal for their kind assistance and understanding. The feedback I received from those who attended my working group at ASTR was constructive, so I thank them all. And I give my special thanks to Jon Erickson for taking time to discuss my essay and give me encouragement.

2. Miy-he Kim, “부조리극 수용과 한국연극 [The Reception of the Theatre of the Absurd and Korean Theatre],” *한국연극의 쟁점과 새로운 탐구 [Korean Theatre's Points at Issue and New Research]*, ed. Yon-ho Suh (Seoul: Yeongueuk-gwa Ingan, 2001) 8. All translations from articles, plays, performances, and books produced in Korea are mine.

3. There is inconsistency in the Romanization of Korean. Throughout this essay, I followed the latest Romanization System of Korean, released in 2000. However, for personal names, I first tried to respect individual Koreans' preference, via email, phone calls, personal conversations, previous publications in English, or public information on the internet. When this was difficult or impossible, I followed the Romanization System of Korean. For example, as for “Junseo Im,” I followed the Romanization System. However, as for “Taesuk Oh,” I followed what his theatre company told me is the playwright's preferred name in English.

4. Junseo Im, *반연극의 계보와 미학 [Anti-Play and Its Aesthetics: Centering on the Theatre of the Absurd]* (Seoul: Salim, 2004) 3-19.

5. Yon-ho Suh, *한국연극사: 현대편 [History of Contemporary Korean Theatre]* (Seoul: Yeongueuk-gwa Ingan, 2005) 223.

6. Quoted in Kim 22, 29.

7. In this essay, the word “realistic” refers to the concept of realism that emerged in European theatre in the late 19th century.

8. In this essay, when I want to stress the temporal meaning of its prefix “post” as in the post-liberation period, I use “post-colonial” with a hyphen. In most cases, however, I use “postcolonial” without a hyphen, indicating the dual meaning of its prefix “post,” i.e., the temporal “post” and the “post” referring to the consequent legacies of colonialism.

9. Kim 9.

10. Yon-ho Suh, *History of Contemporary Korean Theatre* 238-9.

11. Yon-ho Suh, *History of Modern Korean Theatre* (Seoul: Yeongueuk-gwa Ingan, 33-9).

12. Imperial Japan's unequal relationship with Korea goes back to the 1876 Ganghwa Treaty. Korea was officially a colony of Japan from 1910 to 1945.

13. Jo-Yeol Park, *목이 긴 두 사람의 대화 [A Dialogue between Two Long-necked People]. 오장군의 발톱: 박조열 회곡집 [The Toenails of General O: Jo-Yeol Park's Collected Plays]* (Seoul: Hakgobang, 1991) 107, 139. Out of print, but available in the National Library of Korea. Park writes in the afterword: “As soon as I began writing this play, I stopped writing because of self-doubt. At that time, I had a decisive opportunity, which rescued me; I came across Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. That was a revelation and self-confirmation. The wretched activities and waiting in *Waiting for Godot* was similar to how I wanted to dramatize my characters.”

14. Park 111.

15. Ki-baik Lee, *A New History of Korea*, trans. Edward W. Wagner with Edward J. Shultz. (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1984) 373-379; Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History* (New York: Norton, 1997) 185-92. Koreans did not imagine or desire that liberation from Japan would bring a national partition. The Korean Provisional Government and a Committee for the Preparation of Korean Independence were both ignored by the United States.

16. Cumings 186-92.

17. Park 118.

18. 114.

19. See Cumings 190-4.

20. Park 139.

21. For example, see Dohee Kim, “한국의 부조리 연극 [Korean Absurdist Theatre],” *diss.*, Joseon U, 2006, 85-8.

22. Kim 24; Suh, *History of Contemporary Korean Theatre* 223.

23. Suh, *History of Contemporary Korean Theatre* 221-2.

24. Kim 25.

25. Im 18.

26. Suh, *History of Contemporary Korean Theatre* 45.

27. Quoted in Won-Jae Jang, ed. *오테석 연극: 실험과 도전의 40년 [Taesuk Oh's Theatre: Forty Years of Experiment and Challenge]* (Seoul: Yeongeuk-gwa Ingan, 2002) 12, 45.

28. Quoted in Jang 36, 34.

29. Jang 45. Here, I surmise that Oh uses a “linear equation” and a “quadratic equation” as mathematical metaphors for works in which the audience can figure out the meaning of the (artistic) unknown, as opposed to a “cubic equation” in which it is harder or almost impossible to get to a meaning.

30. Hyun-sook Shin, “프랑스 연극 [French Theatre]” *한국에서의 서양 연극 [Western Theatre in Korea]*, ed. Hyun-sook Shin, et al. (Seoul: Sohwa, 1999) 288.

31. Yon-ho Suh and Sang-ho Lee, *우리연극 100년 [Korean Theatre 100 Years]* (Seoul: Hyeonamsa, 2000) 233-5; Hyeon-Cheol Kim 205.

32. Hyeon-Cheol Kim, “1970년대 오테석 희곡의 전통 계승양상 연구: 탈식민주주의적 관점과 전통 계승의 문제 [The Study of Korean Traditions in Taesuk Oh's Drama in the 1970s: Postcolonialism and the Use of Tradition].” *오테석공연대본전집 4 [Collection of Taesuk Oh's Performance Scripts 4]*, eds. Yon-ho Seo and Won-jae Jang. (Seoul: Yeongeuk-gwa Ingan, 2003) 205-6.

33. With this unequal treaty, Japan obtained the right over Korea's diplomatic affairs, but in effect controlled Korea's internal administration as well. See Ki-baik Lee 309-11. According to M. Cody Poulton, *shimpa* (new school) was “the first movement to create a modern theatre in Japan.” While *shimpa* distinguished itself “from the ‘old school,’ *kabuki*,” it “retained many *kabuki* conventions.” See Dennis Kennedy, ed. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre and Performance* (Oxford: Oxford U P, 2003) 1241-2.

34. According to Poulton, *shingeki* (new theatre), “the leading movement in modern Japanese theatre until the 1960s,” “rejected traditional Japanese theatre, especially *kabuki* . . . in favor of [western-style] realism.” See Kennedy 1242-3.

35. Lee 352-4; Suh 33-122, 359-404. See Lee's *A New History of Korea* for more information about Japan's assimilation policy in Korean society in general. See Suh's *History of Modern Korean Theatre* for more information about Japan's assimilation policy in Korean theatre.

36. This concept reflects, for example, Korean *madang-geuk*, a yard theatre, in which the stage, traditionally outdoors, is wide open to the audience. *Chunpung's Wife* was performed on a stage that resembles the structure of *madang-geuk*.

37. Quoted in Jang 9-18.

38. *Yi Chunpung-jeon. 한국고전문학대계: 소설집1 [Korean Classical Literature: A Collection of Novels 1]* (Seoul: Myeongmundang, 1991) 411-28.

39. I would explain it as “a pent-up tragic sentiment of a complex nature, owing to unresolved grievances and trauma.” *Han* is described as “the most Korean tragic sentiment” and is often essentialized as a sentiment that belongs almost only to Koreans. Based on Seong-cheol Jo's explanation of the historical and social background of this term in Korea, *han* appears in the political and social underdogs who do not have resources to undo their grievances. Traditionally, Koreans tended to deal with *han* not by despair or revenge, but by sublimating it through religious activities (e.g., shamanism, folk beliefs, and Buddhism) and artistic activities (e.g., folk songs, pansori, mask dance, and literature). Traditionally, Koreans used comic sentiments or humor, called *haehak* (해학) and *iksal* (익살) to sublimate *han* in these activities. See *Korea-World Encyclopedia* vol. 29 (Dongseo P, 1999).

40. Hyeon-Cheol Kim 222. Kim states that these two characters resonate with the character of the Turtle in *Byeoljubu-jeon*, a Joseon period novelized version of *Pansori Sugung-ga*, the *pansori* performance of the same story.

41. It is well known that Oh changes his scripts for performance constantly. There is in fact no fixed *play* for him, as Suh and Jang say, “[Oh's] plays are revised every day, and are revised for every re-staging of the plays.” Because there are many versions of a given play, Suh and Jang write that they as the editors needed to find what they consider to be “the best version.” As Suh and Jang explain, Oh writes scripts for *performances*, rather than for drama as written literature. Suh and Jang, *오테석공연대본전집 4 [Collection of Taesuk Oh's Performance Scripts Vol. 4]* (Seoul: Yeongeuk-gwa Ingan, 2003) 3-4.

42. *Chunpung's Wife*, dir. Taesuk Oh. Video recording, August 1999.

43. “Gujiga,” which Gi-ok Seong speculates to have existed as early as B.C.E. 7-8 centuries (see “<구지가>의 작품적 성격과 그 해석” 1) [*The Characteristics and Interpretation of 'Gujiga' (1)*]. *Ulsan-eomunnonjib Vol. 3. No. 76 [울산어문논집 제 3집 76]*, is recorded in the second volume of *삼국유사 [History of the Three Kingdoms]* as a part of the mythological story about the birth of Kaya (B.C.E. 42-562), an ancient kingdom in the Korean peninsula.

44. This Korean verse is recorded in Chinese letters. The first half of the verse goes, “龜何龜何 / 首其現也 (거북아 거북아 / 머리를 내어라).” 27 December 2008. <http://art.go.kv/encyclopedia/DirectoryView.jsp?ar_vvm_cd_seq-8093>.

45. Ji-hong Bak reads the turtle in this verse as a knife or God for the purpose of driving away

evil spirits; Yeol-gyu Kim reads the turtle as a symbol of sacrifice; and some interpret it as the process of selecting the head among chiefs given its inclusion for the story of the birth of Kaya. Quoted in Byeong-uk Jeong 한국고전시가론 [*Korean Classical Poetry*] (Seoul: Singu Munhwasa, 2003) 55-6; "Gujiga" at <http://www.art.go.kr>.

46. Byeong-uk Jeong, 54-9.

47. "若不現也 / 燔灼而喫也 (만약 내어놓지 않으면 / 구워서 먹으리)."

48. Jeong 54-9.

49. Hyeon-Cheol Kim 222.

50. "Introduction to Mokwha Repertory Company." 27 December 2008. <http://www.aroong.com/>.

51. Wole Soyinka compares the "comprehensive" theatre of Africa with the compartmentalized generic concepts of the theatre of the West. See Soyinka, *Myth, Literature, and the African World* (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1976); Chan E. Park also writes that Korean *pansori* is "structurally indifferent to Western literary or artistic divisions of 'genre'." See Park, *Voices from the Straw Mat: Toward an Ethnography of Korean Story Singing* (Honolulu: U of Hawaii P, 2003) xi.

52. Lim provides a clear explanation of the evolution of the term *glocal* in his article. See Eng-Beng Lim, "Glocalqueering in New Asia: The Politics of Performing Gay in Singapore," *Theatre Journal* 57.3 (2005): 386.

53. Lim 383-405.

54. As Richard Schechner reminds us, most forms of contemporary local performances have been altered over history from original events that cannot be determined. See Richard Schechner, "Restoration of Behavior," *Between Theatre and Anthropology* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1985) 35-116. I would add that for nations that went through tumultuous colonialism the cases are much more severe. For example, the transmission of the repertoires of Korean traditional puppetry was severely obstructed by Japanese colonialism, the Korean War, and national partition. Korean traditional puppetry, designated as Korea's "Important Intangible Cultural Property # 3" in 1964, is still being restored and put into contemporary artistic frames simultaneously in different venues in Korea (Phone interview with In-Bae Bahg, artistic director of Anseong Namsadang, a representative Korean traditional puppetry group, 26 December 2008).

55. In keeping with Diana Taylor, Korean *glocal*-local acts are possible through the use of *both* (restored) archival memory *and* (restored) repertoires. For more discussion on the relation of cultural memory to the archive and the repertoire, see Taylor's *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke U P, 2003).

56. See Awam Amkpa, *Theatre and Postcolonial Desires* (London: Routledge, 2004) 29.

57. Although Western absurdist plays had been popular among theatre groups and companies especially in the 1960s and absurdist theatre has been familiar in Korean theatre scholarship, the complete Korean translation of Martin Esslin's *The Theatre of the Absurd* did not come out until 2005. The translator Miy-he Kim implies that until the 2005 translation, the few books on absurdist theatre had only partially represented the genre and contained many errors. See Kim 28.

58. Quoted in Jang 96 176-81; 202; 244.

59. 203-8.

60. Im 18-19.

61. Shin 284.

62. See the earlier endnote about *han*; see Miy-he Kim 25; also, see Sang-Cheol Han, *한국에서의 서양 연극* [*Western Theatre in Korea*], ed. Hyun-sook Shin, et al. (Seoul: Sohwa, 1999) 26.

63. Suh, *History of Modern Korean Theatre*. 79-122. Yon-ho Suh argues that because the Korean version is quite different in content and style from Japanese *shimpa*, the Korean version should be distinguished from *shimpa* and called *sinpajo*.

