Vernacular Visions in North and South Korea: Interlingual Translations of *Unyŏng chŏn* (The Tale of Unyŏng) and Ideologies of National Literature

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Abstract: This article focuses on two translations of *The Tale of Unyŏng* (Unyŏng chŏn 雲英傳, early seventeenth century) into vernacular Korean in South Korea (1960) and North Korea (1966). Looking beyond the classical paradigm of interlingual and intralingual translation as "translation proper" and "rewording," respectively, the article argues that translations of classical Korean fiction from Literary Sinitic into vernacular Korean represented a form of transitional intralingual translation as each nation navigated away from active membership in the Sinographic Cosmopolis and attempted to establish a new national literature and literary medium. Whereas the South Korean translation is tethered closely to the Literary Sinitic original in terms of lexicon, orthography, and representation of classical allusions and perpetuates three tiers of literacy, the North Korean translation hews much more closely to spoken vernacular and traditional *kungmun* manuscript versions of classical fiction and embodies the overriding North Korean policy of sinograph abolition and *han'gŭl* promotion.

Keywords: translation, North Korean literature, *The Tale of Unyŏng*, vernacular, language ideology

Introduction

Working in translation studies naturally invites us to define what it means to translate, and often Roman Jakobson's ([1959] 2000: 114) classic tripartite definition of translation is invoked. It is worth considering here:

Intralingual translation or *rewording* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language;
Interlingual translation or *translation proper* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language;
Intersemiotic translation or *transmutation* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems.

As some scholars have pointed out, the implications of these definitions are potentially vast: "The meaning of any linguistic sign is its translation into some further, alternative sign," implying that "translation is a component of all language interactions." Nonetheless, "translation proper" has commanded the vast majority of attention from researchers and translators alike, relegating other

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forms of language interaction to the domains of semiotics or education and pedagogy (Jakobson [1959] 2000: 114; Zethsen 2009: 797).[1] One goal of this article is therefore to contribute to a reconceptualization of "translation" within the Sinographic Cosmopolis, taking into consideration diverse ecologies of writing in the late nineteenth and well into the twentieth centuries. At the heart of this approach is a reconsideration of what authors at this time considered to be foreign and native written languages. I argue that within the inscriptional practices of the Sinographic Cosmopolis, Literary Sinitic (hereafter LS) was not necessarily considered to be a foreign language in the same way that "source" and "target" languages are understood within the "translation proper" paradigm, nor were the "vernacular" and the "cosmopolitan" fixed concepts during the transitional period under consideration here. Even in the post–language nationalization era of the 1960s and the increasing "hangulization" of South but especially North Korean society, premodern inscriptional practices loomed large and continued to inform modes of translation in both countries. Thus, while metalinguistic conceptions of language in 1960s North and South Korea may have assumed a process of *interlingual* translation in the conversion of *The Tale of Unyŏng* to the vernacular, echoes of the LS tradition in terms of lexicon, orthography in the form of sinograph utilization, and the readership's assumed cosmopolitan knowledge and initiation (the decision to gloss Sino-Korean words or explain classical allusions) invoke a lingering tradition of *intralingual* translation. Language ideologies that arose in North and South Korea, influenced respective language policies, and informed the composition of these translations have moreover grown out of this specific shared tradition of literary production in the Sinographic Cosmopolis, a dialectic distinct from other linguistic relationships constituting classical interlingual modes of translation.[2]

Therefore, looking beyond the classical paradigm of interlingual translation between two discrete languages, on the one hand, and conceptions of "intralingual translation" as a form of "rewording," on the other, this article argues that translations of classical Korean fiction in LS into vernacular Korean represented a form of transitional intralingual translation as each nation navigated away from active membership in the Sinographic Cosmopolis and attempted to establish a new national literature and literary medium based in part on appropriation of traditional literary culture and informed by postliberation language policy and nationalist ideology. Whereas the South Korean translation is tethered closely to the LS original in terms of lexicon, orthography, and representation of classical allusions and culture, approximating emergent late nineteenth-century and colonial-era mixed-script translations of classical fiction, the North Korean translation hews much more closely to spoken vernacular and traditional *kungmun* (國文, "*han'gŭl*") manuscript versions of classical fiction. The South Korean translation method embodies a larger paradigm that perpetuated three tiers of literacy: a LS original, a heavily sinicized mixed-script or *hancha*-infused "high" vernacular translation, and a pure *han'gŭl* vernacular version often beyond the purview of scholarly consideration. On the other hand, North Korean translations such as this, driven by postliberation nationalist language ideologies supporting the abolition of sino-

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graphs and mass literacy campaigns to actualize revolution, embodied a much more unified, universalized literary medium tending toward exclusive *han'gŭl* use and presenting selective aspects of premodern Korean culture specially curated to legitimize socialist revolution.

Literary analyses of *The Tale of Unyŏng* in each country moreover reflect disparate ideological approaches. Whereas early studies of the work in South Korea analyzed its literary aspects and turned to its critical potential only in the postdemocratization era, *The Tale of Unyŏng* in the North was framed from the beginning as a critique of "feudal Chosŏn society" and justification for realizing the ongoing revolution. In this light, the *mongyurok* (夢遊錄, "dream record") genre of *The Tale of Unyŏng* has special significance in the North Korean translation. The otherworldly figures of Unyŏng and Kim *chinsa* (the female and male protagonists, respectively), who impart wisdom at the conclusion of the tale in the form of their manuscript, may be construed as the vanguard of socialist revolution, presenting an injunction against the evils of "feudal" society and offering guidance to the next generation.

This article, informed by contested ideologies related to premodern modes of cosmopolitan inscriptional practice, postcolonial nationalistic language ideologies promoting *han'gŭl*, and international (Soviet and Western) linguistic theory, places the vernacular translations of *The Tale of Unyŏng* within the particular language ideological fields of 1960s North and South Korea and examines the textualization of this work of fiction. The particular era of these translations takes on special salience in the discussion. While the South Korean translation in 1960 represents an example of a rather conservative declaration of vernacular literary translation that settled in after an immediate postliberation paroxysm of ultranationalism and pure *han'gŭl* agitation, the 1966 North Korean translation marks part of a turn from communist internationalism and Soviet linguistic theory of the 1940s and 1950s to *chuch'e* (主體, "self-reliance") ideology, which began to dominate society from the late 1960s on and sought to drive out foreign influence while selectively curating traditional Korean culture to justify ongoing socialist revolution.

The Formation of Postliberation Language and Literature Policy in the Koreas

One of the most active areas of reform in the immediate postliberation era was the Korean language, and in this ideologically charged nationalistic atmosphere, the tide turned toward exclusive *han'gŭl* use after years of mixed-script orthography followed by active suppression of Korean in the late colonial period. Even in the South, where conservative elements championing the continued use of sinographs eventually gained greater influence, calls for full vernacularization of the language were initially irresistible. The Chosŏnŏ hakhoe (朝鮮語學會, "Korean Language Society")[3] took the lead in promoting language reform in the South, prefacing reform proposals with strong doses of nationalistic language ideologies invoking simultaneously the "superior excellence" (*ususŏng* 優秀性) of the vernacular script and reminders of the unwarranted and unjust persecution of the script, such as

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in the following preface to a proposal for desyllabified horizontal writing (*karo p'urŏssŭgi*), a proposal incidentally championed by northern linguists as well:

> Throughout the five hundred years that our *han'gŭl* has existed, it has occupied the preeminent position among the world's writing systems, the most superior language in form, function, and composition.
>
> But due to the stubbornness and toadyism of scholars of old who considered *hanmun* to be the only true script (*chinsŏ* 眞書) and disparaged *han'gŭl* as "women's writing," our script was kept alive and nurtured within the circles of women and children. Then, during Japanese imperial rule, they attempted to stamp out our language through a violent, atrocious, and untimely campaign. We greeted our joyful national liberation with the bittersweet realization that we had not a single complete dictionary of our language.
>
> Even in the depths of such tyrannical oppression from the Japanese, the Chosŏnŏ hakhoe dedicated itself ceaselessly to the elevation of academic causes. Over the course of more than twenty years, this organization made great contributions to the standardization of our language. . . . In this way, paralleling our national liberation, everyone in our country will be able to easily learn our script, in harmony with the original intention of King Sejong the Great when creating it, so that "all commoners regardless of education may learn and use the script at will." (Chosŏnŏ hakhoe 1946)

In a 1947 speech, Kim Ilsŏng 金日成 (1912–94), the mouthpiece for North Korean policy in all fields, similarly highlights the suppression of Korean under Japanese rule, linking this with broader colonial assimilation policy. Reprinted in the inaugural issue of the premier linguistics magazine *Cultured Language Learning* (*Munhwaŏ haksŭp*, 1968–) more than twenty years after liberation, his speech shows the clear ideological lineage between colonial-era oppression, immediate postliberation agitation, and ongoing language policy:

> The oppressive colonial police state instituted by the Japanese bastards [*Ilbon nom*] attempted to eradicate our national self-awareness and eliminate our indigenous cultural heritage. The cruelest example of this policy was the attempt to transform Korean people forcefully into Japanese. More than half of Korean children were not able to receive even an elementary education. Our Korean language was brutally suppressed and its usage was banned in school. Korean language publications were brought to the brink of extinction. The Japs eradicated the Korean spirit from our cultural arts. (Kim Ilsŏng [1947] 1955; quoted in Kim Ilsŏng 1968: 5)

While the suppression of education and literacy under Japanese colonialism motivated language and education reform in both North and South Korea, reforms in the North were animated from the beginning with Soviet-infused materialist linguistic theory, which sought to mobilize *han'gŭl* as a tool for realizing rapid mass literacy and revolution. The "bourgeois" basis for the previous standard language, the "language of the educated elite of Seoul" (*churyu sahoe esŏ ssŭnŭn Sŏul mal*) at the center of the Unified Orthography (Han'gŭl mach'umpŏp t'ongiran) of 1933 was replaced in North Korea's New Orthography (Chosŏnŏ sin ch'ŏlchapŏp) in

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1948 with a standard language "based on the variety of modern Korean that is shared most widely."[4] Although both countries achieved impressive advances in eliminating illiteracy in the postliberation years, only in the North was illiteracy virtually eliminated, even before the outbreak of the Korean War, in a campaign driven by a heavily materialist view of language.[5] Kim Ilsŏng touted proudly the gains in literacy, stating in 1948 that "the thirst for knowledge is increasing daily among the workers after the way of learning was lost for so long. Currently at least 1,394,000 workers are attending literacy schools (*han'gŭl hakkyo* [*sic*]) and adult schools, and by 1947 already more than 800,000 have climbed out of illiteracy" (Kim Ilsŏng [1948] 1964; quoted in Kim Ilsŏng 1968: 7). In May 1950, on the eve of invasion, Kim stated that "the illiteracy eradication campaign carried out broadly throughout the population has now fundamentally been completed. Adult primary and middle schools aimed at systematic basic education number more than 2,300, enrolling about 160,000 workers" (Kim Ilsŏng [1950] 1964; quoted in Kim Ilsŏng 1968: 7).

Because of the particular narrative of North Korea's national foundation by Kim Ilsŏng's partisan guerrilla forces, nationalist rhetoric in North Korea has been strongly undergirded by martial overtones, which has also been true of language, literature, and literacy. The following quote, attributed to one of Kim's guerrilla comrades from the 1930s, later DPRK Lieutenant General O Paengnyong 吳白龍 (1913–84), appeared in the inaugural issue of *Munhwaŏ haksŭp* and shows the intimate connection between literacy and armed struggle:

> The goal of our [guerrilla] unit is not only to engage with the enemy, but to become champions of communism who fight for the benefit and desires of the people and serve as organizational propagandists and educators who lead them to victory in revolution.
>
> However, there are many among us who still do not even know how to read or write our script. Without learning this, it is impossible to ascend the great summit of Marx-Lenin scientific learning. While our guerrilla units fight, they must also learn, and most fundamental is knowledge of our script. (O Paengnyong 1968: 9)

O continues in this vein, developing an extensive martial rhetoric relating to learning and literacy based on his remembrances from 1930s Manchuria:

> When our unit marched in dark forests, we attached large rags or pieces of fabric with writing on them to the knapsack of the comrade marching in front of us, and in this way, we read during training. . . . This was very useful because it reduced the fatigue of such marches, and naturally ensured that we watched after our comrades' equipment, maintained the proper speed, and did not fall behind in the march.
>
> Writing I memorized in this way I never forgot. As I became more interested in memorizing writings and focused more intently, there were many times when I forgot my hunger even when marching on an empty stomach . . .
>
> However, we always had to remain vigilant of the enemy. In other words, while marching we had also to learn writing, and while learning writing it was also necessary to monitor enemy movements, prepare for possible battle, and other activities; thus, we

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> conducted study, training, and battle preparation in parallel fashion. In some instances, there were comrades who were so immersed in memorizing passages for their lessons that they did not hear the orders of their commanders. (O Paengnyong 1968: 10)

Thus language policy in North Korea after liberation moved decidedly toward pure *han'gŭl* writing, which was officially announced in September 1949 and was more or less achieved in all official publications before the Korean War, driven by a strong reaction against previous Japanese suppression (King 1997: 118–19). This trend was moreover motivated by materialist language ideologies strongly infused with martial rhetoric. In South Korea, while there was a similar initial trend toward pure *han'gŭl* writing influenced by nationalistic language ideologies, by the late 1940s conservative elements, numerically significant and bolstered by political actualities, staged a challenge to the pure *han'gul* faction on the basis of practical considerations such as those voiced in the following argument:

> Cultural development is more than just national language development, just as the improvement of national culture is more than just the propagation of *han'gŭl*. *Hancha* and *hanmun* have already become the flesh and bone of our national culture, and so there is no reason why *hancha* should not accompany *han'gŭl* culture. One of our major flaws is our lack of academic terminology (*haksul yongŏ* 學術用語). If our duty is to pass down our indigenous culture, we must not only learn and use *han'gŭl* but also learn and understand *hancha*, which will allow us to actualize the elevation and development of our national culture. (Yi Sangŭn 1949)

Although the Law on Exclusive *Han'gŭl* Use (*Han'gŭl chŏnyong e kwanhan pŏmnyul*, 1948) stipulated that "all public documents in the Republic of Korea shall be composed in *han'gŭl*," the rider declaring that "for a time when necessary *hancha* may be used in conjunction" reflected the continuing conservative influence in language policy. The reinstating of 1,000 sinographs for education purposes in 1952 (raised to 1,300 in 1957) then ushered in a prolonged period of mixed-script usage in the South that has defined academic "high-level" writing ever since and provides the backdrop for translations such as Kim Kidong's *Tale of Unyŏng* in 1960, a translation that displays conscious attachment to an LS original and assumes a high degree of sinographic knowledge on the part of the readership.

North and South Korean Interlingual Translation in the 1960s

North Korea is commonly conceptualized as a static relic of communism, trapped in time and devoid of history, save the history of the "Kim dynasty." However, as Suzy Kim (2016: 3) reminds us, "North Korea's history is not simply the history of one man or the party, but part and parcel of the history of modernity, not 'suspended in time' but part of the global history of decolonization."[6] Kim's attempt to "restore North Korea's historicity and its place within the history of modernity" (2) informs this current article as well, as I position the translation of *The Tale of Unyŏng* within a dynamic political and ideological field borne out of a rich history of cosmopolitan and vernacular interaction and evolution. Although a single fam-

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ily has ruled the country since its inception, this does not suggest that internal politics have remained static. Careful studies of North Korea have demonstrated not only the gradual consolidation of power by Kim Ilsŏng and his Manchurian guerrilla clique against the competing Soviet Koreans (Koryŏ saram), Yanan faction, and domestic communists, but also the gradual turn from Communist internationalism in the 1940s, 1950s, and early 1960s to an inward-oriented *chuch'e* philosophy from the late 1960s, which had a combined transformative effect on North Korean language and literature that challenges the notion of a static relic of communism "frozen in time." In terms of language and literature during the first decades after liberation, it may be argued that North Korea was in fact the more dynamic locus of change. South Korea, despite an initial impetus for nationalist vernacularization, ended up preserving a rather conservative vision of inscriptional practices that resulted in a very protracted process of desinicization, vernacularization, and reification of multiple levels of literacy that unfolded over many decades and in some ways continues today.

Han Chŏngho (2007: 319) puts forth the following periodization of North Korean literature, which helps us conceptualize changes in the literary field in response to political exigencies: "1945–50: Constructing a new fatherland (literature of the liberation space); 1950–55: Liberating the fatherland (wartime literature); 1956–60: Postwar recovery (postwar literature); 1960s: Ch'ŏllima Campaign period; and 1970–: Uniqueness philosophy/self-reliance (*yuil sasang/chuch'e sasang* 唯一思想/主體思想)." Linguistic theories embraced by North Korea underwent similar dynamism during the first three decades after liberation and likewise heavily influenced the direction of literature in the country because of the universalized and centralized nature of state philosophy. Ko Yŏnggŭn (1992: 430) suggests this in the following periodization: "1946–50: The embracing of [Nikolai Iakovlevich] Marr's [1865–34] linguistic theory and the foundation of North Korean linguistics; 1950–66: The embracing of Stalinist linguistic theory and the further development North Korean linguistics; 1966–present: The formation and development of *chuch'e* linguistic theory."[7] Scholars have pointed in particular to Kim Ilsŏng's "Conversations with Linguists" (1964, 1966) as turning points in North Korea's language policy that marked a shift toward inward orientation and reflected an embracing and deepening of *chuch'e* philosophy more generally (King 1997: 124–29).

The "*chuch'e* turn" in the late 1960s and early 1970s in North Korea encompassed two major transformations that affected the direction of language and literature thereafter. First, the Soviet contribution to liberation was written out of the national foundation narrative and replaced by a unified, exclusivist narrative of national liberation centered solely on Kim Ilsŏng and his partisan guerrilla forces. This rhetorical shift was accompanied by a turn away from the Marxist-Leninist linguistic theory of the 1950s and 1960s, which recognized the concept of an ethno-language (*minjogŏ* 民族語) common to all members of each nation and acknowledged syncretism between Soviet and indigenous linguistic development. A turn toward exclusivist *chuch'e* linguistic theory, spearheaded by Kim Ilsŏng's "Conversations with Linguists," focused on the state-led development of a new

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cultured language (*munhwaŏ* 文化語) centered on P'yŏngyang. Second, the field of North Korean literature turned away from active engagement with the literature of the Communist bloc in translation and turned toward the native literature of traditional Korea, selectively embracing works of premodern fiction as ideological tabulae for actualizing revolution through alternating praise and condemnation of traditional Korean society. The first transformation concerned a change in language policy and ideology, while the second may be viewed as a shift in literary and cultural theory. Both were highly influenced by state-led conceptualizations of North Korean nationalism within the ongoing socialist revolution.

The Soviet contribution to liberation loomed large in North Korea's national narrative in the late 1940s and 1950s, appearing even in language-related documents. For example, the preface to North Korea's *New Orthography* not only mentions the Soviet contribution to liberation but also relegates North Korea to a position as passive recipient of Soviet benevolence, while the Soviet military is described with the same adjective, *widaehan*, that was later exclusively reserved for Kim Ilsŏng: "Thanks to the heroic victory of the great [*widaehan*] Soviet military, our fatherland was liberated from the clutches of Imperial Japan, we were finally able to use our language and writing freely, and we now feel even more urgently the need to devise every method to unify our language even further" (Chosŏn ŏmun yŏn'guhoe 1948). North Korean authors translated works of Soviet linguistics heavily in the 1950s and early 1960s and freely acknowledged a syncretic relationship between the contributions of indigenous and Soviet linguists.[8] The North Korean linguist Song Sŏryong (1957) wrote the following on the influence of Soviet language debates on North Korean linguistics: "The great linguistic debate in the Soviet Union in (June–July) 1950 brought about a decisive turn in the development of Chosŏn linguistics. This great debate over how to introduce genuine Marxism into linguistics opened the path to creatively solving all of the complex problems in linguistic science based on a Marxist-Leninist framework." He went on to state:

> In the midst of the harsh flames engulfing our country during the war for national liberation, under the guidance of the party and the government of our republic, Chosŏn linguists engaged in a great debate on language, after which they combined the achievements of Soviet linguists in general linguistic theory with Korean traditional linguistics to investigate in-depth Korean grammatical and lexical structure, the internal principles of Korean language development, the relationship between a language common to all (*chŏn inminjŏk ŏnŏ*) and dialects, and the issue of the formation of the national language. (Song Sŏryong 1957, quoted in Ko Yŏnggŭn 1992: 437)

The foreword to the *Abridged Dictionary of the Chosŏn Language* (*Chosŏnŏ sosajŏn* 朝鮮語 小辭典, 1956) reiterated this syncretic relationship, stating plainly: "The compilation of the *Abridged Dictionary* was based on the principles of Marxist-Leninist linguistics along with the considerable experience of our native Korean language scholars in compiling dictionaries in the past" (*Chosŏnŏ sosajŏn* 1961, quoted in Ko Yŏnggŭn 1992: 438).

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In "Conversations with Linguists," especially the 1966 "On Properly Reviving the Ethno-national Characteristics of Our Language," Kim Ilsŏng consciously directed a course for the North Korean language away from Soviet linguistic theory and toward a nativist, prescriptivist view of the language that sought to construct a pure, uncontaminated North Korean language internally. Importantly, the language ideology expressed by Kim went a step further than the pure *han'gŭl* orthography championed up until that time, criticizing the use of loan words from neighboring countries in the North Korean language, but especially targeting the continued saturation of the language with Sino-Korean vocabulary. According to Kim:

> Although it is repeated often, our country is surrounded by large countries such as China, the Soviet Union and Japan, countries with a comparatively high level of scientific advancement. Because of this, many people in our country developed a toadyistic sentiment toward these countries over time, and in our political encounters with these nations as well as in our cultural and economic exchanges, a large amount of foreign words flooded our language.
>
> During the feudalistic Chosŏn Dynasty, Chinese toadyism was rampant, and language from that country saturated our language. Even today, our people continue to use Sino-Korean vocabulary frequently. (Kim Ilsŏng [1966] 1989: 418)[9]

Kim Ilsŏng then proceeds to outline the rudimentary principles of what would become North Korea's language nativization campaign, characterized by the replacement of foreign loan words and Sino-Korean vocabulary (not of a strictly political nature) with native Korean alternatives or newly coined words based on native etymology.[10] Importantly, this was a reaction not only against perceived influence of foreign elements on the North Korean language variety but the supposed contamination of the South Korean variety, especially by English and Japanese (Kim Ilsŏng [1966] 1989). The initial influence of this policy can already be seen in the October 1966 publication of *The Tale of Unyŏng*, where not only are *hancha* relegated to a strictly perfunctory role but Sino-Korean vocabulary is also limited, in comparison with the South Korean translation, and replaced with vernacular alternatives.[11]

The second major transformation that characterized the "*chuch'e* turn" occurred in the fields of literature and culture and involved a shift away from international (mostly Communist bloc) literature in translation to a greater focus on native literature, including selective translation of and engagement with classical Korean fiction (*kojŏn sosŏl*). Although translations of classical fiction in North Korea began to appear from the mid-1950s, these were few and far between, were either obviously subversive, such as *The Tale of Rim kkŏkchŏng* (*Rim kkŏkchŏng*, 1955) and *The Tale of Hong Kyŏngnae* (*Hong Kyŏngnae*, 1955), or highly criticized according to the party line, such as *The Tale of Ch'unhyang* (*Ch'unhyang chŏn* [film], 1959), and did not represent a coordinated effort to mobilize traditional cultural artifacts for revolutionary purposes.[12] While selective curation and analysis of such fiction is usually dated to the early 1970s and is understood as part of a *chuch'e*-inspired project to engage with "*ethno-national* cultural heritage" (*minjok munhwa*

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yusan), the 1966 translation of *The Tale of Unyŏng* represents an early effort in this area reflecting recent pronouncements in North Korean language policy ("Conversations with Linguists") and signaling changes on the horizon, most notably the 1970 pronouncement by Kim Jong-Il (Kim Chŏngil) 金正日 (1942–2011) on "*minjok* cultural heritage" that did for North Korea's traditional culture what his father's 1966 "Conversation with Linguists" did for its language (Kim Chŏngil, March 4, 1970, quoted in Chŏn Yŏngsŏn 2000: 297). Kim Chŏngil stated in this pronouncement:

> If we cover up or cast away the literary works of yesteryear claiming that they are filled with feudalistic and capitalistic elements, there will be nothing left of our history at all, and we will become a people with absolutely nothing to show, devoid of creative products or tradition. Just as there can be no present without a past, and innovation without inspiration is unthinkable, socialist nationalist literature does not develop in a vacuum. Such literature may be developed by discarding the outdated and reactionary elements in traditional literature and instead taking the progressive and people-centered elements and adapting them to the demands and class characteristics of our time. (Kim Chŏngil [1970] 2016, quoted in Chŏn Yŏngsŏn 2000: 297)

Hence the 1966 translation signals pivotal changes in North Korean language and literary policy. The text shows evidence of vernacularization in orthography and word choice, while its critical discussion in the introduction evinces the early stages of literary reevaluation of classical literature before the more fundamental pronouncement and framing of the policy in 1970. An additional translation of *The Tale of Unyŏng* in 1987 moreover demonstrates a deepening of this policy of engagement with and mobilization of classical Korean fiction. This translation, which will be considered briefly below following discussion of the 1966 translation, displayed an even greater degree of vernacularization and more fully integrated the work within the growing pantheon of "classic socialist-realist" works according to *chuch'e* literary and cultural theory.

As mentioned above, the turn toward native literature was accompanied by a de-emphasis on foreign literature in translation. Although a comprehensive analysis of this phenomenon is beyond the scope of this article, a cursory examination of titles appearing in *Children's Literature* (*Adong munhak*, 1946–present), the premiere North Korean publication since liberation for such literature, shows a sharp decline in literature in translation in the late 1950s and into the 1960s. While three to four works of literature in translation appear on average in each issue through the 1950s—tending heavily toward the Soviet Union and China but also originating from Hungary, Romania, Mongolia, Georgia, and even ancient Greece (Aesop's fables), Germany (Grimm's fairy tales), and Denmark (Hans [Christian] Andersen's "The Ugly Duckling")—from the early 1960s the number drops to an average of less than one per issue, and by the mid-1960s works in translation are difficult to locate at all.[13]

In the next section I analyze the place of *The Tale of Unyŏng* in broader North and South Korean society and highlight the disparate literary engagement with the

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work in each country. I then compare the translations in terms of lexicon, orthography, and representation of traditional Korean culture, paying special attention to the role of these works as forms of intralingual translations from an LS original. I then briefly consider subsequent vernacular translations of the work (South Korea, 1978; North Korea, 1987) that represent a further separation of inscriptional practice in the South between LS, *hancha*-infused "high" translation and pure *han'gŭl* (Kim Tonguk 1978), and a further vernacularization in the North through a complete extirpation of already minimized *hancha* along with a deeper elaboration of *The Tale of Unyŏng*'s revolutionary potential through its inclusion and discussion by the author of the introduction into a broader "classical socialist-realist" literary field (Ri Ch'angyu 1987b).

The Tale of Unyŏng in the South Korean and North Korean Literary Fields

The Tale of Unyŏng has garnered considerable attention in South Korean academic circles, especially since the 1990s.[14] Some of the major themes examined have been the identity of the author, influences from other genres, the effect and purpose of vernacularization in the *han'gŭl* versions, conflict between characters' desires and social realities, the nature and source of tragedy in the story, and the significance of the Susŏng Palace setting. The first study, conducted by Ōtani Morishige in 1966 and examining two *han'gŭl* and three *hanmun* versions of the work, presented the hypothesis that the tale was written by none other than Yu Yŏng, the narrator of the story, who receives the manuscript from the phantom main characters, Unyŏng and Kim *chinsa*. Ōtani also proposes that *The Tale of Unyŏng* demonstrated influence from Chinese *chuanqi* (傳奇, "tales of the strange"), a genre of fiction dating mainly from the Tang dynasty, although the evidence for each of these claims is inconclusive (Ōtani Morishige 1966, quoted in Yang Sŭngmin 2008: 137–39). Subsequent studies by Kim Ilyŏl (1972) have focused on the specter of Prince Anp'yŏng 安平大君 (1418–53) from a psychological perspective. Kim writes that, rather than a mere individual who foils the affections of Unyŏng and Kim *chinsa*, Prince Anp'yŏng symbolizes the systematic moral reality of the Chosŏn era. Yi Sanggu (1998: 135–38), however, portrays Prince Anp'yŏng in a more sympathetic light, as something of a tragic figure who fell victim to the political factionalism and social realities of his time. Noting his progressive belief in the potential of women for higher learning, Yi describes Susŏng Palace as a "parallel world" that seeks to transcend social and political realities by providing a clandestine space for the idealized rule denied him by political exigencies. The inability to realize this ideal for rule, moreover, caused tension between the prince and the palace women and ultimately resulted in the demise of Unyŏng and Kim *chinsa*.

Other studies have delved into the relationship between the *hanmun* and *han'gŭl* versions of *The Tale of Unyŏng* in terms of style, content, and readership. For example, Pak Kisŏk (1980: 94), in his comparison of original and translated versions of the work, argues that through the process of translation into *han'gŭl*, the readership and possible authorship of *The Tale of Unyŏng* gradually shifted to a still limited group of upper-class women, as demonstrated by the augmented

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dialogic passages among palace women evident in vernacular versions. Yang (2008: 144–45), however, suggests that, given the considerable number of *han'gŭl* versions extant today, the readership was not quite as limited as Pak contends, and that considering the already significant role of palace women and women's dialogue in the original versions, the changes evident in the vernacular versions should not be considered a major shift in form or content.[15]

For our purposes, it is important to note that detailed literary analyses such as these began well after the modern vernacular translation appeared in 1960 and, until quite recently, ignored or glossed over the potentially socially critical or subversive elements of the work, unlike the North Korean version, which shows evidence of conscious curating according to a very specific, centralized policy of social critique and socialist revolution (Pak Iryŏng 1987; Chŏng Kilsu 2009; Ŏm T'aesik 2015: 165–92, 337–67; Ŏm T'aesik 2017: 145–61). Both versions are prefaced with introductions, but of a fundamentally different nature. While the South Korean introduction gives perfunctory information on variant titles, possible authorship, genre, themes, various versions, and translations, along with a short synopsis, the North Korean introduction is methodical in its delivery, highlighting the ills of "feudalistic" Chosŏn society that the North Korean revolution is ostensibly correcting. The only portion of the introduction to the South Korean version that includes subjective literary critique is as follows:

> This work attempts to describe the anguished confinement endured by palace women of the Chosŏn era and the circumstances of their encounter with true love, and in that sense *The Tale of Unyŏng* is a representative example of Chosŏn-era love for love's sake literature (*yŏnae chisang chuŭi munhak*), and a unique example of a tragic love story of the Chosŏn era.
>
> In short, because this work reveals the paramountcy of love in human existence and the sincerity and ardor of a palace woman in her pursuit of love and life, describes these sincere romantic feelings so vividly and realistically, and creates a scenario where the protagonists would do anything to realize this love to the point of sacrificing their own lives, the artistic value of this work should be evaluated quite highly, among one of the masterpieces of Chosŏn fiction. (Kim Kidong 1960a: 257)

While the South Korean analysis is concerned mainly with the genre of the work and its artistic value, the North Korean introduction, true to the state's lack of a distinction between politics, revolution, and literature, eschews sober literary analysis and instead evaluates the work on its ability to expose the ills of Chosŏn society:

> Through the tragic story of palace woman Unyŏng and her forbidden love with the scholar Kim *chinsa*, *The Tale of Unyŏng* shows the romantic intentions of men and women from the Middle Ages (*chungsegi*), men and women who longed for the free development and expression of love and sentiment. The story uncovers and exposes the anti-people's (*pan inminsŏng*) feudal ethics that tramples upon all that is new, true, and beautiful. In particular, this work occupies a unique place in the history of our short fiction in that it

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> exposes criminal acts by which the human rights of numerous people were publicly violated for the sake of extravagant and debauched entertainment for the royal court. (Kim Hamyŏng 1966: 4)

Each character is in turn interpreted as a symbol for a specific shortcoming of feudal society, a figure through which presocialist society may be "correctly" critiqued and the socialist revolution may be indirectly (and at times directly) justified. For example, the figure of Prince Anp'yŏng represents the depravity of the Chosŏn royal family and the monarchical system more generally: "The actions and ambitions of Prince Anp'yŏng, portrayed as a 'superior' representative of the ruling class, are in essence despicable and hideous. Although he behaves as if he is a gentle, generous person, he is the source of misfortune for Unyŏng and all of her companions" (Kim Hamyŏng 1966: 4). Through the figures of Unyŏng and Charan, the author offers a critique not only of the suppression of friendship, a relationship that would have resonated with comradeship in North Korean society, but of the plight of women in traditional society more generally:

> These themes are intensified through Unyŏng's friendship with other palace women, particularly her friendship with Charan. In Unyŏng's self-sacrificing efforts for her friend Charan we can hear the resounding voices of protest from feudal Chosŏn women doubly and triply bounded by oppression. So that the wish of her friend Unyŏng might be fulfilled, Charan risks her life, behaves boldly, and stands up firmly to her sovereign Prince Anp'yŏng. (Kim Hamyŏng 1966: 4)

Kim *chinsa*, on the other hand, represents a "victim of the feudal social system . . . possessing amazing talents, who is good-natured and finds pure love, but turns to deceiving others like a criminal and is felled in the prime of his life before achieving his sought-after true love" (Kim Hamyŏng 1966: 5). Kim *chinsa*'s conniving servant T'ŭk, a member of the most downtrodden class of slaves, for whom we might expect sympathy from the state's critics, is indeed not blamed personally for his shortcomings but instead, in true class-based analysis, is portrayed as a victim of the system: "In the feudal society of the day that was built on human exploitation, the insidious criminal acts of Kim *chinsa*'s servant T'ŭgi are not unexpected. T'ŭgi's theft of Unyŏng's possessions sent to Kim *chinsa* and his plot to even abscond with Unyŏng herself were modeled after the thieving morals of the *yangban* ruling class in the feudal society in which he was brought up" (Kim Hamyŏng 1966: 5). The introduction concludes with a direct statement on the implications of this work of classical fiction for the ongoing revolution:

> Today, through this work we can see the anti-popular (*pan inminjŏk*) system and moral ethics of the feudal state and its ruling elite, along with the aspirations and hopes of the common people for a happier life. We are now able to more clearly recognize the freedom and happiness of our true individuality afforded by our socialist system, a system that thankfully put an end to a society of exploitation and the source of such horrendous crimes. (Kim Hamyŏng 1966: 6)

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We can sense in this introduction an emergent approach to classical literature through a socialist lens in North Korea. While traditional society is heavily criticized for its systematic stifling of freedom, failure to recognize talent, and corruptive tendencies, the society that produced this work is somewhat paradoxically praised for exposing these same societal ills through such literature. In this sense, classical literature such as this fulfilled a dual purpose by presenting an easy foil for socialist critique while also representing a people-centered (*inminjŏk*) historical link to traditional Korean culture through historical dialecticism. The very selection of a classical love story such as *The Tale of Unyŏng* without obvious revolutionary potential for socialist propaganda meanwhile embodies the emergent "*chuch'e* turn" toward traditional culture that would come to characterize the Kim Chŏngil era. Whereas the political and literary import of this work were outlined explicitly in the introduction, the actual text of the work, to which we now turn, embodied a more subtle pronouncement of North Korean nationalism in the form of language ideology in action.

The 1960 and 1966 translations are both based on the National Library of Korea (Kungnip tosŏgwan) version of the text in LS, the most widely circulated version.[16] The English translation is based on the same LS original and is taken from James Scarth Gale's translation dating to May 1918 but was first published in *Redemption and Regret: Modernizing Korea in the Writing of James Scarth Gale* (2021).[17] The following comparison between these translations is divided into three main categories: orthography, lexicon, and the readership's assumed (or prescribed) cosmopolitan knowledge and initiation. The first category refers to the most conspicuous difference between the translations, that is, the preponderance of sinographs appearing in each.[18] An examination of the translations reveals a much higher number of sinographs in the South Korean translation. This version, which was published in four parts in the literary magazine *Free Literature* (*Chayu munhak*, 1956–63), displays the following breakdown.

Part	Number of Sinographs
Part 1 (February 1960)	750
Part 2 (March 1960)	233
Part 3 (May 1960)	220
Part 4 (June 1960)	162
Total:	1,365

The North Korean translation, on the other hand, shows a total of just 172 individual sinographs, a strikingly smaller number, but considering the North Korean policy of near-universal employment of *han'gŭl* only in publications since 1948, perhaps the most notable aspect is the presence of sinographs in the North Korean translation at all. Investigating further, we see a fundamental difference in the way that sinographs are used in the two translations in terms of parts of speech. In the North Korean version, forty-one Sino-Korean words fall under the category of proper nouns and twenty under the category of nouns, while there are just two

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adjective stems and one preposition. In contrast, the South Korean translation displays much more diversity in the employment of Sino-Korean vocabulary: an analysis of the first portion of Part 1, containing a number of sinographs analogous to the North Korean translation as a whole, shows nine proper nouns, twenty-three nouns, four adjectives, and even one verb stem. The employment of sinographs in the North Korean translation therefore seems to aim at clarifying possibly opaque meanings for a broader audience. The differing orthographic strategies are displayed in the following excerpt:

> SK: 사직(社稷)이 남쪽에 있고 경복궁(慶福宮)이 동쪽에 있다. 인왕산의 산맥이 구비지어 내려오다가 수성궁이 있는 곳에 이르러서는 높은 봉우리를 이루었다. 비록 험준하지는 아니하나 올라가서 내려보면은, 거리에 뻗어있는 상점과 온 장안의 저택(邸宅)은 바둑판과 같고 하늘의 별과 같아서 역력히 헤아릴 수 있고, 완연(宛然)히 베틈틈 실오리가 갈라진 것과 같이 정연(整然)했다. (Kim Kidong 1960b: 258)
> NK: 사직단(社稷壇)을 남쪽에, 경복궁(景福宮)을 동쪽에 두고 인왕산 줄기가 비스듬히 뻗어나가다가 수성궁에 이르러 솟아올랐는데 산은 그리 높지 않으나 그 우에 올라가면 서울 장안을 굽어볼수 있었다. 거리의 점포들과 성안에 가득한 집들은 마치 바둑판에 바둑돌을 벌려놓은듯, 하늘에 별을 뿌려놓은듯, 홉사 실을 줄줄이 늘여놓은것 같아서 손가락으로 일일이 알아맞출수 있었다. (Han Chinsik 1966: 7)
> 社稷在其南, 慶福在其東. 仁旺一脈, 逶迤而下, 臨宮峏起, 雖不高峻, 而登臨俯覽, 則通衢市廛, 滿城第宅, 碁布星羅, 歷歷可指, 宛若絲列分派.
>
> The *Sajik*, or National Gods, are at the South, while the Royal Palace stands guard on the east. One spur of the hills that reaches out farther than the others became the site of this far-famed enclosure. Though not specially high, one could see from its top the busy mart and all the congregated houses within the city walls. Like squares on a checker-board they lay open to its view; at night dotted with sparkling lights that flashed like stars of the sky. (Gale 2021: 569)

Whereas in the North Korean translation, sinographs are limited to reinforcing the meaning of potentially opaque words, even adding the character *tan* (壇, "altar") to further explicate the meaning of "*sajiktan*," the South Korean translation includes Sino-Korean nouns *chŏt'aek* (邸宅, "large residence, manor") and adjective stems *wanyŏn* (宛然, "certainty, clearness") and *chŏngyŏn* (整然, "order, regularity") that could readily have been replaced with more familiar vernacular alternatives. The latter adjective stem moreover summarizes the orderliness of the loom in the original but is based on a Sino-Korean vocable not actually present in the original, suggesting a lateral intralingual translation rather than an expected vernacularization. Therefore, while the South Korean translation strategy suggests a relatively high degree of fidelity to an LS original through employment of more sinographs in more diverse roles, constituting a form of transitional intralingual translation operating within premodern inscriptional practices in the Sinographic Cosmopolis, the North Korean translation reflects the state language policy promoting *han'gŭl* and a more universalized readership, perhaps including young readers in the school setting.

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Differences may also be noted in lexicon. The following excerpt shows not only a greater number of sinographs in the South Korean translation, but also the absence of equivalent Sino-Korean vocabulary in the North Korean version. In other words, not only did the translator of the former version make the decision to include sinographs ostensibly for greater semantic transparency, but they also chose to employ the same vocabulary as the original in a form of intralingual translation, contrasting with the North Korean translation that opts for a much more colloquial vocabulary:

SK: 주도(酒徒)들은 몸소 가아(歌兒)와 적동(笛童) 을 동반하고 가서 놀았으며 소인(騷人)과 묵객(墨客)은 삼월달 봄날 꽃피는 시절과, 구월달 가을 단풍이 익어가는 시절에는 그 위에 올라가서 놀지 아니하는 날이 없었고, 음풍영월(吟風咏月) 하면서 즐기노라고 집으로 돌아가는 것조차 잊었다. (Kim Kidong 1960b: 258)
NK: 그럼으로 꽃피는 봄철이나 가을의 단풍철이면 노래 부르는 아이들과 저대 부는 아이들을 데린 술군들 한량들과 시인문사들이 이 동산에 놀러오지 않은 날이 없었다. 그들은 노래를 읊조리며 아름다운 경치를 즐기면서 돌아갈 줄 몰랐다. (Han Chinsik 1966: 7–8)

一時酒徒射伴, 歌兒笛童, 騷人墨客, 三春花柳之節, 九秋楓菊之時, 則無日不遊於其上, 吟風咏月, 嘯翫忘歸.

Great lords who loved pleasure, archers, singers, pipers, and masters of the pen, used to take advantage of the spring season, when the flowers were out, and the willow catkins hung low; and in the autumn when the leaves were coloured and the chrysanthemums were in bloom, to come day by day in crowds so as to enjoy the fresh air and sing to the moon. (Gale 2021: 569)

Comparing the sinograph-accompanied Sino-Korean vocabulary in the South Korean translation with the equivalents in the northern version, we have the following.

SK	NK
chudo (酒徒, "drinkers")	*sulkun*
kaa (歌兒, "singing children")	*norae purŭnŭn aidŭl*
chŏktong (笛童, "children playing the flute")	*chŏdae punŭn aidŭl*
soin mukkaek (騷人墨客, "poets, scholars, and artists")	*siin munsa*
ŭmp'ung yŏngwŏl hada (吟風咏月 하다, "compose poems of the clear sky and bright moon")	*norae rŭl ŭlpchorimyŏ arŭmdaun kyŏngch'i rŭl chŭlgimyŏnsŏ*

At times, the employment of more vernacular word choice in the North Korea translation is accompanied by other translation strategies that function indexically, suggesting the degree of perceived vernacularization of particular words and the sinographic knowledge of the intended readership. In the North Korean example that follows, two strategies have been employed to domesticate the LS translation for a vernacular audience: parenthetical explanation and simple glossing.

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SK: 산사람도 아니고 중도아니면서 깊은 궁에 갇히었으니, 정말로 이른바 장신궁(長信宮)이다. (Kim Kidong 1960c: 265)
NK: 사인 (舍人—옛날에 왕곁에서 시중들던 사람)도 아니요, 녀승 (女僧)도 아닌데 이 같은 깊은 궁중에 가두니 정말 한나라 반첩여가 갇혀 살던 장신궁(長信宮)이야. (Han Chinsik 1966: 41)
旣非舍人, 又非僧尼, 而鎖此深宮, 眞所謂長信宮也.

We are not scholars, nor are we priestesses; we are only prisoners. This place is none other than Pan Ch'ŏmyo's [BC 18, a famous lady-in-waiting] Changsin Palace. (Gale 2021: 585)[19]

This is one of the few examples where the North Korean translation includes more sinographs than its South Korean counterpart. However, whereas throughout most of the translation the absence of sinographs functions to enhance transparency and broaden the potential readership, here the presence of sinographs coupled with the parenthetical explication of "*sain*" and the glossing of *Changsin'gung* (長信宮) as the palace of "Han nara Pan Ch'om yŏ" (Consort Ban Jieyu 班婕妤 [206 BCE–23 CE] of the Han dynasty) serves to index these terms and the associated allusion with classical literary culture beyond the expected or prescribed literacy of the readership. In the South Korean translation, on the other hand, the classical allusion is integrated into the assumed language and cultural literacy of the target audience, indexed by the absence of the sinographs for *sain* (舍人, "traditional servants of the king") and *yŏsŭng* (女僧, "bhikkhuni") and the eschewing of parenthetical explanations or glosses. In other words, the proper noun "*changsin'gung*" with the reinforcing sinographs 長信宮 is expected to convey the necessary meaning, given the assumed level of cosmopolitan linguistic and cultural knowledge of the intended audience.

In this case, the inclusion of sinographs coupled with explanations and glosses serves to convey information perceived as necessary to the reader, in particular with classical allusions. In various other cases, however, where information is not regarded as necessary for conveying the basic elements of the plot, it is omitted or simplified, a strategy that characterizes the North Korean translation in the vast majority of cases. The following examples display significant divergences in their approach to the Confucian classics and what they index as "necessary" knowledge:

SK: 하시고는, 궁녀 중에서 나이가 어리고 얼굴이 아름다운 열명을 골라서 가르치기 시작하였습니다. 먼저 언해소학(諺解小學)을 가르쳐서 암송 후에 중용(中庸) 대학(大學), 맹자(孟子) 시경(詩經) 서경(書經) 통감(通鑑) 송서(宋書)等을 차례로 가르치고 또 이두당음(李杜唐音) 수백수를 뽑아서 가르치니, 오년 이내에 과연 모두 대성하였읍니다. (Kim Kidong 1960a: 261)
NK: 이리하여 궁녀중에서 자색이 아름답고 나이 어린 사람 열명을 골라서 공부를 시켰습니다. 이리하여 5년이 못되어 모두가 글이 능하게 되였습니다. (Han Chinsik 1966: 15)

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宮女中, 擇其年少美容者十人敎之. 先授諺解小學, 讀誦而後, 庸學論孟詩書通史, 盡敎之, 又抄李杜唐音數百首敎之, 五年之內, 果皆成才.

So he selected from his household ten of the youngest, brightest, and prettiest and set them to study the *Lesser Learning*, and after they were able to read that, to go on to the Doctrine of the Mean, the Great Learning, the Analects, the Book of Poetry and History till they had completed the whole course. They also took up chapters of the Chinese poets, Yi T'aebaek and Tu Chami, and selections of the Tang Kingdom so that, in five years they were well trained scholars. (Gale 2021: 573)

This is perhaps the most dramatic example of "domestication" in the North Korean translation. Whereas the South Korean translation lists the specific works of the Confucian canon studied by the palace women, a list which would have had special resonance with any classically trained reader of the text in premodern times but also a level of familiarity with a South Korean readership, the North Korean version writes only that "ten [women] were selected and made to study." This version is completely unconcerned with the content of classical education, conveying only the portion needed to further the plot. The North Korean version, characteristic of most of the translation, is likewise unconcerned with the specific poets' names, Yi T'aebaek (Ch. Li Bai) 李白 (701–62 AD) and Tu Chami (Ch. Du Fu) 杜甫 (712–70 AD), and omits these names entirely. It is telling that even Gale's English translation, ostensibly aimed at an audience with even less prescribed and assumed cosmopolitan knowledge, faithfully includes all of the specific titles of the classics as well as the poets' names.

The following examples demonstrate similar divergences in their approach not only to classical knowledge but to poetry more generally:

SK: 유생은 바위 위에 앉아 소동파(蘇東坡)가 지은 아상조원춘반로 만지락화무인소 (我上朝元春半老, 滿地落花無人掃)라는 시구(詩句)를 읊다가 . . . (Kim Kidong 1960a: 259)

NK: 류영은 홀로 바위우에 올라앉아 옛 시인의 시 한구절을 읊었다.

짙은 봄, 내 홀로 옛 루각 찾아드니 땅에 깔린 떨어진 꽃 쓸지도 않았더니 (Han Chinsik 1966: 8–9)

生獨坐岩上, 乃咏東坡, '我上朝元春半老, 滿地落花無人掃'之句

Thus, I sat on a rock and sang to myself So Tongp'a's[20] opening lines:
"By early morn I view the rosy spring
Whose fallen petals carpet wide the court." (Gale 2021: 570)

Whereas the South Korean translation names the specific poet of Song-era China reinforced by the accompanying sinographs, the North Korean translation seems unconcerned by the name of the poet and records only that Yu Yŏng recited "a verse from a long-ago poet's work" (*yet siin ŭi si han kujŏl*). More importantly, however, the two versions approach the vernacularization of poetry differently. Whereas the North Korean translation offers a completely vernacular version of the poem,

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replacing the original LS, the South Korean translation not only offers no such parallel vernacular version but no vernacular at all, giving only a Sino-Korean reading of the characters without even the minimal parsing-cum-translation method of *t'o* reading, offering a truly intralingual method of translation that presupposes a high level of cosmopolitan knowledge. This is perhaps a level of cosmopolitan literacy above the level of some readers, and it may be argued that it is here invoked more for its visual aesthetic than for its exact literal meaning.

Although examples abound of such excision of the titles of classics, specific poets' names, and the simplification or explanation of classical allusions, there are extremely few examples of what may be construed as "mistranslations," "embellishments," or "inaccuracies," which runs counter to my initial expectations. For example, in one example toward the beginning of the story, Yu Yŏng's clothing is described as old and tattered (*ŭisang namnu* 衣裳藍縷) and his face as not presentable (*yongsaek maemol* 容色埋沒), but the North Korean version explicitly emphasizes the character's poverty "*kŭrŏna kananhayŏ* " (Han Chinsik 1966: 8).[21] This could be an attempt to emphasize the economic class of the character and in turn the unjust nature of the feudal Chosŏn system. In another passage toward the beginning of the story, while the original describes the damage to Susŏng Palace caused by the fires of war (*pyŏngsŏn* 兵燹), the North Korean version refers to the "damage left behind by the invasion of the *imjin* year (Imjin waeran)," which would serve to embellish the national narrative of Japanese oppression (Han Chinsik 1966: 8). In a final example, whereas the LS version describes the shaman character in the story with the term *ŭmnyŏ* (淫女, "lewd, licentious woman"), only the North Korean translation omits this term, perhaps displaying a level of sympathy for the downtrodden *munyŏ* (巫女, "shaman"), a member of the lowest class in Chosŏn society.

These examples, however, are quite few in number and so slight that one could argue they do not rise to the level of "mistranslation" but rather represent examples of artistic license. The most significant differences between the translations instead concern matters of orthography (the role and preponderance of sinographs), word choice, and assumed and prescribed level of cosmopolitan knowledge embodied in the representation of classical literature and allusions. In terms of content, adherence to the basic plotlines of the story, and faithfulness in translation, however, there is minimal divergence. This may be explained by the differing reasons for appropriation of the story in each country; while roughly equivalent versions of the story in terms of basic content were being read in North and South Korea, each reader is primed by state ideology for a specific understanding of the story. While the South Korean reader is guided through an orthographically, lexigraphically, and culturally "close" version of the original that reproduces as much as possible the mood and tone of classical Chosŏn society, the North Korean reader is directed through a more vernacularized, "nationalized" form of literature that attenuates the nuances of classical culture and instead emphasizes the broad strokes as a ready foil for justifying socialist revolution. The northern version thus performs a balancing act between sterilizing superfluous classical knowledge and preserving enough premodern authenticity for informed and

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useful criticism, while also maintaining the bedrock thematic bonds of human will, emotion, and comradery that connect with the readership.

Further Translations and Interpretations of *The Tale of Unyŏng*: North Korea (1987) and South Korea (1978)

In the 1970s and 1980s North Korea continued to engage critically with classical literature while furthering a nationalist language policy of *han'gŭl*-only orthography and lexical vernacularization. In South Korea, on the other hand, influenced by linguistic theory hostile to or skeptical of active state language planning, the state had much less consistent intervention in language policy, and hence a form of literary translation and analysis were conducted that adhered closely to premodern cosmopolitan knowledge and operated as a mode closer to "intralingual" translation.

The 1987 translation of *The Tale of Unyŏng* is published along with translations of the vernacular fiction works *The Story of Hwang Paekho* (*Hwang Paekho chŏn* 黃白虎傳, eighteenth–nineteenth centuries) and *The Story of Hwang Wŏlsŏn* (*Hwang Wŏlsŏn chŏn* 黃月仙傳). In the introduction to this collection, the North Korean critical approach to classical literature and culture is developed even more deeply. Kim Ilsŏng reiterates this approach, stating: "A new socialist national culture is by no means built from the ground up but constructed through a process of selectively inheriting and developing the superior traditions of our ancestral national culture. In order to gradually build our national socialist culture, we must become aware of the excellent aspects of our traditional culture and be able to critically analyze and evaluate them" (Kim Ilsŏng 1979: 233, quoted in Ri Ch'angyu 1987a). The author of the introduction then writes, "These three works have unique characteristics that differ in content and method of composition, [but] because all three reflect the realities of feudal society and present urgent social problems as ideological themes . . . we may say they are works of great significance in literary history," thus linking the content of these three disparate works through their ability to display "realist" imagery in a manner critical of the traditional order.

The author goes on to develop this line of critique, claiming, "*The Story of Unyŏng* was a ground-breaking and highly significant work of literature, standing as an early example of realist (*sasiljuŭi*) literature in medieval Korea. The most prominent realist aspect of the work is the eschewing of subjective intervention by the author, but rather objectively and truthfully depicting the personalities of Unyŏng and her friends in relationships of social hierarchy" (Ri Ch'angyu 1987a: 9). Thus, whereas most classical works of Chosŏn-era fiction were disregarded in the early years after North Korea's founding, under the *chuch'e* turn the absence of the so-called praise and blame mode of traditional writing according to Confucian morality is interpreted as a progressive socialist trait, representing a form of realist literature that accurately depicts the morally corrupt traditional society as it was. The author concludes with a positive assessment of the work regarding broader questions of human rights, writing, "*The Story of Unyŏng* should be evaluated as a work with great literary significance, fervently defending the liberation of human individuality and opening the path to realism in our country's literature" (Ri Ch'angyu 1987a: 11).

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Figure 1. Page of the 1978 South Korean edition of *The Story of Unyŏng* showing Sino-Korean annotations (top left), mixed-script vernacular (bottom left), *han'gŭl* only (top right), and LS original (bottom right).

In terms of linguistics, the 1987 translation of *The Story of Unyŏng* furthers the state language policy regarding *han'gŭl* only in publications. While a comparative analysis of lexicon and assumed cosmopolitan knowledge of the readership like that conducted above is beyond the scope of this article, the stark contrast in orthography invites a brief comparison. Whereas the 1966 vernacular translation employs a limited number of sinographs and appears by itself, the 1987 translation completely removes all sinographs and instead places the original LS version at the end. This suggests not only the further universalization of vernacular North Korean for a unified popular readership, but also progress toward another goal of North Korean language policy: the curricularization of LS study as a specialized field separate from the vernacular even in the residual form of Sino-Korean lexigraphic mediation. This may also be interpreted as a final transition away from the realm of "intralingual" translation to interlingual translation between two discrete foreign languages perceived as such, if the Jakobsonian paradigm of translation may be salvaged at all.

The 1978 South Korean translation of *The Story of Unyŏng* similarly appears with other classical works of fiction. However, this translation displays not a critical stance toward classical fiction or evidence of vernacularization toward interlingual translation, but a further dissecting of the literary field into three tiers of literacy: an LS original, a heavily sinicized mixed-script or *hancha*-infused "high" vernacular translation, and a pure *han'gŭl* vernacular version. Moreover, unlike the LS original, which is placed seemingly for reference purposes at the end of the North Korean version, the three tiers of literacy are juxtaposed on a single page in the South Korean translation, suggesting the integration of these inscriptional practices within a continuing intralingual translational paradigm (fig. 1). The intention of drawing the reader closer to the original is expressed in the opening lines of the introduction: "The works of classical fiction collected here represent an attempt to organize our

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precious literary legacy into a still incomplete national literature (*kungmunhak* 國文學). As we reveal such literature on the national stage, as a cornucopia-like feast for all, it's almost as if we can hear our literary predecessors behind us, whispering their approval" (Kim Tonguk 1978: 1). The respective approaches to traditional literature in North and South Korea thus function both pragmatically and metapragmatically, governed by conscious, prescriptive nationalist language ideologies.

Conclusion

In these disparate North and South Korean translations, we can detect the fruits of starkly different approaches to classical literature and language policy. The South Korean translations attempt to adhere closely to the LS original, include a high number of sinographs and Sino-Korean vocabulary, assume a high level of cosmopolitan knowledge in a form of literacy that is exclusive and academic-oriented, and may be interpreted as a form of intralingual translation; the North Korean translations, in contrast, reflect a nationalistic language policy tending toward complete hangulization coupled with a propagandistic literary theory mobilizing classical literature for socialist revolution and producing an inclusive, universalizing form of literacy that simplifies the linguistic field and curricularizes LS literature as specialized knowledge. Although, textually speaking, the South Korean translations may be considered forms of intralingual translation more so than their North Korean counterparts, discursively the language debates and specific language ideologies and policies that arose in both North and South Korea emerged from a shared sinographic cosmopolitan space and invoke a lingering tradition of intralingual translation, even as both translation traditions charted independent paths away from LS literacy. There is fertile ground for future research to examine the ongoing processes of national literary vernacularization on the Korean peninsula, as South Korea has continued to intralingually negotiate the relationship between cosmopolitan and vernacular literacy, and North Korea has deepened its *chuch'e*-oriented approach to LS literature.

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NOTES

1 Zethsen (2009: 800) gives these examples for intralingual translation: "Numerous varieties of expert-to-layman communication, easy-readers for children, subtitling for the deaf,

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summaries, some kinds of news reporting, new translations of classics, etc." For more examples, see Shuttleworth (1997: 87–88).

2 For example, the decision to use only *han'gŭl* or to use an admixture of sinographs in mixed script is borne out of a particular shared literary cosmopolis, something that would be fundamentally different between, say, Korean and English.

3 The Chosŏnŏ hakhoe (renamed the Han'gŭl hakhoe in 1949) was founded in 1931 and spearheaded Korean language reform during the colonial period, including orthography standardization and dictionary compilation (Chosŏnŏ hakhoe 1933). Because of the group's clandestine work with the latter project, in 1942 members of the group were arrested by Japanese authorities, tried, and sentenced to years in prison. After liberation the surviving members were released and regrouped, taking the lead in language-related campaigns, which they approached from a highly nationalist, pro-*han'gŭl* stance.

4 The original reads: "P'yojunŏ nŭn Chosŏn inmin sai e sayongdoenŭn kongt'ongsŏng i kajang manŭn hyŏndaeŏ kaundesŏ i rŭl chŏnghanda." See Chosŏn ŏmun yŏn'guhoe (1948).

5 King (2007: 210–11) cites a contemporaneous Soviet report by Vladimir Popov that confirms the strides made by North Korea in eliminating illiteracy prior to the Korean War. Reports in the North Korean newspaper *Rodong sinmun* from 1945–50 provide regular updates on the illiteracy eradication campaign that corroborate this report.

6 See also Immanuel Kim (2016).

7 This is not to suggest that linguistic theory has not evolved since the late 1960s. For example, according to King (forthcoming), North Korea has started to recently reevaluate its non-utilization of *hancha* in publications and *hancha* education more generally.

8 For a list of translations from Soviet sources, see Ko (1992).

9 North Korea does not seem to have considered borrowing from Russian a major issue at this time. See Kim Ilsŏng ([1966] 1989: 419).

10 This campaign was responsible for such high-profile words as "*pokkŭm mŏri*" (fried hair) in place of "*p'ama*" (perm), and "*ŏrŭm posungi*" (ice topping) for "*aisŭk'ŭrim*" (ice cream). North Korean defector interviews in South Korea periodically confirm or deny the regular usage of such terms.

11 This is a form of "replacement" and not word choice because the South Korean version almost always employs the Sino-Korean version of the original LS word, whereas the North Korean translation employs an alternative, usually native Korean word instead.

12 For a list of North Korean translations of classical fiction, see Chŏn Yŏngsŏn (2000).

13 For the tables of contents of these issues, see the T'ongilbu charyo sent'ŏ website: 서지정보 (unikorea.go.kr). I have collected all the works of literature in translation from the inaugural issue to 1960, which number approximately forty.

14 Yang Sŭngmin (2008: 147–48) claims that close to thirty studies of *The Tale of Unyŏng* were published in the period 1990 to 2002 alone. English-language studies of the work have been less numerous. The most well-known translation and study of *The Tale of Unyŏng* in English is Pettid and Cha (2009). For a recent publication of a previously unknown English translation by James Scarth Gale along with my scholarly introduction, see Gale (2021).

15 What should be kept in mind, however, is that "vernacular" and "cosmopolitan" readerships were never mutually exclusive in Chosŏn Korea, notwithstanding enduring discourses reproducing a naturalized link between women and the vernacular script. Although exact numbers are uncertain, literate Chosŏn men engaged with texts in both *hanmun* and *han'gŭl*, though compartmentalized according to disparate sociocultural functions, while certain upper-class

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women, albeit in more limited numbers, were able to read literature in *hanmun*. Thus it would be amiss to conflate readership, or authorship for that matter, on the basis of gender alone.

16 Michael Pettid writes, pace So Chaeyŏng, that "while the versions in literary Chinese have some minor differences in regard to the degree of elaboration in some passages and use of homonyms in places, they are largely the same" (Pettid and Cha 2009: 26).

17 For recent research on Gale's translation of *Unyŏng chŏn*, see the sources cited in Gale (2021: 562–68). See also Chŏng Minjin (2019) and Yi Chinsuk (2019). Although Chŏng Minjin does uncover some key differences in the National Library *hanmun* version of *Unyŏng chŏn* on which the Gale translation is purportedly based, the differences are comparatively minor, there is no extant version (vernacular or *hanmun*) closer to Gale's translation, and the differences at any rate do not draw into question the arguments made here.

18 While orthography theoretically encompasses differences in spelling, for example, the presence of the initial liquid "ㄹ" in the North Korean variety that is absent in South Korean, these differences will not be considered here.

19 Gale's translation in *Redemption and Regret* is accompanied by the following footnote: "Consort Pan (班 婕妤 Ch. Ban Jieyu, 48–ca. 2 BC) was a palace woman and poet of the Western Han (206 BC–23 AD), and a concubine of Emperor Cheng (漢成帝). After falling out of favor with the emperor, she became a lady-in-waiting to the Empress Dowager and was relegated to the Changsin Palace (長信宮, Ch. Zhangxingong), where she penned her extant work "Song of Resentment" (怨歌行, Ch. Yuan Gexing) in which she ruminates on palace life and feelings of abandonment" (Gale 2021: 585n59).

20 So Tongp'a (Ch. Su Dongpo) 蘇東坡 (1037–1101 AD) refers to So Sik (Ch. Su Shi) 蘇軾, an influential literatus, calligrapher, and government minister of Song-era China (960–1279 AD).

21 The South Korean version also mentions nothing explicitly about the character Yu Yŏng being poor, although this could be inferred by his appearance.

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