

DECONSTRUCTION OF IDEOLOGICAL DISCOURSES: CH'OE INHUN'S *SŎYUGI* (*THE JOURNEY TO THE WEST*, 西遊記) AS A PARODY OF *XIYOUJI* (*THE JOURNEY TO THE WEST*, 西遊記)

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In the academic realm, the title *The Journey to the West* is generally identified with the Shidetang edition of the 100-chapter novel allegedly written by Wu Cheng'en in the Ming Dynasty at the end of the sixteenth century. In Korea, though, the title is generally associated not with the 100-chapter novel but with various shorter retellings, which tend to highlight the fantastic and adventurous facets of the story. For this reason, many scholars have assumed that Ch'oe Inhun's *Sŏyugi*, written between 1966 and 1971, is a parody of these overwhelmingly popular retellings, when in fact the author is parodying the complex 100-chapter novel. Much of the scholarly analysis of *Sŏyugi* focuses on reading Ch'oe Inhun's novel against the politically charged background of 1960s Korea. By undertaking a close comparison of *Sŏyugi* and the 100-chapter novel, I argue that such a spatiotemporal frame is too narrow. Unlike other retellings of *The Journey to the West*, *Sŏyugi* does not merely share characters or artistic motivations with the original text, but also makes use of parallels on the structural and stylistic level, and these have generally been neglected in other studies. *Sŏyugi* demonstrates how ideological debates can be reduced to relative truths through its parody of the many voices and perspectives present in *The Journey to the West*.

Keywords: polyphony, ideological discourse, Ch'oe Inhun, *The Journey to the West*, parody

* This work is the product of a long journey that started in Bochum in 2011 when I was supported by a Graduate Studies Fellowship from the Korea Foundation and later by the Academy of Korean Studies of the Republic of Korea in 2013 (AKS-2009-MA-1001). I continued to work on *Sŏyugi* during my 2014 Korea Foundation Post-Doctoral Fellowship at the University of British Columbia. The initial drafts of this paper have benefited from discussions at the AKSE Conference in Bochum 2015, the International Conference of the Korean Language and Literature Association in Seoul 2015 and the Asian Studies Conference Japan in Tokyo 2016. I want to thank the two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments and am especially grateful to Marion Eggert, who made this journey possible.

The Journey to the West is one of the most successful stories in China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, and beyond. It is widely known in today's South Korean society through fairy tales, animations like *Narara syup'ōbodŭ* ("Flying Superboard," Hō Yōng-man 1990), or comics like the bestselling *Mabōp ch'ōnjamun* ("Magical Thousand Character Text," Siriōl 2003–2011). Since these forms are usually associated with popular culture rather than profound philosophical questions, such retellings of *The Journey to the West* often reduce it to its fantastic facets, although it has much more to offer.

One of the most complex versions of *The Journey to the West* is the Shidetang edition, a 100-chapter novel allegedly written by Wu Cheng'en in the Ming Dynasty at the end of the sixteenth century, and referred to hereafter in this study as "*The Journey*." Academic scholars generally regard this version as the "original," and it is considered one of the Four Literary Masterpieces (四大奇書) of the Ming Dynasty. Ch'oe Inhun wrote another version of *The Journey* titled *Sōyugi*, which can also be translated as *The Journey to the West*. I claim that *Sōyugi* not only alludes to *The Journey* by its title, but can be read as a semantic and structural parody¹ of the 100-chapter novel. This paper argues that a close comparison of the *The Journey* and *Sōyugi* opens up new aspects of Ch'oe Inhun's novel that have been overlooked by former studies. I will draw on Bakhtin's novel theory to show how *Sōyugi* plays with the polyphonic techniques of *The Journey* to deconstruct ideological discourses.

In spite of, or perhaps because of, the general perception that *Sōyugi* is a difficult or even problematic text, only about two dozen articles and half a dozen PhD theses in Korean have been written on Ch'oe Inhun's *Sōyugi*. Surprisingly, only one-third of them include *The Journey* in their research,² although the title virtually invites the reader to read *Sōyugi* alongside *The Journey*. The articles on *Sōyugi* that do mention *The Journey* focus on motifs that can be found in both texts—for example, the travel motif—but still analyze them against the background of the Korean situation of the 1960s. None of the existing research has undertaken a deep analysis of *The Journey*. Even the fact that Ch'oe Inhun additionally translated one part of the 100-chapter novel into modern Korean (Ch'oe Inhun 2009a, 261–530) is generally ignored, although this fact suggests that *Sōyugi* is based on a deep understanding of *The Journey*. Reading *Sōyugi* in the context of 1960s Korea undeniably opens up some aspects of the novel, but I

¹ Here, parody should be understood in Linda Hutcheon's sense as "imitation with critical difference" (Hutcheon 2000, 36).

² Studies that examine *Sōyugi* as a parody of *The Journey* include Yi Insuk (1986), Pak Paesik (1995), Chōng Chaesō (2003), Kim Sōngnyōl (2004), Kim Miyōng (2004), Chōng Yōnghun (2005), Cho Sōnhŭi (2007), and Chōng Yōnghun (2011).

would argue that limiting our analysis to that narrow spatiotemporal frame prevents us from seeing the parallels between *Sōyugi* and *The Journey* on the structural level. These parallels are especially crucial for generating the fundamental polyphony, or multi-voicedness, of the novel.

To support my argument I will offer short summaries of parody and parodied text and elaborate how polyphony is embedded in *The Journey*, drawing specifically on Bakhtin's theory of the novel. I will then conduct a close comparison of *Sōyugi* and *The Journey* while paying special attention to prologue, motifs, characters, structure, and style to illuminate how Ch'oe Inhun adapts the polyphony of *The Journey* in his novel.

SŌYUGI AND THE JOURNEY

Sōyugi was first serialized in the monthly journal *Munhak* from May 1966 until January 1967. A slightly modified version of it was published in book form in 1971. The novel starts with a prologue that introduces the novel as an archaeological film about an ancient skull fossil. The main part of *Sōyugi* describes the thought or dream journey of the male protagonist Tokko Chun, in which he is led into his past and into Korean history. During his journey he meets four historical figures: the patriotic kisaeng Non'gae, the war hero Yi Sunsin, the socialist Cho Pongam, and the writer Yi Kwangsu. Additionally, he has two encounters with people from his own past—namely, with a stationmaster and with his own younger sister and brother. All the people Tokko Chun meets represent ideological discourses and beg him to stay behind with them, but he cannot be kept from continuing his odyssey towards “that summer in town W,” which might refer to the last summer Tokko Chun had spent in Wōnsan before he came to South Korea. When he finally reaches town W, though, he is not welcomed but accused of being an imperialistic spy, which marks the end of the dream journey.

As the title suggests, *The Journey* also tells the story of a journey, namely, the successful odyssey of the Buddhist monk Tripitaka, who sets out for the Western Heaven to find the real Buddhist scriptures with his four disciples Sun Wukong (the monkey), Zhu Bajie (the pig), Sha Wujing (the monster), and a horse. Consisting of more than 600,000 Chinese characters, the 100-chapter novel can be divided into a prologue followed by about thirty episodes. The prologue starts with Sun Wukong's miraculous birth out of a stone, describes his career as monkey king, culminates in his fight against all the heavenly authorities, and finally ends with his defeat against Buddha, after which Sun Wukong is imprisoned beneath a mountain. Only Tripitaka can free him, and he offers to do so on the

condition that Sun Wukong accompanies and protects him on his journey to the West. The monk controls the monkey by means of a cap Sun Wukong wears on his head that hurts whenever he is not obedient. After encountering and accepting the other pilgrims, Tripitaka's actual odyssey begins.

Each of the following episodes then repeats a similar pattern:

1. The pilgrims encounter hindrances on their journey, mostly in the form of monsters and demons with all kinds of religious backgrounds;
2. Sun Wukong contrives a plan to overcome the hindrances, which often involves his supernatural abilities and the help of Buddhist advisors;
3. The monsters and demons are defeated,
4. The pilgrims happily continue the journey.

This simple repetitive pattern allows the reader to skip parts of *The Journey*—or even to read just a few episodes—without losing the thread. It also lends itself to all kinds of fantastic retellings, especially as children's literature. However, we can also read the hundred chapters of *The Journey* as a coherent narrative in which each episode has a special, unique meaning.

POLYPHONY IN *THE JOURNEY*

The journey itself can be understood as a search for something, but also as a fight against something. Therefore, the text can be used as a vehicle to teach, but also as a weapon to criticize. When read as a coherent narrative, *The Journey* has frequently been pigeonholed as a Buddhist, Daoist, or Confucian manual for self-cultivation, or as an allegory for the Three-Religions-Joining-As-One movement (Yu 2012: 1,51–53). Alternatively, it has also been read as a satire of life and the world. Considering the diverse and sometimes conflicting features of the 100-chapter novel, not to mention its ironic bent, it seems to be impossible to categorize. *The Journey* is not a consistent or complete allegory. No one viewpoint or style of discourse is continually dominant. What we find in *The Journey* is a good example of what Bakhtin has called a “plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices” (Bakhtin 2014, 6). We hear many voices in *The Journey* but none of them is dominant.

In chapter 99, the monkey Sun Wukong calls this phenomenon the “profound mystery of non-perfection” (不全之奧妙). When his master the monk Tripitaka laments the loss of parts of a sūtra, Sun Wukong says, “After all, even Heaven and Earth are not perfect. This sūtra may have been perfect, but a part of it has been torn off precisely because only in that condition will it correspond to the

profound mystery of non-perfection” (Yu 2012, 4:366). I would like to suggest that it is precisely this “non-perfection,” or, to use a phrase from Bakhtin, the “impossibility of full meaning” (Bakhtin 2011, xxxiii), that makes *The Journey* so variable and successful. *The Journey* is not a complete allegory of any discourse; it is not a “well-rounded, finalized, systemically monologic whole,” but rather an example of what Bakhtin calls “unfinalized dialogue” (Bakhtin 2014, 32). Since there is no discursive strategy that is dominant throughout the whole story, *The Journey* can employ a number of different discursive strategies, to different ends. While most derivative versions of *The Journey* choose one of these discursive strategies, in his version, Ch’oe Inhun plays with the idea of “non-perfection” raised in the 100-chapter novel to proclaim what I am calling the joyful relativity of ideological discourses.³

THE PROLOGUE AS A GUIDE FOR A JOURNEY OF THE MIND

Both *The Journey* and *Sōyugi* begin with a prologue that functions as a structural model for the rest of the book. In the case of the *The Journey*, the story of the Monkey King Sun Wukong serves as prologue. It is like a “mini-quest for salvation,” or a “parody of the enlightenment process” (Plaks 1987, 209). In the case of *Sōyugi* there are actually two different prologues. The prologue in the *Sōyugi* version serialized in the journal *Munhak* differs from the prologue of *Sōyugi* that was later published as a monograph. In the monograph’s prologue, *Sōyugi* itself is referred to as a “film” which is “one part of an introductory series about archaeology. It is a semantic approach to the cerebral cortex of an ancient skull fossil found recently” (7).⁴ Thus, Ch’oe Inhun sets a naturalistic tone for the novel by referencing a method from the natural sciences, suggesting that the episodes that follow should be read as non-biased descriptions.

In contrast, at the beginning of the first episode of *Sōyugi* published in the journal, we find the following “remarks of the author” (*chakcha ūi mal*):

³ Here, ideological discourse should be understood in Zima’s sense as “a discursive partial system which is controlled by semantic dichotomy and by corresponding narrative methods (hero/enemy). Its subject of the statement is not willing or not able to reflect its semantic and syntactic methods, and to make them the object of an open dialogue. Instead, it presents its own discourse as the only possible (true, natural) and identifies it with the totality of its real and potential referents.” (Zima 1989, 56)

⁴ In the case of *Sōyugi* I will only give the page numbers in parentheses, which refer to Ch’oe Inhun 2008.

While trying to give all ideas and emotions—which are hidden in the depth of today's Koreans' consciousness—the form of illusions, in this work I am going to develop the protagonist's mental adaptation in real time and space, in a free methodical time and space. As one part of a trilogy, I have tried to write this work in response to *Hoesaek ūi ūija* (Grey chair).⁵ At the same time, however, I have varied the theme in a freer form than before.

In these remarks Ch'oe introduces the illusions, or dreams, that we will encounter in *Sōyugi*. He makes clear that these illusions embody ideas and emotions that originate in the consciousness, or the brain. The novel is situated in real time and space but it does not cling to methodical frames. Tokko Chun's journey is a thought journey that happens in the protagonist's brain, or mind. While Ch'oe Inhun announces in the prologue of the serialized version that he is going to visualize the protagonist's thoughts in novel form, in the prologue of the monograph he goes further and describes this visualization of thoughts as film.

The author of *The Journey* does something similar by calling Sun Wukong “mind-monkey” (心猿). If the monkey symbolizes the mind, the monkey's journey can, like Tokko Chun's journey, also be regarded as a journey of the mind, an “internal pilgrimage of the mind” (Plaks 1987, 243), or what the narratologist Dorrit Cohn would call a “psycho-narration” (Cohn 1978). Since the consciousness of Tokko Chun is its essential subject matter, *Sōyugi* can also be called a stream-of-consciousness novel. By using the technique of the stream of consciousness, Ch'oe frees himself from all kinds of stylistic constraints. This opens the door for polyphony on the stylistic level.

The whole story of *Sōyugi* happens in the “kaleidoscope” (8) of Tokko Chun's thoughts. Tokko Chun seems to be a patient who observes his own brain surgery with the help of a monitor (Chōng Yōnghun 2011, 486). Ch'oe presents the reader with a “transparent mind,” so to speak. As promised in the prologue, Tokko Chun's brain seems to be dissected. Many sentences are not complete, and we can see abrupt shifts in topic and focus. His associations are so free that the inner and outer worlds begin to melt into one another. The following passage at the beginning of the novel shows how Ch'oe makes use of the stream of consciousness:

While slowly stepping on the kaleidoscope of his thoughts stair by stair, he went up to his room... He walked in the direction of his room. He wasn't thinking anything. But somewhere in his skull, bulbs were stuck that were as dim and small as fireflies. They flickered, went on and out. Every time

⁵ *Hoesaegin* refers to *Hoesaek ūi ūija* (Grey chair) (Ch'oe Inhun 2002a, 336).

they went on again they lit up a glossy wall that was densely covered by a net of capillaries. Then it was darkened only to light up again. He could feel this distinct moving with his body. For what reason? Unexpectedly, he could suddenly hear the low voice of somebody in the emptiness. (For what reason) For what reason do I ...? I ... Tokko Chun was slightly surprised when he realized that the owner of the voice was he himself. He had come to the beginning of the stairs. He went onto the first step and the fireflies inside his skull went on, but when he took the next step they went out again. (8–9)

The sudden change between first and third person marks the dissolution of the barrier between the inner and outer worlds. Actions and sounds that, at first, seem to originate in the outside world move into Tokko Chun's brain, and the line between inside and outside becomes blurred: "Sometimes spider webs covered his neck. While removing them, forlornly clotted on his fingertips, he thought that he touched his own nerves with his hands" (12). "He had the feeling that from outside he could hear the sound of rain. But when he thought about it again it might have also been a hallucination from within his ears" (17). In this light, all encounters of the two protagonists during their journeys can be regarded as projections of their minds. The stations Tokko Chun passes are not concrete places, but "symbolize his mental condition" (Pak Ŭnt'ae 2001, 181). Thus, the journey does not actually happen, but is an illusion or a dream. Ch'oe borrows the idea of the "mind monkey" from *The Journey* to develop a "psycho narration." By using the stream of consciousness technique, he lays the foundation for polyphony on the stylistic level.

REPETITIONS AND CIRCULARITY AS A MEANS FOR ACHIEVING MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES

Every literary text can be read in many different ways, but *The Journey* is especially variable based on its polyphony. The easiest approach is to read it as a quest journey leading along a singular path to an ultimate conclusion, but it is worth considering if the pilgrimage is really progressive. Andrew Plaks, the author of the seminal critical work *Four Masterworks of the Ming Novel*, notes the repetitive character of *The Journey's* landscape, figures, and events: "At the least, they seem continually to be passing through the same landscapes, vulnerable to the same external and internal trails; and when they finally reach their promised land it is suspiciously reminiscent of the Tang capital from which they set out" (Plaks 1987, 243). *Sōyugi* shares the repetitive character of *The Journey*, and exaggerates it.

Whereas the pilgrims in *The Journey* pass through landscapes that are similar, Tokko Chun's whole journey consists of arrivals at and departures from a train station called Sögwangsa, accompanied by the same sounds, smells, and images. He meets different people, but each of the encounters shares roughly the same structure.

In his work *Fiction of Enlightenment* Li Qiancheng explains the repetitiveness of *The Journey* by referring to the structure of the "Section on Entering the Dharma Realm" 入法界品 in the *Flower Garland Sutra* 華嚴經 (Q. Li 2004, 82–84). Mark Ehman, a scholar of comparative religion, divides this section into three parts: the introductory section in which the Buddha-realm (*buddha-viṣaya*, 佛境界) is envisioned, the second section in which the protagonist Sudhana visits spiritual advisors (*kalyāṇa-mitra*, 善知識), and the Maitreya section in which the Buddha-realm is perfectly realized (Ehman 1977, 41–42). This structure can be found not only in *The Journey*, but also in *Sōyugi*. There are especially strong parallels between the two novels in the second "encounters" section. In the "Ru fajie pin," after Sudhana has envisioned the Buddha-realm, he asks various advisors the same question again and again: "How is a bodhisattva to learn the practice of bodhisattvas and to cultivate the path toward bodhisattvahood?" He fails to obtain a satisfactory answer, however, and each time he is sent to the next benefactor. In this manner, he has fifty-four encounters with monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, seniors, young men, and others. Ehman describes this repetitive questioning as "walking in circles" (Ehman 1977, 72).

In her dissertation on religious journeys in *The Journey*, Chiung-yun Liu claims that this kind of questioning has to do with accumulating knowledge from different points of view (C. Liu 2008, 232). Similarly, Li points out that "the *sūtra* itself is a series of attempts to unravel this mystery [Buddha's way of seeing the universe] from different perspectives" (Q. Li 2004, 82). Ehman argues that Sudhana had to walk in circles to see the center from all sides (Ehman 1977, 92). Only after Sudhana has talked to all teachers and benefactors is he in a position to "see" on all sides. The ability to look at things from different points of view is obviously a prerequisite for the "highest perfect enlightenment." The purpose of questioning is not to attain the one and only correct answer and cling to it, but to approach the "truth" from countless different perspectives. It is a dialogic approach to truth. While listening to all the singular voices which coexist and interact, Sudhana finds a way to hear the whole behind the individual voices.

The Journey and also *Sōyugi* can be read in this light, too. It is difficult to tell what Tripitaka and his disciples or Tokko Chun have gained from their encounters, but they do finally reach some kind of "truth," namely, the truth that there is no fixed truth. In *The Journey* the scriptures that the pilgrims first obtain are empty; and, it is

exactly this emptiness of the scriptures that encourages the pilgrims to realize that there is no single fixed truth. The lay exegete Li Tongxuan (635–730) calls this emptiness the “progressive cultivation in the midst of non-progression” (Gimello 1983, 342). In the case of *Sōyugi*, Tokko Chun is confronted with all kinds of ideological discourses without finding the one he is willing to devote himself to. Thus, at first glance it seems that he does not gain anything from the ideological confrontations. However, in the end it becomes clear that it is not important to privilege any single ideological discourse but to appreciate the plurality of the voices.

On the structural level, *Sōyugi* imitates the repetitiveness and circularity of *The Journey*. While the repetitive pattern of the encounters might give us the feeling of redundancy, it is a means to express polyphony on the structural level by relativizing the encounters. In *Sōyugi*, no encounter plays a prominent role, no voice is dominant.

THE MOTIFS OF TRAVEL AND TRANSFORMATION

While the 100-chapter *The Journey* can be divided into about thirty episodes, *Sōyugi* can be divided into six core episodes. Though these episodes are not arranged in chapters, they are clearly marked by blank lines⁶ and have in common that they all take place at Sōgwangsa Station (釋王寺) or in its vicinity.

The name of the place where *Sōyugi* is set, Sōgwangsa Station or Sōgwang Temple, is significant in several ways. There is in fact a Sōgwang Temple in Kangwŏn Province in North Korea, built by the founder of the Chosŏn Dynasty, Yi Sŏnggye, in 1386. The name might therefore serve as an indicator of the length of Tokko Chun’s journey, including the whole duration of the Chosŏn Dynasty (Pae Kyōngyŏl 2009, 141). It is clear that the name of the temple has some significance in the novel, since even Tokko Chun dwells on its meaning. “Where am I? It’s called Sōgwangsa. Sōgwangsa, what could that mean?” (151) One meaning of “Sōgwang” (釋王) is “king of the *sākyas*,” or in other words, Buddha. In this sense, the station can be seen as a place of enlightenment, or disillusionment, where no absolute truths or attachments exist. The station master argues that Sōgwangsa Station is independent because all connections to it had been cut (79), which further supports the idea that the station is a place of enlightenment.

⁶ For this purpose I compared the Munhak kwa chisōngsa edition and the Ŭlyu munhwasa edition of *Sōyugi*.

Tokko Chun's journey leads him into his past and into Korean history. For the dreamer, the dream-journey takes hundreds of years, while in real time the dream might only have been several minutes. Ch'oe adopts the travel motif of *The Journey*, but does not follow its forward-moving chronological timeline. Here, we can see how Ch'oe plays with motifs of *The Journey*. He borrows elements but also modifies them to suit the context of *Sōyugi*, which distinguishes it from the simpler retellings of *The Journey*. He plays with *The Journey*, but does not regard it as a rigid form into which he must pour his novel. What he describes is a journey back in time, with each episode starting not with a dream, but with Chun waking from a dream. For example, at the beginning of the second episode, Ch'oe writes: "Tokko Chun opened his eyes. In this moment the phrase 'It is not a dream, but it seems like a dream' 非夢似夢 and the phrase 'Dream of Nanke'⁷ 南柯一夢 came slowly to his mind, only to move around restlessly and disappear" (118). Episode five starts on a morning in autumn: "Tokko Chun had just woken up. He had dreamed something. But the moment he woke up, he had forgotten all about it" (211). One consequence of Tokko Chun's travel back through time is the fact that he cannot remember his dreams and his past, and consequently does not know who he is: "As hard as he tried he could not remember where he lived before and who he was. The only thing he could think of was that he had to free himself from the restraints of the stationmaster [at Sōgwangsa Station]... He had no memories at all. He was only sure that he had to go somewhere" (194). Only at the end of the novel does Tokko Chun return from his thought journey and arrive at his room in "real" time. He arrives where he departed. Ch'oe defies the conventions of the source text and turns his novel upside down.

It is not only the chronological order of time which Ch'oe inverts. He also plays with the motif of transformation, which plays a significant role in *The Journey*. Almost every time Sun Wukong fights against monsters and demons, he uses his ability to transform his body in order to defeat his opponents. In *Sōyugi* also, the motif of transformation is used in a modified way. In the fifth episode, a highly Kafkaesque⁸ transformation occurs when Tokko Chun himself changes into a large snake (216), which makes it impossible for him to provide for his younger sister and brother anymore. While Sun Wukong's transformations in *The*

⁷ The "Dream of Nanke" by the Chinese writer Li Gongzuo (778–848) tells the story of a dismissed officer who enjoys all kinds of worldly pleasures in a dream only to wake up and to find out that everything had just been an illusion.

⁸ This kind of transformation can of course also be found in traditional Korean literature. Its resemblance to Gregor Samsa's transformation into a monstrous insect-like creature in Kafka's *Die Verwandlung* [The Metamorphosis] in addition to numerous explicit references to Kafka in *Hoesaegin* (Ch'oe Inhun 2005, 206–208) suggest that Tokko Chun's transformation might actually allude to Kafka.

Journey display his power, since he can control them, Tokko Chun's metamorphosis reveals his weakness. In other words, Sun Wukong is a master of transformation, while Tokko Chun is the victim of it.

Besides Tokko Chun's transformation, there are various smaller transformations, which often herald the end of an episode. Just as almost every episode begins with an awareness of Chun's dreaming, each ends with some kind of transformation. The second episode, for example, begins with the mention of the "Dream of Nanke" and ends with a transformation of the stationmaster at Sögwang station. After the stationmaster tries to stop Tokko Chun from leaving his station, his face becomes scarlet and he grows fur, and one of his controllers is transformed into a pig and grunts (149–150). By showing that nothing is immutable, the transformations reveal the illusionary character of fixed truths that had been propagated by the victims of transformation.

THE MOTIF OF HINDERING ENCOUNTERS

The Journey can be read as a sequence of interchangeable encounters, mostly with monsters and demons, which the pilgrims must overcome in order to continue their journey to the West. In a surprisingly similar way, *Söyugi* consists of a sequence of encounters that show no obvious connection to each other.

Tokko Chun meets four historical figures: Non'gae (41), a *keisaeng* who is said to have died in 1593 when she embraced a Japanese general and threw herself into a river to kill him; Yi Sunsin (49), the Korean hero who is idolized for his actions during the Japanese invasions at the end of the sixteenth century; the dying socialist Cho Pongam (170); and Yi Kwangsu (175), who presents the dilemma or opportunism of an intellectual facing Japanese colonialism.

Even before Tokko Chun arrives at Sögwangsa Station, he meets Non'gae, a symbol of blind patriotism, in a dark basement where she is detained by Japanese military policemen. In a long monologue she tries to persuade Tokko Chun to free her by marrying her. She criticizes Japanese imperialism for legitimizing colonialism by inventing a "bad" Korean nature which, according to the Japanese, had to be corrected (49). Although he feels compassion for her, Tokko Chun denies her request to free her: "I wanted to kiss her feet and say that I would like to die for her a thousand times. But that summer was stronger and deeper than that" (50). At this point in the novel it is not clear why Tokko Chun is influenced by "that summer," although he mentions it whenever he decides to leave a person.

The next historical figure, Yi Sunsin, is introduced to Tokko Chun by a historian who is imprisoned in a train at Sögwangsa Station. Before the

imprisoned historian starts to interview Yi Sunsin, he discusses the illusory nature of *minjoksŏng* 民族性, or ethno-nationality.

In short, what I want to say is that I want to deny the real existence of *minjoksŏng*. When I say this, I want to add an important clue. That is that I want to move the debate about *minjoksŏng* from the biological to the cultural dimension. It is clear, so I do not have to repeat it, but the theory of the Nazis was a noncultural one. They did not regard human beings as the agents of culture, but as the seed of life. That's barbarism. From that point of view progress in history would be unthinkable, and human beings could not be distinguished from animals. If we listen to the arguments of their advocates, *minjoksŏng* tends to refer to the form of pigs' snouts, to the color of fur, or to fertility. It's much more reasonable to exchange *minjoksŏng* with the term "cultural frames" (*munhwa-byŏng*, 文化型). After long research I came to the conclusion that the idea of *minjoksŏng* is a useless idea that can't solve anything. It is nothing but a tempting beauty or a mirage. After all this wandering around, I discovered the horizon of reality when I arrived at the idea of "cultural frames." Everything depends on the way of thinking. What I call "cultural frames" means "ways of thinking." If any nation had to face a failure it was because it lacked outstanding "ways of thinking."(130–131)

Kim Sŏngnyŏl has argued that the historian's words here can be understood as an attempt to overcome the colonial view of history, according to which biological factors of the Korean ethnic group were deemed responsible for their colonization by the Japanese (Kim Sŏngnyŏl 2004, 289–290). Additionally, Chang Hyŏn has suggested that these words might disguise some indirect criticism against President Park Chung-hee's plan to strengthen his weak political position by emphasizing national character in the biological sense (Chang Hyŏn 2005, 32). However, I would like to suggest that the fictional historian is trying to abolish the fixed frame by which nationality is defined on the basis of biological factors. In contrast to this kind of biologically-defined nationality, the historian argues that cultural frames, or ways of thinking, are more useful as markers of nationality.

In the historian's interview, Yi Sunsin comes off as the embodiment of a kind of Confucianism that prioritizes peoples' lives over a destructive revolution. The imprisoned historian continues his discussion of the concept of "cultural frames": "Why does culture change? What might be the most desirable 'cultural frame'? This is our task. This is what our generation has to find out. To fix a fair exchange between cultural frames, I look for like-minded people for this task" (146). Although the historian's mission seems to be the essence of the whole of *Sŏyugi*, Tokko Chun still refuses to accompany the historian. What might be the

reason for his refusal? One point is the fact that the historian is still a historian, and an “imprisoned” one at that.

Imprisonment frequently appears in Ch’oe Inhun’s novels as a symbol for biased thinking, or ideological discourse. In “Munhak kwa ideollogi” [Literature and ideology] he writes that people are the slaves of ideology, that they are caught in a prison called ideology (Ch’oe Inhun 2009b, 394). In *Sŏyugi*, the stationmaster’s son writes in a note, “Existence is a wall-like thing. It is blocked. We are imprisoned.... What imprisoned me is God. ... When this imprisonment, this sadness is believed to be God’s love as a way to forgive human beings, religious life starts” (257–258). If “God” is understood here as the claim of ideological discourses that deceive followers by seductive promises to be exclusively true, imprisonment points to the lack of freedom, the impossibility of dialogue. Titles also represent frames and can undermine freedom. The title ‘historian’ is what imprisons the historian. In this sense, then, ‘imprisoned historian’ is a tautology. But why is Yi Sunsin introduced by an imprisoned historian? Although it is Yi Sunsin who takes the center stage in this episode, the historian’s monologue is much longer than the interview with Yi Sunsin. One reading is that this constellation depicts the historical ‘imprisonment’ of Yi Sunsin, his fixed, stereotyped heroic role in Korean history. In other words, the imprisoned historian here serves as the glasses through which Yi Sunsin is generally seen.

The next historical figure Tokko Chun meets is the dying Cho Pongam (170), who in real life was actually a socialist who worked for the peaceful reunion of the two Koreas. He was Rhee Syngman’s biggest rival in the election planned for 1960, but he was eliminated under suspicion of being a spy. The scholar Cho Sŏnhŭi argues that the fact that Ch’oe includes a fictional Cho Pongam in his novel is a way for Ch’oe to express his criticism for Cho Pongam’s condemnation, since in the 1960s one was not allowed even to mention a person like Cho Pongam in a nonfictional context (Cho Sŏnhŭi 2007, 109–110). In the novel, Tokko Chun is asked to take Cho Pongam’s seat in a train, so that his absence will not be noticed, but Tokko Chun refuses. “I am not Cho Pongam. So how could I become Cho Pongam?” (173). Thus, although Cho Pongam does appear in *Sŏyugi*, he does not become the voice of the protagonist.

The final historical figure, Yi Kwangsu, is introduced by a military policeman who explains to Tokko Chun the dilemma of Yi Kwangsu. Yi Kwangsu himself adds:

At a time when most of Asia was occupied by Westerners, the behavior of Japan, when it stepped out to fight those Westerners, deceived me. I had forgotten. I mean, I had forgotten the fact that this Japan was actually the West for our Korea. You may ask how one could forget such an obvious fact. It’s the truth, what can I do about it? At that time I could only see the

Japan which fought against the West, the slave owner. I could not see the fact that Japan was our enemy. (198-199)

Here, Yi Kwangsu self-critically explains the reasons for his collaboration with Japan. He admits that he was so blinded by the power Japan demonstrated in its fight against the West that he couldn't realize how dangerous Japan might become for Korea.

All four encounters mentioned above are “personified discourses” (Ch'oe Inhun 2010b, 24), attempts to win Tokko Chun over to a particular ideological standpoint. Ch'oe has realized Bakhtin's idea according to which “each opinion really does become a living thing and is inseparable from an embodied human voice” (Bakhtin 2014, 32). Furthermore, in *Sōyugi* these voices are not “placed one after the other, as stages of evolution,” but “lie side by side on a place of coexistence and of interaction” (Bakhtin 2014, 31). Similar to Dostoevsky's heroes, Ch'oe's heroes each represent equally authoritative ideological positions, and none of them serve as “a vehicle for the author's own ideological position” (Bakhtin 2014, 7). The voices are set against each other dialogically, orchestrated as polyphony. Here, dialogicality “is constructed not as the whole of a single consciousness, absorbing other consciousnesses as objects into itself, but as a whole formed by the interaction of several consciousnesses” (Bakhtin 2014, 18). Bakhtin warns “each person who enters the labyrinth of the polyphonic novel” not to “lose his way in it and fail to hear the whole behind the individual voices” (Bakhtin 2014, 43).

Besides the historical figures Tokko Chun meets on his journey, he has two more significant encounters. Since these two incidents complement each other, I will discuss them together. Every time Tokko Chun arrives at Sōgwangsa Station, from the first time in episode one and every time thereafter, he meets the stationmaster, who tries to persuade him to stay. Unlike the four historical figures discussed above, the stationmaster does not represent any political conviction; the frame he represents is the frame of protective parental love (*cha*, 慈) or the authoritative “word of a father” (Bakhtin 2011, 342). Whether or not this stance is a “frame” in the same sense as the ideological positions that the historical figures represent, it is as restrictive for Tokko Chun as they are. It arouses in him the feeling that he should return the parental love with filial love (*hyo*, 孝) which would mean giving up his journey. In Ch'oe Inhun's monograph *Hwadu* [Topic of a Zen/Sōn riddle], in which he clarifies the relation of his life and his works (Pak Haehyōn 2015), he explains that the stationmaster's role could also be played by God, Buddha, or Chun's father (Ch'oe Inhun 2002, 140). Indeed, the stationmaster's voice sometimes even changes into the voice of Tokko Chun's

father (339), and Tokko Chun is moved by this: “The stationmaster nods with a benevolent (仁慈스럽게) smile. Without knowing why, Tokko Chun feels depressed and is moved to tears. Suddenly, he just wants to stay and forget about the train” (162).

The counterpart to Tokko Chun’s encounter with the stationmaster can be found in the fifth episode, where Tokko Chun is in the position of giving parental love. At this point, Tokko Chun is transformed into a large snake, which makes it impossible for him to provide for his younger sister and brother any longer. As Pak Myöngsun suggests, the burden of being a father figure is so great that he can no longer move (Pak Myöngsun 2002, 283). Tokko Chun’s encounters with the stationmaster and with himself as a disabled breadwinner complement each other insofar as they demonstrate the restricting effect of parental and filial love. In this regard, both encounters challenge the discourse of family.

Though the structure of each encounter differs somewhat, each encounter broadly represents one kind of ideological discourse with which Tokko Chun is confronted. Although he is sometimes drawn to them, he never allows himself to be taken in by any ideological discourse. Tokko Chun is also exposed to ideological discourses via announcements from radio, telephone, or loud-speaker—for example, announcements by the Shanghai Provisional Government (301–312), the North Korean Government (278–280), the “Hospital of Reason” (理性病院) (283–286, 289–292), or the Korean Buddhist Kwanūm sect (315–322). I will not examine these announcements in detail here, since it is not their content that is important, but I would highlight the way that they are presented as equal voices in the novel. These voices do not compete for the reader’s attention. The reader’s task is just to “hear the whole behind these individual voices.” Still, the announcements play an important role in demonstrating the one-way character of ideological discourses. As announcements, they are not designed for dialogue in the Bakhtinian sense, since they do not allow for interaction with other voices and imply that the discourse they represent is the only one possible. Their monological character is further highlighted by the fact that Tokko Chun never comments on any of them. He cannot even remember them after the moment they end. We can see here a parallel between form and content. As any strict frames are refused on the stylistic and structural level, ideological frames are avoided on the semantic level.

STIMULATING MESSAGES AND MOTIVATION

Given that Tokko Chun faces so many hindrances, what is it that drives him on? Whenever Sun Wukong is not obedient to Tripitaka in *The Journey*, the cap on his head begins to hurt so much that he cannot but follow Tripitaka's orders. While Sun Wukong is stimulated by his cap, Tokko Chun is stimulated by external messages that permeate the whole novel. They can be "auditory, olfactory, or visual" (Söl Hyegyōng 2007, 152) and occur whenever Tokko Chun begins to doubt, feels attracted to a specific ideology, or is about to yield to temptation. The most frequent auditory message is the sound of explosions combined with the sound of planes. When Non'gae asks him to marry her, he suddenly hears the sound of explosions (47). The same happens when the stationmaster asks Tokko Chun to stay with him, and again when Yi Sunsin asks him to stay (101, 151). Why does the sound of explosions have a stimulating effect on Tokko Chun? Yi Insuk argues that the sound of explosion (爆音) is a reference to the final destination in *The Journey*, namely the *Leiyinsi* (雷音寺), or *Temple of Thunderclap* (Yi Insuk 1986, 317). In *The Journey* this place is often abbreviated as *Leiyin* (雷音), or *Thunderclap*. This reference becomes even more obvious when, toward the end of the novel, Ch'oe starts to use the phrase "sound of thunder" in place of "sound of explosions." For example: "That time he heard the sound of planes. This sound of thunder (雷音) shocked him" (826). The *Leiyinsi*, as the place where Buddha resides, symbolizes the place of truth where no illusions exist anymore. The sound of thunder, or the sound of explosions, is the sound that leads to this place.

Other auditory messages include the sound of buzzing bees (47, 54, 61, 345) or hammering (158, 160, 230), which are often accompanied by images such as glowing fireflies (8, 17, 230) or dead trees (119, 167, 194), and by olfactory phenomena such as foul smells (153, 168). Whereas the encounters are what Chōng Yōnghun calls seductive "baits" (Chōng Yōnghun 2005, 477) that hinder Tokko Chun from continuing his journey, these auditory messages encourage him not to give up. They usually mark the end of an encounter and herald a new departure. Similar to Sun Wukong's cap, which tortures him whenever he is not obedient, the messages provide a jolt that prevents Tokko Chun from becoming lost in ideological discourses. Some messages are closely connected to "that summer," Tokko Chun's final destination, which is the basis of his primary motivation.

Desire motivates both Tripitaka's journey to the West in *The Journey* and Tokko Chun's journey into the past. Tripitaka desires to obtain sūtras in the West, while Tokko Chun longs for "that summer in town W." The phrase "Town W" is an example of how Ch'oe leaves the text open for polyphony in *Sōyugi*. "W" might

stand for Wönsan, the place where Ch'oe had moved in 1947 and lived before he came to the South. It might also stand for the West, alluding to *The Journey*; or, the "W" might refer to the woman for whom he is looking, or to the Korean War. In "that summer in town W," as a young boy before he left the North, Tokko Chun lost consciousness in the arms of a young girl in an air-raid shelter during the Korean War. He had followed his teacher's order to gather at the school, but on his way he was overtaken by an American attack and fled into the shelter, led by a young girl. "Not far away they could hear the sound of exploding bombs. Explosions, darkness. The heat of summer and a shelter packed like sardines. When they heard a tremendous explosion over their heads, the shelter began to shake. They embraced each other. In her hair that brushed against his warm arms and face, he lost consciousness" (215). This experience is a key moment in Tokko Chun's life: he experiences "death and eroticism at the same time" (Kim Söngnyöl 2004, 284); it is a "traumatic experience of simultaneous destruction and union" (Cho Sönhüi 2007, 74). The tension between these oppositional experiences, which permeates the whole novel, offers an explanation for Tokko Chun's unwillingness to accept the dichotomy of any ideological discourse.

However, at the outset of his thought journey he does not remember this traumatic experience. It is only when he finds his photo in a newspaper lying on the ground that he recalls it. Next to the photo, he sees the text, "I am looking for this person. In order to find ourselves, in order to meet while talking about the revelation we received on that day in summer. From a person who knows you well" (14). At this point, Tokko Chun begins to remember the explosions, the steel birds, and that day in summer, "The day I met destiny. The summer of explosions. The day when the merciless steel birds opened a merciless season, and flew over the town. Alas, how I long for it! I think of the trembling of the needle which showed me the magnetic north pole of my life" (15). Now he has a goal, although he forgets about it again and again. He is trying to meet that woman in town W again to find his "self," his identity, his metaphysical home. "That summer" exerts an irresistible pull on Tokko Chun: "Summer, I can't give up my summer. I don't know what it is. The only thing that is clear is the fact that everything is hidden in that summer. Everything else comes next" (51).

Tokko Chun also recalls a second traumatic experience that occurred at school when he was scolded by his teacher in the North for a speech. During his speech he praised the "great" power of the Red Army and called for a second or a third Yi Sunsin or Non'gae to banish the American invaders. Although the other students welcomed his speech with applause, his teacher criticized him as *petit bourgeois* and asked him to study the materialistic dialectic view of history (232). Still, Tokko Chun did not understand what he had done wrong. No matter how

bravely the people had fought, would it not have been difficult to win without the help of Yi Sunsin's turtle ships? Through this memory, he realizes the illusory nature of inflexible ideological frames.

TWO DISILLUSIONED CHARACTERS: SUN WUKONG AND TOKKO CHUN

In *The Journey*, Tripitaka overcomes all evil spirits and difficulties on the way with the help of Sun Wukong, and not only successfully obtains *sūtras*, but also attains enlightenment. Tokko Chun, on the other hand, reaches his hometown only to be treated as a spy and an insane person. Buildings collapse as he passes, and he cannot feel anything but shame (350). At first glance, his return seems to be a moment of total despair. After he has rejected all kinds of ideological frames, in the end, even home is revealed to be an illusion for Tokko Chun. The result is total disillusionment. He has found his way back to his traumatic experiences of "that" summer, and he must face a trial concerning his *petit bourgeois* ideas. Even worse, Yi Sunsin plays the judge and the stationmaster Tokko Chun's lawyer:

Resumed trial. At the same place as before. What was different from other courts was that the judges were sitting below Tokko Chun's lecture desk.... Huh! Tokko Chun was surprised when he looked at the blackboard. There is the blackboard and after a second look, this room is my former ... Yes, how could I not have realized it before? This room was his former classroom! After another close look at the inspector Tokko Chun realized that he was his former teacher and counselor of the youth league. No doubt! And all the other people were his friends, executives of the youth league. They were adults, but at the same time teenagers. Their faces changed from adults' to teenagers' faces like neon advertisements. Ah! My classroom! He had the tangled feeling of an escaped prisoner who had been brought back to his prison. (325)

During the trial Tokko Chun criticizes his former teacher, saying that it is wrong to scold a student for the sake of any ideology. Ultimately, however, he is accused of being an imperialistic spy and sentenced to life imprisonment. The stationmaster, in the role of Tokko Chun's lawyer, defends his client by characterizing him as an insane boy who has become tired of refugee life. He is released, but the only thing he can feel is shame (345). He wakes up from his illusions, but there is no salvation waiting for him. During his journey the people Tokko Chun

encountered showed him only the ways he should *not* go, but ultimately he is unable to find the right way for him *to* go.

Even the names of the protagonists in both *The Journey* and *Söyugi*, Sun Wukong and Tokko Chun, point to their apparent existential differences. The name of *The Journey*'s protagonist "Wukong" (悟空) means "awaken to emptiness," which alludes to the cathartic end of *The Journey*, when the pilgrims finally reach the West and receive the Buddhist scriptures, and Sun Wukong attains enlightenment. According to Mahāyāna Buddhism, someone who has internalized the emptiness or insubstantiality of all phenomena is no longer challenged by any attachments to illusions. In other words, he is in harmony with the world, he has found a "metaphysical home." In contrast, the protagonist of Ch'oe Inhun's *Söyugi*, shares the family name Tokko (獨孤) with the protagonists of Ch'oe's other works *Hoesaegin* and *Kuunmong*.⁹ Although Tokko is a real but rare family name in Korea, *tok* (獨) literally means "childless" and *ko* (孤) "orphaned." At first glance, this name suggests total loneliness, but it is important to note that this character's specific loneliness is caused in large part by Tokko Chun's decision to refuse all kinds of ideological discourses. The name instead points to Tokko Chun's aversion to the rigid discourse of family. "Childless" and "orphaned" do not seem to be actual attributes of Tokko Chun; still, his active decision to refuse the inflexible discourse of family makes him, in a figurative sense, both childless and orphaned. Someone who does not feel the pressure of parental love is childless, and someone who is not restricted by filial love is orphaned. In other words, his name refers not to the fact of living alone without family, but to his refusal to be attached to a monological discourse of family.

In a broader sense, *tokko* can be understood as the protagonist's life task to overcome the bindings of all kinds of rigid truths. Tokko Chun is not attached to any voice in *Söyugi*, but he is able to hear the colorful whole behind the individual voices. He does not want to choose between black and white, but rather prefers to remain "grey."

"GREYNESS" AS A WAY TO MOVE

"Greyness" plays a significant role in Ch'oe's larger literary world, as evidenced by the titles of Ch'oe's works, "Kūrei kurakpu chönmalgi" [The whole story of the Grey Club] (1958,) and *Hoesaegin* [A grey man] (1963). In this case, grey does not have the connotation of being boring, dull, uncertain, or indifferent (Heller 2006,

⁹ This is emphasized by adding Chinese characters in parentheses behind the Korean name at the beginning of each novel.

217). It does not characterize a fence-sitter (*boesaek punja*, 灰色分子). Instead, it represents the “ability to resist the oversimplification of the human condition that occurs when taking political or moral stances” (Logie 2006, 19). Grey is the color of dialogue. In an announcement from the Hospital of Reason, Tokko Chun is said to be a patient who suffers from *Geistesgeschichte* (精神史), i.e. “the confusion of judgment caused by the phenomenon of the diversification of the value system” (283). He denies dogmatism in favor of polyphony. His negation of dogmatism is an affirmation of dialogue and ambivalence.

Interestingly, one of Tokko Chun’s friends in Söyugi’s prequel *Hoesaegin* is named Wu Chengen (吳承恩), or O Sŭng-ŭn in Korean, which is the name of the alleged author of *The Journey*. The link is even emphasized by Chinese characters. This character’s nickname is “hairy face” (*t’ölbo*), an allusion to the monkey Sun Wukong from *The Journey*. In a discussion about the Korean word “külsse” (well), O Sŭng-ŭn praises the spirit of skepticism in the face of black-and-white oversimplifications.

“It’s an excellent Korean word,” he argues, depicting the spirit of skepticism in a suspended judgment. Well (*külsse*). What a fine word it is! Either-or, upon reaching a dramatic peak the single word ‘well’ can anticlimactically dissipate tension, and the crisis is naturally resolved...Well, I’m not all that sure about what I’m saying, either. (Ch’oe Inhun 2005, 73/70)¹⁰

The fictional Wu Cheng-en in *Hoesaeg’in* represents the “greyness,” or dialogical atmosphere, of *The Journey*, in which fixed truths are refused. By praising the word “külsse,” he stresses the benefits of dialogue in the case of ideological confrontation.

Kim Söngnyöl characterizes Tokko Chun as a “dialectician of negation” (*pujŏng ūi pyŏnjŭngnon cha*) (Kim Söngnyöl 2004, 296). Tokko Chun’s friend Kim Hak describes him as an “Amitābha of Futility” (徒勞阿彌陀) (Ch’oe Inhun 2005, 67) whose efforts are futile, since he “obstinately refuses to devote himself to anything” (Ch’oe Inhun 2005, 92). Tokko Chun does not believe in a total truth that is absolute for everybody, and he believes it is possible to live beyond ideological discourses: “It’s possible to be neither friend, nor enemy” (329); “I don’t want to believe in truth. I lack the purity to believe in a truth that is absolutely right for thousands, ten thousands of people, and to devote my passion for it” (Ch’oe Inhun 2005, 70); “Becoming a human being doesn’t merely mean

¹⁰ In the case of *Hoesaegin* (Ch’oe Inhun 2005), I have added the page numbers of the English translation (Ch’oe Inhun 1988) whenever I consulted it.

fitting into a certain frame” (331). He denies everything fixed in favor of mobility. Mobility represents the dynamics of a dialogical attitude that is flexible and open and knows no final end. As Bakhtin says, polyphony requires an open end (Bakhtin 2014, 39) because it does not include finalizing authorial words.

Tokko Chun laments the rigidity of any philosophical stance that claims to know the definite truth as final destination. He knows that the reason for human sadness is “the fact that every way [leads] somewhere. A way which does not lead anywhere, a way that just goes on, a way which just to follow brings joy, that is what everybody hopes for in life, but such is still impossible” (12). Still, “without moving, everything rots away... It doesn’t matter where you go as long as you keep moving” (64). To stop means to rely on something, to get lost in something, and finally to lose one’s freedom. Thus, Tokko Chun has no ideological or metaphysical home. In the announcement of the Hospital of Reason, Tokko Chun is diagnosed as “mentally stateless” (精神的 無國籍) (286). During his journey Tokko Chun encounters various ideologies, but he does not become involved in them. His encounters with ideological discourses are “like water that you can feel without becoming wet or like swimming in the sea without being able to drink water” (54). Tokko Chun listens to the colorful singular voices to hear the grey whole behind them.

CONCLUSION

In this article I have examined Ch’oe Inhun’s novel *Sōyugi* as a parody of the 100-chapter novel *The Journey*. Both *Sōyugi* and *The Journey* can be read as journeys of the mind, in the course of which the protagonists, Tokko Chun and Sun Wukong, resist attachments to illusions, particularly the illusions of fixed truth and ideology. *Sōyugi* displays the stream of Tokko Chun’s consciousness, which mirrors various perspectives and lays the foundation for polyphony on the stylistic level. In addition to the travel motif, Ch’oe adapts from *The Journey* the motifs of transformation, repetitive hindering encounters, and encouraging messages, and in doing so, highlights the polyphony of *The Journey*. He borrows various elements of *The Journey* while modifying them to suit the context of *Sōyugi*. While using *The Journey* as a source text, he does not regard it as a rigid form into which he must pour his novel.

In numerous encounters, Tokko Chun is confronted with various ideological discourses, but their equal treatment in the novel relativizes their exclusive truth claims. Tokko Chun is spurred by auditory, olfactory, and visual messages that remind him not to give in to any ideological discourse. He refuses to accept the

oversimplification of monological truths. He does not want to choose between black and white, but prefers to remain “grey,” which represents the color of dialogue.

The illusory nature of ideological discourses is discussed again in the last announcement of the novel, the announcement of the Korean Buddhist Kwanŭm sect:

This is the Buddhist Kwanŭm sect. We welcome all believers in the country, all Koreans, and everybody in the ocean of suffering [*kobae* 苦海] and in the burning house [*hwat'aek* 火宅] who is listening... Buddhism has to become the critic with the least attachments to political interests that ceaselessly change in an open society... Buddhism is not afraid of changes... Color is emptiness, emptiness is color. The fundamental power of Buddhism lies in the powerful complementary movement of this emptiness and color... It is the movement of life that refuses to submit to any phenomenon... [The idea of emptiness] teaches the endlessly developing humankind worldly justice and universal liberation through endless negation of oneself... All illusions come from attachments... The Korean Buddhist Kwanŭm sect does not take part in any political power. We refuse to become a guarantor for any power. We only support the shortest moment of the most progressive acts of the most progressive party (320–321).

The core of this announcement is the famous line from the *Heart Sūtra*. This sūtra also plays a central role in *The Journey*, where a Buddhist master offers the pilgrims this sutra as a protection from demons on the way at the beginning of the journey (Yu 2012, 1:389). Its famous line says: “Color (*saek*, 色) is emptiness (*kong*, 空), emptiness is color.” With regard to the role of ‘greyness’ in the novel, I have chosen ‘color’ as translation for *saek*, which could in another context also be translated as ‘form.’ ‘Greyness’ seems to be Ch’oe’s way of expressing the line of the *Heart Sūtra* mentioned above. Thus, ‘color’ stands for the seductive but illusory nature of ideological discourses in the form of black-and-white oversimplifications. What finally remains after revealing ‘color’ as ‘empty’ is ‘greyness,’ as ‘empty’ color.

Despite the prominent placement of the Kwanŭm sect’s announcement, it should not be read as an attempt to propose that Buddhism is the absolute truth. This would contradict the dialogic message of the whole novel. Neither Buddhism nor Tokko Chun himself becomes the authorial voice in the novel. Ch’oe Inhun uses this idea to describe the illusory character of ideological discourses. Color is emptiness, but emptiness is also color. Although ideological discourses are illusory, they are still ‘color.’ Emptiness does not imply their

nonexistence. Each voice in *Sōyugi* represents an equally authoritative ideological position that coexists and interacts with other voices. It is our task as readers to hear the whole behind the individual voices.

Submitted: March 13, 2017
Sent for revision: April 28, 2017
Accepted: May 30, 2017

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