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National Language Beyond Nation-States: Vernacular Literary Language in Yi Kwang-su

Sangjin Park

The influence of Chinese and Japanese language and literature on Korea has been significant. The influence of Western notions of the modern nation-state in East Asia has also been significant. All of these influences collided in Korea. Through translation, the foreign is made comprehensible, but it is also changed and may be misunderstood. Through the process of translation, the influence of one language upon another is often underestimated, misappropriated, or hidden. The best literature attempts to reveal and transcend these hidden or unconscious dimensions. The importance of understanding the process by which such underlying influences impact culture, especially as forms of resistance and as asserting one's unique identity, may also, unfortunately, be underappreciated. Languages compete when put into the service of nation building. Writers such as Yi Kwang-su (1892-1950) tried to negotiate, resist, and make sense of this new and highly competitive landscape. The collision between multiple national languages may cause an exclusive nationalism. However, if we can hypothesize that the resistance of a national language is not directed to the (language of) outside but rather to all kinds of homogenized (language) space, we can consider that a national language applies the power of resistance to that homogenized space which is based on nationalism. This kind of literary resistance, which can also be named self-negation, is primarily related to the capacity to allow the Other to exist within oneself. This is the process in which the particularity formed through its resistance to a universality forms another universality: namely, the process of appropriating universalities. Literary language is generated and flourishes in the process of such de-homogenization. Literature, by means of deconstructing the oppression of a universality, receives the Other as a force for reconstructing what yet may become another universality, thus building up a field where multiple universalities are contested. In Yi Kwang-su's bilingual way of writing, I will try to trace an example of the literature that built up such fields beyond both ideas of "Korean" and "modern."

The Problem of Yi Kwang-su

One may say that the fundamental elements of a nation's literature are inevitably the concepts of the nation-state, national language, and nation; a national literature should be established on national sovereignty, written and read with a national language, and by the people of a nation. However, this kind of definition based on a modern value system might look somewhat narrow in

light of Yi Kwang-su's transnational writing and imagination. The modern Korean writer Yi Kwang-su wrote in both Korean and Japanese languages, and his literature was received by Korean people as well as Japanese people. Here the border between Korean and Japanese literature disappears. Further, if we consider the productive power of his writing, we can admit that his imagination goes beyond the border of nations.

Where is Yi Kwang-su's literature located then? The answer can be given by reaffirming that it would be difficult to restrict his literature to national borders; his literature is not located on a national language but realized in the competitive process among different vernaculars. However, we should also acknowledge that in the beginning his work emphasized a nationalism reminiscent of the Enlightenment (Paik, 1953, p. 66).¹ Despite broad criticisms that labeled him a pro-Japanese writer who abandoned his nation, Yi Kwang-su himself insisted that his literature centered around Korea as a nation-state (Yi, K., 1962, *Confession*, pp. 175-287).² Overall, his literature shows a contradictory aspect that surpasses the border of a nation and at the same time maintains the identity of a nation, which leads us to reconsider the nature of his literature as a paradox that contributes to the identity of a nation and simultaneously goes beyond its borders. In this respect, we need to recognize his nationalism as an open and even self-negating one.

This contradiction in Yi Kwang-su's literature, which anticipates its nature of cosmopolitanism insofar as it goes beyond a nation and simultaneously remains in a nation, reveals an ambivalent and transversal positionality in association with the nature of resistance in his literary language. Whether Korean or Japanese, his language can be judged as cosmopolitan insofar as it is formed on the resistance to the national homogeneity, a homogeneity formed in both

Notes

¹ In his *History of the Trends of New Literature*, Paik, C. (1953) evaluated him as a nationalist: "Throughout his entire life Yi Kwang-su's literature was concerned with preaching the issue of affection and humanitarianism because as a writer, he was deeply involved in the contemporary situation of Enlightenment. As a writer, he was a nationalist rather than a pioneer of a new age" (p. 66).

² For instance, in his *Study of Yi Kwang-su* (1938) the contemporary writer Kim Tong-in criticized Yi as a pro-Japanese writer. Kim, Y. and Kim, H. (1973) also pointed out that Yi Kwang-su lacked a historical consciousness, and so he led himself toward a pro-Japanese way of thought. As a result, his literature can be seen as a spiritual trauma or temporary absence of national literature.

Japanese imperial nationalism and Korean colonial nationalism. In this respect, Yi Kwang-su's nationalism is local and universal at once. His cosmopolitan vernacular and literature make such ambivalence possible.

Now I need to clarify that what we call "cosmopolitan vernacular" in Yi Kwang-su indicates precisely the whole process of vernacularization or bilingual writing in his literature rather than a specifically pre-fixed language or vernacular. Yi Kwang-su's imaginations were not always tied to pre-fixed linguistic places or territories or boundaries constituted with the process of modernization (or Westernization). Yi Kwang-su's imagination goes beyond nationalism and the modern nation-state system, yet is bound to them in that he desires to return to his home-place of Korea which can hardly be classified into modern or postmodern constellations. What matters in this tricky situation is to trace Yi Kwang-su's literature, its trajectory beyond the modernist (and nationalist) insistence on territorialized imaginations of identity. We may be able to do this work by foregrounding the aspect of de-territorialization of his vernacular which occurs "within" his literary language, just as if we can witness it in our present phenomena such as migration, mediatization, and capital flow.

Yi Kwang-su's literature traces the exile from linguistic places in the pursuit of a more cosmopolitan community. Its nature cannot satisfactorily be explained with the concepts of cultural plurality and multiculturalism. This is because the cultural plurality of multiculturalism can be fundamentally confined to the frame of a nation whereas Yi Kwang-su's imagination was born and continued in a sort of anarchist status. His pursuit toward nationalism in his first period was filled with resistance itself rather than directed toward an ultimate point such as establishment of modern-nation-state; in other words, such cultural centers as China and Japan to which he referred in his literary enterprise were merely mediators and contact-detonations of his resistance rather than the ultimate targets. I will verify this resistance by highlighting the whole trajectory of his bilingual way of writing.

My aim in this paper is to argue that the language of resistance, which is the nature of vernacular, grounds Yi Kwang-su's bilingual writing and links his literature to cosmopolitanism. This argument can be supported by highlighting Yi Kwang-su's particularity which derives from his vernacular literary language that he produced in the process of problematizing modern nationalism and confronted in his contemporary situation of colonial modernization.

Vernacularization

I defined the particularity of Yi Kwang-su's literature as the vernacular of resistance. Now I will discuss it more precisely through the process in which his vernacular literary language was formed. Vernacularization means the process of forming rather than discovering a vernacular. Literally speaking, vernacular is the language that is derived from a universal language and reflects its own local and contemporary particularity. For instance, vernacularization in China was displayed through the replacement of traditional language with the colloquial style (*Baihuawen*) and vernacularization in Japan was displayed through the establishment of its national language against Chinese language. In the case of Korea, vernacularization was more complex; the first stage involved replacing Chinese language with the Korean language, and the second stage in which the Korean language and the Japanese language co-existed. Where plural national languages co-exist and national territorial division collapses, what remains is literary language. Literary language then surpasses the national language as the most important form of territorialized vernacular. This does not mean abandoning the national language but rather deconstructing the homogeneity of national language by endowing the national language with the power of negating itself. In all, vernacularization, at least for Yi Kwang-su, was to build the border of national language and at the same time to transgress it. I would like to call it cosmopolitan vernacular, to borrow from Sheldon Pollock (1998, p. 16).³

In Yi Kwang-su's literature, vernacularization was cosmopolitan vernacular; for him, it was not a fixed single language of a nation but a process in which he strove to create his own literary language traversing such national languages as Chinese, Japanese, and Korean. The vernacularization process, to borrow from Mikhail Bakhtin, promotes the centrifugal force of the unofficial language

³ He mentions that "vernacular literary cultures were initiated by the conscious decisions of writers to reshape the boundaries of their cultural universe by renouncing the larger world for the smaller place, and they did so in full awareness of the significance of their decisions. New, local ways of making culture – with their wholly historical and factitious local identities – and, concomitantly, new ways of ordering society and polity came into being, replacing the older translocalism. These developments in culture and power are historically linked, at the very least by the fact that using a new language for communicating literarily to a community of readers and listeners can consolidate if not create that very community, as both a sociotextual and a political formation." Pollock, S. (2002), p. 16. See also Pollock, S. (1998), pp. 6-37.

resistant to the imperial-official language (1981, p. 295). In this sense, the vernacularization process is the source of language diversity and the moral structure in which a language is no more governed by another language. Now I would like to call into question whether and how Yi Kwang-su was conscious of this vernacularization process in his literary enterprise. I discuss it in two directions; first, how Yi Kwang-su dealt with the Korean language's sensibility obtained from outside (the otherness in the Korean language). The "national language" that he pursued as the language of Korean literature was a new sort of language, not the existing national language insofar as the sensibility obtained from outside is permitted, which leads us to consider the "national language" as the vernacular that traverses among multi-languages: the usage itself of plural vernaculars. Second, how Yi Kwang-su's literature traverses the borders of nation-states in the process of producing such a new sort of vernacular. It includes the inter-relationship of contesting, choosing, and co-existence among Korean, Chinese, and Japanese languages. Let me start with the first issue.

In the essay "Age of Transition between Korean and Chinese Languages" written in 1908, Yi Kwang-su strove to establish the position of Korean language as national language by regarding Chinese language as a foreign language (that is, as the Other) (Yi, K., 1962, Language, pp. 537-538), and thereby presenting a modern-nation-state consciousness. He maintained that Chinese language as the past official language of Korea must be abolished and Korean language must be used, which means that Chinese language is no more than a foreign language in Korea;

To use only Korean language and to abolish Chinese language do not mean that the independence of Korean language should be stressed whereas the absolute value of Chinese language should not be pursued; but it means that in the era when various nations communicate like next-door neighbors we certainly and urgently need to learn the foreign studies academically, economically and politically wherein we should learn Chinese language as a part of foreign languages. (Yi, K., 1908, Age, pp. 16-17)

In short, what he highlighted in the process of establishing national literature was language, which was a vernacular; that is, he intended to found national literature on the process of vernacularization, on borrowing, sharing, and inventing languages (Yi, K., 1962, What, p. 512). In the West, vernacularization accompanied and enabled the production of the nation-state; vernacularization helped initiate an early modern era, marked by its specific type

of modernity. In the process of developing a Korean literature, Yi Kwang-su was also involved in a vernacularization of a great tradition as we see in his essay “The concept of Chosŏn literature” (1929) in which he differentiates between Korean literature and Chinese literature by emphasizing that Korean literature must be written in Korean language.

The most fundamental condition of the literature of a nation is to write in its national language. Chinese literature is written in Chinese language, English literature in English language and Japanese literature in Japanese language; all of these are proper and necessary. Likewise Chosŏn literature must be written in Chosŏn language. (Yi, K., 1962, What, pp. 514-515)

In this context, he regarded *hyangga* 鄉歌 and *sijo* 時調 as “the origin and nature of Chosŏn literature” because they were written in Chosŏn language; in contrast, calling Chinese language literature in Korea “Shina 支那 literature,” he regarded it as Chinese literature that occurred in the territory of Chosŏn rather than Chosŏn literature (Yi, K., 1962, What, p. 176).⁴ Here Chosŏn literature indicates the national literature and Korean language represents the national language. The stress of national language is directly linked to the stress of modern-nation-state as the place and system where the national language locates and operates. In this respect, one might say that Yi Kwang-su formulated national literature like the formation of modern nationalism of the West.

However, it is crucial to point out that the Korean language submitted by Yi Kwang-su possesses the nature of resistant language surpassing the dimension of nation-state. In other words, the language of national literature (national language) that he stressed sustains undeniably Korean literature, but it also surpasses the dimension of national language insofar as it resists to its own

⁴ The term “Shina” is used to indicate China disdainfully. Before the Chosŏn language was used, most of Chosŏn literature was written in classical Chinese language, and this is called Chinese language literature and regarded as the classical literature in Korea. The definition of national literature of Korea which includes Chinese language literature is still controversial. On the historical background of ‘Shina’, see Tanaka, S. (1993), p. 4. On the other hand, Yi Kwang-su (1962) also mentioned: “What is Chosŏn literature? It is literature written in Chosŏn language” (The concept of Chosŏn literature, p. 178); “In the current situation, if someone cannot read a newspaper or book in Chosŏn language, they are not Chosŏn people.....The first condition and responsibility of Chosŏn people is to know and use Chosŏn language” (Admiration of Chosŏn literature, p. 544).

homogenized “placeness.” By excluding Chinese language and by negating the scheme of center-periphery, Yi Kwang-su imagined Chosŏn language surpassing its own dimension. If we can understand this process of surpassing national borders as vernacularization that occurred in Yi Kwang-su’s literature, we need to discuss it as a problem to highlight how a new vernacular could be created as language of de-homogenization rather than to investigate how a new vernacular was selected among the existing languages such as Chinese, Japanese, and Korean. Precisely in this context, we need to look at the “inside” of Chosŏn language chosen and used by Yi Kwang-su.

Yi Kwang-su strove to justify vernacularization by foregrounding the Korean language as peculiar to Korean people and thus representing the people’s sensibility in Korea. However, he seems to have undergone difficulty in establishing a justification because in the center of his choice of language there was an obstacle of sensibility obtained from the outside rather than that peculiar to Korean people. Facing this problem, Yi Kwang-su intended to allow the space of plural languages and plural sensibilities, and through the contest between these plural languages he strove to extract the best language to refine the Korean people’s sensibility.

In this respect, it can be shown that Yi Kwang-su used multilingualism to further vernacularization (Yi, K., 1962, *Admiration*, p. 543). For him, the sensibility obtained from the outside indicates the sensibility imported from Japan and the West, and more importantly, that which Yi Kwang-su formed from his own internal experience of facing a multilingual reality. The language (Chosŏn language) that Yi Kwang-su applied in his vernacularization and the sensibility that this language should no longer represent the contemporary linguistic topography existed solely on the basis of territorialized imagination. He sought to build up a new kind of language by virtue of confronting himself to his contemporary situation, and his own new sensibility to multiple languages.

As we see in the essay “What Is Literature?” which was published in 1916, the contemporary situation Yi Kwang-su faced consisted of several kinds of realities: a reality that had been hegemonized by long standing Chinese cultural forces and a substantial reality of a changing Korea that he attempted to grasp beyond China. By the same token, his reality in relation to Japan was also involved in the duplicated frames of the reality coerced by Japan and the reality he built up outside Japan. In confronting such multiple realities he aimed to

choose his own language, thus demonstrating the nature of resistance and self-negation that his concept of language was destined to have.

Now the point that we should observe in his vernacularization is how he recognized in Korean vernacular a sensibility derived from the outside. For him, Korean vernacular could not be the only national language, and yet at the same time he thought that there must be a national language in order to establish national literature. This is not necessarily a contradictory position because the Korean vernacular could be a translated language from Chinese and Japanese languages. Precisely here, we can observe the nature of resistance in his vernacular to the homogenized language.

In the essay "What Is Literature?" he was not satisfied with negating the past of Korean literature and prospecting its future but rather moved toward the work of seeking the language with which he could represent the reality of Korea by understanding the Korean language as a translated language that includes the sensibility from the outside (Yi, K., 1962, *What*, p. 512). In order to escape the outside influence of China and Japan or more precisely the internalized outside in Korea, he wanted to understand from the inside, Korean, Japanese, or Chinese language and literature. The language of "Korea" that he sought was not necessarily Korean, Japanese, or Chinese based on a trajectory of homogeneity but a language of resistance. He wanted to understand how these languages, existing in close proximity and competing for favor, extended their influence over each other.

In this regard, his vernacularization leads us to revise the equation that identifies the use of the vernacular with the birth of nation. The premise that there exists a specific vernacular in the process of modern nation building can no longer be taken for granted; it is rather a result of imagination. In this case, vernacular does not derive from a sort of origin but should be chosen and then, ultimately, constituted.

Then, how did Yi Kwang-su's vernacular establish its own place among Korean, Chinese, and Japanese languages? While between Korean and Chinese languages Yi Kwang-su chose Korean language, he negotiated between Korean and Japanese; in the context of negotiation he sought the possibility of co-existence of both languages. After all, Yi Kwang-su's vernacular was not unified into a single level but took on the multiple structures; it was not confined to the modern nation-state system insofar as it was born out of the process of resistance to China and Japan, and went beyond them by including them. I believe that his

idea of literature will show more precisely how his vernacular sustained his cosmopolitan horizon of literary language.

The Idea of Literature

If we intend to judge Yi Kwang-su's vernacular as cosmopolitan and formed through self-negation and de-homogenization, we need to foreground his "literature." What we must also ask are thus: was his vernacular literary language realized? What was his concept of literature? By further examining his writing, my aim is not to define his literature ideologically but to survey how he practiced literature. This kind of discourse is related to a fundamentally problematic space of modern Korea, and ultimately the issue of universality, rather than judging him as a pro-Japanese writer or advocating for him as opposing Japanese influence.

We do not need to understand the relationship between languages as a war that one language must win over the other. This premises our task to approach Yi Kwang-su's literature in its plurilingual environment. Although he tirelessly tried to seek the best language for expressing his ideas, it always resulted in maintaining the tension between different languages. What I focus on is this tension.

The vernacularization discussed above is indeed based on the principle of de-homogenization. Yi Kwang-su's later writings were no longer directed toward national literature, that is, a literature as a product of the modern nation-state, but toward cosmopolitan literature that was built by negating the system of the modern nation-state and simultaneously including it wherein his literature establishes its universal literary value. This is the horizon on which Yi Kwang-su pursues the universality of literature beyond such homogenized categories as Japanese literature as well as Chosŏn literature. He suggested new ways of thinking and defining literature as such:

Nowadays the so-called 'munhak' (literature) takes as its meaning the term "literature" that the Western people use, and so we need to say properly that our terminology of 'literature' is one translated from *Literatur* or *Literature* in the West. Therefore, the term 'munhak' is not the one that has been inherited but indicates the literature as something that represents the meaning of literature in the Western language. (Yi, K., 1962, *What*, p. 507)

What draws our attention here is that the definition of literature by Yi Kwang-su promotes an understanding of variation that takes place in the process of translation. In his assertion that “literature is a translated term,” we can see how he uses the term literature to signify the Other, and yet also how he recognizes himself as the Other borrowing the term. If the space where the idea of literature flowed freely was the period of modernization, the phenomena whereby the process of translation clashed with, restrained, overcame, or changed modernity was possibly enlarged. Furthermore, if the idea of literature was not fixed, it should rely more on its aesthetic effect which, in turn, could over-emphasize, exoticize, or resist modernity. If Yi Kwang-su pursued the mischievous play of translation between the literature of East Asia as well as the literature of the West, he may have helped to dissolve some of the differences and misunderstandings that seemed to abound. Did Yi Kwang-su succeed at all in his task?

When we pay attention to literature, we can reply to it positively. In this respect, we need to consider the possible reflection on the universal concept of literature along with the present trend of advocating the literary or aesthetic approach to Yi Kwang-su; we may infer that Yi Kwang-su, by virtue of understanding literature on the aesthetic dimension, recognized that literature had the nature of negating itself (Hwang, 1997). Negating itself includes two aspects: escaping from the traditional form of literariness and establishing the autonomous value of literature. The concept of “Chosŏn literature” that Yi Kwang-su maintained was to liberate itself from a China-centered universalism. However, what we have to consider more carefully is the possibility of his establishing autonomous value through the particular of Chosŏn literature.

I think that Yi Kwang-su’s “literature” makes us clarify nation and modernity as particulars. In the essay “What Is Literature?” he advanced a new discourse in terms of combining the aestheticism and modern perspective of Chosŏn literature. His new discourse on modernity, nation, and literature was permitted into the discursive possibility that the translated term “literature” unfolded. What is unique about his discourse is how he regarded modernity and nation not as absolutes but as particulars.

Yi Kwang-su recognized the particularity of Chosŏn literature by positing China as the Other; this seemed to be an effect of modern recognition of nation and literature. By the same token, we could relate the issue of the particularity of Chosŏn literature to Japanese literature. This case is more unique because

Japanese literature was called “national literature” in the sense that as an empire Japan enforced to annex Chosŏn in the name of “nation.” In the first stage of the essay “What is literature?” (1916) Yi Kwang-su rescues Chosŏn literature from its annexation to Chinese literature while in the late stage of the essay “Nationality of literature” (1939) he posits it into the national literature (Japanese literature). But this position does not mean the disappearance of Chosŏn literature. If we can understand Chosŏn literature as being annexed to Japanese literature as the “new position” that Yi Kwang-su granted to Chosŏn literature, we can also admit that the Chosŏn literature on the “new position” can make Japanese literature as well as itself the Other. Chosŏn literature moved from one other (China) to a new other (Japan) whereby created again a new other (Korea). This kind of repetitive occurrence of the others was the role of Chosŏn literature that Yi Kwang-su imagined.

Thus the effect of rescuing Chosŏn literature in the essay “What is literature?” can be summarized as thus: to make Chinese literature the Other from the position of Chosŏn literature and at the same time to recognize also Chosŏn literature as the Other. This kind of structure of other-ing is not so difficult to understand because China played the role of center in the East Asian context, and so we can imagine that Chosŏn can posit itself outside China; this means simply escaping from the center. In comparison with it, to make Chosŏn literature belong to Japanese literature and at the same time to make Chosŏn literature and Japanese literature the Others to each other are much more complicated structure yet clearly observed in Yi Kwang-su’s idea of literature.

In the essay “Nationality of Literature,” Yi Kwang-su manifests that “literature does not exist without nationality.” If we think that what “nationality” indicates here is Japan, his assertion tells that (Chosŏn) literature is enclosed in (Japanese) national literature; in other words, (Chosŏn) literature is represented by (Japanese) national literature. This sounds absurd in light of the independence of (Chosŏn) literature that he himself holds in the essay “What is literature?” In this essay, literature is suggested as a place and process to allow the existence of the Other. This is because his argument in this essay that the self-consciousness of Chosŏn nation was built by using exclusively Chosŏn language premises the recognition of the self-consciousness of the other nation that does not use Chosŏn language.

Therefore, when in the essay “What Is Literature?” Yi Kwang-su raised Chosŏn literature to the individualized and particularized concept, he established

its own homogeneity or homogenized self-identity. But, in the essay “Nationality of Literature” which maintains that Chosŏn literature should be a part of Japanese national literature, he recognized what laid outside of the homogeneity of Chosŏn literature, that is, the Japanese national literature. To recognize the outside is to escape the momentum of homogeneity and establish the conversational relationship of the subject and object of recognition by positing them as Others together within a new category.

The recognition of the outside can be related to the issues of category and identity of belonging measured by literature. For someone to do literature, that is, to write and read a text in a place, means to manifest that he or she belongs to that place. Yi Kwang-su defines Chosŏn literature and Japanese literature according to their “categories” (Yi, K., 1940). When he says that Chosŏn literature belongs to Japanese literature, he may mean that Chosŏn literature is located inside Japan’s category. In relation to this point, we need to ask what “nationality” means when he says that “there does not exist literature without nationality.” If it is certain that “nationality” includes Japanese nation, it is also certain that Chosŏn nation belongs to it; if by including Chosŏn nation, the concept of Japanese nation is changed, the term “nationality” may include Chosŏn nation as well as Japanese nation, and also a bigger concept beyond them. I believe that this is the process or space in which it is possible for us to recognize Chosŏn nation and Japanese nation as the Others. Now we need to pay special attention to how Yi Kwang-su’s literature possesses the power to make us understand “literature” as such self-negation and de-homogenization. If the exclusive effect of nation is cured by “literature” in this way, this “literature” must be the process of other-ing to promote communication among the Others by recognizing the Others’ places. Chosŏn as well as Japanese national literature existed beyond the traditional Chinese literary identity or category of belonging. This is the literature that he aimed to form paradoxically or implicitly in the process of traversing from “What is literature?” to “Nationality of literature.”

The Triumph of Vernaculars: Literature

To borrow from sociologist Ulrich Beck, the principle of cosmopolitanism is found in the relationship of both/and rather than either/or. As stated before, Yi Kwang-su chose Korean by excluding Chinese, and then negotiated between Korean and Japanese, and afterwards, by including both, moved toward the cosmopolitan stage. In his literary production, Yi Kwang-su was always

concerned with the problem of negotiating between Japanese as national language and Korean as vernacular, and Japanese as vernacular and Korean as national language; indeed, Japanese and Korean were both for him national languages and simultaneously vernaculars. In this process in which there is no more binary opposition among literary languages, he strove to build up the cosmopolitan vernacular by adopting both. For him, vernacular did not indicate any specific-single-fixed language but the process itself in which he uses the plural vernaculars in his literature.

Yi Kwang-su's vernacular literary languages did not "emerge"; they were deliberately constructed. The bilingual way of writing on which his vernacular literary language was based was also made, willed, chosen, and planned. His vernaculars, connected with literature, become cosmopolitan so as to surpass the locality of nations. His bilingual way of writing makes an easy connection between vernacular and literature through the notion of literary-language-diversity.

If Korean language was the vernacular that he desired, Japanese language was also the vernacular that he wanted. In this dual process, he practiced literature rather than national literature. His vernacular literary languages arise on the stage of cosmopolitan vernacular through the negotiation and inclusive co-existence of Korean and Japanese languages rather than the choice of one of them.

What is crucial in the stage of negotiation is to recognize the Other's vernacular as a vernacular. This means the recognition of Japanese language as a particular vernacular rather than the recognition of national language as a universal language. The notion that a nation-people use the same national language in the same nation-state is merely an ideology mobilized in the process of establishing the modern nation-state (Yi, Y., 2006, p. 23).⁵ Like a literary language in a state, a national language is sustained by the plural structure of diverse languages which is far from maintaining linguistic homogeneity.

Ironically, the proclamation made by Ueda Gastoshi (上田萬年) that national language is the mental blood of Japanese people can be understood as if

⁵ Yi, Y. (2006) holds that "Although the expression of national language itself is a 'political concept', it tends to conceal its nature of politics and naturalize language."

the concept and institution of Japanese language was mobilized in the process of establishing the nation-state in Japan (Yi. Y., 2006, p. 63). Conversely, behind Yi Kwang-su's position to recognize Japanese as "national language," there is the paradoxical participation in the situation that Japanese is mobilized as national language. In other words, the Japanese language that he recognized as national language was the language of the empire, an expanded form of Japan as a modern nation-state. The national language for Yi Kwang-su was Japanese and simultaneously Korean. Such dual recognition allowed his vernacular to release from the boundary of national language. This is a resistance to imperial language and simultaneously to colonial language. By virtue of this dual resistance, Yi Kwang-su was able to consistently postpone the homogeneity of national language without being absorbed into the ideology of national language.

In all, Yi Kwang-su's vernacular literary languages were born in the process of surpassing the national languages that he faced. This means that he did not recognize the triumph of one of the national languages such as Korean and Japanese languages but exhibits consciousness of negating the homogenized structure itself in the two respectively. This consciousness arises along with the attempt to seek the significance of maintaining the particular.

Maintaining the particular helped Yi Kwang-su move toward cosmopolitanism through negation of the homogenized linguistic places. By using Korean and Japanese languages as his own vernaculars, he showed that vernacular is intrinsically particular; in this transversal process between homogenized places, he discovered the outside of his own vernaculars and thereby allowed his vernaculars to have cosmopolitan nature without excluding the outside.

In this respect, I propose that the triumph of vernacular be considered in the plural, as the triumph of vernaculars, which means to form a conversational relationship of vernaculars based on the recognition of their heterogeneity, and the promotion of their consolidation and transversal communication. The practice of de-homogenization that Yi Kwang-su pursued with his vernacular literary languages leads us to evaluate his literary language as a cosmopolitan vernacular and as approaching the realization of literature which surpasses language through language.

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