

HOW DID SHAKESPEARE PASS BORDER INSPECTION? : MIGRATION AND TRANSLATION OF ENGLISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE IN NORTH KOREA IN THE 1950S AND THE 1960S

THERESA HYUN
YORK UNIVERSITY, TORONTO

1. Introduction¹

In a study of a translation of *Othello* into Egyptian colloquial Arabic, Sameh Hanna (2009) examines the politicizing aspects of decisions about translation and how the translator deviates from the orthodox approach to the relationship between language and national identity. A similar situation can be found in the North Korean literary world of the 1950s to the 1960s when the translation of foreign literature was considered crucial to the establishment of a socialist society.² During the period from the late 1940s to the late 1960s, translation of foreign literature in North Korea evolved according to the changing political and social climate. In the 1940s and 1950s the focus was on works from the Soviet Union and China in line with the Soviet involvement in founding the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Chinese participation in the Korean War. By the early 1960s, interest in foreign culture broadened to include literature from Eastern Europe and Third World countries as the North Korean regime strengthened its hold on power. The decade from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s also witnessed a surge

in the introduction and translation of works from Western Europe and North America as part of a process of defining the place of North Korean socialist culture internationally.

In this paper, I make a preliminary examination of the extent to which translations of English and American literature in North Korea at this time conformed to or deviated from official norms and prescriptions in order to determine the degree of resistance and/or engagement of the translators. First, I give some statistics and an overview of the translation of English and North American literature. Next, I look at aspects of the environment surrounding translations such as newspapers articles on literary policy and translation and prefaces to translated volumes. Finally, I give some examples of techniques used by North Korean translators of English and American works.

2. Statistics and Overview of the Translation of English and American Literature

The research for this paper focuses on poetry and Shakespeare's plays, and is based on seven volumes of translations of English and American works by twelve North Korean translators. It includes a total of 217 works by seven authors. I will give a few examples of the characteristics of these translations in section four. These translations were published in separate volumes or in government-sponsored periodicals such as *Choson Literature (Choson Munhak)* and *Literary Newspaper (Munhak Shinmun)*.

According to the South Korean English literature scholar Kim Yong Hui (2001), compared to the period after 1967 when Self-Reliance thought was promulgated, North Korea in the 1950s to the 1960s displayed a good deal of openness and free discussion in the literary world.³ Particularly in the early 1960s, with the publication of around one hundred volumes of the *Anthology of World Literature (Segye Munhak Sonchip)*, interest shifted from Soviet literature to translations of Western European and American literature. Under Kim Jong Il's direction, starting in the mid-1980s, a new series of the *Anthology of World Literature* began to be published, and many of the earlier volumes were re-issued.

The *Survey of Western European Literature* (*Sogurap'a Munhak Kaegwan*), published in P'yongyang in 1958, includes a preface which states that the volume is aimed at general readers to achieve a proper understanding of progressive world literature. Writing from a socialist realism point of view, the authors give priority to English literature from the 17th to 19th centuries but give a lower evaluation to English works from the 20th century. Among romantic poets, Byron and Shelley were considered progressive, while Wordsworth was labeled reactionary. This volume displays a relatively open approach compared to writing which appeared after 1967 when translated material was more restricted according to Self-Reliance thought and writing became more doctrinaire (Kim Yong Hui 2001).

Three main factors are involved in the development of English literary studies in North Korea. First, because some Korean scholars specializing in foreign literature came to the North in the late 1940s and early 1950s, there was some continuity before and after the North/South division. Second, from the late 1940s to the late 1960s, Soviet Marxist thought remained influential. Third, the establishment of Self-Reliance thought in the late 1960s resulted in tighter restrictions on the translation and dissemination of foreign works. Although North Korea had to resist US domination, they were influenced by Soviet interest in American popular culture and new literary trends (Kim Yong Hui 2001).

South Korean scholars Ch'oe Kyong Hui and Hong Yu Mi (2001) have examined the reception of Shakespeare in North Korea. Although it is difficult to determine who the readers of Shakespeare were, or whether Shakespeare's plays were produced on the stage, nine plays were published, including *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *King Henry the 4th*, *The Twelfth Night*, *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth*. Translators might have chosen works that were already familiar during the Japanese colonial period. The North Korean reception of Shakespeare passed through successive phases: first, the relative freedom of the 1950s and 1960s; second, the imposition of restrictions following the establishment of Self-Reliance thought in the late 1960s; and third, the realignment of the North Korean cultural world starting in the late 1980s.

In 1953, the Choson Writers' Union (Choson Chakka T'ongmaeng) established Socialist Realism as the approach to literature and art. According to Marxist aesthetics, Shakespeare was a writer who opposed the corruption of the ruling class and supported the people. In the introduction to the 1963 edition of *An Anthology of Shakespeare's Plays*, Im Hak Su emphasizes that Shakespeare is a writer of the people. Im Hak Su also reveals a Confucian perspective when he comments that in Shakespeare's works, good leaders understand and aid the people while bad leaders lose the support of the people. Kim Jong Il commented that Shakespeare was a representative writer of the Renaissance (Ch'oe Kyong Hui, Hong Yu Mi 2001).

Both in the 1950s to the 1960s and in the 1990s, North Korean critics recognized Shakespeare as a great realist writer of his age. Before 1967, Shakespeare was seen as a proponent of humanism, but after 1967 the bard was criticized for his class limits. For instance, in *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare does not see Shylock's flaw as stemming from bourgeois society but rather from his individual character. Shakespeare is limited to the extent that he transforms problems of capitalist society into questions of personal morals. North Korean scholars did not analyze the structure or language of Shakespeare's works but rather tended to focus on their ideological stance (Ch'oe Kyong Hui, Hong Yu Mi 2001).

3. Translation Environment

3.1 Munhak Shinmun (Literary Newspaper) Articles

Articles published in the *Munhak Shinmun* (*Literary Newspaper*) in the 1950s to the 1960s cover a variety of topics relating to the importation of foreign literature and policies towards literary translation.⁴ Four topics are noteworthy: emphasis on the importance of Soviet literature, criticism of foreign literary trends, evaluations of originals and translations of English and American literature, and recommendations on improving the level of translations.

Concerning the first point, in his article "Committee Members' Discussion on Literary Translation" (Nov 21, 1957), Pak Yong

Gun claims that the Soviet Union had produced the most famous works of all time, including those by Maxim Gorky and Vladimir Mayakovsky. He further explains that the North Koreans were planning to publish hundreds of translated Soviet works within a few years with the aim of developing the study of translated foreign literature.

Several of the *Literary Newspaper* articles comment on foreign literary trends, sometimes expressing sharp criticism. Pak Yong Kun's article "Deception, Concealment, Provocation and Tools to Attack" (Feb 10, 1961) predicts that the United States would soon collapse due to the corruption of the bourgeois class. Pak cites the example of Allen Drury's novel *Advise and Consent* which depicts how the United States government emphasizes the communist threat. This ideology was condemned in North Korea, and the South Koreans were outraged by American domination of their country. In "Reactionary Literature Serves U. S. Imperialism" (May 19, 1961), Kim Chong Uk asserts that America's bourgeois literature and reactionary trends such as existentialism and Freudianism are employed in order to dominate other nations. While the former stems from an inability to build a meaningful life, the latter encourages an obsession with base animal instincts.

Pak Yong Gun issues further dire predictions in "America's Reactionary Bourgeois Literature Is Collapsing" (Dec 7, 1965). John Updike's novel *Rabbit Run* exemplifies the decline of American literature because of the vacuity and conformity of middle class life. Edward Albee's play *The Zoo Story* explores themes of isolation and miscommunication in a dehumanized society. The deplorable state of American literature indicates that the collapse of the political regime would soon follow. In "South Korea, as a US Puppet, Produces Reactionary Literature under US Imperialism." (Dec 24, 1965), these criticisms of American literature are extended to North Korea's southern neighbors. Kyong Il excoriates South Korean poetry which follows modernist tendencies and is therefore unintelligible to average citizens. South Korean fiction exhibit a nihilistic anti-communist ideology and betray the people by serving U.S. interests.

Kim Chong Uk gives a brief exposition of Shelley's poetics in "Shelley and Revolutionary Romanticism" (Dec 21, 1962). Shelley opposed tyranny, trickery, and exploitation and supported the overthrow of the unfair social system in order to achieve a new society. For these reasons, Marx and Engels referred to him as a revolutionary prophet. According to Kim, for Shelley, poets are teachers who instill the idea that revolutionary violence can overturn the old society. In "Shakespeare's Art – Celebrating the 400th Anniversary of His Birth" (Apr 24, 1964) Chu Chong Gil asserts that Shakespeare is the greatest writer in the English language and the world's preeminent dramatist. Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* prefigures US imperialism. Falstaff in *King Henry IV: Part I* is a boastful and cowardly knight who satirizes and challenges bourgeois society. We should cherish Shakespeare's works as a valuable inheritance.

We also find evaluations of translations and recommendations on foreign literature translation policy in the *Literary Newspaper*. In his article "On Improving the Translation of Foreign Literature" (Jan 16, 1958), Yi Pong Sop points out that the Subcommittee on Foreign Literature has been translating popular books from the Soviet Union as well as literary works from other countries such as Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, and Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. Yi claims that translators should be passionate about the original works in order to reproduce them in translation. Pak Si Hwan's version of *Robinson Crusoe* is an example of a translation which works well since the translator preserved the artistry of the writing style as well as the purity of the original.

In 1959, Pak Yong Kun, as chair of the Subcommittee on Literary Translation, published three articles in the *Literary Newspaper* which gave recommendations on foreign literature translation. The first, "Raising the Quality and Increasing the Quantity of Translated Literature" (Feb 12, 1959) reviews the current trends in foreign literary translation which emphasize originality, artistic formats, and style. While Pak Si Hwan's translation of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* has some defects, it still meets the standards for literary translation. However, some translators included bourgeois ideology in their translations and this disturbs the growth of North

Korean literature. Therefore, there must be stricter standards when translating foreign literature, and proper attitudes should be maintained toward communist philosophy. The most important requirements for translating foreign literature are to understand the citizens' level of literary appreciation and the ideologies of foreign literature.

In "Translating Requires the Translator's Efforts" (Apr 9, 1959), Pak emphasizes the importance of maintaining the purity of the Korean language while translating foreign works. Even though works of world literature like *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver's Travels* had been translated and introduced to North Korean readers, these versions were not satisfactory. Pak expresses the hope that North Korean translators would endeavor to translate world literature creatively and accept their responsibility to expand their country's literature as part of the cultural revolution. The third article, "Improving Artistic Ideas in Literary Translation" (Aug 18, 1959), outlines Pak's recommendations on raising standards of translating. Literary translators must become warriors of the communist party and follow the principles of socialist realism. However, since some translators lack the basic knowledge of Marxist-Leninism they could not depict communist ideology in their translations. Employing techniques of socialist realism enabled translators to convey the ideas of the communist party, avoid literal translation from foreign works, and achieve a creative writing style in Korean.

3.2 Prefaces to Translation Volumes

The prefaces to volumes of translated works that appeared in North Korea at the time also offer a view of the situation of translation. An examination of the *Anthology of Walt Whitman's Poetry (Wolt'u Hwit'uman Sison)* (1956), jointly translated by Im Hak Su and Pak Si Hwan, is instructive in terms of the reception of foreign literature in the 1950s. A stamp indicates that the anthology's price was 95 won and 5,000 copies were printed. This would seem to reveal that the books were not just sent to university libraries, but were available in bookstores. The seemingly low price might have made them accessible to a relatively wide audience. Since the back page lists six other translated works at similarly low prices, it appears

that there was an effort to cultivate a readership for translations of foreign literature. The preface, written by Im Hak Su, states that Whitman was a superlative American poet who had a humanistic attitude towards the working class. Beyond this, his works celebrate liberation and goodwill among all the people of the world. From an early age, he was outraged by the system of slavery in his country, and this attitude is reflected in his collection *Leaves of Grass*. His poem "Ethiopia" evokes the yearning for emancipation among oppressed people. The volume was prepared in 1955 in honor of the 100th anniversary of the publication of *Leaves of Grass* which was celebrated around the world as a monument to peace and democracy.

The *Anthology of the Poetry of Robert Burns (Ponju Sichip)* was published in 1959 in honor of the 200th anniversary of the poet's birth. The volume was jointly translated by Kim Chong Uk and three other translators whose names are not revealed. Ten thousand copies were printed and sold at the low price of 35 chon. Notes about the historical background and the poet's life are included with some of the translations. The writer of the preface, Hwang Kyong Hui, asserts that Burns exemplifies the democratic tendencies of 18th century England and Scotland. Born into extreme poverty Burns and his brother took turns going to school since their father could not afford to send both of them at once. From an early age, Burns had a keen interest in the history of his country and the popular legends of heroes who opposed Scotland's occupiers. Burns' success as a poet is partly due to his effective use of traditional folk song motifs and colloquial expressions in his works. Hwang Kyong Hui points out that this volume of translations emphasizes Burns' works which reflect the opposition of the people to the ruling class. For this reason, Burns was one of the poets praised by Marx. Admired for their humor, lyric beauty, passion for freedom and deep respect for friendship, Burns' works are valuable not just for the Scots but for peace loving people around the world.

The *Anthology of Modern English Poetry (Kundae Yongguk Sison)*, volume 22 of the *Anthology of World Literature*, was reprinted in 1991 in 5,000 copies. The volume contains poems by Shelley,

Keats, Scott, and Burns. The preface, written in 1991 by Kim Wang Sop, opens with a quote from the great leader Kim Il Song proclaiming that the true art of the people should reflect their struggles to achieve a happier future. Kim Wang Sop writes that the works in the volume proclaim a bright future for the people, employ advanced poetic techniques, and hold an important place in progressive European literature. Along with Byron, Shelley is one of the progressive English poets of the early 19th century, and his works celebrate the ideals of freedom and a bright future. Shelley's contemporary, Keats is a poet of democratic ideals whose poems depict the oppression and corruption suffered by the people. Keats' rich use of poetic language contributed to the development of English Romanticism. Scott marks the point when English literature was turning from Romanticism to realism. He was a pioneer in the writing of realistic historical novels. Although Burns' works reflect the life and emotions of the people, he advocated finding happiness in hard work rather than the struggle against exploitation and therefore his class consciousness was deemed limited.

The *Anthology of the Poetry of Byron* (Paiwon Sison) (1963), translated by Im Hak Su and originally published as volume 21 of the *Anthology of World Literature*, was reprinted in 1991 in 5,000 copies with a preface by Kim Wang Sop. As is the case with the other volumes reprinted in the 1990s, the preface begins with an exhortation by the great leader Kim Il Sung on the inevitability of the struggle against oppression. Kim Wang Sop assures the reader that Byron's poetry is characterized by sympathy for the hardships of the people, opposition to oppressors, and a strong call for resistance and freedom. This is reflective of the fact that in England and other European countries, class conflicts had become more severe due to the industrial revolution when modern capitalism developed. As a result, a small minority of English capitalists became wealthy from the blood and sweat of the vast majority of the working class who were faced with worsening living conditions. Byron supported the people's liberation movements in Eastern Europe and this resistance struggle is reflected in some of his works. However, "Byronism," or his romantic poetics, displays negative elements

such as a preoccupation with solitude, pessimistic moods, and egocentric tendencies. Byron could not completely escape from the antiquated thought patterns and life style of the reactionary class, and because of this limitation, he was seen to lack a clear perspective on the development of society.

The *Anthology of Shakespeare's Works, 1* (*Sweksup'io Huikokson 1*), originally published as volume 15 of the *Anthology of World Literature*, was reprinted in 1991 in 10,000 copies with a preface by Hwang Yong Kil. The translators were Kim Hae Kyun (*Romeo and Juliet*), Chu Chong Kil (*Hamlet*), Pak Si Hwan (*Othello*), Chang Ch'ong Hyon (*King Lear*), Paek Rak Min (*Macbeth*). There is the obligatory advice by the great leader about how literature and art reflect the social system, political and economic life, and daily customs of a historical period. Hwang Yong Kil recounts how in his early period (1590-1600), Shakespeare produced works like *Romeo and Juliet* that depict the overturning of feudalistic customs and the move towards a more open civilization characteristic of the optimism of the Renaissance. During the next period, Shakespeare focused on history and politics, and his works expressed opposition to absolute royal power and supported the elimination of social contradictions. The third period (1609-16) saw the appearance of works like *The Tempest* that demonstrate disillusionment and an attitude of compromise towards humanistic ideals. By showing how the lust for power darkens reason, how jealousy and plotting can lead to murder, how treacherous subjects can betray rulers, Shakespeare's works arouse aesthetic sympathy in readers and viewers and contribute to world literature.

The *Anthology of Shakespeare's Works 2* (*Sweksup'io Huikokson 2*), originally published as volume 16 of the *Anthology of World Literature*, was reprinted in 1995 with an introduction by Hwang Yong Kil. There is no indication of how many copies were printed. The translators were Pak Si Hwan (*The Merchant of Venice* and *King Henry the Fourth*), Chu Chong Kil (*The Twelfth Night*), and Chang Ch'ong Hyon (*Antony and Cleopatra*). Since the great leader Kim Il Sung had passed away in 1994, the preface begins with a comment by the dear leader Kim Chong Il claiming that Shylock represents the cruelty and plundering by the bourgeoisie

during the developing phase of capitalism. Hwang Yong Kil praises Shakespeare for expressing belief in the realization of capitalism in his comedies. *The Merchant of Venice* can be considered progressive to the extent that it portrays the birth of capitalism as the result of the destruction of the feudal system. However, in *Antony and Cleopatra* individual passions are idealized, and the characters are not depicted in terms of the historical reality of their class relations. Hwang Yong Kil thought that these aspects of Shakespeare's works must be criticized from the point of view of Self-Reliance thought.

4. Samples of the Techniques and Practices of North Korean Translators

4.1 Terms Relating To Christianity and European Religious Practices

Example One

“Nosambollaendtu wa **sungryo** Suk'urup'u rul yokyok hagi ui hae so” (*Henri 4 Se Che 1 Pu*) (Pak Si Hwan 1995:214)

“To meet Northumberland and the **prelate** Scroop” (*King Henry IV Part 1, Act V, Scene V, line 37*) (Shakespeare 1972: 154)

Example Two

“Pyonhosa myo **sungryo** myo origwangdae p'ae dul i” (*Muchongbu ui Kamyon*) (Chu Chong Kil 1991: 128)

“Lawyers and **priests**, a motley crowd” (*The Mask of Anarchy, stanza XVII, line 66*) (Shelley 1904: 366)

In the two examples above, the translators use the term “**sungryo**” (Buddhist priest) to refer to a Christian cleric.

Example Three

“**Sosung ui amja** e nammollae sumgyo twossdaga” (*Romio wa Chulliet'u*) (Kim Hae Kyun 1962: 229)

“meaning to keep her closely at my **cell**” (*Romeo and Juliet, Act V Scene III, line 255*) (Shakespeare 1972: 66)

In example three, the translator renders “cell” as “sosung ui amja” (a Hinayana Buddhist hermitage). All three examples follow the prescriptions laid out in some of the *Literary Newspaper* articles concerning the importance of keeping the readers’ level of literary appreciation in mind. They can be thought of as exhibiting what Lawrence Venuti terms as a domesticating tendency.

4.2 Use Of Foreign Terms

Example Four

“Sarang gwa P’opak toen **T’ait’an** ui sulp’un unmyong e gwanhan” (*Haebang Toen P’uromet’yusu*) (Im Hak Su 1991:67)

“And love, and the chained **Titan’s** woful doom” (*Prometheus Unbound*, Act II, Scene II, line 93) (Shelley 1904: 252)

Example Five

“**Hiasinsu** wa **sahyang namu** ukojin chongja kunul eso kaman kaman” (“Ijabella Ilmyong Pakha hwabun”) (Chang Ch’ong Hyon 1991: 190)

“Close in a bower of **hyacinth** and **musk**” (“Isabella or the Pot of Basil” Stanza 11, line 5) (Keats 1951: 166)

Example Six

“Ku daum e **Sidumausu** wa pisuthan uison” (“Muchongbu ui Kamyon”) (Chu Chong Gil 1991: 129)

“Like **Sidmouth**, next hypocrisy” (“The Mask of Anarchy”, Stanza 6 line 3) (Shelley 1904: 365)

In example four (“T’ait’an” / “Titan’s”) and six (“Sidumausu” / “Sidmouth”), the translators transliterate the English terms into the Korean alphabet hangul. In example five, Chang Ch’ong Hyon mixes transliteration (“Hiasinsu” / “hyacinth”) with a Chinese character-based expression for “musk” (“sahyang namu”). These examples seem to indicate that an exoticizing trend existed alongside the domesticating one (to use Venuti’s terminology

again). This is also an indication of the relatively generous leeway in terms of choices that translators enjoyed during the 1950s to the 1960s compared to the late 1960s when tighter government restrictions were imposed. Since this volume of translations was reprinted in 1991, it posed the question of whether the original versions were kept intact or revised.

4.3 Use Of Chinese Character-Based Expressions

Example Seven

“**Hwaran nom** haunin tu byong tchae rul ttarugido chon e t'oakchil ul hago” (*Osello*) (Pak Si Hwan 1991: 340)

“He gives your **Hollander** a vomit, ere, the next pottle can be filled” (*Othello*, Act II, Scene III, lines 86-87) (Shakespeare 1972: 291)

Example Eight

“Ku dul un **yongsaeng pulsa** ui sigan” (*Haebang Toen P'uromet'yusu*) (Im Hak Su 1991: 77)

“There are the **immortal hours**” (*Prometheus Unbound*, Act II, Scene IV, line 140) (Shelley 1904: 257)

Example Nine

“Na nun Mona ui sup'ul sok ul **turuidu yosung i** konildon kosul pogo” (“Segye e ui Insa”) (Im Hak Su 1956: 38)

“I see where the **druids** walk'd the groves of Mona” (“Salut au Monde!” line 94) (Whitman 1965:142)

In example seven, Pak Si Hwan uses the Chinese character-based expression “hwaran” rather than the transliteration of the foreign word “Nedollandu”. As an English literature scholar trained in the traditional way during the colonial period, Im Hak Su translates the Shelley poem as “immortal hours” with the Chinese character-based “yongsaeng pulsa” (living forever not dying) rather than the native Korean “chukji annun” (not dying). For the Whitman poem in example nine, Im Hak Su transliterates “druids” (“turuidu”) and

adds the Chinese-based “Yosung” (referring to an evil Buddhist priest). The tendency to continue to include the more traditional and formal Chinese character-based style of writing goes against the advice found in some of the *Literary Newspaper* articles on suiting translation style to the average readers. As in the examples cited in section 4.2, translators vary their techniques. The choice of Chinese character-based expressions versus transliterating English words reveals a balancing of traditional influences and modern ones at the time when North Korea was attempting to define itself as an emerging socialist society.

4.4 Use Of Traditional Or Archaic Korean Terms

Example Ten

“Mian hada man no nun **p’unggak chaengi** pakke mot toennun kuna” (*Romio wa Chulliet’u*) (Kim Hae Kyun 1962: 199)

“O, I cry you mercy; you are the **singer**” (*Romeo and Juliet*, Act IV, Scene V line 141) (Shakespeare 1972: 60)

The translator renders “singer” as “p’unggak chaengi”, a term for a traditional minstrel who entertained in public places such as markets.

Example Eleven

“Suja ro toen **moritaengi, padukp’an muni** ui myongju ot” (“Hosu ui Nyoin”) (Kim Cho Gyu & Yang Un Han 1991: 237)

“Her satin **snood**, her silken **plaid**” (“The Lady of the Lake”, Stanza 19, line 363) (Scott 1898: 13)

“Snood” is translated as “moritaengi” referring to hair ribbons traditionally used by Korean women, and “plaid” is compared to “padukp’an muni” the checkered pattern on a board for the traditional game paduk.

Example Twelve

“**Taegam Nim**, taek e pyolgo opusinaikka?” (*Osello*) (Pak Si Hwan 1991: 302)

“Signior is all your family within?” (*Othello*, Act I, Scene I, line 83) (Shakespeare 1972: 275)

In the Korean version Roderigo refers to Signior Brabantio as “taegam nim”, the traditional Korean honorific term for a high government official. Examples ten to twelve follow the official norms of preserving the purity of the Korean language, while appealing to the tastes of the average readers.

5. Conclusion

This paper has given an overview of the situation of English and American literary translations in North Korea in the 1950s to the 1960s, including a survey of the *Literary Newspaper* articles and prefaces to translated volumes. The sample of translation techniques, albeit quite limited, indicates some tendencies which require further investigation to determine the degree of conformity to official rules and how these diverse approaches relate to the working conditions and the agency of translators facing shifts in official cultural practices as North Korea moved away from dependence on foreign powers and towards a policy of self-reliance.⁵ During the 1950s to the 1960s, various groups competed for political influence in North Korea, including those who returned from China and Russia as well as leftist intellectuals from South Korea and writers who had been active during the Japanese colonial period. These conflicts were represented in the literary sphere where particular emphasis was placed on literature as a vehicle for educating loyal citizens, and translation of works from the Soviet Union, China, third world countries, and Western Europe played their roles in cultural realignment.

As this research progresses, I will be attempting to situate translations of Western European literature in the larger frame of literary translation during the period when North Korea, heir to centuries of cultural traditions, was establishing its identity as a

socialist society situated on a divided peninsula after decades of colonial rule.⁶ Perhaps, like the bewildered Puck of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* who protested "Did not you tell me I should know the man / By the Athenian garments he had on?" (Shakespeare 1972:92), North Korean readers might have wondered at the changing attire of their cultural persona.

Notes

¹ I would like to thank Prof. Yoo Im Ha and Prof. Jeon Young Sun for their guidance and Prof. Cho Mina, Dr. Yi Son Kyong and Esther Eo Jin Hwang for their advice and help in preparing this paper.

² Guo Yangsheng (2009) describes a somewhat similar case in the late 1970s in China when translation was emphasized as a means of modernization.

³ *Chuch'e Sasang* (Self-Reliance Thought) became the predominant ideology in North Korea in the late 1960s. This is regarded as a new human centered philosophical approach according to which humans are responsible for all aspects of their development. (Yi Myong Jae 2007)

⁴ Kim Song Su (1994) points out that until the early 1960s the articles in the *Literary Newspaper* dealing with foreign works focused on the Soviet Union and China, but after this point interest broadened to include Eastern European and Third World countries among others.

⁵ In a discussion of the agency and activism of translators Maria Tymoczko (2010) writes: "Translators make choices about what values and institutions to support and oppose, determining activist strategies and picking their fights even as they are also making choices about what to transpose from a source text and what to construct in a receptor text."

⁶ When the *Choson Munhak Yesul Ch'ong Tongmaeng* (Choson Literature and Art Union) was founded in 1961 their stated mission was to continue the tradition of revolutionary art and literature in line with Self-Reliance artistic policies set out by the Great Leader and the Party. (Jeon Young Sun 2002).

Works Cited

Primary Sources

Burns, R. *Ponju sichip* (Anthology of the poetry of Robert Burns). Translated by Kim, C. U., et al. P'yongyang: Kukrip Munhak Yesul Sojok, 1959.

Byron, G. G. *Pairon sison* (Anthology of the poetry of Byron). Translated by Im, H. S. P'yongyang: Munye, 1991.

Chu, C. G. Sweksup'io wa ku ui yesul - t'ansaeng 400 chunyon ul machumyo (Shakespeare's art - celebrating the 400th anniversary of his birth). *Munhak Shinmun*, April 24, 1964. (Literary Newspaper).

Im, H. S., Chang, C. H., Chu, C. G., Kim, C. G., Yang, U. H. Translated. *Kundae yongguk sison* (Anthology of modern English poetry). P'yongyang: Munye, 1991.

- Keats, J. *The poems of John Keats*. De Selincourt, E., ed. London: Methuen, 1951.
- Kim, C. U. Mije e pakmu hanun onul ui miguk pandong munhak (Reactionary literature serves US imperialism). *Munhak Shinmun*, May 19, 1961. (Literary Newspaper)
- _____. Swelli wa hyokmyongjok nangman chuui (Shelley and revolutionary romanticism). *Munhak Shinmun*, December 21, 1962. (Literary Newspaper).
- Kyong, I. (1965, December 24). Mije wa koeroe todang ui sasangjok mosumgun uro pokmu hanun Nam Choson pandong munhak I (South Korea, as a US puppet, produces reactionary literature under US imperialism). *Munhak Shinmun*, December 24, 1965. (Literary Newspaper).
- Mun, S. M., Pak C. W., Han K. S., Hwang K. H. *Sogurap'a munhak kaegwan* (Survey of Western European literature). P'yongyang: Kukrip Munhak Yesul Sojok, 1958.
- Pak, Y. G. Ponyok munhak etaehayo chonwonhoe ui t'oron (Committee members' discussion on literary translation). *Munhak Shinmun*, November 21, 1957. (Literary Newspaper).
- _____. Ponyok munhak ui chil chego wa yangjok changsong ul wihayo. (Raising the quality and increasing the quantity of translated literature). *Munhak Shinmun*, February 12, 1959. (Literary Newspaper).
- _____. Ponyok eso chakkajok noryok i yogu toenda (Translation requires the translator's efforts). *Munhak Shimun*, April 9, 1959. (Literary Newspaper).
- _____. Ponyok munhak ui sasang yesulsong ul chego hagi wihayo (Improving Artistic Ideas in Literary Translation). *Munhak Shinmun*, August 18, 1959. (Literary Newspaper).
- _____. Kiman gwa unpy'e, tobal gwa ch'imryak ui mugi - miguk purujyoo pandong munhak etaehayo" (Deception, concealment, provocation and tools to attack - on reactionary American bourgeois literature). *Munhak Shinmun*, February 10, 1961. (Literary Newspaper).
- _____. P'asan toego issnun mije ui purujyoo pandong munhak (America's reactionary bourgeois literature is collapsing). *Munhak Shinmun*, December 7, 1965. (Literary Newspaper).
- Scott, W. The Lady of the lake. *Select Poems*. Alexander, W. J., Ed. Toronto: The Copp, Clark, 1898.
- Shakespeare, W. *Romio wa Chulliet'u* (Romeo and Juliet). Kim, H. K. Trans. P'yongyang: Chonghap Inswae Kongchang, 1962.
- _____. *An essential Shakespeare, nine plays and sonnets*. Fraser, R. ed. New York: Macmillan, 1972.
- _____. *Sweksup'io huigokson 1* (Anthology of Shakespeare's works 1). Kim, H. K., Chu, C. K., Pak S. H., Chang, C. H., Paek, R. M. Trans. P'yongyang: Munye, 1991.
- _____. *Sweksup'io huigokson 2* (Anthology of Shakespeare's works 2). Pak S. H., Chu C. K., Chang C. H. Trans. P'yongyang: Munye, 1995.
- Shelley, P. B. *The complete poetical works of Shelley*, ed. Hutchinson, T. Oxford: Clarendon, 1904.
- Whitman, W. *Wolt'u Hwit'uman sison* (Anthology of Walt Whitman's poetry). Im, H.S. & Pak S. H. Trans. P'yongyang: Kukrip, 1956.
- _____. *Leaves of grass*. Blodgett, H. W. & Bradley S., Eds. New York: New York

University, 1965.

Yi, P. S. Oeguk munhak ponyok saop kaeson ul wihayo (On improving the translation of foreign literature). *Munhak Shinmun*, January 16, 1958. (Literary Newspaper)

Secondary Sources

Ch'oe, K. H. & Hong Y. M. Pukhan ui Syeiksup'io (Shakespeare in North Korea). *Yongmi Munhak Yongu* (Research on English and American Literature) 11 (2001): 37-58.

Guo Y. Theorizing the Politics of Translation in a Global Era, A Chinese Perspective. *The Translator*, 15 (2009): 239-259.

Hanna, S. Othello in the Egyptian Vernacular: Negotiating the 'Doxic' in Drama Translation and Identity Formation. *The Translator*, 15 (2009): 157-178.

Jeon Y. S. *Pukhan ui munhak yesul unyong ch'egye wa munye iron* (The North Korean literary and artistic operational system and literary and artistic theory). Seoul: Toso Ch'ulp'an Yokrak, 2002.

Kim S. S. *Pukhan Munhak Shinmun kisa moknok (1956-1993), sashil chuui pip'yongsa charyochip* (Catalogue of North Korean Literary Newspaper articles (1956-1993), materials on the history of realist criticism). Seoul: Hallim Taehakkyo, 1994.

Kim Y. H. Pukhan Yongmunhak sosol (Introduction to English literature in North Korea). *Yongmi Munhak Yongu* (Research on English and American Literature), 11 (2001): 9-36.

Tymoczko, M. *Enlarging translation, empowering translators*. Manchester, UK: St. Jerome, 2010.

Yi M. J. *Pukhan munhak sajon* (Dictionary of North Korean literature). Seoul: Kukhak Charyowon, 2007.