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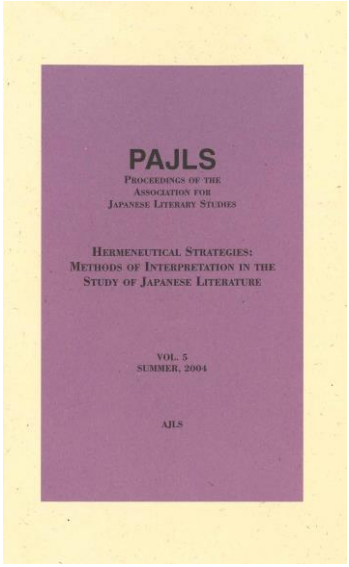
Proceedings of the Association for Japanese Literary Studies 5 (2004): 95–107.



PAJLS 5:
Hermeneutical Strategies: Methods of Interpretation in the Study of Japanese Literature.
Ed. Michael F. Marra.

ZAINICHI LITERATURE THROUGH A LACANIAN GAZE: THE CASE OF YI YANG-JI'S *YUHI*

Catherine Ryu

Yi Yang-ji's novel *Yuhi*, published in 1988, concerns a second-generation *zainichi* woman named Yuhi.[1] In her late twenties, Yuhi goes to Korea to study Korean language and literature at prestigious S University.[2] Just a month before graduation, however, she abruptly returns to Japan. This tale of Yuhi is told retrospectively by the first-person narrator On'ni (meaning "an elder sister" in Korean), who is the niece of Yuhi's landlady during her stay in Seoul.[3]

Like On'ni and the landlady who are profoundly disappointed by Yuhi's decision to return to Japan, critics have interpreted Yuhi's sudden departure as evidence of her failure both to assimilate herself fully into Korean culture and to master her "supposed" mother tongue, Korean.[4]

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[1] *Yuhi* is Yi Yang-ji's prize-winning novel for the 100th Akutagawa Award in 1989. It was first published in *Gunzō* (November 1988). Yi (1955-1992) was the second Resident Korean to receive this prestigious award After Ri Kaisei (b. 1925) who won it in 1971. For a detailed chronology of Yi's life and her literary achievements, refer to *Yi Yang-ji zenshū* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1993), pp. 684-88. Hereafter *zenshū*.

[2] The original text of the novel cited in this paper is from Yi Yang-ji, *Yuhi* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1989), hereafter *Yuhi*. The main character Yuhi is described as a shy, boyish-looking girl, though she is actually a 27 year-old woman (*Yuhi* 52).

[3] The narrator remains nameless except for this generic kinship term 'on'ni.' She works for a publishing company specializing in history and traditional Korean art. Similar to Yuhi, On'ni also studied Korean literature in college (*Yuhi* 25, 45). From the initial meeting, On'ni feels a strong sense of attraction toward this Korean Japanese woman, and once Yuhi moves into the house, On'ni takes the lodger under her wings.

[4] Since *Yuhi* began to receive critical attention, Yuhi's "failure" has been the focus of orthodox reading of this novel both in Japanese and Western scholarship. For instance, Yoshiyuki Junnosuke, one of the selection committee members for the Akutagawa Award, speaks of the story in terms of Yuhi's disappointment with Korea and her return to Japan. Yoshiyuki Junnosuke, "Akutagawasho senhyō," *Bungei shunjū* 67. 3 (1989), cited in "'Moji' to iu 'kotoba': Yi Yang-ji [no] *Yuhi* o megutte by Ueda Atsuko, *Nihon kindai bungaku* 62 (2000): 128. Aoyama Minami introduces *Yuhi* in similar terms, the heroine's disillusionment (*genmetsu*) with her "homeland." Aoyama Minami, "Eigo ni natta Nippon no

Yuhi's final return to Japan, together with her recurring "linguistic escapes" to the comfort of the Japanese language even during her stay in Korea, is therefore taken to signify Yuhi's, and to a large extent the author's, ultimate disavowal of Korea as part of her cultural identity.[5]

Such a reading, however, is symptomatic of major problems with current hermeneutic practice in the field of *zainichi* literature. Even as scholars grapple with the issue of identity as a central focus of *zainichi bungaku*, they tend to erase the subjectivity of characters by equating that subjectivity only with the pre-existing categories of Korean, Japanese, or Korean Japanese.[6] Even when critics argue that identity should not be

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shōsetsu: Yi Yang-ji no *Yuhi*," *Subaru* 16.5 (1994): 118. Likewise, Carol Hayes states that "[T]he main focus of *Yuhi* is the failure of Yuhi's return to her motherland as seen through her inability to settle the linguistic dispute raging within her." Carol Hayes, "The Cultural Identity in the Work of Yi Yang-ji," in *Koreans in Japan: Critical Voices from the Margin*, ed. Sonia Ryang, (New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 126. John Lie's interpretation of Yuhi's return as "a sign of defeat" again echoes conventional readings of the novel. John Lie, "Narratives of Exile and the Search for Homeland in Contemporary Korean Japanese Writings," in *Constructing Nationhood in Modern East Asia*, eds. Kai-wing Chow, Kevin M. Doak, and Poshek Fu (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), p. 350.

[5] Yi Yang-ji herself, however, speaks of how writing this novel helped her see that the *zainichi* struggle between Korea and Japan, or homeland and mother tongue, ultimately intersects with none other than the fundamental questions of human existence, such as the courage and power to embrace reality "as is" (*genzai o aru ga mama no sugata de ukeire, kyoyō suru yūki to chikara mitai na, ningen no sonzai ni okeru konpon mondai to musubitsuku mono de atta ni chigai arimasen*). Yi Yang-ji, "Watakushi ni totte no bokoku to Nihon (1991)," *Zenshū*, p. 665.

[6] Within the theoretical framework of colonialism, post colonialism, and cultural studies, identity issues pertaining to *zainichi bungaku* can be only addressed in impersonal and abstract terms such as nation, race, and ethnicity. The first and second-generation *zainichi* authors themselves, Ri Kaisei for instance, regard nation-state based political consciousness and ethnic identity as the foundation of *zainichin bungaku*. But such a narrow definition of *zainichi bungaku* has become problematic and is perhaps no longer tenable if *zainichi bungaku* were to include works by younger-generation writers such as Yi Yang-ji and Yū Miri whose main approach to literature is not necessarily to voice their political visions. In fact, defining the significance of the term *zainichi*, which has gained currency only after 1945, has been the major focus of scholars, critics, and authors in the field. Refer, for instance, to Takeda Seiji, *'Zainichi' to iu konkyo*: *Ri Kaisei, Kin Sekihan, Kin Kakuei* (Tokyo: Kokubunsha, 1983); Kawamura Minato, "'Zainichi' sakka to Nihon bungaku: so no kadai to genzai," in *Kōza Shōwa bungakushi* vol. 5, Yūseidō , 1989), pp. 25-34.

conceptualized merely as that which is determined by one's political, cultural, and linguistic alliance with a particular nation-state, the critics' refutation of identity in the reductive terms of being Korean, Japanese, or Korean Japanese in effect underscores the primacy of these categories as the basis of the current interpretive paradigm.[7]

Of the given three categories of identity, being Korean Japanese is perhaps the most appealing one for many reasons. This hybrid identity, by definition, not only legitimizes but also amplifies the dual alliance with Korea and Japan. At the same time, the very term "Korean Japanese," which identifies one as being neither wholly Korean nor Japanese, generates an illusory subject belonging to a utopian political reality that has bypassed or dissolved the long-established antagonism between Korea and Japan. In fact, the critical dissatisfaction with Yuhi might lie in the fact that she fails to become a "true postcolonial heroine"—an ideal Korean Japanese who is not only comfortable both in Korean and Japanese cultural and linguistic contexts, but whose psychological and political equilibrium, implicit in her chosen hybrid identity, symbolically expresses that marginalized Koreans living in Japan have overcome the weight of history itself.

The notion of hybrid identity, which I would call "an imaginary utopian subject position," thus plays a critical role in shaping a collective postcolonial fantasy. However, hybrid identity as an ultimate destination in *zainichi* critical discourse can only be reached by ignoring the complex psychological reality of "Resident Koreans" in Japan.[8] In fact, the psychological trauma of Resident Koreans pertaining to their identity issues still remains largely untheorized and unexamined in *zainichi*

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[7] John Lie, for instance, offers "diasporic identity" in place of nation-state based identity when he proposes that "[B]y grounding oneself in the transnational diaspora, one avoids the contradictory position between an impossible return and an idealized homeland (Lie 354)." But, since the very notion of "transnational" can be teased out only in opposition to a stable and discrete idea of "national," Lie's new vision of diasporic identity does not necessarily dismantle the primacy of the nation-state as the basis of current discourses on identity.

[8] Koreans who have established their residence in Japan are referred to as *zainichi Kankokujin* (Koreans residing in Japan). Even if they are born in Japan, their legal status remains as that of aliens, unless they go through naturalization. This procedure, however, has not been readily accessible or obtainable for complicated reasons, both politically and legally. "Resident Koreans" has been used as an English equivalent of *zainichi Kankokujin* since Norma Field's first coinage of the term in "Beyond Envy, Boredom, and Suffering: Toward an Emancipatory Politics for Resident Koreans and Other Japanese," *Positions* 1:3 (Winter 1993): 640-70.

scholarship,[9] despite the fact that depictions of such trauma constitute a major portion of *zainichi bungaku* itself.

This paper therefore attempts to formulate an approach to theorize the complex psychological interiority of Resident Koreans as depicted through the lives of their fictional counterparts in *zainichi bungaku*.[10] To this end, I have chosen, for specific reasons, to explore critical insights and tools developed by Lacanian psychoanalysis as a potential theoretical basis for analyzing *zainichi bungaku*. To begin with, Lacan's exploration of the human mind is carried out both at the theoretical and practical levels. As a clinical practice dealing with actual individuals and their personal issues, Lacanian psychoanalysis employs concrete methods to induce changes in the way patients view themselves and their relationships with the world at large. Lacan's illuminations on this link, both conscious and unconscious, between an actual person and the world in which she lives, may shed light on hitherto unexplored possibilities for *zainichi* scholarship as it endeavors to ameliorate its current literary theory and practice.

This preliminary investigation of Lacanian psychoanalysis in relation to *zainichi bungaku* focuses, in particular, on what Bruce Fink, a leading Lacanian psychoanalyst and critic, terms "the three constitutive moments of subjectivity:" alienation, separation, and further separation. By using these notions as Fink interprets them in his 1995 monograph, *The Lacanian Subject*,[11] I will attempt to demonstrate the extent to which we may be able to theorize the advent of the *zainichi* subject, while elucidating the vortex of psychological forces causing the *zainichi* subject to appear through her personal trauma.[12]

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[9] The psychological trauma of Resident Koreans has been, to be sure, the main focus of *zainichi bungaku* discourse. But what I am referring to is not the subject matter of the discourse, but the theoretical basis for generating the discourse itself. Thus far, critical discussions have been limited to "describing" the psychological trauma of Resident Koreans reflected on the textual level (i.e., Yuhi's disappointment with the Korea she has discovered and her difficulty with the language), without addressing and analyzing the deeper psychological forces that have precipitated the depicted trauma. For example, how are the Korean and Japanese languages configured in Yuhi's psychical economy vis-à-vis herself and the world, (i.e., to the imaginary, the real, and the symbolic [in the Lacanian sense])?

[10] To my best knowledge, Lacanian psychoanalysis has not yet been explored as a potential theoretical framework for *zainichi bungaku*.

[11] Bruce Fink, *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 35-77. Hereafter Fink.

[12] Due to the lack of the linguistic facility that would enable me to read Lanan's original texts in French, I have chosen, for my reading of *Yuhi*, to construct a

The first task then is to illustrate how it is even feasible to align conceptually the *zainichi* subject with the Lacanian subject, in light of separation and further separation. The notion of alienation will be discussed later when analyzing the novel *Yuhi* itself. In Lacan's formulation of separation, the split subject is dominated or subjugated by the Other's desire. A concrete example of the Other's desire is, to borrow Fink's example, the desire of parents that "causes" a child's physical presence in the world.[13] Further separation, on the other hand, entails the split subject "subjectifying," as opposed to "being subjugated by," the cause of her own existence—in other words, the Other's desire. What this means is that the subject comes to make her own the very causation of her existence. As Fink explains, the subject is now able to "take the traumatic event upon [him or] herself, and assumes responsibility for that *jouissance*."[14] By subjectifying the otherness within, the subject comes to be able to say, "I did this," instead of, "It happened to me."[15] The advent of the subject who utters this "I" is a "pure desiring" being, whose desire is no longer determined by or fixated on a particular object of the Other's desire. Instead, she has realigned herself vis-à-vis the Other.

Lacan's notions of separation and further separation can be productively employed to articulate the *zainichi* subject's relation to the world at two different levels, collectively and individually. Collectively, the very physical presence of Resident Koreans in Japan is indeed caused by the Other's desire (i.e., Japan's imperialist desire).[16] They are born into a world made not of their own desire. Therefore, in Lacanian parlance, Resident Koreans in Japan are subjugated by the Other's desire, and their

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Lacanian theoretical model à la Fink because I find Fink's interpretation of Lacanian psychoanalysis most tenable and comprehensible.

[13] Fink, p. 50.

[14] Fink, p. 63.

[15] Fink, p. 62.

[16] Korea became Japan's protectorate in 1905 and was completely annexed to Japan in 1910. Japan maintained its colonial presence in Korea until 1945. During the colonizer's intense military mobilization, about 1.4 million Korean men were taken to Japan in the year 1941 alone for construction, manufacturing, mining, and agricultural work. Koreans constituted one-third of the industrial labor in Japan by the time of its defeat in 1945. Approximately 100,000 to 200,000 Korean women were also taken to Japan. Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History* (New York: Norton, 1997), pp 177-79. After 1945, about 500,000 to 600,000 Koreans remained stranded in Japan due to political, social, and economical problems in Post colonial Korea. Fukuoka Yasunori, "Koreans in Japan: Past and Present." *Saitama University Review* 31.1 (1996): 1-15.

subjectivity disappears behind the bar. In this sense, any Resident Korean in Japan is, by definition, a "barred subject" in separation.[17]

Lacan's concept of further separation, moreover, can be applied to the link between the *zainichi* subject as a unique individual and the world at large. Even though further separation itself is delineated in such an abstract way (i.e., subjectifying the Other's desire), it takes place in concrete and personal terms as the divided subject dramatically realigns her relationship with the symbolic Other, or in the layman's term Fink borrows, "one's fate." Like the Lacanian subject who comes to utter "I did this," instead of "It happened to me," the *zainichi*, too, can occupy this subject position "I" by ironing out her particular psychological "kinks" in her relation to the symbolic Other.[18]

As this brief discussion has indicated, with Lacanian notions of separation and further separation, we can begin to articulate the *zainichi* subject's relation with the world at large, both on the collective and individual levels. Moreover, Lacan's formulation of further separation suggests an exciting theoretical possibility for the advent of the *zainichi* subject that is not defined by pre-existing terms in the symbolic. This Lacanian perspective carries enormous implications both for the *zainichi* themselves and for the critics whose notion of the subject has been tied to the fixed identity categories of Korean, Japanese, and Korean Japanese.

In the rest of the paper, I will analyze Yuhi's decision to return to Japan as a way of demonstrating how we can apply Lacan's open-ended and abstract formulation of further separation to the particular case of a fictional *zainichi* character.

Central to my reading of Yuhi's story is Lacan's theory of objet *a*. Bruce Fink explains the appearance of object *a* in Lacan's formulation of separation as the following: "Separation results in the splitting of the subject into ego and unconscious, and in a corresponding splitting of the Other into lacking Other (A) and object *a*."[19] Object *a* thus stands in for what the Other lacks, which is coextensive with what the Other desires.[20] As such, object *a* performs a specific function in fantasy, which is, in the

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[17] The Lacanian term "barred Subject" refers to "the subject alienated in/by language." The subject is "barred" precisely because it is "devoid of being as it is eclipsed by the Other (i.e. the symbolic order)." Fink, p. 173.

[18] I am borrowing Fink's term "kinks," which appears in his explanation of the real as "kinks in the symbolic order." In Fink's usage," kinks" refer to that which cannot be represented in the symbolic. Fink, pp. 30-31. Fink does not provide a succinct definition of the symbolic, but it is my understanding that the symbolic is that which has been symbolized by the Other (i.e., Language).

[19] Fink, p. 61.

[20] Fink, p. 54.

Lacanian formulation, nothing but the subject's complex imaginary relationship with the Other through object *a*. From the subject's perspective, object *a* is that which "causes" desire, not that which satisfies desire. Differently put, object *a* is the plaything that the subject can manipulate at will to incite her maximum *jouissance* in fantasy and attain a false sense of ego.[21]

The psychological impetus behind Yuhi's initial relationship with Korean culture, language, and people can be effectively delineated by this Lacanian theory of object *a*. The reader learns about Yuhi's motivation to study Korean from the landlady who reveals it to her niece, On'ni the narrator, in the very evening after Yuhi's departure to Japan:

> "Yuhi's father's business failed about the time she graduated from junior high school. Of all people, he was deceived by fellow Koreans. Since then, Yuhi's family had to rely on the support of her mother's family; they were affluent, apparently. And Yuhi's father continued to speak ill of Koreans until his death. A terrible story, isn't it! It seems that his luck with women was not on his side either. The first two wives died on him, and Yuhi's mother was his third wife. Yuhi must have had other difficulties she couldn't share with me, but she did tell me that she was able to come to this country because her father had died. Finally she could make up her mind and come here. Yuhi wanted to defend her country to her father, she told me. Whenever she felt like she couldn't, she studied even harder..."
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> This was the very first time I [On'ni] heard the story. Surprised and shocked, I even felt a touch of jealousy toward Aunt. Why hadn't Yuhi told me this? I then realized once again that both Aunt and I had seen a Yuhi the other was not aware of.
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> "He was a good father, but seeing him talk badly of Koreans was most difficult to bear, according to Yuhi. After entering university, she seems to have started to learn Korean on her own. And by chance, she heard the *taegum* [a Korean flute] music and afterwards decided to study in Korea. In her room, you know, she let me listen to the *taegum* cassette and showed me, with great care, her *taegum*. She even pretended

[21] Fink, pp. 60-62. Fink also explains *jouissance* as "a pleasure that is excessive, leading to a sense of being overwhelmed or disgusted, yet simultaneously providing a source of fascination." Fink xii.

> playing it. 'I wanted to have my father listen to this sound before he died,' she spoke with tears in her eyes."[22]

In Lacanian terms, Yuhi's desire to study Korean stems from her recognition of her father as "lacking Other." In her attempt to figure out object *a*, the Other's desire (i.e., her father's desire), Yuhi takes his incessant verbal dismissal of Koreans to be that which comes in between her desire to be desired by this parental figure, and his desire for something other than herself. For Yuhi, in search of ways to "coincide" or "juxtapose" her desire with her father's own lack/desire so as to regain his undivided love, her father's fixation on the negative qualities of Koreans becomes the master signifier for his lack/desire. This fixation not only takes away his attention from Yuhi but also literally annihilates him in the form of an untimely death when she turns twenty-one, thereby denying her forever his physical presence and the possibility to restore her relationship with him. Thus, from her junior high school days and even after his death, her father's constant disparaging of Koreans has become Yuhi's own fixation—her fixation to prove him wrong.

In Lacanian terms, the Korean language, people, and culture initially form a chain of signifiers that stand in for object *a*, Yuhi's father's lack/desire. In fantasy, Yuhi possesses complete control over this object *a* and plays with it so as to create maximum *jouissance* for herself. By imagining the occasion when she can prove her father to be wrong about Koreans, Yuhi gains a false sense of ego that is capable of reinstating her relationship with her father prior to her recognition of him as lacking Other. In the absence of any actual opportunity to play out her fantasy in the symbolic, Yuhi has been able to maintain this imaginary relationship with object *a*, (i.e., Korea, language, people) for over a decade. Once Yuhi is physically situated in Korea, however, her imaginary relationship with object *a* is forced to undergo a drastic alteration, as evident in the numerous incidents of her "odd" linguistic behavior (i.e., her refusal to speak, her seeming incapacity to make sensible utterances, and her psychological breakdown due to what Yuhi perceives to be Korean linguistic assaults).[23]

The significance of Yuhi's failure to deal with the Korean language gains new meaning once we recognize it as a manifestation of her trauma—her trauma of encountering the Korean language as the symbolic

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[22] The English translation of the novel cited in this paper is my own. *Yuhi*, pp. 105-6.

[23] For the episode of Yuhi's nervous and linguistic breakdown in the bus on her way to purchase a study desk, see *Yuhi*, pp. 62-69; see also *Yuhi*, pp. 80-84 for Yuhi's late-night drinking episode.

Other rather than as object *a*. In analyzing Yuhi's traumatic encounter with the Korean language as the symbolic Other, Lacan's notion of "alienation" provides a conceptual springboard to theorize Yuhi's first-hand experience in Korea.

The success of alienation, which results in the advent of the split subject, requires Yuhi's complete disavowal of her subjectivity so that she can be represented in the symbolic through and by Language, in this case the Korean language. However, not unlike cases of psychosis when a child refuses to be assimilated by Language in its "struggle" with the Other,[24] Yuhi is unable to submit herself fully to the linguistic Other due to her lingering imaginary relationship with Korean as object *a*. Consequently, she does not become a full-fledged split subject in the symbolic via Korean language. For instance, Yuhi's reluctance to write "urinara" (our country)" on a Korean language examination, and her obsessive fixation on the term "urinara" itself as the ultimate psychological stumbling block to embrace Korea, are a telling sign of her unanchored subjectivity within the symbolic via Korean language.[25] Yuhi's problem here is not due to her deficient semantic understanding of the term "urinara," but due to the fact that the term itself is a dead signifier to her (i.e., it carries no subjective meaning).

What Yuhi's linguistic blunders and failures reveal is that her previous imaginary relationship with the Korean language in Japan is now retroactively signifierized as "the real." In the Lacanian formulation, the real is that which cannot be represented in the symbolic.[26] But the operative force of the Korean language as lingering object *a*, the "remainder/reminder" of the real,[27] can be glimpsed through the chain of metaphors with which Yuhi fortifies herself against the Korean linguistic Other. For example, the sound of the Korean flute that she initially encountered in Japan is retroactively signifierized as the sound of the "authentic" Korean language only after Yuhi finds it difficult to relate to the living Korean spoken by natives.[28] Similarly, a set of particular smells,

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[24] Fink, p. 55.
[25] *Yuhi*, pp. 98-99.
[26] Fink, p. 26.
[27] Fink, p. 59.
[28] This is why Yuhi listens to her *taegum* cassette in the corner of her room whenever she finds insupportable her position vis-à-vis the Korean language. On'ni also recalls Yuhi's scribbles, "*Urinara* (our country)... I can't love. *Taegum*, I love... The sound of the *taegum* is my mother tongue." (*Yuhi*, p.84). This confession clearly expresses the metaphorical significance of the *taegum* in Yuhi's problematic relation to the Korean language.

images, and voices,[29] which resist signifierization in and by Language, gains dominance in Yuhi's problematic relation with the Korean language as the symbolic Other.

Yuhi's traumatic encounter with the Korean language as the symbolic Other is compounded by the fact that she also experiences the language as the Other's demand.[30] On'ni and the landlady, well meaning and kind, are always there for Yuhi. In particular, On'ni's overpresence in Yuhi's life and On'ni's earnest attempt to force Yuhi's entry into the symbolic through the Korean language leave no room for Yuhi to view On'ni as lacking Other. Instead On'ni represents the Other's lack of lack, which is, according to Lacan, the most insufferable situation.[31] In the absence of the Other's lack, Yuhi perceives On'ni's solicitude as the Other's demand, which causes not desire but anxiety and frustration. In this potentially overpowering relationship between Yuhi and On'ni, an avatar for the Korean language as the symbolic Other, Japanese functions as a "third term"—that which keeps Yuhi at a safe distance from this "smothering Other."[32] To On'ni, in fact, Yuhi's constant retreat into the Japanese language is not just something "foreign and even undesirable." Rather it is a concrete threat that must be expunged altogether from Yuhi's life. The tension generated between these two women due to the Japanese language is evident from On'ni's harsh scolding of Yuhi: "How many times do I need to tell you this! Your Korean should have improved already, but you aren't making enough effort. It's all because you're always reading Japanese only."[33] As Yuhi's recurrent escape to the comfort of the Japanese language clearly indicates, this language, in its role as a third term, serves to "neutralize the Other's desire," thereby

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[29] For instance, the smell of the landlady's cooking, the image of a rocky mountain, the voices of the landlady and On'ni, the warmth of her room form a collage of the Korea that Yuhi has been able to embrace without any emotional and psychological resistance or disturbance.

[30] Fink differentiates the Lacanian notions of desire and demand: "desire is set in motion, set free of the fixation inherent in demand." Bruce Fink, *A Clinical Introduction to Lacanian Psychoanalysis: Theory and Technique* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 26. The study rituals that Yuhi and On' ni perform together before Yuhi's major examinations or reports can be related to the fixed repetitiveness inherent in demand. Moreover, it is On'ni who pontificates on how Yuhi is supposed to learn Korean. *Yuhi*, pp. 56-60.

[31] Fink, p. 53.

[32] At one point in the story, Yuhi, no longer able to withstand On' ni's "smothering solicitude," flatly demands On' ni to "leave her alone" (*Yuhi*, pp.60).

[33] *Yuhi*, p. 59.

shielding Yuhi from the overpowering dyadic situation created between Yuhi and On'ni.[34]

The significance of Yuhi's abrupt return to Japan therefore should be located within the context of Yuhi's traumatic encounter with the Korean language simultaneously as the linguistic Other and as the Other's demand. In my analysis, Yuhi's decision to leave Korea reflects a dramatic realignment of her relationship with the Other. Against On'ni's and the landlady's earnest objections to her decision, Yuhi follows through on her resolve to leave. This demonstrated power of her subjectivity is in great contrast to the way she explained her motivation to come to Korea in the first place. The essence of her motivation can be restated as: "It is because of my father that I came." Then, Yuhi was clearly the split subject dominated by the Other's desire. Had Yuhi stayed in Korea against her own will, she would have continued to be the same split subject who might say this time, "It is because of On'ni that I stayed."

More significantly, her very act of returning to Japan can be seen literally as Yuhi's "traversing of fantasy," which is a more descriptive term for the previously mentioned notion of "further separation.[35] For reasons that she keeps to herself, Yuhi is no longer compelled to stay in Korea and be dominated by her fixation to prove her father wrong. In short, she has altered her imaginary relationship with her father's object *a*, and is able to take the traumatic event of separation from her father upon herself. At the end of the novel, Yuhi thus emerges as what Lacan terms a "pure desiring" being whose desire is not focused on any particular object, and that is why her subject position can no longer be defined in relation to her father's lack or pre-existing national and cultural identities (i.e., Korean, Japanese, or Korean Japanese).

What this paper has dealt with concerning *Yuhi* is only half the story. The other half concerns the first-person narrator, the Korean woman in whose reminiscing mind we encounter Yuhi.[36] This paper, despite its

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[34] In the Lacanian formulation, a third term is that which separates and protects the child from Mother's desire. For instance, Language (i.e., the Name-of-Father) functions as a third term in its role of separating the child from Mother. Fink, pp. 55-57.

[35] Fink, pp. 61-63.

[36] My reading of *Yuhi* is, first and foremost, about the narrator's "change of heart" vis-à-vis Yuhi, who has already returned to Japan by the time the story begins. The entire textual realm reflects nothing but this first-person narrator's turbulent mind-scape that undergoes the most dramatic transformation within a mere three or four hours after Yuhi's departure. By the end of the novel, On'ni, the product of post colonial Korea with anti-Japanese and nationalistic sentiments, finally comes to understand the personal pain, dilemma, and despair specific to

limited scope, has demonstrated the effectiveness of Lacanian tools and concepts to tease out the psychological forces behind Yuhi's departure and its significance not as a simple defeat or a failure on her part, but as the emergence of Yuhi's subjectivity through her personal trauma. Thus, in our endeavor to expand the theoretical horizons of *zainichi* scholarship, Lacanian psychoanalysis should not be overlooked, merely due to its theoretical opaqueness and complexity, as a viable approach to *zainichi bungaku* at large.

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Yuhi as an individual. A Lacanian analysis can also potentially elucidate the psychological forces that bring about this full identification between the two women in the reminiscing mind of the narrator. In this connection with the identification between Yuhi and On'ni, I have carried out an in-depth textual analysis of the "psychological" hermeneutic process through which On'ni becomes a perceptive "reader" of Yuhi's indecipherable Japanese text of 448 pages. Catherine Ryu, "The Marking of Language, Culture, and Identity in Yi Yang-ji's *Yuhi*," paper presented at the annual meeting of The Asian Studies Conference Japan, Tokyo, June 22, 2003.

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