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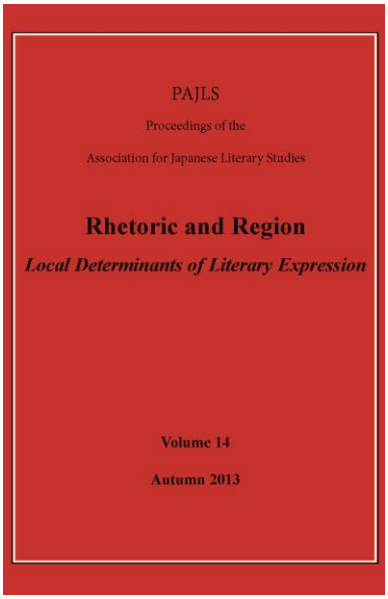

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A Failure of De-colonization: Reading the Postcolonial Subject as Double Agent in *Karasu no shi*

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The rain was lifting. Deep ruts were frozen in the Shiinjan road. The earth had hardened into the heartless shape it had been left after being churned up by trucks and the masses of military boots that passed through it. The sea was so violent that it rang all throughout the town where Shinjan road runs east to west. Clouds hung so low and heavy as to seem to press down against people's foreheads. Occasionally, however, a beam would break through a rift in the clouds and shine as bright as silver. The wind seemed to be letting up. It was a cool chilly day.

"Ahh, hello there again…"

He was waiting on the stone steps to the police station entrance hall when Chon Kijun heard this ill-boding voice approaching from a distance. The master of that voice was 'Grandpa Boils.' Kijun had run into him last night on his way to a secret meeting with members of the resistance. For a moment, Kijun wondered at himself for momentarily losing his cool at the unexpected meeting.

Kijun went from the military governor's office to the police station, but it seemed that the police chief, a distant relative of his, had not yet appeared. The clock showed it was past eleven. The police yard, enclosed by the building and a stone fence, was extremely broad. Attacked by the dry cold, the stone fence and the wooden building had been dyed a heavy, faded color. For a moment he stared straight out from his position on the stone steps at the gravel road, lined by cherry blossom trees on either side that led through the gate and into the police station. Then he shifted his gaze to the dying grass that spread out below the rows of cherry blossom trees. The saplings that had been transplanted from over the sea as the vanguard of the *Kōmin-ka* [Imperial Subjectification] policies now left the shadows of ancient trees as they thrust their gnarled limbs into the cold air. In the yard, in other words, right underneath these cherry blossom trees, there were frequently corpses left sitting there where they had been thrown out of the prison, but today it seemed they had been cleaned up and there was hardly a straw mat to be seen. Kijun, who frequently came across these corpses,

hated crossing the police yard. [1]

The above comprises the opening of *Karasu no shi* (鴉の死, The Death of a Crow), a novel by Kim Sokpom first published in 1957 in the Japanese literary journal *Bungei shuto*, and subsequently republished more than five times, both independently and collected with other works by Kim.[2] The work deals with the incident called variously the Cheju (or Jeju) Island rebellion, or the 4.3 Incident, named for the date that uprisings began on the island: April 3, 1948. The following summary of the events of 4.3, by a fellow at the Korean Policy Institute adopts a sympathetic tone only recently admissible in public discourse about the Cheju rebels:

> In 1948, with U.S. and U.N. support, South Korea held elections that established a separate state in the south, thus solidifying Korea's division. In response, 30,000 islanders in Jeju went out to protest the elections, which was abruptly ended when police opened fire and killed eight protesters. This prompted riots throughout the island and the boycott of the South Korean elections by Jeju islanders. Unfortunately, the United States overseers annulled the Jeju election results due to their lack of participation, and Syngman Rhee was elected without the votes from Jeju counted. But that wasn't all. Korean right wing nationalists labeled the entire island as Communists sympathizers. When U.S. backed leader Syngman Rhee took power following the elections, he initiated a massive "Red" cleansing campaign [which] targeted the Jeju general population. Using the South Korean military and ultra rightist paramilitary groups from the Northwest Korean Youth Association, the Rhee government employed a scorched earth strategy of repression resulting in the indiscriminate raping of women and burning of villages. Thousands of people were killed.[3]

The protagonist of *Karasu no shi*, Chon Kijun (丁基俊), was educated in English at the Tokyo YMCA during the colonial period and at the novel's open is a translator for the American occupation forces. The tension of the novel is created by his need to maintain this position while in actuality working as a double agent for the rebels. In the end he obtains the 'golden' piece of intelligence that the South Korean strongman Syngman Rhee himself will come to the island with the forces to pacify the rebellion. In the meantime

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[1] Kim Sokpom, *Karasu no shi* (The Death of a Crow) in Isogai Jirō and Kuroko Kazuo, <*Zainichi*> *Bungaku zenshū* vol 3 (The Complete anthology of *Zainichi* literature vol. 3) (Tokyo: Bensei shuppan, 2006), 6. Further citation is in-text. *zainichi* is generally shorthand for the population of postcolonial Koreans in Japan.
[2] Isogai, "*Kaidai,"* in Ibid., 383. The name of the journal *Bungei shuto* (文芸首都) means approximately 'Literary Metropolis.'
[3] Anders Riel Müller, "One Island Village's Struggle for Land, Life, and Peace," (April 19, 2011) http://www.kpolicy.org/documents/interviews-opeds/110419andersmulleroneislandvillagesstruggle.html

Kijun suffers isolation and pain from behind a 'mask' (frequently identified as such in the text) as he watches his home destroyed and loved ones killed.

The significance of such a metaphor as the transplanting of the saplings above from the then colonial metropole may seem transparent, but it bears mentioning that the Japanese rendering of 'colony' (植民地, *shokuminchi*) itself expresses the notion of (trans.) 'planting' (植, shoku, a / to plant), albeit with people (民, *min*). Specifically the cherry blossom trees (桜, *sakura*), today even more internationally recognized as a signifier of Japan, have countless associations for the Japanese reader; however, in their present position they serve to orient us chronologically, and to point out that the violence erupting across the island is the legacy of the now absent Japanese. Aside from this quiet condemnation levied by the corpses piled beneath cherry blossom trees, the Japanese are generally offstage in this novel. The *sakura*'s growth from sapling all the way to 'ancient tree' (古樹, *koju*) suggests the passage of time longer than the thirty-seven year span identified by the narrator when he describes the trees as having come with the set of policies designed to literally *change/transform* (化, ka) Koreans into *Imperial subjects* (皇民, *kōmin*). I read this as a conscious distortion of time to communicate the intensity of the colonial experience for the people of Korea in general and the subsequent intensity of the decolonizing crisis in the case of Cheju-do in particular.

In this study I analyze several aspects of Kim Sokpom's *Karasu no shi* through close readings. I have organized my discussion in terms of three overarching themes in the novel, the juxtaposition of natural imagery with human catastrophe (as already seen once above), issues pertaining to identity conflict as expressed through the main character, Chon Kijun, and finally the overt political dimensions of the novel. This novel rejects a one-dimensional political understanding of the rebellion on Cheju-do. The opposition of a continuous and unfeeling external world and the complete internality of the protagonist, who cannot express himself to others for fear of jeopardizing his mission, downplaying the social and political perspective of the novel. This novel functionally reduces postcolonial resistance in the Cheju rebellion to a non-political act; instead it is a simple series of challenges for survival and the protection of one's family.

Contextualizing the Life of Kim Sokpom and the Colonial History of Cheju-do

Kim Sokpom (Japanese: 金石範（キム・ソクポム）, Korean: 김 석범) was born in Osaka in 1925 to two natives of Cheju-do.[4] Although this technically makes Kim a 'second generation' (二世, *nisei*) Korean resident in Japan according to the standard classification, he is typically grouped with such 'first generation' (一世, *issei*) authors as Kim Tal-su and Hô Nam-gi, who came to Japan as children or young adults and began their literary careers on the

[4] Comment is offered below (footnote 13) on such orthographic complexities as the phonetic guide provided above the Japanese version of Kim's name.

occasion of Korea's liberation from colonial rule. These authors who produced works in the 1950s and 1960s have been dismissed by some quarters of academia as having little to offer in the way of literary merit; with their works characterized as empty polemics and communist propaganda. True, we can hardly expect the child of immigrant laborers to have the linguistic and intellectual dexterity of Natsume Sōseki, whose upbringing in the Chinese literary tradition and study of the Western tradition enabled him to synthesize a new Japanese aesthetic. Yet these works by Korean authors, if sometimes in disappointingly plain prose, describe events rife with raw emotion that requires little in the way of literary artifice as packaging.

Although Japan formally annexed the Korean peninsula in1910 and initiated various colonial programs the following year, large scale movement of Koreans into Japan did not begin until the 1920s.[5] In this decade Osaka dwarfed Tokyo as Japan's center of industry; and it was Korean immigration in general, but specifically the immigration from Cheju-do that contributed to the booming manufacturing sector.[6] These Koreans supplied the demand for cheap, unskilled labor that was created by WWI. Today Osaka still has the largest concentration of Koreans living in Japan; according to Government statistics, in 2009 there were 129,992 Koreans registered as foreign citizens in the prefecture, comprising over sixty percent of the total foreign aliens in residence there.[7] The Korean neighborhoods that swelled with new immigrants when Kim was born are still areas of concentrated Korean population today.

In the most long established Korean neighborhood, Ikaino, approximately half the Koreans residents trace their origins to Cheju-do.[8] In 1923 when a regularized shipping and transport route was implemented linking Osaka with Cheju-do and mainland Korea the number of Koreans in the city began to jump by nearly ten thousand each year, reaching one hundred thousand in 1930-31. The Korean population stood at only 6,290 in the entire prefecture as recently as 1920.[9] These were the demands of capitalism and they were

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[5] Today there are about 500,000 persons of Korean origin living in Japan. The number of Koreans in Japan peaked at two million during the last years of the Pacific War as more and more Koreans were pressed into military service and corvee labor. Of these approximately three fourths repatriated after the war ended, but those who remained are the progenitors of the *zainichi* (Koreans living in Japan) population today. Standard English language sources on the topic of Korean immigration are: Changsoo Lee and George Devos. *Koreans in Japan: Ethnic Conflict and Accommodation* (Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1981); Michael Weiner. *The Origins of the Korean Community in Japan, 1910-1923* (Manchester, United Kingdom: Manchester University press, 1989).

[6] Sasaki Nobuaki, "1920 nendai ni okeru zai Osaka Chōsenjin no rōdō=seikatsu katei: Higashinari, shūjū chiku wo chushin ni," in Sugihara Kaoru and Tamai Kingo eds., *Taisho, Osaka, suramu*: *mō hitotsu no Nihon kindaishi* (Tokyo: Shinhyōron, 1996) 165. (This is a chapter titled "The process of life-(as)-labor for Koreans living in Osaka in the 1920s: focusing on the heavily Korean settled area Higashinari" in a book titled "Osaka Slums of the Taisho period, another history of Japan's modern period" pg 165)

[7] OsakaPrefectural Government website, Accessed June 07, 2011, http://www.pref.osaka.jp/kanko/kokusai-data/index.html

[8] Nomura Susumu, *Korian sekai no tabi* (Tokyo: Kōdansha Purasu Arufa, 1999) 290-91. (*Journey through the Korean World*.)

[9] Sasaki, 166.

already beginning to take their toll by displacing huge populations and creating new and imaginatively exploitative labor arrangements.

However, let us return our attention to Cheju-do and the events which frame our story. In 1945, Koreans who had been forcibly deployed overseas to support the Imperial war machine began returning en masse to Cheju-do. Suddenly the 150,000 people on the island at war's end had doubled to 300,000, and, without the foodstuffs to sustain such a large population, especially in the scarcity of the immediate postwar period, many frustrated Cheju-do inhabitants returned to Japan (Osaka in particular) in violation of postwar travel restrictions.[10] Perhaps because of its position on the geographic margin, Cheju-do was late in being placed under the control of a military occupation government, and before its arrival the communists who had been fighting against the Japanese when war ended in August 1945 gained de facto military power. Although these communists coexisted peaceably with the new occupation government for some time, the elections of 1948, and the above mentioned nullification of Cheju votes sparked clashes between citizens and police.[11]

What happened next, as with every time a great power does great violence, is forever obscured in the fog of history. For example, that a great many people died is certain, but might they have been as few as 15,000 or were they as many as 60,000; and who were they? That some partisans fought a prolonged guerrilla war on Cheju-do too is certain, but as we will see below, Kim Sokpom is disinclined to describe these as communist extremists, and casts them as defenders of their native land (of these defenders Chon Kijun is the supreme self-sacrificing hero). As I discuss Kim Sokpom's depiction of the 4.3 incident, let us remember that so often the truth lies somewhere in the middle, but that unless we consider the perspective of those on Cheju-do themselves, we have only the official story to orient ourselves by. Kim Sokpom was not on Cheju-do when the incident occurred, but in addition to his connection to the island through family and his numerous visits (he eventually declared that Cheju-do, not the Osaka of his birth, was his true home), thousands of refugees fled to Osaka so there is reason to believe that Kim Sokpom had a view of the incident which was at least as clear, if not much more so, than the one we can glean through the study of the extremely sparse historical record.

Deconstructing the natural imagery of *Karasu no shi*

[10] Nomura, 300.

[11] There is an extreme paucity of scholarly work on the sequence of events leading to the large scale violence on Cheju-do, much of that which does exist being available in Korean only. Further the South Korean government actively suppressed information about the incident until extremely recently. Two recent projects which present contrasting approaches to the issue are Kyengho Son, "The 4.3 Incident: Background, Development, and Pacification, 1945 - 1949 " (PhD Diss., The Ohio State University, 2008) and Jieun Chang, "National Narrative, Traumatic Memory and Testimony: Reading Traces of the Cheju April Third Incident, South Korea, 1948" (PhD Diss., New York University, 2009).

In the opening of the *Karasu no shi* the twisted and frozen form of the earth suggests the function of the natural imagery in this novel. The landscape has been altered by warfare, changed to the "heartless shape it had been left in after being churned up by trucks and masses of military boots," and solidified. The land becomes a mirror that reflects the atrocities committed on the island. Below I posit that in landscape invocations throughout the novel, as well as in the titular metaphor of the crow, natural imagery constitutes a marked externality, the immovable standard against which human actions are insignificant and are therefore judged. This is a purposeful juxtaposition with Chon Kijun's isolation and near complete internality as I discuss in the next section.

The reader is alerted by the title to the salience of the image of the crow, which appears in three scenes, the last of which gives name to the novel. Its first appearance is outside a hospital. Kijun sees the crow when he exits the building:

> From the small hill where the chalky prefectural hospital building stood, you could see the ocean. The sky was sapphire blue. But the gloomy black sea continuously flashed white fangs as it swept in and out. "A crow was perched on the barren, leafless branch of a zelkova tree in the hospital yard. Calmly looking down at the dark entrance to the hospital, the crow nodded its head to the exiting Kijun as if in a greeting."Gulls flew over the low-walled town. The Salla peaks sent pure black cliffs plummeting steeply into the ocean. From outcroppings in the rock hung lamps like those of an old Western castle; their white was the same as the gulls. Below, the winter sea raged. (22)

The number of oppositions of light and dark in this passage is noteworthy. Positing the sea as a dark image and the rotting zelkova tree as a light image there is an almost exact alternation chartable as follows: The ocean ⇒ chalky white building ⇒ the dark sea ⇒ the white crests of waves ⇒ the dark crow ⇒ the rotting tree (dead in winter, and light in contrast with the crow) ⇒ the dark hospital entrance ⇒ white gulls ⇒ black cliffs ⇒ white lamps ⇒ back around to the winter sea. The opposition of these colors in nature reflects the opposition of two Kijuns; one who can calmly joke about the destruction of the 'reds' and one beneath the surface whose heart is torn at the destruction of his homeland.

Further, the novel's setting in the dead of winter (dark) makes an implicit juxtaposition with the spring (light) when the uprisings began. The beginning of the islanders' attempt to throw off colonial power is associated with the season of health and life. I argue below that the novel attempts to break with the notion of a bifurcated political reality; therefore, in this early scene I also suggest reading the appearance of closely knit oppositions of light and dark as signifiers of the pathologically dichotomous discourse heartlessly used to classify the Cheju people as communists and thereby rationalize their extermination.

The second appearance of a crow occurs at the village of Kijun's ex-lover, Jan Yansuni. Kijun discovers all the homes there abandoned, and in his panic sees a hallucination of Yansuni wearing a *chima* (Korean traditional skirt) and high heels. Thinking it odd to find a woman in such dress in this rural area, he nonetheless believes she is real, and Kijun frantically searches for her in the abandoned village, but discovers only a dead crow lying at the foot of a tree as though it had been 'battered' out of the sky (27).

Finally the crow appears in the concluding scene of the novel. After Chon Kijun has accomplished his mission of obtaining the high level intelligence detailing the strength and composition of the force coming to suppress the rebels, he exits the meeting, hears a crow cry overhead, and sees corpses freshly piled under the cherry blossom trees. We are given a hint that the conclusion of the novel will use this setting as a framing device by the aged messenger who deferentially summons Kijun to the meeting; the narration informs us the he was one of the men who (as a servant) had originally planted the *sakura* saplings in the police station yard all those years ago. Among the corpses Kijun sees a young woman lying with her legs spread ignominiously and her body twisted; she looked as though she might have been killed only moments ago. This nameless woman takes the place of Yansuni, who by this point in the story has been captured and executed before Kijun's very eyes. Suddenly he loses the victorious sense of self-assurance and superiority he had experienced only moments earlier.

In the text it is the cry of the crow that separates two Kijuns from one another. In the following sequence the external/natural world (crow) sets off an *internal* crisis. In the instant before he hears it, he leaves the meeting "with the feeling of one who has stepped fresh from a bath," feels a sense of "pity" for the lesser officials at the meeting who have no idea that he is going to subvert them, "felt like telling a joke," and "promised to buy the chief a drink later" (49-51). The crow directs his eyes to the bodies and those feelings are instantly replaced by a sense of overwhelming loss. Seeing the crow descending on the body of the young woman, Kijun instinctively pulls out his gun and kills it with a single shot. It is the lone instance in the novel in which Kijun fails to act with premeditation and caution. Never in all his interactions with curious locals, heartless enemy commanders, and even loved ones being put to death did Kijun ever let his mask slip in the course of the story. In other words he passes every test of his assumed identity, but at this challenge, by nature, he acts on impulse.

Since the novel has stressed that the slightest flaw in his performance could result in catastrophe, we should not be surprised that Kijun's singular lapse invites an immediate danger. Drawn by the sound of the gunshot, Security Director Kim emerges and compliments Kijun on his excellent marksmanship. Kijun returns to his senses long enough to realize his mistake and affect a natural posture, but Kim's empty prattle about crows (and total disregard for the human lying dead beneath) sends the susceptible Kijun into a rage. He hears the echo of three shots, sees the flash of light, and smells the gunpowder as

though it were someone else who had fired; however, when it becomes clear what he has done, Kijun has somehow deflected the violence meant for this heartless oppressor, sending the bullets instead into the breast of the dead woman.

Before moving on to analyze the depiction of Kijun's internal world, I would like to underscore the significance of the presence of natural imagery by briefly enumerating some of the scenes in which particularly striking images occur: pure white snow falls during Yansuni's execution, Kijun and Jan Ryusok meet secretly in a cave deep in the wilderness of the island, Kijun gazes out at the dazzling ocean as he hits the accelerator (in his determination to find Yansuni), and one section describes the volcanic rocks scattered about the island, a fence made of them that goes around nearly the entire island, and how Jan Ryusok trained himself to jump over it carrying ever more weight.

The Internality and Identity of Chon Kijun

> The examples to be offered indeed suggest that the postcolony is made up not of one "public space" but of several, each having its own logic yet liable to be entangled with other logics when operating in certain contexts; hence, the postcolonial subject has to learn to bargain in this conceptual marketplace. Further, subjects in the postcolony also have to have marked ability to manage not just a single identity, but several—flexible enough to negotiate as and when necessary.[12]

Of course, the protagonist Chon Kijun is not the average postcolonial subject, but I open with these words of Mbembe's essay because Kijun takes the common postcolonial subject's state of shifting identities to an extreme. In the first chapter, Kijun encounters the 'Grandpa Boils' mentioned in the opening (so called because he once lived by begging and sucking the pus from swellings as a healing practice), who is toting about the head of an executed fighter from the rebel forces. "Kijun felt a rush of anger. In his rage he nearly cried out. But no, he just had that feeling and went calmly along. Suppressing his anger, or rather, the killing of all his normal impulses was his practice; it was the practice he had developed in order to be able to stand this work; it was, at least, his duty" (10). In order to make sure none of the gathered onlookers suspect his secret allegiance, Kijun (clad in his American khaki uniform) makes a speech loudly offering a reward for anyone who can identify the 'red.'[13] As it builds up to the crisis in the last scene, the text emphasizes each incident in which Kijun must carefully control his impulses and movements. For example, while nervously waiting to rendezvous with Jan Ryusok, "Kijun was walking with his

[12] Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony (Studies on the History of Society and Culture)* (University of California Press, 2001), Kindle edition, 104.

[13] In the above passage, as in another with the word 'red,' the Chinese character 赤 appears with the phonetic gloss パルゲンイ (*parugen'i*) which distantly approximates the Korean word for the color red and a general noun 'ones' *bbal-gan-i* hence 'the reds'.

hands nonchalantly stuck in his pockets. Even though he felt, of course, eyes concentrating on the back of this head, he made no unnecessary movement to turning his neck to look around" (14). When he is on the street and smiles, he smiles "as an American translator" (9).

In his most difficult act, Kijun denies first her father and then Yansuni herself. Faced with the desperate pleas of the elder Jans captured and awaiting execution at the T concentration camp (both the father and mother of Ryusok and Yansuni, as well as Yansuni herself, being unaware of his secret double-life), Kijun disavows these doomed loved ones in their very presence by thrice saying the words, "How can you live in Cheju at all if you worry over every acquaintance from long ago?" (32-33) The narration reveals that Kijun's inner world is crumbling as he says these words, but he succeeds in deceiving his fellow members of the military forces into believing that the unexpected appearance of old friends (now caught on the wrong side of history) was merely 'bothersome.'

After the outbreak of violence, "The eyes directed at Kijun had clearly changed to the eyes one directs at an enemy. But by that time, Kijun had already been entrusted through Ryusok with a top secret mission from the organization. So began the anguish caused by the break in his internal world and the external world. He turned himself into a loyal servant of the American forces, and turned away the lamenting Yansuni" (34). The words 'internal world' (内界, '*nai*, inside' + '*kai*, world') and external world (外界, '*gai*, outside' + '*kai*, world') express an opposition which was newly developed in the modern period and draws attention to the opposition of interiority and exteriority in the novel as a whole.

I argue that exteriority is presented primarily through nature images in *Karasu no shi*. In *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, Karatani Kojin uses the very same term for 'external world' (*gaikai*) in summarizing Dutch psychiatrist Jan Hendrik Van den Berg's analysis of the relationship between landscape and interiority in the Mona Lisa: "Van den Berg has accurately analyzed the process whereby an alienation from the external world—or what we might call an extreme interiorization—led to the discovery of landscape."[14] If such a process is at work in Chon Kijun, we might characterize it as the discovery of natural landscape as the horizon of honest unguarded human interaction (the *social* landscape) narrows and disappears. I will return to the above discussion in my conclusion, but as we proceed to analyze the political depiction of events in *Karasu no shi*, it will help to bear in mind that the author presents the following in a work that is highly focused on the opposition of the protagonist's internal life and a seemingly irreconcilably removed externality.

A Political Reading

> Kijun suddenly felt a new sense of urgency about his rendezvous scheduled for several days later with Jan Ryusok. There was the problem of

[14] Karatani Kojin, *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature* (London: Duke University Press, 1993) 28-29.

> [liberating] the concentration camp and more importantly if there was something he could do about the problem of Kijun's transfer then they needed to meet tomorrow, or even tonight. Although he had starting thinking this yesterday he was also beset by a nagging guilty feeling that he had, at some point, for some reason, started avoiding Ryusok. It was now more than half a year since the spring of 1948, April third to be exact, when the people of Cheju-do took up arms and occupied the towering Mt Halla (1950 meters) at the center of the island. And in that half year Kijun had met at U hill almost exclusively with Ryusok, but as the fighting got more violent it was more often the case that he could not make contact. It was this close friend, Jan Ryusok, who was also the head of the first division of partisans (operating out of the central division of the north half of the island), that comprised Chon Kijun's only tie to Mt. Halla. Even if there were underground organizations in the various towns and villages, these had no connection with Kijun whatsoever. Ryusok was like the narrow mouth of a clear bottle: through it Kijun was just barely able to feel the outside air. And if he weren't able to do so, then despite his mission, he was nothing more than an instrument in the empty space of a corked bottle. (23-4)

The new sense of urgency Kijun experiences is induced by the sight of villagers being forced to build a barricade in preparation for further sieges. This passage offers nothing in the way of justification for the armed insurrection that began six months earlier (the first time it is mentioned in the text). Kim Sokpom counters the attempt by the cultural dominant to reduce the violence on Cheju-do to a binary clash of 'rightful' power (democratic, voter-endorsed, South Korea) and ideological extremists (communist rebels) by eliding the catalytic events until later in the story, when any political interest Kijun might have is overshadowed by his internal suffering and the external scenes of brutality witnessed in the name of eliminating the rebels. A similar challenge to the orthodox interpretation of 'communist extremist revolt' comes in images such as the following. This is the scene that greets Kijun when he comes to see Yansuni on the pretense of telling her about orders he has received to transfer to the mainland:

> Like a human body retaining its warmth after death, if this village had died, it had been only a short while ago. Kijun only realized it later, but the people of this village had gone up to the mountain before morning's light. Having produced many of the partisans ensconced on the mountain, even the village children sensed that by early the next evening they would be burned out by government troops. On the very day the two of them had met, the arrest of Ryusok's family, in other words Yansuni and their parents, had advanced the timetable for this. In the early dawn, under the leadership of the partisan

> fighters born there, the people of the village abandoned their houses and took their livestock with them up the precipitous mountain. Including the children, they all began the hard life of partisans. (26)

Spivak identifies the cultural dominant's constant management of the knowledge of its origins as "the most encompassing crisis of narrative today—the problem of producing plausible stories so business can go on as usual."[15] The events on Cheju-do comprise the beginning of the Korean War, and the hence the 'founding violence' of the new order of a communist North and democratic South, both under the military dictatorships of strongmen who served as puppets for Moscow and Washington respectively. Kim Sokpom's work leads the reader to consider that participation in the rebellion was forced on many Cheju islanders, rather than voluntarily adopted by them, and their identification as political extremists is more a post hoc rationalization for the violence that occurred there than a true reflection of hardened ideological beliefs leading the populace to take up arms.. Kim's choice of words to describe the rebels on Mt. Halla is doubtless of significance; the word 'partisan' is rendered in a Japanese approximation of its English pronunciation パルチサン (*paruchisan*). This is not a word with much visibility in modern Japanese discourse, and most accounts would probably instead describe the fighters with one of many Sino-Japanese compounds such as 反逆者 *hangyakusha* (rebels) or 抵抗者 *teikōsha* (resisters), rather than the borrowing of this English word. I read its significance as twofold; first, the somewhat disruptive appearance of the unfamiliar English word signifies a break with the past in that foreign words are traditionally adopted when no native word can fill a particular lexical gap. Second, but relatedly, such binary oppositions of power as signified in the terminology of the pre-colonial China-centered tributary state system are not valid in the postwar context.

These fighters are not in the simple position of merely opposing the dominant as rebels (as they were in the actual colonial era), nor yet are they unmotivated agents. The word 'partisan' does imply a ferocious political allegiance, but unlike 'rebel' or 'resistor' the word 'partisan' places the Cheju fighters on an equal epistemological footing with the forces trying to destroy them, which are themselves factionalized organizations of the right.

> Saying that the chaos on the island had gotten too far out-of-hand for the police chief, a Cheju native, to handle, a former commander under the Japanese who hailed from the *northwest* was coming from Pusan to take the post. ('Northwest' pointed geographically to the region of Pyonyang, but had become a placeholder in Korean for 'The Northwest Youth Association.'[16] They were members of the old ruling class who opposed the

[15] Gayatri Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Towards a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999) 340.
[16] Rendered in Japanese and Korean as 西北青年会 and 서북청년회 respectively

> founding of the new political system in North Korea and coming South had formed the definitive anti-communist organization, giving it that name. The Northwest Youth Association was the most loyal appendage possessed by Syngman Rhee and gave him all the massive power he could desire. Not only that, but they labeled 'reds' right and left. This group engaged in modern terrorism, labeled anyone they wished a "commie" or a "red." The term 'northwest, [*sô-buk*],' was born as a name for this object of the people's fears.) (21)

Kijun joins the American Occupation forces in the first heady days of liberation from Japan to satisfy their need for native Cheju translators. Like other descriptions of this period by Korean authors, the liberation is described as a singularly joyful time full of potential. Particularly heartrending is the firm belief of first generation authors that any division of North and South Korea is completely artificial and unsustainable; the possibility that the situation of a divided Korea should continue a half century from the time of their writings seems inconceivable to them. In this early occupation period, Chon Kijun and his lover Jan Yansuni, and her brother and Kijun's close friend (later the partisan leader) Jan Ryusok all moved together from their village to the city; the two Jans having some non-specified but presumably productive employment. Unfortunately the potential for the successful decolonization that Kijun was imagining when he joined the American forces is short lived.

> He realized before long that the interests of the Korean people and the American military policies were not in line, and he saw the proof of it before his very eyes in the antagonism between the islanders and the American occupation government of Cheju-do. The American forces hid in the background while pushing to the fore their surrogates, the police force and rightwing paramilitary groups (such as 'The Northwest Youth Association' and 'The Great Youth Union 大同青年団,') or local terrorist organizations such as 'The Mt Halla Group, 漢拏団.' Like most youth on the island Jan Ryusok joined the rebels on Mt Halla and Yansuni followed him. Chon Kijun had been preparing to quit his translation work and go join them but then… The island was sent into full scale revolt against the Americans by the massacre of young men [protesting the American regime] at the 1947 ceremony commemorating the anniversary of the March First anti-Japanese movement. (34)

The March First protests against Japanese colonization constitute an important event in the memory of the Korean history of resistance; so much so that in the passage

above a more literal translation of the last sentence would be 'the youth massacre incident at the anniversary of *3.1*.' I have previously described the protests:

> After nine years of colonial rule, nationalist sentiment came to a head. On the first of March in 1919, religious leaders accompanied by thousands of nonviolent protestors, publicly read and signed a Declaration of Independence in Seoul's Pagoda Park. The demonstrations continued across the entire peninsula for months with approximately two million total participants. The Japanese response was a brutal show of force, making almost fifty thousand arrests, torturing the leaders of the independence rallies, and killing 7,509 Koreans.[17]

Six men were killed in the preliminary scrape of March 1, 1947, which eventually led to the full scale revolt on April 3, 1948 in a violent clash between the colonial power and angry resistors. They had come to protest at the ceremony to demonstrate what was fairly obvious to Koreans, completely oblivious to the Americans, and off the radar of the reconstruction minded Japanese: that the American military occupation had simply replaced the Japanese as the new colonial dominant. The word 'massacre' 虐殺 in the passage above (34) may seem excessive in reference to the loss of six lives, especially in comparison with the violence that would shower down on the island later; however, we would be wise to draw a parallel to the well-known 'massacre' associated with the founding violence of America in which the number shot down by redcoats was only five. Today we simultaneously recognize and celebrate the misconstruing of the Boston Massacre for helping a people under the yolk of colonial power to decide to break free. If Kim's description of 4.3 as a massacre is admittedly propagandistic, one must also recognize that there is nothing more innately threatening and propagandistic than the dominant's much more pervasive efforts to shape discourse.

Conclusion

> Dien Bien Phu is no longer strictly speaking a Vietnamese victory. From July 1954 onward the colonial peoples have been asking themselves: "What must we do to achieve a Dien Bien Phu? How should we go about it?" A Dien Bien Phu was now within reach of every colonized subject.[18]

[17] Robert Del Greco, *Kim Tal-su and Early Zainichi Fiction*, Master's Thesis, The University of Kansas. The data quoted here comes from Inokuchi Hiromitsu, "Korean Ethnic Schools: 1945-52," in Sonia Ryang, *Koreans in Japan: Critical Voices from the Margin*. (London: Routledge, 2000) 141.
[18] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, (New York: Grove Press, 1961) Kindle Edition. Pg 31

Dien Bien Phu fell squarely between the events of 4.3 and Kim Sokbom's writing *Karasu no shi*. Though certainly the Cheju rebellion was the opposite in the sense that it was ruthlessly suppressed (but for a few guerrillas who managed to hold on for nine years before surrendering), the desire of the colonized subject for such a victory over the dominant suggests Kim's motivation for writing the novel. This desire is also apparent in the novel's popularity, demonstrated by its subsequent republication in 1969, 1971, 1973, 1985, 1999, and 2006. We might consider that *Karasu no shi* was intended to valorize those holdouts who kept their position on Mt. Halla even after the unsatisfying conclusion of the Korean War. This is consistent with Fanon's argument concerning the nature of heroism:

> The outlaw, for example, who holds the countryside for days against the police, hot on his trail, or who succumbs after killing four or five police officers in single-handed combat or who commits suicide rather than "give up" his accomplices, all constitute for the people role models, action schemas, and "heroes." And there is no point, obviously, in saying that such a hero is a thief, a thug, or a degenerate. If the act for which this man is prosecuted by the colonial authorities is an act exclusively directed against a colonial individual or colonial asset, then the demarcation line is clear and manifest. The process of identification is automatic.[19]

Although over ninety percent of *zainichi* Koreans had originally migrated from Cheju and other parts of South Korea, when the artificial division of North and South at the thirty-eighth parallel was given ideological meaning in terms of socialism and capitalism, the first two decades after the Pacific War witnessed *zainichi* Koreans disproportionately aligning themselves with the North. After being systematically exploited by the Japanese in mines, fields, factories, and even on the battlefield, it is not surprising that a population of laborers and their children perceived the capitalist economic order as dangerous to their existence. For that period, the line may have been as clear and manifest as Fanon suggests, but as information about the true state of affairs in North Korea became available, and the propaganda of its economic successes less believable, Koreans in Japan lost the benchmark by which they were able to make the automatic identifications and judgment of 'us' versus the dominant.

In this study I began with the goal of demonstrating that that Kim Sokpom's *Karasu no shi* is in fact an object worthy of study. In part I have set out to demonstrate than any characterization of the novel as a simple polemic is grossly inaccurate. In fact, my reading of *Karasu no shi* is one in which the author has purposefully created and highlighted binary oppositions in order to demonstrate their fallacy. Kijun's constant effort at maintaining a firm division of outer world and inner world is doomed to failure because it is an unnatural state. The orthodox depiction of Cheju rebels as communists is shattered by the children

[19] Fanon, 30.

forced to take up the harsh life of partisans in anticipation of being burned out of their home.

Obviously this study remains incomplete as an evaluation of Kim's novel in relation to the (often unclear) historical record. Even within my own stated parameters of analysis through close reading, I have failed to discuss numerous salient passages, but I believe the organization above reflects the dominant themes of *Karasu no shi*. The reader of this work readily notes the central placement of natural images throughout, and their tendency to insert themselves prominently into the scene, as with the cry of the crow that sets off the final crisis. Opposite these images are detailed explorations of the isolated Chon Kijun's careful maintenance of his double identity. Only after this thorough juxtaposition is posed do the passages describing the political aspect of the 4.3 uprising enter the text.

Today Cheju-do, like Okinawa, is known best as an island resort. The blood shed there at the moment when the potential was lost for a successful decolonization was silently painted over for years in the name of maintaining the East<->West (manifested in Korea as North<->South) political order; but that blood was never washed away from Cheju beaches, and the last ten years have witnessed a renewed academic interest in reconstructing the history of Cheju-do. As scholars proceed on this not-so distantly removed investigation of history, they would do well to note *Karasu no shi* and Kim Sokpom's early challenge to the depiction of rebellious communists on Cheju-do.

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