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## IDEAS OF NEW KOREAN POETRY IN THE 20TH CENTURY: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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### ABSTRACT

This article explores the ideas and themes that emerged in new Korean poetry during the 20th century. Drawing from a comparative analysis of significant works and poets, it sheds light on the evolving landscape of Korean poetry and its response to social, political, and cultural changes. The study traces the trajectory of Korean poetry from early 20th-century modernism to later avant-garde movements, highlighting key poetic concepts and techniques employed by influential poets. By examining the works of major figures such as Yi Sang, Kim Sowol, and Ko Un, the article seeks to identify the central ideas that shaped the development of Korean poetry in the 20th century. Additionally, it delves into the influence of Korean history, national identity, and the Korean War on poetic expression, as well as the impact of Western literary movements on Korean poets. By providing a comprehensive overview of the ideas and themes explored in new Korean poetry, this article contributes to a deeper understanding of the rich cultural and literary heritage of Korea and its significance in the global context.

### KEYWORDS

Leading themes, ideas, Korean poetry, twentieth century, Korean youth, study, faculties of literature, Western European literature, English literature, Russian literature.

## INTRODUCTION

Historically, the Korean people have skilled many acts of invasion and colonialism. In the 19th century, Korea became a colony of Japan. In the second half of the XIX century, the so-called “backward state” in the West began to be conquered by force. The first erroneous treaty was made with Japan in 1876, followed by the United States (1882), England (1883), Russia (1884), France (1886), and other similar states [11.118]. These agreements turned into a battle to colonize Korea, and as a result, Japan won.

## THE MAIN FINDINGS AND RESULTS

The history of the Korean people under Japanese rule was in a sad state. Japan’s victory in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905 helped to conclude a “sponsorship agreement” to protect Korea from danger, when in fact the goal was to assert its dominance in Korea. In August 1910, Japan colonized Korea. Korea became part of the Japanese Empire, becoming a governor-general.

The 40-year-old Japanese colony has brought unparalleled grief and sorrow to the Korean people. In some sources, Japan’s dominance of the literary world in the first decade is referred to as “military rule” [12.132]. The Korean people were deprived of even the most basic economic rights.

The first half of the XX century was a turning point for Korea: the state shifted from a feudal system to a capitalist system, the centuries-old Confucian norms were broken, and the most horrific event was the loss of the state’s independence.

It is known from history that in 1910, Korea was annexed by Japan. This has had an impact not only on the growth of the Korean economy, but also on the rapid development of Korean literature. Many Korean youth went to Japan to study. Here they studied in the faculties of literature, and were able to get acquainted with Western European, English, and Russian literature. Western literature had a significant influence on the formation of modern Korean literature.

It should be borne in mind that the adoption of new methods by Korean literature has led to very difficult socio-political situations. In order to deprive the Korean people of their national identity, the Japanese government severely repressed not only statesmen but also writers and poets, restricting their free creativity.

Uzbek scientist O. Sharafiddinov’s views on the environment of Uzbekistan in the 1930s: “The constant spiritual and physical terror in literature was primarily aimed at breaking the will of writers, intellectuals,



bending it, uprooting human pride in it” [13.4] this period is similar to the environment in Korea.

The publication of uncensored works of art was not allowed. But against this colonial slavery, Korean poets found the courage to sing the ideas of national liberation and a free homeland. Literature has become a weapon of struggle on the path of national awakening and national revival.

In particular, Kim Sovol, whose poems deserve a place among the masterpieces of world literature, writes in his poem “Swallow”:

Even the Swallow  
Flying in the sky,  
Has a house.  
If it leaves once, it will return one.  
Because it has a shelter.

Why don't I burn, my pain is so severe,  
Because I don't have a home, my head hurts!

Although the efforts for independence on March 1, 1919 were unsuccessful, to a certain extent this period determined the direction of the development of national literature. Fearing the rise of their own people rather than colonial oppression, the Korean bourgeoisie began to cooperate with the Japanese government. “The era of cultural management” [14.25]

was announced. Those who “sat” at the top of power, the Japanese and Korean peoples are inextricably linked, their history is the same, so everyone began to talk more often about equal rights. During this period, the Japanese Prime Minister said, “the gap between Korea and Japan in the fields of education, manufacturing and civil services will be sharply closed. On top of that, the government will in time establish a Japanese administrative system in Korea if the situation requires it” [15.56], announced.

In response, the poet Yu Ji Hwan writes about the tragedy of his country in his poem “In the Latitudes”:

Yes, a regret, a sorrow,  
There is no place to sob.  
I quietly go upstairs and open the door.  
But even from a restless sky,  
I can't find a place to go.

The train station is two hundred miles from here.  
These are the widths of despair...

The most famous poet of this period, Han Yong Un, wrote in his poem “Obedience” that the people freed from the feudal system suffered a second blow - the Japanese invasion:

Let people say that I love freedom,

I don't love freedom, I love obedience.

The reason is that I don't know what freedom is,

There is a reason to serve you faithfully.

Thank you for serving me,

Such a service is quite sweet,

Both from freedom and liberty.

The young writers who entered the world of literature in the 1920s were mostly journalists. They were all working in connection with publishing houses: someone was the owner of the publishing department, someone was the editor or the author. During this period, a series of literary magazines began to be established in Korea. Creative groups were formed around these magazines. These groups were supporters of a certain lineage that had formed in the West in the last five years.

All members of the creative team were actively involved in the translation, especially many works from English and French. A large part of European literature entered the countries of the East on its own, that is, in the original, and this process was carried out by individual writers [16.320]. In the process of formation for modern Korean and Japanese literature of the XIX-XX centuries, it was necessary for every writer and poet to have a good knowledge of Western literature, at least one folk literature.

Poet Li Chin Won in his poem "Song of Loneliness" talks about the fact that the country remained in a feudal system for many years, and that the country "separated" from the world is "open" to all today:

Wake up now, oh wake up!

We have been in ignorance for four centuries.

The countries have already united,

The world has always been a common home.

In the early XX century, there was a mixed state of influx from the West, which Korean researchers called the period of "riots".

In the 1920s, Korean writers set themselves new tasks, i.e., they reinterpreted any western work read by them in the original. The translations made became, first and foremost, the writers' first creative tool. As a result, literary trends became more interdependent, adapting not only to national traditions but also to socio-political situations.

It is known that in 1910, a military-administrative regime was established in Korea. Korean workers were oppressed by the colonialists on the one hand, by local officials on the other, and by the emerging national bourgeoisie. Against this three-pronged oppression, the poet Lee San Hwa wrote in his "Will Spring Come to the Colonial Lands?" he says screaming in his poem:

Will spring come to the occupied fields?

Now these lands are foreign to us...

Maybe we lost a beautiful spring along with the field?

The fate of the people who lived under severe pressure during the Japanese annexation was tragic, the fate was bitter, even for the creators. But among the poets there were, of course, poets inspired by the beautiful nature of their homeland, the immaculate mornings, the beautiful corners. In particular, the poet Kim Sovol, whose poems have a worthy place among the masterpieces of world literature, points out in the poem “Flowers” that the change of seasons of nature indicates the continuation of life:

On the mountain - the flowers open,

Many flowers open.

Flowers open.

Is it autumn or summer, the first spring,

The flowers will open anyway.

In mountain,

In mountain

The flowers bloomed,

So, alone, opens alone.

In general, the poet Kim Sovol is inspired by everything in nature. His poems mention grasses that no one pays attention to, and small flowers that open in the field.

It is well known that the October Revolution and its aftermath, the first socialist experiment in Russia in the world, inspired the workers of the West and the East, as well as the advanced intelligentsia. The socialist ideology influenced the consciousness of the great imperial states, even the colonial state Korea, the intelligentsia, even the common people. March 1, 1919, in Korea, in the wake of the October coup in Russia. The movement was defeated. This is what the poet Pak Yong Xi writes about:

In the bosom of a dream full of hopes,

Apparently a light, bright surroundings.

Then suddenly the wish comes true,

Only an old, dilapidated hut stands...

According to some Korean researchers, the history of modern Korean literature dates back to the October Revolution in Russia and the March 1, 1919, actions of the Korean people against the Japanese occupation of Korea.

Mahkam Mahmud’s article “The Idea of National Revival in Poetry” compares the Palestinian national liberation movement to the environment in Uzbekistan. The same comparison applies to the period of Japanese colonization in Korea in the first half of the twentieth century. The fate of the peoples of Palestine, Uzbekistan and Korea is similar. During the Soviet era, Armenians, Georgians, Jews, and



Russians lived in Uzbekistan in high positions and were wealthy, while locals worked as laborers in the fields and workshops as cheap labor, or as guards, street sweepers, and market bearers [17.231]. In Korea, too, all ranks were held by Japanese officials, local men between the ages of 16 and 45 were drafted into the army, 9-year-old boys worked in chemical plants, and their daughters served in the Japanese army. Poet Lee San Hwa expresses his hatred in his poem “Disgusting Season”:

Long, helpless thoughts

Can only be overcome in sleep

The example of a widowed man is the wind that blows,

If the tim-vertical head of the crop.

Longing in the heart, has autumn come.

Heart ready to shoot,

It has no power to leave pain.

Look at the sky: where the rare clouds are going?

Look at the earth: young Choson has lost his way [Chosun is an ancient Korean state].

The frustration and mistrust that engulfed the Korean intelligentsia as a result of the suppression of the First March movement in the country led to the emergence of various decadent currents in the literature. Since the early 1920s, a number of literary magazines have

been published in Korea, such as “Dawn Light”, “The Beginning of the Age”, “Student World”, “Oriental Light”, “Ruins, Rose Village”, “Golden Star”, and “Creation”. A writers’ association was also formed around each literary magazine. These associations declared themselves supporters of this or that literary line. In the 1920s, the number of such routes was not small. Symbolists, romantics, imaginists, aesthetes, modernists, impressionists, surrealists, naturalists - all of them were representatives of the new literary world.

In the first half of the 1920s, the popularity of the magazines “Creation”, “Ruins” and “White Wave” in literary circles was high.

In January 1922, Pak Chon Hwa, Li San Hwa, Cho Myeong-hee, Na Dohian, Hyun Jingtonkabishoir, and a group of writers founded a literary magazine called Phaskulo (the initials of the poets and writers who founded the group were written in Latin script). With the establishment of this magazine, romanticism spread widely in Korean literature [18.136].

Romantic poets portrayed imaginary heroes in their works, which were full of passions typical of European culture. The attitude and love for woman, the world of nature, the harmony with the heart of the poet were the main themes of romanticism.

The romantic writers and poets “Phaskulo” tried to awaken in the heart of the reader the hope for a better

life, the desire for beauty, in harmony with the other world, beauty, which they create. They resisted reality and adversity.

Let the east flow from the sea of floods,

And let the wind blow these lands,

Dust from his face to the sky,

From the dust of my heart,

Let the pain take its toll.

(Li San Hwa “Waiting for the Storm”)

It should be noted that the creators of “Phaskulo” also worked as translators. Thanks to the active efforts of the group’s representatives, Korean readers have enjoyed the world’s romantic poetry. They managed to acquaint Korean readers with the works of famous romantic poets Byron, Shelley, Goethe, Tagore.

In this way, new modern Korean literature was formed and renewed day by day.

Despite the deteriorating socio-political environment in the country, they remained committed to the motto that “poetry should not pursue educational, political goals”. For this reason, the group of poets and writers did not favor the enlightenment movement that emerged in the country in 1920, nor the proletarian literature that was active in the 1930s.

After the defeat of the First March movement in Korea, the prevailing mood of despair, anxiety and insecurity in society led to a tiredness of life, a depression that led to a world of fantasy or death, a romanticism of the soul [19.43].

It was alien to the Korean romantic poet to sing of the unique hero, character, activity, and passions that are so common in European culture. The poems they created were filled with the heartache of man, the feeling of loneliness, the despair associated with the contradiction of the heroic spiritual aspirations to the existing reality, the feeling of leaving a life full of sorrow. It was necessary to find new forms of thinking and literary ways to express in words the inner experiences, heartaches, secrets of the romantic hero. In this case, the images of death, the moon, the sea and others played a special role. For the poets, death was the most acceptable way to escape and escape from a life full of disappointments, sorrows [20.134].

In particular, the protagonist of Kim Yun Sik’s poem “Clear Water Well” thinks that the well is the only way out, a refuge:

Here, in underground,

The sharpened heart lives.

I realized that my heart was there.

It is the sky that stands only in the distance,

The stars are moors

Fire into a well of clear water

Star moors.

But they were influenced by national traditions and manifested with some peculiarities. Moreover, Korean romanticism was wonderfully harmonized with other literary trends because of the some eclecticism that existed in the literature, i.e., the arbitrary confusion of different views, theories.

The depiction of wandering the world in search of a strange world, harmony and beauty was characteristic of the writers of “White Wave”. Liu Chunson wrote in one of his essays:

“Oh, the life of a wanderer

I am infinitely more beautiful than it,

I realized infinite suffering, infinite love!” [21.28].

The third issue of the magazine featured a prose poem by Cho Myeong:

“I set off in search of incomparable flowers in beauty. But not knowing where to look for them, I set off. That's why I'm still floating like a cloud”.

The romantic poets of the “White Wave” hated modern society, escaped from the existing reality, created a fantastically beautiful world, tried to awaken in the hearts of their students the hope of goodness, a

wonderful life. They also sought to create a sense of protest, a sense of denial, of reality.

The “White Wave” Association did not last long, disbanding in 1923. Some of the Romantics continued to create in a spirit of despair, and some poets became members of the democratic wing that emerged in the literature of this period.

The annexation of Korea by Japan in 1910 had an impact on the rapid development of Korean literature. Young people who studied in Japan were able to get acquainted with Western European, English and Russian literature. Western literature had a significant influence on the formation of modern Korean literature.

It should be borne in mind that the adoption of new methods by Korean literature has led to very difficult socio-political situations. In order to deprive the Korean people of their national identity, the Japanese government severely repressed not only statesmen but also writers and poets, restricting their free creativity. But despite such bans, opportunities have been created for Korean readers to become more familiar with Western literature. The spiritual crisis in the homeland, the struggle for liberation from the Japanese colony, the preservation of the spirit of the nation fell to the poets and writers, despite the fact that they were representatives of different currents.

## CONCLUSION



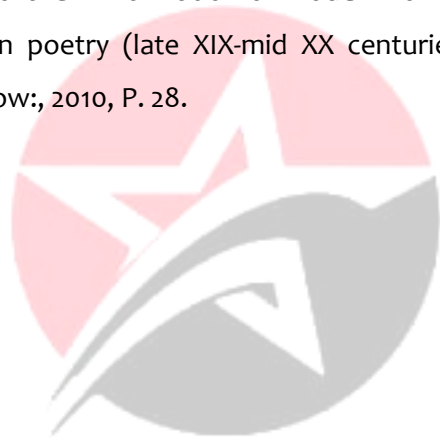
In conclusion, the union of cultures is a new Korean poetry created by external forces - a generalization of ancient traditions, Christianity, new ideological and aesthetic concepts that are completely different from classical literature. During this period, it was observed that national poetry was enriched by its connections with neighboring literatures and strengthened by an understanding of Western experience. The “New Poetry” reflected the diversity of genre styles typical of the transition period, the interest in mastering new artistic methods. Korean romanticism, realism, symbolism sometimes developed in parallel. Poets joined new trends and served for common aesthetic views. Poems in a new form: free poetry / chayusi /, prose poetry / sanmunsi / traditional Korean poetic genres sijo, bowls have taken a back seat.

Without denying the positive influence of Western culture, Korean writers realized that it was time to find a personal way, to enrich national literature with new ideas and forms without abandoning traditions.

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