Contrast in Space and Characters: Han Sŏr-ya’s Counter-Censorship Strategies in the Newspaper Serial, Hwanghon (Dusk, 1936)

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ABSTRACT

The novel Hwanghon (Dusk) by leftist writer Han Sŏr-ya (1900–1976) portrays the dramatic transformation of a country girl into a revolutionary worker in Korea. Another aspect of the drama, one that reflects the context of its different editions, is the story of the novel’s revision. This paper compares the original censored text, published in 1936 as a newspaper serial, and the revised 1955 text, which removed “unsatisfactory” expressions and reflected the North’s post-liberation politics. Examining the 1936 version, I argue that Han deliberately disrupted the regular serialization schedule by skipping days in order to disguise subversive themes and to confound the censor’s memory. The articulation of those scenes, especially the rise of revolutionary workers, is significantly enhanced by Han’s uses of space and characters. By setting up contrasts among his characters, and weaving them into spatial confrontations, Han not only evokes socialist themes, but also creates a multidimensional presence for them that frustrates attempts to locate them in a single source.

Keywords: Han Sŏr-ya, Hwanghon, colonial censorship, counter-censorship strategies, newspaper serialization, fictional space, characterization

Introduction

Han Sŏr-ya (Han Pyŏng-do, 1900-1976, Sŏr-ya is his penname; hereafter Han Sŏr-ya) is one of the most influential leftist writers in modern Korean literature, including both North and South Korea. In the 1920s, Han led anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist literary movements by participating in the KAPF (Korean Federation of Proletarian Artists). Despite the Japanese police’s violent crackdown on this politico-literary organization in the 1930s, Han never relinquished his socialist views. After liberation in 1945, Han traveled to North Korea and began to realize his proletarian ideals by helping to construct a North Korean literature (Sŏ 1999, 89-94).1

Hwanghon (Dusk, 1936; hereafter Dusk) is Han Sŏr-ya’s first full-length novel, which Han himself revised in North Korea in 1955. The novel articulates the author’s conviction that workers are vital agents in creating a politically and economically egalitarian society through the plotline of the dismissal of factory employees after mechanized production leads to layoffs. Alongside Kang Kyŏng-ae’s In’gan munje (Human predicaments, 1934) and Yi Ki-yŏng’s Kohyang (Hometown, 1933-1934), novels which also focus on national identity conflict and class...
struggle, literary critics often laud Han's novel as one of the three masterworks of the 1930s. These three works testify to the spirit of resistance in the 1930s, when Japan expanded aggressively into Manchuria, tightened its grip on politically non-conformist thought through censorship, and produced a flourishing of chŏnhyang munin—writers who recanted their radical ideology under pressure from the colonial state.

A recent surge in censorship studies in Korea has contributed to deepening our understanding of the colonial production of texts. In particular, it has revealed the complicated negotiations between writers and censors through carefully organized surveillance that took place not only when a manuscript was submitted for publication in a periodical, but also when the printed article was republished in a book. Such publication environments under the colonial censorship regime have been characterized into three areas: the establishment of the censoring subjects, such as the Japanese thought police, book department, censors, and translators and the systematization of the work of these agents (Ch'ong and Ch'oe 2006); the means of control, both textual and non-textual, over books and periodicals (Han 2006a; Han 2009); and text producers' responses to censorship, especially counter-censorship strategies, which often resulted in enhancing the artistic refinement of their works (Ch'oe 2001; Han 2006b). By nature, censorship studies evoke interdisciplinary research in various fields of literature, sociology, and journalism. Including the fruitful outcomes of previous research, such collaborative efforts have recently produced anthologized books, which extend the scope of colonial censorship scholarship to expressive media other than print, such as fine arts, film, music, and plays, and to comparative studies with Taiwan (Tongguk Taehakkyo, 2010; Kŏmnyŏl Yŏngguhoe, 2011).

My paper falls into the third subcategory of censorship studies in Korea, which centers on the reinterpretation of literary works in the presence of censors. Studies on counter-censorship strategies have thus far focused on the subversive potentials of particular characterizations, such as of the disabled, and ways of circumventing the use of dangerous words and phrases in short stories. In regard to the issue of “colonial writers strike back,” Han Sŏr-ya's case is intriguing for several reasons. His Dusk is not a short story, but a full-length novel, and it was serialized in a newspaper, the Chosŏn ilbo (The Chosŏn daily), over a considerable time—from February 5 to October 28, 1936 (a period of nine months). It does not carry visibly distinctive characters, such as a disabled person, and does not show many marks of deletion, for instance, fuseji (concealing letters) like “XX” and “OO” and pyŏkdol munja (brick letters) or the marks of upside-down metal types, such as “˥˩˥.”

In brief, my project concerns the counter-censorship strategies of the newspaper serial Dusk. Two questions about Han Sŏr-ya's strategies will be addressed specifically in this paper: How did Han utilize serialization itself as a way of circumventing the keen, omnipresent eyes of censors? And, in order to

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1 It is commonly believed that Han Sŏr-ya was purged in North Korea in August 1962. However, Kim Chae-yong suggests that the political purge does not imply Han's physical death. Kim argues that Han died in 1976; 1962 simply marks the end of Han's production of literary works (Kim 1999, 229).
allude to radical themes of socialism, how did Han develop alternative and more literary ways of expression? In answering these questions, I argue that Han crafted characters and contrasts of spatial setting that both carried his socialist message and eluded the watchful eyes of censors. I build toward that argument in three sections. Section one lays the groundwork by distinguishing the 1936 and 1955 texts of Dusk from the other six versions of this novel I have examined. Taking both of these texts as the historical product of their individual textual environments, I consider how they depict socialist characters and events. Although historically discrete, I also regard the texts as linked by the pressure of external censorship, in the 1936 case through constraints on overt expression, and in the 1955 case through the inducement to spell out what had been “insufficiently” articulated before.2

Section two looks at a specific way of responding to the constraints of external censorship. Noting Han’s statement that he skipped installments when writing subversive sections (Han 1955, 5), I examine the installments immediately before and after these gaps in publication—or “leaps” as I call them here—for evidence of censorship pressures. I reserve the term “leap” specifically for gaps involving dates where the serial could have been published, but wasn’t, which suggests deliberate intervention by Han. I thus exclude other gaps, such as the regular omission of fiction on Mondays and other occasional omissions introduced by the publisher, except in cases where Han extends the length of these gaps by adding a leap before and/or after the gap.

Although Han says he skipped installments to evade censorship, it doesn’t necessarily follow that every leap in serialization was purposeful, and existing information prevents certainty about why a given installment was skipped. In spite of this, the comparison of the 1936 and 1955 texts remains productive for examining how politically disturbing ideas were expressed, not by seeing the 1955 text as the intended expression of the 1936 one, but in order to highlight literary techniques in the 1936 text that enabled allusions to socialist themes and characters.

Through a close reading of the 1936 text of Dusk, section three then identifies specific spatial settings and contrasts in characterization as counter-censorship strategies, devices for carrying the themes of power consolidation and the creation of socialist workers below the radar of wary censors. Specific associations between space and class invest the workplace—a kind of character with its own consolidating agency—with the capacity to transform workers into socialist subjects. By contrasting this socialist space with the elite, the bourgeois space of a factory CEO, Han also conveys the theme of class conflict. Characterization, meanwhile, foregrounds a wealthy intellectual sympathetic to socialism, whose blandness and indecisiveness serve to highlight the rise of a powerful female protagonist, who transforms into a socialist worker through

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2 In his preface to the 1955 edition of Dusk, Han testifies that he was under pressure from Japanese censors and therefore was “not able to fully express what [I] intended to write, and that even if [I] did not self-censor portions, [I] had to articulate expressions obscurely while serializing fiction in 1936” (Han 1955, 5).
her physical experiences at the factory. These combined narrative strategies of characterization and spatial contrast substitute for verbal expressions, which are overtly articulated in the 1955 text.

**Versions and Editions of Dusk**

I have found six different texts of *Dusk*:

1. A serial in *Chosŏn ilbo* (The Chosŏn daily) from February 5 to October 28, 1936.


3. Yŏngch'ang Sŏgwan published the novel again in 1948 three years after liberation. This seems to be a reprint of the 1940 version.⁴ Ch'oe Wŏn-sik edited and republished this version in 1989 using a modern grammatical format in South Korea (Han 1989). Despite different publishers and years of publication, the texts from 1940 and 1948 show little difference from the 1936 newspaper serial.

4. In 1955, the Chosŏn Chakka Tongmaeng Ch'ulp'ansa (The Chosŏn Writers’ League Publishing House) in North Korea published a new edition of *Dusk*, which Han Sŏr-ya himself rewrote to suit a changed political climate, most notably the absence of Japanese censorship.

5. In 1959, the same North Korean publisher printed another version, which Kim Pyŏnggil introduced to South Korean readers in 1999.⁵


Summing up these versions, there are six different publications of *Dusk* stretching

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³ The “minor” changes in the 1940 text mean that they do not substantially affect the plot, characterization, and the progress of the story as found in the 1936 text. Changes include replacing adverbs for clearer meaning: from “kanginghae” (February 7, 1936) to “ôkchiro” (1940, 7) (Both words mean “forcefully”). In some cases, the present tense was changed to the past tense: from “k ŭ nu˘n[…]panu˘jil u˘l sijakhanda” (February 9, 1936; “she starts sewing”) to “k ŭ nu˘n[…]panu˘jil ŭl sijakhetta” (1940, 14; “she started sewing”).

⁴ I make this statement because I was unable to examine the original 1948 text. Instead, I used Ch’oe’s text, an edited 1948 version. As far as I can tell, the edited 1948 version is a reprint of the 1940 one, except for parts adapted to modern grammatical rules.

⁵ I was unable to access this North Korean edition except as the South Korean version promoted by Kim. This makes it hard to explain why he chose the 1959 edition over that of 1955 to introduce the North Korean edition of the story to South Korean readers.
from its first appearance as a newspaper serial in 1936, to the North Korean version published in 1999. But there are really just two main texts: the 1936 edition, which shaped its expressions and themes around the presence of colonial censors, and that of 1955, Han’s own rewrite of the story after censorship had lifted and he had moved to the north. The other versions amount to reprints and re-presentations of these two essential versions.

Each text is a product of unique literary and geopolitical moments. Kim Pyŏng-gil argues that the 1959 version, which he introduced to South Korean scholars, helped achieve Kim Il-sŏng’s supremacy during the period of political turmoil after the Korean War (1950-1953) (Kim 2002: 257-58). According to Kim, the need to represent leadership of the Workers’ Party compelled Han to create Pak Sang-hun, the novel’s leading ideologue, as a symbolic parallel to Kim Ilsŏng, head of the North Korean state (Kim 2002, 275-76). Since Han invented this character in 1955, the argument presumably also extends to that version.

Challenging Kim’s methodology, which interprets the 1959 and 1955 texts solely in light of North Korean politics, I propose to read the 1936 and 1955 texts against each other, despite radical intervening changes of literary and political circumstance. I do so, first, because Han expressly links the revised 1955 text to the tradition of KAPF literature in colonial Korea. In the preface to the 1955 edition, where Han reveals his motivations for rewriting the novel, he says that the 1936 text sought to reflect the Marxist-Leninist ideology adopted by KAPF members. He also says he wrote “Kwadogi” (A transitional period, 1928) and “Ssirŭm” (Wrestling, 1929) to portray labor movements, and that Dusk is an extended version of those stories based upon proletariat literature (Han 1955: 1-6). Another reason for reading the 1936 and 1955 texts against each other, as previously mentioned, is that Han refers explicitly to the issue of censorship in the serialized 1936 text, noting that a key motivation for revising the novel in 1955 was to elaborate themes that he had to express obliquely before.

At that time [during the serialization of Dusk in Chosŏn ilbo], Japanese censorship was getting [more] severe day by day so that I was not able to fully write what I wanted to write and, even if I wrote, I had to allude, or be ambiguous […] [Thus I] revised, filled in, or deleted portions which I had to leave imperfect (1955: 5).

By rewriting a well-known proletarian work produced under the colonial regime, Han was able to produce a more artistically and ideologically refined piece in the
North, to merge his literary experience and opinions as a KAPF writer with the North's interpretation of colonial literature. In other words, Han attempted to extend the legitimacy of North Korean literature back to the tradition of the leftist art movement in colonial Korea.8

The plot of the 1936 text follows the transformation of a poor female student, Ryō-sun, into a class-conscious laborer through the experience of hard work at a factory. The first half of the story focuses on Ryō-sun's estrangement: she becomes entangled in a love triangle with Kyōng-jae, an intellectual who is sympathetic to socialism but lacks the decisive will to put his thoughts into action, and Hyŏn-ok, his indulgent fiancée. In the introduction, Ryō-sun starts work as the secretary of An Chung-sŏ, the new owner of the textile company and also Hyŏn-ok's father. As Kyōng-jae finds “indescribable beauty” in the poor but sincere manner in which Ryō-sun lives her life, and comes to detest the snobbish personality of Hyŏn-ok, Ryō-sun is also drawn to him (April 4, 1936). But when Ryō-sun is almost raped by An and verbally humiliated by Kyōng-jae's father for her relationship with Kyōng-jae, she decides to leave Kyōng-jae, believing that she has to sacrifice herself for the sake of his better future—an arranged marriage with Hyŏn-ok and a high position in the company.

The breakup with Kyōng-jae, however, opens Ryō-sun's eyes to her new independent life. The second half of the story focuses on Ryō-sun's journey to become a laborer and standard-bearer of class consciousness, with the help of Chun-sik, a charismatic leader of the workers at An's textile company. By taking advantage of Kyōng-jae, who still has lingering affections for her, Ryŏ-sun is able to work at the factory. Her intention, however, is to learn skills in order to become independent. An and the other employers, meanwhile, disguise a physical examination as a welfare benefit for the workers, then attempt to fire the sick and the subversive before new machines arrive. But Chun-sik and his comrades co-opt the physical examination as an opportunity to state workers' demands. In the end, the employees start negotiations with their employers. Kyōng-jae is surprised to find Ryō-sun among the leading workers and realizes that workers are the future.

In the 1955 edition, Han makes several crucial changes to character and plot. He reinforces the socialist vision shared by ordinary workers and remaps the leadership hierarchy by creating a new character, Pak Sāng-hun, a strong Marxist and Leninist ideologue. According to Chun-sik, Pak is the “olğū” [organizer of socialist events] and no one knows his whereabouts. And yet, he “expands the organizations based on the unit of the factory” to the city level by “injecting the right ideology” into workers and “linking the ideology with action” (1955, 70-72). Inspired by Pak's leadership, Chun-sik realizes the true intentions behind the rationalizing process of industry and even dreams of a socialist utopia:

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8 Kim Chae-yong argues that through lengthy essays published in the North during the 1960s, Han Sŏr-ya attempted to link the tradition of KAPF literature to the revolutionary tradition of North Korea. According to Kim, this attempt eventually provoked the Party, which created its own anti-Japanese revolutionary tradition in the colonial period, and led to Han's purge (Kim 1999, 252-53).
The authentic way of a human being is that of walking together with people of low status. It should not continue that people suppress others and suck their blood. In the eyes of Chun-sik, a number of young males and females go hand in hand together to the workplace, and exert themselves to create their happiness. He also sees that benevolent mothers and fathers [...] raise their children in the beautiful city and country (1955, 74).

Inspired by this vision, Chun-sik guides Ryŏ-sun to become a socialist worker. In the 1936 text, Chun-sik, the central organizing force behind collective mobilization at the workplace, was also behind the workers’ emerging ideological consolidation. Constraints against him stating verbal encouragement explicitly, however, limited his role in awakening Ryŏ-sun to class consciousness.

Another distinguishing feature of the 1955 text is that Han gives a strong anti-Japanese tone to certain key characters. Chun-sik, depicted in 1936 as “expelled from school due to some accident,” becomes a young anti-Japanese hero in 1955, who “was in the front of the school strike to kick out a Japanese teacher who repeatedly beat up students” (1955, 22). In the 1936 text, emerging class conflict set up An Chung-sŏ, the new owner of the textile company (previously owned by Kyŏng-jae’s father), as a critical symbolic target for subversive action by workers. In the 1955 edition, the negative taint of Japanese collaborator was added to An’s greedy, rapacious personality as a nouveau riche. An works as a Korean broker when a Japanese zaibatsu called Yasuda expands its business into colonial Korea. Using his mining assets, An buys the textile company, which is on the verge of bankruptcy.

A third notable change in the 1955 edition is the greater scale and explicit deadliness of events when workers choose to confront their employers. At the end of the novel, the workers decide to go on strike, and in response, the employers resort to armed Japanese police: “The owner knew that the Japanese police were on his side and not that of the workers. One military sword would cut through hundreds or thousands [of workers] away like thin paper” (1955: 399). The massive scale of working class mobilization, and the obstacles it had to overcome, is on full display in this dramatic scene, heightened even further through the contrast between a wishy-washy intellectual, Kyŏng-jae, and Ryŏ-sun, the courageous and driven new revolutionary subject.

This contrast between versions, however, does not imply that subversive, revolutionary content was absent or written out of the 1936 version. Better, perhaps, to say it was written in through a careful, nuanced appreciation of what exact limitations censorship imposed. If the tone had to be subdued, certain characters played down, and dangerous scenes rendered obliquely, Han had other tools at his disposal. They were not ideal for his message, as the fact of his 1955 rewrite proves. The next section will show, however, that given the political realities in 1936, Han proved most adept with the tools he had.

Additional research is necessary to determine whether the above mentioned characteristics of the 1955 text, such as the creation of the new leader character, a strong anti-Japanese tone, and the greater scale of conflicts between workers and the owner, were a product of the constraints of the 1955’s political situations or the effect of freedom from colonial censorship.
Serialization and Censorship of *Dusk*, 1936

Meanwhile, one advantage in carrying the novel in the newspaper was that I did not have the whole volume of the novel censored before publication; the Japanese police went over each installment published on the newspaper every day. Thus, when [the story] came to dangerous scenes, I could obscure the censors’ memory to some degree by making a leap for a couple of days, instead of serializing everyday (1955, 5).

As one of the rare occasions that discusses a concrete counter-censorship strategy, Han Sŏr-ya’s reminiscence stands out among accounts of newspaper serialization in colonial Korea. He says explicitly that he attempted to trick the memory of censors by delaying installments when they featured politically or socially subversive content. This section identifies the self-censored parts of the 1936 text by comparing that text with the 1955 edition.

*Dusk* was serialized in the *Chosŏn ilbo* between February 5 and October 28, 1936. Records claim that 206 installments were published, but only 203 installments ever saw print, even counting the republished installment of June 27. Under ordinary circumstances, the newspaper included a four-page morning edition and an eight-page evening edition. On Mondays there was no morning edition, and the evening edition, which had only four pages, never carried fiction. The serial therefore skipped Mondays, without exception, meaning that it ordinarily appeared six times per week. From February to April, *Dusk* fell on page five or six (*hagyemyŏn*: the education and art section) of the evening edition, before moving to page four (*sanŏnmyŏn*: the industry section) of the morning edition beginning May 1. The reason for this move is unknown.

Examining *Dusk*’s publication dates shows numerous jumps in installments. These jumps can be categorized into regular occasions and irregular gaps, which I refer to as “leaps.” Regular Monday gaps correspond to the publisher’s internal policy and to a weekly calendar schedule. By contrast, the irregular timing and length of leaps easily suggest the irregular developments of a dramatic novel, whose critical junctures and political danger zones correspond to the unfolding of plot rather than a calendar or newspaper policy. Carrying this thought a step further, longer leaps may reflect the presence of more subversive content in installments immediately before and after a leap. In examining the content of such installments, I note five cases that allude to politically disturbing ideas. Telling features of the installments immediately adjacent to these five leaps include replacement of key words with generic terms (August 29 and October 8) or vague pronouns like “this” or “that” (October 17); the blurring of critical details with ellipses (September 18); and temporal leaps in the progression of the story, which allude to subversive events both by oblique reference and, even more powerfully, through the very act of skipping them (October 28).

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10 Due to the limited length, the serialization table of *Dusk*, which indicates the leaps and irregular numbering in installments, could not be published with this paper. Readers interested in the table, please contact the author at jlee@artsct.wustl.edu.
(1) Taking these five leaps in the chronological order of their publication, the first ran from August 29 to September 1, 1936. The newspaper did not carry the serial on August 30 despite printing the usual number of pages. The following day, August 31, was a Monday, which never carried fiction. Leading up to this gap, August 29 concludes a section called “The Front View” with its fifth and final installment, and on the other side, the leap ends on September 1 with a new section called “A Countermove 1.” At a basic narrative level, the change of section after a leap fits nicely with reader expectations, the way a new chapter often implies (and invites) some kind of temporal break, or the way a symphony makes sense of breaks between movements. But this break is not all it appears to be, for lurking behind this invitation to refresh the setting is a barely audible continuity.

In “The Front View 5” (August 29), the female workers tell Ryō-sun a story about being scolded by the manager “Hairy” (Tŏlbo) for circulating a certain piece of paper (chongi). Meanwhile, the new section, “A Countermove 1,” shows the owner An’s surprise at a newspaper article. He is extremely angry because “a fact that should be kept between him and Manager Hairy” is publicly known (September 1). Since the reader is not informed that the note passed around the factory is a handbill protesting the company’s layoff policy, it is difficult to understand exactly why An is angry and the manager at a loss. The seriousness of unspoken events registers nonetheless through the reactions of the employers and while connections across the leap are not actually stated, the astute reader might deduce that the confusion among employers relates to some “countermove” noted by the section title. This, in turn, hints at workers who are uniquely motivated in the story to oppose the company leaders. Those hints become overt in the 1955 edition, which shows unambiguously that the provocation for An’s anger is the “handbill incident” (ppıra sakŏn) (1955, 331).

(2) On one side of the leap on September 17, the September 16 installment includes a comic scene where a male worker describes how he saw his fat colleague’s penis during the physical exam. This comic mood resumes in the September 18 installment, in which a worker called “the kindergarten headman” (yuch’iwŏn kũpchang) imitates the owner of the company. With a pompous gesture, he tells about the advancement measure of the coming machines: “[They have] an automatic device for stopping the warp and … for filling up the woof” (September 18). He adds, “As it is good for a worker to have fine skills, so it is with the machine.” Laughing, the other workers shout, “You must have been bribed.” The headman’s response, “But… but…” is largely hidden by ellipses.

In the 1955 version, these words, now spelled out, become an explicit mockery of the owner: “But my friends, it is good for machines to be advanced like a human, but it cannot be absolutely like a human. A man is higher and nobler than a machine.” The headman adds, “The machine must not eat a human” (1955, 357). When the other workers ask how a machine can eat workers, the headman explains that when the new machines replace workers, it means that the former eats the latter. In the elided sentence of 1936, it is unclear why the headman discusses the new machines, but his negative view of them is conveyed nonetheless through his mockery of the owner.
(3) As Table 1 below shows, the serial skipped an entire week between October 8 and 16, and resumed by beginning a new section, “Contrast 1.” It opens with An’s frustration after reading a note on the table, but the reader does not know what is written on the paper or why An is upset. The installment that preceded the leap, “Before and after 9,” offers no clues: it features a dramatic reconciliation between Chun-sik and Tong-p’il, a former leader of the workers who was bribed by Manager Hairy. An alert reader, recalling the handbill in “A Countermove 1,” might reasonably assume that the note (*chongi*) on An’s table is another handbill.

According to the 1955 version, this paper is not a handbill but “[a letter of] request laid out by workers” (1955, 387). Figuring this out in 1936, however, would require the reader to piece together a complicated series of hints alluded to in other installments. One hint, dropped in the installment “Before and after 2,” published on September 29, concerns Chŏng-nim, a female worker who seeks to advance herself by having an affair with An. When he fires her instead after satiating his sexual desire, she takes her revenge by removing files from the office and handing over a copy to Chun-sik’s comrades (September 29). Neither the content of the files nor Chun-sik’s plans for them are ever revealed to the reader, who therefore cannot gauge the possible consequences or connect the stolen files to the letter of request. Because these pieces are both ambiguous and insulated by intervening time and details, An’s anger at reading the note on October 16 seems to come out of nowhere. Only in subsequent installments (October 17 and 20), does the reader receive a direct hint about the piece of paper’s contents through An’s discussion with the board members. Importantly, the censors, who might not have grasped the significance of the paper until October 20, may have thought that the paper on the table was simply another handbill. Han’s subversive strategies are worth highlighting here: he published a crucial but obscure puzzle piece on one date, and only later provided the key that lifted the obscurity, by which time it was too late

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Consecutive Number*</th>
<th>Section name / Installment number within Section**</th>
<th>The number of pages printed (Morning ed., Evening ed.)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/8</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>“Before and After 9”</td>
<td>Mor. ed.: 4   Eve. ed.: 8</td>
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<td>10/15</td>
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<td>Mor. ed.: 4   Eve. ed.: 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/16</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>“Contrast 1”</td>
<td>Mor. ed.: 4   Eve. ed.: 8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Consecutive number: the number of installment, regardless of the section.
** Installment number within section: the number of installment within a section.\(^{11}\)

\(^{11}\) Many installments have irregular numbering. Installment numbers within a section sometimes jump or repeat. Other times, the consecutive number jumps ahead or repeats. It is unclear if such irregularities of numbering are simple mistakes or an intentional strategy to help confuse censors.
for the censor to delete the first part.

It is important to note the difference between a handbill and a letter of request. A handbill, while clearly dangerous for its potential to foment subversive action, is not drafted through a concerted, collective will. A letter of request is, and action can be expected when it is denied. Though we do not know whether Han purposefully played with the term *chongi*, such play seems consistent with his concealment of the paper's contents. By referring to both the handbill and the letter of request as “paper,” and by viewing them through An’s perspective, the true nature of the letter may have escaped the watchful eye of the censor. Another risk, of course, is that this same confusion may have lost the insensitive Korean reader.

(4) Imagining publication leaps as a counter-censorship strategy, one might expect a leap near the danger zone showing the contents of the workers’ request letter, just noted. The crucial installment on October 17, identifying the letter, has the telltale signs of a danger zone: ellipses in place of explicit detail. And sure enough, the serial skipped the following day October 18—a leap probably timed so that a regular Monday hiatus the next day doubled the time off between installments.

As before, comparison to the 1955 version reveals the constraint Han faced in 1936. In the October 17 installment of the original serial, the company owner and the employers discuss nine requests from the workers, and struggle to decide which items to accept and which to turn down. The manager says, “The bigger problem is this … because we already have a plan, it should be carried out as we designed.” The owner then replies, “Yes, there is nothing we can do for those who are useless.” From the owner’s response, a sensitive reader might at least deduce that “this” relates to the company’s plan and to workers whose labor value has decreased. From the employer’s point of view, “this” is a problem, so it may also refer to the workers’ plan, which opposes the company’s new policy of firing useless workers. With the ellipsis spelled out in the 1955 edition, the manager says, “The bigger problem is this: *A strong objection to layoffs* because we already have a plan and it should be carried out as we designed.” The owner’s reply is also explicitly modified: “We should fire those who are useless. There’s nothing we can do about it, can we? *For we can’t feed them for free*” (1955, 391-92).

(5) The last leap connected to politically disturbing ideas occurred between October 24 (“Contrast 7”) and 28 (“Contrast 9”)—one skipped day on either side of October 26, which was a Monday, for a total leap of three days. “Contrast 7” and “Contrast 9” are the last two installments of the novel (there is no “Contrast 8”), where the confrontation between the employers and employees reaches its peak. In “Contrast 7,” Kyŏng-jae, the wishy-washy intellectual, is surprised to meet a group of workers, including Ryŏ-sun, Chun-sik, and Hyŏng-chŏl, at the president’s office. They come to hear the owner’s decision on the nine request items laid out by Chun-sik and his comrades. An leads them to the reception room next to the president’s office. “Contrast 9,” the final installment, finds Kyŏng-jae acknowledging the enhanced respect and status of workers who are able to speak up for their interests and exert pressure on the owners, in stark contrast to his own gloomy figure. This climactic conflict between worker and owner is the most powerful, and politically
fraught moment of the entire serial, and so also the most ripe for subversion. To succeed though, Han had to be at the very top of his game, because censors, no strangers to dramatic form, were surely at their most alert given the urgent social disturbances hovering on the periphery of this installment.

With external censors on high alert, the subdued language of this installment comes as no surprise. Kyŏng-jae—the reader's ears and eyes for the scene—does not hear radical agitation in “Contrast 9.” As the workers talk with the owner, Kyŏng-jae moves to a room next to An's office, where only snatches of conversation filter through the intervening walls. An gives a brief speech about the critical situation facing the company, insinuating that workers would only hurt themselves with their collective action. When the chief of the general affairs department attempts to elaborate on An's speech, Chun-sik rebuffs him, shouting, “Let the person with the greatest responsibility talk!” (October 28). That is the last thing Kyŏng-jae hears from the leading workers.

So it is, by making the reader eavesdrop on the drama through the obfuscating walls of an adjoining office, that Han uses spatial setting itself as a censoring device. Because Kyŏng-jae is not in the room when the climactic action unfolds, details are necessarily restricted and indirectly delivered. Han thus strategically mutes politically disturbing expressions; even if the workers argue for dramatic concessions from the employer, the reader wouldn't hear because Kyŏng-jae doesn’t.

There is a price to be paid for Han's shrewd uses of fictional space and characterization in depicting the worker's uprising: shortening the length of graphic scenes. Kyŏng-jae is surprised by the power of a few leading workers to oppose the company's new policy of laying off sick and seditious laborers. Augmenting this atmosphere of surprise and the quick, decisive turn of events is an ending that arrives all too suddenly, through a large time lapse, as if the installment can't wait to conclude.

Until louder voices passed by through the stairs, He [Kyŏng-jae] was not able to collect his mind.

At the dusk of that day … it became darker ahead of Kyŏng-jae, who was walking out of the gloomy, big company, where the sound of breathing (sum sori) had disappeared (khŏjin) (October 28).

The total effect, though, is of something momentous hanging in the air, either about to happen or as aftermath, which dovetails with Kyŏng-jae's meekness: the meek have no place within future-building events and scenes.

Comparison to the 1955 version supports this reading of the earlier narrative. In the 1936 version of the ending, just quoted, the loud voices of workers and the vanishing sound of breathing form a strange contrast. What exactly is this “sound of breathing” that disappears at the end? The breathing sound of humans, meaning that all the workers have left their offices? Or, more dramatically, does it imply that they are all dead? Neither interpretation is convincing. In the confrontation between employers and employees, no physical contact or struggle
Contrast in Space and Characters: Han Sŏr-ya's Counter-Censorship Strategies in the Newspaper Serial, 
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is depicted, nor does it seem likely that workers would leave their offices at the normal time, given the company's state of emergency.

In the 1955 version, it becomes clear that "the sound of breathing" refers to "the sound of the machine working."

It was at the dusk of that day.
It became darker ahead of Kyŏng-jae, who was walking out of the gloomy, big, and high buildings of the company, where the breathing sound of the machines was turned off, but the throbbing sound of red hearts was intense (1955: 404).

The phrase, "the breathing sound of machines was turned off" suggests a strike by the workers. The 1955 version also shows a more graphic struggle between employers and employees in the scene preceding the ending just quoted. When An rejects all of the workers' requests, Chun-sik and his comrades decide to go on strike by turning off the machines. Chun-sik shouts, "With the collective will of the workers, from now on, we will lift our hands off the work" (1955, 404). Surprised by the collective power of the workers, An calls the police: "These scoundrels [the representatives of workers] finally ... would do something ... a strike, yes, yes, that's right. Please soon ... Thank you. No, I'm not worried about it since you're with me." (1955, 403). In the 1955 wording, the rising power of laborers reads like a slogan behind the stark confrontation between "the collective will of the workers," embodied in the strike, and a flustered and furious An, who must resort to police intervention precisely because his own power in the building has failed.

The corresponding 1936 text stops at the negotiating table. Instead of depicting a graphic socialist struggle between employers and employees, it moves quickly away from the scene, first behind muffling walls and then behind a sudden leap in time to Kyŏng-jae's departure at day's end, with only brooding silence to suggest what may have happened in the meantime. As Han no doubt understood, however, silence this heavy is not really mute: what it lacks in overt detail gets transformed into raw suggestive power, that pit-of-the-stomach feeling that something huge lurks just beyond the periphery of senses. One can't be sure whether that unspeakable entity was a vote to strike, or a violent reprisal by An, but uncertainty about such urgent matters can be gripping and hard to ignore, even though nothing overt gives the censors a reason to intervene.

To conclude this section, while the exact use of leaps is hard to pin down, subversive content does tend to occur somewhere in installments immediately adjacent to a leap, which suggests a role within Han's counter-censorship strategy. Longer leaps may correspond to a greater need to conceal something, but a notable exception is the final leap. It lasted for three days between October 24 and 28, and is thus in the middle of the pack for duration, and yet no other moment in the story, even surrounding the longest leap of all (between October 8 and 16), compares to the fateful climax in terms of dramatic scale, importance of message or need to tread carefully around censors. Perhaps, knowing that both the story and the related pressures of censorship would conclude with the final installment, Han didn't feel the need for a mammoth-sized leap at the end. One
must resist presuming too much about Han’s counter-censorship strategies in the serialization of *Dusk*, of course, since he never explicitly revealed his intentions, but relationships between leaps and subversive content is a good place for exploring them.

**Narrative Strategy and Censorship of in the 1936 Text**

Korea’s industrialization occurred during the colonial era (1910-1945), especially in the 1930s when Korea functioned as a supply base for Japan’s military invasion of Manchuria (Eckert et al. 1997, 305-14; Cumings 1997, 162-74). The spinning and weaving industry was booming in particular during that period, as the war in northern China demanded and consumed a large volume of textiles for clothing. In 1939, the number of weaving companies in Korea employing more than a thousand workers was ten—a startling number given that in all of Korea that year, only seventeen weaving companies existed (Pak 2003, 124).

This swell of industrialization meant both expansion in the size of factories and the imposition of more severe regulations on workers. The factory was a type of “softened cell” where carefully measured time and allocated spaces disciplined the workers’ bodies (Pak 2003, 121). During the wartime boom of the late 1930s, when the factories introduced advanced spinning machines to meet increased demand, more effective means of control appeared, such as forcing female workers to live in a dormitory, imposing fines on tardy workers, and applying a punitive wage cut to wrongdoers (Pak 2003, 125-26, 147, 153, 156-58). This process of industrialization recalls Frederic Jameson’s critique of Weber on the rationalization of capitalism: In the binary systems of means and ends, the form of rationalization undoes the “end,” leaving only the “means” to prevail in the capitalist society (Jameson 1981, 250). As a result, workers turn into mere instruments for operating the factory, losing the meaning of their humanity.

The new owner, An, understands “sanŏp hamnihwa” (the rationalization of industry) as a means to instrumentalize the workers. Realizing how the wartime boom will affect the textile economy, he expands the infrastructure of his factory by introducing advanced weaving machines. He knows that once the new machines arrive, skilled workers will no longer be needed since the new machines will replace them. Working on the assumption that skilled laborers are physically weak due to their long working hours, An and Hairy devise a plan for laying off both skilled and sick workers.

Among the various characters in the story, Ryŏ-sun shoulders the heaviest burden in defying this process of rationalization. Her strong and independent spirit, spurred on rather than broken by physical hardships, including An’s attempted rape, leads her to become a class-conscious activist. An, Hairy and other employers, meanwhile, but above all Kyŏng-jae, serve as foils whose contrast to Ryŏ-sun’s resolve and strength of character highlight her transformation into a socialist activist-worker. In the advertisement for his serial in *Chosŏn ilbo*, however, Han calls Kyŏng-jae the protagonist. He says:

> It is difficult to tell every detail of the story. What I would like to just ask [the reader] is to
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read it to the end [of the installment]. Yet, if I were to introduce the story briefly, I would say that this novel depicts the agony of a conscientious intellectual. [I am worried] if the peculiarity [saekch'ae] and meaning of his agony would be diluted if it was expressed [only] as agony, thus I would place it under [a certain device of] contrast, which enables his struggle to be mirrored and clarified (February 2, 1936).

If his agony relates to the company's rationalization policy, this statement raises the question of whether Kyo˘ng-jae is the right person to oppose it, and how a contrast device would meaningfully illuminate his struggle. To answer these questions, it is necessary to examine the relationships he forges with other characters.

Most characters in the novel maintain an ideology that reflects their class background. Those from the working class, for instance, cherish ideas of socialism, while the spinning factory employers favor capitalism. Unlike these groups, Kyŏng-jae is both a socialist and a member of the bourgeoisie. Ideologically, his sympathies belong to the same socialist group as the workers; in terms of class, he is bourgeoisie.

In the socialist group, the main figures (other than the transformed Ryŏ-sun) are Chun-sik, the practical leader of the secret workers' coterie and Ryŏ-sun's hometown friend, and Hyŏng-ch'ŏl, who starts work at the spinning and weaving factory after being introduced by Kyŏng-jae. In the bourgeois group, the important characters include the new owner of the factory An, whose rapaciousness propels him toward larger profits by investing in machines; his daughter Hyŏn-ok, the ex-lover of Kyŏng-jae, who becomes a supercilious noblewoman after the sudden success of her father; and Kim Chae-dang, Kyŏng-jae's father.

In this dyadic patterning of character ideology and class, Kyŏng-jae appears on one level to be a plausible protagonist, an outlier who struggles with his conscience in facing the status quo. Others, especially Ryŏ-sun and Chun-sik, would then be his foils. But simply having a conscience and wrestling with it intellectually, it turns out, is not enough to qualify one as a true protagonist of socialist fiction. Kyŏng-jae's sympathy for factory laborers prevents his being hired by An and working for the interest of the company. At the same time, Kyŏng-jae's position in the upper class and his identity as bourgeoisie make it difficult for him to become a worker. Though Kyŏng-jae detests Hyŏn-ok's snobbish attitude toward poor Ryŏ-sun, his pride as an upper class intellectual doesn't allow the leading workers to become his comrades. But his agony is not simply that he struggles with these things, as any plausible protagonist would do. What makes him a socialist failure—and as such, a diversion from the real protagonist—is that he can't get out of his own intellectual reflections and commit to anything. It is this, rather than agony in general, that banishes him to the gray zone between socialism and bourgeoisie.

The narrator says:

In his [Kyŏng-jae's] thought, he wanted to seek for the most correct way to move this world; but, he could not find the courage and method to pursue it. Go to farms! Go to factories! This is the knowledge he learned from books. Yet, this is merely knowledge and cannot be the
Although he has all the right ideas, he cannot put his body where his mind is. He is incapable of shoulder ing the responsibility to galvanize the power of workers and bring about the socialist world. When An decides to expel sick and subversive workers from the factory, “Kyŏng-jae does not have the knowledge or make an effort to defeat the owner An even in a discussion with him on the layoff” (October 14, 1936).

Such weaknesses, which render Kyŏng-jae unable to shoulder the novel’s socialist commitments, should prompt us to hear Han’s opening advertisement with new ears. As Un Chong-sŏp observes, “this novel claimed to depict the agony of a conscientious intellectual,” so as “to escape the eyes of Japanese censors” (Un 1999, 11). In this view, Han covers the seditious impulses embedded in Ryŏ-sun’s transformation by deliberately foregrounding the wishy-washy character Kyŏng-jae instead. Ryŏ-sun, then, should be considered the main character, with Kyŏng-jae serving as a foil to highlight her successful transformation into a class-conscious worker and activist. Ryŏ-sun’s independent spirit allows her to overcome her financial difficulties by tutoring Kyŏng-jae’s stepbrother and sister while attending school, then starting work as a skilled laborer when her secretarial job no longer feeds her. Crucially, it is her action—another word for physical labors of the body—rather than the mastery of socialist knowledge or ideology that leads to her transformation.

As we have seen in the climactic confrontation between workers and managers, Kyŏng-jae is the passive voice personified, the result of failing to put his revolutionary ideas into action. Only those willing to commit and assume the grammatical active voice are allowed to hear what is said in this climactic scene because the active voice is the message. Through this scene, Han may be saying that socialism is action, not just words, and encouraging the reader to act accordingly. In other words, by rendering Kyŏng-jae passive, Han contrives to find a way to depict the rise of socialist workers without having to verbalize their demands.12

In addition to character contrast with Kyŏng-jae, Han also uses spatial contrast to show Ryŏ-sun’s new identity as part of a worker collective. Specifically, he sets up correspondence between particular spaces and the class identity of people inhabiting them, such that the workplace of the factory corresponds to laborers and the president’s office to the owner An. The secretary’s room, located

12 I would like to thank Tim Bisha for helping me think about the message hidden in Kyŏng-jae’s indecisiveness in acting in accord with socialist ideals. If Kyŏng-jae’s downfall is intended by the author, then we may need to read closely for the nuances and effects of that downfall, rather than treat it as Han’s failure to depict a socialist intellectual. The ending scene in particular, which delivers a rapid succession of Kyŏng-jae’s surprise, the dimming of words and sounds, and Kyŏng-jae’s fading into the gloom, combine to produce a powerful sense of something unresolved and menacing in the air. Perhaps Han wants his readers to find their own ways to materialize the spirit of resistance against colonialism and capitalism. Here, I also partially agree with the anonymous reviewer of my paper who asks whether the character of Kyŏng-jae might illustrate Han Sŏr-ya’s anti-intellectualism. But I would like to focus on the lack of activism in Kyŏng-jae more than the somewhat abstract notion of anti-intellectualism since Chun-sik, the leader of the factory workers in the 1936 version, is depicted as both an intellectual and a worker who enjoys reading books.
between these two spaces, thus aligns on one hand with Kyŏng-jae’s state of having a foot in each class, and on the other, with his incapacity to mobilize himself toward either. Unlike Kyŏng-jae, who ends up in this office, Ryŏ-sun’s transformation into a member of the working class begins here, and occurs through her movement from here to the workplace.

Before looking further into this cooperation between class and space, let us consider how each space appears in the novel. Starting at the “top,” the president’s office is luxurious, a reflection of An’s imposing personality:

In the midst of the [president’s] office a huge table is placed. A thick table cover like Russian embroidery is laid on it. Surrounding the table are fluffy rocking chairs and couches that look so comfortable that a person could be submerged in them. Between the curtains the fresh green of the woods is visible (March 7).

The secretary’s office, where Ryŏ-sun works when the reader first meets her, could hardly be more different:

Ryŏ-sun’s office is immediately next to the president’s office. Though there is a glass door between them, An usually opens it, thus she can easily hear his voice. She hears the kettle boiling behind her back and her pen lightly scratching on the paper in front of her […]. When she is sitting here [in her office], she cannot believe that it is a factory that she is in. No noise is heard and not many passersby are seen. No rising dust, either. She cannot imagine the sweaty smell of the workers, either (March 7).

The insular air of the president’s office is shared by the secretary’s office. Ryŏ-sun’s space appears clean, neat, and calm. But all is not as it seems. In many ways, the secretary’s room, attached to the president’s office and visually connected by a glass door, is merely an extension of the latter, and calm isn’t a word one would choose in association with An. Unlike the president’s office, though, where its occupant lives in the active voice, the secretary’s office is a place of submission to that voice, a place of vulnerability rather than power. Indeed, this proximity makes Ryŏ-sun vulnerable to An’s desire for her. A short while later, this vulnerability turns violent with An’s attempt to rape her in this office. As we saw, it is Chŏng-nim, a female worker with illusions of moving upward by seducing An, who ends up satisfying his sexual desire, and getting fired for it. The secretary’s office, in short, is a hushed, dangerous and vulnerable place where An’s power prowls.

Both of these places contrast starkly to the shop floor. With their first view inside the factory, readers are stung by dirt, noise, and bad air. “No fresh green of the woods” is shown through the window. No sensory diversion, like hearing a boiling kettle while drafting a document, is allowed in this place:

In the department of weaving and spinning, four sets of machines, which are grouped as one, form two long rows. There are two hundred machines total.

All kinds of noisy sounds and rising dust cover the workplace. Scorched windows are closed tight because the wind will easily cut off the thread. It was suffocatingly hot inside [the
In this hellish environment, a worker named Hak-su has his left arm trapped in a machine, and although he does not lose his arm, he lands in hospital. Paradoxically, these horrific working conditions and the constant threat of accidents are the very things that transform Ryō-sun into a worker and generate comradeship with her coworkers. In the workplace, Ryō-sun considers the physical challenge of the factory as a chance to “learn through her body” (September 15, 1936). In her discussion with Kyōng-jae, she says that though she goes home tired, working at the factory is better than the office. Kyōng-jae notices her change of outlook: “Her mind and life have changed after she started working at the factory” (September 15). Hearing that Ryō-sun learns through her physical experiences at the factory with the help of other workers, Kyōng-jae asks himself, “Will everyone who goes to the factory turn out like them?” (September 15). In this conversation, Han depicts the factory as teaching and transforming workers through bodily training rather than words.

The shared physical hardship at the workplace instills in Ryō-sun a sense of comradeship as well. After she spends several months as a factory worker, An asks her to offer another worker her old job as secretary, so that he might have ready access to the worker mindset. An assumes that at least some workers would betray their coworkers to gain a higher position in the company, and that Ryō-sun’s former career as an office worker would seduce them. But Ryō-sun replies, “No, sir. The factory worker’s mind is unlike that of office workers: they would trust their bodies and co-workers rather than appeal to their superiors. My former career as an office worker would not attract them” (September 12).

The absolute trust that factory workers have in their bodies and in coworkers has several dimensions. Most straightforwardly, bodily activity (rather than mental or linguistic exercise) is what brings workers their salaries. Bodily activity is their livelihood. But underlying this pragmatic fact about livelihood is something more ideological: workers understand commitment as action, not as words, promises, or the trappings of inflated lives such as fancy offices, plush furniture or opportunities to gain power over others. They also grasp that this attitude toward the body is shared collectively among comrades, that this sharing produces great strength, and that each person’s sense of importance, too, is collective rather than individual. It is this collective power that Ryō-sun embraces through her transformation into a worker.

One can also grasp Ryō-sun’s transformation in terms of a vertical hierarchy of class-based spaces, from the president’s quarters at the top, through the intermediate space of the secretary’s adjoining office, to the factory floor inhabited by workers at the bottom. Ryō-sun, indeed, affirms this vertical image when she asks Kyōng-jae to recommend her for a factory worker’s position after the attempted rape. She says:

It would be good to have a proper place for me … That I was working at the [secretary’s] office means I jumped two or three steps on the social ladder with your help. You may say
it was my fortune; however, since there was no ground [for me to be in the place], [the ladder I was on] was easily shaken (August 4, 1936).

Ryŏ-sun, from a poor peasant family, enters this vertically stratified space in the “shaky” intermediate zone of the secretary’s office. Counter-intuitively, what stabilizes her life and realizes her potential is her climb (she doesn’t fall) down to the bottom of the social ladder. Kyoŏng-jae, in contrast, goes neither up nor down, but is stuck in limbo between the president and the factory floor. He doesn’t descend to the factory floor despite his socialist ideas, or ascend in support of the president. His inability to reach the socialist space, in particular, implies that socialist ideology alone cannot create socialist workers, which depends instead on physical work and training.

The character contrast between Ryŏ-sun and Kyoŏng-jae and the stratification of spaces between the workplace and the president’s office offer new insights into the climactic scene of the novel: the confrontation between the employers and workers. As noted earlier, the 1936 confrontation involves neither graphic violence nor radical voices, and the scale is modest with only a few worker representatives on hand. They meet with An in his office, start negotiations, and then the story ends, leaving the reader to guess about the consequences of the meeting. The modesty of these events seems even starker when compared to the 1955 text, where we witness the massive will and power of a collective workers’ strike and the promise of deadly reprisals. The most important element of the 1936 scene, though, is not the scale or result of the struggle between employers and workers, but rather the sheer, unstoppable power implied by workers entering the president’s office. The moment is captured through Kyoŏng-jae’s senses. When the managing director escorts the leading workers to the president’s office, the manager of general affairs opens the door a fraction to see who is coming. At that moment, Kyoŏng-jae feels “as if the door is opened tumultuously by a whirling wind” (October 24). We witness the owner and manager’s tense, confused faces in turn, their recognition of a power beyond even the president to control. As the manager approaches the door to usher the workers in, Kyoŏng-jae feels that the “door of the president’s office is pressured from outside by a huge rock” (October 24). His head pounds and he loses strength in his legs. Then the door opens wide, and among the group of people who enter, Kyoŏng-jae first locates the managing director, then Ryŏ-sun, Chun-sik, and Hyŏng-ch’ŏl. Seeing them at the president’s office, Kyoŏng-jae feels that “everything is colored black as if he was collapsing” (October 24). He comments to himself that “they are in such contrast to himself” and that “he finds himself standing in the gathering dusk” (October 24).

Kyoŏng-jae’s downfall helps highlight the awesome power of workers, that “huge rock” forcing open the president’s door. Kyoŏng-jae stands at the end of the novel as a member of the bourgeoisie, a class whose crumbling space mirrors the deterioration of Kyoŏng-jae’s mind. In another sense though, he isn’t bourgeoisie either, but a lone figure who doesn’t belong anywhere. At the end of the story, he doesn’t leave the company walls in the same sense that An or the others do—all of them with fights either won, lost, or looming. Kyoŏng-jae’s dusk is uniquely his own,
a separate world of non-participation, indecisiveness and lack of will, none of which have any place in a confrontation. Just as he inhabited a peripheral space during the story, so he recedes into the gathering gloom of his absolute isolation.

One should add that a text shot through with silences, muted language and unstated, deniable implications does not force one to decide which among multiple readings of a character or situation is correct. Indeed, correspondence among characters and spaces, contrasts between Ryō-sun and Kyōng-jae and between the workplace and the president’s office, and multiple readings of a given character all sound socialist themes and call discreetly for the rise of workers in colonial Korea. Those themes become richer, more resonant, and harder for a censor to locate and remove when they take the form of non-verbal expressions.13

Conclusion

[In Dusk], the awakening of the female protagonist Ryō-sun is not well depicted. We cannot find distinct figuration in which the male character completes himself as a social being (sahoein). […] In this period [of writing Dusk], Sŏr-ya’s version of confusion is the distance between the environment and characters. In the situation where characters are dying, Sŏr-ya struggles to save them (Im 1938).

Dusk has been the subject of two uncompromising evaluations. It has been hailed as a fine labor novel (nodong sosŏl), realistically depicting the historical moment in the 1930s when the mechanization of industry caused layoffs; and it has been criticized for its inability to depict the character type (chŏnhyŏng) required by socialist literature (Kwŏn 1988; Kim and Chŏng 1993; Sŏ 1999; Kim 2002). An influential statement of the latter view is Im Hwa’s negative judgment, quoted above, which argues that Ryō-sun’s transformation into a socialist worker is poorly depicted because the social environment for such a transformation was immature.

Han’s attempt to save dying characters could be read as his passion for socialist literature. Im’s basic starting point of interpretation, however, which takes Kyŏng-jae as the main character, seems mistaken given that Ryō-sun is the one who rises, overcoming great difficulty through physical work, as a socialist protagonist should. Han had the chance in 1955 to take the veils off and make Kyŏng-jae an overt socialist protagonist if he meant to. But the Kyŏng-jae of 1955 would be thoroughly familiar to a 1936 audience: he remains wishy-washy and indecisive.

This paper has examined the literary strategies by which Han Sŏr-ya portrayed the making of a socialist worker despite the pressures of external censorship. In order to show the invisible but pervasive influence of censorship in the 1936 text, I compared it with the revised 1955 version and demonstrated the presence of subversive content in installments immediately adjacent to dates

13 By now, it should be made clear that I did not intend to reduce the various interpretations of space and characters to a general rubric of Han’s counter-censorship strategy. On the contrary, it is my hope that I added another layer of a nuanced reading to multiple contexts of space and characters in the story through the consideration of the colonial environment of textual production.
where Han chose to skip a publication. I also discussed the close correspondence between class and space in the 1936 text, which Han deploys to reinforce and manipulate relationships among the characters, most notably that between Ryōsun and her foils. Through the lens of this space-character identity, I reread the climactic scene where employers and workers face off, and argued that the rising power of workers shines through their intrusion into the president’s room and through the demise of Kyong-jae. By setting up contrasts among his characters, and weaving them into contrasts and ultimately confrontations of space, Han not only conjures up a socialist scene, but makes it a multidimensional presence that frustrates attempts to locate it in a single source. A step ahead of the censors, Han could insert these themes and structures into his serial, and so produce a powerful socialist novel.

GLOSSARY

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<td>chŏnhyang munin</td>
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Hwanghon | 黃昏 |
Im Hwa | 林和 |
Kang Kyŏng-ae | 姜敬愛 |
nodong sosŏl | 勞動小説 |
sanŏmmyŏn | 產業面 |
sanŏp hamnihwa | 產業合理化 |
Yi Ki-yŏng | 李箕永 |

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