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Marshall R. Pihl and His Views on How to Enrich Korean Literature in Translation*

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ABSTRACT

Marshall R. Pihl (1933–1995) was a leading American translator and scholar in the field of Korean literature. He translated major works of modern Korean fiction, taught Korean literature at US universities, and wrote book reviews and articles about Korean literature and/in translation. In this article, Pihl's views of how to translate modern Korean fiction are discussed in detail by comparing his translations of two Korean short stories—Kim Sŭngok's "Sŏul 1964 nyŏn kyŏul" ("Seoul: 1964 Winter") and Chŏn Kwangyong's "Kkŏppittan Ri" ("Kapitan Ri") with his self-revisions thereof. The two initial translations were published in a Korean periodical in 1966 and 1971, respectively, and the self-revisions appeared in a 1993 anthology of modern Korean stories. It is argued that a detailed comparison of the initial translations and self-revisions reveal not only Pihl's evolution as a translator, but also provide an insight into how to enrich Korean literature in translation. This study also discusses Pihl's approach to translation and his qualities as a cultural translator.

Keywords: modern Korean fiction, the translator's self-revision, foreignization, "Seoul: 1964 Winter," "Kapitan Ri"

Introduction

Korean literature in translation has been a major source of scholarly interest. Literary critics and scholars, including those in the discipline of translation studies, have addressed a wide range of issues including the "globalization" of Korean literature (Chŏng 2013; Yu 2017), the publication and circulation of Korean novels in a foreign country (Ch'oe 2017; Jeong-yeon Kim 2015), translation methods and translatorial perspectives (Kim Yŏngsin 2016; Yi Chimin 2018), and comparisons of styles and rhetorical features in the source and target texts (Cho and Cho 2017; Oh, Kim, and Montgomery 2016). These studies have not only expanded the scope of discussion about Korean literature, but also advanced a theorization of translation practice in that field.

However, previous research has limitations in three respects. First, reviews of translations revolve around digressions from the source text (original text), especially non-equivalence (mistranslations) below the sentence level (Kim Taejung 2016; Sin 2017). It can thus be argued that translation studies researchers should address the wider issues of translation practice and turn their attention to what is *gained in translation* rather than *lost in translation*. Second, there is still a lack of systematic research on expert translators of Korean literature. In European

countries, translators such as Harriet de Onís and Samuel Beckett have been analyzed from various methodological perspectives to explore what could shape translation(s) in a particular sociocultural context (Cordingley 2018; Munday 2008). Third, it is necessary to investigate the translator's self-revisions, as most researchers still focus on comparing retranslations (translations of a work that has been already translated into the same language). A detailed analysis of an expert translator's self-revisions could reveal what constitutes a better translation.

Against this background, this study analyzes two translations by Marshall R. Pihl, the late American translator and scholar specializing in modern Korean literature, and Pihl's revisions of his own translations, in order to elicit his perspectives on how to enrich Korean literature in translation. Specifically, Pihl's translations of Kim Süngok's "Söul 1964 nyön kyöul" (서울 1964년 겨울) and Chön Kwangyong's "Kköppittan Ri" (꺼삐딴 리) are compared with his translation revisions, respectively, to explore what he saw as a more faithful reflection of the Korean texts. It should be noted that Pihl's initial translations and self-revisions were published with more than twenty-two years between them, meaning that details of revision may show his evolutionary path to an ideal translator of Korean literature.

Translation of Modern Korean Fiction and Marshall R. Pihl

Over the last decade, Korean literature has gained increasing visibility and recognition in many parts of the world. Notable examples are best-selling novels, such as Shin Kyung-sook's *Please Look after Mom*, Kim Young-ha's *Your Republic Is Calling You*, and Han Kang's *The Vegetarian* and *Human Acts*. These novels enjoyed public acclaim from the outset, but their global success would have been impossible without translation. Indeed, the growing popularity of Korean fiction has drawn renewed attention to practical problems with translation of Korean literature (Cho 2015).

In South Korea there have been systematic efforts to bring Korean literature to readers around the world (Kwön 2017, Ch. 12). Foundations and government-funded institutions, such as the Literature Translation Institute of Korea, have implemented various programs on the translation and dissemination of Korean literature. In particular, their funding policies have had significant effects on decisions as to *who translates what for whom* (King 2002). However, there were also individuals who played a vital role in translating and promoting Korean literature. Several of them worked with funding agencies and academic institutions to produce literary anthologies in translation. For example, Kevin O'Rourke, Peter H. Lee, Marshall R. Pihl, and Bruce and Ju-Chan Fulton translated and edited *Ten Korean Short Stories* (1981), *Modern Korean Literature: An Anthology* (1990), *Land of Exile: Contemporary Korean Fiction* (1993/2007), and *Modern Korean Fiction: An Anthology*

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¹ Inbound translators are those who translate the original text into their native (or first) language, while outbound translators are those who translate the text into their non-native language.

(2005), respectively.

Marshall Pihl (1933–1995) was a first-generation inbound translator of modern Korean literature.¹ He was the first Westerner to earn a graduate degree in Korean language and literature at Seoul National University and the first Fulbright student grantee in South Korea (Shim et al. 2010, 41). In 1970, he won the first annual Modern Korean Literature Translation Award sponsored by *The Korea Times* for his translation of “Nami and the Taffyman.”² In 1974, he became the first person to receive a Ph.D. in Korean literature from a US university (Harvard University).³ Until his death in 1995, he had taught and studied Korean literature at Harvard University and the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. By various standards, he was a trail-blazer and “bicultural” translator (see Pihl 1990, 27–30).

Pihl translated works that represent modern Korean literature. Beginning in the 1960s, he (re)translated a number of short stories including Kim Sūngok’s “Sōul 1964 nyōn kyōul” (Seoul, 1964 Winter), Chōn Kwangyong’s “Kkōppittan Ri” (Kapitan Ri), Kim Tongni’s “Yōngma” (The Post Horse Curse), Cho Chōngnae’s “Yuhyōng ūi ttang” (Land of Exile), and Pak Wansō’s “Kyōul nadūri” (Winter Outing). Many of these translations were published in periodicals, such as *Korea Journal*, and have influenced international readers’ views of Korea. Pihl’s work is still seen as an important contribution to promoting Korean culture and as a guide to modern Korean literature (Fulton 1999; O’Rourke 1996). Nevertheless, there are few in-depth studies on Pihl and his translations.⁴

A detailed investigation of Pihl and his translation revisions would be meaningful in two respects. First, it would shed light on the role of Pihl as a translator specializing in modern Korean fiction. He deserves greater credit for contributing to building a cultural bridge between South Korea and the rest of the world. Second, an analysis of his language choices would enhance our understanding of how to overcome a wide gap between the source and target languages/cultures. It has been shown that culture-specific references can be a major impediment to bringing Korean literature to a wider readership and that an effective and faithful translation of cultural elements is key to disseminating Korean literature (Kwōn Osuk 2014; No 2013).

Texts Analyzed in the Study

In this article, Pihl’s translations of two Korean short stories and his self-revisions thereof are compared in detail to elicit his views of how to better translate Korean literature. As will be shown later, this comparison reveals multifarious aspects of what could enrich English translations of Korean literature. The two Korean stories were selected for two reasons. First, they are works of lofty standing in Korean

² *The Korea Times*, November 22, 2018, “Korea Times History,” http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2018/11/229_12826.html (accessed March 9, 2019).

³ Center for Korean Studies, <https://ckslib.manoa.hawaii.edu/archives-and-manuscripts-collections/marshall-r-pihl-papers> (accessed April 5, 2019). See also “Kwōn Yōngmin ūi munhak k’onsōt’ū,” <http://www.muncon.net/88> (accessed April 5, 2019).

⁴ Only a few studies discuss Pihl’s work in detail. However, they are mostly related to his work on *p’ansori* (see, for example, Yoon 2012).

literature. They won the Tongin Literary Award (Tongin munhaksang 동인문학상), one of South Korea's most prestigious literary prizes,⁵ and have been cited in school textbooks as fine examples of early modern literature. Second, the source texts seem to best reveal the diversity of Pihl's translations. As will be shown in the next section, the source texts have several lexico-grammatical characteristics, which make it possible to explore Pihl's approaches to translation at multiple levels of language.

Details of the texts analyzed in this article are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Texts Analyzed in the Study

Source Text (ST)	Pihl's initial translation	Pihl's self-revision
Original text	Source: <i>Korea Journal</i> (KJ)	Source: <i>Land of Exile</i> (LE)
"Söul 1964 nyön kyöul" 서울 1964년 겨울 (Kim Süngok, 1965)	"Seoul-1964-Winter" (November 1966, 20-33)	"Seoul: 1964, Winter" (1993, 84-101)
"Kköppittan Ri" 까뻬안 리 (Chön Kwangyong, 1962)	"Kapitan Lee" (January 1971, 29-41)	"Kapitan Ri" (1993, 58-83)

As shown in Table 1, the source texts are Kim Süngok's "Söul 1964 nyön kyöul" (1965) and Chön Kwangyong's "Kköppittan Ri" (1962). Pihl's translations of these texts were published in *Korea Journal* (hereafter referred to as "KJ") in 1966 and 1971, respectively, while his self-revisions appeared in *Land of Exile: Contemporary Korean Fiction* (hereafter "LE"), a 1993 anthology co-edited by Marshall Pihl and Bruce & Ju-Chan Fulton.⁶

For analysis, ten short extracts from KJ were compared with their corresponding segments in LE. These extracts were carefully chosen to show how Pihl revised his own translations at the levels of word, grammar, and syntax.

Comparative Analysis of Pihl's Translation and Self-revision

In this section, short extracts from KJ are compared with their corresponding segments in LE to reveal the whats and whys of Pihl's self-revision. Below are ten sets of parallel texts from KJ and LE (Extracts 1-10), along with seven titles encapsulating Pihl's revision methods.

Transliterating Cultural Terms with In-text Explanation

Extract 1 demonstrates that Pihl retained Korean cultural elements in a creative way.

⁵ This award was established in 1956 to commemorate Kim Tongin, a novelist and pioneer in modern Korean literature. It is often recognized as one of the three major literary awards in South Korea, along with the Yi Sang Literary Award and the Hyöndaeh Munhak [Modern Literature] Award.

⁶ These self-revisions were reprinted in various books, including an expanded edition of *Land of Exile* (2007), *Modern Korean Fiction: An Anthology* (2005), and *Asian Publishers' Modern Korean Literature* (2015).

Extract 1 (“Söul 1964 nyön kyöul”)

ST: “그 사실은 완전히 김형의 소유입니다.” 우리의 말투는 점점 서로를 존중해 가고 있었다. *Kü sasil ün wanjõnhi Kim hyõng üi soyu imnida. Uri üi malt’u nün chõmjõm söro rül chonjunghae kago issõtta.* (260)

KJ: “That fact is entirely your property alone, Kim.” Our tone of voice reflected a growing respect for each other. (22)

LE: That fact is entirely your property alone, Kim hyõng. He called me “older brother” as our speech conveyed our growing familiarity with each other. (89)

In Extract 1, 형 *hyõng* (兄) is not a kinship term (a male’s elder brother); it is a polite form of address that an adult male uses for a man of roughly the same age. In KJ, the translator omits it to smooth out the “cultural bump” (Leppihalme 1995), while in LE he transliterates the seemingly untranslatable word and adds a brief in-text explanation (i.e. He called me “older brother”). It is noteworthy that, in LE as a whole, the translator uses *hyõng* 15 times, making the reader increasingly familiar with the exotic word.⁷

Conveying the Expressive Meaning

Extract 2 shows that Pihl tried to convey various types of meaning in a word.

Extract 2 (“Kköppittan Ri”)

ST: “여보, 당꾸 부대가 들어왔어요. 거리는 온통 사람들 사태가 났는데 집안에 처박혀 뭘 하고 있어요 . . . 나가 보아요. 마우재가 들어왔어요.” *Yõbo, tanghku pudae ka türõ wassõyo. Kõri nün ont’ong saram tül sat’ae ka nannunde chiban e ch’õbakh’yõ mwõl hago issõyo . . . Naga poayo. Maujae ka türõwassõyo* (49)

KJ: Dear, there’s a tank unit in town and the streets are just packed with people! Whatever are you doing here all alone in the house? . . . Come out and see, dear! The Russians are here! (34)

LE: . . . “Come out and see, dear! The Russkis are here!” (69)

In Extract 2, the Korean (Hamgyõng) dialect *maujae* 마우재 (毛子) is translated in a slightly different way. In KJ, the translator renders it as “Russians,” with the result that it is difficult to appreciate how the narrator (the central character’s wife) feels about the Russians. In LE, however, the translator emphasizes the “expressive meaning” of the dialect (Baker 2018, 12) by replacing “Russians” (a non-emotive, general word) with the slang “*Russkis*” (a pejorative ethnic slur used to refer to the Russians).⁸ It should be noted that this lexical change is congruent with the way the narrator is characterized in the story. In another conversation with her husband, the narrator expresses her opposition to Russia, saying “[Don’t] push our boy into

⁷ Peter H. Lee (1990, 220) and Chong-wha Chung (1995, 335) also translated “Söul 1964 nyön kyöul” into English. They rendered 김형 (Kim hyõng) as “Mr. Kim” or “you.”

⁸ Expressive meaning relates to “the speaker’s feelings or attitude rather than to what words and utterances refer to” (Baker 2018, 12). For example, there is a significant difference between *Don’t complain* and *Don’t whinge*.

the middle of that ‘Raise the Red Flag’ business” (LE, 72).

De-domesticating Culture-Specific References

In literary translation, culture-specific references (i.e., *realia*) have been used as an important yardstick against which to judge the translated text (La Shure 2010; Schirmer 2013). The following two extracts show how Pihl handled cultural references.

Extract 3 (“Söul 1964 nyön kyöul”)

ST: 어떤 빨딩의 옥상에서는 소주 광고의 네온싸인이 열심히 명멸하고 있었고 Öttön ppilting üi oksang esö nün soju kwanggo üi neon ssain i yölsimhi myöngmyölhago issötko (265)

KJ: [A] neon sign advertising wine on the roof of a building was flashing enthusiastically (28)

LE: [A] neon sign advertising soju on the roof of a building flashed enthusiastically (92)

In Extract 3, there is a marked difference in the way *soju* 소주 is translated. In KJ, the translator uses the so-called “domestication” strategy to make the text conform to the target reader’s expectation and knowledge; in LE, however, he performs “foreignization” to bring the reader toward the source culture (Venuti 2008).⁹ It can thus be said that the translator *de-domesticates* the culture-specific item and defamiliarizes the familiar.¹⁰

Extract 4 (“Söul 1964 nyön kyöul”)

ST: 내가 만일 라디오의 박사 게임 같은 데에 나가게 돼서 Nae ka manil radio üi Paksa kkeim kat’ün te e nagage twaesö (257)

KJ: . . . just in case I got in on something like Information Please on the radio (21)

LE: . . . just in case I got on some kind of quiz program on the radio (87)

In Extract 4, the translator uses different approaches when translating the cultural reference 박사 게임 *Paksa kkeim* [Experts’ Game], a “close approximation of a radio quiz show that aired in South Korea in the early 1960s” (Pak 2010, 40). In KJ, he domesticates it as “Information Please,” an American radio program that aired on NBC from May 1938 to April 1951 (Sher 2013, 110), as in cases of Americanization, such as *cricket* → *baseball* and *fútbol* [soccer] → *baseball* (Molina and Hurtado Albir 2002, 509). In LE, however, he deletes the American cultural reference by using a generalization method.

Deleting Irrelevant Content

Extract 5 shows that Pihl did not blindly stick to the original text.

⁹ In Palumbo’s (2009) words, domestication is “a global strategy of translation aimed at producing a transparent, fluent style in the TL [target language]” (38), while foreignization is “a translation strategy aimed at rendering the ST [source text] conspicuous in the target text or, in other words, at avoiding the fluency that would mask its being a translation” (48).

¹⁰ De-domestication is different from foreignization in that the former means foreignizing a domesticated text or removing elements of domestication from translation. Around the time of the publication of LE, *soju* began to gain currency in the world, so there might be no need for clarification (Fulton 1992).

Extract 5 (“Kköppittan Ri”)

ST: 평당 50만 환을 호가하는 도심지에 타일을 바른 2층 양옥을 소유하게 되었다. *P'yōng-dang 50man hwan ŭl hogahanūn tosimji e t'ail ŭl parūn 2ch'ūng yangok ŭl soyuhage toēotta.* (41)

KJ: [H]e had himself a two-story Western-style building in downtown Seoul where land was extremely expensive—500,000 *hwan* a *p'yōng*. (30)

LE: [H]e had a two-story Western-style building in downtown Seoul where land was extremely expensive. (60)

In KJ above, the translator transliterates the cultural terms *p'yōng* 坪 (坪) and *hwan* 환 (圓). In LE, however, he deliberately omits the parenthetical em-dash phrase (“500,000 *hwan* a *p'yōng*”) probably because the defunct currency *hwan* is unintelligible to contemporary readers and because the predicate adjective (“[extremely] expensive”) alone can convey the core meaning of ST. It should be noted that omission is not always a negative phenomenon; it is a valid translation strategy that requires confident decision-making on the part of the translator (Dimitriu 2004).

Using Punctuation Marks Resourcefully

The three extracts below reveal the use that Pihl made of punctuation marks.

Extract 6 (“Sōul 1964 nyōn kyōul”)

ST: 우리는 다시 침묵 속으로 떨어져서 술잔만 만지작거리고 있었다. 개새끼, 그게 꿈틀거리 는 게 아니라고 해도 괜찮다. 하고 나는 생각하고 있었다. *Uri nūn tasi ch'immuk sok ūro ttōrōjyōsō sulchan man manjijakkōrigo issōtta. Kaesaekki, kū ke kkumt'ulgōrinūn ke anirago haedo kwaench'ant'a, hago na nūn saenggakhago issōtta.* (257)

KJ: We fell into another silence and were just fingering our wine bowls. *Sonofabitch. If he doesn't think that's wriggling, it's O.K. by me!* I was thinking. (21)

LE: We fell into another silence and were just fingering our drinks. *Sonofabitch. If he doesn't think that's wriggling, it's okay by me.* I was thinking. (87)

In “Sōul 1964 nyōn kyōul,” single quotation marks are used when the I-focalizer speaks his mind (to the implied reader).¹¹ This stylistic, narrative feature is inscribed differently in KJ and LE, as shown in Extract 6. In KJ, the translator uses the single quotation marks to reveal the I-focalizer's innermost feelings about his interlocutor (“he” in Extract 6). In LE, however, the translator deletes the quotation marks and italicizes the focalizer's interior monologue, thereby giving more “narrative prominence” to his mental representation (Cho and Cho 2017).¹²

¹¹ The focalizer means the “perceived center of consciousness, ‘who’ may or may not...be identical with the narrator . . . [or] the point from which the narrative is perceived as being presented at any given moment” (O'Neill 1996, 86). In “Sōul 1964 nyōn kyōul,” the story is narrated by the I-protagonist's consciousness.

¹² This may be a stylistic feature. In the same anthology (LE), the other translator (Bruce and Ju-Chan Fulton) does not italicize the character's consciousness. For example, in Hwang Sōgyōng's *A Dream of Good Fortune*, the translator writes, “Not bad, thought Tōkpae” (139).

Extract 7 (“Kköppittan Ri”)

ST: <애정에 국경이 있어요?> → *Aejöng e kukhyöng i issöyo?* (43, angle brackets in the original text)

KJ: *Can love know any national boundaries?* (31)

LE: “*Can love know any national boundaries?*” (63)

In Extract 7, the central figure is reading his daughter’s letter hinting that she wants to marry a foreigner. Here the alteration in translation is more subtle than that in Extract 6. In KJ, the translator encodes the character’s subvocalization in italics, but in LE he adds double quotation marks (those italicized) to differentiate silent reading from other interior monologue. This unusual mix of punctuation marks can also be found elsewhere. For example, the reader can see a slogan that reads “*Destroy Pro-Japanese and Betrayers of the People!*” (LE, 66).¹³

Extract 8 (“Kköppittan Ri”)

ST: 미국에 가 있는 딸 나미. 본래의 이름은 일본식의 나미꼬(奈美子)다. 해방 후 그것이 거슬린다기에 나미로 불렀고 새로 기류계에 올릴 때에는 꼬(子)자를 완전히 떼어 버렸다. 나미짱! *Miguk e ka innün ttal Nami. Pollae ü irüm ün ilbonsik üi Namikko ‘da. Haebang hu kü kösi kösüllindagi e Nami ro pullötko saero kiryugye e ollil ttae e nün kko-ja rül wanjönhi tteö pöryötta. Namitchang!* (42)

KJ: His daughter, Nami, was in America. Her name had been once the typically Japanese, Nami-ko. But he had dropped the “ko” for good when he filed his residence papers after the liberation, since such names had begun to sound awkward then. Dear Nami, little Nami-ko! (30)

LE: His daughter, Nami, was in America. Her name had once been typically Japanese—Namiko. But he had dropped the “ko” for good when he filed his residence papers after Liberation, since such names had begun to sound awkward then. Dear Nami, little Namiko! (61)

In “Kköppittan Ri,” the main character rids his daughter’s name (“Namiko”) of the Japanese syllable “ko” (子) to conceal his past as a pro-Japanese collaborator. However, as shown in Extract 8, he recalls the pre-Liberation days and silently calls his daughter *Namitchang* 나미짱, a Japanese-style pet name consisting of the Korean name “Nami” and the Japanese diminutive suffix *chan* ちゃん (“dear” and “little”).

Interestingly, the main character’s dual identity manifests itself in free indirect speech. In the underlined part of LE, the translator renders *Namitchang* as “Dear Nami, little Namiko.” This is an example of “cultural translation” (Maitland 2017), in the sense that the translator unpacks multiple meanings of the original text and a hybridization of two linguo-cultural perspectives (Japanese and Korean cultures) is inscribed in a third language (English).

It is important to note that, in the process of revision, the translator de-phenates the name “Nami-ko.” From the main character’s perspective, “Namiko”

¹³ In the same anthology, Bruce and Ju-Chan Fulton do not italicize the protagonist’s reading of a poem (139).

is a natural, perfect Japanese name, while “Nami-ko” is an artificial nickname in which the hyphen exposes the Korean identity. In LE, therefore, the two opposing identities are represented more clearly through de-hyphenation.

Using Different Romanization

Extract 9 shows how careful Pihl was in romanizing source-language words.

Extract 9 (“Kköppittan Ri”)

ST: 스텐코프는 이인국 박사의 손을 부서져라 쥐면서 외쳤다.

“꺼삐딴·리, 스파씨보.”

이인국 박사는 입을 헤벌리고 웃기만 했다. 마음의 감옥에서 해방된 것만 같았다.

“아진, 아진 오첸 하라쇼.”

Sút'enk'op'ü nün Yi In'guk paksa üi son ül pusöjyöra chwimyönsö oech'yötta. Kköppittan Ri, sübassibo. Yi In'guk paksa nün ip ül hebölligo utki man haetta. Maüm üi kamok esö haebangdoen köt man kat'atta. Ajin, ajin, och'en harasyo. (59)

KJ: Stenkov took Dr. Lee In-guk's hand in his crushing grip and roared as he squeezed.

—Kapitan Lee, *spasibo!*

Dr. Lee In-guk's mouth fell open and he could only laugh. It was as if he had been released from a spiritual prison.

—Ajin, ajin . . . Ochin horosho! (39)

LE: Stenkov took Dr. Yi Inguk's hand in his crushing grip and roared as he squeezed.

“Kapitan Ri, *spasibo!*”

Dr. Yi Inguk's mouth fell open and he could only laugh. It was as if he had been released from a spiritual prison.

“Ochen, ocheno . . . Ochen khorosho!” (79–80)

In Extract 9, the translator makes two important modifications. First, in KJ, he translates the main character's surname 이 (李) as “Lee,” a typical Romanization of the surname in South Korea; in LE, however, he transforms “Lee” into “Yi” (“Yi Inguk” as a Korean) or “Ri” (“Kapitan Ri” as called by the Russian military officer). This orthographic change is not coincidental, in that Ri is North Korea's Romanization of 李 and thus fits well with Russia (the former Soviet Union), a country that has influenced North Korea's language (see, for example, Lankov 2014).¹⁴ In LE, the two slightly different surnames (Yi vs. Ri) may symbolize the main character's chameleon-like qualities.¹⁵

Second, the translator changes the method of transcribing what the main character says in Russian. In KJ, the translator considers both the Korean letters (“Ajin, ajin . . . Och'en harasyo”) and the phonetic values of the Russian expression

¹⁴ Andrei Lankov, “North Korean Dialect as a Soviet Russian Translation,” *NK News*, August 21, 2014.

¹⁵ Pihl, Fulton, and Fulton (2007, xi) describe the main character as a “parasitic Korean who forsakes his ethnic identity to buy the favor of a succession of foreigners—Japanese, Russian, and American.”

(очень хорошо, *Ochin horosho*). In LE, however, he follows a transcription rule for Russian (“*Ochen khorosho*”) and makes a matching false start (“*Ochen, ocheno. . .*”), thereby making the translation more plausible and normative.

Reconstructing Syntax

Extract 10 demonstrates how Pihl preserved the syntactic features of the original text.

Extract 10 (“*Söul 1964 nyön kyöul*”)

ST: 먼저 말을 주고 받게 된 것은 나와 대학원생이었는데, 뭐 그렇고 그런 자기 소개가 끝났을 때는 나는 그가 안씨라는 성을 가진 스물다섯 살짜리 대한민국 청년, 대학 구경을 해보지 못한 나로서는 상상이 되지 않는 전공(專攻)을 가진 대학원생, 부잣집 장남이라는 걸 알았고, 그는 내가 스물다섯 살짜리 시골 출신, 고등학교는 나오고 육군사관 학교를 지원했다가 실패하고나서 군대에 갔다가 입질에 한번 걸려본 적이 있고 지금은 구청 병사계(兵事係)에서 일하고 있다는 것을 아마 알았을 것이다.

Mönjö mal ül chugo patke toen kös ün na wa taehagwönsaeng iönnünde, mwö kürök'ö kürön chagi sogae ka kkünnassül ttae nün na nün kü ka An-ssi ranün söng ül kajin sümul tasöt sal-tchari taehanmin'guk chöngnyön, taehak kugyöng ül haeboji mothan na rosö nün sangsang i toeji annün chön'gong ül kajin taehagwönsaeng, pujatchip changnam iranün köl aratko kü nün nae ka sümul tasöt sal-tchari sigol ch'ulsin, kodünghakkyo nün naogo yukkun sagwan hakkyo rül chiwönhaettaa silp'aehago nasö kundae e kattaga imjil e hanbön kölyöbon chögi itko chigüm ün kuchöng pyöngsagye esö irhago ittanün kösül ama arassül kösida. (253–254)

KJ: The conversation started off between myself and the graduate student. When some small talk and the self-introductions were over, I knew that he was a twenty-five-year-old flower of Korean youth with the name of An, a graduate student with a major I had never even dreamt of, and the oldest son of a rich family. And he knew that I was a twenty-five-year-old country boy, that I had volunteered for the Military Academy when I got out of high school only to fail and then enter the army where I caught the clap once, and that I was now working in the military affairs section of a ward office. (20)

LE: The chit-chat started off between me and the graduate student, and when the small talk and self-introductions were over I knew he was a twenty-five-year-old flower of Korean youth, a graduate student with a major that I (who hadn't even gotten close to a college) had never even dreamed of, and the oldest son of a rich family; and he probably knew that I was a twenty-five-year-old country boy, that I had volunteered for the Military Academy when I got out of high school only to fail and then enter the army, where I caught the clap once, and that I was now working in the military affairs section of a ward office. (85)

It has been argued that Kim Süngok tends toward complex syntax and in “*Söul 1964 nyön kyöul*” he uses compound and compound-complex sentences in the case of the I-focalizer narrating a situation (Kim Hyeryön 1995). In Extract 10, for example, the ST paragraph that encodes the I-focalizer’s account of An and himself is, in effect, a single sentence.

In Extract 10, the translator reconstructs syntax in the opposite way. In KJ, he divides the one-sentence paragraph into three sentences, creating the look and feel of an ordinary English narrative. In LE, however, he reverses such syntactic normalization by fusing the three sentences and inserting an abnormal “parenthetical sentence” (Leech 2008, 141; the underlined part in LE).¹⁶ The rationale behind this syntactic U-turn can be inferred from the following excerpt:

While Kim (Kim Sŭngok) tends toward long and complex sentence structures, Cho (Cho Se-hŭi, Kim’s contemporary) is terse and unadorned: in the original Korean of the excerpts given above (the openings of Kim’s “Seoul: 1964, Winter” and Cho’s “City of Machines”), Kim’s five sentences (clauses) average 111 syllables each and Cho’s 16 sentences average 23 syllables apiece; all five of Kim’s sentences are compound or compound-complex, incorporating lengthy attributive and conjunctive structures, while more than half of Cho’s are only simple, subject-object-predicate sentences. (Pihl 1990a, 23)

The above passage is Pihl’s (1990a) analysis of Kim Sŭngok’s writing style. It indicates that the translator was very attentive to syntax and that in 1990, about three years before the publication of LE, he was keenly aware of Kim’s syntactic preferences. It can thus be assumed that in syntactic terms Pihl’s denaturalizing strategy was also purposeful and well-informed.

Discussion

The previous section showed that Pihl utilized revision strategies at three levels of language: (1) using the modes of foreignization and de-domestication to preserve Korean cultural elements (at the word level), (2) altering punctuation marks and spellings to retain the intricacies of the original message (at the grammatical level), and (3) changing the architecture of sentences to reproduce the author’s language and the character’s narrative style (at the syntactic level).

The comparative analysis of KJ and LE showed that there were subtle changes in Pihl’s views of how to translate Korean literature. In LE, he placed more emphasis on cultural realia and eliminated instances of domestication that might not do justice to the original. In addition, he tried to be more attentive to detail and retained formal features of the original text. Importantly, he used the revision strategies without greatly reducing naturalness or accuracy. He narrowed cultural gaps and deleted textual elements that might undermine the readers’ understanding.

In this section, Pihl’s perspectives on translation of Korean literature are further discussed, drawing on the findings of the textual analysis conducted before.

Self-revision as Evolution

As shown in the previous section, Pihl revised his own translation in a meticulous way. His self-revision moved the reader closer to the specificities of the original

¹⁶ Parenthetical sentences are inserted into a sentence of which they are only loosely a part, breaking up the linearity of the text as the speaker/narrator spontaneously digresses (Leech 2008, 141).

Korean text and shed light on its foreign identity. In addition, the revision led to greater relevance and reception among the contemporary readers.

It is argued that, as is the case with retranslation, the translator's self-revision can be a step forward to a more faithful representation of the original text. The evolutionary path of self-revision can be inferred from the following:

[T]he accomplishment of any human action demands repetition The whole path of experience must be travelled to arrive at a translation which is self-aware. Every initial translation is clumsy. It is in the wake of this blind and faltering initial translation that the possibility of an accomplished translation arises. (Berman 1990, 3–4, as cited in Deane-Cox 2014, 3)

The translator's self-revision also occurs on a trajectory of increased closeness to the source text. It can explore the possibility of a more desirable translation and stimulate practical discussion on what could make a meaningful difference to (initial) translation. It does not represent the failure of initial translation, as stated in the following passage:

Retranslation (including the translator's self-revision) does not deny or erase the existence of previous translations. It is a fruitful endeavor that would bring previous translations to the readers here and now. Every translation has its own historicity and thus reveals the linguistic, cultural, and literary features of the time in which it was made. (Cho and Kim 2017, 109–10)

Pihl's initial translations are significant, in that they serve as a starting point for better translations and reveal practical facets of translation in the field of modern Korean literature. In addition, they are important historical records that show Pihl as an *evolving* translator. Every translation, as compared with its retranslations, is useful in eliciting diachronic perspectives on translation.

Foreign Otherness and De-domestication

As noted in the preceding section, Pihl embraced foreign otherness and encoded it variously in his self-revisions. He transliterated cultural terms such as *hyöng* (with in-text explanation) and *soju* (without any hint), while avoiding a domesticating method that could have toned down the color of Korean culture (e.g., “Kim” [instead of Kim *hyöng*], “wine,” and “Information Please”). In addition, he replicated syntactic structures of the original text, albeit with the knowledge that the resulting translation is stylistically un-English. It can thus be argued that Pihl was both a resistant and receptive translator: on the one hand, he avoided a transparent translation and confronted the contemporary Anglophone readers with the otherness of the Korean text, but on the other, he treated the foreign with respect and open-mindedness.

Foreignization (and de-domestication), as performed by Pihl, is remarkable in three respects. First, it could bring the resultant translation closer to authentic representation of the original text. It has been argued that replacing unusual features of the source text with more everyday language could distort the meanings

intended by the original author. For example, in the case of simplifying syntax for naturalness and readability, the translator could alter characterization (Lee 2018). Second, foreignized translation could give the reader the aesthetic pleasure of reading the *original* text. The pleasure of reading literature in translation lies in part in feeling aspects of otherness, be they sociocultural or linguistic (Ece 2015, 151). Translations foreignized in an appropriate way can give the readers some pause to think about the foreign, thereby enriching their cultural experience and knowledge. Third, foreignization can make the foreign comprehensible and even familiar. Critics of foreignization have insisted that foreignized translation is less intelligible than domesticated translation and that foreignness should be mitigated as much as possible to increase the marketability of translations. However, as remarked by Pihl (1970, 28), the reader (of Korean literature in translation) should not be considered a “benighted stranger.” In addition, international readers’ attitudes toward Asian literature have changed significantly so that otherness is no longer seen as unrecognizable as it may once have been (Sun 2018).

Flexibility in Foreignization

Pihl did not mechanically foreignize the source text. He resolved problems with literal translation and revised his own translations in a reader-friendly way. For example, he deleted a phrase containing irrelevant cultural terms (“*hwan*”) so as not to impede the reader’s understanding. In addition, he altered punctuation and Romanization in a way that conforms to and emphasizes the discursive norms of the target language. Generally speaking, he used the foreignizing strategy, but under certain conditions he worked to reduce negative effects of literal-*cum*-foreignizing translation.

Choosing a translation strategy is not an either-or issue. Foreignization and domestication may be played off against each other and coexist harmoniously within a given text. They encompass a wide range of possible methods such as *much less foreignized*, *slightly domesticated*, and *halfway between foreignizing and domesticating*. Retaining source-text peculiarities in translation may give rise to significant incomprehensibility and stylistic awkwardness, in which case the undue influence of foreignization should be reduced or eliminated. It would also be problematic to forcefully impose foreignization on readers in the name of defending foreign otherness.

Pihl’s flexible approach to translation may be instructive for those who review and evaluate translations of Korean literature. It appears that some literary critics and translation researchers demand unattainable degrees of formal equivalence¹⁷ and reject any form of deviation from the original text. They sometimes judge the quality of translated texts using a single method or approach.

Cultural Translator

As shown in the previous section, Pihl tried to dig below the surface-level

¹⁷ Formal equivalence means emphasizing fidelity to the lexis and grammatical structure of the source text (Nida 1964).

meanings and make cultural presuppositions clear to the readers. He did not omit complex cultural terms and instead reproduced their meanings in a creative way (e.g., *hyöng*). He also conveyed nuanced meanings of proper nouns (e.g., *maujae*, Nami-ko) and trans-created a phrase whose meaning is culturally hybrid (e.g., Dear Nami, little Namiko).

It can be argued that Pihl had four qualities of the cultural translator. First, he was a critical reader. He was meticulous in details and sought to find multiple layers of cultural meaning. Second, he was a cross-cultural interpreter. Metaphorically speaking, he had a “cultural filter” (House 1999) through which cultural elements in the source text can be guardedly ushered into the reader’s experience. It seems that he tried to find ways to unpack culturally implicit meanings in context and to preserve cultural substance in translation. Third, he was a good writer who reproduced the Korean text in natural English. He made the foreign understood in a natural English discourse and used creative language to convey cultural meanings. Fourth, he is a bicultural translator. He refused cultural essentialism and “ethnocentric violence” (Venuti 2008) and tried to relieve the tension between source and target.

In the above context, the cultural translator may be an ideal translator of Korean literature. Translators of Korean literature have been criticized for misreading the original text, rendering the source culture inaccurately, and/or using unnatural target language (see Yi Hyöngjin 2018). These problems can be conceptually related to Pihl’s qualities as a cultural translator.¹⁸ It seems that Pihl (1990, 29) perceived the cultural translator as a “successful translator,” even though he did not use the term. He rightly pointed out that a successful translator of Korean literature “(1) has a foundation in Korean literary scholarship, (2) is able to [accurately] convey the underlying spirit and essence of the original . . . (3) translates the context . . . as intended by the original author, [and] (4) is a practiced writer in the target language with a native ‘feel’ for its naturalness.”

Smooth-but-Slightly-Lumpy Mashed Potatoes

Pihl was not only a translator but a researcher in the field of Korean literature. He wrote articles and reviews about Korean literature and/in translation, some of which are related to the findings of this study. For example, in an article entitled “No More Mashed Potatoes: An Appreciation,” he describes translations/translators of Korean literature as follows:

We have to date been fed a diet dominated by unsatisfactory, unliterary translations. We have been bored by a mashed-potato sameness which gives us little basis to distinguish the style of one writer from that of another . . . We have suffered outbound Korean translators, working alone, who shamelessly rewrite the original texts, adding, deleting, and changing for their own unliterary reasons. Many of the resulting translations are lumpy and unidiomatic . . . We

¹⁸ The situation has not greatly changed since Pihl’s time. Recent discussion on translations of Korean literature still revolves around the binarism of literalness vs. naturalness and outbound vs. inbound translators. It may be helpful to review studies on Deborah Smith’s translation of *Ch’aeshikchuiija* (e.g., Yi Chimin 2018; Sin 2017; Kim Yöngsin 2016; Kim Taejung 2016).

have also suffered inbound American translators, working alone, who disregard the subtleties of the original Korean text for reasons of ignorance, overconfidence, or laziness and continue to churn out their own mashed-potato approximations of Korean literature. (Pihl 1990b, 29)

In the above passage, Pihl evaluates translations of Korean literature, using the analogy of “mashed potatoes.” He claims that translators of Korean literature make mashed potatoes that look and taste like one another. Specifically, outbound Korean translators tend to make “lumpy” translations that do not read smoothly, while inbound Western translators make their own mashed potatoes by negating the particularities of the Korean text. This diagnostic description still holds true in the sense that the tension between accuracy (or cultural otherness) and naturalness remains a significant topic of scholarly discussion.

By extending the above analogy, it is argued that what Pihl saw as a good translation is similar to *smooth-but-slightly-lumpy* mashed potatoes. These mashed potatoes are smooth and subtly sweet but are just lumpy enough to provide a rich and interesting texture. They are completely different from mashed potatoes mass-produced in factories. They are high-quality, homemade mashed potatoes that cannot be bought anywhere. Smooth-but-slightly-lumpy mashed potatoes symbolize an ideal translation in which a healthy dose of alterity is well mixed with natural target language. Small, sweet lumps in such mashed potatoes are traces of foreignness left by the translator. Lumps are acceptable and even preferable.

Concluding Remarks

In this article, Marshall Pihl’s translations and his self-revisions were examined in detail to discuss how to enhance textual representations in Korean fiction. Pihl’s methods of translation/revision were analyzed in multiple domains of language use, with follow-up discussion on Pihl as a cultural translator and his perceptions of cultural otherness in translation.

The findings of this study should be interpreted in light of two limitations. First, the editorial process of LE was not considered as a revision parameter. It may be claimed that Pihl’s translation choices were influenced in part by LE’s co-editor and other actors in the publishing house (e.g., in the case of Romanization). Pihl was certainly a primary translating agent, but it is unreasonable to assume that other actors were not influential at all. In future research, therefore, possible editorial inputs should be empirically probed to separate the translator’s decisions from institutional forces. Second, the researcher investigated only the two text sets. It is thus necessary to verify whether the findings of this study are also true of Pihl’s translations as a whole. A corpus-based study of Pihl’s self-revisions would better reveal his views of translation.

Despite the above limitations, this study has implications, too. Above all, it has called attention to an American translator who helped bring Korean literature to a wider, English-speaking readership. It is ethically right to uncover individuals whose contribution to promoting cultural others is not well known. Second, this study has enhanced our understanding of Pihl’s strategies for translation/revision. The findings may serve as a foundation on which translation researchers and literary

scholars can build to further examine what characterizes Pihl's translation style. Lastly, this study is a valuable step in understanding how to better translate Korean fiction and how to refine a translated text. The examples shown in this article can be used as reference material for translator training and literature education.

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