

*International Journal of Korean Humanities and Social Sciences*  
vol. 7/2021  
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.14746/kr.2021.07.06>

## **DEVELOPMENT OF THE KOREAN POETIC DRAMA AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE POETIC DRAMA MOVEMENT**

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**Abstract:** This paper deals with the definition and characteristics of poetic drama, and attempts to clarify the significance of poetic drama works during the time when the poetic drama movement took place. Unlike drama-poetry or plays, poetic drama is an independent art genre. It presents artistic vision through the conflict of poetics and dramas. The unity of poetic and dramatic things, which is facilitated through music, internal necessity, stage image, sound effect, and visual auditory indication, poetic drama is a part of complex art. The entire work functions as a poem and must be realized on the stage. For Choi Il-soo, in order to develop the characteristics of these poetry plays, the innatrhythm of the free verse should be embodied within these plays. He accepted Eliot's theory and tried to establish the position that

Western poetic drama works and theories are unique to Korea. This deepening perception of theory led to a poetic drama movement with the creators. In this paper, we classify its characteristics by focusing on approximately 18 poetic drama works. From 1920 to 1999, 18 representative works were classified, focusing on the completeness of the works and the remarkable artists. The characteristics of works can largely be divided into historical, narrative, reality, and philosophy. The meaning of this classification can serve as an opportunity for poetic dramas to advance into more diverse topics or forms. The poetic drama movement was dominated by critics and poets with the aim of pursuing independent Korean art works, and although it failed in performance and popularization, it was an achievement of the times to give a glimpse into the possibility of poetic drama. Poetic drama can act as a new element in the genre of poetry and drama that are losing original literary character, and there is a need to revive in Korean literature.

**Keywords:** Korean poetic drama; T.S.Eliot; Choi Il-soo; the poetic drama movement; the history of Korean poetic drama.

### 한국 시극의 전개양상과 시극운동의 의의

**초록:** 본고는 시극에 대한 정의와 특징을 다루며, 시극 운동이 전개되었던 시대 상황과 시극 작품의 의의를 규명하고자 한다. 시극은 극시나 희곡과 달리 독립된 하나의 예술장르이다. 시적인 것과 극적인 것의 충돌과 발생을 통해 예술적 비전을 제시한다. 시적인 것과 극적인 것의 합일에 더해 음악, 내적 필연성, 무대 이미지, 음향 효과, 시각적 청각적 지시등을 통해, 시극은 복합적인 예술의 한 부분이며, 작품 전체가 한편의 시로써 기능하며, 무대에서 실현되어야 한다는 것이다. 최일수는 이러한 시극의 특징을 발전시키기 위해 자유시의 내재율을 극속에 형상화해야 한다고 생각했다. 그는 엘리엇의 이론을 받아들이며 서양의 시극작품과 이론을 한국만의 것으로 정립하려고 애썼다. 이런 심화된 이론의 인식은 창작자들과 함께 시극 운동으로 이어졌다. 본고에서는 약 18 편의 시극 작품을 중심으로 그 성격을 분류하고자 한다. 1920년부터 시작해서 1999년까지 작품의 완성도와 주목할 만한 작가를 중심으로 대표적인 작품 18 편을 분류했다. 작품이 지닌 그 특징은 크게 역사성, 설화성, 현실성, 철학성으로 나눌 수 있다. 이런 분류의 의미는 시극이 좀 더 다양한 주제나 형식으로 나아가게 만드는 계기가 될 수 있다. 한국의 시극 운동은 독립된 한국의 예술 작품을 추구하자는 목적하에 평론가들과 시인들이 주를 이루었고, 공연화와 대중화에 있어서 실패를 거두었지만, 시극에 대한 가능성을 엿볼수 있는 시대적 성과였다. 시극은 독창적인 문학성을 상실해가는 시와 극의 장르에도 새로운 요소로 작용할 수 있으며, 한국 문학에서 다시 부활해야 할 필요성을 가지고 있다.

**핵심어:** 한국 시극; T.S.Eliot; 최일수; 시극운동; 한국시극사.

## **ROZWÓJ KOREAŃSKIEGO DRAMATU POETYCKIEGO ORAZ ZNACZENIE RUCHU DRAMATU POETYCKIEGO**

**Abstrakt:** Niniejszy artykuł mierzy się z próbą definicji i charakterystyki dramatu poetyckiego, jak i usiłuje ustalić znaczenie dzieł dramatycznych w czasie funkcjonowania ruchu dramatu poetyckiego. W przeciwieństwie do sztuk czy poezji dramatycznej, dramat poetycki jest odrębnym gatunkiem. Wizja artystyczna jest uwidaczniana w konflikcie poetyki i dramatu. Jedność poetyki i dramatu, osiągnana przez muzykę, wewnętrzny przymus, obraz sceniczny efekty dźwiękowe, wizualne odniesienia publiczności sprawiają, że dramat poetycki jest częścią sztuki ujmowanej kompleksowo. Całe dzieło funkcjonuje jak poemat i musi być realizowane na scenie. Zdaniem Choi Il-soo, by rozwinąć opis tych sztuk poetyckich należy zachować w nich wewnętrzne zasady wolnego wiersza. Przyjął on więc koncepcję Eliota i podjął próbę opracowania podstaw zakładających, że zachodnie dramaty poetyckie oraz teorie są atypowe dla Korei. Ten pogłębiający się odbiór teorii doprowadził do wykształcenia się ruchu dramatu poetyckiego, W artykule dokonana zostanie klasyfikacja cech charakterystycznych na podstawie około 18 dzieł dramatycznych. Wybrane osiemnaście dzieł, które powstałe w latach 1920-1999 sklasyfikowano według kryterium ukończenia i pełności pracy jak i ze względu na uznanie artysty. Opisy dzieł mogą być ogólnie podzielone na historyczne, narracyjne, realistyczne i filozoficzne. Klasyfikacja ta może stać się punktem wyjścia dla dramatów poetyckich do przekształcenia w bardziej zróżnicowane formy lub tematy. Ruch dramatu poetyckiego został zdominowany przez krytyków i poetów, których głównym celem było popularyzowanie niezależnych dzieł sztuki koreańskiej, i mimo, że nie zyskał on wielu odbiorców ani na popularności, to uznaje się go za znaczne osiągnięcie ówczesności, pozwalające na wgląd w możliwości dramatów poetyckich. Mogą one być traktowane jako nowy element w gatunkach lirycznych i dramatycznych, tracących swój pierwotny charakter literacki a które należy odzyskać w literaturze koreańskiej.

**Słowa kluczowe:** koreański dramat poetycki; T.S.Eliot; Choi Il-soo; ruch dramatu poetyckiego; historia koreańskiego dramatu poetyckiego.

## 1. Introduction

This paper deals with the definition and characteristics of poetic drama, and attempts to clarify the significance of poetic drama works during the time when the poetic movement took place. Unlike drama-poetry or plays, poetic drama is an independent art genre. It presents artistic vision through the conflict of poetics and dramas. In addition, it becomes a work by combining various genres such as acting of the actors, conflict, directing, music, art, and dance. This paper examines the existing definition of poetic drama and the discussion on the poetic drama theory. Among them, I would like to criticize the differences and commonalities, focusing on the discussions that took place between Choi Il-soo and T.S. Eliot. Why did they continue their persistent exploration and creation of poetic dramas? The reason for this is that they thought of poetic drama as a genre that could complete the peak of art by maximizing the characteristics of poetry and play. For Choi Il-soo, in order to develop the characteristics of these poetry plays, the innatrhythm of the free verse should be embodied within these plays. He accepted Eliot's theory and tried to establish the position that Western poetic drama works and theories are unique to Korea. This is because, Choi Il-soo thought of the art of poetic drama as something that can be achieved through poetic necessity and dramatic necessity, and that it could become a genre based on the absolute spirit and globalization of art.

This deepening perception of theory led to a poetic drama movement with the creators. This paper aims to examine the development and meaning of the poetic drama movement in the late 1950s and the 1960s, the most active period in the history of poetic drama. Korean poetic drama began in 1920 with Kim Myung-soon's *朝露의 花夢* (*Morning Dew's Happy Dream*) (published in 창조 創造). This work deals with the jealousy, conflict, and love surrounding the relationship between the characters. Following this work, the creation of and research on poetic drama have had a history of about 100 years, continuing until the 2000s. While the creation of and research on poetic drama works have not gradually expanded, they have continued little by little. However, poetic drama theorists and researchers are rare to come across, and it is somewhat difficult to find literature data because poetic theaters are rarely staged. In this paper, we classify its characteristics by focusing on approximately 18 poetic

drama works. From 1920 to 1999, 18 representative works were classified, focusing on the completeness of the works and the remarkable artists. The characteristics of works can largely be divided into historical, narrative, reality, and philosophy. The meaning of this classification can serve as an opportunity for poetic dramas to advance into more diverse topics or forms. In addition, research on and creation of poetic dramas can function as a new path to the quiet world of modern art. With the development of science and technology, humans and the world have started to lose creativity and imagination. In Korea, where the individuality of poetry and play has seen a decline, the role of poetic drama as a comprehensive art (including music, art, and dance) is important.

Existing studies on these poetic dramas have often been published as academic papers, rather than as degree papers. While most of the academic papers on the subject have been studies on individual writers, there have been papers that were identified to bring out the perspective of poetic drama history and identified as being comparative studies that drew a comparison of poetic drama with other genres. Even though poetic drama works have a history of 100 years, there have been very few studies conducted on the subject. Researches centered on individual writers are being conducted, focusing on the content analysis corresponding to the situation of the times. The existing papers focus on domestic writers such as Park Ah-ji, Shin Dong-yeop, Kim Myung-soon, Park Se-young, and Jang Ho, who are known to be poetic drama writers. The study of poetic dramas is focused toward some writers because of the narrowness of poetic drama works. Studies analyzing the history of modern poetic drama in Korea include papers written by Park Jung-ho, Lee Sang-ho, and Lim Seung-bin.

Park Jung-ho studied the characteristics of poetic drama along with its formation process (박정호 Park Jung-ho 1997), and Lee Sang-ho studied the works of poetic drama in a chronological order and analyzed the historical situation and contents of the poetic drama movement, which had been insufficient (이상호 Lee Sang-ho 2013). Lim Seung-bin analyzed the verse and dramatic form of the work, focusing on the poetic dramas of the 1920s (임승빈 Lim Seung-bin 2002). Lee Hyun-won focused on the visualization of poetic dramas and analyzed their development. In particular, he identified the dialogue of poetry dramas by dividing it into poetry-centered dialogue and drama-centered dialogue. It is characterized by analyzing the

process of dramatization, by dividing it into dramatization by content and dramatization by visual media (이현원 Lee Hyun-won 2009). Kim Dong-hyun sought the genre characteristics of poetic dramas by focusing on the poetic dramas of Shin Dong-yeop and Choi In-hoon (김동현 Kim Dong-hyun 2013).

Specific theory books on poetic dramas include the books of Lee Seung-ha and Choi Il-soo. Lee Seung-ha's writings are very small, and his theory and work analysis of poetic dramas contain very popular content (이승하 Lee Seung-ha 2014). In this paper, the discussion is focused towards the theory of Choi Il-soo, who participated in the study of poetic dramas during the 1960s along with the writers. However, his theory contains content that analyzes and agrees/refutes the theory of poetry put forth by T.S. Eliot. However, in his attempt to refute Eliot's theory, Choi Il-soo failed to provide specific examples and evidences (최일수 Choi Il-soo 1976). The discussion will be brought out in detail in this section.

## **2. Definition of poetic drama and the theory of poetic drama in Korea**

### **2.1 Definition of poetic drama**

Poetic drama is a completely new art form. It is distinct from poetry and drama. A poetic drama requires two things, namely poetic and dramatic, but focuses a little more on the dramatic things. A dramatic-poetry does not presuppose a performance, but more of poetic things. Raising awareness about the definition and value of poetic drama is key to visualizing a new future and grasping the various literary worlds. Poetic drama is a literary genre in which two different genres –poetry and play– swirl and collide with each other.

However, poetic drama is not a combination of poetry and plays, nor is it an attempt to seek novelty with the help of other genres of art, such as movies or plays. Poetic drama is a new genre of drama that is completely different from dramatic-poetry, which is characterized by the presence of dramatic elements in poetry (최일수 Choi Il-soo 1976: 870). In addition, the difference between poetic drama and plays is that plays are characterized by the conflicts and

events of characters, while poetic dramas must have internal inevitability and dramatic inevitability in dialogues, characters, and situations in addition to possessing narrative conflict (최일수 Choi Il-soo 1976: 370-371).

Through *Theory of Poetic Drama*, T.S. Eliot discussed the process of poetry appearing on the stage and the importance of the value of completing a performance. His works also critically embodied the “modern civilization breaking away from tradition and order”<sup>1</sup> through poetic dramas, such as *The Cocktail Party*, *The Confidential Clerk*, and *The Rock* (김재화 Kim Jae-hwa 2010: 214).

However, in *현실의 문학 The Literature of Reality*, Choi Il-soo argued that Eliot’s theory is far from that of the Koreans. Choi Il-soo’s statement about T.S. Eliot’s *Theory of Poetic Drama* is as follows: “His visionary view of poetic drama that led the poem to the stage can be accepted, but in the end, he couldn’t go beyond stageing the poem”<sup>2</sup> (최일수 Choi Il-soo 1976: 368). However, it should not be considered that the concepts of poetry and play are simply a combination of poetry and play. Poetry is ultimately done in the pursuit of poetic lines and a dramatic composition.

According to Kim Dong-hyun, “In a modern society where totality is divided, ‘Poetic drama’, a genre in which individuals dream of restoring totality, was born”<sup>3</sup>. Poetic drama is a historical genre in which a play, a problematic style characterized by a sense of problem with the future and a will to the future, meets a lyrical genre containing ‘poetic vision’. This view is directly linked to the organic worldview. The definition of poetry plays differs slightly in this view (김동현 Kim Dong-hyeon 2019: 342-343).

In this paper, the standard for the theory and concept of poetic drama is Choi Il-soo’s “comprehensive artistry”. The content and form of a poetic drama cannot be simply distinguished by proses and verses, instructions and non-instructions, stage images, dramatic structures and character relationships, and performance results. While a poetic drama is a fusion of poetic and dramatic, its plot composition

1 “전통과 질서에서 이탈해가는 현대문명” (김재화 2010: 214).

2 “시를 무대로 길 안내한 선각적이고 기지력 있는 안내인으로써 그의 시극관은 수긍될 수 있지만 결국 그는 시를 무대화한 것(이다.)” (최일수 1976: 368).

3 “총체성이 분열된 근대 사회에서 변혁기에 적절한, 세계사적 개인이 총체성을 회복하기를 꿈꾸는 장르인 ‘시극’을 탄생시킨 것이다” (김동현 2019: 342-343).

must have an internal inevitability. Just because the sentence is a verse and has the form of a play, it does not constitute a poem. Even prose lines create a poetic path through internal inevitability, with there being an interaction between the acting of the actor, stage direction, visual image, music, and dance, making poetic drama a comprehensive art. Poetic drama as such is a comprehensive art, which is realized on the stage through text and actors, conflict events, stage installations, poetic situations, and the aesthetic effect process. Furthermore, a poetic drama is created by taking into consideration the the emotions the audience will feel after the performance and the changes in the quality of life after the performance. “It’s like a destiny to live in a community”<sup>4</sup> and human life, along with all art, is established as a new “genre” (이상호 Lee Sang-ho 2016: 17-18). Critic Choi Il-soo accepted and criticized Eliot’s theory of poetic drama and sought to establish a Korean poetic drama theory.

## **2.2. Discussion on the poetic drama theory: focusing on Choi Il-soo and T. S. Eliot**

Poetic drama is not a product of the conflict and harmony between the poetic and dramatic. Mere utterance of poetic lines on a stage does not mean that the performance becomes a poetic drama. As discussed above, poetic drama as a “comprehensive art” has complex characteristics such as actors, conflict structures, music, dance, and visual stage devices. Poetic dramas have a variety of artistic personalities or genres that deal with the conflicts that exist between history and reality. What distinguishes poetic drama from plays and reading of plays is the inevitability of the work. In other words, it depends on how much one has a poetic necessity and dramatic necessity.

At the limit of contradictions in which opposite heterogeneous elements such as justice and injustice of human society, existence and futility, freedom and dictatorship, peace and war are presented at the same time, this inevitable and special situation in which justice,

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<sup>4</sup> “그것은 마치 공동 생활하는 하나의 운명체처럼” (이상호 2016: 17-18).



existence, freedom, peace, and tomorrow are historically promised becomes a world of poetry<sup>5</sup> (최일수 Choi Il-soo 1976: 414).

In other words, the contradiction between the characters and events in the work creates conflicts, overcomes problems, and has a dialectical attitude to live. Therefore, the inevitability of a poetic drama is not accidental; it must consist of a meticulous poetic composition and a dramatic composition.

As a result, poetic drama is a comprehensive art with this inevitability. Poetic drama is also an art of participation in the reality to the fullest.

Among the situations that caused this inevitability, the lyricism that sings the eternal present and the narrative that constitutes the historical flow are unified. This unification is a new dramatic reality that acts in today's most inevitable moment when tomorrow can be promised, and thus, becomes art<sup>6</sup> (최일수 Choi Il-soo 1976: 415).

In poetic drama, the poem's lyric results in the shape of poetic lines. It is not just a line that represents the reality of the situation, it should implicitly bring out the feelings of characters and the situation of reality. In addition, lines with a good poetic shape can bring out the tension, rhyme, rhythm, and image phenomena that lead the work and the breathing of lines with other characters. The play's "narrative" inevitably creates the composition of the work and the structure of conflict, and has the function of directing history, mythology, tragedy, and imagination. In order to establish this concept of poetic drama as a comprehensive art, Choi Il-soo accepted Eliot's theory and criticized and discussed it.

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<sup>5</sup> “인간사회의 정의와 불의, 존재와 허무, 자유와 독재, 평화와 전쟁, 이러한 정반대의 이질적인 요소가 동시에 제시되고 있는 모순의 극한 점에서 정의와 존재와 자유와 평화가 그리고 내일을 역사적으로 약속받는 이러한 필연적이고 특수한 상황이 시극의 세계가 된다” (최일수 1976: 414).

<sup>6</sup> “시극은 이러한 필연성을 떠난 종합적 상황 속에서 영원한 현재를 노래하는 서정성과 역사적인 흐름을 구가하는 서사성이 통일이 되어 내일을 약속받을 수 있는 오늘의 가장 필연적인 모우먼트에서 행동하는 하나의 새로운 극적 현실성에 고차원이 예술로써 나아가서는 이러한 요인을 총화적으로 포괄하는 상황성에 기초하고 있다는 점에서 철저하도록 현실참여의 예술이기도(하다.)” (최일수 1976: 415).

In 1959, when 시극연구회 *sigeug yeongu-hui* ‘The Poetic Drama Research Society’ was formed, the Korean poetic drama movement came into existence through creation and stage performances. However, the poetic drama movement did not achieve great results because of problems such as the completeness of the poetic drama work, the financial situation of the stage process, and the response of readers. At the time, Choi Il-soo actively published a paper on poetry drama as a researcher. His biggest critical work is to push forth that Korean poetic drama should be established as a comprehensive art that combines music, art, and dance production, not simply a unity of poetry and play. Subsequently, through the inevitability of poetic drama, it should become an important genre of art that allows spectators or readers to experience the historical problems or contradictions in life, overcome real-world situations, and move forward.

To do this, Choi Il-soo was of the position that Eliot’s theory of poetic drama, which emphasized only the verse and lyricism of poetry, should be revised. Poetic dramas do not only have the verse characteristics of poems, but also possess the narrative characteristics of plays, which should also be included. According to him, in order to achieve the narrative of plays, the prose nature of a poetic drama should affect the other areas of art, music, and dance, thus, resulting in it becoming a comprehensive art.

However, he repeatedly expresses that his outlook for comprehensive art is very new. This was also the goal of the poets who led the poetic drama movement alongside him. Choi Il-soo’s poetic drama theory also included a political character that actively defended their poetic drama. The question then is, what is the prospect? The first thing to read in the previous argument is that he is not criticizing Eliot’s “three sounds”. At first glance, it can be read as though he had to allocate sound to lyricism, narrative, and play, respectively, and integrate the three sounds. By reading in that specific fashion, he submits a different proposal from that of Eliot, who wanted to integrate lyricism and narrative into the play. However, that is not it. According to him, the three sounds in the question are “a voice directed to the poet himself, a voice directed to the audience, and a voice coming through the mouth of a fictional character”, which “must inevitably be integrated on the stage”, the same as that put forth by Eliot. If this is the case, the emphasis is laid on “a richer and more

dimensional world”<sup>7</sup> (이현정 Lee Hyeon-jeong 2020: 23-24). This vague word can be analyzed in the following statements:

(1) Eliot’s theory, although it spoke about the inevitability of poetry appearing on the stage, never mentioned how poetry is expressed through dramaturgy in the complex and coherent sense of the stage, along with the “genre” of all other arts on the stage<sup>8</sup> (최일수 Choi Il-soo 1976: 368).

(2) Until now, various arts participating in plays or movies, which have claimed to be comprehensive arts, have occupied only one effective position. However, this is not the case with poetry dramas. The various arts participating in poetry plays are synthesized on one stage with such an independent character that, even if they are separated under the one theme of poetry works, they can become an independent work. Therefore, it forms a situation as a complete comprehensive art, and under one theme, the “images” of “genre” engage with each other and combine to create a high world at a new level<sup>9</sup> (최일수 Choi Il-soo 1976: 371).

(3) In a poetic drama, “poetry” is the beginning of the fundamental opportunity of creation, and “play” is a plaza of complex senses that forms the source of a comprehensive “image”<sup>10</sup> (최일수 Choi Il-soo 1976: 37).

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<sup>7</sup> “보다 풍부하고 보다 차원 높은 세계” (이현정 2020: 23-24).

<sup>8</sup> “(1) ‘엘리엇’의 이론은 시가 무대로 등장하게 되는 그 필연성을 이야기하기는 했어도 결코 시가 무대 위에서 다른 모든 예술의 ‘장르’와 더불어 종합적인 상황을 이루고 또 어떻게 해서 무대의 복합되고 교합되는 감각 속에 시가 ‘드라마·츄르기’를 통하여 표현되는가에 대해서는 언급하지 못하였다” (최일수 1976: 368).

<sup>9</sup> “(2) 이제까지 종합예술로 자처하는 연극이나 영화에서는 여기에 참여하는 여러 예술은 하나의 효과적 위치 밖에는 차지하지 못하였다. / 그러나 극에서는 령지가 않다. 시극에 참여하는 여러 예술들은 시극 작품이 가지는 하나의 주제 밑에 각기 따로 떨어져 놓아도 그것이 하나의 독립된 작품이 될수 있는 그러한 독립된 성격을 완전히 갖추고 하나의 무대 위에 종합되는 것이다. / 때문에 그것은 완전한 형태의 종합 예술로서의 상황을 형성하며 하나의 주제 밑에 각기 ‘장르’의 ‘이미지’가 서로 교합되고 복합이 되어 새로운 차원의 높은 세계가 개시된다” (최일수 1976: 371).

<sup>10</sup> “(3) 시극에 있어서 시는 창조의 근원적인 계기의 개시요, 극은 종합적인 ‘이미지’의 원천을 이루는 복합 감각의 광장이다” (최일수 1976: 37).

(4) This is because, the “image” is formed only by the integrated “tone” of the entire poem, and the language selected by the formed “image” becomes such a poem that has a fundamental creative opportunity. But what I want to add here is that, no matter how the poetry talks about the source of creation, if its language does not carry an inherent flow when it comes to the “image” it creates, it becomes a philosophical predicate to study the unified laws of creation<sup>11</sup> (최일수 Choi Il-soo 1976: 378).

The above statements are his own definitions of the “high world in a new dimension”, which are aimed by the critic as indicated at the end of the quote above (2). First, the quote (1) reveals that, in a poetic drama, poetry is not an element of the stage, but a “what” of the entire stage. (2) presents a similar perspective. He once instructed that, “something” is a “situation as a comprehensive art”, and explained that this situation is the result of the “image” of “each genre” being “coupled” with each other. It is noteworthy that the word “image” was used here. This is because of the quote (3) redefining that “situation” as a “complex sensory plaza,” stating that it is a “source of creating a comprehensive ‘image’.”

As a result, images are perceived as a synthesis, not as the “images of each genre.” Finally, in the quote (4), “image” becomes the premise of a “fundamental creative opportunity”. This statement is cyclical. First of all, what was previously referred to as a “plaza of complex senses” is re-stated here as “an integrated tone of the whole poetry”. The integrated tone forms an image. In other words, Choi Il-soo shows that the poetic image contained in Korean poetic drama works has a comprehensive character. Comprehensive senses such as poetry, play, music, art, and dance can create a comprehensive image of the stage. His discussions indicate the significance of the Korean poetic drama movement.

In Korea, poetry plays discovered the possibility of being based on the intrinsic rate of free poetry rather than the verse theory claimed by

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<sup>11</sup> “(4) 시어의 특성은 시전체가 지니는 통합된 ‘톤’에 의하여 비로소 ‘이미지’가 형성되고 그 형성되어진 ‘이미지’에 의하여 선택된 언어들이 근원적인 창조적 계기를 내재하고 있는 그러한 시어가 되기 때문이다. / 그런데 여기서 한마디 덧붙이고 싶은 것은 아무리 창조의 근원을 이야기한다 해도 그것이 ‘이미지’의 흐름이 내재되어 있지 않는 언어라면 그것은 창조의 통일적인 법칙을 연구하는 철학적 술어가 되고 만다는 사실이다” (최일수 1976: 378).

T.S. Eliot, and the experimental work of staging the intrinsic rate was set in the direction of the movement of Korean poetic drama<sup>12</sup> (최일수 Choi Il-soo 1976: 436).

In other words, the prose he refers to is another name for free poetry. He also argues that the function of prose is “exercised freely in free poetry”<sup>13</sup> in other places (최일수 Choi Il-soo 1976: 400), and states that the intrinsic rate of free poetry should be staged. Through this work, the poetic drama movement led to there being a comprehensive art and a comprehensive sense. So, what did Eliot say about the verses of poetic dramas? We can summarize Eliot’s theory of poetic drama, which serves as a clue for this methodology, as follows:

- 1) The verses of poetic dramas are not a common function of poetry.
- 2) The verses of poetic dramas help the plays function.
- 3) The verses of poetic dramas pursue a change in daily life.

According to Eliot, when poetry rhymes are introduced into poetic dramas, the original unique function of poetry changes. A typical poetry expresses a landscape or psychology and embodies a rhythm or symbol. However, in a play, the poetic verse can lead to the anticipation of conversations with other characters or create unfamiliar scenes through unexpected conversations. In addition, the verse of a poetic drama presupposes the literary story that leads the play and can maximize the structure of conflict or the psychology of the actor. Simple general lines do not give the audience or readers a moment of thought or emotion. In addition, this verse can connect the situation in the play to the real situation.

The essence of poetry is to accurately capture one’s voice. Therefore, integrating the poetic verse and poetic form into the play can connect the situation of the play to a real problem. This is because, the lines written in poems impress the audience by arousing feelings, tension, and emotions. This influence of verses causes a change in the lives of the audience. Change in people through poetic

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<sup>12</sup> “우리나라에 있어서 시극은 T.S. 엘리엇이 주장하는 운문론보다는 자유시의 내재율에 입각할 수 있는 가능성을 발견하였으며 그 내재율을 무대화시키는 실험적인 작업이 우리 시극의 운동방향으로 설정된 것이다” (최일수 1976: 436).

<sup>13</sup> “자유시에서 마음껏 발휘” (최일수 1976: 400).

drama has become a positive factor in life. Choi Il-soo failed to bring out Eliot's argument in more detail.

He just states that Eliot laid emphasis on the verse of poetic drama and failed to expand its scope as a comprehensive art. While Choi Il-soo actively accepted Eliot's theory of poetry and imagery, at the same time, he pointed out the limitations of Western poetic drama theory. Choi Il-soo is interested in free poetry because he wants to pursue the theory of poetic drama as a comprehensive art. The reason for this is that the inevitability of poetic drama can be found more in the prose of free poetry.

This analysis served as an opportunity for Korean poetic dramas to deal with various topics. This was a common theme and the experimental topic for Korean poetic drama activists. Poetic drama is a common square where various 'genre' of arts are gathered at a comprehensive level. In addition, the combined sense becomes the core, and a new level of poetic drama can be achieved.

### **3. The history and personality of poetic drama**

The history of Korean poetic dramas has a history of about 100 years to date, starting with Kim Myung-soon's 朝露의花夢 (*Morning Dew's Happy Dream*). Poetic drama was a field where the participation of citizens was passive when the creative, theoretical research, and performances were performed on the stage rather than other genres, but it has continued without completely losing its context. Among them, creating works and performing on the stage was the reason for neglecting the study of poetic drama. In particular, comprehensive research and analysis conducted on the "comprehensive artistry" of poetic drama were insignificant. Poetic drama is a genre that should also be noted in the fields of poetry and play that require individuality and artistry.

The place of poetry, which requires human history, war, and revolution, is creating a different path. Poetry that reproduces reality the way it is reflects and expresses the lessons directly. However, modern poetry, which deviates from these problems, is a personal generalization. In other words, poetry dealing with individual emotions and daily life is similar to an online text that handles and

sympathizes with the present without becoming art itself. In other words, poetry is complacent when it comes to the fear of experimentation and failure. What about plays? With the advent of the era of image imaging and the amplification of global virus problems, opportunities to see works performed in the actual stage have decreased. As the possibility of having stage performances has decreased, the creativity, imagination, and experimentation in plays have started to weaken. While foreign works or Korean classical works are performed sometimes, they are not close to the general audience. This is because, the subject or the content of the plays have not been diversified.

Therefore, the development of poetic drama can serve as an opportunity to overcome the limitations of neglected poetry and play and open them anew. Since Kim Myung-soon in 1920, most poets have created poetic dramas. However, this is because they focused only on poetic necessity, poetic lines, and symbols. It can be concluded that the success rate for the stageization of a poetic drama was low because it was not possible to think about the dramatic necessity.

In this paper, poetic drama works are not classified based on the passing of time, but classified based on the characteristics of the works. The characteristics of poetic drama works can be classified into historicity, narrative, reality, and philosophy. To understand Korean poetic dramas, it is necessary to consider and analyze the situations of the different times in Korea and the emotions of citizens together.

First, it is a poetic drama with historicity. Hwang Ji-woo's *오월의 신부* *Bride of May* (황지우, 2000, 오월의 신부, 서울, 문학과지성사), which deals with the 5.18 problem, and Park Ah-ji's *아버지와 딸* *Father and Daughter* (박아지, 2015, 박아지 작품선집, 서울, 글로벌 콘텐츠) are dialogue poetic dramas of the generations who inherited the pain of history. There are also Shin Dong-yeop's *그 입술에 파인 그늘* *Shade on Its Lips* (신동엽, 1975, 신동엽전집, 서울, 창작과비평사) or Kim Jung-hwan's *열려라, 미래의 나라* *Open, Future Country* (김정환, 1999, 김정환시집, 서울, 이론과실천), which are poetry dramas for children created on behalf of the KAPF literature during the colonial period.

Second, it is a poetic drama with narrative characteristics. These works were recreated based on the tales and legends appearing in the classical literature. He also paradoxically expressed the sad love

between men and women or the desire to escape the harsh reality and wait for the hero. It symbolically brings out the fear and wounds of the ruling class and the tragedy of our poor people. Moon Jung-hee's *나비의 탄생 Birth of Butterfly* (문정희, 1994, 구운몽, 서울, 도서출판 등지) and *도미 Domi* (문정희, 1994, 구운몽, 서울, 도서출판 등지), Choi In-hoon's *옛날 옛적에 휘어이 휘이 Long long Time Ago, Whai Whai* (최인훈, 1976, 옛날옛적에 휘어이 휘이, 서울, 문학과지성사), *어디서 무엇이 되어 다시 만나랴 Where, in what form, shall we meet again* (최인훈, 1976, 옛날옛적에 휘어이 휘이, 서울, 문학과지성사), *첫째야 자장자장 둘째야 자장자장 First Night Jajang Second Night Jajang Jajang* (최인훈, 1976, 옛날옛적에 휘어이 휘이, 서울, 문학과지성사), *등등 낙랑동 Dungdung Naknakdung* (최인훈, 1976, 옛날옛적에 휘어이 휘이, 서울, 문학과지성사), *달아 달아 밝은 달아 Oh, The Bright Moon* (최인훈, 1976, 옛날옛적에 휘어이 휘이, 서울, 문학과지성사), and Jeon Bong-gun's *무영탑 Muyeong Pagoda* (전봉건, 2013, 전봉건 문학선, 서울, 문학선).

Third, it was a practical poetic drama. There are Kim Myung-soon's *朝露의 花夢 Morning Dew's Happy Dream*, Hong Yoon-sook's *에덴, 그後の 都市 Eden, and the Subsequent Capital City* (1967), Jeon Bong-gun's radio poetic drama *꽃소라 Flower Sora* (1964), and Jangho's *사냥꾼의 일기 Diary of Hunters* (1960s). These works symbolize the love and jealousy that exist between men and women, the inner sense of futility, waiting, and real problems.

Fourth, it is a poetic drama that deals with philosophy. *한스와 그레텔 Hans and Gretel* (1981) is a highly completed work of Choi In-hoon. It is a work that embodies the consciousness of reinterpreting and rediscovering the concept of existentialism in the days when Korea accepted Western theory as a loss of individual existence and conflict. Although it has both historical and philosophical characteristics, it is classified as belonging to this category because of its development having more philosophical reasons and compositions.

In short, Korean poetic dramas have established various aspects in terms of form and content, despite the lack of creativity and research. However, when faced with the limitations of data collection or not applied to the standard form of poetic drama, it was not considered a poetic drama. In addition, the classification of research works was applied from 1920 to 1999. Among them, I will examine the era in which the most poetic drama works were actively created in the next chapter. Poetic drama works in Korea were actively created



and studied in the late 1950s and the 1960s through the poetic drama movement.

#### 4. Development and significance of the poetic drama movement

In September 1959, the Poetic Drama Research Association (시극연구회) came to be founded by Gowon, Jangho, Hong Yoon-sook, Shin Dong-yeop, Han Jae-soo, and Choi Il-soo. However, on June 29, 1963, the Poetic Drama Society went on to be re-established as a more experimental and performable practical Poetic Drama movement. The members of this Poetry Society are Jang-ho, Choi Il-su, Go Won, Hong Yun-suk, Shin Dong-yeop, Oh Hak-young, Shin Bong-seung, Yoo Hyeon-mok, Park Yong-gu, Choi Jae-bok, Hwang Hwi, Kim Kyung-ok, Choi Myeong-su, Lee In-seok, Kim Won-tae, Kim Yo-seop, Choi Chang-bong, Cha Beom-seok, Kim Jong-sam, Lim Seong-nam, Park Hang-seop, Park Chang-don, Kim Yeol-gyu, Jang Gook-jin, and Kim Jeong-ok, a total of 33 members (이현원 Lee Hyeon-won 2000: 79).

The first poetry drama recorded in Korea is Kim Myung-soon's 朝露의 花夢 (*Morning Dew's Happy Dream*), tracing back to the Joseon Dynasty. Later, in 1923, Park Jong-hwa's work on poetic drama, namely 죽음보다 압하다 *Hurt Than Death* appeared. In 1937, Park Ah-ji's 어머니와 딸 *Mother and Daughter* were present for the drama. In the 1950s, a number of poetic drama works, including Jangho's 바다가 없는 항구 *Port without the Sea*, were published or staged. 1960 saw the creation of a number of poetic drama plays by writers, which was the most active period. In 1963, along with the active movement of the Poetic Drama Society, research on the poetic drama of critic Choi Il-soo, and writers such as Shin Dong-yeop, Hong Yoon-sook, Jang Ho, and Jeon Bong-gun created and staged many works. The activities of the Poetic Drama Society raised the level of poetic drama works and flexibly moved the exchanges with readers and audiences. I would like to examine in detail the background and value of the times in which the Poetic Drama Society was formed and the expansion of the realm of poetic drama.

First, there was an active sense of resistance from writers and a longing for novelty. In 1960, the April 19 Revolution and the May 16 incident occurred, with writers showing resistance to the world and revolutionary attitudes through their works. We attempted to create “newness” through various materials and forms. This attitude caused the spread of the genres of general stage poetic drama, opera poetic drama, and radio poetic drama, and created works that applied omnidirectional artistry.

Second, it represented the form of accepting the diversity of works and the influence of the stage theater. Jangho, who actively participated in the poetic drama movement, discussed the necessity and effectiveness of theaters in ancient Greece, citing Aristotle, Dionysus, and Max Reinhardt of Germany. He appreciated Shakespeare’s creation with the stage in mind. Shakespeare wanted the audience to watch the play on their own and enrich their imagination. Shakespeare’s consciousness can be said to have supervised the characteristics of the stage and theater considered when setting up works and performing plays. The limitations of stage play are that of time and place constraints. However, Jangho analyzed Shakespeare’s work and focused on the way he worked to make himself “free” from the audience (김장호 Kim Jang-ho 1983: 28), beyond the constraints of time and space. Therefore, the Korean poetic drama movement was not only carried out by activating the poetic drama works and performances, but by also analyzing the stage performance method, theater structure, theater place, and audience characteristics of the times.

In addition, Shin Dong-yeop mentions Shakespeare’s work in his lines in *그 입술에 파인 그늘* *Shade on its Lips* (1966). Choi Il-soo analyzed Hamlet in earnest in his review book. As such, the Western plot structure and materials had a great influence on Korean literature at the time.

It can be said that the full-fledged small theater movement began at the production theater that was founded in 1956. Prior to that, Seorabeol Theater and Experimental Stage Donginhoe were performed during its founding. Since the establishment of the Production Theater, many research groups have been established, but they were canceled because of one or two performances. However, the “Production Theater” continued to conduct performances and research activities despite difficult conditions, becoming a sample of small

theater movement groups that emerged in 1960<sup>14</sup> (정호순 Jung Ho-soon 2002: 41).

The full-fledged activities of the Poetic Drama Society began on September 28, 1963, with a research presentation and a joint review meeting held at the Central Public Relations Center. At this time, Jangho announced the broadcasting poetic drama play "The Key Longevity." Soon after, the first performance was held at the National Theater for two days from 21st October to 22nd October, 1963, less than a month later. The contents of the performance were largely categorized into three types: *부활 Revival* (written by Kim Won-tae and directed by Kim Jung-ok), *Original Color of Love* (produced by Shin Ki-seon and directed by Choi Jae-bok), dance poetry: Choi Il-jak (directed by Choi Jae-bok), and poetic drama: *Port without Sea* (directed by Jang Ho-jak and Park Yong-gu). All three forms are characterized by visualization based on poetic things in accordance to the stage performance. It was the first performance of the Poetic Drama Society and was the first work centered on poetry in Korea. However, it did not achieve great results<sup>15</sup> (이상호 Lee Sang-ho 2016: 184).

Third, it led to the establishment of the theory of poetic drama in Korea and the development of poetic drama creation. Choi Il-soo's theory and practice, who performed the most in the the Poetic Drama Society, influenced the development of the poetic drama. He analyzed and studied Korean poetic dramas through Western theories and

<sup>14</sup> “본격적인 소극장 운동은 1956 년 창립한 ‘제작극회’에서 시작된다고 할 수 있다. 그 이전에도 ‘서라벌극회’와 ‘실험무대동인회’가 창립공연을 했으며, ‘제작극회’창립 이후 많은 연구극 단체가 발족되었으나 한두 편의 공연으로 무산되었다. 그러나 ‘제작극회’는 어려운 여건 속에서도 지속적인 공연과 연구 활동을 전개함으로써 결성 이후 1960 년에 이르기까지 생겨난 소극장 운동 단체들의 표본이 되었다” (정호순 2002: 41).

<sup>15</sup> “‘시극동인회’의 본격적인 활동은 1963 년 9 월 28 일에 중앙공보관에서 연구발표회와 합평회를 여는 것으로 시작되었다. 이때 장호가 방송 시극 「열쇠장수」를 발표하였다. 곧이어 한 달이 채 안 된 1963 년 10 월 21~2 일, 이틀간 국립극장에서 제 1 회 공연이 이루어진다. 공연 내용은 연출 있는 시: 「부활」(김원태 작·김정옥 연출), 「사랑의 원색」(신기선 작·최재복 연출), 「凝結」(송혁 작·최재복 연출), 무용시: <分身>(최일수 작·최재복 연출), 시극: <바다가 없는 항구>(장호작·박용구 연출) 등 크게 3 개의 형식으로 이루어졌다. 세 형식 모두 무대 공연에 맞추어 시적인 것을 토대로 시각화한 것이라는 특징이 있다. ‘시극동인회’의 첫 공연이자 우리나라에서 처음으로 시를 중심으로 한(다)” (이상호 2016: 184).

works such as Eliot and Shakespeare. The article below shows that Choi Il-soo used Eliot's theory as an example to establish his theory of poetic drama. In addition to Eliot's argument about poetic drama, Choi Il-soo is unfolding his own theory, claiming that poetry is a comprehensive art.

Unlike T.S. Eliot, for Choi Il-soo, poetry is inevitably accompanied by all arts and comprehensive situations, and all arts, as well as modern poetry, are already heading toward higher and new dimensions through this comprehensive situation. This historical road is the theater, and this theater is the only comprehensive square that forms a new dimension of poetic drama and theater. At the same time, it is also the source of opportunity. However, the inevitable reason for the city's unity with the play is that there is no territory except for the play that can be properly recognized in the heterogeneous "genre" as a city. Therefore, poetry, which is the most important factor in the formation of the comprehensive dimension, cannot help but be united with the play in which the parent body of the comprehensive dimension is made up of language (최일수 Choi Il-soo 1976: 380).

In addition to the unity of poetic and dramatic things, which is facilitated through music, internal necessity, stage image, sound effect, and visual auditory indication, poetic drama is a part of complex art. The entire work functions as a poem and must be realized on the stage. Despite these activities, poetic drama activities have become increasingly difficult to conduct.

After many twists and turns, the Poetic Drama Society lasted for about four years (from June 1963 to July 1968), except for a six-year hiatus in the middle, marking a major milestone in the development of Korean poetic dramas. A comprehensive summary of the achievements of the Poetic Drama Society, which has been active for about four years, is as follows: research presentations and joint reviews – eight times (seven theoretical presentations and 11 work reviews); topics – prospects of the poetic drama movement, the personality and rhyme of the poetic drama, the relationship between the poetic drama and the play (line), the dialogue of the poetic drama, the intonation of the Korean language, etc.; forms of the work assumed – poetic drama (eight pieces), Cine forum (one piece), and monodrama (play, two pieces); number of presenters for the work – eight people (three presentations in two works and five presentations in one work); and distribution by presenter field – five poets and three playwrights. Among the 11 poetic dramas presented at the Happyeonghoe, there are three confirmed texts currently (the 2nd

performance): Shin Dong-yeop's "Shade on its Lips," Lee In-seok's "Doll on the Ladder," and Hong Yoon-sook's "Park." Despite these achievements, poetic drama activities have been left with regret<sup>16</sup> (이상호 Lee Sang-ho 2016: 191-192).

Considering that the creator was almost a poet, there was a lack of understanding of the play, and the actors did not complete their understanding of the poetic drama. Further, the audience did not highly enjoy the poetic drama or had awareness. The poetic drama slowed down for a while because the specific measures were not strategically presented in the poetic drama performance technique.

However, in the 1970s, poetic dramas by Jang Ho, Moon Jeong-hee, Lee In-seok, and Lee Seung-hoon appeared. The subject matter of poetic drama works became more diverse. In the 1980s, Moon Jeong-hee actively worked on the work, and the works of Kang Woo-sik and Ha Jong-oh appeared. In the 1990s, Hwang Ji-woo's work and poems of Jin Dong-gyu and Lee Yoon-taek appeared. As such, the value of the poetic drama movement of the Poetic Drama Association, re-established in 1963, continued with the history of poetic dramas such as Kim Kyung-joo's *나비잠 Butterfly Sleep* in the 2000s, and developed new perceptions, subjects, and forms of poetic drama. We hope that the new perceptions and discoveries of poetic drama continue in the future. We also hope that the various studies on it will also continue.

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<sup>16</sup> “많은 우여곡절을 겪은 ‘시극동인회’는 1963년 6월부터 1968년 7월까지 했수로 6년, 중간에 2년 가까이의 공백기를 제외하면 약 4년 동안 존속하면서 우리나라 시극 발전에 큰 획을 그었다. 약 4년간 활동한 ‘시극동인회’의 업적을 종합적으로 간추리면 다음과 같다. 연구 발표회와 합평회: 8회(이론 발표 7건, 작품 검토 11편). 주제: 시극 운동의 전망, 시극의 성격과 운율, 시와 시극의 관계, 시극과 희곡의 관계(대사), 시극의 대사와 국어의 억양 관계, 낭독법 등. 상정된 작품의 형식: 시극(8편), 씨네 포임(1편), 모노드라마(희곡, 2편). 작품 발표자 수: 8명(2편 발표 3명, 1편 발표 5명. 발표자 분야별 분포: 시인 5명, 극작가 3명). 합평회에 상정된 시극 11편 가운데 현재 텍스트가 확인된 작품 3편(제 2회 공연작들): 신동엽의 「그 입술에 파인 그늘」, 이인석의 「사다리 위의 인형」, 홍윤숙의 「여자의 공원」(이 있다)”(이상호 2016: 191-192).

## 5. Conclusion

This paper has dealt with the definition of poetic drama and its distinction from other genres. There are more research papers on poetic drama than degree studies, and among them, the theory of Choi Il-soo (who participated in the 1960 poetic drama movement) deepened the definition and characteristics of poetic drama. By accepting Eliot's theory, he criticized the verse of poetic drama that Eliot claims to be important. It has been argued that Korean poetry plays should focus more on the intrinsic rate of prose-free poetry, than on verse, in order to imply poetic necessity and dramatic necessity. However, for Eliot, the verse of poetic drama does not simply mean poetic. In poetic drama, verse is different from verse, which functions in poetry. The role of the verse is more helpful for dramatic things than poetry. In addition, Eliot says that the verse of poetic drama should be centered on the "change" of human life. While Choi Il-soo accepted Eliot's views, he criticized Eliot's theory of poetic drama, which failed to secure the "comprehensive artistry" of poetic drama. In addition, poetic drama focuses on the conflict and occurrence of poetic and dramatic things, as well as the combination of genres such as music, art, directing, acting, and dance.

The perception of the theory of poetic drama led to the history and characteristics of poetic drama. It deals with the characteristics of *朝露의 花夢* (*Morning Dew's Happy Dream*), which began in 1920, and Hwang Ji-woo's *Father of May* (1999). Poetic drama works are difficult to find these days, and the research is insufficient as they are rarely staged. In this paper, the characteristics of poetic drama works were analyzed in content and classified into four categories. It can be divided into historicity, narrative, reality, and philosophy. Representative writers with outstanding historical characteristics include Shin Dong-yeop, Hwang Ji-woo, Park Ji-ji, and Kim Jeong-hwan. Choi In-hoon, Moon Jeong-hee, and Jeon Bong-gun are examples of writers with well-represented narratives. The works of Kim Myung-soon, Hong Yoon-sook, and Jang-ho can be distinguished from the works of poetic drama. Finally, the works of poetic drama that disseminated philosophy can be classified as the works of Choi In-hoon.

With the arrival of the results of such various poetic drama works, the influence of the poetic drama movement that began in the

late 1950s can be found. The poetic drama movement was dominated by critics and poets with the aim of pursuing independent Korean art works, and although it failed in performance and popularization, it was an achievement of the times to give a glimpse into the possibility of poetic drama. Poetic drama can act as a new element in the genre of poetry and drama that are losing original literary character, and there is a need to revive in Korean literature. Poetic drama does not have a limitation of simply putting the story on stage. Poetic embodiments composed of poetic dramas, Korean history, historical situations, tragic Korean inner psychology, and contradictory social phenomena are combined. In addition, comprehensive artistry with other art genres such as music and art dance can be maximized to the audience and readers.

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