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ASPECTS OF VOICES APPEARING IN SHIN KYUNG-RIM'S POETRY

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Abstract: This study explores the transformation in Shin Kyung-rim's poetic world in the 1970s-1980s by categorizing the vocal modalities that appear in his poems into three analytic categories - the lyric self, the poetic speaker, and the poetic subject. Criticizing the prior studies' tendency to interpret Shin Kyung-rim's work under the discursive category of 'Minjung,' this study seeks to move beyond ideological frameworks and to reinterpret his poetry through attention to the internal structures of the text and the layers of its practical relationships. When the voice of the lyric self is foregrounded, the poem remains at the level of the poet's inward confession; by contrast, the emergence of the *mudang* speaker actively embraces the voice of the other, converting the reader from a mere listener into a performer. Furthermore, the voice of the poetic subject enables readerly intervention, allowing the poem to function as a constantly renewed discourse. These shifts of voice show the process by which the text moves from singularity to complexity and from sameness to otherness, demonstrating that Shin Kyung-rim's poetry shapes the voice of actual other in reality as living events.

Keywords: Shin Kyung-rim, Farmer's Dance, Dalneomse, Minjung, lyric self, poetic speaker, mudang, poetic subject

신경림 시에 등장하는 목소리의 양상들

초록: 본 연구는 1970-80년대 신경림 시에 나타나는 목소리의 양상을 서정적 자아, 시적 화자, 시적 주체라는 세 범주로 나누어 분석함으로써 그의 시 세계의 변모 양상을 탐구하였다. 기존의 연구가 '민중'이라는 담론적 개념에 종속되어 신경림 시를 해석해 온 한계를 비판하며, 이데올로기적 틀에서 벗어나 시 텍스트의 내적 구조와 실제적 관계의 층위에서 시를 재해석하고자 하였다. 서정적 자아의 목소리가 전면에 드러나는 경우 시는 시인의 내적 고백 차원에 머물렀으나, 무당 화자의 등장은 타자의 목소리를 적극적으로 수용하며 시를 사건화하고 독자를 단순한 청자가 아닌 수행자로 전환했다. 또한, 시적 주체의 목소리는 독자의 개입을 가능하게 하여 시를 끊임없이 새롭게 생성되는 담론으로 기능하게 했다. 이러한 목소리의 변화는 텍스트가 단일성에서 복합성으로, 동일성에서 타자성으로 나아가는 과정을 보여주는 것으로 신경림의 시가 현실에 존재하는 타자의 목소리를 살아 있는 사건으로 형상화했음을 드러낸다.

키워드: 신경림, 농무, 달넘세, 민중, 서정적 자아, 시적 화자, 무당, 시적 주체

1. Rereading Shin Kyung-rim's Poetry

Shin Kyung-rim (신경림, April 6, 1936-May 22, 2024) made his literary debut in 1955. After returning to his hometown in 1956, he ceased his poetic activities until 1965, and subsequently published his first poetry collection *Farmer's Dance* (농무) in 1973. *Farmer's Dance* (농무) primarily depicts the lives of the Minjung (people, 민중) who surrounded him at the time, together with the concrete rural experiences he had after moving back to his hometown. In his poetry, the Minjung (people) appear in a variety of forms and aspects grounded in the poet's experiences and perceptions, which indicates that a Minjung (people)-oriented sensibility strongly influenced his consciousness.¹

¹ The keyword of the 1970s and 1980s, 'Minjung', presents certain translation challenges. At the time, in Korea, the concept did not simply denote 'people', but rather designated a historically and politically constructed subject. These individuals

“Intellectuals must be among the Minjung (people). Within the ‘Minjung (people)’ they must speak and sing in their voices. Intellectuals are not an independent class. When they distance themselves from the Minjung (people), they lose their true intellectual voice and fade” (Shin Kyung-rim, *신경림* 1977: 14) reveals that he perceived himself particularly within the relationship with Minjung (people).

Shin Kyung-rim’s *Farmer’s Dance* (*농무*), winner of the first Manhae Prize for Literature (*만해문학상*) was highly praised for its realist poetry depicting the lives of marginalized farmers in the 1970s, and his poems, critical essays and poetics came to occupy a prominent place in the Changjakkwabipyung (*창작과비평*), which at the time was advancing the theory of Minjung Literature (*민중문학론*). Shin Kyung-rim likewise used Changjakkwabipyung, as a venue to articulate his views on farmers’ literature and Minjung literature. However, by the late 1970s – when Minjung literature theory was evolving into a theory of national literature (*민족문학론*) – the evaluation of Shin Kyung-rim by Changjakkwabipyung, shifted markedly. At a 1978 symposium on national literature, Yoo Jong-ho (*유종호*) and Baek Nak-cheong (*백낙청*) adopted a noticeably more critical stance toward Shin Kyung-rim’s poetry than before, criticizing on what they perceived as a lack of commitment to unification grounded in national spirit.² However, the remarks of Ko Un (*고은*), who also attended that symposium, deserve attention. His statement that issues such as peasant literature or Minjung literature were raised in response to the circumstances of the time, but only recently has the concept of national literature been established³

primarily comprised the oppressed working class, farmers and the urban poor, and were invoked as the agent of social transformation. When ‘Minjung’ refers to ordinary people, the term ‘people’ is appended; when the term is treated at the discursive level, it is simply written as ‘Minjung’.

² At the symposium, Yoo Jong-ho judged that since *Farmer’s Dance* (*농무*), Shin Kyung-rim had been writing “works of the same character,” and remarked that “he should stop lamenting and not remain confined to experiential depictions of the period around the 1950s, but rather explore new horizons.” In response, Baek Nak-cheong agreed with Yoo Jong-ho’s remark and further assessed that Shin Kyung-rim’s poetry exhibited a weak “density rooted in indigenous sentiment,” and, in particular, lacked “a fervent passion for unification” (Ko Un et al., *고은 외* 1978: 29-32).

³ The full passage containing this remark is as follows. “Entering the 1960s, criticism emerged against the Korean Writers’ Association (*한국문인협회*)’s purism that had dominated the literary world in the 1950s – criticism of literature that had become

subtly indicates that critics have, to some extent, interpreted and evaluated works according to the ideologies they uphold or the discourses promoted by the media. Afterwards, as the theory of national literature expanded with Changjakkwabipyung at the center in the 1980s, Shin Kyung-rim's poetry was no longer actively cited, and the significance of his poetic world became fixed as bearing a Minjung-oriented coloration under the dominant influence of the Minjung literature discourse.

Meanwhile, 'Minjung' emerged not only within the 1970s literary scene but also socially as a central subject of movements. As 'Minjung' combined with various contemporary issues through a complex and multifaceted process, the term came to signify the agent of historical transformation (Kang Jeong-gu and Kim Jong-hoi, 강정구, 김종희 2011: 293-323). However, at this time, 'Minjung' was less a reference to the numerous ordinary people who existed in reality than a potential being established as the subject of historical change. Likewise, the 'farmer as 'Minjung' that Changjakkwabipyung set as the subject of literature in the 1970s was a being of obligation demanded by the process of historical development – able to exist as a potentiality but not as an actuality (Lee Hyun-seok, 이현석 2011: 223-254). Yet, as shown above, the Minjung (people) appearing in Shin Kyung-rim's poems were the rural farmers the poet personally met and lived with, and his words "Intellectuals must be among the Minjung (people)" indicate that he established a practical relationship with actual people rather than with an abstract, conceptualized 'Minjung'. It is therefore necessary to discard the interpretive reading that treats 'Minjung' as a merely potential, conceptual construct and to reread Shin Kyung-rim's poetry accordingly.

Based on this awareness of a problem, various attempts have

detached from various real-world problems – and debates between pure literature (순수문학) and engagement literature (참여문학) took place; attention concentrated on those issues. Then, with the launch of Changjakkwabipyung, more serious discussions were led and the journal played a pioneering role up to that point. Adapting to the circumstances at hand, issues such as peasant literature or Minjung literature were raised, and recently the concept of national literature has been established. In that respect, it is true that many poets and writers were awakened through the consistent efforts of figures like Professor Baek and Professor Gu. But what will be important going forward is that, in fact, up until now it seems the focus has been on the examining the possibility of national literature.” (Ko Un et al., 고은 외 1978: 51)

been made to reinterpret Shin Kyung-rim's poetry from perspectives that depart from the conventional view. Studies that interpreted the Minjung (people) appearing in Shin Kyung-rim's poems as vivid, everyday beings who cannot be grasped through ideological interpretations (Kang Jeong-gu, 강정구 2005), and studies that have uncovered the Minjung(people)-ness in his poetry to involve not only realism but also an intellectual gaze – an aspect that Changjakkwabipyung side had rejected - (Park Yeon-hee, 박연희 2016)⁴ have opened up diverse possibilities for interpreting Shin Kyung-rim's poetic world. This study shares the premise that Shin Kyung-rim's poetry has been interpreted under the influence of dominant discourses and therefore seeks to read his poetry from a different perspective than before.

A defining characteristic of Shin Kyung-rim's poetry in the 1970s–1980s is that, over the course of his poetic activity, the modalities of the speaking voice in his poems show a marked transformation. The direction of this change moves from the lyric self to the poetic speaker, and from the poetic speaker toward the poetic subject. In *Farmer's Dance* (농무) (1973) and *Saejae* (새재) (1979), the voice is largely interpreted as that of the lyric self; in *Dalneomse* (달님세) (1986), a poetic speaker configured as a mudang (Korean shaman, 무당) emerges; and after that, voices appear whose meanings are to be read from the standpoint of the poetic subject. As the speaking voice in the poems changes in this way, the content of the poems

⁴ The 1970s literary field was polarized between the Changjakkwabipyung side and the Munhakgwajiseong (문학과지성) side. Although the two sides shared the themes of anti-dictatorship and the contradictions of capitalism, they were politically and culturally contrasted, each tending to pursue, respectively, nationalism and freedom; 'Minjung'-ism and intellectualism; and realism and modernism. Park Yeon-hee (박연희), however, attempted to dismantle the existing dichotomy by demonstrating that the way Shin Kyung-rim was placed in Changjakkwabipyung and Hwang Dong-Gyu (황동규) in Munhakgwajiseong "overlaps with the period in which the two media's mutually incompatible discourses were becoming solidified." Arguing that interpretations of the poems had been polarized according to media discourse, she attempted to reinterpret the poetry of the two poets by raising the need to read the poetry of Shin Kyung-rim and Hwang Dong-Gyu in a fresh way. According to Park Yeon-hee's study, the 'Minjung'-ness expressed in Shin Kyung-rim's poetry is "reproduced by an intellectual gaze," while the intellectual discourse emphasized through Hwang Dong-Gyu's poetry is "accentuated in contrast to the concept of 'Minjung' (Park Yeon-hee, 박연희 2016).

likewise progresses from unity to complexity, from closedness to expansiveness, and from sameness to otherness. This is because, depending on whose voice is speaking, the relationship between that voice and the poetic object, the relationship between the poetic object and the reader, and the degree to which readers may intervene in the poem all differ. Therefore, this study will examine the aspects in which the modalities of the speaking voice in Shin Kyung-rim's poetry change, while also proposing a specific methodology for analyzing the speaking voice in poetry through the case of his work.

2. The voice of the Lyric Self

When examining Shin Kyung-rim's poetry collections by period of publication, it becomes clear that no single vocal modality consistently predominates in any given period; even within a single volume, individual poems present differing kinds of speaking voices. Nonetheless, in the 1970s-1980s – the period in which the poet was most active, and which corresponds to his early poetic world – a sequential flow can be observed: as his output accumulates, the prominence of the lyric self's voice diminishes, and the voices of the poetic speaker, followed by the poetic subject, appear with increasing frequency. This shift cannot automatically be taken to signify, in itself, a developmental progression of his poetic world.⁵ What is clear, however, is that the transformation of the speaking voice that occurs over the course of his work in the 1970s–1980s brings about changes not only in the poem's formal elements but also, in terms of content, in the relations established between the speaking subject and the poetic object. This, in turn, leads to a change in the relationship between the poem and its readers. Depending on whose voice is speaking, the distance between reader and poetic object can either narrow or widen; the reader may actively participate in interpretation by inserting their own reality into the poem or may perceive the poem as detached from reality. Therefore, whose voice speaks in a poem determines whether

⁵ From the 1990s onward, the voice of the lyric self – identified with the poet – re-emerges as a prominent voice in Shin Kyung-rim's poetry. His poetic world thus takes on the character of the poet's inner confession.

the poem can function on the level of reality – since the reader functions as the mediator between poem and reality.

The lyric poetry genre has played a dominant role in the history of Korean poetry, and among its influences the concepts of ‘lyricism’ advanced by Hegel and by Staiger occupy considerable weight in Korean lyric discourse. According to Hegel, lyric poetry is “that in which the subject’s feeling and reflection absorb the world of existence into themselves, experience it upon this inward foundation, transform it internally, and only then express it in words” (Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel 2015: 256). In other words, ‘lyricism’ is characterized by inwardness or subjectivity produced through the synthesis of subjectivity and objectivity. By contrast, Staiger – who understands the essence of lyricism as ‘Reminiscence (Erinnerung)’ (회감) – conceptualizes ‘Reminiscence (Erinnerung)’ as “a term for the absence of distance between subject and object” and as “a term for lyrical mutual Harmony (Ineinander, Schmelz)” (Emil Staiger 1978: 96). Staiger does not acknowledge the dichotomy of subject and object; rather, argues that subject and object stand in an intersubjective relation and overcome distance through a process of ‘harmony’. Nevertheless, it is difficult to claim that Staiger has entirely broken with the initial state of separation and the dialectical process of synthesis through subjectivity that Hegel presupposes. ‘Reminiscence’ which brings about memories, begins from a relationship in which subject and object are separated, and ‘harmony’ is not markedly different from dialectical synthesis. Ultimately, then, ‘lyricism’ is uttered through the poet’s psychic activity, and the lyric self is identified with the poet.⁶

Therefore, we should regard the poet’s inwardness as the original center of lyrical poetry. Yet this inwardness itself is partly a state in which the individual is purely unified with himself and partly something that becomes richly particularized and is fractured and dispersed into a wide variety of representations, emotions, impressions, insights, etc.; their conjunction exists only insofar as the same self, as a mere vessel, receives and contains them within self. Consequently, for a lyric work to acquire the unifying point that binds the whole, the poet must enter into a particular mood or situation and, at the same time, identify

⁶ In relation to the issue of literary genres: in addition to Staiger’s definition of lyric poetry as the ‘Reminiscence (Erinnerung)’ of the lyric author (self), if we synthesize Hamburger’s view of lyric as an empirical statement of the lyric self and Kayser’s understanding of lyric as ‘internalization,’ the result is that the lyric self in lyric poetry remains inseparable from the author (Cho Kang-sok, 조강석 2009: 4).

himself with these particularizations – thereby feeling and representing himself from within them. Only by this means does it become a totality confined to the self and express only what is raised in and related to that bounded situation.⁷ (Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel 2015: 255)

Hegel explicitly states that lyric poetry is an expression of “the poet’s inner life.” Moreover, through inwardness, the individual is simultaneously “purely united with oneself” and “richly particularized,” and the self produces a totalized “identical self” through specialization and identification with itself. Staiger’s theory, which defines the essence of the lyric poetry as ‘Reminiscence,’ is likewise explained as ‘the Self-Internalization of the World’ (세계의 자아화) or ‘the Principle of Sameness’ (동일성의 원리) – that is, the world’s entry into the subject.⁸ In this way, the lyric self presupposes the concept of a unitary subject as the center of integrated thought. However, although reading poems in the voice of the lyric self, equated with the poet, is an appropriate concept for exploring individual’s inner life, it has the limitation that it is ill suited to apprehending objects and aspects of the world that are not subsumed within the self’s consciousness.

⁷ “그러므로 우리는 시인의 내적인 것을 서정적 시가의 원래적인 중심으로 보아야 한다. 그러나 이 내면성 자체는 부분적으로 개인이 자신과 순수하게 합일되는 것이며, 또 부분적으로는 매우 다채롭게 특수화하며 지극히 다양한 표상, 감정, 인상, 통찰력 등으로 분열·분산하고 있으며, 그 결합은 동일한 자아가 단순한 그릇으로서 그것들을 자기 속으로 수용하는 것에만 존재한다. 그러므로 서정시적 작품이 전체를 묶어 주는 통일점을 획득하기 위해서는, 시인은 특별한 기분을 가지거나 특별한 상황으로 들어가야 하는 동시에, 자기의 이 특수화와 자기를 동일시하고, 그리하여 이 특수화 속에서 자신을 느끼고 표상하도록 되어야 한다. 이것에 의해서만 그것은 자기 속에 국한된 하나의 총체가 되고, 이 한정된 상황에서 제기되고 이것과 관련을 가지는 것만을 표현한다.” (Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel 2015: 255)

⁸ ‘The Self-Internalization of the World’ is a concept of Jo Dong-il (조동일), who divided literature into four branches and explained the lyric branch as ‘the Self-Internalization of the World’ (Jo Dong-il 조동일 1974: 23). Kim Jun-oh (김준오) explains in the lyric poetry the world’s subordination to the subjectivity of the self as the ‘Principle of Sameness.’ According to Kim Jun-oh, the ‘Principle of Sameness’ is synonymous with the ‘Self-Internalization of the World’ (Kim Jun-oh 김준오 2017: 36).

Furthermore, so long as the poet brings the world into his own subjectivity and renders it in language, the lyric self will inevitably fail to achieve full identity between world and self. The moment this identity fails, there is little room for the reader to intervene. If the lyric self is identified with the poet, the poem becomes attached to the poet, and the reader is reduced to an observer witnessing a single person's frustration, unable to narrow the distance to the poetic object. In such cases, the poem may be a reflection of the contemporary reality confronting the poet and an outpouring of personal feeling, but it will be difficult for readers to re-cognize the poem on a realistic plane.

Farmer's Dance (농무) has been evaluated as a new form of realism that, grounded in intellectual discernment, moderates pain and sorrow and overcomes the aggressiveness, extremeness and crudeness characteristic of earlier realism. However, it is unreasonable to assume that this appraisal applies to every poem in *Farmer's Dance* (농무). Rather, the collection frequently exhibits poems in which the suffering and sorrow of the lyric self – identified with the poet – overwhelm the whole poem. This tendency is especially pronounced when the lyric self that appears as the 'I' is foregrounded.

Barefoot they go
Through the pouring rain
Bruises bloom
On the gaunt hands they clasped
They call for me
In angry voices
Then spit
On my terrified face⁹

(Shin Kyung-rim, 신경림 1973: 46)

⁹ “쏟아지는 빗발 속을/맨발로 간다/서로 잡은 아원 손에/머미 맺혔다/성난 목소리로/나를 부른다/겁먹은 내 얼굴에/침을 뱉는다” (신경림 1973: 46)

Even after twenty years my hometown
Remains unchanged poverty-like smoke
Coils around the village
And in it dog's bark
Kids cry and they all
Shout at me
Speak Speak Speak
Ah - I can say nothing at all.¹⁰

(Shin Kyung-rim, 신경림 1973: 67)

The two poems cited illustrate cases in which the speaking voice is unmistakably that of the lyric self. In these poems the 'I' contemplates the arduous lives of the 'Minjung' and feels a sense of duty and indebtedness – one aspect of the relationship between intellectuals and the 'Minjung' that the poet repeatedly emphasized across various venues. However, no communication takes place between the 'I' and 'They,' and in the latter part of the poems, the 'I' even becomes severed from the 'Minjung'. In the first poem, the “angry voices” and the act of “spitting” occur at the level of the speaker's consciousness rather than belonging to 'Them': the naked 'They' who are receding “through the pouring rain” are too powerless and frail to shout or carry out violent acts of rage. In the second poem, the cries of “Speak” likewise reflect the 'I's consciousness rather than their voices – 'They' merely weep. Thus, although the 'I' is enraged by their painful reality and feels compelled to speak, that impulse is transformed into an intensified guilt that one “can say nothing at all.” Ultimately, both poems conclude as confessions of the 'I's own powerlessness.

¹⁰ “20년이 지나도 고향은/달라진 것이 없다 가난 같은/연기가 마을을 감고/그 속에서 개가 짖고/아이들이 운다 그리고 그들은/내게 외쳐댄다/말하라 말하라 말하라/아아 나는 아무 말도 할 수가 없다.” (신경림 1973: 67)

When the emotions of the lyric self overwhelm the entire poem, the poetic object is pushed into the background. If the rhetorical poetry of the time, written with the aim of awakening the ‘Minjung’, faced the problem of excessive purposefulness, poems that are merely expressions of the lyric self’s feelings encounter the problem of failing to attain concreteness on a realistic level, as they render the poetic object and events as background. The lyric self not only fails to make something an object of perception with a certain meaning but also increases the distance between the reader and the poetic object. Readers are left without a pathway to understand the poetic object or to add their own interpretation to the poetic situation – in other words, they cannot intervene with their own reality. One reason why long poems and epic poems actively submitted in the 1970s–1980s was that they provided readers with sufficient information, which could be expected to provide a sense of immersion and persuasive appeal. However, when the emotions of the lyric self are maximized, readers may momentarily empathize with the self’s feelings, but such empathy remains that of a third party.

3. The Voice of the Mudang, the Poetic Speaker

New critics, who regard the poem as a world that operates beyond the author’s intention and control, present lyric poetry as a linguistic structure and treat the poetic speaker as a speaker situated within a specific context. The poetic speaker can be understood as analogous to the persona in a play composed of characters’ dialogue, operating without overt authorial intervention. According to the conception that treats the lyric voice as a speaker, lyric poetry becomes an utterance overheard by the reader, and readers participate in the work as overhearers. In this formulation, the work appears as a unified whole that achieves order and harmony and thus becomes an object of analysis. However, this perspective also raises a problem: it implicitly presupposes the existence of an omniscient author expected to achieve the work’s unity behind the poetic speaker or persona. Even if we assume that the speaker exists solely within the poem, the speaker’s voice is confined within the work, and the work lacks its historical context and becomes socially and culturally vacuous.

While the forms of Madanggeuk (마당극)¹¹ and Madang shamanic rite (마당굿)¹² became common place in the culture of the activist in the 1980s, in poetry, a current that formalized shamanistic ritual – ‘shamanic rite poetry’ (굿시)- came to occupy a notable position in the era. In particular, the pain and historical meaning of the Gwangju Uprising (광주항쟁) were expressed in various genres such as Madang shamanic rite poetry (마당굿시) and Salpuri shamanic rite poetry (살풀이굿시)¹³, and ‘shamanic rite poetry’ (굿시) came to be established as a representative form of poetry for commemorating the countless souls who suffered in the 1980s (Kim Eun-jung, 김은정 2012; Cho Yeon-jung 2016; Lee Kyung-soo 2021).¹⁴ The speaker of ‘shamanic rite poetry’ (굿시) is the mudang (shaman).¹⁵ Although the mudang occupies a marginal status insofar as they are a messenger, they acquire a distinctive position not simply as a messenger but as one who, in a state of self-loss, accepts another’s soul and speaks on that other’s behalf. If the poetic speaker is inevitably a concept that presupposes the poet’s existence, the mudang speaker disturbs the speaker-author connection by drawing in the voice of the other through the powerful device of the mudang. Moreover, just as Madanggeuk (마당극) and

¹¹ ‘Madanggeuk’ (마당극) is an indigenous and experimental outdoor theatre that, since the 1970s, has creatively inherited and developed traditional folk performative forms such as Talchum (mask dance, 탈춤), Pungmul (folk performance, 풍물), and Pansori (narrative song, 판소리); it primarily stages social critique and accusations of reality.

¹² ‘Madan shamanic rite’ (마당굿) refers to the final ritual, performed in an open area outside the main gate to send away wandering souls that had gathered at the ritual site. Both ‘Madanggeuk’ (마당극) and ‘Madan shamanic rite’ (마당굿) become solemn play-sites that soothe the pains of life.

¹³ ‘Salpuri’ (살풀이) is a shamanic chant/dance performed to dispel bad fortune or malignant influences, typically carried out to the rhythmic pattern called the ‘Salpuri Jangdan’ (살풀이장단).

¹⁴ For the performativity and activism of ‘shamanic rite poetry’ as a Minjung (people)’s movement, see these papers.

¹⁵ ‘Shaman’ originally referred to religious intermediaries in the Siberian region; by means of intense movement, music and sometimes mysterious substances, they fall into trance or a state of self-loss and, in that condition, make contact with supernatural beings. Thereafter they preside over rituals such as divination, healing, and ceremonies. A shaman is thus an experiencer of possession, a guide of souls, a priest, a mystic and at times even a poet (Mircea Eliade 1992: 23-24).

shaman ritual (굿) – which publicize the historical suffering and the vivid voices of the victims – function as collective plays completed through the audience’s voluntary participation, readers of ‘shamanic rite poetry (굿시)’ acquire the role of performers who receive and embody the other’s anger and aspirations. The genre-mixing of ‘shamanic rite poetry (굿시)’ and the emergence of the mudang speaker therefore help to offset the theoretical weaknesses attributed to the conventional poetic speaker.

A gong jing booms out the curtain falls

A rough stage, lights dangle from a paulownia tree

Everyone’s gone home and playground’s empty

Our faces still daubed with power

We rush to the little tavern by the school and drink

Life’s mortifying when oppressed and wretched

Off down the long rout behind the kkwaenggwari

Only some kids running bellowing behind us

While girls lean pressed against the oil shop wall

Giggling childish giggles

The full moon rises and one of us

Wail like Im-Kkeokjeong another

Laughs like Seorim after all

What’s the use of fretting and struggling tucked away in these hills

With farming not paying the fertilizer bills

Leaving it all in the hands of the wives

Passing through the cattle-fair and dancing in front of the slaughterhouse

Bokyoung KIM: Aspects of Voices Appearing in Shin Kyung-Rim's...

We start to get into the swing of things

Shall we dance on one leg and blow the Nallari

Shall we shake our heads and make our shoulders rock¹⁶

(Shin Kyung-rim 1973: 26)

I cannot go with broken necks and severed limbs,

I cannot close my two bruised eyes that brim,

I can't hold, these torn hands cannot hold,

I cannot hold that blood-stained hand.

Returned, returned with bruised eyes wide,

Embracing broken necks and severed limbs

Gnashing the teeth so the hard frost falls from the sky,

With these shredded, ragged hands I cannot seize,

I cannot seize that bloodied hand,

¹⁶ “징이 울린다 막이 내렸다/오동나무에 전등이 매어달린 가설무대/구경꾼이 돌아가고 난 텅 빈 운동장/우리는 분이 얼룩진 얼굴로/학교 앞 소줏집에 몰려 술을 마신다/답답하고 고달프게 사는 것이 원통하다/팽과리를 앞장세워 장거리로 나서면/따라붙어 악을 쓰는 건 쪼무래기들뿐/처녀애들은 기름집 담벽에 붙어서서/철없이 킬킬대는구나/보름달은 밝아 어떤 녀석은/걱정이처럼 울부짖고 또 어떤 녀석은/서림이처럼 해해대지만 이까짓/산구석에 처박혀 발버둥친들 무엇하랴/비룻값도 안 나오는 농사 따위야/아예 여편네에게나 맡겨두고/쇠전을 거쳐 도수장 앞에 와 돌 때/우리는 점점 신명이 난다/한 다리를 들로 날라리를 볼거나/고갯짓을 하고 어깨를 흔들거나” (신경림 1973: 26)

To alleys, market stalls, factory yards, the docks

Returned as a relentless bank of dark clouds,

Returned as a fierce howling uproar.¹⁷

(Shin Kyung-rim 1986: 150-151)

When the two cited poems are read together, the difference between the poetic speaker who plays the role of persona and the mudang speaker becomes clearly apparent. The first cited poem is “*Farmer’s Dance*” (농무), the title piece of the collection, and it follows a prototypical dramatic structure. The speaker appears both as a character within the play and as a narrator. At times, the speaker utters the character’s own lines – “Life’s mortifying when oppressed and wretched” – and at other times explains the dramatic situation in which the story unfolds, beginning with “A gong jing booms out the curtain falls.” “*Farmer’s Dance*” (농무) is a complete composition in itself, and the poem’s content is presented as if it were a scene on a theatre stage. Readers will visually conjure up the image of farmers left in an empty countryside, drinking and venting their grievances, and the farmers’ dance they do. Yet, apart from whether readers are able to acquire concrete images of the poetic objects or situations, the speaker is entirely unaffected by who the reader is. When the readers are not given space to participate in the context of the situation presented by the speaker, readers remain merely eavesdroppers.

The second poem is included in *Dalneomse* (달넘세), a volume composed entirely of ‘shamanic rite poetry (굿시)’. ‘Ssitgim’ (씻김) is a purificatory act that washes the soul of the deceased clean and sends it to the afterlife; ‘Ssitgim Shamanic rite’ (씻김굿) is the shamanic ritual intended to wash away the grudeges of the living and to guide the dead to the next world. However, the soul voiced through the mudang

¹⁷ “꺾인 목 잘린 팔다리로는 나는 못 가,/피멍든 두 눈 고이는 못 감아,/못 잡아, 이 찢긴 손으로는 못 잡아,/피묻은 저 손을 나는 못 잡아.//되돌아왔네, 피멍든 눈 부릅뜨고 되돌아왔네./꺾인 목 잘린 팔다리 끌어 안고/하늘에 된서리 내리라 부드득 이빨 갈면서,//이 갈가리 찢긴 손으로는 못 잡아,/피묻은 저 손 나는 못 잡아./골목길 장바닥 공장마당 도선장에/즐기찬 맥구름 되어 되돌아왔네./사나운 아우성 되어 되돌아왔네.” (신경림 1986: 150-151)

declares that it has returned as “a relentless bank of dark clouds” and “a fierce howling uproar.” This unappeased spirit is a marginalized Minjung (people) who mainly lived in “alleys, market stalls, factory yards, the docks,” and the declaration functions as a protest against socio-structural contradictions. If the ‘Ssitgim Shamanic rite’ (씻김굿) ordinarily guides the dead to the afterlife and thereby achieves reconciliation that upholds the world’s order, this poem effectively redirects the ritual’s function by revealing a rupture with the world through the voice of the unappeased spirit. Moreover, unlike the voice of the poetic speaker that relegates the poetic object to the distance, or the voice of the lyric self that operates apart from the reader – leaving the reader in the position of an eavesdropper – the utterance of the other mediated by the mudang directly addresses the reader. The vivid voice conveyed by the unappeased spirit as victim evokes an affection in the reader, enabling the poem to be situated within a social context – that is, to be located as an event on the level of reality. Thus, ‘shamanic rite poetry’ (굿시) in which the chanter (mudang) transmits the voice of the other to the reader (audience) turns the domain through with the other’s voice is conveyed into a communicative space and converts the reader (audience) from a passive spectator into a participant in the event.

4. The Voice of the Mudang, the Poetic Speaker

The proposition that literature, insofar as it functions as discourse, cannot be freed from otherness has now become a general theory of literature. According to Antony Easthope, discourse is composed of two dimensions. One is ‘Enunciative content,’ which refers to the content itself that is uttered or stated; the other is ‘Enunciative operations,’ the act of utterance through which that content is materially performed. He understands Enunciative operations not merely as functions of meaning-transmission, but as a process that unfolds materially. Under these circumstances, the reader does not remain a passive interpreter of the discourse but actively intervenes in the poetic text as the agent of Enunciative operations. Through this intervention, enunciation always takes on the continual aspect of presence that occurs in the here-and-now, and the poem exists not as a fixed meaning, but as a living discourse newly created in that moment by the reader (Antony Easthope

1994: 81-82). And when the poetic text is determined both by the symbol system designed by the poet and by meanings constructed through the reader's enactment of discourse, the reader is established as the 'poetic subject.' At this point, the reader becomes a poetic subject through encounters with the text's others – the 'you' – or with the 'I-that is not I' that firmly exists within the reader. In other words, within the text, the reader can be the 'I' as the poetic subject only in relation to the other.

In the pitch-black darkness, a shape slowly began to appear. At first, the outline of the basket balanced on her head showed, then the lines of her face, then the neck, shoulders, and torso, and at last, against the dark, a young woman bearing a fish-basket stood there.

A still, viscous darkness lay between us. She moved her lips as if to speak, her words swam through the dark and slowly came toward me.

Ah – at last her words reached me. But even then, the woman's form was already being reburied in the dark. Her torso sank back, the contours of neck and shoulder vanished, and finally the outline of her face, the basket that had rested on her head became one with the darkness.

Now my own form is also slowly emerging from the dark. The lines of my face, neck, and shoulders are revealed, the outlines of my limbs appear. Thus, I am saying something to you. My utterance will swim through the darkness, slowly making its way to you. Ah – but when my utterance reaches you, my form will already be gradually disappearing again into the dark.¹⁸

(Shin Kyung-rim 1986: 203)

¹⁸ “새카만 어둠속에서 서서히 형상이 나타나기 시작했다. 처음, 머리에 인 광주리의 윤곽이 나타나고, 얼굴의 선이 드러나고, 목 어깨 몸통이 드러나더니, 마침내 어둠을 배경으로 생선 광주리를 인 젊은 아낙네가 거기 서 있었다./아직도 끈적끈적하고 진한 어둠이 우리 둘 사이를 가로막고 있었다. 아낙네는 무슨 말을 하는 듯 입술을 달싹이고 있었고, 그의 말은 어둠을 헤엄치면서 천천히 나를 향해

This poem explores the relation among utterance, being, and the poetic subject through images that appear in and vanish into darkness. What deserves attention is that the poetic subject is not presupposed as a fixed self, but is presented as fluid, relational being that is temporarily formed in the flow of speech and then soon dissolves. In the poem, this aspect of the poetic subject is structured by “utterance” that have not been fully semanticized and by variations in person. The “utterance” the “woman” offers to the “I” and the “I”’s “utterance” addressed to “you” can be understood as enunciative movements just before becoming words, in that they are not yet meaningfully articulated. Yet, the moment those “utterance” reaches their addressee, the speaking being disappears “into the dark.” Thus “utterance” performs a double function: they simultaneously constitute and deconstruct the poetic subject. The poetic subject exists temporarily during the process of verbalization, but the moment language acquires meaning, the subject has already passed into the realm of nonexistence – the “dark.” Nonetheless, the poetic subject can be formed only within relations with the other – ‘woman-I’, ‘He-I’, ‘I-you.’ This is because the poetic subject that exists in the variations of the person is not a self that expresses its independent self-identity in language; but rather it appears as a subject that constitutes itself through enunciative relations with the other. This subject is a being that emerges within the relational tension with the other, and because it withdraws at the moment utterance reaches the other, the poetic subject is continually repositioned and reconstituted between self and the other.

In this way, this poem presents the poetic subject as a being in the process of forming a poetic subject through non-semanticized utterance and figures of subjectivity – a subject that slides between the

오고 있었다./아, 마침내 그의 말이 내게 이르렀다. 그러나 이미 그때 그 여자의 모습은 서서히 어둠속에 되묻히고 있었다. 몸통이 묻히고, 목 어깨의 형상이 사라지고, 끝내는 얼굴의 윤곽이, 머리 위에 얹었던 광주리가 어둠과 하나가 되었다./내 형상도 지금 서서히 어둠속에서 드러나고 있다. 얼굴과 목과 어깨의 선이 드러나고 팔다리의 윤곽이 나타나고 있다. 그리하여 나는 당신을 향해서 무엇인가를 말하고 있다. 나의 말은 어둠속을 헤엄치면서 천천히 당신을 향해 갈 것이다. 아, 그러나 나의 말이 당신에게 이르렀을 때, 이미 내 형상은 서서히 어둠속으로 사라져가고 있을 것이다.” (신경림 1986: 203)

moments before and after the arrival of the language. Utterance does not serve to fix the identity of the poetic subject; rather, only through processes that defer and delay it does utterance provisionally reveal the subject. Therefore, the poetic subject is not a completed self, but a processual being formed and simultaneously dissolved by the reader who participates in the text as the agent of Enunciative operations. This structure, based on the incompleteness of language and the fundamental asymmetry of communication, creates the very process of enunciation – intimately intertwined with temporality and otherness – into a space for poetic thought.

5. Conclusion

This study analyzed how Shin Kyung-rim's poetic world has reshaped over time by grouping the vocal modalities that appear in his poetry of the 1970s–1980s into three analytic categories: the lyric self, the poetic speaker, and the poetic subject. In particular, to overcome the prior research tendency that has mainly interpreted his work under the discursive concept of the 'Minjung,' in this research, his poems were reinterpreted not within an ideological framework, but from the perspective of the voice, which is an internal element of the poetic text, and the layer of actual relationships and experiences surrounding the poetic text.

First, when the voice of the lyric self comes to the forefront in a poem, the poem functions as an inward confession based on the poet's personal experience. Because the text supplies little concrete information about the poetic object in such cases, objectification fails, and readers remain at the level of recognizing or merely empathizing with the lyric self's affective state. Second, the mudang speaker's voice actively draws in the voice of the other and, by evoking an affection in the reader, converts the reader from an eavesdropper into a participant in the event. At this time, poems acquire historical and social contexts and can operate as events located within real-world contexts. Third, the voice of the poetic subject appears as a fluid entity that is formed and dissolved through relationships with the other in the process of Enunciative operations. The reader participates in the text as an agent of Enunciative operations and becomes subjectified through relations

with the other. With the emergence of the poetic subject, poetry functions not as a fixed system of meanings, but as a living discourse that is constantly being regenerated through the reader's participation.

The shifts of voice in Shin Kyung-rim's poetry should be read not simply as variations in expression, but as a process that expands the poeme-reader relationship and reconfigures how poetry connects to reality. At the level of the lyric self, poem functioned merely as a confession of the poet's inner life; the advent of the mudang speaker, however, actively accepted the voice of the other and renders historical reality visible. When the voice of the poetic subject appears, it opens up the possibility for the reader to actively intervene in the text. Along with this flow, Shin Kyung-rim's poetic world moves from singularity to complexity, from closedness to expansiveness, and from sameness to otherness. Shin Kyung-rim's poetry transcends the discursive limits of 'Minjung' and shapes the voices of actual others in reality as living events.

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