Searching for an English Speaking Diaspora in ROK
: An Explorative Study on What the Literature Indicates

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Abstract

Diaspora, in the flux to new lands, bring with them their culture and teachings. In the ROK, with the Korean birth rate declining, and through encouragement from various sectors, non-Koreans are making their presence on the peninsula more permanent. The current paper seeks to explore the writings of non-Koreans in the English language to address whether in fact there is a genre of literature that can be called ‘diaspora literature’ in Korea nowadays. To investigate this phenomenon, two corpuses from two Korean bookstores specializing on Korea were analyzed and interviews with two large writing group circle leaders were obtained. The results indicate that through there is a nascent movement within the writing circles towards creation of potentially a new diaspora literature genre in ROK, the writings within the two established corpuses indicate some of the most prolific writers on Korea in English reside outside Korea, and focus more on non-fiction writings. Implications from this study suggest further investigation into the development and promotion of a non-Korean English diaspora writing genre can help to promote not only the integration and well-adjustment of the diaspora themselves within Korea, on the world stage through non-Korean eyes.

Keywords: ROK, diaspora, literature, identity, Intersectionality, Intercultural Communications

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I. Introduction

The plethora of diaspora literature has been particularly impressive in its growth, so much so that it is now becoming to be thought of as a canon of literature of its own merit\(^1\). With the last five out of ten Nobel Prize winners of literature\(^2\)\(^3\) coming from what is known as “diaspora literature”, it is truly cementing its own genre within the literature field. There were over a million migrants in 2015 to Europe alone\(^4\)\(^5\) indicating that this field of literature will only continue to grow.

In Seong-kon Kim’s recent opinion article\(^6\), he recognizes the value Korean literature brings to us as “important social documents that faithfully record and vividly mirror the contemporary society from which they originate”. His comment gives rise to the question of what non-Koreans, those considered “outsiders”, can offer in terms of a social document on their perceptions of the Republic of Korea (ROK).\(^7\) It is the aim of this paper to examine, by means of an explorative case study, the writings of what may be called “diaspora” in South Korea, as represented through the English language. First the nature of diaspora literature will be reviewed considering the tenets and/or themes of this genre, and what can traditionally be called ‘diaspora literature’. Then

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1) In Jopi Nyman’s seminal work “A Post-colonial canon? An explorative study of Post-Colonial Writing in University-level courses” he discusses the possibility of this emerging phenomenon of making and breaking a canon.

2) As referenced in The Economist in “The Others” on December 17th, 2009, these include V.S. Naipaul, Gao Xingjian, J.M. Coetzee, Doris Lessing and Herta Muller.

3) The 2017 Nobel Prize winner, Kazuo Ishiguro, though he himself can be considered part of the Japanese diaspora living in Britain, did not win the prize in the diasporic novel genre.

4) This figure is from a BBC report titled “Migrant crisis: Migration to Europe explained in seven charts” on March 4th, 2016.

5) In the newly released documentary film “Human Flow”(October 19th,2017) about refugees, director and contemporary artist Ai WeiWie states 65,000,000 people in the world are now forcibly displaced from their homes.

6) Seong-kon Kim is a professor emeritus of English at Seoul National University and the president of the Literature Translation Institute of Korea. He is a regular columnist in The Korea Herald and this article referenced is “What we can learn from Korean literature” November 8th, 2017.

7) In this paper the Republic of Korea (ROK) may be referred to by its common name of “South Korea” and the Democratic Republic of Korea (DPRK) may be referred to as “North Korea”.

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an investigation into what kind of literature has been written in the English language by non-Koreans in South Korea seeks to address the question of how these writings reflect upon, and “vividly mirror the contemporary society from which they originate” as Seong-kon Kim states as the value of literature. Is there, in fact, a genre of literature that can be called ‘diaspora literature’ in Korea, written in English? A preliminary internet search indicated a dearth in studies on this subject of diaspora writing in Korea in English. This current study hopes to contribute to this neglected area of research by investigating what has been done in writing by non-Koreans in English in two specialty bookshops databases in Korea, as well as investigating the activities of two MeetUp English writing groups currently active in Korea.

II. Literature Review

For researching the question of whether there is a genre of literature existing that can be called ‘diaspora literature’ in Korea, this term and its dimensions are considered in context of established writing in the field. The term ‘diaspora’ itself has expanded greatly from its original meaning. Traditionally defined as a “forced exodus of a group of people from their home land, to settle in another land, without the ability to return to their original land8)”, it has over time become much wider9) to include anyone that is leaving their original land to resettle in a new land. Often this relocation is done for economic reasons, but not necessarily. Also changed from the original meaning is the idea of ‘never to return’ to their original lands. With the free will of choice included now in the economic diaspora movement, the choice that they can return to their homeland is also implied. The term ‘diaspora literature’ its self is often interchanged with the term ‘expatriate literature’. Diaspora literature is identified as “literary works written by the authors outside their native country, but these works are associated with native culture and

8) Mashira Khan Pritom’s text “Exile Literature: Identity formation of Diaspora”
9) For a more complete discussion on diaspora literature and its defining contextualization see Sumit Kumar’s “Diaspora: A New Dimension of Literature”
background”\(^{10}\). Often Diaspora literature can have some aspects of what is referred to as “witness literature”. This is a type of testimony literature, often on more horrific events, as a kind of record keeping of those who were present to the nature of the events\(^{11}\). This kind of literature is often debated as to its accuracy, but it nonetheless puts a human touch on events that may otherwise be left unrecorded other than through statistical record keeping sources, which in themselves may not be accurate. Though witness literature positions itself not as literary creation, but rather a testimony to the events, diaspora literature is often seen as literary creation through story-telling. Some of the more recognized Diasporas with a large volume of literature include the Indian diaspora, the African-American diaspora, the Chinese diaspora, the Jewish diaspora, the Armenian diaspora, as well as many lesser volumes from groups such as Filipinos, Polish, Pakistanis, Ghanaians, Romanians, among others.

Diaspora literature is recognized as writing by a minority nationality living in a nation other than their own, specifically fiction is the most rendered writing form. But when writing on, and about the diaspora themselves, it is Tololyan’s work that has helped us to distinguish some of the intricacies involved in the complexity of the diaspora and their representation. Through analyzing diaspora in various binaries, one of the binaries he has configured is that of identity versus identification. He argues that identity can be seen as an emic approach, where the perspective is of the native speaker, or individual within the diaspora themselves; whereas identification is an etic approach, where the outsider is looking in on the diaspora, and is the “scholarly discourse of diaspora studies”\(^{12}\). Therefore extrapolating on Tololyan’s analysis, when speaking of diaspora literature, it is the emic perspective that can be seen to be involved, as the ‘diasporic person’ them self writes about his/her plight in his/her new land. As such, identity is the primary focus of the writings, rather than identification, though in fact there is a constant juxtaposition in the two as one in fact shapes the other; namely, how other’s see us often influences and shapes our own believes about ourselves, this is all the more prevalent when vulnerable and subjected to an new

\(^{10}\) “Chapter 2: Indian diasporic literature in English” p. 42.

\(^{11}\) See Laura Sasu’s Witness literature- A conceptual Framework for a more comprehensive discussion on its tenets.

\(^{12}\) In Tololyan’s “Diaspora studies: Past, present, and promise”, p. 11.
environment while adapting. Many themes in diaspora literature involve identity and identity formation, as will be seen.

Intersectionality theory, first coined by Kimberle Crenshaw in 1991\(^1\), and later developed more fully by sociologist Patricia Hill Collins, is a useful framework in which to consider diaspora literature and its emic nature. Intersectional Theory can be a lens through which to analyze the marginalized: it conceptualizes a person, group or people, or social problem as affected by a number of discriminations and disadvantages, taking into account people’s overlapping identities and experiences in order to understand the complexity of prejudices they face.\(^2\)

Traditionally Intersectionality focused on factors such as race, class, sexuality and nationality to analyze social identities. Later it expanded to include age, religion, culture, ethnicity, ability, body type, and “looks”. It is this researcher’s opinion, economy must also be a factor included in this list, as economy is often the driving force behind an individual leaving his/her home country to become a member of a diaspora in another land. For diaspora, economy may in fact be the most important factor to consider in their marginalization struggle in their new land. Though there can be said to be economic marginalization festering on the world stage as a whole\(^3\), the individuals whom have taken it into their own hands to relocate due to economy are doing so knowing often that they will be marginalized in other ways in the new land. These ‘other ways’ are the themes that reveal themselves through the diaspora literature, and that Intersectionality identities as “social identities of the related systems of oppression, domination, or discrimination.”

Individuals in the diaspora are said to be in a constant quest of understanding their identity.

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13) In her seminal paper in Stanford Law Review (1991), Crenshaw develops the basis for her theory. Others have argued whether it is really a theory or a framework, with the former being more widely agreed upon.

14) Collins discusses at length the definitional conundrum involved in Intersectionality, and has accepted the widening of the original idea presented by Crenshaw which focused primarily on race and gender when discussing marginalization. She even argues that there is a bastardization to the term itself as it has become a free-for-all in its academic usage, therefore the designation of it as a theory is not adequately supported and framework is more appropriate.

15) According to ICIJ (International Consortium of Investigative Journalists), reporting November 14th, 2017, the richest 1 percent of the world population now accounts for half of the world’s wealth.
Diaspora groups are prone to be marginalized in more than one sector, and that is why the awareness of Intersectionality helps to dissect the various sectors in which this marginalization may be present- to see each of the marginalization’s as independent and contributing in their own right to the whole. Identity struggle may take on meaning not only to the individual, but it may also act as a generational identity marker to the diaspora. For example, first generation diaspora are often identified as holding on to their heritage strongest, such as a desire to maintain their traditional clothes and food\(^\text{16}\), whereas each generation thereafter is thought to assimilate more and more into the predominant culture.

Intercultural Communications theorists have speculated on the adaptation process of the individual into the new land, arriving at two main schools of thought: the typology school, and the progressive school. According to Berry’s typology view\(^\text{17}\), there are four possible outcomes the individual may have in their new land: integration, assimilation, separation or marginalization. First generation diaspora would be more likely to experience separation and/or marginalization than second or third generation diaspora; but successful first generation diaspora might even successfully integrate or even assimilate. Diaspora scholars seem to refer mainly to the marginalization of diaspora, when seen through a more negative lens of conflict and struggle; and assimilation or integration when seen through a more positive lens of multiculturalism. Diaspora literature also reflects this predilection.

As mentioned above, diaspora literature typically refers to fiction, with novels being the most common text under which it is studied and analyzed\(^\text{18}\). Traditionally in analyzing diasporic texts, scholars examine a large range of issues in relation to identity formation, such as alienation, displacement\(^\text{19}\), existential rootlessness, nostalgia, amalgamation, disintegration of cultures,

\(^\text{16}\) In Malerkotla’s “The saga of the journey of Indian diaspora”

\(^\text{17}\) Berry in his model asks two questions to determine a person’s adaptability to a new culture: “Are ethnic/cultural values retained?” And, “Are positive relations with the larger society of value and sought?” Depending if the individual answers ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to these two questions determines which of the 4-types they belong to for adaptation.

\(^\text{18}\) In Keshishyan’s 2013 dissertation “Dislocations of Identity in Late Twentieth Century Armenian Diaspora Literature” the texts written by second and third generation Armenians are often memoirs, autobiography and autobiographical fiction.
anxiety, home, and authenticity among many others, all of which are often associated with post-colonialism, and hybridization. Those people colonized in the past, migrate to the countries which once colonized them for a chance at a better life, often experiencing firsthand these feelings mentioned above, which manifest themselves into themes within their creative works, reflecting Berry’s “marginalization” and “separation” categories. The more positive diaspora literature writings, in which the diaspora integrate and assimilate successfully, have in essence the protagonist sporting a new “multicultural” identity. This may be seen much more in second and third generation diaspora groups and their writings, reflecting Berry’s “integration” and “assimilation” categories.

### III. Methodology

A mixed-methods methodology was used to gather data for this current research. The following will describe the data collection process. Several steps were taken to collect the information needed for the study at hand over about a one-month period.

1. A literature review of the field using university data bases and a broader internet search using Google Scholar, using such terms as “diaspora fiction literature” “Expatriate fiction literature”, “fiction diaspora literature in Korea”, etc. was conducted. The researcher, realizing that there was not much diaspora fiction literature in Korea available easily through such search

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19) Steckenbiller’s 2013 dissertation “Putting Place Back Into Displacement: Reevaluating Diaspora In the Contemporary Literature of Migration” presents a paradigm shift in thinking from the traditional sense of “loss of place” incurred in most studies on diaspora, to one that shows the migrants temporarily out of place but never without a place.

20) See John McCleod’s analysis in “Diaspora and Utopia: Reading the recent work of Paul Gilroy and Caryl Phillips” Of course the debate on multiculturalism, as formed through these “multicultural identities”, and its success, is one that is constantly ongoing.

21) A study done by Park and Kim (2007) looked at two culture cities in Korea and compared them to see how they were promoting themselves in terms of tourism characteristics; a later study done by Yoo (2014) compares the cultural image of Haenyum tourism of university students, creating several subcategories for analysis. This current research considers these cultural categorical aspects in the current study, though no work has been conducted to this researcher’s knowledge that is similar to it already.
terms, reached out through personal word-of-mouth contacts to long term foreign residents of Seoul and those within the literature field in Korea. Though some leads were gathered on literature written by diaspora in Korea, in general, fiction was hard to come by, and it seemed there needed to be a more methodological practice for information gathering. It was also deemed necessary to open up the research scope to include all genres of literature written in English on Korea as the fiction genre was too narrow.

2. It was at this point that the researcher decided to examine the publications within two Korean specializing publication bookstores, namely Royal Asiatic Society (RAS) and Seoul Selection. These two were selected because of their high reputation and that they are exclusively oriented to writings on Korea.

**RAS- Korea Branch**

The Korea Branch of the RAS was created in 1900, as a branch of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain. The founding members were missionaries and diplomats interested in deepening their knowledge of Korea and the Far East. It is the oldest non-Korea English language record keeping organization in Korea, serving in connecting the community in many capacities to Korea through not only their books, but cultural excursions and specialty lectures. Books available from them cover a range of topics, including Art & Architecture, Culture, Korean Literature, History, Economics, Politics, etc. The researcher contacted the Director of the RAS to obtain the “mother list” of their titles. There were a total of 854 items on record.

**Seoul Selection**

Seoul Selection is a publisher that specializes in English-language material. It has been providing English-language books on Korea for the past 10 years. They also cover a large range of topics. Their bookstore is located near Gyeongbokgung palace, a central location. They also have a magazine SEOUL which is jointly published with the Seoul Metropolitan Government. They have a total of 3720 items on their booklist which was updated November 19th, 2017, obtained through their internet site.
Data consolidation

1.1 Both book title lists were merged on an Excel sheet.

1.2 As the primary research objective is to examine English-speaking diaspora literature in Korea, the total 4,574 items were examined and only items that were books written by individuals or team co-authored were kept. This meant that ALL names which were Korean in origin were eliminated so that Heritage Koreans too were not included. Organizations were also eliminated, as it was unclear who the individuals behind the organization were. In the case where there were two authors and one name was non-Korean, the item was also eliminated. In such a case, it could mean the non-Korea writer was a translator, editors, and/or co-writer of the item, and due to this ambiguity, it was eliminated. In the case where two titles might exist for the same item, one was eliminated. After collapsing and cleaning the data, a total of 275 items remained.

1.3 The data was analyzed for the following information: name of author(s), title of text, sex of author(s), category of text, and year of publication. Data was grouped in 5-year interval periods from 1900 for easier illustration in chart format.

1.45 Items were coded according to the following categories: Fiction, Language learning, History, Travel/Guide, Korean Stories, Culture/Customs/Religion, Politics, Business/Economy, Memoir, North Korea, and Other. These categories were determined to be the best fit after grooming the data. Difficulty arose in several situations where a book’s category might overlap two or more categories. Each book was individually googled to see that all the information on the original booklists was accurate, and to read a brief description of the book. At this point too, if a category was suggested for the book from a publishing company, in most cases this was used, but in many cases it was left to the researcher’s own discretion on finding the appropriate category of fit.

3. To understand the current situation of what is being produced with regards to diaspora literature in Korea, the researcher connected with the two largest writing groups through MeetUp in Seoul; Seoul Writer’s Collective and Seoul Writer’s Workshop. MeetUp is an online global networking service that enables people with similar interests to connect in person. The researcher
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participated in both the Seoul Writer’s Collective workshop and the Seoul Writers’ Workshop followed by an e-interview with both the current lead organizers. Their comments are included in the results section.

The main research question under investigation in this study was can there be said to be a distinct genre of English-language diaspora writing in Korea? To answer this, an investigation into the area of English-language writing on Korea was conducted, using the following

**sub-questions as a guide:**

1. What are the most popular categories of English-language writing in Korea?
2. What is the distribution of single-authored and multi-authored writings?
3. Is there a male/ female bias?
4. Are there more men writing together than females or mix-sexed writings?
5. Which writers are the most prolific, and what are they writing about?
6. Were there a greater number of English-language writings done at a particular time than other times from circa 1900 onwards; and what types of writings?
7. What is currently being done to promote English-language diaspora writing in Korea?

### IV. Results and Discussion

The results show that after eliminating the titles which contained a Korean writer as a primary author, or even co-author, that 275 items remained from the original 4574 items originally obtained from both the Royal Asiatic Society and the Seoul Selection bookstores. The 275 items were both single-authored, co-authored, and multi-authored by non-Korean writers. The following presents the quantitative results for analysis in the order of the research questions used as a guide in this study.

The first question in this study addresses the most popular categories of English-language writing in Korea. The majority of texts are concerned with Korea’s culture, customs and religion (27%), followed by its history (19%), and Korean Stories (16%), which for the most part, were
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children’s fairy tales. The ‘other’ category included ad hoc titles, such as a book on Taekwondo, and Korea’s birds.

It is clear that ‘diaspora literature’ in not a genre in Korea at all. Non-fiction writing holds first and second rank; Korean stories, meaning Korean fables translated from the Korean, holds third rank. The top three categories all have what can be considered an anthropological etic-perspective documentation. The writers are clearly looking in on Koreans as outsiders, rather than holding writings on themselves inside the Korean culture and personal narratives/ fiction. Therefore the diaspora literature lens of looking at themes within the literature and analyzing the writing in terms of assimilation, integration, separation, and/or marginalization, is inapplicable. Only six per cent of the texts were categorized as ‘fiction’, but that does not mean that they were diaspora literature just because they are fiction.

<Table 1> Most popular categories of English speaking writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culture/Customs/Religions</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean stories</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel/ Guide</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiction/ Fiction(novel)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memoir</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language learning</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Korea</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business/ Economy</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was of interest to note if there was a difference in writers writing collectively or individually. The second question looked at the distribution of single-authored or co/multi-authored writings. There is a clear proclivity towards writers preferring to write on their own within the texts surveyed. The question of single author versus co-authored/ multi-authored writings is of interest.
to this study as co-authored texts indicate some sort of liaison and possible community. For if there is a community, there may exist a diaspora, and the possibility of a diaspora literature to emerge. However this too must be rebuked, as often the co-authored or multi-authored writings are done by one person residing in Korea, and the other abroad; or in some cases both co-authors reside outside Korea but write on Korea because they may have experienced Korea at some point in the past.

<Table 2> Distribution of single-authored and multi-authored writings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Single author</th>
<th>Co-authored or Multi-authored</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>260</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The third question sought to research if there was a male or female bias in the number of publications within the two databases on Korea. It can clearly be seen from the above results that there is a strong male bias, with 75% of the items being single-authored by men. The ‘other’ category indicated items that were co-authored, or multi-authored and includes male/male; female/female; and male/female authorships.

These results raise the question as to why it is more females don’t write on Korea. And furthermore, one might speculate on if they did write on Korea what they would write on. Could more females be encouraged to write on Korea and would their writings greatly influence the already clearly non-Fiction category bias the current male writers seem to occupy; would female writing on Korea pivot it towards fiction writing and help to manifest a diaspora literature genre? Crenshaw and Collins discussion on Intersectionality makes it clear that gender is one of several marginalization factors for the individual. Could it be that the female non-Korean individuals in ROK are so marginalized that their existence has been obliterated from writings on Korea?
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Table 3: Literature by male and female writers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On closer examination of the ‘other’ category, it can be seen that the majority of items are male co-authored, or multi-authored; men writing together accounted for 73%, with female-female teams and male-female teams of equal occurrence (13%). Writing in English about Korea in both single-authored and co-authored/multi-authored cases indicates a clear male bias.

Table 4: Co-authored literature male and female distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M-M</th>
<th>M-F</th>
<th>F-F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question five queried which writers are most prolific and what type of writings were they doing. The most prolific writers were Duane Vorhees and Mark Mueller, who were co-authoring many Korean stories. Duane Vorhees is a long-time resident of Korea, he has taught at Seoul National University and Korea University, and has acted as a consultant for Academy TOEFL. Mark Mueller however, lives in Clinton, NJ. He has written 24 books, some novels, but none about Korea and appears to have had no history of living in Korea. Both writers contributed to a series of Korean traditional Children Tales that were interpreted by them, and relayed to the English speaking world. The third most prolific writer was Robert Koehler, who is the owner of the publishing company and bookstore Seoul Selection. He has written the majority of his works on Culture/Customs and Religion, but he has also published some well-thought of Travel/Guide books on Seoul and Korea. Richard Saccone is an expert diplomat with a Ph.D. in public and international affairs. He worked both in South Korea and North Korea on issues such as
preventing nuclear weapons development. He is currently serving as a member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives in USA. Brother Anthony of Taize arrived in Korea in 1980 and began to translate modern Korean literature in 1988, and published a wide variety of works from classic Korean authors. The current 4 titles are only the ones listed in the two data sources surveyed. He taught at Sogang University for about thirty years and translated modern Korean literature and wrote books and articles about literature and translation. Bruce Cumings is an American historian and former chair professor of University of Chicago’s history department. He specializes in modern Korean history and contemporary international relations. He has written extensively on Korea, living in Korea for two years as a Peace Corp volunteer, and is considered one of the leading Korean scholars. Fred Lukoff was an American linguist who specialized in the study of the Korean language and the first president of International Association for Korean Language Education (IAKLE). He taught at Yonsei University for seven years, but then returned to the USA to teach. Laural Kendall is a leading scholar of popular religion. She is the Curator of Asian Ethnology and Division Chair of Anthropology and Professor at Richard Gilder Graduate School. She was also a Peace Corp volunteer. Her primary research is female shamans. Andrei Lankov is a prominent Russian scholar of Asia and Korean studies specialist. He has been more or less permanently residing in South Korean since 1992, and is currently teaching at Kookmin University.

This question really aims at the heart of the research question-searching for a diaspora literature in Korea in English by non-Koreans. And it can be seen that five of the nine most prolific writers on Table 5 do not live in Korea nowadays. Those that live in Korea all focus on the culture of Korea in its various forms, but through the etic lens of the anthropologist: documenting, recording and accounting. Those residing outside of Korea may have a culture interest also, but they tend to focus on less aesthetic categories such as North Korea, History, Politics and Language Learning. Again, fiction is nowhere on the list of top publications in Korea by non-Koreans, and diaspora literature seems to have no fertile ground.
To investigate if there were a greater number of English-language writings done at a particular time in history, from circa 1900 to the present, and what types of writings were done, the following table (Table 6) illustrates the outcome in five-year intervals. The table shows that a few writings were done in the early, or pre-1900s. These would be namely the Korean early missionaries, such as James Gale, Lillias Underwood, Homer Hubert and Horace Allen, early explorer Captain Basil Hall, or war correspondent Henry James Whigham in the current databases. From 1910 to 1965 writings are sparse. From 1966 onwards, the proliferation of writings increases quite dramatically with the greatest number of texts being written between the period of 2011-2015 (61 items written), followed by 2006-2010 (43 items written). It seems that in 2011-2015 that the majority of the writings concerned Korea’s Culture, Customs and Religion (18 items), followed by Travel/ Guide writings (11 items). For the period of 2006-2010, Korea’s Culture, Customs and Religion were also the most popular writings (16 items), followed by Korea’s History (10 items). Overall, Korea’s Culture, Customs and Religion had a total of 79 items written about it, and Korea’s History (56 items), from the two data bases the texts were collected. From 2006-2015 the most texts (8 items) on North Korea were written.

Though the data is of interest to see what was written when and what was more popular at

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Number of publications</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duane Vorhees</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Korean Stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Mueller</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Korean Stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Koehler</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Culture/ Customs/Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brother Anthony of Taize</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Korean Stories; Culture, customs and Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Saccone</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Korean Stories; Culture, customs and Religion North Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruce Cumings</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred Lukoff</td>
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different times, or overall in the period investigated, the results are similar in terms of their meaning to the principle research question: there is no real ground to claim there exists a diaspora literature in Korea written by non-Koreans. The fiction genre saw the highest item count in the 2011-15 five-year interval, with four items. This indicates that at its most prolific five-year interval, less than one novel a year is being written in English by non-Koreans.

<Table 6> Number of English text writings and the their type from pre-1900 to present

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Legend

A Business/Economy
B Culture/Customs/Religion
C Fiction/ Fiction (novel)
D History
E Korean stories
F Language learning
G Memoir
H North Korea
I Politics
J Travel/ Guide
K Other

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Searching for an English Speaking Diaspora in ROK: An Explorative Study on What the Literature Indicates

The researcher wanted to investigate what is currently being done to promote English-language diaspora writing in Korea (Question 7). To do so, a search of the MeetUp groups in Korea for writers revealed that two of the largest and most active groups were Seoul Writer’s Workshop (SWW) and Seoul Writer’s Collective (SWC). The researcher made an on-site visit to both groups to observe the format of the gathering, which was then later followed by an e-interview with both of the current organizers. Both SWW and SWC followed a similar format of interaction with its group members. Up to three submissions in total from the group were allowed to be reviewed prior to the in-person meeting. These submissions were uploaded onto google document and all members could access it easily. The author of the piece had to explain briefly about the piece being submitted (ex. Intended audience, length of piece, any particular aspects for the readers to pick up on).

Prior to attending the meeting, the group attendees were then expected to have read the pieces, and have formed comments to share to the group. SWW asked that these comments be written (typed) and given to the author at the time of the meeting. At the time of the meeting, little time was wasted and the organizer of the group took the lead to recapture the stories essence and then go on to give their personal insights on the piece, which could range from content accuracy, grammar, “realism” of the flow of the piece, and/or their feelings as to if it worked or not for them. Each member of the attending group then followed course with their opinions. The writer in attendance, would remain quiet throughout this feedback process, taking notes, and at the end of fielding all the attendees’ comments, would reply to each person in turn with some feedback/discussion on what they thought of the comments. This process was thought to lessen any bickering or engaging in any unwarranted difficulties. All of the groups are voluntary and contribution is unpaid.

The overall process took about two hours and started and finished promptly in both observed on-site visits. At the time of the on-site visit, SWW had 4 attendees, and SWC had 6 attendees, including the researcher, who participated actively in the groups. Though the researcher had identified herself to the organizers prior to participation in both groups as a researcher on diaspora writings by non-Koreans, she did not identify herself to the group members as this was
not thought to be ethically compromising research, and to do so may have interrupted the flow of the groups dynamics.

An e-interview\(^{22}\) was requested to both of the current organizers of the group following the in-person visit, and both organizers were very willing to do so. Following are highlights from the e-interview.

**Seoul Writers Collective (SWC)**

This group was formed in 2007. There are 809 registered members, 21 of which were active in the last week. It has had “quite a few” organizers. The current organizer is Christine Shea, presently teaching elementary school children in Seoul, who came to the group because “Over Christmas, I went home to see my family in Chicago and met up with a fellow writer and friend for lunch. While catching up, I told her how I was having trouble with the ending of my book and that I didn’t know what to do. After briefly chatting about it, I had the epiphany of how it was supposed to end, wrote it all on the back of a paper napkin, and continued my lunch. It was then that I truly realized how badly I was in need of a writing community in Seoul.” Christine is an energetic, passionate organizer, who is currently working on a sci-fi novel about dragons and fantasy. She has been the organizer of this group for one and a half years. Christine is networked in another writer’s group as well called Wordsmith, but this is a monthly spoken word event.

Christine is aware of two works that have been published\(^{23}\) by SWC group members and she thinks there may be others she does not know of. Her participation in the group was marked with positive elements such as “meeting new writers, discovering new ways of looking at something, and helping others to get past the proverbial brick wall.” Negative elements were “there are so many different levels of writing and not many people consistently come every workshop; some people are non-committal, and will only show up when they need their writing workshopped”. But overall Christine remains positive and said “even if there are pitfalls, the joys far outweigh them…” This group has given me real leadership training in time management, self-expression,

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22) Both organizers’ were asked the same 8 questions via an e-interview. See Appendix A for these questions.
23) https://www.amazon.co.uk/Cartwright-Final-Solution-Greta-Wink-ebook/dp/B00YEUMIGQ
and fostering meaningful discussion about the work. It’s been a great ride and I’ve learned so much”. Certainly in person she helped to create an active, inviting and participatory feeling for all to contribute their comments and feedback.

Christine uses the following analogy to summarize her overall learning from involvement in SWC as follows: “One thing I’ve learned from this group is that it’s kind of like a gym. You have the group who knows what they’re doing—they have correct form and use their strengths to encourage others. You have the novices—the ones who have dabbled with machines and weights, perhaps in high school, but are now ready to get serious. Then there are the complete newbies, the ones who have always wanted to pick up a barbell shaped pen and flex it, but often get so caught up with what other more accomplished athletes are doing that they think they aren’t ready yet. They look in the mirror and see someone scrawny, whereas the coach sees potential. But mostly it’s like a gym because you have to do it—you have to get up and do it every day—because you can have results or excuses, but you can’t have both”.

**Seoul Writers’ Workshop (SWW)**

This group was also founded in 2007 as well. The group has 534 registered members on their MeetUp site, 5 to 7 of the participants are active, according to the organizer. The current organizer Deauwand Myers, a university professor, was asked to take over as chair four years ago because the previous chair was leaving Korea. Positive attribute of this group for Deauwand include “critiquing and reading good work…getting constructive feedback”. Whereas the downfalls of the group are “adults being late, not reading directions, etc. is tedious at times…also, expats, especially men from Western countries, are too often weird and socially awkward/immature/unsophisticated…as with much in the expat community, there’s a transient quality to the group”. Deauwand himself is networked in several other writing groups: Seoul Writers’ Collective, Nanowriters, and Brothas and Sistas of South Korea, which has a writing group within its organization for Black American writers. He knows of one person that has published from their group.24)

This group is also associated with the Seoul metropolitan government. It is the only writing
group that has been officially recognized through the “The Sharing City Seoul” Project\textsuperscript{25).} Discussing this project and the SWW association with it, Deauwand said “They haven't given us any funding yet, though they have helped in the dissemination of our group's events and resources like that. There's actually a ton of money the Seoul government gives out every year to cultural groups of foreigners; in fact, the minimum amount was so high (4 million Won per group function) we couldn't qualify for any support because we couldn't utilize that much money. The Seoul Metropolitan Office requires the group to spend its own money first, then reimburses the group for that amount if the grant is approved. It's an odd way of funding foreign cultural orgs. Original receipts and documentation of the event (such as flyers or posters) are required after the event is held.”

Deauwand has no plans to leave Korea soon, and will continue to lead SWW, but is thinking of perhaps changing its location to Itaewon area (an area quite popular amongst expats in Seoul), rather than continuing to host it in its present location of Kangnam (quite an affluent area of Seoul which has more business expats).

As these two interviews and on-site visitations revealed, there is a somewhat nascent collective which supports one another to develop their writings. No financial support is provided to them, and all is done on a voluntary basis. Though the group leaders were somewhat aware of recent publications from members of their groups, due to the transience of the group members, and even to the leaders themselves somewhat as both were not the initial leaders of their groups, it was not clearly known if others had published previously. It was implied it must have been, but any records were just kept within the leaders own memories, nothing was recorded. Other than the three novelists they knew personally from participating in the groups’ sessions while they were leaders, they were unable to think of any other names.

\textbf{Conclusions and Recommendations}

From this exploratory study, several observations and recommendations emerge and will be

\textsuperscript{24} https://www.amazon.com/Megarothke-Robert-Ashcroft/dp/1946487066
\textsuperscript{25} http://english.seoul.go.kr/policy-information/key-policies/city-initiatives/1-sharing-city/
highlighted briefly here.

First, there clearly is no diaspora literature, as it is known by its definition that exits presently in Korea. Literature written by non-Koreans tends to be more anthropological in nature, using an etic lens for recording what they see the Koreans doing, or translating and possibly interpreting already existing Korean texts.

Second, more community connection is needed as a whole in order to create fertile ground in which a diaspora may take root and hence raise their writers. Any emic perspectives in literature on Korea by non-Koreans are just barely emerging from MeetUp groups which have only been founded since 2007. Perhaps with the use of the internet, there may remain more documentation of group events and recording of their histories together as writers to create more of a collective memory for future writers to build upon, aiding the diaspora foundation.

Third, women need more voice in the writings. Currently this is lacking and this may help to create a richer awareness of the Korean context, as the writings may help to diversify the categories of writing more and create more writings in categories that are currently lacking, such as fiction.

Fourth, this research clearly indicates that fiction writing is lacking and that as a genre requires attention in promotion through Western eyes. Korean fiction writings that are translated into English are not the same as having a non-Korean write their perspective on Korea. They are very different writings and would be no threat of contamination or comparison. In order to help widen the bridge the culture gap, understanding gap, and human gap forever cemented in the East-West schematic divide, those non-Koreans who are able writers in English need to be encouraged to do so. Encouragement can take the form of writing bursaries, funded writers retreats, scholarships, creative forums and workshops to help foster the movement.

Collecting and creating a database of such writings- both for fiction and non-fiction- will help to fossilize the collective memory needed for diaspora literature to take root, and will engage “important social documents that faithfully record and vividly mirror the contemporary society form which they originate” as Seong-kon Kim suggests is at the heart of all civilizations.
Limitations of Study

This study can be said to have several limitations.

First and foremost, the data collected and analyzed was from only two corpuses. These two corpuses certainly did not contain all books written on Korea by non-Koreans. A future study might consider expanding the corpuses both within Korea and outside of Korea to use other collections.

These days much is published online and to catch the new and latest novels published this way would be best for indicating the current state of fiction on Korea. This would be a way to follow-up better on this study.

The cleaning of the data was done very meticulously and the researcher had a second person check the data and then rechecked the data again to ensure all the books, authors, year of publication and categories were correct. Again, human error may have caused some texts to be improperly deleted.

Lastly, the categories themselves could be said to be inappropriate as some texts are clearly overlapping in their contents. For example a book may be religious, historical and cultural all at the same time. I used when possible the designated categories recommended by the bookstores or on-line description, but in the end I often had to classify the book to the best fit I deemed most reflected the text. Here, too, due to subjectivity, there may be cause for some debate on accuracy.

Appendix A

1. What made you interested in forming this group? Taking the leadership role?
2. How long have you been hosting this group?
3. Have there been any published works emerging from the group that you know of? If so, what kinds of topics have been published (and if you have any links to these published works).
4. How long have you been here in Korea and how long are you planning to stay here?
5. What are the joys and pitfalls of organizing and keeping such a group going?
6. How many members do you have now, and how many of these are "active" members?
Searching for an English Speaking Diaspora in ROK: An Explorative Study on What the Literature Indicates

7. Are you networked with any other groups?
8. And if you have anything else that you'd like to mention about your hosting/leadership of this group that I might not be addressing in the above questions.

References


Keshishyan, L.(2013). Dislocations of Identity in Late Twentieth Century Armenian Diaspora Literature. Dissertation Abstracts. Escholarship.org, 0pb9425f


접수일(2017년 12월 30일)
수정일(2018년 01월 26일)
계제확정일(2018년 02월 02일)
3인의명 심사결

- 254 -
세로운 세계로의 이주는 이주민들의 문화와 교육을 동반하게 된다. 한국의 경우, 
한국인의 출산율이 낮아짐에 따라 비한국인이 많은 분야에서 더욱 영구적으로 일하 
도록 만들고 있다. 본 연구는 비한국인의 영어 글쓰기를 탐색함으로써 현대의 한국 
사회에서 "디아스포라문학"이라는 장르가 있는지를 알아보고자 한다. 이러한 현상 
을 조사하기 위하여, 한국에 대한 서적이 특성화 되어있는 2개의 한국 서점에서 2개 
의 문학의 정수를 분석하였으며, 2개의 저명한 글쓰기 그룹 리더들과 인터뷰를 진행 
하였다. 본 연구 결과 글쓰기 그룹에서 잠재적으로 새로운 디아스포라 문학 장르가 
발생하는 움직임이 있으며, 2개의 문학의 정수는 영어로 한국에 대해 다작을 하는 
대부분의 작가는 한국이 아닌 곳에 거주하고 있으며, 이들은 논픽션 글쓰기에 더 많 
은 중점을 두고 있는 것으로 나타났다. 본 연구의 시사점으로는 비한국인의 영어 글 
쓰기 장르의 개발 및 축진에 대한 향후의 연구는 한국내의 이주자의 한국에서의 응 
합과 더 나은 적응을 도울 수 있다.

주제어: 한국, 디아스포라, 문학, 정체적, 교차성, 이문화간 의사소통

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