

The Pan-Asian Empire and World Literatures

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Abstract: In her article "The Pan-Asian Empire and World Literatures" Sowon S. Park argues that world literature studies have been limited to "Europe and its Others." That is to say, while there has been an increasing preoccupation with literary networks beyond the Western canon since the middle of the last century, the investigations have been restricted to the colonial world and the postcolonial states of the Western powers. The non-Western colonial field of the Pan-Asian empire (1894-1945) — Imperial Japan, colonial Korea, semi-colonial China, and Taiwan — has been not so much relegated to the margins as just passed over. Park recalibrates the dynamics of the "West and the rest" and "center/periphery" models of world literature by bringing an East Asian perspective to the discussion and presents an atypical model that expands the radius, as well as challenges certain accepted norms.

Sowon S. PARK

The Pan-Asian Empire and World Literatures

In theory, world literature is that which is universal, but in practice the dominant texts found in world literature lists are mostly the texts of the dominant nations. Given that the current idea of world literature arose in response to European historical events in the nineteenth century when Europe governed most of the world, it is perhaps inevitable that its methodology and boundaries reflect its provenance. However, the equivalence of European literature and world literature cannot be explained merely by the accident of its place of birth: as a category of knowledge, world literature emerged simultaneously with and as a corollary of the rise of national literatures and from the beginning there existed a conflict between the idea of world literature as literature that transcends national boundaries and the antithetical idea of it as a hyper-nationalist manifestation that aims to dominate the world literary market (see, e.g., D'haen 152; D'haen, Damrosch, Kadir). This tension remains largely unresolved. One fundamental reason has to do with organization. Despite the universalist description, the field is constituted by a selective process that renders it hierarchical, establishing some texts as universal, transcending the particulars of their origin, and others, as obscure. So whether one sees world literature as transnational or hypernational, the underlying issue keeps returning to the question of what or whose measure of evaluation authorizes the process of stratification. To this question there are no satisfactory "literary" answers, only more political questions: who or what produces the function of world literature? What power or authority ensures the currency of its criteria across changing historical and cultural contexts? On what grounds? And for what purpose? One might note that such questions of evaluative judgment and stratification are themselves universal. For no discussion of the literary canon has been without its version of this debate. But the question of canonization processes is central to this field since its very establishment was fueled by a desire to escape the methodological limitations of the discipline of comparative literature within which the issue of Eurocentrism was profound. As Robert J.C. Young has noted:

In comparative literature ... theory functions as the global measure of comparison, so that comparative literature itself can take the position of the universal, holding the literary texts together like the two points of John Donne's compasses. The requirement of comparison tends to emphasize common generic (in the tradition of Aristotle's *Poetics*) or conceptual ground (being, "the human spirit" [Brunel; Pichois; Rousseau], the "inaesthetic" [Badiou]) that can bring the two together, usually through the invocation of concepts drawn from European poetics or philosophy. European theory operates the node through which comparison is effected. This model is replicated in the German concept of *Weltliteratur*, in which literatures of the world are not compared directly with one another but mediated by the larger concept of world literature, a frame in which they are put side by side. (685)

As Young points out, world literature, like comparative literature with which it shares its ancestry, has a knack of organizing European literary values as being universal. Thus Sukehiro Hirakawa represents a serious critical opinion when he states that "It is true that great scholars such as Curtius, Auerbach, or Wellek wrote their scholarly works in order to overcome nationalism. But to outsiders like me, Western comparative literature scholarship seemed to be an expression of a new form of nationalism — Western nationalism, if I may use such an expression. It seemed to me an exclusive club of Europeans and Americans. It was a sort of Greater West European Co-prosperity Sphere" (546). But market-led globalization has the potential to reshape world literature as a field of knowledge and the validity of Europe-led definitions are, if not in full dispute, at least no longer accepted as immutable.

Against this background, I aim to open up the discussion by offering a view of world literature from the perspective of the Pan-Asian Empire (1894-1945), the only non-Western empire in the modern world and the first "peripheral" region to launch a sustained and at times successful challenge to the imperial West. In bringing in the East Asian perspective, I seek to recalibrate the dynamics of the world literary map, which is heavily configured on the "West and the rest," "Europe and its Others," and "center-periphery" models. This is not to deny or refute the center-periphery model of the world literary system whether it be drawn according to Franco Moretti or Pascale Casanova. However, relations between the Pan-Asian Empire and European literature offer an additional and

atypical model that both expands the radius of world literature and modifies certain accepted norms of the field. In challenging Eurocentrism, I do not claim to step completely outside of Eurocentric discourse for when the discussion is articulated through the conceptual structure of the English language with reference to European literary structures of thought, there are inevitable limitations. But I make distinctions between kinds of Eurocentrism for the term is often used with little degree of approximation and can provide a breeding ground of confusion. Although the narrow definition of world literature has received criticism, it is much less clear as to what an enlarged and enriched reformulation would look like. In any case, an East Asian vantage point on world literature cannot simply be a matter of discussing the literature of East Asia without reference to the frame of the European canon, which would be just as inadequate a solution and ultimately just as unsatisfactory as the matching-up of prominent East Asian texts to canonical works on the ground of "universal" cultural values. To reconfigure world literature without reiterating the confines of Eurocentric thinking — while acknowledging the particularity of the geocultural landscape, including that of Europe — it would be more useful to readjust the frame of assumed universalism rather than to seek to abolish or replace it.

So what relevance or legitimacy can the literature of the Pan-Asian Empire have for discussions of world literature? The answer was, until fairly recently, very little, at least in the more acknowledged debates on *Weltliteratur*. And although since the middle of the last century we have seen an increasing preoccupation with intercultural transactions outside the Western canon, owing largely to postcolonial interventions, the interrogations have been limited to the colonial world and the postcolonial states of the Western powers. The non-Western colonial literary field of the Pan-Asian Empire — Imperial Japan, colonial Korea, semi-colonial China, Taiwan and occupied Manchuria — is not so much relegated to the margins as just passed over. However, the absence of engagement is one-sided. In the Far East, world literature has been an active area of study for at least a century. However, to date there has been little direct exchange between world literature studies and East Asian literary studies, which have more or less remained outside the frame of the "world" as defined in the domain of world literatures.

Nevertheless, there is a direct link between the creation of the Pan-Asian Empire and the world literary system: though Pan-Asia was one of the major imperialist forces of modernity and the only one to challenge and attempt to overthrow Western imperialism, it did not emerge independently of the West and was in fact a kind of surrogate — "surrogate" in the sense that Japan borrowed the system of empire building from the West. As one of the last parts of the world to be incorporated into capitalist world economy, and as late as the early nineteenth century, Japan was hardly better prepared than India or Africa to resist European expansion. Yet, Japan succeeded in turning itself into a major industrial imperialist power within thirty years of being forced into an unequal trading treaty in 1854 by U.S. commodore Matthew C. Perry. It is commonplace to note that the Meiji Restoration (明治維新) of 1868 that restored the emperor system to the Tokugawa shogunate made it possible for feudal Japan to achieve the feat of industrializing and modernizing in super-record time. This is the standard narrative inasmuch as it exists, which focuses on the exceptionalism of Japanese modernization. And whether one accepts Meiji as the exemplary model of modernization or not, the corpus of analysis of the Japanese empire is broadly in agreement on one thing — its so-called surrogate nature. As W.G. Beasley states in *Japanese Imperialism 1894-1945*, "European colonialism was a precondition of Japan's advance into South-east Asia ... the New Order and the Co-prosperity Sphere were heirs to Western empire: partly because they incorporated those ingredients in it that survived, partly because the West's experience remained a factor in Japanese thinking. There never was a time when Japanese empire builders could start with a *tabula rasa* ... external circumstance, in the shape of the example and the constraints deriving from the West's imperialism, was a precondition" (252-58).

If the Japanese empire had an imitative, surrogate nature, then it also had important political differences. One is that Meiji was not a revolution in the mould of the French or the US-American revolutions, but a reprise of imperial rule that was aristocrat-led and fundamentally anti-democratic. Whereas European modernity began in the age of reason signaling universal and equal rights as opposed to traditional privileges, Meiji was a top-down political movement in which the aristocracy and the Meiji oligarchy formed an absolutist alliance. While European modernity came about through the revolutionary and middle classes merging to strike against absolutism and the tyranny of the *ancien*

regime and in so doing launched democracy, technical progress, and liberation, the Meiji restoration justified class oppression and imperial domination in the name of technical progress and survival. These different points of departure account for the particular ways in which Western literary forms were adopted and developed in the Japanese Empire which, as I will later argue, reframe ideas not only about the so-called universality of the Western canon, but undermine a prevalent if often tacit assumption in world literature studies that goes right back to Goethe: that world literature is a body of lasting works, steadily progressing towards a liberal humanist consensus. But before that, one should address another major difference regarding the origins of Japanese imperialism: Japan's motive in expansion, unlike that of Western industrial imperial states, was not primarily economic, and its imperialism was not an inevitable stage in finance capitalism. Many studies have pointed out that Japan was an exception to the rule of the process of colonization. The economist, Michio Morishima states that "as such this 'imperialism' of Japan can never be imperialism as defined by Marx, Lenin, or Sweezy. This is due to the fact that Japan began her overseas invasion when her economy was but in its childhood and youth; thus her 'imperialism' was not one brought about by the stage of monopoly capitalism, which in Marxism is defined as the highest stage of capitalism" (157-58).

The primary motive that impelled and then sustained Japan's modernization (and later that of other regions in East Asia) was the need to counter the aggressions of Western imperialist modernity. In nineteenth-century Japan, it was universally accepted that the only way to avoid invasion and subjugation by Britain or the United States was to develop from a feudal semi-unified pre-capitalist society into an industrialized and armed modern state. What enabled the process was the shared sense of a mission to stand against the threat of imperialism, which can be glimpsed in slogans during and after the Meiji Restoration such as "Resistance Against the White Man's Domination." This might be the defining slogan 成语 (chengyu, "four character" sentence) of the Japanese empire, which one finds in a wide variety of artefacts in the material culture of the time. So one could make a case for saying that Japan reformed itself into an empire as a response to an awareness of living in a "white" imperialist world — in fact, modeled itself on the West as a protection from the West.

This reactive and defensive aspect of Japanese modernity is remarkable in that it demonstrates the extraordinary power and motivation that can be generated by threat. During the Meiji period, the politics of fear played a vital role in producing the impulse to undergo a profound transition and to achieve a self-reconstruction as enforced by the state's military authority. Beasley has summed up this feature of the Japanese empire: "Marxist writers about Japanese imperialism have thus had to come to terms with the fact that it did not quite relate to capitalism in the way required by Leninist theory. They have done so by a process of implicit intellectual borrowing. Modifying Schumpeter, they hold that the weakness of the bourgeois element in nineteenth-century political change left Japan with a military bureaucracy — ideologically, if not genetically, the heirs to a feudal class — which exercised an exceptional influence on policy. Equally, they maintained that the existence of an international imperialist structure, by which Japan was threatened, provided an external impulse working in the same direction. So Japanese imperialism becomes the illegitimate child of Western capitalism, with international rivalry as midwife" (9). So when Ito Hirobumi's government declared war on China in the initial stage of expansion after 1894, Japan was setting out to substitute a syncretized system of imperialism in East Asia in place of what they had inherited from the nineteenth-century West. This required a restructuring of the feudal system into an industrial capitalist state, but also a specifically Asian ideology. This was Pan-Asianism, which became one of the most persistent topics of East Asian modernity (see Tihanov). The key idea was to build a great alliance between Japan, Korea, and China to create a bloc of Asian nations in order to defy Western powers and to preserve Asia from "white" imperialism. There were a great many complicated and interesting debates about what being Asian means and what Asian consciousness and values actually are, debates which by no means are settled today and the discussion of which the focus of this paper does not permit, except to observe two aspects of Pan-Asianism.

The first is that separately from the contents of the debate, the discourse of Pan-Asianism legitimated Japan's expansionist policies in the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere. Japan's hegemonic ambitions — which saw it annex Taiwan in 1895, the southern half of Sakhalin, and South Manchuria after the Russo-Japanese war in 1906, and Korea in 1910, the expansion to Mongolia, parts of China, Burma, the Philippines, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Manchukuo, and Kampuchea — were

enshrined in the ideology of Pan-Asianism which constructed the idea of Asia as a geographical, historical, and spiritual unity (see Myers and Peattie 10-11). Japan, as another popular slogan would have it, was on its way "to become the Britain of the East."

The second point about Pan-Asianism is that "Western" or "world" literature played a pivotal role in its construction. So what exactly was the role that Western literary texts played in the construction of Asian modernity and how did they play it? As was the case with economic and political reform, the primary motive for cultural reformation in Pan-Asia was the perceived need to strengthen and protect Asia from the imposition of Western powers, yet paradoxically just as in the politics of empire-building, the main model of knowledge on which reforms were based came from the West. The fifth article of the Oath Charter (or the "Oath in Five Articles") of 1868, proclaimed at the enthronement of Emperor Meiji states that "Knowledge shall be sought throughout the world so as to strengthen the foundations of our country" (Keene 137). And true to its spirit, a sizeable body of Japanese trainees were sent abroad to study under government sponsorship. It is worth noting that in the Oath, as well as elsewhere, "world" was used synonymously with the major Western states and knowledge of the world meant knowledge of the major powers. In fact, there was a hierarchy constructed according to which nations were ranked according to their use-value and potential threat. As Hirakawa writes, "Japanese thinkers ranked Western nations according to their relative 'superiority' or 'inferiority'" (80). At its peak in 1869, 174 students were sent to Britain, France, Holland, and Russia and it was from this pool that the first generation of Meiji intellectuals and political elites emerged, for example Hirobumi, the Meiji Prime Minister. As Byron K. Marshall states in his *Academic Freedom and the Japanese Imperial University 1868-1939*, "although government leaders in the 1870s saw their most immediate needs for imported knowledge in terms of military defense and public works, a sizeable portion of public expenditures was allocated to long-term investments in Western humanities, social sciences, and theoretical natural sciences, apart from applied technologies. In other words, these leaders were committed to social engineering and cultural reform as well as to the importation of material technology. Along with armaments, steamships, and telegraph lines, Japanese leaders sought to acquire a working understanding of those basic principles underlying Western civilization that might be of use in reshaping Japan's economic life, legal system, political structure, and even aesthetic standards" (29).

In addition to sending students to study in Europe and the U.S., the Japanese government increased the number of European employees. In 1875, approximately 520 were employed by and among them the British were the most numerous. For example, in 1872, 119 out of 213 were British (see Marshall). As the historian, David H. James, who had been one of those foreign employees and who had not only witnessed, but helped create the transformation, notes in *The Rise and Fall of the Japanese Empire*, "the skill with which Japanese utilized western knowledge and picked the brains of foreign experts, to build a first-class military and industrial power on the bare foundations of feudalism amazed the world. The motive force was the Daimyo and the urge behind it all was a desire to make up for lost time under the Tokugawas, and to save the country from the aggressions of foreign capitalists and militarists" (127). Crucial to this change was the role of the print media and a great number of translations and even more adaptations of Western texts flooded the Japanese market. Scott J. Miller writes in his *Adaptations of Western Literature in Meiji Japan*: "In Meiji era Japan (1868-1912) ... translations and adaptations of Western literary texts found their way into the Japanese publishing mainstream ... Some of the texts were translated quite literally, and bear phonetic baggage of gangly English or French names and the exotic trappings of foreign settings. Not all were translated, in the strictest sense of the word, however. Many found their way into Japanese as *hon'anmono*, adapted tales of foreign origin. These adaptations were often quite creatively fleshed out even as they retained some of the original elements of the original tale ... the last three decades of the nineteenth century saw hundreds of Western texts reincarnated into Japanese versions that fed an increasingly literate citizenry" (3)

One of the most salient aspects of scholarship during Pan-Asian modernity is the restructuring of every aspect of knowledge from a Sinocentric and Chinese script-based system into discourse translated from Western sources. One of the best examples of this is the changing conception of literature itself. Before the advent of Western modernity throughout the long history of literature in China, Korea, and Japan, the term for literature 文學 (*mūnhak*) in Korean, 文学 (*bungaku*) in Japanese,

and 文學 (*wenxue*) in Chinese meant scholarship, erudition, or the study of the Confucian classics, were wide-ranging and mostly non-fiction. Further, the character 文 (*mūn/bun/wen*) indicated a broader concept than literature as we understand it today and signified humanity's moral relationship with the universe. Literary activity was not a specialized field, but was inseparable from the moral, political, cultural, social, and personal just as in pre-modern Europe before aesthetics became a separate category. With the advent of modernity, Western literature became the model to which former conceptions must adjust and the European novel began to take on an unprecedented role. One only has to look at the proliferating journals of this period to find evidence of literature being rapidly reconstructed according to Western classifications of knowledge and this was widely remarked upon at the time.

One of the earliest and most influential examples in Korea is found in a modernist literary manifesto by the "new" novelist and "founding father" of modern Korean literature Yi Kwangsu (1892-1950). In "What is Literature?" (1916) he wrote that "in recent years, what is called *mūnhak* has come to mean 'literature' as the word is used by Westerners, so it is correct to say that *mūnhak* is a translation of the Western concept of 'literature.' Therefore, *mūnhak* expresses the meaning of the term 'literature' in Western languages and not what it has traditionally represented" (508, translation mine). In this classic, Yi develops and advocates a thesis about what Korean literature should be in modern times. Taking his cue from unspecified yet clearly European models that prioritize affective individualism, he urges for a break with the Confucian, Sinocentric past. A year later, in 1917 he published his "new" novel *무정* (*Mujong*, Heartless: meaning literally "No Heart") which is now recognized as the first Korean novel (according to the European definition) and credited with inaugurating modern Korean literature. Heartless dramatizes the thesis outlined in "What is Literature?" and although it delineated the conflict between the two incompatible worlds of traditional ideals and modernity, it is clear where the author's sympathies lie, attacking, as it does, outmoded forms of feudal models and concepts which do not correspond to the rapidly changing times and proposing that Koreans need to adopt new categories, in other words, Western forms of thought, to respond to the advent of a new kind of society.

Similarly, in China Lu Hsun (1881-1936), the founder of modern Chinese literature and regarded by many as China's greatest modern writer, wrote in his essay "門外文談" ("Lay Discussions of Literature") that "we used to call those records written in difficult, old characters *wen*, but now those who follow the new are calling them *wenxue*. However they are not referring to the use of *wenxue* in Book Eleven of *The Analects*, they are referring to the translation of the English word 'literature' imported from Japan" (99). It is also worth noting that Lu like his counterpart Yi in Korea was not only a commentator on the transformation more radical than in any comparable stretch of history, but was himself heavily involved in the process of transformation. For example, in his 1924 *中國小說史* (*A Brief History of Chinese Fiction*) — the first account of the history of Chinese fiction — he weaved a narrative history of legends, myths, prose romances, supernatural tales, satire, political narratives, and adventures going back to the first usage of the word 小說 ("fiction" [xiao-shuo], meaning "small talks") by Chuang Tzu, a philosopher in the warring states period in the 4th-3rd century BC. Nowhere in Lu's history is the European novel mentioned directly, but it is clear that the affective, the individual, and the realistic were the defining measure of his assessment of the works he pulled together. In other words, the European novel provides a normative paradigm for Chinese fiction. Much like T.S. Eliot's notion of "tradition" in his "Tradition and the Individual Talent," Lu reconstitutes China's literary past according to his present conception of the "new" novel. Perhaps this model is not exceptional in itself — for all literary histories are to an extent back-projections of the present especially when they are constructed according to national classifications — but it is significant that for Lu, as for Yi, European literary forms provided the exemplary model.

It is also noteworthy that both Yi and Lu studied in Japan (the former at Waseda and the latter at Sendai) where they were exposed to European literature and the Westernized literary pool into which they plunged was in no small way created by the literary critic, translator, and scholar Shoyo Tsubouchi (1859-1935). While there is no unified East Asian paradigm, Tsubouchi's career was a precedent for Yi and Lu. Like Lu, Tsubouchi translated European literature (Shakespeare, Scott, Bulwer-Lytton) and like Lu and Yi had a decisive influence on the foundation of the modern literature of his nation. In his canonical 1885 text *小說神髓* (*The Essence of the Novel*), one of the earliest

influential texts to advocate the Europeanization of literature, Tsubouchi stated his motive and intention as follows:

One may well say that the present happy reign of Meiji is a period of unprecedented prosperity for the novel. ... [But] how extraordinary it is that every novel or romance should enjoy the same popularity regardless of its quality, no matter how poor the tale or how vulgar the love story, whether it is an adaptation, a translation, a reprint, or a new work! This is indeed a golden age for all types of fiction. ... It is because I also believe I have come to understanding something of the true purpose of the novel that I now presume to offer my theories, such as they are, to the world. I hope that they will bring readers to their senses and at the same time enlighten authors, so that by henceforth planning the steady improvement of the Japanese novel we may finally bring it to the point where it outstrips its European counterpart and shines together with music, poetry, and painting on the altar of the arts (3) ... Let the reader clearly understand that the argument I have just put forward refers to the perfect novel and not to the recently popular kusazoshi! [popular fiction]. If the novel really possesses such possibilities as these, then, would it not be seriously remiss of us not to overhaul and improve our crude Japanese novels, to make them flawless, better than those in the West, to produce a great art form fit to be called the flower of our nation? To do it, we must work out a plan for writing the perfect novel by first understanding the reasons for past successes and failures, taking care not to make the same mistakes again while seeking out and concentrating on the good points. Without a campaign of this nature, the Oriental novel will probably always remain at the level of the old romance, with no chance to develop. (47)

With the statement of intent quoted above, Tsubouchi went on to revise systematically the Japanese literary tradition expounding on the rules, the aims, types, and benefits of the novel with reference to Homer, Virgil, Spenser, Milton, Bunyan, Defoe, Fielding, Richardson, Bulwer-Lytton, Scott, Thackeray, Hugh Miller, Schiller, Macaulay, Dumas, George Eliot, Disraeli, Dickens, Brougham, and Carlyle. Based on the examples given, it might seem that the significant shift in the literary field was primarily a straightforward transplantation of Western culture and part and parcel of the larger adoption of Western economic, scientific, and political institutions. Indeed, a good part of the eager and swift reception of European literature and literary terms was just that. As Hirakawa points out, it was fashionable in upper-class society to imitate Western manner and lifestyle and among the Meiji oligarchy adopting a Westernized lifestyle came to be seen as display of status which in its heyday was called 岡ねづ (oka-netsu, Europeanization fever) (127).

But the transmission of Western culture to the East was not a straightforward process. For the influx of Western concepts produced not only assimilation, adaption, selection, and transformation — or what Karen Thornber calls "transculturation" — but a fierce resistance that parallels the nature of the politico-economic reform outlined earlier: if some adaptations were self-reconstructions based on adjustment to the West, others were adopted for the specific purpose of overcoming the West. In this previously Sinocentric region, when literature was seen from the perspective of the Western empires, it acquired comparative self-awareness and then turned its gaze outwards, developing into an aggressively anti-Western ideology. Indeed one very influential idea that nineteenth and twentieth-century intellectuals in the Far East encountered in European thought, especially in the concept of *Geistesgeschichte*, was nationalism. The narrative mode of a literary history, which constructed a tradition of national literature, was actively absorbed and *mūnhak/bungaku/wenxue* quickly came to be perceived as discourse on nationality, a means for self-definition, as the expression of a people and the reflection of a national spirit.

Clear evidence of the establishment of *mūnhak/bungaku/wenxue* in a nationalist sense is found in the foundation of separate departments of English, German, and French literature in modern universities in Japan, Korea, and China. For example, there were nine Japanese imperial universities founded between 1877 and 1939, established to cultivate the elite administrative class for the running of the empire. Seven were in Japan (Tokyo, Kyushu, Tohoku, Kyoto, Osaka, Nagoya, and Hokkaido), one in Korea proper (Keijo Imperial University, now Seoul National University) and the other in Taiwan (Taihoku Imperial University). At Tokyo Imperial University Japanese literature — which had previously been combined with literature in Chinese in a Department of Letters and that included the study of history, religion, and sociology — became in 1889 a separate Department of National Literature (see Hasegawa).

With reference to the writers discussed earlier, it is worth noting that in addition to being enlightenment reformers and active advocators of Western literary forms, they were great nationalist strategists: all three were not only founders of a Europeanized form of literature, but also founders of national literatures. So on the one hand, absorption of Western literature meant modernization which

enabled a confrontation with the feudal past and a rearticulation of the indigenous shifts already taking place; on the other, it meant self-definition, self-preservation, and the ability to match up to the imagined threats of the West. It is also true that the twin processes of utilization and resistance produced multiple discourses (with at least two diametrically opposed) within the Japanese Empire. On the one hand, nationalist ideas provided the backbone of anti-colonial, independence movements in colonial Korea and semi-colonial China and anti-Western rhetoric in imperial Japan; whereas on the other, the nationalist discourse also produced the pro-imperial rhetoric of Pan-Asianism that legitimated Japanese expansionist policies. In this instance, the systemic appropriation of Western texts became the foundation of the fascist, pro-imperialist, and belligerently anti-Western discourse throughout the empire, including Korea and Taiwan. These multiple processes occurred in series and in parallel.

To conclude, although this is but one perspective from East Asia, there are aspects of this region that have more general relevance. In this brief study I have tried to show how European literature was absorbed in an empire-building strategy in the form of Pan-Asianism as a reaction to and a resistance against Western hegemony. So if East Asia is a "periphery," then it is a "surrogate periphery" with Tokyo as the center of that periphery. This trait sharpens the distinctions between this and other peripheral regions that have as their center European metropolises; and lends support to a multi-centric model of the world literary map. Another significant feature of world literatures in Pan-Asia is that although canonical European literature was adopted strategically and voluntarily, no European language was officially adopted on a national scale. This is a crucial point of difference which account for many of the minor differences. For example, the role of literary adaptations was central in Pan-Asia, and they were considered to have just as much validity as translations, if not more so: their imaginative flourishing weakens, in positive and productive ways the grip of individual authorship, the primacy of authorial intention in textual interpretation, and the significance of originality prevalent in Western scholarship. The case of the Pan-Asian Empire also undermines the idea that the works of "peripheral" writers must circulate into the metropolitan European center in order to achieve recognition as world literature for writers of this region to have reached the status of world literary writers like Lu Hsun defy that model. Not unrelatedly to the non-adoption of a European language is the near irrelevance of the otherwise ubiquitous postcolonial term "hybridity" in this region. This places the idea of hybridity in a more historically specific setting of Africa and South-East Asia. Regional models do not imply uniform models and the legacy of the western empire in the formerly Sinitic areas provides important differences from those in South East Asia, Africa, and Australia. This leads to the question of Eurocentrism: a nationalist attack on Eurocentrism should be distinguished from the kind of challenges that seeks to redefine the literary knowledge that serves European interests at the expense of non-Europeans. Individualism, affective realism, an inward turn to the processes of the mind may have originated in Europe (as indeed did the form of the novel, as we understand it today), but they are not restricted to it. As the Pan-Asian example shows, knowledge that came from Europe was taken up to counter indigenous forms of oppression and injustice but also adopted to oppress and inflict injustice. The various ways in which canonical European texts were utilized undermine the solidity of universality around which the field of world literature is constituted. Equally, the current spread of world literature(s) is paradoxically promoting new nationalisms in the semi-peripheral and peripheral cultures, boosted in part by new anthologies and new literary histories. While this is a positive and perhaps necessary development in the sense of re-establishing an occluded legacy, it can result in creating arbitrary, anachronistic, and competitive divisions. Such tendencies will be best balanced by the overall structure of world literature which reasserts the fact that no literature is merely national.

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