Migrants and/in Contemporary South Korean Theatre: Multicultural Transformation, the Korean Diaspora and Representation of Ethnic Otherness

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Declaration of Authorship

I Bomi Choi hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed: Bomi Choi

Date: 17 May 2021

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The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in the middle of my third year in 2020 added unexpected extra challenges to this PhD project; however, thankfully I have completed this thesis with lots of help and love.

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Explanatory Notes

In this thesis, the official romanisation system of Korean language is used. Regarding Korean names, however, one's own English spelling of her or his Korean name is prioritised over the official system. In terms of arranging first and last names, the Korean style where surnames come first is used. For first names, a hyphen is selectively added in the middle to avoid confusion in pronunciation or to adhere to the original English spelling of one's Korean name. For other English translations including titles (i.e. performance and law) and contents (i.e. playtext, book, journal article, newspaper article, review and interview), the existing official/original English translation is used wherever possible. All translations used for the purpose of quotation are my own unless otherwise indicated.

Abstract

This thesis examines how the professional sphere of contemporary South Korean theatre engages with migrants *othered* in or by the country. While internal migrants from developing Asian countries and North Korea are marginalised within the emerging multicultural society, the Korean diaspora outside the Korean peninsula have been excluded in modern Korean history and contemporary South Korean identities. For the historical, cultural and performance/textual analysis of those socio-political others and/in theatre, the Introduction traces, firstly, the transition from mono-ethnic to multicultural society, and then how modern and contemporary Korean theatre has functioned as a public sphere. Chapter 1, as an underlying counterpoint to the following case studies of perceived others and/in theatre, critically explores how Korean identities are interpreted in Korean theatre and others are overlooked in the theatrical construction of Koreanness. With a specific focus on those others, my case studies in Chapters 2, 3 and 4 encompass both minority and counterpublic discourses to offer a balanced and comprehensive analysis of the underexplored subject in the theatrical public sphere. Chapter 2 unpacks two differently staged minority discourses around North Korean migrants and further explores them through the theoretical lens of heterotopia. Chapter 3 on Asian marriage migrants mainly compares how non-migrant South Korean theatre-makers objectively but stereotypically represent ethnic otherness and Asian migrant artists stage themselves authentically and boldly. In Chapter 4, which investigates both diasporic and non-diaspora's theatrical approaches, memory functions as a theoretical framework for the comparative interrogation of the employment of diasporic/postmemory and prosthetic memory of the Korean/Japanese diaspora. In my conclusion, I ultimately aim to delineate the ways in which theatres of migration participate in making South Korean society a more inclusive space.

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Introduction

On 7 May 2020, in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, members of associations for migrants' human rights in South Korea gathered in front of the *Cheong Wa Dae* (the presidential office and residence) in Seoul to exhort the government not to exclude migrant workers in its pandemic subsidy scheme. Apart from a few exceptions such as marriage migrants, the majority of foreign migrants were not recipients of emergency benefits.[1] According to the associations, the government's scheme excluded 1.44 out of 1.73 million migrants staying in South Korea for the long-term (Seo, 2020). The protesters condemned the government, claiming that the exclusion of migrant workers was against the universality of the pandemic subsidy and the policy was institutionally discriminatory against migrants (Seo, 2020). That is, the measure introduced to tackle the global emergency marked already disadvantaged migrants as others. Won Okgeum, the head of the *Donghaeng* centre for migrants, commented on this issue that it would be more reasonable to consider who is suffering from the pandemic than to draw a line between a citizen and a non-citizen (2020).[2] As Won pinpoints, the national response to the unprecedented crisis explicitly showed how the country systemically segregates migrants from non-migrant citizens, revealing its biased perspective towards and unequal treatment of migrants.

In the book titled *The Jae-ilbon Daehanmingukmindan and Republic of Korea Are One: The Trace of the Korean/Japanese Diaspora's Contribution to their Home Country* (2014), Lee Minho enumerates a long and detailed list of examples of the ways in which the Korean/Japanese diaspora have made a critical contribution to South Korea.[3] For instance, immediately before the establishment of the government in 1948 when team South Korea could not afford to have proper uniforms to participate in the London Olympics, the Korean/Japanese community provided the

[1] A few local governments including Ansan and Bucheon provided foreign residents with an emergency grant (Won, 2020).

[2] *Donghaeng* means 'going together' in Korean.

[3] *Jae-ilbon Daehanmingukmindan* is the Korean residents' union in Japan.

team with uniforms and workout clothes with the national flag on them as well as travel expenses of approximately 6,450,000 KRW (Kang, 2016).[4] This community, who experience widespread discrimination in Japan, could only save the required money by spending less for their own meals (Kang, 2016). This is a small but powerful example of how the diasporic community contributed to the prestige of South Korea; however, they are rarely remembered for what they sacrificed for their home country. Lee points out how South Korea regards the Korean/Japanese diaspora as strangers and argues that their histories should be recorded in school textbooks so that the next generation can learn about the diasporic community's devotion to their country (Kang, 2016).

The claims to be recognised as part of South Korea in the two cases above allow us to diagnose how marginalised both foreign migrants and the Korean diaspora are in South Korea. A considerable number of migrants from developing Asian countries are domiciled in the country but they are not equally treated as legitimate members of society. The Korean diaspora outside the peninsula have been forgotten in spite of their Korean ethnicity and have been denied the presence that they deserve in modern Korean history. Based on a thorough examination of the complex socio-historical context of migration to/from (South) Korea, this thesis explores how those socially excluded in/by South Korea are represented and involved in contemporary South Korean theatre. The analysis in the main chapters ultimately aims to illuminate how theatrical engagement has the potential to influence the way South Korean audiences perceive both internal and external migrants. With a balanced focus on the migrants within/from the peninsula, I will explore migrants and/in theatre with the following research questions: 1) How does contemporary South Korean theatre address and represent ethnic others or ethnic Koreans with different socio-cultural backgrounds? 2) Who gets to do the representing? What changes when migrants represent themselves? 3) How does theatre as a heterotopic space enable non-migrant audiences to experience the lived realities around migrants differently? 4) Can diasporic memory belong to non-diasporic people? 5) How can theatre in the professional sphere achieve the politics of inclusion? My theoretical and

[4] As of February 2021, this is roughly equivalent to £4,208.

methodological approach to the research questions will be elaborated in the latter part of this Introduction.

1) Migrants and/in theatre: between theatrical practice and socio-political engagement

As my socially engaged research questions above suggest, we cannot simply treat theatres of migration as a piece of creative artistry and only analyse their aesthetic value. In many cases, contemporary theatrical productions on migrants are created and received within particular social contexts. When it comes to the cultural as well as socio-political engagement, scholarly evaluation and interpretation are divided into two schools of thought. While some argue that those performances contribute to produce empathy for migrants, others express concern that such theatrical intervention reinforces stereotyped representation of migrants and related issues. In *Precarious Bodies in Performance Activism and Theatres of Migration* (2020), Yana Meerzon analyses *The Dead are Coming* (2015), a public burial ceremony of the real corpse of a Syrian refugee, created by the Center for Political Beauty (CPB) in Berlin. In the "documentary and immersive performance" (Meerzon, 2020: 25-26), a coffin with the exhumed body of a Syrian woman is buried in a Berlin cemetery. In her analysis, Meerzon points out that the spectators' participatory experience, for instance, to support the crowdfunding for the burial (cited in Meerzon, 2020: 32) can create not only political awareness but also euphoria (2020: 33). In that sense, she argues that "there is danger in the use of political performance as an act of misrepresentation to deliberately excite an audience" (Meerzon, 2020: 22). Meerzon does not dismiss the significance of the performative representation of migrants, however, she takes the risk of misrepresentation more seriously. Obviously, Meerzon is not alone in raising concerns about those probably unintended but worrying outcomes.

Theatre and performance scholar Emma Cox pinpoints how audiences often come to recognise refugees as victims (2012: 120-121); "narrative rationality" of verbatim theatre in particular "can subject asylum to a taxonomy designed to elicit an audience's pity, outrage, shame and solidarity" (2015: 33). In *Refugees, Theatre and Crisis: Performing Global Identities* (2012), Alison Jeffers further points out the

danger of reinforcing the abject situation of refugees (2011: 108). When observing refugees' self-harming acts such as lip-sewing, "the public audience is repelled rather than compelled by the extremity of the act, and an opportunity for understanding may be lost" (Jeffers, 2011: 108). That is, the extreme self-representation is likely to deprive the audience of the chance to empathise with refugees instead of encouraging the spectators to challenge the existing stereotype of refugees. In short, Meerzon, Cox and Jeffers share the concern that performative representation of or by migrants/refugees can lead to misrepresentation of those already disempowered and stereotyped.

On the other hand, in the analysis of a Prague-based Palestinian refugee puppeteer's performance, *The Smooth Life* (2016), that tells a refugee family's history, Laura Purcell-Gates suggests that the artist created "a piece that attempts to resist stereotypes as it transverses overdetermined narrative vectors of political power, contested land, victimization framings, and national and personal identities" (2020: 50). In the beginning of the piece, audiences see slides of the refugee puppeteer's family photographs presented in the way they are typically mediatised. In the later part of the performance, however, the stereotyped "pictures of faces that the audience initially consumed through a familiar documentary-style performance" become "a material part of a human figure animated" by the puppeteer in the proximity of the audience, unsettling the stereotype of the refugee (Purcell-Gates, 2020: 51). Helena Grehan offers a similar view in her analysis of Ariane Mnouchkine and Theatre du Soleil's *Le Dernier Caravanserail* (*Odyssees*, 2003). The layers of refugee stories in *Odyssees* were heavily reliant on the testimony of people who Mnouchkine interviewed (Grehan, 2009: 117, 123). Grehan's concluding remark gives this performance credit for "repositioning the refugee as *the* figure of the twenty-first century" (2009: 138), which echoes Purcell-Gates's hopeful interpretation of *The Smooth Life*:

> Spectators experience a number of emotional, visceral and intellectual states when they witness the multiple stories of pain, trauma and hardship the performance presents. As a result of this witnessing they leave the performance with a range of complicated and at times contradictory responses that might include a sense of

> culpability or insulation, empathy and emotional disturbance as well as the desire to respond to and mobilise responsibility for the other. (Grehan, 2009: 137-138)

These opposing scholarly views on theatres of migration do not readily lead us to reach a uniformed conclusion. While Grehan argues that refugees' indirect voice in Mnouchkine's performance encourages empathy, Jeffers points out refugees' performance of self-harm is more likely to reinforce their abjection than to produce empathy. By contrast, as opposed to Jeffers, Purcell-Gates values how migrants' self-representation unsettles the stereotype imposed on them. Meanwhile, unlike Grehan's optimistic view on theatrical representation of the plight of refugees, Meerzon is wary of misrepresented migrants in political performance. I will look into these points of view through my case studies of theatres of migration in South Korea. In particular, one crucial point that underlies the contrasting scholarly arguments is the difference between migrants representing themselves and their representation by non-migrants. For an in-depth analysis of this distinction, I will conduct a comparative case study of both types of performance practices in Chapter 3, where I critically explore how theatre works intervene in migrants' concerns or reinforce ethnic stereotypes.

Marginalised others in the theatrical public sphere

In South Korea, although migrants and associated issues are largely disregarded in mainstream theatre productions, they are not entirely unseen on stage in the professional sphere. What is under the microscope in this thesis is the theatrical public sphere where theatres of migration take place, therefore marginalised migrants are heard and seen. I will elaborate the notion of the theatrical public sphere theorised by theatre and performance scholar Christopher Balme later in this Introduction and apply this to the Korean theatrical public sphere. The realm of the theatrical public sphere that accommodates theatres of migration plays an important role in presenting the underrepresented population through theatre but remains underexplored by theatre practitioners and scholars alike in South Korea. Indeed, I rarely interacted with theatre-makers from migrant or diaspora backgrounds in the professional sphere when I worked as an arts administrator, producer, education officer and PR & marketing manager over a span of several years (2007-2016). The absence of migrant or diaspora artists is not simply a lopsided personal experience;

there is an institutional discouragement for them to participate in creative activities in South Korea. Until 2020, Arts Council Korea (ARKO), the main national funding body in the arts, did not allow individuals without Korean nationality to apply for funding.[5] The restriction partly explains why I had limited options to choose from when I searched for relevant performance case studies. In a similar vein, some works about/by migrants in my case studies rarely received media or scholarly attention. The lack of public and academic interest in theatres of migration precisely mirrors the South Korean society where migrants and diaspora are neglected as others.

Foreign migrants and ethnic Koreans with different socio-cultural backgrounds increasingly constitute part of the country; however, they are excluded from the public sphere and marginalised in South Korean society. For many ethnic Koreans in South Korea (including myself), Asian migrants, North Korean migrants or the Korean diaspora are still unseen others who are merely read or heard about in newspapers or on television programmes once in a while. In my case, when my cousin participated in a marriage tour and married a Vietnamese woman in 2011, the ethnic other became part of my extended family.[6] My cousin's marriage suddenly narrowed the distance between myself and the perceived other; however, I could not feel solidarity with her. For years, I resisted confronting my own discriminatory perception of marriage migrants from developing Asian countries. With the belated realisation of my own racist bias towards the non-ethnic Korean family member, embarking on this PhD project after several years of working in the performing arts industry led me to probe the unquestioned underrepresentation of migrants in theatre. The contradictory gap between the search for inclusiveness in this research and the inability to embrace less privileged others around me further prompted me to realise my positionality as an implicated subject, a notion that I explore in detail in Chapter 4.

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[5] Only in 2021, did the council ease the restriction so that individual artists without South Korean nationality could apply for the grant scheme. This issue of exclusive restriction in ARKO's grant application was raised by Park Kyong-ju, the founder of multicultural theatre company Salad as well as a newly appointed council member of ARKO, in a council members' meeting in September 2020, and ARKO accordingly made the change ('The Stenographic Records').

[6] Since the 1990s, a substantial number of South Korean men in rural areas have found their Asian wives by going on 'a marriage tour' to Asian countries where they can meet bride candidates and, in many cases, have their wedding ceremonies soon after. These tours are generally arranged by matchmaking agencies. More details will be offered in Chapter 3.

What also brought a change to my exclusive perspective was my own experience of being an other in the UK. The occasions when I experienced discrimination as an ethnic minority enabled me to rethink from a different angle and understand the positionality of others in South Korea more empathetically. The change encouraged me to investigate the history of migrants in Korea and the Korean diaspora. I also began to attend plays centred around migrants, refugees and diasporas. Based on my critical realisation and research, this thesis investigates the interrelation between migrants, positionality and theatre with a focus on the three different groups of *othered* migrants in South Korea: North Korean migrants, Asian marriage migrants and the Korean diaspora. The ultimate question that underpins this project is: how can theatre participate in making South Korean society a more inclusive space? This thesis is my intellectual journey into the question.

2) The transition from mono-ethnic to multicultural society

Ethnic homogeneity: the occupying ideology for centuries

Korea was formerly a classic example of a mono-ethnic country. Themes of an ethnically homogenous nation have been present in Korean culture for centuries, with its origins in *Dangun* mythology – the myth of the country's birth.[7] When Canadian political philosopher Will Kymlicka wrote in *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (1995) that "most countries today are culturally diverse", he had to mention very few "culturally homogeneous" exceptions including Korea, where citizens "share the same language, or belong to the same ethnonational group" (1995: 1, 196). In Korea, where the mono-ethnic majority speak Korean, the ethnic homogeneity has not been a neutral concept but almost interchangeable with ethnic pride or exclusion. In the nineteenth century, when the Western powers including France (1866) and the US (1866, 1871) forced the *Joseon* dynasty (Korea, 1392-1910) to open its borders, Koreans regarded ethnically different Westerners as having "horrendously long noses, different hair colors, and round eyes, [thus] as barbarians and monsters" (Breen, 2017: 142-143). At that time,

[7] *Dangun* mythology, the foundation and the principle that produce the idea of cultural homogeneity, is based on history books *Samguksagi* (*The History of the Three Kingdoms*) and *Samgukyusa* (*Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms*) written in *Koryeo* dynasty (Korea, 918-1392) (S. Kim, 2010: 84).

Koreans were resistant to the outside world as they were wary of the humiliation suffered by neighbouring China and Japan when they opened their doors to the West (Breen, 2017: 142). More fundamentally, however, Confucian values were far more strictly implemented in *Joseon* than in China, where Confucianism originated (Atkins, 2010: 8). Koreans under the influence of strict Confucianism were encouraged to believe that they were superior to foreigners (Breen, 2017: 142).

Ethnic homogeneity as a concept gained additional traction during the early twentieth century in the course of the struggle for independence from Japanese colonial rule (1910-1945), encouraging Koreans to resist Japanese imperialism through nationalist discourse (S. Kim, 2010: 84-85). In relation to the impact of the colonial experience, some South Korean scholars further argue that the idea of mono-ethnic Korea is a modern (not an ancient) mythology which was introduced as a substitution for the absent nation during the colonial period (Ha, 2012: 542). South Korean literature scholar Kim Seung-hwan borrows Benedict Anderson's concept of "imagined communities" and explains that the colonised nation had to invent such communities on the basis of homogeneous Korean ethnicity (2010: 76-78). Kwon Hyeokbeom, the author of *Is Nationalism a Deadly Sin* (2014), suggests a more concrete explanation of the interpretation of ethnic homogeneity as a modern legacy. The abolition of the class system during the last years of the *Joseon* dynasty and the rise of the collective sense of resistance to the colonisation in the early twentieth century, Kwon argues, were critical for citizens from different classes to regard themselves as one people (Kwon, 2014: 27) who are all equal members of the single ethnic community. Despite the question over its origin, the ancient or modern ideological belief of ethnic homogeneity remained solid over time until recent decades.

The transition to multicultural South Korea

In the 1990s, the fetish of ethnic homogeneity began to be undermined during the transition into a developed country as well as a multicultural society. After the division of the democratic South and the communist North (1948), the Korean War (1950-1953) and the resultant political turmoil, South Korea managed to achieve exceptionally fast economic growth. The fast-growing economy was at its zenith in and around the 1990s. Between 1980 and 2000, for instance, the Gross National

Income (GNI) nearly quadrupled ('Gross National Income'). The nation also hosted the Seoul Olympics in 1988 and joined the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1996. The thriving 1990s were a significant turning point into a multicultural society for several aspects. Firstly, the high demand of cheap labour resulted in a massive influx of foreign workers from developing Asian countries. In 1992, the government introduced the Industrial Trainee System to solve the shortage of labour in industries that required hard physical work, which tended to be avoided by domestic labourers ('The Industrial Trainee System'). Since then, increasing numbers of Southeast Asian workers came to South Korea seeking a comparatively better-paid job. In addition, the establishment of a diplomatic relationship with China in 1992 allowed Korean/Chinese people to work in South Korea (Han, 2003: 160). Secondly, alerted by the ageing population and declining fertility rates, local governments led the entry of Asian brides for rural bachelors who could not attract ethnic South Korean brides. In particular, the newly established diplomatic tie with China became the catalyst for the arrival of Korean/Chinese brides (M. Kim, 2007: 217). As the new marriage custom was rapidly accepted, an increasing number of young women from various developing Asian countries immigrated to marry South Korean men in rural areas. Consequently, those cross-border marriages led South Korea to experience "significant changes in its ethnic composition for the first time in its history as a nation-state" (N. Kim, 2012: 104). Finally, in addition to the influx of Asian migrants, North Koreans – who had different socio-cultural backgrounds from ethnically homogenous South Koreans – started to cross the border to South Korea in the 1990s. The severe economic difficulties and shortages of food in North Korea resulted in an increased number of North Korean escapees to South Korea (Yoon, 2009: 71).

Statistical figures clearly evidence that South Korea is no longer a culturally and ethnically homogenous country. In 1990, the number of foreign residents was 49,507 ('Immigration Statistics of 1990') but 26 years later this figure rose to 2,049,441, accounting for 3.96% of the entire population of the nation in 2016 (Ministry of Justice, 2017: 38). Their nationalities vary from Chinese to Vietnamese to Thai (Ministry of Justice, 2017: 38). Nationalities of those naturalised as South Koreans also vary. In 2016, 10,108 foreigners became South Korean citizens by naturalisation and more than half of them came from China (50.7%), which was

followed by those from Vietnam (32.5%) and the Philippines (3.3%) (Ministry of Justice, 2017: 59-60). Although the marriage between ethnic South Korean men and Asian women has gradually decreased since 2005 when numbers peaked at 30,719 ('Korean Husband's Marriage Types'), naturalisation by marriage is still the leading factor. In 2016, citizens naturalised by marriage accounted for 63.1% of South Korean citizens by naturalisation (Ministry of Justice, 2017: 62). The high percentage of marriage migrant citizens logically leads to the creation of a large number of multicultural families. In 2016, the population of members of multicultural families was 963,174, accounting for 1.9% of the total population ('Members of Multicultural Families').[8] Meanwhile, the number of North Korean migrants has also risen. There were 947 North Korean migrants in 1998 and the number almost doubled by 2004 ('The Latest Development'). As of September 2020, 33,718 North Korean migrants settled in South Korea ('The Latest Development').

In this accelerating multicultural society, it is inevitable that the long-standing value of homogeneity is being challenged. That is, the ethnic or cultural homogeneity is no longer the singularity that distinguishes South Koreans from non-South Koreans. Despite this, discriminatory practices against ethnic or cultural others are still not regarded as politically incorrect. Indeed, the pejorative term 'Kosian' to describe a child with an ethnic South Korean father and an Asian migrant mother was used widely until recently. As the daily practice of *othering* indicates, the ethnic majority of the former mono-ethnic society has failed to be more self-reflective and embracing. The problem is essentially both ideological and institutional, therefore, I am not ascribing this exclusive attitude to individuals alone. More fundamentally, state policy has shown a problematic approach to new members of an emerging multicultural society.

3) Multiculturalism in South Korea: Koreanisation or institutional practice of *othering*

As a consequence of the unprecedented demographic change, multiculturalism became an important part of governmental policy in South Korea. According to Stuart Hall, the term multi-cultural "describes the social characteristics and problems

[8] As of 2019, the number increased to 1,062,423.

of governance posed by any society in which different cultural communities live together and attempt to build a common life while retaining something of their 'original' identity" (2000: 209). Kymlicka's interpretation of multicultural offers a supplementary explanation on the ambiguities of "different cultural communities" in Hall's definition. Kymlicka defines a state as multicultural "if its members either belong to different nations (a multination state), or have emigrated from different nations (a polyethnic state), and if this fact is an important aspect of personal identity and political life" (1995: 18). Multiculturalism is then to do with governing those multicultural societies. Hall argues that multiculturalism refers to "the strategies and policies adopted to govern or manage the problems of diversity and multiplicity which multi-cultural societies throw up" (2000: 209). As one of the six different types of multiculturalism classified by Hall, conservative multiculturalism insists "the assimilation of difference into the traditions and customs of the majority" (2000: 210). This applies to South Korean multicultural policy. As pointed out in *A Study of Policy of Multi-Cultural Society in Korea and Suggestions for an Advanced Policy Response* (2014), which analyses South Korea's multicultural policy, the state policy sets its sights on the 'Koreanisation' of non-ethnic Korean citizens (Park and Park, 2014: 52).[9] To put it more pointedly, as Iain Watson argues, the state has two fundamentally incompatible goals: firstly, promoting the nation as "a democratic and republican state", and secondly, sustaining "cultural and racial homogeneity" (2010: 338). Watson criticises the state-led conservative multiculturalism for being "an expedient policy of cultural assimilation into a privileged and homogeneous Korean culture" (2010: 338).

The main target of assimilation has been Asian marriage migrants who have direct impacts on the changes of the ethnic composition in the basic units of society. In 2008, the *Damunhwagajok Jiwonbeop* (*Multicultural Families Support Act*) for multicultural families where migrant women are key members was established.[10] This act signals that female marriage migrants in South Korea are largely accepted as part of society because it is understood they have helped to solve the national issue of unmarried men and the decreasing birth rate (T. Kim, 2013: 701-703).

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[9] *A Study of Policy of Multi-Cultural Society in Korea and Suggestions for an Advanced Policy Response* is the official English title of the publication.

[10] *Multicultural Families Support Act* is the official English title.

Nonetheless, marriage migrant women are still perceived as undermining ethnic homogeneity. In order for these ethnic others to be unmarked members of a society that proudly enjoyed the reputation of being a mono-ethnic country, they are expected to be Koreanised. As aforementioned, the government's policies and projects mostly see those migrants with multicultural backgrounds through a Korean lens and aim to Koreanise them (Park and Park, 2014: 43). In comparison, North Korean migrants' Korean ethnicity exempts them from this institutional Koreanisation. Instead, the treatment of ethnic Korean migrants who have escaped from the politically opposite country is based on 1997's *Bukhan Italjuminui Boho Mit Jeongchakjiwone Gwanhan Beopryul* (*North Korean Refugees Protection and Settlement Support Act*).[11] So, by law, this specific group of migrants with Korean ethnicity are supported to adjust to the socio-politically different Korea, though even legal protection cannot stop social discrimination against North Korean migrants.

Unlike those migrants who can become legitimate members of society through family connections or ethnic homogeneity, migrant workers – mostly from developing Asian countries – are simply regarded as temporary non-citizens.[12] In many cases, those workers from South(east) Asian countries, including Cambodia, Nepal, Vietnam and Indonesia, hold E-9 visas specifically issued for non-professional employment. This means they are exclusively employed in labour-intensive sectors such as construction, manufacturing or agricultural industries, which depend heavily on an unskilled workforce (J. Lee, 2021: 175-176). In 2016, the number of foreign residents with E-9 visas was 279,187, and 16.3% of these people were unregistered (Ministry of Justice, 2017: 43). These blue-collar workers are precariously placed on the margins of the society; for instance, about 10% of people who died of industrial accidents in South Korea between January and June 2019 were foreign workers (H. Kim, 2019a) – considering the relatively small percentage of foreign workers among the total population of South Korea, 10% is a sizeable figure. Similarly, a 2017 South Korean survey shows a disproportionately large difference between foreign workers (90.7%) and native workers (3.1%) who are injured or fall sick at work but who are

[11] *North Korean Refugees Protection and Settlement Support Act* is the official English title.

[12] Asian Migrant workers are, of course, also key members of multicultural South Korea. It is, however, beyond the scope of this thesis to cover all sections of South Korean society, thus, I focus on Asian marriage migrants, in Chapter 3, after considering available relevant theatre works for case studies.

not supported by government benefits or covered by workplace insurance (Oh et al., 2017: 79). This further highlights the marginality experienced by Asian migrant workers. In addition, the media representation of these workers solidifies the prevalent perception of them as struggling others. For example, in a television documentary series entitled *Geullobeol Appa Chaja Sammanri* (*Finding My Daddy*), aired between 2015 and 2019 on EBS1, viewers watched the emotional reunion between a guest worker and his family, one of many who visit South Korea to see their fathers and husbands after a long period of separation.[13] In the episodes, Asian migrant workers are stereotypically shown as hard-working manual labourers who have to support their families back home and, thus, cannot afford to see them very often. Through the analysis of the programme, South Korean scholar Lee Jeong-hwa points out how guest workers are stereotyped as second-class labourers and successfully adjusted others (2021: 196). Despite the creation of the *Jaehan Oeguk-in Cheo-u Gibonbeop* (*Framework Act on Treatment of Foreigners Residing in the Republic of Korea*) in 2007, these temporary residents are not covered by this law (Park and Park, 2014: 38).[14] Furthermore, the *Oeguk-in Geulroja-ui Goyongdeung-e Gwanhan Beopryul* (*Act on the Employment, etc. of Foreign Workers*, 2003) limits the temporary workers' employment.[15] Indeed, the act specifies that they can be employed for three years with only one extension of two years allowed ('Act on the Employment'). This regulation clearly indicates that the government frames these foreign workers, who are mostly employed in the industries avoided by native citizens, as mere temporary residents, discouraging them to settle in the country. In other words, the focus of the law is more on marking the marginalised migrant workers as others rather than protecting them.

Ideological *othering* of others in multicultural South Korea

While it has been almost three decades since the nation began to experience a multicultural transformation in the 1990s, evidence suggests that the dichotomy between the ethnic majority and others is still overt, with the growing number of

[13] EBS1 is a South Korean television channel run by the Educational Broadcasting System.

[14] *Framework Act on Treatment of Foreigners Residing in the Republic of Korea* is the official English title.

[15] *Act on the Employment, etc. of Foreign Workers* is the official English title.

migrants still not being welcomed into South Korean society. According to the Migrant Hospitality Index, developed in *A Study on the Measurement of Hospitality for Migrants* (2018), South Korea was ranked twenty-first out of a total twenty-three OECD countries in 2017 (Han and Choi, 2018: 30).[16] The concept of hospitality in this study refers to attitudes and practices based on three values, namely 'transboundariness', equality and conviviality when it comes to forming relationships with social minorities (Han and Choi, 2018: 41).

In addition to South Korea's low-ranking position in the aforementioned index, the recent controversy surrounding Yemeni asylum seekers in South Korea also provides a useful case study by which to examine the lack of a 'welcoming gesture' exhibited by ethnic South Koreans towards new members of their society. In Yemen, since 2015, a number of citizens were displaced by the civil war between Sunni and Shia Muslims. As a result, in 2018, hundreds of Yemeni refugees were admitted into Jeju island in South Korea where most foreigners are entitled to stay for a month without a visa. According to the UN refugee agency UNHCR, South Korea "acceded to the 1951 Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol" ('Republic of Korea Fact Sheet'). In 2012, South Korea also established the *Nanminbeop* (*Refugee Act*), giving the nation a legal responsibility to protect refugees.[17] Despite this, public sentiment about refugees was split (Haas, 2018). Some supported the governmental responsibility of treating refugees humanely but many were not in favour of granting the Yemeni refugees asylum (H. Lee, 2018a), declaring that the government should prioritise the protection of its own citizens and not others whose genuine asylum seeker status could be questioned (H. Lee, 2018a). In reaction to an upsurge in the number of asylum seekers, the Ministry of Justice promptly denied Yemenis entry to South Korea without a visa (Haas, 2018).

Currently, there is a pervasive negative stereotype of Muslims in South Korea; one that either perceives them as terrorists or as subjugating women. Technically, this negative perception stems from a disconnection between Muslims as individuals and people, and who they are perceived to be through the lens of ideological prejudice. The gap between reality and perception in this context is akin to the Slovenian

[16] *A Study on the Measurement of Hospitality for Migrants* is the official English title of the publication.

[17] *Refugee Act* is the official English title.

philosopher Slavoj Žižek's angle on anti-Semitism in *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (1989). As Žižek puts it, what creates the gap between "the real state of things" and "ideological prejudices" is "the determination of ideology" (1989: 47-49). That is, it is not Jews but "the ideological figure of a Jew" that is the object of the "anti-Semitic prejudices" (Žižek, 1989: 48). Similarly, the real object of the almost pathological hatred towards Muslim refugees in South Korea is the ideological figure of Muslims, not the Muslim refugees themselves. Despite the clear theoretical distinction, in reality the ideological prejudice victimises Yemeni asylum seekers.

Being caught in a similar kind of ideological trap, I, as a resident ethnic Korean, did not welcome non-ethnic Koreans into society. As I admitted earlier, I failed to overcome my own ideological prejudices concerning marriages between South Korean nationals and migrants from developing Asian countries, thus did not warmly embrace my cousin's Vietnamese wife as a family member. As, like I was, many ethnic South Koreans are not yet fully open to recognise "the equal value of different cultures" (Taylor, 1994: 64), people with dissimilar ethnic or/and cultural backgrounds are often merely regarded as others. The biased *othering* is, however, not limited to those perceived others within the country. Regardless of their Korean ethnicity, ethnic Korean migrants outside the Korean peninsula, namely the Korean diaspora, are similarly marginalised as others in South Korea. The historical context of the formation of the Korean diaspora and the neglected perception of them will be examined in Chapter 4 on the Korean diaspora in contemporary South Korean theatre.

Concerning the ideological nature of the prejudices directed towards internal others, governmental policy on multiculturalism cannot be the complete solution to the problem. This is, however, not to suggest that the ineffectiveness of multicultural policy is exclusive to South Korea. In the case of black immigrants in 1970s Britain, for example, it was not the anti-racism policy, but British black-influenced music (reggae and soul music with political theme) that provided white British and black immigrants with opportunities to mingle socially (Gilroy, 1987: 114-222). In comparison to what British black-influenced music achieved in confronting racism, it is noteworthy that theatre, amongst others in Korea, has played a pioneering role in enlightening people and encouraging them to be both critical and political during

periods of significant historical and social change, including modernisation and democratisation. In a similar but contemporary context, I would argue that theatre is currently functioning as a space where ethnic South Koreans can be self-reflective about – and interconnected with – internal migrants within the emerging multicultural society as well as with ethnic Korean migrants outside the peninsula. An examination of contemporary theatre in South Korea as a means of creating a more inclusive society will appear in the following chapters, but first I will elaborate my theoretical approach to the socio-political context of theatre.

4) Contemporary South Korean theatre as a public sphere

Theatre as a public sphere

Theatre as a place where performance closely engages with contemporary social concerns produces a public sphere. Theatre and theatrical spaces that function as a public space have been researched from various angles within Theatre and Performance Studies. Through the theorisation of ‘utopian performatives’, feminist theatre scholar Jill Dolan suggests that the experience of intersubjective moments in theatre can encourage audiences to be participant in other public spheres. In other words, the liminal experience within a distinctive public space may have the potential to cause social impact outside the theatre building. Balme also stresses the significance of a political and social efficacy of the theatrical public sphere. Based upon my theoretical review of Dolan and Balme’s approaches on the socio-political context of theatre, I will examine how contemporary theatre in South Korea functions as a theatrical public sphere. Firstly, I will look at how theatre and its social impact are currently understood and discussed in the performing arts in South Korea. Then, I will further trace how Korean modern theatre interacted with society and intervened in social discourses.

Theatre is a public space which is shared by performers and audiences. With the corporeal presence of spectators, “audience spaces have almost always reflected with great accuracy the class preoccupations of their society” (Carlson, 1989: 135). That is, theatre is a real public space that symbolically reflects society. When a performance happens on stage, the public sphere and the symbolic place both become a liminal space where people simultaneously experience both reality and the

created world of a play. According to cultural anthropologist Victor Turner, a phase of liminality is the transitional experience of an ‘in-betweenness’, and the communal experience of liminality is termed ‘communitas’ (1982: 41-59). Turner’s concept of communitas has provided an important theoretical ground to discuss the communal experience of liminality in/through theatre. Dolan is one of the key academics who elaborated further by coining a term that defines the unique moment that allows spectators to experience communitas (2005: 11). In *Utopia in Performance: Finding Hope at the Theater* (2005), Dolan defines ‘utopian performatives’ as follows:

> Utopian performatives describe small but profound moments in which performance calls the attention of the audience in a way that lifts everyone slightly above the present, into a hopeful feeling of what the world might be like if every moment of our lives were as emotionally voluminous, generous, aesthetically striking, and intersubjectively intense. (Dolan, 2005: 5)

The temporal and shared experience of a utopian performative is the essence of theatre reception in a liminal space. When, for instance, feminist performer Peggy Shaw intimately communicates with audiences by “shaking people’s hands, speaking directly to them, patting them on the back” during her solo performance *Menopausal Gentleman* (1997), these intersubjective moments become utopian performatives (Dolan, 2005: 54). These performatives, however, do not necessarily have to be utopian. Characters’ pain and frustrations embodied on stage also create an interconnected moment (Dolan, 2005: 71). Dolan then suggests that such spectatorship by a temporary public “might encourage them to be active in other public spheres” (2005: 11). What she ultimately proposes is that the liminal experience in theatre may have the potential to generate social impact in the public sphere.

Balme, in *The Theatrical Public Sphere* (2014), similarly explains theatre and its interaction with society, employing the concept of the theatrical public sphere. He discusses the role of theatre and performance in the public sphere, “the realm where issues are debated and where citizens are, ideally, free to enter and engage in discourse” (Balme, 2014: 4). Overtly, the focus here is not the aesthetic dimension of performance but its political and social efficacy (Balme, 2014: 13-14). While the aesthetic quality of a performance provides audiences with a necessary artistic effect,

the interaction between stage and auditorium remains on a personal level because the performance does not necessarily function as a medium to connect itself with the public sphere. When the interaction between performers and audiences moves beyond an individual level and engages with social discourse in the public sphere, the performance gains 'publicness'. Balme criticises the "little engagement with the public sphere" – the loss of "publicness" – in the aesthetic performances of modern-day theatre (2014: 3).

Publicness in theatre and theatre as political action in contemporary South Korea

Publicness in the performing arts has recently been a frequently discussed topic in South Korea. When it was revealed that the Park Geun-hye government (2013-2017) excluded artists from receiving grants or from working for national/public arts organisations because they were against the conservative administration, artists criticised the loss of publicness.[18] In order to recover publicness in theatre, theatre practitioners built a temporary theatre in Gwanghwamun square where millions of citizens participated in candlelight vigils for the impeachment of the former president (International Association of Theatre Critics – Korea, 2017: 324-344). In the *Gwangjanggeukjang Beullaektent* (Black Tent Theatre, 10 January - 16 March 2017), artists solely presented performances concerned with sensitive political issues (i.e. comfort women and the *Sewol* ferry disaster) which had been avoided and censored by the government.[19] The opening performance *Ppalgansi* (*Red Poem,* written and directed by Lee Hae-seong, 2011) was about comfort women, while another play, *Geu-wa Geu-nyeo-ui Otjang* (*His and Her Wardrobe,* written and directed by Oh Se-hyeok, 2011), was performed by mothers of teenager victims of the 2014 ferry disaster (International Association of Theatre Critics – Korea, 2017: 321, 340).[20] The political performances at the illegal theatre tent in central Seoul were part of the large-scale protest against the president.

[18] The so-called Black List featured the names of those intentionally excluded artists by the Park administration.

[19] The historical/political context of the two issues (the *Sewol* ferry disaster, comfort women) is briefly touched upon in Chapters 1 and 4 respectively.

[20] *Red Poem* is the official English title.

Prior to the building of the theatre tent and performances therein, theatre practitioners were already actively against the censorship by showing a strong sense of solidarity. In 2016, twenty-two plays were staged as part of the theatre festival of *Gwolijangjeon 2016 Geomyeolgagka* (*The Bill of Rights 2016 Your Lordship Censorship*, 2016) (International Association of Theatre Critics – Korea, 2017: 181-189, 194). As one of the participating plays, *Geomyeol-eoneo-ui Jeongchihak: Dugae-ui Gungmin* (*The Politics of the Language of Censorship: Two Citizens*, written and directed by Kim Jae-yeop, 2016) re-enacted edited scenes from a parliamentary audit on the government's censorship (International Association of Theatre Critics – Korea, 2017: 193-194). By directly and responsively staging this political scene, this verbatim theatre blurred the boundary between a political action and a theatrical work.

In *Theatre and Protest* (2017), Lara Shalson elaborates on the blurred distinction between politically motivated actions and performance. She writes of the feminist punk performance collective Pussy Riot, who performed *Punk Prayer* (2012) in Moscow to oppose Vladimir Putin when he ran for his third term as President in Russia (Shalson, 2017: 1-7). Consequently, the members were all arrested and sentenced to two years in jail. During their trial, at which it was suspected that the verdict had already been decided, the crowd in the courtroom gave a standing ovation to the members' passionate testimonies, as if they were at a theatre (Shalson, 2017: 2). Pussy Riot further inspired theatrical reactions in other countries, including the UK and the US (Shalson, 2017: 2-4). This sort of political performance overtly functions as political action, however, the direct intervention in sensitive political issues is not necessarily about getting a result. This is similar to Dolan and Balme's standpoints; their discussions on socially engaging theatre were not to scrutinise its efficacy but to analyse the importance of audiences' embodied experiences of social issues through theatre.

Obviously, the distinctive experience of a theatre audience and its extended value in the socio-political context are not specific to the contemporary moment. The following overview of Korean modern theatre offers a critical insight into how theatre played an integral part in the formation of structures of feeling, "the undeniable experience of the present" (Williams, 1977: 128), in relation to socio-political

changes of the turbulent modern era. The notion of structures of feeling conceptualised by British cultural theorist Raymond Williams will be further explored in Chapter 2. The brief historical introduction to Korean modern theatre in the next section will provide this study with a foundation to capture the contemporary structures of feeling which is being generated through theatre.

Historical overview of Korean modern political theatre

In *Performing Korea* (2017), French theatre scholar Patrice Pavis points out that "Korean theater has not had a long history of political and social struggle like that of European theater" (2017: 9). Although the struggle is not as long as that of Europe, theatre as political action has certainly been an important feature since modern theatre appeared in Korea.[21] When Western-style theatre was first introduced and developed in the early twentieth century, the intention was political rather than to attach importance to aesthetic values. In the 1920s, the modern Korean theatre movement *Singeuk* (New Theatre) was led by intellectuals who "regarded themselves as cultural activists rather than as artists" (Jang, 2000: 79-81). At that time, intellectuals of colonised Korea struggled to resist Japanese imperialism as well as adopt the civilised Japanese and Western culture (S. Lee, 2001: 38-39). Under the circumstances, New Theatre was considered as "a cultural gate to the importation of western culture", thus, the leaders endeavoured to import European and American modern drama to modernise the nation and liberate it from Japanese colonial rulers (Jang, 2000: 80). Along with the focus on modern European and American plays, the leaders of New Theatre also supported the development of "original modern Korean drama" so that it could be comparable to Western drama (Jang, 2000: 81). Many realistic Korean dramas of the period were about "modern identity, resistance to Japanese aggression, and poverty under colonial rule" (B. Kim, 2014: 14). *Tomak* (*The Mud Hut*, written by Yu Chi-jin, 1931), for example, depicts the tragic story of an impoverished family during the Japanese colonial period (A. Kim, 2007: 665-666).

[21] One might be able to further trace the struggle through the lens of traditional Korean performance but the issue is beyond the concern of this research.

As is indicated by the then intellectuals' belief that theatre is "the most effective educational method with which to modernise Korean society" (Jang, 2000: 79), theatre had an inextricable relationship with the enlightenment (S. Lee, 2001: 40). Considering that over 80% of Koreans were illiterate in the 1920s ('Knowing is the Power'), theatre was expected to effectively enlighten Korean people (S. Lee, 2001: 39) and this partly explains why realist drama was common in this era. Furthermore, as opposed to *Sinpageuk* (New School Drama) in the 1910s, which was "fettered by its early and continuing commercial reliance on melodrama and [therefore] waned" (Nichols, 2007: 669-670), the prevalent realist drama in the West in the early twentieth century was regarded as the style that could develop Korean theatre (S. Lee, 2001: 41). In the 1930s, the goal was still to improve understanding of modern theatre among Korean people (Jang, 2000: 89). Young scholars of the Geuk-yesul Yeonguhoe (Theatre Arts Research Association) published the journal Geuk-yesul (Theatre Arts), ran theatre classes and staged modern Western dramas (Jang, 2000: 90). That the Japanese colonial government regarded the association as a political group that promotes cultural nationalism, not simply a theatre company (Jang, 2000: 91), demonstrates how modern theatre of the time functioned as political action.

Since modern theatre was introduced in the 1920s, realist plays were consistently the most dominant genre. *Hyeolmaek* (*Bloodline,* written by Kim Young-soo, 1948), for instance, offers "a naturalist depiction of poverty in the slums" around the time of liberation (B. Kim, 2014: 15). The late 1960s, however, saw a significant change in the trend. As a way of resisting the dictatorship, "modernization of traditional theater became a propositional theme for the political theater movement mainly led by university students" (B. Kim, 2014: 37). These performances employed "the structure and forms of *talchum*" (traditional Korean mask dance), and they were eventually developed into *madanggeuk* (B. Kim, 2014: 37-42). *Madanggeuk* is "an outdoor form combining mask-dance drama, folk entertainments, and political content", and it "became a weapon in student-led movements against military regimes for two generations, uniting students and common laborers, and challenging establishment concepts" (Nichols, 2007: 345-346). *Madanggeuk* notably turned to the traditional Korean performing arts form, thus, it was fundamentally different from the prevalent Westernised style of modern theatre. The three main differences are:

> Firstly, *madanggeuk* is against the Western way of classifying genres and moved away from modern theatre buildings. Instead, it was usually performed as part of festivals or events. Secondly, the direct communication between performers and audience members is vital; the quintessential goal is not to create the illusion on stage but to interact with spectators. Finally, time and space are not constructed based on a cause-and-effect relationship but are instead structured as dynamic and multidimensional forces. (Y. Lee, 2003: 284-289)

Along with the distinctive feature as a performance type, its contents also had equally significant characteristics. As mentioned above, *madanggeuk* performances dealt with sensitive political issues such as "criticism against military dictatorship, eradication of corruption, promotion of labor rights, and guarantee of democratic freedom" (B. Kim 2014: 40). The case of *Monnae Monnae Jeolttae Monnae! Budangsuse Jeolttae Monnae!* (*I Will Not Pay I Will Not Pay I Will Never Pay! I Will Not Pay an Unreasonable Water Tax,* The Troupe Sinmyeong, 1988), observed by South Korean theatre scholar Kim Woo-ok and recounted in his book *Theatre as Experiment and Challenge* (2000), demonstrates the political nature of *madanggeuk*. As the title indicates, the performance aims to educate farmers on the injustice of paying a water tax. The outdoor event was held in the courtyard of a police station in a small rural town. At the beginning, there was a speech criticising the government's agricultural policy, which was followed by the *madanggeuk* performance. As there was no boundary between stage and auditorium in the courtyard, performers actively interacted with audiences. At the end of the performance, it seamlessly transformed into a protest against the water tax and they went on a march (W. Kim, 2000: 201-212). As the description illustrates, it is impossible and unnecessary to draw a line between performance and protest in the theatrical sphere of *madanggeuk*.

Since the 1980s, this strongly political form of *madanggeuk* has almost completely disappeared (B. Kim, 2014: 60-61). Contemporary South Korean theatre no longer employs the same style, nor does it deal with the same categories of political issues. The decline of *madanggeuk* does not, however, mean the demise of the theatrical public sphere. Although the professional sphere played a role in the construction of past-oriented and exclusive Koreanness to a certain degree (as I will examine in Chapter 1), the theatrical public sphere has also continuously interacted with society

and intervened in contemporary social discourses, including multicultural transition and migrants. The following chapters will explore how the performances about migrants in/from (South) Korea function as the theatrical public sphere.

Scholarly (dis)interest in contemporary South Korean theatre: the position of theatres of migration

The theatrical intervention in contemporary South Korea, however, has not particularly prioritised the concerns of those who are socially *othered* and/or marginalised. In 2015, when the theatrical public sphere was under the aforementioned threat of the then government's censorship, 979 theatre practitioners signed a petition against the oppression of the arts (International Association of Theatre Critics – Korea, 2017: 5), actively tackling it in solidarity. The *Sewol* ferry disaster that occurred in April 2014 was a particularly taboo topic during the Park administration, which was condemned for its incompetent and immoral handling of the crisis. Nonetheless, theatre and performance-makers persistently dealt with the sensitive issue (International Association of Theatre Critics – Korea, 2017: 8-9). Scholarly documentation of – and discussions on – the theatrical and political engagement in the performing arts industry led to the publication of a book titled *South Korean Theatre after the Sewol Ferry Disaster: From the Black List to the Black Tent Theatre* (2017), edited by the International Association of Theatre Critics – Korea. In comparison to this highly public, prompt and united response, the concerns of internal migrants and the Korean diaspora (M. Kim, 2012, M. Kim, 2017, S. Kim, 2016b, J. Lee, 2018, S. Lee, 2012, Woo, 2017) remain one of the underexplored research topics within the discipline. Unlike the issue of censorship, the socially marginalised population of migrants have stimulated little interest among South Korean theatre scholars.

Anglophone scholarship on contemporary South Korean theatre has largely covered three areas: English translations of South Korean plays, theatre and interculturalism in South Korea and the Korean diaspora playwrights in the US and other Western countries. Firstly, theatre scholars such as Richard Nichols have translated South Korean plays written by established playwrights, including Lee Yun-taek, into English. *Four Contemporary Korean Plays* (2007) and *Modern Korean Drama: An Anthology* (2011), for instance, afforded English-speaking readers access to South Korean

theatre. Secondly, South Korean theatre directors' 'Korean' interpretation and staging of Shakespeare plays attracted Western theatre scholars' critical attention. Pavis calls this intercultural approach "Koreanization" (2017: 59-79). In a similar context, Shakespeare scholar Kevin A. Quarmby titled his book chapter on South Korean theatre director Yang Jung-ung's *Hamlet* (2009) as 'Shamanistic Shakespeare: Korea's Colonization of Hamlet' (2018). Furthermore, theatre scholar Brian Singleton examined how Koreanised Shakespeare plays (*Romeo and Juliet* [1995] directed by Oh Tae-suk and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* [2002] directed by Yang Jung-ung) reveal "the lost, forgotten or suppressed within a contemporary urbanized first-world culture that transcends national boundaries" (2009: 196). The use of "the lost, forgotten or suppressed" cultural elements such as Korean shamanism in the directors' Koreanisation of Shakespeare plays will be closely looked at in Chapter 1, where I investigate the construction of Koreanness in contemporary South Korean theatre. Finally, Korean diaspora playwrights – particularly those based in Western countries such as the US and the UK – and their works have attracted public and scholarly attention. As one of the five Korean diaspora playwrights introduced to Seoul audiences in 2017 (which wil be explored in more detail in Chapter 1), Korean American Young Jean Lee's *Songs of the Dragons Flying to Heaven* (2006) was highly acclaimed by reviewers of major newspapers such as *The New York Times* (Shimakawa, 2007: 96). The play, which deals with questions of race, attracted scholarly analysis (Hatch, 2013, Nahm, 2020) on its use, for instance, of racialised and gendered characters (Shimakawa, 2007). Reflecting the growing attention given to Korean diaspora playwrights, Esther Kim Lee, the author of *A History of Asian American Theatre* (2006), edited *Seven Contemporary Plays from the Korean Diaspora in the Americas* (2012) and authored its introduction. In comparison, how theatre-makers in South Korea engage with the contemporary and socio-historical issues around migrants in/from the country has not been widely discussed. These are the gaps that my thesis attempts to fill by presenting case studies of theatres of migration from South Korea.

As examined in the literature review of theatres of migration earlier in this Introduction, scholars including Cox, Grehan, Jeffers, Meerzon and Purcell-Gates have discussed how theatre and performance function as a theatrical public sphere where migrants' voices are heard, encouraging empathy or, in other cases, where

they are misrepresented and further disempowered. In this thesis, I build on this scholarly discussion of theatres of migration by exploring the analytical approaches with examples from South Korea, thus, offering a contribution to current scholarship on theatre and migration. Although the formerly mono-ethnic Korean society has become multicultural, the essentialist view of separating ‘us’ from ‘others’ by ethnicity is still prevalent. When discussing the issues around migrants to/from (South) Korea, therefore, it is important to pay attention to whether one’s ethnic identity becomes a marker that *others* migrants or an identifier of national and civic affiliation. In addition, the exclusive understanding of ethnic identity is variably applied, depending on the ideological, geographical or historical context around the migrants in question. While ethnically Korean migrants, including North Korean migrants within South Korea and the Korean diaspora outside the Korean peninsula, are marginalised or neglected despite their Korean ethnicity, migrants from elsewhere in Asia domiciled in South Korea are marginalised because of their ethnic otherness. In my case studies that encompass the differently *othered* migrant groups, I analyse the ways in which playwrights, directors and performers deal with the complex issues of ethnicity in telling stories of migrants and in staging those who continue to be *othered*. The examination will accordingly show how those theatrical approaches unsettle or repeat the widely held conventional perception of migrants. Through a comprehensive analysis in the following chapters, my selected case studies will ultimately shed light on the significant role theatrical interventions play in challenging essentialist views of national identity, affiliation and inclusion, which can be applicable to other cultural contexts. Before concluding this Introduction, I will finally outline my methodological and theoretical approach to the chapters.

5) Chapters outline and methodological/theoretical discussion

Chapter 1 explores a couple of underlying questions that frame the main chapters: How are Korean identities addressed or presented on stage? Do those theatre practices reflect or reinforce perceived national identity? The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of how Koreanness is interpreted, imagined or pursued in theatre in South Korea. For this analysis, I will look at the National Theater Company of Korea (NTCK) and South Korean theatre directors (Lee Yun-taek, Oh Tae-suk and Yang Jung-ung), who are well-known at home and abroad for their Koreanised

Shakespeare plays. More specifically, I will discuss how this mainstream theatre company and leading directors in the professional sphere conceptualise and practise Korean theatre. One main point of the discussion is to compare how the national theatre company's focus on historical narrative and traditional performance structure is either similar or different from the individual directors' adoption of ancient Korean shamanism in their Koreanised productions of Western classics.[22]

In an attempt to offer a concise overview of how the idea of Koreanness has been shaped and embedded in the professional sphere, I opted to carry out a case study of a representative theatre company and established theatre directors. Although the chosen institution and the individual theatre-makers' works cannot represent the entire professional sphere, I suggest that they can outline both public and non-public parts of the sphere. In addition, the analysis of the high-profile theatre works that embody Korean identities will serve as a counterpoint to theatres of migration that I analyse in later chapters. In the performance analysis, existing scholarly research on selected pieces and media coverage of issues in question support my interpretation of Koreanness in theatre. In order to fully illuminate the distinct ways in which Koreanness is pursued by the public arts organisation and individual directors, the analysis in the case study takes different shapes. In relation to NTCK, I will first delineate how NTCK has produced 'Korean' theatre that brings historical narrative and traditional performance structure onto the modern stage. Secondly, I will look into the company's staging of its 'contemporary' quest for Korean identity through the scrutiny of new programmes such as the *Korean Diaspora Season*.[23] Finally, I will analyse the cherry-picked 'international' influences in Korean theatre. In comparison to the analysis of NTCK and its 'Korean', 'contemporary' and 'international' theatre projects, I will examine how the theatre directors revitalised Korea's traditional culture through theatre. The focus of the performance analysis is on the three

[22] Korean shamanism is believed to date from "the archaic period (before 1,000 BC)" and "ancient beliefs, such as myths and rituals" are understood as its origin (Chačatrjan, 2015: 57, 59). In general, Korean shamanism means the cult of a shaman (J. Lee, 1973: 136). In Chapter 1, I will analyse how South Korean directors used the traditional Korean shamanic ritual *gut* to create Koreanised Shakespeare plays.

[23] *Korean Diaspora Season - Five Special Perspectives that Spread throughout the World* is the official English title and description of the project.

directors' use and aesthetic recreation of the Korean shamanic ritual *gut*, therefore I will also provide a historical overview of Korean shamanism. I then compare the three directors' different interpretations and use of *gut* in their Koreanised Shakespeare plays.

Chapter 2 commences the investigation of theatres of migration and focuses on North Korean migrants. Unlike foreign migrants within the country, this group of internal migrants with Korean ethnicity occupy an ambiguous place between migrants and ethnic Koreans. For the detailed understanding of this distinctive community of migrants, I analyse the socio-historical context of the appearance of North Korean migrants in South Korea, and how the perception of the migrants in the South has gradually been shifted from defected brave warriors to North Korean migrants. In order to examine how South Korean theatre addresses and represents those ethnic Koreans with different socio-political backgrounds – the theatrical shaping of structures of feeling around the ethnically Korean others – I selected two plays *Mongnan Eonni* (*Sister Mok-rahn*, 2012) and *Seoneul Numneun Jadeul* (*Those Who Cross The Line*, 2018) that feature dramatised North Korean migrant characters and their issues. I also interviewed the playwrights of those two plays in order to achieve an in-depth analysis of their perspectives on the boundary between the South and the North, as well as the people caught in the middle.

In the case study, I analyse how similarly and differently the two selected plays present North Korean migrants and the border. Firstly, *Sister Mok-rahn* and *Those Who Cross The Line* dramatise the reality where dehumanised and stereotyped North Korean migrants struggle in the South. The dramatised social discourses, however, do not simply mirror the reality or duplicate the ideological prejudice suffered by North Korean migrants. Secondly, both plays critically reflect how the linguistic difference between the North and the South Koreans becomes to function as a linguistic marker of North Korean migrants. Finally, and most importantly, the two plays invite audiences into a heterotopia where the lineal boundary between North and South Korea is symbolically blurred (*Sister Mok-rahn*) or spatially reinterpreted (*Those Who Cross The Line*) between social and staged realities. According to French philosopher Michel Foucault, heterotopias are "places that are outside all places, although they are actually localizable" (2000: 178). The analysis of

heterotopia in this chapter will be based on Foucault's theoretical concept of the term – which links the idea of utopia with reality – as well as theatre scholar Joanne Tompkins's interpretation of heterotopia as existing between constructed and abstracted spaces in theatre. Through the theoretical lens, I will examine how the border between the South and the North is differently signified in the heterotopic space of theatre. Furthermore, I will analyse how the experience of the heterotopic space and time in the two plays enables audiences to cross the (in)tangible border and to have a more empathetic understanding of the internal others from the North.

Chapter 3 continues to explore how theatre approaches and represents perceived internal others but the focus is on those with socio-culturally different backgrounds as well as ethnic alterity. Of those *othered* migrants in South Korea, the subject of analysis of this chapter is Asian marriage migrant women. The notion and perception of female marriage migrants in modern/contemporary (South) Korea have been shaped in the socio-historical context of cross-border marriage, therefore, this chapter first provides the historical overview of marriage migration. In the case study of two performances *Ranui Ilgi* (*Ran's Diary*, 2011) and *Teksaseu Gomo* (*My Aunt in Texas*, 2018) that dramatise contemporary South Korea where Asian marriage migrants are stereotyped and marginalised, I will mainly discuss how they differently touch upon the social issue, and how the dissimilar perspectives result in different ways of presenting ethnic otherness on stage.[24]

In comparison to *My Aunt in Texas*, where the group of migrants is both addressed and received through theatre by the dominant public in South Korea, *Ran's Diary* functions as a space where a subordinate group of migrants raises its own voice against the dominant one. With a sharp focus on the sexual exploitation of Asian marriage migrant women, 'counterpublic' discourses in *Ran's Diary* reflect the dominated public's points of view. According to American literary critic Michael Warner, a counterpublic is produced through the ways in which a public addresses contemporary social issues with the perspectives and committed participation of those "socially marked by their participation in this kind of discourse", generating "friction against the dominant public" of the time (2002: 66-87). I will frame the two opposing perspectives as minority discourse (*My Aunt in Texas*) and counterpublic

[24] *Ran's Diary* and *My Aunt in Texas* are both official English titles.

discourse (*Ran's Diary*) and compare them to analyse the differences between represented migrants and forms of self-representation. As the minoritarian characteristics of counterpublic discourse signals, however, the friction is often unnoticed by the dominant public. As a result, I did not have access to the details of production and reception of *Ran's Diary* through publicly available materials. Therefore, it was essential to persuade the playwright/director to allow me to watch the video of the performance and interview her. In contrast, I had a relatively wide access to the minority discourse in the mainstream production of *My Aunt in Texas*. I was able to attend the performance, which was jointly produced by NTCK and a regional public arts centre. The production received abundant media attention (still available online) and the playwright and the producer also readily consented to my request for interviews. The transcribed data will be used to examine the different perspectives and practices through the lens of performance and textual analysis.

In Chapters 2 and 3, I examined theatrical engagement with North Korean migrants and Asian marriage migrants marked as others within the society, while the final chapter shifts its focus from internal migrants to marginalised Korean migrants outside the Korean peninsula: the Korean diaspora. Like North Korean migrants with Korean ethnicity, the Korean diaspora also share ethnic homogeneity with ethnic Koreans in the peninsula. Compared to the ethnic Korean migrants who settle in South Korea but treated as others, the Korean diaspora are marginalised in their host countries whilst being forgotten or neglected by their home country in spite of their deserved presence in modern Korean history. Among many different communities of ethnic Koreans widely dispersed across the world, for an in-depth analysis, this chapter narrows down the scope of the discussion to the Korean diaspora in Japan.

The analysis of the two plays *Yakkinikku Deuraegon: Yonggiline Gopchangjip* (*Yakiniku Dragon*, 2008) and *Honmalabihae?* (*Honmalabihae?*, 2018) focuses on the specific group of Korean diaspora ambiguously located between North Korea, South Korea and Japan.[25] Based on the historical overview of the motive for migration and the place of settlement, the analysis traces how diasporic memory or memory of the diaspora is reconstructed in theatre and shared with audiences. In my comparative

[25] *Yakiniku Dragon* is the official English title.

analysis of the plays that connect contemporary South Korean audiences with the past of those historically marginalised, memory is employed as the theoretical framework. *Yakiniku Dragon* is based on playwright/director Chong Wishing's diasporic memory and postmemory from his preceding generation of the Korean/Japanese diaspora. According to Marianne Hirsch, US scholar of memory studies, postmemory is a secondary but lasting memory that is formed while growing up and hearing emotionally overwhelming stories of the previous generation (2012a: 22). Attending to the modes in which the play animates diasporic memory and postmemory of the Korean/Japanese diaspora, I will further examine how audiences access cultural memory and thus, develop an artificial memory of the diaspora. In *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (2004), Alison Landsberg suggests that prosthetic memory "emerges at the interface between a person and a historical narrative about the past" (2004: 2). I will borrow the logic of the concept to explain the transmission of the memory from Chong to audiences as well as from the past to the present.

In contrast, the non-diaspora South Korean creative team of *Honmalabihae?* were not in a position to deploy diasporic memory or postmemory because they did not have migrant heritage. Therefore, they depended on the acquired prosthetic memory of the Korean/Japanese diaspora in the creative process. A couple of interviews with key members of the theatre company helped me to gain a more detailed understanding of the process. Unlike Chong's approach to archiving his own diasporic memory and postmemory through theatre, the theatrical use of the collected prosthetic memory led the team to face their own perspective towards the diaspora. The introspective perspective is another important point of the performance analysis of *Honmalabihae?* in that it further encourages audiences to critically realise their positionality as implicated subjects in relation to the Korean/Japanese diaspora. Theorised by American historian and literary scholar Michael Rothberg, "an implicated subject is neither a victim nor a perpetrator, but rather a participant in histories and social formations that generate the positions of victim and perpetrator" (2019: 1). This concept provides a useful theoretical framework to navigate a non-diaspora South Korean audience member as an implicated subject between victim (the Korean/Japanese diaspora) and perpetrator (Japan(ese)) and to investigate how the critical awareness of the positionality leads

them to realise their responsibility as implicated subjects.

As indicated, I have taken a manifold methodological approach in this thesis. In Chapter 1, I have mainly referenced academic literature on NTCK's works to create a short historical survey of the company's theatre practices. In relation to the analysis of the three Koreanised Shakespeare plays, I had full access to the scripts and video documentation for the performance analysis. In Chapter 2, I analysed the published playtext of *Sister Mok-rahn* and the edited performance documentation. I also conducted a face-to-face interview with the playwright for the analysis. For *Those Who Cross The Line*, I had full access to the unpublished playtext as well as the video documentation of the production; additionally, I interviewed the playwright/director in person. Drawing on the wider critical engagement with the two plays, I offer a balanced textual and performance analysis. For the case study in Chapter 3, I travelled to Seoul, South Korea. I attended performances of *My Aunt in Texas* in person and interviewed the playwright and the producer. Although the playtext was not published, I was given access to the full script. For *Ran's Diary*, I analysed the published script and interviewed the playwright/director in person after watching videos of the performance. The available materials allowed me to offer narrative and aesthetic analyses in this chapter; however, scholarly or audience reviews of *Ran's Diary* are extremely scarce. For the performance analysis in Chapter 4, I read the full script of *Yakiniku Dragon*, watched edited videos, used existing (published/media) interviews with the playwright/director and additionally referenced the film version of *Yakiniku Dragon* (2018), produced by the same artist. Furthermore, I briefly visited Osaka, Japan to have an understanding of the milieu of the Korean/Japanese diasporic community. For *Honmalabihae?*, I read the published script, watched a short video clip and conducted personal interviews with the two key members of the creative team. To overcome the insufficiency of the materials for analysis, I collected further details of the staged play through written interviews with two audience members who attended the performance.

In this thesis, I focus the scope of the research on the professional sphere. Firstly, I aim to offer a focused analysis of the broad topic. Secondly, my professional work experience in the professional creative industries has allowed me to explore my theory-based research questions in practical contexts, and it played an important

role in securing access to research materials (particularly, unpublished documents) and interviews so that the case studies could be carried out as planned. I specifically focus on narrative drama in the professional sphere; however, there is scope for future research to look at community and amateur theatre, or forms of popular entertainment such as musicals, when discussing migrants and/in theatre in South Korea.

As outlined, the comprehensive performance analysis with reference to the carefully chosen analytical frames of Koreanness, heterotopia, counterpublic discourse, memory (postmemory, prosthetic memory) and implicated subject in the case studies will illuminate the underexplored theatres of migration where disempowered migrants are present as subject matter or through forms of self-representation. Through these theoretical approaches, I will ultimately delineate the ways in which the Korean theatrical public sphere might engage with marginalised migrants in pursuit of a more inclusive South Korean society.

Chapter 1:

The Construction of Koreanness in Contemporary South Korean Theatre

1) Introduction

This first chapter explores fundamental questions that undergird Chapters 2, 3 and 4 on foreign or ethnic Korean others in the Korean theatrical public sphere. How are Korean identities staged in the professional sphere? And how is national identity framed in contemporary theatre practices? Tackling these questions forms the basis of a discussion of how contemporary South Korean theatre engages with *othered* migrants in the following chapters.

To provide an overview of how Koreanness is approached in theatre in South Korea, I will take a closer look at NTCK and South Korean theatre directors (Lee, Oh and Yang), who created Koreanised Shakespeare plays. With the focus on NTCK's 'Korean', 'contemporary' and 'international' programmes and the revitalised traditional shamanism in the directors' Koreanised Western classics, I will discuss how this mainstream theatre company and leading directors in the professional sphere conceptualise and practise Korean theatre. In the case study, the first half employs a historical survey to offer a comprehensive analysis of theatre practices of NTCK, established in 1950, and mainly references scholarly criticism of those written or staged dramas. For the analysis of the Koreanised Shakespeare plays in the second half, I used full video documentation and scripts (Korean/English) of the performances publicly available on the Asian Shakespeare Intercultural Archive (ASIA) ('Productions').

2) The construction of Koreanness in theatre: at the intersection of Korean vs. international and traditional vs. contemporary

NTCK is a flagship theatre company subsidised by the South Korean government. It stages on average twenty plays a year at its multiple venues in Seoul.[26] This public theatre company works with both emerging and established theatre practitioners for its creative productions, functioning as the hub of the professional sphere. On its website, the company states that "NTCK is ready to be an international center for drama, embracing the living legacy of the Korean stage, and open up new horizons for contemporary theater" ('Introduction'). This statement implies that the national and the global as well as the past and the present intersect and coexist in the theatre company's productions. In the case study of NTCK, therefore, I will analyse the 'Korean', 'contemporary' and 'international' aspects of NTCK's programmes and how those characteristics in its performances contribute to the theatrical construction of Koreanness.

Both NTCK and the National Theater of Korea (NTOK) were founded in 1950, with NTCK initially set up as one of NTOK's resident companies along with the National *Changgeuk* (traditional Korean opera) Company of Korea, the National Dance Company of Korea and the National Orchestra of Korea.[27] In 2010, NTCK became an independent organisation and in 2015 it merged with the Myeongdong Theater, a public producing theatre which functioned as NTOK for about eleven years after the Korean War (Yu et al., 2010: 22-25).[28] Compared with other national arts organisations that aim to incorporate traditional Korean performance forms such as *Changgeuk*, NTCK's theatre productions are more Westernised and modern rather

[26] NTCK's three venues are Myeongdong Theater (558 seats), Baek Seonghui & Jang Minho Theater (190 seats) and Theater PAN (100 seats).

[27] Other resident companies were founded in later years, for example, the *Changgeuk* company was established in 1962.

[28] From 1957 to 1961, the Myeongdong Theater was the home of both an official residence of the city of Seoul and NTOK. In 1962, the Myeongdong Theater reopened as NTOK and it functioned as the national theatre until NTOK moved to its current home in Namsan in 1973 (Yu et al., 2010: 22-25). Meanwhile, the merging of NTCK and the Myeongdong Theater in 2015 was planned and carried out by the government (the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism) that subsidises the two public arts organisations.

than foregrounding traditional Korean aspects in their form and content.[29] Ancient and modern Western classics by Euripides, Shakespeare and Chekhov are staged along with modern and contemporary Korean dramas such as *Unmyeong* (*Fate*, written by Yun Baek-nam, 1921), which I will briefly discuss in Chapter 3, in its proscenium and black box theatres. The wide range of theatre works on NTCK's stages is Korean, created by resident South Korean theatre artists, though non-Korean names are sometimes included in the creative team credits. However, as I will discuss in later sections, there is a notable pattern when involving others in the staging of Korean theatre. What further gives NTCK's works Koreanness varies from engaging with Korean history to employing a traditional Korean art form. In the next section, I will first analyse how NTCK, as a national theatre company subsidised by the government, has engaged with and used Korean history in its theatre practice.

'Korean' theatre: selected historical narrative on contemporary stage

The opening of NTCK occurred amidst drastic social and political transformations in Korea. In the wake of Japan's defeat at the end of the Second World War, Korea became independent from the Japanese in 1945 and established its national theatre soon after.[30] In 1950, NTCK (at NTOK) staged its opening play *Wonsullang* (*Won Sul Lang – The General's Son*, written by Yu Chi-jin and directed by Heo Seok, 1950).[31] The choice of Korean historical drama about *Unified Silla* (Korea, 676-935)'s war against the *Dang* dynasty (China, 618-907) reflects the patriotic and nationalist sentiments upon liberation (Yu et al., 2010: 56).[32] In other words, NTCK attempted to create an image of an independent nation and ethnic community by separating

[29] There are also other national performing arts companies such as the Korean National Ballet that mainly produce Western and modern style works.

[30] The opening of the national theatre was in April 1950 and the Korean War broke out in June in the same year.

[31] *Won Sul Lang – The General's Son* is the official English title. NTCK and NTOK both record *Won Sul Lang – The General's Son* (1950) as their opening play. In April and May 2020, the two organisations planned to celebrate the seventieth anniversary of their founding by staging NTCK's *Manseon* (*Ship Filled with Fish*, written by Cheon Seungse and directed by Sim Jaechan) at NTOK, but the performance was cancelled owing to the worsening Covid-19 pandemic situation.

[32] *Unified Silla* is deemed as the first-ever unified Korea in history. *Unified Silla* accomplished the unification with the *Dang* dynasty's assistance; however, the two countries eventually waged war against each other when the alliance was broken.

Koreans from others (S. Kim, 2011: 24). In *Won Sul Lang – The General's Son*, what unites Koreans as one people is nationalism. Indeed, when the main character Wonsul comes back alive after serving in the war, he is criticised by his own father for not dying in battle (J. Lee, 2013: 62). What is repeatedly stressed throughout the story is that one has to fight to the death for his/her country (J. Lee, 2013: 63).

The emphasis on the nation over its individual citizens is not simply a moral lesson from a historical story but also a key feature of modern Korea. Similar to the discussion in the Introduction around strengthened ethnic homogeneity during the colonial period, South Korean political scientist Hong Taiyoung points out that the undue emphasis on the nation as an ethnic community is a legacy of the colonial experience (2015: 90, 103). The traumatic experience of losing a country and banning or assimilating cultural practices encouraged Koreans to place more importance on the construction of their cultural identity in relation to the country as an ethnic community. In building a modern and independent Korea, therefore, the nation overrode individuals' identity, and this heavy stress on the ethnic community continues today (Hong, 2015: 90, 106). In 1950s Korea, which was entering a new phase as an independent nation, *Won Sul Lang – The General's Son* arguably stimulated Korean audiences to have a nostalgic notion of the nation rather than enabling them to become conscious of nationalism objectively. Given that nostalgia "operates in the present by using a remembered past (however fanciful it may be) to construct a desire for the future" (Singleton, 2010: 355), *Won Sul Lang – The General's Son* evoked a sense of nostalgia at a major turning point for the country. The nostalgic historical narrative employed in this production, I suggest, seamlessly connected the nationalistic past on stage with the imagined construction of the future for the audience.

As all historical narratives have their own limitations, offering "partial perspectives on historical agents and events" (Singleton, 2010: 373), so does *Won Sul Lang – The General's Son*. South Korean theatre scholar Lee Jeong-sook points out that the playwright and the first artistic director of NTOK, Yu Chi-jin, selectively used historical materials to meet the needs of the society rather than aiming for a faithful historical overview (2013: 64). In *Won Sul Lang – The General's Son*, *Unified Silla* was perceived as the idealised origin of modern Korea by the newly independent

nation (S. Kim, 2011: 25). In other words, the national arts organisation recalled a specific historical period and the selected utopian past was reanimated on stage based upon its own interpretation. Lee further argues that Yu chose this play on the *Hwarangdo*, the code of *Silla* chivalry, to accommodate the government's goal to discipline citizens (J. Lee, 2013: 65-66).[33] In South Korea, the *Hwarangdo*'s code of conduct is taught in history classes at school, therefore, people are generally familiar with the code that includes rules such as: one must not step back in battle. Accordingly, the centuries-old nationalistic message in the form of staged drama could be effectively reemphasised and delivered to the 1950s audiences. The national theatre company's opening historical play became a big hit among the Korean public at the time, with over 10% of the Seoul population attending performances in one week (Yu et al., 2010: 56). That *Won Sul Lang – The General's Son* was well received by Korean audiences confirms that its political purpose was faithfully served (J. Lee, 2013: 59, 66). In short, the case of *Won Sul Lang – The General's Son* shows how a selected historical moment is reshaped on stage and connected with the present to build an idealised 'past-oriented' notion of Korea.

Unsurprisingly, *Won Sul Lang – The General's Son* was not the only Korean historical drama on the national stage. In its early years, NTCK staged thirty-one Korean historical dramas until Park Chung-hee's dictatorial regime (1963-1979) ended in the late 1970s (S. Kim, 2011: 22). While South Korea was accomplishing unprecedented economic development during Park's eighteen years in power, the idea of a national identity was still prioritised over anything else and it was undoubtedly associated with a monolithic ethnic community. In *Drawing the Landscape of Korean Historical Drama Through the National Theater Company of Korea: Focusing on the Period Between 1950 Through* [sic] *1979* (2011), South Korean theatre scholar Kim Sung-hee remarks that Korean historical drama was dominant at the national stage under the regime's nationalist ideology (2011: 22-23).[34] By drawing upon the past and employing ethnic homogeneity, those historical dramas connected present and past (S. Kim, 2011: 24). In the 1960s and 1970s,

[33] Main character Wonsul is a *Hwarang*, *(Unified) Silla*'s warrior.

[34] *Drawing the Landscape of Korean Historical Drama Through the National Theater Company of Korea: Focusing on the Period Between 1950 Through* [sic] *1979* is the official English title of the publication.

NTCK's historical dramas particularly connected audiences with the relatively recent memory of the Korean War (1950-1953). As I will examine in the next section, the selective theatrical focus on the war arguably contributed to the construction of the exclusive Korean identity that *others* North Koreans.

Kim lists eight plays that touch upon the collective memory of the Korean War: *Sanbul* (*Burning Mountain*, 1962), *Sungyoja* (*Martyr*, 1964), *Bamgwagachi Nopeunbyeok* (*A High Wall Like Night*, 1967), *Ikkikkin Gohyang-e Dolaoda* (*Coming Back to Mossy Hometown*, 1967), *Daljip* (*Sheaf Burning*, 1971), *Porodeul* (*Prisoners*, 1972), *Gorangpo-ui Sinhwa* (*The Myth of Gorangpo*, 1975) and *Haksalui Sup* (*Forest of Massacre*, 1977). As she points out, memory of war is a collective experience of a generation and theatre or film is an institutional form that produces those memories in society (S. Kim, 2011: 28). In producing the collective memory through theatre, the national theatre company had to follow the military government's anti-communist agenda (S. Kim, 2011: 29). Indeed, the listed eight plays mostly serve to deliver anti-communist messages, therefore, North Korea and its people are negatively represented, which impacts the broader cultural imaginary. In comparison to *Won Sul Lang – The General's Son*'s focus on Koreans against non-Korean others, the plays about the Korean War arguably manifest a more specifically exclusive idea of Korean identity, reflecting the political border between the South and the North. Regardless of their Korean ethnicity, North Koreans are *othered* and negatively perceived for their political affiliations and commitments. For instance, in *Burning Mountain*, *A High Wall Like Night* and *Sheaf Burning*, communist soldiers are described as having inappropriate relationships with South Korean women or raping them (S. Kim, 2011: 28-30). In other words, the historical plays produced by the national institution in the 1960s and 1970s contributed to the then government's pursuit of anticommunism, negatively stereotyping North Korea(ns).

The noticeable past-oriented focus on Korean history is not limited to NTCK's early programmes but is also an important part of its current repertoire. A series of historical plays produced under the heading *Geunhyeondae Higokeui Jaebalgyeon* (*Rediscoveries of Korean Modern Drama*) are recent examples of the company's past-oriented pursuit of Korean identity.[35] Between 2014 and 2018, South Korean

[35] *Rediscoveries of Korean Modern Drama* is the official English title of the project.

theatre critic Kim Yun-cheol served as NTCK's artistic director and he focused heavily on the idea of a Korean identity in programming (Munhwa News, 2016), and the *Rediscoveries of Korean Modern Drama* launched in 2014 was one of three different approaches he deployed.[36] As the title indicates, the plays remind audiences of the nation's modern history. Through figures, stage settings and costumes, Korean modern history is visualised and vivified, thus narrowing the gap between past and present.

As part of this still continuing series, eleven plays have been produced including *Fate* (written by Yun Baek-nam and directed by Kim Nak-hyoung, 2018), a story of a Korean picture bride who emigrated to the US to marry a Korean man in Hawaii in the early twentieth century, *Chehyang-nal* (*Memorial Day*, written by Chae Man-sik and directed by Choi Yong-hun, 2017) that tells the story of old woman Choi whose husband died during the *Donghak* Peasant Revolution in 1894, with her son leaving home during the first independence movement in 1919 and her grandson becoming a socialist and *Bloodline* (written by Kim Young-soo and directed by Yun Kwangjin, 2016) about a poverty-stricken time right after the liberation from the Japanese occupation.[37] As the storylines indicate, the modern history on stage is largely about difficult pasts such as the annexation of Korea by Japan. The staged memory of the past, I argue, encourages contemporary audiences to share emotional solidarity as ethnic Koreans, transcending the boundary between the past and the present. As the focus on the past is seamlessly overlapped with the long-held perception of Korea as a mono-ethnic country, the series that explore Korean identity through Korea's modern past unsurprisingly alienates non-ethnic Koreans who do not share in the solidarity engendered by this historical memory. It is, however, not only ethnic others excluded in the past-oriented interpretation of Korean identity. The national theatre company's critical awareness of the colonial experience that threatened Korean

[36] Kim dealt with the matter of Korean identity from three different perspectives: the first way is to explore the identity by learning about the past, the second point is to attempt to define who contemporary Koreans are and the final approach is to reflect on themselves from a foreign viewpoint (Munhwa News, 2016). The last two points will also be briefly addressed in the later part of this chapter.

[37] *Fate*, *Memorial Day* and *Bloodline* are all official English titles. Picture brides refer to Korean women who left for the US to marry Korean men there, mostly in Hawaii, in the early twentieth century. More detailed historical context will be offered in Chapter 3.

ethnicity and the ongoing ideological conflict with North Korea also *others* pro-Japanese or pro-Pyeongyang ethnic Koreans. The examination of a cancelled production of the series in the following section will shed light on the exclusive interpretation of Korean identity.

In September and October 2019, *Binghwa* (*Ice Flowers*, written by Im Seongyu, 1942) was planned to be staged as part of the series. The story of Koreans is set in the maritime province in the former Soviet Union between 1934 and 1937 (Yang, 2008: 186). Main characters Park Yeongcheol and his lover Baek Sunyeong leave for the province to start a new life but they are described as having an even more difficult time in the new place (Yang, 2008: 186). Park resists the Soviet Union's deportation policy in vain and Baek unwillingly becomes a Soviet government official's concubine (Yang, 2008: 186). *Ice Flowers* touches upon difficult pasts around the Japanese occupation and, thus, is in line with other plays of the series. NTCK's choice of *Ice Flowers*, however, requires further scrutiny. *Ice Flowers* is a well-known example of *Gungmin Yeongeuk* (National Theatre) – in a 1940s Korean context, National Theatre refers to those plays purposely produced to serve Japanese imperialism in the latter part of the colonial period (O. Kim, 2007: 126, Yang, 2007: 369). Furthermore, the play is also a product of a national drama contest (1942-1945) overseen by the Japanese. Similar to other plays in this contest, for example, *Ice Flowers* includes some portion of its lines written in Japanese, the coloniser's language (Yang, 2008: 189-190). More notably, the play features sceptical Korean intellect Park Yeongcheol who ultimately changes his mind and embraces Japan. Thus, the play successfully delivers a key National Theatre message: Koreans' assimilation into Japan (O. Kim, 2008: 313). *Ice Flowers* also encouraged a negative perception of Japan's enemies, such as the former Soviet Union (O. Kim, 2008: 304). In the development of the politically driven National Theatre, the drama contest played a significant role (Yang, 2007: 367). As one of the five plays at the first contest in 1942 (Yang, 2007: 387-388), *Ice Flowers* proved to be the most popular (Yang, 2008: 181).

In postcolonial South Korea, those who participated in the drama contest, including Im, were without exception labelled as pro-Japanese. Pro-Japanese does not merely mean to have a friendly attitude towards Japan (B. Lee, 2018: 6). Upon liberation,

punishing pro-Japanese Koreans was regarded as one of the most important tasks that the new independent country would deal with (B. Lee, 2018: 8).[38] In 1948, the new government passed the *Banminjokhaengwi Cheobeolbeop* (*Anti-National Activist Punishment Law*) to punish pro-Japanese collaborators.[39] The 'anti-national' in the title also implies 'anti-ethnic' in Korean, therefore, the title indicates that pro-Japanese people are deemed as ethnically anti-Korea. According to the law, those subject to punishment included Koreans who conspired with the Japanese government for the annexation of Korea and who persecuted Koreans who fought for independence from Japan ('Anti-National Activist'). This does not, however, mean that pro-Japanese activities terminated when the annexation ended; collusive links with dictatorial governments after the emancipation and supporting a divided (not united) Korea were also regarded as pro-Japanese (B. Lee, 2018: 7). This historical and political perception of pro-Japanese Koreans also applies to the evaluation of the artists of the time. Pro-Japanese literary works of the so-called a 'dark age' or an 'absent period', for instance, have largely been eradicated from the history of Korean literature (Jo, 2002: 10-11).

Scholarly investigation of the period had a tendency to unconditionally criticise pro-Japanese works. As South Korean literature scholar Yang Seung-gook points out, academic research on 1940s Korean drama mostly focused on analysing pro-Japanese characteristics and criticising them (2007: 367). More and more South Korean scholars, however, have begun to approach this issue from a different angle. Yang argues that the National Theatre was not the mainstream theatre of that time and its pro-Japanese impacts on audiences were not strong either (Yang, 2007: 394). He suggests that traditional Korean songs emotionally sung in the choruses of *Ice Flowers*, for example, allowed audiences to realise their Korean identity (Yang, 2008: 196). In other words, the staging of *Ice Flowers* actually expressed a Korean national

[38] Court cases still exist between the South Korean government and descendants of Koreans with pro-Japanese history. One of the most recent cases is well-known pro-Japanese figure Min Yeonghwi (1852-1935) whose descendant finally lost the clawback of a pro-Japanese asset trial in 2020 after three years of battle with the government (Gu, 2020).

[39] An enquiry committee was set up in 1948 but the task of punishing pro-Japanese people was obstructed by the then Rhee Syngman (1948-1960) administration. As a consequence, the committee was disbanded the following year (B. Lee, 2018: 9). From the liberation in 1945 onwards, the controversy surrounding pro-Japanese people continues (B. Lee, 2018: 6).

identity within the public sphere of the colonial period (Yang, 2008: 196, 204). Similarly, South Korean theatre critic Kim Ock-ran examines how Im skilfully wrote *Ice Flowers* as a melodrama, avoiding making it completely pro-Japanese (2007: 126). Yang and Kim's points indicate that, ironically, the play is not as pro-Japanese as it was supposed to be. That is, the label of a pro-Japanese play was given to *Ice Flowers* based upon the ideological judgement on the period and the National Theatre, not upon the play itself.

Due to the ideological label of a pro-Japanese play, staging *Ice Flowers* has been taboo. In addition, the fact that Im defected to North Korea has also discouraged South Korean theatre scholars to properly evaluate his plays (O. Kim, 2008: 303). Therefore, NTCK's plan to stage *Ice Flowers* was expected to be a rare chance for South Korean audiences to see a production of this play. However, when the diplomatic relationship between South Korea and Japan deteriorated in 2019, NTCK cancelled its staging, citing that it questioned the playwright's pro-Japanese activities ('Notice (2019)').[40] Initially, the national theatre company intended to stage the problematic pro-Japanese play to critically reflect on the shameful past ('Notice (2019)'). Despite this intention, as a 'national' company, NTCK announced the cancelation on the 5th of August, less than two months before the scheduled opening, as public sentiment turned against Japan and its economic sanctions on South Korea ('Notice (2019)'). The company's decision to cancel this play shows that the *Rediscoveries of Korean Modern Drama* does not simply dramatise modern Korean history; it reveals how the collective memory of a difficult past (the Japanese annexation of Korea) forms the past-oriented and exclusive understanding of Korean

[40] The diplomatic relationship between the two countries deteriorated as follows: on 30 October 2018, the supreme court of South Korea adjudicated disputes between Japanese companies and Koreans who were drafted into these companies by force during the Japanese colonial era. The court ruled that these companies must compensate the victims (J. Kang, 2018). On 12 August 2019, Japan removed South Korea from its trusted export list. In the wake of the removal, consumers in South Korea started to boycott goods of Japanese companies. In August 2019, the South Korean government announced the termination of GSOMIA (General Security of Military Information Agreement) between South Korea and Japan, however, Seoul and Tokyo narrowly agreed not to completely terminate the agreement six hours before the scheduled deadline (23 November 2019) (G. Kim, 2019).

identity, and closely interacts with NTCK's contemporary theatre practice.[41] The cancelation of *Ice Flowers* demonstrates that the traumatic colonial experience has affected the construction of an ideologically strict and exclusive view on Korean identity in theatre. The ideological judgement of Korean identity will be further discussed in Chapter 2, which analyses the theatrical representation of *othered* North Korean migrants in South Korea.

'Korean' theatre: the seeking and practice of traditional Korean performance structure

Interestingly, the 'rediscovery of the past' is a recurring theme for NTCK. In 2018, the then artistic director Lee Sung-yol launched the *Uriyeongeuk Wonhyeong-ui Jaebalgyeon* (*Rediscovery of the Archetype of Korean Theater*), stressing that it is NTCK's duty to inherit and research Korean traditions and to lead the new direction (Naver Performance and Exhibition, 2019).[42] This new project explores the ways in which original forms of traditional Korean performing arts could be interconnected with contemporary theatre. Indeed, the participating artists of the project use traditional Korean culture and performance such as the shamanic ritual called *gut* and mask dancing. During the project's first year, the company subtitled the project as the *Yeongeuk Dongne Yeonhi Madang* (*Theatre Town Theatre Yard*). *Yeongeuk* and *Yeonhi* in the Korean subtitle are both translated as theatre in English; however, for native Korean speakers the terms are more nuanced: *Yeongeuk* refers to modern theatre and *Yeonhi* refers to traditional Korean performance. The juxtaposition of *Yeongeuk* and *Yeonhi* in the subtitle manifests that NTCK, the leading producer of modern and Westernised theatre, foregrounds traditional Korean theatre. The new project that aims to explore the origins of traditional Korean theatre (Naver Performance and Exhibition, 2019) was further developed the following year.

In 2019, the purpose of the project became more specific: exploring the meeting of theatre and *Pansori*. *Pansori* is a traditional Korean art form where a performer delivers a story through singing and storytelling to a drummer's beat. That is, the idea is to go back to traditional Korean performing arts such as *Pansori* to explore

[41] This is not to suggest that pro-Japanese or pro-Pyeongyang Koreans should not be excluded in Korean identities.

[42] *Rediscovery of the Archetype of Korean Theater* is the official English title of the project.

the ways in which the original art forms could be modernised as a contemporary theatre practice (S. Lee, 2019: 2). Artistic director Lee's programme note that the company launched this project in a search for contemporary Korean theatre's identity (S. Lee, 2019: 2) confirms the logic that the past is regarded as a fundamental source of Korean identity, therefore, the return to the past is essential in the search for Koreanness. The past-oriented perspective in this project is overtly in line with the attention to the past in the aforementioned series, the *Rediscoveries of Korean Modern Drama*. In the second year, using the theme of theatre and *Pansori*, two pieces called *Songpa-ui Gyeong-i: Nobuinui Bangmun Sammak-e Daehan Deoneum* (*Gyeong-i from Songpa: 'Deoneum' on Act 3 of the Visit of the Old Lady*, written and directed by Im Yeong-uk, 2019) and *Da Dareun Gil.Mok.eseo* (*In the Corner of All Different Moks*, devised and directed by Bae Yo-sup, 2019) were showcased to test the possibility of developing them into regular performances.[43] In the third year (2020), the focus on *gut* shows how NTCK attempted to find an interface between theatre and this traditional Korean shamanistic ritual.[44] Notably, the theatrical practice of *gut* in this project resonates with the theatre directors' use of *gut*, which will be examined in detail later on in this chapter.

Considering that NTCK mainly produces Western classics and Korean plays in the form of modern theatre, this new attempt to rediscover the archetype of Korean theatre signals that NTCK feels responsible for the practice of Korean traditions. It is certainly understandable that a government-subsidised national theatre company

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[43] *Deoneum* means 1) a unique telling/singing part created based upon a *Pansori* singer's own creative contribution, 2) a part which a *Pansori* singer is exceptionally better at than other singers ('Show Info – *The Rediscovery of the Archetype of Korean Theater 2 - Gyeong-i from Songpa: 'Deoneum' on Act 3 of the Visit of the Old Lady*'). *Mok* refers to a *Pansori* singer's vocal technique ('Show Info – *The Rediscovery of the Archetype of Korean Theater 2 - In the Corner of All Different Moks*').

[44] Under the title of *Hajimaji Nolgutpulgut* (*Celebrating the Summer Solstice*) in 2020, NTCK produced a new full-scale performance called *Bulkkotnori* (*Fireworks*, written by Kim Min-jeong and directed by Nam in-woo) and three experimental pieces that explore a shaman as a *gut* performer. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, they were all shown online. I watched the three pieces *Yeon Gut, Good* (*Unfold Good*, performed by Mun Min-hyeong), *Seonmudang, Yeongeuk Japneunda* (*A Novice Shaman Takes Over the Stage*, performed by Kim Solji) and *Dangkeulmaeda* (*Spirit Awaits*, performed by Go Dong-uk) online on the 24th of September 2020. The title translations are all official English titles.

endeavours to explore the origin of Korean theatre and its identity. What needs critical interrogation here is the ways in which the search for Korean theatre is identified with the search for Korea's own past and tradition. In this project, what is deemed *Uriyeongeuk* (our theatre) is traditional Korean theatre; according to this logic, one is expected to share Korea's past and tradition to be entitled to belong to 'us' and explore 'our' theatre. Indeed, in the illustrated posters of the project in 2018 and 2019, Koreans enjoying traditional Korean arts are featured, wearing traditional Korean costumes or playing traditional Korean musical instruments. The images do not include non-ethnic Korean others who enjoy 'our' theatre. The visualised idea of this project implies that Korean theatre is tied to the nostalgia for an imagined ethnically homogeneous space, which is divorced from a contemporary multicultural society. Compared to *Won Sul Lang – The General's Son*, plays on the Korean War and the *Rediscoveries of Korean Modern Drama*, which all utilise Korean history and memory to tell stories, this rediscovery project is different in that it explores traditional Korean art forms. Despite this difference, the examples consistently show that the way NTCK produces Korean theatre or pursues Koreanness tends to be past-oriented. In the next section, I will move on to examine the company's contemporary approaches to national identity construction.

'Contemporary' theatre: from up-to-date Western plays to Korean diaspora playwrights and to new Korean plays of 'here and now'

The preceding sections looked at how NTCK recalls the past, produces 'Korean' theatre and delivers it to contemporary audiences. Compared with the act of remembering and interpreting the distant past in the present, being contemporary means to keep up with the speed of constant change and the circulation of new ideas and to respond to situations as they arise. As a subsidised public theatre company, NTCK shows both strength and weakness as a producer of 'contemporary' theatre. When the *Sewol* ferry sank in the South Sea of Korea, killing about three hundred people (mostly teenage students on a school field trip) in 2014, the government was criticised for its inability to deal with the situation. The then president was impeached in 2017 because of other accusations, but this incident was frequently addressed across society in the impeachment process. In line with the public anger and criticism, individual theatre practitioners and independent

theatre companies immediately and continuously reacted by staging plays on the tragic incident and the alleged corrupt regime. In contrast, government-subsidised public theatres never addressed the issue (International Association of Theatre Critics – Korea, 2017: 340) and so neither did NTCK. As this absence of reactive expression from public theatre groups demonstrates, a government-funded budget is a double-edged sword: it effectively silences national arts organisations in the face of government-implicated national scandals such as the *Sewol* ferry tragedy, but on the other hand these companies receive a budget that enables them to be 'contemporary' in a way that independent theatre companies cannot easily replicate. In this section, I will look at how Koreanness is explored in the contemporary productions of NTCK.

Looking at NTCK's yearly programmes, the company is notably active in bringing contemporary Western plays to the South Korean stage. In 2019, for instance, it was quick to stage *Consent* (written by Nina Raine and directed by Kang Yangwon), which premiered in 2017 at the National Theatre in London, England and was staged again at the Harold Pinter Theatre in the capital city in 2018. Since merging with the Myeongdong Theater in 2015, NTCK has consistently introduced new European and Asian plays to South Korean audiences. In 2015, new works by European playwrights/authors including Arne Lygre (Norway), Martin Crimp (UK) and Michel Houellebecq (France) were translated into Korean and staged as readings. In 2016, award-wining French playwright Florian Zeller's new plays *Le Père* (directed by Park Jeong-hee) and *La Mère* (directed by Lee Byeonghun) were translated and staged for South Korean audiences. In the same year, NTCK also hosted the National Theatre of China's production of *Richard III* (directed by Wang Xiaoying). In 2017, the UK's Duncan Macmillan and Robert Icke's new adaptation of *1984* (directed by Han Tae-sook) was included in the repertoire. *One Green Bottle*, written and directed by Noda Hideki, the art director of Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre, was also in the annual programme. As a final example, *Oslo* (written by J. T. Rogers and directed by Lee Sung-yol), winner of the Best Play at the 2017 Tony Awards, was staged in 2018 by NTCK. As this list indicates, NTCK focuses on introducing contemporary plays written or directed by established artists from Western and neighbouring Asian countries. In other words, the national theatre company selectively introduces qualified works mostly from the Global North, trying to incorporate them into the

contemporary theatre scene in South Korea. Keeping up with the trend on the world stage is a key aim but NTCK's contemporary theatre practice certainly does more than that. The next section will examine the company's approach to the staging of contemporary Korean identity.

Hanguk-inui Chosang (*A Portrait of Koreans*, devised through creative collaboration and directed by Koh Sun-woong, 2016), that critically explores current social issues in South Korea and Korean identity, was a new play developed at NTCK.[45] This play does not have a plot structure but, instead, twenty-seven episodes – seemingly randomly – display contemporary South Korean society for eighty-five minutes, including people with a smartphone addiction, middle-aged people having an affair, employees fired via WhatsApp and a group of violent teenagers. Through the theatrical exploration, *A Portrait of Koreans* opened up the question of who contemporary Koreans are. South Korean theatre critic Sim Jaemin argues that, while the play dealt with visible social issues, this production by a government-funded theatre company failed to critically examine the hegemonic ideology that fundamentally causes those problems (2016: 47, 49). That is, not unlike NTCK's anti-communist historical dramas that went along with the government's ideology in the 1960-70s, this reflection on contemporary Korean identity was neither entirely free from the then politically conservative ideological gaze.

The following year, NTCK further explored the question of contemporary Korean identity by staging Korean diaspora playwrights' works in its *Korean Diaspora Season - Five Special Perspectives that Spread throughout the World*. Through this season, five internationally well-known playwrights with Korean heritage, including Young Jean Lee (US), In-sook Chappell (UK), Julia Cho (US), Mia Chung (US) and Ins Choi (Canada), showed their works to audiences in South Korea.[46] The playwrights all have either Korean surnames, first names or both. Just like their blend of English or Korean names signals their diasporic identity, their plays address issues that the Korean diaspora face between their home and host countries. For instance, *Aubergine* (written by Julia Cho and directed by Jeong Seung-hyun, 2017) features Korean American Ray who cannot speak Korean and belatedly gets to

[45] *A Portrait of Koreans* is the official English title.

[46] The five dramas originally written in English were translated into Korean by NTCK.

know his dying father whom he grew apart from due to differences and a lack of communication ('Show Info – *Aubergine*'). And *This Isn't Romance* (written by In-sook Chappell and directed by Pu Saerom, 2017) describes the perilous relationship between a sister adopted and brought to the UK and a brother left in South Korea who meet after twenty-five years ('Show Info – *This Isn't Romance*'). Similar to the broad spectrum of the diaspora narrative in the plays, the five playwrights have various kinds of Korean identities. Lee and Chung emigrated with their Korean parents to the US when they were both two years old. Chappell was adopted and brought to the UK when she was young. Cho was born in the US to Korean parents and Choi was born in South Korea but was raised in Canada.

Regardless of the different degrees of affinity with Korea, the fact that they are ethnically Koreans unconditionally grants them Korean identity. Thereby, their works were all staged under the name of the *Korean Diaspora Season* on the national stage. Ironically, however, the original plays were all written in English, targeting English-speaking audiences, thus, the translated plays could not be delivered to Korean-speaking audiences in the exact way that it was received in English-speaking countries (M. Kim, 2017: 79). NTCK did not consider the language barrier as a hindrance to identify the playwrights as Koreans, which shows that the emphasis lies on ethnicity when it comes to defining Korean identity. This particular viewpoint is in stark contrast to the social perception of non-ethnic Korean but Korean-speaking migrants in South Korea. That is, the proud introduction of diaspora playwrights' works – written in English – on the Korean national stage is opposite to how Korean-speaking foreign migrant settlers are typically perceived as others in South Korea (the *othering* of those non-ethnic Korean migrants will be examined in Chapter 3). Furthermore, as South Korean theatre critic Kim Mihi notes, NTCK's *Korean Diaspora Season* exclusively presented works of Korean diaspora playwrights from Western countries such as the US, the UK and Canada (2017: 80). Kim states that NTCK's sole focus on the West, disregarding works of Korean diaspora playwrights from developing Asian countries such as China, displayed a 'colonial' attitude (M. Kim, 2017: 80). NTCK's lack of diversity in its *Korean Diaspora Season*, I argue, mirrors South Koreans' understanding of a contemporary Korean identity that excludes ethnic Koreans in developing Asian countries.

Along with the efforts to introduce new plays from Western countries, to stage contemporary quests for Korean identity and to showcase contemporary Korean diaspora playwrights' works, NTCK also functions as a testing ground where new Korean plays can be tried and developed. In 2018, it launched the *Higok Uchetong* (*Play Postbox*), a new play discovery project.[47] In contrast to the company's full-scale productions planned on a yearly basis and born out of an extensive (pre)production process, *Play Postbox* was designed to be more flexible. Through this platform, which is open to anyone to submit new plays throughout the year, NTCK welcomes full-length plays with contemporary issues and formats ('Play Postbox'). The readings of the chosen plays are open to the public in more informal environment, such as in NTCK's rehearsal rooms. Through this programme, audiences have relatively easier access to dramatised contemporary stories and works in progress. The readings are normally followed by discussions among playwrights, NTCK staff members and audience members. In this way, compared with other regular productions, audiences are invited to actively engage in the creative process. The reduced bureaucracy involved in *Play Postbox* also partly redeems the subsidised company's inability to promptly and widely mirror contemporary South Korea. In 2018 and 2019, eight new plays were publicly read in each year.[48] Among those, Ahn Jung-min's *Godokhan Mokyok* (*Solitary Bath*, directed by Seo Jihye) was selected and read in 2018, and then produced as a full-scale performance in 2019.[49] In December 2020, NTCK planned to stage Yoo Heyul's *Sarang-ui Byeonjugok* (*Love Variation*), which had its reading in 2019, under the new title *Dangsini Bameul Geonneo-ol Ttae* (*When You Arrive at the Other Side of the Night*, directed by Lee Eun-jun) but the performance was cancelled because of Covid-19 restrictions.[50] As the two readings-turned-performances indicate, *Play Postbox* is an important 'contemporary' part of NTCK's programming.

The list of chosen *Play Postbox* dramas shows NTCK's determination to reflect the 'here and now', including unheard voices. Through this widely accessible project, matters ignored in society and hardly discussed in public are brought to life. In 2019,

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[47] *Play Postbox* is the official English title of the project.

[48] In 2020, NTCK organised readings of five selected works.

[49] *Solitary Bath* is the official English title.

[50] *When You Arrive at the Other Side of the Night* is the official English title.

NTCK showcased *Byeoleul Wihayeo* (*For Stars*, written by Bae Sihyeon), which deals with the subject of women and sex. This topic, long suppressed and distorted by South Korea's patriarchal society, had been brought to the fore in the wake of the #MeToo movement ('Show Info – *For Stars*'). *For Stars* particularly hones in on the issue of sex and women with disability, addressing social prejudices and violence against them ('Show Info – *For Stars*'). Paying attention to relatively unheard voices and perspectives, NTCK is including these as 'us' in the discussion of contemporary Korea and thus functions as a more inclusive theatrical public sphere, albeit this change is still in its infancy. Before moving on to the discussion on South Korean theatre directors, I will finally discuss how NTCK interacts with the contemporary world beyond the Korean peninsula in the making of Korean theatre.

'International' theatre: selectively accepted international influences in Korean theatre

As previously discussed, NTCK mainly stages modern and Westernised theatre but Korean history, memory and tradition are also interwoven into its 'Korean' theatre in many different ways. In terms of its theatrical reflection of 'contemporary' Korea(ns), the company is increasingly staging dramas reflecting a wider variety of issues and perspectives. Moreover, NTCK's programme also boasts an 'international' repertoire. Since 2015, when NTCK merged with the Myeongdong Theater, Shakespeare has never been excluded in the yearly programmes. Meanwhile, *Jossi Goa, Boksuui Ssiat* (*The Orphan of Zhao: Seeds of Revenge*, written by Ji Junxiang, adapted and directed by Koh Sun-woong, 2015) is Chinese classic that NTCK made a national success.[51] *The Orphan of Zhao: Seeds of Revenge* was first produced and staged by NTCK in 2015 and won prestigious theatre prizes, including the Dong-A Theatre Awards in South Korea. In the following year, it was even well received at the home of the popular classic (the National Theatre of China in Beijing) ('Show Info – *The Orphan of Zhao: Seeds of Revenge*'). After NTCK restaged it in 2017 and 2018, the play was ranked as the most popular production in an audience survey and so was staged again in 2020 to mark the company's seventieth anniversary.[52]

[51] *The Orphan of Zhao: Seeds of Revenge* is the official English title.

[52] The popular play was staged again at NTCK in April and May 2021.

Artistic collaborations with international partners is another key area that NTCK focuses on. In 2015, NTCK commissioned award-winning German playwright Nis-Momme Stockmann to write a new play. *Deo Pawo* (*The Power*, written by Nis-Momme Stockmann and directed by Alexis Bug) that criticises capital and power in modern society premiered in 2015 and was restaged the following year.[53] In 2016, Róbert Alföldi, who became the youngest artistic director at the Hungarian National Theater in 2008, was invited to direct Shakespeare's *A Winter's Tale*. In 2016, South Korean novel *Bitchui Jeguk* (*The Empire of Light*, written by Kim Young-ha, adapted by Valérie Mréjen, Arthur Nauzyciel and directed by Arthur Nauzyciel, 2016) was adapted and directed by French artists.[54] The uniquely Korean story of a North Korean spy who was forgotten by his country over a decade thus almost forgot his identity as a spy but was suddenly ordered to return was successfully staged in South Korea (NTCK) and France (CDN Orléans/Loiret/Centre etc.). In 2017, NTCK staged well-known Japanese director Noda Hideki's *One Green Bottle*. Noda had a close partnership with the Myeongdong Theater before the merge with NTCK – he previously staged his other plays including *Bansin* (*Half Gods*, 2014) in collaboration with South Korean actors and *The Bee* (2013) there.[55] As part of its seventieth anniversary celebration in 2020, NTCK planned to stage the Royal Shakespeare Company (UK)'s *The Taming of the Shrew* (directed by Justin Audibert), the Vakhtangov Theater (Russia)'s *Uncle Vanya* (directed by Rimas Tuminas) and the stage adaptation of South Korean novel *The Vegetarian* (written by Han Kang), the winner of 2016 Man Booker International Prize, with the Théâtre de Liège (Belgium, adopted and directed by Selma Alaoui). Although the three international productions were all cancelled because of the Covid-19 pandemic, they are prime examples of the company's drive to pursue international collaborations.[56]

While the range of these artistic partnerships beyond the peninsula is commendable, the predominantly Global North line-up of collaborations and theatrical artists reveals that only a few qualified international partners are chosen to associate with

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[53] *The Power* is the official English title.

[54] *The Empire of Light* is the official English title.

[55] *Half Gods* is the official English title.

[56] NTCK included two plays, including *The Vegetarian,* produced through collaboration with the Théâtre de Liège and staged in Belgium in its yearly programme in 2021.

contemporary Korean theatre. This tendency, I argue, exactly mirrors South Koreans' Western bias and the society where migrants from developing Asian countries remain in the margins. These biased international partnerships are especially disappointing as they highlight the conspicuous absence of domestic partnerships with, for instance, marginalised Asian migrant artists resident in South Korea.[57] As pointed out in the Introduction, diversity and inclusivity are not only lacking at NTCK but also in the Korean theatrical public sphere in general. The aim of this chapter is to examine the exclusive understanding and presence of Koreanness in the theatrical public sphere and how it overshadows otherness. In order to offer a more balanced and broader interpretation of the pursuit of Koreanness in contemporary South Korean theatre, the following section will focus on South Korean theatre directors and their works in the non-public sector of the professional sphere.

3) Revitalising Korea's traditional culture through theatre: the aesthetic quest for Koreanness

Koreanisation in theatre: Koreanised Western classics

As a national institution, NTCK strategically and responsibly produces Korean theatre, drawing upon Korea's own history, cultural memory and deep-rooted traditions. Koreanness in theatre is, however, not exclusively pursued in national productions: there are plenty of individual theatre directors or independent theatre companies that foreground Korean cultural roots in their works. When considering Koreanness, they almost invariably return to Korea's past for the theatrical exploration of the perceived cultural roots. The aim of the second half of this chapter is to examine how those individually or independently produced theatre works revitalise the past on stage. In the professional sphere, NTCK and these theatre practitioners engage in various types of collaborations, thus, it is not necessarily easy to draw a line between the public organisation and the individual artists.[58] Despite this, the detailed understanding of the non-public realm of the theatrical

[57] This issue will be discussed in Chapter 3 on Asian marriage migrants and/in theatre.

[58] This is the case for the three directors in question in this chapter. Yang's *Hamlet* was staged at the Myeongdong Theater in 2009 (before the theatre's merge with NTCK). Even though Lee's *Hamlet* and Oh's *The Tempest* were not presented by NTCK, the two theatre directors staged quite a few other works on national stages.

sphere allows us to explore the different approach to ‘Korean’ theatre. Among many different and creative ways of making Korean theatre in the non-public sector, I will specifically probe how theatre artists aesthetically revitalise Korea’s traditional culture; to be more specific: the ways in which individual theatre directors Koreanise Western classics by drawing upon ancient Korean cultural factors such as Korean shamanism. Many South Korean theatre-makers do not simply translate a Western classic text into Korean but adapt or even rewrite it, which Pavis describes as “Koreanization” (2017: 61). As the *mise-en-scéne* is also Koreanised, consequently, those converted Western classics become utterly different from the original plays. This way of borrowing an original Western text and transforming it into an unconventional artistic outcome is, however, not specific to South Korean theatre.

Japanese film director Kurosawa Akira directed a critically acclaimed period drama, *Ran*, in 1985. The film – set in Japan – is based on Shakespeare’s *King Lear*. The Japanese director’s own interpretation and *mise-en-scéne*, however, discourage audiences to relate it to the source text. Western classics are reinterpreted and staged by contemporary South Korean theatre artists in a similar way. Around the time of the release of *Ran* in the late twentieth century, in fact, the opposite direction of borrowing other (especially Asian) cultures was more visible and frequent. This type of “intentional encounter between cultures and performing traditions” (Lo and Gilbert, 2002: 36) was led by Western theatre directors such as Peter Brook, whose *The Mahabharata* (1985, 1989) was a representative and controversial example of intercultural theatre. Some scholars were supportive of Brook’s artistic freedom or the then trend of adjusting Asian culture in Western performance to make it acceptable to Western audiences (cited in Mitra, 2015: 13). However, these “one-way borrowings” have been heavily criticised as cultural appropriation, Orientalist approaches or neo-imperialist tendencies by Rustom Bharucha and many others (Mitra, 2015: 10-15). In order to examine “the contested, unsettling, and often unequal spaces *between* cultures”, Ric Knowles uses the adjective “intercultural” over other terms such as cross-cultural in *Theatre & Interculturalism* (2010: 4). Beyond the critical attention on – and prolific discussion of – pioneering intercultural theatre works, theatre and performance scholars including Royona Mitra, Charlotte McIvor and Jessica Nakamura have further suggested new perspectives on interculturalism. While McIvor discusses intercultural theatre projects where the West

and other cultures meet within the context of intercultural Ireland (2011), Mitra examines how the "embodied inside-outside nature" of British/Bangladesh dancer and choreographer Akram Kahn's "new interculturalism" operates between not only cultures, but also artistic disciplines (2015: 23, 28). Meanwhile, the formulaic manner in which Asia is used or overshadowed by the West is not only questioned within intercultural theatre productions but also within Theatre and Performance Studies. Nakamura, for example, points out how the Japanese Noh theatre "joins other non-Western forms long used to spark artistic innovation and develop theoretical ideas" (2021: 153).

What I will specifically discuss in the rest of this chapter is how the one-way direction from the West to Asia is reversed in intercultural theatre productions in South Korea. In comparison to Kahn's approach that works beyond the one-way dynamics found in other intercultural works, many South Korean productions still remain an unequal space where one culture is mediated through another. Although Asian cultures are not appropriated by the West through the Koreanisation of Western texts, such productions also cannot be free from the criticism of Koreanisation as an imported Orientalism (B. Kim, 2013: 28). In this chapter, I analyse how South Korean directors' past-oriented understanding of Koreanness occupies the intercultural theatre productions with Korean shamanism and, furthermore, how the 'shamanised' Shakespeare plays are framed as quintessentially 'Korean' theatre on national and global stages. The following sections aim to examine the ways in which South Korean theatre-makers use a Western classic text as a framework to revitalise Korea's traditional culture. Lee Yun-taek, Oh Tae-suk and Yang Jung-ung are three representative South Korean theatre directors who have staged Koreanised versions of Shakespeare plays. Lee's Theatre Troupe Georipae and Oh's Mokwha Repertory Company were highly acclaimed at home and abroad for their theatre works that use traditional Korean culture.[59] Yang runs the theatre company Yohangza and its

[59] In the wake of the #MeToo movement in 2018, however, Lee and Oh disappeared from the professional sphere. Lee was accused of committing numerous sexual offences against female theatre practitioners, using his power and reputation as a respected theatre director. As a result, he was convicted and imprisoned for seven years and his theatre company was closed down. Oh was also implicated in the sexual harassment scandal and, as a result, his theatre company ceased production.

productions based upon Korean aesthetics have been acclaimed in many other countries including Australia, Colombia, Cuba, Poland and the UK.

The positionality of shamanism in Korean society and shamanism in Korean theatre

Interestingly, Lee, Oh and Yang deployed shamanism to Koreanise Shakespeare; Lee and Yang directed different versions of *Hamlet* and Oh directed *The Tempest*. All three directors featured *gut*, a Korean shamanic ritual performed by a shaman, in different ways. South Korean theatre scholars' understanding of *gut* as an ancient shamanic ritual as well as the origin of theatre in Korea (M. Kim, 1997: 29, Shin, 2001: 390) partly enables us to speculate why Lee, Oh and Yang specifically chose and used *gut* to Koreanise the Western classics. I will closely examine the interface between *gut* and theatre in the case studies section. The aesthetic perception and scholarly attention of the shamanic tradition, however, do not mean that Korean shamanism has always been at harmony with mainstream society. In South Korea, there exists two contradicting perspectives towards shamanism: one deems it as a superstitious nonsense that deludes and deceives people, while the other considers it as an important piece of folklore that represents traditional Korean culture (Yi, 2005: 152). The latter positive viewpoint on shamanism is actually a contemporary phenomenon (Yi, 2005: 152) while the former unfavourable perspective has a much longer historical trajectory. South Korean folklore scholar Yi Yongbhum suggests that the negative view on shamanism dates from the mid-twelfth century when it was dismissed by Confucian scholars in the *Koryeo* dynasty (Korea, 918-1392) (2005: 152). In the late *Joseon* (Korea, 1392-1910) period, shamanism was still repressed and shamans belonged to the lowest class in Confucian society (I. Park, 2013: 86). Meanwhile, during the colonial period (1910-1945) in the early twentieth century, the colonial authority classified Korean shamanism as primitive superstition, going as far as criminalising it (I. Park, 2015: 58). In 1915, the colonial government officially recognised Shinto (traditional Japanese religion), Buddhism and Christianity as religions but the other sixty religions including shamanism were classified as quasi-religious groups and were thus subject to police crackdowns (I. Park, 2013: 85). It was, however, not solely colonial Japan who supressed shamanism but Korean

intellectuals and media of the time were also strongly against the old custom as they believed it hindered the country from modernising (Yi, 2005: 153, 158, 169).

The negative perception of shamanism from the colonial period was still prevalent until the 1950s in the newly independent country (Jung, 2012: 182). The 1960s, however, marked a turning point. In 1962, the South Korean government enacted the *Munhwajaebohobeop* (*Cultural Heritage Protection Act*).[60] Consequently, previously undervalued shamanism-related heritage was included in the list as an intangible cultural asset and folklore material (Jung, 2012: 185). The recognition of shamanism as a part of South Korean cultural heritage implies that society began to perceive shamanic rituals more positively and re-evaluate them as traditional arts rather than religious faith (Yang and Hwang, 2004: 361-362). From South Korean folklore scholars' points of view, as a consequence, *gut* lost its shamanic meaning and function as it began to be performed and staged (Yang and Hwang, 2004: 361-365). The act, meanwhile, did not incorporate all folk religions and those excluded were destroyed and discriminated against by the regime that still regarded folk belief as superstition (Jung, 2012: 179, 188, 189). What the wide as well as historical gap between shamanism as superstition and protected cultural heritage indicates is that Korean shamanism is not necessarily willingly deemed as typically Korean by all South Koreans. The negative perspective that sees shamanism as a superstition has not completely disappeared; as a result, shamanism and shamans still remain on the periphery of society.[61]

Considering these two contrasting views, the use of the shamanic ritual in Koreanised *Hamlet* and *The Tempest* demonstrates that the South Korean theatre directors all accepted Korean shamanism as quintessentially Korean rather than dismissing it as superstitious faith. When Yang's *Hamlet* was staged in London, the director mentioned in an interview that the combination of Korean emotion and tradition with shamanism introduced a distinctive *Hamlet* production that could only be created by Koreans in Shakespeare's home country (S. Kim, 2014a). Yang's

[60] *Cultural Heritage Protection Act* is the official English title.

[61] A recent news report on three daughters who beat their own mother to death following shamanic advice (D. Choi, 2021) offers an example of how shamanism is socially perceived in contemporary South Korea.

comment clearly shows that he holds a high regard for the role of shamanism in his creation of the distinctively Korean *Hamlet*. In relation to the use of *gut* in *Hamlet* by many South Korean theatre directors, including Yang, South Korean scholar of theatre and English literature Lee Hyonu argues that the plot and structure of *Hamlet* are particularly suitable to embody *han*, the distinctively Korean emotion of regret (2013: 250). One of the key functions of *gut*, such as *Jinogigut*, is actually to resolve a kind of *han*; a dead person's deep sorrow (Yi, 2011: 71). Considering the purpose of *Jinogigut*, the murdered king's spirit in *Hamlet* needs to be comforted through the *gut*. This specific point partly explains the frequent link between Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Korean shamanism that will be closely looked at in the following section. In a broader context, however, I suggest that Yang's viewpoint that shamanism is typically culturally Korean exemplifies the prevailing past-oriented perception and pursuit of Koreanness in contemporary South Korean theatre.

The idea of shamanised Shakespeare based upon the past-oriented understanding of Koreanness is not unusual in the professional sphere. In spite of shamanism's historically marginalised position in Korean society, the borrowing of shamanism – namely the consideration of ancient shamanism as quintessentially Korean – has been constant in theatre. For those theatre directors who employ *gut* in their works, shamanism is considered not simply as Korean but more precisely as representative of Korean culture. This perception is arguably to do with the significant change in the national understanding of shamanism in the 1960s. As mentioned above, the government officially designated shamanic rituals as part of South Korea's cultural heritage in the 1960s, which suggests that *gut* was recognised as part of traditional culture with an artistic quality rather than as a religious practice (Yang and Hwang, 2004: 361). In other words, shamanic rituals began to be revalued as part of traditional Korean art and culture. This new social perception of *gut* as traditional Korean art, which chimes with the scholarly understanding of *gut* as the origin of theatre, I argue, attracted more theatre-makers to employ shamanic rituals in their performances. As for the reason why Shakespeare has been given so many Korean makeovers, it is to do with the veneration for the English language among cultural elites in South Korea (cited in Quarmby, 2018: 69). That is, the interface of the revalued shamanism and the reverence for Shakespeare found its place in theatre.

As early as the 1970s, “Shakespeare became the shamanic medium for communicating Koreanness to theatre audiences” (Quarmby, 2018: 69).

Since 1990, 88 out of 376 Shakespeare plays on a South Korean stage have been *Hamlet* and over a quarter of the 88 versions of *Hamlet* “adopted shamanism as their main theme, incorporated *gut* ritual, and/or presented Ophelia as a *mudang* or in shamanic terms” (cited in Quarmby, 2018: 70).[62] Lee similarly but more selectively lists over ten Koreanised *Hamlet* productions that employed *gut* between 1993 and 2011, including those of directors Yang and Lee (H. Lee, 2013: 249-250). He also notes other *gut*-inspired Shakespeare plays, such as Oh’s *The Tempest* (H. Lee, 2013: 250). By “employing themes, sounds, and images closely associated with shamanism” in various ways, those “theatre directors embraced these ancient ritual elements to create distinctively Korean Shakespeare identities” (Quarmby, 2018: 69). Considering the persistent fusing of Korean shamanism with Shakespearean drama, the ritual has arguably been revitalised on stage through this aesthetic quest for Koreanness. In the next section, I will focus on the three directors’ Koreanised Shakespeare productions and discuss them in detail.

Koreanisation of Shakespeare and *gut*

In *Gut (Korean shamanic ritual) and Korean Shakespeare* (2013), Lee compares “two ways to incorporate *gut* into Shakespeare.[63] One is to bring Shakespeare into *gut*, and the other is to bring *gut* into Shakespeare” (H. Lee, 2013: 273). Yang’s *Hamlet* (2009) falls under the former (H. Lee, 2013: 250), as the director does not simply use *gut* as part of a scene but infuses the entire play with *gut*, and so completely Koreanising it. Lee describes the atmosphere of the performing space of Yang’s *Hamlet* as a shaman’s place with big paintings of shamanistic spirits in the walls and white rice on the edges of the stage floor (H. Lee, 2013: 251). The rice crops placed around the rectangular stage are a key element of *gut*. In *Jinogigut*, for example, it is understood that specific patterns shown on filed rice grains tell whether the deceased reincarnates in paradise (Hong, 2004: 36). The shamanic atmosphere created in Yang’s *Hamlet* is undeniably analogous to South Korean theatre critic Kim

[62] *Mudang* is a Korean word for shaman.

[63] *Gut (Korean shamanic ritual) and Korean Shakespeare* is the official English title of the publication.

Soyeon's description of the actual place where the *Ganghwa-do Daedonggut* occurred in the following quotation:[64]

> There is a small courtyard under a shaman's place located at the foot of a mountain. The surrounding space of the courtyard becomes an auditorium. A table full of colourful fruits, rice cakes, rice snacks and sweets are filed in front of a painting of gods. At one side of the *gut* place, musicians who seem to have waited for a while are neatly sitting. (S. Kim, 2006: 85)

Similar to the food, paintings and musicians in the *gut* location, the stage floor surrounded by white rice grains, walls on three sides crammed full of pieces of shamanic paintings, as well as traditional Korean musical instruments on two sides of the floor in Yang's *Hamlet* create a realistic shamanic space and atmosphere. As the performance begins and progresses, the static elements are further combined with dynamic movement and sound: dancing shamans in their *Obangsaek* (five-coloured) costumes, the jingle-jangle of the shamans' hand bells and the shamans' singing to the drummers' beat.[65] As can be noticed from the description of the actual *gut* (*Ganghwa-do Daedonggut*) preparation and the *gut*-like performance in Yang's *Hamlet*, *gut* naturally offers theatrical factors such as stage setting, props, live music, sound effects and body movement. In line with the aforementioned scholarly perception of *gut* as the prototype of Korean theatre, South Korean scholar of Korean literature Kim Ik-doo argues that the shamanic *gut* is a kind of cultural performance or performance culture (2011: 46-47). With a focus on the performative characteristics of *gut*, Kim, for instance, compares theatrical body movements in Seoul *Jinjinogigut* with singing and music accompaniment in Jindo *Ssitgimgut* (I. Kim, 2011: 52-58).[66] *Jinogigut* employed in Yang's *Hamlet* is an example of *gut* with inherent theatrical aspects.

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[64] *Daedonggut* is a *gut* that supplicates for wellbeing and prosperity of a village. The three-to-five-days-long *gut* used to take place once a year or once every three years. *Ganghwa-do* is a name of the area where the *gut* takes place.

[65] *Obangsaek* refers to traditional Korean colour (blue, white, red, black and yellow) which represents five different directions (east, west, south, north and centre), respectively.

[66] There are various types of *Jinogigut*, depending on the size or the length of time between someone's death and *gut* (Hong, 2004: 29-31). *Jinjinogigut* is, for example, one kind of *Jinogigut*

Jinogigut, which aims to transfer the deceased to the next world, is a shamanic ritual practised in Seoul (Hong, 2004: 29). Seoul *Jinogigut* consists of three major parts: visualisation of the path to the next world, direct communication with the dead and praying for both the dead and people in this life (Yi, 2011: 65). In particular, the direct communication with the deceased takes place when a shaman is possessed by the dead and the process of possession distinctively manifests *gut*'s theatrical characteristics. Kim interprets the possession in *Jinjinogigut* as the characterisation from a performer's self (shaman) to a character (the dead or spirit) (I. Kim, 2011: 53-54). Yang ultimately makes the same point but does so reversely. That is, he sees an actor's playing of a character in theatre as possession, suggesting that *gut* is a kind of theatre and theatre itself is *gut* (Yohangza Theater Company, 2009: 12). In his *Hamlet*, Yang used *Jinogigut* at the beginning of the play to create a scene whereby three female shamanic characters are possessed by the late king's spirit and tell Hamlet the truth of his father's death in turn, asking for revenge on the murderer (H. Lee, 2013: 252). The theatrical aspect is, however, not limited to *Jinogigut*. Lee notes how theatricality is similarly emphasised in *Sumanggut* when shamans perform *gut* facing spectators, not at a ceremonial table (cited in H. Lee, 2013: 257). *Sumanggut* is a ritual for those who drowned and this *gut* is used in Ophelia's funeral in Yang's *Hamlet* (cited in H. Lee, 2013: 257). In this *Sumanggut* scene, a shaman is similarly possessed by the deceased Ophelia's spirit during the ritual and talks to Laertes while he mourns his sister's death.

As his perception of theatre and *gut* as interchangeable signals, Yang did not simply create a *gut*-inspired atmosphere using theatrical factors but the rituals of *Jinogigut*, *Sumanggut* and *Sanjinogigut* are actually carried out during the performance (H. Lee, 2013: 251). In *Jinogigut*, parting a hemp cloth is an integral element of the ritual that visualises the disappearance of all the obstacles that stop the dead leaving this world (Hong, 2004: 36); in Yang's *Hamlet*, this part of *Jinogigut* is faithfully performed. One shaman slowly walks to part a long and narrow hemp cloth into two pieces while other shamans hold the white cloth to chest level from both sides. Parting the hemp cloth, however, fails as the shaman suddenly collapses during the process, whereby the moment is immediately switched to the shaman's possession by the late king.

(Hong, 2004: 30). In comparison to *Jinogigut* (in Seoul) which is practised by a spiritualistic shaman, *Ssitgimgut* (in Jindo) is performed by a hereditary shaman (I. Kim, 2011: 45).

The ritual could not be completed because the king's unfulfilled quest for revenge stops him from departing this life. This *mise-en-scéne* shows that Yang did not simply borrow *Jinogigut* as an eye-catching theatrical device but clearly understood the meaning of the ritual and faithfully staged it. While *Jinogigut* and *Sumanggut* are for the dead, *Sanjinogigut* is *gut* for the undead, and this *gut* is performed at the end when Hamlet is on the verge of death (H. Lee, 2013: 258). In addition to the major *gut* scenes, Yang interspersed other scenes where *gut* is applied throughout the performance. For instance, a duel between Hamlet and Laertes is staged as another *gut* scene where shamans in shamanic costumes create a shamanic atmosphere by singing and dancing (H. Lee, 2013: 257) prior to the fan fight, not a sword fight. The blurred boundary between the theatrical performance and the shamanic practice, however, did not convince the whole auditorium. South Korean theatre critic Lee Jin-a points out that what the director ultimately tried to deliver through the text is missing in the overwhelmingly shamanic staging of *Hamlet* (2009: 221-222).

In comparison to Yang's attempt to re-enact the shamanic ritual in his Koreanised *Hamlet*, Oh emphasises *gut*'s theatrical and playful characteristics in his version of *The Tempest* (2010) (H. Lee, 2013: 263).[67] What is staged by Oh is not an authentic *gut*, more the stage is full of things that signal *gut*. As the performance starts, king Jilji (Prospero) plays a big Korean drum and creates a storm. Although Jilji is not a shamanic figure, he wears a mask used in shaman rituals on the back of his head, thus, the king is metaphorically seen as a shaman (H. Lee, 2013: 260). To the beat of the drum, king Jabi (Alonso) and a group of his people in traditional Korean costumes develop the storm scene by jumping up and down, letting their wide and long sleeves wave in the wind (H. Lee, 2013: 260). Lee suggests that the movement reminds audiences of possessed shamans' intense dancing and the white sleeves are suggestive of great waves (H. Lee, 2013: 260). After the shipwreck in a storm and the subsequent fire scene, where a choreographed group with fans again signals a shaman's ritualistic dance (H. Lee, 2013: 261), three characters wearing symbolically shamanic masks also dance while another shamanic figure sings a

[67] G*ut* is central in many of Oh's works. In *Baekmagang Dalbame* (*The Moon-light Baekma River*, 1993) and *Yonghosangbak* (*Diamond Cut Diamond*, 2005), for instance, *gut* is not simply inserted into the plays but is closely related to the development of the stories (S. Kim, 2009a: 294). *The Moon-light Baekma River* is the official English title.

song sung in *gut*. In the later part of the performance, meanwhile, some scenes feature a group of performers with animal masks portraying, for example, a monkey, ox and goat. Although dragons, roosters and rabbits do not appear on stage, the figures certainly signal Chinese zodiac animals, which is an important part of shaman culture (H. Lee, 2013: 262).[68]

Unlike Yang's *Hamlet*, there is no authentic shamanic ritual or a shamanic character who practises *gut* on stage; however, the combination of drum sounds, shamanic movement and characters with shamanic symbols in Oh's *The Tempest* evoke something very similar (H. Lee, 2013: 260). In other words, using symbols (H. Lee, 2013: 261), Oh created a symbolic interface between theatre and *gut*. Along with the theatrical use of Korean shamanic ritual, as the changes in the characters' names such as king Jilji (from Korean history), instead of Prospero and the use of traditional Korean costumes and musical instruments indicate, this play has been entirely Koreanised. Even when taking a curtain call at the end of the performance, the actors bow before audiences in a traditional Korean way. With regards to Oh's Korean references, Pavis points out that they are not always well received in the West, comparing him with other theatre directors including Ninagawa Yukio and Robert Lepage, whose works are "tailored for a global and glocal market" (2017: 68). Pavis even worries about *The Tempest* spectator who might not be able to follow so many "Koreanisms" (2017: 73). Pavis's criticism of what he perceives as overly Korean precisely demonstrates how Korean Oh's *The Tempest* is. The seamlessly added symbolic shamanic factors in this very Korean play, I argue, blur the boundary between Korean and shamanic. In other words, this performance leads audiences to understand Korean shamanism as fundamentally Korean. The Korean/shamanic *The Tempest*, contrary to Pavis's concern, actually impressed foreign audiences in other countries. Michael Billington, *The Guardian* newspaper theatre critic, gave Oh's *The Tempest* at the 2011 Edinburgh International Festival four out of five stars, and praised the production as "an eloquent testament to the fusion of the best of east and west" (2011).

Lee's directorial style, meanwhile, is known for employing "a wide spectrum…from modernism and postmodernism, and presenting characteristics of traditional Korean

[68] The animals are regarded as mediums to connect this world and the afterlife (H. Lee, 2013: 262).

drama mixed with elements from William Shakespeare, Georg Büchner, Tadeusz Kantor, and Heiner Müller" (B. Kim, 2014: 89). His *Hamlet* (1996) uses Korean shamanism but the way he Koreanised the Shakespeare play differs from Yang's *Hamlet* and Oh's *The Tempest*. In the latter two, Korean/shamanic aspects such as costumes or drumbeats used in *gut* are immediately apparent, while Lee's balance between the Western source text and its Koreanisation is comparatively even. For instance, some characters appear on stage wearing Westernised modern costumes, while characters between this life and the afterlife, such as Ophelia or the gravediggers, are seen wearing Korean clothes. Similarly, Western classical and traditional Korean music are evenly but separately used in different parts of the performance (D. Kim, 2008: 735-736). Of those traditionally Korean factors in the performance, the director's shamanic interpretation is most noticeably employed in the scene of Hamlet's encounter with the late king. When Hamlet meets his dead father, he is seen being possessed by the spirit (D. Kim, 2008: 724). As aforementioned, *Jinogigut* aims to transmute the dead into the afterlife and one key aspect of *gut* is the direct communication with the deceased through a shaman. In this scene, there is no *gut* ritual, only possession is borrowed for the communication with the late king. Also, it is not a shaman but Hamlet himself possessed by the late king's spirit who asks for vengeance on his murderer. South Korean Shakespeare scholar Kim Dongwook explains this scene as the shamanistic interpretation of Hamlet's madness (2008: 751) and that, in the latter part of the play, the shamanic possession is further transmitted to Ophelia (2008: 724).[69] Lee's *Hamlet* was highly acclaimed in many countries including Germany, Japan and Russia. In Russia, for example, audiences applauded eleven times during a performance and further gave a standing ovation for five minutes after the curtain call (D. Kim, 2008: 737).

In short, Lee, Oh and Yang created Koreanised Shakespeare plays using a traditional folkloric source – *gut*. As I have shown, however, shamanic practices have long been suppressed and marginalised in Korean history. Hence, although *gut* is perceived as traditionally Korean in general, it does not necessarily mean that all South Koreans are familiar with or perceive it positively. Despite the still prevalent negative perception of Korean shamanism, the three directors did not dismiss it as a

[69] Kim also analyses Lee's shamanic interpretation of the play-within-the-play in his *Hamlet* (D. Kim, 2008: 728-734).

spiritual superstition but revitalised the traditionally Korean *gut* for the contemporary stage. That is, the theatre directors all regarded shamanism as something quintessentially Korean and created Koreanised Shakespeare plays by aesthetically referencing it as an ancient Korean cultural form rather than as a religious cult with a dubious reputation. Through the varied interfaces between contemporary theatre and traditional shamanism, the essence of Western drama in *The Tempest* and *Hamlet* was completely Koreanised. Ultimately, the contemporary adoption of the traditional shamanic ritual by Lee, Oh and Yang demonstrates how the theatre directors invariably returned to the past to explore Koreanness.

An encounter between contemporary audiences and Korea's remembered past

Like Lee and Oh's Koreanised Shakespeare plays being successfully staged outside the Korean peninsula, Yang's *Hamlet* also travelled abroad. The shamanised *Hamlet* was staged at the Peacock Theatre in London as part of a three-week celebration of Korean culture in 2014, entitled Seoul In The City. The decision to present Yang's *Hamlet* on the London stage for an occasion that celebrates Korean culture concretises the perception that the shamanism in the production is typically Korean. In his analysis of Yang's *Hamlet* in *Shamanistic Shakespeare: Korea's Colonization of Hamlet* (2018), Quarmby describes this phenomenon as "Korea's identification with its near-lost ancient past" (2018: 70). What Quarmby questions by describing Korean shamanic tradition as the "near-lost ancient past" is the emotional distance that contemporary South Koreans have towards an unfamiliar cultural memory framed as fundamentally Korean. Quarmby offers an example of the distance, recounting how his Korean acquaintance who attended Yang's *Hamlet* in London was unfamiliar with the so-called traditional Korean ritual (2018: 61-62). As an ethnic Korean who spent more than thirty years in South Korea, I am not familiar with the traditional ritual either, thus, I had to thoroughly research it from scratch for my performance analysis in this chapter. The gap between the time when *gut* was commonly practised in daily life and contemporary South Korea where *gut* is mostly performed in front of audiences or clients is significantly wide.[70] That is, through the

[70] For example, although *Joseon* was a Confucian society, ordinary people were more familiar with folkloric religion, thus, *gut* was widely practised in every corner of the society (I. Park, 2013: 84). These days, although some people still commission *gut* personally, they are reluctant to do it publicly, therefore, ordinary people rarely have an opportunity to see *gut* (Youm, 2010: 391-392).

theatrical use of *gut* in the contemporary Shakespeare productions, I suggest, South Korean theatre directors revitalised Koreanness of the past rather than exploring it in the context of the present. The revitalised traditional Korean culture on stage arguably functions to seamlessly connect contemporary audiences with the past, encouraging them to remember the unfamiliar Koreanness as Korean.

Considering the socio-historical suppression of shamanism that has created this vacuum between modern-day South Koreans and a perceived past, the consequences of which have led to a certain amount of ignorance and negative perspectives, it is noteworthy that Yang views his shamanised *Hamlet* as "a quintessentially 'Korean play' designed to help Koreans 'discover their identity' by allowing them to 'think about the past, the present and the future'" (cited in Quarmby, 2018: 62). Interestingly, some reviews show that South Korean theatregoers were persuaded by Yang's choice of traditional Korean *gut* in the Koreanisation of *Hamlet* (Enifess, 2009, Weeny00, 2009), though it is not clear how familiar or knowledgeable reviewers were with the spiritual practices. As this concurrence demonstrates, to identify shamanism as Korean and revitalise it for the contemporary stage is a socially accepted approach to the largely unfamiliar traditional Korean culture, thus does not warrant criticism. What should not be overlooked here is that the director's interpretation of his *Hamlet* as "a quintessentially Korean play" that helps Korean audiences to "discover their identity" and audiences consentient to the director's view explicitly show their shared past-oriented perception of Korean identity. When mentioning "identity" in this context, the director presumably meant the ethnically homogeneous Korean identity not affected by current multicultural transformation. Of course, it is indisputably important to trace the historical origin of Korean identity and preserve traditional culture, thus, the past-oriented focus cannot simply be criticised. At the same time, however, it is undeniable that this past-oriented perspective that underlies Koreanised Shakespeare plays, which conjures up a memory of a pure, unadulterated Korea, is at odds with contemporary Korean identities that reflect current multicultural society. The case studies of theatre pieces that mirror the here and now in Chapters 2 and 3 will examine how theatre stimulates audiences to consider contemporary Korean identities in the context of a multicultural South Korea.

4) Conclusion

The main objective of this chapter was to illuminate how the idea of Koreanness is framed and pursued in contemporary theatre practices. Through the case studies of NTCK and the three South Korean theatre directors in the professional sphere, this chapter examined how historical narrative, traditional performance forms or traditional culture are employed in Korean theatre, constructing past-oriented and an exclusive perception of Korean identities.

The recurring theme of the past in NTCK's early historical dramas and rediscovered modern Korean dramas is indicative of the national theatre company's past-oriented interpretation of Korean national identity. In these productions, the collective memory of difficult pasts – such as the colonial period – is produced on the national stage through narratives that reproduce and recreate the nation's history. While the recent attempt to rediscover the archetype of Korean theatre does not centre around historical narratives, it similarly goes back to Korea's own past and explores traditional Korean performance forms, such as *Pansori*. The staging of cultural memory and the practice of tradition accordingly connect contemporary audiences with the past, encouraging them to experience emotional solidarity as Koreans beyond historical constraints. This sense of solidarity, however, is double-edged as it excludes those who do not share those pasts or who are *othered* through this form of memory. As has been examined, the exclusive perspective on Korean national identity does not only apply to the company's plays and projects that engage with the past. As the *Korean Diaspora Season* that excluded ethnic Korean playwrights based in non-Western countries indicates, NTCK tends to selectively associate with the West in its exploration of contemporary Korean identities. The preferred association with the West is similarly the case in the company's international collaborations. Despite the tendency that favours the past and the West, it is also noticeable that NTCK is making attempts to engage with those presently marginalised in society. *Play Postbox* signals that the company has begun to engage with and incorporate current affairs. Even though this initiative is still in its infancy, it is a meaningful change towards a more inclusive understanding of contemporary Korean identities.

Similar to NTCK's deployment of the past, the three theatre directors in the non-public sector brought ancient Korean shamanism onto the contemporary stage. Compared to NTCK's continuous borrowing of historical narratives, or the recent attention given to traditional Korean performance styles, the directors focused more on aesthetic stagings of cultural tradition from the past. Even though they did so differently, Lee, Oh and Yang all employed the Korean shamanic ritual *gut* and aesthetically revitalised it in their Koreanised interpretations of Shakespeare. The use of *gut* ideally serves the contemporary directors' aesthetic and past-oriented quest for Koreanness on stage in that *gut* is an ancient shamanic ritual with theatrical aspects. As evidenced earlier, however, shamanism has long been on the fringes of the society. Despite shamanism being viewed as both a superstitious cult and a state-sanctioned cultural asset, Lee, Oh and Yang identified shamanism as Korean and directly or symbolically adopted the ancient Korean rituals in their Koreanisation of Shakespeare plays. Accordingly, their critically acclaimed shamanised Shakespeare plays connected contemporary audiences with the remembered unfamiliar past, encouraging them to perceive ancient Korean shamanism as quintessentially Korean. The past-oriented search for Koreanness certainly has a valid and noble purpose but also leads us to question how a more contemporary understanding of Korean identities in theatre could shape the Koreanness of the here and now. How theatre engages with perceived others in South Korea and shapes this contemporary version of Koreanness will be explored in the following chapters.

Chapter 2:

North Korean Migrants in Contemporary South Korean Theatre

1) Introduction

North Korean migrants in South Korea are in the ambiguous position of being both migrants and ethnic Koreans. With this in mind, I will first outline this unique group through an investigation of their socio-political border-crossing to the South of the Korean peninsula. Next, I will examine how these ethnically Korean migrants have been perceived and received in South Korea, in particular in relation to the ongoing multicultural transformation. Before analysing two plays that feature North Korean migrant characters in detail, I will also provide an overview of theatrical approaches towards North Korea(ns) in and outside the peninsula. In my case study, I will analyse *Sister Mok-rahn* (written by Kim Eunsung and directed by Jeon Incheol, 2012) and *Those Who Cross The Line* (written and directed by Choi Zina, 2018). My performance analysis explores three aspects of the two plays: firstly, how they dramatise North Korean migrants' struggle in the South where they are dehumanised and stereotyped; secondly, how they present the marked linguistic difference of the North Korean dialect; and finally, how they signify the border between the South and the North in the heterotopic space of theatre.

Sister Mok-rahn premiered in Seoul in 2012 and the Korean script, which I read, was published in the same year. This play was restaged in 2013 and 2017, and was also translated into other languages and received by audiences in the US and Japan. I used one of the English versions translated by Jeong Dayoung for quotations, however, my textual and performance analysis focuses primarily on the productions in Seoul. Although a full recording of the performance in South Korea is not available, I was able to watch edited video clips of different performances. I also had access to the audio recording of post-show talks in 2017, archived by the Doosan Art Center.

Additionally, in November 2018, I conducted an interview with the playwright Kim Eunsung.

The text of *Those Who Cross The Line* was not published; however, the playwright/director Choi Zina kindly allowed me to have a full access to the script as well as video documentation of the play staged at the Arko Arts Theater/Main Hall in Seoul in 2018. I also conducted an interview with Choi in November 2018.

2) Border-crossers in the Korean peninsula: from the North to the South

North Korean defectors

Since the division of the country, capitalist South Korea has accomplished economic growth and developed diplomatic relationships with other nations. By contrast, communist North Korea has become one of the most isolated and impoverished countries in the world. Owing to both limited access to North Korea and its conflicting political ideology, South Koreans have little understanding of the other half of the peninsula and vice versa. Considering the peninsula's 5,000 years of history and heritage, however, this division into two Koreas is a relatively recent phenomenon. Due to "the uninterrupted oneness of Koreans forged through a long period of history", many Koreans believe that the two Koreas have to be reunited (S. Kim, 2014b: 10). Contrary to the aspiration for one Korea, a reunification of the two countries has to date not been realised. Instead, a long-term ceasefire, in place since 1953, has resulted in the appearance of a unique type of migrant in South Korea: *Bukhan Ital Jumin*. The literal meaning of the official term is a resident who defected from North Korea. According to the *North Korean Refugees Protection and Settlement Support Act* (1997), North Korean defectors refer to those who have addresses, lineal family members, spouses and jobs to the north of the Military Demarcation Line on the Korean peninsula, and have not acquired foreign citizenship after escaping North Korea ('North Korean Refugees').

The term North Korean defector was first used by the former Communist Workers' Party secretary Hwang Jang-yop who sought asylum in South Korea in 1997, and it has been widely used ever since (J. Kang, 2009: 14). Considering the high-ranking

North Korean official's political influence in North Korea, what is emphasised in the term is that a North Korean defector has escaped from the communist country. In 2005, the Ministry of Unification introduced a new and apolitical term *Saeteomin* (New Settlers) to replace North Korean defectors. *Saeteomin* refers to those who settle in a new land with a hope for life (J. Kang, 2009: 15). In comparison to the political implication embedded in a North Korean defector as someone who has crossed the border, the focus of *Saeteomin* is more on their new lives in South Korea. The government insisted that the new term plays a meaningful role in easing the negativity projected upon North Korean defectors (An, 2007b). Contrastingly, the Committee for the Democratisation of North Korea, the association of groups of North Korean defectors, was strongly against the term. They claimed that *Saeteomin* is not appropriate to address North Korean settlers in the South, as it is reminiscent of *Hwajeonmin*: people who seek to find new land to find food (An, 2007a). They argue that North Koreans do not simply come to South Korea for food but they settle in the other side of the peninsula to accomplish the democratisation of North Korea with South Korean citizens (An, 2007a). Even though the committee's somewhat radical claim could not represent North Korean defectors as a whole, it is noteworthy that they actively opposed the apolitical term. Consequently, the Ministry of Unification officially withdrew the term (J. Kim, 2008), thus the term North Korean defector is still widely used. Those defectors are the subject of analysis in this chapter, but I will address them as North Korean migrants based on the socio-political context that I will discuss in the next section.

The changing perception of former North Koreans in multicultural South Korea

Over the past decades, how society views North Korean migrants has significantly changed in the socio-political context. Until the 1980s, when South and North Korea were strongly against each other due to cold war ideology, North Korean escapees were mostly soldiers (Yoon, 2009: 19). As the act of escaping showed they preferred the capitalist system to the communist regime, they were well treated as defected brave warriors by the South Korean government (Yoon, 2009: 19). The 1990s, however, saw a change in the reason for escaping, as the death of Kim Il-sung, the founder of North Korea, in 1994 and a great flood in 1995 encouraged ordinary

people to cross the border for economic reasons (Yoon, 2009: 20).[71] Since 2000, a growing number of North Koreans have escaped their country for South Korea in a quest for building better lives for themselves (Yoon, 2009: 21), the same as other migrants. In other words, the reasons for migration to South Korea no longer set apart North Korean migrants from foreign migrants. Nonetheless, the migrants from the North are different to those from other countries in that they are ethnically Korean. In a country where ethnic homogeneity has been fetishised, migrants with Korean ethnicity expectedly have a distinctive status. In short, the unusual combination of ethnic homogeneity and migrant characteristics makes defining them difficult.

Thus, there is no consensus as to whether former North Koreans with Korean ethnicity can be labelled as separate from other migrants in multicultural South Korea (Yoon, 2009: 56, Yoon and Song, 2013: 9). When South Koreans were asked whether North Korean defectors should be viewed as a separate group, or seen as foreign migrants in a multicultural society, 39.7% and 38.7% of respondents replied that they regard North Korean defectors as a separate group and as migrants, respectively (Yoon and Chae, 2010: 88). These similar percentages mirror the issue of the unresolved status. In spite of the comparable opposing views, growing evidence demonstrates that North Korean migrants are key members of multicultural South Korea. Researchers and research institutes are, for instance, gradually categorising North Korean defectors with different socio-cultural backgrounds to South Koreans as migrants. When Chung et al. of the IOM Migration Research and Training Centre compared the social distance towards diverse migrant groups in the *Korean National Identity and Migration Related Attitudes* (2011), they included North Korean defectors on the list of migrants along with Europeans, Americans, Southeast Asians and Chinese (2011: 69-98).[72] Similarly, the research team of the *Survey Report on Migrants' Cultural Enjoyment* (2008) included North Korean defectors along with guest workers and marriage migrants in the object of investigation (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2008: 2).

[71] When North Koreans cross the border to South Korea, it is rarely the case that they literally cross the border in the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ). Instead, they normally arrive in South Korea via third countries such as China and Laos over a span of years.

[72] *Korean National Identity and Migration Related Attitudes* is the official English title of the publication.

The point of view that deems North Korean defectors as migrants (as members of multicultural South Korea) has also widely been adopted across various academic disciplines. In 2009, when Yoon In-jin, a South Korean professor in sociology, published *North Korean Migrants: Life, Perception and the Settlement Support Policy* (2009), he argued that policy needs to see North Korean defectors as migrants as the number is growing and their settlement is being prolonged (Hong, 2009). In the same year, South Korean literature scholar Kang Jeong-gu used the description 'North Korean Defector-Immigrant' in *The Literacy Reception of North Korean Defector-Immigrant's Culture – About the Conception and Characteristic in the Poetry of North Korean Defector-Immigrant* (2009).[73] As Kang elucidates, the term 'North Korean Defector-Immigrant' pays attention to the fact that North Korean defectors become a cultural minority thus struggle as migrants in the new society (J. Kang, 2009: 15). To summarise, the direction of a gradual but profound shift from defected brave warrior to North Korean migrant mirrors how differently they have been viewed and experienced by South Korean society.

North Korean migrants: structures of feeling around in-between others

What the recent scholarly perspectives towards those from North Korea demonstrate is that multicultural South Korean society has gradually come to perceive them as a group of migrants. Considering that the current understanding and terminological usage of North Korean migrant is a sort of "a social experience which is still *in process*", Raymond Williams's "structures of feeling" (1977: 132) can be useful to grasp the social perception in process. As Williams suggests with the concept that "we are concerned with meanings and values as they are actively lived and felt" (1977: 132), the way of perceiving and categorising North Korean defectors as migrants reflects how the society is currently experiencing the specific group of new citizens. Structures of feeling as the practical consciousness acquired based on what one actually lives through in society, Williams argues, bears "the sense of a generation or of a period" (1977: 131). With a similar focus on timebound experience in society, French philosopher Maurice Halbwachs theorised on the concept of

[73] *The Literacy Reception of North Korean Defector-Immigrant's Culture – About the Conception and Characteristic in the Poetry of North Korean Defector-Immigrant* is the official English title of the publication.

“collective memory” which is also “culturally specific, responding to the needs of a particular society at a particular time” (Landsberg, 2004: 8). In spite of the significance of an authentic experience of a particular era as a form of structures of feeling or collective memory, however, one who belongs to a specific period or society obviously cannot fully experience everything happening during the time themselves. For example, it was only when my cousin married the Vietnamese woman that enabled me to belatedly relate myself with the overt multicultural transition in South Korea. That is, not all contemporary South Koreans obtain an embodied experience of migrants on the margins of the society. Consequently, structures of feeling around the marginalised migrants is unavoidably constructed based on both individual experience and a socially constructed perception of them. In an attempt to examine the contemporary social perception in process, I will specifically investigate how theatrical reflections of North Korean migrants approach the gap between the ideological bias projected upon the migrants and the reality of migrants as individual members of society. Put another way, I will examine how plays on North Korean migrants are created and received in South Korea when the embodied experience of the contemporary issue and the people is often ironically absent. Furthermore, I will explore what kinds of impact those theatrical experiences could have on the construction of structures of feeling around North Korean migrants. The investigation of the formation of structures of feeling around migrants will similarly be maintained as an underlying theoretical perspective in the following chapters.

As of September 2020, approximately 33,000 North Korean brave warriors, defectors, *Saeteomin*s or migrants have crossed the border to South Korea (‘The Latest Development’). The former North Koreans are now officially citizens of South Korea but their identities are inevitably in-between South and North Korea. Survey results in the *Changing Perceptions and Levels of Socio-Cultural Adaptation of North Korean Migrants* (2010) show how differently North Korean migrants perceive themselves and how they are recognised by South Koreans.[74] There are four different kinds of identities that define North Korean migrants: South Korean from North Korea, South Korean, North Korean and Compatriot.

[74] *Changing Perceptions and Levels of Socio-Cultural Adaptation of North Korean Migrants* is the official English title of the publication.

Table 1 North Korean Migrants' Self-Perception and South Korean Citizens' Perception of North Korean Migrants

Classification	North Korean Migrant (%)	South Korean Citizen (%)
South Korean from North Korea	50.6	43.9
South Korean	24.9	11.2
North Korean	15.3	42.9
Compatriot	9.2	1.2
Total	100	100

Source: *Changing Perceptions and Levels of Socio-Cultural Adaptation of North Korean Migrants* (2010)

As shown in the table above, 50.6% of North Korean migrants regard themselves as South Koreans from North Korea. Only 15.3% perceive themselves as North Koreans (Yoon and Chae, 2010: 56-57). Whereas, 42.9% of South Koreans regard North Korean migrants as North Koreans (Yoon and Chae, 2010: 56-57). The large gap in the types of perception indicates that many South Koreans are reluctant to encompass North Korean migrants as part of them, instead marking them as others (Yoon and Chae, 2010: 57). Consequently, North Korean migrants do not belong to either side but they ambiguously exist in-between South and North Korea. To borrow Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben's wording, the fundamentally unlocalisable group of migrants can be understood as "an *exclusive inclusion*" (1998: 21). A problematic aspect of being exclusively included is that this precarious status is not expected to be instantly improved, in particular, when South Koreans show ambivalently complicated attitudes towards North Korean migrants. Indeed, according to the *Korean National Identity and Migration Related Attitudes* (2011), ethnic South Koreans are willing to welcome North Korean migrants as fellow citizens but they are reluctant to interact with them in daily life (Chung et al., 2011:

xlvii). Interestingly, South Koreans demonstrate an opposite attitude towards people with other racial and ethnic backgrounds. Chung et al. in the aforementioned research report analyse that South Koreans are open to being friends with members of other races or ethnic groups, but they are not keen to accept non-ethnic Koreans as citizens (2011: xlvii). This evidence implies that the ethnic homogeneity shared by South and North Koreans compels South Koreans to accept North Korean migrants into society, however, there still exists a socio-political distance between the two groups, therefore the migrants are caught in the middle.

In summary, despite the significant terminological change from a defected brave warrior to a North Korean migrant, structures of feeling in terms of how the society marks them has been unchanged. On a national level, South Korea established the *North Korean Refugees Protection and Settlement Support Act* as early as 1997 and the government has treated these individuals with special care. The South Korean government provides this group of migrants with settlement money and re-education programmes so that they can adjust to life in the new system. Founded in 2010 by the Ministry of Unification, the Korea Hana Foundation has supported North Korean migrants' integration into society but, despite this, negative perceptions of them persist. According to a survey on North Korean migrants conducted by the Foundation in 2017, 23.1% of the respondents reported to have personally experienced some form of discrimination (Korea Hana Foundation, 2018: 88). While this percentage is not high, the major reasons given for feeling discriminated against are worthy of note: 74.3% of respondents experienced discrimination because of differing cultural communication (i.e. different lifestyle and North Korean accent and tone) and 41.1% cited South Koreans taking issue with the presence of North Korean migrants (i.e. South Koreans' tax burden) as the reason for discrimination (Korea Hana Foundation, 2018: 88-89). The survey responses imply that the governmental efforts have been ineffective in curbing native citizens from *othering* migrants. To put it more pointedly, the negative perception of North Korean migrants is partly the consequence of the state-led assimilationism that does not regard non-migrant South Koreans as policy objects. Not only the migrants, but also the existing members of society need opportunities to adjust to this new multicultural society and new members, which can lead to the shaping of structures of feeling that more properly reflects the lived experience of the current time. Of all the possible

opportunities that might work to ease this process, I will examine the theatrical realm in the public sphere that engages with the perceived others from the North.

3) North Korean migrants in the theatrical public sphere

Imagined North Korea(ns) in the Western theatrical public sphere

Since 1953, an official end to the Korean War or a reunification of South and North Korea has not to date been realised. The uncommon as well as problematic relationship between the two Koreas and related political issues have also become creative sources for theatre artists. I am wary of generalising from only a few examples, however, theatre productions in Western countries including the UK and the US tend to stereotype North Korea and North Koreans negatively on stage. The recent UK production *The Great Wave* (written by Francis Turnly, directed by Indhu Rubasingham, 2018) reminds audiences of the illegal abduction of Japanese citizens committed by North Korea in the late 1970s.[75] The poignant drama, based on true stories of those abducted, portrays a Japanese family's struggle to find Hanako who went missing. The teenaged girl never came back home after she was abducted from a stormy beach near her home in Japan and taken to North Korea. The truth-based theatrical description of North Korea as a country that abducts an innocent Japanese citizen arguably reinforces the existing negative view that Western audiences already have towards North Korea. Although the focal point of the play is not necessarily to demonise North Korea, the Japanese/Northern Irish playwright and British Tamil theatre director's perspectives do not actively avoid a stereotyped presentation of North Korea(ns), either. In the play, North Korean characters often become the object of ridicule (i.e. the way North Koreans salute the Great Leader).

Alternatively, it is typical of Western dramas to describe North Koreans as being in extremely pitiful conditions, as depicted in another UK production (Connections 2018, National Theatre) *The Free9* (written by In-sook Chappell, 2018).[76] Written by the Korean-born British playwright, Chappell, whom I introduced in Chapter 1 as a Korean diaspora playwright, this drama is also based on a tragic true story. In contrast to the teenager Hanako taken to North Korea, *The Free9* follows a story of

[75] I attended the performance on 24 March 2018 at Dorfman Theatre, National Theatre, London, UK.

[76] I attended the performance on 29 March 2018 at Watford Palace Theatre, Hertfordshire, UK.

North Korean teenagers who escape the dystopian communist state. In this play, North Korean street orphans desperately attempt to cross over the border to the South. Chappell also wrote *P'yongyang* (2016) that tells the story of a North Korean couple estranged from each other due to a communist regime that stratifies its people. That is, how North Korea is imagined and dramatised is certainly prone to be based on how the hermit state is stereotypically perceived by the West. *You For Me For You* (written by Mia Chung, 2012) is another example that shares the stereotyped perception and representation of North Korea.[77] The Korean American playwright's piece (one of the five plays in the *Korean Diaspora Season* discussed in Chapter 1) features two North Korean sisters who escape the country. As the ambiguous title signals, the story unfolds between reality and fantasy ('Show Info – *You For Me For You*'). Not unlike *The Free9*, as South Korean scholar of theatre and English literature Na Eunha points out in her analysis of this play, "North Korea is portrayed as a nation that needs to be corrected into democracy and its people need to be rescued" (2020: 183). Regardless of whether the playwrights have Korean heritage or they wrote the plays based on true stories, for those theatre artists based in Western countries, North Korea is a faraway and secretive communist state that stimulates them to imagine it in negative terms rather than to approach it with empathy.

North Korea(ns) in closer proximity in the Korean theatrical public sphere

In South Korea, contrastingly, North Korea(ns) are not simply imaginary objects of pity or ridicule. As previously mentioned, South Koreans are not allowed to access North Korea physically or even virtually, therefore, they also have very little knowledge of the country. Despite this, South Koreans share a long history and cultural heritage with North Koreans and thus have a sense of kinship with North Koreans. In addition, a number of North Korean settlers have enabled South Koreans to have relatively closer access to North Korea (for example, opportunities to discover more about what goes on across the border) and proximate relationship with the migrants from the North. Therefore, South Korean theatre-makers do not simply need to imagine but they are in a position to be able to dramatise their

[77] This play was staged in the UK, the US and South Korea. I attended the performance on 5 July 2017 at the Baek Seonghui & Jang Minho Theater, NTCK, Seoul, South Korea.

relatively proximate experience, for instance, by staging structures of feeling around this community of new citizens. Recent South Korean theatre productions that concern North Korean migrants evidence the theatrical construction of structures of feeling. Examples of such works include *Sister Mok-rahn*, *Talchul: Nalsumui Sigan* (*Escape*, written by Park Chan-kyu and directed by Koh Sun-woong, 2014), *Toilit Pipeul (A Toilet People,* written by Lee Yeo-jin and directed by Choi Yong-hoon, 2016*)* and *Those Who Cross The Line*.[78] These plays stage how North Korean migrants cross the border or how they settle in South Korea with difficulty through different narratives and via *mise-en-scéne*. Indeed, for the staging of the tense fleeing scene in *Escape*, director Koh filled the first forty minutes of the performance with movements of North Korean escapee characters in total silence (Jo, 2016).

For South Koreans, unlike those who reside outside the peninsula, North Korean migrants who illegally cross the border are, technically, not the only type of (former) North Koreans with whom they can have a proximate relationship, albeit with limitations. In the Gaeseong Industrial Complex that officially opened in the North Korean city of Gaeseong in 2004, tens of thousands of North Korean employees (not North Korean migrants) worked for South Korean companies until the complex was shut down by the South in 2016.[79] *Leobeu Seutori* (*Love Story*, written by Na Kyeongmin, Sung Suyeon and U Beomjin, and directed by Lee Kyungsung, 2018) features three North Korean workers in the complex.[80] The fictional characters and their stories were created based on research on the complex, interviews with associated people and the imagination of South Korean actors who play the characters. Although the South Korean theatre-makers did not have first-hand experience of the complex, their theatrical approach aimed to look into ‘people (North Koreans)’ in the complex and examine how the specific physical space created ‘human relationships and emotions’ (Doosan Art Center, 2018: 10). What I am suggesting with the addition of *Love Story* in the list of South Korean theatre pieces on North Korean migrants is that the Korean theatrical public sphere arguably engages with people from the North with a closer and more empathetic perspective.

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[78] *Escape* and *A Toilet People* are both official English titles.

[79] In 2020, North Korea further blew up the inter-Korean liaison office within the complex.

[80] *Love Story* is the official English title. I attended the performance on 18 November 2018 at Space111, Doosan Art Center, Seoul, South Korea.

To examine the different theatrical approach in more detail, I will have a closer look of *Sister Mok-rahn* and *Those Who Cross The Line*.

4) *Sister Mok-rahn* and *Those Who Cross The Line*

Dramatised reality of dehumanised and stereotyped North Korean migrants

In 2012, the Doosan Art Center, a leading producing theatre in Seoul, planned the series called In-Between People to address the specific issue of socially marginalised people through theatre. The centre commissioned a new play concerning the theme of boundaries as part of the series. Subsequently, playwright Kim Eunsung and director Jeon Incheol created *Sister Mok-rahn*, which deals with the boundary between South and North Korea (Jeon and Kim, 2017). When *Sister Mok-rahn* travelled to Tokyo as part of the 7th Reading of Contemporary South Korean Drama in 2015, Japanese audiences were impressed by the fact that this play, which focuses on the sensitive social issue of North Korean migrants, is staged in South Korea (H. Lee, 2015: 154). In 2017, the staged reading of the play in New York (PEN World Voices: International Play Festival 2017) provided US audiences with a rare opportunity to have a closer look at contemporary life in the two Koreas and re-evaluate any misplaced assumptions about the two countries and its citizens (cited in Chon, 2017b). The intention of the production and audiences' responses show how this play was created and received within a socio-political context surrounding the divided Korean peninsula. Similarly, playwright and director Choi Zina wrote *Those Who Cross The Line* when she realised that a boundary between socially marginalised people, including North Korean migrants, and South Koreans still exists within society (Yang, 2018). This play critically mirrors how South Korea *others* the migrants on the margins of the society (J. Lee, 2018: 38-39). In this case study section, I will look at how North Korean migrants are represented through theatre, what kinds of aesthetic aspects are employed to stage the stories and how those theatrical experiences of North Korean migrants are received by audiences.

Sister Mok-rahn is a multi-award-winning play, winning (amongst others) the Best Drama category at the prestigious Dong-A Theatre Awards in 2012. Ethnic South Korean playwright Kim was interested in modern history thus he chose North Korean studies for his (unfinished) university degree (E. Kim, 2018). He later studied

directing at the drama school of the Korea National University of Arts (H. Kim, 2012: 163). As a playwright, Kim is especially well-known for his modern Korean adaptations of Western classic plays, including Anton Chekhov's *The Seagull* (1895) and *Uncle Vanya* (1898). As South Korean theatre critic Kim Hyang notes in *A Meeting with Playwright Kim Eunsung: Playwright Who Inquires into the Backwaters of Life* (2012), those adapted plays criticise how the margins of society are neglected (2012: 164-165). *Sunu Samchon* (*Uncle Sunu*, 2009) based on *Uncle Vanya*, for instance, tells stories of those who powerlessly faced indiscriminate urban development in 1970s South Korea. Those socially critical views are also found in his other plays, including *Yeonbyeon Eomma* (*Yeonbyeon Mother*, 2011) and *Sister Mok-rahn* (2012) where the main characters are struggling migrant women. Focusing on those marginalised people in an exclusive society, Kim enables audiences to experience the South Korean society from those others' point of view (H. Kim, 2012: 164-165).

Those Who Cross The Line was selected as one of the new plays by ARKO in 2017 and premiered in 2018. Similar to Kim, playwright/director Choi also deals with hard-hitting socio-political issues in her works. Before Choi staged this play, she wrote and directed *Oidipus – Alryeogo Haneunja* (*Oedipus – Those Who Want to See*, 2016).[81] Through this modern translation of the Greek tragedy *Oedipus*, she highlighted the controversial issue around retaining the high school classroom of the victims of the *Sewol* ferry disaster. The play was critically acclaimed at home and abroad, winning her a Best Director gong at the Babel International Performing Arts Festival (Romania) and the Kim Sangyul Theatre Awards (South Korea) in 2017. The drafting of *Those Who Cross The Line* goes back to 2014 when she participated in the international exchange programme with the Deutsches Theater in Berlin (H. Kim, 2018). Choi wrote the play as she began to think seriously about the Korean Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) and North Korean migrants (H. Kim, 2018).

The two plays are not verbatim or documentary theatre, but the dramatised reality on stage captures disregarded North Korean migrants' struggle in South Korea. Jo Mok-rahn in *Sister Mok-rahn* and Song in *Those Who Cross The Line* are both female North Korean migrants. The use of female protagonists partly reflects the fact that

[81] *Oedipus – Those Who Want to See* is the official English title.

more women than men have been crossing the border since 2002, accounting for about 70% of the current population of North Korean migrants ('The Latest Development'). Based on a true story (S. Lee, 2012: 123), the plot of *Sister Mok-rahn* centres on struggling North Korean migrant woman, Jo Mok-rahn. She performed as an elite musician in North Korea and her name means magnolia, North Korea's national flower. Compared to the way that *The Free9* describes North Korean escapees as typically pathetic figures, and *Escape* features realistic North Korean migrant characters who helplessly depend on socially disregarded jobs such as prostitution, Jo Mok-rahn being represented as a highly educated musician is considerably different and also intentional, as it challenges the stereotype (Kim, Jeon and Nam, 2017). Jo Mok-rahn unexpectedly escapes North Korea when her parents are falsely charged with fraud, only to find that the situation in South Korea is not greatly different: she is swindled and loses her resettlement money. Frustrated, Jo Mok-rahn – who wears a typical North Korean dress and speaks with a strong North Korean accent on stage in the 2017 production – is desperate to return to North Korea. Her desperate aspiration is well depicted in the following dialogue with broker Kim Jong-il:[82]

KIM JONG-IL: Is that all? Tell me the real reason.

JO MOK-RAHN: I do not want to spend another day in this shitty land.

…

KIM JONG-IL: Look, Pyongyang Elite Jo Mok-rahn. You trust me?

JO MOK-RAHN: ……Can you send me back to Josun?[83]

KIM JONG-IL: You got the money?

[82] Kim Jong-il was also the name of the second Supreme Leader of North Korea from 1994 to 2011. The playwright presumably named this North Korean migrant character intentionally as Kim Jong-il to allude to the actual politically and geographically divided peninsula.

[83] As I will offer a more detailed context in Chapter 4 on the Korean/Japanese diaspora, North Koreans often address the country as *Josun* (*Joseon*), the name of the last kingdom of Korea.

> JO MOK-RAHN: How much will it take, sir? Will 50 million won do?[84] How much will it cost? If only I can go back to Josun, I will build a bridge to the heaven… (E. Kim, 2017: 22-23)[85]

With this North Korean migrant character who is determined to recross the border to North Korea in this drama, as Na notes, playwright Kim grapples with a question of why some actual North Korean migrants "cross the border again at all costs after the first crossing into South Korea" (Na, 2020: 189).

Although Jo Mok-rahn badly needs 50 million KRW to cross the border back to the North, she is not easily tempted to make the money in an unrighteous way. She refuses to work at a brothel-like bar but starts work as a carer for Huh Tae-sahn, the son of the bar owner, Jo Dae-jah. Huh Tae-sahn, with a doctorate in Korean history, is jobless and has been hopelessly heartbroken for the past five years. The origin of his depression, however, goes further back to the moment when his widowed mother suggested they could die together when he was seven years old (M. Kim, 2012: 22). Jo Mok-rahn starts her work as a carer of Huh Tae-sahn but soon "the cultural exchange" takes place between them, for example through teaching South and North Korean love songs to each other (Na, 2020: 193). With Jo Mok-rahn's help, Huh Tae-sahn slowly overcomes the pain of a broken heart and depression. Na's interpretation of the bond of sympathy beyond the political boundary between South and North Korea as "new cultural memories" suggests that the memories become "an alternative site" where the two politically uncompromisable nations can be "reimagined and reconciled" (Na, 2020: 194). While Huh Tae-sahn accumulates cultural memories with Jo Mok-rahn, Huh Tae-sahn's brother Huh Tae-gahng gradually develops feelings for Jo Mok-rahn. Over time, Jo Mok-rahn and Jo Dae-jah's family build a bond. Huh Tae-sahn's sister Huh Tae-yang also treats Jo Mok-rahn well later but at first she establishes a metaphorical boundary between herself and Jo Mok-rahn. Compared to her brothers, she initially shows an extremely dismissive attitude towards Jo Mok-rahn:

> HUH TAE-YANG: (*Looking at MOK-RAHN*) Yo, North Korean.

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[84] As of February 2021, this is roughly equivalent to £32,625.

[85] I follow the translator's romanisation to maintain the consistency, for example, the official English title is *Sister Mokran* but the translated title is *Sister Mok-rahn*.

JO MOK-RAHN: Yes?

HUH TAE-YANG: Come over here for a sec.

…

HUH TAE-YANG: …North Korean, you cried when Kim Il-sung died, didn't you?

JO MOK-RAHN: ……I don't remember that well.

HUH TAE-YANG: Liar. You sobbed. Right in front of the statue of Kim Il-sung, you boo-hooed "Oh my dearest leader--." I can tell you're lying. (E. Kim, 2017: 63-65)

Although Huh Tae-yang is four years Jo Mok-rahn's senior – there is a degree of hierarchical relationship between one and one's elder in South Korea – their relationship is immoderately asymmetrical. Huh Tae-yang does not treat Jo Mok-rahn either as a respectable individual or as a South Korean. Instead, her initial attitude constructs Jo Mok-rahn as an ideological figure of a North Korean. Regardless of who she is as a human-being, Jo Mok-rahn is merely identified with the nation that she belongs to by birth. In fact, "North Korean" in Huh Tae-yang's line quoted above is 'Bukhan' which translates as North Korea, the country, in the original Korean script. "North Korean" is a reasonable translation as Huh Tae-yang is addressing a person, not the nation, but what is lost in translation is how 'Bukhan' is a loaded, derogatory and above all dehumanising insult – Jo Mok-rahn is not granted her individual identity, but merely referred to as her country. As the dialogue additionally reveals, Jo Mok-rahn is criticised and derided for previously being North Korean through no fault of her own. She is thus positioned to have to justify herself and her home country. By contrast, as a superior member of society, Huh Tae-yang unashamedly judges North Korea and North Koreans. By differentiating herself from the disempowered others, Huh Tae-yang places North Korean migrants on the border, not within it. This sequence is significant as it critically reflects the ideologically stereotyped perception of North Korean migrants in South Korea.

Not long after, the bond between Jo Mok-rahn and the family – including the chanceless romantic relationship with Huh Tae-gahng – is broken when Jo Dae-jah goes missing without paying Jo Mok-rahn's salary as agreed. As Jo Mok-rahn

realises that saving up 50 million KRW is in jeopardy, she threatens Huh Tae-sahn and demands the money. By this point, Jo Mok-rahn is no longer “strong-willed yet virtuous” (Woo, 2017: 148). Spectators observe Jo Mok-rahn’s struggle to cross the border again and see how capitalism has turned the pure Jo Mok-rahn into a slave to money (S. Lee, 2012: 137). Jo Mok-rahn eventually leaves for North Korea with the money from Huh Tae-gahng, but ends up in a red-light district in China, failing to return to her homeland. The last scene that features the failed returnee tragically stuck somewhere outside the Korean peninsula signals that the failure to cross the border ruthlessly ejects her beyond the boundaries of the peninsula. As South Korean scholar of theatre and English literature Woo Mi-seong argues, North Korean migrants suffer from “the inability of two vastly different societies to defend basic human rights and fulfill humanitarian needs” and this tragic ending represents the playwright’s criticism of this total ineptitude (2017: 146-147).

Those Who Cross The Line analogously addresses the difficulties and injustice that North Korean migrants face in a new society. In this play, three different groups of characters and their stories overlap. Firstly, there is the North Korean soldier, Mr. Kim, who is in the process of crossing the border. At the start of the play, Mr. Kim’s six-minute-long monologue in darkness builds tension in a border-crossing scene. His long monologues spoken in a literary style effectively reveal his inner thoughts while crossing the line, maximising his presence on stage (Kim et al., 2018: 50). Secondly, Song, Kang and Ok are three North Korean migrants who struggle to adjust to South Korea. Similar to Jo Mok-rahn who unexpectedly crossed the border, the main character Song crossed the line not because she was unhappy in North Korea but because her mother first fled to South Korea and sent her a broker. Song’s unwilling border-crossing implies that Choi attempted to unsettle the stereotyped perception of North Korean migrants thought to be unconditionally happier in the South. With regard to the three migrant characters, the director shows the audience that they already crossed the border like Mr. Kim does. In comparison to the unseen border in Mr. Kim’s border-crossing scene (which will be examined in a later analysis section), a notable difference here is the visibility of the line. The beginning of the migrants’ border-crossing scene is overlapped with its previous sequence where two South Korean soldiers guard the border. With tense sound effects and guns pointed at the three North Korean migrants in the darkness, Song

and Ok cautiously split a horizontal line in the air and then pass through the crack and Kang follows them, quickly passing through when they first appear on stage. The literal staging of the lineal border in this scene symbolically suggests that the border is more explicitly experienced by those who are living as others in the South than those who are actually crossing it. Finally, in contrast, South Korean Jeong is considering going over to North Korea. Although he is an economic criminal in South Korea, the character is portrayed as still putting himself in a privileged position to judge North Korean migrants in the same way Huh Tae-yang does in *Sister Mok-rahn*. Similar to Kim's portrayal of Huh Tae-yang as disdainful of North Korean migrant Jo Mok-rahn, Choi's portrayal of Jeong is also a critical reflection of South Koreans.

The narrative around the characters particularly contrasts North Korean soldier Mr. Kim's hopes and desires for a better life in South Korea with the frustrating experiences of North Korean migrants such as Song. Through this explored contrast, the playwright/director provides a critical insight into how negative perceptions of and discrimination against North Korean migrants are structured and carried out in South Korea. In a sequence where Song discusses university life with some South Koreans, we see them complaining about the reverse discrimination they feel they experience because of North Korean migrants. They insist that benefits for North Korean migrants, such as the special admission process at prestigious universities that prioritises entry to migrants, demotivate South Korean students. In another scene, when a policeman is dispatched to Song's mother's restaurant because of a violation of a regulation, he immediately recognises that Song is a North Korean migrant. Following this, the policeman reveals his double standard toward North Korean migrants, as follows:

> Policeman: Your social identity number says that (you are a North Korean migrant). If you are a North Korean migrant, you have to behave more cautiously. Considering that you are a compatriot from North Korea, I will just issue a fine, the cheapest one.
>
> …

> Song: Why do I have to be extra careful about things if I am a North Korean migrant?
>
> Policeman: You are not familiar with things here because you are from another country. You are from North Korea. (Choi, 2018a: 32)

The South Korean policeman recognises North Korean migrants ambivalently as both fellow Koreans (us) and foreigners (others), failing to realise his own double standard. The staged dialogue overtly uncovers the contradictory perceptions South Koreans have towards North Korean migrants. Song problematises the way the policeman and other South Koreans differentiate North Korean migrants from ordinary South Koreans. Despite this, the policeman does not change his indifferent attitude towards Song and her struggle as an ambivalently defined member of society from beginning to end.

Similarly, another South Korean character, Jeong, does not consider Song as South Korean because he does not believe that she can point a gun at North Korea if a war occurs in the peninsula. Jeong's distorted viewpoint shows how the conflicting political ideologies in the two Koreas are used to distinguish an unmarked one from a marked other in society. According to French Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, the difference between the one (the Same) and the other (the Other) can be overcome by placing "the Other *in* the Same" (2000: 141). By doing so, inside the Same, "the Other sobers the Same" (Levinas, 2000: 143) and "the one-for-the-other" becomes responsible for the Other (Levinas, 2000: 152). Unfortunately, the relationship between the unmarked and the marked has not been this ethical in South Korea. North Korean settlers may legitimately be a part of South Korean society by law, but this does not stop South Koreans from *othering* these migrants. The ideologically marked others, including Song, are continuously forced to choose between the two political enemies in the Korean peninsula and have to continuously justify themselves to be regarded as South Koreans. As South Korean theatre critic Kim Mi-do points out in her review of *Sister Mok-rahn*, although North Korean migrants settle in South Korea, they cannot avoid being on the borderline in their mind (2012: 21). It is not simply in their mind but they are socially constructed as liminal between the South and the North like Song in *Those Who Cross The Line*.

Regardless of individual qualities and personalities, the perceived others cannot be free from a stereotyped bias projected upon the whole group. They are merely deemed as one of thousands of North Korean migrants, not individual citizens (J. Lee, 2018: 38-39). This uniform perspective on migrants consequently discourages them from forging an identity in their new society. The following monologue by Song critically mirrors the reality whereby an individual North Korean migrant finds it difficult to have a sense of belonging in South Korea.

> Song: …If I was born and brought up here so if I am from this land and the land feels comfortable with me, even though I complain from time to time, can I live here? Can I live here without thinking about if I belong here or not just leaving my footprints if I encounter the mud and erasing them if I encounter the sands? I should not have left North Korea back then… (Choi, 2018a: 29)

Similar to Jo Mok-rahn's case, the realisation of not being able to become 'us' in South Korea makes Song regret her decision of crossing the border. In the two plays discussed in this chapter, the two North Korean migrant women who struggle in South Korea both attempt to leave their destination country in the end. In *Sister Mok-rahn*, as described, Jo Mok-rahn leaves for North Korea but she ends up in China. Unlike Jo Mok-rahn, Song in *Those Who Cross The Line* leaves South Korea for another country beyond the Korean peninsula. In a *Sister Mok-rahn* post-show talk, director Jeon mentioned that audiences are invited to contemplate the reason for Jo Mok-rahn leaving South Korea (Kim, Jeon and Nam, 2017). For South Koreans who lack the will to understand North Korea or North Korean migrants – like Huh Tae-yang in *Sister Mok-rahn* or the policeman and Jeong in *Those Who Cross The Line* – the characters' decision to return to North Korea or choose another country should make those in the theatrical public sphere feel compelled to reflect on their attitude towards migrants from the North. The rare opportunity to listen attentively to the *othered* individual migrants in multicultural South Korea, I argue, matters because the experience in the form of a utopian performative could encourage the audience to be more attentive to the migrants in other public spheres.

Examining linguistic markers of North Korean migrants in theatre

In staging North Korean migrants and their struggle, another aspect common to the two plays is the painstaking attention to the linguistic differences between the two Koreas. Unsurprisingly, the linguistic focus is not specific to theatre productions on North Korean migrants but it is generally an important consideration in discussing migrants and/in theatre. Indeed, the interwoven English and Polish in the dialogues of *Cherry Blossom* (2007) co-produced by the Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh with Teatr Polski Bydgoszcz in Poland enabled a monoglot audience to experience a migrant's linguistic disorientation in a new country (Lease, 2014: 12). While North Korean migrants' mother tongue is also Korean and so do not suffer from linguistic disorientation as such, the differences in accent and tone between North and South Korea will create enough linguistic obstacles for migrants; not least, as the aforementioned 74.3% of North Korean migrants claimed, the discrimination-provoking hurdle of 'different cultural communications'.

Unlike the commonly held belief in the Korean peninsula that the same language is spoken in both Koreas, the difference is considerable. The syntax remains the same, however, the dissimilarity in vocabularies, accents and tones is significant. For example, the meaning of some North Korean words and expressions such as *Misiri* (simpleton), *Utongchida* (to bluff) and *Jjijeo* (cheers) in the Korean script of *Sister Mok-rahn*, cannot be easily interpreted by ethnic South Korean readers without the author's footnotes. In *Sister Mok-rahn*, the playwright did not simply scatter a few North Korean words in dialogues. Instead, when introducing the characters in the playtext, Kim meticulously designated the language spoken by each character. So, while former North Korean Jo Mok-rahn who resides in Seoul speaks a North Korean dialect originally spoken in Pyeongyang, the capital city of North Korea, South Korean Huh Tae-sahn speaks standard South Korean spoken in Seoul. The detailed designation of a different Korean dialect for each and every character demonstrates how the distinctive North Korean intonation functions as a barrier to assimilation in reality, as it marks migrants linguistically. In the playtext, North Korean migrant characters' lines were further written to be pronounced as North Korean dialect. In order to deliver the North Korean accents and vocal tone as authentically as possible as spoken language to the audience, South Korean actors had to learn the unfamiliar

North Korean dialect. South Korean actress Kim Jeongmin, who played the role of Jo Mok-rahn in 2017, mentioned in a media interview that it was surprisingly tricky to learn the accents and tone (Arirang TV, 2017). The production credits also indicate that music director Chae Surin, an actual North Korean migrant, taught the actors North Korean language and culture.

The significance of the presentation of the linguistic differences in this play was the overriding consideration for the translators of this drama. When translating the script into English for the staged reading of *Sister Mok-rahn* in New York, Jeong Dayoung carefully dealt with the language difference. In her English version, she even differentiates the lines by North Koreans in North Korea, the lines by North Koreans in South Korea and the lines by South Koreans by typing in different fonts and aligning them differently (Jeong, 2017). Targeting the US audience, the translator concentrated further on the difference in accent. In her translation, she tried to capture the effect that the characters' distinctive accents have on Seoul audiences so that New York audiences could experience something similar (Chon, 2017a). As the translator acknowledges, however, a key factor that distinguishes different Korean dialects is the intonation and it is almost impossible to find "an equivalent or parallel in the English language" (Jeong, 2017: 32). Instead, Jeong adopted a strategy of carefully choosing words and idioms as well as faithfully translating "the lexical arrangement" of unique "proverbs and mimetic words" (Jeong, 2017: 30, 32). In fact, what makes North Korean dialects in the source text sound unfamiliar to even South Koreans is the unique intonation as well as the vocabularies or sayings used in the dialects. As the regional managing editor of *The Theatre Times* Walter Byongsok Chon's description of New York audiences as having "responded enthusiastically with laughter and empathetic sighs" demonstrates (2017b), the translator's faithful translation of the original text guided non-native Korean speaking audiences to effectively experience the linguistic unfamiliarity.

Similarly, when the staged reading of *Sister Mok-rahn* in Japan was arranged in 2015, the translation of the overall North Korean dialect was unquestionably key to the successful reception of the play (H. Lee, 2015: 154). The Japanese translator, Isikawa Jyuri, slightly changed endings of Japanese words, and these creative changes somehow sounded analogous to North Korean (H. Lee, 2015: 154). As

South Korean theatre scholar Lee Hong-I reviews that the mimicry of a North Korean announcer made Japanese audiences laugh without a sense of incompatibility (2015: 154), the Japanese translation, too, could carry the subtle linguistic nuances and comicality from the original script. The translators' strategic approaches towards North Korean dialect and the successful reception in New York and Tokyo validate how critical the linguistic differences between the two Korean dialects are in the representation of marked North Korean migrants in this play.

As briefly indicated in the audience's response to the dramatic readings in Japan and New York, the linguistic difference also provides a comedic angle. Alongside caricatured characters, slapstick comedy-like exaggerated movements from the actors and the possible comicality felt by some in the audience towards the North Korean language itself, using the differences between North and South Korean dialects to make puns and poke fun in *Sister Mok-rahn*, Kim Mi-do argues, also creates comedic situations for the audience (2012: 22). For example, in a scene where Jo Mok-rahn makes a joke to cheer Huh Tae-sahn up, her joke targets Huh Tae-sahn and provokes audience laughter as the vocabulary contains a humorous ambiguity.

> JO MOK-RAHN: Do you know what we call light bulbs in Joseon…… In North Korea?
>
> HUH TAE-SAHN: ……
>
> JO MOK-RAHN: We call the light bulbs the "balls." And do you know what we call tubular bulbs? Tubular bulbs are long balls. Chandelier is a commune of balls. Candle bulbs are peanut balls. Isn't it funny? (E. Kim, 2017: 55)

Bulal (ball) is an informal word for penis in Korean.[86] In this scene, the comic effect is created not only by the word, but by making fun of the perceived unpolished and unmodern North Korean vocabulary. On a serious note, one can thus argue that this comical representation of North Korean language actually serves to portray an undesirable stereotype of North Korean migrants as old-fashioned and unrefined.

[86] In South Korea, the word *bulal* is only used in informal conversations by the older generation rather than by young people. One example of such usage is a *bulal* friend, which is an informal description of a close friend from one's childhood.

However, the genius of the linguistic differences portrayed in this play is that they provide different shades of meaning. They provide the comic, the jeering but also the empathetic elements to the development of the story. Kim, who reviewed the 2012 production of *Sister Mok-rahn* featuring South Korean actress Jeong Unseon, describes Jo Mok-rahn's North Korean locution as 'unchic but amiable' (M. Kim, 2012: 22). As the theatre critic's use of 'amiable' suggests, the staged North Korean dialect enabled the audience to develop a fondness for the North Korean migrant protagonist rather than frame her as just an unsophisticated Korean speaker. Similarly, this audience reviewer of the 2017 production of *Sister Mok-rahn* also appreciated the staged North Korean dialect:

> …This time again, actress Kim Jeongmin's command of North Korean dialect was so natural thus it felt like that I was facing Jo Mok-rahn who really came from North Korea. (Silver6312, 2017)

Here, the authenticity of the articulated North Korean dialect served to immerse this audience member in the story, further proving that the staged representation of North Korean dialects is not just used as cheap laughter-provoking tactics. Rather, the comically but authentically staged North Korean dialect creates enough affection for Jo Mok-rahn, Kim argues, making her sad ending heart-wrenchingly tragic (M. Kim, 2012: 22). The tragic nature of the ending can compel the audience to feel they cannot simply laugh. That is, ultimately, the occasional fun-poking treatment of the North Korean dialects, I argue, invites the audience to critically realise how North Korean migrants are as marked and undervalued as their language is.

Those Who Cross The Line also features distinctive dialects spoken by North Korean migrant characters, enabling audiences to have an embodied understanding of the gap between the two Korean languages. In addition to the articulation of linguistic differences, this play further leads audiences to grasp how the migrants' initial ignorance of the linguistic gap is in fact the same language barrier that migrants face daily. At the beginning of the performance, Mr. Kim crosses the border, believing that the language is the same in the two Koreas.

> Mr. Kim: The thinnest line. Only drawn by a wooden post and iron wire. There is no mark in the ground but only a sign slightly above the iron wire. The Military

> Demarcation Line. It is South Korea's land, it is the Demilitarised Zone over this line. They might have different ideologies and rules over there. The language, however, it is the same. (Choi, 2018a: 13)

By juxtaposing this naïve expectation with the reality that North Korean-speaking migrants confront in South Korea, the playwright illustrates that such a belief is to be shattered once a North Korean becomes a migrant. Main character Song, despite settling in South Korea, experiences great difficulty in communicating with South Koreans, as follows:

> Saerom: Just ask. Then they will explain.
>
> Song: I asked and they explained but I did not understand. They told me to access a website and search there but probably I did not understand properly, I could not do it. (Choi, 2018a: 15)

The essence of the problem that Song – like many other North Korean migrants – faces is that the language barrier does not only cause communication difficulties, but also marks them out as others. The following dialogue between South Korean BJ and North Korean migrants Song and Ilhyang depicts the reality where North Korean migrants inevitably become deceptive so as not to be labelled as others because of the inherent linguistic difference.

> BJ: Is this food from Pyeong-an province (in North Korea)?
>
> Ilhyang: My mother is from Pyeong-an province. I am from Gangwon province (in South Korea). Potatoes.
>
> Song: I know that you are from Pyeong-an province.
>
> Ilhyang: Uncle Hoeryong told me that people would harass me if I reveal that I am a North Korean migrant on the day Kim Jeong-eun appears on news programmes. (Choi, 2018a: 21)

In South Korea, those who speak a dialect of Gangwon province, which sounds similar to the North Korean dialect, are sometimes misunderstood as North Korean migrants. Critically mirroring the reality in this sequence, the playwright/director

demonstrates the structure of discrimination that North Korean migrants can hardly avoid. That is, North Korean migrants cannot speak South Korean without an accent. They are subsequently labelled as North Korean migrants, and thus, experience discrimination. The learned discrimination then leads them to falsely pretend to be non-migrant South Koreans. What Choi also critically alludes to is that such discrimination is regarded as fair treatment by South Koreans.

> Song: But, now, I know about all different kinds of coffees and I have memorised the menu. But, my salary is still lower. Saerom, did you know about this but you did not tell me? ...
>
> Saerom: Song, you still have North Korean accent. It is too obvious that you are from North Korea. (Choi, 2018a: 18)

South Korean character Saerom shows how unsympathetic and irresponsible South Koreans are in relation to North Korean migrants' linguistic difficulties and the resulting disadvantage. The critical depiction of reality in this sequence arguably provides the audience with an opportunity to self-reflect by seeing a minority's perspective. By staging the linguistic differences through a critical lens, this play ultimately enables South Koreans to realise that North Korean is paradoxically the closest language to, as well as the furthest from South Korean (Kim et al., 2018: 54). Obviously, compared to foreign languages that ethnic South Koreans can never understand without translation, the language barrier between North and South Korean is considerably lower. South Koreans are thus presumed to understand North Korean during a performance without the need for subtitles. At the same time, however, it is also true that South Korean actors in *Those Who Cross The Line* (like those of *Sister Mok-rahn*) needed extra training to speak North Korean fluently (Kim et al., 2018: 55). In summary, the compelling representation of the linguistic differences in the two plays urges the audience to realise the paradoxical but indisputable fact that North Korean and South Korean are the same language as well as different languages and, more importantly how they misuse these linguistic differences as a linguistic marker.

Heterotopia: between the South and the North as well as reality and staged reality

In *Sister Mok-rahn* and *Those Who Cross The Line*, audiences confront with the staged representation of North Korean migrants' struggle in a heterotopia. To put it more concretely, the theatrical space of the two plays become heterotopic where the border of South and North Korea is differently signified between the diegetic world of theatre and reality. In reality, the border in the middle of the Korean peninsula horizontally divides Korea into two disparate nations. What I specifically examine in this section is how the factual border between the two Koreas is theatrically interpreted or staged in the heterotopic space of theatre. Introduced by Michel Foucault, heterotopias are elusively "places that are outside all places, although they are actually localizable" (2000: 178). Unlike "fundamentally and essentially unreal" utopias, heterotopias are "sorts of actually realized utopias" (Foucault, 2000: 178). As a liminal space without clear boundaries, a heterotopia exists between the idea of utopia and reality, having both temporality and spatiality. As Foucault puts it, along with cemeteries, museums, libraries and gardens, theatre is a representative heterotopia (2000: 180-183), with the most distinctive characteristic of theatre as a heterotopia being the capacity to connect multiple spaces which are not compatible in themselves (2000: 186). In a staged heterotopia, Joanne Tompkins argues, audiences thus can detect "some hint or inkling of another world" (2014: 6). What Tompkins ultimately suggests is that a heterotopia holds the capacity to describe and spatialise "how socio-political relationships might work differently beyond the stage" (2014: 20). The socio-political efficacy of heterotopia in theatre, thus, can be a useful theoretical framework in the interpretation of the two plays that deal with the entangled relationship between the South, the North and North Korean migrants on the margins of South Korea. With a focus on the presence of a North Korean migrant as a distinctive medium that embodies the two Koreas beyond the border in *Sister Mok-rahn* and the staging of the linear border as a liminal space in *Those Who Cross The Line*, I will examine how the border is heterotopically reimagined in a theatrical space, which is both real and unreal at the same time.

In *Theatre's Heterotopias: Performance and the Cultural Politics of Space* (2014), Tompkins employs heterotopia as an analytical framework and explores the concept

in her performance analyses. According to Tompkins, heterotopia in theatre is discernible between constructed and abstracted spaces (2014: 32). A constructed space here refers to “the spatial environment that one usually confronts as a production begins” (Tompkins, 2014: 32). Whereas, an abstracted space with “an abstract quality (a state of mind/being)” is a “contrasting spatial environment that may be located in a geographically determined place” (Tompkins, 2014: 32). To give an example of constructed and abstracted spaces, in an audio-walk called *And While London Burns* (2006), participants walk around London’s financial district listening to stories characterised by elements including fire, dust and water as well as following vocal instructions. In *And While London Burns*, “the constructed space is the historical square mile of the City of London” (Tompkins, 2014: 47). Combined with the audience’s first-hand experience of the constructed space, the narrative generates another layer of an amorphous space that critically investigates the connection between oil companies and global warming. The geographically and politically extended space named The Carbon Web becomes the abstracted space (Tompkins, 2014: 48). Tompkins then suggests that a heterotopia, which is “a hopeful, personal space”, occupies the participants’ minds, encouraging them to “intervene and respond to the events around us” (2014: 52).

Similar to Tompkins’s interpretation of heterotopia in theatre, theatre scholar Benjamin Wihstutz also pinpoints “the political potential of theatre as heterotopia”, arguing that “it would be wrong to ignore the theatre’s potential to provoke unrest and act as a counter-site to society” (2013: 188). As the crucial interrelation but elusive distance between ‘hopeful’ heterotopia and socio-political ‘intervention’ in the two scholars’ interpretation of heterotopia in theatre imply, the valuation of a performance as heterotopic can be not only tricky but also subjective. Although it is not easy to discern heterotopia accurately and objectively owing to its ambiguous nature, Tompkins’s structured frame offers a useful theoretical tool to investigate staged heterotopia. I follow Tompkins’s approach to analyse the three different layers of constructed space, abstracted space and heterotopia, however, I will primarily explore how heterotopia is realised in the two performances. In addition, unlike Tompkins’s analysis that does not cover the body in the category of space (2014: 13), the body will be considered as a key spatial medium that creates heterotopia in my performance analysis.

In *Sister Mok-rahn*, the constructed space is a thrust stage with a simple set and a few props. The constructed space remains rather undefined as it is not the stage set but the actors who create a space in each scene. In order to realise the unusually various locations specified in the script on stage, the director developed the strategy of creating a space with actors, not with the stage set (Jeon and Kim, 2017). That is, bodies of actors become important mediums to define and form different scenes in the constructed space. Through the *mise-en-scéne*, the open-ended constructed space seamlessly becomes abstracted space that takes the audience to the various geographical locations including both Koreas in the present and Vietnam in the past. Between the two discernible spaces, another layer of heterotopic space is generated when two disparate bodies of North Korean migrants intersect on stage. This play features two types of North Korean migrants: a fictional North Korean migrant, the main character Jo Mok-rahn, and an actual migrant from the North, the accordion musician Chae Surin who plays music at an edge of the stage (S. Lee, 2012: 123). The two are further connected as the character Jo Mok-rahn partly mirrors Chae's real-life experience as a North Korean migrant. Compared to most South Koreans without any first-hand experience of the North, North Korean migrants including Chae uniquely have embodied experience of the two incompatible Koreas. With the resulting ambivalent nature of their sense of belonging, which was discussed earlier, the bodies of the migrants become heterotopic mediums that embody South and North Korea between the present and the past. In *Sister Mok-rahn*, I suggest, the staged presence of Jo Mok-rahn and Chae places the divided Koreas between lived reality, staged reality, the past and the present. This kind of strategic staging of a fictional character along with a real figure was also adopted elsewhere, for instance, in the well-known film *Schindler's List* (1993). In the final scene, the Jews played by actors in the film dissolve into the actual Schindler Jews in Israel, guaranteeing the memory that the film developed (Landsberg, 2004: 126-127). The heterotopic co-presence of Jo Mok-rahn and Chae in *Sister Mok-rahn*, I argue, has a similar effect of authorising the authenticity of this invented character and narrative, encouraging spectators to immerse themselves in the created reality.

Chae, also the music director of this production, is originally from Pyeongyang in North Korea. As the director Jeon acknowledges in the programme, her own life story helped to develop this play (Doosan Art Center, 2013a: 8-9). That is, Jo Mok-

rahn and the narrative around her are an entangled combination of reality and imagination. For instance, Chae is an accordionist and had a privileged family upbringing in the North (E. Kim, 2018), and Jo Mok-rahn is also portrayed as an elite musician who plays an accordion. However, unlike Jo Mok-rahn, who wants to return to North Korea out of frustration, Chae does not particularly want to return (E. Kim, 2018). Undoubtedly, Chae experienced similar difficulties as a North Korean migrant in South Korea but, instead of returning to the North, she has dedicated her time to work for South Korean theatre and film productions on North Korea to encourage a better understanding of the North (Chung, 2013). Regardless of this critical difference, Chae used to identify herself with Jo Mok-rahn (E. Kim, 2018) when she participated in the production. The relatability between the character and the musician is evidently strong, thus Chae's emotional attachment to the character is understandable. In fact, the line between the real person and the fictional woman also seems to be ambiguous to other creative team members. In one of the post-show talks in 2017, the playwright stated that Jo Mok-rahn was based on a real person, presumably Chae, who provided him with critical clues so he could create the character (Kim, Jeon and Park, 2017), and in an interview conducted by myself in 2018, Kim gave a similar explanation but he made it clear that he had already developed Jo Mok-rahn considerably before he met Chae (E. Kim, 2018). He said that Chae certainly helped him to develop the character but she is not the person whom Jo Mok-rahn was based upon (E. Kim, 2018). The playwright also added the aforementioned point that Chae tends to confuse the character with herself (E. Kim, 2018). As previously mentioned, however, the director acknowledges that some materials for this play did come from Chae's life story (Doosan Art Center, 2013a: 8-9). At this point, my intention of counterpointing the three different stakeholders is far from investigating whose claim or memory is right. Rather, that the director, playwright and Chae differently perceive the distance between Chae and Jo Mok-rahn demonstrates how complicated it is to demarcate between the fictional character and the real woman. The corporeal co-presence of Jo Mok-rahn and Chae on stage, I suggest, invites the audience to experience the shades of relatability and distance between the two.[87]

[87] A full-page photo in the programme (2013) also features Chae playing an accordion and Jo Mok-rahn in symbolically North Korean costume side by side (Doosan Art Center, 2013b: 4-5).

Chae plays the accordion on the same stage where South Korean actress Jeong plays Jo Mok-rahn in parallel.[88] This spatial overlap between them symbolically blurs the border between the North and the South, creating a heterotopia where the audience members are invited to reimagine the North-South border between the fictional and real realms. The temporal coexistence of Jo Mok-rahn's present as partly Chae's past, and Chae in the present South, is only possible in the heterotopic space. Having both on stage, the audience experiences an entangled North and South Korea where the actual and fictional North Korean migrants belong in a space between the present and the past. The staged bodies that generate the heterotopia, I suggest, enable spectators to experience the differently embodied coexistence of the two Koreas beyond the geographical or political border. In this heterotopic space between imagination and reality, North and South Korea, as well as the present and the past, contemporary South Korean audiences arguably experience a utopian performative that more empathetically connects them with the perceived others from the North. Indeed, Kim's memory of the audience members particularly touched by Chae's accordion playing at the end of the performance (E. Kim, 2018) shows how profoundly they could empathise with Jo Mok-rahn and her story in the presence of Chae.

In this performance, what also significantly contributes to the creation of the staged heterotopia is the unconventional stage structure. *Sister Mok-rahn* does not have a traditional proscenium arch and auditorium. In the first stagings in 2012 and 2013, the action took place on a main thrust stage with two side stages. Each of the side stages symbolises South and North Korea (S. Lee, 2012: 118). A large portrait of Kim Jong-il on the wall of one side stage symbolically visualises North Korea. The whole stage was then surrounded by the audience. Compared with the original version, the bare thrust stage of the 2017 production had considerably fewer props as the director Jeon intended to create an empty square on stage (Kim, Jeon and Nam, 2017). Jeon compared this to a *madanggeuk* stage (Kim, Jeon and Park, 2017), in which there is no clear boundary between the open stage and the auditorium. Although this open structure does not particularly ask audience members

[88] In the 2017 production, Chae did not appear on stage and actress Kim, not Jeong, played Jo Mok-rahn. My performance analysis through the lens of heterotopia is based on the productions in 2012 and 2013.

to actively participate in the performance, the unique structure certainly made audiences play some roles in a few scenes. When the hostess bar owner Jo Dae-jah encourages her bar girls to be more lascivious and flirtatious to increase the bar's profit, and when her son Huh Tae-gahng gives his philosophy lecture, there are no bar girls or college students on stage. Instead, Jo Dae-jah and Huh Tae-gahng directly address audiences in the dark but proximate auditorium, thereby breaking the fourth wall between stage and auditorium and, making the spectators the explicit addressees of the text. In the absence of the fourth wall on the thrust stage, the North Korean migrant story freely crosses the boundaries between the stage and the auditorium, as well as between the theatrical world and reality. The boundaryless structure, I argue, played a significant role in the audience's lived experience of the heterotopic co-presence of Jo Mok-rahn and Chae.

The structure of stage and auditorium that crosses multiple boundaries further intensifies the socio-political function of heterotopia in this production. To be specific, the four-way stage structure put South Korean audiences in a position to witness the theatrical representation of the life of a North Korean migrant, while simultaneously being conscious of the gaze of their fellow audience members. As one audience member reported: during the performance, those in the auditorium observed other audiences' facial expressions from their seats (Heawon7387, 2017). Another reviewer describes in more detail how spectators could not help but watch other audience members' facial and postural reactions while witnessing, for instance, Jo Mok-rahn in tears (Kwj3599, 2017). These remarks indicate that the structure of the thrust stage made audiences experience the constant movement between reality and the theatrical world, further crossing the South-South boundary in the boundaryless space. That is, the boundary-crossing moment unavoidably caused audience members to witness how their fellow society members respond to the critical staging of reality. The concurrent perception of the insightfully represented society on stage and the critical realisation of the public gaze arguably led spectators without an embodied experience of North Korean migrant issues to ponder their own responsibilities as South Koreans in relation to Jo Mok-rahn's story.

> What this play tells us is our reality seen from those on the margins of the society…the bare face of our society…makes us ashamed of ourselves… (Idella, 2017)

Similar to this introspective audience review in the blogosphere, South Korean theatre academic Lee Sang-lan suggests that *Sister Mok-rahn* allows audiences to view society from North Korean migrants' points of view, and to cross the borders inside their minds (2012: 140). The incorporeal border-crossing is important as it can enhance the intangible utopian performative, and encourage audiences to cross boundaries which are indelibly imprinted in their minds. Therefore, they can come to deem the new society members from the North not as ideological figures but in relation to themselves in society.

Unlike *Sister Mok-rahn*, which created a heterotopia on the thrust stage beyond the fourth wall between stage and auditorium*, Those Who Cross The Line* uses an ordinary proscenium stage. Therefore, the boundary between the stage and the auditorium is comparably explicit. In spite of the significance of connecting incompatible spaces, however, how a heterotopia is generated does not necessarily depend on atypical spaces or stage structures. Tompkins also discerns performance heterotopias in various spaces, including a classic proscenium theatre. Using the case study of verbatim theatre piece *Aalst* (2007), which centres around the trial of a couple who murdered their children, Tompkins analyses how "a heterotopia of a void" is discernible in the minimal court-like space on a proscenium stage and the auditorium (2014: 89, 92). Compared to *Sister Mok-rahn*'s unusual stage structure, *Those Who Cross The Line* is performed on a traditional rectangular stage and thus provides audiences with a different kind of heterotopic experience.

The constructed space is a full-sized bare platform with a triangle-shaped zigzag mounted by the stage's back wall. As soon as the play starts, Mr. Kim is first heard in complete darkness, then seen crossing the border between the two Koreas. The frontier between North and South Korea is usually perceived as a linear line that horizontally bisects the peninsula and a latter scene realistically features the line as a barbed-wire fence. In this initial sequence, however, the director does not specifically visualise the line but ambiguously places the soldier somewhere in the DMZ that surrounds the border. The boundary that separates South and North Korea

accordingly becomes visually vague on stage. This unseen and amorphous border that Mr. Kim is crossing over a long period of time becomes the abstracted space.

The director, then, creates a heterotopic space on the borderless line. In the last part of the play, Choi stages a liminal moment on this ambiguous line, featuring Mr. Kim and other characters from different places and times who meet in the heterotopic zone of the DMZ. At this juncture, the audience sees North Korean Mr. Kim crossing the border between the Koreas, while also seeing North Korean migrant Song about to leave South Korea. Simultaneously, South Korean Jeong considers crossing the border to the North after ending up as an economic criminal in the South. It is significant that the space where the three characters meet is the Demilitarised Zone on stage. As Kim Suk-young states in *DMZ Crossing: Performing Emotional Citizenship Along The Korean Border* (2014): “Like the theater”, the DMZ is also “a space of temporary passage” (2014b: 8). In reality, although some people such as North Korean escapees pass the line or the DMZ in unusual circumstances, they can only pass through it; no one is supposed to stay on the line. In this scene, however, characters from both sides eat, drink and talk about each other’s reasons to cross on the imagined space of the line. Song explains why she does not choose either the North or the South but a third country, Jeong criticises the South Korean society that did not allow him to be as successful as he wanted and Mr. Kim is worried about his mother left in the North. Through Song’s line in the sequence, the playwright strongly suggests that the frontier where the three characters are currently placed is a line from a distance but it is actually a zone where they can have some freedom (Choi, 2018a: 40-41). With the staging of the differently interpreted border and the stories from both sides, I argue that the director invites audiences to experience the heterotopic zone shared by a South and a North Korea that are not divided by a line. In this scene that features the three characters, the director placed barbed-wire fences horizontally across the middle of the stage. Despite the realistic and physical presentation of the border, it still remains as heterotopic where Mr. Kim and Jeong can simultaneously cross it, in 2016 and 2018, respectively (Choi, 2018a: 39).

The interpretation of the line as a heterotopic space and the focus on individuals from the two Koreas, not the ideological line itself, encourage audiences to differently imagine the border. The liminal movement, moment or space of crossing to the

South, the North or neither of them, I argue, becomes a heterotopia where the audience can cross the South-North border in their mind. One audience member wrote in a review that North Korean migrants would have been happier in North Korea (Uhj99910, 2018), thus suggesting that the theatrical experience of the heterotopic space and time actually frees the audiences from any rigid ideological viewpoints they had of the South and the North. What the empathetic review also implies is that the utopian performatives experienced in this staged heterotopia enable audiences to see North Korean migrants as individuals, not as ideological others.

5) Conclusion

This chapter analysed how the theatrical public sphere in South Korea engages with internal others, with a focus on North Korean migrants. They are ethnic Koreans but migrants from a socio-politically different country, and the social exclusiveness towards others in multicultural South Korea has offered no exception to the migrants from the North. In comparison to Western theatre productions that tend to negatively stereotype North Korea(ns), the two South Korean plays in my case study played an important role in the construction of structures of feeling around marginalised North Korean migrants through theatre. Whilst the two plays similarly illuminate the brutal reality that North Korean migrants face in South Korea, they adopted different approaches in the staging of North Korean migrant characters and narratives. Therefore, I opted to compare and contrast how the two plays represent North Korean migrants' struggle, critically portray the linguistic differences that mark them as others and stage the border between the two Koreas in a heterotopic sense.

Based on the playwrights' critical inquiries into North Korean migrants on the margins of South Korean society, *Sister Mok-rahn* and *Those Who Cross The Line* both depict a reality whereby North Korean migrants are dehumanised and stereotyped. While elite musician Jo Mok-rahn from Pyeongyang is not respected as an individual but identified with a demonised North Korea, Song, who did not willingly leave the North, is treated as an ambiguous other between a foreign migrant and an ethnic Korean. The two plays, however, do not simply duplicate the ideological prejudice against and the double standards suffered by internal others. With the main characters Jo Mok-rahn and Song who seek to leave South Korea for the North

or somewhere else, the plays disturb the stereotyped perception of North Korean migrants, stimulating audiences to challenge their biased presuppositions about them. The critical dramatisation of this unique migrant group gave audiences an important insight into social issues regarding North Korean migrants who are not yet fully included in the discussions around migrants in multicultural South Korea.

In presenting *othered* North Korean migrant characters and narratives, *Sister Mok-rahn* and *Those Who Cross The Line* carefully attend to the differences between the two syntactically identical Korean languages. North Korean migrant characters in both plays speak in their native dialect and accent, which needed sensitive treatment by English and Japanese translators of *Sister Mok-rahn* so that nuanced meanings were not lost. In the performances of *Sister Mok-rahn* and *Those Who Cross The Line* in Korean, through the North Korean migrant characters' authentic articulation of the dialogues in North Korean, the linguistic gap as a linguistic marker that labels North Korean migrants as others was vividly displayed. Whilst the partly comical presentation of distinctive North Korean words and expressions in *Sister Mok-rahn* generates laughter, dialogues and sequences in *Those Who Cross The Line* adopt a darker perspective on how linguistic differences disadvantage North Korean migrants who endeavour to settle in South Korea. The comical and authentic staging of the North Korean dialect in *Sister Mok-rahn*, however, does not simply replicate actual negative or pejorative stereotypes but, rather, serves to strengthen the pathos felt towards Jo Mok-rahn when the audience witnesses her tragic ending, showing that comedy is not just a tool for laughter in this play but is used to provoke different audience emotions. Meanwhile, the scenes that describe in detail Song's linguistic trouble in *Those Who Cross The Line* enable the audience to critically realise the paradoxical distance between the two Korean languages.

The final key point of this chapter was to examine the staged heterotopia. As I have argued, the two staged dramas created heterotopic space and time where North and South Korea could coexist beyond the physical border and how it is imprinted in the audience's minds. The heterotopic copresence of Jo Mok-rahn and Chae on stage in *Sister Mok-rahn* blurred the South-North border between the present and the past as well as reality and theatrical reality, and thus allowed the audience to experience the utopian performative where they are invited to reimagine the border and think

differently about the perceived others from the North. Furthermore, the unconventional stage structure that exposes the audience to the public gaze between the theatrical world and lived reality intensified the socio-political function of the staged heterotopia, leading them to consider their responsibility towards North Korean migrants. In *Those Who Cross The Line*, the director staged the frontier between the two Koreas in three different ways. Firstly, the border is unseen and amorphous in Mr. Kim's border-crossing scene. Secondly, Choi concretely staged the physical line that Song, Kang and Ok cross when the North Korean migrant characters first appear. Finally, a barbed-wire border was placed on stage that became a heterotopic space where a North Korean (Mr. Kim), a North Korean migrant (Song) and a South Korean (Jeong) encounter each other, transcending time and space. Similar to *Sister Mok-rahn*, Choi's heterotopic interpretation and *mise-en-scéne* stimulated the audience to perceive the border differently and see North Korean migrants as individual members within the society rather than as ideological others.

The application of the theoretical frame of heterotopia to the two plays was particularly significant in this analysis, as I could demonstrate how theatre allows audiences to be freed from a fixed, blinkered understanding of the border and those who have crossed it. This discussion of the theatrical formation of structures of feeling around the ethnic Korean migrants in South Korea provides a useful foundation for my exploration of non-ethnic Korean 'migrants in South Korea' and 'ethnic Korean migrants' outside the Korean peninsula in Chapters 3 and 4, respectively.

Chapter 3:

Asian Marriage Migrants in Contemporary South Korean Theatre

1) Introduction

Chapter 2 scrutinised two plays (*Sister Mok-rahn* and *Those Who Cross The Line*), focusing on others from the North in the south of the Korean peninsula. This chapter continues to examine how theatre engages with perceived internal others in multicultural South Korea. In comparison to the previous chapter's attention to the ethnically Korean but socio-politically others, this chapter examines others with socio-culturally different backgrounds as well as ethnic alterity. Of those foreign migrants within South Korea, the subject of analysis here is Asian marriage migrant women. This chapter first provides a historical overview of cross-border marriage and marriage migration in the context of modern Korea/contemporary South Korea and the associated construction of exclusive perspectives towards marriage migrant women. As part of the historical overview, I will further trace the formation of ethnoracial exclusiveness in the socio-historical context of imported racism from the West and the colonial experience in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. Next, to put into context contemporary inter-Asian marriages, the positionality of migrant women in those marriages and the intervention of matchmaking services in South Korea, I will discuss similar occurrences in other Asian countries. The subsequent discussion briefly but specifically covers how the theatrical public sphere in South Korea incorporates or excludes marginalised ethnic others. Finally, in the case study, I will offer an in-depth analysis of the theatrical presentation of marginalised and victimised Asian marriage migrants in two staged dramas, *My Aunt in Texas* and *Ran's Diary*. Focusing on how the two performances present Asian marriage migrant characters in different ways, I will discuss how these divergent perspectives present ethnic otherness on stage.

My Aunt in Texas (written by Yun Mi-hyun and directed by Choi Yong-hoon, 2018) was co-produced by NTCK and the Ansan Arts Center. As introduced in Chapter 1, NTCK's yearly programme regularly includes adapted Western classics and modern and contemporary Korean plays, including this new piece. As a leading theatre company that offers theatre practitioners an ideal environment for their creative work, NTCK also attempts to collaborate with regional arts centres, hence partnering with the Ansan Arts Center in Gyeonggi province (S. Park, 2018). *My Aunt in Texas* was staged at the Byeolmuri Theater (in Ansan) and the Baek Seonghui & Jang Minho Theater (in Seoul). I attended the production at the latter venue in November 2018, thus my analysis of the performance focuses on this staging of the text.[89] Quotations are taken from the unpublished Korean script of the play, which was kindly provided by NTCK.

Ran's Diary (written and directed by Park Kyong-ju, 2011) was produced by the Salad theatre company; the Asian migrant artists of the company have staged performances since its founding in 2009.[90] What specifically motivated Park to create *Ran's Diary* was the death of actual Vietnamese marriage migrant Tran Thanh Lan in 2008.[91] *Ran's Diary* premiered in May 2011 and its revised version was performed at the *Seoul Byeonbang Yeongeukje* (Seoul Marginal Theatre Festival) in October of the same year.[92] Compared to the original version that focuses solely on victimised marriage migrants, the revised version additionally provides their South Korean husbands with a space to raise their unheard voices. My performance analysis is

[89] I saw this play on 16, 19 and 23 November 2018 at the Baek Seonghui & Jang Minho Theater, NTCK, Seoul, South Korea.

[90] In 2014, Salad was authorised as a social enterprise by the Ministry of Employment and Labor.

[91] As summarised by Park, Tran Thanh Lan met a South Korean man via a matchmaking agency in 2007 and married him in Vietnam. Only five days after she arrived in South Korea in 2008, she was forced to divorce. Tran Thanh Lan wanted to stay in South Korea to be able to financially support her parents in Vietnam, however, she died in a fall from their flat on the 14th floor. As of May 2018, the case was statute-barred (Park, 2019b: 101). Based on Tran Thanh Lan's diary neglected in the police investigation, Park developed her own investigation of the case, which she turned into arts productions, including *Ran's Diary*.

[92] *Seoul Marginal Theatre Festival* is the official English title of the festival.

based upon the video documentation of the two versions of the performance and the recently published script.[93]

For this chapter, I interviewed Park (Kyong-ju), playwright/director of *Ran's Diary* as well as *My Aunt in Texas* playwright Yun and producer Park (Sungho) and transcribed the audio recording of the interviews.[94] In the case of *Ran's Diary*, I did not see the live performance and the details of the production are not fully available to access online, therefore the interview was essential and was conducted face-to-face in June 2019 in Seoul.[95] For *My Aunt in Texas*, I went on a research trip to Seoul to specifically see this performance.[96] I selected this play as a case study because *My Aunt in Texas* is a rare example for two reasons. Firstly, this play is a mainstream theatre production that directly addresses multicultural discourses; secondly, this South Korean play features a non-ethnic Korean character played by a foreign actress. The creative process in relation to these two aspects is closely examined, based on the interviews with the playwright and the producer.

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[93] Initially, I did not have access to the playtext and video but playwright/director Park later kindly offered me the video links in response to my persuasion and official request. The script of the series of plays including *Ran's Diary* was published in 2019.

[94] I conducted the interviews with playwright Yun in November 2018 and June 2019 and producer Park in November 2018. I also transcribed all the other audio-recorded interviews that I conducted for this thesis.

[95] *Ran's Diary* premiered on 22 May 2011 at the Box Theatre of Seoul Art Space_Mullae, Seoul, South Korea. The revised edition of *Ran's Diary* (including the live on-stage talk with the *International Marriage is a Crazy Thing to Do*) was performed as part of the 13th Seoul Marginal Theatre Festival in the same year (1 - 2 October 2011, South Korea). My performance analysis is based on the edited video clip of the indoor performance at the box theatre and the full video documentation of the revised edition at the festival.

[96] *My Aunt in Texas* premiered at the Byeolmuri Theater, Ansan Arts Center (26 - 27 October 2018), Ansan and the Baek Seonghui & Jang Minho Theater, NTCK, Seoul (2 - 25 November 2018) in South Korea.

2) Historical overview of cross-border marriage and the social construction of ethnic/racial exclusiveness in modern and contemporary (South) Korea

> Park Mary: It was last spring. When my father came back from church, he asked me if I am interested in going to the US, showing me a picture of a man…For that reason, my father wrongly believed that people in the West, particularly in the US, are all intelligent, rich and have good personalities…So, I quite strongly disagreed (with my father) and was hesitant (about this marriage) but he secretly applied for my visa and asked (the husband-to-be) for my travel expense then my father almost forcibly accompanied me and saw me off in Yokohama, Japan where I went aboard a ship (to Hawaii)…When I met the highly praised man here (in Hawaii), my husband was earning living by repairing shoes…
>
> …
>
> Park Mary: … Also, he is not civilised so his mistreatment of me gets worse whenever he is drunk.
>
> Lee Su-ok: That is a harmful consequence of photograph marriage. Also, it is a bitter legacy of depraved Confucianism. That is the abuse of paternal authority. Unless those unrighteous moral principles and the custom of the rotten Confucianism disappear in our *Joseon* society, only dead tree trunks will remain in the end… (Yun, 2013: 48-50)

As shown in the dialogue between unhappily married Park Mary and her ex-lover Lee Su-ok, the modern Korean drama *Fate* (1921) features a hapless picture bride character.[97] A picture bride refers to an ethnic Korean woman who married an ethnic Korean man based in the US in the early twentieth century. As those marriages were arranged through photos, they are addressed as photograph marriages. While not

[97] *Fate* premiered in 1921 and the written text was published in 1924. In 2002, Yang Seung-gook translated the Korean title *Unmyeong* into *Destiny* in his journal article where he analyses playwright Yun's two works (the article is included in my reference list). In 2018, NTCK staged this play and translated the title as *Fate*. Upon consideration of the different nuances of the two English words, I selectively follow NTCK's translation.

inter-ethnic, a photograph marriage was the first kind of transnational marriage phenomenon in modern Korea (J. Kang, 2011: 212-215). The birth of this particular type of cross-border marriage is directly related to Korean people's emigration to Hawaii, which began in 1902 (J. Kang, 2011: 213). As Korean American scholar Sin Seongryeo remarks in her article documenting the oral history of the first generation of Koreans in the US, those who had no choice but to move to Hawaii to work on sugar cane farms were the beginning of Korean emigration to the US (1979: 269-270). In order to ease the shortage of labour force on the farms, over 7,000 Koreans moved to Hawaii from 1903 to 1905 (Sin, 1979: 271, 273). Among the emigrant workers, bachelors could not find brides locally, thus the Home Office and the employers helped unmarried Korean men to source their spouses from Korea by sending their pictures (J. Kang, 2011: 214). As a result, between 1910 and 1924, 1,066 photograph marriages were arranged in total (J. Kang, 2011: 214).[98]

Factors that convinced ethnic Korean women to leave their homeland and sail over the Pacific to the United States of America to become picture brides were poverty, gender-discriminating customs and colonial rule in Korea (Jeong, 2018: 305-306). While some of them were later able to politically and financially support Korea's independence movement (Hong, 2017: 11-24), in many cases, picture brides had to suffer hard labour for many years (Sin, 1979: 282-289). Even before the brides endured this toil, they were already victimised through the problematic process of those arranged marriages. Indeed, numerous bridegrooms-to-be in Hawaii deceived brides-to-be in Korea with misleading pictures (cited in Seo, 2011: 106-107). The issue was so widespread that it found representation in popular historical fiction. In the novel *Sajinsinbu Jini* (*Honolulu*, written by Alan Brennert and translated by Lee Jihye, 2014), one of the picture brides arriving at the port in Hawaii immediately returns to Korea due to her frustration at seeing the difference between the picture she saw in Korea and the actual husband-to-be in Hawaii (Brennert, 2014: 72-76).[99] The occasionally fraudulent photograph marriage was largely criticised in Korean society. As South Korean scholar Kang Jingu pinpoints in his analysis of newspaper

[98] An arranged marriage determined by pictures was specific to photograph marriages, but in Confucian *Joseon*, an arranged marriage was a custom. Indeed, marriage was regarded as "a union of two families rather than two individuals" (Han, 2004: 119).

[99] *Honolulu* is a historical novel that tells the stories of picture brides, including the main character, Jin.

articles of the period, firstly, photograph marriage itself was condemned as a bad custom imported from Japan and, secondly, the picture brides' pursuit of marriage outside the patriarchal society was seen to be driven by vanity (2011: 215-222). The above quoted *Fate* is an example that mirrors how 1920s society reacted to the issue at that time. As the character Lee Su-ok's critical tone indicates, playwright Yun attempted to enlighten the public about the harmful effect of these kinds of arranged marriages (S. Yang, 2002: 133).

Between these outbound picture brides who emigrated *en masse* to the US in the early twentieth century and the start of an unprecedented influx of Asian marriage migrants into South Korea in the 1990s (which I will discuss later in this chapter), there was another wave of distinctive cross-border marriages. Since the US and the former Soviet Union arbitrarily divided Korea into South and North as part of the Second World War treaty between them, US armed forces have been based in South Korea (N. Kim, 2015: 275-276). Accordingly, military bases and surrounding camptowns were established "to accommodate both the American objectives and the soldiers' material, cultural, and sexual needs and wants" (N. Kim, 2015: 276). The US military first entered the southern part of Korea in September 1945 and by the end of that year, the first camptown was already formed in a city neighbouring where the US forces landed (Yuh, 2002: 19-20). Those nearby camptowns used to have "red-light districts catering to U.S. soldiers" and "revolve economically around the bases" (Yuh, 2002: 9). In the camptowns' heyday in the 1960s, over 30,000 women made their living, entertaining around 62,000 US soldiers who were deployed all over the country (Yuh, 2002: 21). Following this, between 1950 and 1989, approximately 100,000 Korean brides immigrated to the US (Yuh, 2002: 2).

Owing to the aforementioned context, however, those military brides who married US soldiers are almost unconditionally associated with prostitution around the US military camps (Yuh, 2002: 4). In *My Aunt in Texas*, for instance, the playwright's choice of Texas out of fifty states in the US, I suggest, symbolically pinpoints South Koreans' biased perception of military brides – including the main character Chunmi – and their presumed association with red-light districts such as the Miari Texas in Seoul.[100] The stereotyped labelling as a camptown woman was imposed on those

[100] The Miari Texas is not technically located in a camptown but it is an infamous red-light district.

who moved to the US as well as stayed in South Korea, socially alienating and isolating the military brides "from both mainstream American society and mainstream Korean society" (Yuh, 2002: 14). Indeed, there is a note of sarcasm in the derisive titles of "*yang gongju* (Western princess) and *yang saeksi* (Western bride)" (Yuh, 2002: 20) given to the Korean women by South Koreans.[101] The social stigma was even further attached to those who associate with African American soldiers.

Of all the Korean women who entertained American servicemen in the brothels, some were further segregated from others based upon the skin colour of the men with whom they associated. That is, sex workers who associated with white servicemen were more highly regarded than those who served black servicemen (cited in M. Lee, 2008: 68). In the social context, the contempt for military brides is harsher on those who married black soldiers, indeed, as one military bride commented: "Koreans don't like me because I married a black man" (Yuh, 2002: 168). Those "anti-Black stereotypes" were initially influenced by the American mass media introduced to South Korea along with the US military stationed in the country (N. Kim, 2015: 277-278). In addition, media coverage of the 1992 Los Angeles riots resulted in South Koreans witnessing African Americans committing arson, vandalising shops and inflicting violence (N. Kim, 2015: 290). Some "sympathetic media reports" partly encouraged South Koreans to regard black Americans as victims, similar to Korean immigrants (N. Kim, 2015: 290) but the overriding negative stereotype prevailed, marking military brides' children, in particular those with African heritage, as mixed raced others.

The term Amerasian generally defines children of Asian women and US soldiers stationed in Asian countries, including Vietnam, Japan, the Philippines and Korea (Lim, 2010: 64). Similar to the unfavourable association of military brides with camptown prostitution, Amerasian children born from specific cross-border relationships are on the whole regarded as shameful and humiliating as they are seen as the symbolic legacy of the Western conquest and the sexual abuse of Korean women, and thus face discrimination (cited in Lim, 2010: 64). A major obstacle for Amerasians who strive to live in South Korea as Koreans is an

[101] The general usage of Western princess/bride in South Korea is not limited to camptown sex workers but encompasses those who actually married US soldiers.

institutional ethnic exclusiveness that *others* mixed race citizens. For instance, military service is mandatory for South Korean men "but illegal for Amerasian men" (M. Lee, 2008: 57-59).[102] Of those Amerasians in Korea, "about one out of three" are black (cited in K. Lee, 2015: 8). Considering the socio-historical context where the anti-black stereotype was developed and reified over time in Korea, it is not difficult to speculate that those Amerasians of African American descent "have faced far greater discrimination and rejection than white Amerasians" (K. Lee, 2015: 24-25). If we further trace the social and institutional discrimination against those (African) Amerasians, what fundamentally encourages ethnic South Koreans to regard these Koreans as "interlopers" who belong somewhere else (Lim, 2010: 64) is arguably the still prevalent fetish of ethnic homogeneity which, as examined in the Introduction, had been mythologised through the resistance against Japanese colonial rule.

In Korea, the colonial experience played an undeniable role in the construction of ethnic exclusiveness. The colonial empire "reified assumed racial differences between coloniser and colonised", presupposing "the ultimate assimilation of the latter by the former" (Weiner, 1994: 5). On the one hand, Japanese people believed that the colonised people are "inferior races" and assimilation is "impossible" (Shin, 2006: 43). In contradiction to this belief, Japan attempted to justify its assimilation policy based on the theory that Japanese and Koreans are descendants of one race ("the *nikkan* race") (Shin, 2006: 44). The coloniser's intention was to insist that Japanese patronage could transform less civilised Koreans into "imperial citizens" because Koreans fundamentally possess superior elements like the Japanese (Shin, 2006: 44-45). The problematic ideology of race, however, was not only practised by Japan. Ironically, when resisting the colonial racism and assimilationism based on Japan's presumed racial superiority, Koreans' "nationalist response" similarly centred on "the insistence on the unique racial origins of the Korean people" (Shin, 2006: 45). In other words, Koreans arguably took on a certain strain of racism from their Japanese colonisers.

Despite the significant impact, however, the increased emphasis on ethnic/racial singularity under colonial rule is not enough to fully explain ethnoracial exclusiveness in Korea. Prior to the colonial period, during the Enlightenment in the late nineteenth

[102] Since the law was amended in 2010, military service is now mandatory for half Korean men.

century, the idea of racism was already introduced into Korea from the West. As Western supremacy and Western perspectives on race were uncritically imported and received by the country (Ha, 2012: 536), skin colour became a crucial marker in Korea. Following the ethnically suppressed colonial period in the early twentieth century and Korea's independence in 1945, as noted above, American mass media was brought into South Korea along with the arrival of the US military, and this further disseminated racist views towards African Americans (N. Kim, 2015: 278). This socio-historical context allows us to understand how military brides, in addition to the presumed association with camptown prostitution, were further stigmatised for having children with black soldiers. The unfavourable social perception of cross-border marriages of military brides bears a certain similarity with that of current inter-marriages with Asian migrant women who are also stereotypically perceived to undermine ethnic homogeneity.

This brief historical overview indicates that cross-border marriages have commonly been perceived in a negative or derogatory way in Korea. When a fifteen-year-old woman chose to be a picture bride in order to be liberated from her birth family, her parents thought their daughter was being sold and were further afraid that the cross-border marriage would ruin the family name (Sin, 1979: 276). The case of military brides is analogous; indeed, the pejorative titles "Western princess" and "Western bride" (Yuh, 2002: 20) have haunted South Koreans, maintaining the association between military brides and prostitution. Whilst picture brides and military brides did not stick to conventional rules, as I will shortly examine, Asian marriage migrants actually serve the archaic patriarchal society. Nevertheless, their image of being ethnic others and as strangers who do not belong still remain prevalent. As Sara Ahmed puts it, strangers are not recognised as belonging even "in their very proximity" (2000: 21). In South Korean society, those ethnic others are not simply ignored as strangers, they are exploited and experience violent behaviour towards them. In the next section, I will provide the societal background to the unprecedented influx of Asian marriage migrants into South Korea and the consequent associated issues.

3) Asian marriage migrants in the mono-ethnic and patriarchal society

The rise of cross-border marriage in the 1990s

In relation to the exponential rise of inter-Asian marriages in South Korea, the origin of this significant change in marriage custom goes back to the industrialisation and the domestic migration that occurred during the economic transition. Throughout the rapid period of industrialisation in the 1960s and 1970s, urbanisation in South Korea was fuelled by “internal migration” (Lee et al., 2016: 271). Due to the “rural-urban migration”, the population in rural areas sharply dropped after 1970 (cited in Dewind et al., 2012: 376). As part of the internal economic migration, in particular, many women were employed in the manufacturing sector in cities (cited in Lee et al., 2016: 271-272), thus causing “numerical imbalances between men and women” in rural communities (Lee et al., 2016: 272). Both migration to cities and the subsequent gender imbalance which followed were further accelerated as increased numbers of women sought higher education and thereafter entered the workforce in the rapidly developing country. As a result, in a society where “women are expected to ‘marry up’”, highly educated women with high-income jobs had fewer opportunities to find spouses (Lee et al., 2016: 269). Inversely, less educated men with lower incomes were disadvantaged “in the marriage market” (Lee et al., 2016: 269). Many of these underprivileged men were farmers who could not find ethnic South Korean brides due to the newly formed socio-economic hierarchy (S. Kim, 2009b: 211).

As those rural bachelors became “a national concern” (H. Lee, 2018b: 401) in the male-oriented society, local governments began to promote cross-border marriages with *Joseonjok* (Korean/Chinese) brides. *Joseonjok* refers to those who are ethnically Korean but live in China as Chinese citizens. When South Korea was affected by shortages of labourers and brides in the late 1980s, Korean/Chinese workers and wives were regarded as an ideal solution to this issue because they were not seen as a threat to “Koreans’ self-identity as a homogenous people” (Freeman, 2005: 86). This was especially the case for marriages with Korean/Chinese brides which, despite being cross-border marriages, were still intra-ethnic, and therefore the country could maintain its “ethnic homogeneity” (M. Kim,

2013: 460). Another catalyst for the entry of Korean/Chinese wives was the newly established diplomatic relations with China in 1992. Subsequently, local governments took the lead in promoting cross-border marriages with Korean/Chinese women (M. Kim, 2007: 217). This government-initiated, intra-ethnic but cross-border marriage project soon turned into profitable "marriage tours" organised by both licensed matchmaking agencies and unlicensed marriage brokers (Freeman, 2005: 80). The boom in matchmaking quickly resulted in the rapid expansion from intra-ethnic to inter-Asian marriages. A growing number of similar-coloured Southeast Asian women migrated to South Korea to marry rural bachelors. Between 1995 and 2005, the number of marriage migrants almost tripled from 10,365 to 30,719 ('Korean Husband's Marriage Types'). As of 2016, marriage migrants from China are still the majority, accounting for 37.4% of the marriage migrant community, followed by those from Vietnam (27.4%), Japan (8.6%), the Philippines (7.6%), Cambodia (2.9%), Thailand (2.1%), Mongolia (1.6%) and the rest (12.4%) (Ministry of Justice, 2017: 51).[103]

As briefly aforementioned, when discussing the expansion of the number and nationalities of the marriage migrant women, the explosive growth and deep involvement of the commercial matchmaking service sector cannot be overlooked. In South Korea, the number of matchmaking agencies was around 700 in 1998, which by 2005 had almost tripled to 2,000 (cited in D. Kim et al., 2010: 6-7).[104] In the *Survey of International Marriage Brokerage in Korea 2017* (2017) commissioned by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, 84.3% of marriage migrants replied that they met their spouses through marriage agencies (Seol et al., 2017: 257).[105] As this

[103] In the early 1980s, Japanese women moved to marry South Korean men through the Unification Church (D. Kim et al., 2010: 1), with over 60% of these cross-border marriages organised in this way (C. Kim, 2011: 94). In the church, "matchmaking and marriage" are believed to be "the direct and perfect manifestation of a profound theology and worldview" (C. Kim, 2011: 93). In terms of ethnic background and geographical mobility, this marriage is also classed as inter-Asian marriage migration, but due to Japan's high global economic status, this cannot be understood in the same context of the marriage migrants from developing Southeast Asian countries.

[104] In general, international matchmaking agencies are differentiated from the regular marriage bureau in South Korea.

[105] *Survey of International Marriage Brokerage in Korea 2017* is the official English title of the publication.

high and recent figure indicates, many Asian marriage migrants still find their South Korean husbands – and vice versa – through international marriage agencies or brokers. In general, those agencies arrange marriage tours where South Korean men meet candidates for their marriages and choose one. In many cases, even wedding ceremonies take place during these tours, with 29.2% of South Korean men surveyed by Seol et al. responding that their weddings took place the day after their blind dates (Seol et al., 2017: 198-199). On average, South Korean husbands spend 15,810,000 KRW in agency fees (Seol et al., 2017: 186); 56.9% of those husbands-to-be, however, earn less than one fifth of this fee (2,990,000 KRW) per month (Seol et al., 2017: 101), thus making this expenditure a substantial investment.[106] Considering the peculiar nature of these inter-Asian marriages and how they are organised through matchmaking services, they can be understood as a form of arranged marriage. Obviously, the cases of these cross-border marriages are somewhat extreme, particularly regarding the speed of the process; however, an arranged marriage is a socially acceptable custom in Korea. It has long been practised throughout the history of the country (C. Kim, 2011: 78-81) and remains common practice today, not just for rural bachelors who marry foreign brides, but also for non-cross-border marriages among ethnic South Koreans.[107] To a certain degree, I argue, it is this old but still prevalent custom that enables inter-Asian marriages organised through matchmaking services to be socially accepted.

In this specific type of arranged marriage, the attraction of South Korea for Asian migrant women is not necessarily their prospective husbands, but rather, the country's economic affluence and competitive global status. Although rural bridegrooms are viewed comparatively less desirably within South Korean society, "the position of the Korean economy within the global economic order" often makes them desirable and popular among women from developing countries (Lee et al., 2016: 283). Indeed, what appealed to Korean/Chinese women to "fill the vacancies

[106] As of February 2021, 15,810,000 KRW is roughly equivalent to £10,316 and 2,990,000 KRW is roughly equivalent to £1,951.

[107] An arranged marriage in a contemporary South Korean context means that men and women find their spouses through family connections or marriage agencies. The point is that modern-day arranged marriages are different from those in the past, which were almost always arranged by the bride's and groom's parents and family.

in Korean households" since the 1990s was "the wealth, middle-class lifestyle, and personal freedom that South Korea is imagined to hold" (Freeman, 2005: 80). As one Korean/Chinese bride admits, South Korea was pictured as "a paradise" where machines do all the hard work in the field and people simply sit back and relax, and she did not realise that South Korean men who sought out brides in China are perceived as having "something lacking" in South Korea (Freeman, 2005: 89).

Despite the gap between South Korea's global status and the domestic position of rural bachelors, as Lee et al. argue with the case of Vietnamese marriage migrants, these cross-border marriages constitute "hypergamous unions" in the less affluent sending communities (Lee et al., 2016: 279-280). Hypergamy means to marry "with someone of higher social status" (cited in Mohanadoss, 1995: 558), and these Asian brides and their families believe that the brides 'marry up' through the cross-border matchings. Through this upward migration, for instance, Vietnamese brides can financially contribute to their birth families, and thus they are empowered in decision-making (Bélanger and Tran Giang Linh, 2011: 65-66). Conversely, in South Korea, Asian marriage migrants are perceived to play the pejorative role of marrying socially and economically underprivileged men who are snubbed by ethnic South Korean women. That is, marriage migrants are expected to take up the traditional gender-specific duties that ethnic South Korean women no longer comply with (S. Kim, 2009b: 211). Their roles are thus often seen to be limited to domestic labour and child-bearing (Piper and Lee, 2016: 475). The next section will concentrate on the problems caused by this distorted view of Asian migrant women in South Korea as well as similar issues in the broader context of Asia.

The problematic consequence of inter-Asian marriage

In the still-patriarchal society, conventional customs are especially dominant in rural communities where the vast majority of Asian marriage migrants settle down. In addition, the monetised rapid marriage process through commercial matchmaking services has further given South Korean husbands a distorted perception of marriage (Women Migrants Human Rights Center of Korea, 2018: 51). As migrant wives are perceived as purchased, reproductive labour and domestic chores are regarded as migrant wives' duties. They are further expected to become Korean mothers and to stress their Korean identities while marginalising their own (M. Kim,

2013: 469). That is, the perceived ethnic others are regarded as the object of assimilation into the patriarchal system of South Korean society (S. Kim, 2009b: 215). In return for obedient complying with the patriarchal norm, “a legitimate social position which may dilute their ethnic otherness” is given (Jung, 2012: 209). In a host country that maintains a conservative view of multiculturalism, these ethnic others as well as female migrants have no choice but to be obedient migrant wives and Korean mothers.

This kind of gendered intra-Asian marriage migration and related issues are not unique to South Korea but are, in fact, an Asian-wide phenomenon. Along with South Korea, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore and Taiwan are also ‘host’ countries and cities, while China and Vietnam are predominantly ‘sending’ countries. Of interest here is the point that host countries across Asia under-privilege their Asian marriage migrants in a strikingly similar way. In *The Place of Vietnamese Marriage Migrants in Singapore: Social Reproduction, Social ‘Problems’ and Social Protection* (2013), Yeoh et al. examine commercially matched cross-border marriages and how “marriage migrants are positioned within the family and nation-state as dependants of Singaporean men” (2013: 1927). In Singapore, increasing numbers of working-class men marry foreign women “as a more affordable way of securing various forms of care work” (Yeoh et al., 2013: 1930). Similar to South Korea, Singaporean men retain old-fashioned views and attitudes towards the role of the wife in the family, but fewer native women are willing to fulfil these expectations (Yeoh et al., 2013: 1931). In these circumstances, marriage migrants from low-income countries fill the gap, performing unpaid domestic labour, looking after elder members of a family and delivering and raising children (Yeoh et al., 2013: 1928). This asymmetric marital relationship continues because many immigrant wives cannot help but depend on their husbands’ sponsorship or their willingness to be sponsors to secure “rights to residency, access to paid work and social subsidies” (Yeoh et al., 2013: 1931).

As marriages between Hong Kong men and mainland Chinese women exemplify in *Marriage Migration as a Multifaceted System: The Intersectionality of Intimate Partner Violence in Cross-Border Marriages* (2017), the “gender inequality” between immigrant wives and their citizen husbands often places the migrant women in vulnerable positions in their marital relationship (Chiu, 2017: 1300-1303). The Hong

Kong husband-over-Chinese wife relationship chimes considerably with the marriage between a rural bachelor in South Korea and a migrant wife from a developing Asian country. Similar to underprivileged South Korean husbands, many Hong Kong husbands in this context achieved poor levels of education, thus their occupation statuses tend to be lower (Chiu, 2017: 1304). Nevertheless, because of the enormous socio-economic disparity between Hong Kong and China, mainland Chinese wives are stereotypically perceived as “gold-diggers” who only marry for Hong Kong citizenship and economic purpose, with the intention to leave their husbands after they complete their migration to Hong Kong (Chiu, 2017: 1301). Consequently, migrant wives have to endure irrational suspicions and are placed under their husbands’ constant surveillance (Chiu, 2017: 1302). In addition, the economic deprivation of low-income households further triggers “conflicts with and violence against marriage migrants” (Chiu, 2017: 1304). When violence is employed, migrant wives face a dilemma as they can neither go back to their home country as Chinese citizens nor stay in Hong Kong with their abusive husbands (Chiu, 2017: 1299). Consequently, marriage migration becomes the point where “immigration, class, gender, and culture” cross to construct “a multifaceted system that not only increases the vulnerability of” intimate partner violence (IPV) to marriage migrants “but also cripples marriage migrants’ ability to manage IPV” (Chiu, 2017: 1295).

Such domestic violence within inter-Asian marriages is not an exception in South Korea. According to a survey report on marriage migrants’ sense of a secure residence published by the National Human Rights Commission of Korea in 2017, 42.1% of respondents reported to have personally experienced some form of domestic violence (Kim et al., 2017: 125). The figure 42.1% evidences the unfair situation that marriage migrants are in; however, at the same time, as the establishment of the *Multicultural Families Support Act* in 2008 shows, the South Korean state’s multicultural policy has benefited Asian marriage migrants who belong to South Korean families more than any other group of migrants in the country (Park and Park, 2014: 37-38). The point here is that, although the policy certainly supports the migrant women so that they can be assimilated into society (Park and Park, 2014: 50), it does not widely protect those who have not been successfully assimilated. The private sphere of family, as well as wider society, are

all responsible for these cross-border marriages; however, in unsuccessful cases, marriage migrant women become helpless victims.

Under these circumstances, non-governmental organisations have played a key role in helping those neglected and marginalised migrant wives. Among others, the Women Migrants Human Rights Center of Korea runs twenty-six refuges across the nation for female migrant victims of violence (Women Migrants Human Rights Center of Korea, 2018: 8). *Stories That No One Knew: The Struggles of Female Victims of Violence* (2018) is the centre's publication about marriage migrant victims of domestic violence. The book features real-life accounts from marriage migrants in the centre's refuges with expert interpretations of each case. Many stories in the recently published book are about Vietnamese brides who were beaten by their South Korean husbands (Women Migrants Human Rights Center of Korea, 2018: 15-137), indicating that the struggles of marriage migrant women are ongoing. In the next section, I will ask how, then, in comparison to the multicultural policies in force, as well as non-governmental organisations' efforts to respond to the struggles of these marginalised ethnic others, does theatre engage with this current crisis of multicultural transition. It is especially relevant to ask this question as theatre has been socially engaging in transitional periods of past crises in Korea, including the transition to a modern country as elaborated in the Introduction.

The struggle of ethnic others and theatre

To a certain degree, theatre and the performing arts have been engagingly active in promoting multicultural society. For instance, both central and local governments have organised numerous multicultural festivals such as the *Munhwa Dayangseong Chukje MAMF* (Migrant's Arirang Multicultural Festival).[108] The MAMF has been held since 2005 with support from the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism as well as broadcasting companies. Since 2010, the festival has taken place in the city of Changwon, Gyeongsangnamdo ('History') where the third biggest population of multicultural families reside ('The Geographical Distribution').[109] Aiming to encourage interaction between different migrant peoples and non-migrants, the festival features

[108] *Migrant's Arirang Multicultural Festival* is the official English title of the festival.

[109] In 2020, the festival went online and 'untact' because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

traditional food, culture and performances from the migrants' home countries. In this kind of cultural event, however, as Jeffers points out with refugee festivals where many refugees showcase traditional performances from their country of origin (2011: 113-114), others' bodies are presented rather than encountered through performances (2011: 120). While enjoying the authentically staged otherness, audiences are not necessarily encouraged to question who the performers are or "why they come to be performing at a refugee arts festival" (Jeffers, 2011: 120).

Beyond the display of traditional culture and arts mostly from Asian migrants' home countries, plays and performances have gradually begun to mirror the issue of multicultural transition. The government-subsidised *Damunhwa Gukak Myujikeol Leobeu in Asia* (*Multicultural and Traditional Korean Musical Love in Asia*, 2007), which toured the country until 2010, addresses conflicts between a South Korean woman and her three daughters-in-law from China, the Philippines and Vietnam in a multicultural family, with an actual Asian migrant woman performing one of the characters in the 2010 production.[110] More recently, the Gyeonggido Theatre Company produced the *Hapchang Musical O! Solemio!* (*Choral Musical O! Sole Mio!*, 2018) about a multicultural choir's exciting challenge to participate in a competition despite having financial difficulties. Through the narrative and/or visual presentation of ethnic others on stage, these performances contribute to improve audiences' multicultural awareness to some extent. Despite this, Asian migrants – both in terms of performers and performance content – are still mostly considered as a marginal concern within the professional sphere, which is not open to artists of colour.[111]

Apart from a few examples, theatre practitioners in mainstream productions are still dominantly ethnic South Koreans. As of July 2019, NTCK, a major theatre producer in South Korea, has no non-ethnic Korean actors among its eighteen members who

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[110] *Love in Asia* is the official English title.

[111] In South Korea, people often use biased terms such as *Honhyeol* (mixed-blood) to address a Korean whose parent (either father or mother) is not an ethnic Korean. In a similar context, as pointed out eariler, foreign migrants are prevalently regarded as the subject of Koreanisation. In order to avoid repeating those politically incorrect terms and perspectives, I employ the phrase 'people of colour'. This term was taken from the US context where, for instance, Korean American people identify themselves as people of colour. In this chapter, I mainly address Asian migrants in South Korea as people (artists/actors/performers) of colour.

appear on the national stage.[112] At the Doosan Art Center, a leading producing theatre that particularly supports young artists, fifteen plays were all directed by ethnic South Korean artists in 2019. To make my point clear, artists of colour in question in this chapter are limited to those involved in domestic productions. Not surprisingly, a number of artists from all over the world, including artists of colour based in other countries, frequently present their works in South Korea through short-term or long-term international collaborations, such as at performing arts and theatre festivals. However, this chapter does not focus on those non-resident foreign artists or their works; instead I wish to highlight the scarcity of less privileged Asian migrant artists who are domiciled in South Korea in the professional sphere.

Away from the mainstream stages, the presence of Asian migrants delivering their stories through performance is actually more visible. *Mama Meme Ez* (*Mother Az Mother*, directed by Yu Jiwon, 2016), for example, actively involved Asian marriage migrants in the creative process.[113] Organised by a local cultural foundation, in total, eight migrant women, including those from Vietnam and three ethnic South Korean residents, participated in this project (S. Kim, 2017: 45). The whole process included forging a bond among the participants through plays, sharing the participants' own stories through the myths from their home countries, penning a storyline together and creating the final performance (S. Kim, 2017: 44). Kim Suk Hyun, South Korean theatre critic and the artistic director of this amateur production, elucidates the social efficacy of the performance created by marriage migrant women, as opposed to aesthetically-oriented professional performances (2017: 42). In other words, theatre here is exclusively understood as a useful platform to help the socially marginalised. The participants' feedback also demonstrate that *Mother Az Mother* achieved the expected goal, enabling ethnic South Korean residents and migrants to better understand each other and overcome prejudices (S. Kim, 2017: 56-58). That is, this amateur theatre production is solely valued as a community performance, not as an art form.

[112] *My Aunt in Texas*, which was jointly produced by the company, features non-ethnic South Korean actress Anna Elisabeth Rihlmann but she was not one of the eighteen official actors.

[113] *Mama*, *Meme* and *Ez* mean mother in Filipino, Vietnamese and Mongolian respectively.

This kind of dichotomous perspective that differentiates aesthetic mainstream stages from theatres of migration that involve actual migrants has been maintained in South Korean society. As the director of multicultural theatre company Salad somewhat sceptically remarked about having no contact from the professional sphere (Park, 2019a), the two different worlds have hardly been in contact with each other. The aforementioned case of NTCK with no non-ethnic Korean actors among its eighteen official members also proves the absence of an interface between the two realms, further implying that the professional sphere has not been free from the myth of ethnic homogeneity and social prejudice against ethnic others. While the undervalued ethnic others have hardly been able to be a key part of the exclusive theatrical sphere, their presence is not completely absent. The following performance analysis examines a rare but existent theatrical addressing of the issues around Asian marriage migrants and staging of their ethnic otherness in the professional sphere.

In order to analyse the theatrical engagement with this ongoing social discourse, I chose two performances: one is the highly acclaimed theatre piece *My Aunt in Texas* and the other is *Ran's Diary*, which was staged by marginalised Asian migrant theatre-makers. The two plays were carefully selected to discuss both a minority discourse staged by non-migrants and a staged counterpublic created by migrants themselves. A counterpublic is a type of public "an ongoing space of encounter for discourse" (Warner, 2002: 62). As Michael Warner puts it, what makes a public a counterpublic is the ways in which it addresses contemporary social issues with the perspectives and committed participation of those "socially marked by their participation in this kind of discourse", generating "friction against the dominant public" of the time (2002: 66-87). The meaning of a counterpublic against the dominant public in Warner's interpretation allows us to grasp the multicultural theatre company's theatrical approach towards the social discourse of marriage migrants in *Ran's Diary*. In contrast to *My Aunt in Texas*, where the dominated group (outsiders) is both addressed and received through theatre by the dominant public (insiders) in South Korea, *Ran's Diary* functions as a space where the subordinate group of migrants (outsiders) raises its own voice against the dominant one (insiders). As Emma Cox points out in *Theatre and Migration* (2014), "there can be different interests at work when 'outsiders' are written and performed into being by 'insiders',

as contrasted with ‘outsiders’ enacting some kind of self-representation” (2014: 22). In the context of South Korea, as pointed out, the two realms operate separately, thus the insiders and the outsiders rarely intersect. Through the analysis of the two plays that fall into each category respectively, I will illuminate the different interests between insiders’ interpretation of others and outsiders’ self-representation.

In the analysis of *Ran’s Diary* as a staged counterpublic, I will further examine how the performance that encourages audiences to be critically aware of the issue in question ultimately functions as a protest about the dominant public. The aim of this examination is, however, not to demonstrate the political clout of a theatrical intervention. In *The Politics of Performance: Radical Theatre as Cultural Intervention* (1992), Baz Kershaw discusses “the potential efficacy of theatrical performance” (1992: 1) with the cases of community theatre where audiences actively participate as part of the projects. At a micro-level, those community theatre practices function as “a temporary creative outlet” (Kershaw, 1992: 220). In 1980s Britain, however, it was far more influential and even became a model for “the community activist movement” (Kershaw, 1992: 254). Compared to applied theatre oriented towards pathways for action, the counterpublic discourse on stage, *Ran’s Diary*, arguably provides spectators with a critical consciousness of the marginalised ethnic minority and associated issues. The enhanced awareness of political correctness is, I suggest, what is needed in the ongoing multicultural transition.[114]

4) Multicultural discourses in theatre: minority discourse vs. counterpublic discourse

Critically acclaimed mainstream production (*My Aunt in Texas*) vs. multicultural performance created by Asian migrant artists (*Ran’s Diary*)

My Aunt in Texas is a critically acclaimed play that addresses multicultural discourses in South Korea. As one of only a few mainstream plays that directly deal with the current social issue in the country, *My Aunt in Texas* won Best Drama at the prestigious Dong-A Theatre Awards in 2018. Before telling this story of marriage migrants, South Korean playwright Yun Mi-hyun had already written about socio-

[114] In 2019, for example, a news story reported an incident about a migrant worker who was physically assaulted by an ethnic South Korean for no apparent reason (S. Kim, 2019).

economically vulnerable members of society in her other plays. In her 'house' trilogy including *Pyeongsang* (*Low Wooden Bench*, directed by Lee Ucheon, 2013), *Jeolmeun Fucidin* (A *Young Fucidin – A Love Story*, directed by Yoon Hansol, 2014) and *Gyeongbokgung-eseo Mannan Ppalgan Yeoja* (*A Woman in Red Who I Met in Gyeongbokgung Palace*, directed by Kim Seungcheol, 2014), Yun consistently features tenants who are in danger of being kicked out of their rented accommodation (I. Kang, 2015: 49). Yun's recent play-turned-opera *Teotbat Killer* (*Killer's Garden*, directed by Jang Yeong-a, 2019) similarly portrays disadvantaged people in South Korean society: a needy family and its incapable members helplessly needy for the grandmother's gold teeth, the fortuneless family's only asset.[115] In *My Aunt in Texas*, Yun again attends to people living on the margins of society but the focus shifts to those marginalised as migrants and as women. In a newspaper article that summarises the theatre industry shaken by the #MeToo movement in 2018, *My Aunt in Texas* was recognised as one of the growing number of plays that place women in the centre of its narrative in South Korea (Hwang, 2018). The multi award-winning playwright based the play on a first-hand account of a South Korean return migrant who left for Argentina in the 1970s when the South American country was prosperous (Yun, 2018a). Yun dramatised this story by replacing the return migrant with a fictional character Chunmi (Yun, 2018a) who leaves for the US state of Texas with her soldier husband but returns home in the end.

Despite Chunmi being ethnically Korean, discriminatory views of military brides, as discussed in the historical overview, are analogous to those of Asian marriage migrants in South Korea. In the dramatisation of the transgenerational discrimination against marriage migrant women, the playwright juxtaposes the story of Chunmi with that of an Asian migrant character; a young Kyrgyzstani woman in a countryside town in South Korea. The two stories overlap across time and space, and raise issues such as, the treatment of migrant women in sweatshops. Through these two impoverished, labouring female migrants, Yun touches upon the injustices that are passed down through each generation of marriage migrants. In the current transition to a multicultural society in South Korea, this rare theatrical intervention in the

[115] I saw this opera on 4 July 2019 at Sejong M Theater, Sejong Center, Seoul, South Korea. *Killer's Garden* is the official English title.

discourse of Asian marriage migrants (through the Kyrgyzstani migrant character) is especially contemporary and socially engaging. *My Aunt in Texas* won the 4th ASAC (AnSan Arts Center) Creative Drama Contest in 2017. The city of Ansan is arguably the centre of multicultural South Korea and the competition has encouraged playwrights to write new dramas specifically about the city since 2011. *My Aunt in Texas* was jointly staged by the Ansan Arts Center and NTCK in 2018.

Compared with the minority discourse that was produced by the leading public theatre and theatre company, multicultural theatre company Salad's *Ran's Diary* stages a counterpublic discourse. As an independent theatre company with multi-ethnic/national members, Salad aims to promote diversity and human rights (YTN, 2018), by encouraging the indifferent and discriminatory dominant public to be self-reflective. Similar to the company's other performances, migrant characters in *Ran's Diary* are mostly performed by actual Asian migrant performers, telling the story of the tragic death of Vietnamese marriage migrant Ran. Although Park Kyong-ju, who writes and directs most of the productions, is a non-migrant and ethnically Korean, the actors and creative team members of Salad are mostly Asian migrants with various ethnic and cultural backgrounds.[116] This multicultural theatre company focuses solely on Asia(ns) to tackle the contradictory issue of how ethnic South Koreans – as Asians themselves – discriminately perceive and treat Asian migrants (Park, 2019a). Through theatre, Salad creates a place where marginalised Asian migrants have a voice. The company's subordinate and disempowered position as a group of ethnic/racial minorities places Salad's committed works as counterpublics. Considering the Asian members' racial minority and their theatrical participation in the host country, Salad's vision and practice can be compared with Asian American actors' solidarity that grew in the 1960s in the US. Their aim was to "protest 'oriental' stereotypes", raise "awareness of Asian American actors' wide-ranging talents" and demand non-Asian roles as well (E. Lee, 2006: 25). In comparison to the Asian American actors who demanded non-stereotyped presence within the industry, Salad's counterpublic is more about being socially engaging than challenging the professional sphere.

[116] The creative team members of the company with headshots can be found here. salad.or.kr/260?category=519366 ('The Introduction of Salad Members').

When director Park studied experimental film in the early 1990s in Germany, the neo-Nazi movement was prevalent, forcing her to realise that she is merely seen as a 'yellow-faced' Asian in the European country (W. Jeong, 2019). The experience of being a foreign minority in a wealthy Western country enabled her to put herself in others' (particularly foreigners') shoes, thus, she could not simply ignore migrant workers and their difficult situations when she returned to South Korea (W. Jeong, 2019). Park initially established Salad TV, an internet-based independent multicultural broadcasting platform, in 2005. She collected many stories of migrants then founded the theatre company in 2009 to create performances using those stories. Under her artistic leadership, the still extant company produces two different kinds of performance. One is the Asian musical series that introduces other Asian countries' cultures to South Korean audiences. Considering that musicals in South Korea are seen as representative of "middle-brow art" that "pleases everybody, shocks nobody, and looks democratic" (Pavis, 2017: 52), it is noteworthy that the multicultural theatre company chose the commercial genre. As the aim of introducing other Asian cultures indicates, however, Salad's musicals are not simply musicals. Unlike commercially driven licensed musicals which are dominant in the performing arts industry, Salad's small-scale musicals intend to enhance the audiences' multicultural awareness (YTN, 2018). Focusing on the musical series, South Korean scholar Kim Soojin categorised Salad as a musical troupe in her analysis on how the company performs and reflects multiculturalism (2016a: 124-125). The perspective that defines the company as a musical troupe is, I argue, a bit narrow as it does not accommodate another important aspect of its work: experimental performance.

Experimental performance primarily addresses the issue of human rights, specifically those of Asian migrants (YTN, 2018). Among others, *Ran's Diary* and *Yeosu Cheoeum Junggan Kkeut* (*Yeosu, Beginning, Middle and the End*, written and directed by Park Kyong-ju, 2010) are both part of the company's *Jon-gyeongbatji Mothan Jukeum Sirijeu* (*Unrespected Deaths Series*) that addresses the matter of migration in South Korea through exploring cases of the tragic deaths of migrants.[117] Unlike the musical productions, these performances adopt unconventional forms and styles to examine the socially neglected but critical issues. The experimental

[117] *Yeosu, Beginning, Middle and the End* is the official English title.

approach often creates a *mise-en-scène* that compels the audience to face the tragic reality that they have not experienced first-hand. In *Yeosu, Beginning, Middle and the End,* for example, the audience is encouraged to move around the space during the performance.[118] In the fire scene at the foreigners' detention centre in the city of Yeosu, the audience is located on the stage so that they are in the heart of the chaotic and agonising scene. In November 2020, Salad showcased *Saengjon Ilgi* (*The Survival Diary*, collectively devised by members of Salad and directed by Park Kyong-ju, 2020).[119] This new performance that shows how the company and its Asian migrant members are going through the Covid-19 pandemic was live streamed on YouTube, connecting a live outdoor event in Seoul with its three members stuck in the Philippines and Mongolia because of the travel restrictions.[120] During the show, one member in the Philippines painstakingly presented a house cleaning performance, demonstrating on screen how her life was struck hard by the pandemic. This exemplifies Salad's experimental and thought-provoking performances that create a subversive space where non-others cannot simply ignore perceived others' painful experiences, as they might normally do in reality. That is, the political intent of the plays is more explicit than in other aesthetic-oriented performances.

In the case of *Ran's Diary*, the company further created a revised edition through the collaboration with ethnic South Korean husbands victimised by fraudulent cross-border marriages. By doing so, the performance also gave the South Korean husbands – rarely regarded as victims of these marriage arrangements – an opportunity to have their voices heard. This version, that separately features the character Ran and the actual South Korean husbands, was performed as part of the Seoul Marginal Theatre Festival in 2011. While the original *Ran's Diary* was performed on the street near the Hyehwa Catholic Church in the Daehakro theatre district of central Seoul, the South Korean husbands presented a live on-stage talk with a one-act play titled *Gukje Gyeolhoneun Michin Jisida* (*International Marriage is a Crazy Thing to Do*) at a black box theatre nearby. For audience members who know that part of the city, the location of the outdoor venue additionally signals that

[118] The edited video clip of the performance (in the Small Hall of the Daehakro Arts Theater, Seoul) in 2010 can be found here: www.parkkyongju.com/new-art ('New Conceptual Art').

[119] *The Survival Diary* is the official English title.

[120] I saw the live streamed performance on 21 November 2020 on YouTube.

the spot is where the Filipino market is held every Sunday. In other words, the performance that features Southeast Asian performers is intimately tied to this specific site. The open-air and indoor performances were then connected through live streaming on the internet, forming the revised edition. As pinpointed by South Korean theatre critic Kim Minseung, the two opposite voices heard in disparate spaces only partly intersect with each other through live coverage, thus reflecting the one-sided and limited communication in reality (2011). The high-tech media technology was used to purposely connect the two parts in the revised edition; however, few people accessed it (Park, 2019a).[121] Thus, it is hard to trace how the company's progressive attempt was received by audiences. The aforementioned point made by Kim is also from the only professional theatre critic's review on this piece. That is, Salad's experimental performances that engage with social issues around internal migrants remain on the periphery of the professional sphere.

As Park explains, the Asian musical series clearly targets teenage students and the performances at school have been well received over the years (Park, 2019a). Although the musicals have been successful with the continuous financial support from its corporate sponsor, the audience members are mostly school students watching as part of their curriculum, not the theatre-going public. Meanwhile, the aim of experimental performances such as *Ran's Diary* is more about the realisation of the director's conviction and her artistic ambition, not necessarily about its reception (Park, 2019a). What fundamentally leads the director to place greater importance on the intention and the process than its impact upon the audience, I argue, is the marginalised status of unconventional performances in South Korea. As Pavis remarks, experimental theatre in South Korea is in a fragile state (2017: 260); thus, it is not difficult to speculate on the reality that Salad has to face with their experimental performances that feature marginalised Asian migrant performers. Despite public indifference towards such unconventional theatrical works, Salad has played an undeniably pioneering role in addressing social issues in multicultural South Korea. For the company's contribution towards helping multicultural families, Salad was awarded the social contribution group award at the *Dong-A Multicultural Awards with the LG* in 2017. Based on this detailed understanding of the different

[121] Similarly, the recent live streaming of *The Survival Diary* was also watched by less than ten people.

backgrounds of the mainstream production (*My Aunt in Texas*) and the experimental performance created by the multicultural theatre company (*Ran's Diary*), I will now analyse each work in detail.

My Aunt in Texas: intervention in audiences' critical awareness

My Aunt in Texas mirrors the reality where marriage migrants are unseen and merely exploited as manual labourers. In this play, with the exception of the main character Chunmi, migrant women characters are nameless. They are simply referred to as someone's mother or somebody from somewhere. The characters without names, I argue, critically mirror how marriage migrants are seen – or indeed not seen – in South Korean society. The unrecognised migrant women, including Chunmi, are all portrayed as suffering from the toils of physical labour. Chunmi, a youthful housemaid in a small countryside town of Goesan, South Korea, follows US soldier Richard to Texas to escape a life of hardship. Chunmi imagines the US to be a utopian place of leisure, where she could partake in pastimes such as gracefully swimming in her bikini and drinking coffee. Once living in Texas, Chunmi becomes Christina, which romantically reminds her of Christmas (Yun, 2018b: 30-31). Opposite to Chunmi's expectations, however, her new name and life in Texas make no significant difference to her life experiences. In the first scene, set thirty-six years ago in a cornfield in Texas, Christina complains about working all day long in the field:

> Aunt in Texas: I am Christina. (Interval) Why am I picking corns instead of swimming in my bikini? I came to the US because I hated Chunmi who always had to work wearing an apron in Goesan.
>
> (It gets completely dark.)
>
> Aunt in Texas: Than the life as Chunmi in Goesan, I find the life in Texas as Christina is harder. (Yun, 2018b: 6-7)

The back-breaking labour is based on the real day-to-day lives of military brides like Chunmi. Indeed, the military brides interviewed by Yuh Ji-yeon, the author of *Beyond the Shadow of Camptown*: *Korean Military Brides in America* (2002), laboured mostly as "unskilled or semiskilled" workers (2002: 111). Mrs. Mullen, one of the

interviewees in the book, states that she worked “like a *slave*” at a candy factory (Yuh, 2002: 112). So, the opening scene immediately confronts the audience with Chunmi’s situation and the real issue of the exploitation of marriage migrant labour.

As pointed out, there is a huge gap between Chunmi’s fantasies of life in the US and the harsh reality of working on a giant corn farm in Texas. Although the overwhelming physical labour is a key part of the female migrant character’s storyline, the staging of the character’s physical struggle is not the focal point of this piece. In the prologue scene set in Texas, the director gives only a brief visual impression of the type of labour Chunmi is forcibly tasked with by hanging several ears of corn around her shoulders. It is the character’s words that reveal her toil on the farm. The narrative description of painful physical labour is also the case for another migrant woman character: Socheol’s mother. As the story develops, the audience learns that she committed suicide, partly because of her South Korean family’s disdain for her Cambodian migrant status, and partly because the extreme level of labour demanded of her was too much to bear. The long list of her tough farming work is revealed through her son Socheol’s lengthy monologue. Given that this physical labour was so overwhelming that it factored in her suicide, the migrant woman’s physical labour could have been performed through the character’s body on stage.[122] Instead, her hardship is only indirectly referenced in the aforementioned monologue.

Considering “the possibility that, in representing human pain, theatre makers may fall into traps of voyeurism, pity and the aestheticisation of suffering is a constant possibility” (Jeffers, 2011: 72), it is noteworthy that the director did not aestheticise the suffering of victimised marriage migrants. As noted by South Korean theatre critic Bae Sun-ae in her interview with the director, included in the programme, perpetrators do not appear on stage, thus there are no distressing scenes that might considerably discomfort audiences (2018: 2). This approach, I argue, avoids the objectification of suffering but instead maintains an objective distance from it. In comparison to Ariane Mnouchkine and Theatre du Soleil’s *Odyssees* that represents “as many stories as possible” to share “the diversity of experiences” and “to avoid

[122] Sochel’s mother appears on stage but her brief physical presence is mainly to signal that she committed suicide.

appropriating the others' pain" (Grehan, 2009: 124), director Choi Yong-hoon strategically eschewed realistic staging (Bae, 2018: 2). His 'dry and monotonous' description of 'the absurd reality' intended to position the audience to encounter it with reason rather than emotion (Bae, 2018: 2). In other words, the intention of his *mise-en-scéne* was to create an objective distance (not an emotional connection) between the staged reality and the auditorium, thus enabling the audience to critically reflect.

The objective perspective towards the subject is also embedded in the characters developed by the playwright. In this drama, neither Chunmi nor the nameless Kyrgyzstani character is purely described as a victim. The Kyrgyzstani migrant woman is Chunmi's own sister-in-law. They are both marriage migrants and their unhappy marriages are alike. Chunmi left for Texas to follow her future husband but he left her soon after they settled there. After years of hard labour, she returns to South Korea, leaving behind her children. She, however, pretends she still has a decent life in Texas. Despite the tragic consequence, she is not portrayed entirely as a victim in that it is her who fantasised about the US and chose to follow the man to Texas while barely knowing him. In her conversation with a Mexican woman, it is revealed that Chunmi did not even know if her husband was an American or a Mexican. In addition, as a family member as well as a former marriage migrant with similar experiences, Chunmi certainly empathises with her new Kyrgyzstani sister-in-law, however, does not actively intervene to help her. Similarly, neither is the Kyrgyzstani woman portrayed purely as a victim. Her South Korean husband, forty years her senior, seeks sexual satisfaction and a secure labour force from his second marriage. In contrast to this, the Kyrgyzstani woman insists that she married to study and succeed in South Korea. She refuses both sex and physical labour, but persistently insists upon attending school. As such, both the husband and the migrant bride entered into this marriage as a means of attaining something else. In brief, while the marriage migrant characters certainly expose the harsh realities of actual marriage migrants, the narrative is not necessarily biased in their favour.

The playwright also structured the plot in a way that enables audiences to objectively reflect on themselves in relation to the dramatised marriage migrant characters. That is, the story of the South Korean Chunmi who leaves for the US is juxtaposed with

those of Asian marriage migrants who settle in South Korea. This structural arrangement, I suggest, invites the audience to navigate their own positionality between the ethnic South Korean migrant and Asian marriage migrants in South Korea. The combination of the contrasting but fundamentally similar stories enables ethnic South Korean audiences to simultaneously sympathise with victimised marriage migrants as well as realise their own role in victimising the migrants in their own country:

> The awareness of the reality that sharply depicts the bare face of our society where we have become perpetrators even with the experience of once being a marginalised other stands out. ('Show Info – *My Aunt in Texas*')

The above quote from the judges of the ASAC drama contest demonstrates how the juxtaposition of the stories guides non-migrant South Korean audiences to critically realise the shift in their position from sympathising with a victim (by identifying with ethnic South Korean migrant women, including Chunmi, abused by others) to identifying themselves as a perpetrator (by reflecting on their own discrimination against Asian marriage migrants, including the Kyrgyzstani migrant woman).

For non-migrant South Korean characters in this play, the narrative similarly maintains an objective distance, suggesting that ethnic South Koreans may hold different attitudes towards marginalised ethnic others, with an important dividing factor being age. The sixteen-year-old daughter of the South Korean husband, for instance, insists that it is wrong for her father to marry a woman who is only three years older than herself. While, on the one hand, the audience encounters the teenage girl who also empathises with a Korean/Bhutani orphan in the village, on the other, spectators see an old South Korean woman who used to abuse her Cambodian daughter-in-law (Socheol's mother) by secretly hitting her with a hot ladle. The difference arguably implies that the younger generation is more empathetic than the older generation, with the latter tending to insist upon ownership of ethnic others and to practise violence against them. One audience review similarly points out that it is not the grown-ups but the children who think in a reasonable way and console other people who are suffering (Gogo-ys, 2018). That is, the balanced portrayal of contrasting attitudes towards marginalised others led the audience to reflect on themselves between sympathy and discrimination.

Whilst maintaining this objective distance, the play further touches upon the sensitive issue of sexual exploitation of marriage migrants. Although the representation is mild on stage, like the case of labour exploitation, the theatrical intervention in the issue arguably provides the audience with an opportunity to become critically aware of the problem. In Act Three, a Kyrgyzstani mail-order bride arrives in Goesan. She married Chunmi's older brother through a matchmaking agency to avoid ending up working in a cup factory in her home country. When this 19-year-old young woman in jeans first appears on stage, the husband is instantly impressed by his new wife's revealing top when she takes off her jumper. The *mise-en-scéne* is not particularly sexually suggestive, however, it sufficiently evinces the South Korean husband's perception of his foreign bride as an object of sexual desire. In the analysis of South Korean film *Naui Gyeolhon Wonjeonggi* (*Wedding Campaign*, directed by Hwang Byeong-guk, 2005), South Korean media scholar Kim Sumi similarly notes how Uzbek women are seen as "objects of sexual desire and as inviting sexual subjects" by South Korean men on a marriage tour in Uzbekistan (2009b: 219).[123] In reality, the twisted perception of foreign wives problematically results in the inhumane treatment of them. In one of the real stories in the aforementioned book, *Stories That No One Knew: The Struggles of Female Victims of Violence* (2018), a Vietnamese marriage migrant is even raped by her father-in-law (Women Migrants Human Rights Center of Korea, 2018: 133-135). In *My Aunt in Texas*, the distorted sexual desire towards female marriage migrants is indirectly but explicitly addressed through the conflict between the old husband and the young wife. After the short honeymoon period, this Kyrgyzstani woman no longer obediently accepts the expected role. As the husband's sexual desire is not met by his disobedient wife, the marital relationship goes wrong:

The woman from Kyrgyzstan: I have already told you no.

Father (husband): Why no?

[123] The South Korean film is about South Korean rural bachelors who go on a marriage tour to Uzbekistan through a marriage agency. Similar to this film, *My Aunt in Texas* also addresses issues around cross-border marriages with Asian women or marriage tours to other parts of Asia, focusing on Central Asian countries, such as Kyrgyzstan, that are geographically nearer to Europe and relatively less well known to South Koreans.

The woman from Kyrgyzstan: I will read books.

Father (husband): You did not marry me to read books.

The woman from Kyrgyzstan: (nodding) I married you to read books.

Father (husband): That is wrong. You married me to sleep with me every night.

The woman from Kyrgyzstan: No. (Yun, 2018b: 29-30)

The woman from Kyrgyzstan: I was informed that I can go to school in South Korea.

Father (husband): I did not really mean it. I just said so to bring you (to Geosan).

The woman from Kyrgyzstan: No, you meant it. (showing her little finger) You promised me.

Father (husband): I said so just because the matchmaking agency instructed me to do so… (Yun, 2018b: 33)

As the above quarrel between husband and wife suggests, this play problematises the issue of sexual exploitation but does not unilaterally portray a marriage migrant as a powerless victim of sexual objectification. As quoted, this Kyrgyzstani character stubbornly resists sexual pressure in order to achieve what she wants. The resistance is, however, short-lived. As the husband's sexual instinct is not satisfied in the marital relationship, his bride is ruthlessly forced into unpaid manual labour. In a scene after the quarrel, the husband reminds his new Kyrgyzstani wife, who eagerly wants to study, of the reality that she has to hold a hoe in her hands, not books. The tension is heightened when the husband almost threatens his wife with the hoe, then the conflict between a book (migrant wife) and a hoe (South Korean husband) eventually ends with the hoe's victory. Subsequently, the Kyrgyzstani woman, with a bruise on her face, is seen working in a field. In this last scene, she no longer wears a revealing top and jeans. As the costume designer Kang Gijeong describes, she is now a farm woman who wears grey-coloured, washed out clothes (2018: 6). In addition to the change in costume, a couple of bulbs of garlic hang around her

shoulders to function as a metaphor of hard labour in a similar way that a few ears of corn did during the prologue. The concise *mise-en-scéne* in the last scene exactly counterpoints with that of the first scene, where the youthful Chunmi in Texas was overwhelmed by endless labour in the cornfield. As one audience member reports, the juxtaposition of these two stories enabled the audience to realise that the social problems regarding marriage migrants have not progressed (Phi96, 2018). The critical awareness of the problematic social issue demonstrates how successfully the playwright and director's objective perspectives have been received by the audience.

Actual migrant women who were invited to view this play by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family similarly valued how this play helps audiences become aware of this ongoing social issue. On 16 November 2018, Jin Sunmee, the then Minister of Gender Equality and Family, saw this play and had a roundtable discussion with marriage migrants, staff members of organisations that support those migrants and the creative team of *My Aunt in Texas*, including the playwright. The migrant women participants in the event, co-organised by the Ministry and NTCK, concluded that this play exposes the rising social problem and thus has enabled ethnic South Korean audiences to recognise the seen but neglected matter (Yun, 2019). Minister Jin also shared her hope that this play can help people to empathise with multicultural families and their difficulties, emphasising the power of arts and cultural output that have the potential to influence how people think and live (Mogefkorea, 2018). Such enhanced critical and empathetic awareness of those ethnically marginalised in multicultural South Korea matters as it can lead the audience to picture a more inclusive multicultural society. *Ran's Diary* is another theatrical example that serves to enhance multicultural awareness but the ways in which it involves migrants in the production and represents ethnic otherness are completely different. Before moving on to scrutinise this play's alternative perspective and approach, I will briefly probe one unique aspect of inter-Asian marriages covered in both *My Aunt in Texas* and *Ran's Diary*: the problematic intervention of matchmaking services.

Matchmaking agencies in cross-border marriage: the depiction of the monetised and unethical intervention in *My Aunt in Texas* and *Ran's Diary*

As discussed earlier, importing foreign brides to marry ethnic Korean bachelors in South Korea was initially led by local governments, but the cross-border marriage

initiative quickly morphed into a moneymaking marriage business. Both plays in my case study mirror this reality where the commercial matchmaking service is a crucial as well as problematic part of cross-border marriages. In *My Aunt in Texas*, audiences are informed that the South Korean husband went on a marriage tour to Myanmar and Kyrgyzstan where he spent 20 million KRW to marry a Kyrgyzstani woman through a marriage agency.[124] The expense revealed in this play is comparable with the aforementioned average agency fee (15,810,000 KRW) that an actual wife-seeker has to pay (Seol et al., 2017: 186). The fee to find a wife inevitably leads to the problem of South Korean husbands viewing their migrant wives as a purchase who is replaceable. Indeed, following Socheol's mother's suicide, the audience learns that her South Korean husband travels to the Mekong river region to search for another diligent bride who can replace her. In Act Ten, meanwhile, a dialogue between the Kyrgyzstani wife and the South Korean husband reveals that the matchmaking agency falsely informed her that she could study in South Korea if she marries the South Korean man. Without a matchmaker character on stage (in line with the absence of perpetrators or cruel scenes of exploitation on stage in this play), the narrative once again indirectly exposes the underhand dealings of the mercantile matchmaking business.

In *Ran's Diary*, matchmaking agencies are more vehemently condemned. In the performance overview on Salad's website, a marriage agreement arranged via such an agency is framed as human trafficking ('*Ran's Diary*'). To demonstrate how unethical the arrangement is, the problematic matchmaking process is presented in detail in the performance. In the marriage tour scene, three bride candidates including two in sleeveless tops and short pants/skirts, and Ran in a white áo dài, are displayed for selection by future husbands.[125] While the women are dancing to techno music, a marriage broker proudly claims that the agency can guarantee that even a (South Korean) man who has been married four times before can find a bride. How these women are presented in this bride selection process mirrors how a marriage tour works in reality. In *Adapting to Marriage Markets: International Marriage Migration from Vietnam to South Korea* (2016), one interviewee who participated in a marriage tour to find her South Korean husband, describes her

[124] As of February 2021, this is roughly equivalent to £13,050.

[125] Áo dài, a long dress, is a traditional Vietnamese garment.

experience of winning a “brides contest”, stating that “she was very proud and happy that she had been chosen from among the 100 beautiful girls” (Lee et al., 2016: 281). Although the interviewee does not particularly seem to be against the so-called contest, her depiction of the event causes us to question the ethics behind these marriage tours. Mirroring the reality of these women being paraded as little more than physically attractive goods before potential buyers, the staged bride contest in *Ran’s Diary* serves to enlighten a previously indifferent South Korean audience about the unprincipled dealings of matchmaking agencies.

Migrant brides are not the only victims in this monetised business. In the one-act play (*International Marriage is a Crazy Thing to Do*), included in the revised edition of *Ran’s Diary*, for instance, a South Korean husband character swindled by a marriage agency fiercely criticises this type of matchmaking service. A marriage broker character is condemned for being a fraudster and a pimp who matches South Korean husbands with fake foreign brides. While the South Korean husbands blame these agencies for underhand dealings in cross-border marriages, the narrative and theatrical presentation of the main character, Ran, maintains its focus on female sexual exploitation in this process. This abuse and oppression of Asian migrant women at the hands of South Korean husbands will be examined in the next section.

***Ran’s Diary*: sexual protest over the indifferent dominant public**

Unlike *My Aunt in Texas*, which does not actively present the audience with perpetrators or cruel scenes of exploitation on stage, *Ran’s Diary* places the sexual abuse of a migrant woman’s body at the forefront. Just like the Asian migrant artists behind *Ran’s Diary*, theatres of migration produced by ‘outsiders’ tend to deal confrontationally with a harsh reality where migrants, immigrants or refugees are victimised by ‘insiders’. In *Illegalised* (written and directed by Sînziana Koenig & Nico Vaccari, 2019) by British-Romanian collective BÉZNĂ Theatre, an in-flight scene of a forced repatriation is performed in the auditorium.[126] The scene turns the whole auditorium with approximately one hundred seats into an airplane cabin, with one of the actors who plays the role of a passenger asking the other passengers (the actual

[126] I saw this play on 16 May 2019 at Applecart Arts, London, UK. The show details can be found here: applecartarts.com/in_the_theatre.php?id=705&title=ILLEGALISED (‘Illegalised’).

audience) if they will simply observe the inhumane and violent situation. Contrastingly, another actress who plays a flight attendant asks the assumed passengers to remain calm. In other words, this "protest-theatre" ('Illegalised') urges the presumed 'insider' audience to decide if they will simply observe or stand up to support the victimised immigrant (by the end of the scene, a few audience members actually stood up to show their support).

In a similar way, *Ran's Diary* confronts audiences with an uncomfortable reality with a specific focus on sexual violence. To tackle such a sensitive subject, Salad intended to create an adults-only sexually charged play. The promotional flyer goes to great lengths to indicate this, marking it as a 'number nineteen' viewing, which signifies high sexual content (in film) in South Korea that only those aged nineteen and above can view.[127] Also, provocative Kama Sutra style sex images and slogans such as "the very first restricted drama of Korean multiculturalism" and "the sex story without love" ('No.3 *Ran's Diary*', '2011 *Ran's Diary*') are printed on the flyer.[128] Salad produced this sexually suggestive play to publicly present a problematic private matter between a South Korean husband and an Asian migrant wife in a cross-border marriage. The strategic focus on this sensitive issue and the provocative promotional material, I argue, indicate the play's self-positioning as a type of protest. In this play, however, the scenes of a sexual nature are not solely the source of the protest element. The very existence of this play is a protest in that it insists on giving marginalised ethnic minority a voice; they become empowered through being heard and seen on stage while the more powerful in society – ethnic South Koreans – are the captive observing audience who are kept silenced in the auditorium. Ironically, however, migrant artists' empowerment becomes stronger when they present themselves in the most fragile position publicly. As I will discuss in more detail shortly, the sex scenes in *Ran's Diary* feature Asian migrants who appear to be undressed, creating an uncomfortable contrast with the dressed audience. The next section will analyse how the intentionally sexual *mise-en-scéne* transforms an 'outsider's performance into staged political action that compels the 'insider' audience to recognise their own complicity as the dominant public.

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[127] The age restriction symbol was borrowed from the film industry but *Ran's Diary* is a play, not a film.

[128] In a similar context, for example, a marriage broker in a marriage tour scene uses a microphone which resembles a penis in appearance.

The protesting nature of *Ran's Diary* becomes more obvious when compared with how *My Aunt in Texas* indirectly stages sexually objectified Asian marriage migrants. For instance, the scene in *My Aunt in Texas* where the South Korean husband's teenage daughter buys condoms to stop her father and his new Kyrgyzstani wife procreating – as South Korean theatre critic Kang Il-joong argues – allows the audience to laugh as well as be confronted (2018). In comparison to this light treatment of darker issues, the sex scene in *Ran's Diary* is highly provocative. After the marriage tour and speedy wedding ceremony scene, the South Korean husband and Vietnamese wife Ran perform a choreographed sex scene straightaway. A series of repeated movements are performed, symbolically representing sexual intercourse. In the dimly lit and almost empty stage, under a few spotlights, the focus is on their bodies and movements. Meanwhile, in the open-air performance (of the revised edition) on the street, it was the proximity between the stage and the auditorium that attracts audiences' close attention to the performed sex scene. In this scene, the actor and actress who play the couple are wearing skin-coloured body stockings, which look convincing enough to suggest overt nudity. Sound effects such as panting also establish the charged sexual and seedily voyeuristic atmosphere. As it becomes clear as the scene develops, however, it is not just sex but rape. The wife's passive body and the husband's forceful body separate in a choreographed sequence, with the man's movements becoming more aggressive, thrusting his hips with increased vigour, and the woman's cowering body expressing fear and unwilling. The enforced sex, reminiscent of sex trafficking, is brought to the fore so that the audience can be in no doubt what is occurring.

In this rape scene, sex is not the only element that is enforced – the audience members, too, have no choice but to become voyeurs of an act of domineering brutality at the hands of an oppressor towards a submissive woman who is akin to a sex slave. There is no pleasure in the voyeurism, with the body stocking designed to offer an alternative way to look at the nakedness of the characters. It is, however, noteworthy that the director's original intention was to have actual naked bodies on stage to fully expose in graphic detail the horror of the marital rape and as a full-on statement about the sexual victimisation of women (rape, not sex) (Park, 2019a). Park compromised for the actors because they were not comfortable performing in the nude (Park, 2019a). In consequence, the graphic nature of the representation did

not meet the director's original plans. However, whether the performers are actually naked or the rape sequence ties in with the age 19 restriction symbol, I argue, is not the key point of the discussion. The power of this scene comes from a different angle: that 'insider' audiences are compelled to observe the performer of colour in the body stocking, who, I argue, protests by boldly playing the character Ran being sexually victimised in a cross-border marriage. That is, the audience is an enforced witness, made to watch this rape and thus made to watch this protest. In particular, the outdoor version, which was presented in intimately close proximity to the audience, can be compared to the political action of naked street demonstrations.

On 2 June, 2019, 125 naked people in New York demonstrated against the social media giants Facebook and Instagram for their censorship on artistic nudity ('Nude'). In the photos of the demonstration published online, naked participants are seen to stand or lie down, holding round-shaped printed images of male nipples to cover their genitals. This can be compared with the performers in *Ran's Diary*: demonstrators also deemed to be performing in the nude and using props. As Lara Shalson pinpoints in *Theatre and Protest* (2017), "protest is *itself* a form of performance" (2017: 15). It is, therefore, neither easy nor necessary to draw a line between the protest where the participants demonstrate through their unclothed bodies on the street and the (open-air) performance where the symbolically naked performing bodies are presented in public. As the protesters chose to be undressed in public to protest against the censorship, the performers in *Ran's Diary* willingly played the sequence in the sexual costume that puts them in a fragile position in public. Through theatrical action, I suggest, *Ran's Diary* protests against the dominant public who fail to acknowledge the victimisation. The sex scene forcibly confronts the audience with performed nudity, and this ultimately functions as a political action against a society that continues to victimise Asian marriage migrants. In short, the intention of the overt rape scene and the sexual presentation is not to reiterate reality or fulfil a voyeuristic desire but to force spectators to acknowledge their positions of implication.

The theatrical reflection of uncomfortable reality: authenticity vs. objective distance

The rape scene in *Ran's Diary* continues in a prison cell set on wheels that appears on stage. The small cell about a metre high above the ground looks like a human cage. This set piece, where the actors have to crawl about on hands and knees inside the confined space, is addressed as a cage for a dog in the script (Park, 2019b: 11). Unsurprisingly, the actors were initially reluctant to be inside the cage (Park, 2019a), demonstrating the atmosphere this set creates. Inside the cage, Ran refuses sex, shouting "no". The husband's behaviour, however, becomes more coercive and violent. Apart from wanting sex with her, the working-class husband is indifferent to his wife. The visual presentation of the caged and sexually abused Ran functions as a metaphor for Asian marriage migrants who are in reality ill-treated by their South Korean husbands and disconnected from society. The mundane life inside the confined cell is further shown on a big screen on the back wall of the stage. The absence of the screen in the open-air performance was replaced with the aforementioned high-tech solution that, through live streaming, connected *Ran's Diary* on the street and the actual South Korean husbands' live on-stage talk with the one-act play at the black box theatre. The use of the live screen for the indoor performance, and the real date and time of the performance identifiable on the large live streaming screen, strategically urges the audience to observe Ran's reality in the context of lived reality. That is, the *mise-en-scéne* adds authenticity to the theatrical reflection of this uncomfortable reality.

In *Ran's Diary*, authenticity is fundamentally inherent. Although the play features fictional characters such as Ran's friend Chau who calls Ran's husband to account and eventually kills him, *Ran's Diary* is based on an unsolved case of the death of a Vietnamese migrant woman in South Korea.[129] Director Park spent ten years investigating the 2008 death of Tran Thanh Lan, and *Ran's Diary* is one of the staged outcomes of what she discovered (Park, 2019b: 101).[130] The artistic strategy

[129] As part of the theatrical investigation of the death, Salad also produced *Ranui Ilgi Gaejeongpan 2.0* (*The Revised Edition of Ran's Diary 2.0*, written and directed by Park Kyong-ju, 2013) and *Gongsosihyo* (*Statute of Limitations*, written and directed by Park Kyong-ju, 2018).

[130] In Park's solo exhibition titled *26ilui Gogohak* (*26 Day Archeology*) which I attended on 26 and 29 December 2019 at SeMA Space (Seoul Innovation Park, South Korea), for instance, a docent who

of dealing with what *has* happened – as opposed to what *could* happen – is how documentary theatre often strives for authenticity (Schulze, 2017: 191, 218). Salad does not specifically categorise *Ran's Diary* as documentary theatre but the aforementioned fact that this play follows the death of Tran Thanh Lan and the director Park's long-term investigation of the case allow us to understand its characteristics as documentary theatre.[131] In *Authenticity in Contemporary Theatre and Performance: Make It Real* (2017), Daniel Schulze explores authenticity with examples of intimate theatre, immersive theatre and documentary theatre. With a specific focus on those less conventional theatre forms, Schulze elaborates on how audiences' experience of authenticity in theatre is amplified when the boundary between lived reality and staged reality or artists and audiences becomes less palpable. Although authenticity is likely to be experienced and detected more easily in those specific types of performances such as *Ran's Diary*, I suggest, authenticity that has a profound impact on audiences is not necessarily experienced in the most intimate or immersive moments of those performances.[132] That is, my intention of

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plays a policewoman character briefs visitors on Tran Thanh Lan's death and the trial with reference to displayed materials such as legal documents of the case. *26 Day Archeology* is the official English title of the exhibition. *Archeology* is not a spelling error but is the English title stated in the programme.

[131] As part of the investigation, for instance, director Park commissioned the translation of Tran Thanh Lan's diary written in Vietnamese, which is the only thing left by the deceased (Park, 2019b: 101). An abridged and edited version of the real diary is partly read aloud in the performance.

[132] One contemporary example of immersive performance demonstrates this. *Now is the Time to Say Nothing* (by Caroline Williams and Reem Karssli, 2018) is an immersive video installation that follows the real story of Syrian film-maker Reem Karssli. Entering the dimly lit room, audience members wearing headphones sit in front of one of the fourteen old-fashioned small screens installed in a circle. At the beginning, the audience watches Karssli and her family's life in war-torn Syria on screen, learning about the creative process of this collaborative project that includes a group of teenagers in the UK. Around the point when Karssli starts her journey to escape Syria, audience members' key interactive and immersive experience begins as well. They are first invited to stand in the middle of the room and see each other. At this moment, the audience realises that they are the performers of this actor-less performance. Then, when the small screens show a video footage of a boat in the sea packed with refugees, playing the roar of waves through the headphones, the audience members are instructed to sit as close as possible to each other. Certainly, this scene is one of the most immersive moments that encourage the audience to break from armchair passivity. Sitting closely with the strangers on the floor in the dark room, I was able to relate my own experience in the room to the refugee's experience at sea on the screen. As far as I am concerned, the most powerful moment of the performance was, however, not this planned immersive moment. Rather, the moment that

bringing authenticity into the discussion is not to suggest a proportional relationship between unconventional types of performance and authenticity. Instead, I will explore how performed authenticity on stage positions 'insider' audiences between a staged reality and the reality that they share with 'outsiders' outside the theatre.

In *Ran's Diary*, the way the narrative based on an actual story is staged further establishes authenticity. Lorna de Matheo, who plays the Vietnamese marriage migrant Ran, is a Filipina marriage migrant herself. Technically, De Matheo is not Vietnamese; however, South Korean audiences will notice that she is Southeast Asian, not an ethnic Korean. Moreover, she plays Ran with an authentically non-standard Korean accent. When the edited parts of Tran Thanh Lan's actual diary are read aloud at the end of the performance by other performers, their foreign accent also enhance the feel of authenticity born out of the real-life text. With a similar focus on performers' authentic accents, Schulze observes that the soldiers who speak in a strong Scottish dialect in *Black Watch* (written by Gregory Burke and directed by John Tiffany, 2007) authenticate the documentary theatre that "revolves around a group of Highland regiment soldiers who have returned from their various tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan" (cited in Schulze, 2017: 217-218). The authentically non-Korean accent in *Ran's Diary* and the Scottish voices in *Black Watch* are, nonetheless, still only comparatively authentic. In comparison to refugee 'autoperformers' who "display their damaged bodies in public to an audience" (Jeffers, 2011: 136), the actors in *Ran's Diary* and *Black Watch* can only play the characters. Although there is a difference between the performer and the character, the Filipina migrant performer's comparatively authentic representation of Tran Thanh Lan and her true story, I argue, creates "a level of political exposure on the audience's part because they cannot hide behind the idea that they are seeing a fiction" (Jeffers, 2011: 136) as is the case in refugee autoperformances.

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affected me the most deeply was when I saw one of the refugees on screen, with shivering hands after being rescued by people on land. Of course, the footage was also part of the whole immersive performance, thus, it would be impossible to draw a line between immersive and non-immersive parts. What I am suggesting here is that sequences that directly target audiences to have immersive experiences do not necessarily have the greatest effect on them. I attended the performance on 19 October 2019 at Battersea Arts Centre, London, UK.

Compared with the authentically staged reality in *Ran's Diary*, a certain distance and balance between reality and the created world of a play are constantly maintained in *My Aunt in Texas*. Firstly, the realistic as well as theatrical stage set locates audiences between reality and the theatrical reality. For instance, real knee-high bushy grass placed downstage faithfully matches how the playwright describes the thicket in Goesan in the script. Unlike another realistic-looking countryside house in Goesan built on stage left, the vast cornfield in Texas is simply indicated with several stalks of corns here and there on stage. Although the shadow or a moving panel of the cornfield is added so the scene could look more plausible, the moment when the small cartoonish panel appears on stage with the noise of the wheels underneath signals to audiences the theatricality of the setting. Secondly, each scene is short thus set changes occur many times. As a result, the flow is regularly cut, allowing audiences to step outside the gripping theatrical world. Furthermore, the somewhat cryptic sound effects used during the frequent scene changes give a feeling of turning a page of a comic book, also placing the audience outside the staged reality. In this play, music and sound effects are rarely used apart from the short ones during the changes and a song sung by a Mexican character. In other words, music or sound does not play a significant role in delivering the story in an emotionally amplified way, thus contributing to the maintenance of the objective distance between the story and the audience. To sum up, the *mise-en-scéne* of stage set and music/sound in *My Aunt in Texas* discourages audiences to be completely immersed in the dramatised story but helps them to observe the staged reality with a critical distance. In the following final part of this chapter, I will examine how ethnic otherness is represented in the two plays and how the notion of authenticity is differently interpreted and employed in the forms of representation.

Representation of ethnic otherness

In South Korea, Han Hyun Min is well-known as the first black Korean fashion model. The successful teenage model, however, also experienced prejudice, similar to other children of colour from multicultural families in the country. He said in an interview that his friend's parents forbade their children from playing with him, which resulted in his dislike for his own appearance (Issueteam, 2017). As examined in the historical overview of this chapter and as Han's case also demonstrates, ethnic

otherness that involves a non-Westerner – for instance, an American who is not of a European ethnic origin – is not seen as a value neutral difference in South Korea. This discriminatory perception, prevalent in South Korean society, is likewise applied to performing artists. In 2014, Burkinabé dancers who worked for an African museum in South Korea protested against exploitative working conditions. One of these dancers, Emmanuel Sanou, whose professional dancing career spans fourteen years, claimed that his and his colleagues' monthly salary was only 600,000 KRW and, despite not being in their contract, they were made to clean the museum as well as forced to do more than three shows a day without additional allowance (Park and Gu, 2014).[133] The claim here is that the African state of Burkina Faso was interpreted as underdeveloped, and black artists were treated as cheap labour. The biased perception of African artists is analogously observed in collaborations between equally qualified choreographers from South Korea and Cameroon. In her analysis of South Korean choreographer Park Soon-ho and Cameroonian choreographer Jean-Michel Moukam Fonkam's dance collaboration, South Korean researcher Yoon Soo-ryon points out that "Fonkam's body had already been marked as 'African'" and this "limited how his dance could be interpreted more diversely in the process of a transnational collaboration" (2017: 21).

Mirroring the cases of African performing artists being perceived and treated unequally, aesthetic representation of Asian others in mass media similarly repeats this biased perspective. In *Uncanny Hybridity and Nostalgia Politics in The Yellow Sea* (2017), South Korean scholar Rhee Suk Koo analyses how Korean/Chinese people are treated as nostalgic but ambivalent others in the South Korean film *Hwanghae* (*The Yellow Sea*, written and directed by Na Hong-jin, 2010) with a focus on those who returned to South Korea (2017: 731-732). As ethnic Koreans living – mostly in Yanbian – in China, the Korean/Chinese community inherently belong to the two different countries regardless of their choice of identification. What differentiates a Korean/Chinese from a Korean is their socio-culturally ambivalent backgrounds, for example, they can speak Korean but apparently with an accent and eat Chinese food in their day-to-day lives (Rhee, 2017: 731-732). The film reinforces this ethnic ambivalence by estranging them from contemporary South Korea. For

[133] As of February 2021, this is roughly equivalent to £391.

example, Korean/Chinese people are described as living in “regressive Yanbian”, where the archaic Korean way of life still exists (Rhee, 2017: 736-739). In this way, as Rhee argues, Korean/Chinese people are nostalgically imagined but aesthetically utilised and consumed in their ancestral homeland (Rhee, 2017: 729-731). Compared to a Korean/Chinese whose ethnic identity is identical with that of ethnic Koreans in South Korea, internal migrants of colour have socio-cultural difference as well as ethnic alterity. Their ethnic otherness is more overt and this obvious otherness is differently staged in *My Aunt in Texas* and *Ran’s Diary*.

As I have analysed, actors of colour in *Ran’s Diary* perform the play’s ethnic others themselves in an unadulterated manner, so without attempts to, for example, make their accent sound more South Korean; thus granting this performance authenticity. Although the authenticity in the migrant theatre practitioners’ self-representation might not cause ethical concern over misrepresentation of ethnic otherness, it can lead audiences to undervalue them as artists. That is, there is a possibility that some authentically performed differences on stage can be regarded as a less professional form of artistic virtuosity. De Matheo and other Asian performers’ authentically non-standard Korean accent, for instance, can sometimes be difficult for native speakers to understand. The unclear diction could possibly discourage the audience from being immersed in the performance and valuing the authenticity, arguably explaining its unpopularity among the South Korean theatre-going public to some extent. In other words, the pursuit of staging otherness authentically can be understood as being in conflict with traditional interpretations or categorisations of ‘high art’ based on diction, gesture and appearance. In a country where Western supremacy is still largely accepted, I suggest, the judgemental perspective is more likely to be applied to the unmediated staging of otherness by people of colour. Despite this, Park does not encourage the company’s Asian migrant performers to try to sound more like ethnic South Koreans (Park, 2019a). Through the authentic representation of ethnic otherness as opposed to the idea of assimilation or Koreanisation, I argue, the director insists that otherness is not something that migrants have to abandon but should be seen as a legitimate part of multicultural South Korean society. *My Aunt in Texas* also features ethnically non-Korean characters, including the Kyrgyzstani marriage migrant who speaks accented Korean, but the overall intention and the

mise-en-scéne employed to acquire authenticity in the representation of ethnic otherness are different.

Of the few non-ethnic Korean or foreign characters in *My Aunt in Texas*, Socheol is a male child of a South Korean father and a Cambodian mother. For this character, the playwright included a line where Socheol explicitly admits that he is half Korean. This, I suggest, reflects the playwright's belief that Koreans with mixed Asian heritage are not marked as other by appearance (Yun, 2018a). In comparison to Socheol, the otherness of a non-Asian foreign character is more palpably represented. At the beginning of the play, when Chunmi in Texas appears with a Mexican woman, it is evident that the Mexican character, played by a South Korean actress, was carefully developed to reflect how a female Mexican farm worker looks and sounds. When the slightly dark-skinned woman in shabby clothes has a conversation with Chunmi, they speak Spanish and Korean respectively. Although the difference was carefully staged, the director's intention was not to present the difference authentically. That is, the production did not cast either a Mexican or a Spanish-speaking actress for that role. Contrastingly, the director chose to cast a foreign actress for a Kyrgyzstani migrant woman character.

In spite of the key difference that the Kyrgyzstani marriage migrant is a main character and the Mexican character is a minor role, it is still interesting to see how the director staged the foreign characters differently. With the Mexican woman, as described above, the director emphasises corporeal and linguistic differences. The dual difference also allows the audience to immediately perceive the Kyrgyzstani migrant woman as a foreigner but the ways in which the difference is presented are palpably different. The Kyrgyzstani migrant character's dialogue is spoken in accented Korean, mirroring how the internal other is unconditionally expected to be assimilated to the ethnic majority. In terms of the physical presentation of the Kyrgyzstani woman, the director's focus was heavily on visual differences, a feature that cannot be easily assimilated. The fact that he cast the only foreign actress among seventy-one applicants ('Notice (2018)') demonstrates that a visually distinct image was a priority in the director's casting decision (Bae, 2018: 2). The choice of a foreign actress for the Kyrgyzstani migrant character as opposed to a South Korean actress for the Mexican woman signals more than the attention paid to a main

character over a minor character. The casting, I suggest, implies how explicitly society differentiates ethnically dissimilar Asian migrants within them. Ironically, despite the importance of presenting the so-called ‘exotic’ look (S. Park, 2018) of the internal other, authentic casting was not considered: the director cast a white German actress, not an Asian actress, for the role of the woman from Kyrgyzstan.

Casting Anna Elisabeth Rihlmann in the role was certainly not an issue in terms of her qualifications. As of 2018 when *My Aunt in Texas* premiered, she had lived in South Korea for over five years and was being professionally trained as an actress at the prestigious Korea National University of Arts in Seoul (‘German Actress Shines’). She even has a Korean version of her name (Yoon Anna). Although Rihlmann is quite familiar with Korean culture and fluent in Korean, she is certainly distinguishable from ethnic Koreans, which impacts her professional casting by limiting the roles she is offered (‘German Actress Shines’). White residents like Rihlmann are, however, rarely the victim of racial *othering* or violent discrimination (i.e. domestic violence in cross-border marriages) in the country. In other words, how ethnic South Koreans see and treat Rihlmann and the Kyrgyzstani marriage migrant whom she plays in *My Aunt in Texas* are significantly different. Considering the unbridgeable gap between the experiences of Rihlmann and an Asian migrant woman in South Korea, the casting of the white German actress as the Kyrgyzstani character mirrors, to some extent, how ethnic South Koreans neglectfully perceive foreigners from geographically distant thus relatively unfamiliar Asian countries such as Kyrgyzstan. The director’s stress on the visually different representation of the nameless Kyrgyzstani character, I suggest, could have been pursued through more sensitive casting in consideration of how the Central Asian country and its people would be perceived by the audience through this production.

Considering the casting choices and the gap between the social perception of Rihlmann and her character, the ways in which ethnic otherness is staged in *My Aunt in Texas* raise questions of ethics and limitations of the Orientalist view. In *Orientalism* (1978), Edward W. Said problematises “the Western approach to the Orient” (2003: 73), thus, labelling the Asian theatre director’s choice of a Western actress for the theatrical presentation of an Asian other in South Korea as Orientalist may not immediately make sense. As examined in the introduction to this chapter,

however, the biased perception of race in the West was introduced to Korea as early as the late nineteenth century and the arrival of American mass media along with the US military in mid-twentieth century further disseminated the idea of racism. In addition to the uncritically imported racist view towards African Americans, the West's Orientalism that perpetuates the marginal presence of the ethnic minorities with Asian backgrounds also arguably permeated the society. The consequent reality where Salad strives to tackle how ethnic South Koreans as Asians are biased and discriminating against Asian migrants (Park, 2019a), I argue, allows us to realise that the casting decision is paradoxically Orientalist and resembles 'yellowface'.

Compared with how 'yellowface' is typically practised as "the performance of white actors in East Asian roles" in Western contexts (Rogers, 2014: 452), firstly, *My Aunt in Texas* was created and received in South Korea and, secondly, the Kyrgyzstani character is Central Asian rather than East Asian. Despite this, the ways in which the white actress was made to have an Asian look for the role, I argue, is comparable to stereotypical 'yellowface' practices. Rihlmann, for instance, had to dye her blond hair black (S. Park, 2018). The implication is that the visual authenticity of the character mattered but the director did not consider casting, for example, a Southeast Asian actress who does not have to dye her hair.[134] Especially given that quite a few Asian migrant theatre practitioners (i.e. Salad's performers) are active in theatre scenes, this casting arguably shows how the mainstream theatre production had no intention to engage with artists from socially marginalised backgrounds. That is, while marginalised people can be a theatrical subject, they are not recognised as eligible to represent themselves on mainstream stages. Of course, "authentic casting" cannot be an automatic go-to solution to achieve authenticity as it "circumscribe[s] theatrical possibilities" and disempowers actors by confining them so they "can only play those roles that seem to pertain to their own race" (Rogers and Thorpe, 2014: 2).

[134] The creative team did not particularly consider involving foreigners or those working in theatre on the margins of the professional sphere (S. Park, 2018). According to producer Park's account of an audition and his understanding of the director's choice of Rihlmann in the process, she definitely prepared thoroughly for the audition but, among others, her different appearance and naturally accented Korean stood out compared with other ethnic South Korean applicants (S. Park, 2018). What I am suggesting is that the two aspects are not specific to Rihlmann but also innate and universal among, for instance, Asian resident artists in South Korea.

But in spite of this very valid point, this casting example highlights the prevalent exclusion of ethnic minority theatre practitioners in the professional sphere.

The mild version of 'yellowface' in this play, I argue, also contradicts the director's own intention to encourage audiences to think seriously about the problematic issue of marriage migration (Bae, 2018: 2). The reason why the playwright made the marriage migrant character Kyrgyzstani and not Southeast Asian, such as Vietnamese, was to mirror what she sees as the current trend for South Korean men to prefer Eastern European brides (Yun, 2018a). Geographically, Central Asia is nearer to Europe but they are Asians rather than Europeans. As the playwright's categorisation of Kyrgyzstan as Eastern Europe, not Central Asia, demonstrates, Central Asian countries, including Kyrgyzstan, are largely still unknown in South Korea. Indeed, that some ethnic South Korean characters (including the husband) in Goesan confuse Kyrgyzstan with Russia is a fairly realistic reflection of ethnic South Koreans' geographical knowledge of the less familiar part of Asia. In the social context, the casting of Rihlmann, I argue, encouraged audiences to follow the white actress's Western gaze rather than helping them to critically consider the issues around marriage migrants as the director intended. In her media interviews, for example, Rihlmann mentioned the practice of marriage by abduction in Kyrgyzstan a couple of times.[135] Her intention, while uncertain, could be understood to share her own newly acquired knowledge of Kyrgyzstan and its culture. Bride kidnapping is undeniably deeply rooted in the culture of the country. The problem here is that there is a danger that her Orientalist gaze, thus how she judges and selectively talks about Kyrgyzstan, with no other point of comparison, could influence how South Korean audiences come to view Kyrgyzstan.

When mentioning the Kyrgyzstani practice of bride kidnapping, for instance, Rihlmann did not equally remark on a number of positive aspects of Kyrgyzstan, such as the fact that it has a higher number of universities per person than other developed countries with similar populations, including Denmark and Finland (Sabzalieva, 2015: 49). In other words, Rihlmann's view on Kyrgyzstan is, I argue, consequently Orientalist in that she can disseminate a distorted image of the

[135] One of the newspaper articles (in English) can be found here: english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2018/11/20/2018112000638.html ('German Actress Shines').

country.[136] The Orientalist view that lacks ethical attention to the Asian country involved in this play becomes clearer when comparing it with Salad's more responsible approach towards the representation of lesser-known Asian countries. Indeed, one reason that Salad started the Asian musical series was because many ethnic South Koreans have little understanding of other Asian countries. As the musical series aims to educate audiences about Asian cultures, the company makes a thorough study of Asian countries including China, India and Nepal, which they focus on in each production (Park, 2019a). For that purpose, each musical production has a coordinator who is originally from the country in question (Park, 2019a). Put another way, the company is invested in ethically presenting ethnic others and their cultures through their theatrical works, which contrasts with the kind of high-profile national theatre productions like *My Aunt in Texas* that employ an Orientalist casting in a South Korean context.

It is also noteworthy that this version of 'yellowface' casting was not considered to be particularly problematic: no critical attention was paid to a white actress playing the role of an Asian migrant woman. The public indifference to the Orientalist practice in the national theatre company appears in contrast to the public outrage over the use of 'yellowface' casting in the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC)'s *The Orphan of Zhao* (adapted by James Fenton and directed by Gregory Doran, 2012). A key problematic point that triggered the so-called 'Zhao-Gate' (Chow, 2014: 507) was that the RSC utilised the Chinese origin of the play for marketing whilst disregarding this in artistic decisions such as casting (Thorpe, 2014: 448). Indeed, three British East Asian actors in *The Orphan of Zhao* are hardly heard or seen while they manipulate a puppet on stage (Chow, 2014: 514). In contrast, with regards to the 'yellowface' casting in *My Aunt in Texas* by NTCK, the foreign actress in the cast was highlighted, for example, without being critically questioned if there was no other way of presenting visual differences. This response demonstrates the way in which the professional sphere fundamentally excludes non-ethnic Korean performers, arguably showing how it is not yet open to incorporate diverse ethnic groups within it. The casting is especially disappointing in that it produces a poignant irony: NTCK

[136] In an interview, she rightly pointed out South Koreans' biased discrimination against those from developing countries including Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan (Yu, 2018); ironically, however, her selective introduction of Kyrgyzstan is arguably Orientalist.

rarely stages a play that addresses discrimination against underprivileged migrants but did not incorporate ethnic minority actors from these marginalised groups. As aforementioned, the German actress was chosen through an audition where she was the only foreign and non-ethnic Korean applicant. NTCK could perhaps claim that they did not consciously choose a white actress over a non-Korean Asian actress and, thus, the casting decision is not discriminatory. While this may be the case, the point here is a leading professional theatre company's disappointing lack of care or support for those on the fringe of the professional sphere. Considering the scarcity of Asian migrant theatre practitioners on mainstream stages, NTCK could have been more aware of the cultural sensitivities and supportive opportunities around this casting process. In other words, this production reiterated and rehearsed the emerging multicultural society where migrants are marginalised by imitating reality on stage rather than creating the opportunities to imagine an alternative.

5) Conclusion

Inter-Asian marriages and the marginalised positionality of migrant women in those cross-border marriages require greater critical scrutiny in the broader context of Asia. In South Korea, the unprecedented influx of Asian marriage migrants is a contemporary phenomenon but marriage migration has a century-old history in the Korean peninsula. The overview of cross-border marriages that involve picture brides in the early twentieth century and military brides in the second half of the century provided this chapter with the socio-historical background to examine similar forms of migration in contemporary contexts. In the patriarchal society that purports to be ethnically homogenous, picture brides were criticised for their cross-border marriages, military brides and their Amerasian children were stigmatised and Asian migrant women have been marginalised. The aim of this chapter was to examine how contemporary theatre intervenes in the social issue of marriage migration with a focus on Asian marriage migrants in multicultural South Korea. In the case studies, the comparison of minority and counterpublic discourses enabled me to analyse the different perspectives and divergent forms of representation of ethnic otherness on stage.

As a critically acclaimed mainstream theatre production, *My Aunt in Texas* is an example of how non-migrant South Korean artists dramatise and stage marriage

migrants and their stories. Through the juxtaposition of the two characters of Chunmi and the Kyrgyzstani woman, who suffer comparable challenges as unseen or exploited marriage migrants, this play invites audiences to confront and observe the conditions in which migrant women frequently have to live. In this staged minority discourse, however, the narrative is not necessarily biased towards migrant women characters nor are non-migrant South Korean characters staged as demonised perpetrators. That is, the playwright and the director did not intend to encourage the audience to emotionally approach the migrant characters and their stories. Instead, their objective perspective and *mise-en-scéne* are socially engaging in the sense that they attempt to redirect public indifference towards this social issue through theatrical reflection. The staging of the main Asian marriage migrant character, however, entailed an Orientalist view. The casting of a white German actress as the Kyrgyzstani character, as I have argued, shows how neglectful the professional sphere remains to underprivileged ethnic others. The absence of debate around 'yellowface' casting in this play arguably demonstrates how fundamentally marginalised and excluded Asian minorities are in the Korean theatrical public sphere.

Unlike the award-winning *My Aunt in Texas* performed on a national stage, Salad's *Ran's Diary* was produced on the fringe of the professional sphere and thus was not widely received by theatre audiences. However, I have highlighted its function as a space where Asian migrant artists could boldly stage a counterpublic discourse. Compared with the objective distance maintained in *My Aunt in Texas*, *Ran's Diary* is an intensely confrontational production where the audience bears witness to direct staged experiences of oppression and abuse. Based on a real tragic death and the director's dedicated investigation into the case, the detailed representation of the problematic matchmaking process, the direct criticism of matchmaking agencies' immoral intervention in cross-border marriages and the provocative *mise-en-scéne* of the sexual abuse of marriage migrants enable non-migrant audiences to realise why Salad frames those marriages as human trafficking. With the specific focus on the sensitive issue of sexual exploitation in these marriages, the director employed performed nudity to portray this uncomfortable reality. In this way, this sexually charged play positioned itself as a protest against the indifferent dominant public, making marginalised marriage migrants' voices heard. The intended sexual

exposure of Asian migrant performers' bodies in public and their authentically non-standard Korean accents functioned to encourage the audience to observe the staged reality in the context of lived reality. Ultimately, the counterpublic aspects of *Ran's Diary* provide the audience with opportunities to feel a sense of shared responsibility as a dominant majority public.

As an integral part of this thesis placed between the preceding and the following chapters on ethnic Korean migrants, this chapter illuminated the dissimilar stagings of ethnic otherness in minority and counterpublic discourses, therefore, enabling my discussion to offer a more comprehensive analysis of the underexplored subject of migrants in the Korean theatrical public sphere. Given that the theatrical exploration of multicultural discourses in the professional sphere is still in its initial stages in South Korea, the comparative case studies in this chapter are further intended to offer a springboard for further studies in this field to better understand this new area of research.

Chapter 4:

The Korean Diaspora in Contemporary South Korean Theatre

1) Introduction

Compared with the last two chapters, which researched theatrical engagement with marginalised migrants (including North Korean migrants and Asian marriage migrants) within South Korean society, this chapter focuses on marginalised Korean migrants *outside* the Korean peninsula: the Korean diaspora. To begin with, I will provide a terminological and historical context of the concept of the Korean diaspora. As I will employ memory as a theoretical framework to analyse theatrical works concerning the Korean diaspora, I will also offer some insight into how Korean diasporic memory has been investigated and archived through academic research, literary works and theatre. After the introductory overview, for a more focused analysis of the Korean diaspora – a hypernym that encompasses many different groups of ethnic Koreans widely dispersed across the world – I will concentrate the discussion on the Korean diaspora in Japan. In relation to this specific group, I will trace the formation of the diasporic community, concentrating on the motive for migration and choice of settlement. In the case study, I will explore dramatised memories of and about the Korean/Japanese diaspora. To be specific, I will analyse *Yakiniku Dragon* (written and directed by Chong Wishing, 2008) created by established Korean/Japanese artist Chong, and *Honmalabihae?* (written by Theater Company Silhan and directed by Sin Myeongmin, 2018), an emerging South Korean theatre company's theatrical and introspective investigation into *Zainichi*, drawing on the theoretical insights of postmemory, prosthetic memory and implicated subjects.[137]

For the analysis of *Yakiniku Dragon*, I used the full script (Korean/English) and video

[137] The meaning of *Zainichi* and usage of the term in this chapter will be explained in detail in an upcoming section.

documentation of the play. For quotations, I referenced the original English translation used for the reading of the full-length play in 2011 in Melbourne, Australia (Flavin, 2014: 18). Although a full recording of the play is not available, I was able to watch a film version of *Yakiniku Dragon* (2018). The film with the same title was also written and directed by Chong, who also wrote and directed the play.[138] I will draw on the film for the comparison with the play and supplementary description of some points, however, only a few selected scenes from the film will be discussed. The staging of *Yakiniku Dragon* in Seoul (in 2008, 2011) was well received and critically acclaimed. In 2008, the International Association of Theatre Critics – Korea chose *Yakiniku Dragon* as one of the best three plays of the year.[139] The production was therefore in the spotlight, and so spawned plenty of media coverage, audience reviews, scholarly articles and interviews with the playwright/director – all accessible online.

Honmalabihae? is a relatively new play which premiered in 2018.[140] This drama was collectively devised by Theater Company Silhan in South Korea.[141] In 2019, I attended a reading and staging of the company's other two plays (in July and December) and interviewed Jung Hyun-june, the executive producer/leader of the company, in December. In May 2020, I planned to see the play (2 - 10 May 2020, at the Arko Arts Theater/Small Hall) at the *Seoul Yeongeukje* (Seoul Theater Festival) in Seoul; however, due to the Covid-19 lockdown in the UK, I could not travel to South Korea.[142] Instead, the theatre company kindly provided the full playtext and a short video clip of the play.[143] In addition, a number of audience reviews and images

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[138] In South Korea, the film premiered in 2018 as an opening film at the Jeonju International Film Festival. The film and the play share the same title but do so slightly differently. The film was officially titled as *Yonggiline Gopchangjip*, the literal translation of *Yakiniku Dragon* into Korean, and the title of the play is *Yakkinikku Deuraegon* spelled in the Korean alphabet.

[139] The performances in Tokyo (2008, 2011 and 2016) were also critically acclaimed. The focus of my analysis, however, is the performances in Seoul.

[140] *Honmalabihae?* was also staged in September and October 2019.

[141] The company members collectively and almost completely rewrote the play based on the original script written by Kim Yeonmi.

[142] *Seoul Theater Festival* is the official English title of the festival.

[143] The playtext was later included in the collection of dramas published by the organiser of the theatre festival, thus, I reference the published version for quotations.

of the performance are available in the blogosphere. In order to capture more details for performance analysis, I additionally arranged for Shin Jisuk, a non-expert member of the public, and a theatre academic, Sohn Shinhyoung, to attend the play in Seoul and conducted written interviews with them afterwards.[144] After the performance in May 2020, further details of the production and rehearsal process were collected through a written interview with Woo Hyemin, who played the Korean/Japanese character Lee Jisuk in *Honmalabihae?*.

2) The Korean diaspora: (post) colonial experience and economic migration

Between territory, ethnicity and nationality: the terminological understanding of the Korean diaspora

As of 2021, the number of overseas Koreans is approximately 7.5 million: Asia and Oceania 3,878,804; Americas 2,892,349; Europe 687,059; Middle East 24,498; and Africa 10,877 ('The Current State'). For many decades, there has been a substantial number of Koreans living overseas; however, they had long been disregarded in South Korea until the late twentieth century. When they were occasionally remembered by their home country, the Koreans were perceived as an additional resource for the country's economic development rather than as fellow Koreans. In the 1970s, for example, the South Korean government encouraged Koreans in Japan to contribute and invest in the development of the nation (cited in J. Jeon, 2008: 109). Apart from those few occasions when overseas Koreans were recognised as a potentially valuable economic resource, they were rarely seen as members of society. Until the 1990s, overseas Koreans were mostly neglected by the government (J. Jeon, 2008: 108).[145] The arrival of the post-Cold War era and globalisation belatedly moved the issue of overseas Koreans from the periphery to the centre of Korean public discourse (J. Jeon, 2008: 108). The establishment of the Overseas Koreans Foundation (OKF) under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1997 was a particularly significant turning point in the recognition of Koreans outside the

[144] This initiative was supported with funds from the University of London PGR Expenses fund.

[145] Though the matter of the Korean/Japanese diaspora was discussed in intergovernmental talks to reach the 1965 South Korea-Japan treaty (S. Lee, 2017: 119-150).

Korean peninsula. This government-affiliated organisation supports overseas Koreans so that they can become respectable citizens in their host countries, while keeping their Korean ethnic identity (J. Jeon, 2008: 111). The foundation runs projects that advocate the study of Korean language, culture and history and it also aims to increase economic cooperation between overseas Koreans and their homeland ('The overview'). In 2007, ten years after the founding of OKF, the South Korean government designated 5 October as *Segye Hanin-ui Nal* (a day for Koreans in the world) to mark the significance of overseas Koreans (H. Jeon, 2008: 165). Therefore, the creation of OKF and the day celebrating overseas Koreans suggest that the government officially began to recognise Koreans outside the peninsula as a legitimate part of the country.

According to the *Jae-oe-dongpo-ui Chulipgukgwa Beopjeok Jiwie Gwanhan Beopryul* (*Act on the Immigration and Legal Status of Overseas Koreans*) established in 1999, overseas Koreans comprise two groups: *Jae-oe-gungmin* (overseas Korean citizens) and *Oeguk-gukjeok-dongpo* (Koreans with foreign nationalities).[146] The first group, overseas Korean citizens, refers to those who have been granted permanent residency in foreign countries or who reside abroad in the pursuit of permanent residence ('Act on the Immigration'). For instance, Korean/Japanese residents in Japan who officially identify as having a South Korean nationality (not a Japanese nationality) are part of the first group. In comparison to those unconditionally regarded as South Korean citizens regardless of being resident abroad, members of the second group, namely Koreans with foreign nationalities, are selectively entitled to be considered as South Koreans. According to the article 2 of this act, those who were previously Korean nationals or are a lineal descendant with a foreign nationality are eligible to be designated as overseas Koreans with a foreign nationality by the presidential executive order ('Act on the Immigration'). For example, Korean/Japanese people naturalised as Japanese, or those who emigrated before the establishment of the government of republic of Korea in 1948, fall under this second category. Korean migrants deported from the Russian Far East to Central Asia in 1937 and their lineal descendants are also represented by this group. These Koreans are classified as having a foreign nationality; however, they are

[146] *Act on the Immigration and Legal Status of Overseas Koreans* is the official English title.

regarded as Koreans as well. This inclusive definition of overseas Koreans can be understood in the context of the past-oriented perception of Korean identities – discussed in Chapter 1 – which allows this act to acknowledge Koreans who, in many cases, unwillingly went abroad before 1948. In short, while the definition of 'overseas Koreans' seemingly includes all Koreans who reside outside the national territory, the differences between overseas Korean citizens and Koreans with foreign nationalities in the legal definition lead us to realise that it is important to carefully consider the historical and political context of the dispersal. This complex context will be discussed shortly after a terminological investigation of who overseas Koreans are.

In Korean, overseas Koreans are addressed as *Jae-oe-dongpo* or *Jae-oe-hanin*, which have subtly different meanings.[147] OKF, for example, is written and pronounced in Korean as *Jae-oe-dongpo jaedan*, not *Jae-oe-hanin jaedan*. '*Jae-oe*', present in both words, means 'overseas' and '*jaedan*' is a Korean word for a 'foundation' thus, the difference lies between *Dongpo* and *Hanin*. *Hanin* literally means a Korean person. Whereas, according to a dictionary definition, the word *Dongpo* affectionately addresses a person from a same country or someone who shares the same ethnicity.[148] Compared with *Jae-oe-hanin*, *Jae-oe-dongpo* thus highlights that the Korean in question has Korean ethnicity regardless of being overseas (H. Jeon, 2008: 169). In the context, Koreans in Japan are commonly addressed as *Jae-il dongpo*, which emphasises the blood ties (K. Park, 2010: 418).[149] While the word *Dongpo* is certainly used, it sounds somewhat antiquated or North Korean to native Korean speakers in South Korea. See, for example, this extract from *Honmalabihae?*:

> Jisuk: Yeongju, Hmm…We are all *Dongpo*.
>
> Yeongju: See, Jisuk, the word *Dongpo* is only used in North Korea, Jisuk. So, I mean… (Theater Company Silhan, 2020: 260)

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[147] Similar to *Dongpo*, *Gyopo* and *Gyomin* are also frequently used to address overseas Koreans. As the point here is to examine the significant dissimilarity between the words, I focus on the comparison between *Hanin* and *Dongpo*.

[148] The word also refers to siblings born from same parent ('Naver Korean dictionary').

[149] *Jae-il* means 'in Japan'.

As the dialogue between South Korean Sin Yeongju and *Jae-il dongpo* Lee Jisuk, who regards North Korea as her homeland suggests, *Dongpo* is more commonly employed in North Korea, where antiquated Korean language is still used, than in South Korea, where Korean language continues to be modernised. In other words, the use of the word *Dongpo* in South Korea arguably serves to associate the Koreans outside the peninsula with the past rather than the present. The past-oriented implication embedded in *Dongpo* also resonates with its dictionary definition that implies the long-held fetish of ethnic homogeneity scrutinised in the Introduction. With the similar emphasis on Korean ethnicity, overseas Koreans are also termed the Korean diaspora.[150] Yoon In-jin, the South Korean sociologist, defines the Korean diaspora as the dispersal of people with Korean ethnicity to other parts of the world (2003: 126). Diaspora was originally used to describe "Jewish, Greek, and Armenian dispersion"; however, it now includes "immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guestworker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community" (Tölölyan, 1991: 4). William Safran, a scholar of diaspora studies, enumerates a similar category of "diaspora community" from expatriates to ethnic and racial minorities (1991: 83). What the references suggest is that the contemporary understanding of diaspora is not only about dispersal, but also about communities created in host countries through geographical displacement. The notion of diaspora embraces migration as well as community, culture and identity, and, therefore, it invites an investigation of various relevant issues involved in migration and settlement (Yoon, 2003: 126).

The Korean diaspora as communities of ethnic Koreans outside the Korean peninsula, and *Jae-oe dongpo* which signals stress on Korean ethnicity, can be understood within a similar context. Unlike the similarity between *Jae-oe dongpo* and the Korean diaspora, *Jae-oe-hanin* and the Korean diaspora are not necessarily interchangeable synonyms. Technically, there are no set qualifications for the Korean diaspora compared with *Jae-oe-hanin* nor are the Korean diaspora and *Jae-oe-hanin* strictly differentiated in a daily and even official usage of the terms. Despite this, the disparate socio-historical context of their emigration offers a reasonable criterion for the distinction between them. Indeed, Koreans who moved to Japan

[150] Diaspora is a commonly used loan word in South Korea.

during the colonial period can be regarded as diaspora; however, those who emigrated to the US after the 1970s seeking economic and social success are not deemed to satisfy the condition of the term (E. Kim, 2010: 126). Instead, these overseas Koreans seeking prosperity are *Jae-oe-hanin*, which could refer to any Korean who resides outside the Korean territory. Additionally, the Korean diaspora does not simply refer to individual Koreans in other countries. Considering the aforementioned scholarly definition of diaspora, the term Korean diaspora indicates an overseas Korean community or the collective identity of those communities formed in the historical context, which I will explore in the next section. In current times, the collective Korean identity among the Korean diaspora is gradually receding due to generational changes. Nonetheless, there are still specific regions such as Osaka (Japan), Yanbian (China) and Sakhalin (Russia) where the Korean diaspora form a community. Before examining the diaspora in Japan in detail, the next section will first provide an overall historical overview of the formation of the Korean diaspora.

Historical overview of the Korean diaspora

It is widely understood that outbound border-crossing migration began in the mid-nineteenth century in *Joseon* (Korea, 1392-1910). Initially, Koreans left the country for neighbouring China and Russia to escape poverty. In the 1860-70s, due to the severe famine in the Korean peninsula, starved farmers in the north crossed the river *Duman* to Russia to find new farmland territory (J. Yi, 2010: 185). Between 1869 and 1870, owing to the food shortage in this region, the number of cross-bordering surged. For example, 4,500 Koreans crossed over to Russia in 1869 alone (cited in J. Yi, 2010: 185). Korean migration across the *Duman* to China also began around this time, specifically to *Gando* (today Yanbian) (G. Yi, 2001: 181-183). In 1885, the *Cheong* dynasty (China, 1616-1912) officially designated farmland in the north of the river *Duman* for Koreans (G. Yi, 2001: 181-183). As numbers of Koreans migrating to *Gando* increased, the *Joseon* government even assigned an officer in the region to oversee them (cited in G. Yi, 2001: 181-183).

In the early twentieth century, as labour migration began, the geographical displacement extended beyond Eurasia into the Americas. As discussed in Chapter 3, between 1903 and 1905, over 7,000 Koreans moved to Hawaii to work on sugar

cane farms (cited in J. Kang, 2011: 213). From 1910 to 1924, over 1,000 Korean women further emigrated to marry Korean male workers in Hawaii and America (J. Kang, 2011: 214). Around the time of labour migration to Hawaii, some Koreans travelled further into Mexico. In 1905, about 1,000 Koreans arrived in Mexico and worked at henequen plant farms for four years in Yucatán (cited in Y. Park, 2003: 662-664). Park Youngmee, a South Korean scholar of Latin American literature, demonstrates in *La Primera Migracion Coreana a Mexico (1904-1905)* (2003) that the labour migration of Koreans to Mexico was actually a case of fraud. As closely examined by Park, international migration broker John G. Meyers and a Japanese immigration agency recruited Korean labourers through deceptive and misleading advertising (cited in Y. Park, 2003: 655-656). In 1909, when the four-year-long contract terminated, Japan almost annexed Korea, thus, these migrants had nowhere to return to and thus dispersed into other parts of Mexico and Cuba (Y. Park, 2003: 664). In 1921, 288 Koreans left Mexico for Cuba and found work on sugar cane farms (Suh, 2000: 149-150).

During the Japanese occupation (1910-1945), meanwhile, Japan deprived Korean farmers and workers of their land and means of production, thus they had no choice but to move to *Manju* (China) or Japan (Yoon, 2003: 127). After the First World War, Japan had a domestic crisis in agriculture and therefore extorted food from colonised Korea (G. Yi, 2001: 185). Starting in the 1920s, Japan practised a policy that commercialised the rice production in *Joseon* to bring a steady supply of food to Japan (Sun, 2011: 183). Due to the policy of merging farming land, the agricultural *Joseon* society collapsed and, consequently, a mass rural exodus followed (Sun, 2011: 183). The collapse of the farming society and the difficulty of finding work forced some farmers and workers to migrate to Japan (Sun, 2011: 183), with others moving to *Manju* to maintain a livelihood (cited in G. Yi, 2001: 185-186). Along with the economic migrants, the turbulent political situation in Korea also led to migration (cited in Mun and Park, 2011: 131). For instance, those who fought against Japanese colonisation left for *Manju* and Russia to continue the fight (J. Yi, 2010: 185).

Among the Koreans who moved to Japan and Russia, some experienced forced migration. Due to the wartime labour shortages in factories and mines, approximately

800,000 Koreans were forcibly moved to work in Japan (cited in Lie, 2008: 5). Japan also imposed conscription of Koreans into the army after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) (cited in Sun, 2011: 183). In *Yakiniku Dragon*, the main character, Kin Ryukichi, is described as having lost his arm as a consequence of being drafted to fight in the Pacific War (1941-1945) for colonial Japan, which mirrors the traumatic experience of the enforced migration of the period. In addition to Korean men forced to fight in the war, a number of Korean women were sexually enslaved by Japanese soldiers from the 1930s to 1945 (J. Kim et al., 2019: 58), and this also can be understood as part of the forced migration.[151] Meanwhile, as *Ice Flowers* discussed in Chapter 1 touches upon as the background of the story, Koreans in Russia had to go through a traumatic deportation process because Russia was concerned that Koreans might liaise with Japan, therefore, Russia did not want Koreans residing on the border between the two countries (Kwon, 1998: 151-152). As a result, approximately 172,500 Koreans in the Russian Far East were forced to move to Central Asia in 1937 (J. Yi, 2010: 187). Under Stalin's Russian nationalism, those Koreans in Central Asia were not allowed to use their own language and the government also restricted their right to move (Sun and Bae, 2018: 460). Therefore, they were 'Russianised', and as such their Korean identity was dissolved (Sun and Bae, 2018: 460). In summary, Koreans who left the country before independence in 1945 mostly had no choice but to cross the border to other countries by force or due to political or economic necessity.

After Korean independence from Japan and the Korean War which followed, another wave of migration, one that can also be looked at through the lens of the Korean diaspora, took place. In the 1960s, a key national priority in South Korea was economic growth. The country had surplus labour but was in need of foreign capital, thus, the government strategically exported workers to the then thriving Germany,

[151] The "comfort stations" where women, taken from many Asian and Japanese-occupied countries including Korea, were forced to be "military sexual slaves" were spread out over a wide area including China, Japan, the Philippines and Macau (cited in J. Kim et al., 2019: 58-59). With regards to this historical and controversial issue, an agreement was reached between Seoul and Tokyo in December 2015. In South Korea, however, the deal was largely criticised because, for example, surviving victims were excluded in the process and what they requested from Japan was not really considered in the intergovernmental agreement (Na, 2016).

which was in need of a larger work force (J. Park, 2013: 342, 346). In the 1960s and 1970s, thousands of Korean workers migrated to West Germany as miners (7,936) and nurses (11,057) (Bak, 2019: 85). After their contracts ended, 20% of those miners and nurses remained in Germany, 40% of them moved to other countries in Europe and North America, and another 40% returned to South Korea (J. Park, 2013: 352). Many of them were economic migrants like the Korean workers who went to Hawaii and Mexico in the early twentieth century. It is, however, a distinctive case that Koreans moved to a specific country to specifically work as miners and nurses (not farm workers). Meanwhile, as examined in Chapter 3, as the US military became stationed in South Korea in 1945, marriages between South Korean women and US servicemen increased. For about forty years from 1950, roughly 100,000 Korean military brides emigrated to the US and formed Korean communities through, for example, US-based Korean churches (Yuh, 2002: 2, 4). In South Korea, those Korean women who married US soldiers were regarded as doing so because such a union was the only way they could escape from poverty (Yuh, 2002: 2). In addition, as previously pointed out, those military brides were almost unconditionally presumed to have an association with military prostitution (Yuh, 2002: 4). As racial discrimination played a further part, the victims of the most deep-seated prejudice against military brides were particularly those who married African American soldiers (Yuh, 2002: 168).

In short, since the mid-nineteenth century, Koreans have dispersed into Asia, the Americas and Europe mostly as economic migrants, settling in various host countries. As demonstrated by the cases of Koreans who became victims of the fraudulent labour migration to Mexico or conscription during the colonial period, and of those deported from the Russian Far East to Central Asia, many Korean migrants experienced great hardship. In the examination of the cases, I consistently made a point that the geographical displacement that caused the suffering was tangled up in the complicated historical and socio-political context of modern Korea. This is precisely, I argue, why the Korean diaspora should not be forgotten, but should in fact be regarded as part of modern Korean history. Their Korean identities do not merely derive from their Korean ethnicity, but are equally and importantly based on the positions that the Korean diaspora occupy in the modern history. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, however, South Korea was indifferent to the Korean

diaspora until the late 1990s. To borrow Rothberg's concept of an implicated subject, namely, "the one who participates in injustice, but in indirect ways" (2019: 20), non-diaspora South Koreans have failed to realise that they are implicated in the injustice experienced by the Korean diaspora. In some cases, the implicated subjects – in this instance: South Korean nationals resident in South Korea – have not merely forgotten about the Korean diaspora. As the unfavourable view on military brides indicates, South Koreans have in fact have gone as far as to stigmatise them. In a later part of this chapter, I will elaborate on the theoretical notion of an implicated subject and explore how the creative team and audiences of *Honmalabihae?* experience the positionality as an implicated subject in relation to a neglected group of the Korean diaspora: the Koreans in Japan.

3) *Zainichi*: the motive for migration and the place of settlement

The boundary in the perception of *Zainichi*

A Japanese term, *Zainichi* "literally means 'resident in Japan' and is now commonly used by both the Japanese and Korean population to refer to the Korean residents of Japan" (Chapman, 2004: 29).[152] The literal meaning is seemingly value-neutral; however, the term actually marks "a population of colonial-era migrants from the Korean peninsula that settled in the Japanese archipelago and their descendants" (Lie, 2008: x). As John Lie, a sociologist with Korean heritage, concisely but insightfully defines in his book *Zainichi (Koreans in Japan): Diasporic Nationalism and Postcolonial Identity* (2008), the *Zainichi* is "a postcolonial, diasporic identity in Japan" (2008: ix-x). The key components of the postcolonial and diasporic identity are "Korean descent", "Japanese livelihood" and "the persistence of Japanese discrimination" (Lie, 2008: 128). In comparison to the socio-historical context embedded in the *Zainichi*, the English or Korean translation of *Zainichi* places an emphasis more on their in-between identity of Korea and Japan as well as the South and the North. The Korean/Japanese diaspora is an English translation of *Zainichi* and it overtly shows their liminal identity. Meanwhile, *Zainichi* is translated into Korean as *Jae-il Hanguk-in* or *Jae-il Joseon-in*. Whilst the focus in *Zainichi* is on Koreans in 'Japan', the difference between *Jae-il 'Hanguk-in*' ('Koreans' in Japan)

[152] *Zainichi* is a commonly used loan word in South Korea.

and *Jae-il* '*Joseon-in*' ('*Joseon* people' in Japan) stresses the difference between being either South or North Koreans (M. Park, 2018: 173). In the South, *Joseon* (1392-1910) is understood as the name of the last Korean dynastic kingdom which ceased to exist in 1910. In contrast, North Koreans and *Jae-il Joseon-in* still identify themselves with *Joseon*. For instance, when South Korean Yeongju questions if Korean/Japanese Jisuk is a North Korean in *Honmalabihae?*, the Korean/Japanese character claims that she is neither a North Korean nor a South Korean but a *Joseon-in* who lives in Japan (Theater Company Silhan, 2020: 259). Similarly, the official name of North Korea is *Joseon Minjujuui Inmin Gonghwaguk* (Democratic People's Republic of Korea). In other words, *Joseon-in* implies its affiliation with North Korea rather than South Korea. In this chapter, I will use both the *Zainichi* and the Korean/Japanese diaspora to address the Korean diasporic community in Japan; however, I will selectively use one term over another, depending on the context of where they are situated.[153]

The history of Koreans' migration to Japan dates from the second century B.C. (Sun, 2011: 181-182); however, as I have explained, Japanese colonial rule over Korea in the modern era was a major turning point in the migration to Japan. Depending on the period of migration, the Korean diaspora in Japan can be divided into various groups. Yoon, for example, lists five different phases of migration, namely, before 1910, 1910-1937, 1937-1945, 1945-1989 and after 1989 (Yoon, 2003: 129). The year of 1910 and 1945, the beginning and end dates of the annexation of Korea by Japan, are key marking points in Yoon's classification. Within this period, we see an important shift in the patterns of Korean migration to Japan. As mentioned above, the late 1930s saw a change whereby the Japanese introduced Korean conscription into its army, resulting in increased numbers of Korean migrants coming into the country not by choice. The category of 1937-1945 thus includes those who moved to Japan by force (Yoon, 2003: 129). In 1989, meanwhile, another huge shift occurred in that it was the year that all South Korean citizens were allowed to travel internationally. This date is an important marker that differentiates the early generation from a new generation of Korean residents in Japan.

[153] The *Zainichi*, the Korean/Japanese diaspora, *Jae-il Hanguk-in* or *Jae-il Joseon-in* basically refers to the same group of Koreans in Japan. What I tried to elucidate in this section is the subtle difference in the usage of the terms.

In general, Korean/Japanese residents are largely categorised into two groups: *Old Comer* and *New Comer*. *Old Comer* refers to those who remained in Japan after Japan's defeat at the end of World War Two (cited in Sun, 2011: 182). They migrated to Japan due to the Japanese occupation, the collapse of the Korean farming society and their forced drafting into the Japanese army (cited in Sun, 2011: 182). Meanwhile, with the signing of the San Francisco Treaty, which restored Japanese sovereignty in 1952 (Lie, 2008: x), the legal status of 'citizens' from the former Japanese colony was changed to 'foreigners'. The term *New Comer* designates those foreigners who entered Japan after this alteration (Sun, 2011: 178-179).[154] Therefore, the rapidly increased number of Koreans who settled in Japan after international travel became widely accessible in 1989 are classified as *New Comers* (Yoon, 2003: 129, 140).

The demarcation between *Old Comer* and *New Comer* is seemingly a generational boundary; however, it is not simply a reference point for older and younger generations. As the contrast between conscription during the Japanese aggression and the free movement in the late 1980s signals, the difference between *Old Comer* and *New Comer* concerns more the varying motives for migration to Japan, and how these are related to the historical context. As I will shortly discuss in detail when examining the term *Old Comer*, the overt difference in the reasons for migration resulted in different *Zainichi* experiences. *Old Comer* and *New Comer* are respectively representative of these differing *Zainichi* experiences. As the dichotomous grouping signals, the perception of *Old* and *New* in this context is not value-neutral but is the labelling of one group over another that can function as a judgemental marker of *Zainichi* experiences. An excerpt of the interview with *Yakiniku Dragon* playwright/director, Chong, for example, reveals the value-laden perception of the *Zainichi* experience:

> Noda Manabu: …I guess that it would be difficult to talk about your positionality as Korean/Japanese to foreigners who do not understand the historical background?

[154] Despite colonial racism, the Japanese officially recognised Koreans as "Japanese nationals and the Emperor's children" during the colonial aggression (Lie, 2008: x). Japan restored its sovereignty in the 1952 treaty and this change then rescinded Japanese citizenship for Koreans in Japan (Lie, 2008: x).

> How do you explain?
>
> Chong Wishing: In English, it is “Korean Japanese”. The *Zainichi* have gone through a really complicated process. Some were forced to move to Japan and others came to Japan for economic survival. Indeed, my father came to Japan to study when he was fifteen years old. We are not *New Comer* often found in Shin-Ōkubo, Tokyo. We are the so-called second and third generation Korean/Japanese descendants of those who settled in Japan before the war. Currently, there is the fifth generation. Our parents and grandparents came to Japan for many different reasons, thus it is quite complicated to explain. (Noda, 2012: 136)

One noticeable point in Chong’s remark is that he consciously differentiates himself from *New Comer* and attempts to exclude the relatively recent arrivals in the discussion of the complicated and difficult past of *Zainichi*. In *Yakiniku Dragon*, Chong’s subjective perspective towards *New Comer* is explicitly presented through the lines of *Old Comer* character Go Shinkichi:

> TAESU: We’re all Koreans. Why can’t you congratulate us?
>
> SHINKICHI: The Korean-Japanese and the Koreans may look alike, but we’re different. Don’t assume that you and I are the same.
>
> TAESU: How are we different? In what ways are we different?
>
> SHINKICHI: You have no idea how much we have suffered in Japan. You don’t know our hardships! (Chong, 2014: 78)

The dialogue between Shinkichi and I Taesu discloses the invisible but clear line drawn between the existing Korean/Japanese diaspora and the new Korean immigrant. Considering that this story is set between 1969 and 1971, Taesu, who came to Japan by choice long after Korea’s liberation, is not considered to be an *Old Comer*. *Old Comer* Shinkichi does not regard recent immigrant Taesu even as a *New Comer*, but treats him as a Korean who presumably has no understanding of *Zainichi* at all. Chong’s view here suggests that *Old Comers* suffered from a difficult past, therefore, they are exclusively entitled to talk about *Zainichi* experiences. What

encourages *Old Comers* to claim the ownership is, I suggest, their clear perception of the different motivations for migration to Japan: *Old Comers*' unwilling or inevitable settlement in Japan versus *New Comers*' free-will migration (Sun, 2011: 178).[155] From an *Old Comer*'s perspective, *New Comers* do not share *Old Comers*' painful experiences and therefore they cannot be considered the same as the *Zainichi*. In the rest of this chapter, I will use *Old Comer* or *New Comer* instead of *Zainichi* when the specific difference needs to be addressed.

The subdivision of *Old* and *New Comers*, the widely accepted binary perception of the *Zainichi*, cannot be overlooked in this discussion; thus, I will have a closer look at diasporic experiences of *Old Comers* in the following section. This does not, however, necessarily mean that *Old Comer* strictly refers to first-generation immigrants, nor that the diasporic experience only relates to this generation. For example, Chong identifies himself as the *Old Comers*, though it was his father who unwillingly settled in Japan (as I will explain in detail in a later section), and he differentiates *Old Comers* from *New Comers* from a perspective of *Old Comers*. According to a recent survey conducted between December 2020 and February 2021, however, 70% of Korean/Japanese students, who are least likely to be regarded as *Old Comers*, experienced some form of anti-*Zainichi* hate speech (Kang, 2021). That is, while *Old Comers* undeniably represent the *Zainichi* experience, any seemingly clear boundary between experiences of *Old* and *New Comers* is also ambiguous. The dissimilar but shared diasporic experiences demonstrate the need to approach the diasporic community beyond a binary logic or fixed perception. To better appreciate the complexity of – and dynamics within – the *Zainichi*, the lens of hybridity introduced by postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha can be useful. In his discussion of cultural differences between the two polarities of colonisers and those colonised, Bhabha argues that there is a "need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities" in order to "focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences" (2004: 2). In a similar context, it is more important to understand a diaspora as a dynamic process and

[155] For instance, *Old Comers* and *New Comers* in Tokyo dwell in different parts of the city (Sun, 2011: 192). In terms of the motive for migration to Japan, *New Comer* is further differentiated from a newer generation, namely *New New Comer* who normally move to Japan after college education in South Korea or attends college in Japan and adjusts to the society (cited in Sun, 2011: 179).

space that enable “other positions to emerge” (Rutherford, 1990: 211) rather than trace the origins of hybridity. The different nationalities, from Japanese to stateless to South Korean, directly show the ambivalent and ambiguous ‘other’ position the *Zainichi* hold; their hybridity directs us to think beyond the boundary between *Old* and *New Comers* or within *Old Comers*. As I will explain, Chong describes how second-generation *Old Comers* are also disadvantaged and discriminated against in *Yakiniku Dragon*. By staging the first and second generation *Old Comers*’ distinct but overlapping experience, Chong arguably allows the audience to understand the Korean/Japanese diaspora as ‘diaspora space’ (Brah, 1996: 209, 238-239), an intersectional and entangled space. The inherent hybridity and multi-generational dynamics ultimately challenge the binary perception of the *Zainichi*, making this community an interesting and important subject for the study of the Korean diaspora. In order to fully examine the *Zainichi* as an entangled and intersectional diaspora space, with a focus on *Old Comer*, the next section will first examine the historical and socio-political background of the formation of the diasporic community and their perceived ownership of the *Zainichi* experience.

***Old Comer*: to remain in Japan or to return to Korea**

Zainichi is the colonial legacy (Sun, 2011: 178) but the termination of the colonial period did not necessarily result in the return of all *Old Comers* to Korea. Upon Japan’s defeat at the end of the Second World War and following Korea’s independence, while a majority of *Old Comers* returned to Korea, many remained in Japan. In 1944, immediately before liberation, approximately two million Koreans were living in Japan (H. Kim, 2009: 318-319). Koreans who did not return to Korea after independence numbered about 0.6 million in 1948, becoming the origin of the *Zainichi* (H. Kim, 2009: 318-319). Those who remained had complex reasons for doing so. Despite suffering racism and economic exploitation, some Koreans were successful “in business, the imperial bureaucracy, and even the military” during the occupation, while others found “economic opportunities” that became available after the end of the war (cited in Lie, 2008: 34). Japan, however, restricted the amount of money that each returnee could carry – up to a thousand Yen – and this small sum was expected to cause economic difficulty in Korea (M. Lee, 2013: 39). As opposed to those who found some success and were thus relatively privileged, there were

also “impoverished Koreans who could not afford the train fare to one of the departure ports” (cited in Lie, 2008: 34). In addition, repatriation was not smooth due to severe restrictions on post-war traffic between Korea and Japan (Lie, 2008: 36). While millions of people travelled between Simonoseki (Japan) and Busan (Korea) by ferry between 1905 and 1945, this route was subsequently closed and “the line was not resumed until 1970” (cited in Lie, 2008: 36).

Owing to “the generally impoverished, unhealthy, and unmodern conditions in post-liberation Korea”, some returnees “made a U-turn back to Japan” (Lie, 2008: 34). This does not, however, mean that life in Japan was easy for them. *Old Comers* had to accept extreme poverty, discrimination and indifference as the conditions of living in Japan (cited in Mun and Park, 2011: 127). In the 1950s, about 10% of the diasporic population was on state benefits, many of them were blue-collar workers or small-scale business owners, and they were also excluded from national health insurance because their nationality was not Japanese (cited in M. Lee, 2013: 41). Ironically, “Japan was, for all intents and purposes, and in spite of poverty and discrimination, a home” (Lie, 2008: 35). According to a survey of a Tokyo ward in 1951, “63 percent of ethnic Koreans were born in Japan, and 43 percent of them could not speak Korean (as opposed to 18 percent who could not speak Japanese)” (cited in Lie, 2008: 35). Meanwhile, in addition to those who remained in or returned to Japan, the unsettled political situation in the Korean peninsula encouraged Koreans to newly move to Japan. In particular, the 4.3 (3 April) incident in 1948 caused a mass exodus to Japan (cited in Mun and Park, 2011: 131). This happened after inhabitants of Jeju, an island located to the south of mainland Korea, demanded the withdrawal of US forces and opposed an election which did not include North Korea. This protest resulted in the military suppression of the islanders whereby 30,000 – approximately 10% of the population of the island – were killed (Mopaspr, 2020).[156] Those Jeju islanders who migrated to Japan after this incident are generally categorised as *Old Comers* (Yoo, 2014: 310). *Yakiniku Dragon* also features the *Old Comer* character Kin Eijun, a former Jeju islander who escaped from the incident. In brief, decisions to leave Japan or to (re)enter Japan shortly after liberation were made based on economic or political considerations.

[156] The 4.3 incident continued until 1954.

The decision whether to remain or return was even more complicated for those who regarded *Joseon* as their homeland. Liberation and the Korean War divided their home country into the South and the North. The Korean peninsula was not simply divided into two parts geographically: instead, two countries with opposing political ideologies were built. In 1948, Rhee Syngman and Kim Il-sung established democratic and communist governments in South and North Korea, respectively. Therefore, Korean/Japanese residents in Japan had to make a tough political decision when returning to Korea. Even those who remained in Japan were not free from this political division, and Korean/Japanese society was accordingly divided into the pro-Pyeongyang and pro-Seoul sides: the *Jae-il Joseon-in Chongyeonaphoe* (The Federation of *Joseon-in* Residents in Japan) and the *Jae-ilbon Daehanmingukmindan* (The Korean Residents Union in Japan). The sixty-year-long conflict between the two Korean/Japanese associations since liberation reflects the divided homeland (K. Park, 2010: 421). Meanwhile, the two opposing Korean governments showed different approaches towards the diasporic community. South Korea regarded Korean/Japanese people as a matter that Japan has to deal with, thus Seoul ignored them (T. Kim, 2010: 372). In contrast, North Korea showed interest in and support towards Koreans in Japan and, in 1959, the communist state initiated a repatriation project, which resulted in over 90,000 Korean/Japanese residents moving to North Korea until the termination of the project in 1984 (M. Lee, 2013: 39, K. Park, 2010: 432). This initiative is represented in *Yakiniku Dragon*, which features Korean/Japanese characters Kin Shizuka and Kiyomoto Tetsuo who leave for North Korea as part of this scheme.

As the high number of Korean/Japanese population who chose the North indicates, for many of the Korean diaspora in Japan, North Korea is regarded as their homeland (T. Kim, 2010: 383). Indeed, many Korean/Japanese parents educate their children in Korean schools supported by the pro-Pyeongyang federation and North Korea. Final year students in the schools, as evidenced in the documentary film *Uri Hakgyo* (*Our School*, 2006), directed by South Korean film-maker Kim Myeongjun, who spent three years filming at the *Hokkaidô* Korean School, usually go on a field trip to North Korea to visit their ‘homeland’. Japan, however, does not allow Korean/Japanese residents to have North Korean nationality, and those who do not choose South Korea or Japan as their nationality remain stateless in Japan (T. Kim,

2010: 372).[157] Those stateless people were granted the status of special residents only after Japan acceded to the refugee treaty in 1982 (E. Kim, 2010: 134, cited in K. Park, 2010: 427). Compared to the gradually decreasing numbers of the Korean/Japanese population with the status of special residents, the number of Korean/Japanese citizens with Japanese nationality is on the rise (H. Kim, 2009: 320-321). While obtaining Japanese nationality guarantees a legal status, there is also a social price to pay. Naturalised Japanese citizens are often excluded from the Korean ethnic community (H. Kim, 2009: 314) because they are perceived as betraying the community (K. Park, 2010: 434). Not unlike the experience of the discordance between the nationality (a Japanese national) and the ethnic belonging (the Korean ethnic community), special residents and those with South Korean nationality also experience the contradiction between national identity and actual belonging. That is, their legal belonging is inconsistent with their psychological belonging (H. Kim, 2009: 332). In summary, *Old Comers* do not properly belong to either *Joseon*, South Korea, North Korea or Japan but they are ambiguously located somewhere between them. The economic and political difficulties, as well as the national identity crisis that *Old Comers* had to experience in the socio-historical context also explain their perceived exclusive ownership of the *Zainichi* experience.

Osaka: staging the diasporic and heterotopic place

Osaka, a region where both plays that I analyse in this chapter are based, is a distinctive diasporic place that cannot be overlooked in the discussion of *Zainichi*. The investigation into this location matters because the complex *Zainichi* history therein provides an important context for an analysis of the diasporic place presented on stage. Initially, many Koreans settled in Osaka because it was a major marine transportation point as well as an industrial city requiring an additional supply of labour force (Sun, 2011: 187). Moreover, the operation of a passenger ship between Osaka (Japan) and Jeju island (Korea) played a significant role in the influx of Koreans into Osaka and they began to cluster in *Ikaino* (cited in Mun and Park, 2011: 131), the former name of Ikuno-gu on the outskirts of Osaka. Hence, among the *Zainichi* in Osaka, the number of residents originally from Jeju island is much

[157] The stateless Korean/Japanese people do not choose either the North, the South or Japan but regard *Joseon* as their homeland.

higher in comparison with those from other regions of the Korean peninsula (cited in Mun and Park, 2011: 151). Another important point not to miss here is the name of the place where Koreans clustered. *Ikaino* means a field for raising wild boars (cited in Sun, 2011: 188). As the meaning of the name implies, *Old Comers* cultivated the barren land abandoned by Japanese people (Sun, 2011: 188). At the present juncture, Ikuno-gu is still full of traces of its Korean residents, including Tsuruhashi (Korean town) market, *Yakiniku* (Korean barbecue) street, Ikuno Korean School and offices of the pro-Pyeongyang federation and the pro-Seoul union (Mun and Park, 2011: 129). In other words, Ikuno-gu displays the peculiar historical lineage and locality of this city (Mun and Park, 2011: 132). The now-defunct name *Ikaino* was officially used until 1973 when the geographical location of *Ikaino* was subsumed into other suburbs (Mun and Park, 2011: 130). According to the South Korean scholar of Japanese literature Lee Young-hee, *Ikaino*, literally 'a place where people who raise pigs live', was changed to Ikuno-gu, as residents worried that the name would remind people of the odour of pigs, and thus might cause the price of the land to drop in value (2016: 290).

Although the name *Ikaino* is no longer officially used, it is still employed as a symbolic name for that place. Indeed, second generation Korean/Japanese writer Won Su-il titled his novel about Korean/Japanese people *Ikaino Iyagi (Stories of Ikaino*, 2006) over thirty years after the name was replaced. In the author's note, Won wrote that the place name *Ikaino* has disappeared, but Jeju islanders are still living in *Ikaino* (Won, 2006: 245-246). In other words, *Ikaino* does not simply refer to the *Ikaino* in Osaka, but any Korean village in Japan in which the Korean language is spoken and neighbours harmoniously live together can be regarded as *Ikaino* (cited in Mun and Park, 2011: 158). Korean/Japanese poet Kim Sijong describes the physically disappeared but spiritually existent *Ikaino* as follows:

> A town is there although it does not exist./…everyone knows but/it is not on the map/because it is not on the map/it is not Japan/it is not Japan/because it is not Japan/it does not matter if it disappears/… (cited in Mun and Park, 2011: 143-144)

The paradoxical description of *Ikaino* in the poem tilted *Boiji Anneun Dongne* (*An Invisible Town*, 1978) precisely mirrors Won's understanding of *Ikaino* as a symbolic *Zainichi* place. Lee, meanwhile, interprets the elusive Korean village in existence as

a heterotopia, an entangled place where Japan and *Joseon* as well as the South and the North coexist (Y. Lee, 2016: 292-293). The two plays that I analyse in this chapter seek to animate this heterotopic place on stage.

In *Yakiniku Dragon* and *Honmalabihae?*, *Zainichi* stories unfold in Osaka, the distinctively Korean/Japanese and heterotopic place.[158] The second generation Korean/Japanese character, Kim Kwangsik, in *Honmalabihae?*, runs a small shop in the Tsuruhashi market in Osaka. *Yakiniku Dragon* similarly features the Korean/Japanese character Ryukichi, who has a *Yakiniku* restaurant in a Korean settlement in Osaka. The spatial background of Osaka in both plays demonstrates that the place is a key part of *Zainichi* identity; however, the diasporic as well as heterotopic place has been interpreted and presented from different perspectives. In *Honmalabihae?*, Kwangsik's shop and the attached living space visually mirror the entanglement of the South, the North and Japan within the concept of *Zainichi* identity. At different times or simultaneously, audiences encounter the staged diasporic space surrounded by symbolic images from the three different countries: the framed photographs of the North Korean leaders in the living room wall, a poster of a South Korean celebrity in the shop, and the shop entrance printed with characteristic white cats typically seen in shops and restaurants in Japan. The uncanny visual coexistence on stage, I suggest, locates audiences in the heterotopic place where *Jae-il Hanguk-in* or *Jae-il Joseon-in* live between the North, the South and Japan on a daily basis. Whereas, in the staging of the ambiguously overlapped heterotopic space in *Yakiniku Dragon*, the focus is more on blurring the boundary between the actual diasporic place in Osaka and the staged place experienced by audiences. Indeed, before the performance, the *Yakiniku* restaurant on stage and the auditorium are already filled with the smell of barbecue smoke. In this way, the director connected the staged place with the actual diasporic place by adding the distinctive smell from the *Yakiniku* alley in Osaka.

To summarise, Osaka as a diasporic place is one of the essential points that need to

[158] In the script of *Yakiniku Dragon*, the spatial background is not specified as Osaka but described as "a city in the Kansai Region" (Chong, 2014: 31). Osaka is geographically part of Kansai and, as South Korean scholar of Korean literature Moon Kyoung-yeon identifies the place as Osaka in her journal article on this play (2012: 215), it is widely understood that the place in the play is a Korean ghetto in Osaka.

be considered in the discussion of *Zainichi* in general. The theatrical representation of the diasporic place will be more closely examined in the case study; however, before I proceed to this part of my analysis, a discussion of methodology must come first. The overarching analytical framework in the case study will be the notion of memory. Therefore, the next section will first investigate the relationship between diaspora and memory, then how diasporic memory has been accessed and approached in South Korea.

4) The Korean diaspora and memory

Diaspora, memory and archive

In the following case study of this chapter, I interrogate theatrical engagement with the Korean/Japanese diaspora through the lens of memory, which is a frequently borrowed theoretical concept in scholarly analysis of diaspora. In *Diaspora and Memory: Figures of Displacement in Contemporary Literature, Arts and Politics* (2007), Marie-Aude Baronian et al. argue that memory, "the complex relation of personal experiences, the shared histories of communities and their modes of transmission", has to be regarded as "a privileged carrier of diasporic identity" (2007: 11-12). This is to suggest that the significance of memory in relation to diaspora derives from its important role in forming diasporic identity, the outcome of the interaction between individual and collective experiences in a historical context. The "intersection of private and public history" (Hirsch, 2012a: 13) and the resulting memory are the key to the formation of diasporic identity. What also importantly links memory with diaspora is the shared characteristics of "movement and mobility" (Baronian, Besser and Jansen, 2007: 12). Similar to diaspora, whose identity is not solely bounded in one place, memory is also in flux, therefore, it is inevitably modified as it is remembered (Baronian, Besser and Jansen, 2007: 12). In particular, in comparison to "natural, authentic, coherent and homogeneous" national memory, diasporic memory is by definition "cut off, hybrid, displaced, split" (Huyssen, 2007: 85). Despite its variable and incomplete nature, diasporic memory matters because it connects contemporary people with the often forgotten and neglected past of those who are historically marginalised. Put another way, "the narratives of memory can function as the story, or history, of a dispossessed community and, in this sense, it can replace the dominant narrative that fails to describe the experience of those that

it disempowers" (Lourens, 2007: 179). Logically, in order for the scattered pieces of diasporic memories to be able to replace the consistent dominant narrative, the memories first need to be properly archived. What I will shortly explore is how specifically *Zainichi* memory – as diasporic memory, postmemory or prosthetic memory – is archived through theatrical engagement and attempts to replace the exclusionary dominant narrative, connecting contemporary theatre audiences in South Korea with the diasporic past. I will further discuss what kind of impact the transcending connection could have on contemporary non-diaspora South Koreans. Before doing so, I will briefly look at how diasporic memory has been archived by the Korean diaspora and in South Korea.

In academic research, one methodological approach to document diasporic memory is oral history. *Burying the Years on the Sugar Cane Farm in Hawaii* (1979), for example, was a pioneering research paper that offers close access to the Korean American diaspora's memory through the diaspora's oral history. At the beginning of this paper, the Korean American researcher Sin Seongryeo points out the absence of a recorded history of the Korean diaspora in the US, where they were subjected to racial discrimination (1979: 269-270). The second generation Korean American scholar thus embarked on this large research project, aiming to archive the experience of first generation Korean Americans. Sin and other researchers interviewed 80 Koreans who emigrated to the US from 1903 to 1924 and discuss selected stories of 29 female emigrants (Sin, 1979: 269-272). Sunhi's story is one of the documented oral histories in the paper where members of the Korean diaspora's memories were collected and written down. Here is a summary of her recorded memory:

> In 1916, eighteen-year-old Sunhi emigrated to the US through picture marriage. She dreamed of having a happy life in the US known as a country of gold. It did not, however, take long to realise that it was only a dream. In reality, she settled down in Montana and cultivated vegetables for twenty-four years. Her husband passed away of old age while she was pregnant with their youngest child. Sunhi's family moved to Oregon to escape from long winter in Montana that makes farm work painful. The life in Oregon, however, was not much different. She had to cut vegetables at a frosty ground at dawn and had to pick strawberries throughout

summer. How demanding the labour is cannot be speculated without experiencing it oneself. (Sin, 1979: 286-287)

The story was written by the researcher based upon Sunhi (the narrator)'s oral statement of her own life story. Some of her original statements such as 'life as a slave in Korea would have been much better than this' (Sin, 1979: 286) were, however, delivered to readers without modification. Those direct quotes from the narrator, I suggest, function to narrow the distance between the narrator in the past and readers in the present. The rare archived memory of the first generation Korean American diaspora helps contemporary South Koreans to access a difficult past they have not lived themselves.

Non-diaspora South Korean scholars have also conducted research on the Korean diaspora by archiving and interpreting diasporic memories. To examine *Zainichi* with a focus on nationality and identity in *An Analysis of Nationality and Identity of Koreans in Japan* (2009), South Korean sociologist Kim Hyun-sun interviewed six Korean/Japanese people without Japanese nationality (four with South Korean nationality, and two who regard *Joseon* as their homeland) (2009: 316-317).[159] Similar to Sin's comment on the lack of the documented history of the Korean American diaspora, Kim also notes that research on Korean/Japanese residents without Japanese nationality had received little attention (H. Kim, 2009: 317). In this research, the methodological approach of listening to interviewees and analysing what they said allowed Kim to observe how discrimination against the *Zainichi* has been internalised as fear and anxiety and how this influences their daily lives (H. Kim, 2009: 327). Throughout the paper, the researcher frequently includes lengthy direct quotes from her or his interlocutors' responses based on their recalled memories. The diasporic memories collected through these in-depth interviews led the researcher to a more sophisticated analysis of a choice of one type of Korean/Japanese identity over another. For example, interviewee Park Myeongsun admitted that she had to pretend that she was Japanese since she was young (H. Kim, 2009: 327). Similarly, interviewee Bae Haesuk questioned her own identity due

[159] Although not clearly stated, the researcher's analysis implies that (s)he is a South Korean scholar who is able to conduct interviews in both Korean and Japanese. *An Analysis of Nationality and Identity of Koreans in Japan* is the official English title of the publication.

to having a Japanese name, while being ethnically Korean (H. Kim, 2009: 328). Kim's two interviewees then elaborated on their own behavioural changes from pretending to be Japanese, to publicly living as Korean/Japanese, which enabled Kim to understand that the tendency to be assimilated in Japan does not necessarily stay unchanged (H. Kim, 2009: 325-329). That is, unlike a statistical index that merely shows which nationality Korean/Japanese people eventually choose, the collected oral history helped the researcher to further access diasporic memory in progress. Compared to Sunhi's story, which is more about the difficulties she suffered from physical labour, the Korean/Japanese interviewees in Kim's research had to deal with a personal crisis of national identity. Although they are very different diasporic memories, both cases give access to the neglected past of those left to struggle. The scholarly documentation and interpretation of diasporic oral history are, however, not the only available ways to access diasporic memory.

Diasporic memory: between historical reality and the fictional realm

Literature by diaspora also offers access to memory. Indeed, the pioneering Korean/Chinese playwrights Hwang Bongryong and Choe Jeongyeon dramatised what Korean/Chinese people went through during the colonial period (N. Kim, 2018: 336). In *Jangbaek-ui Adeul* (*The Son of Jangbaek*, written by Hwang Bongryong, 1959) set in 1936 in the midst of the armed resistance against Japan in *Manju* (N. Kim, 2018: 86), Hwang features Korean/Chinese characters who fight against the Japanese (N. Kim, 2018: 336).[160] The complicated historical context of the 1930s dealt with in this play requires an in-depth understanding of the historical background to properly follow the story (N. Kim, 2018: 82-86). In his analysis of the drama, South Korean literature scholar Kim Namseok suggests that this kind of work functions to archive historical trauma (2018: 336). Unsurprisingly, Kim is not the only literature professional who regards Korean diaspora writers' literary works as a historical record of diasporic memory. South Korean professor of Korean language and literature Song Myung-hee and novelist Kim Hyejin show a similar perspective in their analysis and review of the Korean novel *Sogeum* (*Salt*, written by Kang Kyung-

[160] *The Son of Jangbaek* was staged more than 400 times in Yanbian, China (cited in N. Kim, 2018: 87); however, Kim focuses solely on the text, not the performance, in his analysis of the work. Therefore, I also discuss this piece as a literary work.

ae, 1934) that portrays a poor and powerless Korean woman who tragically loses all of her family members one by one in *Manju*. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, *Manju* was a place where the Korean diaspora began to settle in the mid-nineteenth century. Kang Kyung-ae herself moved there in 1931 to live and write until she returned to Korea in 1939 because of a deteriorating health condition (Cha, 2011: 438). Kang wrote twenty-one novels with more than half of them set in *Manju* (Song, 2008: 10). In other words, the novel about the Korean diaspora in *Manju* was written by the Korean author who had close access to the memory of diasporic life in that place. In *The Study of Gando and Diaspora in Kang, Kyung-ae's Literature* (2008), Song evaluates that Kang fictionalised events within the context of actual past political situations of the time and her novels testify how *Gando*, the land of hope for Korean migrants, betrayed their hope and dreams (Song, 2008: 16-18, 29-30).[161] Similar to Song's point on how Kang's novels captured the diasporic experience in the context of historical reality, Kim argues that her novels, such as *Salt*, are a record or testimony rather than a novel (H. Kim, 2019b). That is, literature by diaspora confronts contemporary readers with historical diasporic memory.

Literature by diaspora's value as an archive of historical memory becomes more distinctive when compared to a non-diaspora writer's work on diaspora. South Korean literature critic Cha Seong Yeon examines the difference in *Representation of the Other that Can't be Sacrificed: Representation of Joseon People in Manju in Red Mountain and Salt* (2011) where the researcher compares different perspectives in two literary works.[162] Korean novelist Kim Dong-in wrote *Bulgeunsan* (*Red Mountain*, 1932) as he began to be aware of the persecution of Koreans by Chinese people in *Manju* (Cha, 2011: 434). In *Red Mountain*, the conflict between different ethnic groups such as Chinese people and *Joseon* residents in *Manju* is addressed, but the complexities of reality are missing (Cha, 2011: 437, 438, 441). As Cha criticises, the reality of Koreans' life in *Manju* was unduly simplified and distorted by the non-migrant author who could not overcome the limitations of his perspective on migrants (Cha, 2011: 438). By contrast, in *Salt*, Kang interprets the conflict between

[161] Some parts of *Manju* are also addressed as *Gando*. *The Study of Gando and Diaspora in Kang, Kyung-ae's Literature* is the official English title of the publication.

[162] *Representation of the Other that Can't be Sacrificed: Representation of Joseon People in Manju in Red Mountain and Salt* is the official English title of the publication.

Chinese and Korean groups as the class struggle between a landowner (the Chinese) and a penniless tenant farmer (the Koreans) then delineates the harsh reality through the experience of a subaltern woman living in the exhausting reality of *Manju* (Cha, 2011: 441). In the aforementioned review of *Salt* and Kang's other works, Kim Hyejin further suggests that the story of those precariously disempowered in the 1930s is not irrelevant to the present thus Kang invites contemporary readers to critically consider, for instance, if they could simply ascribe poverty to individuals without taking any responsibility (2019b). In other words, the archived historical memory in literature by diaspora engages contemporary South Koreans with the distant reality that they do not have their own memory of it.

Stories of Ikaino, briefly mentioned in the earlier discussion of the distinctive Korean/Japanese diasporic place *Ikaino*, is another literary example of archived diaspora memory. The second generation Korean/Japanese writer Won wrote this novel in Japanese, which was later translated into Korean for non-diaspora readers in South Korea. Of the seven stories that feature a variety of Korean/Japanese characters in *Ikaino*, the second story, *Hirakwon*, portrays a small *Yakiniku* restaurant near *Ikaino*. In the short story, Won vividly describes the milieu that actual Korean/Japanese people might have experienced in *Ikaino*. Seung-ok, originally from Jeju island and the owner of the *Yakiniku* restaurant *Hirakwon*, has lost her two sons, and customer Sunmi's son left her in debt then ran away.[163] Other customers, the Kinosita brothers, have a fist fight when they cannot agree on sensitive *Zainichi* issues such as obtaining Japanese nationality. In the author's note, Won claims that characters and streets in *Stories of Ikaino* have a reality because they cannot be separated from the real *Ikaino* where he grew up as a boy (Won, 2006: 5). With the perspective as an insider and the diasporic memory, Won could write the stories in great detail. While following events in the lives of characters well-situated within the historical context and lived reality of *Ikaino*, non-*Zainichi* readers find themselves in the position of almost stepping into the lives of *Old Comers*. Similar to Won, who wrote stories of *Ikaino* based on his own memory of the place, Kang also experienced the complex situation in *Manju* and incorporated the insider's perspective into her literary work, such as *Salt* (Cha, 2011: 438-439). By archiving

[163] Seung-ok's oldest son's decision to cohabit with a Japanese woman, for example, angered his parents and three years later when the woman betrayed him, he hung himself.

their diasporic memory as a form of literature, diaspora writers Kang and Won have afforded contemporary readers closer access to the historical diasporic past.

Diaspora theatre: from an under-researched subject to the national stage in South Korea

Scholarly research on literature by the Korean diaspora does not have a long history and, in comparison to poems or novels, diaspora drama has particularly been neglected (Yun, 2012: 7). In the preface of his book on Korean/Chinese playwrights, Kim Namseok wrote about his experience of being frustrated by scholarly indifference towards Korean/Chinese drama (2018: 5-6). He states that some examiners even criticised him for researching plays written by diaspora playwrights (N. Kim, 2018: 6). This lack of academic interest on literature by diaspora mirrors how the Korean diaspora has been forgotten in South Korea. In addition to the neglect of the Korean diaspora and their literature, research into theatrical productions faces further challenges; for instance, not many scripts or information about early performances are available (Yun, 2012: 8). In *Loss and Recovery: The Stage of Diaspora – Focusing on Overseas Koreans' Theatre during the Colonial Period* (2012), Yun Geumseon alternatively analyses diaspora performances during the colonial period based upon performance reviews in newspapers or media reports on the productions (2012: 8-9). Through this indirect access to the diaspora theatre works, Yun examines performances in the US, Russia and China, where early generations of the Korean diaspora settled. While theatre activities in the three countries were not identical, theatre that promoted (Korean) nationalism was staged in all three (Yun, 2012: 93-257).

Compared with the earliest theatre works closely linked to Korea using the theme of nationalism, performances by later generations have been gradually placed between their home and host countries. Soon-tek Oh, "the first Korean actor to appear in American mainstream theatre, film, or television" (E. Lee, 2005: 372), travelled to the US in 1959 and joined the "all-Oriental acting company" East West Players (EWP), established in 1965 (cited in E. Lee, 2006: 45), and in 1978, he founded the Korean American Theatre Ensemble in LA (E. Lee, 2005: 387). "The symbols, values, and history" that Oh used were "rooted in his idea of Korea" and, this helped "Korean American youths to 'remember and know their ancestry'" (E. Lee, 2005: 388). For

example, *Ka-ju-ta-ryung* (*Have You Heard*, 1979) was “a bilingual production about Korean American youths done in a style that featured traditional Korean theatre such as *Madang-nori* [arena play or outdoor yard play] and traditional dance, music, and folktales, as well as components of contemporary American popular culture” (E. Lee, 2005: 388). *Have You Heard* was staged at the Jeongdong Theatre in Seoul as part of the International Theatre Festival in 1997 (E. Lee, 2005: 389). Oh’s return to South Korea was warmly received, and the performance in Seoul was viewed by audiences including directors and producers in South Korea (E. Lee, 2005: 389). The performance that travelled from LA to Seoul connected Korean diaspora theatre with non-diaspora Korean audiences in South Korea.

As discussed earlier, the establishment of OKF in 1997 was a significant turning point whereby South Korea belatedly began to pay attention to the Korean diaspora. The 1997 performance in Seoul can be understood in a similar context as the introduction of the Korean diaspora theatre to South Korea. Twenty years after the staging of *Have You Heard* in Seoul, NTCK staged Korean diaspora playwrights’ works including Korean American Young Jean Lee’s *Songs of the Dragons Flying to Heaven* (2006) as part of its first-ever *Korean Diaspora Season* in 2017. As discussed in Chapter 1, NTCK’s *Korean Diaspora Season* provided non-diaspora South Korean audiences with opportunities to access contemporary Korean diaspora theatre from the US, the UK and Canada. Between *Have You Heard* in 1997 and the *Korean Diaspora Season* in 2017, the aforementioned *Yakiniku Dragon* (2008) appeared, and forms an important part of the discussion of diaspora and theatre in South Korea.

5) *Yakiniku Dragon* (2008): from archived diasporic memory and postmemory on stage to prosthetic memory in the auditorium

As previously mentioned, *Yakiniku Dragon* was written and directed by Chong.[164] Although audiences are not necessarily aware that Chong is Korean/Japanese, the title of this play already indicates its half-Japanese identity. *Yakiniku* is a Japanese word that refers to “a Korean style of braising beef over an open grill placed in front

[164] The premiere in 2008 was co-directed with South Korean director Yang Jung-ung. In 2011, the production was directed by Chong.

of the customers" (Flavin, 2014: 18); it is fairly commonly used in South Korea as well. The English *Dragon* which comes after *Yakiniku* in the title relates to the first name of the main character Kin Ryukichi, whereby the 'Ryu' in 'Ryukichi' means a dragon (Flavin, 2014: 18).[165] In this way, *Yakiniku Dragon* becomes the name of a *Yakiniku* restaurant run by Korean/Japanese Ryukichi's family in Osaka. On stage, the signage of the shabby restaurant provides the audience with a more detailed context for the narrative, playing a significant role in defining the *Zainichi* place. The signboard in Japanese reads *Yakiniku Horumon*, which means 'grilled tripe'. Placed near the ceiling of the upstage centre, the conspicuous signboard is one of the objects that immediately captures the audience's view from the auditorium (Flywithanne, 2011). The white rectangular sign with black (*Yakiniku*) and red (*Horumon*) Japanese letters is located above the roof of the restaurant, of which the inside occupies almost two thirds of the space from the stage left. The meaning of *Horumon* on the sign further alerts the audience to the social class of the Korean/Japanese family. In Japan, tripe used to be regarded as scraps, but people started to eat it because Korean/Japanese restaurants served the scrapped tripe in a Korean barbecue-style dish. In the 1970s Japan staged in *Yakiniku Dragon*, a *Yakiniku* restaurant was one of only a few business opportunities available for the *Zainichi* (H. Lee, 2008). Thus, a closer look at the play title and the signage on stage invites audiences to sense the time and the place in which this drama is located. It should be noted, however, that the nuances of these details will not be apparent to all audience members, particularly audiences with little knowledge of the Korean diaspora in Japan, or those with no command of the Japanese language. Although the subtle and unfamiliar signs may not be immediately interpreted, they still set the tone for the performance, with the aim of intriguing the audience so that they attentively follow the Korean/Japanese narrative.

As suggested by the staged place and the main character, Chong focuses solely on issues around *Zainichi* in *Yakiniku Dragon*. This is, however, not his only play on this theme. Prior to *Yakiniku Dragon*, he wrote other dramas on *Zainichi* such as *Ineo Jeonseol* (*Legend of a Mermaid*, 1990) and *Isipsegi Sonyeon Sonyeo Changgajip* (*Twentieth Century Boys and Girls' Songbook*, 2003). More recently, the New

[165] The character's Korean name is 'Yonggil', and 'Yong' also means a dragon.

National Theatre, Tokyo (NNTT) staged a series of Chong's plays based upon the history and memory of *Zainichi*, namely, *Yereuldeuleo Deule Pineun Kkotcheoreom* (*Like a Flower Blooming on the Moor*, 2007), *Yakiniku Dragon* (2008) and *Pamaya Sumire* (*Sumire's Beauty Parlor*, 2012). Set in a coal mining town in Kyushu during the 1960s (so preceding the 1970s backdrop of *Yakiniku Dragon*), *Sumire's Beauty Parlor* features a Korean/Japanese family in a place where a number of Korean workers were forcibly drafted during the Japanese aggression (Jang, 2016b). When NNTT restaged Chong's Korean/Japanese trilogy in 2016, Chong mentioned that the plays that touch upon *Zainichi* life in the 1950s – *Like a Flower Blooming on the Moor*, the 1960s – *Sumire's Beauty Parlor* and the 1970s – *Yakiniku Dragon* would educate audiences on the nameless *Zainichi* absent in Japanese history textbooks (Jang, 2016b). Despite *Zainichi* issues being a common theme of Chong's work, they have not always been at the centre of his writing, and at one point he went as far as to turn his back on this subject matter. In 1995, when Chong left *Shinjuku Ryõzanpaku*, a theatre company that he co-founded with *Zainichi* director Kim Sujin in 1987, he told Kim that he wanted to be free from *Zainichi* issues (Jin, 2014: 266). As listed, however, he continued to create *Zainichi* plays, including *Yakiniku Dragon*, suggesting that his Korean/Japanese identity remains inseparable from his work.

The embodied in-between identity in Chong's plays ambiguously places him and his works between Japan and Korea. In South Korea, Chong's plays are frequently discussed in the field of Korean literature. Park Myeong-jin is one of the South Korean literature scholars who has analysed Chong's dramas, including *Yakiniku Dragon*. In *A Study on Memory and Mourning in Jung Eu-Sin's* [sic] *Dramas* (2018), however, Park clarifies Chong as a Japanese writer who has Korean ethnicity but works in Japan (M. Park, 2018: 174).[166] Chong also addresses himself as a Japanese playwright because he writes about Japan in Japanese (Noda, 2012: 136). Similar to the in-between nature of his national identity, the generation that he belongs to is not clear-cut. Some scholars, including Philip Flavin, classify Chong as a third generation *Zainichi* (2014: 20, Moon, 2012: 211), while others, such as Noda Manabu, categorise Chong as second generation *Zainichi* (2012: 135). As Chong's father was Korean and mother was second generation *Zainichi*, (Moon, 2012: 211),

[166] *A Study on Memory and Mourning in Jung Eu-Sin's* [sic] *Dramas* is the official English title of the publication.

another group of academics, including Choi Jung, refers to Chong as 2.5 generation *Zainichi* (2010: 613). The elusiveness of his identity was, however, not entirely destined: in a sense, Chong chose this liminal identity. Indeed, he was born in 1957, was raised in Japan, and received Japanese education from kindergarten through to university (Noda, 2012: 136). Consequently, he is not fluent in Korean, as evidenced by his speaking in Japanese during a press conference in South Korea (S. Kim, 2018). Despite this, Chong chose to have South Korean (not Japanese) nationality and a Korean name (Jin, 2014: 253, J. Kim, 2013). While Chong is an established playwright with numerous award-winning works in Japan (Choi, 2010: 614), he continuously attempts to work in South Korea where he has a language barrier (Min, 2013: 231). Chong, I argue, elects to maintain his ambiguous Korean/Japanese identity instead of opting for one or the other.

In *Yakiniku Dragon*, Chong illuminates the elusive identity with the story of a Korean/Japanese family. Chong shows how the traditional idea of a family changes when interwoven with *Zainichi* identity. The makeup of the Kin family in *Yakiniku Dragon* is more complex than a family typically formed through a marriage between an unmarried couple. When Kin Tokio, the youngest son, introduces his family members as a narrator, he mentions that his older sisters, Kin Shizuka and Kin Rika, are children by his father's first wife, while another older sister Kin Mika is the product of his mother's first marriage, while he himself is the only child born of both mother and father (Chong, 2014: 41). The unusual combination is not simply the result of the couple's own choices, rather it is the consequence of the historical context of *Zainichi* discussed in the earlier section of this chapter. Ryukichi, the father, was born in Korea, but was forcibly drafted into the military during the Japanese occupation. He lost one of his arms during military service in the Pacific War. When he attempted to return to Korea at the end of the war, he lost his whole fortune due to the sinking of a ship and so had to remain in Japan. Not only could he not afford to return to Korea, but his wife died. Furthermore, his family and relatives in Jeju island were all killed because of the 4.3 incident. Meanwhile, Eijun, Ryukichi's current wife and the mother of the Kin family, ran away to Japan with her daughter Mika in the aftermath of the incident in Jeju island. At the end of the play, this unusually connected family is dispersed as the three daughters choose to leave their family home with their Korean/Japanese, Korean and Japanese husbands

respectively. Both Shizuka and Rika leave for Korea (Shizuka to North Korea and Rika to South Korea), and Mika leaves but chooses to remain in Japan. What is noteworthy is that Chong created realistic *Zainichi* characters such as the former Jeju islanders Ryukichi and Eijun, as well as Shizuka and her husband, who both decide to go to North Korea as part of the aforementioned repatriation project, thus inviting the audience to follow a plot which blurs the line between created and lived realities. Through the lens of this Korean/Japanese family, differently formed and finally scattered to North Korea, South Korea and Japan, Chong touches upon the matter of a national identity not granted to Korean/Japanese people; instead, they have to choose one over another.

In reality, what significantly affects the choice of a nationality is the social perception of the liminal identity. Chong sharply addresses how the in-between identity is prevalently perceived in Japan:

> Rika: Your education isn't a medal. You and I are Korean, from the top of our heads to the tips of our toes. We may look the same as the Japanese, but we're stuffed with kimchi.
>
> Tetsuo: If that's the case, then I'm bottled kimchi, and better quality.
>
> Rika: (*Increasingly angry*) Kimchi is kimchi. Do you think you're special? ... (Chong, 2014: 55)

Rika and her husband Tetsuo, whom she later separates from, are both Korean/Japanese. When Rika criticises Tetsuo, who complains about limited opportunities available for Korean/Japanese job seekers, she chooses kimchi to symbolically address themselves as Korean. Kimchi is well-known as a traditional Korean side dish consisting of salted fermented cabbage. The dish is high in nutrition and the taste is even attractive to the palate of non-ethnic Koreans, despite it having an undeniably distinctive smell. In this dramatised context, the Koreanness of kimchi is not represented by nutrition or taste, but by smell. And like the dish (explicitly Korean with a smell that cannot be hidden), although Rika and Tetsuo look Japanese, they cannot conceal the fact that they have Korean heritage. In comparison to this self-deprecating act of likening themselves to kimchi, the film *Yakiniku Dragon* (2018) illustrates how Japanese counterparts also relate the

Zainichi with the dish.[167] Rika's younger brother Tokio attends a Japanese school and the Korean/Japanese schoolboy is bullied by his Japanese peers. After Tokio is beaten by a group of peers in the school corridor, he is seen curling himself up in his underpants in an empty corner and the large Japanese characters written lengthways on his bare back read kimchi. In another poignant scene in the film, Tokio is absent from school and the close-up of his empty desk shows an illustrated image of his face with the message: Kimchi, go back to *Joseon*. That is, Tokio is derogatorily identified as kimchi by his Japanese peers because of his Korean/Japanese identity. These negative metaphors of kimchi in both the play and film show how Korean/Japanese people and their counterparts perceive the liminal identity.

In this play, the in-between identity is not simply addressed through the story. In addition to the narrative of the Korean/Japanese identity, the intermingling of Korea and Japan in the theatre production enables the audience to have a more embodied understanding of the liminal identity. *Yakiniku Dragon* was jointly produced by leading public theatres of the two countries, namely NNTT (Japan) and the Seoul Arts Center (SAC, South Korea) to mark their tenth and the twentieth anniversaries, respectively, in 2008. This Korean-Japanese or Japanese-Korean play won prestigious theatre awards both in South Korea and Japan. In particular, Sin Cheoljin and Go Suhi, who played Korean/Japanese characters Ryukichi and Eijun, won Best Actor in the 2008 Yomiuri Theatre Awards in Japan, which was the first time South Korean actors had won the award (Jang, 2016a). In this play, the majority of the characters are Korean/Japanese and were played either by South Korean or Japanese actors. To be specific, the first generation Korean/Japanese characters Ryukichi and Eijun were all played by South Korean actors. However, their children (Shizuka, Rika, Mika and Tokio), the second generation Korean/Japanese characters, were mostly played by Japanese actors. In the performances in Seoul (2008, 2011), of the four children, only Mika was played by a South Korean actress.[168] This casting decision, I argue, mirrors the difference between the first generation, whose first language is Korean, and the second generation, who hardly

[167] The film (2018) features the same characters with the same names from the play (2008).

[168] The casting of a South Korean actress for Mika reflects that the character who came to Japan from Jeju island is more fluent in Korean than her siblings.

speaks Korean.[169] That is, the different casting of Japanese or South Korean actors for *Zainichi* characters of different generations evidences that language is one of the important markers that differentiate the different generations. The linguistic representation further indicates that the *Zainichi*'s in-between identity is not halfway between Korea and Japan but it is gradually being Japanised. Therefore, the co-presence of South Korean and Japanese actors on stage plays a vital role in the presentation of the complicated and changing liminal identity.

The linguistic overlap between Korean and Japanese is particularly noticeable on stage. Unlike the translated (thus monolingual) script in Korean or English, the actors on stage deliver lines in Japanese or Korean, making this performance bilingual. When Ryukichi talks to Tokio, joining his son on the rooftop, even first generation Ryukichi quite freely switches between Japanese and Korean. Therefore, throughout the performance, the Korean or Japanese audiences cannot help but depend on subtitles to some extent. This, however, did not become an issue as the transition between the two languages was seamless (Reiring, 2008). As South Korean audience members attested, South Korean actors fluently delivered lines in Japanese and the subtitling was faultless (Ohys83, 2008, Typebis, 2008, Suya1019, 2011). In this bilingual play, one language does not simply switch over to another, but they sometimes overlap. In the opening of Act Five, for example, while the regulars of the restaurant repeatedly shout "*gonnijjiwa*" (hello in Japanese), singing along to a song titled *Hellos from the World* played on the radio, Mika, in Korean, encourages her mother to see the fireworks outside. Moreover, some characters do not simply speak Korean or Japanese but also speak in dialects of both (Flavin, 2014: 19). To the Japanese audience, "the distinctive languages spoken in Osaka" convey "a clear sense of locale and social status" (Flavin, 2014: 19). Similarly, those dialogues delivered in Korean are spoken in the equally distinct dialect of Jeju island and this gives South Korean audiences "a similar sense of location" (Flavin, 2014: 19). Sometimes, even less fluent Korean or Japanese is also spoken by some of the characters. When Ryukichi permits Mika's marriage to Japanese divorcee Hasegawa Yutaka, he expresses his gratitude to Ryukichi, saying 'thank you' in broken Korean, a typically Japanised pronunciation of the language. In brief, the authentic aural

[169] Unlike the blanket usage of Japanese names in the English script, the couple's Korean names and the childrens' Japanese names in the Korean script also reflect the generational difference.

representation of the *Zainichi* community on stage gives this production a distinctive Korean/Japanese identity and offers the audience a pointed reference to its complex in-between characteristics.

The archiving of *Zainichi* memory through theatre: diasporic memory and postmemory

The theatrical presentation of the liminal Korean/Japanese identity reanimates the day-to-day reality of *Old Comers*, enabling contemporary audiences to access the disappearing memory of those who have remained nameless in modern Korean and Japanese histories. In other words, *Yakiniku Dragon* bridges the gap between *Zainichi* memory in the past and those without *Zainichi* memory in the present. What ultimately prompted Chong to write and direct this play that connects the past/memory and the contemporary non-*Zainichi* audience was his perception of theatre as an archive and taking responsibility for archiving the unseen Korean/Japanese history through his works (Jang, 2016b). When NNTT and SAC suggested a joint production (which later became *Yakiniku Dragon*), Chong was determined to write about the *Zainichi*, as he stated in an interview:

> Noda Manabu: You probably have to be brave to stage *Yakiniku Dragon* in South Korea, don't you?
>
> Chong Wishing: When the joint production was suggested, I thought that I will write about *Zainichi*. Because, the *Zainichi* is like an abandoned citizen in South Korea and Japan. In particular, people in South Korea know nothing of *Zainichi*. They do not know…At the beginning, I declared that, whether this drama is accepted or not, I will first write a story of *Zainichi*. (Noda, 2012: 142)

The self-perception of the *Zainichi* abandoned by both South Korea and Japan motivated the playwright/director to archive what the *Zainichi* have undergone through theatre (J. Lee, 2011). What further imbued Chong with a sense of urgency regarding the voluntary responsibility of documenting *Zainichi* history was the predicted disappearance of these people: the decreasing number of second and third generation Korean/Japanese people and the increasing number of those who

choose Japanese nationality (Sin, 2012, J. Lee, 2011).[170] In order to archive the disappearing *Zainichi* memory, Chong carried out an in-depth investigation of key *Zainichi* issues such as ostracisation at school, repatriation to North Korea and limited job opportunities (Jang, 2016b) – all of which he touches upon in *Yakiniku Dragon*. While factual research on *Zainichi* was undoubtedly important in the creation of this play, as I will shortly argue, however, his embodied and inherited *Zainichi* memories played a more fundamental role. In particular, the memory from previous generations, so-called postmemory, is one key part that constitutes Chong's theatrical archiving of *Zainichi*.

Postmemory is a theoretical term coined by Marianne Hirsch. It characterises "the experience of those who grow up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories are evacuated by the stories of the previous generation shaped by traumatic events that can be neither understood nor recreated" (Hirsch, 2012a: 22). In addition to this definition, Hirsch's account of her own second-generation memory enables us to fully grasp postmemory, which she frames as "a *generational* structure of transmission" (2012b: 35). Hirsch has never "seen, heard or smelled" the places in her parents' native Czernowitz (in modern-day Ukraine) because she was born in Rumania after the couple's exile (2012a: 242).[171] For Hirsch's family, Czernowitz embodies "the idea of home" but it is the home that they are unlikely to visit or return to (2012a: 242).[172] Instead, Hirsch grew up with her parents' stories, thus the places such as "the streets, buildings, and natural surroundings" in Czernowitz occupied a significant place in her childhood memories (Hirsch, 2012a: 242). Hirsch developed the notion of postmemory in connection with Holocaust survivors' children; however, this analytical framework can also be useful to describe "other second-generation memories of cultural or collective traumatic events and experiences" (2012a: 22). That is, the gist of postmemory is that one

[170] The number of Korean/Japanese people naturalised as Japanese was 232 in 1952 and the annual number peaked at 11,778 in 2003 ('*Zainichi* society'). As of 2016, in total, 365,955 Korean/Japanese residents obtained Japanese nationality ('*Zainichi* society').

[171] Rumania is not a typo but Hirsch's own spelling in the book.

[172] Hirsch's *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory* (2012) was first published in 1997. Inspired by her later visits to Czernowitz (between 1998 and 2008), she co-authored the book titled *Ghosts of Home: The Afterlife of Czernowitz in Jewish Memory* (2010).

acquires some form of secondary memory from the experience of growing up surrounded by the stories of the preceding generation which, I suggest, applies to Chong.

The formation of Chong's postmemory began at a very early stage of his life. Until Chong entered primary school, he did not live with his immediate family but lived with his grandmother in a deprived Korean village in Japan (Noda, 2012: 137). Chong's grandmother moved to Japan when she was fourteen years old to marry his grandfather, of whom she had only seen a picture (Noda, 2012: 137) and she never returned to her homeland (cited in Choi, 2010: 616). Unfortunately, her husband was not particularly faithful to his family; for instance, he often stayed out overnight and had a Japanese girlfriend (Noda, 2012: 137). Chong's grandmother used to regale Chong with old memories of herself as a girl in Korea (cited in Choi, 2010: 615-616), and repeatedly told him that she wants to return to her hometown and just wants to die (Heo, 2011). For her, "the space of identity" (Hirsch, 2012a: 243) was Korea. Chong's grandmother's longing for her home and death occupied young Chong's thoughts, leading him to realise that life is not so great and people live to die (Heo, 2011). When Chong published the collection of his dramas in South Korea, he acknowledged that his words were born out of his grandmother's sorrow and happiness, thus his words are returning to Korea instead of the grandmother who could not (cited in Choi, 2010: 616). What I am suggesting here is that the embodied memories transmitted from his grandparents' generation to him occupy a substantial portion of his own *Zainichi* memory, and thus his plays are based on this postmemory. The way that Chong uses creative writing for staging (playwriting) to embody his postmemory further resonates with Hirsch's interpretation of postmemory as being "a powerful and very particular form of memory precisely because its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation" (2012a: 22).[173] Chong's collection was published in 2007 before the premier of *Yakiniku Dragon*; however,

[173] Post-Holocaust artist Art Spiegelman, who retells his Holocaust survival father's experiences in Poland and in the Auschwitz concentration camp in his Pulitzer Prize winning comic book *Maus*, and 2.5 generation *Zainichi* Chong similarly have postmemories which originate from the preceding generations who obtained the memories during the first half of the twentieth century. Spiegelman and Chong, similarly, also used art forms to archive collective memories through individual memories.

the influence of postmemory on his playwriting is certainly not limited to those plays in the collection, thus, Chong's postmemory of *Zainichi* cannot be overlooked in the analysis of his other plays, including *Yakiniku Dragon*.

While postmemory from his grandmother underlies across Chong's works, the haunting memory from a place and time to which Chong's father, not Chong, belonged, which thus fits into Hirsch's postmemory framework, more directly influenced *Yakiniku Dragon*.[174] Chong's postmemory of his *Zainichi* father is mirrored in the character Ryukichi and the episodes around him. In the scene where characters discuss the eviction plan of the state-owned land, Ryukichi claims that he bought the land from a soy sauce seller called Sato immediately after the war. This replicates reality as Chong's father also insists that after the liberation he bought land, where they had a house, from a man called Sato who ran a soy sauce shop, which Chong drew upon to develop the scene (M. Kim, 2018). Considering that the event took place around 1945, thus before Chong's birth in 1957, the use of factual details such as the name Sato shows how deeply the distant past is inscribed in Chong as postmemory. In a later sequence, another of Ryukichi's memories derives from Chong's father's more traumatic *Zainichi* memory: Chong's father lost all his wealth and possessions in a shipwreck while attempting to return to Korea after the war, which is how he ended up living as *Zainichi* (Heo, 2011). This devastating memory overlaps with a story where Ryukichi talks about his past in the play:

> RYUKICHI: … After the war, I…I hoped to return to my home…with Shizuka and Rika…they were both small…and my wife at the time…but I couldn't find a boat to Korea…I finally found one… (*In Korean to* MIKA) All our possessions…
>
> MIKA: Chests, clothing and other belongings.
>
> RYUKICHI: (*As* HASEGAWA, MIKA, *and* RIKA *listen*) I had packed everything, and just when I thought we were to leave, Rika became ill…so we waited for the next boat…then the boat on which we had packed everything sank… (Chong, 2014: 87)

[174] Chong wrote this play by reconstructing his father's experiences and other Korean/Japanese people's stories that he collected (Cine_Play, 2018).

This disastrous incident happened when Chong's father attempted to return to Korea after the war, therefore this memory is again from the time that precedes Chong's birth. Chong did not experience the frustration of losing everything and of having no choice but to remain in Japan. Instead, Chong grew up with the overwhelming memory passed onto him and he reanimated the postmemory in *Yakiniku Dragon*; that is, Chong's postmemory seamlessly became part of Ryukichi's memory, which is then conveyed to audiences.

Chong, however, did not entirely depend on his postmemory. As a 2.5 generation *Zainichi*, he has both postmemory as well as his own memory of *Zainichi*. In other words, Chong is simultaneously inside and outside the *Zainichi* memory that he engages with in *Yakiniku Dragon*. Indeed, the description of Ryukichi as a father stubborn about educating his children in Japanese schools is based on his own memory of his *Zainichi* father (Allthat_art, 2018).[175] Ryukichi sends his youngest son Tokio to a prestigious private Japanese school, and as a result, Tokio is severely ostracised at school. Ryukichi, nonetheless, does not change his mind that Tokio has to attend a Japanese school because Japan is ultimately a place where *Zainichi* Tokio has to overcome all difficulties and live his life. Ryukichi's determination reflects how Chong was educated at Japanese institutions from kindergarten to college (Noda, 2012: 136) rather than seeking to be educated in Korean schools in Japan. The father's persistence in giving Chong a Japanese education presumably originates from the frustration that he had to experience as a *Zainichi*; for instance, the big gap between Chong's father's original intention of moving to Japan to study as a fifteen-year-old boy but quitting college because he was taken to the war (Noda, 2012: 136), and the reality of running a junk shop to afford a livelihood to raise his five children (Noda, 2012: 137) allows us to understand the frustration. The character Ryukichi, who does not transfer maladjusted Tokio to a Korean school, arguably projects Chong's memory of his *Zainichi* father determined to educate his children in Japanese schools so that they can survive in Japanese society that does not welcome the *Zainichi*.

Similar to Chong's father as reflected in Ryukichi, Chong also brings his own

[175] Chong mentioned this about Ryukichi in the film but this point can be applied to the same character in the play.

diasporic memory of *Zainichi* via Tokio, an arguably self-projective character. Fifteen-year-old Tokio is described as having gone mute due to being bullied at school. As the story develops, the audience learns that he commits suicide by leaping from a roof where he used to spend time on his own. Chong resists the idea that Tokio is a character that reflects himself, rather he argues that there is no character that he identifies with and the characters are all fictional (M. Kim, 2018).[176] He, therefore, discourages audiences to equate Tokio with himself.[177] While there is clearly no exact correspondence between the life of Chong and that of Tokio, the likeness between them arguably invites audiences to make that connection. Indeed, the starting point of this story is 1969 and Chong was born in 1957, thus Chong was similarly a teenaged boy like Tokio in the period that he describes in *Yakiniku Dragon*. Other details in Tokio's memory also overlap with those in Chong's own memory. As a narrator, Tokio provides audiences with his memory of the place where his family lived in detail as follows:

> TOKIO: I once lived in this neighborhood. I hated it. I hated the people who lived here...It was an era when rapid development took off at an incredible rate, dashing off without a thought, leaving things behind without a thought, and everything became bright and shiny without a thought...But this town remains unchanged...the men are drunk from midday...the women abuse their good-for-nothing husbands, and spend their entire day around the public well...the alley overflows with the laughter, tears, and shouts of the children, and the raised voices of the men and women as they argue… (Chong, 2014: 34)

Tokio's retrospective narration at the beginning of the play describes the neighbourhood vividly and realistically. The description of the Korean ghetto in the script is unmistakably analogous to Chong's own memory of the Korean settlement where he resided with his grandmother:

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[176] Chong mentioned this when he was asked a question about the characters in the film but his answer can be applied to the same characters in the play.

[177] In an interview, Chong remarked that he and his brothers were not ostracised at school (Noda, 2012: 136). At university, however, "when the other students became aware of his *zainichi* background, they treated him as 'a Korean from a ghetto in Himeji' who deserved to be shunned, discriminated and despised" (cited in Flavin, 2014: 23). Consequently, "he dropped out his second year, in 1978" (Flavin, 2014: 23).

> Chong Wishing: It was the era of high economic growth. The junk shop was very busy, thus, (my parents) could not afford to look after five children. For this reason, I lived alone with my grandmother in another *Joseon* (Korean) village until I entered primary school. In the village, you could only see *Joseon* people (Koreans). Although the economy was growing rapidly, it was a very deprived area. We lived in the town centre but we still had pigs and fields around us… (Noda, 2012: 137)

The contrast between Japan's fast-growing economy and the Korean ghetto left behind is almost identical in Tokio's memory and Chong's childhood memory. As South Korean literature scholar Jin Ju argues, the similarity enables us to reasonably speculate that Chong reveals how he feels about the village where he lived as a boy (with his grandmother) through Tokio (2014: 257-258). Moreover, Tokio's narrated depiction of the alley at the start of the play, I suggest, further encourages the audience to believe that this story as told from the narrator (Tokio)'s perspective is also the voice of the playwright. Although character Tokio's memory is fictional, what audiences come to understand through the vividly recounted memory on stage is, I argue, certainly based on Chong's diasporic memory.

From diasporic memory and postmemory of the past to prosthetic memory in the present

The theatrically archived *Old Comer*'s memory in *Yakiniku Dragon* leads contemporary non-*Zainichi* South Korean audiences to access the time and place that they have not lived themselves, offering them an alternative form of *Zainichi* memory. To borrow a term that Alison Landsberg introduces in her book *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (2004), *Yakiniku Dragon* enables audiences to develop prosthetic memories of *Zainichi*. According to Landsberg, prosthetic memory "emerges at the interface between a person and a historical narrative about the past, at the experiential site such as a movie theater or museum. In this moment of contact, an experience occurs through which the person sutures himself or herself into a larger history" (Landsberg, 2004: 2). That is, prosthetic memory is the outcome of mediated contact between an individual in the present and a historical point or event in the past. This memory that transcends the boundaries of space and time challenges "the idea that a particular set of memories belongs exclusively to a particular group" (Landsberg,

2004: 22). As the experience of the transcending interface invites one “to see through another’s eyes” (Landsberg, 2004: 148), for instance, “memories of the Holocaust do not belong only to Jews, nor do memories of slavery belong solely to African Americans” (Landsberg, 2004: 2). The implication in this claim is that prosthetic memory helps one to have “a sense of collective social responsibility” in “the ‘remembering’ of particularly traumatic events of the collective past” (Landsberg, 2004: 152).

While the logic of prosthetic memory ultimately concerns one’s responsibility in relation to what others underwent in the past, the stress is more on ‘I’, than on the ‘other’. In his review of Landsberg’s book in question, film studies scholar Marco Abel undervalues this way of understanding responsibility, framing it as “subjective imperialism” (2006: 385). That one recognises the other, Abel argues, presumes one’s subjectivity as principal (2006: 387). With reference to Emanuel Levinas’s ethics of others and Jeffrey Nealon’s ethical alterity politics, Abel argues that ‘I’ am “always already response-able *regardless* of whether or not I recognize it” (2006: 387). He, therefore, relegates the way prosthetic memory enables ‘I’ to respond to the ‘other’, for instance, “*as if* I had lived through Auschwitz” to “the ‘as if’ structure of prosthetic memory” (Abel, 2006: 386). Abel’s criticism that a prosthetic memory helps people to realise “as if” they are responsible (2006: 386) arguably discounts the value of prosthetic memory as if those who fail to realise the so-called obligatory ethical responsibility towards others are few. Abel’s ideal interpretation of ‘I’, I argue, contradictively underrates the subjective focus on ‘one’ over the ‘other’ that can actually stimulate ‘I’ to realise the theoretically supposed unconditional responsibility towards others. In the rest of this chapter, I will use the concept of prosthetic memories based on this critical understanding of it. Meanwhile, James Berger, a scholar of English and American Studies, shares “Landsberg’s vision of new political alliances” (2007: 608) via prosthetic memory but disagrees with her, claiming that Landsberg is “overly optimistic about the future progressive uses of capitalist mass media” (2007: 606). When it comes to “creating empathy for the historical narratives”, Berger argues, “the main difference between the literary and the mass cultural product is simply that the latter reaches more people” (2007: 605). The fair point, however, does not fully encompass prosthetic memory whereby a physical and experiential site also plays a crucial role. My performance analysis will mainly focus

on this distinct aspect of prosthetic memory.

Considering that *Old Comer*'s memory is also a collective memory of a difficult past as detailed in the overview, Landsberg's logic can be useful to clarify how Chong's theatrical record of *Old Comer*'s memory creates the interface between the historical past and contemporary non-*Zainichi* South Koreans. The conceptual framework that foregrounds the transferential medium/site of memory can be especially useful to interrogate how the *Zainichi* memory is implanted in audiences through/in theatre. In her analysis of Chong's plays including *Yakiniku Dragon*, Jin points out that what he presents 'here and now' on stage functions to form the audience's memory, arguing that Chong's memory is transmitted to the audience (Jin, 2014: 278). Jin does not reference the concept of prosthetic memory; however, her point on the transmission of memory through/in theatre corresponds with the transcending and experiential connection between the present and the distant past in Landsberg's explanation of prosthetic memory. Based on these overlapping points, I will specifically examine how Chong's diasporic memory and postmemory from the past are transmitted to audiences in the present through *Yakiniku Dragon*.

In the performance, what significantly triggers memory transmission is the reanimated site of *Zainichi* life on stage. In the script, Chong provides a full description of District X in the Kansai Region, the place where *Old Comer*'s memory remains unchanged, as follows:

> A city in the Kansai Region: District X, the Korean settlement near the airport. During the war, District X was an area with lodging for the military airfield construction workers, and a large number of Korean laborers lived here…With the chaos of the postwar period, the Korean population in other parts of the country no longer had anywhere to go and turned to relatives and acquaintances with the same background for help, which then resulted in their moving to District X from all over Japan. With this, District X had the largest Korean population in Japan…Originally, District X had been a river, and whenever it rained it was inundated with water. As the sewers had never been completed, occasionally "sh*t" would come floating to the surface. Because it was state-owned land, telephone lines had yet to be installed…On the corner of an alley, there is a barbecue [yakiniku] shop called the Yakiniku Dragon. Over the years, the curtain at the

> entrance to the Yakiniku Dragon has been stained with smoke, grease, rain, and other things…The shop interior consists of a counter and seating area of wooden planks. The seating area has low folding tables with seating cushions covered in Korean colors…The shelves above the counter have been decorated with an unidentifiable assortment of things – good luck charms, lucky rakes, gilt-edged white cardboard squares with unknown autographs, mascot figurines – none of which seem to have bestowed any divine blessings...There is a public well in front of the Yakiniku Dragon shop. Here, the housewives from the tenements gather to do their laundry, cook, and enjoy the latest gossip. Tenements with roofs of galvanized sheet iron line both sides of the narrow alley…The alley is also filled with children, their laughter, their tears, their shouts, and their arguments. It is also always filled with smoke. (Chong, 2014: 31-33)

As the name District X signals, it is an imagined Korean settlement in Japan. The detailed description, however, reveals that the fictional place resembles the actual diasporic place Osaka where *Old Comers* settled. Chong describes District X as a region with the largest number of Koreans in Japan; Osaka was an industrial city where Korean labourers clustered, as I discussed earlier in the chapter. Moreover, that District X is an extremely deprived place – where even dung floats on the surface when it rains – signals its identification with *Ikaino* as well as the Korean village where the young Chong lived with his grandmother. As explained, *Ikaino*, the old name of Ikuno-gu in Osaka, was a barren land where people raised wild boars. In the Korean village, Chong lived in the town centre surrounded by fields and pigs. Chong has not specified that the floating dung is from pigs, but the overall description of District X matches pig-related images of *Ikaino* and the village. In brief, District X closely mirrors actual diasporic places from where *Old Comers*' memories originate, inviting the audience to closely access Chong's diasporic memory and postmemory.

While the story unfolds on stage, the written description of District X is delivered to the audience as a form of a visualised place of memory. As South Korean scholar of Korean literature Choi Jung puts it, Chong recalls and represents the memory of the past onstage in the present (2010: 619). In *Yakiniku Dragon*, Chong staged the *Zainichi* memory by filling the stage with a shabby *Yakiniku* restaurant like the ones

found in alleyways of shanty towns where *Old Comers* congregated in Osaka. During the performance, audiences see the whole stage area transformed into the inside of the restaurant, the greyscale tenements with roofs of galvanised iron sheeting and a public well in a narrow alley. The stage set stays unchanged for a running time of almost three hours (Flavin, 2014: 19). The fixed set that embodies condensed *Zainichi* memories arguably functions to inscribe the place in the audience's collective mind. Compared to the physical nature of theatre, filming has much less spatial restriction; nonetheless, Chong similarly gives weight to the *Yakiniku* restaurant in the alley in the film, which further demonstrates the visual and spatial significance of the place in *Yakiniku Dragon*. The audience's spatial experience of the reconstructed *Zainichi* place in theatre, in particular, recalls Landsberg's explanation of the Holocaust museum in the US, namely, not as a place to "somehow experience the Holocaust" but as a place where visitors can "have an experience that positions their bodies to be better able to understand an otherwise unthinkable event" (2004: 131). What decisively makes the unthinkable Holocaust 'thinkable' is the experience of physically being in the museum, the place that potentially stimulates visitors to have closer access to the past in question. Similarly, the role of the staged *Zainichi* place is to give the audience in the auditorium a unique opportunity to closely feel the diasporic space, thus to understand the milieu of *Zainichi*. That is, the reanimated space of memory on stage functions as a medium that connects the story in the past and audiences in the present so that non-*Zainichi* South Koreans, unfamiliar with *Old Comers*' lives, can develop the prosthetic memory of *Zainichi*.

In staging the *Zainichi* place, Chong turned theatre into a space where audiences can see, hear and even smell the place of memory. Before the theatre bell that informs the beginning of the performance rings, actors who play the rowdy regulars of the *Yakiniku* restaurant are already cooking tripe and playing musical instruments on stage, filling the space with the smell and smoke of the barbecue (K. Park, 2011a, Ibbanto, 2011). As audiences enter the auditorium, they are thus transported to an alley of a poor village in Osaka in the 1960s (K. Park, 2011a). One audience member describes the visual, auditory and olfactory experience of the *Zainichi* place as one that led him or her to feel like (s)he was lost in a strange place and looking around it, rather than being inside a theatre (Byeol-ui Moksori, 2008). Among others,

the smell is a significant indicator of actual *Yakiniku* restaurants in Osaka. Indeed, strangers to the town (Tsuruhashi) – including me – could even find the way to *Yakiniku* alley just by following the smell which is embedded in the place. Enhanced by the unusual use of smell in theatre, the *Zainichi* story was seamlessly combined with the staged space, and the synesthetic experience of the place was arguably inscribed in audiences' memories, arousing the audience's interest in *Zainichi*.

In the film of the same title, Chong replaced the actual cooking and the smell in the theatre with a close-up of sizzling tripe being cooked over charcoal. Still, the visual and auditory representation on screen cannot fully replace the intense synesthetic experience in theatre. As Choi puts it, memory and place can be more vividly restored here and now in theatre (Choi, 2010: 620). The means of inviting audiences into the time and space of the narrative through stimulation of their olfactory senses is especially distinctive to experiential sites like theatre. In other words, the smell in the performance of *Yakiniku Dragon* is a particularly significant factor that contributes to the development of prosthetic memory of *Zainichi*. Furthermore, with the smell, Chong does not simply stimulate audiences' noses, rather, he symbolically attacks NNTT: "Japan's great temples to the arts" with "the greasy pungent clouds wafting from the braziers on stage" (Flavin, 2014: 20). Considering that SAC also has a similar symbolic cultural status, it arguably had a similar effect in South Korea. The olfactory assault enabled audiences to fill the discordant gap between the shabby place built on the stage and the prestigious theatre building so that they can immerse themselves in the staged memory. In summary, combined with the faithfully realised shabby restaurant, the unusual barbecue smell that immediately stimulates audiences' olfactory senses inside the theatre plays a vital role in the transmission of memory from the past to the present, as well as from Chong to the audience.

One key value of these acquired memories is that they help people who are not imbued with the original memories to see things differently (Landsberg, 2004: 109). Landsberg explains the power of prosthetic memory with an example from the world of mass media that led the change in the social perception of African Americans in the US. The broadcasting of *Roots*, a novel adapted into a television miniseries, in 1977 generated extensive public discussion around the taboo topic of the US's enslavement of African people (Landsberg, 2004: 102-105). Given that it was aired

in the 1970s, “what was new about *Roots* was its attempt to use the mass media to create images of slavery and, even more important, to portray a sympathetic black character with whom a white audience might identify” (Landsberg, 2004: 103). That is, the television drama allowed “white viewers to see through a black man’s eyes” (Landsberg, 2004: 103), and the viewers’ acquired prosthetic memory accordingly created “the conditions for ethical thinking precisely by encouraging people to feel connected to, while recognizing the alterity of, the ‘other’” (Landsberg, 2004: 9). In addition, “the collective nature of the experience, a diverse audience viewing the same story simultaneously, made a new public sphere possible” (Landsberg, 2004: 103). *Roots* “dominated conversations, radio call-in shows, classroom discussions and religious sermons” (cited in Landsberg, 2004: 103). Considering the power of television as a medium compared to theatre, it is unreasonable to directly compare *Roots* with *Yakiniku Dragon*. Despite the difference in scale, however, I suggest that *Yakiniku Dragon* similarly created a public sphere. The play was staged in 2008 (20 - 25 May) and 2011 (9 - 20 March) for only short runs each time in Seoul, but both occasions successfully attracted public attention towards the *Zainichi*. The blogosphere, for instance, overflowed with hundreds of audience reviews and comments about the play, creating a new public sphere where non-*Zainichi* South Koreans could publicly share and disseminate their prosthetic memories of *Zainichi*. As the following blog reviews demonstrate, the synesthetic experience of this staged drama enabled audiences to see through the historically marginalised people’s eyes and thus to develop an empathetic and ethical memory of *Zainichi*:

> Everything on stage was realistic and amiable; the actual barbecue cooking and the smell at the beginning made the stage more realistic, the music and old songs that actors play as well as the falling snow drops and flower petals of cherry blossom were unbeatably beautiful…Laughter and tears, heavy and light, family and hometown, life and death, the life of the *Zainichi* who cannot belong either to Korea or Japan. This play touches upon all of the issues but do so in an amiable way, thus, I was more than happy to give a standing ovation and acclamation. As this was the last performance, actors on stage were all teary-eyed. I could not help but share their tears, failing to control the weeping… (Typebis, 2008)

For this audience member, the realistic representation of *Old Comers’* lives on stage

allowed them to empathetically understand *Zainichi* identity, which does not properly belong to either Korea or Japan. With the newly developed affectionate understanding of *Zainichi*, this reviewer shared tears with the performers. The intersubjective moment that this attendee experienced in the auditorium can be interpreted as a utopian performative. As Dolan suggests, such spectatorship has the power to lead audiences to be "active in other public spheres" (2005: 11). Indeed, for this particular audience member, the intense and interconnected spectatorship in the theatre encouraged them to actively share their prosthetic memory of *Zainichi* in the blogosphere.

> In this scene where three sisters are about to be scattered to start anew in North Korea, South Korea and Japan, I felt really bad that the division in the Korean peninsula caused great sorrow for the *Zainichi*…Many audience members became teary-eyed in this scene and they gave a standing ovation, showing the reason why they saw this play… (Wogh0077, 2011)

In the final scene when the family scatters, what this reviewer realised is the obvious but often overlooked link between the *Zainichi* and the Korean peninsula. That they felt bad for what the *Zainichi* had to experience further implies that the newly developed empathetic memory allowed this person to feel some degree of responsibility as a non-*Zainichi* Korean in South Korea. Imbued with this ethical sense of responsibility, they began to relate to the sad but unavoidable separation of the sisters from a *Zainichi*'s point of view. This next blogger also felt an emotional tug:

> The clonking noise of Tokio, throwing himself from the roof gave me deep sorrow in my heart and the windblown cherry blossom in the light was sadly beautiful. I do not think I have ever seen this kind of play… (Suya1019, 2011)

As this reviewer describes, characters including Tokio, who act out a poignant *Zainichi* memory, made audiences empathetically share the sorrow of the *Zainichi*. Overall, the reviews imply that this performance offered the audience the embodied understanding of the difficulty and suffering that the *Zainichi* had to experience. While this play also received some negative reviews, including a complaint on the unnecessarily long running time (Ohys83, 2008), the overwhelmingly empathetic reviews archived online suggests that Chong's memory of the *Zainichi* has been

transmitted to audience members, encouraging them to see through *Zainichi* eyes with their newly implanted prosthetic memory of *Zainichi* experiences. This new form of ethical perspective and empathetic connection that those non-*Zainichi* audience members have come to develop demonstrate Landsberg's point that "the construction of prosthetic memories might serve as the grounds for unexpected alliances across chasms of difference" (2004: 3) beyond the gap between I and other.

6) *Honmalabihae?* (2018): implicated subjects on stage and in the auditorium via prosthetic memory of the *Zainichi*

Into *Zainichi* past and memory via a non-*Zainichi* South Korean's eyes

Honmalabihae? concerns the Korean/Japanese diaspora who struggle with their identities, being caught between Korea and Japan. The play, produced by the South Korean Theater Company Silhan, critically reflects on how Koreans in South Korea do or do not engage with struggling Koreans in Japan. As the selected theme and the perspective on it signal, this emerging theatre company ultimately aims to produce plays with socially engaging perspectives. Unlike many other established professional theatre companies run by a single director in South Korea, Silhan invites guest directors each time (Jung, 2019). Instead of simply following a director's style, its productions pay specific attention to the socially excluded, showing that the company foregrounds socially inclusive narratives. Silhan's repertoire clearly demonstrates these inclusive aspirations. In 2018, the company's inaugural performance was the documentary theatre piece *Lerami Projekt* (*The Laramie Project*, written by Moisés Kaufman, adapted and directed by Sin Myeongmin, 2018) on a homophobic hate crime which resulted in the murder of a young man, who was beaten and left to die in 1998.[178] In the performance, Silhan actors appear both as members of an American theatre company that embarks on creating a play based on the murder, as well as numerous residents whom the theatre company interviewed in the city of Laramie, Wyoming, in the US. More recently, the company staged a reading of their work-in-progress *Natseoni* (*The Stranger*, written by Theater Company Silhan and, directed by Sin Myeongmin) in December 2019, which touches

[178] I attended the performance on 13 July 2019 at Space111, Doosan Art Center, Seoul, South Korea.

upon issues surrounding refugees in South Korea.[179] In one episode, the staged refugee characters who endeavour to look as miserable as they could in an attempt to obtain official status as refugees arguably had the intended effect of making audiences aware of their own social bias against these marginalised people. The choices of *The Laramie Project* and *The Stranger* reflect the company's commitment to address contemporary issues around the socially, politically, racially and sexually marginalised. Sandwiched between those two productions was *Honmalabihae?*, which highlighted the plight of another group of marginalised people: the Korean diaspora in Japan.

The title *Honmalabihae?* implicitly and wittily signals what this play is about. The title is neither Korean nor Japanese. The unidentified compound word is written in Korean; however, South Korean audiences cannot ascertain the meaning until the very end of the performance when it is explained. The pronounceable but enigmatic title with a question mark at the end, I suggest, represents South Korean audiences who have probably heard of the Korean/Japanese diaspora, but do not properly know who they are and what they have lived through. The Korean diaspora, including the Korean/Japanese community, continues to exist today; however, many Koreans in South Korea have only a minimal understanding of those Koreans outside the peninsula and the related historical context. Consequently, the Korean diaspora are hardly considered as part of current South Korea but tend to be regarded as being 'over there' or a community that existed sometime in the past. Combined with the past-oriented perception of Korean identities (which was examined in Chapter 1), the past-oriented perception of the Korean diaspora arguably allows South Koreans to regard the physically remote Korean/Japanese diaspora as Koreans, albeit vaguely. That is, whilst Korean/Japanese people's Korean ethnicity grants them Korean identities, at the same time, the residents in Japan are also considered as having Korean identities because they once belonged to Korea. The link with Korea's past, however, paradoxically discourages contemporary South Koreans from regarding the Korean/Japanese population as part of contemporary Korean identities. As a result, caught between the past and the present, the *Zainichi* are being forgotten, thus *Zainichi* memory as a collective

[179] I attended a reading of this play on 27 December 2019 at Theatre Song, Seoul, South Korea. This play was later staged as a full production in October and November 2020.

cultural and historical memory is also vanishing. *Honmalabihae?* is a theatrical attempt to engage with the neglected *Zainichi* and the memory.

In the theatrical representation of the *Zainichi*, *Yakiniku Dragon* and *Honmalabihae?* feature different times through different *mise-en-scenes* but both place them in the past, not the present. In *Yakiniku Dragon*, the narrative is set between 1969 and 1971 in a Korean settlement in Osaka. At the beginning of the play, Chong offers audiences a hint of this temporal context through the narrator Tokio's monologue:

> It was an era when rapid development took off at an incredible rate, dashing off without a thought, leaving things behind without a thought, and everything became bright and shiny without a thought…But this town remains unchanged… (Chong, 2014: 34)

While *Yakiniku Dragon* is situated in the late 1960s and the early 1970s, the fast-changing time that many *Old Comers* went through, *Honmalabihae?* returns to the comparatively recent past when the Korean wave (for example, South Korean TV drama) became hugely popular in Japan. *Honmalabihae?* was first staged in 2018 and the starting point of its plot goes back to Osaka in 2009. The distinctive *Zainichi* place in the past was recreated using a small shop on stage, situated stage left. The shop, in the Tsuruhashi market, is run by a 47-year-old Korean/Japanese man named Kim Kwangsik. On one side, a poster of Yonsama, a nickname of the South Korean celebrity Bae Yongjun who became phenomenally popular in Japan, is displayed above the shelves full of stuff sold in the store. The beginning of the first scene features Kwangsik helping a female Japanese customer, Kanako, to write a message in Korean on a banner that she intends to bring to a fan meeting with Yonsama. After Kanako leaves, Kwangsik switches on a small television placed above one of the shelves so that *Gyeoul Yeonga* (*Winter Sonata*), a mega hit South Korean television miniseries that features Yonsama, is screened (Shin, 2020, Sohn, 2020). As described, the props and the action of the first scene vividly reanimate the era on stage, thus inviting audiences to travel back to the past.

Chong set *Yakiniku Dragon* in the past because, as previously examined, his intention was to archive a collective and historical memory of *Zainichi* based on his own (post)memory. In contrast, as Silhan member Woo Hyemin explains, the

company chose to situate *Honmalabihae?* in the past because they do not know much about the *Zainichi*, thus they were not in a position to produce a compelling drama set in contemporary times (2020).[180] Regardless of the different approaches, both stagings of the *Zainichi* as an object of memory that belongs to the past arguably produce contradictory effects. On the one hand, the identification with the past potentially acts to emphasise the 'pastness' of the *Zainichi*, and so discourages the audience in the present from relating to those in what is perceived to be the distant past. On the other hand, the return to the past could help contemporary audiences access the *Zainichi* memory in a historical context that connects both sets of people. Landsberg also points out the indissoluble connection between memory and the past, mentioning that "memory in its various forms has always been about negotiating a relationship to the past" (2004: 4). In the analysis of *Honmalabihae?*, my aim is to examine how theatre intervenes in this negotiation. I will particularly focus on how this play, created by non-*Zainichi* South Koreans, narrows the gap between those people and memories left in the past and audiences in the present, enabling contemporary South Koreans to realise how they are, in fact, involved in *Zainichi* issues.

In both plays, it is a playwright who explores *Zainichi* memory and connects the past with contemporary South Korean audiences. While Korean/Japanese playwright Chong wrote *Yakiniku Dragon*, *Honmalabihae?* features 24-year-old South Korean playwright character, Sin Yeongju who claims to be the author of this staged drama. Prior to the first scene of Kwangsik and Kanako, Yeongju actually appears in front of the stage and introduces herself as the playwright of this drama (Shin, 2020). She further explains that this play is based on what she experienced in Osaka when she went there to help theatre company Masaru in 2009. Immediately after Yeongju mentions that her play is going to start, she leaves the stage, leaving it in the dark so that the first scene can commence (Sohn, 2020). The introduction deliberately disorientates the audience into believing they are going to experience the alleged playwright's own memory of the *Zainichi*. As I will examine more closely later in this

[180] Woo also mentioned that the government's policy on the Korean/Japanese diaspora is continuously changing, therefore, the judgement on it can only be made after some time (Woo, 2020). For this reason, the company chose a time in the past where its members shared some degree of agreed perspectives (Woo, 2020).

chapter, in the staging of the past through Yeongju's memory, the point is not simply to unfold the memory chronologically, but more to illustrate the substantial changes to Yeongju that the memory has caused. The main character, as well as being the only non-*Zainichi* South Korean in the play, further mirrors the creative team who grappled with the issue of presenting the *Zainichi* from a non-*Zainichi* South Korean's perspective. Unlike Korean/Japanese Chong, who wrote *Yakiniku Dragon* based upon his own memory and postmemory, Yeongju as well as the South Korean theatre-makers who created the playwright character lack any direct memory of the *Zainichi*. With the dissimilar distance and relationship that they have with the *Zainichi* memory, the two plays present the memory differently. The next section will examine the different positionalities of the two playwrights and how the difference (Korean/Japanese vs. non-*Zainichi* South Korean, playwright vs. playwright character) was dealt with and staged in *Honmalabihae?*.

The positionality of non-diaspora South Korean in *Zainichi* memory

Honmalabihae? and *Yakiniku Dragon* have some common ground: for instance, the dramas both touch upon discrimination against the *Zainichi* in Japan. There is, however, an overt difference in their approaches. In *Yakiniku Dragon*, Korean/Japanese Tetsuo highlights his unfair disadvantaged position when he complains about the difficulty of finding a decent job, regardless of his strong educational qualifications. In contrast, *Honmalabihae?* involves the only non-*Zainichi* South Korean character, Yeongju, in the discussion of discrimination. Whilst gradually becoming friends with the Korean/Japanese residents she meets in Osaka, she becomes increasingly shocked by the widespread discrimination against the *Zainichi* in Japan. In Act Four, Yeongju and Korean/Japanese Jisuk, a tenant in Kwangsik's house as well as an actress whom Yeongju closely works with in the theatre company Masaru, encounter a teenage Japanese girl on the street. The Japanese teenager suddenly accosts them with hate speech, as follows:

> A middle school girl: …I cannot handle my hatred for Koreans because I really hate Koreans. I really want to kill them… This is Japan. This is not the Korean peninsula. Go back!
>
> …

Yeongju: Of course we are victims!

A middle school girl: Do you understand why? That is because you are all idiots. If you do not think, you are not human beings. (You are) beasts.

Yeongju: *Gemono*? Hey, it is you who are a beast! Ah, you are making me angry. (Theater Company Silhan, 2020: 272-275)

What is indicated in this dialogue with the antagonistic Japanese girl is that Yeongju tries to defend the *Zainichi* against the racist remarks, identifying herself and the *Zainichi* as 'us'. The direct experience of the hatred aimed at the *Zainichi* encourages South Korean Yeongju to tackle this reality.

Another key aspect for comparison is the presentation of a dual language – a major constituent of Korean/Japanese identity – on stage. In both plays, actors who play Korean/Japanese characters deliver lines in both Japanese and Korean. As aforementioned, the cast of *Yakiniku Dragon* included actors from South Korea and Japan, with a subtitling service providing translations for the audience. In contrast, *Honmalabihae?* did not actively remove the language barrier. Rather, it purposely located audiences in a position to experience the distance between the two languages. According to my informant Shin, who attended the performance of *Honmalabihae?* on my behalf, roughly 30% of the dialogue was spoken in Japanese (Shin, 2020). In the playtext, those dialogues were written in three different ways: firstly, the way that a Japanese word is pronounced in Korean, secondly, the word written in Japanese, and, finally, the translation of the Japanese word into Korean, showing that the company made an extra effort to properly deliver the lines in Japanese. During rehearsals, director Sin also invited a Japanese native speaker to train the South Korean actors (Kwj3599, 2018). The production, however, did not provide Korean subtitles at all (Shin, 2020). Instead, when characters speak in Japanese, either one of the Korean/Japanese characters became a translator, or Yeongju as a narrator summarised a scene presented in Japanese (Sohn, 2020). When the creative team decided against providing subtitles, they slightly reduced the percentage of Japanese lines (Woo, 2020). Still, for some audience members, listening to parts of a play spoken in an incomprehensible foreign language without subtitles was challenging. One reviewer wrote that the substantial amount of

dialogues in Japanese made him feel like he was in Japan, but, also confused him (Kwj3599, 2018). Another attendee similarly commented that they overheard other spectators say that it would be difficult to understand this play if one does not speak Japanese (Free_7985, 2018).

The absence of subtitles seemingly reinforced the distance that the audience already had between them and the *Zainichi*. The linguistic disorientation was, however, arguably a strategic way of involving non-*Zainichi* South Korean audiences in an unfamiliar *Zainichi* milieu where Korean and Japanese languages are freely mixed. As the aforementioned reviews indicate, the inability to understand a substantial portion of the dialogues over the course of the performance inconvenienced the audience, compelling them to face the language barrier. The intended inconvenience, I suggest, led the monolingual audience to have an embodied experience of the (dis)similarity between themselves and the *Zainichi* who switch between the two languages. Therefore, the vague distance between the audience and the *Zainichi* was replaced with a clearer recognition of the (dis)similarity, thus leading them to ponder their position in relation to this community of others.

The critical awareness of positionality as non-*Zainichi* South Koreans is another point of difference between the creative team of *Honmalabihae?* and Chong. While *Yakiniku Dragon* was written and directed by *Zainichi* Chong, and the play featured actors from South Korea and Japan, *Honmalabihae?* had a cast of six South Korean actors and was collectively devised by a theatre company in South Korea with a South Korean director.[181] As discussed in my analysis of *Yakiniku Dragon*, what Chong portrays in the play is closely related with his own memory and experiences as a Korean/Japanese resident. In other words, Chong is in a position to insist on an ownership of the *Zainichi* memory. In contrast, members of Silhan do not possess the memory. More importantly, however, they do not pretend to fully understand why Korean/Japanese people remained in Japan after the liberation, nor the difficult decision that *Old Comers* had to make between affiliating with the South, the North and Japan. That is, the team with the absent memory accepted the inevitable deficiency in their approach to the subject in question. In my interview with the head of Silhan, Jung mentioned that the creative team did not embark on the project with a

[181] One of the six actors plays multiple roles.

full understanding of the *Zainichi* (Jung, 2019), and the more they learned about this community, the more they realised they might not be able to deal with the issue properly. Therefore, the company alternatively produced a play that portrays their perspectives on the *Zainichi* rather than one on the people (Jung, 2019). What is noteworthy here is the ethical acknowledgement of their ignorance and the critical recognition of their positionality as non-*Zainichi* South Koreans. Their creative approach based on a keen awareness, I argue, enabled *Honmalabihae?* to avoid, for instance, the distorted interpretation of the Korean diaspora's reality that the non-diaspora Korean author failed to avoid when writing *Red Mountain*.

As director Sin explains, the acknowledgement of their positionality is presented through the main character Yeongju (Kwj3599, 2018) who reflects the non-*Zainichi* creative team's journey of accessing *Zainichi* memory. As the scene of Yeongju's first-time visit to Korean/Japanese Kwangsik's place in Osaka shows, she is initially described as an insensitive and unsympathetic figure. Kwangsik, who always tries hard to keep his Korean identity, prepares a table full of Korean dishes to welcome Yeongju only because they are *Dongpo* and thus share Korean ethnicity. As soon as Yeongju sees framed pictures of the leaders of North Korea (Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il) hanging on the wall, however, she is frightened, misunderstanding Kwangsik's unconditional hospitality as a strategy to kidnap and deport her to North Korea (Sohn, 2020). This comical and somewhat exaggerated misunderstanding relates to the political context of the Korean diaspora in Japan discussed earlier. Unlike South Koreans, many Korean/Japanese people regard North Korea, which supported them when most needed as their homeland. Therefore, it is not unusual for them to have North Korean leaders' photos displayed at home. Similar to Yeongju's misunderstanding that the *Zainichi* are North Korean spies, the creative team also confronted their own stereotypical perception of the *Zainichi*, for example, as pathetic (Jung, 2019). In short, the main character who unnecessarily overreacts and has little knowledge of the *Zainichi* is a theatrical recognition of the team's positionality as ignorant non-*Zainichi* South Koreans. What was critical in the development of the awareness and the self-critical character was the prosthetic memory of the *Zainichi* that they acquired in the creative process.

Prosthetic memory and implicated subject

Unlike Chong, the non-*Zainichi* South Korean theatre-makers neither have lived experience of the *Zainichi* nor grew up hearing about their parents' *Zainichi* memories. As the diasporic/postmemory is absent, the members instead depended on the *Zainichi* memory that they collected. During the pre-production and rehearsal period, they had (in)direct contact with the *Zainichi* community. Interviews with community members and extensive research (i.e. books and films which they publicised as the source of their creative work) arguably enabled the team to develop a prosthetic memory of the *Zainichi*. The programme for the performances in 2019 includes a list of books that the team read in the creative process (Woo, 2019: 15-16). The list includes *Against Hate* (written by Carolin Emcke, 2017), *Zainichiui Jeongsinsa* (*The Ideological History of Zainichi: Between the North, the South and Japan*, written by Yun Geoncha, 2016) and *The Philosophy of Emotional Discrimination: How to Face Negative Emotion against Others* (written by Nakajima Yosimichi, 2018). Seven out of the ten books directly deal with Korean/Japanese issues such as discrimination against the *Zainichi* and Korean schools. During the interview that I conducted, producer Jung also listed documentary films that they watched such as *Our School* and *Ulbo Gwontubu* (*A Crybaby Boxing Club*, directed by Lee Ilha, 2014) (Jung, 2019). The two documentary films similarly touch upon the institutional discrimination against Korean schools in Japan and Korean/Japanese students, a part of the daily lives of the detested *Zainichi*. *A Crybaby Boxing Club* begins with footage of anti-*Zainichi* protests that took place in various places in Japan. The following scene features actual Korean/Japanese students (who attend Korean schools in Japan), teachers and parents protesting against the Japanese government's decision to exclude Korean schools in its scheme to make high school education compulsory. In *Our School*, students returning from the field trip to their homeland (North Korea) receive a hostile reception from the Japanese far right protesters when the North Korean passenger ship enters into port. This chronic plight is not widely known to South Koreans because not only are they indifferent to Korean/Japanese people but they are systemically discouraged to learn about North Korea, the country that many Korean/Japanese people regard as their homeland.[182]

[182] For example, it is not allowed to access North Korean websites in South Korea.

Therefore, the filmed *Zainichi* who cry out to be recognised as part of Japanese society, and the scenes showing Japanese citizens protesting against the *Zainichi* and North Korea, serve to galvanise non-*Zainichi* South Korean viewers, including Silhan members, to confront the long-neglected socio-historical reality and arguably develop a prosthetic memory of *Zainichi*.

In addition to the mass-mediated *Zainichi* memory, a visit by a Silhan member to a *Zainichi* neighbourhood in Osaka supplemented the development of the team's prosthetic memory. After the premiere in late 2018, one of the team members, Seo Mijeong, travelled to Osaka to have a first-hand experience of a Korean school and Tsuruhashi market (Seo, 2019: 17-18). Seo recorded what she saw and felt in Osaka and included her travel log with several photos in the programme of the performances in 2019 (Seo, 2019: 17-18). At Tsuruhashi market, Seo unexpectedly encountered a Korean/Japanese man named Kwangsik who recounted how he settled in Japan. It was purely coincidental that this play features the middle-aged Korean/Japanese male character called Kwangsik. What ultimately made this coincidence happen was unarguably the visit to Osaka. The experiential contact with the historically *Zainichi* site, I suggest, provided the non-*Zainichi* South Korean actress with an opportunity to develop her own memory of the community. In her discussion of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Landsberg notes that "the American public seems increasingly drawn to experiential mass cultural forms, many of which turn history into personal memory and thus advance the production of 'prosthetic memories'" (Landsberg, 2014: 130). At the Holocaust museum where visitors can actually walk on uneven cobblestones brought from "the Warsaw ghetto" (Landsberg, 2014: 132), the physical proximity with and experience of the historical object blurs the temporal and spatial boundary between the historical event displayed in the museum and the visitor, granting them access to a prosthetic memory. Similarly, Seo's experiential and close encounter with the *Zainichi* neighbourhood and the actual Korean/Japanese Kwangsik in Osaka arguably enabled her to form her own prosthetic memory of the *Zainichi*. As Seo's final comment in the travel log that she could finally understand Kwangsik (Seo, 2019: 17-18) demonstrates, the acquired prosthetic memory led her to have a more empathetic and reflective understanding of the *Zainichi*. In brief, in addition to the mediated contact with the *Zainichi* through interviews, books and films, the visit to

Osaka also contributed to the forging of the prosthetic memory.

In utilising prosthetic memory in the collective devising process, the team responsibly maintained their non-*Zainichi* positionality: for instance, trying to deliver the unmediated voices of the *Zainichi* (Kwj3599, 2018). This does not, however, mean that all lines were directly quoted from an original source. Most dialogues were developed and polished in the creative process (Woo, 2020) while the members endeavoured to find realistic words for each character (Jung, 2019). Their endeavour to offer a sensitive depiction of the *Zainichi* shows that the team members worked with the critical awareness of their implication in *Zainichi* issues, and were thus determined not to mispresent the acquired memory. After the team collectively drafted the script, they developed scenes mostly through improvisation. During the rehearsals, the actors improvised a subject or theme of an episode to explore how to stage the *Zainichis'* and non-*Zainichi* South Koreans' different perspectives (Woo, 2020). Most of the scenes that capture this difference – including Act Three titled *2009nyeon Heiteu Seupichi* (*The Hate Speech in 2009*) – were developed through this improvisational practice (Woo, 2020). In the hate speech sequence, upon seeing the anti-*Zainichi* protest for the first time, Yeongju is seen being absolutely furious at the Japanese protesters while not properly understanding the surrounding context. Whereas, Kwangsik and his son Hyeonkyu's passive reaction implies that encountering this hatred towards themselves is part of their lives as the *Zainichi*. To summarise, the development of prosthetic memory simultaneously implicated the non-*Zainichi* creative team, thus made them responsibly imagine from a *Zainichi* perspective, also opting for improvisation as a means to achieve a most naturalist presentation as possible. This sensitive and respectful treatment reveals the sense of responsibility they have come to have as South Koreans towards this marginalised group.

Created with a reflective and responsible approach, Yeongju gradually realises that she herself is implicated in the *Zainichis*' struggle. As pointed out, at the beginning, Yeongju has little understanding of the *Zainichi* and mistakes Korean/Japanese Kwangsik for a North Korean spy. Her experience of the hate flung towards the *Zainichi* in Osaka, however, changes her, leading her to actively grapple with *Zainichi* concerns that are both determined by the past and which continue to

determine the present. Not unlike the museum that Landsberg describes as an experiential site that advances the forging of prosthetic memories of the Holocaust, the anti-*Zainichi* protest and hate speech in Japan, I suggest, create a quotidian site where Yeongju can experience the ongoing past, and thus develops a prosthetic memory of it. Yeongju's behavioural change afterwards clearly demonstrates the influence of this embodied practice: she willingly takes a risk of being in the thick of the protest, recording a video. She also interviews a Korean/Japanese victim of hate crime. Yeongju shares the experiences on her blog and also starts to write a drama about the *Zainichi* (which later becomes *Honmalabihae?* that she claims she wrote). In spite of the change, her understanding of and empathy with the *Zainichi* was still limited. When Yeongju visits Osaka for the second time in 2012, she enters into a conflict with Korean/Japanese Jisuk. While having a conversation with Jisuk, Yeongju still adheres to her perspective as a South Korean and criticises Korean/Japanese parents for sending their children to Korean schools that follow the North Korean regime. In the last scene set in 2017, however, when the *Zainichi* characters have been dispersed, Yeongju tries to vocalise the guilt she feels about the *Zainichi*. She regrets her insensitive words and behaviours when criticising Korean schools and mistaking Kwangsik for a spy. She also tearfully regrets that the *Zainichi* people she met in Osaka still could have lived together if she was more understanding and accepting of them (Kwon, 2018). Yeongju's critical realisation indicates the transformation from indifference towards the *Zainichi* to having a sense of responsibility for them. The non-*Zainichi* South Korean finally realises that she cannot simply claim she has nothing to do with what the *Zainichi* have suffered, or can no longer easily criticise their solidarity with North Korea. In other words, Yeongju has come to identify herself as an implicated subject.

The concept of an implicated subject problematises the dichotomous framing of a victim and a perpetrator: "An implicated subject is neither a victim nor a perpetrator, but rather a participant in histories and social formations that generate the positions of victim and perpetrator, and yet in which most people do not occupy such clear-cut roles" (Rothberg, 2019: 1). Rothberg identifies those "entangled in injustices" (2019: 8) somewhere between the two (victim and perpetrator) and name them as implicated subjects, which can be applied to grasp the entangled relationship between the *Zainichi*, non-*Zainichi* South Koreans, and the Japanese. Of the three

parties, the *Zainichi* are the victims who are neglected by non-*Zainichi* South Koreans and discriminated against by the Japanese. Compared with the Japanese who have actively oppressed the *Zainichi* (for example, in hate protests), the majority of non-*Zainichi* South Koreans have shown little more than indifference. Whilst the Japanese in this context can easily be identified as the perpetrators, the absence of any hostile action or direct involvement allows South Koreans to avoid being labelled as such. Here, Rothberg's interpretation, I suggest, affords South Koreans the status of being between the victim and the perpetrator as an implicated subject, especially given that not only actions, but inactions contribute to the victim/perpetrator structure (2019: 1). What fundamentally places South Koreans in the position of implicated subjects is the guilt or responsibility that they, as individuals and members of society, have upon realisation of the effects of their indifference throughout history from the past to the present.

German philosopher Karl Jaspers conceptualises "the distinctive forms of guilt" (Rothberg, 2019: 42) and distinguishes the notion into four different types: "criminal guilt, political guilt, moral guilt, and metaphysical guilt" (Rothberg, 2019: 43). Unlike criminal guilt, the three remaining categories can be interpreted as "forms of *responsibility* that extend beyond the jurisdiction of the law" (Rothberg, 2019: 43). In particular, Jaspers's political guilt supposes that "'everybody is co-responsible for the way he is governed,' a form of responsibility that 'results in my having to bear the consequences of the deeds of the state whose power governs me and under whose order I live'" (cited in Rothberg, 2019: 43). Political guilt is "Jaspers's only category that treats individuals as members of collectives, an important prerequisite for thinking about implication" (Rothberg, 2019: 43). Jaspers's analytical approach, however, does not cover responsibility for "events that are distant in time" (cited in Rothberg, 2019: 45) and the distance in time exactly differentiates responsibility from guilt. While guilt is "always contemporaneous with the life of the perpetrator of a deed", "responsibility not only encompasses those implicated at the time of the events without directly participating in them", but also "political communities that are transgenerational in nature" (Rothberg, 2019: 46). On guilt and responsibility, German-American political theorist Hannah Arendt offers a critical insight into the distinction. "Guilt, unlike responsibility, always singles out; it is strictly personal. It refers to an act, not to intentions or potentialities" (Arendt, 1987: 43). Whereas,

responsibility is different in that “mere membership in a group already suffices to connect one to an injustice; one need not have taken any linear, causal action” (Rothberg, 2019: 50). Arendt pinpoints how this form of responsibility is invariably political (1987: 45) and further specifies that “responsibility is a diachronic as well as synchronic phenomenon” (cited in Rothberg, 2019: 47). That is, “although not guilty of what precedes us, we remain captive to a communal responsibility by virtue of our participation in a collective way of life” (Rothberg, 2019: 47).

Considering that the implicated subject refers to individual members of society who have a communal responsibility for injustice, regardless of their distance from such events, the creative team of *Honmalabihae?* are implicated subjects when it comes to the *Zainichi*. They, however, consciously and responsibly dealt with their implication. The critical realisation of their non-*Zainichi* positionality was mirrored in Yeongju who eventually reflects on her unfulfilled responsibility for the *Zainichi*. As I have argued, what ultimately allowed Yeongju and the creative team to realise their responsibility as implicated subjects was the development of prosthetic memory.

In the staging of the prosthetic memory, the aforementioned contrasting representation of the *Zainichi* and non-*Zainichi* South Korean characters in various episodes, I argue, encouraged audiences to critically realise their positionality as implicated subjects as well. Indeed, Korean/Japanese Kwangsik’s son, Kim Hyeonkyu, becomes a famous rock musician in Japan. When he appears on television and fails to clearly answer a sensitive question on Dokdo, an island that currently belongs to South Korea but Japan continuously claims ownership of, Hyeonkyu is heavily criticised by both countries. In contrast to *Zainichi* Hyeonkyu who suffers because of his in-between Korean/Japanese identity, Yeongju is described as insensitive to the difficulties faced by the *Zainichi*. In a scene where Hyeonkyu teaches Korean/Japanese teenager boy Choi Ujin Korean history, Hyeonkyu pronounces *Yukdupum*, the top grade of the social status system in *Silla* (Korea, B.C.57-A.D.935), as *Ryutdupum*. This latter phrasing is how Japanese people would typically pronounce it, which leads Yeongju to mock him. In comparison to Korean/Japanese Hyeonkyu, who knows Korean history in great detail, non-*Zainichi* South Korean Yeongju simply teases Hyeonkyu about his incorrect pronunciation. The dialogue, which includes the exaggerated pronunciation

of *Yuk* and *Ryut*, prompted audiences to burst into laughter (H. Kim, 2019c). One reviewer argued that this scene merely gave audiences the chance to laugh, rather than leading them to realise why laughter is problematic here (H. Kim, 2019c). My informant Sohn similarly pointed out that it felt somewhat contradictory that this play created in audience members a sense of empathy and responsibility towards the Korean/Japanese diaspora, while simultaneously stereotyping and making fun of them (Sohn, 2020). Despite this reasoned critique, the targeted contrasting presentations of *Zainichi* and non-*Zainichi* South Korean characters in those episodes clearly helped South Korean audiences to critically self-reflect. One audience blogger, for instance, stated that the play *Honmalabihae?* was not funny, but made them feel sorry for the *Zainichi*, adding that if this was the playwright's intention, they were successful (Free_7985, 2018). This suggests that the play's treatment invited audiences to confront the entangled interface between themselves and the *Zainichi* and reflect upon how they are implicated in the *Zainichi* struggle.

Targeting the implicated subjects in the auditorium who share Korean history and ethnicity with the *Zainichi*, this play poses a fundamental question about *Zainichi* identity. In the closing scenes of both *Yakiniku Dragon* and *Honmalabihae?*, Korean/Japanese characters make various decisions to disperse. Unlike *Yakiniku Dragon*, where the characters choose their national identity within traditionally considered options of the South, the North and Japan, *Honmalabihae?* features young Korean/Japanese characters who choose none of these three options. While Jisuk and Hyeonkyu choose Japanese nationality, they elect to live in neither Japan nor Korea but in Latvia, where their *Zainichi* identity does not matter. 'Honmalabihae' is the expression that Jisuk in Latvia uses to tell Ujin in Japan that she is very well. 'Honma' means 'really' in Japanese, 'Labi' means 'good' in Latvian and 'Hae' is Korean. Therefore, the trilingual portmanteau title *Honmalabihae?* can be translated into *Jeongmaljoahae?* (Is really good?). The direct explanation given to the audience at the end of the performance enables them to finally grasp the title's enigmatic meaning. This, however, does not mean the question of *Zainichi* identity is settled, nor does it allow audiences to be freed from the historical responsibility as implicated subjects in the matter of this liminal identity. Instead, the interwoven title that ambiguously lies between Japanese, Korean and Latvian languages obligates audiences to consider their own contribution to the birth of the stateless word and

urges them to seriously question if the *Zainichi* are doing 'very well'. As independent arts reviewer Kwon Hyerin argues, the question mark at the end of the title indicates that this matter has not yet been solved (2018). The theatrical encounter with this unresolved matter arguably provides the audience with "an opportunity to confront [their] role as perpetuators of injustice" (Rothberg, 2019: 125). The enigmatic irony in the title *Honmalabihae?*, I suggest, symbolically but sharply implicates audiences as those who perpetuate the *Zainichi*'s struggle observed in this play. Considering that "the framework of implicated subjects can open up a space for new coalitions across identities and groups" (Rothberg, 2019: 20), the audience's critical realisation of their status as an implicated subject could lead to a coalition between non-*Zainichi* South Koreans and the *Zainichi*. Such an alliance is crucial as it can encourage the implicated subjects to recognise their historical responsibilities so that, ultimately, they no longer serve as perpetuators of the injustice suffered by the *Zainichi*.

7) Conclusion

The premise of the discussion of the Korean/Japanese diaspora is, as I have argued, not simply that they have Korean ethnicity, but rather that their diasporic identities were shaped within the context of modern Korean history. My detailed historical overview of the Korean diaspora was, therefore, a prerequisite for the analysis of plays that engage with the diasporic community. *Yakiniku Dragon* and *Honmalabihae?* have brought the Korean/Japanese diaspora, neglected in modern Korean history, into greater prominence and visibility through the dramatisation of *Zainichi* memories. Both plays were set in the distinctive diasporic space of Osaka and similarly addressed key concerns and traits of *Zainichi* communities, such as their national identity crisis, persistent discrimination and shifts between two languages, namely Korean and Japanese. The Korean/Japanese diaspora portrayed in the two plays are ambiguously located between Korea and Japan as well as between the past and the present. Despite their similarities, the two staged dramas present these themes through fundamentally different approaches. In *Yakiniku Dragon*, the playwright/director archived his postmemory and diasporic memory through theatrical performance, allowing audiences to develop prosthetic memories of the *Zainichi*. The audience reviews in the blogosphere express how the implanted memory helped them to have an empathetic alliance with this community. In contrast,

Honmalabihae? was created based on non-*Zainichi* South Korean theatre-makers' prosthetic memory of the *Zainichi*, with the consequent theatricality focusing more on involving non-*Zainichi* South Korean audiences in order for them to acknowledge their implicated positions as well as their historical responsibility.

Yakiniku Dragon is *Zainichi* playwright/director Chong's theatrical record of *Old Comer* memories. In the dramatised memory, Chong's own diasporic experience and postmemory are intermingled. As I elaborated in detail, the reanimated *Zainichi* memories on stage were transmitted to, and implanted in, non-*Zainichi* South Korean audiences. The main vehicle for this transmission is the realistically created *Zainichi* space on stage and the vivid linguistic representation of the liminality of *Zainichi* identity. In addition to the visual, spatial and auditory invitation to the distinctive Korean/Japanese space, the director used olfactory stimulation to evoke the place and memory of it. The *mise-en-scéne* accordingly led audiences closer to the staged and lived reality. This critically acclaimed play that engages with the neglected subject of the *Zainichi* brought the concerns of these marginalised people into the public sphere in South Korea. The spread of empathetic reviews of the dramatised archive of *Zainichi* memory in the blogosphere demonstrates that audiences have developed prosthetic memories of this community. This new form of memory matters as, for non-*Zainichi* South Koreans, it can serve as grounds for ethical thinking about, and an empathetic alliance, with the *Zainichi*.

Unlike Chong, the creative team of *Honmalabihae?* depended on an acquired prosthetic memory of the *Zainichi* to create the play. *Honmalabihae?* is not simply a *Zainichi* story, but the focus is more on portraying non-*Zainichi* South Koreans' perception towards this struggling Korean diaspora. For the portrayal, the staged drama features the playwright character Yeongju, who critically mirrors non-*Zainichi* South Koreans, including the creative team and the majority of the audience. Through claiming to be the playwright of *Honmalabihae?*, the non-*Zainichi* South Korean character leads audiences to follow her own memory of the *Zainichi* that she developed in Osaka. Following the staged journey of the memory, audiences are accordingly confronted with their indifferent and/or insensitive attitudes to the neglected people. In the interface with the *Zainichi* via theatre, I have argued, there is a strong potential for audiences to locate their implicated position in the *Zainichi*'s

struggle between Korea and Japan. While *Yakiniku Dragon* encouraged the audience to develop empathetic alliances through the acquired prosthetic memory, the staging of *Zainichi* memory in *Honmalabihae?* further pushed audiences to recognise their historical responsibility towards this marginalised community. The enigmatic title with the question mark ultimately compels the implicated subjects to question if the *Zainichi* are really 'all well' and to realise their roles as perpetuators of the *Zainichi*'s perpetual struggle.

This section discussed how the Korean diaspora in Japan are different from internal migrants, including North Korean migrants and Asian marriage migrants in South Korea. At the same time, however, the Korean diaspora bears a similarity with them: while North Korean migrants and the diasporic community both have Korean ethnicity, the *Zainichi* share the experience of being marginalised in a host country with Asian marriage migrants. The related but expanded focus on the external Korean migrants in this chapter thus enabled this thesis to explore migrants and/in theatre in a broader context. In the case studies, the selected analytical frame of (post and prosthetic) memory guided me to thoroughly unpack how theatre engages with the diaspora marginalised in the dominant narrative of modern Korean history. Through the analysis, I ultimately illuminated the underexplored ways in which contemporary non-diaspora South Korean audiences are led to empathetically experience or critically confront the interface with the *Zainichi*.

Conclusion

In February 2017, Katabilla Ketiye Ge-Dara Nimal Siri from Sri Lanka rescued an old South Korean woman in her nineties from her burning house in Gunwi, Gyeongsangbuk-do, South Korea. As a result of this act, Nimal suffered second-degree burns on his neck, head and wrists. Due to the smoke in his lungs, he continues to have respiration difficulties. In recognition of this action, the Ministry of Justice granted the former unregistered guest worker permanent residency (W. Choi, 2018).

In March 2020, the South Korean government banned its citizens from sending masks abroad when the supply of masks could not meet the soaring demand in the midst of the Covid-19 crisis.[183] In the same month, Korean diasporic communities in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Germany and Madagascar were similarly suffering from the pandemic; however, they either shipped masks to their homeland or made a donation. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs recognised those members of the diaspora who voluntarily participated in the donation, despite many of them being not well off (Lee, 2020).

The above two newspaper reports encapsulate the social context in which migrants in/from (South) Korea find themselves. The implication is that internal migrants and the diaspora are rarely recognised as 'us' in South Korea unless they make those exceptional contributions to the country. The chasm between how the migrants and diasporic communities perceive South Korea and how they are treated by the nation is one of the neglected socio-political issues in the contemporary national public sphere. Of the many different possible ways to approach the issue, this thesis explored how theatres of migration in South Korea confront the indifference and also hostility towards – and *othering* of – internal/external migrants and incorporate these others into an exclusive public sphere and narrowly defined national identity. That is, following Dolan's and Balme's shared scholarly perspectives that foreground socio-political contexts of theatre, I examined contemporary South Korean theatre as the

[183] As the supply issue normalises, the government gradually allowed the shipping of masks to other countries.

Korean theatrical public sphere. With a focus on two different migrant groups within the relatively new multicultural society and the Korean diaspora geographically far away from the peninsula, I probed how the theatrical public sphere leads audiences to question their existing views towards society and its *othered* members. Attending to the theatrical attempts to bridge gaps between the socio-political construction of 'us' and others, I ultimately examined how structures of feeling around perceived others are differently formed in the Korean theatrical public sphere.

Throughout the chapters, I investigated the socio-historical context of how North Korean migrants, Asian marriage migrants and the Korean diaspora have been marginalised and how theatre presents and involves them. To offer a balanced analysis of the theatrical engagement in the professional sphere, I explored a large spectrum of theatrical works: from those which reinforce traditional stereotypes to those that give expression to marginalised communities. In doing so, however, my aim was not to cover the country's *entire* theatrical public sphere. Instead, my chapters selectively analysed relevant theatre works created by artists with or without migrant/diaspora backgrounds, produced within the mainstream or on the artistic fringe, as well as those which were either critically acclaimed or overlooked. This thesis thereby sheds light on how theatre brings marginalised subjects into the theatrical public sphere where they can be seen and heard, achieving the politics of inclusion to a certain degree. The original contribution of this study is its unique attempt to provide a comprehensive approach towards underrepresented migrants and/in theatre through a carefully framed theoretical analysis, which I will summarise below.

To begin with, the first chapter played a vital role in creating the foundation for the theoretical analysis of selected case studies in the later chapters. In order to investigate the presence of others in drama and on the stages of contemporary South Korea, I first examined how the idea of Koreanness has been shaped in the professional sphere. With the examples of the national theatre company and the three leading theatre directors, this chapter took a closer look at how the theatrical exploration and construction of Korean identities have rarely included others. As shown in the theatre productions that engage the Korean past through the use of historical narrative and traditional performance forms, and which noticeably exclude

non-Western others, NTCK's theatre embodies past-oriented and exclusive perceptions of Koreanness. Meanwhile, the selected South Korean theatre directors all aesthetically revitalised traditional Korean culture (Korean shamanism) in their staging of Western classics (Shakespeare's plays). As their shared understanding of traditional Korean shamanism as quintessentially Korean signals, the past-oriented perception of Koreanness is also embedded in the directors' approach to Korean theatre. These insights into the professional sphere served as a counterpoint to the next chapters that consider more inclusive contemporary theatre practices.

In Chapter 2, I examined the two plays *Sister Mok-rahn* and *Those Who Cross The Line*, which mirror how North Korean migrants are dehumanised and stereotyped in South Korea. In the analysis, I also looked into how the linguistic differences between the two Koreas mark former North Koreans as others in South Korea. In addition to the staged struggles and linguistic barriers, what further stimulated the audience to rethink their ideological bias towards North Korean migrants was the two different heterotopic stagings of the border between the South and the North. In *Those Who Cross The Line*, the border line between the two Koreas was not simply visualised as a lineal line but was reimagined as a liminal space where Koreans from both sides – but from different time zones – can interact on their way to the South, the North or somewhere else. In comparison to the spatial interpretation of the line that divides the two countries, in *Sister Mok-rahn*, the corporeal coexistence of North Korean migrant character Jo Mok-rahn and the actual former North Korean Chae, whom the character was partly based on, symbolically and temporally blurred the border between the North and the South. In short, the theatrical presentation of struggling North Korean migrants, the linguistic differences that *other* them as well as the heterotopic interpretation and *mise-en-scéne* of the North-South border enabled audiences to imagine cultural crossings and forms of transfer.

In the third chapter on Asian marriage migrants and/in theatre, I elaborated on the difference between how 'outsider' Asian migrants stage themselves (*Ran's Diary*) and how they are represented by 'insider' non-migrant South Korean theatre-makers (*My Aunt in Texas*). *My Aunt in Texas* is a rare mainstream play that directly deals with multicultural discourse in South Korea. This staged minority discourse that maintains an objective distance from the subject in question offered insight into the

lived reality of marriage migrants, enabling the audience to be self-reflective. In relation to the practice of 'yellowface' and the absence of any criticism on it, however, I argued that conventional and insufficiently sensitive perspectives towards ethnic otherness is asserted in the professional sphere. In contrast, *Ran's Diary* closely and critically mirrors the brutal reality of the cross-border marriage where Asian migrant wives are sexually victimised. In the staging of this marginalised and sensitive issue, the representation of ethnic otherness by the Asian migrant performers did not allow the 'insider' audiences to observe the uncomfortable reality of ethnic others simply as staged reality but urged them to face it in the context of lived reality. The bold self-representation of Asian migrant artists that employed performed nudity, as I have argued, further positioned this performance as a protest against the dominant public. Nonetheless, the counterpublic discourse on stage still remains on the margins of the professional sphere. Through the comparative performance analysis, this chapter particularly illustrated the difference between the objective but stereotypical representation of ethnic otherness in *My Aunt in Texas* and *Ran's Diary* as staged counterpublic discourse that compels the dominant public to face their own complicity in this marginalisation.

Finally, in Chapter 4, I aimed to compare how the two plays *Yakiniku Dragon* and *Honmalabihae?* dramatise memories of – or about – the Korean/Japanese diaspora, who remain marginalised and/or ostracised in modern Korean history. To be specific, the comparative focus was on the modes in which *Zainichi* memory and social concerns have been brought into the theatrical public sphere. *Yakiniku Dragon*, based on postmemory and diasporic memory of the *Zainichi*, visually, spatially and olfactorily staged the *Zainichi* space and auditorily represented the liminality of *Zainichi* identity, which effectively invited audiences to develop a prosthetic memory. I further examined how the acquired memory stimulates them to be more empathetically engaged participants in other public spheres. On the other hand, *Honmalabihae?*, collectively devised through the prosthetic memory of the *Zainichi*, critically mirrors non-*Zainichi* South Koreans without the evocation of diasporic memory or postmemory. With a focus on the character Yeongju who gradually realises her own implication in *Zainichi* issues, I analysed how the creative team used Yeongju, not only as a representative of their own journey from ignorance to perception of the *Zainichi*'s plight, but also as a device to make the audience realise

they are implicated subjects in perpetuating the *Zainichi*'s lived realities of discrimination and prejudice. The theoretical investigation into the notion of an implicated subject offered a critical insight to unpack how a staged prosthetic memory can enable audiences to position themselves in a trajectory of historical and cultural implication.

As summarised, the six performances in the case studies have variously brought ethnic Korean and foreign migrants onto stage, enabling the non-migrant audience in South Korea to be aware of those who are neglected in/by their own communities and to further realise their own bias and prejudice towards those perceived others. To analyse and compare the different theatrical approaches towards the migrant groups in depth, I carefully chose and deployed relevant and complementary theoretical frameworks in each chapter. The analysis of *My Aunt in Texas* and *Ran's Diary* in Chapter 3 compared minority and counterpublic discourses around Asian marriage migrants, while I employed the theoretical lens of heterotopia in Chapter 2 to illuminate the difference in theatrical interpretation and *mise-en-scéne* of the border between the South and the North in *Sister Mok-rahn* and *Those Who Cross The Line*. The case studies of *Yakiniku Dragon* and *Honmalabihae?* in Chapter 4 examined how memories of and about the *Zainichi* are differently represented on stage and received by audiences. For this analysis, I drew upon the concepts of postmemory and prosthetic memory and extended the theoretical examination further to implicated subjects. By encompassing the three distinctive migrant groups and analysing their presence or involvement in theatre through these carefully approached theoretical frames, this thesis suggested a new way of thinking about migrants and/in theatre; that is, how contemporary South Korean theatre engages with *othered* migrants and related social issues in a way that theatre can contribute to the making of a more inclusive society. In spite of their valuable contributions to society, migrants and/in theatre have remained on the margins of academic research on theatre and performance in South Korea. Compared to the theatre practitioners' and critics' united and resistant response to the government's control over the performing arts industry, no such committed efforts to question or tackle the obvious lack of theatrical intervention in social issues around the marginalised members of the society have been made. Either as a theatrical subject or a form of self-representation, migrants have continued to be on the fringe of the professional

sphere and academic research on the realm. The close attention to – and the comprehensive overview of – the theatrical engagement with those *othered* in this thesis, thus, play an important role in illuminating this relatively underexplored area of research.

Moreover, my case studies of migrants and/in theatre, based on carefully selected theoretical frameworks, offer an in-depth examination of the underexplored area of contemporary South Korean theatre in anglophone scholarship. As I briefly summarised in the Introduction, contemporary South Korean theatre has received some scholarly attention in the West; however, the emerging theatres of migration have yet to be widely addressed. To be specific, some South Korean plays have been translated and introduced to Anglo-American readers; globally staged Koreanised Shakespeare productions have attracted Western researchers' critical attention to interculturalism in South Korean theatre; and Korean diaspora playwrights' works have gradually become a subject of discussion in anglophone scholarship. However, how theatre artists in South Korea engage with issues around migrants in/from the country has received little scholarly attention. Mirroring the marginalised positionality of migrants in South Korea as well as the marginalised positionality of theatres of migration in the Korean theatrical public sphere, migrants and/in theatre have rarely been part of scholarly discussions of contemporary South Korean theatre in English-language scholarship. In that sense, the case studies in this thesis fill a significant gap. This thesis's contribution to knowledge is, however, not limited to existing anglophone scholarship.

My analysis of examples from South Korea adds an analytical point of view to the discussion around theatres of migration in Theatre and Performance Studies. The specific focus in my case studies on migrants in/from the country who are marginalised despite their Korean ethnicity, or because of their ethnic otherness, suggests an additional angle to consider in the analysis of theatres of migration. That is, in addition to the existing focus on how theatre can create an empathy with migrants, or mispresent them, I have illuminated how the idea of ethnic homogeneity or the perception of ethnic otherness is considered by theatre artists in South Korea today, which plays a role in the creation of empathy or the reassertion of social marginalisation and exclusion. Through a thorough and balanced examination, my

case studies ultimately shed light on how theatrical engagement can encourage non-migrants to disassociate the perception of national identity and civic participation from a fixed or essentialist view in order to envisage a more inclusive society. In summary, my focused as well as comprehensive approach towards the subject of analysis provides theatre and performance researchers in and outside the Korean peninsula with a foundation for further research in these areas.

One of the biggest frustrations or challenges in my research into the underexplored Korean theatrical public sphere was the occasions when I could not find adequate archives or reviews and comments from audience members or theatre critics on the performances in my case studies. The level of attention and criticism on these theatre works devoted to *othered* migrants on the one hand demonstrates an insufficient public engagement and on the other hand invites scholars to consider new forms of archiving. (Migrant) theatre-makers and the theatres of migration that I have examined have certainly played a vital role in helping South Korean audiences to realise how problematic it is not to pay attention to the lived experiences of marginalised migrant groups, but much more can and needs to be done by artists as well as theatre and performance scholars. It is my intention in this study to prompt greater future critical and scholarly engagement with migrants and/in contemporary South Korean theatre.

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