

Keeping Proper Distance: The Question of Aesthetics in Translating English Narratives into Korean

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ABSTRACT

This paper starts out from the premise that literary translation influences the literature of the target language, which inevitably brings attention to the importance of aesthetical awareness and fidelity in translation.

For translators of English narratives into Korean, a language yet in the early stages of development as a tool for literary expression, this task poses immense challenges. This paper aims at analyzing the Korean translations of Nobel laureate J. M. Coetzee's highly crafted and interior narratives in order to examine the obstacles, limitations and new possibilities in maintaining aesthetical fidelity in the translation of English novels into Korean.

The examination will be based on Antoine Berman's categorization of deforming tendencies in the translation of novels, to be applied to determining the prevalent deformations in Korean translations, which will serve as indicators of the most problematic obstacles—the encompassing issue being the gap between spoken and written Korean. In the course, the paper will aim at revealing the ways in which translation can expand and enrich the Korean language as an expressive tool.

KEYWORDS

Literary translation, English-into-Korean translation, aesthetics in translation, narrative distance, literary prose.

1. Introduction

Literature in translation transports readers to a new world, geographically, culturally and aesthetically. Reading a translated poem or novel is an introduction not only to the way people of other nations and cultures live, think and express themselves, but to new and different literary styles and approaches, which in turn, influence the literature of the target language. This is where the importance of aesthetical awareness and fidelity arises in literary translation.

Antoine Berman (2005: 289) emphasized that literary translation deals with texts closely bound to their language, concluding, “translation stimulated the fashioning and refashioning of the great western languages only because it labored on the letter and profoundly modified the translating language.”

In the case of the Korean language, this “fashioning and refashioning” process is still very much an on-going one. In the history of Korean literature, which spans 4,000 years, an extremely small fraction of the literary canon has been written in Hangeul, invented in 1443 to replace Chinese characters but adopted as the official writing system only in 1894 by the declining Chosŏn monarchy—only to be shadowed, for the most part of the first half of the 20th century, by Japanese, the colonialist's language.

The first novel written in Hangeul dates back to the 17th century, but these pre-modern narratives made up a lesser genre in a culture dominated by literature written in Chinese in the Chinese tradition, until the colonial period when western literature was introduced via Japan through translation. In effect, the Korean language, at this point, was “involuntarily, and prematurely, pushed into the aesthetic system called modern literature” (Jung 2010: 110). Critic Kim Chul, in his book *Ventriloquists*, provides a detailed account of how Korea's

pioneers of modern fiction struggled to practically "invent from scratch" Korean prose in order to make it function as a tool for writing modern fiction, from punctuation and pronouns to vocabulary and sentence structure (2008).

The fact that Korean literary prose, following a tumultuous century of dizzying Japanese and English influences, is yet in its developing stage (Koh 2007) poses immense difficulties in producing an aesthetically faithful and polished translation of a work of English literature, with its centuries-old tradition honed in the hands of Shakespeare and the myriad masters that contributed to establishing the western canon.

The biggest difficulty is that Korean literary prose is yet in a state that can be described as "unrefined, unorganized and disorderly" (Lee 2008). Every translation from the more refined and organized order of the English language, therefore, becomes an inevitable attempt, a challenge, to stretch Korean prose beyond its limits.

Secondly, because the Korean language, in its developing stage, remains very much vulnerable to influence, there is a great burden on the translators to preserve and to protect the traits of the Korean language while at the same time attempting to expand and enrich it as a means of artistic expression, alongside the latest generation of writers hard at work at refining Korean writing. This is especially poignant when it comes to translators of English, for within the current global political/cultural hegemony, the interference of English in the vocabulary and syntactic structure of the Korean language is greater than ever (Koh 1999: 236-237).

This paper aims at analyzing the Korean translations of Nobel laureate J. M. Coetzee's narratives, intricately crafted and therefore some of the most difficult among contemporary English novels, to translate into Korean. The stylistic sophistication and thematic

complexity of Coetzee's works will help reveal a wide range of obstacles, limitations and new possibilities in maintaining aesthetical fidelity in translating English into Korean, and the examination will hopefully point towards new means with which translation, as labor on the letter, can broaden, amplify and enrich (Berman 2009) the Korean language as an expressive tool.

2. Berman's Analytic for the Translation of Novels

Berman was not a singular voice in stressing the influence of translation on the target language and its literature. Lawrence Venuti, in discussing the impact that translation has had on 18th and 19th century German literature, pointed out that "because translation can contribute to the invention of domestic literary discourses, it has inevitably been enlisted in ambitious cultural projects, notably the development of a domestic language and literature" (1998: 76-77), which also supports the aim and approach of this paper.

Berman, however, singularly elaborated a specific and comprehensive analytic for the translation of novels, to locate the tendencies in translation to deform, and which in turn, gets in the way of the translator's work of laboring on the letter (2005: 280). He focused on the translation of novels because prose, less formal, less homogeneous than verse, is more vulnerable to deformation, and thus translated novels face bigger dangers of turning into a style that is completely different from the original: "Literary prose collects, reassembles, and intermingles the polylingual space of a community"; "The Babelian proliferation of language in novels pose specific difficulties for translation...the principal problem of translating the novel is to respect its *shapeless polylogic* and avoid an arbitrary

homogenization” (2005: 279).

The following is translation’s twelve deforming tendencies as categorized by Berman:

- 1) rationalization
- 2) clarification
- 3) expansion
- 4) ennoblement
- 5) qualitative impoverishment
- 6) quantitative impoverishment
- 7) destruction of rhythms
- 8) destruction of underlying networks of signification
- 9) destruction of linguistic patterning
- 10) destruction of vernacular networks or their exoticization
- 11) destruction of expressions and idioms
- 12) effacement of the superimposition of languages

The examination in the following section, of Korean translations of Coetzee’s novels, will be based on this categorization, focusing on the most prevalent deforming tendencies that occur in these translations, and also those closely related to the most pressing problems in Korean-into-English translation.

3. Coetzee’s Narratives Translated into Korean

South African writer J. M. Coetzee, who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2003, is the author of fifteen novels, characterized as contemplative, metaphysical and anti-realist—minimalist in style and postmodernist in approach (Wang 2004). On various levels, his work stands at the forefront of contemporary narrative craft, deceptively simple and clear on the surface yet full of

subtle, complicated shifts and turns that reflect the breadth of his layered themes: The Nobel Committee defined him as “a scrupulous doubter, ruthless in his criticism of the cruel rationalism and cosmetic morality of western civilization. His intellectual honesty erodes all basis of consolation and distances itself from the tawdry drama of remorse and confession” (Nobel Prize Press Release 2003).

Coetzee’s novels are comprised of exquisitely controlled prose – “unemotional, precisely descriptive” (Attwell 1993) – for his art is based on the notion that “language is a primary, constitutive element of consciousness and of culture at large” (Attwell 1993).

This close attention to language makes the translator’s “labor on the letter” all the more difficult – hence the reason his works were chosen for this paper – but the biggest challenge for the translator lies in the fact that Coetzee’s novels are far from conventional narratives that simply tell stories in the realist tradition: They portray “the intimate experience of an individual’s inner states... brought into being by the shaping of language, the phrasing of syntax, the resonating of syllables, the allusions and suggestions” (Attridge 2004).

This interiority in Coetzee’s novels is evident in the proximity and elasticity of psychic distance employed in his narratives. Novelist John Gardner (1991) defines psychic distance as “the distance the reader feels between himself and the events of the story.” Wayne Booth, in his influential book *Rhetoric of Fiction* (1983: 156) states that “aesthetic distance... serves to control our sense that we are dealing with an aesthetic object,” which creates and maintains tension between the work and the reader.

Coetzee’s fluid handling of narrative distance is manifested as “the scrupulous avoidance of any sense of an authorial presence” (Attridge 2004) in portraying “the surprising involvement of the outsider”

(Nobel Prize Press Release 2003), adding great depth and scope to the narrative. This quality is crucial for weaving a psychologically complex, interior narrative like Coetzee's, whether in first-person, with "the advantage of immediacy and a clear, singular voice," or in third, which "allows the writer greater latitude in terms of distance" (Bernays and Painter 1995).

Wang Eun Chull, a committed scholar of English literature who has written extensively about Coetzee and his art, has translated ten of his novels into Korean with a keen awareness of the writer's craft and themes. In the pages that follow, we will examine passages, both the original and in Wang's translation, from two of Coetzee's novels: *Waiting for the Barbarians*, one of his earliest work; and *Disgrace*, a later work that reflects the author's development in style and craft. The former was written in 1980 and published in Korean in 2003, while the latter was written in 1999 but was the first work by Coetzee to be translated into Korean, in 2000.

The examination will focus on the author's control of narrative distance and how this has been transferred from English into Korean, one of the most linguistically distant language pairs in the world, by applying Berman's set of deforming tendencies to individual sections of the text.

3.1. Waiting for the Barbarians (야만인을 기다리며)

The novel is a first-person narrative told in present tense, a "confessional" (Wang 2004) offered by the Magistrate, an imperialist oppressor and collaborator, albeit a benign one, who serves as the novel's deeply interior, hyperconscious narrator. From the opening below (ST1), the interiority of the narrative is clear, the psychic distance proximate as in a close-up shot, amplified by the question

the narrator asks himself, "Is he blind?"

ST1 I have never seen anything like it: two little discs of glass suspended in front of his eyes in loops of wire. Is he blind? I could understand it if he wanted to hide blind eyes. But he is not blind. The discs are dark, they look opaque from the outside, but he can see through them. He tells me they are a new invention. "They protect one's eyes against the glare of the sun," he says. "You would find them useful out here in the desert. They save one from squinting all the time. **a) One has fewer headaches.** Look." He touches the corners of his eye lightly. "No wrinkles." He replaces the glasses. It is true. He has the skin of a younger man. "At home everyone wears them" (Coetzee 1980:1).

TT1 나는 그런 걸 본 적이 없다. 그 눈앞에는, 작고 동그란 유리 두 개가 철사로 매달려 있다. 그는 장님인가? 만약 장님이라는 걸 가리기 위한 것이라면 이해하지 못할 바도 아니다. 그러나 그는 장님이 아니다. 우리는 검은색이어서 밖에서 보면 불투명하지만, 그는 **그걸** 통해 볼 수 있다. 그는 **그것이** 새로운 발명품이라고 말한다.

“눈이 햇빛에 부치지 않게 보호해주지요. 이곳 사막에서는 유용하게 쓰일 겁니다. 이걸 쓰면 눈을 찡그릴 필요가 **a) 없고, 두통도** 별로 생기지 않습니다. 여길 보세요.”

그는 이렇게 말하고 손가락을 눈가에 가볍게 댄다.

“주름살도 생기지 않습니다.”

그는 안경을 다시 쓴다. **그건** 사실이다. 그의 **피부**는 젊은 사람의 것 같다.

“고향에서는 다들 **이걸** 씁니다” (Coetzee 2003: 5, translated by Wang).

ST2 The fire is lit. I draw the curtains, light the lamp. She refuses the stool, but yields up her sticks and kneels in the centre of the carpet.

"b) This is not what you think it is," I say. The words come reluctantly. Can I really be about to excuse myself? Her lips are clenched shut, her ears too no doubt; she wants nothing of old men and their bleating consciences. I prowl around her, talking about our vagrancy ordinances, **sick at myself.** Her skin begins to glow in the warmth of the closed room. She tugs at her coat, opens her throat to

the fire. The distance between myself and her torturers, I realize, is negligible; I shudder.

"Show me your feet," I say **c) in the new thick voice that seems to be mine. "d) Show me what they have done to your feet"** (Coetzee 1980: 27).

TT2 불이 지펴져 있다. 나는 커튼을 치고 램프에 불을 붙인다. 그녀는 의자에 앉는 걸 마다하고, 막대기를 놓고 카펫의 중앙에 무릎을 꿇고 앉는다.

“b) 이전 네가 생각하는 것과 다르다.”

나는 이렇게 말한다. 말이 잘 나오지 않는다. 내가 진정으로 자신을 변명할 수 있을까? 그녀의 입술은 딱 다물려 있다. 틀림없이 그녀의 귀도 그러할 것이다. 그녀는 늙은이에게서 원하는 게 아무것도 없다. 그들이 씨부렁대는 양심의 소리도 듣고 싶은 생각이 없다. 나는 부랑자들에 관한 법령 어찌고 하면서 그녀의 주위에서 어슬렁거린다. 내 자신이 역겹다. 그녀의 피부가 방안의 온기 때문에 불그스름해지기 시작한다. 그녀는 코트 위쪽을 짓히고 목을 불 쪽으로 향한다. 나는 그녀를 고문했던 사람들과 내 자신 사이에 존재하는 거리가 무시해도 좋을만큼 미미하다는 걸 깨닫는다. 나는 몸서리를 친다.

“발 좀 보자.”

c) 나는 쉰 소리로 말한다. 그 목소리가 낮설기는 하지만 내 목소리가 맞기는 한 것 같다.

“d) 그 자들이 네 발에 어떤 짓을 했는지 보여주렴” (Coetzee 2003: 49-50, translated by Wang).

The first thing to note about Wang’s translation is his fidelity to the original prose, which evidently originates from the translator’s deep appreciation of Coetzee’s work. Each sentence is faithfully rendered, almost word for word, with minimal “literal” deformations. The dialogue in the opening (ST1), between the Magistrate and the colonel visiting from the Empire’s capital, has been translated to fully reflect the spoken quality of the original, by flexibly utilizing the verb ending “-요.”

In ST2, things get more complicated for the Korean translator. Of the three paragraphs quoted in ST2, a psychologically charged scene

that sets in motion the external plot and inner conflict, of the Magistrate's first night alone with the Barbarian girl that he has saved, himself unsure of his motivations, critic Derek Attridge (2004) comments, "the multiple, simultaneous, constantly changing effects of a passage like this... encouraged by the present tense and first person, we undergo, along with the Magistrate, the complex unfolding of feelings and associations."

These fluid, almost elastic, shifts in psychic distance are difficult to render in Korean because the gap between spoken and written Korean is immense. In any language, the spoken tongue can be defined as diverse, spontaneous, phatic, expressive, concrete, ambiguous, informal; while the written language is simple, planned, informational, descriptive, abstract, explicit, formal (Noh 1996). What sets Korean apart from English is that the spoken and written languages have yet to meld together as a single flexible body of literary prose and are not often used within the same passage, which can make shifts like Coetzee's, from declarative sentence narration to free indirect discourse or interior monologue, sound unstable and clumsy in translation, and often translators choose to deform them into conventional narratives.

The following are examples of these deformations in Wang's translation, marked bold in the quoted passages, which blur the shifts in psychic distance and make the translated narrative less interior and more realist than the original, as arranged according to the relevant tendencies among Berman's analytic:

3.1.1. Rationalization

Both in TT1 and TT2 punctuation plays a large role in rationalizing, or tidying up, the syntactical structures of the original,

altering many of the colons, semicolons, commas and periods, which compromises the fluidity, the spoken and simultaneous quality of the narrative, and in some cases, also the intended focus and emphasis.

The simple and impactful declaration, “One has fewer headaches,” a) in ST1, is a sentence that stands alone due to its subtle yet significant allusion to the differences in attitude of the two men towards the Barbarians, but in TT1, it has been rendered as part of the preceding sentence, connected by a comma, limiting its significance to the physical symptom of headaches. In TT2, c) is a similar case, but here a single sentence has been cut up into two, the relative clause that modifies the noun “voice” stretched out into a separate sentence, resulting in a jarring shift in psychic distance.

3.1.2. Destruction of rhythm

Another significant deformation has to do with paragraph breaks, wherein TT1 all the direct discourse that was embedded into a single opening paragraph has been laid out in the conventional style of single-line quotations, which might contribute to a clear delivery of the dialogue itself, but slows down the impactful pace of the novel’s opening, obscuring the internal focus of the tension between the two men, of the underlying political and philosophical themes related to what one sees out in the empire’s border lands.

Why such deformation is necessary, one wonders, considering the loss it entails, when dense paragraphs interwoven with direct discourse are commonly observed in contemporary Korean fiction, utilized to great effect even without quotation marks, as seen below in a section from a longer paragraph from the novel *흰 소가 끄는 수레*:

...당신은 천생... 작가야. 천생 작가가 이제 유서를 써 품에 안고 새벽 진눈깨비 속으로 나서려 하고 있었다. 이렇게 일찍, 신문사에 누가 나왔다고... 한숨 자고

나가요, 여보. 나는 아내에게 터무니없이 욕정을 느꼈다. 가서 기다리고 있지, 뭐. 구두끈을 꼭꼭 조여맬 때, 내 내부에서 회전 빠른 롤러에 닿아 연소하는 칼날의 불꽃이 보였다. 아직 욕망이 죽지 않았으니, 따뜻한 침대에서 깊이 자고 말면, 맑은 날, 눈떠, 나는 나의 임종사를 찢고 나서, 이십여년간 같고 닮은 다양한 스텝의 기교로, 나의 소설들을 이어쓸 것이었다. 카미카제가 되지 않으면 죽을 수 없다, 라고 나는 생각했다. 나는 진눈깨비 속으로 당차게 걸어 신문사로 갔다... (Park 1997: 35)

3.1.3. Ennoblement

Perhaps the biggest difference between spoken and written Korean is the omission, in the case of conversational speech, of various sentence parts, especially subjects and pronouns (Noh 1996: 165).

Here, in a first-person narrative characterized by proximity in psychic distance, many of the pronoun subjects in TT1 and TT2, marked in bold, could have been left out to better preserve the spoken quality of the interior questions and statements. But the convention is that a Korean translator is hesitant to render informal, spoken sentences in literary prose, even in direct discourse, lest they sound not literary enough. And the result, in this case, is a far more distanced – “ennobled” – narrator in the Korean translation, compared to the Magistrate in English, who establishes an intimacy with the readers in the first few paragraphs.

Critic Kim Yun-shik offers an interesting insight, that whereas omitted subjects are recognized as aesthetic refinement in Japanese literary prose, there is no established critical discourse regarding the same convention in Korean, even when it is widely, and effectively, in use in literature (2010: 292). An increased awareness and research of the writer’s craft, on a basic sentence level, is perhaps what is called for to expand the horizon of Korean literary prose.

3.1.4. Destruction of vernacular networks or their exoticization

Berman stresses this domain, for “all great prose is rooted in the vernacular language” (2005: 285), citing that “the polylogic aim of prose inevitably includes a plurality of vernacular elements”; that the physical nature of the vernacular is closely associated with the concreteness in prose; and that prose always attempts to “recapture the orality of the vernacular (2005: 286). This point again brings us to the necessity of fully utilizing spoken Korean to rendering the proximity of aesthetic distance in Coetzee’s novels.

In ST2, b) and d) make up the Magistrate's two most important lines, which are twists on clichés: the former the standard line of the seducer, "This is not what you think it is"; and the latter that of a concerned parent, "Show me what they have done to your feet." The lines are used here in a way that can sound intimate, perverse, manipulative and earnest all at the same time, creating a richly layered scene, precisely because the sentences are so familiar to the ear.

The translator here is faced with great challenges, for he not only has to first find similar clichés or idiomatic expressions that befit the situation and the exchange, but also choose appropriate verb endings that will render the lines as suggestive and complex as the original – an extra burden that comes with working in Korean, arguably a language with the most intricate system of honorifics that require a careful consideration of socio-linguistic knowledge among the speakers (Koh 2007: 294-296). The parental tone in d) is rendered using the intimate verb ending “-럽,” a very skillful and successful attempt that makes the Magistrate’s voice, and his inner conflicts, come to life. But b) is delivered as a literal statement with the more formal ending “-다,” which results in a loss of all the underlying

connotations of the line that the narrator utters perhaps to seduce the girl, to excuse himself, or perhaps to confess that he has no clue what he thinks “it is,” either.

Using vernacular or literary references to add layers to the prose and the narrative is surely not a device exclusive to the English language and many masterful examples can be found in Korean novels as well. The following are a pair of sentences from the story “상춘곡” by Yun Dae-nyung, a first-person narrative written in old-fashioned epistolary style. The narrative voice is made distinct by a romantic—almost clichéd—lyricism, implied rhetoric, and other elements reminiscent of a dated vernacular, rooted in the poetic tradition of the southern regions. The verbs ending “-지요,” in conjunction with the subjunctive ending “-면” render the sentences as subtle, layered propositions:

...마음 흐린 날 서로의 마당가를 기웃거리며 겨우 침향대를 맡을 수 있다면 그것만으로도 된 것이지요 (Yun 1999: 55).

당신 앞산에 벚꽃이 피면 그때 찾아가서 놓고 오지요 (Yun 1999: 56).

3.2. Disgrace (추락)

Disgrace is told in the third person but its present tense helps maintain a similar intimacy in the narrative as *Waiting for the Barbarians*, which a reviewer described as an “improvised” quality that “allows for the sublime exhilaration of accident and surprise... Improvised in the way that our own lives are” (Gorra 1998).

Written almost 20 years after *Waiting for the Barbarians*, this novel tells the story of an academic ousted from the university for an affair with a student—its external narrative, set in post-Apartheid South Africa, deceptively realist but in fact taking his modernist,

minimalist approach and style to the extreme. Coetzee's "chiseled" (Attridge 2004) sentences, therefore, provide even more challenges for the translator, the prose cadenced by unconventional punctuation and fragmentation, which all contribute to added interiority and intensity in the narrative.

ST3 For a man of his age, 52, divorced, he has, **to his mind**, solved the problem of sex rather well (Coetzee 1999: 1).

TT3 그는 이혼 a)까지 한, 권들의, 남자 b)치고는, 자신이 섹스 문제를 잘 해결해왔다고 생각한다 (Coetzee 2011: 7, translated by Wang).

ST4 *It gets harder all the time*, Bev Shaw once said. **c) Harder, yet easier too. d) One gets used to things getting harder; one ceases to be surprised that what used to be as hard as hard can be grows harder yet.** He can save the young dog, if he wishes, for another week. **e) But a time must come, it cannot be evaded**, when he will have to bring him to Bev Shaw in her operating room (perhaps he will carry him in his arms, perhaps he will do that for him) and caress him and brush back the fur so that the needle can find the vein, and whisper to him and support him in the moment when, bewilderingly, his legs buckle; and then, when the soul is out, fold him up and pack him away in his bag, and the next day wheel the bag into the flames and see that it is burnt, burnt up. He will do all that for him when his time comes. **f) It will be little enough, less than little: nothing** (Coetzee 1999: 219-220)

TT4 항상 더 어려워져요. 베브 쇼는 언젠가 이렇게 말했다. **c)더 어려워지지만 더 쉬워지기도 한다. d)사람들은 어려워지는 것에 익숙해진다. 너무너무 어렵던 것이 아직도 더 어려워질 수 있다는 데, 더 이상 놀라지도 않는다. 그가 원한다면 또 한 주일 동안 그 어린 개를 살려줄 수 있다. 하지만 그가 그 개를 베브 쇼의 수술실로 데려가고(어쩌면 그는 그 개를 팔에 안고 갈 것이다. 어쩌면 그는 그 개를 위해 그렇게 할 것이다.), 그 개를 껴안고 바늘이 혈관을 찾을 수 있도록 털을 빗겨주고, 그 개에게 뭔가를 속삭여주고, 그 개의 다리가 후들거릴 때 몸을 받쳐주고, 그런 다음 영혼이 나가면 그 개를 집어서 자루에 싸서 넣고, 다음**

날에는 자루를 불길에 밀어넣고, 그 개가 타고, 그 개가 다 타버리는 것을 보는 e)날이 오고 말 것이다. (그건 피할 길이 없다.) f) 그건 충분히 적은 것이다. 적은 것보다 못할 것이다. 아무 것도 아닐 것이다 (Coetzee 2011: 330-331, translated by Wang).

The first excerpt is the novel's opening paragraph and the second is from the final scene, with a few more paragraphs to go until the ending, but clearly evident, in the pacing and the rhythm, that the narrative is winding down to a conclusion. The analysis will focus on tendencies that have not been addressed in the preceding chapter, in order to examine and identify as broad a range as possible of obstacles in translating from Korean into English, and in utilizing both spoken and written Korean in literary prose.

3.2.1. Clarification

The unconventional cadence that Coetzee adopts in this novel is evident from the opening sentence (ST3). "The commas," Michael Gorra (1999) commented in his review of the book, "are lovely in the way that they parse out his situation, bracketing off 'to his mind' in order to suggest the limits of his solution." Wang, again in obvious appreciation of Coetzee's prose and craft and in an attempt to maintain aesthetical fidelity, has decided to keep the commas as they are, syntactically, in his translation. Here, however, the attempt at fidelity is too literal, and the effect is that the commas in the Korean text turn out far more unconventional than in the original.

What complicates things further—and perhaps what deforms the translation further—is the rhetorical emphasis added by the Korean case markers in a) and b), “-까지” and “-치고는.” In Korean grammar, nouns cannot stand on their own but require case markers to indicate what parts they play in the sentence, which means that the

translator has no choice but to add case markers, but the clarification effect here comes from choosing markers that are rhetorically too strong, resulting in an unnecessary focus on the fact that the protagonist is 52 and divorced, while the effect that Coetzee sought with the commas, highlighting “to his mind,” is minimized into a negligible verb form at the end of the sentence.

Clarification, according to Berman (2005: 281), is about rhetoricizing, about making explicit, imposing the definite where the original aims at the indefinite. In translating English into Korean, case markers and verb endings pose the greatest dangers to this deformation tendency.

Novelist Kim Hun (2008: 150-151) elaborated on his frustration with case markers, which he cannot do without as a Korean writer, but finds them difficult to control, for they can change, often in just one syllable, a fact into an opinion. The anecdote of the agony he experienced in choosing the right case marker for the first sentence of his novel *칼의 노래* clearly affirms the huge difference in rhetoric between two subject markers, “-은” and “-이”: Kim in the end decided that the more plainspoken “-이” befits his stoic and reticent first-person narrator and wrote: “버려진 섬마다 꽃이 피었다” (2000: 1).

This, when applied to translations, would mean extra attention must be paid to the choice of case markers if the translator is aiming at avoiding deformation tendencies in translation, especially clarification, which is inherent in the very nature of the process.

3.2.2. Destruction of vernacular networks

In ST 4, Coetzee makes full use of fragments and free indirect discourse—c), d), e) for example—to delve deeper into the interior narrative, bringing us the protagonist's unfiltered thoughts and

ruminations at the deepest level as the narrative arrives at an end. His artistic finesse is distinguishable from early stream-of-consciousness narratives, in that the interior and exterior narratives are seamlessly interwoven, the shifts in psychic distance seemingly spontaneous but at the same time highly controlled.

In Wang's translation, a number of the fragments are rendered as full sentences, using the formal declarative verb ending "-다," when ending the fragment as a more colloquial and informal predicate, or rendering it as a noun phrase, which is just as natural and common in spoken Korean (Noh 1996: 197-198), would have preserved the psychic distance intended in the original.

A similar strategy could work to retain the spoken quality of free indirect discourse, but these sentences have been translated as declarative expositions as well, compromising the vernacular network vital to the passage, where readers are allowed an intimate glimpse into the protagonist's interior landscape before he decides to take the dog to the operating room in the last sentence of the novel: "Yes, I am giving him up" (Coetzee 1990: 220).

The late scholar and educator Lee O-deok dedicated his career to narrow the gap between spoken and written Korean, so that people will write as they speak and speech will not be dictated by written texts (1989). The most immediate change should come in the use of verb endings, he concluded, after comparing a published text of a folk tale and an elderly woman's oral rendition of it, and urged writers to employ a more diverse range of verb endings as in the oral storytelling, which made use of informal, vernacular endings (Nam and Ko1993) like " - 거든," "-드라," "-라그" and "-지" instead of the singular formal "-다."

It is not as easy to find effective examples of free indirect discourse in Korean narratives, which perhaps implies that this is an

area of narrative craft that Korean writers can further develop. The following is an excerpt from the award-winning story “하나코는 없다” by Choi Yun, novelist and French literature scholar, who, as the passage shows, was clearly influenced by the interior, stream-of-conscious narratives in the French tradition:

로마에 내리자마자 서울에 전화를 걸리라. 그의 마음은 예전에 비해 한 치도 바뀐 것이 없다고. 당신의 자리가 너무도 비어 있었노라고. 꼭 한번 아이를 데리고 베네치아에 같이 오자고. 그런 기약 없는, 확신 없는 말을 전하기 위해 전화를 걸리라. 모든 것이 아주 쉽게 이루어지리라. 지금까지 그래 왔던 것처럼. 그렇지만 아내가 이렇게 말한다면. 이번에는 그렇게 할 수 없어요. 얘기를 합시다. 단 한 번만이라도 서로에 대해 솔직하게. 그는 양미간에 주름을 지으면서 잠이 들었다 (Choi 1994: 40).

The shifts in psychic distance is as fluid here as in *Disgrace*, perhaps more so, moving from free indirect discourse to free direct discourse then back again, utilizing a rhythmic repetition of sentence fragments before returning to third-person narrative at the end with a single declarative statement with the verb ending “-다.” Because the Korean language is relatively less rigid, and grammatically more vulnerable, its potential as a polylogic prose would be far greater than what has been achieved in its relatively short history of modern literature. Not only verb endings but syntax and structural transfers (Noh 1996: 215-216) are additional factors to apply to the development of spoken Korean within the spectrum of literary prose.

3.2.3. Destruction of rhythm

In discussing Vladimir Nabokov’s complicated narrative craft, Booth (1983: 303) asserts that “the degree of difficulty may be entirely proper to the work as a whole.” This understanding, or acceptance, of the complexities and difficulties of the original text

would be necessary for a translator with an awareness of his aesthetical responsibilities.

Controlling rhythm and cadence proves difficult as well in Coetzee's long sentences in ST4, as the most complicating inner development takes place and the narrative winds down, allowing room for contemplation. In TT4, d) and e) are chopped up into curt, almost staccato sentences, and in the parts where the longer structures have been preserved, the fluid rhythm has been lost due to the prosaic use of pronouns, marked in bold.

The following is an excerpt from another story by Park Beom-sin, a beautifully long and dense passage that maintains rhythmic control by using flexible verb endings and utilizing the traditional 3-4 / 4-4 beats to provide the lyrical cadence suitable for revisiting a distant past:

... 박꽃은 밤마다 하얗게 피어나고, 논강평야 너른 들을 지나온 바람 가만가만 박꽃마다 건들고 가고, 먼 데 가까운 데 소쩍새는 솔적다솔적다 울고, 잠 못 이루는 젊은 누님은 들고 앉은 수틀 속 학의 날개에 수바늘 박아넣다 말고, 들 가운데 지나는 서울행 열차소리 나발처럼 킷구멍 열고 듣다가 소리 죽여 한숨을 쉬고. 그 시절은 그랬어. 내가 큰 애 너보다도 더 젊었을 때. 스무살 된 아들하고 이렇게 나란히 발매기를 할 날이 있으리라곤 꿈에서라도 상상 못했던. 아, 아니다, 애야. 그렇게 우듬지만 꺾어뜯어놓으면 안 돼. 이놈들 잡초가 얼마나 번식력이 왕성하다구... (Park 1997: 74)

4. Conclusion

When writers speak about the limitations of Korean prose, it is not to conclude that certain sentences cannot be written, or that certain narrative craft cannot be rendered in the Korean language, but out of a pressing need and desire to push the language toward a

higher level of factual and scientific clarity (Kim 2008: 150); and to pioneer new frontiers in literary prose by pursuing further thematic depth through more concreteness in writing (Kim 2009: 253-254). Translators, confronted with similar limitations and driven by similar desires, no doubt share their goals.

The Korean translations of Coetzee's novels, as examined in the preceding pages, demonstrate a deep aesthetic appreciation of the writer's craft and painstaking efforts to do it justice in a language immensely distant from the original English. The deformations that inevitably occur in the process speak for the obstacles posed by the linguistic differences and the developmental gap between English and Korean prose.

These obstacles, however, are not innate to the Korean language itself but to the history of its development as an expressive literary tool. In other words, Wang's less successful translations are not so much failures than paths that will lead future generations of translators to refine and innovate Korean prose, not simply to render the translation more readable but to deliver the linguistic, aesthetical power of the work, and furthermore, to contribute to the development of new writing styles and pave the way for the next wave of Korean literature.

The biggest obstacle, the preceding examination found, is the still-existent gap between spoken and written Korean, which results, even with the best of intentions, in an unstable rendering of English modernist narratives that emphasize interiority and style. But perhaps the gap is not as great as it first appears, thanks to writers pushing the limits of language in Korean writing, as observed in the intricately-crafted prose of novelists like Choi Yun, Yun Dae-nyung and Park Beom-sin, whose work provided fine examples of modernist narrative craft as rendered in the Korean language.

Within the current cultural and political climate, dominated by populations using the English language, the task of translating contemporary English-language novels into Korean remains vital and crucial, and it is reassuring that Korean translators and writers will continue to influence one another through their work, to expand and enrich Korean literary prose, as is the case in any other language, and an awareness of this task would result in a more invested, more attentive approach to craft and aesthetics.

Cho Dong Il, a foremost scholar of the history of Korean literature, admits that centuries of rule by supporters of Chinese influence repressed the development of an indigenous literary tradition, but history also shows that writers have always responded with newer, richer works, which now make up today's literary tradition (Cho 1995: 78). "Do languages evolve?" asks Kim Yun-shik, rhetorically, in his call for the expansion of the horizon of Korean literary prose, stressing that as writers continue to write, with a strong awareness of their aesthetical task, they will arrive at the "genius" of the individual language (Kim 2010: 292).

The writers, however, cannot achieve such evolution on their own, as we have observed in the preceding pages. Translators, in their push toward new frontiers in Korean prose, should recognize the urgency of the challenges and move beyond the discourse of accuracy and meaning in translation as they explore the issues of aesthetics and craft in literature, both English and Korean—a goal similar to one that Berman pointed to in citing a French translation of Thomas Mann that made the author's German resonant on myriad levels: "This is the sort of success—not quite impossible, certainly difficult—to which every translator of a novel ought to aspire" (2005: 288).

The highest form of translation, in other words, is the process of negotiating difficulties, not impossibilities.

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