

Authorship, Co-Production, Plagiarism: Issues of Origin and Provenance in the Korean Studies Community¹

ROBERT WINSTANLEY-CHESTERS University of Leeds, Bath Spa University²

Abstract

The long controversy and struggle over Charles Armstrong's *Tyranny of the Weak* may have, for the Korean Studies community felt uniquely transgressive and offensive, but the malfeasance and academic corruption of the episode is not by far the only instance of productive difficulty in the recent history of the academic field. This paper not only attempts to think through questions of authenticity and intellectual ownership in Korean Studies' difficulties with the writer formerly known as Professor Charles Armstrong, but also to explore other moments of complexity, both historical and contemporary, in the discipline. These include questions and problems surrounding co-production and practices of shared and creative authorship in many recent North Korean defector/refugee narratives, alternative views of truth telling and notions of "truthyness" familiar in a world of #fakenews and post-truth. The paper seeks a longer, deeper historical frame for considering Korean Studies "wicked" problems of authorship, touching on complicated processes of misinformation, disinformation and re-publication from the Cold War, past visions of political and ideological realities weaponized by security agencies and actors whose agendas and ambitions have not always entirely been clear. Ultimately beyond concrete notions of truth and objectivity, the paper asks whether Korean Studies should be concerned with the origin stories and provenance of text as much as with source and citation.

Keywords: Authorship in Korean Studies, Charles Armstrong, Plagiarism, Co-Production, Provenance

When Brian Myers, specialist on North Korean ideology and political culture widely known for his iconoclastic observations (and in his work as a literary critic, known for his iconoclastic book reviews),³ uploaded a blogpost titled “*Revoking a Recommendation*” to his then new website www.sthelepress.com on the 13th of September, 2016,⁴ a storm was unleashed into the field of Korean Studies and its academic community. On September 10th, 2019, very nearly three years later, the subject of Myers’ revocation Charles Armstrong, was forced into early retirement, declared guilty of research conduct and plagiarism by his own employer, thoroughly disgraced.⁵ Since this moment Armstrong’s reputation has been further tarnished as allegations of sexual assault against him have been levelled by a former student supported by Columbia University Graduate Worker’s Union.⁶ Current events aside this paper seeks to recount, as much as possible, the narrative set in motion publicly by Myers in 2016. The extraordinary story of Charles King Armstrong and his at one time, tour de force monograph *Tyranny of the Weak: North Korea and the World, 1950–1992* and his fall from grace at the hands of what can only be described as his own academic malfeasance. This narrative of course is not recountable without describing the details of the dogged pursuit of Armstrong by the academic he had repeatedly wronged, Balázs Szalontai and a small team of colleagues who picked apart the offending book and detailed the injustices that had been done with a substantial degree of intricacy. This paper cannot possibly cover all of these details or intricacies; one of the hallmarks of the whole affair was that the level of detail Armstrong had gone into when it came to academic impropriety, is matched by the volume of detail produced by those who sought to unpick it. There is a vast body of documentary material that Szalontai and the group around him produced, itself underpinned by an equally vast body of archival material related to it which both Szalontai and Armstrong used. There is also correspondence on the matter between Szalontai and Armstrong and between Armstrong and his employer, Columbia University of New York. There is a still larger body of public comment on the matter, which spans the gap between the more closed academic world and public social media landscapes, such as the furious discussion which arose on the Korean Studies world email list (often known as the KS list), after the 15 September 2016.⁷ It would be possible to write a monograph, a weighty monograph, purely focusing on all of this material and this affair, but this paper, while obviously foregrounding the Armstrong affair aims not to focus solely on it.

Instead this paper will seek to use the experiences of 2016–2019 to explore previous moments of unsavory, unconventional or substandard academic practice in Korean Studies both historically and in contemporary times. While the Armstrong affair is a recent bright flair up, Korean Studies as a field is no stranger to such matters. This paper therefore seeks to question and consider issues of authorship, co-production and plagiarism in Korean Studies more widely than simply a highly detailed review of the issues surrounding Charles Armstrong. In order to do so the paper will have to a certain extent, define terms and concepts. When it comes to authorship or by co-production what do we mean as scholars of Korean Studies? The author of this paper is a Human Geographer by discipline, and geographers have a very specific use of the word co-production which refers to the complex and fluid way in which humans and their societies produce in tandem, the landscapes in which they live, work and place, with the ecologies, materials and eco-systems those landscapes, in their rawest sense are made from. However this is not simply a uni-directional process and so those materials and ecologies also co-produce the human beings and societies who live amongst, next to or within them. Co-production is in this sense an unconscious process which necessarily impacts both parties, remolding and reshaping them as it unfolds.⁸ When the same terminology is used by writers or creative developers in the film or television industry it has a different sense, in that they jointly create a product, franchise or product for sale, and this is I suspect closer to the sense that academic writers have of it.⁹ That co-production is akin to co-authorship an act of literary or intellectual joint creation, using a shared writerly voice.

I want to suggest that co-production in Korean Studies is at times closer to the version derived from Geography; that not only does a piece of written scholarly work get produced, but that the authors of that work through the process of the writing and the finding, or attempt to find of a unified voice, become in some ways unwittingly involved in the co-production and generation of each others' intellectual landscape, influencing and shaping the framing and conceptual networks of any work produced. No doubt for the most part this co-production involves a fair distribution of work or labor, but this paper will ask essentially can it be co-production, when one author with either native language skills, or with a higher degree of seniority, influence or professional regard holds the key either to research materials or potential for publication? Co-production therefore is not always balanced equitably or fairly, so much so that its prefix "co" may become a little meaningless. To avoid confusion and unnecessary misunderstanding, it is worth perhaps in Korean Studies, rather than Geography introducing a typological approach to the variations in form of academic co-production. These essentially range from the fully acceptable to the fully unethical: Firstly a form of

co-production based on mutual agreement and open acknowledgement (where all co-producers are named, trust each other, and don't seek to disadvantage each other); secondly a form of co-production which is also based on mutual agreement, but in which only partial acknowledgement or credit is given (where one partner, such as a research assistant, is only briefly mentioned, and the extent of their contribution is downplayed); thirdly a co-production based on mutual agreement but where there is a lack of acknowledgement or credit (where the contribution of one partner is wholly concealed, though with their consent); fourthly a form of co-production based again on open acknowledgement, but with only partial agreement between the parties (where one partner is not entirely truthful or correct toward the other); and finally a form of co-production which lacks any acknowledgement, agreement, or mutual awareness between the parties; in other words plagiarism, where the consent of the person plagiarized was never asked for and they discover the fact of the "co-production" only later.¹⁰

It is worth also in this paper considering more deeply what we actually mean by authorship, when much of the work undertaken in the field of Korean Studies is done through translation, or using translated materials. How can the voice of the author or original producer of knowledge or evidence being focused on, possibly come through in an equal manner in the work of another author whose language almost necessarily privileges their work over the original. In Korean Studies we encounter for instance many writers and scholars who write and work in the Russian language whose data and scholarship is repurposed into English by English speaking authors who are much more famous and well known than their source material.¹¹ The same is true of course of Koreans. There are innumerable Korean scholars whose work is projected and amplified into the domain of English language scholarship and publication, not by themselves, but by others who utilize their material as the raw data for their own. Who in these cases is the actual author, and who perhaps might instead be translators, transformers or *transfigurers* of the original source material? Here Korean Studies comes into intersection with the field of literature and translated literature, even with non-fiction and semi-fiction writing, which is very important in the field of North Korean defector or refugee memoirs, which this paper will seek to touch on and which have created some of the most publicly and globally famous moments in which truths become undermined or deconstructed in some way.

Mentioning truth in the preceding paragraph at the same time as talking about such ostensibly non-fiction material reminds the reader that we are writing and reading in a historical moment when truth is hugely important and contested. As much as some writers would have it that we live in a "post-truth" age, the energy revolving around popular claims and counter claims suggests that far from being

beyond truth, truth is still hugely important.¹² New terminologies have arisen in recent years to give a sense of some of the energy behind truth claims made in the public and media arenas. Something is said to have a “truthiness” about it when it feels like it is much more likely to be true, or to contain content which in spite of other aspects which might not seem so, core elements of the content certainly feel they should be true.¹³ There is a lot about the industry around North Korea defector/refugee writing which is possessed of a degree of “truthiness.” Given the sense that North Korea is a catastrophically autocratic country, content on harming, depriving and traumatizing its own people, it stands to reason for readers that horrible things have happened, almost indescribably horrible things which appear almost beyond conventional levels of horror. It is “truthy” that such things have happened, and “truthy” that those who have somehow escaped from such things bear witness to them, and will be able to recount honest and uninflated versions of them. The same in a sense is true of the writing of Charles Armstrong. For academics it seemed “truthy” that Armstrong would produce a book such as *Tyranny of the Weak*, erudite, but rooted in complex, deep readings of archival collections, even those in foreign languages. It was unlikely or “untruthy” that Armstrong could have co-opted or appropriated the work and scholarship of someone else, all the better to amplify and project his own academic authority and prestige.

At the same time as considering notions of truth or truthiness, it is worth the paper returning to our conceptualization of what is plagiarism and what is it to plagiarize the work of another. A number of readers will no doubt work in academic institutions and mark or assess the work of students. For the most part that assessment will be done in tandem with a complex and ubiquitous piece of technology known as “Turnitin” through which we feed all the material submitted to us and expect it to be able to determine what is or is not sourced correctly.¹⁴ This piece of software technology has in our own professional work become the primary arbiter of what is plagiarized and what has been attributed correctly. With *Turnitin* we obtain a percentage similarity for every piece of work and can actually track backwards, using its enormous database of inputted material, to any original source. This in part outsources our responsibility and perception of what is plagiarized, as well as redefining what is plagiarism itself. Previously what academics would have considered simply bad or incomplete attribution can become full scale plagiarism, but on the other hand, well paraphrased or reconfigured writing, even without sourcing, can pass the systems by. Likewise material which has convincing source or attribution markers can also pass the systems by.¹⁵ Thus plagiarism as we know it has become an algorithmic, technical or mechanical process. But just as it is hard for us to keep hold of our handle on

what is “truthy” or what is possessed of “truthiness,” this means that plagiarism that is more artful or creative approach can get lost. It can also be subsumed into the prerogatives and pressures of the publication and academic industry. As some presentations of the Armstrong story sought to demonstrate, we are all under enormous pressure to publish, and certain moments in academic life, tenure preparation or REF censuses (in the UK), can only amplify those pressures.¹⁶ Early on in the process of this story, it was suggested the Armstrong affair was a case when an academic’s compass on what might constitute plagiarism or appropriation of another’s work had become lost or displaced, when faced with an endless set of reference notes behind the book in question, which after many years working may not have been in the most comprehensive or coherent order. As readers will actually see, when the results of Columbia University of New York’s investigation were actually released, this was not the case at all.¹⁷

Having considered notions of authorship, co-production, truth and “truthiness” and plagiarism or appropriation the author of this paper suggests that perhaps another conceptual frame might be useful or helpful in which to locate a future approach or reconfiguration for Korean Studies, one based on consideration of origin or provenance from Art History and curatorial practices. Provenance as a term originally derived from practices of business and trade, relating to the validity of notes and accreditation documents held by a trader or middleman attesting to their creditworthiness or reliability in ages when communication was slow and it was just not possible to verify one’s credentials on the spot. Such notes had to be produced in a certain way, using particular forms such as seals and watermarks, and the validity of such documents and whether the value they bestowed on the trader before a client could really be transferred or not, this reliability was their provenance. As trading and economic practices developed and items of value became more and more specific and unique, it became particularly important that those things being traded could be verified as what they were claimed to be. This was particularly true when it came to painted fine art and sculpture as the economic structures of the art world moved from roots in patronage and direct connection to the ruling and highest classes, to one based on an “art market” through which painted, sculpted and later photographed and graphically produced works could be freely traded.¹⁸ These art and creative objects had values which were set up by this market and trading, values connected to their scarcity and more esoteric trends of desire and fashion. As the value of painted and sculptural art in particular increased in the 19th century, and as the technological revolutions, which in part generated the capital for the market, threatened to make their reproduction possible and increasingly inexpensive, strategies for accrediting their originality and uniqueness became ever more important.¹⁹

Art provenance thus became one of the key pillars of the art market and a sub-industry focused on the techniques, abilities and knowledge sets which would allow interested parties, buyers and sellers, to trace art pieces' histories and ownerships. This became particularly important in Europe after the 1939–1945 war during which Nazi Germany sought to steal and appropriate collections of art from the many countries occupied by their armed forces, as well as to appropriate culturally important (and other) property from populations marked for extermination by fascist ideology.²⁰ Following the war the remaining descendants and family members who had owned these artworks, together with national collections from liberated countries sought to recover their property (and in a number of cases are still trying to do so), from the post war West German state. To do so they had to prove by provenance that works which had changed hands and changed geography many times since they had been stolen or appropriated, had once belonged to them.²¹ Already existing strategies and practices of provenance became hugely important in this exercise, and techniques developed even further. This development with the invention of X-ray, CT scanning and MRI technology has progressed in recent years beyond matters of simple ownership to explore below the paint or plaster itself in order to interrogate the age of a painting or the chemical make up of the pigments it was produced with.²²

Moving beyond art and cultural products and production, but remaining with the world of technology, provenance has accrued another meaning or field in recent years with what is known as data provenance or data lineage. Essentially as computer systems and interlinked networks have become ever more vital to the functioning of global economic structures and social practices and needs, the links between computers, systems and databases provided by the hypertext protocol based internet become ever more intrinsic to their functioning, it becomes more and more important to be able to trace what is flowing through those links.²³ Open Source data and computing systems thus require a level of traceability of the information and data that flows within and around them, in order to establish the lineage or provenance of that data. In part this is to avoid bad data, bugs or errors to flow around the system, but in another part this to allow rights holders to establish whether their data is being used in a way which is allowed by contracts and licenses. Equally, Open Source software and data must be open everywhere and not appropriated by profit seekers, and so its free lineage becomes also vital.²⁴ In pure science research open data and data lineage or provenance are also hugely important when it comes to the requirement for reproducibility—there is an epidemic of irreproducibility in recent years in many pure science disciplines which drives even further the need for the original data to be open and clear. It is worth considering whether the Armstrong case demonstrates a real need for

both data provenance and data lineage in Korean Studies, as other elements of this paper will recall, one of the key elements of the whole affair was the complication involved in the tracing of where particular elements of the knowledge or data derived from. As such this paper considers whether Koreanists and other Asian Studies academics might gain from incorporating practices of provenance and lineage into our ethical and practical frameworks. This is of course what referencing or citation is ultimately for, however might we as an academic community take this further and consider alternate strategies to avoid such instances in the future.

Finally moving beyond provenance and lineage, but not beyond the issue which lies beneath them, namely traceability, the author of this paper hopes that readers might consider Origin as a further potential tool to connect with our disciplinary notions of authorship and co-production in order to avoid such instances of appropriation, plagiarism and malfeasance in the future. My use of the term “origin” is deliberate, and I also deliberately derive it from French property law. Ultimately I am referring to the “*Law of 6 May 1919 relating to the Protection of Appellations of Origin*,” a law which regularized in modern legal frameworks, a particularly French route to the protection of food and drink producers, rooted in the location of a producers production, the first instance of which was in 1411 when the people of Roquefort sur Soulzon in southern France were granted the legal monopoly on the sale and production of their famous soft blue cheese, now known as Roquefort, by King Charles VI.²⁵ 1919’s law gave birth to what we now know as *Appellation D’origine Contrôlée* or “controlled designation of origin” in English. This legal principle regarding food production has been translated into many different legal frameworks in Europe and elsewhere and has been used to protect not only the geographic areas in which food and drinks can be produced, but the breeds of animal involved in their production, the techniques used, and even in the case of Mimollette cheese from Lille in France, the fact that the cheese is in part aged by the use of cheese mites on its surface (though the use of fly larvae in the production of Sardinia’s Casa Marzu has not allowed the granting of a “*Denominazione Origine Protetta*,” but instead the banning of the cheese’s production entirely on health and safety grounds).²⁶ Obviously academic work and scholarship is some distance away conceptually from food production, but it is clear in Korean Studies that a lot of that work derives from access to particular places and locations, not simply for fieldwork, but also for archival and documentary collection.

Another of the important elements in the Armstrong story was the geography of the collecting of data by Balázs Szalontai, and also supposedly by Charles Armstrong. A researcher engaged with this level of research in Korean Studies

develops a repertoire of productive skills when it comes to archival research, similar perhaps to those skills of production involved in food production. Each archive has its own bureaucratic process and empirical landscape, and a researcher must know the vagaries of each. The collections within each must be harvested and extracted in a particular way, and received by the researcher in a specific format or style. Each catalogue must be searched or interrogated in its own unique manner, and in fact sometimes constructed or crowd sourced by the academic and those they might know. Also each country a researcher visits, not only has its own language and set of cultural norms, but it has its own set of academic principles and scholarly traditions—these traditions necessarily often build upon the work of generations of scholars from that country, and the writing and research done in those places is often a product not only of the scholars themselves, but of the national traditions and processes behind them. It is very possible, as was the case in the investigation of the Armstrong affair, for academic practices derived from the origin of the data and material extracted by an academic in their work of collection, to be marked by the geographical and cultural traditions of the place from where it came. This, it will become clear, made it obvious to this author, that Armstrong had never himself seen some of the sources he had claimed to have used, in situ as he suggested he had in his research process. This paper suggests therefore that collectively the Korean Studies community might conceptualize a way of taking into account “origin” as a factor or an important element in our approach and framework of authorship and production, and develop strategies perhaps to use as a tool in the investigation of future moments of plagiarism and academic malpractice.

Armstrong also examines the competition for legitimacy between the two Koreas during the Cold War. His book builds on the work of projects hosted at the Wilson Center, in Washington, D.C., and on his travels to various capitals; the result is a superb example of international history that makes use of multiple archives.²⁷

With notions of authorship, production and co-production, plagiarism, origin and provenance in mind this paper is worth returning to the book which essentially drives the interest of this paper, and so many others’ concerns. *Tyranny of the Weak: North Korea and the World 1950–1992* was published on 18 June 2013 by Cornell University Press as part of its *Studies of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute* series. It would not be an understatement to say that at the time it was acclaimed.²⁸ Charles Armstrong’s first monograph *The North Korean Revolution, 1945–1950* had been well received, and he was now a tenured Professor at Columbia and an important player in much of the institutional superstructures behind Korean Studies as a discipline in the USA, sitting on many funding

committees and on the Editorial Boards of a number of journals. The very positive review which starts this section of the paper, published in *Foreign Affairs*, and still like many such statements of support for the book, in spite of what has happened, available online with no additional comment or retraction, was one of many such reviews in both academic journals and other more publicly facing media.²⁹ What is interesting with hindsight is that one of the things many of these reviews sort to focus on and praise in Armstrong's book at the time was the perception that it was especially strong in its use of archival sources and a careful reading of some highly unconventional and hard to access sources. Very quickly *Tyranny of the Weak* ended up on university reading lists, at my own institution the University of Leeds, Adam Cathcart used it as a key element of the reading list in his Korean focused modules for instance between 2014 and 2016.³⁰

One review it seems appeared in 2013 which reads like a premonition of what was to come, that by Brian Myers in the journal *Acta Koreana*, volume 16.2, which includes the pointed assertion (after having communicated with the original author), "Several pages unfold events and quotations in a sequence so similar to Balázs Szalontai's *Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev Era*" (2005) that one either starts or ceases to wonder why Armstrong was so reluctant to cite it."³¹ Szalontai had already had concerns about these similarities, had begun to investigate, and was supported by Myers to trace the collection of Russian documents Armstrong claimed to have used in the creation of *Tyranny of the Weak*.³² Concerned that Szalontai's analysis of the issues could take a long period of time, on 13th September, 2016 published *Revoking a Recommendation*.³³ In the post Myers outlined four initial points of interest, one from page 81 of *Tyranny of the Weak* which mentions North Korea's First Congress of Artists and Writers in 1953, the second from page 105 refers to North Korean Minister of the Interior Pang Hak Se's conversation with a diplomat from the Soviet Union in 1960, a third from page 156 where Armstrong discusses the North Korean response to the Prague spring of 1968 and finally a fourth instance from page 63 of the book where Armstrong considers the support Eastern European technicians and advisers gave to North Korea following the Korean War.³⁴ In all four cases Myers suggested while he understood that flaws and mistakes can get into the first edition of a book, *Tyranny of the Weak* has already been reconfigured for a paperback version and all of these mistakes continued to be in the text. More than that though, if there were mistakes in these four instances, they were a very particular form of mistake. Either, as was the case in the third example, a complete misreading of the original source material, or in the case of the first, second and fourth, misattributions of sources, which could be very much more easily and coherently found in a book by Balázs Szalontai published in 2005 titled *Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev Era*.³⁵

Myers' core assertion at this point was that these four examples demonstrated that Armstrong had utilized materials from Szalontai's book and created tenuous false attributions and citations to cover up the fact he had done so. Only four examples at this point, though enough when news of Myers' blogpost emerged a couple of days later on the Korean Studies global email list, courtesy of a brief posting by a curious and disappointed sounding Jiyul Kim,³⁶ to elicit an extraordinary outburst of rage in support of Armstrong and against the critique from Myers. Professor Donald Baker of the University of British Columbia and famous scholar of Korean religious and shamanistic traditions opening comment was "I wouldn't trust Brian Myers to evaluate someone else's scholarship"³⁷ Frank Hoffman (then moderator of the list), infuriated by Myers posting, remarked a couple of days later "No balls, no decency, no academic conduct, and swarm mentality? Is this really where we are now? Is this where we really want to go? Is this what you teach your students?"³⁸ Sir James Hoare, former Charge D'Affaires at the British Embassy in Pyongyang and connected to SOAS, University of London followed up "We all make mistakes. My PhD supervisor, a distinguished historian of Japan, apologized in one of his last books for having spelt the name of the first US representative in Japan, Townsend Harris, consistently as 'Townshend Harris' from his very first book in 1955. Footnotes are notorious as a source of mistakes. They should not happen but they do. Each of us will have to decide whether such mistakes invalidate a whole book."³⁹ It is fair to say that these exchanges on the Korean Studies list were one of the most bad tempered of recent years. The author of this paper and many others known to them felt it was extremely disappointing to read famous and senior scholars dismissing such potentially terrible academic practice so readily, and in many sense using their academic authority to close down, curtail or restrict debate and discussion on the matter.

Myers of course was not to be discouraged, and reported on 3 October that, spurred on by the intemperate discussions on the list, he had on the 21 September, 2016 sent Berlin's Political Archive a list of 17 documents that *Tyranny of the Weak* claimed to have utilized from East German collections, in order to check whether they in fact existed at all.⁴⁰ The reply from the archives to Myers was that in fact only one out of these 17 documents actually existed with the similar cataloguing numbers, but that document did not really support what was written in Armstrong's book—however Myers asserted that a re-reading of this section revealed it to be a semi-paraphrasing of writing from Szalontai in which he was commenting on a document from the Hungarian Foreign Ministry archives recounting a similar situation Hungarian intelligence had reported on the policing of embassies in East Germany.⁴¹

From this point on the issues with *Tyranny of the Weak* seemed to snowball. A group of scholars brought together by Balázs Szalontai worked together using various Google documents to essentially deconstruct the citations claimed in Armstrong's book, the initial four contentious citations or sections, grew to over twenty and at the end of the exercise comprised some 98 separate instances. Szalontai later constructed these 98 instances into a more coherent and comprehensive set of documents which partition the concerns over Armstrong's book into main categories.⁴² Firstly there were 55 instances in which a section of *Tyranny of the Weak* had used plagiarized material, but to hide this had fabricated a non-existent source. Secondly there were a further 28 cases in which Armstrong had used plagiarized material, but had sought to use a completely irrelevant source to cover the plagiarism.⁴³ There were even a number of cases in which the exercise of using irrelevant or completely fabricated sources utterly distorted the actual narrative Armstrong was writing about. Szalontai on this matter records: "In one such case, for example, the words of a Hungarian diplomat are placed in the mouth of his Soviet counterpart. In another one, the greater seriousness of which will be apparent to all scholars of diplomatic history, the North Korean security organs are said to have arrested a dissident inside the Bulgarian Embassy, when in fact he was arrested outside. In a third case, the author cites a report supposedly written by the "GDR Embassy in the DPRK" on 22 December 1953, though the GDR did not open an embassy in North Korea until the summer of 1954"⁴⁴

Ultimately Armstrong appears to have attempted to discount these concerns, claiming East German and Soviet archival documents throughout *Tyranny of the Weak* to back up his scholarship, when in fact he had used the work of Balázs Szalontai, whose writing was underpinned by archival material from the Hungarian Foreign Ministry archives. Szalontai asserted that it appeared that Armstrong somehow had had access to the materials which made up his book *Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev Era* in manuscript for other form at some point in 2005, as material which had been in previous versions of work that became part of that book was itself part of the exercise of plagiarism. The collection of 98 instances was not exclusively derived from Szalontai's work, but also that of Sergey Radchenko, Alexandre Mansourov, Kathryn Weathersby, Barry Gills, and Rüdiger Frank. There are some fairly egregious uses of Woodrow Wilson Center translation documents, translations by Sergey Radchenko and elements of German language publications from Professor Frank.⁴⁵

Some of the material Armstrong claimed to have used was from the Russian Federation's Foreign Ministry Archives, while Szalontai and others asserted that much of this was in fact derived from material held by the Hungarian Foreign Ministry Archives and written about in *Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev Era*. While

it appears from Szalontai's careful analysis that Armstrong's claims were unlikely to be true, it was worth utilizing a quirk of Russian archival practice to confirm this. Soviet and Russian archival practice has been to organize material around the bureaucrat or employee responsible for it. Therefore documents are organized into folders, or *fondy* containing all the material relating to a particular issue that a bureaucrat is tasked with or working on.⁴⁶ When a scholar recalls such folders from the archive, the physical folder has a document attached to it which records the names and details of other scholars or archival workers who have recalled it in the past. It is often therefore possible to obtain a reasonably good idea of all of the scholars in the past who have been interested in a particular document or set of documents from these cover documents. Having used the Russian Federation Archive of the Economy and the Russian Federation's Foreign Ministry Archive in the past, this author employed a Research Assistant to check the *fondy* which Armstrong claimed to have used in order to construct *Tyranny of the Weak*. It will not surprise the reader to discover that having done so, no evidence that Charles Armstrong nor any research associate, colleague or employee of his, nor in fact anyone during the period he was supposed to have done the research, could be found on the dated cover sheets in the archive.

As the evidence and number of instances of potential source manipulation, distortion and plagiarism grew, Armstrong himself, perhaps more than his most vociferous supporters, sounded at least outwardly and initially, apologetic. His first public statement on the matter was a post amidst the florid outburst on the Korean Studies email list on the 17 September, 2016.⁴⁷ Armstrong wrote "For the errors in my own work I of course take full responsibility, which includes the responsibility to correct my errors and improve the work."⁴⁸ At the same time Armstrong sought to perhaps narrow the framing of any problems in *Tyranny of the Weak*, suggesting that "the criticism is directed to a small section of Chapter 3 of the book, basically pp. 121–123."⁴⁹ By December 2016 however Armstrong was less apologetic, and on 30 December published a post on his own (now defunct), blog www.charleskarmstrong.com which outlined the fact he had now instructed his publisher Cornell University Press to produce a revised version of the book which included corrections to make good the situation. This blog ended however with the rather provocative, given hindsight statement: "For those who find the book flawed, inaccurate, or insufficiently researched, the answer is simple: write a better book. I would look forward to reading it."⁵⁰ As well as being rather more provocative and assertive, Armstrong in this post continued to frame the issue as being rather less dramatic or extensive than appeared to be the case, and only dealt in detail with four particular incidents in the book, most of which derived from the original four outlined by Myers in his first post on the matter from September.

As the numbers of issues with the book grew into the 90s, Cornell University Press did actually work with Armstrong to publish a revised version of *Tyranny of the Weak*, including some 52 corrections. This revision, coinciding with the publication of the paperback and digital versions of the book, did not stop on the 29 June 2017, Charles Armstrong having to return the prestigious Fairbank Prize to the American Historical Association, which was a great honor for the book and author and been so much a part of its selling by the press.⁵¹ It was an extraordinary example of a revision however, really unlike any other this author had seen. Although there were 52 changes, according to Dean Smith, Director of Cornell University Press “the press reviewed the book after the corrections were made and believed that its substance was accurate and was not affected by the citation errors.”⁵² So much so that the revised version published by Cornell in July 2017 not only does not flag up on the cover that it is a revised second edition, but fails to do so almost entirely in the pages of the book, and includes only the vaguest of descriptions of the affair in the acknowledgements. Intriguingly, the date of publication of the book remains 2013, as if this of course were exactly the same book had been first published, unencumbered by any hint of scandal or concern.

Behind the scenes of course the number of instances of concern around *Tyranny of the Weak* had grown to 98, Balázs Szalontai had filed an official complaint to Columbia University, which began its own slow moving investigation and disciplinary process, and colleagues such as Professor Sheila Miyoshi Jager has resigned from the Advisory Board of the Woodrow Wilson Center in protest at Armstrong’s continued place on that board.⁵³ From a personal perspective it was clear to this author that although friends and supporters continued to advocate positively for Armstrong in public and in print, the authority surrounding him was beginning to drain away. The edited volume proposed on “North Korean Culture” whose editors were supposed to be Armstrong and ANU’s Ruth Barraclough and which I was contracted to be produce a chapter for, published of course by Columbia University Press, suddenly disappeared off institutional screens and is no longer talked about.⁵⁴ Armstrong was quietly removed from other boards and appeared on few panels and at few conferences. The University of Leeds which had purchased a copy of the revised edition of *Tyranny of the Weak* for its high demand collection, felt the book tainted to such a degree, that a special note was applied by the library to the book which recommended the reader did not use it as a scholarly reference, instead only to use it in discussions of plagiarism and academic malpractice.⁵⁵ By January 2019, even Columbia University’s own student newspaper *The Columbia Spectator* published an article concerned with the seeming lack of action and the apparent disinterest or lack of urgency on the subject.⁵⁶ Khadija Hussein’s article of January 28 2019 wrote that there was

concern about the impact on the reputation of Columbia's history department and an anonymous faculty member suggested it would be better for graduate students to not come to the department until the matter was resolved. In Hussein's article Professor Jager was quoted with a pointed assertion: "I have every reason to believe that Columbia University, one of the most respected institutions of higher education in the world, will thoroughly and impartially investigate this case. It should take appropriate corrective measure in accordance with its findings. The longer the investigation and actions are delayed and Columbia University stays silent, the greater the danger that professor Armstrong's transgression will not be seen as such."⁵⁷

The extraordinary saga of Armstrong and *Tyranny of the Weak*, concluded unexpectedly on 10 September, 2019 when Columbia's Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Maya Tolstoy, wrote an open letter to the faculty stating that investigations and inquiry had concluded that Professor Armstrong had "committed research misconduct, specifically plagiarism in his book *Tyranny of the Weak*."⁵⁸ Following this Armstrong would be retiring at the end of the 2020 academic year and would be on sabbatical until his retirement. In this statement there was little detail about what had been found by the investigations and inquiry team, however not much time later the website retractionwatch.com which focuses on issues of academic malpractice, published online a partial version of the report of Columbia's Research Misconduct committee on the issue.⁵⁹ While 98 potential issues of plagiarism certainly sounded a lot, what the report suggests was a huge surprise to followers of the whole issue, and really amplified the level of malpractice Armstrong had engaged in, as well as the span of time involved. While *Tyranny of the Weak* was published in 2013, it appeared that a substantial part of the book with a number of chapters had actually been written as far back as September 2003.⁶⁰ In part this is perhaps because Professor Armstrong had his successful tenure review on the 2 September 2003, and was required to produce material for future publication in order to support his tenure. Armstrong in fact included a number of chapters which would later comprise elements of *Tyranny of the Weak* in his 2003 tenure file, chapters which contained material apparently plagiarized from the work of Balázs Szalontai. Extraordinarily, and as Szalontai has suspected, Armstrong had obtained a copy of Szalontai's own PhD dissertation "*The Failure of De-Stalinization in North Korea: The DPRK in Comparative Perspective, 1953–1964*" (which Szalontai would only successfully defend at Central European University in Budapest in June 2003), after they had met, Armstrong making a specific trip to Budapest to meet Szalontai in 2002.⁶¹ Armstrong had either been given a copy of the dissertation either by Szalontai himself, or by Bruce Cumings of the University of Chicago, Armstrong's erstwhile

PhD supervisor.⁶² This copy of Szalontai's dissertation was actually found in Armstrong's office at Columbia by the investigation team when they searched it.⁶³ Ultimately therefore, Armstrong had originally engaged in the plagiarism of Szalontai's work as far back as 2003, and perhaps obtained his own professional tenure at Columbia on the back of plagiarized material which would later appear in *Tyranny of the Weak*. The report is fairly clear on the findings and the opinion of the committee on what had happened and when: "The Committee finds it more likely than not that around this time [September 2003] Dr. Armstrong inserted citations into chapters 2 and 3 of his book draft that he knew to refer to the documents that he never checked, and that he inserted into the same chapters that he knew he had borrowed from the Szalontai Dissertation in draft chapters he wrote in 2002–2003..."⁶⁴

When it came to the numbers of instances of plagiarism, the committee found that 61 cases in the book offered "sufficient and incontrovertible evidence of research misconduct" and that these include pure fabrication and citing non-existent or irrelevant sources in order to cover up the use Szalontai's work. The committee also rejected entirely Armstrong's various defenses and his attempt to discredit Szalontai's original complaint (Armstrong had claimed it was spurred by an academic dispute). Finally when it came to Armstrong's "state of mind" argument on the issues, the committee says: "The Committee does not find 'passage of time' to be a mitigating factor to a finding of misconduct ... Dr Armstrong's systematic erasure of Dr. Szalontai and of Hungarian sources provides further support for a finding that the misconduct was committed knowingly. It is particularly noteworthy that Dr Armstrong used an indirect citation style frequently throughout the book for documents, of which he owed his knowledge to other secondary works, but never with respect to Dr. Szalontai's work ... The pattern is too systematic to be chance error, and the committee concludes that Dr. Armstrong knowingly omitted references that would show his reliance on the Szalontai dissertation."⁶⁵

The almost total dismissal of Armstrong's defense and near total vindication of Szalontai's primary and continued argument throughout, by the report from Columbia's committee is only amplified by the unbelievable reality that the affair extended much further back in time, than anyone expected, and that perhaps even Professor Armstrong's own tenure was obtained as a part result of work generated by acts of plagiarism. Almost as an aside to the affair, not only has Armstrong lost his career and *Tyranny of the Weak* discredited to the point it will be taken permanently out of print (according to Cornell), but on the 10th of February 2020, the journal *Cold War History* retracted his article "*Fraternal Socialism': The International Reconstruction of North Korea, 1953–62*" as it had also

been constructed of plagiarized material from Szalontai's dissertation and book.⁶⁶ Brian Myers has also raised concerns about potential self-plagiarism in other works of Charles Armstrong, given the similarity of material found in his first book "*The North Korean Revolution*" and that in a chapter titled "North Korea and the Education of Desire," in a 2016 edited volume from Alf Lüdtke titled *Everyday Life in Mass Dictatorship* (Fyodor Tertitsky goes into similar further detail on this in an article for *Daily NK* from 2017).^{67,68} For clarity, the Armstrong case at something like its conclusion fits into the final category offered by the typology of co-production offered by this paper, namely that of pure plagiarism, where the consent of the person plagiarized is not sought, and the fact of the "co-production" is discovered only in retrospect.

While the issues surrounding Armstrong and *Tyranny of the Weak* (along with potentially many other of his publications), may seem like a florid and colorful outlier given his seniority and the rupture caused by the affair, this paper, although it has gone into great detail on the matter, does not want to suggest it is entirely an aberration. Far from it, such plagiarism and issues of authorship and unauthorized co-option of other's material is found in a number of other circumstances and at other times in Korean Studies.

In 1996 Professor JaHyun Kim Haboush, then Professor of East Asian Culture and History at the University of Illinois, Urbana Champagne, published "*The Memoirs of Lady Hyegyong: The Autobiographical Writings of a Crown Princess of Eighteenth-Century Korea*" with the University of California Press.⁶⁹ This book was a translation of the diaries of Lady Hyegyöng, a noble woman born into a very prominent yangban family, the P'ungsan Hong, who married King Yöngjo's second son, Crown Prince Sado in 1744 and thus became a crown princess. Lady Hyegyöng of course experienced some extraordinary events in Korean history from her position, including the death of her husband in 1762 by execution at the behest of her own father. Her own second son would become King Jeongjo. Haboush's translation was fairly widely acclaimed, Martina Deuchler declaring in *Korean Studies* that "Haboush must be congratulated for an exemplary annotated translation that preserves the tone and color of the original texts."⁷⁰

In 1998 however a publisher in Milan, ObarraO Edizione released a volume titled *Memorie di una Principessa di Corea del XVIII Secolo*, the princess whose name in the book is Hong, is of course the very same Lady Hyegyöng as translated by Professor Haboush, only this time her diaries were, it was claimed translated directly into Italian from Korean, by a Vincenza D'Urso.⁷¹ The obvious should be said, that there are very few direct translations into Italian from the diaries of eighteenth century Korean princesses so this would certainly have been an unusual publication. Since the volume was in Italian, it would perhaps also have

not garnered quite the same level of interest in the Korean Studies community as Haboush's work. However D'Urso's publication certainly arrived in the discipline's spotlight the following year when a letter appeared in 1999's *Newsletter of the Association for Korean Studies in Europe* in which Haboush bluntly states "It has come to my attention that *Memorie di una Principessa di Corea del XVIII Secolo*, Traduzione del coreano di Vincenza D'Urso, bears a striking resemblance to my book ..."⁷² Haboush in her three tightly argued pages, recounts that D'Urso's Italian version suggested it had followed a version of Lady Hyegyöng's diaries which was the oldest available, known as the Asami text, held at the University of California, Berkeley, which explained its organization and the separation of the diaries into four separate sections.⁷³ However, Haboush continues, the Asami text, does not in fact do that at all, in fact none of the historical available versions of Lady Hyegyöng's diaries follow that pattern. Haboush asserts that in fact during the process of her translation for her 1996 book she reorganized the text and the four separate sections to best reflect the passing of time and historical events in the diaries.⁷⁴ Haboush also suggests that in the section marked in her own book as "The Memoire of 1795" there are long sections of text, descriptions and a particular structure which do not appear in the Asami version, but which are exactly the same in D'Urso's version.⁷⁵ Further to this Haboush suggests that many elements of the diaries which were excluded from her version are also directly excluded in D'Urso's translation. Fascinatingly, Haboush goes into to say Lady Hyegyöng's diaries were in their original form unpunctuated, and that adding punctuation into a translation of such a text requires a great deal of time and expertise in translation practice and no two translators agree on exactly the same punctuation style across a text; however D'Urso's approach to punctuation directly follows that taken by Haboush in her 1996 publication.⁷⁶ Finally, as is the case in many academic texts focused on Korean history and language, due to complications with language and Romanization, many names of Koreans and Korean things have become standard or common uses, despite not being exactly proper when it comes to naming and language convention. For example Park Chung-hee is known in academic publications by that spelling, when his name, if using McCune Reischauer Romanization, should be spelt as Pak Chöng hüi. Haboush suggests that to make it easier for contemporary readers to engage with and read, she utilized the names that were familiar and have become common usage in Korean Studies and Korean History in translating names in the diaries, rather than the exact names Lady Hyegyöng had used originally—Haboush uses the fact that Lady Hyegyöng refers to her own husband in the text as Kyöngmo-gung, the name of his grave shrine, as an example, and instead had used the name Crown Prince Sado which is much more commonly used—D'Urso, according to Haboush's letter,

of course uses exactly the same approach and the same reconfigurations of such names.⁷⁷

The *Association of Korean Studies in Europe*, being a collegiate and respectful organization of course allowed D'Urso right of reply, and so in the same issue of the *Newsletter* there is also a letter from the accused.⁷⁸ While this is some seventeen years previous, it is interesting to read D'Urso's letter with the defense and initial response given by Charles Armstrong in mind when confronted over the matter of his appropriation of Balázs Szalontai's work between 2016–2019. Armstrong repeatedly confirmed that of course he had read Szalontai's book, and that he respected its scholarship. Armstrong also suggested that the issues were to do with issues of publication and time, and evidence from Columbia University's own investigation of that affair suggested that perhaps the pressure of obtaining tenure and the need to demonstrate a strong future publication schedule or agenda was behind some of the impetus for what happened—equally Armstrong appeared at least to offset some of the issues onto his publishers, Cornell University Press and a need to push through with publication which perhaps meant that some stages in the review process which might have caught any issues, earlier. D'Urso is, it has to said, more florid than Armstrong when it comes to her defense. Responding to Haboush's claim that there was a "striking similarity" between her translation and the Italian, D'Urso suggests: "She is right. I adopted the same four chapter structure she proposed in her version. But how could it be otherwise?... During the translation, her book was on my desk like the Bible on the desk of a priest ... By deciding to follow her structure I meant to give credit to her work, recognize her scholarly achievements and honor her long years of research ..."⁷⁹

The rest of D'Urso's letter continues in a similarly unconvincing manner, suggesting that in fact part of the issue was down to the fact that the Italian publisher aimed for the translation of Lady Hyegyöng's diaries into Italian to be a general book for a non-academic audience and ("the book was to have no quotations, no bibliography, no academic content that could scare the reader away," that it was an apparently brand new publisher with little experience in the field.⁸⁰ Further to this, and perhaps even more unrealistically, D'Urso claimed never to have seen a copy of the final draft and was not able to fully engage with the process because she worked in Venice, lived in a different town in the south of Italy and the publisher was in Milan.⁸¹ D'Urso's assertions that essentially much of the confusion and many of the issues were down to the publisher, obviously did not go un-noticed in Milan and the *Association for Korean Studies in Europe Newsletter* for the year 2000 contains a further letter. In response to D'Urso, Maurizio Gatti, on behalf of the ObbaraO Publishing company replies: "What you have made publicly known in your letter as to facts, pieces of information

and ObbaraO commercial policy is inexact, misleading and definitely pointless to the charges raised against you by Professor Haboush ... it is in open violation of the pledge of secrecy undertaken by you in the contract with us ...”⁸² While it is fairly clear from D’Urso’s letter from 1999, that whatever the approach to publication and authorship credit she made for her Italian translation Lady Hyegyŏng’s diaries, in relation to the already existing version produced by Professor Haboush, it was not at all conventional. The story however beyond this point is not very clear, and whether either took further steps or whether the book was withdrawn or corrected is not something the author of this paper has so far been able to ascertain. It is interesting though, that unlike Professor Armstrong, in 2020, Vincenza D’Urso remained an Associate Professor at Ca’ Foscari University of Venice for sometime and continued to publish. Her offending book, *Memorie di una Principessa di Corea del XVIII Secolo*, remained in print for some time, and is still listed on ObarraO Edizione’s website (though out of stock), so perhaps some accommodation was reached behind the scenes.

Beyond these two important cases of plagiarism or appropriation, this paper finally wants its readers to consider issues of co-production and co-authorship as they effect Korean Studies and publication of Korean interest. In many ways there is a great deal about Korean Studies material and literature that is, as a Geographer would have it, about co-production. Much material and much writing around Korean Studies is necessarily in translation, either from Korean into English or vice versa, or from other languages in which much is written about Korea, for example, French, Russian, German, Chinese and Japanese, to name but a few. Many of these academic communities which write in these languages, along with English, require translation of materials, and publications in those languages are themselves translated (the work of Wada Haruki for instance which has appeared in a number of different languages).⁸³ As anyone who has ever read literature, written originally in a different language, surely can feel, translated work is necessarily a process of co-production between the original writer and the translator of their words. This co-production is sometimes fairly straight forward, as is the case with some translations of novels between closely related European languages. However, as Sho Konishi in 2013’s *Anarchist Modernity: Cooperatism and Japanese–Russian Intellectual Relations in Modern Japan* demonstrated, translation is often much more than about words, punctuation or grammar.⁸⁴ A translator must translate an entire cultural milieu, ways of being, landscapes and lifescapes, much more than simply translating a story or a narrative, and in so doing, they may write a completely new story. Konishi as an example focused on the translation of works by Tolstoy into Japanese towards the end of the 19th century, which essentially required completely retelling into a Japanese context

in order to make sense to a Meiji era readership. That is also certainly the case when it comes to translations from Korean into English. Janet Poole's landmark translation of Yi T'aejun's colonial era essays *Eastern Sentiments* from 2013 is just such a retelling and reconfiguration of the original material,⁸⁵ as is Inshil Ch'oe Yoon's brilliant translation of Yi Chung-hwan's *T'aengniji, the Korean Classic for Choosing Settlements* from 2019.⁸⁶

Of course there is one other, and very much more famous subset of Korean literature which can be seen through the lens of co-production, and that is North Korean defector or refugee memoirs. It is worth saying at the outset of this section, that to consider or name these works as co-productions, or acts of co-authorship, and to talk about them in the same paper as issues of plagiarism, and to talk about provenance and origin in the same space as them, is to some people highly offensive. I suggest in that sense reading the work of Norman Finkelstein, on the creation, propagation and continued existence of a different sort of literary industry, related perhaps, by dint of that body of work, and North Korean defector/refugee narratives essentially being about holocausts and the importance of such events occupying a particular category of human experience or cultural importance.⁸⁷ I do not of course mean to be offensive, nor cast doubt on the events and narratives described in them, but, as has been the case with many of them, there are undoubtable issues with these stories, issues which only become multiplied and amplified as they reified and made monolithic by certain popular narratives and academic work. The first, or surely the first famous example would be 2001's *The Aquariums of Pyongyang: Ten Years in the North Korean Gulag*, co-authored by the French anti-communist, neo-conservative historian Pierre Rigoulot and Kang Chol-hwan, a former North Korean.⁸⁸ Rigoulot and Kang's story recounts Kang's experiences as part of a family who had emigrated to North Korea because of its promise of authentic socialism, only to be incarcerated in a labor camp because of their untrustworthy background as former residents of Japan. The book's framing of personal redemption and salvation in South Korea (Kang even meets George W. Bush in the 2005 edition),⁸⁹ after degradation, squalor and misery is now highly familiar. Its familiarity was driven firstly by Los Angeles Times journalist Barbara Demick's *Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea*.⁹⁰ This book is a work of absolute co-production, Demick skillfully weaving together material from the stories told to her by a series of refugees from the coastal town of Chongjin (famous as the home port of many of North Korea's Ghost Ships and whose nickname is now "widows town"). *Nothing to Envy* is rightly famous for co-produced first-hand accounts of life during the arduous march, the famine period in North Korea after 1992, and many other moments of complication and difficulty. It is intriguing for giving the reader a sense of the small acts of resistance and the navigation of "absurd" and

miserable circumstances many North Koreans had to engage in to live their lives. While the writing, structure and framing may be artful and creative, of course the actual identities of the co-authors who gave Demick their lives and narratives are unknowable. Rigoulot and Kang's effort fits within the first category of this papers' typology of co-production, Demick's work on *Nothing to Envy* is surely an example of the third category.

Unknowable or unreachable co-authors are something of an occupational hazard when it comes to writing about North Korea, but sometimes their unknowability is convenient given the complexities of those co-authors and their narratives. This was especially true in the case of perhaps the most famous of all North Korean defector narratives, that co-authored by *Washington Post* journalist Blaine Harden and Shin Dong-hyuk in 2012, *Escape from Camp 14: One Man's Remarkable Odyssey from North Korea to Freedom in the West*.⁹¹ This work, also a direct collaborative co-production recounts Shin's childhood in North Korea's "Camp 14," a Kwanlliso (관리소) or long term labor camp⁹² and his truly horrible experiences, including the execution of his own mother and brother after he had informed on them for storing illicit rice and potentially planning an escape. Shin made his own escape from the camp with a friend "Park," who was fatally killed trying to climb over electrified wires, but whose body inadvertently served to ground them both, so that Shin himself was not killed by the electricity. *Escape from Camp 14* was hugely successful, and was translated into more than twenty languages. Its account of the brutality and misery of North Korean prison camp life spurred on much of the effort through the United Nations Commission of Inquiry, to restrict and contain Pyongyang. In October 2014, it proved too much for North Korea to not respond to and its team at the United Nations released a DVD containing a video which included footage of Shin's own father (who was not dead), speaking out against him and claiming his narrative had not been the same as the book's.⁹³ Within a year Shin Dong-hyuk had admitted to Blaine Harden that not all of their co-authored work was in fact true, and that he had not been incarcerated in Camp 14, the highest level of camp, throughout his entire life, but had also lived in the less severe Camp 18. He had also escaped before and made it to China on one occasion.⁹⁴

Early in 2015, Shin Dong-hyuk changed his story. He told me by telephone that his life in the North Korean gulag differed from what he had been telling government leaders, human rights activists, and journalists like me. As his biographer, it was a stomach-wrenching revelation.⁹⁵

As a professional journalist exploring complicated issues and difficult stories no doubt Blaine Harden had encountered discomfort in his professional life in the

past, but having the man who he co-authored and co-produced one of the most famous pieces of writing on North Korea of all time, recount to him at length that his narrative, which served as and was advertised as truth and witness against Pyongyang's regime, was not entirely true, must have been a painful experience. Harden's understated admission that Shin was, given all of this perhaps an "unreliable narrator,"⁹⁶ generous considering what he must have been feeling. Harden and Shin's complicated relationship of co-production therefore also fits within category four of this paper's typology of co-production, in which there is certainly agreement between the parties, but the truth of elements involved is not clear. While professionally embarrassing, this incident could have curtailed the momentum which has seen the privileging of defector/refugee narratives as an existentially different sort of truth about North Korea, testaments akin to the diary of Anne Frank or the video reels shot by British troops on arrival at Bergen Belsen in 1945. Truths, that although they could be not seen with one's eyes, or verified with one's own fingers, could not be argued with, and which, helpfully dovetailed with so many political opinions and aspirations for North Korea's containment or rollback. They even made superstars out of characters such as Yeon-mi Park.⁹⁷ But what power do they have if these co-productions are not the whole verifiable truth, what if they, as Harden and many others have suggested, are marked and shaped by the trauma those telling them have gone through. What if this shaping and trauma, is marked itself, by survival strategies honed in North Korean prison camps, where to cheat, lie, and obscure the truth may mean the difference between life or starvation, or being executed? Does it even matter, after all, whatever the level of reliability of these narratives and co-productions, didn't they always have a level of "truthiness" about them? Given the picture a particular approach to North Korea and North Korean studies, and its attendant ideologies and conceptual frames, paints onto the country, would it be surprising if such tales of torture, misery and degradation were true.

Returning to "truthiness," co-production and issues of authorship or attribution towards the end of this paper, it is worth, having explored some moments of translation malpractice and academic appropriation in the near present, mentioning, since so much writing on North Korea, and in fact so much that Cold War historians or historians writing about the Cold War, like Charles Armstrong, write, the situation prior to 1992. Writing on nations like North Korea of course did not begin in 1992, academics and institutions of the non-Communist or non-Socialist world had been hugely interested in nations of the Warsaw Pact and the Non-Aligned Movement during the Cold War, and certainly did so. However much of the academic production of these countries was simply not available to foreign or non-Communist scholars, because the two poles of the Cold War

essentially ran academic publishing industries and institutions entirely disconnected from each other. While both sides of course saw academic production and research, aiming for objective truths, as vital in the processes of statecraft and development, neither could access the output of the other in an official way. While this was not entirely the case in European Korean Studies, which saw connections between Soviet, Czech, Hungarian and Polish academics with western Koreanists as early as the founding of AKSE in 1978 (Halina Ogarek-Czof of the University of Warsaw being an early and persistent crosser of the ideological divide, who had studied at Kim Il Sung University, in Pyongyang receiving a doctorate in 1961 and actually married a North Korean at one point, before she was expelled along with her daughter in 1965),⁹⁸ academics elsewhere could not hope to gain access to the research materials and any evidential data from the other side. United States agencies such as the *United States Information Agency*, the *Joint Publications Research Center* and the *Defense Technical Information Center* had a solution to this though, translation and republication of material from the other side, without of course agreements or permissions. Journals such as *Problems of Communism* and in the UK *Soviet Studies* (published by the University of Glasgow's Department for the Study of the Social and Economic Institutions of the USSR), not only reported and offered commentary on scientific or academic matters, and reviewed books published in, the Soviet Union, they also directly translated publications from journals published in the Soviet Union and other countries, co-opting and appropriating the output of the other side in the global conflict (Volume 1.1 of *Soviet Studies* for example features a translation of Professor Dogvadov's article "Stages in the Development of the Soviet Collective Agreement" originally published in *Bulletin of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (Economics and Law)*, 1948, vol 2).⁹⁹

Recent years have seen the beginning of a trend in Korean Studies focused publications, which directly reprints in translation writing from North Korean authors, though most of the instances are at the moment works of literature (Immanuel Kim's recent translation of *Friend*, by Paek Nam-nyong for Columbia University Press, is a good example).¹⁰⁰ While I am sure a conversation can be had about the dynamics of power when it comes to the negotiating of contracts and permissions with the original author in these cases, unless they become a case similar to that of D'Urso and Haboush, it is worth perhaps establishing a convention as a discipline, around these reprintings and translations, lest we repeat the ethical curiousness of the pre 1992 era. In a search for truth through direct co-option, to replace "truthiness" provided by potentially "unreliable narrators," there are other risks which have to do with both origin and provenance in our field. These are all "wicked problems" and we have literally in recent years seen them become floridly and colorfully "wicked," to the extent that they are having a substantial

impact on the way our discipline, be it Korean Studies or North Korean Studies is received by the wider public and wider academic community. As Hussein contemplated in her *Columbia Spectator* article, it is not just History at Columbia which was implicated and tarnished by Armstrong's actions over many years, but also the wider field of North Korean studies. As public and media narratives navigate the tightropes and boundary lines of the "truthy" or of "truthiness," individual academics and a wider Korean Studies community must find ways and practices to bolster our empirical truth claims and objectivity against such practices which would diminish them or negate them.

Authorship, Co-Production and Plagiarism, notions of course which are different, and which do not in many situations belong together, but brought together by Charles Armstrong and others they have been. Hopefully by taking a longer historical frame, and viewing the furor around *Tyranny of the Weak*, not simply as a one off aberration, but merely the latest example of the complicated navigation of notions of individual authorship in our discipline, this paper gives its readers lines of flight, or at least food for thought when it comes to future directions of travel, and future strategies to avoid such altercations in the future. Taking seriously the sense that, in our discipline, when it comes to archival research and research which necessarily involves the work of other authors in other languages, the idea of a single author is not tenable at times, and that we must find new ways of incorporating and regularizing notions of Co-Production, in order to better protect against malfeasance and plagiarism. Alongside a renewed and developed notion of the author or authors as co-producers of knowledge or material output, Korean Studies would do well to take into account notions of Origin and Provenance, when it comes to data and knowledge collection. The material we collect as archive delvers, or library bashers is not often found simply by our own hands, our own initiatives, but in the case of *Record Group 242* at the US National Archives (NARA) in College Park, Maryland, focused on North Korean captured documents, for example, the work of many hands, a collective of enquiry that has come before us to unpick the knotty problems of incomprehensible catalogues and misplaced data. It is the work of previous scholars we have to thank on many occasion for the ease of use of many collections of data and evidence that we use, and that eventually compile and coagulate into books like *Tyranny of the Weak*. One of the "wicked problems" of our own academic community is the myth of the heroic single archive hunter and author, and although is certainly a wicked problem, solve it, through a more comprehensive consideration of the issues raised in this paper, we must.

Notes

1. The publication of this paper and the workshop which served to generate the research and work behind these papers was supported by the 2020 Korean Studies Grant Program of the Academy of Korean Studies (AKS-2020-C-16). I am grateful for all the anonymous reviewers who contributed so much to improving the paper and to Adam Bohnet and Vladimir Tikhonov for having me in this project. Thanks to Balázs Szalontai for his support in the process of writing this paper, and to all contributors to the search for documentary evidence surrounding the Charles Armstrong affair over the years (who know who they are), and especially Brian Myers for lighting the blue touch paper in September 2016.
2. Robert Winstanley-Chesters is a Lecturer and Visiting Fellow of the University of Leeds and Bath Spa University, and from September 1 2021, a Lecturer in Human Geography at York St John University. Email: r.winstanley-chesters@leeds.ac.uk.
3. Brian Myers. "Smaller than Life" review of Johnathan Franztzen's *Freedom, The Atlantic*, October 2010, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2010/10/smaller-than-life/308212/> (accessed July 7 2021).
4. Brian Myers. "Revoking a Recommendation," *Sthele Press*, 13 September 2016, <http://sthelepress.com/index.php/2016/09/> (accessed 20 August, 2020).
5. Maya Tolstoy. "Letter to Faculty of Arts and Sciences Columbia University," September 10 2019, available at, <https://retractionwatch.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Armstrong-report.pdf> (accessed 20 August, 2020).
6. Julie Moon. <https://twitter.com/GWCUAW/status/1380894750144876546>, April 10 2021 (accessed 30 April, 2021).
7. Jiyul Kim. "Re: Revoking a Recommendation," *Korean Studies mailing list*, 15 September, 2016, http://koreanstudies.com/pipermail/koreanstudies_koreanstudies.com/2016-September/012251.html (accessed 20 August, 2020).
8. "Geographies of Co-Production," *RGS-IBG Publications Hub*, 1 August, 2014, [https://rgs-ibg.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/toc/10.1111/\(ISSN\)1475-4959.geographies-of-co-production](https://rgs-ibg.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/toc/10.1111/(ISSN)1475-4959.geographies-of-co-production).
9. Jean-Luc Renaud and Barry Litman. "Changing Dynamics of the Overseas Marketplace for TV Programming: The Rise of International Co-production." *Telecommunications Policy* 9.3 (1985): 245–261.
10. This typology of co-production was arrived at in discussion between the author of the paper and Balázs Szalontai.
11. Sergei Kurbanov. North Korea's *Juche* Ideology: Indigenous Communism or Traditional Thought?, *Critical Asian Studies* 51.2 (2019): 296–305.
12. Lee McIntyre. *Post Truth* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2018).
13. Nicole Cooke. "Posttruth, Truthiness, and Alternative Facts: Information Behavior and Critical Information Consumption for a New Age," *The Library Quarterly* 87.3 (2017): 211–221.
14. Tshepo Batane. "Turning to Turnitin to Fight Plagiarism among University Students." *Journal of Educational Technology & Society* 13.2 (2010): 1–12.
15. Phillip Dawson, Wendy Sutherland-Smith, and Mark Ricksen. "Can Software Improve Marker Accuracy at Detecting Contract Cheating? A Pilot Study of the Turnitin Authorship Investigate Alpha." *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education* 45. 4 (2020): 473–482.
16. Robert MacDonald. "'Impact', Research and Slaying Zombies: the Pressures and Possibilities of the REF." *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 37. 11–12: (2017), 696–710.
17. "Draft Report of the Ad Hoc Committee to the Standing Committee on the Conduct of Research at Columbia University," 17 August, 2018, <https://retractionwatch.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Armstrong-report.pdf> (accessed 20 August, 2020).

18. Gail Feigenbaum and Inge Reist. *Provenance an Alternate History of Art* (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Publications, 2013).
19. *Ibid.*
20. Jonas Tinius. "Awkward Art and Difficult Heritage: Nazi Collectors and Postcolonial Archives." *An Anthropology of Contemporary Art: Practices, Markets, and Collectors* (2018), p. 130.
21. Nancy Karrels. "Renewing Nazi-era Provenance Research Efforts: Case Studies and Recommendations." *Museum Management and Curatorship* 29.4 (2014): 297–310.
22. Claudio Bonifazzi, P. Carcagni, Raffaella Fontana, Marinella Greco, Maria Mastroianni, Marzia Materazzi, Enrico Pampaloni, Luca Pezzati, and Davide Bencini. "A Scanning Device for VIS–NIRM Multispectral Imaging of Paintings." *Journal of Optics A: Pure and Applied Optics* 10.6 (2008): 064011.
23. Peter Buneman, Sanjeev Khanna, and Wang-Chiew Tan. "Data Provenance: Some Basic Issues." In *International Conference on Foundations of Software Technology and Theoretical Computer Science* (Berlin: Springer, 2000), 87–93.
24. Brian Levine and Marc Liberatore. "DEX: Digital evidence provenance supporting reproducibility and comparison." *Digital Investigation* 6 (2009): 48–56.
25. Emilie Vandecandelaere, "Geographic Origin and Identification Labels: Associating Food Quality with Location." In *Innovations in Food Labelling* (Cambridge: Woodhead Publishing, 2010), 137–152.
26. Heather Paxson. "'Don't Pack a Pest': Parts, Wholes, and the Porosity of Food Borders." *Food, Culture & Society* 22.5 (2019): 657–673.
27. Andrew Nathan. "Brothers at War; Tyranny of the Weak," *Foreign Affairs*, November/December, 2013, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/reviews/capsule-review/2013-10-21/brothers-war-tyranny-weak>.
28. Christopher Green. "Review of 'Tyranny of the Weak: North Korea and the World, 1950–1952,'" *Journal of East Asian Studies*, 14.2 (2014): 303–304.
29. Sandra Fahy. "Review of 'Tyranny of the Weak: North Korea and the World, 1950–1952,'" *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 75:3 (2016): 847–851.
30. Personal communication with Adam Cathcart, 2020.
31. Brian Myers. "Review of 'Tyranny of the Weak: North Korea and the World, 1950–1952,'" *Acta Koreana*, 16:2 (2013): 629.
32. Personal communication with Balázs Szalontai, May 2021.
33. Personal communication with Balázs Szalontai, May 2021.
34. Brian Myers, "Revoking a Recommendation."
35. *Ibid.*
36. Jiyul Kim, "Re: Revoking a Recommendation."
37. Donald Baker, "Re: Revoking a Recommendation," *Korean Studies mailing list*, 15 September, 2016, http://koreanstudies.com/pipermail/koreanstudies_koreanstudies.com/2016-September/012252.html (accessed 20 August, 2020).
38. Frank Hoffman, "Re: Revoking a Recommendation," *Korean Studies mailing list*, 19 September, 2016, http://koreanstudies.com/pipermail/koreanstudies_koreanstudies.com/2016-September/012271.html (accessed 20 August, 2020).
39. James Hoare, "Re: Revoking a Recommendation," *Korean Studies mailing list*, 17 September, 2016, http://koreanstudies.com/pipermail/koreanstudies_koreanstudies.com/2016-September/012264.html (accessed 20 August, 2020).
40. Brian Myers. "From Berlin, News of More Bogus Sources," *Sthele Press*, 3 October 2016, <http://sthelepress.com/index.php/2016/09/> (accessed 20 August, 2020).
41. Balázs Szalontai, "A Table of 98 Examples of Source Fabrication, Plagiarism, and Text-Citation Disconnects in Charles K. Armstrong's *Tyranny of the Weak* (2013)," unpublished document personally supplied by Balázs Szalontai.

42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. Mark Kramer. "Archival Policies and Historical Memory in the Post-Soviet Era," *Demokratizatsiya*, 20.3 (2012): 204–215.
47. Charles Armstrong. "Re: Revoking a Recommendation," *Korean Studies mailing list*, 17 September, 2016, http://koreanstudies.com/pipermail/koreanstudies_koreanstudies.com/2016-September/012261.html (accessed 20 August, 2020).
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
50. Charles Armstrong. "Corrections to Tyranny of the Weak," personal blog, 30 December, 2016, <https://web.archive.org/web/20170107005201/https://charleskarmstrong.com/2016/12/30/corrections-to-tyranny-of-the-weak/> (accessed 20 August, 2020).
51. American Historical Association. "2014 Fairbank Prize Returned," *American Historical Association*, June 29 2017, <https://www.historians.org/news-and-advocacy/2014-fairbank-prize-returned> (accessed 20 August, 2020).
52. Scott Jaschik. "Amid Dispute, Prize Returned," *Inside Higher Ed*, July 5 2017, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/07/05/history-book-award-returned-amid-questions-about-citation-errors> (accessed 20 August, 2020).
53. Khadija Hussein. "Amid Public Allegations of Plagiarism Reputation and Academic Integrity of Korean Studies Program Face Scrutiny," *Columbia Spectator*, January 28 2019, <https://www.columbiaspectator.com/news/2019/01/28/amid-public-allegations-of-plagiarism-reputation-and-academic-integrity-of-korean-studies-program-face-scrutiny/> (accessed 20 August, 2020).
54. Personal communication between Robert Winstanley-Chesters, Ruth Barraclough and Charles Armstrong, 2017.
55. Communication between Adam Cathcart and University of Leeds library service.
56. Khadija Hussein. "Amid Public Allegations of Plagiarism Reputation and Academic Integrity of Korean Studies Program Face Scrutiny."
57. Ibid.
58. Maya Tolstoy. Letter to Faculty of Arts and Sciences Columbia University, September 10 2019, available at, <https://retractionwatch.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Armstrong-report.pdf> (accessed 20 August, 2020).
59. "Draft Report of the Ad Hoc Committee to the Standing Committee on the Conduct of Research at Columbia University."
60. Ibid, p. 15.
61. Ibid, p. 13.
62. Ibid, p. 14.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid, p. 32.
65. Ibid, p. 34.
66. "Statement of Retraction: "Fraternal Socialism": The International Reconstruction of North Korea, 1953–62," *Cold War History*, 10 February, 2020, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14682745.2020.1724643?src=recsys> (accessed 20 August, 2020).
67. Fyodor Tertitsky, "Tyranny of the Weak: Part of a decade-long pattern?" *Daily NK*, 20 February 2017, <https://www.dailynk.com/english/tyranny-of-the-weak-part-of-a-deca/> (accessed 20 August, 2020).
68. Brian Myers, "A Mystery is Solved," *Sthele Press*, 25 February 2017, <http://sthelepress.com/index.php/2016/09/> (accessed 20 August, 2020).

69. JaHyun Kim Haboush. *The Memoirs of Lady Hyegyong: The Autobiographical Writings of a Crown Princess of Eighteenth-Century Korea* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996).
70. Martina Deuchler. "Review of 'The Memoirs of Lady Hyegyong: The Autobiographical Writings of a Crown Princess of Eighteenth-Century Korea,'" *Korean Studies*, 21 (1996): 136–138.
71. *Memorie di una Principessa di Corea del XVIII Secolo*, translated by Vincenza D'Urso, Milan: ObarraO Edizione, 1998.
72. JaHyun Kim Haboush. "Letter to the Editor," *AKSE Newsletter* 23 (1999), Association of Korean Studies in Europe.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid.
75. Ibid.
76. Ibid.
77. Ibid.
78. Vincenza D'Urso. "Letter to the Editor," *AKSE Newsletter* 23 (1999), Association of Korean Studies in Europe.
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid.
81. Ibid.
82. Maurizio Gatti. "Letter to the Editor," *AKSE Newsletter* 24 (2000), Association of Korean Studies in Europe.
83. Wada Haruki. *The Korean War: An International History* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2013).
84. Sho Konishi. *Anarchist Modernity Cooperatism and Japanese–Russian Intellectual Relations in Modern Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).
85. Yi T'aejun. *Eastern Sentiments*, translated by Janet Poole (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2016).
86. Yi Chung-hwan. *A Place to Live: A New Translation of Yi Chung-hwan's T'aengniji, the Korean Classic for Choosing Settlements*, translated by Inshil Choe Yoon (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2019).
87. Norman Finkelstein. *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering* (London: Verso, 2003).
88. Pierre Rigoulot and Kang Chol-hwan. *The Aquariums of Pyongyang: Ten Years in the North Korean Gulag* (New York, NY: Perseus Press, 2001).
89. "President George W Bush Welcomes Chol-hwan Kang to the Oval Office," June 13 2005, https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2005/06/images/20050613-1_p45011-005-515h.html (accessed 20 August, 2020).
90. Barbara Demick. *Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea*, New York (NY: Spiegel and Grau, 2009).
91. Blaine Harden and Shin Dyon-hyuk. *Escape from Camp 14: One Man's Remarkable Odyssey from North Korea to Freedom in the West* (London: Penguin, 2013).
92. Debra Liang-Fenton. "Failing to Protect: Food Shortages and Prison Camps in North Korea," *Asian Perspective*, 31.2 (2007): 47–74.
93. "North Korean Defector Changes Story After Seeing Father in Video." *The Guardian*, 19 January, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/19/north-korea-defector-change-story-shin-dong-hyuk> (accessed 20 August, 2020).
94. Blaine Harden. "New Foreword to *Escape from Camp 14: One Man's Remarkable Odyssey from North Korea to Freedom in the West*," <https://blaineharden.com/escape-from-camp-14-reviews/> (accessed 20 August, 2020).
95. Ibid.

96. Ibid.
97. Alex Preston. "Interview with Yeonmi Park," *The Guardian*, 4 October, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/oct/04/park-yeon-mi-in-order-to-live-north-korea-interview> (accessed 20th August, 2020).
98. Nicolas Levi. *Tangible and Intangible Legacies of 70 Years of Polish–North Korean Relations* (forthcoming, Warsaw: Polish Academy of Sciences, 2021), p. 123.
99. V.M. Dogvadov. "Change in the Nature of Soviet Collective Agreements," *Soviet Studies*, 1.1 (1949): 79–84.
100. Paek Nam-nyong. *Friend*, translated by Immanuel Kim (New York: NY: Columbia University Press, 2020).