

Mobile Imperialism and its Fissure in Colonial Chosŏn: Centering on Kim Namch'ŏn's "To Chŏllyŏng"¹

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Abstract

This paper explores Japanese mobile imperialism as supported by the colonial mobility system and examines an emancipatory imagination, which enables the opening of a fissure in the system, by approaching Kim Namch'ŏn's short story, "To Chŏllyŏng (Ch. Tieling 鐵嶺)," from the new mobilities paradigm. It argues that, via modern mobility technologies, "sociality," i.e., the communal ethic, can be created at the core of "the social"; ergo, Korean society, dominated by colonial mobility's rationality, constructs the colonized people as dehumanized beings while simultaneously incubating an alternative way of living, namely, "the undirected being-together." The spontaneous social cohesion that results is significant, functioning as "an affirmative *puissance*," which may undermine Japanese colonial rule.

Keywords: Colonial mobility system, Mobile imperialism, Governmobility, Colonial mobility's rationality, Communal ethic, Affirmative *puissance*

Mobility and Colonialism

This paper explores Japanese mobile imperialism in Korean, supported by a colonial mobility system composed of modern mobility technologies and infrastructures, and examines an emancipatory imagination, which enables the opening of a fissure in the system, by approaching Kim Namch'ön's emblematic short story "To Chölllyöng" (1938) from the new mobilities paradigm. Specifically, by drawing on Michel Maffesoli's distinction of "sociality" and "the social," it argues that "sociality," or the communal ethic, can be created at the core of "the social," i.e., the social world dominated by colonial mobility's rationality, thereby functioning as "an affirmative *puissance*," which may undermine Japanese colonial rule.

In general, the "new mobilities paradigm" denotes theorizing a social world in terms of "a wide array of economic, social and political practices, infrastructures and ideologies that all involve, entail or curtail various kinds of movement of people, or ideas, or information or objects."³ Emphasized in this paradigm, thus, is "*complex mobilities* of all kinds as the basis of all forms of space," "[H]ow these political-economic relational spaces were produced in and through social and cultural practices" is to be analyzed.⁴ Within the literature, John Urry focuses on the collective "mobility system" rather than on specific modes, such as the train, automobile, road, or railway, respectively, because the former, presupposed by the complexity of mobile practices, renders various kinds of movement to be "predictable" and "repetitive,"⁵ and thus participates in the creation of such relational spaces. The paradigm, therefore, views a social world, not only created by various kinds of mobile practices, "*complex mobilities*," but regulated by a specific mobility system.

When Michele Foucault notes that "circulation, the circulation of goods, of the products of men's activity" is "the last object of police" and "the condition and development of roads" is one of their main concerns,⁶ he implicates the construction and the use of a mobility system as an exercise of governmentality, enabling power or government to regulate various kinds of movements, including that of a population, in a way that renders its members "predictable" and "repetitive." From this viewpoint, Jørgen Ole Bærenholdt characterizes this situation as "a situation where the regulation of mobilities are internalized in people's mobile practices" by devising a notion of "governmobility."⁷

At the same time, however, it must be stressed that within the paradigm, mobility technologies and infrastructures enable or suppose multiple variable movements,⁸ and consequently, social and cultural practices are not limited to creating a social world regulated by a specific power or government that tries to regulate them. Rather, they can also create different social spaces owing to the

variable usability of mobility technologies and infrastructures. The paradigm, thus, investigates the social world by considering its various mobile practices and its mobility system, the formation of different spaces in relation to them, and an operation of governmentality, i.e., governmobility, in the process of its formation.

By approaching Kim Namch'ŏn's "To Chŏllyŏng" from the new mobilities paradigm, this paper particularly examines Japanese mobile imperialism supported by a colonial mobility system through which its actors had practiced governing the colonized territory and its people. Published in 1938, the year when the construction of the modern mobility system, propelled by the Japanese Government General of Korea, was nearing completion, Kim's short story describes the accidental meeting of a nameless first-person narrator, who travels to Sŏngch'ŏn with an emigrant family moving from Yangdŏk to Sŏngch'ŏn, and to an ultimate destination, Chŏllyŏng (K.) in Manchuria, China, for a better life. The narrative's settings are situated in mobile spaces—for example, a waiting room, the side of a road, and inside the train—which behave as social, relational worlds. Therefore, the current paper's primary focus is the manipulation of such mobile spaces created through the complicated exercise of Japanese governmentality and the social and cultural practices of the colonized people. In addition, it posits and defends the resultant "affirmative *puissance*" that opens a fissure in the representation of Japanese imperialism, by analyzing different social spaces created on the variable usability of mobility technologies and infrastructures.

In this regard, it is helpful for this study to take Michel Maffesoli's argument of "sociality" into account. Contrary to "the social," built on the principle of individuation and of separation," which "favors individuals and rational, contractual associations," "the political order," "sociality" "places the emphasis on the affective, feeling dimension," "the realm of identification"; therefore, Maffesoli demands that we acknowledge the latter as an alternative principle of society to the former, which, as the modern and dominant, subjects social existence "to the injunctions of a multiform *power*," by highlighting "an affirmative *puissance*" that "confirms the '(ever-) renewed game of solidarity and reciprocity'"; thus, dwelling on the dehumanization and solitude is not as important as seeing potential for "the network of solidarity," namely "sociality," in the contemporaneous social world.⁹ In this context, Maffesoli asserts that as a carrier of an affirmative *puissance*, "the shared feelings" can encourage "the communal ethic,"¹⁰ which is not a series of *a priori* norms or principles but rather the common faculty of feeling, found in "the undirected being-together."¹¹

Considering Maffesoli's argument, as well as new mobilities paradigm altogether, Kim's work can be viewed as representing social worlds that the colonial government sought to re-organize and administer, which on the other

hand gave rise to an affirmative *puissance* lurking in the colonial mobilities; for example, a scene that plays out in a waiting room describes the dominant power of colonial mobility system over people; while action set on the road, within a social world, reflects individual interest and colonial mobility's rationality; inside the train transporting the characters, a separate social world is established where, through their reciprocity, the communal ethic is momentarily achieved.

Japanese Mobile Imperialism and Governmobility

As Japan's modernization was inseparable from the historiography of the railway,¹² Japanese imperialism propagated the development of mobility technologies and infrastructures in Korea as one of the representative testimonies for demonstrating the legitimacy of its colonial rule,¹³ as reflected by the modernization of society. Notably, the construction of the colonial mobility system, primarily consisting of railways, roads, and ports, was an essential means through which Japanese imperialism re-organized and ruled the colonized territories and people.

Historically, preceding its occupation of Korea (1910), Japanese imperialism had actively participated in constructing a network of railways in the Korean Peninsula, including the Hansŏng-Inch'ŏn Railroad, the first railway in Korea, in 1899 and the Hansŏng-Pusan Railroad, which later would link Manchuria and Japan, in 1904. Thus, just after the occupation, the Japanese Government General of Korea began constructing mobility infrastructures across the country, appropriating over 20% of its total budget per year for the work in its earliest period.¹⁴ Patterning the railways built previously, the main-line railways centered around Keijō had been laid throughout the 1910s and the 1920s, linking the four directions of the Korean Peninsula.¹⁵ At the same time, new roads were built for maximizing the effectiveness of the rail system to further connect transportation hubs where railroad stations were built and the nearby towns that lacked railroad connections,¹⁶ as well as ports established mainly to connect the Korean Peninsula, the Japanese mainland, and Manchuria.¹⁷

Alongside the expansion of railway lines as the centre of the colonial mobility system, the construction of new road infrastructure for automobiles in colonial Korea nearly resulted in imperializing the everyday movements of the populace.¹⁸ For example, by promulgating the amendment of "The Regulations for the Control of Roads" in 1921, the Japanese Government General of Korea legislated the rule of left-hand orientation both for vehicles and pedestrians by reversing the previous rule of right-hand orientation, which accorded with the rule on the Japanese mainland.¹⁹ Additionally, in response to the increasing number of automobiles and traffic accidents and crowdedness of roads, the division of sidewalks and

roadways came into existence first in the 1920s. That is, through constructing the mobility infrastructures across the country and, also, re-arranging or disciplining the movements in everyday life, the colonial mobility system was gradually established on the Korean Peninsula.

Meanwhile, while retrieving the managerial rights of the Korean railways from the South Manchuria Railway Company (Minami Manshū Tetsudō Kabushiki Kaisha)—a Japanese state-run cooperation based on the northeast regions of China—in 1925, the Japanese Government General of Korea enacted a series of statutes governing the transportation industry, including “An Act of the Automobile Business in Korea (Chōsen Jidōsha Kotsū Jigyōrei 朝鮮自動車交通事業令)” (1933), which was summarized in the transfer of the managerial rights of automobile transportation business to the railway bureau. Thereby, Japanese imperialism came to establish its unitary mobility system centred on railways in the Korean Peninsula, which was controlled first and foremost by the colonial government.²⁰

Thus, it is noteworthy that “The 30th Anniversary Exposition of Administrative Policy (Shisei 30 Shūnen Kinen Hakurankai 市政 30 周年記念博覽會)” (1939), the largest event for celebrating the achievements of the Japanese colonial rule for 30 years, was opened on the premises of Ch’ōngnyangni Station, just a year after the “12-Years Plan of the Chosŏn Railway (Chōsen Tetsudō 12-nen Keikaku 朝鮮鐵道12年計畫)” (1927–1938), the biggest national railway construction plan in the colonial era, was terminated. While it propagated the notion of advanced modernization and rationalization of Korean society, in terms of a significant mobility system born out of Japanese colonialism, the event would be considered a demonstration of the stabilization of colonial rule, which rendered all movement in the colonised territories to be “predictable” and “repetitive.” In this sense, the creation of the Japanese imperial colonial mobility system can be viewed as enabling colonial government to disseminate its administrative power to every corner of the country.²¹ From this viewpoint, its governmentality can be called imperialistic “governmobility,” whereby Japan perpetually sought to expand its territory and complete its colonization by supervising the movements via developed mobilities.

Meanwhile, Japanese imperialists consistently proclaimed the construction of mobility infrastructures aimed at the development of industry and the improvement of the quality of living in Chosŏn.²² Although they were essentially used for military purposes (e.g., the expansion of Japanese territory to the other Asian regions, including China), 80% of railways in colonial Korea were constructed initially for distribution abroad, that is, for the sake of logistics and the transport of goods between Japan, Korea, and Manchuria.²³ In this respect, the railways were used mainly to take foodstuffs and natural resources out of

Korea to Japan, thereby subjugating the Korean economy to the Japanese circular capitalistic economy.²⁴ And so, for the Japanese, the development of industry and the improvement of living in Korea were not different from the capitalization of its society.

Specifically, large-scale businesses such as those charged with the construction of railways or new roads could not be conducted without developing the rationalization of society in terms of its capitalization. To this end, the establishment of a capitalistic financial system enabled the raising of large-scale construction costs and promoted the generalization of private ownership of land, thereby allowing land to be commercialized and expropriated—an action the Japanese Government General of Korea reinforced by executing the “land survey project” in the 1910s.²⁵

In addition, as one of the important effects of construction of a mobility system, the commodities produced in factories at a regional distance gradually displaced handiworks—which were made mainly in the local communities—from the local markets, relegating the Korean people, particularly tenant farmers (and proletariats),²⁶ to become wage laborers working on the railway or on new road construction sites.²⁷ Collectively, these changes intimate that through this colonial mobilities and capitalism, Japanese imperialism made an attempt to rationalize its colonial rule and promote it as collective progress.²⁸

As a result, the establishment of a colonial mobility system forced people to acclimate to changed circumstances dominated by “the social” in Maffesoli’s sense, that is, the political order as a rational association of individuals. In this regard, it is noteworthy that the so-called movement of the rationalization of living in the 1930s eventually reinforced the generalization of the capitalistic lifestyle by demanding thinking and practicing from the perspective of economic rationality, that is, the use of reason for maximizing individual interests.²⁹ Therefore, it can be asserted that through the construction of its mobility system, the colonial government endeavored to create a society regulated by “the social” via those people seeking individual interests, thereby embodying capitalistic rationality and colonial governmobility. In this sense, Japanese imperialists celebrated the foundation of colonial rule centered on governmobility, by opening the “The 30th Anniversary Exposition of Administrative Policy” in 1939.

However, colonial rule ultimately failed to completely achieve totalitarian and perpetual rule over Korean society. Because it exercised its dominion mostly via mobility technologies and infrastructures, its inherent variable usability could be considered one of the reasons of such a failure. For instance, the modern mobility system sometimes was used even by Korean activists who wanted to expand their network across the country for the independence movement. Representatively, the March 1st Independence Movement (1919) was to be spread via the railway

lines,³⁰ and the countrywide network of independence movements that occurred in the 1920s was fashioned along the country's expansive railway network.³¹

Furthermore, for the administration of independence activities in foreign countries, such as in China and the Soviet Union, the system was also a useful means of exchanging information with the other activists on the Korean Peninsula and avoiding arrest by the Japanese police.³² Drawing on Peter Adey's words that "mobility is not essentially resistance or domination; it is potentially both or either,"³³ mobility technologies or infrastructures could be used for establishing colonial rule or for opening its fissures, or for both.³⁴

Historically, the colonial government considered its rule was nearly complete in the late 1930s; correspondingly, the aforementioned usability of mobilities for resistance was inevitably reduced and, even, disappeared due to the fortified terrorization for the purpose of totalitarian-fascist rule. In this historical-political context, significantly, Kim's short story, "To Chŏllyŏng," presented an imagined, alternative usability of mobility technology against the allegedly stabilized colonial rule in the late colonial era, thereby describing a mobile space of "sociality" in Maffesoli's sense, which was created inside the train, a central component of the colonial mobility system, as per the communal ethic. Therefore, created by its variable usability, such an alternative space could be considered as opening a fissure within Japanese mobile imperialism, which sought to control and subjugate the colonized territories and their people via colonial governmobility.

Mighty Mobility Technology and Dehumanised People

Published in the year when the construction of colonial mobility system was near completion, "To Chŏllyŏng" narrates a story about a nameless narrator on his way back to Sŏngch'ŏn from Yangdŏk, Korea, who happens to meet a migrant family, led by its elderly patriarch, moving to Chŏllyŏng (Tieling 鐵嶺) in Manchuria, China. Notably, they meet twice but in different ways; when they first meet on the road, they do not converse; on the contrary, when they meet again inside the train to Manchuria, they exchange food and feelings, having a conversation. Centering on their encounters, this short story is constructed in three scenes; first, a waiting room wherein people wait temporarily for the train; second, on the road where the narrator, traveling by truck, encounters the migrant family accidentally; third, inside the train where an interaction and separation between the narrator and the family occur.

Prior to the first scene of the waiting room, this work briefly explains that the narrator has to travel to the Yangdŏk station because he overslept and missed the bus to Sŏngch'ŏn on this particular morning, so he must travel by train; as



Map 1 A migrant family's journey from Yangdök to Söngch'ön to Chölyöng

Source: Based on "Map of the railway network of Manchukuo," https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Manchukuo_Railmap_en.png

part of the exposition, the author describes the landscape outside the station in seemingly unnecessary detail. However, this introduction is indispensable to the rest of the short story because it sets up the temporal and spatial conditions of "To Chölyöng," or, more precisely, the historical and political contexts of the social world in which this work is contextualized, which must be examined for an analysis and deeper understanding of the work.

The first paragraph of this short story is replete with words denoting temporality; for example, the author notes that:

... because I played till late at night and returned to the inn about 2 AM, I couldn't meet the departure time of the bus to Söngch'ön while sleeping. When I got up, rubbing my eyes, and looked at the clock, it was about 8 AM; thus, inevitably, I was about to prepare to return to Söngch'ön by taking a train, which would depart from the Yangdök station at 1:30 PM.³⁵

In this context, the clock evidently rules all the movements of people, functioning as a yardstick that measures and regulates them, a regulator they should follow and to which they must acclimate. Not to be forgotten is that, in colonial Korea, the clock time was recalibrated to Tokyo Standard Time, which replaced Korean Standard Time³⁶ and thus became the dominant temporality that measured the colonized people's travels. Therefore, the world of "To Chölyöng" fundamentally is built not only on the modern temporality of the clock, but also on the colonial reorganization of time, which can be framed as "temporal standardization."³⁷

After presenting its temporal condition, i.e., the colonial modern temporality, this work describes the mobile landscape outside the station as featuring trucks running on new roads, and the reader is told that from this rural area, cut timbers are transported across the country and wooden pillars are delivered to Manchuria. Additionally, the narrator points out that the bus stop and garage were newly constructed by being cut out of the mountain slope, thus distinctly destroying the natural scenery. In this sense, “To Chŏllyŏng” represents the manipulating, colonial world, composed of new roads, long-distance logistics networks, and mobility infrastructures, which mobilize systems across the country and abroad, including Manchuria. It is a controlled context wherein movements are regulated by the Japanese Standard Time and the colonial mobility network.

Upon introducing the temporal and spatial conditions, the narrator paints the awkward picture of the train station waiting room. Specifically, after admiring the developed mobilities outside, the narrator feels awkward when entering the waiting room full of strangers who are waiting for the train. In the mobile space, dominated by “a railway timetable” and “a price list,” the travelers, including the narrator and his relatives, do not say anything, but stand wordlessly and inanimately. On the other hand, the mobility technologies such as the automobile and steam train make loud noises, moving animatedly, as if boasting of their power; for instance, an automobile carrying people arrives at the station with a “cough,” and a train whistles, making a steaming, chugging sound. As such, this sharp contrast of people and mobility technologies keenly reveals that, in the social world, the master is the latter, not the former.

In particular, the gigantic structure of the train, composed of an engine locomotive at the head, followed by 15 or 16 wagons carrying timbers, and one carriage at its end, robustly brings the inanimate state-of-being of the people into relief. In this work, people are most of all presented as beings equivalent or inferior to objects; more precisely, as dehumanized beings, they are just conveyed as cargo, by a vibrant, animated mobility technology, not by themselves. At the same time, as shown especially in the lifeless human interaction that takes place in the waiting area, even the narrator’s relatives—who come to see him off at the station—keep looking elsewhere with expressionless faces; nobody is motivated to have a conversation or interact with others. In addition, the disharmonious and rather random assemblage of characters—a clerk, a Korean geisha, a prostitute, a supposed testifier, and the like—underscores a lack of cohesion and intimates their alienation: devoid of commonality, they tacitly accept their dehumanized status by saying or doing nothing, waiting to be moved and conveyed towards their destinations by the mighty mobility technology.

Consequently, this scene of a waiting room shows the temporal and spatial conditions of a social world where objectified, dehumanized people exist inanimately and individually, a world constructed by the colonial, modern temporality of the reset clock and the spatiality of an imposed mobility network that Japanese imperialism has developed and constructed.

Colonial Mobility's Rationality

After boarding the train and taking a seat, the narrator spies an approaching migrant family composed of an old man, his daughter-in-law, and her children. Looking at their faces, the narrator recollects that while coming to Yangdök, he met the family on the road the previous day. In his encountering the family twice; once while he is in the automobile and for a second time on the train, there exists here a repetition and difference, because although the automobile and the train are the essential components of the colonial mobility system, two such encounters show the possibility of configuration of different social worlds due to the mutability of use of these mobility technologies.

The scene of "on the road" wherein the driver and the narrator happen to meet the family for the first time unfolds as the narrator is being driven to the train station and is signaled by the old man, leader of the migrant family, who futilely tries to hitchhike. One of the apparent reasons for not picking them up might be the fact that inside the automobile, there are not enough seats to accommodate four members of the family. However, if he truly wanted to help them, the driver could allow them to ride in the luggage space of the truck. But the driver refuses, despite the narrator's amenability and gives an account of the real reason for passing them over, justifying this behavior, as follows:

The reason for not putting them in my automobile is not the fear of the police substation. Even if I am accused of putting them in my automobile, it is no matter, because I can pay a fine of three KRW. But I once had an old man ride in my automobile and, just because of this, I had a big problem.

He continues, telling me that once, the driver made an old man ride on top of his automobile as the old man was pestering him inside the cab; the old man attempted to hop off the automobile before it stopped, slipped from it and rolled onto the road and wounded himself; as a result, the driver paid for the old man's treatment and was called to the police substation several times, so after that, he decided not to help others.³⁸

In the quotation above, based on his experience, the driver defends his unhelpful behavior, arguing that the costs of his good will might be too steep, rationalizing his position completely. The first thing to point out here is that his

justification is predicated upon such rationality as the calculation of behavior according to individual interests. In addition, as shown by the driver asking the narrator for consent, such rationality is demanded not on the personal but rather on a universal level. At the same time, such rationality is acceptable only for the driver of the automobile, not the narrator who, contrary to the driver, feels sympathy for the family. In this scene, therefore, it is important that what is dominant on the road is such a mobilized rationality that the narrator and the family members have to follow the decision and disposal of the driver of the vehicle, who reflects the automobile's rationality.

Relatedly, Urry's characterization of the automobile as "Weber's 'iron cage' of modernity, motorized, moving and privatized,"³⁹ would be helpful to examine the automobile's rationality. Drawing on his argument, drivers are excused from face-to-face interactions with others inhabiting the road and may even consider pedestrians as obstacles.⁴⁰ Thus, they lose the ability to perceive strangers beyond the car, which precludes interaction on a human level.⁴¹ In short, the automobile conditions drivers not to interact with others on the road, discounting them as obstacles, namely, dehumanized beings. It can be deduced, thus, that the automobile's rationality consists of the priority of individual interests and the dominance of mighty mobility. From this view, the space on the road in Kim's short story represents the social world in which objectified, dehumanized people exist inanimately and individually against the dominant power of mighty mobility technology.

Considering its historical context, the mobile space that the automobile's rationality dominates can also be characterised as the society of "the social," which is regulated by colonial governmobility. In other words, given the driver's real reason for passing the travelling family over as "the driver paid for the old man's treatment and was called to the police substation several times," would not be a behavior expected of him in the past, "the social" society, in fact, refers to the settlement of a colonial mobility system that was contemporaneous with the promotion of social relations centering on pecuniary interests, extrinsic discipline, and the re-organization of everyday movements by the police and the law. In this respect, the automobile's rationality, composed of the priority of individual interests and the dominance of mighty mobility, is synonymous with colonial mobility's rationality.

From this viewpoint, contrary to the driver, who is suited to the colonial society, the narrator and the migrant family can be considered the ones who, although compelled to follow colonial mobility's rationality, feel awkwardness or inanimation in the constructed social world. In other words, they are the beings obeying such rationality to use the mobilities and travel somewhere but, simultaneously,

experiencing it unwillingly. Thus, even if the colonial government oversees the whole country by using a developed mobility system, there exists the possibility of an alternative existence in such awkward or inanimate attitudes.

Shared Feeling and Communal Ethic

Inside the train, recollecting his encounter with the migrant family on the road the day before, the narrator happens to sit across from them, facing them in a narrow space. In this scene, the first thing that stands out is the description of the family members from the viewpoint of the narrator. For example, although he is barely over 50, the patriarch appears as an old man: he has a scarred face, wears excessively old hemp cloth garments and a straw hat, and is gaunt, looking much older. Just over 20, his young daughter-in-law, a widow, has an infant and a bony baby of one or two years who is suckling from her. In this scene, their shabby clothes and haggard appearances demonstrate their impoverishment and clarify they are travelling to Chölyŏng in Manchuria, China, for a better life. For them, Manchuria seems the only remaining land of hope to save them from poverty.

Manchuria itself carries symbolic meaning in the story. To be noticed first is the semantic change of Manchuria in colonial Korea. Particularly, after the Mukden Incident in 1931, Japanese imperialism enacted policy to motivate the Korean people to colonize the region. By plundering the lands in Manchuria and simultaneously establishing Senman Takushoku Kabushiki Kaisha (鮮滿拓殖株式會社), a company charged with executing the planned movement to Manchuria, in 1936, the program was promoted on a large-scale, and they had encroached upon Manchuria by 1937.⁴² Meanwhile, millions of Korean people had moved to Manchuria expecting the propagated support of the colonial government, including travel expenses, farmland, and housing, but, just after arriving there, came to realize the promised resources were baseless propaganda promoting emigration. After 1938, when the fantasy of developing Manchuria began eroding, the colonial government often forced people to move there by defrauding them or coercing them with threats or violence.⁴³ Consequently, while touted as a land of abundance and hope at first, Manchuria came to be re-signified as the last and only option for escaping poverty, irrespective of its actuality.

Given this semantic shift in the referent of Manchuria, it is not difficult to discern the reason the narrator gave the food given by his friends to the family or why the narrator expressed sympathy for the emigrants who were moving to Manchuria. The reason that they had to move to Manchuria, apparently, is their obvious poverty, but more fundamental would be their aspiration to escape from their thing-like, dehumanized state-of-being in Korean society. The sympathy the

narrator feels for the family, therefore, originates from the narrator's empathy with those who, although desperate, choose to move to Manchuria, demonstrating their shared understanding that it would not be an ideal alternative to such a dehumanized life in colonial Korea.

At the same time, even more important in this scene is not the reason itself but the fact that, inside the train, they exchange food and, as a result, begin to share feelings by having a talk. Looking closely at the scene of exchanging foods, we can analyze the short conversation about the family's expected life in Manchuria, which is presented as follows:

At that time, the young widow stands up quietly without drinking a sip of cider. She stumbles among several people sitting about, goes towards her baggage, takes a biscuit from it, and returns with it. Then, after sitting still, she tears one side of the bag of biscuits and offers them to her father-in-law, silently, with the intention of giving me the biscuits which her children's aunt had bought for them. So, I felt embarrassed but, at the time, felt tears owing to her kind heart and actions.⁴⁴

After receiving the biscuits from the old man, the narrator leaves a bag of apples for the family, telling the old man that he is getting off at the next station, Sinsŏngch'ŏn, to return to his home in Sŏngch'ŏn, Korea. Thereupon, a surprised and sad expression passes over the faces of the old man and his daughter-in-law. Then, the old man says to the narrator,

"Thank you for giving us the apples, again."

He appreciates me. The train comes into the station. Once again, a handful of biscuits are given to me while I briefly look out the window. Questioningly, I gaze at the old man:

"Because of being in sorrow."

When he says so, in his mouth is laughter, but in his eyes are tears. After putting the biscuits into my suit pocket, I bowed to him, saying,

"Thank you for them."⁴⁵

In the above quotations, by repeatedly exchanging food such as cider, apples, and biscuits, the family and the narrator come to share the same feeling, sorrowfulness, thereby creating "the realm of identification." Apparently, this affective event would be an expression of their common understanding of the difficulty of survival and its pursuant experience of solidarity. On the other hand, more noteworthy is that such an understanding and experience are conditioned fundamentally by the material commonality of being "inside the train" and, despite their different destinations, they share an ontological commonality of being "on the move." In this respect, the affective event can be seen as a configuration wrought by their practice of "being mobile," which, quoting Peter Adey's words, seem

“to unlock barriers between bodies,” enable “the passing on of ideas, emotions and fellow sentiments so that a feeling can itself become mobile.”⁴⁶

In addition, by practicing the exchange of food and feelings, they succeed in activating “an affirmative *puissance*,” owing to the sharing of sorrowfulness, to create “the undirected being-together,” namely, “sociality,” which could be considered different from the way of life in Korea and Manchuria, respectively. Given that the foods the narrator gave to the family had been given to him by his friends before he took the train, notably, the semantic reading of such an affective event would be even wider beyond the narrow space inside the train. By recognizing “the ethic” as something that serves as a daily vessel for the collectivity’s feelings as Maffesoli said, thus, such affective an event can be characterized as creating “the communal ethic,” which enables people to adjust to one another and to adapt to the environment.⁴⁷ That is, despite the dominant way of living in Korean society, which is ruled by colonial mobility’s rationality, represented by the “automobile,” the realm of identification, which is reorganized by the communal ethic could be created via train travel.

Accordingly, the train, a form of communal mobility, seems superior to the automobile, i.e., individual mobility, as in their initial phase, railways symbolized a kind of ideal technology that brought people together both temporally and spatially.⁴⁸ However, not to be forgotten is that the train (especially) and automobile both are the essential components of the colonial mobility system. From this viewpoint, the practice of “being mobile-together” and, subsequently, the creation of the communal ethic in fact should be recognized as by-products of the colonial mobility system. As such, the dominant way of living in colonial Korea simultaneously conditions the alternative way of “being mobile-together,” which then enables the communal ethic to be created. Ironically, these processes emanate from Japanese governmobility in that they all are conditioned ontologically and technologically by its mechanisms.⁴⁹

To sum up, while the colonial mobility system functions as a power construct managing the colonized territories and people, it can effect “an affirmative *puissance*” for creating an oppositional opportunity against the colonial, rational, and individual, way of living, thereby working against its initial intention, ostensibly, the completion or stabilization of Japanese colonialism.⁵⁰ Therefore, what is essential in this work is the presence of “an affirmative *puissance*” which, by lurking within the colonial mobility system itself, can undermine Japanese mobile imperialism from within. Ironically, just by the colonized people sharing feelings and exchanging food in its center, “an affirmative *puissance*” can be activated and thus weaken the allegedly complete domination of Japanese imperialism and cause colonial governmobility to malfunction.

Conclusion: Opening the Fissure of Imperialism

Written by the time Japanese mobile imperialism was about to complete the establishment of its colonial mobility system in Korea, Kim's short story, "To Chŏllyŏng," describes the social microcosms of a station waiting room, the open road, and the inside of a train, all of which, in principle, are governed by colonial mobility's rationality, and thereby represent the colonized people, who are on the move somewhere seeking a better life. Meanwhile, inside the train, it also creates an alternative way of living, that is, "being mobile-together," which is conditioned by the communal ethic, suggesting that Manchuria would not be the proper option as an escape from their dehumanised existence in colonial Korea. Notably, such creation could activate "an affirmative *puissance*," which might open a fissure in Japanese mobile imperialism from within, by using mobility technology in an unintended, ungoverned way.

About the work's time of publication in 1938, about 30 years after the Japanese occupation of Korea, Japanese Imperialism was sure of the stabilization of its rule in colonial Korea to the extent of preparing its next war, the Pacific War, in 1941. To this end, it outlawed the public activities of the labor and student organizations or groups that had been lawful up to then, by promulgating a variety of policies of regulation and mobilization after 1937—the year when the Second Sino-Japanese War broke out—including "National Mobilization" as a fundamental law for the mobilization of human and material resources for military purposes; thereby, at that time, the independent movements in colonial Korea were carried out by small-scale, illegal organizations or groups, i.e., "secret organizations," but their conditions were generally oppressed and depressed.⁵¹ In addition, as reflected in the emigrant family in Kim's short story, the colonised populace's living condition became poorer, as a consequence of the mobilisation of such resources for the Imperialist wars. This situation was supposedly considered a success of the Japanese colonial rule by the imperialists.

Therefore, Kim's short story can be viewed as a desperate attempt to excavate and present an alternative to the colonial way of living, while simultaneously suggesting to colonial society that there might not be any feasibility for a better life for the colonized people. In other words, it is significant that at a time when there seemed to be no way of escaping colonial rule, an emancipatory imagination emerged, enabling a possible escape from the circle of colonial governmobility to be created by activating "an affirmative *puissance*"—even though it could not be realized materially. What Walter Benjamin called "a *weak* Messianic power"⁵² might be at work in activating "an affirmative *puissance*," which would wordlessly dwell among dehumanized, inanimate people, waiting for its materialization in the future.

Notes

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2. Lee Jinhyoung is an Assistant Professor at the Academy of Mobility Humanities, Konkuk University, South Korea. He earned his PhD from Yonsei University and completed a post-doctoral fellowship at Seoul National University. In addition to his book, *1930 Nyōndae huban shingminji Chosōn ūi sosōl iron* (1930년대 후반 식민지 조선의 소설 이론 Theories of the Colonial Korean novel in the Late 1930s) (2013), he has co-authored other books including *T'eksūt'ū t'ek'ūnolloji mobillit'i* (텍스트 테크놀로지 모빌리티 Text, Technology, and Mobility) (2019), *Honjongsōng ihu* (혼종성 이후 After Hybridity) (2017), *Han'guk tamunhwa chuūi pip'an* (한국 다문화주의 비판 Criticism of Korean Multiculturalism) (2016) and others. He also translated Haim Hazan's *Against Hybridity* (2020) and co-translated Linda Hutcheon's *A Theory of Adaptation* into Korean (2017), as well as *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics* (2006) by Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson. His interests include the modern Korean novel and criticism in the colonial era, diaspora, hybridity, (post)coloniality, and mobility humanities studies.
3. John Urry, *Mobilities* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), 18.
4. Mimi Sheller, "From Spatial Turn to Mobilities Turn," *Current Sociology* 65.4 (2017): 3.
5. Urry, *Mobilities*, 2007, 13.
6. Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2007), 325.
7. Jørgen Ole Bærenholdt, "Governmentality: The Power of Mobility," *Mobilities* 8.1 (2013): 29.
8. Urry, *Mobilities*, 2007, 45.
9. Michel Maffesoli, *The Time of the Tribes*, trans. Don Smith (London, Thousand Oaks & New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1996), 11, 72.
10. Maffesoli, *The Time of the Tribes*, 1996, 16.
11. Maffesoli, *The Time of the Tribes*, 1996, 81.
12. Kate McDonald, "Imperial Mobility—Circulation as History in East Asia under Empire," *Transfers* 4.3 (Winter 2014): 70.
13. Ko T'aeu, "Chosōn ch'ongdokpu t'omok haengjōng kwa t'omok kwallyo ūi 'Chosōn kaebal' insik," *Yōksa wa kyōnggye* 97 (2015): 302–308.
14. Todoroki Hiroshi, "20 segi chōnban Han pando toro kyot'ong ch'egye pyōnhwa," *Chirihak nonch'ong*, Monograph Series 54 (2004): 34.
15. Chōng Chaejōng, *Ilche ch'imnyak kwa Han'guk ch'ōldo (1892~1945)* (일제침략과 한국철도, 1892~1945) (Seoul: Sōul taehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 1999), 147.
16. Cho Pyōngno, "Ilche singminji sigi ūi toro kyot'ong e taehan yōn'gu (I)," *Han'guk minjok undongsa yōn'gu* 59 (2009): 9.
17. Just after acquiring administrative authority over Korea, the Japanese Government General of Korea founded Chōsen Yūsen Kabushiki Kaisha (朝鮮優先株式會社), a company which was given an exclusive managerial right of the coastal routes in the Korean Peninsula, to regulate them unitarily for its economic and military purposes (Ha Jiyoung, "1910 nyōndae Chosōn usōn chusik hoesa ūi yōnan hangno Kyōngyōng kwa chiyōk," *Yōksa wa kyōnggye* 109 (2018), 204–206).
18. In this regard, by a curious coincidence, automobiles were imported into Korea from Japan for the first time in 1911, just after the Japanese occupation, and in principle were categorized as military materials by the colonial government. Their total number peaked at 10,000 in about 1940 (Son Jōngmok, *Ilche kangjōmgi tosi sahoesang yōn'gu* (Seoul: Iljisa 1996), 335–340).

19. After the liberation of Korea from Japanese occupation in 1945, the rule of the left was switched to the right (Ibid., 368–369).
20. Cho Pyŏngno, Cho Sŏngun, and Sŏng Chuhyŏn, “Ilche singminji sigi ūi toro kyot’ong e taehan yŏn’gu (II),” *Han’guk minjok undongsa yŏn’gu* 61 (2009): 271–274.
21. Yun Sangwŏn, *Tong asia ūi chŏnjaeng kwa ch’ŏldo* (Seoul: Sŏnin 2017), 125.
22. Chŏng, *Ilche ch’imnyak*, 1999, 151.
23. Chŏng, *Ilche ch’imnyak*, 1999, 635–642.
24. Chŏng, *Ilche ch’imnyak*, 1999, 151–166.
25. T’aeŏk Kwŏn, *Ilche ūi Han’guk singminji-hwa wa munmyŏng-hwa* (1904–1919) (Seoul: Sŏul taehakkyo ch’ulp’anbu, 2014), 86–87.
26. Kye hyŏng Lee and Pyŏngmu Chŏn, *Sutcharo pon singminji Chosŏn* (Seoul: Yŏksa konggan, 2014), 200–201.
27. From the late 1920s, the Japanese Government General of Korea carried out the civil engineering project as a kind of policy of the relief of the poor, a countermeasure against unemployment (T’aeu Ko, “Chosŏn ch’ongdokpu t’omok haengjŏng kwa t’omok kwallyo ūi ‘Chosŏn kaebal’ insik”: 292–293).
28. The rationalization and justification of colonial rule through the construction of colonial mobility were not specific solely to Japanese imperialism. For example, the railway in British India served both as the means of British colonial rule and its justification, based on the rhetoric of development like education, institutionalizing capitalist production and wage labor through the expansion of markets and the circular flow of good, as well as producing “a new collective identity,” the colonized India, through uniting different religions and castes in the railway space. As a symbol of modernity, the railway was comprehended in terms of an object that secured the colonial authority and enactment of social change (Marian Aguiar, *Tracking Modernity: India’s Railway and the Culture of Mobility* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2011): 4–15).
29. Cheuk Kong and Kŭnsik Chŏng, *Singminji ūi ilssang, chibae wa kyunyŏl* (Seoul: Munhwagwahaksa, 2006), 28–34.
30. Chaejŏng Chŏng, *Ch’ŏldo wa kŭndae Sŏul* (Seoul: Kukhak charyowŏn, 2018), 532–535.
31. Sangwŏn Yun, *Tong asia ūi chŏnjaeng kwa ch’ŏldo*, 139–144.
32. Ibid., 144–148.
33. Peter Adey, *Mobilities* (2nd) (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 152.
34. Similarly, in terms of politically variable usability of “mobility,” David Atkinson handled the Italian fascist colonialism in the half of the 20th century specifically, a little differently by focusing on a series of military engagement. David Atkinson discussed the Italian seizure of Cyrenaica and the Sanussi-Bedouin’s anti-colonial resistance from 1923 to 1932, questioning mobility and movement. According to his arguments, the Italians had to establish a series of bases for highly mobile, mechanized patrols that criss-crossed the country to respond the Sanussi-Bedouin groups’ nomadic strategies, i.e. their guerrilla tactics based upon unregulated mobility, finally imprisoning them into the concentration camp (David Atkinson, “Nomadic Strategies and Colonial Government”. In *Entanglements of Power: Geographies of Domination/Resistance*. Ed. by Joanne P. Sharp, Paul Routledge, Chris Philo and Ronan Paddison (London and New York: Routledge, 2000)).
35. Kim Namch’ŏn, “To Chŏllyŏng,” in *Sonyŏnhaeng* (Keijō: Hagiyesa 1939), 131.
36. Kyŏngsu Pak, “Kŭndae ch’ŏldo rŭl t’onghae pon ‘singminji Chosŏn’ mandŭlgi,” *Ilbonŏ munhak* 53 (2012.6): 261–263.
37. In her book, *Tracks of Change: Railways and Everyday Life in Colonial India* (Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2015), Ritika Prasad elucidated the processes that the colonized people in British India became modern and rational through the lens of temporal standardization which presumed colonial difference, articulated “binaries of colonial versus metropolitan time-sense.” (135–147).

38. Kim, "To Chölllyŏng," 140.
39. Urry, *Mobilities*, 120.
40. *Ibid.*, 123.
41. *Ibid.*, 129.
42. Wönsuk Yu, "1930 nyöndaŏ ilche üi Chosönin Manju imin chöngch'aek yön'gu," *Pudae sahak* 19 (1995): 632–644.
43. Chubaek Sin, "Hanin üi manju iju yangsang kwa tongbuk asia — 'nongöp imin'üi sönggyök chönhwan üi chungsim üro," *Yöksa hakpo* 213 (2012): 248–253.
44. Kim, "To Chölllyŏng," 146.
45. Kim, "To Chölllyŏng," 148.
46. Adey, *Mobilities*, 207.
47. Maffesoli, *The Time of the Tribes*, 20.
48. Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey—The Industrialization of Time and Space in the Nineteenth Century* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2014), 70.
49. Jinyoung Lee, "Singminji mobillit'i sisüt'em kwa sai konggan üi saengmyöng chöngch'i," *Kubo hakhoe* (구보학회) 23 (2019.12): 103–104.
50. In his work on Nazi evacuation's lexicon, concept, and practice, Peter Adey presented the two versions of mobility, broadly as follows: "a pathway of protection from the Allied air raids and fire bombings," albeit forbidden to Jews, and "a roadway of deportation for imprisonment, forced labor, or mass killing to purify and cleanse the homeland," which were performed "by using the same infrastructure" (Peter Adey, "Evacuated to Death: The Lexicon, Concept, and Practice of Mobility in the Nazi Deportation and Killing Machine," *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 110, no. 3 (2020): 822). Thus, as an infrastructure for protection and deportation, the train is deemed "the perfect symbol for the contradictions of evacuation within the Nazi concept" (819). In this regards, the train in Kim's short story can be similarly considered the symbol for the contradictions of mobility within the Japanese imperialism, but that is differently composed of a base of colonial rule and its possible fissure.
51. Ūnjin Pyön, *Ilchemal hang-Il pimil kyölsa undong yön'gu* (Seoul: Sönin, 2018), 45–47.
52. Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, trans. by Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 254.

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