

# The Reception of Goethe's Faust in Korea

Sang Bum Chin<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Institute for Intercultural Communication, Chonbuk National University  
[cbs@jbnu.ac.kr](mailto:cbs@jbnu.ac.kr)

**Abstract.** The goal of this paper is to examine the Reception through translation in Korea from the beginning of the 20th Century until the present on a comparative literature level. I will examine the problems in the reception of Goethe's Faust literature in Korea and the possibility of its productive reception in the future.

**Keywords:** Comparative Literature, Korean productive Reception, Translation, Goethe, Faust

## 1 Introduction

When all Europe was faced with a period of crisis during the emergence of Napoleon in 1813, Goethe originated from the idea of World Literature, which inspired in all the European intellectuals a sense of mission that demonstrated the spirit of forbearance and mutual understanding through spiritual exchange making it possible to overcome the chaos of a period of the East and the West.

Goethe's classical work for world-literature that would be unforgettable for good to the history of world literature was translated and then introduced to the whole nations. This resulted in opening a new horizon to the literature of every country. Goethe's spirit for World-literature became the spiritual asset shared with all the intellectual of global village. Until now I have researched Goethe Literature in an Asiatic aspect. The goal of this paper is to examine the Reception through translation in Korea from the beginning of the 20th Century until the present on a comparative literature level. I will examine the problems in the reception of Goethe's Faust literature in Korea and the possibility of its productive reception in the future.

## 2 Korean Reception of Goethe's Faust Literature through translation

Because of the open-policy of the Gapo Reform of 1894, Korea could contact with the Western Culture. With it from the beginning of 1920 the German Literature was introduced by the people who returned from Japan to Korea after finishing having studied in Japan at that time. Goethe's Faust was partly introduced to Korean readers by the way of re-translation from Japanese to Korean. Goethe Literature that was

translated into Japanese language was translated again into Korean language. For example in 1919 Jeon Young Taek who was a writer, translated Goethe's Work 'Sesenheimer', Choe Seong-Man 'Nacht' and 'Vor dem Tore', Cho, Hee- Soon accomplished the translation of the five scenes of Faust. Cho, Hee- Soon, Kim Jin-Seob, Seo, Hang- Seok and Park, Young- Choel, who came back to Korea formally after finishing their study in Japan took a leading role in the introduction of German literature to Korean readers. They issued out the special book in memory of Goethe who died 100 years ago. Within that, special book learned papers of Faust and partially related works of Faust were published out. It means that the history of Goethe Reception in Korea was started.

Goethe's translation in the era of the Japanese colonial period was mainly made through the translated materials that was translated into Japanese language. But Park, Young- Cheol, Seo, Hang- Seok who majored in the German Literature in Japan translated Goethe's Works through German Language. Professor Kim, Seong -Ok's thesis that is about the translation of Goethe's Faust, " the comparison of translation between Mori Ogai's Japanese translation and Korea's translation of Faust" pointed out that Mori's translation edition that was firstly translated through German's original book was translated into Korean language by Kwon, Han and Ha, Tae-Young was referred by the works of Mori. But the works of Kwon, Han is more sophisticated and original than Mori's. Through all the review of above mentioned contents we came to know that except for translators who majored in German Literature, Korean translators depended upon their books that were translated into Japanese language. Therefore, we can recognize that the true essence of Goethe was not to be fully understood. as the result of it.

We conclude that the one-sided reception of German Faust Literature was made at that time. For the first time in 1958, with the form of the reference edition of Faust translated into Japanese Language. Lee, Seong- Man published out the first part of Faust. In 60's and 70's. the researchers of Goethe, Kim, Dal- Ho, Kang, Du- Sik, Kim, Jeong- Jin, Park, Jong-Seo, Jeong, Kyong- Sook, Lee, Hyo- Sang, Park, Chan-Ki, and in 80's Kwak, Bok- Rok, Lee, In- Ung, Park, Hwan-Duck issued out the translated works of Faust with explanation additions competitively. With such many a translation works of Faust, a great deal of ordinary readers and intelligent readers have appeared widely through the whole country.

Before the year of 1945, a deeper understanding could be possible about Faust. Especially, to the readers who majored in German Literature offered a motive of research and continuous concern about Faust by comparing the German original with the translated works. This fact has a great significance in reception of Faust. Entering the year of 2000, to all the younger generations who use only Korean language and don't understand Japanese, translators translated the original works by emphasizing on the meaning of Korean language. the representative one is Jeong, Seo- Ung.

For example he escaped from the established style of translation to select the paper languages within Korean language that is independent from the conception of Chinese letters. The point that is different from the established style of translation is that his translation has no connection with the re-translation by Japanese language. His translation was directly translated through the original work. Such a developing phenomenon is arising in German Literature society in Korea. The translated contents expressing the true meaning that is possessed in Korean language of Koreans were

conveyed into the Korean intelligent readers. His translated works seem to be applied productively through the research, Faust performance, and creative arts. Therefore, the translated works of Jeong, Seo -Ung of Faust has a great significance in Korean translation history.

The shift from the generation who can understand Japanese language and translate works by depending upon Japanese language to the generation who have not learned Japanese language only by depending upon the German language text has been arising.

If translation means the conversion works from the culture of a foreign country to the one of one's own native land, the translated of one's own native land, the translated works of real meaning translating into a proper language that is in harmony with the Korean culture by Korean language.

### 3 Conclusion and Prospect

1) Even in the beginning of the 20th century, Faust reception in Korea seemed to be impossible in an upright Faust reception to such a situation that didn't publish out one translated work of Faust. In addition to it, our confusion influence and a difference of culture made us be impossible to receive Goethe's Faust. After 20's, in a reception of Faust, we could be in contact with the work of Faust by retranslation through Japanese language. At the first phase that translated into Korean the work of the Japanese reference book translated from German into Japanese, we could analyze out that the history of Faust reception in Korea has begun. At 60's, the researchers who studied the German literature in Germany have started to publish out a lot of translated works of Faust. Their translation works put value much on the original work of Faust. Their translation works were a literal translation. As the result of it, their translation hadn't a keen sense of language. After the year 2000, after completely understanding about Faust by Goethe specialists, they selected such language as to be suitable for the sentiment of Korean people to translate to reach the level of Korean readers who are exclusively using of Hangeul. We can find such a good trend in the part of translation of Faust. We can recognize that the translation should be made by considering the younger generation of using exclusively of Hangeul.

We think that all the systematic research should be continued to receive productively by Korean intellectual writers to let the Korean readers know the spirit of Faust. The spirit of Faust would make public by popularization through the translation of Faust.

### References

1. Koh W.-K.: Faust-Übersetzung in Korea. Geschichte, S. 53, In :Hrsg. vom Institut für Übersetzungsforschung zur deutschen und Koreanischen Literatur, Poryok-Yongu(Übersetzungsforschung), Heft 2/1994.

2. Kim, S.-O., Mori Ogari eu Ilboneo Pausto pnyok Goa Hangukeu pausto pnyok eu Bigyo (A comparison between Mori Ogari's Japanese Translation of Faust and Korean Faust Translation ) pnyokyongu (Translation Study) Vol. 2. Handok Munhak Pnyok Yeun Gu So(Korean -Germany Literature Translation Institute) 1994. p.69-82.
3. Lee, C.-S., "Hankuk eu Dokoe Dokmunhak Goan Gye ponyok Mun Heun Jeong Bo (Bibliography on German language and literature translated in Korean)1906-1990), Hankuk munhoasa, pp. 417-425
4. Joeng, S.-U., trans. Fausto(Faust) 1, 2, Segyemunhakjeonjib21, Mineumsa 199.
5. Chin, S.-B.: Ein vergleichendes Studium über China-Rezeption in der literarischen Welt von Goethe und Hesse. Korea Universität. Diss. (1988).
6. Chin, S.-B., Schirmer A.: Goethe und China , S. 234-294. Eins und Doppelt. Festschrift fuer Prof. Dr. Lee, Sang-Kyong. Peter Lang.
7. Chin, S.-B.: A comparative Study of relationship to the narrative structure between Goethe Literature and Lee, Kwang-Soo. S.201-228. Koreanische Hesse-Gesellschaft Nr. 12. (2004).

Goethe's Faust finally settled on the word "Tat" (Deed) as the most fitting equivalent of the word "logos" in Saint John's Gospel, and Trotsky agreed with him. Did Faust dethrone the Word to the detriment of our understanding the nature of language and literature? Save to Library. Download. Despite their marginalisation in mainstream Christianities after the European Enlightenment, the figure of the demon endures within modern literature and popular culture, its many artistic "lives" standing in stark opposition to its more. 1 The Redress of Goethe's Faust in Music History. (pp. 23-44). Lorraine Byrne Bodley. Goethe's Faust was profoundly important for Richard Wagner. He knew of it as a young boy and read it as a teenager; he composed songs, "Seven Compositions on Goethe's Faust" (1829-30), probably in conjunction with the appearance of his sister, Rosalie, as Gretchen, in the first Leipzig production. Wagner suppressed these student works; they were first published posthumously. Unlike numerous contemporaries, Wagner never attempted an operatic or oratorical setting of the play; his single mature work on Faust, A Faust Overture, is seldom performed. The expression "Wagner's Ninth" has become commonplace in the reception history of Beethoven's choral symphony. "Being Faust" Enter Mephisto is a "big game". It's a physical game enhanced with virtual elements, based on Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's drama "Faust". The game format is unique: A group of players gathers at a specific site at a specific time. Each player assumes the role of young Faust. Equipped with a smartphone and the intention to take life on, the players enter the tempting digital world of MEPHISTO&co., where values and ideals are up for sale. The starting point for this innovative project, which has been developed by Goethe-Institut Korea and NOLGONG, was the question of how and with which means Faust and Mephisto were to meet in the digital age. The universal questions remain the same: What do I value in life? What are my personal values based on?