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Mapping Korean American Literary Studies in Korea, 1994-2016*

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Abstract

This paper reflects on how Korean American literature has been received and studied in Korea as a subfield of English/American literature, and discusses its prospects by analyzing Korean American literary studies published in Korea from 1994 to 2016. Our database covers 290 articles published in the 23 KCI journals of Korea listed under the category “English and literature,” which deal substantially with Korean American literature. Through quantitative analysis of the database, we examine the literary genres of Korean American literature and the unbalanced levels of scholarly interest these genres receive; different modes of critical approaches taken by researchers; changes in the demographics of Korean American authors; the diverse concerns of Korean scholars and Korean American writers; and potential future directions for Korean American literary studies. From this quantitative examination, we illuminate changes in literary subject matter and critical interests, as well as the contributions and roles of Korean scholars in the field of Korean American literature. Our research can serve as a valuable resource for domestic and overseas scholars to review the development of Korean (Asian) American literature, and further facilitate their inter-Asian and trans-Pacific interactions and exchanges on the subject.

Keywords

Korean American literary studies in Korea, KCI journals, Korean American literature,
Korean American writers, contributions and roles of Korean scholars

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In 2012, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* published a special issue on “Asian American Studies in Asia” that includes papers outlining the considerable increase in Asian American literary studies over the past several decades in East Asian countries such as Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan.¹ These papers, written by domestic scholars on a country-by-country basis and published in the West, explore how Asian American literary studies have evolved and been institutionalized in each country’s academic climate. As Chih-ming Wang proposes in the “Editorial Introduction” to the issue, the papers expose Asia as “a critical locus” that brings “an inter-Asian and transpacific perspective to our understanding of ‘Asian American’ as a moving field of intellectual inquiry . . . and as part of local knowledge formation in order to break down . . . ‘Euro-centric’ or ‘Anglo-centric’ visions” (165).

Such studies also demonstrate the stirrings of inter-Asian intellectual exchanges among these three countries, as well as trans-Pacific interactions with US academia. The latter appears in terms of the field’s aim to foster perspectives developed within Asian countries that explore American literature, especially its engagement or intersection with their national interests. Indeed, two years later, this research became the foundation for a comparative study on the subject, Pin-chia Feng’s “East Asian Approaches to Asian American Literary Studies.”² Surveying the cases of Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan, Feng’s study explores these countries’ unique academic climates, common ground, and emerging issues in the field.

The purpose of this paper is to facilitate these inter-Asian and trans-Pacific interactions by further developing existing research on Asian American literary studies in Korea. The most prominent studies thus far on the topic are scholarly overviews by SuMee Lee and Kun Jong Lee, which examine the history of Asian American literary studies in Korea by quantifying the articles, books, and dissertations in this area. Written and published in Korean in 2005, and in English in 2012,³ both articles highlight the disproportionate representation of particular authors, genres, texts, and themes, most notably the concentration on a select few Korean American authors and works.

Along with this numerical approach, the writers also scrutinize the complicated situation in Korean academia wherein many scholars of Korean literature consider Korean American literature as within their compass. Kun Jong

¹ These include Mie Hihara, “The AALA” (267-74); Kun Jong Lee, “An Overview,” (275-85); and Kim Tong Tee, “The Institutionalization,” (286-93).

² Pin-chia Feng, “East Asian,” (257-67).

³ SuMee Lee, “Asian American,” (887-910); Kun Jong Lee, “An Overview.”

Lee distinguishes Korean scholars as “Koreanist” or “Americanist” based on whether they consider Korean American literature as essentially Korean or American, and points out that the early research from the mid-1960s to the early 1970s—before even the rise of Asian American literary studies in the US—was made by “Koreanists” (275).⁴ SuMee Lee tallies the number of literary studies conducted by “Koreanist” scholars. Furthermore, both authors attend to the increasing interest among scholars of Korean literature in suggesting future directions for Asian American literary studies in Korea: SuMee Lee proposes more interaction between scholars of Korean and American literature; Kun Jong Lee suggests focusing more on the views of “Koreanist” scholars as a way to foster unique perspectives from Korean scholars on Asian American literature.

Although our research draws on these two articles, unlike Lee and Lee, we focus exclusively on “Korean American” literary studies in Korea, and take an “Americanist” approach to Korean American literature. In so doing, we aim to provide a holistic view of how Korean American literature has established itself as an academic subfield of American literature in Korea. By quantifying the literary studies in this field since its emergence in Korea, our work allows for a substantive examination of the literary genres of Korean American literature and the unbalanced levels of scholarly interest these genres receive; the modes of critical approaches to Korean American literature by Korean scholars; changes in the demographics of Korean American authors; the concerns and interests of Korean scholars as well as Korean American writers; and future prospects for Korean American literary studies.

Through our quantitative analysis, we will also identify the contributions and roles Korean scholars have made as “Americanists” in the field of Korean American literature; this examination will help us detect changes in terms of literary subject matter, as well as reveal the presence of Korean American authors less often acknowledged in Korea, or only recently starting their writing careers. These quantitative and qualitative analyses will ultimately suggest future visions for Korean American literary studies in Korea. We believe that this research will contribute not only to knowledge production in Asia, but also, through its transnational circulation, to inter-Asian and trans-Pacific intellectual interactions.

⁴ The first scholarly articles on Korean American literature appeared in academic journals in Korea in the 1960s. Written by scholars of non-English literature and published in journals of Korean literature including *Literature Monthly* and *Modern Literature*, or in the multidisciplinary English journal of Korean studies, *Korea Journal*, these early publications treated Korean American literature as part of Korean rather than American literature.

To this end, we have built a quantitative database of articles discussing Korean American literature that have been published in Korean Citation Index (KCI) journals.⁵ As of January 2017, there are 43 KCI journals under the category “English and literature.” Our research excludes 20 of these, since they specialize either in English linguistics and education (10 journals), or in irrelevant literary periods and authors (10 journals). Our database therefore contains 23 KCI journals⁶ and consists of all articles which include a substantial discussion of Korean American literature, even those which as a whole address a broader topic (such as issues in Asian American literature). Most of the articles in our data are written by native Korean scholars, although some come from international scholars.⁷ It is important to note that, since the KCI journals we cover for this research are used primarily by scholars of English/American literature in the Korean academic community, the numbers in our paper should be considered part of the total comprising Korean American literary studies in Korea.

The Emergence of Korean American Literary Studies in Korea

Scholarship on Korean American literature began to emerge as part of American literary studies in academic journals of English/American literature in Korea early in the 1990s. The increasing visibility of Korean American literary

⁵ The KCI, a citation database for academic and professional journals from Korea, is selected and maintained by the National Research Foundation (NRF) of Korea, the most influential national organization for scholarship promotion in Korea. The NRF evaluates scholarly journals yearly: once a journal passes the selection criteria set by the NRF, it is designated as a KCI accredited or candidate journal. The KCI journals are those qualified through their professionalism and expertise in their relevant fields. To maintain KCI status, these journals are reevaluated and requalified tri-annually by the NRF. The KCI journals are now the principal repositories of Korean scholarship in all fields.

⁶ These are: *Journal of English Language and Literature (JELL)*, *Journal of American Studies*, *Studies in British and American Language and Literature*, *Studies in English Language & Literature*, *New Korean Journal of English Language & Literature*, *Modern Studies in English Language and Literature*, *Jungang Journal of English Language and Literature*, *New Studies of English Language & Literature*, *Mirae Journal of English Language and Literature*, *Journal of Modern British & American Language & Literature*, *English 21*, *American Fiction Studies*, *British and American Fiction*, *Studies in Modern Fiction*, *Journal of Modern English Drama*, *Studies in Modern British and American Poetry*, *Feminist Studies in English Literature*, *In/Outside: English Studies in Korea*, *Journal of English Studies in Korea*, *Journal of Criticism and Theory*, *Journal of Teaching English Literature*, *English & American Cultural Studies*, and *Journal of English Cultural Studies*.

⁷ Nine articles are authored by international scholars with professional affiliations in Korea; another five are from overseas countries including Taiwan, Japan, and the US.

studies in the field was due to factors in both the US and Korea. First, Asian American literature had developed as an important field in American literary studies in the US during the 1980s, and Korean scholars of American literature were influenced by this trend. For instance, Kyhan Lee, a pioneer in Korean American literary studies in Korea, earned his doctoral degree from the University of Connecticut in 1990 with his dissertation “The Notion of ‘Self’ in Korean-American Literature: A Socio-Historical Perspective.” After returning to Korea, he published articles on Korean American literature as an “Americanist.”⁸ Many scholars have since been drawn into the field, both in the US and Korea; this influx—particularly since the second half of the 2000s—has in turn furthered critical awareness of and interest in the field.

Second, the emergence of diverse academic journals of English/American literature in the 1990s helped establish Asian (Korean) American literature as a literary subfield of American literature in Korea. The number of academic journals in Korea began increasing in 1991 as the National Research Foundation (NRF) of Korea started to encourage and support their publication; academic journals in the field of English/American literature were no exception. In 1992, the English Language and Literature Association of Korea (ELLAK)⁹ encouraged its members to organize associations specializing in literary genres such as the novel, drama, and poetry; literary periods such as the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries; and individual authors including D. H. Lawrence, Mark Twain, and so on. In January 1993, the first ELLAK annual conference was held with 27 professional associations, in a format similar to the Modern Language Association convention in the US. Since then, the number of journal publications aligned with these specialized associations has rapidly increased.

This dramatic growth also coincided with the NRF introducing an evaluation and management system for academic journals in 1998. This project has affected all

⁸ Kyhan Lee published four articles in three journals: “Younghill Kang and the Genesis of Korean-American Literature,” *Korea Journal* 31.4 (1991): 63-78; “Korean-American Literature: The Next Generation,” *Korea Journal* 34.1 (1994): 20-35; “Kim Eun-Kuk and Korean-American Literature after the Outbreak of the Korean War,” *Veritas* 7.1 (1994): 345-60; “Images of Early Immigrant Life as Portrayed in Korean-American Literature,” *Journal of Arts & Physical Education* 6.1 (1996): 81-92. *Veritas* was published by the Department of English Language and Literature at Myongji University and *Journal of Arts & Physical Education* by the Research Institute of Arts & Physical Education at the same institution. At the time, there were relatively few academic journals of English literature in Korea; many scholars published articles in small journals affiliated with research institutions or university departments.

⁹ ELLAK, the first and largest academic organization in English language and literature, was established in 1954 and began publishing the *Journal of English Language and Literature (JELL)* in 1955.

Korean academic fields; the number of academic journals has risen from 56 KCI journals in 1998 to 2,283 as of January 2017. Out of the 43 KCI journals categorized as “English and Literature,” 29 (67.4%) published their first issues after 1990 (20 in the 1990s and nine in the 2000s); of the 23 journals covered in our research, 11 (47.8%) began publishing after 1990 (eight in the 1990s and three in the 2000s).¹⁰ Treating formerly regional branches of ELLAK (seven of the 23 journals)¹¹ strictly as part of the central association, the total number of journals examined in our research drops to 16. The 11 journals established in the 1990s and 2000s comprise 68.8% of these 16 journals, evidence of the enormous impact of the NRF projects on the academic field of English/American literature.

Lastly, the growth of research in Asian (Korean) American literature was further accelerated by diverse new academic conferences and research projects in this field during the 2000s. For example, the Korean Society for Teaching English Literature held a conference on “Teaching Asian-American Literature” in 2005. That same year, a research project on “Korean American Literature: Gender and Ethnicity” was sponsored by the NRF, and a conference was held under the same project title in 2006 in association with the Korean Association of Modern Fiction in English. In 2013, the Korean Association of Modern Fiction in English held an international conference, “Current Asian American Studies in East Asia”; 16 papers, including four on Korean American literature,¹² were presented by scholars from Taiwan, Korea, and Japan.

As seen in Fig. 1, the number of articles on Korean American literature in the 23 journals has risen steeply from 1994 to 2016, for a cumulative total of 290 (180 in Korean and 110 in English).

¹⁰ Eight journals began publication in the 1990s: *New Studies of English Language & Literature*, *In/Outside: English Studies in Korea, British and American Fiction*, *Journal of Criticism and Theory*, *Journal of Teaching English Literature*, *Feminist Studies in English Literature*, *Journal of Modern English Drama*, and *Studies in Modern Fiction*. Three journals began publication in the 2000s: *Journal of English Cultural Studies*, *Journal of English Studies in Korea*, and *English & American Cultural Studies*.

¹¹ These formerly regional branches of ELLAK include *English 21*, *Studies in English Language & Literature*, *Mirae Journal of English Language and Literature*, *New Korean Journal of English Language & Literature*, *Jungang Journal of English Language and Literature*, *Modern Studies in English Language and Literature*, and *Journal of Modern British & American Language & Literature*.

¹² Yoo Jin Choi, “Disenfranchised Grief and Enfranchised Reunion in *Resilience*”; Yu-yen Liu, “Locating Afterness: Emotional Geographies and War Memories in Chang-rae Lee’s *The Surrendered*”; Robert Grotjohn, “Song as ‘Event’ in Ed Bok Lee’s Poetry”; Hyeyum Chung, “Interested Disinterestedness of Race in *Over the Shoulder*.”

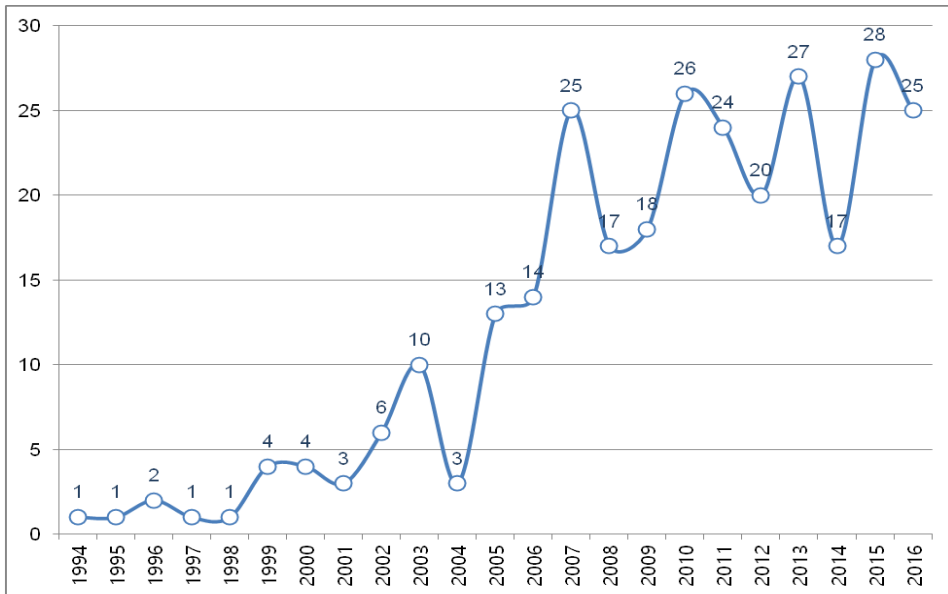


Fig. 1. Articles on Korean American literature, which were published in 23 journals of English/American literature in Korea.

We chose 1994 as a starting point for our database in recognition of Sangran Lee's article on Ronyoung Kim's *Clay Walls* (1987), the first study discussing Korean American literary work to be published in a journal of English/American literature in Korea.¹³ Although Lee treats Kim's work as an integral part of Asian American literature studies by discussing it alongside literature by Maxine Hong Kingston and Joy Kogawa, her article provides an early example of the inclusion of Korean American literature as part of American literature in Korean academic circles.¹⁴

Two years later, in 1996, the first scholarly articles solely concerning Korean American literature were published. Chull Wang focuses on Chang-rae Lee's *Native Speaker* (1995) in "The Meaning of Spying in *Native Speaker*," published in *Studies in Modern Fiction*; Jin Hee Yim looks at Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *Dictee* (1982) in "The Self/Language/Nation in Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *Dictee*," in *Journal of*

¹³ Sangran Lee, "Asian American Women Writers," (333-62). Kun Jong Lee and SuMee Lee also acknowledge this article's status (K. J. Lee, "An Overview" 276; S. Lee 889).

¹⁴ In 1995, Jin Young Choi explored another major Korean American literary work, Younghill Kang's *East Goes West*, alongside the works of Maxine Hong Kingston and Joy Kogawa in her article: "Defining Asian American writing," *Journal of American Studies* 27.2 (1995): 206-22.

American Studies.¹⁵ Based on the foundation of these late 1990s articles, the growth of publications on Korean American literature has been exponential in the 2000s: the 227 articles published on this subject from 2007 to 2016 comprise 78.3% of all relevant articles published between 1994 and 2016.

Quantitative Review of Korean American Literary Studies in Korea

Genre-specific journals such as *Studies in Modern Fiction*, *American Fiction Studies*, *British and American Fiction*, *Journal of Modern English Drama*, and *Studies in Modern British and American Poetry* have played leading roles in the development of Korean American literary studies in Korea by narrowing the scope of scholarship according to genres and periods. The 112 articles published in these five journals account for 38.6% of all the articles in our database; the largest number (53; 18.3%) were published by *Studies in Modern Fiction*, an academic journal issued by the Korean Association of Modern Fiction in English, followed by *American Fiction Studies* from the American Fiction Association of Korea (32; 11%).¹⁶

¹⁵ Chull Wang, “The Meaning of Spying in *Native Speaker*,” (23-39); Jin Hee Yim, “The Self/Language/Nation,” (205-27).

¹⁶ Interestingly, nine regional journals outside Seoul—the seven formerly regional branches of ELLAK and two independent regional journals (*Studies in British and American Language and Literature* and *New Studies of English Language & Literature*)—have shown relatively little interest in Korean American literature. From 1994 to 2016, these nine journals published only 62 articles (21.4% of our database) on Korean American literature. This has changed somewhat in the past few years. For instance, in 2015, the Jeju Island-based *Mirae Journal of English Language and Literature* published an article by So-Hee Lee on a documentary film about a Korean American adoptee. We didn’t include this article in our database because our paper mostly deals with literature in the more traditional sense; nonetheless, this shows the diversification of literary subjects in regional journals: So-Hee Lee, “Memory, Loss, and Identity in the Transnational Adoption Documentary, *First Person Plural*,” *Mirae Journal of English Language and Literature* 20.1 (2015): 199-226.

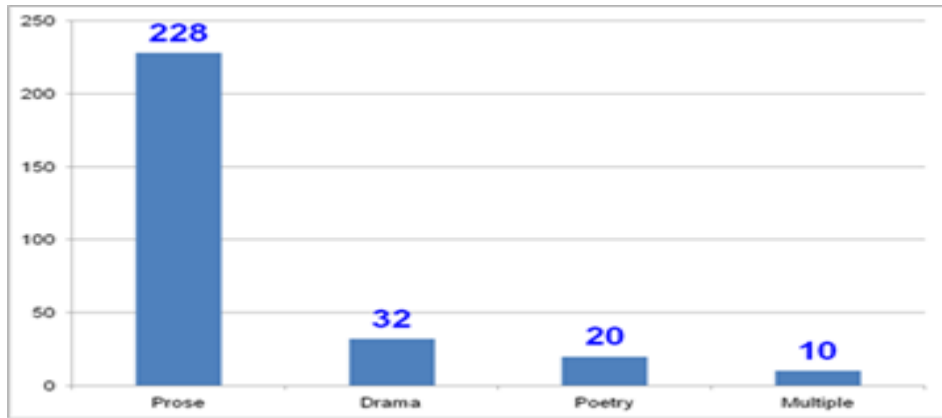


Fig. 2. Articles classified by literary genre.

That these prose-specific journals have published so many of the existing articles on Korean American literature alludes in part to an imbalance among the genres researched in Korean American literary studies. As seen in our database (Fig. 2), among the articles covered in our research, the percentage of those on Korean American prose overwhelms those on drama and poetry: of the total 290 articles, 228 (78.6%) deal with prose, while 32 (11%) discuss drama, 20 (6.9%) poetry, and only 10 articles (3.4%) provide comprehensive studies across genres.¹⁷ The dominance of research on prose is not, however, simply a matter of scholarly bias towards prose works; rather, it reflects the general preponderance of Korean American prose writers who are successful in the American literary market relative to dramatists and poets. Most well-known Korean American writers—Younghill Kang, Nora Okja Keller, and Chang-rae Lee—are prose writers. Even Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *Dictee*, considered as crossing genre lines, is mostly discussed in the field of fiction or autobiography, and rarely approached exclusively as poetry.¹⁸

Nonetheless, the last 10 years have witnessed a profound increase of literary studies on Korean American drama and poetry: of the total 52 articles on these two

¹⁷ Although American literary studies in Korea is often influenced by American scholarship, there are also considerable differences based on the particular historical and theoretical contexts of each society. We believe that quantitative comparison of Korean American literary studies in Korea with those in America would shed further light on the differences implied in the relative numbers discussed in this paper. Although this is beyond the scope of our research in this paper, it suggests a further direction for future study on this topic.

¹⁸ Out of 19 articles on Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, only one deals with *Dictee* as poetry: Hye Sook Son and Bo Yun Choi, "The Reader's Position in *Dictee*," *Studies in Modern British and American Poetry* 20.2 (2014): 89-110.

genres, 51 (98.1%) were published between 2007 and 2016. These recent changes seem closely related to the emergence of a new generation of Korean American playwrights and poets, such as Julia Cho, Young Jean Lee, Sung Rno, Diana Son, Rob Shin, Suji Kwock Kim, Sun Yung Shin, and Ed Bok Lee. Most have recently received considerable attention in American literary circles, which led to a notable increase of studies on their works by Korean scholars.¹⁹

Another striking imbalance is found in the types of research used within Korean American literary studies. Of our 290 articles, the vast majority (225; 77.6%) deal primarily with a single author; 42 (14.5%) use comparative approaches for multiple authors; and 23 (7.9%) are general or theme-based (Fig. 3). Notably, *Journal of Criticism and Theory*, which specializes in general studies of English/American literature, has never published an article on Korean American literature. This suggests a lack of research focusing on theoretical and comprehensive insights into Korean American literature.

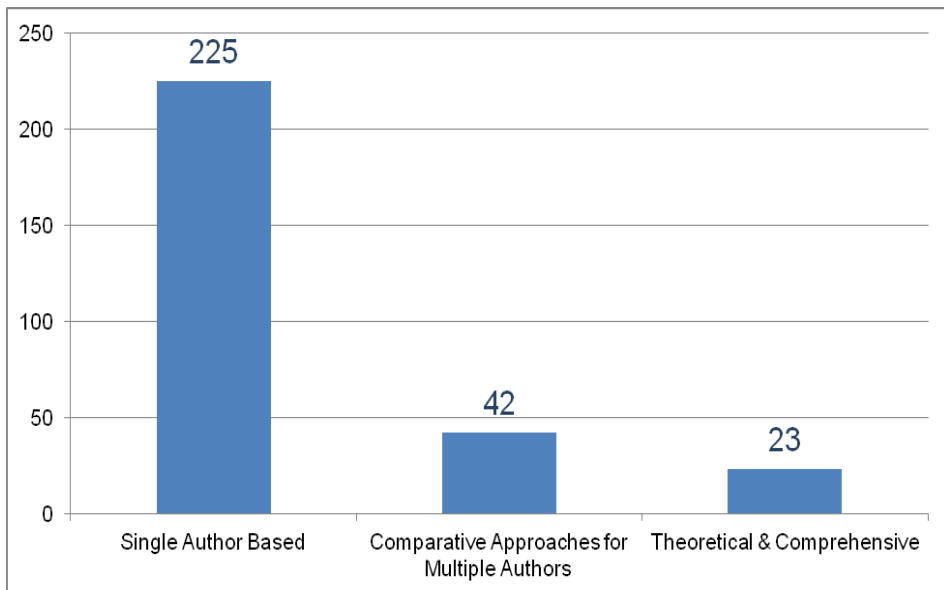


Fig. 3. Articles according to research type.

¹⁹ For the number of articles which deal with each writer, refer to Table 1. The details of the increase in literary studies on Korean American drama and poetry are discussed in the next section.

Table 1 details how Korean American literary studies in Korea have concentrated on only a select few authors. Out of 40 authors discussed in the 225 articles covered in our research, Chang-rae Lee, Younghill Kang, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Nora Okja Keller, and Julia Cho (together, 12.5% of the total authors studied) are the subjects of 137 articles (60.9%). This overwhelming focus on a few big names exposes the dependence of Korean American literary studies in Korea on established authors and their “canonical works,” which have been accepted in mainstream American literary circles.

Table 1. Number of articles on individual Korean American authors: out of 225 single author-based articles

Author	Articles	Author	Articles	Author	Articles
Chang-rae Lee	69	Don Lee	4	Thomas Park Clement	1
Younghill Kang	19	Suki Kim	3	Mary G. Lee	
Theresa H. K. Cha		Diana Son		Mary P. Lee	
Nora Okja Keller	17	Gary Pak	2	Sundra Lim	
Julia Cho	13	Paul Yoon		Sukyul Choi	
Susan Choi	8	Elizabeth Kim		Sun Mee Chomet	
Heinz Insu Fenkl		Suji Kwock Kim		Helie Lee	
Myungmi Kim	5	Richard Kim		Patti Kim	
Ronyoung Kim		Cathy Hong Park		Mira Stout	
Jane Jeong Trenka		Marie Youngok Lee	Ty Pak		
Cathy Song	4	Leonard Chang	1	Sunée Kim	
Sung Rno		Yong-ik Kim		Ed Bok Lee	
Linda Sue Park		An Na			
Young Jean Lee		Rob Shin			

Correspondingly, 30 (75%) out of the 40 writers have received attention in fewer than five articles. Although Don Lee, Paul Yoon, and Leonard Chang are currently highly acclaimed in America—writers to watch among the next generation of Korean American literature—there have only been, respectively, four, two, and two articles on their works to date.²⁰ In addition, 15 out of the 40 writers, including Mira Stout, Sunée Kim, Helie Lee, and Ed Bok Lee, have been the focus of only one literary study. Once again, however, some changes are evident over the last 10 years. Of the 15 writers who appear in a single article, 12 were the subjects of articles published between 2007 and 2016.²¹ This suggests a recent change in the demographics of Korean American authors considered in Korean American literary studies in Korea. Among the group of authors whose works are the subject of the bulk of articles in our database, Chang-rae Lee dominates. Single author or comparative researches involving his writings have steadily increased since 1996—from the publication of his first novel, *Native Speaker*, to his most recent, *On Such a Full Sea* (2014)—to 82 articles (28.3%) of the total 290 (Fig. 4).

²⁰ Four articles on Don Lee: Seong Kon Kim, “Rethinking Difference and Identity: Don Lee’s *Yellow*,” *Studies in Modern Fiction* 15.1 (2008): 125-49; SuMee Lee, “Reading Don Lee’s *Yellow* as a Short Story Cycle,” *JELL* 57.5 (2011): 727-55; Gui Woo Lee, “A Critique of Cultural Nationalism in Asian American Literature: Don Lee’s *The Collective*,” *American Fiction Studies* 21.1 (2014): 109-26; Endeok Hwang, “There is No Country of Origin: Race and Identity in Don Lee’s *Country of Origin*,” *Studies in British and American Language and Literature* 118 (2015): 83-107. Two articles on Paul Yoon: Jae Eun Yoo, “Beyond ‘the Forgotten War’ and Globalization: History and Communication in Paul Yoon’s *Once the Shore*,” *American Fiction Studies* 18.3 (2011): 77-103; Yeonmin Kim, “Magic Realism in Paul Yoon’s *Once the Shore*,” *JELL* 62.3 (2016): 441-61. Two articles on Leonard Chang: Jin Hee Yim, “Black-Korean Urban Space in Leonard Chang’s *The Fruit ‘N Food*,” *Studies in Modern Fiction* 17.2 (2010): 153-79; Hyeeyurn Chung, “In Charlie Chan’s Shadow: The ‘Interested Disinterestedness’ of Race in *Over the Shoulder*,” *American Fiction Studies* 23.1 (2016): 249-72.

²¹ They are Mary P. Lee, Sandra Lim, Sukyul Choi, Sun Mee Chomet, Helie Lee, Patti Kim, Sunée Kim, Ed Bok Lee, Rob Shin, An Na, and Thomas Park Clement.

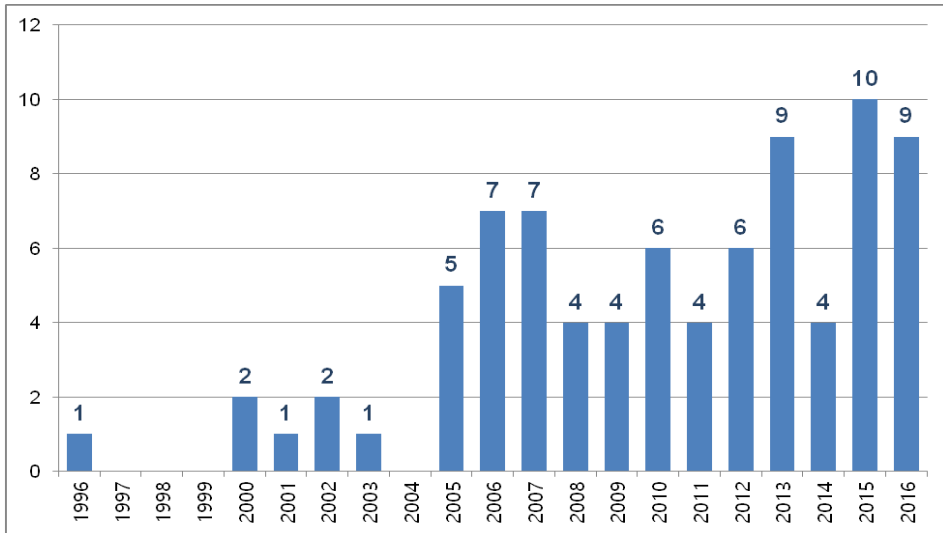


Fig. 4 Articles on Chang-rae Lee.

Interestingly, despite longstanding and consistent attention from Korean scholars and Lee's prolific output, 55 of the 82 articles concentrate primarily on his first two novels, *Native Speaker* (34) and *A Gesture Life* (21; 1999). Including the three articles addressing these works together, they comprise the subject of 70.7% (58) of 82 articles on Chang-rae Lee. His other three novels have attracted relatively less attention to date: *Aloft* (9; 2004), *The Surrendered* (9; 2010), and *On Such a Full Sea* (3); three additional articles combine discussions of *Aloft* with *Native Speaker* (2) and *A Gesture Life* (1). Accounting for the publication dates of these novels, the annual publication rates of articles involving them reveal a critical trend in Korean scholarship:²² relatively more critical attention is given to Lee's novels that reflect the Korean American experience as immigrants and discuss Korean cultural and historical heritage, including *Native Speaker*, *A Gesture Life*, and *The Surrendered*.

Departing from the emphasis on singular canonic works, as indicated in Fig. 3, 42 (14.5%) out of the 290 articles offer comparative approaches based on multiple literary authors. There are several types of comparative approaches (Fig. 5). The first is intra-ethnic studies, which discuss more than two Korean American writers in one article; 17 articles (40.5% of 42) take this approach. For example, Kyung

²² Annual publication rates of articles on Lee's novels: *Native Speaker* (1.8), *A Gesture Life* (1.3), *Aloft* (0.9), *The Surrendered* (1.3), and *On Such a Full Sea* (1).

Soon Lee discusses Hak Kyung Cha's *Dictee* and Nora Okja Keller's *Comfort Woman* (1997) through the lens of cultural politics and memories,²³ while Hyung Shik Lee examines the return of "ghost narratives" as recently emerging subjects of Korean American drama through Sung Rno's *Cleveland Raining* (1995) and Julia Cho's *The Piano Teacher* (2007).²⁴ This type of approach contributes to the synthetic understanding of common subjects and themes imbuing Korean American literary works.

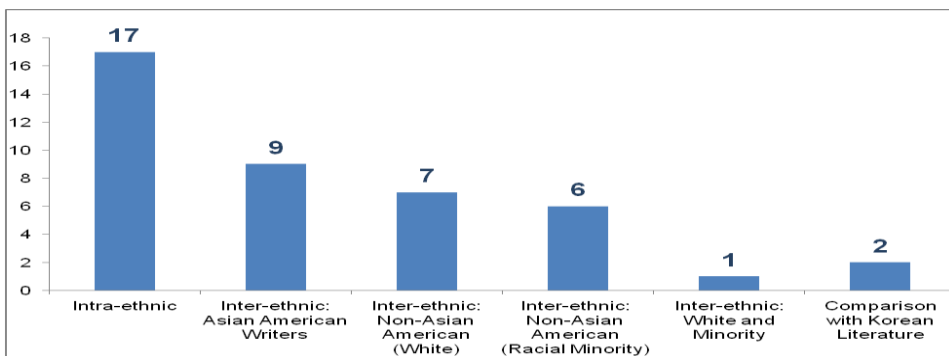


Fig. 5. 42 comparative approaches for multiple authors

Second, 23 of the 42 articles are inter-ethnic studies comparing Korean American and non-Korean American literary works. Of these 23, nine articles discuss Korean American works alongside those of non-Korean Asian American writers: Hyunjoo Ki on Rob Shin's *The Art of Waiting* (1993) and the Indian playwright Asif Mandvi's *Sakina's Restaurant* (1998), examining food-based identity politics among Asian Americans; the same author on Sung Rno's *Cleveland Raining* and the Filipino writer Ralph Pena's *Flipzoids* (1996), dealing with dislocation and the homeland;²⁵ Haesook Tae on Hak Kyung Cha's *Dictee* and Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* (1975) as diasporic women writers;²⁶ Yeon Joo Shin and Hyung Shik Lee on Julia Cho's *BFE* (2003) and the

²³ Kyung Soon Lee, "The Korean American Women Novels and the Cultural Politics of Memory: *Dictee* and *Comfort Woman*," *English 21* 19.2 (2006): 69-97.

²⁴ Hyung Shik Lee, "Return of the Ghosts: A New Trend in the Plays of Korean American Playwrights," *Journal of Modern English Drama* 20.2 (2007): 155-80.

²⁵ Hyunjoo Ki, "The Politics of Food and Identity: Resistance to Exoticization of Asian Cuisine and Stereotypes of Asian Americans," *Journal of Modern British and American Drama* 20.3 (2007): 5-32; "The Aesthetics of Displacement in *Flipzoids* and *Cleveland Raining*," *Journal of Modern British and American Drama* 22.2 (2009): 5-38.

²⁶ Haesook Tae, "Writing Body from Asian Diasporic Women's Locations: *The Woman*

Chinese playwright Elizabeth Wong's *Kimchi & Chitlins* (1990), concerning the influence of mass media on Asian American drama;²⁷ Eun Sook Ku on Susan Choi's *The Foreign Student* (1998) and the Chinese author Ha Jin's *War Trash* (2004), based on war memories;²⁸ John Eperjesi on representations of the Korean War and its psychological influences in Paul Yoon's *Snow Hunters* (2013) and Ha Jin's *War Trash*;²⁹ Gui Woo Lee on Nora Okja Keller's *Comfort Woman* and the Vietnamese writer Lan Cao's *Monkey Bridge* (1997), discussing transnational feminism;³⁰ Dae Jung Kim on Myung Mi Kim's poems and the Chinese poet Li-Young Lee's "The Cleaving";³¹ and Sujin Lee on the American hero culture represented in An Na's young adult novel *A Step from Heaven* (2001) and the Chinese American cartoonist Gene Luen Yang's graphic novel *American Born Chinese* (2006).³²

The other 14 of the 23 inter-ethnic studies examine Korean American literary works alongside those of non-Asian American writers. Seven of these involve white American writers: William Faulkner,³³ Don DeLillo,³⁴ Jack London,³⁵ Tim O'Brien,³⁶ Thomas Wolfe,³⁷ and Pam Muñoz Ryan.³⁸ Six compare Korean

Warrior and Dictée," *Feminist Studies in English Literature* 11.1 (2003): 235-55.

²⁷ Yeon Joo Shin and Hyung Shik Lee, "The Influence of Mass Media on the Construction of Asian American Identity in *BFE* and *Kimchee and Chitlin*," *Journal of Teaching English Literature* 19.2 (2015): 45-67.

²⁸ Eun Sook Ku, "The Literary Representations of Korean War Memories as 'Grief-Work': Ha Jin's *War Trash* and Susan Choi's *The Foreign Student*," *JELL* 54.6 (2008): 899-915.

²⁹ John R. Eperjesi, "Psychological Warfare and the Representation of Korean War POWs in Ha Jin's *War Trash* and Paul Yoon's *Snow Hunters*," *Journal of American Studies* 48.3 (2016): 267-91.

³⁰ Gui Woo Lee, "'Fatherland' and Gender: Transnational Feminism in Nora Okja Keller's *Comfort Woman* and Lan Cao's *Monkey Bridge*," *Studies in Modern Fiction* 14.2 (2007): 251-78.

³¹ Dae Jung Kim, "Animalized Asians in Li-Young Lee's 'The Cleaving' and Myung Mi Kim's Poetics of Commons," *JELL* 59.3 (2013): 489-509.

³² Sujin Lee, "Rooting on the Hetero Culture: *A Step from Heaven* and *American Born Chinese*," *English 21* 29.3 (2016): 155-75.

³³ Gui Woo Lee, "Resistance Against Panoptic Power: Unwed Mothers in Chang-Rae Lee's *On Such a Full Sea* and William Faulkner's *Light in August*," *Feminist Studies in English Literature* 23.2 (2015): 91-118; Younghun Shin, "War and Trauma: A Study on William Faulkner's *Sartoris* and Chang-rae Lee's *The Surrendered*," *Journal of Modern British & American Language & Literature* 34.4 (2016): 61-85.

³⁴ Teck Young Kwon, "Enlightenment and Negativity: The Korean Images Portrayed in *Mao II* and *Native Speaker*," *Journal of American Studies* 37.2 (2005): 5-28.

³⁵ Teck Young Kwon, "Korean Trauma in American Fiction: Repeating Images in 'Chosun Episode' and *Dictée*," *American Fiction Studies* 13.2 (2006): 27-49.

³⁶ Jung Hoon Jang, "Healing the Scars Left by Traumatic Memories: Focused on Tim O'Brien's *July, July* & Chang-Rae Lee's *The Surrendered*," *Studies in Modern Fiction* 22.2

American literary works with those by American writers belonging to non-Asian American racial minorities: Toni Morrison (Black American),³⁹ Joy Harjo (Native American),⁴⁰ Sandra Cisneros (Mexican American),⁴¹ and Khaled Hosseini (Afghan American).⁴² Lastly, an article by Ju Young Jin is a comparative study of three works by authors from three different racial groups: white, African American and Korean American. Jin discusses war and disability narratives in works which deal with the Korean War by Jayne Anne Phillip, Toni Morrison, and Chang-rae Lee.⁴³

Finally, two articles out of the 42 comparative studies pair Korean literary works with Korean American literature. So-Hee Lee compares the Korean American author Nora Okja Keller's *Fox Girl* (2002) and the Korean writer Jung-Mo Yoon's *The Bridle* (1988), examining gender identity and national consciousness by discussing how Korean sex workers in US military camptowns are represented in each work. Il-gu Kim contrasts two aspects of the artistic and moral features of warfare as represented in Richard Kim's *The Martyred* (1964) and another Korean author Junghyo Ahn's *White Badge* (1989).⁴⁴

(2015): 247-69.

³⁷ Hye Jeong Shin, "Self-recognition Through Recapturing the Past: Focusing on Thomas Wolfe's *Look Homeward, Angel* and Younghill Kang's *The Grass Roof*," *Studies in Modern Fiction* 17.2 (2010): 57-84.

³⁸ Jungmee Jung, "American Dream and Immigrant Children's Burden: Focusing on Multicultural Children's Literature," *Studies in Modern Fiction* 23.3 (2016): 125-46.

³⁹ Young Oak Lee, "Mother-Daughter in Morrison and Keller: Revising Hawthorne's Legacy?" *Journal of American Studies* 31.2 (1999): 443-54; Mie Hyeon Kim, "'Dual Fatherhood' in Chang-rae Lee's *Native Speaker* and Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*," *Studies in Modern Fiction* 14.3 (2007): 247-71; Jin Beom Shin, "A Study on the Intertextuality of Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and Elizabeth Kim's *Ten Thousand Sorrows*," *Studies in Modern Fiction* 10.2 (2003): 177-95.

⁴⁰ Sung Hee Yook, "(Re)membering Trauma: Joy Harjo's Prose Poetry and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *Dictee*," *Studies in English Language & Literature* 42.4 (2016): 71-90.

⁴¹ Dae Jung Kim, "The Chronotopes in *Caramelo* and *Comfort Woman*," *Journal of English Cultural Studies* 1 (2008): 43-75.

⁴² Ilgu Kim, "Kite Race and Fighting Fate: Linda Sue Park's *The Kite Fighters*, Laurence Yep's *Dragonwings*, and Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*," *English & American Cultural Studies* 11.2 (2011): 1-24.

⁴³ Ju Young Jin, "Wayward War: The Korean War and Disability Narrative in Jayne Anne Phillips' *Lark and Termite*, Toni Morrison's *Home*, and Chang-rae Lee's *The Surrendered*," *American Fiction Studies* 23.3 (2016) 63-88.

⁴⁴ So-Hee Lee, "A Comparison of *Fox Girl* and *The Bridle*: Gender/Nation, Colonialism/Postcolonialism," *Studies in Modern Fiction* 15.1 (2008): 149-92; Il-gu Kim, "Confrontation of Cultures and Healing in Richard Kim's *The Martyred* and Junghyo Ahn's *White Badge*," *British & American Cultural Studies* 12.2 (2012): 97-122.

Although theoretical and/or comprehensive articles account for the smallest percentage (7.9%) by research type (Fig. 3), they have made significant contributions to Korean American literary studies in Korea. Sun Mo Yoo and Wook Dong Kim have each surveyed early Korean American literature, providing useful introductory sources for scholars.⁴⁵ Furthermore, an article co-authored by Jin Hee Yim and Hyuk Kyung Kwon considers representative Korean American authors—Younghill Kang, Ronyoung Kim, and Hak Kyung Cha—within the discourse of “identity-building as a marginal self” in Asian American literature, adding an important comprehensive study to the discussion of Korean American literature within the larger context of Asian American literature.⁴⁶

Since the 2000s, there has been an increase in theme-based research analyzing Korean American literature through the lens of critical and controversial ideas, such as racial formation,⁴⁷ the literary scope and definition of Korean American literature,⁴⁸ and comfort women narratives and representation of American military camptowns.⁴⁹ In addition, Jin Hee Yim and Seung-A Oh address pedagogical problems which may arise in teaching Korean American and Asian American literature.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Sun Mo Yoo, “American Dream and Korean Identity of Korean American Writers – Mainly Focusing on Interviews,” *Studies in Modern Fiction* 4.2 (1997): 149-74; Wook Dong Kim, “The Topography of Early Korean American Literature,” *New Korean Journal of English Language and Literature* 5.4 (2009): 17-40.

⁴⁶ Jin-Hee Yim and Hyuck Kyung Kwon, “A Study of Asian American Literature: Image of Marginal Self,” *Studies in Modern Fiction* 5.2 (1998): 251-76.

⁴⁷ Dae Jung Kim, “Korean Americans in the Space of Racial Formation,” *Journal of English Cultural Studies* 5.1 (2012): 35-54.

⁴⁸ In Chan Park, “The Coordinates of Korean American Novel and a Search for Inter-literary Communication Source,” *In/Outside: English Studies in Korea* 20 (2006): 118-43.

⁴⁹ Jeong Yun Ko, “‘Good’ Comfort Women Novel? Ethics and Representational Tactics of Korean Comfort Women Novels in English,” *Feminist Studies in English Literature* 24.1 (2016): 99-129; “Politics of Representation: Americanization of Korean Comfort Women and Camptown Sex Worker Discourses,” *Jungang Journal of English Language and Literature* 56.1 (2014): 19-46; Eun Sook Ku, “Heterotopia on an Island: The Literary Representations of the American Military Camp Town in Korea,” *Feminist Studies in English Literature* 10.2 (2002): 131-40.

⁵⁰ Jin-Hee Yim, “A Pedagogical Search for Teaching Korean American Literature in the Context of English Departments in Korean Universities,” *Journal of Teaching English Literature* 9.1 (2005): 137-56; Seung Ah Oh, “Between Sameness and Difference: Teaching Asian American Literature,” *Journal of Teaching English Literature* 13.1 (2009): 5-25.

Qualitative Changes in and Visions for Korean American Literary Studies in Korea

Using our quantitative analysis of Korean American literary studies in Korea since 1994, we have detected various qualitative changes underway. First, our database offers glimpses of gradual change among the Korean American literary genres receiving scholarly attention. Despite the overwhelming number of studies on Korean American prose, there has been a profound increase of literary studies on Korean American drama and poetry from 2007 to 2016. This scholarly work primarily focuses on the emerging generation of playwrights, and all of the 32 articles on drama (Fig. 2) were published in this span. Almost half of the 32 articles on drama (15; 46.8%) examine five major plays by Julia Cho,⁵¹ a young American

⁵¹ Studies on *99 Histories* (2002): Mi-Kyung Jeong, "A Study on a Korean American Woman's Hybrid Identity Formation in Julia Cho's *99 Histories*," *The Journal of English Cultural Studies* 6.2 (2013): 221-49.

On *BFE* (2003): Mi-Kyung Jeong, "Asian American Women's Gendered Bodies in *BFE*," *Journal of Modern English Drama* 21.1 (2008): 59-83; Kyu-cheol Hwang, "Double Distress of Three Asian American Family Members in Julia Cho's *BFE*," *Journal of Modern English Drama* 23.3 (2010): 101-20; Miseong Woo, "Tennessee Williams in Julia Cho: Intertextuality in Julia Cho's *BFE*," *Journal of Modern English Drama* 23.1 (2010): 135-58; Kwangsook Chung, "*BFE*: Julia Cho's Vision of an Unhomely Home for Asian Americans," *Journal of Modern English Drama* 25.3 (2012): 128-49; Yeon Joo Shin and Hyung Shik Lee, "The Influence of Mass Media on the Construction of Asian American Identity in *BFE* and *Kimchee and Chitlin*."

On *The Architecture of Loss* (2004): Hyung Shik Lee, "Return of the Ghosts: A New Trend in the Plays of Korean American Playwrights," *Journal of Modern English Drama* 20.2 (2007): 155-80; Sun-young Cheon, "The Possibility of Constructing Different Subjectivity: 'Asianness' and Asian American Identity in Julia Cho's *The Architecture of Loss*," *Journal of Modern English Drama* 24.1 (2011): 101-23; Kwangsook Chung, "Traumatic, Melancholic, and Supernatural Aspects of Loss in Julia Cho's *The Architecture of Loss*," *Journal of Modern English Drama* 25.1 (2012): 87-112.

On *Durango* (2006): Miseong Woo, "Asian American Male Sexuality Torn Between Communal and Self Identities in Julia Cho's *Durango*," *Journal of Modern English Drama* 26.2 (2013): 197-216; Sun-Young Cheon, "The Quest of Searching for Diasporic Subjectivity in Julia Cho's *Durango*," *Journal of Modern English Drama* 29.3 (2016): 247-71; Kwangsook Chung "Julia Cho's *Durango*: Asian American Male Narratives of Frustrated Fantasies," *Journal of Modern English Drama* 29.3 (2016): 191-212. In addition, Chung discusses Julia Cho's *The Architect of Loss*, *Durango*, and *BFE* as a trilogy in her article: "Julia Cho's Desert Trilogy: A Topography of the Lost," *Journal of Modern English Drama* 26.3 (2013) 291-311.

On *The Piano Teacher* (2007): Kwangsook Chung, "Julia Cho's *The Piano Teacher*: A Site of Trauma and Testimony," *Journal of Modern English Drama* 28.2 (2015): 195-217; Taehyung Kim, "Remembering the Dissonance: Melancholic Memories in *wAve* and *The Piano Teacher*," *Journal of Modern English Drama* 23.3 (2010): 145-73.

playwright of Korean descent who has won several national awards.⁵² This attention to Korean American drama also includes articles on Sung Rno's *Cleveland Raining* and *wAve* (2004);⁵³ Young Jean Lee's *Songs of the Dragons Flying to Heaven* (2006);⁵⁴ Rob Shin's *The Art of Waiting*;⁵⁵ and Diana Son's *R.A.W. ('Cause I'm a Woman)* (1998), *Stop Kiss* (1998), and *Satellites* (2006).⁵⁶

Scholarly work on poetry has likewise increased: 19 out of 20 articles on poetry have been published since 2007. Cathy Song and Myungmi Kim are the most recognized poets in the field of Korean American poetry in Korea. Of six single author or comparative studies on Cathy Song, three focus on *Picture Bride* (1983).⁵⁷ The seven single author and comparative studies on Myungmi Kim are

⁵² Julia Cho won the L. Arnold Weissberger Award for *BFE*, presented by the Williamstown Theatre Festival (2004); the Barrie and Bernice Stavis Playwriting Award (National Theatre Conference) for *Durango* (2005); the Claire Tow Award for Emerging Artists (2005); and the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize for *The Language Archive* (2009).

⁵³ Mi Kyung Jung, "Deconstruction of Korean American Family: Sung Rno's *Cleveland Raining*," *Journal of Modern British & American Language & Literature* 26.3 (2008): 89-107; Kwangsook Chung, "Apocalyptic Vision of Home in *Cleveland Raining*," *Journal of Modern English Drama* 22.3 (2009): 213-36; Hyunjoo Ki, "The Aesthetics of Displacement in *Flipzoids* and *Cleveland Raining*"; Hyun-Joo Yoo, "Asian/African American Identity as 'Simulacra' in *Kimchee* and *Chitlins* & Self-Defining Identity as 'Difference' in *Cleveland Raining*," *Journal of Modern British & American Language & Literature* 27.3 (2009): 35-57; Taehyung Kim, "Remembering the Dissonance: Melancholic Memories in *wAve* and *The Piano Teacher*," *Journal of Modern English Drama* 23.3 (2010): 145-73; Mikyung Jung, "Quantum Mechanical Asian American Identities in Sung Rno's *wAve*," *Journal of American Studies* 46.2 (2014): 157-80.

⁵⁴ Jisoo Chung, "Politics of Discomfort: Young Jean Lee's *Songs of the Dragons Flying to Heaven*," *Journal of Modern English Drama* 23.1 (2010): 181-207; Mikyung Jung, "A Comedy Pleasing/Displeasing to the Audiences: The Politics of *Songs of the Dragons Flying to Heaven*," *Journal of Modern English Drama* 26.3 (2013): 161-90; Jeonghwa Lee, "Avant-Garde Racial Comedy: Young Jean Lee's *Songs of the Dragons Flying to Heaven*," *Studies in British and American Language and Literature* 106 (2013): 135-57; Jung Soon Shim, "Politics of Irony: Gender and Race in *Songs of the Dragons Flying to Heaven* as a Postdramatic, Postfeminist Performance," *Journal of American Studies* 46.1 (2014): 73-96.

⁵⁵ Hyunjoo Ki, "The Politics of Food and Identity: Resistance to Exoticization of Asian Cuisine and Stereotypes of Asian Americans"; Miseong Woo, "Ethnic Humor and Aesthetics of Waiting in Rob Shin's *The Art of Waiting*," *Journal of Modern English Drama* 24.3 (2011): 71-96; Kyung-jung Joo, "Racial Stereotypes, Stand-up Comedy, and Self as an Art in Rob Shin's *The Art of Waiting*," *English 21* 26.2 (2013): 309-28.

⁵⁶ Kyoung-jung Joo, "The Deconstruction of American Orientalism in Diana Son's *R.A.W. ('Cause I'm a Woman)*," *Journal of Modern English Drama* 26.3 (2013): 313-35; "Miscegenation and Hybridity in Diana Son's *Satellites*," *Journal of Modern English Drama* 27.3 (2014): 425-42; Mikyung Jung, "Interracial Couples in New York: Post-Racial Politics in *Stop Kiss* and *Satellites*," *Jungang Journal of English Language and Literature* 56.4 (2014): 521-38.

⁵⁷ Joong Eun Ahn, "Aspects of Familial Relationships in Cathy Song's Poetry"; Hye Sook Son and Ahn Jae Young, "Cathy Song's *Picture Bride* as an Ethnic Autobiography," *Journal of American Studies* 46.3 (2014): 261-82; Hyang-Mi Lee, "'A Ritual of Remembrance Keeping Her

evenly distributed over three works: *Dura* (1998), *Under Flag* (1998), and *Commons* (2002).⁵⁸ Suji Kwoc Kim, the author of the Korean War poem collection *Notes from the Divided Country* (2003), has also been the subject of four single author and comparative studies.⁵⁹ Robert Grotjohn, a rare non-Korean working in Korean academia, is notable for introducing emerging young poets such as Cathy Park Hong and Sandra Lim, as well as Korean American adoptee poets like Sun Yung Shin and Jennifer Kwon Dobbs, through his scholarly work.⁶⁰

Our database also reveals the emergence of literary subjects and categories that have diversified Korean American literature itself: children's and young adult literature (12 articles), adoption literature (21), and literature on Hawai'i (five). These subjects reveal new trends in prospective scholarship in Korean American literary studies in Korea. Interest in Korean American young adult literature can be attributed to Linda Sue Park winning the 2002 Newbery Medal, a prestigious award for American children's literature, for her third book, *A Single Shard* (2001), which

Memory Alive': Cathy Song's *Picture Bride*," *Studies in British and American Language and Literature* 117 (2015): 41-56.

⁵⁸ Eun-Gwi Chung, "Myung Mi Kim's Poetry and the Cultural Politics of Space: Focusing on *Under Flag* and *Dura*," *Journal of English Studies in Korea* 18 (2010): 63-97; Eui Young Kim, "'Here, This Speck and This Speck That You Missed': A Poetics of the Archive in Myung Mi Kim's *Commons*," *JELL* (2010): 1119-33; Kyungsook Suh, "Asian American Poems and Avant-Garde Poems: Focused on Myungmi Kim's *Commons*," *The Journal of Modern British & American Language & Literature* 31.1 (2013): 193-210; Dae Jung Kim, "Animalized Asians in Li-Young Lee's 'The Cleaving' and Myung Mi Kim's Poetics of Commons"; Yangsoon Kim, "Re-positioning Asian American Poetry: On the Differences Between Cathy Song, Myung Mi Kim, and Suji Kwoc Kim," *Journal of American Studies* 42.3 (2010): 203-41; Jooyoung Park, "Language, History, Identity: Myung Mi Kim's Translingual Poetics," *Journal of English Studies in Korea* 17 (2009): 181-215; Joon Ho Hwang, "The Complexity of Asian American Literature and Korean Elements in Korean American Literature: The Case of Myung Mi Kim's 'Siege Document,'" *Journal of English Studies in Korea* 13 (2007): 5-34.

⁵⁹ Yang Soon Kim, "Re-positioning Asian American Poetry: On the Differences between Cathy Song, Myung Mi Kim, and Suji Kwoc Kim"; Il Hwan Lee, "High-flying Notes from a Korean-American Poet: *Notes from the Divided Country* by Suji Kwoc Kim," *JELL* 57.3 (2011): 413-28; Joon Ho Hwang, "Ambivalence in the Representation of Others' Suffering: Suji Kwoc Kim's Korean War Poetry," *Studies in Modern British and American Poetry* 18.2 (2012): 151-72; Robert Grotjohn, "Recognizing Korean American Poets: Cathy Park Hong, Suji Kwoc Kim, and Ethnic Nationalism," *Journal of American Studies* 45.1 (2013): 197-226.

⁶⁰ Besides his comparative article on Cathy Park Hong and Suji Kwoc Kim (2013), Grotjohn has also written four articles on these poets: "Intertexts in Korean-American Adoptee Poetry: Sun Yung Shin and Jennifer Kwon Dobbs," *English* 21 24.2 (2011): 211-46; "Speculative Poetics in Cathy Park Hong's *Engine Empire*," *English* 21 28.3 (2015): 365-83; "Sandra Lim's 'Errant Wildness': From Immigrant *Gurlesque* to Antinomian Tradition," *Journal of American Studies* 48.3 (2016): 293-317; "Hijacking the Type: Cathy Park Hong's Poetry against Conceptual Whiteness," *Feminist Studies in English Literature* 24.1 (2016): 33-65.

involved celadon pottery in twelfth-century Korea. Park's win was eagerly reported by Korean newspapers and publishers seeking to expand exchanges with overseas Koreans under the national slogan "Global Korea." Korean public schools selected her books for their required reading lists, introducing her as a proud "Korean" who promoted Korean culture around the world by incorporating Korean history into her work. Accordingly, scholarly research on Park's works has increased considerably,⁶¹ in turn gradually bringing attention to other Korean American writers who have recently distinguished themselves in children's or young adult literature, including Sook Nyul Choi,⁶² An Na,⁶³ and Marie G. Lee.⁶⁴

All of the 12 articles on Korean young adult literature have been published since 2005, and 10 of these since 2010. Where "Koreanists" primarily focus on the "Koreanness" in these works, especially those based on or involving Korean ethnic subjects, "Americanist" scholars examine aspects of "Koreanness" within the context of American children's multiple cultural heritages and multicultural education. For instance, Seung Ah Oh assesses Linda Sue Park's works within the tradition of American children's literature, while Eunhyun Kim's study comprehensively surveys Korean American children's and young adult books

⁶¹ Seung Ah Oh, "Linda Sue Park and the Heritage of American Children's Literature," *American Fiction Studies* 29.1 (2016): 59-88; Ilgu Kim, "Kite Race and Fighting Fate: Linda Sue Park's *The Kite Fighters*, Laurence Yep's *Dragonwings*, and Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*"; Eun Ja Yun, "Connection and Inclusion Through Two Strong Korean Girls' Voices in Historical Fiction from a Multicultural Feminist Perspective," *Journal of Modern British & American Language & Literature* 28.2 (2010): 1-20; Hyuckmi Kwon, "A Literature-based Civic Identity Formation for the Youth: Linda Sue Park's *Project Mulberry*," *Journal of Modern British & American Language & Literature* 30.2 (2012): 113-32; Yunki Park, "The Characteristics of Linda Sue Park's Historical Novels and Her Real Identity as a Korean-American Writer," *Modern Studies in English Language & Literature* 56.2 (2012): 65-85; Eun Joo Woo, "Writing the American Novel With Korean History: Linda Sue Park's *The Kite Fighters* and *A Single Shard*," *Journal of American Studies* 37.1 (2005): 308-27.

⁶² Jeboon Yu, "Anarchy of Empire and Empathy of Suffering: Reading of *So Far from the Bamboo Grove* and *Year of Impossible Goodbyes* from the Perspectives of Postcolonial Feminism," *JELL* 58.1 (2012): 163-83; Eun Ja Yun, "Connection and Inclusion Through Two Strong Korean Girls' Voices in Historical Fiction from a Multicultural Feminist Perspective."

⁶³ Jungmee Jung, "American Dream and Immigrant Children's Burden: Focusing on Multicultural Children's Literature"; Eunsook Jeong, "Identity Negotiation and Multicultural Ideology in An Na's *A Step from Heaven*," *Jungang Journal of English Language and Literature* 57.2 (2015): 353-75; Sujin Lee, "Rooting on the Hetero Culture: *A Step from Heaven* and *American Born Chinese*."

⁶⁴ Do Seon Eur, "A Lacanian Study of Identities as Revealed in Korean-American Literature for Young Adults: Marie G. Lee's Novels in the Light of 'Discourse of Hysteria,'" *Journal of Teaching English Literature* 9.1 (2005): 103-36

published between 1970 and 2006 in the US, examining their artistic qualities, representations, and themes from the perspective of multicultural texts.⁶⁵

Adoption literature has also strongly impacted recent scholarship, with 21 articles on the subject; of these, 19 have been published since 2008. The increasing interest in adoption narratives in Korean American literature can be attributed to the project panel on transnational adoption at the 2008 ASAK (American Studies Association in Korea) Conference. This panel was advertised in major daily Korean newspapers, such as *Korea Herald* and *Chosun Daily Newspaper*, and invoked the intellectual discourse on transnational adoption in Korea. In turn, this led to the formation of the research group “Transnational Adoption,” which managed a monthly seminar program by the NRF in 2009-2010, and pursued research on transnational—specifically, Asian American—adoption narratives. These narratives subsequently became popular topics in Korean American literary studies in Korea.

While more than half of the 21 articles (12; 57.1%) focus on established writers of Korean American adoption literature—Jane Jeong Trenka, Elizabeth Kim, Mira Stout, and Marie Myung Ok Lee—three articles look at newer writers Sun Mee Chotmet,⁶⁶ Sunée Kim,⁶⁷ Jennifer Kwon Dobbs, and Sun Yung Shin.⁶⁸ In addition, six articles (28.6%) are comprehensive studies of Korean American adoption literature that use diverse approaches.⁶⁹ This signals a very important new trend in Korean American literary studies in Korea.

Korean American literature in Hawai’i, despite its long history, has recently gained attention as an important source for understanding the histories not only of Korean American immigrants in the early twentieth century, but also of the second-

⁶⁵ Eunhyun Kim, “Korean/Korean-American Children’s Literature: Themes and Representations,” *Journal of Teaching English Literature* 16.2 (2012): 233-58.

⁶⁶ Mi Seong Woo, “Performing the Diasporic Sensibility of Displacement: International Korean Adoption in Sun Mee Chomet’s *How to Be a Korean Woman*,” *JELL* 61.2 (2015): 289-308.

⁶⁷ In Shik Bang, “I Eat, Therefore I Am: Kim Sunée’s Memoir Woven by Food Experience,” *Journal of American Studies* 48.2 (2016): 209-29.

⁶⁸ Robert Grotjohn, “Intertexts in Korean-American Adoptee Poetry: Sun Yung Shin and Jennifer Kwon Dobbs.”

⁶⁹ Jin Hee Yim, “Adoption Narrative, Social Memory and Healing Through Literary Education,” *Journal of Teaching English Literature* 20.1 (2016): 111-27; “Healing Narratives of Overseas Korean Adoptees and Nation,” *American Fiction Studies* 22.3 (2015): 203-25; Dae Jung Kim, “Adoption and Ethico-ontology in the Era of Post-diaspora,” *Journal of English Cultural Studies* 8.3 (2015): 7-27; Young Mi Kim, “Trends of Adoption and Adoption Literature,” *In/Outside: English Studies in Korea* 26 (2009): 356-72; Eun Gui Chung, “Outsiders Within, Poetry of Origin: A Study of Korean American Adoptee Poetry,” *Journal of Teaching English Literature* 17.1 (2013): 135-65; So Hee Lee, “Motherhood and Family in the Memories of Returned Transnational Adoptee Women Writers,” *Studies in Modern Fiction* 19.2 (2012): 179-216.

and later generation Korean American immigrants within the state's unique cultural, geographical, and historical environment. Critical interest in Hawai'ian literature by Korean Americans was broadly inspired by the centennial anniversary of Korean immigration to the US via Hawai'i in 2003. A notable contribution is by Gary Pak, a third-generation Korean Hawai'ian writer, who published *A Ricepaper Airplane* in 2006. An article by Min Jung Kim on this work was published the same year, and an article co-authored by Youngmee Kim and Myung Ho Lee in 2010.⁷⁰

Heui-Yung Park approaches Hawai'ian literature comprehensively in two articles: the first focuses on pre-1965 second-generation Korean American life writing from Hawai'i; the second examines early Korean immigrant life through their written materials, such as lyric poems and letters written in Korean from the 1910s through the 1960s in Hawai'i, and explores the ways early Korean immigrants developed their sense of identity in association with the place of their settlement, claiming their presence in the US.⁷¹ More recently, So-Hee Lee has examined first-generation Korean American immigrants in Hawai'i through the memoir of Mary Paik Lee, *Quiet Odyssey: A Pioneer Korean Woman in America* (1990).⁷²

Lastly, in the midst of Korean scholars' predominant focus on a few individual writers and their works, our research has uncovered several notable critical approaches to the new generation of Korean American writers. Yeonmin Kim, for instance, has explored Paul Yoon's *Once the Shore* (2009)⁷³ in terms of magic realism.⁷⁴ Although Yoon's book covers a large range of twentieth-century Korean history against the backdrop of (presumably) Jeju Island, Kim primarily focuses on Yoon's use of magic realism, which enables the author to bring his work

⁷⁰ Min Jung Kim, "Politics of the Literary: Reading Form in Gary Pak's *A Ricepaper Airplane*," *JELL* 52.5 (2006): 1039-59; Youngmee Kim and Myung Ho Lee, "The Representation of the Space of Hawaii in Gary Pak's *A Ricepaper Airplane*," *Journal of Teaching English Literature* 14.1 (2010): 39-62.

⁷¹ Heui-Yung Park, "Where Have I Come from?: Ethnicity and Place in Pre-1965 Second-Generation Korean American Life Writing from Hawai'i," *Jungang Journal of English Language and Literature* 56.4 (2014): 169-93; "The 'Selves' of Early Korean Immigrants to Hawai'i: Korean Language, Life Writing, and the Transition from Expatriate to Resident," *Journal of English Studies in Korea* 28 (2015): 175-206.

⁷² So-Hee Lee, "*Quiet Odyssey*: Life Writing as a Subject of History," *Feminist Studies in English Literature* 24.2 (2016): 159-95.

⁷³ Paul Yoon, born in 1980, is a young Korean American fiction writer who has recently received critical attention in American literary society. His first book *Once the Shore* was selected as a *New York Times* Notable Book and his novel *Snow Hunters* also won the 2014 Young Lions Fiction Award.

⁷⁴ Yeonmin Kim, "Magic Realism in Paul Yoon's *Once the Shore*."

out of the confines of the story of a particular ethnic group, and to expand a Korean American subject into the discussion of US imperialism and its legacy. SuMee Lee examines Don Lee's *Yellow* (2001), a collection of short stories, within the literary tradition of the American short story cycle.⁷⁵ Another instance is found in Jeboon Yu's and Eun Ja Yun's respective research on Sook Nyul Choi and Linda Sue Park's works.⁷⁶ Rather than homing in on the "Korean" aspects of these young adult fictions—which primarily deal with ancient Korean history—and connecting them to issues of ethnic identity, Yu and Yun both discuss the works from a multicultural feminist perspective. These approaches are distinctive in that they place individual Korean American literary works within broader contexts, and in so doing, resist pigeonholing the works from a Korean nationalistic or identity perspective.

In fact, these diverse critical approaches are necessary for examining the new generation of writers. Cherishing their Korean ethnic heritage but worried about narrow categorization, younger writers often deal with "different ways of being Korean in America," as well as "continuing interest in US imperialism in Korean history, racism in immigrant life, and issues of gender and sexuality in family and society" (Kim 15). Don Lee, a third-generation Korean American, comments on the desire to redefine the writerly self:

Most of the Asian American literature I've encountered has dealt with F.O.B.'s—immigrants Fresh Off the Boat. I wanted to write about people like me, third- and fourth-generation, post-immigrant Asian Americans who are very much assimilated into the overall culture, but who have residual ethnic ties. . . . I wanted to show that Asian Americans can be just as individual and different, as sexual, artsy, feisty, athletic, articulate, neurotic, and screwed up as anyone else in America. (34)

These concerns among emerging writers call for Korean scholars to view Korean American literature as authentic American literature rather than Korean, "establishing the Asian-American presence in the context of the United States' national cultural legacy and contemporary cultural production" (Wong 16).

⁷⁵ SuMee Lee, "Reading Don Lee's *Yellow* as a Short Story Cycle." The short story cycle is here represented by Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919).

⁷⁶ Jeboon Yu, "Anarchy of Empire and Empathy of Suffering: Reading of *So Far from the Bamboo Grove* and *Year of Impossible Goodbyes* from the Perspectives of Postcolonial Feminism," *JELL* 58.1 (2012): 163-83; Eun Ja Yun, "Connection and Inclusion Through Two Strong Korean Girls' Voices in Historical Fiction from a Multicultural Feminist Perspective."

Although studies on a narrow segment of writers dominate our database, it is a sign of progress that articles on 25 (62.5%) of the 40 individual authors (Table 1) were published during the last 10 years. Korean scholars have given close and careful attention to the new generation of Korean American writers by responding to their changing interests and concerns. Nevertheless, there is a need for more consideration of writers who discuss both receiving a Korean cultural inheritance and simultaneously recasting themselves as American selves living in America. Looking towards this new generation with new critical perspectives would be an effective way to expand the scope of research to include less prominent authors, who continue to be overshadowed by a few canonical names. Scholars need to pay more—and more enthusiastic—attention to young authors beginning their careers as Korean American writers.

Since the late twentieth century, Korean American literature has provided a discursive arena in which Korean scholars of Korean and American literature have put forth critical viewpoints on the literature as Korean and/or American. In particular, scholars of Korean literature have sought inclusive approaches to Korean American literature, reflected in the use of terms such as “Anglophone Korean American literature,” “overseas compatriot literature,” “diasporic Korean literature,” and “*Kyopo Munhak*” (Korean ethnic literature) to refer to works by Korean American authors. Although he is a scholar of American literature, Kun Jong Lee also suggests viewing Korean American literature in juxtaposition with Korean literature, to produce “broader, comparative, transnational, and translanguagel readings of Korean/Asian American texts” (“Overview” 281).

We agree that such approaches widen the scope and possibilities of Korean literature, and are apt in an era of convergence, globalization, and transnationalism. However, it is also critical to exercise caution with generalized concepts of nationality, lest all overseas Korean literature be lumped together. If nationalist orientation and rhetoric, or overly strict ideas of Koreanness, become the dominant criteria for the inclusion of Korean American literature within Korean literature, the discussion runs the risk of erasing the material, political, and historical specificities that these writers have built and sought to express. If Korean Americans are approached as separate from America, and their literature as separate from American literature, research will fall into self-ghettoization, threatening to impede the vital connection of literature and criticism to the wider world. These approaches are distinctive in that they appreciate individual Korean American literary works within broader contexts, and in so doing, navigate pigeonholing the works from a Korean nationalistic or identity perspective within the assimilation framework to

say nothing of failing to read the ways Korean Americans attempt to claim America for themselves.

The same concerns should be made in dealing with Korean-language literature written by Korean Americans in America. In fact, although Korean-language American literature has been the subject of research for scholars of Korean literature, it has rarely attracted the attention of scholars of American literature in Korea. As Kun Jong Lee argues in another article, scholars of American literature need to pay greater critical attention to Korean-language American literature, whether or not the authors are well-known in America or primarily published in Korea (“Korean-Language” 21). Taking as a given that Korean-language American literature is an important component of Korean American literature, Heui-Yung Park’s study of Korean-language life writings by early Korean immigrants to Hawai’i offers an example of such developing studies in the field of American literature. We expect more critical attention to be drawn to this field because of the advantage bilingualism gives Korean scholars of American literature.

It should nonetheless be noted that, in dealing with Korean-language American literature, this bilingual approach is only worthwhile when Korean scholars admit the writers’ different standpoints as Korean Americans in America. Considering Korean Americans as American is a prerequisite for Korean scholars, especially when discussing Korean American writers’ changing and expanding concerns and interests from the national to the individual. Whether discovering Korean American literature written in Korean or exploring Korean legacies embedded in Korean American literature, American literary scholars should explore Korean American literature not only in and of itself, but also in light of its relation to American literature in broader contexts. Grounded in these distinct approaches, Korean scholars of American literature will undoubtedly continue to hone and direct their critical insights toward shedding new light on Korean American literature in association with American literature.

Korean scholars’ bilingual ability will further facilitate their engagement with inter-Asian and/or trans-Pacific scholars, encouraging intellectual exchanges such as conference panels and research projects. Interestingly, about 37.9% (110 out of 290) of the total articles examined in this research were written in English; the average rate goes up to 44% for articles published after 2001. We believe that the increasing number of articles in English has facilitated intellectual communication between Korean and overseas scholars. Exploring both Korean- and English-language American literatures, and discussing their knowledge of the subject in both languages, Korean scholars can contribute to the understanding of Asia not as

a “singular reference point” (Wang 166), but as “a critical locus” (165). Furthermore, they can counter “Euro-US geopolitical mapping embedded in the Asian American rhetoric about roots” (166) by exploring the subjects from pluralistic and transnational perspectives. Our comprehensive survey of Korean American literary studies produced by scholars of American literature in Korea is in line with this critical approach. By providing valuable resources for domestic and overseas scholars on Asian American literature, we hope to provoke further dynamic interactions and exchanges on this topic.

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