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Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review

Title

An Homage to the Bleak and Dismal World

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7pj0w121>

Journal

Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review, 1(21)

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Publication Date

2016-12-01

Peer reviewed



An Homage to the Bleak and Dismal World

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Han Kee Hyung and Lee Hye-Ryoung, eds. *Chōsuha ūi sigan: Yōm Sang-sōp ūl ikta*
저수하의 시간, 염상섭을 읽다 [Time under the heaven tree: Reading Yōm Sang-sōp].
Seoul: Somyōng ch'ulp'an, 2014. ISBN: 9788956265896.

The Korean novelist Yōm Sang-sōp (1897–1963) documented and described the lives of Koreans in the (early) modern period in minute detail. In “Chakp’um ūi myōngam” [The light and shadow of works] ([1929] 2013), he characterized the public’s view of his works: “It is said that people find my fictions to be bitter, irritating, heavy, solemn, and stale” (45). He not only admits this, but goes so far as to express a desire for his works to be even more biting and harsh. Yōm’s fictions do not depict the world as harmonious and unified, nor do they make readers feel comfortable. However, the sense of discomfort that they provoke is the aesthetic he has deliberately cultivated. This aesthetic reflects his ethical position as a writer:

It is true that our life at present, no matter what we face, cannot show us a light any brighter or make us laugh any more cheerfully than we used to have or used to do in the illustrious 500-year history of Chosōn. One might say that the whole world is faced with a period of trouble and that this whole generation is overshadowed by a sense of struggle. Yet, what today’s Chosōn is encountering is some kind of age of terror that cannot be simply described by words such as trouble, gloominess, or sense of struggle; it is challenged with the choice between life and death and is writhing in the throes of death.... Hence, under such conditions of life and such a mindset, it is a tall order for only literature to be bright, light, sweet, and cheerful.... I choose to be bitter and heavy by being serious and desperate, rather than falling into frivolity and coarseness by trying to present something clear and luminous. (Yōm [1929] 2013, 46–47)

Literati who sought to trace the origins of the gloominess and bleakness cast over modern Korea under the Japanese occupation were not uncommon, but one as extensively involved and focused on this subject throughout his work as Yōm Sang-sōp is quite rare. His

own words—“capturing the overall circumstances and the actual state”—epitomize his perception and creative strategies most accurately (Yöm [1929] 2013, 47). Indeed, many of Yöm’s works successfully accomplished the greater task of calling into question the political structures and socioeconomic relations of reality, while depicting, in detail, the confused and complex social conditions and trends of Korea in the early modern period.

In his *Nanse ũi munhak* [Literature of turbulent times] ([1991] 2001), Lee Bo-young, the foremost expert in the study of Yöm Sang-söp, sums up the author’s strength as “the awareness of turbulent times” (11) or “the imagination born out of turbulent times” (32). Lee argues that any writer living in the turbulent times of colonialism “could not escape from the ethical questions that demand political consciousness to objectively observe and overcome the fundamental problems of the colony—which are the policies maintaining Japanese occupation and the status quo in the colony and the social contradictions resulting from them” (Lee BY [1991] 2001, 18–19). According to Lee, one can hold such an attitude only when one maintains “the realistic perspective, moral integrity, and courage to recognize the social reality of the colony wholly and fundamentally.” What he refers to as the awareness of turbulent times is “the political and ethical consciousness that is demanded of writers born into a land of turbulence” (Lee BY [1991] 2001, 19). The key is experiencing a sense of despair and being aware of the contradictions, from which the hope of reforming the status quo can arise. Lee’s perspective can be viewed as one that reads and interprets Yöm in the most positive and active manner, in terms of “resistance.”

Kim Yun-sik, a renowned scholar of early modern Korean literature, also conducted influential and extensive research on Yöm Sang-söp, which is presented in his *Yöm Sang-söp yŏn’gu* [A study of Yöm Sang-söp] (1987a), published a few years prior to Lee Bo-young’s aforementioned work. Kim’s research revealed important facts pertaining to Yöm’s life and ideology, as well as contextual information related to his activities from the colonial period until his death in 1963. In a paper that Kim wrote over a decade after the publication of this book, he recalls, “What I worked on most laboriously in *Yöm Sang-söp yŏn’gu* was the reconstruction of the writer’s life, which comprised the greater part of the book” (Kim 1998, 27). The substantiating materials and study of authorship that Kim provided became a source of public wealth that scholars of Yöm Sang-söp could refer to and rely on in the years to come. In particular, the interpretational frameworks presented in the book—such as value neutrality or the conservatism of maintaining the status quo—made a great impact on later studies of Yöm Sang-söp.

It is interesting that Kim Yun-sik found Yŏm's counter-ideology to colonial modernity not in nationalism, but in a entirely different epistemological sphere. According to Kim, Yŏm launched his challenge against modernity "on the clear basis of understanding capitalism, nationalism, and imperialism as homogeneous entities" (Kim 1987b, 330). Further, Kim emphasizes that Yŏm recognized "nihilism, anarchism, and communism as the ideas that could confront [these entities]." For Yŏm, modernity was the equivalent of Japan and Japanese imperialism and, since those are basically "homogeneous with" capitalism and nationalism, "the Korean nationalist movement was as good as meaningless" (Kim 1987b, 330). It is perhaps based on this assessment that Kim identified Yŏm as the most avant-garde figure in modern Korean literature.

Lee Bo-young, discussed previously, noted that "the ideology that always triggered a sense of self-contradiction in the mind of the nationalist [Yŏm Sang-sŏp]" was socialism ([1991] 2001, 429). Lee detected the "instability" unique to Yŏm Sang-sŏp's nationalism, which distinguished it from the kind of nationalism asserted by other intellectuals, such as Yi Kwang-su, in that Yŏm was ideologically interacting with socialism. Lee deemed this unstable nationalism to be very important, as he thought it was the proof of Yŏm's "literary integrity" (Lee BY [1991] 2001, 429).¹ Kim and Lee's portrayals of Yŏm—as someone opposed to nationalism and as someone who claimed to be a nationalist, respectively—may seem to contradict each other. However, it may not be necessary to determine whose perspective is more valid. Rather than pegging Yŏm Sang-sŏp with one particular identity—be it nationalist, anarchist, or socialist—it seems more appropriate to understand him through his actions, as someone who partook in a complex epistemological movement. Hence, it is fitting to understand the concepts, messages, and discourses proposed by the two authors in a comprehensive manner rather than to choose one over the other.

Now let us turn to *Time under the Heaven Tree: Reading Yŏm Sang-sŏp* (henceforth, *Heaven Tree*), the relatively new collection of serious research on Yŏm Sang-sŏp under review here. I discussed other critical works at length before delving into *Heaven Tree* in order to try and evaluate this recent publication from a diachronic perspective. *Heaven Tree* offers justifiable and zealous attempts to commemorate Yŏm Sang-sŏp as a remarkable subject, one who was most acutely aware of the politics, society, and aesthetics of the period in which he lived. In addition, the twenty scrupulously researched and enlightening articles included in the collection unfold this attempt in a brilliant fashion, harking back to the two earlier studies by Lee and Kim. Those earlier books are the productive "ancestors" of *Heaven*

Tree, in that the depth and magnitude of their reconstruction and reevaluation of Yŏm's thoughts are analogous to what is achieved in this new collection. Nonetheless, as much as *Heaven Tree* is similar to its ancestors in terms of the passion and meticulousness demonstrated by the contributing authors, it proves to be a courageous offspring, as the authors further absorb, complement, and renew the existing research. This is why I chose to summon up those two particular studies, despite the fact that they are not so recent; in so doing, I run the risk of skipping over a great deal of other research on Yŏm Sang-sŏp that has been produced between their publication and now.

As the editors' preface emphasizes, *Heaven Tree* highlights Yŏm Sang-sŏp's "contemporariness within intellectual history" (Han and Lee 2014, 5), his radicalness, and the remarkable endurance of his spirit. The contributors begin by emphasizing the significance of Yŏm Sang-sŏp's "heavy pessimism," his independent attitude toward "socialism and radicalism," and his confrontation with his time as a writer, which ultimately contribute to "reestablishing the idea of Yŏm Sang-sŏp's literature" (Han and Lee 2014, 5–6). It is in this context that Yŏm's analysis of socialism and anarchism plays an important role. Yŏm's relationship to socialism has been a crucial subject in the study of the author from early on. Han Kee Hyung's 2003 article "Ch'ogi Yŏm Sang-sŏp ūi anak'ijŭm suyong kwa t'alsingminjŏk t'aedo" [Yŏm Sang-sŏp's acceptance of anarchism and his postcolonial attitude during his early period] was the first piece to shed light on the relationship between Yŏm Sang-sŏp's literature and anarchism. Several articles included in *Heaven Tree* provide substantiating evidence and add rich interpretation to this discussion.

According to Yi Jong-Ho, one of the contributors, Yŏm Sang-sŏp thought that "the nationalist movement should part ways with the capitalist path—for only then can it acquire meaning as a nationalist movement and form an alliance with the socialist movement" (Yi 2014, 87). Yi notes that Yŏm pursued "the kind of socialism that the nation itself would not cease to exist even after the socialist society is realized" (2014, 88). He also uncovers the paradox of Yŏm's literature, which can be encapsulated as "the vision of socialism that criticizes proletarian literature," as well as the content of true revolution conceived by Yŏm as "the transition into socialism" (2014, 88). While Yi starts his discussion with "revolution and uprising," Hwang Jong-Yon concentrates on the "revolt," which is different from a politically imbued sense of revolution and, in turn, also contributes to the study of Yŏm Sang-sŏp's anarchism. If the study of Yŏm's acceptance of anarchism has thus far focused on providing substantial evidence to uncover the people and media he was involved with,

Hwang's "Kwahak kwa panhang" [Science and revolt] describes the concrete contents of his ideology. According to the article, the essence of Yŏm's anarchism lies in philosopher Max Stirner's sense of "revolt," which sets it apart from the political sense of "revolution" (Hwang 2014, 130). Hwang views Yŏm's *Sarang kwa chŏe* [Love and sin] as an important piece of work that contains "the anarchist method of constructing the self," which "battles with the state" as a way of "overcoming the existing order, instead of overthrowing it" (2014, 130).

As Yi Jong-Ho and Hwang Jong-Yon highlight in explicit terms, socialism and anarchism are closely intertwined with nationalism or anticolonialism for Yŏm Sang-sŏp. In Yŏm's work, ideas, and life, one can detect various heterogeneous elements of ideologies composing anticolonial nationalism. It is in this regard that the compound of nationalism, socialism, and anarchism in Yŏm's literature and ideas acquires immense historical and political significance. What this ideological nexus is constantly pointing at is, needless to say, colonialism. Yŏm displayed the highest level of intellectual thinking in his endeavors to critically reflect on and seek the possibility of overcoming colonialism. Hence, it is not only integral but actually inevitable to discover in *Heaven Tree* a considerable amount of research focused on numerous scenes of colonialism and colonial modernity being deployed in Yŏm's literature. In particular, the economic and political realms of money and capital are the critical sites in which colonial modernity unfolds in his work. In or through these sites, life in colonial modernity was caught in the intricate web of development and exploitation, through which it came to be exposed to secular desires, worldly affairs, daily apprehensions, and casual failures. Yŏm described these complex and multilayered experiences with pessimistic, or at times cold, eyes.

Yŏm Sang-sŏp's fiction represents the various sites of colonial modernity and the concrete modes of life unfolding within them. Each work demonstrates different tendencies, aesthetic traits, and epistemes, which have been explored in a rich and multifaceted fashion in individual studies of his writings thus far. *Heaven Tree* also includes some full-scale analyses of Yŏm's fictions, including *Manse jŏn* [On the eve of the uprising], *Sarang kwa chŏe* [Love and sin], *Muhwagwa* [The fig tree], *Morankkot p'il ttae* [Until peonies blossom], and *Ch'urak* [The fall]. The studies that focus on particular texts need to be read scrupulously, because they present new methods of understanding these works through meticulous analyses. What draws our attention in the discussion of Yŏm Sang-sŏp pertaining to the question of colonialism and postcolonialism is the complicated pairing of (social or political) movement

and capital—or ideology and money—within the colony, as well as the presence of a sympathizer that enables us to trace the relations between the pair.

The sympathizer is a unique concept that characterizes Yöm’s literature, one that is crucial not only in understanding his work, but also in illuminating the social, political, and economic conditions and relations of colonial Korea. The concept of the sympathizer allows us to see how simplistic it is to separate the resistance movements in a colony from the issue of money or capital. In that regard, the argument presented in Park Heon-Ho’s “Somo rosöüi singminji, (purim) chabon üi unmyöng” [Colony as consumable: The destiny of (infertile) capital], which is that “it is necessary to observe colonial Korea through a new prism, one that enables us to view it as an entwinement of movement and capital,” is quite insightful (Park HH 2014, 606). Consider the following passage:

Muhwagwa [The fig tree] is a work that demonstrates the perception that a [social] movement is instilled in capital, while, at the same time, displaying the vision that that capital would end up becoming infertile, unless it was grounded in such a movement. The portrait of colonial Korea [in *Muhwagwa*] suggests that not only the capital, but also the colony itself, would end up as consumable. This work amplifies its rebellious nature by making capital into a consumable—in other words, by turning it into the nanny that nurtures revolution, society, and families. However, in order to survive censorship, this fact is concealed in the novel by the amorous passion, desires, and wrangles over money in which the characters were involved. “The simultaneous vision of liberation and production” through a *sympathizer* is the site of elation that Yöm Sang-söp’s literature reaches. (Park HH 2014, 607)

It is undoubtedly an extraordinary attempt to read from the records of financial investment and ruin of one sympathizer the colonial reality “where capital cannot function as the motivation for production” and “the fate of colonial capital is dependent on the character of the capitalist” (Park HH 2014, 591–592). The sympathizer, an agent uniquely portrayed by Yöm, has long been read inwardly as the embodiment of socialist ideology. However, Park Heon-ho argues that the sympathizer should be understood within the context in which the character is placed and based on the effect he has on the work. This serves as a groundbreaking shift in the reading of sympathizer, a subject that has been ardently studied by scholars of Yöm Sang-söp for a long time. Another article in *Heaven Tree*, “‘Simp’ösaïjö’ ranün p’ilt’ö” [“Sympathizer” as a filter], by Oh Hye-jin, takes a similar stance.

The articles reviewed thus far generally portray Yöm Sang-söp as a figure who “struggles with modernity” using “modern weapons.” These articles mainly focus on the issues of socialism and anarchism, or the logic of resistance and counter-ideology that are

constructed by expanding these ideologies. However, *Heaven Tree* also sheds light on other aspects of Yöm Sang-söp's work, such as Yöm's attempt to connect with tradition. The meaningful question of Yöm's connection to traditional cultural resources is an issue that has been largely ignored until now. Yet Han Kee Hyung's "Nobül kwa singminji" [Novel and colony] and Jang Moon-Seok's "Chönt'ong chisik kwa sahoejuüi üi chöppyön" [Assimilation of traditional knowledge and socialism] approach and reveal the meaning and effect of tradition that is so relevant to Yöm from different angles. As the titles of these contributions suggest, the former approaches the issue in relation to the form of modern fiction, while the latter does so in relation to socialism; both reveal how Yöm maintained tension and dialogue with tradition.

"Nobül kwa singminji" describes how Yöm Sang-söp's view of traditional fiction is filled with the language of popularity, indigenusness, and democracy, and proves how he tried to "realize the novel-like qualities [of traditional fiction] within contemporary literature" in order to embody those values (Han 2014, 186). This paper actively ascribes meaning to Yöm's attempt at invoking indigenusness—the traditional narrative, in this case—from the perspective that "the independence of those who are not subsumed by Western experiences and terminologies is a possible intellectual struggle for the colonized" (Han 2014, 194).

The main idea of "Chönt'ong chisik kwa sahoejuüi üi chöppyön" was, as author Jang Moon-seok states, triggered by one sentence from Yöm Sang-söp's "Hyöndaein kwa munhak" [Modern humans and literature] ([1931] 2013): "'Without constant means [that is, a stable means of livelihood], people will not have constant heart' is the lesson commonly taught by Mencius and Marx" (Jang 2014, 330). This article offers a glimpse into the history of translation or the acceptance of Korean socialism in a larger context. At the same time, through a close reading of "Hyöndaein kwa munhak," it attempts to grasp Yöm's intention of connecting Mencius and Marx. By associating the two philosophers, Yöm criticizes the conditions in Korea in 1931, when feudalism was widespread, society was saturated in capitalist logics, and morals were absent. The two articles by Han and Jang intersect with the articles mentioned previously that deal with Yöm's socialism. "Nobül kwa singminji," in particular, uses and offers the interpretational frameworks to explore Yöm's socialism contextually or outwardly, rather than being restricted by an internal examination of "popularity that alleviates the unstable images endowed upon socialism" and "socialism that controls the 'popular' world" (Han 2014, 193).

Yŏm Sang-sŏp was an outstanding writer with an acute mind who lived through the hardships of colonial modernity. The power of his writing endured even after, or over the course of, independence and the Korean War, which left scholars with the responsibility and right to study Yŏm Sang-sŏp in the post-1945 (independence) period. *Heaven Tree* contains extensive research on Yŏm's perception and aesthetics during the colonial period, which has been the general scholarly focus within Korean literary circles, but the collection also explores his work in the 1950s. *Ch'wiu* [Rain shower] ([1953] 1987), a unique record of everyday life during wartime, is noteworthy. Yŏm's fictions from the 1950s have not drawn much attention from researchers due to the common judgment that those works markedly lost tension and density in terms of the imagination and emotions that he had displayed during the colonial period.

Kim Yun-sik has commented that “what remains in [Yŏm's] work after anything Japanese and modern has completely vanished” is only mundane, everyday life (1987b, 11:331). According to Kim, in the 1950s Yŏm Sang-sŏp reduced himself to a mere “observation device,” recording the trivial routines of daily life (1987b, 11:331). Research on Yŏm during this period was further developed by Kim Kyung Soo in *Yŏm Sang-sŏp changp'yŏn sosŏl yŏn'gu* [A study of Yŏm Sang-sŏp's novels] (1999), but the criticism that his works showed clear signs of sinking into everydayness did not change drastically. Given this trend, it is quite refreshing to find two articles discussing his works from the 1950s in *Heaven Tree*.

Jeong Jong-Hyun's “1950nyŏndae Yŏm Sang-sŏp sosŏl e nat'anan chŏngch'i wa yulli” [Politics and ethics in Yŏm Sang-sŏp's fictions from the 1950s] seeks political meanings inherent in the everydayness of life during the post-independence period by focusing on *Chŏlmŭn sedae* [Young generation] and *Tae rŭl mullyŏsŏ* [Passed down through the generations]. This reinterpretation could be perceived as the result of a conscious reaction to the existing negative criticism of Yŏm's later work. Jeong's article examines the romance narratives of the mid- to late 1950s in relation to *Hyop'ung* [A morning breeze], written during the independence period, and demonstrates how Yŏm's idea of “constructing the democratic state and unifying Korea” was transformed into a work of fiction (Jeong 2014, 639). Jeong thus suggests that it is high time that we view Yŏm Sang-sŏp's consciousness during the 1950s in a different light.

Lee Chul-Ho's article, “Panbok kwa yewoe, hogŭn pulganŭnghan kongdongch'e” [Repetition and exception, or the impossible community], which situates *Ch'wiu* in relation

to his other works dealing with the “modern girl,” presents a critical perspective that intersects with three other articles included in *Heaven Tree*: Kim Kyung Soo’s “Yöm Sang-söp ūi changp’yön sosöl kwa singminji modön göl ūi sösahak” [Yöm Sang-söp’s novels and the narrative of the colonial modern girl]; Shim Jin-Kyung’s “Set’ae rosöüi yösöng” [Women as social condition]; and Lee Kyoung-Hoon’s “Munja ūi chönsöng sidae” [The golden age of letters]. While the first two articles examine the modes in which women are represented in Yöm’s works, the last one illuminates the gender politics surrounding colonial men and biracial women from a more complex perspective. Lee’s “Panbok kwa yewoe, hogün pulganünghan kongdongch’e” is an exploration into the significance of *Ch’wiu*, which is somewhat different from Yöm’s other novels from the 1950s that advocated patriarchy. This article treats *Ch’wiu* as an exception, in that it “underscores the possibility of modern girls becoming the agents of their own lives, which is something unprecedented” (Lee CH 2014, 635). “Her” agency seems to have been secured during wartime, when capitalism was not at work, but ultimately falls under the control of the patriarchy. Lee interestingly interprets this as the manner in which a strategy of control by the patriarchy of Korea/Chosön itself unfolds.

What other research methods are possible in the study of Yöm Sang-söp? What other aspects remain to be discovered and “excavated”? These are the questions that arise in reading this extensive collection, which explores a wide variety of Yöm Sang-söp’s writings, from fiction and literary criticism to other genres. Lee Hye-Ryoung’s “Sosimin, red kompleksü ūi yanggak” [The petite bourgeoisie: The epitome of Red Scare] seems to offer an unhesitating answer to these questions. Instead of delving into a study of Yöm Sang-söp and his work, this article views the competition surrounding the reading and interpretation of Yöm that occurred among the later generations from a meta-perspective. This article holds particular significance in that its mindset and methodology attempt to present a creative angle from which Yöm Sang-söp and his literary works can be considered. As the author suggests, Yöm Sang-söp was read differently by two groups of critics: one that remained in South Korea and absorbed the airs of colonization, division, and the Cold War, and another that had different historical and political experiences after having gone through the April 19 Revolution. The latter group, in particular, conducted a “roundabout criticism” on “socialism, the conditions of literature, and expression of thought under the oppressive political situation” (Lee HR 2014, 48). The moment these critics appropriated *Samdae* [Three generations] by way of such criticism was a significant moment in the literary and intellectual world of Korea, when its epistemological horizons and geography were revealed. There may have been some

deliberate misreading or unconscious misunderstanding involved—or, if not, some restrictions presented by the censorship operating in this process during the period of Japanese occupation. Yet, within such limitations, the latter group of scholars and critics displayed critical interpretation and articulation by moving between the author and the texts, through which Yŏm Sang-sŏp himself impressively turns into “the source of resistance” (Oh 2014, 136).

What one discovers throughout this book is the passionate intention of the authors, who endeavor to construct Yŏm Sang-sŏp as the *topos of resistance*. As mentioned previously, imperialism, capitalism, and colonial power were the gigantic enemies he opposed. The contributors to this collection scrupulously follow the trajectories of the movement and the ideas that Yŏm realized and utilized in order to execute his opposition. The world of Yŏm Sang-sŏp is wide and complex; hence, without choosing one methodological path, a systematic and coherent explanation would soon become impossible. Perhaps due to this, “the gateways to Yŏm Sang-sŏp” created by the twenty articles in *Heaven Tree* may lead to different aspects of his work. In that sense, every article included in the book is at once complete in its own right but also engaged in an interactive relationship or mutual conversation with the others. One weakness deriving from the collective nature of this book is that it causes the book to lack a certain flow. In that respect, what seems to be missing are observations on Yŏm Sang-sŏp’s work from 1945 through 1950.

We do get a glimpse at this in *Yŏm Sang-sŏp munjang chŏnjip* [The complete collection of Yŏm Sang-sŏp’s writings] (Han and Lee 2013), which was carefully compiled by the editors of *Heaven Tree*. However, it is still problematic that *Heaven Tree* lacks any exploration into the post-independence period and the period during which separate governments were established in South and North Korea. What it means to follow the “flow” is to tenaciously trace the thoughts and questions Yŏm raised and grappled with from the time when he first started writing all the way through the post-independence period. More specifically, it involves examining how the questions of nation, state, coloniality, sovereignty, and counter-value remained or transformed during the colonial period (though, to be strict, this period cannot be grasped as a homogeneous one), after independence, and then into the 1950s. Though the study of Yŏm around the time of independence has been actively undertaken, an overall examination and new approaches are also crucial, if not required. One could say that there is a clear pursuit and awareness of a “horizontal flow” of Yŏm Sang-sŏp contained in *Heaven Tree*, in that it presents a comparative literary approach

to his acceptance and translation of knowledge and ideology across East Asia that is not constrained by national borders. In contrast, Yöm's "vertical flow"—and by "flow," I am not just referring to "continuity"—is cut off in the middle and not properly considered as a whole. Now this task is bestowed on those of us who will study Yöm Sang-söp after the publication of *Heaven Tree*.

In the article "Piru wa ömjöng" [Abjectness and strictness], Park Hyun-Soo writes:

Yöm Sang-söp's literature casts the problem that, even after it is put under evaluation or examination, there are still parts that elude these efforts. Whether one uses style as the standard to interpret him as realist or naturalist, or focuses on the ideology to define him as a nationalist or socialist, there are still aspects of Yöm's literature that resist restrictions by one definition or perspective. Even the view that his literature presents a sharp description and candid exposition of colonial discrimination and oppression is not enough to encompass his literature to the fullest extent. The fundamental reason lies in the unique characteristic of Yöm's literature that it cannot be comprehended by a single standard. (2014, 269)

This passage accurately expresses the thoughts that arise in readers' minds when they encounter Yöm Sang-söp's world. It is this multiplicity, complexity, confusion, and marginality that create productive chaos, which in turn invite constant rereading of Yöm Sang-söp and his texts. It is in this long history of "rereading" Yöm Sang-söp that the meaning and significance of *Heaven Tree* is tested and proven.

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Note

- 1 Lee Bo-young views Yöm Sang-söp's socialism as something closer to "humanitarian socialism," rather than Marx and Engels's scientific socialism.

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