Postmemory and the Image-Text

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I received funding to pursue a project on contemporary Asian diaspora poetry. This

project examines various poetry collections and their engagements with theories of photography

and postmemory. More specifically, this project currently envisions the prose poem, epistolary

form, and collage as collaborative and connective practices with the potential to enact reparative

modes of refusal, persistence, and transformation.

Over the summer, I focused on Korean poet-translator Don Mee Choi’s multilingual

poetry collection DMZ Colony (2020), as well as her previous works Hardly War (2016) and

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found it rewarding to

complement theoretical frameworks learned in the classroom with my own Korean language

proficiency, which allowed me to trace Choi’s unique translation practices. In the case of Don

Mee Choi, the work of photography intersects with the work of translation for a postmemorial

viewer and speaker. By viewing Choi’s translation work through the lens of Roland Barthes’

theory of photography (studium/punctum) outlined in his book Camera Lucida , I reach a refined

interpretation of the hybrid image-text’s inquiries and possibilities.

Through additional funding from a Koelln mini-grant, I was able to attend a writers’

conference during my fellowship period. There, I was fortunate to receive feedback from a poet

whose work is a part of my project. Her suggestions with theoretical sources and creative

practices related to image-based poetry have guided my approach.

Due to the generous support of the Surdna Foundation, the work I have produced this

summer will contribute to a senior honors thesis/independent study for this upcoming academic

year.

Faculty Mentor: Hilary Thompson

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