English Studies in Asia, Does It Make Sense?

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Introduction

Hello! My name is Chankil Park. I am a professor of English poetry teaching at Ewha Womans University at Seoul. My original mission was to have a meeting with the faculty members of the School of English here at Hong Kong University to establish a special exchange agreement at the departmental level. When we contacted professor Dirk Noel, he not only accepted our request of meeting, but also kindly invited one of the delegation to the talk in your seminar series. I agree totally with him that a discussion through an academic discourse would be a natural way of knowing each other, particularly for the academics like us. Thank you again for your thoughtful invitation, and it is absolutely a pleasure meeting you and an honor of mine to have a chance to talk to you here at Hong Kong University. Thank you also other professors, students who have joined us today. I will do my best to make my point as shortly, as less boringly as possible.

I am a scholar of British Romanticism by training, but the title of my talk today is, "English Studies in Asia: Does It Make Sense" As a scholar of English located in Asia, I have never been free from such self-consciousness ever since I started my work as a full time faculty of English Literature 22 years ago because I have been living and working in so-called “periphery” of the scholarship of English where an academic achievements in such a discipline are very much likely to be underestimated or ignored both within and without region. The following thoughts are a result of my experience as a scholar of British Romanticism located at the periphery.

1. The "Crisis" Narrative of English Studies in Anglophone Academia

The "crisis" of English Studies in Anglophone Academia has long been a commonplace. Ever since Bill Readings published *The University in Ruins*(1996) where he cogently analyzed how the university had been deteriorated from her ideal form, so many scholars have played the similar tunes, the tunes of anxiety, anger, and lament over the downfall of the university and the collapse of liberal education. Harry R. Lewis’s *Excellence Without A Soul: Does Liberal Education Have a Future?*(2006), Ellen Schrecker’s *The Lost Soul of Higher Education: Corporatization, The Assault on Academic Freedom, and the End of the American University*(2010), Martha Nussbaum's *Not for Profit*(2010), Benjamin Ginsberg's *The Fall of the Faculty*(2011), Frank Donahue's *The Last Professors*(2011), to name a few, have all tolled the knell of the University, the University where relatively small number of students are taught by tenured professors within a well-developed liberal education program consisting of the canonical works of great authors such as Homer, Plato, or William Shakespeare. More recently, Paul Jay, in his *The Humanities "Crisis" and the Future of Literary Studies*(2014) seems to take a more balanced stance on this matter. His comments are of particular pertinence to us because his book recapitulates all the major "crisis" narratives published in the last couple of decades in a wider historical context with a particular concern over the declining literary studies in the North American Universities. His summary of the "crisis" sounds familiar but seems universally true. I will start quoting a passage from his introduction to remind ourselves what predicament we all of us are facing in our universities whether we are in the center or periphery.

The humanities today seem the victim of a perfect storm. Budget cuts stemming from a persistent recession, accompanied by the defunding of public institutions of higher education through shrinking tax revenue, have threatened humanities programs everywhere. The corporatization of higher education has increasingly turned university presidents into CEOs, and academic administrators into upper management. The decisions they make regarding academic programs are increasingly driven by boards of trustees dominated by businessmen, bankers, and financial consultants whose bottom-line methods of operation are taking precedence over the traditional role faculty have played in determining academic and curricular programs. In this context, higher education is increasingly seen in sheerly instrumental terms, with courses and programs judged in terms of their pragmatic and vocational value. Education that ends in credentializing seems to be trumping education as an end in itself. For many, the teaching of practical skills is becoming more important than making sure students have a basic knowledge of history, philosophy, literature, and the arts. With the value of education being measured more and more by the economic payoff that comes after graduation, it is becoming difficult for many to understand the value of a humanities education.

2. A Story of Korean Universities: Crisis or Not?

Let me tell you a little bit about Korean situations in relation with the things Paul Jay mentioned above:

**Budget Cut**. The 2014 educational statistics in Korea shows that the Humanities occupies about 2.2% (71m us dollars) which is of course a decrease from previous years. But in Korea, the absolute amount of educational budget is less a problem than how to use them. The problem is that the government wants to use the R & D money not as a way of encouragement, but of restructuring and reduction of an academic field. Free competition for the money leaves only a few in the field. Even in those lucky few, scholars exhaust their energy not with teaching or research but with the paper works related to the research grant. You must know what I mean.

**Corporatization.** Just like companies are estimated with profit, universities are estimated with ranking. QS, The Times, Shanghai Zaotung, Leiden Ranking internationally, Ministry of Education, Joongang Daily, Chosun Daily domestically, all these companies or institutions are publishing the hierarchy of the universities. No universities are free from their evaluations, and they commit themselves to an unending race to get a better place in the table they draw at their will. Their evaluations are based on many parameters, of course. But the simplest and clearest indicator of the quality of researches carried out in a university is the total amount of R & D money. (In this respect, the humanities is almost a meaningless factor.) Just like a company is estimated in terms of annual sales, a university is estimated in terms of the total amount of research grant. Money means everything also in the university.

**Pragmatic and vocational value**. We all know that the rate of employment is getting more and more important in estimating our “utility” individually or collectively. In comparison with other humanities subjects such as history or philosophy, English department may be relatively ok as far as the employment rate is concerned. But I cannot forget a special lecture given to the whole faculty of my university a few years ago by the director of a research institute affiliated with Samsung Group who happened to be a professor of management at our neighbor university. He was talking about the role of university in a globalizing economy, and concluded his lecture with downright conviction saying that "You professors's sole mission here in the university is to grow your students into the talent that is worth "an entry annual salary of 200,000 US dollars." (I was shocked with two things: the target salary was way too high in comparison with mine, and of course his impudent provocation and simple unabashedness. How dare he say such a thing to his fellow professors?)What a shame!

**Education that ends in credentializing**. Getting a job is becoming more and more important to students. Our undergraduate is a 4 year program with 2 semesters a year. Companies are beginning to recruit a new employee from October or November which are well within the second semester. Students in their final semester have no qualm in applying for the places that do not wait until they complete the final semester in December. Perhaps 10 years ago, I simply kicked them out even before they try to "negotiate" with me. Now I am ashamed that I find myself willing to "negotiate" with them first. If not making them worth 200,000 US dollars, how could I block them to make a living with a regular job which was one and only objective of university degree in the first place? Besides, it would make our department employment rate even higher!

Perhaps I can go on like this cynically making fun of myself and my fellow professors who are suffering from serious identity crises.

3. The Identity Crisis of English Scholars in Asia: English Teacher or Scholar?

Yes. we are suffering from identity crisis, perhaps with somewhat different reasons from those of Western English scholars. Located in Asia, to whom should we make our academic contributions? As a researcher, I could perhaps write for the world if I write in English. But most of my research papers have been written in Korean for multiple reasons. First, English is not my native language and it is not very convenient vehicle of writing taking long time to publish. We are required to publish 1-2 articles every year and we are evaluated every year by the university. Besides, it is very difficult to believe that Wordsworth scholars of Anglophone world are waiting for my academic contribution more eagerly than those in Korea. Of course I cannot be sure about my Korean colleagues. Then for whom should my academic activities be done? Obviously, it is more reasonable that the place to which my academic contribution should be made is Korea, the place I live. Then what does it mean to be a professor of English Literature in Korea?

(Well, the fact that English is not my native language is of course a handicap but an advantage. As a scholar of English Literature, my "accessibility" to the texts in English cannot but be evidently lower than my counterparts in the Anglophone academia. But in my own community, my English proficiency is much more, much readily appreciated than in the West, which is the reason why a teacher of English Language is the most readily accepted professional identity that I am accredited with in my own country. But it was the case only before Korea opened its gate to the global market of English education. We started to "import" English teachers from the Anglophone world, and it was them, "English Native Speaker Teachers" who began to take over the responsibility of English Teaching from us the English Literature professors. Outside the university, the layman, who used to "respect" us as "experts in English," came to believe "Native Speaker Lecturers of English Conversation" more than English scholars of Wordsworth or Shakespeare. As a matter of fact, we Korean professors of English do not regret particularly that we no longer function as English teachers. We do not appreciate the job of teaching "College English" to the freshmen or making English tests for all kinds of entrance exams which used to be carried out usually by junior staff or part-time lectures.)

The professional identity we ourselves assume is a scholar of English literature or linguistics regardless of the working location. We perform our academic work for an imaginary general public in and out of the country who are supposed to read our papers . We have not had any particular awareness of our nationality or national identity when we teach English Literature or English Linguistics to our students whether they are Korean or not. We have not assumed any particular nationalities as our main readership when we write our research papers. If we are required to justify our professional contributions to our community we live in, will it be ok to go on like this? How could we cope with their barbarous treatments of our profession if we cannot prove our "utility" in those terms that would be understandable even to them.

4. The English Scholar as a Translator of Culture

(I am not representing all Korean professors of English Department, not even those of my own department where 17 full time professors (apart from myself prof. Choi over there) are working. There are about 2,600 full time teaching staff of English Literature or Linguistics in 202 4 year universities in Korea. They must be very diverse and disparate in their sense of professional identity and social contributions. So, the following thoughts are entirely mine based on my own experience of 21 years as a teacher and a scholar in Korea.)

I have always thought that the role of Korean scholar of English Literature was that of a translator, the translator not only of language, but more significantly of culture. Korea was opened by force in the late 19th century by foreign countries, particularly by the imperialistic Japan which had preemptively taken the modernity of the West through Meiji Innovation. That modernity was enforced upon Korea by Japan for 36 years through their colonial domination of Korea between 1910 and 1945. After getting the independence from Japan in 1945, US replaced Japan as a model of modernization. Whether or not we like it, there is no way of understanding the modernity of Korea without Japan and United States. The modernity of the West which was "translated" by Japan, the modernity of the West which was "adapted" by the United States were indeed the driving force behind the modernization of Korea, and it was Korean scholars of English Literature who had first understood those particular models of modernity in Korea. If it was UK(as was translated by Japan) and US that had been playing the most dominant roles in establishing the World Order since the 19th century, it was Korean scholars of English Literature who "translated" the best part of their modern civilization into our own cultural resources. It was obviously the contribution they had made far more important than simple teaching of English language.

5. The English Scholar, a Local Agent responsible for imparting the ideology of postcolonial colonialism?

I know that my idea sounds like Arnold's: a civilized man pursuing perfection making "the best that has been thought and known in the world current everywhere." I am also aware of Edward Said's critique on Arnold. Our naive acceptance of what he described as "sweetness and light" simply as "the best" achieved by mankind could make us blind to the sinister nature of the cultural strategy of imperialism, and some may well think that we, perhaps without our knowledge, are working for the colonialists, working as the "local agents" of their cultural apparatus to impart the postcolonial colonialism. The Asian scholars of English might never be entirely free from such suspicion. It is undeniably evident that the scholars located in the "periphery" tend to be oriented towards the "center." My own department, for example, has 19 full time faculties and 17 of them have American or British Ph D, I do not see anything qualitatively different in their teaching and research from those of their counterparts in the "center." We both of us have been colonies once and the decolonization must be an important social issue to both of us. I understand that the decolonization process in Hong Kong could involve an even trickier problem: how to establish a new social order which would be acceptable to the Mainland China without sacrificing the democracy you have been enjoying under the colonial regime. As far as the decolonization is concerned, Korea is not an easy case either. Japan, the old colonial power, is still not genuinely regretful of their colonial domination in the past. Both Korea and Japan have been staunch allies to Unites States economically and militarily ever since 1945, but US has never clearly taken Korea's side in the long history of our ideological conflicts with Japan. If I am allowed to simplify, I would summarize like this: US has always supported Japan more than Korea especially in relation with our decolonization process because US has always been more interested in maintaining *status quo* in this region than making Korea a really independent country free from its colonial inheritance. The point is that the issue of decolonization is very much alive both in Hong Kong and Korea in the contemporary politics. My question then is how could we justify our profession of an English scholar, the "problematic" scholarship under the suspicion of collaboration with the old(and new) colonial power? How could we make our translation of their best "culture," a real enrichment of our intellectual resources, not a propagation of a new colonialism which often disguises itself as transnational capitalism or neoliberalism. Knowing that the "great tradition" of English literature was in fact "planned and produced" as a part of the cultural strategy of imperial Britain, how could we make the essence of their real creative achievement as our own without succumbing to its possibly colonialistic purport.

6. A Personal Recollection: Military Dictatorship in Korea(1961-87) and University Students's Roles in Democratization Movement

At this point, I cannot help being self-confessional. I was very much self-conscious of the political implication of my academic pursuit from its very beginning. I entered the university back in 1980 right after President Park, Korea's first military dictator who was father of the current president Park, was shot dead by one of his subordinates. It was when everybody was dreaming of a rosy future of democracy in Korea, and the university was the very center of such a political idealism. In Korea, many intellectuals including writers, journalists, and university professors participated actively in the democratization movement against General Park's government between 1961-79. University Students, though young, were always the main component in the street demonstration. I started my university life in such an atmosphere. However, we had another military dictator, General Chun, who took the power after he had suppressed people's revolt at Kwangju killing hundreds of rebellious citizens. It was May 1980, only 2 months after I entered the university. It was an age of violence to which students responded with violence. Street demonstrations were a part of our daily lives during which many friends of mine got arrested, imprisoned, even killed. I was not an active member of political movements, but did share, as it were, "the spirit of the age" like anybody else.

7. William Wordsworth, a Revolutionary Poet

That was why I was attracted to the story of William Wordsworth who was known as a poet of revolution who had personally witnessed the very early stage of the French Revolution. I tried to read Wordsworth's poetry in the context of his political imagination, which could be, I thought, my own political engagement through my academic pursuit. It was a naive thought of course because reading revolutionary poems is one thing, and participating in the real politics entirely another. And Wordsworth's radicalism itself turned out to be much more short-lived than I had hoped it would be. It took only less than a decade for a revolutionary poet who declared,

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,

But to be young was very Heaven! ...

When Reason seemed the most to assert her rights
When most intent on making of herself
A prime enchanter to assist the work,
Which then was going forwards in her name!

(ll. 108-109, 113-116, Book X, *The Prelude*, 1805)

to become the one who claimed,

O for the coming of that glorious time
When, prizing knowledge as her noblest wealth
and best protection, this imperial Realm,
While she exacts allegiance, shall admit
And obligation, on her part, to teach
Them who are born to serve her and obey;

(ll. 293-298, Book IX, *The Excursion*, 1814)

Percy Bysshe Shelley who had actually been one of the most devoted disciples of Wordsworth, exclaimed with lament that “What a beastly and pitiful wretch that Wordsworth! That such a man should be such a poet!” It was a great disillusionment to me to recognize later that his celebration of "that glorious time" turned out to be a proleptic expression of British imperialism and his attachment to British land as was warmly expressed in "Michael" was to be used as the spiritual foundation of the British imperialism as was recently indicated by some romantic scholars. Isn't it a typical example of a dramatic irony that my choice of subject, apparently motivated by the political subconsciousness of a would-be anti-colonialist literary scholar proved to be the very origin of the British colonialism? But I do not have any regret of having become a scholar of Wordsworth because what I had liked (and continue to like) in Wordsworth was his early poems inspired by his political idealism he learned for Michael Beaupuy, a revolutionary army officer and his passionate love of democracy. What enabled him to conceive such idealism all against the main current of British politics was the fact that he was absolutely alienated from the center of British cultural circles. Wordsworth was spiritually an exile all along his radical years of the 1790s. When he heard the defeat of British army at the Battle of *Hondschoote* on September 8 1793, for example, Wordsworth felt himself typically as the one "like an uninvited guest" in his home country.

When Englishmen by thousands were o'erthrown,

Left without glory on the field, or driven,

Brave hearts! to shameful flight. It was a grief,

Grief call it not, 'twas anything but that,-

A conflict of sensations without name,
...And, 'mid the simple worshippers, perchance,

I only, like an uninvited guest
Whom no one owned, sate silent, shall I add,
Fed on the day vengeance yet to come?

(ll.262-266, 272-275, Book X, *The Prelude* 1805)

His expectation of "the day vengeance" was surely unpatriotic, but his sense of alienation in which he was able to remain intact from the 'Church and King" patriotism was the very condition for his political insight to see through the parochial narrow-mindedness of many British intellectuals who had quickly turned their backs to the political idealism of the French Revolution to which they also had welcomed at first. Wordsworth's political idealism was made possible by a kind of cosmopolitan point of view he had adapted from a French army officer who was absolutely “external” to British tradition. We all know that Wordsworth lost his poetic creativity exactly when he began to settle into British soil, recovering his sense of national identity as a British subject as was indicated by his accepting the appointment of the distributor of stamps in 1813.

8. Lord Byron and the Value of the "Otherness"

Such "externality" or “otherness” to the parochial nature of British culture Wordsworth had once shown was inherited by Lord Byron whose political idealism was in fact anything but British. He was not only physically expelled from British soil, but spiritually exiled far into Europe. Childe Harold, his poetic avatar, is really a character of European cast into which he was built by Byron's own Grand Tour, the educational program for British aristocracy to go beyond the parochialism of British culture. Byron's *Childe Harold Pilgrimage* is to me a kind of poetic antithesis Byron had to construct outside Britain as an antidote to Wordsworthian egotistic sublimity Wordsworth had been establishing on the British soil. Byron's "unpatriotic" but historically correct reflection is made when Harold stands upon the place of Britain's historical victory over Napoleon at which many British travelers would have nothing but rapturous feelings of national pride. Byron's response was far different.

Fit retribution - Gaul may champ the bit

And foam in fetters - but is Earth more free?
Did nations combat to make *One* submit:

Or league to teach all kings true Sovereignty?
What! shall reviving Thraldom again be
The patched-up Idol of enlightened days?
Shall we, who struck the Lion down, shall we
Pay the wolf homage? proffering lowly gaze
And servile knees to thrones? No; *prove* before ye praise!

(ll 163-171, Stanza 19, Canto III, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*)

Byron's clear-eyed insight into the most dramatic moment of the modern history of the West, the downfall of Napoleon, is really admirable, which I believe was made possible only by his truly international perspective far beyond the realm of Britain. And it was an expression of his political idealism conceived with European mind, the kind of idealism Wordsworth had once had. What Byron wanted to overcome through Harold's educational journey was a petty nationalism which makes people blind not only to historical justice of a political event but also to literary justice to the poets of universal and permanent fame. Byron criticize vehemently the Florentines who, ignorant of the true value of Dante, did not allow him to be buried in his own hometown with petty political reasons.

Ungrateful Florence! Dante sleeps afar,
Like Scipio, buried by the upbraiding shore:

Thy factions, in their worse than civil war,
Proscribed the Bard whose name forevermore
Their children's children would in vain adore
With the remorse of ages; and the crown
Which Petrarch's laureate brow supremely wore,

Upon a far and foreign soil had grown,
His Life, his Fame, his Grave, though rifled -not thine own.

(ll. 505-513. Stanza 57, Canto IV, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*)

The reason why I have examined Wordsworth and Byron is to indicate that both works, *The Prelude* and *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, constituting the canon of the great tradition of British Literature themselves, were made possible only by their "external" point of view, or the "otherness" to the British tradition. Their cosmopolitanism remained more or less within the limit of European territory, but doesn't it strongly suggest the real value of "externality" or "otherness" of the viewpoint in reading history and culture? Self-awareness of our Asian identity, recognition of our "otherness", aren't they give us a new perspective with which to read their classic literature with fresh insights otherwise unavailable? As Byron's perspective "external" to the tradition of Italian literature enabled him to appreciate more clearly the universal value of Dante, our own cultural context, so external to that of Europe, may well be providing an advantageous viewpoint from which we could do more justice to the real value of their literature. Perhaps such awareness is a suitable first step to take to think about an anti-colonial "translation" of their culture from a truly international perspective.

9. The "Utility" of Romantic Education: the Idea of *Bildung*

I have been trying to explain my thoughts on how Asian English Studies could make sense making a distinctive contribution to the literary scholarship itself whether it is in the center or periphery. It was mainly about the significance of our research performed here in Asia. To be able to justify our profession of university professors in relation to the geographic location of Asia, we should think about our performances as teacher. What kind of teaching should we commit ourselves, what "relevance" could we claim with our education of English Literature here in Asia? Earlier I was talking about a little bit of colonial past both of us have and our rather "awkward" place in which we find ourselves in relation to that matter. Are we just "local agents" voluntarily working for the colonial ideologues of the Anglo-American world still alive and kicking? Perhaps the question itself would be an unforgivable insult on our trade if it were given by somebody outside Asia. But the question had always been hanging around within my mind for a long time. My answer is of course, Definitely Not! But what are we doing now? What have we been contributing precisely to our communities? As far as Korea is concerned, I can say this. If we agree to Martha Nessbaum's opinion that we need the humanities for democracy, not for profit, we Korean scholars of English studies do have a lot of meaningful works to do because there is still long way to go for Korea to reach the level of Democracy United States or UK have. Yes, we have been making a progress and been able to elect the president with a relatively democratic system since 1987. But democracy precisely up to that point. This is not a place for a political speech, but I have to say this. Unless we have people enlightened enough not to vote for the candidate who denies the cause of democracy justifying the dictatorship for economic prosperity forgetting how much sacrifice had been made to end that very dictatorship in less than three decades, the democracy materialized in the election system is only of limited use. Wordsworth himself had the same feeling of disenchantment as mine when he exclaimed “France was like a dog/ Returning to his vomit”(*The Prelude*, 1805, Book X, l. 935). Democracy depends on people and the people should change, the people should get enlightened. The people should learn that democracy is achieved only in proportion to the extent that they realize the real value of Libery, Equality, and Fraternity . In this context, I think we could argue that our teaching does have enormous amount of "utility": we could grow a citizen embodying civic virtues necessary for democracy if not "a talent making "an entry annual salary of two hundred thousand US dollars." In this regard also, we have a lot to learn from the Romantic studies because the idea of liberal education established in the 19th century originated from the Romantics. It would be a long story if I follow properly the history of liberal education in Britain (from Wordsworth, Newman, Mill, Arnold, and Leavis), but I will briefly explain the concept of "Bildung" that I believe lies beneath all the major literary projects of British Romanticism. Let me start with a short description of "Bildung" from a book on the early German romantics.

This word(*Bildung*) signifies two processes--learning and personal growth--but they are not understood apart from one another, as if education were only a means to growth. Rather, learning is taken to be constitutive of personal development, as part and parcel of how we become a human being in general and a specific individual in particular. If we regard education as part of a general process of *self-realization*--as the development of all one's characteristic powers as a human being and as an individual--...they(the romantics) insisted that self-realization is an end in itself...the very purpose of existence. (*The Romantic Imperative*, Frederick C. Beiser, pp.91-92)

"Bildung" means literally "education," in German but what makes the "Bildung" special is that it means a kind of "automatic" education. Man learns by himself. Man learns not from the textbooks, not from teacher, but from himself, but from an introspection into himself. How could we learn by ourselves? That is because we have "the perfect man" already within ourselves which are waiting to be realized in due course. Many people think that Friedrich Schiller gave a classic expression to those thoughts in his *Aesthetic Letter*.

It may be urged that every individual man carries within himself, at least in his adaptation and destination, a purely ideal man. The great problem of his existence is to bring all the incessant changes of his outer life into conformity with the unchanging unity of this ideal. (*Aesthetic Letters* IV, Second Paragraph)

We have the type of a perfect man installed within ourselves, and all we have to do is to allow such a man realize itself naturally. Hence Rousseau who wanted to leave the children to grow without any intervention of school education. Hence Wordsworth who wanted us to throw away the books and go out to enjoy Nature. But Schiller was not an advocate of "natural" education like Rousseau or Wordsworth, but an advocate of "art" education. Schiller's "art" comprises not only the fine art in the modern sense but also poetry, drama, music, etc that are related to the development of human sensibility. And this is the very origin of the idea of liberal education, the education with special focus on the literary classics in the later development in the 19th century Britain. We also know that this was the foundational idea of Berlin University created by Wilhelm Humboldt in 1810, although philosophy, not art, occupied a central place in his curriculum of "Bildung." With this romantic concept of "Bildung" in mind, we now come to understand why we have so many stories of "growth of mind" in the poetic projects of Romanticism. Apart from *The Prelude* and *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* we have already mentioned above, a story of “the growth of mind” is everywhere: Wordsworth’s famous “Tintern Abbey, The young poet of The Ruined Cottage, The wedding Guest of Coleridge’s Ancient Mariner, The Poet in Shelley's “Alastor,” and many “Byronic” characters typically portrayed in Byron’s *Don Juan*. I believe that teaching and reading such works which describe the growth of human mind, nurturing the human sensibility is of enormous "utility" in the modern world as well. In the country like Korea, which has to learn what civic virtues make a democratic country, such a story of growth conceiving a dream of a perfect man in the West is an education of great significance. Living as a professor of humanistic disciplines like English Language and Literature in the age of transnational capitalism, it is impossible not to fight against the barbaric logic of Neoliberalism that threatens our work places in a fundamental way. Maybe it might become a reiteration of the same old stories we heard again and again in the last 100 years to argue against utilitarians with a romantic dream of "Bildung,” but I believe that it is still useful and significant to remind once again what John Stuart Mill recollected in his biography how he had come to realize the importance of human sympathy through Wordsworth's poetry.

What made Wordsworth's poems a medicine for my state of mind was that they expressed, not outward beauty but states of feeling, and of thought coloured by feeling, under the excitement of beauty. They seemed to be the very culture of the feelings which was in quest of. By their means I seemed to draw from s cource of inward joy, of sympathetic and imaginative pleasure, which could be shared in by all human beings, which had no connection with struggle or imperfection, but would be made richer by every improvement in the physical or social condition of mankind. (John Stuart Mill, John M. Robson and Jack Stillinger eds. *Autobiography and Literary Essays*. University of Toronto Press, 1981. p.150.)

10. Concluding Remarks

What I have been trying to argue with this idea of *Bildung* as the key concept of Romantic Education is that we still need them to grow our students into the World Citizens with civic virtue for democracy. What Mill had learned from Wordsworth’s early nature poetry was the sensibility of human sympathy, the ability to feel the pain of others’s as if they were his own. Only such ability, “he could afford to suffer/ With those whom he saw suffer”(*The Excursion*, Book First, ll. 370-71). Such mental ability brings about an emotional attachment to the community, the sense of fraternity which is the very foundation of a democratic society.

I have been trying to explain to you how to make a sense of Asian scholarship of English Studies, how to make them more “relevant” to the community we live in. The “otherness” our geographical location conditioned us with could become an advantage, not a handicap as a scholar of English. The romantic ideal of *Bildung* might still be a valid justification of our trade in our region. Let me conclude my little story of English Studies in Asia with a quotation from a recent book “The Global Future of English Studies”(Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) by an American scholar who is quite appropriately named “James English”. After his statistically based analysis of the current states of English studies both in and outside the Anglophone academia, professor English wants to draw a conclusion by presenting a prospect rather more positive than those of authors of “crisis” narratives.

The future expansion of English studies will mostly occur outside the discipline’s traditional Anglophone and European bas. We are approaching a turning point at which, in strictly quantitative terms, the most consequential decisions about what and how we teach will be made on the seeming peripheries of the discipline. This represents an opportunity for all of us in the field to unsettle the established pattern of time-lag emulation, whereby the literary curriculum at a university in Seoul resembles that of a university in New York 30 years earlier. The tail of foreign variants is becoming long enough to wag the dog of domestic English lit. The English departments in East Asia, only just now beginning to test the water of Anglophone Asian literatures, could have much to contribute to the future of that burgeoning field.

(English 191)

Although I know that there is no more time-lag of 30 years in the curriculum of English departments in Seoul, I want to share his optimism for the future of Global English Studies indicating that there may be something else too that we could contribute to this field other than the subject of Anglophone Asian literatures.

Coda: EPASIA(English Portal Asia)

Before I finish my talk, I want to introduce an incomplete project which was created by myself a few years ago to forge an academic community of English Scholars in Asia making use of digital technology on the Web.

EPASIA(English Portal Asia) was created back in 2006, being operated for a while and remain incomplete from about 5-6 years ago. It is still working, but requires a substantial update. Since we have recently selected for the next stage of Brain Korea Project until 2020, we are thinking of revitalizing it with a little help from our friends abroad who might be also interested in establishing a network of academic collaboration in Asian region.

(I have been working on Digital Humanities(formerly called Humanities Computing) ever since 1999, having completed 6 different projects related to what is now known as Digital Humanities. EPASIA is the peak of my digital commitments in the last 15 years. EPASIA has the following characteristics.)

a. Global Scope: EPASIA is an Academic Portal Site specialized in English Studies, which was, of course, inspired by Alan Liu’s *Voice of the Shuttle*. Whereas VOS is a comprehensive portal covering all subjects in the humanities and social sciences, EPASIA is only for the English Studies. What is unique about EPASIA, however, is its truly global scope; it covers not only Anglo-American regions (UK, US, Australia) but also many Asian countries such as China, Japan, Singapore, Taiwan, the Philippines, India, and Korea. (So far we have uploaded information about a little more than 700 sites for English Studies collected from all over the world and we are hoping to increase our number of items and the quality of our information with the collaboration of our foreign partners. If they contribute contents produced in their native regions perhaps after their own "translation," EPASIA can become a truly unique collection of site information, which, I hope, will make the hitherto-unknown Asian scholarship in English studies more visible to Western academic communities.)

b. Collaborative Networking: EPASIA is also an annotated Webliography (bibliography of academic web contents). EPASIA’s annotations are given by an open-ended, bilateral network of scholars and graduate students in Asia. (A site concerning Jean Rhys maintained by professor Pin-chia Feng of Taiwan, for example, was annotated by a graduate student of my department majoring in contemporary British fiction who maintains her own website related to her major field. An annotator is asked to contribute reviews of items in her major field to EPASIA in a standardized format, just in the way an independent local TV production company provides a national broadcasting system with its own programs.) The contents of EPASIA are (thus) uploaded and maintained by a networked community of students and scholars who best know the contents in their own professional fields.

c. Digital Publishing & Archiving: EPASIA presents an international academic journal of English Studies, published both as a peer-reviewed e-journal and as a paper journal. Print or audio-visual materials produced through international conferences, workshops, and lecture series are collected and archived in the EPASIA database(, and some of them are already provided to the general public. Digital mediations of local academic activities will also make Asian scholars a more significant presence in Western academic communities. What we can do with a digital project like EPASIA may seem at first to be little more than Caliban’s clumsy challenge to Prospero. With a little bit more solidarity and positive participation among us, however, we may achieve something far more constructive than Caliban’s curse.)

For more details, you can refer to the leaflets I prepared or you can visit the site epasia.org yourself.

This is it for today, and thank you very much for your listening. Thanks a lot.