

Research Articles and Essays**Disability Metaphors and Patriotic-Enlightenment Movement in*****The Korea Daily News, 1907-1910***

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Abstract

This article explores how disability metaphors were used in *the Korea Daily News* from 1907 to 1910, particularly in the section titled *pyunpyungidam*, meaning strange stories. The author argues that this early modern Korean newspaper used blindness to portray its antagonists and to construct “illegitimate” citizens in the context of the patriotic enlightenment movement against colonialism. This article also shows how language disabilities were used as a metaphor to express despair because of Japanese colonial media censorship.

Keywords: disability, metaphors, *the Korea Daily News*

Disability has been overlooked in both enlightenment studies and postcolonial studies, despite the use of the idea and image of disabilities to shape and symbolize the ideas of enlightenment and colonialism. As Cleall and Gust (2021) put it, it has been assumed that “all histories of the enlightenment can be written without consideration of disability, or the marginalization of disability as an insignificant side-issue.” The age of enlightenment was the time when the disability was constructed as something abnormal that must not be tolerated in society (Thomson, 1997). This idea of “abnormality” not only oppressively impacts people with disabilities but also works as part of the reasoning of enlightenment philosophy. For instance, western enlightenment philosophers used disabilities as an experimental object to examine humanness, the link of mind and the body, and the condition of a civilized individual (Cleall & Gust, 2021; Wright, 2010).

In a similar vein to studies of enlightenment, postcolonial studies also lack investigation into questions of disability in their work, with the exception of a few scholars (Barker, 2014; Barker & Murray, 2010; Erevelles & Minear, 2010; Grech & Soldatic, 2015; Sherry, 2007) who explored the intersections of disability studies and postcolonial studies. While postcolonial studies actively engage with race, gender, and ethnicity to analyze colonial and postcolonial texts, they have almost entirely neglected disability (Grech and Soldatic, 2015). In addition, Grech and Soldatic (2015) also mention how “there are few references to processes of disablement for disabled people in [postcolonial] scholarship,” even while they use disablement as a metaphor to describe the colonized condition.

Considering the Korean context, there is almost no study of disabilities in enlightenment and postcolonial studies published in English or Korean. While symbolic meanings of disabilities in Korean literature during colonization have been explored (Han,

1991; Kim, 2016), the idea of disability as a part of the mechanism of enlightenment and colonial frameworks is rarely examined. In this vein, this study aims to explore how disability was constructed in newspaper articles in early 20th century Korea, in which several social ideas were rigorously introduced, contested, and implemented, including enlightenment, colonial imperialism, western ideas of modernization, patriotism, etc. This study approaches the Korean news discourse on disability as a way to critically review Korean patriotic enlightenment thoughts in the colonial context, as well as their process of disablement in the context of colonization and the enlightenment movement in Korea. Toward this research goal, this study analyzed *The Korea Daily News*, specifically the *pyunpyungidam* column from 1907 to 1910.

The Korea Daily News and Pyunpyungidam Section

Most modern newspapers in Korea emerged around the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, amid the situation of invasion by western and Japanese imperial powers with a view toward accomplishing the independence of Korea and “enlightening” Koreans with a new wave of western ideas of modernization. In particular, the era between 1895 (Gabo Reformation) and 1910 (The colonization of Korea by Japan) in Korea is usually called the patriotic enlightenment period. During this period, the concept of modernity was introduced to Korean intellectuals, and they sought to implement this new concept as a tool not only to reform the Korean society but also to defend the country from imperial nations, particularly Japan. In this process, “print capitalism” played a major role in shaping Korean modernity to become more like western countries. The modern print media, such as newspaper, journals, textbooks, literature collections, and modern novels provided a place for the production of discourse in which various new modern concepts competed with each other (Jin, 2004; Kim, 2007), in particular in order to overcome this national crisis in Korea. In particular, *Korea*

Daily News, which is under the scope of this article, is considered the center of rigorous patriotic enlightenment discourse (Jung, 2003).

The Korea Daily News was first published on July 18, 1904, by Ernest Thomas Bethell, a British Journalist, and ran the Strange Stories section beginning on May 23, 1907, until the newspaper's final publishing date on August 28, 1910. At that time, Japan was already exercising strong censorship of the newspapers, and suppressing Korean newspapers and journalists. However, because the publisher was British – whereas main editor (Gi-tak Yang) and most journalists were Koreans – *the Korea Daily News* was able partially to avoid that type of censorship until 1907. *The Korea Daily News* was the most influential and popular media outlet on behalf of the Korean People. The main themes of *the Korea Daily News* were the independence of Korea, modernization and enlightenment, and these themes appeared frequently with the intersection of disability in its articles.

The Korea Daily News regularly featured a section of unusual fictional stories involving people with disabilities from 1907 to 1910. The name of that section was *pyunpyungdam*, meaning a kind of curious, strange, interesting, or weird story. While *the Korea Daily News* mostly delivered facts and actual events, it compiled this particular section from reader contributions. Readers sent their fictional stories to *the Korea Daily News* to express their desire to become writers or storytellers (Jeon, 2010). While many of them focused on sensational or fun stories, this section also published satire stories and social criticisms (Jeon, 2010). It is noteworthy that editors of *the Korea Daily News* also emphasized that modern fictional stories should be enlightening and didactic (Koo, 209) in their editorials.

According to Jeon (2010), 746 stories in total were published in the *pyunpyungdam* section. I found 328 articles from the *pyunpyungdam* section in the Korean newspaper

archive database (<http://kinds.or.kr>). As seen in Table 1, sixteen stories relating to disabilities were found among them. In total, forty-five articles from the *pyunpyungidam* section, as well as editorial and general news sections in *the Korea Daily News* were analyzed to understand those sixteen stories. The topic of disabilities in the *pyunpyungidam* section has been rarely recognized among scholars in Korean literatures. For example, Jeon (2010) classifies 126 *pyunpyungidam* articles thematically and finds thirteen themes, including general funny stories, gender issues, family relationships, criticism on Korean society in general, or other empires, except the topic of disabilities. Disability is so invisible that its stories are classified as “general” funny stories. Table 1 shows a summary of *pyunpyungidam* stories relating to disabilities. All disability-related terms were directly translated from the stories, even though most of them are not acceptable or appropriate in present Korea and they are considered derogatory language. But in the early 1900s, they were common words to describe people with deafness or language disability. They include *jangnim* or *sokyung* (literally person with a cane and indicating people with blindness), *beongeori* or *banbeongeori* (literally meaning mute or half-mute, indicating people with hearing disabilities and/or language disabilities). *Byungsin* was translated as “cripple,” which literally means defective body, and described people with physical disabilities.

	Date	Subject
1	12/18/1907	a ‘half-mute’ family (parents, a daughter, and a son-in-law)
2	6/23/1908	a ‘mute’ son of ‘mute’ parents, who became a scholar
3	7/3/1908	a daughter-in-law who killed a chicken to prevent the sunrise
4	12/5/1908	communication of a deaf/‘mute’ woman with an officer by means of gestures
5	12/6/1908	a father and a bad son with disabilities
6	12/24/1908	three men pretending to be ‘mutes’ for begging
7	1/6/1909	one blind man imagining future prosperity based on one found coin
8	1/14/1909	officer Min's impropriety of speech
9	1/29/1909	Impressions of a deaf man, a blind man, and a ‘crippled’ man, about a temple

10	3/24/1909	misunderstanding of “teeth” (sounds like "stupid mute," taken to mean vulva)
11	6/15/1909	two blind men discussing the colors and patterns of a temple
12	8/12/1909	the inability of three ‘half-mute’ daughters to disguise their disability
13	8/18/1909	two officers insulting each other (“son of a monk” and “son of a shaman”)
14	11/14/1909	a person pretending to be a ‘mute’ for begging
15	8/7/1910	a ‘half-mute’ family (parents, their daughter, and their son-in-law)
16	8/23/1910	low-level officers drive away a bad superior officer

Table 1 Summary of Pyunpyungidam stories relating to disabilities

To explore how the newspaper media used the disability metaphor, I incorporated the methods of critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Gee, 1999; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). This article first examines what people with disabilities in pyunpyungidam represent, and then situates these disabilities metaphors in the context of patriotic enlightenment movement in colonial time in Korea.

Disability Metaphors in *The Korea Daily News*

This article focuses on two disability metaphors – blind and ‘mute’/‘half-mute’. Rather than using these words to describe individuals with disabilities from that period, the pyunpyungidam section stories constructed social meanings around these labels and conveyed other metaphorical meanings through the stories. In the pyunpyungidam section, the metaphor of blindness was used to refer to any Koreans who lacked awareness of historical change. They were also constructed as a non-legitimate Korean citizen. The mute / half-mute metaphor was used to describe the tragedy of the absence of media freedom under Japanese censorship, including the loss of Korean “voices” in the newspapers.

Blind Metaphor

“Blindness” as lack of awareness. The main characteristic of persons who are blind in *pyunpyungidam* is not simply presented as a physical condition of vision, but also as a sort of absence of awareness. In other words, the blind in these stories are unable to see something, and furthermore they cannot “see” that very fact of what they cannot see. One story from 1909 presents this kind of characteristic of blindness:

One blind man, one deaf man and one cripple went to see a temple. They sat on the rock to rest their tired legs when they reached a place after crossing over big mountains and rugged passes. Then, the blind man pointed toward the mountain with his cane far away and said, “How great it is! The various colors of the temple building are so clear and bright that I cannot forget it. How poor is the person who cannot see that scene!” (Jang, 1909)

The motive of this story can be found from the story itself. A man who is blind went to see a temple and was quite impressed with the colors of the temple building. There is a common Korean saying related to this scene and this image of the blind. That proverb, which might apply in this context to the blind man’s way of seeing the patterns and colors of temple building, is “*sogyong dancheonggugyeong*,” which means a wasted or unappreciated sight, or seeing things without discerning their contents. When the man in the first story speaks of how great the temple building was with its beautiful colors, this newspaper’s readers would likely laugh at his exclamation and think that he was silly and ignorant, since it is assumed that he could not really see the temple but is only pretending to be able to see it.

Regardless of their prior experiences of vision or lack thereof, their present inability to see is not their most important characteristic in these stories, but rather, what is most

significant is that they are pretending to know something that they cannot possibly know. Why does the story talk about blindness in this way? The limitation referred to here is not especially related to literal, disability, but is rather connected to particular characteristics of ignorant and pretentious people in general. This can be one indication that the focus of these stories is not to discuss particular or even typical real-life blind people, but rather to covertly discuss and criticize a target, as a concealed subtext of the narrative.

An important clue is found in one editorial in the same newspaper, which is useful in explaining the usage of blind metaphor in the *pyunpyungidam* stories.

Though Sakwang has good ears, he will not be able to hear as a representative of the obscure deaf. And though Iru has good eyes, he will not be able to see as a representative of millions of blind people. ... Some people say that the sky is round and earth is square; the sun has the appearance of a king and the moon the appearance of a subject. Nonsensical ideas are often stated. ... People talk about the countries of the world, and believe in ridiculous things like Kwanhung-kuk (“Stitched-chest-land,” a country where people sew their own chests closed) and Ilmok-kuk (“Cyclops-land”). Because they have become blind and deaf citizens: they cannot see or hear, even though they see with their eyes and hear with their ears. (continuation omitted) (“Botonggyoyugui pillyo,” July 7, 1908)

Unlike the *pyunpyungidam* section, the identity of the blind and the deaf is clearly explained in this editorial. While the editorial was explicitly intended to “educate” readers, the *pyunpyungidam* as a fictional story sought to “entertain” readers, with the message of enlightenment and modernization remaining implicit (Jeon, 2010). People who are blind in the *pyunpyungidam* stories are Korean citizens who still hold nonsensical ideas and ridiculous beliefs, and who fail to recognize that a nasty wind and horrible rain invade the

front yard and door [of Korea] (“Botonggyoyugui pillyo,” July 7, 1908). In this vein, people with disabilities in the pyunpyungdam section represented analogously as “disabled” with respect to their time and culture. According to Ryu (2005), the early Korean newspapers criticized Koreans’ lack of awareness or “wisdom” because its editors thought that Koreans were too ignorant to realize that injustice of the present situation and they did not even have a sense of shame or anger

Blindness for what? At this point, one question arises: What are people who are blind- metaphorically Koreans – “supposed” to see, that they are blamed for failing to see? One story (“Dorosogyeong,” 1909) of a man’s being made able to see, seems to offer a very interesting response to this question. In this story, there is a man who used to be blind, but whose eyes have suddenly been opened, and now he is sitting in the street crying. He says that the sky, earth, sun, moon, mountain, and river are so radiant and so charming that he cannot walk. A teacher in the country gives him the advice that he should become blind again and the man agrees with the advice. The meaning of the sky, earth, sun, moon, mountain and river in this story is not clear. Fortunately, though, the newspaper added commentary to the story, at the end of the section. They edited the paragraph of commentary in a way different to the story itself, in order to mark that this commentary is not part of the story.

Currently, there are many persons who are sitting in the street crying because they are too surprised with the new culture of the world to have a sense of direction. No one leads them to progress, and stubborn scholars mislead them back to their former behaviors and pleasures. It is miserable! How many have become blind again!
 (“Dorosogyeong,” 1909)

In this story, what the metaphorically blind are supposed to see comes to the front. They ought to see and learn the “new culture of the world.” The teacher in the country may

be depicting a Confucian who wishes to preserve his traditional philosophy and culture in Korea, and is opposed to accepting modern, western culture and values. In addition, as claimed in the previous editorial (“Botonggyoyugui pillyo,” 1908), some Koreans were still “blind” in that they believed in the existence of strange and barbarous countries in the world outside of Korea, not seeing the civilization and modernization of western countries. In fact, this newspaper continually delivered news from western countries including the U.S., with great interest and full of positive reports about western civilization and culture. *The Korea Daily News* introduces special education for students who are deaf and blind in America with a special interest in the idea of public education even extending to students with disabilities. In another editorial (“Gungminui oeyanggwa,” 1910), the newspaper describes western countries as thriving nations and Asian countries in contrast as declining nations. To overcome their national crisis – namely, that Korea was on the verge of being colonized by Japan – Koreans were being called on to “open” their eyes and “see” the modernized western societies, and to accept and learn from it without embarrassment and surprise: in short, not to be like the man who wanted to become blind again in the previous story.

Not legitimate Korean citizens. The newspaper’s warning against being blind is more than simply advice. The writers’ voices become more urgent and more angered against such “blind” Koreans in other articles. They describe some Koreans not only as failing to see changes in the world, but as floating on clouds (“Gungminui oeyanggwa,” 1910). They are criticized as not physically laboring yet wanting to be rich. This image of a person is a little different from previous characters who do not see and are “ignorant.” He is described more negatively, as a non-productive person. Other editorials in this newspaper have a similar description for a certain “class” of people: those who are clothed and eating, even though they play rather than work. In one such editorial (“Yuiyusikaneunjaneun,” 1909), the writer

defines group as those who eat someone else's profit without using their arms and legs. In this category are Korean classical scholars, monks, prostitutes, exorcists (fortune tellers), petty town officials and their servants, *and the blind*. They are seen as thieves and not legitimate Korean citizens. The different groups that make up this class seem to be very different from one another, and it is rather difficult to determine what they have in common that this editorial treats as a reason for judging them so harshly. In the general news column of this newspaper, there appears a similar categorization of "undesirables" ("Dangyeonhigeumharil," 1908). The report – which is in fact not really a news fact, but another editorial – advocates a policy of prohibition toward exorcists (fortune tellers), magicians, *and the blind*, arguing that they are thieves, cheating people and taking their property. The newspaper features continuous reporting of this type of "theft," by the blind and fortune-tellers, who seem to be presented here as a singular category of people. For centuries, fortune-telling had been a typical occupation of the blind in Korea, but at the beginning of the 20th century, such work came to be considered a form of theft, and came under strong criticism. In addition to fortune-telling, which this newspaper essentially treated as a crime in its reporting, the newspaper would also be sure to report any actual crimes committed by people with disabilities.

It is necessary to consider the context of the social development of Korea in the beginning of the 20th century in order to understand why they are considered thieves. The Korean enlightenment thinkers including intellectuals who published the early modern newspapers editors of *the Korea Daily News* thought that those able to work physically on farms and in markets and factories, etc., were vitally necessary in the establishment of an emerging "new Korea." Those whose livelihood was perceived as absorbing the profits of those productive classes, on the other hand, did not measure up to the same standard of

importance, and were considered “drains on society,” or simply, “thieves.” This newspaper took on the responsibility of breaking through conventionalities in the interest of promoting modernization in Korea, and classical scholars, prostitutes, monks, exorcists (fortune-tellers), petty town officials and their servants, as well as the blind, were significant targets of this iconoclasm. In their discourse, the blind fortune-teller would not be unnecessary in a modernized Korean society, but would in fact act as a barrier to new and rational ideas in the new century.

“Mute” and “Half-Mute” Metaphor

The tragedy of family fate. Another group of persons with disabilities that appear as frequently in the *pyunpyungidam* section of *the Korea Daily News* are people called “mutes,” or “half-mutes.” The words “mute” and “dumb” are no longer used in Korean public media, but they were used in the 20th century to refer to certain people with disabilities. It is not necessarily easy to determine the identity of the mute in these stories, because the description of mutes differs significantly from that of the deaf or of language disabilities. Taking into account the characteristics of individual described in this section, the mute cannot speak at all, and communicate by means of gestures, which is hard to be considered as Korean sign language because it is described as a funny and ridiculous way instead of a communicative way. Of these, some seem to be deaf, because others who are able to speak nevertheless use gestures to communicate with them. In the other category are the half-mute. They are described to be able to hear and speak in these stories, but have difficulty articulating and pronouncing words correctly. They are clearly not deaf, as they do not use gestures at all and have no trouble hearing what others say. It is difficult to determine which factors may have contributed to their unclear and incorrect pronunciation. Half-mutes appear more often in this newspaper than do mutes, not only as characters and symbolic figures. In comparison to the

stories about blind people, the stories featuring mute and half-mute people much more frequently involve family relationships.

In the *pyunpyungidam* stories, half-mutes are usually described as members of half-mute families, for instance being half-mute parents or half-mute sons or daughters. In several stories (“*hanjibe se sikgu*,” 1907; Kim, 1908), it is portrayed that (half-) muteness “runs in the family:” that they marry other (half-) mute persons, as well as that their children are also (half-) mute. In another story, a woman has three daughters who have not yet gotten married, and all three of her daughters are half-mutes (Kim, 1908). However, there is one story that depicts a man’s status change after leaving his parents:

One mute man made his living farming in a ravine. He married a mute woman, and they lived in the mountains, and they had a son. When their son was three years old, he began to eat rice, but he ate with his hands like his parents; and in everything else he did, he imitated his parents. And so, he became mute. ... (continuation omitted). (Kim, 1908)

This story describes the son as having *become* mute after a process of imitating his parents. Later on in the same story, the son is said to have become a scholar, but only after leaving his parents and obtaining his education formally in a school. Unlike this “success” story, there is another one that shows how hard it was to escape the status of being half-mute, and this story was shown two times in this newspaper.

There was a family made up of a husband, a wife, and one daughter. All three were born half-mute. Their daughter had reached the proper age to get married. So they chose a very handsome man, but didn’t realize that their future son-in-law was also half-mute. On the wedding night, the man wanted to hear the way his bride spoke, but he could not initiate the conversation, because his speech was not smart. Finally, he had the idea to get his hat dangerously close to the fire while pretending not to notice. As his wife watched him sitting still apparently unaware that his hat was about to burn, she

grew nervous and said "Lok at the fai (Look at the fire)." When he heard the way she spoke, he knew that she too was half-mute like him. He made fun of her and said "Loga she tong (Look how she talks)." As her mother peeked at them through the door, in order to see if her son-in-law's speech was smart, she was astounded to discover that he was also mute. She said, "Bo o de a mus (Both of them are mutes!)." Her husband said, "Hepis! Ma fei (Helpless! My fate!)" ("Bonsasawon," 1910; "Hanjibe se sikgu," 1907)

The parents in the story sought to have a son-in-law with a "smart" way of speaking. The mother of three daughters tried to help them get married by hiding the fact that they were half-mute, but they ultimately fail to conceal it. Moreover, they are also terribly disappointed to learn that their son-in-law is a mute just like them and their daughter, and they lament their fate as a "mute family," having not one family member in two generations who can speak very well.

The fact that this story of the "fateful" half-mute son-in-law was printed two different times in this newspaper tells the urgency of this story's message. The final words of that story may be particularly helpful in interpreting what is being represented in this newspaper by means of the metaphor of the half-mute or mute. The father of a half-mute daughter exclaims, "Helpless! My fate!" He and his wife were desperate to gain a new family member who could speak out in their place, as they were half-mute. But now they resign themselves to their fate, and the father's words clearly reflect the intensity of their frustration. He cries out his recognition that they are cursed to remain a half-mute family.

Different disabilities portrayed in this section of the newspaper represent different voices, situations or perspectives, and they are presented in very different tones, particularly between the stories of blind people and those of deaf or mute people. While the newspaper seeks to instruct people who are blind and command them to open their eyes, the stories of

mute and half-mute persons typically illustrate a family's situation, focusing on the perceived tragedy of it. Thus, it seems that the newspaper presents the stories of mute and half-mute persons in a much more empathetic tone than that of the stories of blind persons. One editorial in this newspaper speaks with a similar empathetic tone.

In the sick Korea, people lack knowledge; there is corruption of morals; manners are wild and an unfortunate fate emerges. The only one teaching and leading them is the Newspaper (...) Newspapers, who today carry such a great duty and responsibility on their shoulders, are not free at all. They've become half-blind and half-mute, because their eyes of spirit and truth have been pulled out by a sword, and their mouths of love and goodness are burned inside with flames. How can they fulfill their duties and responsibilities? (Gak singmun wihyeopaneun, 1909)

The newspapers in the early 1900s were explicitly used as tools not only to teach, enlighten, and change Korea, but also to resist the Japanese domination of Korea. The belief that the only way to rescue Korea and its citizens besides military resistance was the voice of the newspaper led to the establishment of many new newspapers around 1883. Both inside and outside of Korea, many efforts were made to speak out through the medium of newspapers, analogous to the families of half-mutes seeking to have a new member who could speak well. However, it seemed that these efforts failed, as Korea was unable thereby to escape the situation in which they could not speak out clearly; their mouths of love and goodness are burned with flame; and they become half-mute. The significance of half-muteness as a metaphor for the condition of the newspapers can be seen in another news article in the same issue of this newspaper, about the discontinuance of other newspapers:

Do you like being a mute?

The sale and distribution of the 144th issue of Sin-han-min-bo [a name of other newspaper] and the 61st issue of Dae-dong-gong-bo [a name of other

newspaper] are prohibited for breach of public order. (“Beongeoriga jonnya,” 1909)

As seen in this news brief, the condition of being mute is used to refer to the state of newspapers without freedom of speech. In this vein, the “flame” can be thought of as the censorship which was imposed by Japan. On July 24, 1907, the Korean government, in forced submission to Japan, enacted the Law of the Newspaper, which aimed to suppress and control Korean newspapers that had been active in speaking on behalf of Korean Patriots. Under this law, even Korea Daily News – which was published by a British man (though the contributors and almost all administrative staff were Koreans) – could not evade the Japanese censorship. It rendered nearly all the newspapers’ condition one of “silence” and “darkness” in the years leading up to 1910, when Japan took away the national sovereignty of Korea. To many Koreans, the loss they had suffered was unbearable.

The (half-) mute can be understood as symbolizing Koreans themselves being enervated by its loss of voice. The voice of despair expressed by the father (“Helpless! My fate!”) was first published after the enactment of the censorship law in the year 1907, and echoed again (when the story was reprinted) just prior to the forced discontinuance of Korean national sovereignty in the year 1910. In addition, it cannot be a coincidence that the *pyunpyungidam* section first appeared in 1907, and featured stories relating to disabilities increasingly year by year until 1910. The empire of Japan prohibited Koreans to talk about its colonization of Korea, and this prohibition applied especially to newspapers. It was a terrible suffering for Koreans to become “a mute,” being unable to say even one word, even though they discern what is wrong or right (“Pirichunchu,” 1910).

Disability Metaphor in Patriotic-Enlightenment Project in Korea

A metaphor is an analogy comparing two objects or ideas, conveyed by the use of one word or phrase in the place of another. Metaphors rely on, and in turn reinforce, the supposition

that the two concepts involved are equivalent, even though they are usually entirely different in reality. *The Korea Daily News* – a patriotic enlightenment-oriented publication – applied this metaphor to “ignorant” Koreans who persisted in tradition, and to citizens whose way of life made them “illegitimate” participants in the new, modern Korea, equating their condition with that of blindness. While this metaphor of blindness was used for Others, the mute and half-mute metaphor was also used for the media itself, to express their despair and helplessness at their inability to resist colonial oppression. Similar metaphoric usage of disability increased conspicuously during the Japanese colonial time (1910-1945), especially in modern Korean literature. Characters with disabilities in Korean modern literature during this time often represented Koreans who were unable to protect themselves against Japan and could not speak freely under Japanese censorship (Choi, 2001; Han, 1991, 2005.); this trend closely resembles the mute/half-mute metaphors examined in the present study. According to Choi (2001, p.434), impairment and disability in such Korean literature during colonial times were “phenomena that are *socially* produced, maintained, and enforced” through “the physically impaired and disabled figures' struggles to become socially able beings” with an “anti-colonial message.” This practice of using disabilities as a metaphor in literature continued even after liberation from Japan, although less literature of the kind was produced, and with some different traits, such as the change of main characteristics from physical disabilities to psychological or mental illness, or newly coined terms referring to people with disabilities (Choi, 2001).

This usage of disability metaphors was not coincidental but resulted inevitably from the interaction between colonialism and the new ideas of western modernization and enlightenment during the 19th and 20th centuries. In particular, the otherizing process of individuals with disabilities in *the Korea Daily News* is also reflected in the discourse of civilization, which was another dominant cultural discourse created and enforced by western and Japanese imperialism. The western idea of civilization has been used as a justification for colonizing

non-western and “uncivilized” countries (Hall, 2007). Japan, the first country in East Asia to contemplate and adopt western ideas of modernization, used the same dichotomy of civilized vs. uncivilized (i.e. barbarian) as a rationale for its invasion of other Asian countries including Korea (Ham, 2004). Japanese imperial invasions were framed as providing the benefit of civilizing other Asian countries, and Japanese colonialism was credited as the catalyst for the modernization of Korea. Ironically, this imperial discourse of civilization was also used by Korean intellectuals to achieve national independence against imperialism.

Freedom and independence are key concepts in the early modern newspapers in Korea and were most frequently mentioned in *the Korea Daily News*. According to Ryu (2005), they have a dual meaning: one is the condition on the national level, of not being subordinate to other countries, and the other meaning is the independence of the people as individuals. Most Korean elites believed these could be only achieved by actively adopting a western idea of modernization and changing Koreans into “enlightened” citizens. Moreover, national and individual independence were strongly connected in early modern Korean thought. An individual’s independence – meaning their ability to work for their own living in the newly modernized society – was considered a prerequisite condition for the national independence of Korea. In this vein, any presumed dependence became a target to be rejected, and *Korea Daily News* used a mechanism of exclusion to bring about their desired change in society. Park’s explanation (2004) about excluding “Others” during the Korean enlightenment period is useful in explaining otherizing process including individuals with disabilities in the newspaper. Park (2004) argues that the common contempt for exclusion of Others helped people who produced and maintained ideas of enlightenment and national discourse to bind together. Additionally, during the 19th and 20th centuries, the idea of “new” and “modernized” nations was being invoked around the world, including exclusionary discourses and practices toward presumed

non-citizens. Korea in the 1900s was not exceptional in this regard (Park, 2004). Cleall & Gust (2021)'s explanation sheds light on this history:

In questioning the boundaries of humanity, however, they constructed a hierarchy of embodiment, with the able-bodied, white, and elite man at the pinnacle, leading the path of “civilization” and “progress.” The consolidation of this paradigm during the course of the nineteenth century led to disabled people being increasingly understood as defective and aberrant, in need either of curing and assimilating to fit the norms of society, or of eradicating entirely (Cleall & Gust, 2021)

As the nineteenth century in western history shaped the repugnant image of people with disabilities, the early twentieth century in the wave of modernization in the Korean colonial context “led to disabled people being increasingly understood as defective and aberrant, in need either of curing and assimilating to fit the norms of society, or of eradicating entirely” (Cleall & Gust, 2021).

One circumstance that deserves attention is the way exclusion was used both by colonial oppressors and by patriotic movement leaders during this period. Although Korean intellectuals wanted to resist Japanese oppression, they went about this, ironically, by means of their own exclusion strategy, resulting in oppressing other marginalized groups and projecting them as barriers to the achievement of a new modern independent nation, as this research has examined. Similar otherizing/exclusion processes were also carried out within Japan and Western countries against members of their own societies as well. In particular, otherizing by use of a dichotomy was a universal strategy in the colonial period. The British empire used the civilizing mission concept, which included enlightenment ideals as a justification for its imperialism in colonizing other countries (Ham, 2004; Schmid, 2002). Japan used the same dichotomy of civilized vs. uncivilized to justify its political interference in Korea as well as its colonization (Ham, 2004; Schmid, 2002).

Ghandi (2019) pointed out the problem of anti-colonial nationalism, which paradoxically learned key lessons from the oppressors it opposed. Korean intellectuals, especially invested in enlightenment patriotic newspaper production, used the same dichotomy framework of new Korean new citizens vs. Others in their criteria for meeting a western standard of modernization. Any group of people who deviated from the image of newly modernized (i.e., westernized), enlightened, productive, educated, and independent citizens were regarded as others. This list included metaphorically blind people, those unable to “see” this social change, those who maintained a traditional fortune telling profession which was an object of iconoclasm, those who may live as beggars, again entirely out of step with the idea of a modernized society, even though certain forms of poverty are also results of modernization.

One may argue that there is a logical leap in reasoning that these disability metaphors in *the Korea Daily News* created actual exclusion of contemporary people with disabilities. It is worth noting that enlightenment discourse did not exist only on a symbolic level, but was strategically aimed at disturbing Korean individuals’ desire to be transformed into enlightened citizens (Jung, 2003). People with disabilities who were considered abnormal or had already been marginalized (therefore categorized as Others) could only be accepted by demonstrating their transformation into faithful subjects of the patriotic enlightenment movement (Jung, 2003). The ideas of individual’s differences, rights, needs, and desires were not yet considered relevant, and even current “postmodern” societies still struggle to escape the discourse of independence, productivity, and contribution as requisite conditions for legitimate citizenship. In addition, the cultural discourse as social praxis soon become the reality (Hall, 2007).

The concept of subaltern (Guha & Spivak, 1988) may be useful in explaining this relationship between the patriotic Korean enlightenment intellectuals activists who produced and circulated this otherizing discourse and people with disabilities who were constructed as Others by this media discourse. The subaltern studies, particularly in the context of India, explain how subaltern groups actively resisted both colonial power and domestic oppression, unlike the dominant historical explanations that emphasize the influence and leadership of middle class educated elite groups. Similarly, it is critical to recognize that *the Koran Daily News* was the dominant voice of Korean elites during that time, while the voice and the silence of contemporary subaltern groups, such as people with disabilities, still needs to be explored through different historical sources and methods.

Starting with several “strange” stories relating to disabilities in *the Korea Daily News*, I encountered a wave of modernization and enlightenment influences during the colonial period in Korea, which had a critical role in creating the disablement practice especially by using negative metaphorical images of people with disabilities in the media. Korean early 20th century intellectuals conveyed their voices in this newspaper, producing and circulating the disability stories. In these stories, people with disabilities are subject to deficiency as a metaphorical tool to convey the idea of western enlightenment and modernization and the suffering of ongoing Japanese censorship. Even though their intention was to suggest how Koreans could overcome this colonial situation and proceed to become a modernized and enlightened society, in the process they stigmatized and marginalized people with disabilities in their discourses. In addition, simply, *the Korea Daily News*’ use of disability metaphors transforms something natural into something ugly (Sontag, 2002). While we cannot live without metaphors, the words we use expose our attitudes toward others, and so we ought to be careful about the metaphors we choose to use (Sontag, 2002). This type of discourse that blames others using the metaphor of disabilities seems particularly dangerous. It is reminiscent

of the discourse of the social burden, which has continued to promote the underlying concept of eugenics since the beginning of the 20th century. Since we still live in the time or the result of modernization and colonization, more research would be necessary to examine how the metaphor of disabilities in media has been constructed in the linear and superficial approach of modern and colonial knowledge in the world.

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