

The Ethical Structure of the Taxi-Based Narrative: Focusing on *Taxi Crazy Rhapsody*

Myungsim Yang

Abstract: Focusing on *Taxi Crazy Rhapsody* (『タクシー狂躁曲』), a work by Zainichi writer Yan Sogiru, whose narrative unfolds around a means of transportation, the “taxi”, this paper aims to explore the ethical significance of Zainichi literary texts by drawing on the theory of ethical literary criticism propounded by Nie Zhenzhao. Based on the author’s real experiences over 10 years working as a taxi driver, *Taxi Crazy Rhapsody* is set in Japanese society in the 1970s, a period of rapid economic growth. The novel portrays the difficult and impoverished life of Zainichi and the social discrimination they suffered in Japan. *Taxi Crazy Rhapsody* well describes the way in which “a Zainichi as a being on the move” is substantialized in the space called a “taxi”. He depicts the ethical world of ethnic Koreans in Japan by showing the complex relationship in which human nature and desire collide with ethical values and norms and dismantle them through the absurd value standards of the Japanese, who make moral judgments based on racial factors.

Keywords: Zainichi; Yan Sogiru; taxi; mobility; ethical literary criticism

Author: Myungsim Yang is HK Research Professor at the Academy of Mobility Humanities at Konkuk University (Seoul, Korea). Her academic interest lies in researching Zainichi (Korean residents in Japan) literature in general and the “movements” depicted in Zainichi narratives from the “mobility” perspectives in particular (Email: ms0611@konkuk.ac.kr). This work was supported by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea and the National Research Foundation of Korea 【NRF-2018S1A6A3A03043497】.

标题: 出租车叙事的伦理结构: 以旅日作家梁石日的《出租车狂想曲》为中心
内容摘要: 本文以“出租车”这一移动手段为中心, 以扩张叙事的旅日朝鲜人作家梁石日的作品《出租车狂想曲》为对象, 立足于聂珍钊的文学伦理学批评, 旨在对旅日文学文本的伦理意义进行考察。朝鲜迎来解放以后, 未能回国而滞留在日本的旅日朝鲜人未能获得日本社会的承认, 在生活中不停意识到自己民族和个人认同感。当过出租车司机的作家以自己的真实经历为基础创作的这部作品, 以1970年代高速增长期的日本社会为背景, 描写了旅日朝鲜人贫困贫瘠的生活和日本社会的歧视。《出租车狂想曲》借助多个伦理

结实现了结构化，本文首先以“我”为中心，通过出租车、出租车司机、乘客的这种机械与人类的结构性功能和人物之间的关系，考察了“出租车”这一移动手段所蕴含的意义，还通过“我”身边的人物来考察压力之下登场人物们的行为所具备的伦理意义。从文学伦理学批评的观点审视梁石日文学包含的伦理选择及其价值，将突破此前的旅日文学分析框架，让我们能够从更为普遍和全面的角度看待旅日文学。

关键词：旅日；梁石日；出租车；移动；文学伦理学批评

作者简介：梁明心，韩国建国大学移动人文学研究院 HK 研究教授，主要研究方向为日朝鲜人文学和“移动性”。本文为韩国教育部和韩国国家研究基金会项目【NRF-2018S1A6A3A03043497】的阶段性成果。

Introduction: Yan Sogiru, the Taxi Driver

Focusing on *Taxi Crazy Rhapsody* (1987), a work by Zainichi writer Yan Sogiru (1936-),¹ whose narrative unfolds around a means of transportation, the ‘taxi,’ this paper aims to explore the ethical significance of Zainichi literary texts by drawing on the theory of ethical literary criticism propounded by Nie Zhenzhao.

The original meaning of the Japanese word “zainichi” is simply “foreigners in Japan”. But in general use, it became a derogatory term used to refer to ethnic Koreans living in Japan. Zainichi are Koreans who moved to Japan during the colonial period, when Korea was ruled by the Japanese, and who either did not or could not return to their homeland after it was liberated from Japanese colonial rule. In Japanese society, they were not recognized as full members of society. They have been forced to be constantly conscious of their national and personal identity. In analyzing the literary works of ethnic Koreans in Japan, which emerged from the complicated history between Korea and Japan and its many twists and turns, the theory of ethical literary criticism proposed by Chinese literary theorist Nie Zhenzhao, who has focused on a “fundamental reexamination of the relationship between literature and society” (J. Lee 332), can provide an effective and appropriate framework for analysis.

First published in 1981, *Crazy Rhapsody* was published again in 1987 as a

1 Yan Sogiru’s parents were from Jeju Island, Korea. They moved to Osaka, Japan, and settled there. Yan Sogiru was born in 1936 in Ikaino, Osaka, the largest and oldest ethnic Korean quarter in Japan. He started a printing company at the age of 26, but the business failed and he ended up taking on a huge debt. At the age of 29, he left Osaka and began wandering around Japan. Then, in 1970, at the age of 34, he started working as a taxi driver in Tokyo. When *Taxi Crazy Rhapsody*, which he wrote based on his experiences working as a taxi driver, became popular, he began to transition into a full-time career as a writer. (*Zainichi Korean Dictionary*, Sunin, 2012. 250.)

paperback version with the revised title *Taxi Crazy Rhapsody*. When the novel was adapted as a film by director Sai Yoichi under the title *All Under the Moon*, Yan Sogiru began to capture the attention of the Japanese literary world. Based on the author's real experiences over 10 years working as a taxi driver, *Taxi Crazy Rhapsody* is set in Japanese society in the 1970s, a period of rapid economic growth. The novel portrays the difficult and impoverished life of Zainichi and the social discrimination they suffered in Japan. In the 1970s, Japan achieved high levels of economic growth and made tremendous progress in technology and industry, which brought about profound changes in Japanese society. On the other hand, Japanese society was faced with numerous problems, including the relative poverty of most of its people compared to the strong national economy, the gap between a developed national economy and other sectors that fell relatively behind, an unthinking indulgence in Western culture, and Japanese people's unusual love for and attachment to their own country¹.

In particular, as the issue of minorities emerged in the 1970s as a problem in post-war Japanese society, discrimination in the areas of race, class, and gender became increasingly prominent. The Japanese considered themselves pure, unique and superior to other peoples. The result is that the Japanese government tried to curb the influx of foreigners as much as possible while adopting a very inhospitable policy towards outsiders. The general public also had an unfriendly attitude to foreigners, so the damage had to be borne by foreigners who did not belong to the Japanese "pure-blood" (Kim 39).

Taxi Crazy Rhapsody consists of seven parts: "Miju"(迷走), "In Shinjuku," "Living Together," "Ancestral Rite," "Canal," "Crazy Horse I" and "Crazy Horse II". Although it resembles a collection of short stories that are independent of each other in content and composition, it can also be seen that the personal life and adversity experienced by the protagonist of each story form a continuum like a series, eventually building a single whole.²

The novel can be divided into two main narratives: one is the taxi narrative centered on the narrator who is a taxi driver; the other is a narrative of surrounding characters that consists of episodes with the taxi company, taxi passengers, Japanese colleagues, and Zainichi friends who appear on the narrator's travels.

Nie Zhenzhao explained that the purpose of ethical literary criticism is "to discover the ethical values that exist objectively in literature through ethical

1 See Yung-myung Kim, *Poverty in Japan*, Seoul: Miraesa, 1994.

2 See Yeounsuk Lee, "From Nihilism to Dreams: About *Taxi Crazy Rhapsody*," *Poetry and Criticism: Eureka* 32 (15), 2000 (12): 93.

interpretation, and to reveal the truth of life and facts portrayed by literary works” (Nie Zhenzhao, “Ethical Literary Criticism: Basic Theory and Terminology” 79).

From the perspective of ethical literary criticism, the ethical consciousness of humankind emerged as reason matured, and the essential characteristic that distinguishes the human species from animals is the fact that the human species has reason, and the core of reason is ethical consciousness (Nie Zhenzhao, “Ethical Literary Criticism: Basic Theory and Terminology” 70-71).

Of the critical terms devised by Nie Zhenzhao, the one most frequently used is ‘ethical structure’, which refers to the structure of a text composed by the thoughts and activities of characters in the text. There are two basic axes that form an ethical structure: ethical line and ethical knot. An ethical line refers to one or multiple ethical structures that penetrate ethical knots, and ethical knots mean ethical contradictions and conflicts that complete the structure of a literary text by being penetrated or connected by ethical lines.¹

Each story in *Taxi Crazy Rhapsody* is structured with several ethical knots. This paper will examine the meaning of the “taxi” as a means of transportation by examining the complex fabric of the structural functions of the machine (taxi) and human beings (taxi driver and passengers), and the relationship between the characters, centered on the narrator. And, drawing on Nie Zhenzhao’s theory of ethical literary criticism, this paper analyzes how the discriminatory behavior revealed through the narrative of the people around the narrator and the distorted behavior of the characters resisting discrimination are structured with ethical knots. Through this, the study seeks to explore the ethical significance of the actions of characters in the literary text. By illuminating the ethical choices and their values implied in Yan Sogiru’s literary work from the perspective of literary ethics, we will be able to look at the literature of Zainichi from a more universal and comprehensive perspective, going beyond the conventional framework of analysis of Zainichi literature, which has focused on the limited topics of the history of Koreans living in Japan amid poverty and discrimination, their national identity as Koreans or their personal identity.

Taxi-Based Narrative Seen through the Relationship between Taxi, Taxi Driver, and Passengers

As we can see from the use of the means of transportation called a “taxi” in the title, this novel is not simply a work of a Zainichi writer, but the story of a “taxi driver”:

¹ See Jinhyoung Lee, “Popular Narrative and the ‘Ethical Turn’ in Literature,” *Journal of Popular Narrative* 22.2 (2016): 343-344.

No one would ever think of a career as a taxi driver, which is a job of such low social standing that even money lenders would be reluctant to trade with one. Every driver considers it as a temporary measure to earn needed money. They hope to change to another job if given the opportunity. But as time goes by, and one year of driving becomes two, and then three and then five, the opportunity to change jobs becomes slim. In typical companies salary increases according to seniority, which guarantees a certain degree of stability in the lives of employees, but the opposite is the case for taxi drivers. When you are young, you can make more money by relying on your physical stamina, but as the years go by, the number of your dependents increases, while your physical strength declines; this means that your ability to work decreases and your income dwindles to the point where you have to struggle to make ends meet. Moreover, despite facing death every day, nothing is guaranteed. Of course, I also became a taxi driver as a temporary measure. But as a Zainichi who is not guaranteed anything in this country, being a taxi driver might actually be the best fit for me. (Yan, “Miju” 16)¹

Among the seven short stories collected in *Taxi Crazy Rhapsody*, the first one titled “Miju” deals with the daily lives of taxi drivers, who work under poor conditions which force them to struggle every minute and second to achieve the “norm” (standard amount of labor), as well as the absurd reality faced by taxi companies, by showing a cross-section of the overnight travel route of the narrator, an ethnic Korean taxi driver in Japan. The story begins with a scene in which Nakanishi, unable to relax even for a moment to feed his family, gets up first, picks up the narrator, and then drives off to pick up Uchida, who is sleeping with an oil stove on in a room of the size of four and a half tatami mats in an old wooden building. In contrast to the “woman in a red Mercedes-Benz sports car unnecessarily tooting her horn” (Yan, “Miju” 9) in a scene describing his journey to work, Nakanishi gets a traffic ticket while trying to evade a traffic jam so as not to be late—the worst way to go to work. In this way, the novel begins with several devices that allow the reader to guess the status of the taxi driver, and the poverty of his environment.

The aftermath of the high economic growth of Japanese society at that time also affected Zainichi. The economic disparity is clearly visible when looking at the rates of college education that are associated with improved living standards.

1 The text is based on Yan Sogiru’s *Taxi Crazy Rhapsody* (Tokyo: Chikumabunko, 1987), but the quotation is from *All Under the Moon (Taxi Crazy Rhapsody)* (Ingangwayesulsa, 1994).

There was a significant difference between the Japanese and Zainichi in terms of the improvement of their living conditions during this period of high economic growth. This trend related to the living standards of Zainichi involved deep-seated racial discrimination. Both government agencies and private companies would rarely hire non-Japanese employees, and it was even more difficult for Zainichi to find stable jobs (Tonomura 496-499).

According to Urry in the *Mobility*, the concept of “mobilities” refers to “various kinds of movement of people, or ideas, or information or objects” and “a wide array of economic, social and political practices, infrastructures and ideologies that all involve, entail or curtail” such movements (18).

Urry is more interested in the automotive mobility system than any other. He sees the car-driver as a machine-human hybrid, explaining that the car is combined with the driver’s body and emotions, which changes their identity and subjectivity (H. Lee 28). Urry said that the car system provided a way to transcending a public timetable by enabling car-drivers to develop their own timetabling of social life. And it also created “a wide array of other spaces beyond the railway carriage and the station” (112).

A “taxi” is different from other means of public transportation in that it is one of the means of public transportation such as railroad or train, and at the same time has the functions of the automotive system. And while taxis share the functions of the automotive system, ethical relationships between various people are formed by the combination not only of the car and the driver, but also of the passengers:

I will continue to run through the streets like a gypsy. My destination depends on the passengers. I go anywhere the customer demands. I eat soba when I am hungry, and when I want to sleep, I pull my car over by the roadside and sleep. There is neither Lunar New Year nor Chuseok for taxi drivers. There is only the meridian of yesterday and today. There is only the endless conflict between the body and the mind. Over there where the headlight illuminates, I see the entrance to hell with its jaws wide open. I rush through the nadir, where life and death have their backs to each other. During these four years, I traveled back and forth the distance between the Earth and the Moon. Riding on the acceleration of time, I am passing time at twice the speed of other humans, because two days have passed after a day’s labor is over. (Yan, “Crazy Horse 2” 207)

The above quotation well describes the poor working conditions of taxi drivers, and the relationship and structural characteristics of taxis, taxi drivers, and passengers.

In contrast to buses and trains, which operate according to fixed public timetables, taxis have an individual and flexible system of operation. From the passenger's point of view, a taxi has the advantage that the passenger can freely set the time and space, and can freely decide the destination and change the route in the middle. For the taxi driver, the taxi is a means of livelihood and at the same time a personal haven that allows them to go anywhere they need to, and also to park and take a rest. But in reality, the body of the taxi driver is always exposed to the risk of accidents because he is in a condition of "working by cheating the body while fighting overwork and unbearable drowsiness" (Yan, "Miju" 20). The reality of taxi drivers, whose operating hours, miles driven, and income have a proportional relationship, is that even when they are at rest, they must constantly be mentally calculating their mileage as they think about the amount of work they have done that day.

Further, taxi drivers are bound to interact with passengers, and at such a moment, the mobile space of the taxi becomes a place of social exchange between drivers and passengers. In a taxi that functions as a place for consumption of emotions, the driver can establish close social relationships with passengers, or conversely, can face conflicts and collisions.

The story "Miju" depicts episodes involving the narrator and various passengers on the night of Christmas Eve. Late at night, four drunken male passengers flatter the ego of their department head, who is in a good mood. But when he gets out, the remaining three men all attack the boss for his indecisiveness. Then, the last man suddenly leans forward from the back seat and shouts a request, almost threateningly, to the driver (the narrator), asking him to find a woman for him. Some passengers show an interest in the narrator's taxi license. A person in the front passenger seat is intrigued when he sees the name "Yan" on the narrator's taxi license, asking an odd question, "That's a rare name. How do you read it? Are you Chinese?" Hearing the driver answer "I am Korean" (Yan, "Miju" 37-38), the passenger is embarrassed and abruptly ends the discussion, amplifying the tension as if he had learned of the criminal record of an ex-convict. Furthermore, the driver's status as a *Zainichi* provides cover for unethical behavior by some taxi passengers, with some taking advantage of his relatively low status to evade the fare. One drunken passenger who tried to avoid paying went to the police station, and as if playing his trump card at the decisive moment, discloses: "This guy is a *Josenjing*" (Yan, "Miju" 41). "*Josenjing*" means derogatory word for ethnic Koreans in Japan.

In a taxi that serves as a place of emotional consumption, drunken passengers sometimes complain of their lot to the driver, while some gossip about co-workers

in one voice with their colleagues on board. And some passengers are curious about the taxi driver's private life, generating an ethical structure within the mobile space of a taxi.

In this way, the emotional exchange that takes place within the taxi sometimes makes the driver sitting inside his vehicle composed of mobile mechanical devices feel safe, comfortable, and free, and at other times it can make him feel uncomfortable, when he must work through feelings of suppression and restraint (H. Lee 27).

What is important is that a taxi driver cannot be an independent subject, either inside or outside the taxi. He is the one at the wheel who moves the vehicle, but the destination is determined by the passenger seated in the back.

Ironically, the taxi and its driver, which have such a symbolic significance as examples of the minority, run through downtown Tokyo, which is the heart of Japan and a center where social luminaries gather. *Taxi Crazy Rhapsody* shows the reality of Japanese society through the contrasting scenery of day and night of downtown Tokyo, and the conflicts and clashes between the driver and passengers with diverse personalities, while portraying the stratified discrimination based on racial and class differences epitomized by the Zainichi taxi driver.

The job of a taxi driver, formed through the author's actual experiences, best embodies the Zainichi as a being on the move while at the same time showing the reality of a job in which humans are treated like a subhuman adjunct attached to a machine. While navigating all over the city, the taxi driver has a symbolic significance as an occupation that allows one to experience the mainstream society of Japan, which is the main agent of discrimination. Through the perspective of a taxi driver, this novel shows the day and night scenery of downtown Tokyo, through which the taxi is navigating, and the behavior of passengers observed through the rear-view mirror in a narrow space called a taxi. By symbolically revealing the complex relationship between machines and humans, ethical values and norms, human nature and desires, the work awakens the reader to the ethics that exist in the background of the times and the society, and provides an opportunity to reflect on ethical values.

Elimination of Ideology, Ethical Structure of Zainichi Narrative

Taxi Crazy Rhapsody features various characters who constitute a conflict structure, such as the first-person narrator of the taxi driver, passengers from various walks of life, office workers and executives, and hometown friends of the narrator.

The seven short stories in the novel form a complex conflict structure that leads

to collisions of ethical values: the taxi company giving a notice of dismissal with no reason; the police officer who treats the protagonist like a criminal because he is not carrying his alien registration card; the drunken passenger trying to cunningly take advantage of the fact that the taxi driver is Korean; the attitude of Hosokawa, who suddenly turns aggressive when he finds out the narrator is a Korean, advising him to cover it up. In the process of resolving conflicts, the stories show the problem of the ethical choices that must be made by the protagonists who ‘resist’ the violence in Japanese society.

“In Shinjuku”, the second story in *Taxi Crazy Rhapsody*, depicts an episode involving Han Seong-hyeong, a friend of the protagonist who is from Jeju Island in Korea and runs a financial business. While drinking at a bar, the two men get into a brawl with right-wing students and are taken to the police station. During the investigation, the pair are treated as criminals because they are not carrying their alien registration cards. Enraged at the reality that Zainichi themselves are considered criminal suspects, Han Seong-hyeong starts to behave in a bizarre manner, defecating in his pants and smearing feces all over his body and the desks of the police officers.

“Living Together” is a story of the protagonist who is fired from his taxi company and starts living at the home of his Japanese friend, Hosokawa. At Hosokawa’s recommendation, the narrator brings his resume and goes to Hosokawa’s taxi company for a job interview. There, for the first time, Hosokawa learns that the narrator (Mr. Yana) is Korean. The narrator hears Hosokawa say, “I like you, Mr. Yana, but I hate Josenjing” (77). Hosokawa’s comments that Koreans are cunning, filthy, and uncultured confirm the deep-seated discrimination among the Japanese people against ethnic Koreans.

“Canal” is a story of the narrator who receives a telegram from his cousin and then visits Ikaino¹, Osaka for the first time in the 10 years since he has left his hometown. The story revolves around Yoo Young-shim, who gets drunk and jumps into a canal, and the protagonist’s memories and recollections of his violent, monster-like father.

In “Crazy Horse I,” the narrator, tired of taxi driving, takes a job as a long-distance transport driver when he hears that he will be guaranteed 200,000 yen a month. But realizing that the job is far from what he expected, he is again introduced to a small taxi company on the outskirts and changes his job once again. There, he reunites with Isamu-Ito, an elementary school classmate who works as

1 Ikaino is an old name for Ikaino-cho, Ikuno-ku, Osaka City in which the largest and oldest Zainichi residential area. (*Zainichi Korean Dictionary*, Sunin, 2012. 304.)

a taxi driver there. Isamu has become a weak and helpless man, and is eventually admitted to a mental hospital.

In “Crazy Horse II”, the taxi company the narrator works for goes bankrupt, as it was made up of drivers who were addicted to gambling and executives who were indifferent to management. After a few days off, the narrator comes back to work and witnesses a fire that appears to be arson and thinks of the old man at the vehicle maintenance department who said, “I will take care of myself” (206). He suspects that the old man may have burned himself to death. But the story ends with the sight of the old man running past the narrator, away from the flames.

Each short story in *Taxi Crazy Rhapsody* involves several ethical knots. And in the process by which the characters dismantle the conflict structure between them, they force themselves to make ethical choices. Based on Darwin’s theory of evolution, Nie Zhenzhao defines humans as beings formed by ethical choices. He believes that there is a ‘sphinx factor’ that consists of two parts: the human factor and the animal factor; since the human factor in general is superior to the animal factor, the former can control the latter. He adds that this explains why humans can become ethically conscious beings.¹

The act of defecating in one’s own pants and smearing feces on the desks of the policemen, and the impulsive act of Yoo Young-shim, who, frustrated with life, jumps into the canal, ridicules the rescuers, and ends up being arrested: both are expressions of an unethical will to break free from moral restraint. From the standpoint of the police, Zainichi are deviants who do not follow the rules and disturb the social order. The deviant behavior of Han Seong-hyeong and Yoo Young-shim can be seen as a form of self-verification through aberration as well as a sign of resistance against the injustice of the police automatically treating Zainichi as criminals without touching the heart of the matter.

Based on the theory of Nie Zhenzhao, the bizarre behavior of Han Seong-hyeong and Yoo Young-shim who resist the Japanese value standard that makes moral judgment based on racial factors, show that they are aware of ethics (the human factor) through the unethical symbols (the animal factor), and that it is important to make ethical choices through rational will. In the conflict between the human factor and the animal factor inherent in human nature, Zainichi writer Yan Sogiru portrays the process of overcoming the conflict by revealing the animal factor.

Through the memories of Ikaino, “Canal” depicts the ethical conflict surrounding the existence of the ‘father,’ which symbolizes the unresolved

1 See Nie Zhenzhao, “Towards an Ethical Literary Criticism,” *Arcadia* 50.1 (2015): 96.

animalized body within the narrator:

I was in a fixed upright position for hours. I was like a desperate prisoner who endured long and painful torture in a closed room, awaiting death. My father, who was sleeping with his back facing this side and his upper body naked, seemed like a mysterious monster. Vivid wounds caused by teeth, chains, edge tools, and hooks lodged in those hard muscles. A sword-cut like snake tattoo from the shoulder to the tailbone. (Yan, "Canal," 137)

As evidenced by the above description of the father, the deep-seated feelings of resentment and hatred for the father become a key conflict factor that brings ethical confusion to the narrator, who has grown up hearing, "Koreans are the people in the world that respect blood ties the most. Respect for parents, love for brothers, and respect for good manners toward neighbors are the moral principle of Koreans" (Yan, "Canal" 117).

The protagonist constantly summons the animal factor which wants to deny his father and forces himself to make an ethical choice because his father is a person who destroyed the family order and became the main cause of the collapse of a Korean Zainichi family. The narrator's irrational wish to deny the existence of his father was an expression of resistance to the violent behavior of his father who betrayed family ethics as a father and husband, which the narrator experienced as a child.

A Zainichi, living in the turbulent period of the 1970s, had no choice but to live a life subordinated to society, and the incomprehensible reality of discrimination constantly evokes the animal factor inherent in human beings. This is a device Yan Sogiru uses to represent the gloomy side of Japan in the heyday of its economic growth, by summoning the animal factor, while at the same time to awaken a new awareness of the human factor through awareness of the animal factor.

Taxi Crazy Rhapsody is a work that well reveals the importance of ethical choice through the rational will by becoming aware of ethics (the human factor) by means of unethical symbols (the animal factor) and practicing resistance to escape from the unethical nature of the violence of imperialism and discrimination rampant in Japanese society.

Conclusion

Drawing on the theory of ethical literary criticism, this paper has discussed Yan Sogiru's *Taxi Crazy Rhapsody* focusing on the symbolic significance of the taxi, a

means of transportation, and the existence of Zainichi, as well as the relationship between ethical knots in the narrative, which is synchronically forming the Zainichi society in Japan.

A taxi driver must always be ready to look in different directions. Even if he is looking ahead, he should always keep an eye on vehicles coming from behind and passengers in the rearview mirror. Koji Hayashi evaluated that Yan Sogiru's literature "is always looking up at the back yard of Japanese society from the bottom, and depicts the pretentiousness of modern Japan covered up by decoration, as if peeling it off layer by layer" (180).

As Hayashi's evaluation confirms, Yan Sogiru, who was conscious of the multiple gazes a taxi driver must adopt simultaneously, looked in the rear-view mirror to see the government office quarters of downtown Tokyo in the middle of the day, the night landscape crowded with faces as masks, the appearance and behavior of various passengers. Through this, he realistically depicts the huge gap between the façade of Japan during its period of rapid economic growth in the 1970s and the Japanese society and people reflected in the rearview mirror. *Taxi Crazy Rhapsody* well describes the way in which 'a Zainichi as a being on the move' is substantialized in the space called a 'taxi'.¹ He depicts the ethical world of ethnic Koreans in Japan by showing the complex relationship in which human nature and desire collide with ethical values and norms and dismantle them through the absurd value standards of the Japanese, who make moral judgments based on racial factors.

The characters in the novel constantly experience the process of ethical conflict and choice with others or with themselves due to the racial discrimination, conflict, and antagonism of values experienced by Zainichi as an ethnic minority, and the social reality faced by the protagonists constantly stimulates the animal factor that is latent in the characters.

The purpose of ethical literary criticism is not merely to make a simple value judgment on literature as good or bad from an ethical standpoint, but to discover the ethical values that exist objectively in literature through ethical interpretation, and to reveal the truth of life and facts depicted in literary works.²

The author's intent seems to be to show how Zainichi are valued through the ethical choices of the protagonists, and at the same time, to critically express the absurd system of Japanese society through the depiction of unethical behavior of its

1 In her article, "Migratory Aesthetics in Diasporic Claustrophobia," Maria Luisa Torres Reyes explored "Filipino domestic workers" as beings on the move, which, for example, is substantialized in "the Italian tour bus" (51-53).

2 Nie Zhenzhao, "Ethical Literary Criticism: Basic Theory and Terminology," *International Journal of Diaspora & Cultural Criticism* 5.1 (2015): 79.

people, and to emphasize the importance of the human factor and its ethical value through awareness of the animal factor.

Yan Sogiru has realistically portrayed even the ugliness of Zainichi society and criticized the fact that the lives of Zainichi were not properly portrayed in the literary works of the first generation of Zainichi writers, who were preoccupied with issues like ethnicity, politics, and ideology. For this reason, it is considered that he consciously eliminated ideological elements such as loyalty, sympathy, ethnicity, and morality in his work, to instead depict naked human nature in a violent world that cannot be dealt with within the framework of ethnicity or ideology, with a unique style that is filled with tension (Yan, et al. 210).

The first generation of Zainichi immigrated to Japan from the Korean Peninsula, and while living in Japanese society, remained attached to their homeland and hometowns, and tried not to lose their sense of place. Their precarious way of life itself was something that they regarded as a long nightmare, and they dreamed of returning to their homeland, both spatially and temporally. However, the main character in Yan Sogiru's work left his hometown, where he was born, to earn a livelihood, heading for a new world. He has no sentiment of nostalgia or attachment to his hometown or to his family (his father). It is at this point that Yan Sogiru's literary work appears to be trying to transform the Zainichi narrative by creating a crack in the sentiment of attachment to the ethnic group, country, and hometown represented in conventional Zainichi literary texts.

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