



A Meaning of the Healing Writing Shown in a Text - Focusing on the Movie Titled *The Reader*(2008) and the Novel Titled *Heuksan*(黑山, 2011)

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Abstract

This study shows that characters could heal their wounds through a self-therapeutic process. In other words, people who act spontaneously and intensely in the therapeutic literature process positively impacted their own therapy mechanism. In the literature text, we could find that characters can not only build their own identities with literature works but also acquire mental compensation through reconciliation with their pasts. This process is only possible when the 'self' expresses and speaks his/her own story. In the study, the therapeutic literature or therapy with literature context is the result of tracing back to their memory and the continuous introspection. Considering the therapeutic process in literature texts and characters, we could find the solution to a controversial 21C mental illness following the footsteps of our ancestors including German predecessors in literature. We can seek the examples in text. Hannah and Michael represent the analog-style reading and writing in the era of the information technology, and correspond to the main character in *Heuksan*(黑山) who strolls to interact with nature, writes the memories of the past, and communicates with neighbors. The characters in this study indicate those kinds of lifestyles. In conclusion, the object of the therapeutic literature is the consolation-oriented therapy process between two selves; one that a character created and the other that self expressed.

Keywords: Healingprocess in writing, Therapeutic Literature, The Reader, Heok-San, Self-reflection

1. Introduction

In the humanities therapy including mental health or counseling, the themes dubbed 'literature as a cure' or 'healing in literature' are receiving attention these days[1]. This flow is adding new possibility to a meaning that literature has amidst our life that becomes more and more complicated. New probability here implies to be extended up to a meaning of healing and compensation beyond this, not signifying literature any more just as semantic reading in the dimension of traditional hermeneutics. That is to say, people who regard literature as cure and healing consider that it can be expanded into the process of becoming an author oneself(Der Autor) when being exposed to a text, reading a meaning, or reproducing own text on it, and of becoming a reader(Der Leser) of own text at the same time through interpreting it. Accordingly, a reader or a participant[2] in a literary text becomes the author and the reader simultaneously in the reading process and the treatment chapter.

In this way, a participant who experiences the process of being a reader oneself and becoming an author in literary therapy may have the authority of all interpretations oneself contrary to the traditional literature. This is the biggest difference that can be found between the literary hermeneutics and the literary healing hermeneutics. Thus, diverse aspects in emotion and experience that a participant suffers in the process of reading take place even in the moment that the participant oneself reads the text that he or she wrote. The participant comes to have a new experience while the intrinsic creative process in a text itself is changed into external activity.

According to a change in this flow, a counselee or a client in counseling or psychotherapy is used as a person of autonomously joining the text work, namely as a concept dubbed a participant in the literary healing sphere. Hence, a participant is defined as 'a human being with creative vitality or sense(die Anthropologie des schöpferischen Menschen),' rather than being deemed as an object or a case(case, der Fall) that will receive treatment due to having a problem. In other words, the participant here is accepted as 'the human subject that is still remained a healthy part, not a sick person'.

If the conventional literature activity was understood as the process of interpretation like this mainly through analyzing a work, the literature in literary therapy can be considered to be the process of self-discovery through writing and reading a text and to be the process of confirming self-existence. Thus, a text can be said to be the paradigm in a participant's life, and simultaneously the image of life itself. In this context, there is a great implication in what the humanities books and the literary works are being recently published in large numbers relevant to the psychological product to which the healing and the literary writing bring. It is no exaggeration to say that this writing paradigm has a close relationship even with the talking point of literary therapy that was begun after the 1990s. In the wake of the extremely difficult controversy for about 10 years, 'the crisis of humanities,' which had been raised in many academic fields centering on the contemporary German literature, was naturally extended to the literature as a cure or the philosophical counseling, and the healing paradigm called humanities therapy, or the applied humanities.

Consequently, this study aims to examine the healing vitality and factors, which appeared in the healing texts, through the process of life in characters, and also to explore how it can be applied and comprehended actually in literary therapy. In addition, the objective is to compare and analyze how different and similar the text as a cure, which is indicated in a literary text, is from the participants' texts in the actual literary therapy. This is what inquires into how the literature as cure and the healing in text proceed with constructing its meaning, as well as with which method the healing process and the reconciliation process are available. The reason is that this process is just a new alternative plan for the crisis in humanities, namely, the background of a birth in literary therapeutics and the meaning of existence. That is to say, the function of a meaning and an interpretation in the literature and the movie text can be mentioned to be just the characteristic function in literature that the participants themselves proceed with finding in the process of literary therapy.

2. Literary Healing as Creative Anthropology

In the traditional Gestalt psychotherapy or psychoanalysis, it generally makes it a rule to seek its healing power with paying attention to psychological pathology(Pathogenese) with various mental diseases such as psychosis, neurosis, personality disorder. But in the literary therapy, the starting point is health science(Saluthogenese), which maximally applies the creative power and the innate sense that a human being has. This is similar to the principle as if we learn drum or sports dance through using muscles of having not been used at ordinary times, express the image of sky with a color or reproduce it with the body while looking at the blue sky. On the other hand, a human being in the literary therapeutics is defined as "the body subject that perceives, remembers, contemplates and expresses(perzeptiver, memorativer, reflexiver und expressiver Leib Subjekt)"[3]. A human being here is seen as involving all, reaching from what is available for expression(conscious thing) through fully mobilizing all senses that oneself has, to what is unavailable for expression(unconsciousness). Owing to this media-based compatibility or inter-media characteristic, the literary therapy belongs to the section in the expressive art therapy given seeing in the technical aspect, and corresponds to the humanities therapy(Humantherapie) given seeing in the

dimension of seeking for breakthrough that modern people will proceed with living in the 21st century, or of exploring the anthropological value.

Even if the therapeutic sphere seems to be handed down through theory or technique, it has attribute of being transferred through a person given taking a closer look at the reality. Thus, the key point is when, where and how it was learnt from whom. Moreover, the basic position in literary therapy starts from the healing power in “embodied language”[6] that a human being has. That is to say, the creative literary text that participants make in the process of literary therapy, namely, the linguistic figurations are considered to possibly give true healing power. Ultimately, “power available for embodiment” is regarded as just the autonomous. creative healing ability that a human being has. In this way, the literary therapy has the stance as saying of being able to obtain unexpected vitality even by oneself through which the participants write diverse literary texts(becoming an author oneself) in the therapeutic process, and read it to other participants(becoming a reader oneself). Therefore, 'embodied language,' which is spoken in literary therapy, not only allows oneself to be impressed and changed but also possibly has an effect even on other participants who experience it together. Of course, it can be mentioned to be possible for participants to display this creative capability only when being able to vitalize the whole senses as the main body of action that perceives, remembers and expresses. For example, even two characters in the text of being addressed in this study can be considered to be a case, which comes to have a healing experience oneself through the process of writing own inner self.

2.1 Literature as a Cure

Seeing from the memory theory, the literature is deemed as what was formed newly while authors' personal memory and literary imagination act synergistically, namely, as the construction of other memories[4]. In other words, 'authors' fantastic stories are considered to be what came to rise above the surface of consciousness through being pulled out from what was denied(ex negativo) between memory and oblivion'[5]. Hence, literature is the remembrance work from the past memory as for an author oneself and becomes the healing and reconciliation process through this. This healing function in literature is being regularized and specified more and more in the territory of literary therapy.

That can be easily found even in texts that were addressed in this study. Still, the common point, which is shown in these texts, is what most characters come to attempt reconciliation with life in the meantime or to get a reward for the past life through the literary/artistic experience. Also, the characters in a literary work come to not only form own problem oneself through intensely looking back on own extremely difficult life but also find comfort and vitality of life in the middle of passing through such process. As this is similar to the healing process available for being discovered in the process of literary therapy, for instance, it can be regarded even as self-healing vitality, which is obtained by a participant's writing a literary text and attempting the interpretation on it oneself according to the healing program that was presented by a therapist.

Then, the next aims to explore the literature as a cure, and the healing in a literary text while examining the cases on therapeutic process available for being easily found in a literary text. The perspective of literature as a cure, which was elicited through reading a text in this study, can be identified diverse standpoints in many aspects, but can be arranged by connoting it with around 2 key things. These two viewpoints include, first, the healing as reconciliation and comfort, second, the healing as observation and insight of life[6].

2.2 Case 1: “I reconciled with our story” - Literary healing as reconciliation and consolation - Having a case as Hannah in the movie titled *The Reader*

What the functions of a comfort, a reconciliation and a reward play a primary role in characters can be often seen among original functions of literature. Especially, seeing from the position of authors who write, there are many cases that most of their works ultimately attempt a reconciliation with it while addressing the memory in the past as a material. For example, even in 『*The Reader*』 as a German movie that is addressed in this presentation, the main character Michael in the last chapter of a work is confessing the process of reconciling with the past memory, which had been hard, with recalling "a reason that I tried to write our story is because of having liked to escape from this story. However, the memories were not reminded properly when I am about to write. Meanwhile, I realized that our story is getting out of me. So, I desired to hold on to those things anyhow through writing. Nevertheless, even writing failed to revive my memories. I just left our story alone without touching from a few years earlier. I reconciled with our story. Upon that, our story returned with the round and complete image that has own direction, up to the details and enough not to give sorrow any more to me" [7].

The narrative plot, which was developed in this movie, consists of a method that is crossed the present and the past of the hero. This technique ever becomes a device that shows the logic of a literary text as saying that the so-called narrative is eventually under interaction between memory and oblivion. Also, a literary work is unfolded with a method in which a leading character talks about the memory in infancy. On the other hand, the movie is being primarily used a technique of reminiscence in the way of turning back again from the point of having become an adult.

In other words, the impossibility of communication, which is caused by failing to be shared this periodical context between these characters, is one of the central themes in a work. These characters are lonely and solitary each. For example, the image of Michael who confesses his problem to his mother after the passage of about 20 years, Michael's daughter who had just felt that her father keeps away from her until she becomes an adult, and the image of Michael who comes to see Hannah's true nature just through the sentence of guilt can be considered to have originated from the community spirit in which these people failed to share each other. In general, people are considered to mutually commune with each other's sentiments “while the emotion of sympathy is changed into the feeling of empathy” [8].

In this way, Michael talks to his daughter about his memory of infancy in front of Hannah's grave in the last scene of the movie, thereby being able to give consolation for the outcome of agony in the meantime to him himself as well as to his daughter. Furthermore, this therapeutic action can be interpreted as a compensation for the absence of her father in the past even as for his daughter. If so, how is the therapeutic process in Hannah as a heroin being shown? As can be seen even in the above movie scene, Hannah can be known at a glance to be a character who has thoroughness and perfection on order. For example, even in the scene of sharing love with Michael, she gives careful instructions(reading a book → showering → love-making, etc.) and asks Michael to act according to her rule. Especially, the uniform that she wore, a stiff look, and precision are well revealed even through the body language that she shows.

Also, even in the scene that Michael asks her name for the first time, she overreacts for no reason. Moreover, the writing on the blackboard dubbed “Goethe,” which is presented in Michael's school class, and the concept of "secret," correspond to the important concept in Western literature. A character in a novel is defined by the specific information of being possessed by a character who appears in it. The characters in *Odysseus* have a crooked character sometimes, and also have a high taste occasionally. The

commentary in a literature teacher as saying that "characters are subject to not disclosing well own private information" is ever read as a phrase of hinting at the reality of the past in Hannah. At last, Hannah disappears without a previous notice to Michael after listening to her superior's saying, "Your work performance is perfect as I scanned report. You will be assigned to an office position. You were promoted. Congratulations."

In addition, Hannah has an interest in Michael's school life. For instance, she asks, "Do you learn even language?", "What do you learn during German language class?" Like this, Michael's reading a book for Hannah is begun. This process provides a motive so that Hannah can do her memory work. For example, when Michael reads the paragraph dubbed "He kissed her hand. She lay dead. Everything that he has vanished," Hannah cannot stop crying in Michael's arms. This action happens even in a bicycle trip with Michael. For example, Hannah who had listened to a chorus of girls inside a church is moved to tears. This can be compared even with the response that participants show when we progress the working stage and the direction setting stage after passing through the introduction stage in the process of literary therapy. Also, Hannah often tries action of washing Michael. In this scene, guessing from the look of Michael, a situation is ever produced enough to be painful because of being excessive in action of wiping him with soap. Of course, even when cleaning her body, she washes every nook and cranny of her body as well very closely. In this way, the symbol and the action called water, swimming and bath, which are indicated in the whole of this movie, are available for being interpreted as characters' process of symbolic ritual, which tries to clean away the past memory and sinful act.

The climax of therapeutic process in this movie, namely, the process available for being considered to be around the new directional setting phase in the chapter of literary therapy, is the scene that Michael begins again in earnest to read a book to Hannah *while* getting divorced to leave his daughter to his mother. He indulges in a happy smile while taking out books again that he had read to Hannah before. Hannah now proceeds with finding a new self with re-experiencing the past memory with him while listening again to Michael's voice. Furthermore, these characters proceed with continuing their own communication method again through reading and listening. Finally, Hannah comes to write her name for the first time with coming to get literacy while listening to a literary text that Michael sent. In addition, Hannah writes to send Michael a simple letter such as "Thank you for what you sent this time. It was so funny," "Please send me many love stories," "In my opinion, Schiller will need to probably find romance," "Do you ever receive my letter? Please give me reply." A prison officer evaluates Hannah's this change in this way.

"Hannah was confined within herself. She didn't seem to likely change. She came to be completely different in recent years. She began to interact."

Like this, Hannah comes to proceed with seeking a meaning of new life while re-experiencing the past memory with Michael. Reading a book to Hannah through Michael's voice becomes energy available for being consoled newly with forgetting the memory with the past. This can be considered to be the same process even as if coming to be comforted by reading the text, which was written by oneself wrote, and by explaining it through own inner voice in the process of literary therapy. Hannah's consolation may be possible even through the words of encouragement(Zu-spruch) and the words of comfort(Trost-spruch) that Michael delivers. Nevertheless, what ultimately completes therapeutic vitality is finally the main medium of literary therapy. But it is considered to be available even through 'embodied language(gestaltete Sprache),' 'written language(Geschriebenes Wort),' which may be said to be a major motive. That is because the literary therapy is starting from the embodied and expressed speech act, which eventually "produces sympathy and fear and may trigger catharsis of these emotions or similar feelings in

that manner(Mitleid und Schauder auslöst und auf diese Weise die Katharsis dieser und ähnlicher Gefühle bewirkt)"[14]. This can be mentioned to be just the self-therapeutic process and the healing emotion that Hannah discovered through a therapeutic motive called Michael.

In conclusion, it could be known even in the therapeutic process of the character called Hannah. Still, the literature as a cure can be arranged as what is possible through the integrated semantics(意味體), which covered all of self-reflection(philosophical position), consolation(ritual function), amusement(Homo Ludens), and the talking function(Homo Storytelricus) that the function of literature has essentially.

2.3. Case 2: "Ja(茲) also has a meaning of now, this moment, here. So, isn't it good?" - Literary therapy as observation and insight of life - Kim Hun's Heuksan(2011)

Most of literary works can be mentioned to have a therapeutic characteristic. Especially, the therapeutic process that is depicted through the hero Jeong Yak-jeon in Kim Hun's 『Heuksan(黑山)』 shows very strong message. The therapeutic process, which is described in this work, is begun with arriving safely on the island called Heuksan(黑山) after the main character left a place of exile. For example, leaving trauma of the body behind, he takes comfort from saying, on that occasion that "the smell of time sprouting beyond the horizon throngs(Heuksan, p. 19)," "I am glad I didn't die.... because new time in that way is flooding like a mountain." In other words, even before the grief of the survivor died down, his mind of looking at the sea turns into a series of hope for 'new time.' This is also a gift of nature that the sea with eternity(億劫) gives. But it is no exaggeration to say that it originated from the attitude of life that accepts everything with destiny and conformity. Then, let us examine from which point i-process that he is making a therapeutic life was begun[9].

Jeong Yak-jeon, who is a leading character of having gone through a therapeutic life in the novel titled 『Heuksan』, is a person who was forced to run away to Heuksan Island(黑山島) on a charge just of "Mumin(誣民, cheating people) using the absurd matter-of-fact remark(妖言) as saying of burning ancestral spirits to abolish ancestral rites, and of the dead coming back to life to make a state without king and ancestors in a place where is not the land in this place." That is to say, Jeong Yak-jeon(丁若銓) is a figure who came in contact with Catholicism called 'Sahak(邪學, incoherent and cunning learning)' and then got over an eternal storm, but comes to suffer distress in which most of his brothers come to have their head cut off.

What allowed his life to regain therapeutic vitality in earnest includes fish, and a character named Chang-dae who had never gone ashore. He is being delineated just as a character who "does not mix what can be asked with what cannot be questioned, and does not add what can be answered to what cannot be replied" [10]. He was "a person who knows the inside of things through taking a quiet look at even if having been born on island and having read only three or four books." In such a way, he is playing a role like a mirror available for looking into the window of his mind in Jeong Yak-jeon who has to live in exile alone. The conversation and communication with Chang-dae and fish provide an opportunity for Jeong Yak-jeon to come to write it in a book with looking into fishes for his whole life. That is just <Jasaneobo(茲山魚譜, Encyclopedia of fishery)> that he left during his life of exile.

In terms of Jeong Yak-jeon's therapeutic process like this, facing the sea, which goes ashore, may be seen as the introduction stage. On the other hand, it can be interpreted as the working stage as for observing fish and talking with Chang-dae, as the direction setting or new direction setting stage as to the process of building a house newly, greeting a woman and coming to have a son. In particular, his writing a book in light

of fish shape and human life image can be therapeutic vitality that is made at the final stage of literary therapy. Let us directly check the process through his mouth.

In this way, the above dialogue is the passage of ultimately representing the process in which the trauma of the body that this novel has is changed into new meeting, new living foundation, and new life energy. Above all, the feeling gives a strong impression that a horror or anxiety of the whole life in a place of exile is eradicated through the language expression called *Jasan*(兹山). This can be regarded as the therapeutic process that the leading character Jeong Yak-jeon proceeds with experiencing in this novel. We can know here that the therapeutic vitality of being possessed by language can be obtained through the surrounding environment or new incidental vehicles. This is just the part of showing as well that the literature as a cure can reach the integration of mind and body through a method dubbed the artistically embodied language.

3. Conclusion

The conclusion available for being gained in the texts, which were addressed in the above main subject, is a point that all the leading characters finally come to get healing through experiencing the self-therapeutic process themselves. In other words, this is similar to what the participants in literary therapy reach the therapeutic process through taking part in literary activity spontaneously and intensely. For instance, the characters in literary text come to acquire a reward of mind through the literary activity leading to forming new ego or to reconciling with the past. That is to say, the literary self or the expressive self comes to achieve a result that comes to be again integrated 'the wounded ego' in the past and the present self of trying to look at it newly through the written words and the spoken words. Of course, it is possible only when the expressing and speaking self can accomplish work with oneself fiercely.

Accordingly, in terms of the conclusion that may be made through the characters in texts of having been examined in the main subject, the literature as a cure, and the healing in a literary text can be considered to be a fruition of the continuous memory work and introspection on oneself. Moreover, with inquiring into the therapeutic process and the characters in the literary text, the solution to the 21C modern people's mental pathology, which gets more serious day by day, might be what looks back upon lifestyle in virtuous men/literatures in Korea including Germany, and what we ourselves experience and reflect it again. For instance, such a way of life will just include book reading and writing(Hannah and Michael) in analogue method, not internet or screen in the era of information technology, taking a walk for interacting with nature, and writing leading to composing and looking back on oneself(main character in Heuksan), and the communication through talking with people around[11].

The characters in the text of having been examined in the main subject can be seen as the ones who practiced this lifestyle[12]. In addition, the participants through literary therapy, and the feedback and the sympathy sharing among participants will give a meaning and a value of new life to modern people who have low consciousness of 'common value or common goal.' This can be mentioned to be just a device of literary therapy available for vitalizing the literature as a cure, and the healing in literature much more. Therefore, the literature as a cure, namely, the healing in literature, is considered to be likely able to be linked to the true integration of body and mind just through which the leading character oneself proceeds with finding the creative self, and the ego of expressing oneself[13].

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