

Organ Writing and the Reconstruction of Existence: An Interpretation of I Put the Evening in the Drawer from the Perspective of Life Poetics

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Abstract. This paper centers on Han Kang's poetry collection *I Put the Evening in the Drawer*, notable for its organ imagery as it probes core human existential themes—life, nothingness, death. Adopting the lens of life poetics, this study examines how Han Kang, through her "organ writing," articulates the dissociation between the body and organic coding, unpacks the symbolic connotations and subversive potential of language, and seeks reconstruction and rebirth amid fragmentation. Building on an exposition of life poetics' core propositions, the paper draws on Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of the "stratum" and the "rigid segmentary line" to analyze the contradictions in bodily organ writing and the escape from coding that it reveals. It then turns to the "tongue" as a linguistic symbol to examine its multiple layers of meaning, and finally argues that Han Kang moves toward a vision of life's wholeness by foregrounding the fragmentation of the body.

Keywords: life poetics, organ-writing, Han Kang, *I Put the Evening in the Drawer*

1. Introduction

Han Kang is an immensely influential writer in contemporary Korean literature. Her works confront historical trauma and the fragility of human life with poetic language, and she was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2024. The citation reads: "She confronts historical trauma with poetic prose and reveals the fragility of human life." [1]

Twenty years after her debut as a novelist, Han Kang returns to her literary origins and publishes her only poetry collection to date, *I Put the Evening in the Drawer*, continuing her inquiry into the essence of life and existence. With a calm and detached hand, she depicts organs such as the tongue, lips, heart, and stomach, detaching them from the intact body and endowing them with independent symbolic meaning, thereby magnifying the existential dilemmas of human life.

This paper, grounded in the perspective of life poetics and drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of the "stratum," "line of flight," and "body without organs," analyzes the deconstructive phenomena of organ writing in *I Put the Evening in the Drawer*, and on this basis discusses the legitimacy of "organ writing" as a critical category. The research aims to answer: how, through organ writing, does Han Kang move from "the fragmentation of the body" to "the wholeness of life"?

2. Theoretical genealogy and research foundation

2.1. Life poetics as a theoretical perspective

A comprehensive survey of the theoretical genealogy of life poetics reveals two main currents: "humanistic" and "anti-humanistic" (here, "humanistic" refers to the theoretical position within poetry that equates "life" with "human life" and regards poetry as a product of human life experience, personality practice, or aesthetic transformation).

The former is represented by Chen Chao. His framework of "individual life-existence-language" views poetic creation as an extension of the poet's life and personality practice, emphasizing "individual witness" and "historical justice." Compared to this systematic construction, the pioneering work of Guo Moruo, Zong Baihua, and others on early life aesthetics regarded poetry as the aesthetic transformation of life experience [2], though it did not yet form a complete poetic system. In Korea, Song Wook [3] attempted to bridge Bergson's *L'Évolution créatrice* and Yulgok Yi I's philosophy of *gi* (氣/기), opening up a cross-cultural space for the development of life aesthetics and poetics.

In contrast to the above humanistic approach, Deleuze's art theory is anti-humanistic. Researchers such as Zheng Haiting [4] have summarized it as a "poetics of life" to distinguish it from traditional "organic poetics." In Deleuze's theory, the organism is a "stratum" imposed upon the body from outside---a phenomenon of accumulation, solidification, and sedimentation that fixes organs to specific functions and creates constraints. What maintains this stratified structure is the "rigid segmentary line." In the interstices of strata there always exists a "line of flight," pointing toward the possibility of breaking free from coding. When organs are liberated from functional fixation, they arrive at the "body without organs" [5]. This theory provides an effective tool for analyzing the fragmentation of the body and the dissociation of organs in poetry.

It should be noted that this paper employs both Deleuze's and Chen Chao's theories: Deleuze's framework analyzes the dissociation and flight of organs, while Chen Chao's framework interprets the hope and affirmation of "being alive." Their philosophical positions differ, but Han Kang's poetry itself contains the tension between dissociation and the claim of life. Therefore, this study respects the internal heterogeneity of the text and uses two perspectives to interpret different dimensions of the poetry, maintaining critical honesty.

Furthermore, with the theories of Deleuze and Guattari as important philosophical resources, there is also a branch of posthuman life poetics. Represented by German philosopher Andreas Weber, this branch proposes replacing "technology" with "poetics" as the basic element for constructing reality, critiques anthropocentrism, and explores the symbiosis and becoming of humans and non-humans [6].

2.2. Current research on "body discourse" in Han Kang's works

Life poetics emphasizes the body's experience of the world. Correspondingly, "body discourse" is also a focal point in the scholarly discussion of Han Kang's works. Existing research can be divided into two main types.

First, discipline and resistance. Guo Mengqiu points out that the protagonist Yeong-hye in *The Vegetarian*, as a "witness to violence," suffers multiple forms of violence from family and society, and resists through bodily languages such as refusing food and not wearing a bra [7]; Han Jeong-hee systematically analyzes the discipline of the body, intercorporeality, and the possibility of escaping

the symbolic order in Han Kang's works, drawing on Foucault and Deleuze, establishing a relatively complete analytical framework for body discourse [8].

Second, bodily perception and the formation of subjectivity. In her master's thesis, Han Jeong-hee systematically reviews the state of research on body discourse in Han Kang's novels, citing Lee Seong-won's analysis of the body as a "memory carrier" in *Your Cold Hands*, and Kim Man-seok's discussion of the "uncontrollable body" and its relation to the narrator: the former argues that the "body" is a subject continually generated in the process of recording the past, bearing trauma and desire; the latter believes that the language of the body is a channel of dialogue between consciousness and the body [8]. Choi Chang-keun, starting from the relationship between language and the body, explores how individuals reconnect with the world through bodily perception when language fails [9]. Du Qiu and Ye Yuqi analyze organ perception in Han Kang's poetry from the perspective of body phenomenology, introducing Deleuze's concept of the "body without organs" [10], but there is still room for further development.

Before Du Qiu and Ye Yuqi, some scholars had already attempted to use Deleuze's theory to study Han Kang's works. Kim Mi-jeong analyzes Han Kang's *The Vegetarian* through the concept of "becoming-plant," exploring how the female body escapes through plantification [11]; Joanna Bednarek reconstructs the concept of "plant sexuality," analyzing the relationship between "becoming-plant" and desire in Han Kang's *The Vegetarian* [12]; Pimentel Biscaia interprets bodily transformation in *The Vegetarian* through "rhizome" and "body without organs" [13]. These studies all use Deleuze's "becoming" theory as a tool, and the research is highly concentrated on a single work, *The Vegetarian*; their logic is mostly one of concept validation, with theoretical framework preceding close reading.

In addition, research on Han Kang's works also covers multiple dimensions such as historical trauma, violence narrative, plant imagery, and feminism. Overall, the existing research has the following shortcomings: the research object is mainly focused on Han Kang's novels, with systematic analysis and close reading of the poetry collection *I Put the Evening in the Drawer* being very weak; although issues such as "trauma," "life," and "body" have been touched upon, no study has integrated them under the theoretical framework of "life poetics"; most studies treat the body as a holistic category, or focus on the overall plant transformation, without in-depth analysis of the symbolic meanings of specific organs (tongue, eye, heart, bone) in the poetry. This leaves room for this paper to approach through organ writing and analyze Han Kang's poetry from the perspective of life poetics.

3. Stratum and lines: The failure of organic coding

3.1. The rigid segmentary line: The rigidified body organ

The essence of poetry is the experience of life, and life experience depends largely on the body's perception of the world. In her 2024 Nobel Prize in Literature lecture "Light and Thread," Han Kang said: "When I write, I use my body. I mobilize all sensory details: sight, hearing, smell, taste; sensations of tenderness, warmth, cold, and pain..." [14] The presence of the body is so important in creation that the spirit must manifest itself through the body to perceive the world, and the experiences of various organs stimulate the birth of verses. Different organs bear different duties and bring diverse life sensations. Han Kang's poetry collection *I Put the Evening in the Drawer* makes extensive use of organ imagery such as lips, tongue, eyes, and heart. These are both the medium for perceiving the world and the carrier through which life experience, as a kind of spirit, is presented.

On the one hand, the poet focuses on these organs, amplifying the individual's subtle perceptions of the world, such as "Seeping / spreading / like a wave about to touch / entering my fine blood vessels / your blood" [15] and "When I close my eyes and rest / with eyelids as thin as an amniotic membrane" [15]---the sensation of blood flow is like a wave, the closing of the eyelids like the covering of a membrane, the inner movements of life depicted delicately and truthfully, with creation revolving around organs as its center.

On the other hand, when describing the organs, an obvious characteristic is the alienation of the poet's will from her own bodily organs; the organs become pure objects, opposed to the will. Under this "alienation," the poet's attitude is twofold: "perceptive rejection" and "numb detachment." "I have / a tongue and lips // Sometimes it is very hard to bear the existence of these organs // I, can't take it anymore" [15]; "I endure and say / I have something red / that contracts and expands every second / that spurts a fist-sized amount of hot blood every second" [15]---the bodily organs do not obey the command of the will; the will falls into chaos, causing the body to feel strange, foreign, and hostile; "direct experience" causes her pain, so she intensely rejects it. The second attitude, cold numbness, is the will adopting an "onlooker's" perspective to survey this object that is originally the "self": "In the dark blue X-ray photograph / I am a not-too-tall skeleton" [15], thus being swallowed by a strong sense of alienation; "I have / a tongue and lips" [15]; "I have / a heart / and also cold hair and nails that feel no pain" [15]---the use of possessive sentence patterns reflects the poet's separation of "me" and "my organs" into two things, speaking of them as if taking inventory; "Because it has no skin / it is naturally very thin / the inverted-triangle pelvis is empty inside / a vertebral disc on the hip bone / very beautiful, like a new moon, somewhat worn // a delicate bone that will not decay / forever motionless // an unobstructed nasal cavity and empty pupils / carefully watching my face / no tongue or lips / no hot red blood of any kind" [15]---the calm verses contain descriptions of appearance and tactile sensations; a doctor can study my body like any object; at this moment, "I" have lost emotion and even stand on the same side as the doctor's gaze.

To understand the poet's special attitude toward her organs, we can take Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the "organism" in *A Thousand Plateaus* as a starting point.

In Deleuze's theory, "organs" are the material, concrete components of the body; in their natural state, these organs are open, with potential intensities and possibilities for connection. But when an organ is captured and solidified into the "organism" as a fixed form of existence, it loses its freedom.

The organism is a "stratum" imposed upon the body, "a phenomenon of accumulation, coagulation, and sedimentation. It imposes forms, functions, bonds, dominant and hierarchized organizations, and organized transcendence upon the BwO [body without organs], all in order to extract an effective utility from it. The stratum is bondage, it is pincers" [5]. This explains why organs make the poet "can't take it anymore": the tongue, lips, heart, etc., exist within the organism; their shapes, positions, and functions are determined by genes, as "sedimentations" long since developed, not transferable by the will.

If the "stratum" is the result of sedimentation, then the "rigid segmentary line" is the rule that maintains the stratum's structure; it constructs an environment full of presuppositions and consistency, devoid of intensity, regulating the organism's operation through coding.

"The ankle I sprained years ago / is inflamed again / every step a moment of quietly being burned by fire" [15] ---the poet's old injury repeatedly aches because the rigid line has coded the accidental event of the sprain into the ankle's organization; in a certain scenario, the pain is led back along the same path to the injured segment. Another example: "It is time to eat // I ate the meal" [15] ---the act of eating is driven not only by the unavoidable "hunger" of the stomach but also determined by eating habits. The rigid line has already aligned eating with a time point; despite staring at the steam

rising from the rice, immersed in thought, having no appetite, she still picks up the bowl and eats---because that is more realistic. Within the organism, the "I" is reduced to a spectator. It watches "my flesh" execute commands that do not belong to "me" under the bondage of coding. At the level of the signifying totality, various sensations are conceptualized with words like "pain," "cold," "hungry," but the organ's intensities may not flow toward these meanings; they are misread. At the level of subjectification, sensations are naturally defined as the "I's" experience---presupposing the existence of a "subject" and blocking escape.

Rigid prescriptiveness binds free life, for individuals and even more so for society. The segmentary line is always associated with binary mechanisms. At the social level, one sees the class dichotomies of man/woman, child/adult; each segment represents the exercise of a social power: women are expected to be gentle and docile, to be "wise mother and good wife" (현모양처), to use "female language" (여성적말); adults are required to be mature, responsible, and not childish. In this context, Han Kang writes: "I want to enter such a place / roll my shoulders inward / bend my waist / bend my knees / exert force / tighten my ankles / my heart is about to blur / but nothing changes" [15] ---the bodily movements reflect the oppression and alienation of free life by the rigid line. The self curling up, behaving properly, not taking up space---does this not correspond to the "humility," "modesty," and "gentleness" that society demands of women? The poet actively compresses herself, with a touch of defensiveness, hoping to conform to discipline in this way in order to gain some relief, or perhaps to return to the fetal period, to immerse herself in the warm womb of the mother and no longer be an adult, to the point of "inner blurring"---the self-will is about to dissolve, yet "nothing changes." Because the pressure comes from an external society that is binary-opposed to the "I"; having been born, having been born a woman, she must accept this thousand-year-old social pattern. The poet can change her own bodily posture, but not the oppressive order.

3.2. The stirring of the line of flight

Admittedly, "rigidity" is in some sense stability, preventing order from collapsing. In a false peace, many people take this pattern for granted; but the sensitive poet sees the discord between the will of her own life and the prescriptiveness.

If Han Kang's novels reveal more the social dimension of resistance, then her poetry focuses on the individual's predicament. The large number of organ images in the poetry collection is not without reason; the dissociative organ writing indicates that the poet doubts the so-called "self-perception"---she questions the authority of coding, questions the a priori nature of the "subject," and does not believe that organ sensations equate to her true life experience. In her view, the true life is never lived among these coded organs. She is pained, confused, guarded, and therefore adopts a seemingly detached, objectifying perspective, wandering and contemplating from a distance, trying to sever the connection between organs and will, in order to find a fissure through which life can be reconstructed.

Han Kang does not reject organs themselves; what she rejects are always the rigid connections. Her dissociative organ writing cuts the original connections within the organism, disturbing the order, and thus the poet's life will---the strong intention to let organs flow freely toward the plane of the "body without organs"---breaks through the soil. "To free consciousness from the subject so as to form a mode of exploration, to free the unconscious from signification and interpretation so as to form a true production" [5]---in this sense, organ writing leads out a path of "flight" toward rebirth.

The possibility of flight is provided by the uneven distribution of the stratum. The stratum is a process, not a finished product; where the stratum is thinnest and its folds loosest, the poet finds a

fissure not yet completely sealed: the image of the tongue.

4. The symbolism of the "tongue"

In this poetry collection of only about 50,000 characters, the image of the "tongue" appears 14 times, which can be said to be everywhere. This newly emerging organ image has a comprehensive polysemy, such as the sensitive and flexible quality of life, the fragile flesh, the sense of taste, the capacity and limitation of language, the expression of sex and love, etc. Yet in literary history, very few writers have shown a particular fondness for the "tongue" image. Wellek's view in *Theory of Literature* is: "We consider 'symbol' to have a repeated and persistent meaning. An 'image' can be turned into a metaphor once, but if it keeps appearing as a presentation and representation, it becomes a symbol, even part of a symbol system" [16]. Han Kang extracts the "tongue" from among the many body parts and uses it as her "private symbol" [16]---the movements of the tongue imply the poet's attitude toward language, toward the relationship between will and body.

4.1. The representative of language

The tongue is the core organ of language production, and the language it represents has great limitations. Whether "honey-tongued and insidious" or "words failing to convey the meaning," the essence is the human inability to grasp the essence of the world through language. Admittedly, language is powerful; it allows beings to manifest and the world to "open up." But the user's ornate diction and chattering tongue worsen the barrenness of language. In Deleuze's view, language is not a neutral tool but a system of external coded constraints, i.e., the "signifying" stratum. Returning to the poem mentioned earlier: "I have / a tongue and lips // Sometimes it is really hard to bear the existence of these organs," after expressing her pain, Han Kang then gives the reason for the "hard to bear": one cannot bear the great efficacy of language. The inadequacy in using language, the uncontrollable feeling that language brings, both shake her: "For example: hello / for example: what do you think / for example: when it is true, // the crooked tongue / touches / my palate, / the back of my smooth teeth / touches, then leaves" [15]---the minute and slow movement of the tongue shows the poet's hesitation and caution in speaking---distrusting the appearance of language, and also rejecting the sensations language brings to herself.

4.2. Lips and tongue: Two sides of the same coin of body and will

However, generalizing the contexts in which the "tongue" appears in the poetry collection reveals that the tongue is very rarely written alone; it is almost always in a relation of opposition to the "lips." This shifts the connotation of the tongue from "language symbol" to a metaphor for "body and will."

"Broken lips / tongue in the darkness" [15]; "If the tongue melts / the lips must be opened" [15]; "A knife not completely erased / long separates my lips // My round and retreating tongue / seeks a darker place" [15]---the lips and tongue appear together; compared to the lips that are "separated" or in a state of incompleteness, the tongue, because it is hidden, receding, and concealed behind the lips, is always in darkness, and its existence is relatively intact---its meaning emerges in relation to the lips. In "Evening Leaves," the appearance of lips and tongue seems quite abrupt: "Time seems to have passed / about a hundred years / my body / grows deeper like a huge vat / I think of the tongue and the lips" [15]---why does the poet think of the "tongue and lips" immediately after perceiving her body becoming "deeper"? Perhaps there is this explanation: the tongue is part of the body, but

also the organ closest to the "spirit"; it produces language, and language is considered the expression of spirit. Then, at some level, the relationship between tongue and lips is the relationship between spirit and body. After the body's perception is thoroughly felt, the spirit---or will---manifests.

The tongue (will) and the lips (body) are closely connected, corresponding to the two-sidedness of body and will; but from the outside, what is always seen first is the lips, not the tongue in the darkness---this precisely corresponds to the hiddenness of authentic life and true will.

Precisely because the authentic life will is protected by the body, it has purer freedom. For instance: "The sun sets, the night turns dark / turns dark, until it turns blue again / I will moisten my tongue / I will smell / listen to the layered night sounds / read the layered night colors / I will sing by your ear / extremely low / extremely soft" [15]---after night falls, the "moistened" tongue acquires functions as fresh, delicate, and soft as those represented by the subsequent parallel clauses, reminiscent of snakes; the tongue seems able to capture the same sensations and information as the nose, ears, eyes, and mouth; especially as the first organ to appear, it may even have the meaning of transcending or leading all subsequent organ functions---precisely because the tongue is "moistened," flavors can be smelled, sounds heard, colors seen, much like the nature of will.

In her choice of rhetoric, Han Kang uses special verbs such as "submerge" and "melt" to describe the tongue, indicating that for her, the tongue is originally a clear energy, a concrete thing, but is wrapped and eroded by something, turning into a blurred stirring. All this happens beneath the cover of the lips, so it appears silent and easily overlooked. Observe the trajectory of the tongue's movement further: "the crooked tongue / touches / my palate, / the back of my smooth teeth / touches, then leaves." One sees that, before preparing to vocalize, the tongue always probes inside the mouth, touching and leaving, sprouting and retracting; it is always in a liminal state of desire, between "about to speak" and "not yet spoken," between "exposure" and "concealment." We might thus guess that what makes the tongue hesitant and weak is precisely the external substance that envelops and melts the tongue---the slipperiness of language, the discipline of coding, the hypocrisy and violence in social history that harm authentic human life.

4.3. The "retreat" of the tongue

The true desire represented by the tongue wants to speak but holds back, and ultimately falls silent. When language has been contaminated by power and desire, reduced to a tool of violence, Han Kang decides to let the tongue retreat into silence, opposing the tongue's linguistic function in order to preserve the authenticity of life.

In the poetry collection, the tongue "retreats" in three ways. First, when facing external coercion, it resists expression: "A knife not completely erased / long separates my lips // My round and retreating tongue / seeks a darker place"; second, the maintenance of silence in the normal state: "Broken tongue // lips in the darkness" [15]; "tongue submerged in darkness" [15]; the third is a resolute "anti-language" stance: "Hiding a clenched fist in my pocket / I carve them on the back of the tongue" [15]---realizing that a "vow" would "disappear after gliding," she is shocked, then calm, and immediately knows that she should engrave her anger on the "back" of language. Why "carve" rather than "write"? Writing is light and erasable, while carving is violent, permanent, and painfully clear; the poet uses this action to emphasize the loyalty betrayed by language. But this does not mean giving up speaking. Because "carving" itself is a form of expression, not with sound but with pain; turning away from the world, yet facing the will.

In summary, the tongue is a specific point where the coding of the organism loosens. On the one hand, the poet frees it from the signifying nature of language, so that it no longer performs fixed signifiatory functions, opening the way for the stirring of the line of flight; on the other hand, the

life will concentrated in the tongue is fully nurtured in the freedom of silence---and that is precisely what life poetics pursues. The uniqueness of the "tongue" lies in its connection of the logical chain from organ dissociation to life integration, serving as a transitional link from fragmentation to wholeness. Its writing not only confirms the fissures in the "stratum" but also lays the foundation for the generation of hope.

5. Life poetics oriented toward hope

5.1. The body without organs: Becoming and its limits

5.1.1. The liberation of organs

From the loosening of the organism's coding to the emergence of the line of flight, the purpose of Han Kang's organ writing is not to make organs disappear or the body perish, but to generate a new bodily state---what Deleuze and Guattari call the "body without organs" (CsO) [5]. This is a state after organs are liberated from the functional fixation of the organism. Organs are no longer fixed to a single use such as "speaking," but are opened to new connections and new intensities. On it, desires flow freely, and new configurations that did not exist before become possible.

For example, in "The Anatomy Theater": "a vertebral disc on the hip bone / very beautiful, like a new moon, somewhat worn"---the beauty of this bone does not depend on any function; it is not useful (somewhat worn, so it cannot perfectly bear the function of supporting the body); at this moment of functional diminution, it is seen as pure form, beautiful and white, like a new moon. Similarly, the line "the inverted-triangle pelvis is empty inside" empties not only matter but also its prescribed obligations (procreation, support), leaving only a pure shape, which is precisely the meaning of life itself. Finally, the poet writes of a "delicate bone that will not decay / forever motionless." A skeleton is often interpreted as an image of death, but isn't it also a body without organs, a free body escaped from all coding? "Will not decay" means exiting the organism's metabolic cycle; "forever motionless" means no longer performing any functional action---utter stillness and silence, becoming a pure field of intensity, a plane on which the will can flow.

At the end of "When Tears Come, My Body Turns into an Empty Jar," under the sunlight and sea breeze, in the perception of natural objects, the poet admits that life has "extra additions," and after crying, she warmly calls out: "Thus awaken again, the life within my heart" [15]. It is a life within the heart, one that only awakens after the body has become empty. It is a new personality shaped by the life will; the tears of weeping carry the joy of rebirth.

5.1.2. The danger of numbness and self-destruction

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari also raise the following question: why does the line of flight "carry within itself such a particular despair, even though it conveys a message of joy, as if at the moment all is unraveling, something at its very core threatens it: a death, a destruction?" [5]

Indeed, the process of becoming is arduous. Leaving the stratum also means no longer having form and substance, organization and development, content and expression. We are disarticulated. In the process of flight, the individual risks falling into chaos and destruction---just as the poet experiences feelings of loneliness, nothingness, and alienation. At other times, the individual may be reclosed into strata---these strata become even more rigid, even losing their diversity, differentiation, and degrees of movement [5].

The "body without organs" reveals the possibility of freedom, but this theory does not offer a definite value commitment. After flight, the individual may fall into chaos and nothingness, or may be recaptured by even more rigid strata. In other words, destratification does not equal liberation. However, in Han Kang's poetry, we can see that whether in fragmentation or rebirth, something always flickers and refuses to perish. It is not the line of flight in Deleuze's sense, but an older, more stubborn life itself. The discussion of this dimension requires the help of another discourse--- Chinese scholar Chen Chao's life poetics centered on "individual life." Although the two theories differ in philosophical stance, Han Kang's poetry itself simultaneously contains cold "dissociation" and the pursuit of "hope in life," interwoven and interacting, which constitutes the literary tension of *I Put the Evening in the Drawer*.

5.2. The ultimate pursuit of life poetics

As for what is called life poetics, Chen Chao provides a clear explanation: "It concerns the relationship between modern poetry and the life of modern people. I do not wish to address only art, but also life philosophy, religion, culture, and the issue of suicide among youth" [17]. Thus, from its inception, the construct of "life poetics" has plunged its probing tentacles deep into the core of life, questioning the fundamental issues of life and death. Han Kang's poetry certainly contains darkness and fragmentation, bloodiness and chill, but behind the choice of organ imagery and the arrangement of language lies the pursuit of "shining" and "being alive," that is, a fundamental hope for "life."

In "Bleeding Eyes 3," the poet "realizes the moment the soul shatters," but "even shattered," she is "still alive" [15]; in "Evening Sketch 4," with "those clear eyes about to shatter," she watches the process of "the thin ice over the black puddle sinking," and perceives "something / shining / until it shines" [15]---isn't hope precisely that little "shining" that people stubbornly seek amidst the helpless black cold and fragmentation? In *Drafts on Life Poetics*, Chen Chao also uses a similar phrase---"the shining of life"---to locate the poet's duty in the field of life poetics: "Poetry, from its word formation, also tells us that the poet is the priest and singer of humanity. We live every day in a brand new, different world. At the same time, we live every day in an old, aging, sluggish geographical unit of the universe. Humanity feels that shining of life, distant yet near, departing yet returning. They need ritual, they need singing... The poet represents the height of human weeping and singing" [18].

The poem "June" more fully embodies Han Kang's trajectory of pursuing "being alive":

Hope is like germs
In the alley where canola flowers bloom
Grass blades bent by rain threads, the bodies of grass blades
Cannot straighten
It's not just my chest that burns
Not just the soles of my feet
Nor the stomach that ached all night
What makes me move forward, what
Puts shoes on my feet
Pushes my back
Lifts me up when I fall weakly
Clenches my tightly biting tongue
It's not the sunlight that trembles
Let the mountains and rivers be beautiful! It's not

The sparkling water flow
What inside my body aches, what
Never leaves? Because my body
Is a mung bean sprout, if it gets sick
Will it want to leave?
If I stop
Even if I tremble, you who ties my feet to the earth
There is a cluster of spore-swaying flowers
Blooming there
Live, live
Say you are alive
Even though I cover my ears
It is not a sound the ears can hear, nor a song
The ears can block [15]

Germ, canola flowers, rain threads, bent grass blades---all are fragile, sickly things, corresponding both to the poet's body as slender and easily broken as a "mung bean sprout," and symbolizing the powerlessness of "hope." Next, the perspective turns inward, describing three organs. The organs ache, but the triple negation of the pain---"not just," "not only," "nor"---suggests that the pain transcends the physical "direct object"; it is not localized, but spreads throughout life and will, not easily eliminated.

At this point, an unknown force supports the poet. It makes her stand up, makes her "clench my tightly biting tongue." Here, the "tongue" again does not perform a linguistic function; "tightly bite" and "clench" are actions of the same nature as the tongue's "retreat"---restrained, silent, but with the added connotation of "gathering strength." The tongue does not seek help from the outside, expending energy, but accumulates, until "Live, live / say you are alive," then it uses its linguistic function, which is to emphasize the fundamental hope and issue a call to live.

And from where does this call emanate? "There is a cluster of spore-swaying flowers / blooming there"---the answer lies here. Spores, as a type of cell, the smallest unit of plant reproduction, without organs, drifting in the wind, yet containing the full potential to bloom. Is this not like an ideal state of being human? Ideally, one can dissociate organs and even the prescriptiveness of the flesh, becoming a pure life force, free and strong, full of possibility. The three successive imperative sentences of "Live!" are the summons of this life force. It may be spoken by the personified flowers, or by the poet herself, moved. Judging from the last line, "nor a song / the ears can block," the former possibility is greater.

The summoned poet instinctively "covers her ears" in resistance, indicating that she instinctively distrusts these broken organs, or, because her fear and exhaustion are too deep, she is unwilling to say "live" again. Yet, a highly tense paradox then unfolds, for it is "not a sound the ears can hear," so covering the ears does not stop it from being heard.

This means that there is a more authentic "hearing" in the world that transcends physical hearing. Perhaps the true discourse, the true song, is inessential when given sound. The true call makes itself understood without noise, without confusion, clearly univocal, leaving no room for curiosity.

The call the poet hears does not come from the spore flowers but from the poet's own heart. Because it originates from the self, it is neither "a sound the ears can hear" nor "a song the ears can block." It is life itself singing. The subject of the call is it, and the object of the call is also it---the coded, alienated yet unwilling-to-die life, earnestly calling for its purest form! That sound enters the

body and vibrates the heart. Listening to its song, the "I" therefore transcends that weak, chaotic self constrained by organ pain, and grasps the clear, authentic life.

The poetry of life is painful. Perhaps fragmented, perhaps involving darkness, even bleeding; though poetry arises from pain, it is not pessimistic; instead, it turns pain into a starting impetus. A force that makes the "bent grass blade" straighten again, that makes the "tightly biting tongue" finally burst into the cry "say you are alive." This is the force of life. Life poetics is the poetics that, through aesthetic means, reveals the process of struggling to live and celebrates the force of life.

In the poetry collection, Han Kang's awareness of life is not limited to the self---even if the life sensations she reveals are shared by all humanity, more directly, she extends her pen to society and history. In "Winter at the Other Side of the Mirror," the poet gazes at her own eyes "shedding two lines of candle tears," and sees "while it is still raining in the square // women wearing white headbands embroidered with the names of murdered children / moving forward with slow steps" [15]---this refers to South Korea's 1980 "Gwangju Uprising"(also known as the 5·18 Gwangju Democratization Movement), a tragic democratic movement that resulted in thousands of civilian and student casualties.

In the life poetics theory of Chen Chao and his successors, "individual witness" and "historical justice" are two important value pillars, the latter being an elevation of the former. For the former, the poet must start from individual life and write her own true experience; for the latter, this individual writing must point to a broader history; the poet must assume the responsibility of being a member of humanity. He believes that true poetry does not simply "express the self" or become a megaphone for history, but, through complete subjectivity, expresses care for "human existence." "This is a completely opposite type of creativity from those instrumental poems that ignore the individual and suppress individual desires with group goals" [18]. The opening of poetic themes to the Other and to historical trauma is also Han Kang's purpose in writing. On the one hand, the subject must step out of itself to encounter the Other; on the other, the subject itself contains the Other. The inner call "Live!" in "June" also, because of the summons of the "face of the Other" at the ethical level, takes on the meaning of bearing the destiny of humanity.

I Put the Evening in the Drawer is grounded in individual lives that share commonality; it experiences nothingness, listens to the language of the soul, strives to approach the authenticity of life, and leads people to feel those life experiences that everyone wants to understand, tries to articulate, but frequently fails to grasp. Han Kang describes her creative experience thus: "I try to inject into my sentences the fresh sensations I feel as a mortal human being with blood flowing in my body, as if I am releasing an electric current. When I feel this current passing to my readers, I am shaken and deeply moved" [14]. These creations are not only personal but also human, thus infinitely approaching the center of life poetics research.

I Put the Evening in the Drawer verifies the effectiveness of the "organ" image in poetry as a carrier of life, and also demonstrates the unique expressive power of this type of imagery. Fragmentation, the reasons for fragmentation, and the journey toward wholeness are dimensions that life poetics has not yet fully explored. In this sense, Han Kang's poetry not only opens up a new space of interpretation for the study of life poetics but also, with the achievement of the Nobel Prize in Literature, wins recognition for this critical theory. Those verses infused with freshness require us to continually rediscover them.

6. Conclusion

Han Kang's poetry seems to dismember the body, but is in fact a way of liberating the spirit of the "I" from its constraints by dissociating the will from the flesh. Her cold and absurd organ writing

serves the liberation of the life will. What Han Kang attempts to construct is a pure living being, defined by no function, bound by no coding, appropriated by no power---close to Deleuze's "body without organs," or more precisely, a life will returned to its authentic state. *I Put the Evening in the Drawer* suggests to us that perhaps the highest wholeness of life is not merely the integrity of the flesh, but the will's courage to face fragmentation and recognize the indestructible within it. No theory promises salvation; only people's own listening and searching. Even if once broken, even if still in pain, one can still speak the belief: "Live!"

This study finds that Han Kang's organ writing provides new points of entry for understanding life poetics in at least two ways. First, a default premise of humanism is that the expression of life requires wholeness, but Han Kang's poetry inspires us: when the whole is shattered, the fragments can instead reveal a concealed reality, thus supplementing a reverse path from fragmentation to wholeness. Second, the persistence of hope in the poetry also responds to a challenge in Deleuze's life poetics---what after flight? An effective poetics needs to find a balance between anti-humanist deconstruction and humanist value commitment. With her cool and unique tone, Han Kang presents the fragility and resilience of life, offering textual resources worthy of further exploration for contemporary life poetics theory.

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