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A Critical Reflection upon Korean *High School English Readings*: Power Relations and Orientalism*

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The purpose of this article is to expose the extent to which seven *High School English Readings* (abbreviated as *Readings*) are incorporating the power relations between the Orient and the West, and to demonstrate how those relations are expressed in terms of Oriental discourses. This article begins by revealing how English teaching started with the purpose of justifying Western domination in the Orient through the medium of English literature. Next, the author reveals how the same logic is repeated in Korean *Readings*, specifically illustrating the extent to which the Orient and the West are described biasedly and prejudicially in each textbook. According to this study, the West and America in particular are presented as moving powers of the world. On the other hand, the Oriental countries are generally attributed with negative images. Finally, the author proposes two solutions to the problematic issues of Korean *Readings*. First, teachers should assist students in critically assessing and reflecting upon the contents of such textbooks. Second, Korean *Readings* should be replaced by new ones written with new perspectives, with which all parts of the world are depicted unbiasedly and impartially.

I. INTRODUCTION: ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS AND POWER RELATIONS

In the history of teaching English as a foreign language in the Orient, the role of English literature in consolidating Western views of the Orient cannot be overemphasized. Around the last quarter of the nineteenth century, English literature had firmly established itself in the form of texts for English teaching in the colonies of the United Kingdom, especially in India. At that time, the basic objective of English teaching in colonial schools was “the assimilation of British culture through the medium of English literature” (Howatt, 1984, p.

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212). By reading English literary works, colonized people were supposed to accept British or Western views of themselves and the world. They were “confronted with a distorted image of themselves and of their history as reflected and interpreted” in English literature (Ngugi, 1986, p. 225). These views of the Orient might be called “Orientalism,” which Said (1991) defined as “a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (p. 3). Accordingly, we come to the conclusion that English education, with the help of English literature, was politically motivated and instigated in order to justify Western domination of the Orient.

Have writers of Korean *High School English Readings* (abbreviated as *Readings*) acknowledged such political implications being hidden in English literature and decided not to include any authentic English short stories and plays in their textbooks? In the seven *Readings* I touch on in this study, most of the reading materials are composed of essays which, on the surface level, seem to be apolitical and value-neutral. However, in a manner similar to English literature, these texts incorporate colonialist representations which have a substantial impact on Korean students who are liable to accept messages in textbooks without questioning their ideologically constituted viewpoints of the world. As McLaren (1998) points out, “Knowledge is always an ideological construction linked to particular interests and social relations” (p. 183) and “power relations correspond to forms of school knowledge” (p. 186). Embedded in *Readings* are current power relations on the base of which social, political, cultural, or scientific factors of our world are explained or enumerated.

How are the power relations of the Orient and the West represented in *Readings*? In no lesser intensity than within English literature, English textbooks offer a wide range of Oriental discourses. As suggested by postcolonial critics such as Bhabha (1994), Boehmer (1995), and Said (1991, 1994), in a substantial number of English literary works, English people are delineated as a superior race, who should act as role models for the Oriental people. In most cases of *Readings*, however, focus was placed more on America and its people than on the supreme quality of English people or culture. As Cox and Assis-Peterson (1999) point out, “the source of Westernization has changed from Greece, to Rome, to Spain, to England, and finally to the United States” (p. 438). America as the only super power in the world is shared by all *Readings*, reflecting the changing global power relations of today. This corroborates the extent to which school knowledge reflects current world power relations.

Most reading materials in *Readings* were excerpted and adapted from essays or stories written by Americans. These textbooks are therefore liable to be imbued with the cultural values endorsed and sustained by Americans; the values of which are biased and prejudicial in the eyes of Asians and Africans. However, the majority of Korean students, who have been taught that messages delivered in textbooks are beyond controversy, tend to

be highly affected by American views of the Orient. What Altbach (1999) called “the negative results of educational neocolonialism” cannot be avoided when “foreign textbooks” are used in schools of developing countries (p. 452). Korean students are in danger of being brainwashed into internalizing the Oriental discourse and considering the global role of America as a matter of course. By using such texts in high schools, educational institutions in Korea commit themselves to perpetuating and reproducing the existing relations of the West and the Orient.

Worse still, the teaching methodologies often used in language classrooms are also responsible for leading students to internalize the Western views of the Orient presented in textbooks. Communicative language teaching, the prevailing methodology in second-language pedagogy today, aims at “providing the students with the practical abilities that enable them to function in the new society” (Gyseon Bae, 2004, p. 335). Designed to assist students in acquiring the skills needed to survive in English speaking countries, the communicative language teaching method has put significant emphasis on “assimilation into dominant cultures, not resistance or the spread of minority ones” (Rampton, 1998, p. 301). Accordingly, with communicative language teaching, students have not been motivated to critically reflect on how textbooks were ideologically formulated. Instead, students have been led to acquire the information, assumptions, and stories contained in textbooks without casting any doubt on the validity of the arguments they contain. In addition, English textbooks used for communicative language teaching are often regarded as no more than “either vehicles for linguistic structure, or as functional survival material for some groups of EFL learners who are given materials such as forms or official letters” (Yoon-Hee Na & Sun-Joo Kim, 2003, p. 144). Then students pay considerably less attention to the cultural, ideological, and political factors underlying those textbooks.

In this study, with critical and reflective ways I will view reading materials in seven *Readings* and quest what is taken for granted. Except for Textbook F, all reading textbooks I have analysed in this study contain at least one chapter on the West, mostly America, and the Orient. Unlike our expectation about reading materials in textbooks, the West and the Orient are ideologically represented with power relations underlying those textbooks. I will demonstrate the extent to which those power relations are expressed in terms of Oriental discourses which have been appropriated to justify the superiority of the West and America in particular.

II. METHOD

In order to examine how Orientalism is embedded in Korean textbooks, it is important to select research materials in which the power relations between the Orient and the West are

well represented. Among diverse English textbooks used in middle & high schools across Korea, I found that *Readings* is the most efficient for this study in that it contains more reading materials than any other English textbooks available in Korea, such as *Middle School English 1, 2 & 3*, *High School English I & II*, *High School English Conversation*, and *High School English Composition*. I collected and examined all the *Readings* authorized by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources in 2004. I collected textual data by reading all of the seven *Readings* and marking the parts where the power relations between the Orient and the West were explicitly or implicitly suggested. There might have been more power relations incorporated in the seven *Readings* which I might have overlooked, but I did my best to include as many items of evidence for my argument as possible.

As this kind of study is likely to produce subjective results according to the viewpoints of researchers, I tried to minimize my views of the world by implementing content analysis in terms of critical pedagogy and Oriental discourses. Critical pedagogy was adopted to illuminate the relationship between knowledge and power underlying English textbooks. In recent years, some language scholars (Gysoon Bae, 2004; Cox & Assis-Peterson, 1999; Crookes & Lehner, 1998; Kumaravadivelu, 1999; Hammond & Macken-Horarik, 1999; McLaren, 1998; Yoon-Hee Na & Sun-Joo Kim, 2003; Rivera, 1999) have pointed out how critical pedagogy can be applied in English teaching. This paper, among possible power relations, aims at investigating the specific relationship between the Orient and the West. For this reason, Oriental discourses asserted by postcolonial critics, such as Docker (1995), Nandy (1983), Ngugi (1986) and Said (1991, 1994), were mainly appropriated.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The West and America

In *Readings*, the superiority of the West, specifically America, is presented in indirect and suggestive ways, rather than in terms of overt power relations. The following lessons which seem to provide objective or scientific knowledge can be political enough to mislead Korean students to think highly of the West and America in particular. Written from the perspective of Americans, information with regards to education, sports, science, and language cannot be regarded as value-neutral or objective.

In “Values of the Heart,” Lesson 2 of Textbook A (2004), an American boy by the name of Danny writes a letter to his Korean pen pal, Minsu. He talks about the social service programs his school offers. He says the programs aim at helping students “learn by doing service projects outside the classroom” (p. 30). The point to remember from the letter is

that Danny takes pride in the American Education system which puts a lot of emphasis not only on acquisition of knowledge but also on the practice of that knowledge. Danny says,

I don't know if your school or community has service activities for students. But I hope you will look for some kind of service project to participate in. My teacher says that this kind of work teaches us to have good values. He calls them "Values of the Heart."

Please write soon! It's great to have a Korean friend like you to share with.
(p. 33)

Moreover, a response to this letter is not included in the lesson; Korean students thus are susceptible to one-sided views. Far from a value-neutral text, the lesson can be used to inculcate students with an image of America, a country from which Korean students have a lot to learn.

In "Sports: History and Roles," Reading 1 of Lesson 2 of Textbook G (2004), the role of sports in our lives is historically illustrated. Students, who unquestionably comply with the argument in the article, are liable to take America and England as great countries, from which "modern sports spread throughout the globe" (p. 28). When seen from such perspective, other histories of modern sports, whether Greek or Oriental, are totally forgotten or ignored. We need to take into account whom the article is addressed to, that is, who "we" or "the public" are (p. 29). From the statement that "when Joe Dimaggio, one of the greatest baseball players, recorded successive hits, shouts came out from everywhere including hospitals, offices, even prisons" (p. 29), it can be inferred that the article was written from a viewpoint of Americans with the purpose of instilling patriotism into the hearts of Americans. Despite the role of sports on the surface level, this article may be used to induce Korean students to feel overwhelmed by American views of the world.

In another instance, the scientific report, "New Medicine from the Oceans," Lesson 3 of Textbook A (2004), seems to be written unbiasedly, informing us of new knowledge about medicine. This essay, however, illustrates that "knowledge acquired in school . . . is never neutral or objective but is ordered and structured in particular ways" (McLaren, 1998, p. 173). How America's superiority is asserted here is so suggestive that special attention should be taken. According to the author, the oceans have taken the place of the land and have become the most prolific source in the face of finding of newer and stronger drugs. In endorsing this argument, only one scientist is mentioned. His name is William Fenical, an American marine chemist. His mention within the article cannot be neglected in that the only person cited in the lesson is none other than an American. There might be other nationals who have endeavored to search for new drugs from the oceans. As the author suggests, the efficacy of the oceans for medicine has long been well-known to "people in

ancient China, Egypt, Greece and Rome” (p. 50). The author specifically illustrates how plants and animals from the oceans were used in the past as materials for medical treatment: “In ancient Greece, people used seahorses to cure cancer. The Romans used the poison from stingrays for toothaches” (p. 50). Then, why is it that one individual American chemist is cited as if only Americans were the ones able to develop new medicines from the oceans today? We need to understand the ideology which is embedded in this essay and what ideas it intends to propagate. The author’s attitude towards China, Egypt, Greece and Italy, which built prosperous civilizations in the past, is very similar to what was described by Nandy (1983) regarding Western colonizer’s view of India:

The colonial ideology postulated a clear disjunction between India’s past and its present. The civilized India was in the bygone past; now it was dead and ‘museumized’. It was India only to the extent it was a senile, decrepit version of her once-youthful, creative self. (pp. 17-18)

By overlooking how such countries as China, Egypt, Greece and Italy are still enthusiastic about creating new medicines from the oceans, this essay misleads Korean students into assuming that only Americans dedicate themselves to the development of new medicines from the ocean. In other words, this essay imbues students with the political message that the future of human beings largely depends on Americans.

“Who’s Out There?,” Lesson 4 of Textbook C (2004), deals with American response to the existence of aliens and UFOs. As in Lesson 3 of Textbook A, this lesson seems to be designed to recount objective scientific knowledge concerning life in outer space. What is noteworthy in this lesson is that American superiority is ingeniously hidden behind universalist scientific knowledge. Stories regarding UFOs have often been heard around the world, but this lesson is confined in the experiences of 900 Americans surveyed regarding their views of life in outer space. By failing to mention the involvement of non-USA citizens, this essay gives us the impression that only Americans have had contacts with aliens. Such a logic is quite often displayed in most American movies about aliens where America plays a crucial role in protecting the earth from aliens. One of several illustrations from American films in the lesson, “a flying UFO above the White House” (p. 75), is quite symbolic in conveying the message that the White house was visited or attacked by a UFO. The scene is significant enough to imply that America is the only superpower on the earth, the future of which relies on how America copes with aliens. Appropriately Ngugi (1986) points out the danger of American movies:

Every time we go to the movies we are confronted with the way the imperialist bourgeoisie sees the world; we are faced, so to speak, with the

ideological justification of their ways to themselves and to us. Thus we never see ourselves reflected on the screen; we never react to or respond to ourselves and to our environment on the screen. (p. 225)

Also, the American government seems to be internationally influential in confirming whether the aliens really exist: “the American government knows [that aliens visit us regularly] but is covering it up” (p. 75). Therefore, by the decision of the American government, might the existence of aliens be publicly investigated or verified. Such a role of America in a scientific essay might work more effectively in instilling Korean students with a prevailing image of America as the only superpower in the world. Without being committed to critical reflection on such text, Korean students cannot but internalize American views of the world and justify the American role of safeguarding the peace of the world.

To grasp the American views of the world in *Readings*, it is essential to speculate how the need for learning English is explained. In “English and Your Life,” Lesson 1 of Textbook B (2004), the manifold benefits of excellent English speakers are demonstrated with emphasis on how to improve our lives by learning to speak English well. Most of the arguments in this lesson are true and understandable in the face of the present day era of globalization. With good English ability we can have access to more information from a wide range of sources, communicate with people from around the world, and advance in our careers. However, even in the introductory paragraph the writer jumps to the conclusion that “you can get all this if you speak English well” (p. 12). It seems that good English ability can give us the solutions to any of the problems we have. The writer ignores the fact that proficiency in English is only one of a number of abilities needed to achieve our goals, such as making “big jumps in [our] career” (p. 12). Also, the argument that “knowing English will allow you to be a world-class businessperson” (p. 15) does not realistically reflect the many qualifications required for becoming successful international businesspeople. Such roles of English are largely based on how beneficial the spread of English has been to the development of human beings (Cox & Assis-Peterson, 1999; Pennycook, 1994, 1995; Phillipson, 1992). Even today the use of English as a vehicle of human progress is influential enough to engender the logic that English speaking countries are replete with the potential of economic development. Again in Lesson 1, how English has become the official language of the world is construed from an American/British point of view. The writer says, “We like to call English ‘the language of communication.’ . . . Because it seems all the people in the world have agreed to use English to talk to each other” (p. 14). English has been designated as the official language of the world, but it is far from accurate to say that “all the people in the world have agreed to use English to talk to each other.”

Another part of Lesson 1 was also written from the perspective of American or British people, exposing their views of the world. International English television networks such as CNN International and BBC World are said to “broadcast news much faster and more professionally than smaller, national networks” (p. 13). We should not view this argument as commonsensical. We need to consider whether it can be applied to Korean news in Korea or Japanese news in Japan. It is needless to say that the Koreans and the Japanese can have the fastest access to their national news through their own national television networks. The argument makes sense only in countries under despotic rules where freedom of the press is strictly restricted. To avoid such Western views of the world, Korean students need to be alert to the arguments encompassed in this lesson, taking them with a grain of salt.

2. The Orient and Korea

In contrast with the West and America, the Orient is generally provided with negative images in *Readings*. How the Orient is presented in *Readings* corroborates the fact that many parts of the textbooks reflect global power relations. Whether they belong to Asia or Africa, most Oriental countries are described negatively in one way or another.

In “Seeking Help to Save my Son,” Reading 2 of Lesson 1 of Textbook E (2004), a Chinese man called Yongxin Deng has a son who is suffering from a very serious and rare heart disease but cannot have surgery in China. However he manages to receive financial aid, thanks to “strangers from California” (p. 29) and takes his son to LA for heart surgery. This story demonstrates that “the relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination” (Said, 1991, p. 5). By critically analyzing how America manifests itself in the essay, we can perceive how ideologically the text is implicitly organized. Above all, Americans are regarded as benevolent in that they dedicate themselves to helping Oriental people. Also, in this story where a Chinese boy’s life is saved through the financial and medical help from America, the story strongly implies that the Orient depends on America for its survival.

In the same way, in “Volunteer Work,” Lesson 8 of Textbook E (2004), India is depicted as a country which needs to seek help in learning how to survive from the outside world. In Reading 1, an American called Burham Philbrook relates his experience as a volunteer in a rural community in India. What is noticeable in the essay is that the Indian community is considered as a backward one, lacking in toilets and even in shovels with which to dig a toilet. According to the argument, without the help from volunteers from the outside world, Indians cannot achieve self-reliance. Beyond that, in Reading 2, a Westerner by the name of Tom Miller talks about his experiences in volunteer work at an Indian orphanage. His depiction of the orphanage and its children is negative enough to create and instill a bad

impression of India into Korean students.

The children in the orphanage had ragged clothing and no shoes. The building where they slept was a warehouse. There was only one light bulb in it. The kids slept on concrete floors. They had lice on their bodies. (p. 131)

Such an image of India is often shared by Westerners who generally see the Orient as “a locale requiring Western attention, reconstruction, even redemption” (Said, 1991, p. 206). In *Readings*, we cannot find any chapter which highlights the glorious Indian civilization of the past, let alone the prosperous Indian IT industry of today. By reading such biased texts, students adore the powerful West, contempting the backwardness of Asia.

Compared with that of Asia, are there any differences in the introduction of Africa to Korean students? “Unicef Goodwill Ambassador,” Reading 3 of Lesson 12 of Textbook G (2004), focuses on the life of Audrey Hepburn as a goodwill ambassador to Unicef, but it also supplies a chance to get a glimpse of Africa for Korean students who have little knowledge of the region. Just like Asia, Africa is no more than a continent whose people depend on assistance from the outside world. Through this lesson we can have quite a good understanding of how urgently Africans need help from an international aid organization like Unicef. For example, Ethiopia is “drought stricken” (p. 218), and Somalia is “war-ravaged and drought-stricken” (p. 219), and Kenya is known for its “refugee camps” (p. 219) in the northern part of the country. Most African countries have similar problems, but such views lead our students to have only one image of Africa—that is, Africa as a continent which should heavily rely on the West for its survival. In contrast with the other textbooks, however, Textbook B includes a chapter which warns us of such prejudicial Western conceptions of the Third World:

The developed world surrounds itself with a wall of indifference. It is putting up a global Berlin Wall since it sees the Third World as a world of barbarians. Any news from behind that wall is about wars, crimes, murders, drugs, diseases, refugees, and famine—about things that constitute a danger for the developed nations. (p. 222)

It is interesting to see how an advanced country of Asia such as Japan is depicted in *Readings*. To our surprise, Japan, like other Asian or African countries discussed above, is viewed from the perspective of Westerners, and the Japanese are generally described in negative tones. In “Interview with Japanese Teenagers,” Reading 3 of Lesson 1 of Textbook G (2004), *Time*, an American magazine, visits an internet “chat room,” and records Japanese teenagers’ response to the following two controversial issues it raises:

- (1) Adults complain about your general behavior in public places, like eating on the train, putting on makeup in public, sitting on the floor, things against common rules.
- (2) Older people complain about your generation's sexual behavior. (p. 18)

The point to remember here is why *Time* is bringing forward such issues as if they were unique to Japanese teenagers. In fact, they seem to be general enough to apply to any teenagers around the world. Furthermore, painting a negative picture of Japan, the Reading begins with controversial information about Japan: "Japan may have been late to enter the online age" (p. 18). We are not sure whether Japan entered the online age later than America, but it is well-known that Japan has been one of the leading IT countries. Located in Asia, however, Japan cannot avoid the West's distorted views of the Orient.

Then, how is Korea introduced in *Readings*? In several textbooks, Korean culture and history are described with great pride. In "The Exporting of Korean Culture," Lesson 8 of Textbook A (2004), Kimchi and Nanta are illustrated as two Korean cultural products which have been enjoyed by people around the world and have made a great contribution towards helping Korea known to the world. In "Visiting Gyeongju," Lesson 5 of Textbook E (2004), an American by the name of Jack tells us of his trip to Gyeongju. His travel log is a strong expression of his fascination with Korean culture and Korea's people. In addition, in "Music as an International Language," Lesson 3 of Textbook G (2004), 'Samulnori' is highly evaluated as a Korean art form which, together with Jazz, opera, and Canzone, people from all over the world fall in love with. Apart from Korea, Singapore is the only Asian country depicted using an affirmative image: "Singapore, unlike every other Asian capital, has neither traffic jams nor smog" (Textbook C, 2004, p. 212).

On the other hand, it is surprising that even Korea or Koreans are presented from the perspective of Western eyes in some parts of *Readings*. Above all, the proud history of the Korean printing press is totally forgotten when it is stated that "Guttenberg invented the printing press" (Textbook D, 2004, p. 129). Many Koreans have endeavored to challenge and change the Eurocentric history of the printing press, but ironically a Korean English textbook contributed to the consolidating of that view. In "How to Be Somebody," Lesson 6 of Textbook D (2004), the writer expresses his experience concerning how to be somebody. He says that, by collecting contributions, he helped "a physically challenged girl who had a deep desire to go to Hawaii" (p. 113). We can identify the girl by the illustration of the girl on the upper part of the same page. By a signboard in front of her which says "KOREA," we can guess that she is Korean. Then does the writer intend to say that the long-cherished desire of a Korean girl, who is to "die one year after her dream trip" (p. 113), is to make a trip to Hawaii? This essay tells us about how much Koreans are enthusiastic about visiting "a great country" such as America. We are required to think how such text can mislead Korean students accepting and internalizing the unconscious

subservience to the stronger country like America.

3. The Orient and the West Compared

In addition to having a thorough grasp of how individual countries are represented in *Readings*, it is meaningful to find out how Oriental countries are characterized when they are compared with Western countries and America in particular. In doing so, we can perceive more distinct power relations working between the Orient and the West in *Readings*. Overall, our attention is directed to the extent to which the representation of the Orient and the West is prejudicial and biased.

When Koreans are compared with Americans in *Readings*, it is always Koreans who are provided with negative images. In “Do You Want to Smoke?,” Lesson 4 of Textbook A (2004), it is reported that “Korean teen-agers have the highest smoking rate in the world! Thirty-five percent of Korean high school boys smoke compared to 18 percent in the U.S.” (p. 66). Is this data supposed to show that American school boys know how to control themselves by being more temperate in smoking than Koreans? How women’s struggle for gender equality is manifested in *Readings* also shows us the attitude of the author toward America and Korea. In the case of the United States, this issue is illustrated with the life of a famous American woman called Barbara McClintock in Lesson 11 of Textbook A (2004). She is introduced as a pioneer who, in a male dominant society, repudiated the traditional roles of women as housewives and mothers. How about Korean women’s struggle for gender equality? In Lesson 4 of the same textbook, this issue is ironically demonstrated. Among several reasons why female Korean teen-agers start smoking, is the one that “they think it [smoking] is a way to be equal with boys” (p. 68). It seems that Korean women’s struggle for gender equality is implemented only in negative aspects. Worse, apart from within this chapter, no *Readings* incorporate a section in which this issue is treated as seriously as in the case of America.

In Lesson 1 of Textbook G (2004), we are confronted with two opposite views of teen culture, one from Asia and the other from America. To our surprise, Asian teens are offered as an example of negative images of today’s teens:

[Teens in Asia] dye their hair brown, red, yellow, and blue. They tan their skin until their complexions resemble those of California lifeguards. They chat noisily on phones in public, and they are rude. They cause trouble; a juvenile crime wave is spreading across the Asian countries. Schools once famous for rigidity and discipline have turned into chaotic places. (p. 10)

Of particular note, the statement that teens in Asia “tan their skin until their complexions

resemble those of California lifeguards” is quite problematic in that it implies that Asian teens tend to be eager to mimic the Western people. It is assumed that Asian teens regard Western standards as superior and try to look attractive by those standards. According to Docker (1995), “the inferior culture is always relating itself directly to the metropolitan source” (p. 445). Korean *Readings* made a big mistake in regarding Asian culture as inferior. On the other hand, a survey of American teens is presented in the same lesson to raise objections to the negative aspect of Asian teen culture. According to the survey, it turns out that today’s teens “get along well with their parents and other adults,” and that “more young people volunteer for charities and services than ever” (Textbook G, 2004, p. 11). Accordingly, it should be noted that, when the Orient and the West are represented to account for a universal moral issue in *Readings*, the Orient represents the negative side and the West the positive side, a logic typical to Orientalism.

In “Traveling around the World,” Lesson 5 of Textbook A (2004), the Orient and the West are introduced with different perspectives. The lesson comprises three travelers’ journals of a typical sightseeing schedule for one day in three big cities—Beijing, London and Los Angeles. Who wrote the three diaries and whether they were written by the same person cannot be inferred from the context. But from the statement that “we wrote postcards to send to our friends and relatives in Korea” (p. 89), we may presume that the travel journal about London was probably composed by a Korean. This is reinforced by the illustration on the same page which depicts a Korean looking family in a wax museum.

What is striking in the three journals is that the overall attitude toward Beijing is by and large negative, compared to that toward the two other places. The account of the trip to the Forbidden City and Tianamen Square starts with complaints about uncomfortable travel conditions in Beijing, which are not mentioned in the other two journals. The writer fully understands the Chinese people’s use of bicycles as a transportation system, but his wife becomes furious at the idea. She is not broad-minded enough to accept the advice of the Chinese hotel receptionist, that is, “When in Beijing do as the Beijingers do” (p. 84). Instead of riding bicycles, therefore, the writer has no choice but to take a tour bus. But even the writer grumbles about the heavy traffic in Beijing when they “[get] back on the bus and [go] at a snail’s pace” (p. 85). Despite fully enjoying the Forbidden City and Tianamen Square, they seem to continue to be annoyed about the inconvenience caused by the traffic problem in Beijing.

In comparison with the Beijing travel log, there is a stark difference in the travel logs of LA and London. The writer visits Hollywood, wishing to spot some movie stars. But he/she can see nothing but bronze stars with entertainers’ names written below them. Though he/she experiences something far less satisfactory than he/she had expected, he/she does not appear to be as frustrated as the couple in the Beijing travel log. He/She consoles himself/herself by thinking, “If I couldn’t see any stars in person, at least I could see how

the movies that made them famous were made” (p. 87). Also, though he/she only sees the cars of famous stars in Beverly Hills, he/she just says, “Maybe tomorrow I’ll be luckier” (p. 87). Unlike the couple traveling in China, the traveler in LA looks optimistic, resorting to what he could enjoy at the moment. Meanwhile, the travelers in London are completely satisfied with the city, describing the city as “a fantastic city” (p. 86).

Generally speaking, every city has its own merits and demerits and is positively or negatively delineated according to the viewpoints of its viewers. However, to depict only an Oriental city in negative terms is problematic because it can consolidate Western views of the Orient, which have been formulated to have authority over the Orient. By reiterating those views, this lesson can lead our students to regard Western superiority over the East as a natural power relationship. Beyond that, the writers of LA and London travel journals lack in the political consciousness with which to critically anatomize the American and British intentions of assuming the hegemony of the world. For example, at a loss in how to find movie stars, the writer of the LA travel log does not take into account how American films illustrate “the way the imperialist bourgeoisie sees the world” (Ngugi, 1986, p. 225). It is also true of the writer of the London travel log, who describes the British museum as follows:

It is one of the oldest museums in the world and contains valuable treasures from ancient civilizations. We saw many things, including the Rosetta Stone, sculptures from ancient Athens, and a famous Viking ship. (p. 89)

The problem lies in the fact that the explanation with regard to the British museum touches only on the significance of that museum in terms of its value. After reading the passage, students will regard London as a city where they can see a wide range of collections of human civilization. Students should be led to duly reflect how those collections have been kept in the British Museum and how colonial policies in particular have contributed to the acquisition of foreign treasures. Without such a critical analysis, students will remember only the bright side of the United Kingdom and will not cease to aspire after the greatness of Western countries in general.

IV. CONCLUSION

As the above discussion reveals, Korean *Readings* include a substantial number of reading materials which were written from the perspective of Orientalism. In essays largely covering objective or scientific knowledge such as education, sports, science, and language, it is covertly implied that the West and America in particular are the moving powers of the world, which have made a great contribution to the enhancement of human beings. On the other hand, Oriental

countries are generally attributed with negative images. Most of them are also shown to be dependent on America economically, politically, or psychologically. In particular, when compared with Western countries and America in particular, they are always characterized as negative as if to show the West's upper hand in the international power structure.

When such textbooks are employed in the language classroom, what can be done in order to assist students in abstaining from being badly affected by this Oriental discourse? As I have shown how to critically examine texts in this article, teachers can induce students to critically assess and evaluate those texts and resist or challenge the power structure incorporated within those texts. With a critical and reflective perspective, students should involve themselves in investigating and critiquing how the power relations between the Orient and the West are depicted in each reading material. It is to be remembered that focusing on such critical reflections upon texts does not come at the expense of the acquisition and the retention of language skills that our students are supposed to master (Kumaravadivelu, 1999; Morgan, 1998). Rather, with more issues to be considered, students will be more motivated to take part in discussions and, at the same time, will be able to elevate their proficiency levels in the four language skills. To successfully implement such discussion-oriented classes, teachers should be equipped with a basic understanding of Oriental discourses and trained in the process of how to lead discussions involving multiple perspectives.

Ultimately English textbooks should be written with new perspectives, with which all parts of the world are depicted unbiasedly and impartially, and while not placing America at the center of the world. Rather than having a binary divided world with the superior West and the inferior Orient, diverse aspects of each country and its people should be incorporated in English textbooks. To do that, we need to create reading materials suitable for Korean students, instead of excerpting or adapting essays and stories written by Americans, which often tend to carry American views of the world. Provided with multiple perspectives of the world within English textbooks, Korean students will be empowered to better understand the world in a more fair and impartial way.

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APPENDIX

The 7 High School English Reading Textbooks

- Textbook A: Jang, Ik-Su; Lim, Sung-Chan; & Lee, Sang-Yup. (2004). *High school English readings*. Seoul: Daeil Publishing Company.
- Textbook B: Jun, Pyung-Man; Lee, Heung-Su; Cha, Kyung-Hwan; Lee, Yung-Sik; Sin, Dong-il; Kim, Seok-Su; Park, Choo-Won; Lee, Jung-Im; Song, Sung-Duk; & Na, Woo-Chul. (2004). *High school English readings*. Seoul: The Case Inc.
- Textbook C: Kim, Im-Deuk; Lee, Pyung-Chun; Kim, Ki-Ho; An, Sung-Ho; & Kim, Yung-Hee. (2004). *High school English readings*. Seoul: Hyundai English Company.
- Textbook D: Kim, In-Won; Park, Seo-Hwan; Yun, Seung-Nam; & Orr, Thomas Edward. (2004). *High school English readings*. Seoul: Kyohaksa.
- Textbook E: Lee, Il-Bum; Kim, Dae-Jin; Kim, Jung-Hwan; & Lee, Min-Kyu. (2004). *High school English readings*. Seoul: Minjungseorim.
- Textbook F: Lee, Kee-Dong; Kim, Sung-Sik; Jung, Young-Suk; Kang, Sin-Ja; & Duffy, Michael George. (2004). *High school English readings*. Seoul: Neungyul English Company.
- Textbook G: Hwang, Sun-Hye; Yum, Kung-Suk; & Kim, Sung-Pil. (2004). *High school English readings*. Seoul: The Daehan Textook Inc.

Applicable levels: secondary, tertiary education

Key words: textbook analysis, orientalism, critical pedagogy

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