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HandBook of Modern Korean Literature

Insights from different perspectives



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Table of Contents

Introduction

1. The Coherent Relationships and Trends as Seen Through the Ecosystem of Korean Literature

Hyunah Kim

2. Korean Literature Offers More Than Just Healing: Why Global Readers Deserve More Diversity on the Market

Sarah K. H. Yoo

3. Recognized Abroad, Rediscovered at Home

Joyce Park

4. What It Means to Read Across Genres: Literary Production, Media Circulation, and International Reception

Helen Cho

5. Literary Magazines Still Stand at the Center of Korea's Literary Eco system *Seohyun Ahn*

References

Introduction

In recent years, Korean literature has drawn growing international attention, often framed through moments of visibility such as major literary prizes, translation milestones, or the global circulation of a small number of widely read titles. While such recognition is undeniably significant, it offers only a partial picture of how Korean literature moves beyond its place of origin. Less visible are the structures, negotiations, and interpretive habits that shape which works are produced, translated, circulated, and ultimately read across borders.

This collection brings together five essays that approach Korean literature not as a fixed canon but as a dynamic ecosystem shaped by both internal structures and external forces. Rather than presenting a curated list of works, the essays reflect on the conditions that determine how Korean literature travels and the kinds of meanings it is asked to carry in international contexts.

The opening essay by Hyunah Kim situates contemporary Korean literature within its domestic ecosystem. Examining recent shifts in readership, authorship, and publishing structures, the essay analyzes the widening imbalance between creative supply and reader demand, along with the effects of debut systems, market pressures, and thematic concentration. By mapping these internal dynamics, it provides a structural foundation for understanding why certain literary forms and themes come to dominate the field at particular moments.

Building on this context, Sarah K. H. Yoo turns to the global marketplace of translation and publishing from the perspective of a practicing translator. Her essay foregrounds the collaborative yet often invisible labor involved in bringing Korean literature abroad, while questioning the market-driven preference for a narrow range of so-called “healing” narratives. Arguing that Korean literature offers far greater stylistic, emotional, and imaginative diversity than is typically exported, she calls for greater risk-taking and openness from publishers, agents, and readers alike.

Joyce Park’s contribution shifts the focus to what happens after Korean literature crosses borders. Through the cases of *Cursed Bunny* by Bora Chung and *The Vegetarian* by Han Kang, she examines how international recognition can return to reshape domestic literary value. Her essay traces how global acclaim unsettles established hierarchies, expands genre boundaries, a

nd prompts Korean readers and institutions to reconsider works they may have previously overlooked, revealing the reciprocal nature of literary circulation.

The essay by Helen Cho widens the lens further by examining how Korean literature is read once it enters a cultural environment shaped by film, television, and visual media. Focusing on works that have moved from page to screen, including *Kim Ji-young, Born 1982*, *The School Nurse Files*, and *Silenced*, the essay explores how literary ambiguity, narrative distance, and ethical complexity are transformed through cinematic form. It argues that reading across media reshapes not only interpretation but also modes of reception, turning reading into viewing and, in some cases, into collective witnessing and social action.

Last essay of Seohyun Ahn describes the current state of literary journals, a vital part of the Korean literary ecosystem, which continue to survive as print media and still reach readers. While the mid-2010s and subsequent years were a period of independent literary journals and various experiments, the past year or two have seen a strengthening of the centrality of mainstream literary journals.

Taken together, these essays suggest that the global life of Korean literature cannot be understood through visibility alone. It must also be examined through the infrastructures that support it, the labor that sustains it, and the interpretive frameworks that accompany it across languages, media, and cultural contexts. By foregrounding these processes, this collection invites readers to look beyond individual successes and consider the broader conditions under which Korean literature travels, along with what is gained, transformed, or lost along the way.

The Coherent Relationships and Trends as Seen Through the Ecosystem of Korean Literature

By Hyunah Kim

Rising Market Demand: The “Text Hip” Phenomenon, Media Diversification, and Book Influencers

Over the past two to three years, a new trend has begun to spread, particularly among young people in their 20s to 30s, where reading books is seen as a hip and sophisticated way to enjoy culture. The term “Text Hip” has become a popular trend, with people reading novels and poetry, posting photos to authenticate their reading, or participating in book clubs, book concerts, and private writing classes across social media. Book influencers, TikTokers, and YouTubers active on social media have made notable strides, and even novelists and famous actors have recently joined this movement, operating their own publishing companies or actively promoting books to the public via Social media. This trend is expanding Text Hip culture beyond the literary elite to the general public. In Korea, the recent surge in reading novels and poetry has fueled this trend, particularly among the MZ generation, a major user base of social media. It appears to have had a positive long-term impact in expanding the base of readers of pure literature.

Previously, women in their 20s to 40s constituted a relatively small yet influential segment of the Korean pure literature market. However, the awarding of the 2024 Nobel Prize to the novelist Han Kang, along with the expansion of social media, the rise of book influencers across YouTube and Instagram, and the global popularity of K-content – including K-pop, Korean cinema, television dramas, and webtoons – has critically broadened international interest in Korean culture. The shift has, in turn, led to a surge in attention to Korean pure literature, once confined to Korean readers, now reaching a global audience.

Explosive Increase in Creative Demand: From Cultural Consumers to Creators

The increased interest in literature has transformed readers from passive c

consumers into active creators. Growing engagement with Korean literature has stimulated creative production across both pure literature and genre fiction, leading to an unprecedented surge in aspiring writers across all age groups and genders. For instance, in December 2025, submissions to the *Chosun Ilbo*'s Spring Literary Contest reached 13,612 – an increase of 76% from the previous year's record of 7,755. [1] This surge was not limited to the *Chosun Ilbo* but was observed across all seven major newspaper companies hosting the contest. While some attribute this surge in creative demand to the use of AI, it is more plausibly the result of a complex interplay of factors: a long-standing appetite for literature and creative expansion, a social climate that frames literary engagement as sophisticated, and the potential of literature to function as a single-source, multi-use medium capable of generating diverse revenue streams.

Korea's distinctive writer debut system – known as the *Spring Literary Contest* or “Deungdan” (등단), which refers to a formal literary debut in Korean – emerged from this persistent imbalance between supply and demand in the Korean literary market. Confronted with a limited readership for literary fiction and an influx of aspiring writers, the literary community sought to maintain a relatively homogeneous standard of production by selectively evaluating, certifying and endorsing works deemed to be of high quality. Within this framework, the debut system functioned as a gatekeeping mechanism, conferring official recognition and symbolic legitimacy upon successful entrants in a somewhat closed manner. Only those who passed this highly competitive process have been granted access to publication in a limited number of literary journals in Korea.

In international markets, aspiring writers often make their literary debut by submitting works directly to publishers or literary magazines. While a similar direct submission system exists in Korea, literary fiction – once a genre with limited domestic market demand and low reader interest – was preemptively modelled on Japanese practice and adopted by Korean publishers to stimulate market interest, actively discover new writers, and facilitate marketing and promotion. Although it may appear closed, the system provided stability, gradually introducing selected works and proven writers to a market with limited interest in literary fiction. Over time, it became embedded in Korean literary culture, functioning as a quasi-qualification system that has offered a traditional debut opportunity to a few writers who passed the contest.

However, with the advancement of technologies such as AI, the diversification of media, and the rapid growth of market demand and interest, the existing imbalance between supply and demand appears to be deepening. Some have questioned whether Korea's "Deungdan" system, which lies at the core of its literary discovery framework, requires reform or supplementation to fix its closed operation. Despite these concerns, there is currently no effective alternative to solve the bizarre phenomenon of "few people want to read, but many want to write." For practical reasons, including marketing and promotion, the Korean publishing industry – across both literary fiction and genre fiction – continues to discover new writers primarily through contests. Unless a groundbreaking approach is found to address the supply-demand imbalance, this system is likely to persist in the foreseeable future, potentially becoming even more entrenched.

Discrepancy between Supply and Demand: Rising Interest amid Slow Qualitative Growth and Lack of Diversity in Subject and Style

Despite growing interest in literary fiction and an expanding pool of aspiring writers, qualitative development has remained slow. A critical concern is the lack of diversity in subject, themes, and style, leading to a homogenization of works. This pattern is evident in both literary and genre fiction and is particularly pronounced in small-sized markets with limited capacity, like Korea, where consumer spending is limited. It is likely to be a transitional phenomenon preceding the quantitative and qualitative maturation of the market. In literary fiction, when a certain work garners attention from readers, critics, and the broader market, subsequent works with similar styles, themes, characters, and narratives tend to proliferate, creating short-lived fads. While literature is often described as a mirror of society, this pattern raises concerns about its impact on cultural and social diversity. When political correctness emerged as a key social message a few years ago, the tone and message of literary fiction shifted accordingly, whilst recent works explicitly addressing feminism and LGBTQ+ issues have become somewhat less dominant, but the tendencies toward short-term market responsiveness and homogeneity still persist.

Literature grounded in authenticity and realism remains widely popular. In particular, novels that vividly portray the author's personal experiences (Autofiction) and explore realistic themes resonate with Korean readers.

rs. This trend is not limited to Korea, but is also evident across East Asia. In Japan, for instance, *Hunchback*, which depicts the author's experience with a severe disability, won the Akutagawa Prize in 2023. *Convenience Store Human*, written by a writer with 18 years of experience working in a convenience store, also received the same award in 2016. These examples illustrate how realism – effective in conveying profound meaning and persuading both critics and the market – has gained significant prominence. Similar patterns are visible in Korea, especially in the meticulous depiction of settings and details of daily life, though it has also led to the frequent replication of works with comparable styles and themes.

A similar concentration of subject matter and themes is further evident in genre literature. Since the early 2000s, numerous homogeneous novels, so-called “Shop literature”, have appeared in the Korean publishing market, for example, *The Dallergut Dream Department Store* (2020), *The Second Chance Convenient Store* (2021), *Welcome to the Hyunam-dong Bookshop* (2022), and *The Rainfall Market* (2023), etc. Set in everyday spaces such as bookstores, department stores, and convenience stores, these modest yet comforting stories of ordinary people have earned widespread popularity. They reflect contemporary anxieties, arising from the struggles of the self-employed and the prolonged economic downturn. Another notable fact about these writers is that they did not have a formal training in creative writing and worked in fields not related to the literature area. Combined with the author's experience and testimony, this has led to the mass production of similarly realistic prose, appealing to readers' empathy.

Korean Literature Offers More Than Just Healing: Why Global Readers Deserve More Diversity on the Market

By Sarah K. H. Yoo

There are two things that are now widely accepted about translation that perhaps weren't in the not-too-distant past: first, translation is an inherently collaborative process; and second, translators do a lot of unpaid labor. These two things are intimately linked; the act of birthing a translated text involves many people and many steps (most of which don't even involve translating at all!), and throughout these many interactions and steps, translators remain eager and involved. Well, most of us do, anyway. Because chances are, that sample we did wasn't simply a commissioned piece we saw as nothing more than a much-needed paycheck. It was a labor of love from the very beginning, from discovering the book to procuring the rights to translating a free sample (or getting a grant if we're lucky) to pitching it to agents and/or publishers. In my first year as an emerging translator, I completed samples for nine books—two paid for by grants, three as part of a paid internship, and four unpaid. For most of them, I cleared the rights (sometimes through creative methods after a polite but patent rejection), wrote detailed pitch packets, and composed dozens of earnest emails I cringe reading back today. This is not to complain or garner sympathy—nobody asked me to do any of it. I did it all because I wanted to, because I couldn't fathom *not* doing it. If there's one thing translators tend to be, it's passionate. Every translator I respect reads voraciously and has that one author they will stop at nothing to get published in their target language.

And so, when I see Anglophone publishers turn down a short story collection out of hand because “they just don't sell”, a small part of me dies inside. *But what about Shoko's Smile*[2]? I protest in my tortured head. *What about Broccoli Punch*[3]? When I see books fail to receive funding from Korean grant organizations because an author is new, I can't help but wonder what the point of governmental funding is if not to discover up-and-coming talent and send them off into the big wide world where readers can decide for themselves. When I see books from the same genres get picked up again and again, I feel glad that another work of translation is seeing the light of day but also a little sad that it's mostly more of the same. The Korean literary landscape is rich and layered and deep. When only the sa

me types of healing books are offered contracts and marketed year after year, readers outside of Korea are deprived of the chance to discover the fresh, quirky writing; bonkers storylines; and visceral emotional threads that live in the words of lesser-known authors. I am well aware that everyone reads for different reasons, and that healing books have their place in the literary canon. But translators are bringing so much more variety to the table. We're pitching books that can strike a nerve, surprise people, even change them. The delight of discovery, the jolt of recognition within the unfamiliar. Isn't that the whole point of reading translated literature in the first place?

Korean writers are unapologetically weird. Do you enjoy the brutal beauty and incisive commentary in the works of filmmakers like Park Chan-wook and Kim Jee-woon? Read *Hunger* by Choi Jin-young, translated by Soje, or *The New Seoul Park Jelly Massacre* by Cho Yeeun, translated by Yewon Jung. Landmark women novelists like Park Wan-suh and Yang Gui-ja deserve to be on more shelves, more Anglophone Best Of lists, more Bookstagram feeds, not just because they're capital I "Important", but because they write bangers. Melodrama, scandal, feminist quandaries, they've got it all!

Publishing itself is a collaborative system, within which lie a multitude of strengths but also just as many opportunities for reform. We'll keep bringing the hidden gems if agents, publishers, and marketers give them a chance. Readers everywhere deserve diversity, for the potential to discover their new favorite author. And I have a sneaking suspicion that throwing open the gates might even be good for the industry as a whole.

Recognized Abroad, Rediscovered at Home

By Joyce Park

As Korean literature crosses linguistic borders through translation, it is often celebrated for its growing global visibility. Yet what deserves closer attention is not merely this outward expansion, but the reciprocal transformation that follows. International recognition has increasingly functioned not only as a means of introducing Korean literature to the world, but as a catalyst that reshapes how that literature is read, valued, and organized at home.

In recent years, certain works, once relatively overlooked within Korea's own literary field, have returned through translation and international acclaim, newly affirmed and newly legible to domestic readers. This essay examines that process of return through two representative cases: Bora Chung's *Cursed Bunny* and Han Kang's *The Vegetarian*. Together, they reveal how global recognition can unsettle entrenched literary hierarchies, reconfigure genre boundaries, and prompt a broader reassessment of literary value within Korea itself.

When *Cursed Bunny* was first published by the independent press Arzak in 2017, it attracted little commercial attention and remained largely outside the literary spotlight. It was only after the English translation was shortlisted for the International Booker Prize in 2022 that the novel experienced a dramatic reversal: within a single month, its sales surpassed the total figures accumulated over the previous five years (Munhwa Ilbo, April 19, 2022) [4].

In Korea, *Cursed Bunny* sent a quiet but unmistakable shock through the science fiction community, a genre long regarded as a relatively marginal domain within the nation's literary landscape. Since then, *Cursed Bunny* has contributed to two significant shifts within Korean literature: the expansion of science fiction's presence in the broader literary field, and the increasing participation of women writers within the genre.

A similar pattern emerged with Han Kang's *The Vegetarian*, which won

the International Booker Prize in 2016. Although Han Kang is now regarded as a global literary figure, her standing in Korea at the time rested largely on the critical acclaim of *Human Acts*, a novel widely recognized for its moral gravity and historical depth. The international recognition of *The Vegetarian*, however, posed a subtle yet profound challenge to prevailing Korean literary sensibilities, unsettling established assumptions about where literary value was thought to reside.

“What, then, did we fail to see in these books, what overseas literary critics were able to recognize?” the Korean literary community began to ask. In a sense, the Korean literary community has long operated within a narrow corridor of influence, one dominated by major critics, large publishers, and a small, predominantly male group of recognized writers. Even when a handful of writers sought to cast new light on prevailing literary values, their interventions were easily set aside, confined to the periphery of the literary field. Both Bora Chung’s *Cursed Bunny* and Han Kang’s *The Vegetarian* stand as clear examples of this dynamic. It was only after international recognition that they came to be fully seen, read, and acknowledged in Korea.

With Bora Chung’s international recognition, science fiction, a genre once so marginal in Korea that it lacked firmly established authorities, began to attract young women writers as a field in which they could fully exercise their literary talents. Over time, this shift contributed to the expansion of the genre, drawing in more writers, a broader readership, and an increasing number of publications.

Meanwhile, *The Vegetarian* opened Korean readers to ethical and existential perspectives, frequently linked to vegetarianism, that unsettled prevailing assumptions about life, the body, and social conformity. For many Koreans who had regarded vegetarianism merely as a dietary choice, the international recognition of *The Vegetarian* proved to be a profound eye-opener, not only within literary circles but among the general public as well.

Korean literature is undeniably emerging as a refreshing and transformative presence within the global literary scene. Yet the cases examined here suggest that such change is never unilateral. International recognition does not simply propel Korean literature outward; it returns inward, reshaping the very conditions under which literature is written, read, and valued. Change, by its nature, first alters those who participate in its movement

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Korean writers and readers now find themselves increasingly aware of an expanded horizon: how their works might be read by unseen audiences, and which values must be articulated in order to resonate across borders. Writing with this awareness beyond a narrow, familiar readership and toward an immense, unknown one, is itself a profound shift, and arguably the point at which a more radical transformation in Korean literature has begun. Korean readers, too, have come to recognize that the values they discern and carry within literary works are no longer held in isolation, but shared within a global community of readers.

At the same time, this transformation remains uneven. The pathways through which Korean literature is translated and circulated continue to depend heavily on the judgment of a relatively small number of translators and publishers. Yet initiatives such as those undertaken by the Norwich Centre for Writing point toward a gradual diversification of these routes. If international recognition has taught Korean literature anything, it is that literary value is neither fixed nor self-evident, and that its reconfiguration, while often prompted from elsewhere, ultimately demands sustained reflection from within.

**What It Means to Read Across Genres:
Literary Production, Media Circulation, and International Reception**

By Helen Cho

In recent years, Korean literature has reached international readers through an unusual path. For many, their first encounter with Korean storytelling comes not through books but through film and television. A viewer might watch *Parasite* or *Squid Game*, then seek out Han Kang or Cho Nam-joo. This sequencing matters. By the time readers open a Korean novel, they often bring interpretive expectations shaped by visual media. The question is not whether this is good or bad, but what happens when these expectations meet the printed page.

Each medium carries its own interpretive grammar. Film relies on visual composition, editing rhythm, and performance to create meaning. Television builds narrative through episodic structure and sustained character development. Literature works differently. It can move slowly through interiority, leave motivations deliberately unclear, and resist the pressure to resolve ambiguity. These are not hierarchical differences but formal ones. The friction arises when readers unconsciously apply the interpretive tools of one medium to another.

This friction appears regularly in international discussions of Korean literature, particularly in online reviews and book club conversations. Consider how often readers describe a novel as “slow” when it lingers in mundane domestic scenes, or express frustration when a character’s psychology remains opaque. These responses are not naive. They reflect genuine engagement. At the same time, they also reveal an expectation that narrative should move at a certain pace, that silence should be filled with explanation, that individual stories should offer clear windows into broader cultural contexts. A mother’s routine becomes a symbol of Korean motherhood. A quiet meal scene becomes a statement about Korean family dynamics. The interpretive question shifts from “what is this character experiencing” to “what does this tell me about Korea.”

These reading practices intersect with significant changes in how Korea

ean literature is being written. Contemporary authors increasingly work with an awareness of cross-media circulation. Novels are structured with visual adaptability in mind. Short story collections echo the episodic logic of streaming television. Some writers openly discuss crafting work that can travel across platforms. This is neither cynical nor compromising. It reflects the material conditions of literary production in a media-saturated environment where adaptation can determine a book's international reach.

However, something specific gets lost or transformed when literary works move to the screen, and examining these transformations reveals what makes literary form distinctive. Take *Kim Ji-young, Born 1982*. Cho Nam-joo's novel accumulates critique through strategic distance. Readers move between individual suffering and systemic pattern. This structure asks readers to think analytically even as they feel empathetically. The film adaptation re-centers this around emotional identification with the protagonist. What emerges is affecting and powerful, but it operates through different mechanisms. The film asks viewers to *feel* with Ji-young. The novel asks readers to think about the conditions that produced her life.

The School Nurse Files offers a different case. Chung Serang's novel derives much of its strangeness from generic ambiguity. Is it horror, fantasy, romance, workplace fiction? The text refuses to settle. Its supernatural elements are presented matter-of-factly, without any explanation or origin story. Readers must accept uncertainty as intrinsic to the reading experience. The Netflix adaptation necessarily makes different choices. Visual media requires that the invisible be made visible, the vague be given specific form. The result is visually striking, but it trades the novel's productive ambiguity for stylistic coherence.

The example of *Togani* and its film adaptation *Silenced* reveals yet another dimension of cross-genre circulation. Gong Ji-young's novel presents institutional violence through accumulated testimony and detail over many pages. The reading experience is meant to be arduous. Readers are forced to sit with discomfort, to recognize their own complicity through the act of continued reading. The film translates this into visceral, immediate impact. The result was unprecedented public mobilization. The film's release led to legal reforms. This is remarkable and valuable, but it also demonstrates how different media produce different forms of engagement.

What these cases suggest is not that screen adaptations diminish literature

rary works, but that they make visible what is specific to literary form. Literature's particular affordances include the ability to withhold information, to maintain ambiguity over extended duration, to create distance between reader and character, and to layer multiple frames of reference simultaneously. These techniques are not mere stylistic choices. They are ways of producing meaning that cannot be directly translated to visual media.

The challenge for international readers, then, is developing a dual literacy. This means recognizing that a slow scene is not necessarily a failed scene. That withheld information might be generative rather than frustrating. That what seems like authorial distance might be ethical positioning. That a novel that refuses to explain itself is not being difficult but is asking readers to accept uncertainty as part of the interpretive experience. None of this requires rejecting the pleasures of film and television. It simply asks that we recognize when we are carrying expectations from one medium into another and consider whether those expectations serve the work at hand.

For Korean literature specifically, this matters because of how often it is read as cultural explanation. International readers want to understand Korean social realities. But when every domestic scene becomes symbolic and every individual story becomes representative, literature loses its capacity for particularity and complexity. A novel can offer something different from a documentary or ethnographic study, but only if readers allow it to function as literature rather than as cultural evidence.

The solution is not to police how people read, but to cultivate awareness of interpretive frameworks. When a reader finds themselves frustrated by a novel's ambiguity or slowness, the productive question might be: what kind of reading does this work require, and am I equipped to meet it? When a scene seems opaque, instead of immediately seeking explanation, there might be value in sitting with that opacity. This is not about making reading more difficult, but about expanding interpretive flexibility.

Korean literature circulates today in a rich, complex media environment. It travels alongside film, television, webtoons, and contemporary art. This circulation creates new possibilities and new audiences. The task is not to resist this reality but to develop reading practices capable of honoring what is specific to each form. To read across genres well means not erasing difference but attending to it, allowing each medium to do what it does

s best, and recognizing that genuine cross-cultural understanding might come not from seeking easy transparency but from learning to be comfortable with what remains difficult to grasp.

Literary Magazines Still Stand at the Center of Korea's Literary Ecosystem

By Seohyun Ahn

In the mid-2010s, numerous independent literary magazines emerged in Korea's literary scene. These magazines, which sprang up one by one through crowdfunding, are no longer in active publication. Even relatively recent publications like <Belit>, <Unusual>, and <TOYBOX> have failed to release their latest issues, disappointing readers. Only the recent announcement of <Pillow>'s long-awaited 10th issue signals that independent literary magazines are still alive and well.

In the late 2010s, there were also attempts for writers to meet readers directly. Many 'mailing systems' emerged where writers personally sent their writing to readers via email. Writer Lee Seul-ah also demonstrated that this method could lead to becoming a successful writer.

By 2025, several years later, these experiments became less visible, overshadowed by the sustained vitality of major literary magazines. Korea's major literary magazines, with histories ranging from 40 to 70 years, were embroiled in the second major literary power struggle of the 2010s but subsequently successfully reestablished themselves as the solid core of the Korean literary ecosystem. Literary journals with shorter histories, often more sophisticated ones, have also steadily survived. However, the concentration of literary magazines is increasing as regional and small-scale literary journals disappear.

While the readership is not as large as during the golden age of literary journals, many overseas readers are surprised that major literary journals still maintain print editions. Major literary magazines are also available in e-book format, but print remains the primary medium. E-book services are generally just an additional service for print subscribers. With the recent boom in book fairs in Korea, alongside the Text Hip phenomenon, major literary magazines have launched aggressive marketing campaigns targeting the younger generation. They operate magazine clubs or memberships and often lead the book club craze. Readers in their 20s and 30s no longer subscribe by ph

one or mail, but they willingly pay membership fees at the Seoul International Book Fair and participate in various online and offline gatherings centered around reading the respective magazines.

This phenomenon, a facet of the text-hip era where paper books have become rare, can be seen as evidence of the significantly diminished influence of print media. Conversely, the fact that readers still purchase and read literary magazines published in print demonstrates the enduring vitality of paper books. It is precisely somewhere in this middle ground that the paradoxical phenomenon of the glorious return of these major magazines is taking hold.

However, since there are limits to expanding the readership of print media, various additional methods are being explored to broaden points of contact with readers. Representative approaches include publishing anthologies that select works from magazines to reach a broader audience or distributing affordable collections featuring only outstanding pieces, such as ‘This Season’s Novels’ or ‘A Collection of Excellent Works by Young Writers.’ Recently, an idea was proposed to transform the webzine operated by the Arts Council Korea into a public literary platform, archiving some works from literary magazines to allow readers online access. If realized, this would bring about another major shift in how literary works meet their readers.

The Korean literary magazine system can also be linked to the unique characteristics of Korean fiction, which often emphasizes short story creation or sees serialized novels develop into full-length novels. Furthermore, when explaining the thematic currents of Korean literature, the ideology and orientation of major media outlets are invariably mentioned. The news of the continued vitality of this literary journal ecosystem, well-known for its close association with the unique content and form of Korean literature, suggests that by 2025, the experiments will have concluded and the orthodox domain will have returned. This prompts reflection on how Korean literature possesses a dynamic yet historically grounded foundation that resists easy change.

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