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Fragmented Form and Spatiotemporal Experiences in Transnational Korean Women's Poetry

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Abstract – This paper explores the intersection of poetic form and transnational identity in contemporary women's poetry, focusing on the strategic use of fragmentation and prose poetry. By examining the works of poets Don Mee Choi, Emily Jungmin Yoon, and Cathy Park Hong, it highlights how these forms enhance the exploration of spatiotemporal experiences and cultural belonging. I show how the interplay between fragmented poetry and prose poetry creates a dynamic aesthetic, reflecting the layered complexity of lived experiences, trauma, and resilience. Through a detailed analysis, this paper demonstrates how the use of prose poetry provides a versatile platform for delving into narratives of confinement and oppression, while fragmented forms capture the fluidity and dislocation inherent in transnational identities. I highlight how the integration of personal and socio-political narratives underscores the interconnectedness of global experiences, offering new perspectives on identity and belonging in a constantly shifting world.

Keywords – Fragmented Form; Prose Poetry; Transnationalism; Spatiotemporality.

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1. Introduction

The exploration of poetic form as a vehicle for conveying spatiotemporal experiences within contemporary poetry represents a dynamic interplay that goes beyond conventional linguistic structures and traditional forms of poetry, such as the sonnet or the sestina. The relationship between form and content gains significance when contextualized within postcolonial transnationalism and identity. In this paper, I analyze the poetry of Don Mee Choi, Cathy Park Hong, and Emily Jungmin Yoon through Brian McAllister's theories in "Narrative in Concrete / Concrete in Narrative: Visual Poetry and Narrative Theory." As a scholar of contemporary poetry, McAllister highlights the potential embedded in the visual dimension of poetry, stating that it "blurs formal boundaries between the poetic and the visual, [and] provides a unique testing ground for identifying narrativity's visual and poetic potential" (234). He states that visual poetry allows for the spatial arrangement of text on the page to emerge as a defining factor, working hand-in-hand with the poem's semantic context. In this paper, I show how Choi, Hong, and Yoon's poems stand as a testament to poetry's resistance to traditional narrative structures, mirroring the way that many transnational women authors resist traditional cultural norms.

McAllister suggests that "in visual poetry, how the text appears on the page (or whatever surface) matters just as much if not more than the semantic content of that" (234). Thus, visual poetry becomes a place in which readers are challenged to navigate and negotiate meaning not just within the words themselves but in the spaces between them. Within innovative poetry, narrativity becomes a bridge between the verbal and the nonverbal, creating a symbiotic relationship that shows forward movement – a metaphorical journey that leads readers through fragmented narratives (McAllister 237). Disruptions often serve as deliberate mechanisms to interrupt narrativity, and the foundation for my exploration of the role of poetic form in conveying transnational experiences positions visual poetry as a unique medium that subverts conventional structures and sets the stage for an analysis of fragmented identities. I use his theories as a framework, as well as Michael Leong's, Horvath's, Hetherington and Atherton, and others, to propose that the spatial arrangement of words on the page contributes to the exploration of spatiotemporal experiences in the transnational poetry of Choi, Hong, and Yoon's.

2. Fragmented Poetic Form

Fragmentation, as a poetic device, serves as a method for unraveling the stories of transnational individuals; it challenges the conventional progression of language and causes a disruption of linear progression and narrative (McAllister 244). This deliberate breaking of linguistic structures is used by poets to navigate identities, creating a space for layered narratives. In this section, I dissect specific aspects of fragmented poetic form, such as line and stanza breaks, broken syntax, and gaps in content, while showing how its very essence, in this context, mir-

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rors the fragmented nature of transnational identities, becoming a means of articulating dislocation, hybridity, and the multifaceted nature of belonging. The roots of fragmentation in poetry finds itself in various movements that sought to challenge and reshape traditional notions of expression, from the avant-garde experiments of the 20th century to the postmodern era, capturing the fractured realities of the world, such as migration and displacement or cultural hybridities. In transnational poetry specifically, fragmentation is often used to highlight the disorienting spatiotemporal experiences of changes in location and culture.

Fragmented form not only reflects disjunctures but also offers moments of recognition and connection within transnational narratives. By tracing the fractures and the unions that are intrinsically embedded in poetic fragmentation, it is inevitable to reflect on the intersections that make up the spatiotemporal experiences of transnational individuals, highlighting the symbiosis between literary innovation and the exploration of people's lives throughout history. Essentially, fragmented form acts as a vessel that reflects these experiences but also unveils the threads that connect individual narratives to the broader aspects of migration and cultural exchange. In exploring the fractures that are inherent in fragmented poetry, the goal is not necessarily to fix disjunction, but to embrace it; fragmentation can indeed signify a sense of brokenness, but it can also serve as a way of identifying with and honoring that brokenness. Fragmented phrases and repetitions show how memories and experiences are splintered yet can be celebrated through the multiplicity of narratives that emerge.

The poet Emily Jungmin Yoon often uses interrupted lines, disjointed themes, and overlapped stanzas as a tool through which she showcases how fragmented form embodies the shifting landscapes and identities of fluid geographical, cultural, and temporal borders. Her work reflects the lives of individuals who grow up in between cultures and whose experiences of being “raised in a neither/nor world” (Pollock and Van Reken 4). In this sense, Yoon's experimentation shows how poetic fragmentation can convey ideas that capture the essence of the intersections of cultures, languages, and histories to overlap and mirror the dynamic nature of transnational identities. Fragmented form has the ability to give poets an opportunity to challenge the traditional limits of language and structure within poetry. Yoon's poems in *A Cruelty Special to Our Species* embody the transnational identity, especially in “Hello Miss Pretty Bitch” where she offers a poignant reflection on what it is like to feel like a perpetual foreigner:

hello miss pretty bitch
the street drummer
calls out in Korean
no doubt thinking it
a compliment
a pleasant surprise
...
two American journalists
ignite Kim Jong-un's face
freedom has prevailed
...
soldiers would laugh
at Korean children
chanting *bello bello*
gibu me choco-let
with wartime hunger. (Yoon 7)

The poem's lines and stanzas mirror the disjointed experiences of transnational individuals, echoing the disruptions of identity, with shifts in subject matter and tone capturing the jarring

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transitions experienced by people navigating transnational borders. For example, the narrator abruptly transitions from talking about a memory to showing a stark portrayal of the challenges faced by immigrants in a new country. Additionally, the sudden shifts between English and Konglish within the poem also reflect the linguistic dissonances that people experience. The poem's reference to the movie "The Interview," which humorously portrays the incineration of Kim Jong-un's face, highlights the blurred lines between humor and violence, drawing a parallel to how even war can be seen as darkly comical. This mirrors the idea that fragmented form challenges traditional limits and invites readers to reevaluate the act of reading and engaging with poetry – the conventional expectations of coherence and structure are subverted using fractured narratives, compelling readers to confront uncomfortable boundaries between art and the role of humor in serious subject matters.

Furthermore, the juxtaposition of the American soldiers' laughter at Korean children's chants for chocolate during wartime hunger with the laughter at the dictator's explosion in tune to a pop song emphasizes the theme of hybridity and tension within transnational individuals. This can be seen in the convergence of the different spatiotemporal contexts of the poem, where laughter serves as an expression of both amusement and discomfort. The poem navigates power dynamics, cultural appropriation, and the legacy of colonialism, creating tension and reminding readers that laughter can be a symbol of ambivalence that may be inherent in transnational individuals who must navigate multiple cultural affiliations and histories. The fractured narrative reflects how they can be simultaneously humorous and tragic. In this sense, "Hello Miss Pretty Bitch" serves as an example of poetry's ability to capture the spaces "in-between" cultures and histories, exploring the dynamic and disruptive nature of poetic fragmentation within the context of transnationalism. With the poem delving into specific facets of cross-cultural experiences, such as the negotiation of identity and power dynamics across borders, it shows how personal narratives and broader socio-political landscapes can come together to provide a nuanced reflection of an incident.

The deliberate manipulation of line breaks and spacing becomes a way for Yoon to draw attention to patterns and absences that reflect the flow of identity across geographical and cultural divides. Through this type of poetic fragmentation, Yoon bridges the gap between form and content, accentuating both the written work and the unspoken experience. The elements of her poem invite readers to interpret the narrative not only through language but through the rhythm of the presentation. This approach can be seen in "Bell Theory," specifically as she utilizes fragmented phrases within the context of the poem:

When I was laughed at for my clumsy English, I touched my throat.
Which said ear when my ear said year and year after year
I pronounced a new thing wrong and other throats laughed.

...

In French class
a boy whose last name is Kring called me belle.
Called me by my Korean name, pronouncing it wrong.
Called it loudly, called attention to my alien.

...

Years ago, 1923 Japan, the phrase *jūgoen gojissen* was used
to set apart Koreans: say *15 yen 50 sen*. The colonized who used the chaos
of the Kanto Earthquake to poison waters, set fire: a cruelty special to our species.
A cruelty special to our species — how to say *jūgo*, how to say *gojit*,
how *jūgo* sounds like *die* in Korean, how *gojit* sounds like *lie* —
lie, lie, library, azalea, library. (Yoon 36)

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The structure of “Bell Theory” showcases the disjunction and tension within transnational identities, specifically with the constant mispronunciations and misunderstandings depicted in the poem, such as “ear” and “year,” highlighting the challenges of navigating linguistic boundaries. These linguistic fragments not only capture the author's personal experiences but also resonate with the broader theme of cultural and linguistic disruption faced by transnational individuals. The poem's exploration of the grape-bell in our throats, the uvula, and her portrayal of the bell in the throat as a source of laughter and communication emphasizes the power of language and its potential to both unite and alienate. Yoon delves into the themes of identity and belonging — her desire to be loved and accepted, as exemplified by Kring's calling her “belle” and using her Korean name, underscores the yearning for connection and the negotiation of multiple identities within transnational contexts. This is a sentiment felt by many, especially individuals of the diaspora, as they struggle with the “balancing of ethnic identities and assimilation” (Son 380).

Not only that, but the poem's seemingly abrupt historical references to the treatment of Koreans during the Japanese colonization, a difficult time period in which Koreans experienced “the loss of a nation, sovereignty, collective ideal and/or autonomous history” (Cho and Chae 1072), connect with the broader spatiotemporal narratives that transnational poets explore. These historical fragments illuminate the lasting impact of colonialism and discrimination on transnational identities. In “Bell Theory,” Yoon skillfully employs poetic fragmentation to merge linguistic, historical, and personal fragments to create a compelling narrative that reflects the tension inherent in transnational identities, effectively approaching the complexity of transnational experiences and making them accessible to readers through an alternate channel of visual and linguistic communication.

Yoon and Hong employ fragmentation to deconstruct dominant ideologies, weaving together personal narratives and cultural criticism. The significance of poetic fragmentation in the realm of contemporary poetry is exemplified by its role in enabling transnational women writers to shape its discourse, empowering marginalized voices, fostering experimentation, and contributing to a broader understanding of spatiotemporal experiences. The American poet and editor Carolyn Forché states that “fragmentation is a standard feature of literary modernism, but the fragment gains currency in the aftermath of extremity [...] lines of poetry can be grammatical fragments [...] poems themselves can be fragments” (Forché 42). Fragmentation goes beyond mere literary technique, becoming a conduit for conveying the fragmented nature of lived experiences, especially after traumatic events, grappling with personal and societal turmoil — poets often use strategic line breaks and spacing enhances the visual impact of the poem, mirroring the fragmented reality of grief and trauma, with disjointed lines symbolizing the shattered lives and ruptured communities left in the wake of a disaster. Words are often repeated to evoke a sense of numbness and routine in the face of overwhelming loss and try to highlight the emotional toll of the tragedy on the speaker of the poem's psyche as themes of grief, memory, and resilience are explored, as well as the enduring human spirit in the aftermath of tragedy.

As Forché suggests, “the reader is strangely aware of what has been left out, what cannot or has not been said... [a] shattered, exploded, or splintered narrative” (Forché 42). The use of fragmented form represents a powerful assertion by authors in that the form becomes a means to dismantle the barriers that have often marginalized their voices within the literary canon. By challenging poetic norms, poets can carve out a unique space where experimentation thrives and narratives create dynamic means of conveying spatiotemporal accounts. This can be seen in Yoon's poems about Korean comfort women, who were kidnapped during World War II and sold into sexual slavery by the Japanese military, then “depersonalized as the common property of the soldiers who called them their “sanitary public toilets”” (Soh 1238-39).

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An excerpt from the “Testimonies” section of Yoon’s book, specifically “Hwang Keum-ju,” showcases the spatiotemporality within these narratives:

a draft notice for girls, who was going to go? Everybody
crying. I went. I dressed nicely and went
train windows covered with tar paper
None of the girls knew
Japanese soldiers on horses vast Manchurian field
...
Girls arrived got sick pregnant injected
with so many drugs nameless animals
exploded on top of us. (Yoon 15)

Yoon manipulates line breaks, spacing, language, and typography with the intended purpose of crafting poems that transcend linguistic and cultural boundaries. She shows the trauma experienced by the comfort woman in her poem in a nonlinear fashion, reflecting the disruptive and altering nature of trauma itself. Through her manipulation of form, Yoon creates a space where the boundaries of language and time are blurred, allowing for a more visceral and evocative exploration of the traumatic experiences depicted in her poetry. Don Mee Choi does something very similar in her poem “Ahn Hak-sop #1” in *DMZ Colony*:

I was going to die one way or the other... from the beatings or from getting sick... I
decided that I wanted to be able to move my body before I died... I opened the door...
the entire prison was on alert... the guards thought there was a fire... (Choi 22)

In the poem, Choi employs a fragmented structure to delve into the harrowing experiences of individuals caught in the turmoil of conflict and oppression. Building upon the themes of trauma and resilience, the poem offers a raw and unflinching portrayal of survival amidst brutality, which can be seen more vividly in the next section of the poem:

... the torturer asked
... what if I smash your head to bits?
... I said
... e e e
... ideology. (Choi 36)

Through her use of line breaks and spacing, Choi creates a sense of disorientation and urgency, mirroring the chaotic and unpredictable nature of torture and captivity. The nonlinear progression of the poem reflects the nonlinear nature of trauma itself, allowing for a more immersive and impactful exploration of the psychological and emotional toll of violence and oppression. In this sense, the manipulation of form becomes a powerful tool for conveying the enduring resilience of the human spirit in the face of adversity.

Beyond conveying difficulties and struggles, fragmented form also serves as a powerful lens through which to examine broader societal shifts and cultural negotiations. The deliberate interruptions and irregular line breaks mirror the disruptions and dislocations inherent in transnational experiences, inviting readers to explore the gaps and silences within the narrative. Through this intentional disruption of traditional narrative structures, fragmented form not only allows poets to convey thematic complexities but also transforms the reading experience into a collaborative act of meaning-making. Overall, the use of fragmented form in poetry offers readers an immersive journey into the nonlinear and non-chronological narratives of

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spatiotemporal experiences of the transnational community. By mirroring the fluidity and transformation inherent in such experiences, fragmented form becomes a powerful tool for capturing the essence of transnationalism and inviting readers to engage deeply with identity, belonging, and cultural heritage.

3. Narrative and Prose Poems

In a poetry collection predominantly characterized by fragmented forms, the inclusion of prose introduces a compelling dimension, enhancing the exploration of spatiotemporal experiences and identity in the transnational context. Lehman, in his essay “The Prose Poem: An Alternative to Verse,” states that the prose poem, in its simplest definition, is a “poem written in prose rather than verse. On the page, it can look like a paragraph or fragmented short story, but it acts as a poem” (45). He goes on to state that prose poetry “is an insistently modern form” (45), and that when prose is strategically interwoven with fragmented pieces, it can offer a depth that helps complement the lyrical and narrative elements, linking the themes of identity, time, and place. The interplay between prose and fragmented poetry creates a dynamic aesthetic, reflecting the layered complexity of lived experiences. By juxtaposing these distinct elements, readers are invited to think about the portrayal of identity and cultural belonging.

Hetherington and Atherton’s exploration of prose poetry also highlights its suitability for expressing the postmodern experience (viii); they note that prose poetry is “protean and hybrid, that no summary will successfully delineate its borders” (13). The peculiar nature of prose poetry allows for the structure of sentences and paragraphs to serve the role traditionally played by lines and stanzas in verse poetry (Lehman 45). This flexibility in form allows prose poetry to adapt and respond to the thematic needs of the piece, providing a tool for exploring complex ideas. Because of this, Lehman states that poets must give up “the meaning-making powers of the line break” (48). However, this also offers artistic freedom, moving beyond traditional rhymes or meters, enhancing creative expression (Horvath 12). This liberation from conventional poetic devices not only allows for a broader range of expression but also challenges readers to engage with the text in new and meaningful ways since it “does not conform to the exceptions associated with...conventional narrative prose” (Hetherington and Atherton viii).

The incorporation of narrative elements within the prose poem introduces a sequential and immersive journey through the complexities of trauma. Through vivid storytelling, poets can navigate the visceral experience of fear and violence, using sentences as a basic unit of measure, replacing the line and introducing a new dynamic into the poetic form and allowing for a different exploration of narratives (Horvath 13). This prosaic narrative structure allows for a more linear progression, often presenting events in a chronological order that immerses the reader in an unfolding story. The intentional fusion of narrative techniques with poetic form underscores the power of storytelling in conveying the thematic exploration of trauma and its lasting effects. By interweaving prose within the poetic sequence, poets can blur the boundaries between genres, creating a hybrid form that captures the essence of lived experiences. This integration of narrative and poetic elements enriches the exploration of themes such as resilience and survival in personal narratives. The contrast between prose and poetry allows certain narratives to pause and expand, providing space for deeper emotional engagement and reflection. According to Lehman, this flexibility is inherent to the prose poem, as it “works in sentences rather than lines” (45), relying on the interplay between sentences to build depth (48). Prose poems may be “understood as fragments — they never give the whole story and resist closure” (Hetherington and Atherton 14). This type of structural choice can amplify the impact of traumatic events, making the reader’s experience of the narrative more visceral and immediate.

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The prose poem's departure from traditional poetic conventions, such as the use of line breaks, enhances its ability to convey unique emotional landscapes. By letting go of the "meaning-making powers of the line break," poets can use sentence structure to generate meaning, which Horvath suggests is similar to making deliberate poetic decisions within the prose framework (12). This stepping away from conventional poetic devices allows for a more nuanced portrayal of narrators' psychological states, capturing disorientation and creating a juxtaposition of fragmented memories that people often experience during and after traumatic events. These types of hybrid forms not only mirror the fragmented nature of memory and trauma but also provide a versatile platform for exploring the ways in which individuals process and articulate their experiences. By merging narrative depth with poetic intensity, prose poetry can examine resilience and showcase the paradoxical aspects of human identity and spatiotemporal experiences.

Prose poetry, with their uninterrupted blocks of text, can sometimes evoke a sense of density or suffocation, particularly when exploring themes of confinement or oppression. The absence of white space, typical in fragmented poetry, contributes to a feeling of being hemmed in, mirroring the stifling nature of topics being addressed. For example, in narratives addressing experiences of imprisonment or psychological confinement, the lack of visual breaks in prose poems can intensify the reader's sense of being immersed in the claustrophobic atmosphere of the text. This dense, blocky structure becomes a stylistic choice that amplifies the thematic exploration of confinement and constraint, underscoring the emotional weight of the subject matter. Don Mee Choi does this when addressing the events of "1950 June 28: The Fall of Seoul," in her book *Hardly War*:

It was partly history... the ground trembled and a Russian-made tank crossed the bridge and I froze and stared up at the red star of the tank, which is also partly history. The tank aimed and fired a shot to the midpoint of Mouth South and everyone scattered like crickets. I say it was partly history because in 1948, the year of liberation from Japan, a star of a different degree boasted that if war ever broke out they would be able to push back the North Korean People's Army and have breakfast in North Korea's city of Kaesong, lunch in the capital, Pyongyang, and dinner in Shinuiju all in a single day. So I say it was partly history as I watch the red star pass by, shitting more stars from its behind. (Choi 12)

In Choi's prose poem, the uninterrupted flow of text serves to immerse the reader in the narrative, reflecting the intensity and urgency of the speaker's experiences. The relentless stream of observations, intertwined with historical reflections, creates a sense of density, mirroring the oppression inherent in the context of political unrest. Through the vivid imagery of the Russian-made tank and its red star emblem, Choi captures the reader's attention and evokes a palpable sense of fear and tension. The lack of visual breaks emphasizes the continuous barrage of events, leaving the reader feeling hemmed in and overwhelmed by the atmosphere. By integrating prose poetry in her book, Choi effectively conveys the psychological impact of living under political repression, highlighting the interconnectedness of personal experiences with larger historical narratives.

Similarly, Cathy Park Hong employs a diverse range of poetic forms in her collection *Dance Dance Revolution*, using prose poems alongside fragmented form to explore cultural identity, diasporic experiences, and the juxtaposition between tradition and modernity. Within the framework of "Excerpts from the Historian's Memoir," Hong intricately weaves together two distinct narrative voices: that of the Desert Guide and the Historian. The fragmented form, from the Desert Guide's perspective, offers a visceral immersion into cultural amalgamation, expressed through Desert Creole – a linguistic hybridization echoing the diversity of experiences and identities – made of "some three hundred languages and dialects imported into this

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city, a rapidly evolving lingua franca” (Hong 19). This fragmented narrative, with the rhythms of various languages, serves as a testament to the nature of diasporic existence across space and time, where individual stories intertwine to form a collective narrative. This is an excerpt that showcases the fragmentation of the Desert Creole:

Mine vocation your vacation!
...I train mine talk box to talk yep-puh, as you
‘Merikkens say “purdy,” no goods only phrases,
betta de phrase, “purdier” de experience. (Hong 25)

Contrasting with the fragmented poetry, the prosaic passages by the Historian provide a complementary lens through which to view an unfolding narrative. Hong, using these prosaic pieces, highlights a broad historical context and offers analytical insights and explanations that contextualize the experiences that are detailed by the Desert Guide. This can be seen in one of the many sections of “Note from the Historian,” typically included after some of the Desert Guide’s speeches:

Asked why she chose to be a guide at the St. Petersburg Hotel, she replied that it was her calling to work as a guide for the great hotel of St. Petersburg and besides, her heritage and the heritage of Russians are similar: they both love the combination of dried fish and very strong liquor. (Hong 28)

This juxtaposition of the two voices, conveyed through the distinct poetic forms and narrative perspectives, creates rich meaning; while the fragmented poetry delves into the intimate, lived experiences of individuals navigating the transnational landscapes of the Desert’s New Town, the prose poems provide a broader socio-political framework, allowing the interplay between the voices and creating a dynamic dialogue between form, content, and perspective. Through fragmented poetic sequences interspersed with prose passages, the poems delve into personal and collective histories, shedding light on the challenges and triumphs of navigating transnational landscapes. Each narrative window offers a glimpse into different facets of the human experience, from the nostalgic recollections of homeland to the disorienting realities of displacement.

Hong and Choi’s works embody a deliberate disregard for the traditional distinctions between poetry and prose, instead focusing on the immersive power of storytelling and the vivid portrayal of cultural landscapes. By embracing fragmentation and prose as complementary elements, they offer compelling reflections on the fluidity of identity and the interconnectedness of global narratives. This is evident in how their works traverse diverse cultural histories, times, and geographies, reflecting the shared human experiences of migration, displacement, and cultural hybridity. This can be seen in “More on Attachment” by Choi in which she blends personal and political narratives:

Everyone is born wanted or unwanted, but some may be born exceptionally unwanted or wanted. A nation may be wanted or unwanted depending on what the other nations is thinking about. This nation was exceptionally wanted then unwanted because it was thought to be precariously small. Whatever happens to this nation will be revealed gradually even though the morning news is exciting. (Choi 26)

In the poem, the unbroken block of text creates and mirrors the precariousness of national identity and political status. By highlighting the volatility of geopolitical perceptions and the impact these perceptions have on a nation’s sense of self, Choi underscores the unpredictable

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repercussions politics can have on individual and collective identities. The absence of breaks in the poem parallels the continuous and relentless nature of social pressures, conveying also the immediacy of the unfolding narrative. Both Choi and Hong use prose poems like these to draw attention to identity and belonging in a world where there's a constant shift in global frameworks. Through this integration of prose, Choi captures the connectedness of personal experiences within a larger historical and political narrative.

This technique of blending personal and socio-political narratives through prose poetry is similarly evident in Hong's collection. The integration of prose within poetry collections serves as a deliberate choice, adding layers of narrative depth to the exploration of identity. In Hong's "Adventures in Shangdu," the prose elements offer a dense and immersive narrative experience, showcasing cultural connections, personal histories, and the navigation of physical and emotional spaces. This combination of poetic and prosaic elements allows for a more nuanced examination of the themes that define the spatiotemporal elements of the transnational experience. As the narrative unfolds within the prose pieces, they become tools for exploring identity beyond borders, challenging conventional notions of belonging (Hetherington and Atherton viii). For instance, Hong uses detailed descriptions of diverse cultural settings and personal anecdotes that span multiple geographic locations, illustrating the often hybrid nature of modern identities. The vivid portrayal of characters' interactions across different cultural landscapes highlights how identities are not confined to one place but are shaped by a multitude of influences and experiences.

As a whole, while fragmented poems capture the movement and dislocation inherent in transnational experiences, the prose poems interrupt this flow, providing readers with opportunities to delve into individual and collective identities. The interplay between fragmented and prose poems creates a dynamic tension, allowing poets to explore the intricate layers of identity and cultural belonging. The dense, blocky structure of prose poems evokes a sense of immersion and immediacy, emphasizing the psychological and emotional weight of themes such as confinement, political repression, and historical trauma. Meanwhile, fragmented poetry reflects the fragmented nature of memory and the fluidity of modern identity, highlighting the dislocation and hybridity experienced by individuals. By blending these forms, poets like Cathy Park Hong and Don Mee Choi, effectively convey the interconnectedness of personal and socio-political narratives, offering an exploration of the human experience. This synthesis of these forms not only enhances the thematic depth of poetry but also mirrors people's experiences, making a powerful statement about the fluidity and resilience of identity in a constantly shifting global landscape.

4. Conclusion

In this exploration of transnational women's poetry, the interplay between poetic form and the expressions of spatiotemporal experiences emerges as a central theme. Hetherington and Atherton state that "prose poetry's distortion of space and time...explores the effects created by the prose poetry's simultaneously condensed and onrushing language" (viii). With this in mind, it is possible to read poetry by unraveling the layers of identity and trauma within the multifaceted nature of transnationalism. By doing so, it becomes evident that the relationship between form and content is symbiotic, considering the fact that these poems are "never entirely driven by narrative and are always trying to point to something about their language or their subject that sits outside of any narrative gestures they make" (Hetherington and Atherton 14). Beyond mere stylistic choices, then, the intentional and strategic use of poetic form engages with themes of migration, belonging, and cultural negotiation, amplifying voices that straddle multiple languages, identities, cultures, and histories. Through different forms, such as fragmented spaces, readers are invited to engage with layered narratives, viewing poetry

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through a fresh lens. The works of transnational poets, including Choi, Hong, and Yoon, show agency and innovation within the literary sphere. Poetic fragmentation allows writers to explore and expand the boundaries of literary expression, contributing to contemporary literary discourse in innovative ways. Moving forward, the path remains open for further exploration, extending an invitation to delve deeper into the connection between form and identity. Through such analyses, transnational women writers emerge as catalysts for broader literary dialogue.

As mentioned in this paper, specific poetic forms within these works enhance and challenge conventional narratives – the strategic use of fragmentation and the integration of prose poems navigates the limitations and possibilities of language, offering insights into the intentional decisions made by poets to express the complexities of transnational experiences. Poetic forms become a tool for mirroring the disjointed nature of identity, the presence of absence, and the negotiation of multiple cultural affiliations. By shifting away from traditional forms, transnational poets contribute to a vibrant dialogue that challenges established norms, reclaims narratives, and offers a counterpoint to dominant discourse. Less traditional poetic forms become a unique and powerful tool for subverting and reshaping the narratives that define understandings of identity and belonging.

The analysis of poetic form within transnational women's works emphasizes its relevance as a medium for expressing multifaceted narratives woven with postcolonial transnationalism. In conclusion, through this exploration, poetry becomes not just a means of artistic expression, but a vehicle for social and cultural critique, amplifying marginalized voices and advocating for greater inclusivity within literary spaces.

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