

# A Chronology of Conflated Dispersion – Duras and Yun

subjectively edited by Haegue Yang, 2018

Marguerite Duras (1914–1996) and Isang Yun (1917–1995)

## 1910

In the Japan–Korea Treaty of 1910, also known as the Japan–Korea Annexation Treaty, Japan formally annexed Korea. The treaty was concluded by representatives of the Empire of Japan and the Korean Empire on August 22. Recognized as an unequal treaty, its legality was later disputed.

## 1914

Marguerite Duras was born on April 4 as Marguerite Donnadiou in Gia-Dinh, near Saigon, Indochina (now South Vietnam). Her parents, Henri Donnadiou (1872–1921) and Marie Legrand (1877–1957), were French colonists. She had two elder brothers: Pierre (born 1910) and Paul (born 1912).

## 1917

Isang Yun was born to a poet Ki-Hyon Yun and a teacher Sun-dal Kim on September 17 in Tongyeong, a seaside city surrounded by islands and on the southern coast of South Korea. (Several sources indicate that Yun was born in the South Korean Province of Kyungnam and moved to Tongyeong at the age of three.) He was deeply influenced by the songs of fishermen, *pansori* (a Korean genre of musical storytelling), and open-air performances by shamans when he was growing up.

## 1919

The March 1st Movement, also known as the Sam-il (3-1, in reference to March 1) Movement was one of

the earliest public displays of Korean resistance during the Japanese rule of Korea from 1910 to 1945.

## 1921

Some sources state that Duras' father died on December 4, when she was seven. Marie Legrand, Duras' mother, attempted to diversify her income with the purchase of rice fields in current Cambodia, but the investment was tainted by corrupt French colonial bureaucracy. The area was often flooded with seawater, making it unsuitable for agriculture. The family's savings dwindled as she sank money into an ever-failing plan to construct sea walls to prevent flooding.

## 1922

At the age of five, Yun enrolled in a traditional Korean school and studied Confucianism, Taoism, and the Chinese classics.

## 1924

Marie Legrand took a teaching position in Indochina. She and the children—Duras and her siblings—moved to Vinh Long, then to Sadec.

## 1925

Yun was exposed to Western music at an early age. When he was eight, he transferred to a Japanese-run Western-style school and encountered Western music. He was surprised by the organ music at school and in a Christian church, noting the ability of the instruments to play many tones at one time, in

contrast to Korean instruments, which play single and softer tones.

1929

Duras, aged fifteen, met an older Chinese man who became her lover. This encounter inspired her novel *The Lover* (1984); however, the main male character's identity remains obscure.

1930

Yun began violin lessons at the age of thirteen and began teaching himself to compose. He also studied cello, music theory, and harmony.

1931

Duras entered a high school in Saigon. During this time, she became aware of her family's poverty, which surpassed most of her Asian schoolmates. She received her baccalauréat from the Lycée de Saigon. Her childhood in colonial Indochina provided her with source material for future writing. Her biographical facts often conflict due to her elusiveness when responding to questions about altering her own history to suit her needs.

Yun's first composition was played at a silent film theater in Tongyeong.

1932

At the age of seventeen, Duras moved to France. She entered the Sorbonne, intending to major in mathematics.

1933

Yun's family moved to Seoul, where he attended a private music school. He learned elementary harmony from a student of Franz Eckert, a German musician who established the first Western military band in Korea. Yun visited the national library in Seoul, discovering the Western classical music of composers such as Richard Strauss and Arnold Schoenberg.

1934

At his own expense, Yun printed the Korean song collection *Mokdong ui norae* (Shepherd's Song) to build and strengthen a Korean consciousness, opposing the aggressive attempts of the Japanese imperial power to erase Korean culture.

1935

Duras acquired degrees in political science and law at the Sorbonne. She started to work as a secretary for a French government office representing Indochina.

Yun studied cello, music theory, and composition at the Osaka College of Music between 1935 to 1937, but returned without graduating to support his family.

1937

Duras became an employee of the Ministry of Colonies (Ministère des Colonies).

1939

The Second World War began.

From 1939, labor shortages as a result of conscription of Japanese males for the Second World War led to the organized official recruitment of Koreans to work in mainland Japan, initially through civilian agents, and later directly, often through coercion.

Duras married Robert Antelme. Their apartment on 5 rue Saint-Benoît in Saint-Germain-des-Prés became a gathering place for authors and intellectuals including Jean Genet, Georges Bataille, Henri Michaux, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Edgar Morin.

Yun attempted to study composition under the composer Tomojiro Ikenouchi in Tokyo, who had earlier studied music in Paris.

1940

Duras published *L'Empire Français* (Gallimard, Paris), a collection of nationalistic and propagandistic statements, co-written with Philippe Roques. It is the only book published under her birth name, Donnadieu. Decades later, Duras continued to deny the existence of this book, which justifies French imperialism in Asia.

Duras quit her job at the Ministry of the Colonies.

1941

Yun returned to Korea to participate in the anti-Japanese resistance. He immediately formed an underground group with friends who were involved in several underground activities and tried to make weapons and bombs to arm themselves.

1942

As the labor shortage increased in Japan, the Japanese authorities extended the provisions of the National Mobilization Law to include the conscription of Korean workers for factories and mines on the Korean Peninsula and the puppet state of Manchukuo, and the involuntary relocation of workers to Japan itself as needed.

From 1942 to 1944, Duras worked for the Vichy government's Paper Allocation Agency. Facing a shortage of resources during the war, this agency functioned as an unofficial station for censorship and determined whether a book would be allocated paper for publication.

1943

Duras, her husband Robert Antelme, and critic and political philosopher Dionys Mascolo joined the Mouvement national des prisonniers de guerre et déportés (MNPGD), a French resistance group against Nazi invasion. As part of the resistance, they became acquainted with future French president François Mitterrand, who also hid himself at their home on 5 rue Saint-Benoît.

Duras also met French intellectual and author Maurice Blanchot through the publishing house Gallimard and Mascolo.

Yun's underground group was captured by the Japanese, and he was forced to work at a military supply service at a rice mill.

1944

On August 25, the French capital of Paris was liberated from the Germans.

Duras, then struggling as a writer, published her first novel *Les Impudents* under the surname of Duras, as the story takes place in Duras, the birthplace of her late father. During that same year, her child was stillborn. She began a romantic liaison with Mascolo. Duras joined the PCF, Parti communiste français (French Communist Party) with Antelme and Mascolo. In June, Antelme, her sister-in-law Marie-Louise, and two other members of MNPGD were arrested at Marie-Louise's apartment in rue Dupin, while Mitterrand barely escaped. All four were sent to a concentration camp.

By September, Duras commenced publication of *Libres*, a newspaper that communicated the whereabouts of war prisoners to their family and friends. When Antelme was sent to camps in Buchenwald, Gandersheim, and then Dachau, Duras stopped writing until 1950. She remained an active member of MNPGD. While awaiting her husband's return from the concentration camp, she started a tumultuous relationship with Pierre Rabier, whose real name was Charles Delval and who was part of the Gestapo. During this time, she kept diary-like notes, which formed the basis for a 'memoir' published in 1985.

Yun was arrested by the Japanese as some of his compositions found in his home were written in Korean, a language strictly forbidden during the Japanese rule. After a two-month imprisonment, he was sent back to the rice mill to perform forced labor. However, upon learning from a friend about his impending arrest the next morning, he fled to Seoul with his cello, hiding under the Japanese name, Kanamoto.

1945

The Russians reached Berlin shortly before the US forces in April. Italian partisans captured Mussolini and executed him on April 28. On April 30, the German leader Adolf Hitler committed suicide in his bombproof shelter together with his mistress Eva Braun, who he had, at the last minute, made his wife.

Russia declared war on Japan and invaded Japanese-ruled Manchuria on August 8. The US dropped an atomic bomb on the island of Nagasaki on August 9 as the Japanese had not surrendered following Hiroshima on August 6.

The Japanese unconditionally surrendered to the allies, ending the Second World War on August 14, and the Imperial Japanese rule over Korea ended on August 15. Anxious that the Peninsula would be entirely under the influence of Soviet forces, two young American officers hastily decided on the 38th parallel to split the Peninsula into two zones on August 10. Soviet forces occupied the North and the US Forces, the South, to disarm the Peninsula.

Antelme returned to France, thanks to a dramatic rescue effort by Mascolo and Georges Beauchamp, initiated by Mitterrand. Duras devoted herself

to successfully nursing the severely weakened Antelme to recovery. Duras and Antelme founded the publishing house La Cité Universelle. The couple lived together with Mascolo until the end of the war.

**1946**

Duras and Antelme divorced after he recovered from typhus.

After Yun's recovery from tuberculosis, he directed a municipal orphanage in Busan. From 1946 to 1950, Yun taught music at secondary schools in Tongyeong and Busan.

**1947**

The Government of Japan enacted the Alien Registration Act, which defined Japanese Koreans and Taiwanese as aliens.

Duras' only son, Jean Mascolo, fathered by Dionys Mascolo, was born. Antelme published *The Human Race* (La Cité Universelle, Paris), narrating his experience in Buchenwald.

Yun organized the Tongyeong String Quartet and played the cello.

**1948**

Amidst boycotts and protests, two nations were created on the Korean Peninsula. On August 15, the Republic of Korea was established in the South. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea was declared on September 9 in the North by Kim Il-sung (1912–1994), the first Supreme Leader of North Korea until his death.

**1949**

The People's Republic of China was established.

Yun published a collection of six art songs entitled *Dalmuri* (Lunar Halo). These songs were in the pentatonic scale of Korean folk songs and featured Western harmonic arrangement.

**1950**

The Communist Party labelled Duras a revisionist, and she resigned, together with Antelme and Mascolo. In a later interview, however, Duras stated that she had always been a communist. Around 1950, Duras established her reputation as a professional

writer. That year, she published an autobiographical novel, *The Sea Wall* (Gallimard, Paris), which was adapted for film twice. The narrative investigates a mother's failed attempt to build a wall to prevent seawater from flooding her farmland.

In quick succession, she published *The Sailor from Gibraltar* (Gallimard, Paris, 1952); *The Little Horses of Tarquinia* (Gallimard, Paris, 1953); *Whole Days in the Trees* (Gallimard, Paris, 1954); and *The Square* (Gallimard, Paris, 1955).

Yun met Soo-ja Lee, a Korean language teacher at Busan Normal School where he worked. They married on January 30 despite persistent opposition from Lee's family due to Yun's health, family poverty, and profession as a musician.

Their daughter, Jeong was born on November 20.

**1950–1953**

The Korean War, between North Korea and South Korea, began on June 25, 1950.

Yun refused to participate in the Korean War and stated that he could not believe that the conflict could not be resolved in peaceful manner. During this period, he composed songs for children and wrote chamber works. He also wrote film soundtracks to support his family.

**1953**

The Cuban Revolution, an armed revolt by Fidel Castro's revolutionary 26th of July Movement and its allies against the authoritarian government of Cuban President Fulgencio Batista, began in July.

After the Korean War, Yun taught music at several universities including Seoul National University.

**1954**

Yun's son, Wookyung, was born on September 1.

**1954–1962**

The Algerian War of Independence was fought between France and the Algerian National Liberation Front, leading to Algeria's independence from France.

**1955**

Yun received the Seoul Cultural Prize, the most prestigious award conferred by South Korea. Inspired by a Japanese translation of Josef Rufer's writing on the twelve-tone technique, which brought

a strict compositional frame to music, Yun was determined to use the prize award to take a trip to Europe to study new forms of music.

#### 1956

Duras' *The Square* was staged at Studio des Champs-Élysées, co-directed by Claude Martin.

Yun traveled to Paris to study under Tony Aubin and Pierre Revel at the Conservatoire National de Musique, yet his family remained in Korea. His journey to Paris from Seoul took ten days and included stops at Tokyo, Hong Kong, and Istanbul.

#### 1957

Duras and Mascolo separated.

From 1957 to 1958, Duras contributed to *France-Observateur*, a left-wing magazine. Her concerns were mostly about the hidden world of groups or individuals, which she linked with political issues by narrating the texture of everyday individual experiences.

Yun studied composition under Boris Blacher at the College of Music in Berlin. Blacher, who was born in Manchuria and grew up in China, advised Yun to retain his Asian musical traditions. Yun also learned the twelve-tone technique from Josef Rufer, a pupil of Arnold Schoenberg and the author of the writing on the technique that aroused Yun's interest in serialism.

#### 1958

Duras received high praise for *The Square*, which she followed with the novel *Moderato Cantabile* (Les Éditions de Minuit, Paris). From this period, the ideas of sexual desire, love, death, and memory appeared, becoming major themes in her later works.

Yun attended international courses at Darmstadt and met Nam June Paik and Yoshio Nomura. His experience at Darmstadt, a center of modern music at the time, exposed him to avant-garde styles and ideas. The incorporation of Asian philosophy and writings in the experiments of John Cage encouraged Yun to integrate Eastern and Western musical concepts.

#### 1959

The 26th of July Movement, a vanguard revolutionary organization then a party led by Fidel Castro,

overthrew the Fulgencio Batista dictatorship in Cuba.

On September 13, the Soviet Union's Luna 2 mission became the first human-made object to reach the surface of the Moon.

Filmmaker Alain Resnais asked Duras to write the screenplay for *Hiroshima Mon Amour*. The film received a lot of attention and led Duras to focus on writing for screen. Duras was later nominated for an Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay.

Yun's *Music for Seven Instruments* (1959) premiered at the International Vacation Courses for New Music in Darmstadt on September 4. Two days later, Herman Kruyt played *Five Pieces for Piano* (1958) at its premiere at the Gaudeamus Muziekweek in Bilthoven in the Netherlands. For this work, Yun compositionally drew upon the piano works of the Second Viennese School. Yun moved to Krefeld, Germany.

#### 1960

Named for its number of signatories and published in 1960, the 'Manifesto of the 121' included Duras, Antelme, Jean-Paul Sartre, Alain Robbe-Grillet, Henri Lefebvre, and Alain Resnais. These 121 intellectuals refused to participate in the war against the Algerians, whom they felt were oppressed by the French.

Duras' *Moderato Cantabile* was adapted for film by director Peter Brook and starred Jeanne Moreau and Jean-Paul Belmondo. Moreau's character leads a boring life as the wife of a big steel manufacturer. Her life changes when she witnesses the murder of a woman by her lover. Her fascination with this violent love affair sparks a morbid relationship with a man played by Belmondo.

Duras began to exhibit signs of alcoholism and by the 1960s, had published eight novels.

At the International Society of Contemporary Music festival in Cologne, the legendary Novák Quartet (led by Dušan Pandula) from Prague premiered Yun's *String Quartet III* (1959).

#### 1961

Organized and carried out by Park Chung-hee, the May 16 Military Coup d'état took place in South Korea.

In Darmstadt, Michael Gielen conducted the premiere of Yun's *Symphonic Scene* (1960), which was inspired by the painting style of Jackson Pollock. In September, Yun's wife Soo-ja joined him in Germany. Despite Yun's emerging popularity, he was in a financially precarious situation. He supported his wife and himself using the proceeds from a South Korean Foundation for the Development of Culture prize and a job as an East Asian music expert for a radio station.

#### 1962

Francis Travis directed Yun's orchestral piece *Bara* (1960) in Berlin, merging the twelve-tone technique with Korean Buddhist musical traditions. The title is taken from *Bara-chum* (Dance with the Cymbals), a Korean temple dance, performed in strides before the altar portrait of Buddha and transmitted to the present day. *Bara* (or para) is the name of a Korean percussion instrument, the cymbal. This slightly curved metal disc is mostly employed in pairs and occurs in a specific Korean Buddhist ceremony.

While Yun's early works were generally well-received, he faced several obstacles. Performers had difficulty interpreting his music, and he encountered rejections and a few negative reviews. Based on these incidents, Yun consciously simplified his notation.

#### 1963

Yun visited the Great Tomb of Gangseo in North Korea, an ancient decorated tomb from the Goguryeo dynasty (37 BC – 668 AD) thought to have been painted around the sixth or seventh century. The mural depicts four guardian deities—the Azure Dragon of the East, the White Tiger of the West, the Vermillion Bird of the South, and the Black Tortoise of the North. The deities are believed to relate to the four cardinal directions, the four seasons, and the twenty-eight major constellations. They are said to ward off evil influences and ensure the balance of yin and yang energy. Painted without any background decoration, the deities assume a commanding presence on the walls. Vigorously executed in realistic strokes, they are regarded as some of the finest works in East Asian painting.

#### 1964

Duras collaborated with Gérard Jarlot for the screenplay of the telefilm *Sans merveille*. She

published *The Ravishing of Lol Stein* (Gallimard, Paris).

Yun's daughter and son joined their parents in Germany. After receiving a Ford Foundation Grant for artists working in Berlin, Yun decided to settle in the city.

#### 1965

Duras staged *Whole Days in the Trees*. She published *The Rivers and the Forests*, *The Square*, *La Musica* (Gallimard, Paris), and *The Vice-Consul* (Gallimard, Paris).

Yun's *Der Traum des Liu-Tung* (The Dream of Liu-Tung, 1965) premiered in Berlin. The opera has a prelude, four dream images, and a postlude. The libretto is based on a fourteenth-century Chinese didactic drama by Ma Chi-Yuan about a Confucian scholar's conversion to Taoism.

#### 1966

The premiere of Yun's *Réak* for large orchestra (1966) was done under the direction of Ernest Bour in Donaueschingen. In *Réak*, Yun imparted a ritualistic character that evokes the mood of Korean court music in combination with his personal musical language using a main tone and sound complex techniques. Asian musical instruments including the Korean bak (a wooden clapper) and a Thai gong were featured. Yun studied and lectured at the Aspen and Tanglewood festivals in the US for two months.

#### 1967

On June 17, Yun was kidnapped from West Berlin by the South Korean secret service. He was taken to Seoul via Bonn, condemned for espionage, and threatened with life imprisonment by the Park Chung-hee government. Yun, along with the poet Cheon Sang-byeong, painter Yi Eungno, and scores of other innocent people, were jailed, tortured, and forced into confessions of communist subversion in what became known as the East Berlin Incident. According to the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA), 194 people were involved, mostly intellectuals, artists, scholars, and elites. In October, Yun received permission to compose in his unheated prison cell.

1968

In early May, during the student occupation protests, Duras signed a petition published in *Le Monde* supporting the students. On May 20, the Students-Writers Action Committee was created; Duras, Antelme, Mascolo, and Blanchot joined. It is thought that one of the most famous slogans from this period—*Sous les pavés, la plage* (Under the paving stones, the beach)—was coined by Duras.

During his time in prison cell, Yun worked successively on three pieces. The opera *Butterfly Widow* (1967/68), which Yun had started composing in Germany, was completed on February 5. It is based on a Chinese folk tale about dreams and the transmigration of souls.

He also wrote *Riul* (Law), for clarinet and piano, and *Images*, for flute, oboe, violin, and violoncello. *Images* for flute, oboe, violin and piano was written in a guarded hospital room where he was transferred to after a physical breakdown. *Images* was inspired by Yun's 1963 visit to the Great Tomb of Gangseo, located some thirty kilometers southwest of Pyongyang. Yun's visit was crucial in charging him with spying.

1969

The US' Apollo 11 was the first manned mission to land on the Moon, on July 20.

From June to July, following the dissolution of the Students-Writers Action Committee, *Lettres nouvelles* published five anonymous texts under the heading *A Year Later, the Students-Writers Action Committee*. Duras and Blanchot each authored one text while Mascolo contributed three.

Duras' feature-length film *Destroy, She Said* premiered. It was adapted from her novel of the same title. The student movement and strikes of May 1968 nurtured the films.

After international protests led by Igor Stravinsky and the conductor Herbert von Karajan, and the efforts of his friends and the German Foreign Office, Yun was freed at the end of February, returning to West Berlin on March 30 with his wife who had been released earlier. He then taught composition at the College for Music and Theater in Hanover till 1971.

1970

In protest against substandard labor conditions in South Korean factories, twenty-two year old worker and workers' rights activist, Jeon Tae-il (1948-1970), burned himself to death in public. His suicide led to the formation of the labor union movement in South Korea.

The 1970s was a period of filmmaking for Duras. She shot many of these films in Neauphle-le-Château, where she lived alone.

Duras published *Abahn Sabana David* (Gallimard, Paris) dedicated to Antelme and Blanchot. Here, she described Jews as the most progressive revolutionaries, not submissive to any state power but pursuing exile, anonymity, and failure. Similar perspectives towards the Jewish diaspora are also present in her film *Jaune le soleil* (1971).

1971

From 1971 to 1973, Duras wrote screenplays and directed *Nathalie Granger*, *Woman of the Ganges*, and *Jaune le soleil*. Jeanne Moreau and Gérard Depardieu—in his first film role—acted in *Nathalie Granger*. Both actors developed a strong friendship with Duras. Duras once stated that *Nathalie Granger* is about a house and the violence of a child; she discovered that the previous owner of the home was illiterate, a fact that she found terrifying. Duras also noted that people tend to return home to commit suicide, a situation which resonates with the notion of home as a charged place in this film. Scholar Emma Wilson translated one of her notes, 'In a house, horror of the family is also inscribed, the need for retreat, a whole set of suicidal feelings.'

Yun became a West German citizen. *Namo* (1971) for three sopranos and orchestra, premiered in Berlin on May 4. The title is drawn from the Sanskrit term for 'greeting,' and the piece references the singing style of Korean shamans. His grand opera *Love of Spirits* (1969/70) premiered in Kiel under Hans Zender. *Dimensionen* (1971) premiered in Nuremberg on October 22.

1972

President Richard Nixon spent eight days in China in February, during which he met Chairman Mao Zedong and signed the Shanghai Communiqué with Premier Zhou Enlai.

Wolfgang Sawallisch conducted the premiere of Yun's *Sim Tjong* (1971/72) as part of the 1972 Olympics in Munich. It is based on a Korean folk tale, *Shim Cheong jeon*, which is often associated with *pansori*, or Korean narrative singing. Considering the symbolically charged narrative of Shim Cheong—who sacrifices herself for her father's blindness in a sea ritual, yet is reincarnated—one wonders about Yun's motivation in presenting this repertoire at the postwar Olympic Games musical program. Yun became a Professor at the Hochschule der Künste in West Berlin where he taught until 1985.

#### 1973

The 1973 oil crisis began when members of the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries proclaimed an oil embargo.

Duras published *India Song* (Gallimard, Paris).

Yun began supporting campaigns for democracy in South Korea and the reunification of North and South Korea, when Kim Dae-Jung (1924–2009), a pro-democracy activist who later became president of South Korea, was abducted by South Korean intelligence officers in Tokyo.

Yun was a composer-in-residence in Aspen, Colorado in the US.

#### 1975

The Vietnam War, which started on November 1, 1955, came to an end with the fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975.

Duras directed the film version of *India Song*. Delphine Seyrig—a tall and frail actress—played the mysterious central female figure, Anne-Marie Stretter, the promiscuous wife of the French Vice-Consul of India in the 1930s. Seyrig was known to be a militant feminist; she signed *Le Manifeste des 343* (a declaration of having had an abortion) along with Duras, Moreau, and Simone de Beauvoir. Duras wrote an article for *Vogue* on Seyrig, who also appeared in her films *La Musica* (1966) and *Baxter, Vera Baxter* (1977). Although *India Song*—with themes of decadence, passion, and loss—is supposed to be set in India, it was entirely shot in a Boulogne mansion (le Palais Rothschild). Duras chose not to familiarise herself with Calcutta, which she had visited in her teens, just as she never traveled to Hiroshima for her screenplay for *Hiroshima Mon*

*Amour*. Another notable aspect of this film is its non-synchronic approach, what Duras once expressed as 'le film des voix,' whereby no actor in *India Song* speaks. Voices only come from 'outside' and do not accompany the actors' performances, while the piano waltz, composed by Carlos d'Alessio, repeats throughout.

Up until this point, Yun's compositions had been mainly within the twelve-tone system and were inspired by Asian ideas and techniques. Many of his titles also reference this Asian influence. After 1975, Yun began adopting European titles, such as *symphony* or *sonata* for his compositions.

#### 1976

Duras adapted *Whole Days in the Trees* and *Son nom de Venise dans Calcutta désert* for film. In the latter, the plot returns to *India Song*, where the narrative is constructed completely through voiceover and is entirely free of actors, while the camera wanders in the abandoned mansion where *India Song* was shot. *Son nom de Venise dans Calcutta désert* is an extreme 'double' of *India Song*, a cinema of text, destroying the cinema of actors.

Yun's *Cello Concerto* (1976) was premiered by the cellist Siegfried Palm and the Orchestre Philharmonique des Pays de la Loire, France on March 25. Yun once expressed that, '*Cello Concerto* can be understood from three perspectives: technical aspect of instruments, compositional style and my personal motivation.' The solo part of this piece is notoriously difficult to play. The piece deals with the notion of freedom and was the first in a series of compositions that expressed his political convictions more openly after his release from prison in South Korea. At a conference of exiled Koreans in Tokyo, the South Korean Intelligence Service made another attempt to kidnap Yun. The attempt was aborted by Yun's bodyguards.

#### 1977

Duras wrote and directed *The Truck*. The eighty-minute-long film comprises mainly Gérard Depardieu and Duras reading the script together for, as she put it, 'what would have been a film.' The narrative unfolds in the living room of her house in Neauphle-le-Château. Duras published *Les Lieux de Marguerite Duras* (Les Éditions de Minuit, Paris) in collaboration with Michelle Porte.

A book authored by Isang Yun and Luise Rinser, *Der verwundete Drache: Dialog über Leben und Werk des Komponisten* (S. Fischer) was published. Yun became chairman of the Korean Union for Democratic National Reunification and held the position till 1984. The organization, which was formed in Japan, aimed to support Korean expatriates and work toward the reunification of Korea.

Yun composed *Double Concerto* for oboe, harp, and small orchestra, which premiered at the Berliner Philharmonie. The oboe was performed by Heinz Holliger, a world-famous oboist, and close friend and supporter of Yun. In *Double Concerto*, Yun returns to an East Asian legend: a harping princess falls in love with a shawm-playing cowherd, displeasing the king who separates the lovers to opposite ends of the Galaxy, allowing them to meet only once a year, on July 7, in the middle of the Galaxy. Corresponding to the narrated subject, the composition's form follows principles of succession, rather than development. According to the legend, hardly any magpies are seen the days before July 7, and when they return, their feathers on the forehead are gone. Children are told that the magpies lose their feathers when building a bridge for the lovers' reunion. In Yun's work, this tale allegorically implicates the division of Korea, which was decided on by foreign powers. While the sky grants the favor of reunification once a year, negotiations in Korea had remained without success till then.

#### 1979

US President Jimmy Carter granted China full diplomatic recognition, acknowledging mainland China's One China principle and severing diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

The South Korean President Park Chung-hee was assassinated on October 26 by the Director of the KCIA, Kim Jae-kyu, in what is simply known as the 10.26 Incident and Park's eighteen-year authoritarian military rule seemed to come to an end. Yet, the South Korea Army major general Chun Doo-Hwan, who was a captain during the May 16 coup of Park, seized power in a military coup, in what is today called the Coup d'état of December Twelfth.

#### 1980

Between May 18 to 27, the Gwangju Uprising saw mass protests against the South Korean military government in the city of Gwangju in South Korea.

The power vacuum from the abrupt end of President Park's authoritarian regime allowed democratic movements in South Korea to emerge. In the wake of nationwide protests for reforms, Chun Doo-Hwan imposed martial law on the entire nation on May 17, shutting down universities, and curtailing political activities and the press.

In defiance, students of Chonnam National University in Gwangju protested the closing of their university on May 18, leading to a clash with soldiers. The violence escalated over the next few days, with the military responding with indiscriminate attacks to crush the uprising.

Duras suffered from severe alcoholism. Nonetheless, she had a prolific year, publishing *The Man Sitting in the Corridor* (Les Éditions de Minuit, Paris), *L'Été 80* (Les Éditions de Minuit, Paris), and *Green Eyes* (Cahiers du cinéma, Paris). Duras once confessed that she wrote many of her works under the influence of alcohol.

Duras met Yann Andréa, a philosophy student and an ardent fan of hers. Yann Andréa became her secretary, actor, and companion until her death, notwithstanding their differences in age and sexual orientation. Years later, Duras wrote about their relationship in *Yann Andréa Steiner* (P.O.L, Paris).

In response to the Gwangju Uprising, Yun composed the solo cantata *Night, Be Parted*. Seeking to convey the universal nature of darkness, *Night, Be Parted* is based on the poetry of Nelly Sachs, a Jewish poet forced into exile from Berlin to Stockholm who wrote about her experience of Nazi dictatorship.

#### 1981

Duras wrote and directed *Agatha et les lectures illimitées* starring Bulle Ogier and Yann Andréa. *L'Homme atlantique* was produced, from the remaining material of *Agatha et les lectures illimitées*; only Andréa is featured and Duras provided the voiceover, while the screen stays predominantly black.

Commissioned by the West German broadcasting station WDR, Yun composed the orchestral work *Exemplum in memoriam Kwangju*, directly referencing the Gwangju Uprising of the previous year. The vigor of the young protestors is expressed through the xylophone and glockenspiel in the first section and leads to gunshot-like beats by the brass section.

1982

Duras wrote *Savannah Bay* (Les Éditions de Minuit, Paris). She was hospitalized for alcohol addiction, receiving treatment at the American Hospital of Paris. Duras' writing from this period addresses isolation and self-destruction in relation to the impossibility of love. *The Malady of Death* (Les Éditions de Minuit, Paris) was published. The tale, narrated in the second person, features a contract between 'you' (vous) and 'her' (elle), and depicts nights in which the wish of 'you' to learn how to love is unrealized, while 'she' diagnoses 'you' with a 'malady.' Duras included directions on stage and film adaptations, yet never directed a version herself. Leslie Hill writes in *Marguerite Duras: Apocalyptic Desires* (1993), 'The relationship between text and theatre in *The Malady of Death* provides an implicit gloss on the question of the relation between the sexes in Duras. The encounter between them, whether sexual or textual, is arguably always already a missed encounter; the only mode of relationship that Duras' text allows one to envisage is in fact a non-relationship.'

Concerts of Yun's compositions were held in Seoul and Pyongyang. Since then, an annual Isang Yun Festival has been held in Pyongyang.

1983

In a critical response to *The Inoperative Community* (published in 1983 as an article, and later as a book in 1986; Christian Bourgois, Paris) by French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy, Maurice Blanchot wrote an essay, *The Unavowable Community* (Les Éditions de Minuit, Paris) that references *The Malady of Death*. Kuisma Korhonen writes, 'Duras' narrative not only served for Blanchot as an example of the intimate-passionate order between two subjects in the text, but also appeared as an allegory for a textual encounter in general, as if literary communities, just as communities of lovers, belonged ultimately to those asocial and unworked communities that are always on the brink of collapse.'

1984

At the age of seventy, Duras published *The Lover* (Les Éditions de Minuit, Paris). It sold two million copies and earned her the Prix Goncourt. The novel conflates fiction and memoir. Written during her alcoholic rehabilitation, it deals with her childhood, her relationship with her mother, and

the older lover from her youth. This blurring of boundaries between fact and fiction has been termed 'the French new autobiography,' a style apparent by the melding of conventions of the autobiographical genre such as specific biographical references with the writer as both narrator and character, together with a disinterest in maintaining consistency in biographical facts.

The Isang Yun Music Institute was established in Pyongyang and Tongyeong. In the 1980s, Yun wrote five symphonies, which represent his exploration of the Hauptton technique and express his hope of peace and reconciliation. *Symphony No. 1* (1983) premiered on May 15 as part of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra's 100th anniversary celebrations, inspired by the peace movement that opposed the deployment of nuclear rockets in Germany. Yun's *Symphony No. 2* (1984) premiered at the Berliner Philharmonie on December 9. In comparison to *Symphony No. 1*, the instrumentation of this piece is more reserved. Symbolically, the string instruments represent positive forces, and the percussion and brass instruments evoke destruction.

1985

Duras published *The War: A Memoir* (P.O.L, Paris), a haunting portrait of her time in Paris during the German occupation and the first few months of Liberation. The book depicts the intense period waiting for her husband and the process of nursing him back to health when he returned from a concentration camp. It also features her strange liaison with a French Gestapo agent, Monsieur X, called Pierre Rabier, who was also attracted to Duras. The meetings between Duras and Rabier grew into an intense play of power and dependency. She was in need of information from him about her husband, while he of her companionship—though he had the authority to arrest her. Later, when the defeat of the Nazis became evident, Duras had the option to testify against him, yet she remained ambivalent. Another remarkable aspect of this memoir lies in the substantial changes in style and tone made to her original notes. Though many of Duras' peers regarded this rewritten version of *The War: A Memoir* as a shameful distortion of the truth, it was also acknowledged that historical accuracy was never Duras' primary goal. In the search for understanding and closure from a tragic event in these two versions, notions of truth and

history might divert but also coincide in emotional authenticity.

Yun's *Symphony No. 3* (1985) premiered at the Berlin Festival Weeks on September 26. Describing the piece as 'philosophical,' Yun's composition unfolds through a series of competing sound worlds. Yun received an honorary professorship at Tübingen University.

#### 1986

In November, Duras explained why *The Malady of Death* could only be read onstage in an article, *La Pute de la côte normande*, published in *Libération*. Duras published *The Slut of the Normandy Coast* (Les Éditions de Minuit, Paris) and *Blue Eyes, Black Hair* (Les Éditions de Minuit, Paris), a novel dedicated to Yann Andréa. The latter features an incomplete love triangle between a heterosexual woman and a homosexual man.

On November 13, Yun's *Symphony No. 4* premiered at the Suntory Hall in Tokyo. The title 'Singing in the Dark' was taken from the published diaries of his friend, the German writer Luise Rinser. The piece reflects on the oppression of Asian women: those in war-torn regions, those forced into prostitution, and slave laborers. The first movement of the symphony is modeled on *sijo*, a classical Korean poetry recitation characterized by simplicity and concentration.

#### 1987

Mass protests against the military regime of President Chun Doo-hwan took place in the June Struggle or the June Democracy Movement, a nationwide democracy movement from June 10 to June 29 in South Korea.

A scheduled international passenger flight Korean Air Flight 858 between Baghdad, Iraq and Seoul, South Korea exploded in mid-air on November 29 upon the detonation of a bomb planted inside an overhead storage compartment of the passenger cabin by two North Korean agents. All 115 passengers and crew on board were killed.

#### 1988

The Summer Olympics took place from September 17 to October 2 in Seoul, South Korea, the second Summer Olympic Games hosted in Asia, after the one in Tokyo

in 1964. The games were boycotted by North Korea and its allies, including Cuba, Ethiopia, and Albania.

In a coma for five months, Duras was diagnosed as incurable, yet regained consciousness. She continued to write, focusing on her life and her impending death.

Yun was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany.

#### 1989

In the spring of 1989, thousands of students held demonstrations in Beijing's Tiananmen Square, demanding democratic reforms and an end to corruption. On June 3, the government sent in military troops to clear the square, leaving hundreds of protesters dead.

#### 1990

Duras' ex-husband, Antelme, died.

#### 1991

Jean-Jacques Annaud directed a film version of *The Lover*. Duras did not like the adaptation; she published *The North China Lover* (Gallimard, Paris) as a counterpoint.

#### 1992

Duras published *Yann Andréa Steiner* (P.O.L, Paris), which describes the beginning of her relationship with her companion Yann Andréa.

Yun's seventy-fifth birthday was celebrated with a concert festival in Japan, and numerous concerts and seminars were held in his honor in Europe.

#### 1993

Duras published *Writing* (Gallimard, Paris), which discussed her writing methods and her desire to write.

#### 1994

Kim Jong-il (1941-2011) ruled North Korea as the second Supreme Leader from the death of his father Kim Il-sung in 1994 until his own death.

1995

Duras published her final book *No More* (P.O.L, Paris). The last entry of the book was written on August 1, 1995:

*It's done, I think. My life is over.*

*I am nothing now.*

*I have become absolutely frightful. I no longer hold together.*

*Come quick.*

*I have no mouth left, no face.*

Yun's daughter, Jeong received the Goethe Medal on his behalf in Frankfurt. Yun died aged seventy-eight on November 3 in Berlin. He was buried in a grave of honor given by the Senate of Berlin at the Landschaftsfriedhof Gatow Cemetery, near his family home.

He continued composing even in his final years. On May 9, *Angel in Flames* (1994) premiered at the Suntory Hall in Tokyo. *Clarinet Quintet No. 2* (1994) premiered in Berlin on September 26 and *Quartet for Oboe, Violin, Viola, and Cello* (1994) premiered at the Musikverein in Vienna on November 7.

1996

On March 3, Duras died aged eighty-one in her apartment in Paris. She was buried in the Montparnasse Cemetery.

The Isang Yun International Society was established in Berlin and has been led by Dr. Walter-Wolfgang Sparrer until today.

1997

During the Asian financial crisis, the South Korean economy suffered a liquidity crisis and had to rely on a bailout from the International Monetary Fund.

1998

Kim Dae-Jung, was elected President of South Korea. Leader of the opposition, he was sometimes referred to as the 'Nelson Mandela of South Korea.'

Yun had always yearned for a concert with musicians from both South and North Korea. This was eventually realized at the Isang Yun Reunification Concert held in his honor in Pyongyang.

2000

Kim Dae-Jung was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his policy of engagement with North Korea, termed

the Sunshine Policy. He moved to begin détente with the communist government in North Korea, which culminated in a historic summit meeting in 2000 in Pyongyang with North Korean leader Kim Jong-il. This marked a critical juncture in inter-Korean relations, and the two Koreas have had direct contact with each other since.

2010

Originally published in German in 1977 and still regarded as the unique seminal material on Yun outside of Korea, *The wounded dragon: dialogue with Isang Yun and Luise Rinser* was finally released in English by Minsokwon. It was first conceived as an annotated English translation for a PhD thesis.

2016

On December 9, Park Geun-hye, President of South Korea and daughter of the late Park Chung-hee was impeached after a month-long protest.

2017

Yun's 100th birthday was celebrated in Europe and also in Korea after a long silence and ignorance about his music and legacy in his homeland.

2018

Yun finally returned to South Korea, twenty-three years after his death and forty-nine years after he left the country. On February 23, his remains were exhumed at Gatow Cemetery, delivered to Korea, and eventually interred on March 20 in a cemetery at the Tongyeong International Music Foundation in his hometown of Tongyeong, which he had long yearned for.