



# **When the Future Disappears: The Modernist Imagination in Late Colonial Korea (Studies of the Weatherhead East Asian In)**

*Janet Poole*

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Taking a panoramic view of Korea's dynamic literary production in the final decade of Japanese rule, *When the Future Disappears* locates the imprint of a new temporal sense in Korean modernism: the impression of time interrupted, with no promise of a future. As colonial subjects of an empire headed toward total war, Korean writers in this global fascist moment produced some of the most sophisticated writings of twentieth-century modernism. Yi T'aejun, Ch'oe Myongik, Im Hwa, So Insik, Ch'oe Chaeso, Pak T'aewon, Kim Namch'on, and O Changhwan, among other Korean writers, lived through a rare colonial history in which their vernacular language was first inducted into the modern, only to be shut out again through the violence of state power. The colonial suppression of Korean-language publications was an effort to mobilize toward war, and it forced Korean writers to face the loss of their letters and devise new, creative forms of expression. Their remarkable struggle reflects the stark foreclosure at the heart of the modern colonial experience. Straddling cultural, intellectual, and literary history, this book maps the different strategies, including abstraction, irony, paradox, and even silence, that Korean writers used to narrate life within the Japanese empire.

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