Chapter 1.

Is Love Possible in a Cold, Emotionally Detached City?

Is love possible in this cold, heartless city?[1] We live in an emotionally detached city of a fragmented society where urban life has become dry and desolate, and romance is gradually disappearing, in an every-man-for-himself atmosphere. Kim Kwang-seok continually evokes fading memories of love, affirming that love is possible precisely in this age. In a cold society, Kim Kwang-seok's passionate appeal suggests that to love another human being genuinely is to confront not only the weight of one's own self but also the weight of society itself. It is from this perspective that I seek to illuminate the musician Kim Kwang-seok for bringing about a profound cultural transformation from a fragmented society to the atmosphere of an affective society.

In this desolate and barren city, Kim Kwang-seok's music and songs remain alive and vibrant, deeply rooted in the everyday lives of urbanites. He rekindles their lost dreams and beautiful memories of youthful love, bringing them back to life. Amid the hardships of everyday life, Kim Kwang-seok embraces urbanites, liberating them from the pain of youthful love through contemplation so that they no longer remain trapped in painful memories but can continually begin anew.

The empty memories in a cold society and an every-man-for-himself society where individuals are driven into relentless competition are rapidly breaking down the emotional bonds. Paradoxically, in an age characterized by hyperconnectivity through technological media, social relationships have become increasingly fractured and fragmented, while urban spaces have become pathways dictated by efficiency rather than places for leisurely lingering. Under the pressures of hyperaccelerated competition and performance-driven demands, the urban atmosphere has taken on the barren and desolate character of a fragmented society.

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1. The Cold, Heartless Atmosphere of the City

This atmosphere of fragmentation refers to a social condition in which the emotional bonds connecting individuals to society and to one another are dismantled in a fragmented relationship, while leaving urbanites to individually struggle for survival amid relentless competition in dry and fragmented relationships. The atmosphere of hyperaccelerated competition generates increasing tension and conflict in urban social relationships. It casts a deep shadow over urban life, encouraging individuals to objectify others by calculating their usefulness and the benefits they may offer according to changing circumstances. In such an atmosphere, urbanites are exposed to a violent atmosphere confronting serious social pathologies, including social distrust arising from the erosion of human relationships, immersion in narcissism, extreme selfishness, hatred toward others, inner emptiness, and loneliness.

Such everyday violence exists everywhere as an invisible form of violence.[2] Urbanites face risks that threaten and undermine both their survival and their social relationships in a world where no form of security can be guaranteed. Within this atmosphere, fear, anxiety, and dread become deeply embedded in their unconscious minds. Everyday violence is deeply spreading waves of sensory resonance eroding and spreading the roots of empathy across diverse social relationships. In other words, at the microscopic level of everyday life, the contagion and proliferation of the sensory resonances of violence rapidly corrode and destroy the foundations of social relationships, the very roots of empathy.

In this atmosphere of the society of exhibition, urbanites suffer profound psychological shocks and emotional wounds that extend beyond the boundaries of their self-identity.[3] Modern society, in which everyday violence has become pervasive, is particularly devastating in relation to narcissism. Narcissism is being instrumentalized as an object that can replace others around at any time. As a projection of narcissism, gaslighting continually forces others to accept manipulated and distorted versions of their own memories. As a form of everyday violence, gaslighting corrodes and destroys social relationships at their very roots on a microscopic level as the severe shocks causing the serious distortion and destruction of self-identity, humiliation, and shame in the social relationship.

The problem, however, is that urbanites in modern society are forced to endure and bear this invisible everyday violence entirely on their own. Narcissism emerges from a narrow structure of ethical insensitivity in

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which the sensibility and sensitivity toward a lost world of Romanticism. Modern society is rapidly eroding the ethical sensitivity and capacity for empathy that enable us to welcome one another's existence, respect others, and transcend their minor imperfections through a distance of permeability, while shaping one another's lives into works of art.

In this age of risk, the everyday lives of urbanites are sensitive due to excessive tension and anxiety in the social relationship due to relentless competition and the disappearance of romance and love. The contagion and spread of this atmosphere generate sensory resonances of conflict and confrontation, rigidity and stigma, discord and distortion, anger and hatred, corroding and destroying countless social relationships throughout society. This atmosphere of violence intensifies psychological tension among urbanites, while the pressures of competition imposed from multiple directions cast a pervasive atmosphere of melancholy and depression over society as a whole.

Against this backdrop, Kim Kwang-seok's music and the sense of place of Kim Kwangseok-gil Street continually evoke all generations to empathize and stroll together across the generational boundaries as the love and pain of youth in contrast to the emotionally detached city of a fragmented society and an every-man-for-himself world. Kim Kwang-seok's name is accompanied by numerous epithets. The Korean Bob Dylan, the Eternal Musician, the Legend of Folk Music, and the Emperor of Live Performance, these titles symbolize how his music transcends the broad category of popular music to embody the spirit of an era.

What, then, distinguishes Kim Kwang-seok from other musicians, and what is the nature of his social influence? Why are his music and Kim Kwangseok-gil Street, where his songs gently resonate, so special to us? How does his music contribute to a profound transformation from the atmosphere of a fragmented society to that of an affective society? And why does he continue to live and breathe deep within the hearts of urbanites, even after his passing?

To understand Kim Kwang-seok is not simply to trace the career of a musician. It is to recognize that he created a distinctive cultural style in Korean society during the 1980s and 1990s and to understand how his music connects different eras and inspires hope among people living in the present. To explore Kim Kwang-seok's music is to illuminate how his passionate pursuit and dedication, expressed through his voice, can transform the social atmosphere into an affective atmosphere, in which people empathize with one another's pain and embrace one another's tragedies.

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At the foundations of culture, Kim Kwang-seok continually inscribes the distinctive imprint and atmosphere of an era, enabling urbanites to be reborn and rise once again from their fading youth and love, the loss of love, abandoned hearts, and emotions that are constantly suppressed, wounded, and fragmented, through a 'shared destiny, an atmosphere of facing fate together'.

In this sense, the transformation of the atmosphere evoked by Kim Kwang-seok becomes a cultural link and bridge that heals and reconnects fragmented urbanites and those separated by generational divides, facilitating a shift from a fragmented society to an affective society. It is precisely here that Kim Kwang-seok makes shared cultural memories reborn and take root in the foundation of community as the face of an era, a common destiny, the fragrance of time, the aesthetics of longing, and redemption through beauty.[4]

Amid a dry and desolate atmosphere, Kim Kwang-seok's musical world and the sense of place of Kim Kwangseok-gil Street sustain a longing born of loss through contemplation and reflection, evoking memories of love and cherished moments at the boundaries of the heart. In a cold society, contemplation of youthful experiences and memories gently permeates the urbanites and spreads as sensory resonances of love and longing through new sensations and interpretations.

It is here that Kim Kwang-seok, as a wanderer along the boundaries, continually elevates urbanites to understand and embrace worlds of impossibility that couldn't be understood in the past as crossing different temporal dimensions, the past and present, the present and future, and the future and past, through the contemplation of love between the self and the other.

Kim Kwang-seok's musical world restores vitality to this cold city, whose dry and desolate atmosphere resembles a frozen winter kingdom, continuously encourages urbanites to remind their longing and move beyond the pain of the past. Through this transformation of atmosphere, the barren and desolate city is transformed into the affective atmosphere imbued with love once again. Kim Kwang-seok pays particular attention to the gradual disappearance of youthful memories marked by the pain of love along the boundaries of urbanites' relationships with others in a reality increasingly engulfed by narcissism and fragmentation.

He recognizes that the sensory resonances generated by the reawakening of youthful memories constitute the very vitality of society. Recalling the experiences that unfold at the boundaries of the youthful heart, Kim

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Kwang-seok inspires people to walk together along these boundaries. Throughout this journey of contemplation, the emotional emptiness and hunger of fragmented hearts of urbanites are resonated and contaminated as the sensory resonances that evoke love deep within the heart. In this way, he consistently embodies the ethos of a wandering bard who endlessly traverses the boundaries of youth, continuing even today to evoke lost memories of love through his enduring aura.

In the dry, desolate atmosphere of our times, Kim Kwang-seok's musical world and the sense of place on Kim Kwangseok-gil Street still touch urbanites today as a living aura, carrying a sense of heterotopian transformation. Though he has left this world, his sensory waves keep evoking urbanites' memories of past love, restoring the love they had shut away and elevating them to discover_anew the countless stories buried within them. As a flâneur of the times, Kim Kwang-seok carries out a cultural experiment that, at the very ground of culture, embraces urbanites so that they can move beyond the fragmented, heartless society where it's every man for himself, and turn and shape it toward a gentler atmosphere.

With these questions in mind, I set out to discover anew, in Kim Kwang-seok's musical world and in the heterotopian sense of place of Kim Kwangseok-gil Street, two things: how the vitality of a society that lets urbanites rediscover their shut-away dreams and loves is set fundamentally in motion at the ground of culture; and the cultural experiment that keeps filtering and elevating urbanites' sensibilities. In the city's gentle atmosphere, urbanites draw their past memories out of the volatile flux of life and social relationships; embraced by the scent of time, they keep evoking and elevating them.

At this moment of crisis, Kim Kwang-seok, as the face of the times, inscribes urbanites into the community they live in. I attend to the cultural atmosphere newly embraced by Kim Kwang-seok's sensory waves, which turn the dangers of a fragmented society toward an affective urban atmosphere, and to the turn in atmosphere that he elevates as a spirit of the age; through them I hope to bring about an empowering, healing change toward an affective city. This book proposes a healing cultural turn, from the atmosphere of a fragmented society toward an affective society, found in the music of the musician Kim Kwang-seok and in the experiment in sense of place on Kim Kwangseok-gil Street: a turn that restores empathy and solidarity, the discovery of buried stories and the many forms of coexistence, and a deep responsiveness to pain and longing.

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However fast the digital transformation moves, the depth with which we understand human beings and society cannot easily be automated. Technology may speak of efficiency, and however far it advances, it cannot stand in for the questions of human suffering, responsibility, and solidarity. What the humanities address is precisely this: the layer of meaning. In a fragmented society like ours, where affective communities are being shattered to pieces at hyper-accelerated speed, Kim Kwang-seok, who lets urbanites inscribe the spirit of the age on their community, keeps elevating and evoking, in a society grown cold with ethical numbness, an atmosphere and an ethos of ethical sensibility that shares in one another's pain and tragedy.

A fiercely competitive society where it's every man for himself makes urbanites lose their dreams and memories, and their ethical sensibility with them. As the affective atmosphere drains away into dryness and desolation, a hunger society in which money is idolized as a divine power spreads an atmosphere of melancholy across the whole of society.[5] In the glittering exhibition society, urbanites turn their eyes away from one another's tragedies and suffering, and the ethical sensibility that once bound us together is lost.

In an age of crisis, amid the realities of risk, urbanites can be embraced by a gentle atmosphere, as in a nest beneath society's sheltering cover: in the spirit of the age that Kim Kwang-seok, the face of the times, carries; in his musical world; and in the sense of place on Kim Kwangseok-gil Street, where his music softly echoes. Ethical sensibility and empathy for the other are the turning point for the great transformation from a fragmented society to an affective one.

Kim Kwang-seok's musical world leads urbanites to contemplate and reflect on how they ought to live, along the journey of youthful dreams and love, of loss and the heart. In an atmosphere that demands nothing of them but fierce, exclusionary competition, it lets urbanites recall the dreams of youth they had shut away and the memories they had hidden. Urbanites can bring into bloom again the countless strata of time they never fully lived. In this context, sustaining contemplation and evocation matters enormously for urbanites. Only by dwelling in this time can they sustain the duration it takes to digest and ripen things in their inner world.

In Kim Kwang-seok's songs, the past, arriving as if by fate at the crossing of many times, is sparked as meaning, savored and elevated as relationships are seen from a new angle. Fate, emerging from a world of loss, is

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hard to approach through rational choice, consideration, or understanding. It is a world we must face when we feel it as something else altogether, something that swirls deep in the unconscious and sweeps us away. Then the past does not end as the past; it comes back to life as the ground in which present and future take root, and the future, seen overlaid on the past, comes back to life as a new horizon. The past revived here and now gives urbanites the leisure of reflection, in which new meanings for their relationships can be sought.

Kim Kwang-seok's music and the sense of place on Kim Kwangseok-gil Street allow urbanites to step back from the shock of loss, to contemplate it, and to reach a vantage from which they can understand their relationships with others anew and be reconciled with them. This vantage heals the world of loss and its aftershocks in the self. More than that, it sets in motion a change in urbanites' sensibilities, seen from within a new turn in atmosphere, and a transformation of both individual and society. Kim Kwang-seok's musical world extends healing sensory waves as a sense held in common across generations, as a shared sense. Here "the fate of a place" is born again, in the present and the future, through the senses urbanites share. Kim Kwang-seok's songs take urbanites on a journey through time and set them once more before forgotten dreams and longing. This healing frees them from inner emptiness and carries them from the pain of loss beyond a timeless atmosphere of melancholy. In this atmosphere, evoking the dreams of their times, a shared memory, and longing, urbanites come to embody a bold and steadfast immunity.

Kim Kwang-seok strolls with urbanites along the borders of melancholy, embraced by the scent of time. Here, in a sense of place where we remember together, a place of destiny, urbanites' dreams and loves are evoked for us, and we are carried away by them. This very moment is the power of communication, the window of evocation, that sets off sensory waves of empathy among all the generations who pass through Kim Kwang-seok's music and the sense of place on Kim Kwangseok-gil Street. In this respect, his musical world heals urbanites across generations, through senses held in common and shared. The sense of place on Kim Kwangseok-gil Street is not a non-place that merely stitches biography to fiction or sinks into narcissism.[6] Rather, here and now, in a sense of place reenacted in reality, he lets urbanites move beyond the walls that reality has thrown up, within an atmosphere that embraces their past losses and their memories of forgotten love.

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Then urbanites, as walkers on the boundary, let the vanished dreams of the community and the fragments of place appear as "the face of the times." From these fragments and fissures in the sense of place, vanished time and the forgotten dreams of an era are recalled. The lost world does not end as a vanished world; it leaves shards and fragments behind and sets off a sense through which urbanites can remember. The mood of melancholy moves from the urbanites's loss and emptiness, through the evocation of longing for a lost world, toward shared dreams and memory held in common. In this movement, the urbanite parts with narcissism and emptiness and can embrace it as a bond between the indivisual and the community. Melancholy makes possible a connection between the emptiness of the world and the individual's community. At the same time, melancholy is a matter of contemplating and gazing into the ground that stirs deep in urbanites' unconscious, without falling into emptiness. The atmosphere of melancholy is a world that takes root together and blooms dynamically at the crossing of many times.

Today a community made desolate and dry by conflict and division can quickly grasp and see into the contexts in which urbanites suffer loss, and so move toward unity. A community's unity becomes possible when the vanished past is revived in the present and the future, and when two lost worlds embrace each other in an atmosphere of mutual dependence. For in the face of the shock of loss, melancholy lets the sense of community transcend time and put down the community's roots. Here the past comes back to life and is born again, and the future, seen overlaid on the past, comes back to life as a new horizon. The past revived here and now offers the leisure and reflection to seek meaning in new relationships.

As the face of the times, Kim Kwang-seok's sensory waves, with a force that pierces through to the world of truth, heal urbanites deep in their unconscious, turning them toward "Where Wind comes From." His musical world stays with urbanites as shared senses and, by passing through the blind spot, turns toward healing and reconciliation. Then the lost world faces reality without distortion, welcomes the other with hospitality, and turns into a gentle atmosphere that embraces us within the nest of community. Kim Kwang-seok's musical world and the sense of place on Kim Kwangseok-gil Street move beyond the blind spot; seeing through reality from within the lost world, they bring about healing and reconciliation in an atmosphere that welcomes and embraces others. In this respect, the narrative of Kim Kwang-seok's songs awakens a communal sense of longing for the lost world.

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Urbanites' repressed senses are setting off sensory waves of cultural memory that reach beyond individuals and generations. Kim Kwang-seok's stories let urbanites welcome their lost world into a gentle nest and savor the moments and events in which they meet one another in a fated sense of place. In this respect his musical world keeps evoking the sensory waves of a tragedy urbanites share. If the sharing of tragedy is the lifeblood of community, Kim Kwang-seok's musical world gives shape to the foundations of community through longing for a lost world. The reason his musical world extends healing sensory waves lies in how it takes urbanites, sunk in emptiness and narcissism, out of past loss and re-contextualizes them in a time-journey of story. Urbanites' stories and the crossing of many times invite them into an atmosphere of contemplation, reflection, and hospitality. As a result, urbanites are able to part ways with their inner emptiness and their burial in narcissism.

Kim Kwang-seok's musical stroll makes it possible to stroll the boundaries of urbanites' lost world and of their deep unconscious. In this stroll, the vanished time of urbanites' past embraces melancholy once more and moves beyond it. Only then does their numbed, frozen time awaken to new feeling in the sense of place of the real. In other words, the sense of a lost world can be born anew in shared senses. The world of loss is a world of ideals and dreams, of love and nostalgic yearning, with which urbanites everywhere can empathize. The world of melancholy, as the sharing of tragedy, leads us from individual to individual and, further still, toward a sense that joins the individual to the community.

The sense of place on Kim Kwangseok-gil Street is a door and a bridge of communication through which healing can be reenacted in reality. The vantage Kim Kwang-seok evokes brings forth a recovery of the affective communality that modernity has found so hard to reach. His musical world, blooming anew in the sense of place that bears his name, lets the city's strollers savor "the patterns of the times" with which people can empathize across generations. Kim Kwang-seok's music is an open link from one generation to the next, a door and a bridge of communication. As shared cultural memory, it leaves new fingerprints on this era, on history, on community.

Kim Kwang-seok's musical world lets a beauty devoted and offered in worship to the lost world endure, through the stroll, as artistic feeling, and beyond that, lets it be shared as common cultural memory. In other words, his musical world restores the world of loss to urbanites' daily lives as cult value, and that world is elevated as it is embraced by the

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scent of time. Then urbanites enter a world that is no longer fearful or frightening, one that embraces and moves beyond, all at once, past and future, life and death, healing and wound, the flowering and the paralysis of potential, excellence and incapacity, resistance and adaptation, exhibition value and cult value.[7]

Kim Kwang-seok's sensory waves therefore embrace urbanites so that they overcome melancholy and, passing through the blind spot, make their own lives into works of art. On this journey urbanites are elevated: out of the anxiety and dread that avoid loss and will not face fear, out of life's ennui and stale routine into an atmosphere of devotion to the steady, weighty values of a life that does not bend to the lure of glittering exhibition value. This world carries us from past loss to a future horizon, from loss to redemption, from fall to flight, from dehistoricization to historicization, from timelessness to temporality, and it sets the potential of the individual and the potential of society in motion at once.

2. The Narrative of Memory Evoked in Kim Kwang-seok's Musical World

Kim Kwang-seok's musical world is a journey of strolling: recalling, contemplating, and reflecting on the events that happen at the borders of the young heart. On this journey, his music invites urbanites into a stroll in which the events that once took place at the boundaries of their youth are evoked in the present, to be contemplated and savored. He observes with keen senses how urbanites live in modern society. His aspiration is an endless process of struggle and searching around a single question: how music ought to shed its light in order to foster an affective, communal atmosphere in modern society.

The Musical World of Kim Kwang-seok, Walker on the Boundary: Evoking and Contemplating Memory

As a flâneur, Kim Kwang-seok senses anew the stories and feelings of memory, through an evocation and contemplation that let him breathe again from the pain of a melancholy born of loss, boiling up from the place where he had fallen in his youth. In the process of recollection, urbanites' memories of the past do not evaporate. They are discovered anew, and can be grasped and contemplated in a context that helps us

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