

From Naming to Being Named: Mirroring and Reciprocal Recognition in Kim Chun-soo's the Flower

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines Kim Chun-soo's poem "The Flower" through Heinz Kohut's concept of mirroring in self psychology and Axel Honneth's theory of recognition. The poem explores the relationship between naming, identity, and the desire for recognition. The study analyses how the act of naming transforms another individual into a meaningful presence and how the speaker subsequently expresses a desire to receive similar recognition. Kohut's concept of mirroring explains the psychological need for affirmation through the responses of others, while Honneth's theory of recognition helps examine the relationship between acknowledgement and identity formation. Through qualitative textual analysis and close reading, the paper investigates the speaker's movement from recognising another individual to longing for reciprocal recognition. It also explores the significance of the desire to possess a name that reflects individual identity and to remain present in another's consciousness. The study argues that the poem presents longing as more than a desire for emotional connection; it represents the need for one's existence and identity to be acknowledged by another. By bringing self psychology and recognition theory together, the paper highlights how reciprocal acknowledgement contributes to the formation of relational selfhood. Thus, "The Flower" presents recognition as a shared experience in which the desire to acknowledge another is accompanied by the longing to be acknowledged in return.

Keywords: Mirroring, Recognition, Selfhood, Identity

1.INTRODUCTION:

Literature provides a means of examining the relationship between individual identity and interpersonal experiences. The recognition of an individual by another plays a significant role in shaping the perception of self and establishing meaningful relationships. Naming, in particular, can be understood as an act through which an otherwise indistinct presence acquires identity and significance. Kim Chun-soo's poem "The Flower" explores this relationship between naming, recognition, and identity through the speaker's interaction with another individual. The poem presents the transformation of an unnamed presence into a meaningful existence through the act of naming and subsequently shifts towards the speaker's desire to experience similar recognition.

The psychological significance of this movement can be examined through Heinz Kohut's self-psychology, particularly the concept of mirroring. Kohut emphasises the importance of affirmation and acknowledgement in the development and maintenance of a cohesive sense of self. In the poem, the speaker's act of naming establishes the identity of another, while the subsequent question, "will someone please call my name," expresses the desire for recognition in return. This transition suggests that the need to acknowledge another is accompanied by the need to be acknowledged by another. Axel Honneth's theory of recognition further supports this interpretation by explaining the relational dimensions of identity and the significance of being recognised by others. Together, these theoretical perspectives provide a framework for examining the speaker's longing for reciprocal recognition.

Existing interpretations of "The Flower" have explored its philosophical, linguistic, psychoanalytic, and phenomenological dimensions. Kim You-Joong's psychoanalytic study examines the poem through Julia Kristeva's semiotic psychoanalysis, while Kim Cheong-u approaches the poem through cognitive poetics. Kwon Teck-Young's phenomenological reading considers the relationship between naming, embodiment, and the transformation of the individual into a meaningful presence. These studies establish the significance of naming and identity in the poem. The present study extends these discussions by focusing on the psychological movement from granting recognition to yearning for recognition in return, using Kohut's concept of mirroring and Honneth's recognition theory.

Through qualitative textual analysis and close reading, this paper examines how naming establishes the identity of another and how the speaker's desire for reciprocal acknowledgement reveals the relational nature of selfhood. It argues that "The Flower" presents longing not merely as a desire for emotional connection but as a psychological need to have one's identity acknowledged and affirmed by another. The study therefore explores how the movement from naming to being named expresses the desire for mutual recognition and a meaningful interpersonal relationship.

The research explores the following questions: How does the act of naming in Kim Chun-soo's "The Flower" contribute to the recognition and formation of individual identity? How can Heinz Kohut's concept of mirroring explain the speaker's transition from recognising another individual to longing for recognition in return? How

does Axel Honneth's theory of recognition illuminate the relationship between reciprocal acknowledgement and the formation of relational selfhood in the poem? How does the poem's concluding image of a gaze that will not be forgotten express the speaker's desire for mutual recognition and enduring interpersonal connection?

The study hypothesises that Kim Chun-soo's "The Flower" presents identity as a relational experience shaped by the need for reciprocal recognition. Through Kohut's concept of mirroring and Honneth's theory of recognition, the poem illustrates how the speaker's act of acknowledging another individual develops into a desire to receive similar acknowledgement. The study proposes that the speaker's longing reflects the psychological need for affirmation and the desire to establish a meaningful identity through mutual recognition.

2.LITERATURE REVIEW:

Kim You-Joong's "A Psychoanalytic Study of Kim Chun Su's 'Flower': Using Kristeva's Semiotic Psychoanalysis" (2015) is particularly relevant to the present research. Kim examines the difference between understanding the poem as a metaphysical exploration of existence and language and interpreting it as a love poem. The study focuses on the mutual calling of names and the way linguistic interaction allows desire to enter the realm of meaning. Drawing on Julia Kristeva's psychoanalytic approach, it interprets the relationship between the speaker and the other as a process through which meaning develops through emotional connection and linguistic exchange. This study is important because it establishes that a psychoanalytic reading of the poem is not entirely new. However, its primary framework is Kristeva's semiotic psychoanalysis. The present paper can extend this discussion by focusing more specifically on the psychological significance of mirroring and the desire for reciprocal recognition. Kohut's framework will help explain the speaker's need for affirmation, while Honneth's theory will help clarify the relationship between recognition and selfhood.

So Pil-gyun's 2016 study, "Cognitive Study on 'Flower' of Chun Su Kim Applying Greimas Semiotic Square," combines cognitive poetics and semiotics to examine the poem's structure and its production of meaning. The study considers the progression from an unnamed gesture to a flower through naming, as well as the speaker's subsequent desire to become a recognised presence. It also examines the reciprocal movement between the positions of the recognising subject and the recognised object. This interpretation is closely related to the present research because it recognises that the poem's movement is not limited to the naming of another individual. The positions of the speaker and the other are capable of being reversed. The present paper develops this relational dimension through self psychology: the speaker who initially grants recognition also expresses the need to receive it. The distinction is between explaining how the poem produces meaning and examining the psychological need for acknowledgement that emerges from its structure.

Teck-Young Kwon's "Body in Phenomenology: Chunsoo Kim's 'Flower' and Chungjoon Lee's 'Home-Coming'" (2010) examines the relationship between naming, embodiment, and existence. Kwon discusses how the body becomes a flower through the name designated by a lover and considers the relationship between language and the experience of being in the world. The article also draws on phenomenological thought associated with Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. Kwon's study is useful for establishing that naming in the poem is not merely a linguistic act. It transforms the way a presence is encountered and understood. For the present paper, this interpretation provides a foundation for asking what happens when the speaker who gives meaning to another seeks a similar acknowledgement. The focus consequently shifts from the relationship between language and existence to the psychological desire for recognition within an interpersonal relationship.

Another relevant study examines Kim Chun-soo's early poetry through Lacan's concept of the Real, Kristeva's concept of the semiotic chora, and bodily drives. It considers the difficulty of expressing reality through language and identifies "The Flower" as an important text for exploring the relationship between existence, signification, and desire. This work suggests that the poem can support psychoanalytic interpretations extending beyond its familiar philosophical reading. However, the present study should use Lacan selectively rather than making him a third primary theorist. The central research question concerns reciprocal recognition, for which Kohut's mirroring concept offers a more direct psychological framework. Lacan's ideas about the Other and desire may be mentioned where they clarify the speaker's dependence on another's recognition, but they are not essential to the main argument.

Mun Hyewon's 2013 article, "A Study on the Phenomenological Features in Kim, Choon-soo's Poems and Poetic Theory—Focusing on the Relationship between Husserl's Phenomenology," examines the phenomenological dimensions of Kim Chun-soo's poetry. It identifies the Flower poems as part of the poet's exploration of existence and the process through which phenomena become available to consciousness. This study provides broader philosophical context for the poem. It also indicates why the present paper should distinguish between the ontological question of how an individual comes to possess significance and the psychological question of why the speaker longs to be acknowledged in return.

Heinz Kohut's self-psychology provides the principal theoretical foundation for this study. Kohut's approach examines the development and maintenance of the self in relation to significant others. Within this framework, mirroring refers to the experience of having one's feelings, presence, and sense of worth acknowledged by another.

Such responses contribute to the development and maintenance of a cohesive sense of self. Baker and Baker's "Heinz Kohut's Self Psychology: An Overview" (1987) explains three central selfobject needs in Kohut's framework: mirroring, idealisation, and alter-ego or twinship experiences. The authors discuss the importance of these needs in self-development and the consequences that may follow when they are not adequately met. For the present study, mirroring is the most relevant concept. The speaker first recognises another individual through naming, thereby establishing the other as a meaningful presence. The subsequent request for someone to call the speaker's name suggests a desire for comparable acknowledgement. This movement can be interpreted as a literary representation of the need to have one's identity affirmed by another. The analysis must nevertheless distinguish between a literary interpretation and a clinical diagnosis. The speaker should not be described as psychologically impaired or as demonstrating a clinical condition. Kohut's theory is being used to interpret the poem's representation of the need for affirmation.

Erez Banai, Mario Mikulincer, and Phillip R. Shaver's "'Selfobject' Needs in Kohut's Self Psychology: Links With Attachment, Self-Cohesion, Affect Regulation, and Adjustment" (2005) examines mirroring, idealisation, and twinship in relation to attachment, self-cohesion, affect regulation, and interpersonal adjustment. Their research investigates the usefulness of these concepts and their relationships with constructs studied in contemporary personality and social psychology. This work is valuable because it provides a scholarly basis for discussing mirroring as part of a broader account of self-cohesion and interpersonal experience. In "The Flower," the speaker's desire to be named may be read as a wish for the self to become meaningful within another person's awareness. The poem thus permits an interpretation in which identity is not entirely independent of interpersonal relationships. The paper should avoid suggesting that Kohut's theory and Banai, Mikulincer, and Shaver's empirical findings prove the meaning of the poem. Instead, these works provide conceptual support for a close reading of the speaker's desire for acknowledgement. Kohut's *The Analysis of the Self* (1971) and *The Restoration of the Self* (1977) are foundational primary texts for understanding his approach to self-development. The first develops his account of narcissistic configurations and selfobject relationships, while the latter elaborates his understanding of the self and its restoration. These texts should be consulted directly before finalising the theoretical discussion. They will help distinguish mirroring from the broader concept of self-object needs and prevent the paper from reducing Kohut's theory to the simple idea that people want praise.

Axel Honneth's theory of recognition offers a complementary framework for examining the relationship between selfhood and interpersonal acknowledgement. In *The Struggle for Recognition*, Honneth develops an account of how positive relations to oneself are shaped through relations of recognition. His theory distinguishes between forms of recognition associated with emotional attachment, legal respect, and social esteem.

Suzana Guerra Albornoz's "The Spheres of Recognition: An Introduction to Axel Honneth" (2011) provides an accessible overview of these three spheres: love, rights, and solidarity. The article explains their relationship to self-confidence, self-respect, and self-esteem. For the present paper, the sphere of emotional attachment is particularly relevant because the poem presents naming as an intimate, relational act. The speaker's wish to be named in return can be examined as a desire for acknowledgement from another individual. However, the poem should not be treated as a direct illustration of every dimension of Honneth's theory. The analysis will concentrate on the relationship between interpersonal recognition and the individual's sense of self.

In "Recognition and Justice: Outline of a Plural Theory of Justice" (2004), Honneth argues that recognition is central to understanding experiences of injustice and disrespect. He distinguishes between forms of recognition connected to love, equal legal treatment, and social esteem, linking these forms to the development of personal identity. Although Honneth's article is concerned primarily with social philosophy and justice, it provides a useful conceptual distinction between being noticed and being recognised in a way that affirms one's identity. This distinction is relevant to the poem because the speaker does not merely wish to attract attention; the speaker longs for a name that corresponds to an individual identity and for a presence that will remain in another's consciousness. The paper uses this argument carefully. The speaker's unfulfilled desire may be interpreted as a longing for recognition, but the text does not necessarily depict social injustice or institutional misrecognition. Honneth's framework is therefore most useful here for its account of recognition and self-relation, rather than for its full political and normative implications.

Bart van Leeuwen's "A Formal Recognition of Social Attachments: Expanding Axel Honneth's Theory of Recognition" (2007) discusses Honneth's distinction between recognition through love, respect, and social esteem. The article is useful for considering how interpersonal attachments fit within a broader theory of recognition. Applied to "The Flower," recognition can be understood as a relational process rather than an isolated act. The speaker's initial act of naming establishes the other as meaningful; the subsequent desire to be named reveals that the speaker also wishes to occupy the position of the recognised. The poem thus presents recognition as a movement between individuals rather than a one-directional act.

The connection between Kohut and Honneth developed with conceptual precision. Kohut's self-psychology addresses the psychological functions of selfobject relationships and the need for mirroring in the development and maintenance of the self. Honneth's theory examines recognition as a social and interpersonal condition for

positive self-relations. Although their frameworks are not identical, both make the relationship between selfhood and others central to their respective arguments.

R. Ganis's "Insecure Attachment and Narcissistic Vulnerability: Implications for Honneth's Recognition-Theoretic Reconstruction of Psychoanalysis" (2015) is a potentially valuable source for connecting psychoanalytic perspectives with Honneth's recognition theory. It should be consulted directly before making detailed claims about the relationship between the two frameworks.

The studies located so far examine "The Flower" through psychoanalysis, semiotics, cognitive poetics, phenomenology, and the philosophy of language. They differ in their approaches, but collectively demonstrate the importance of naming, identity, existence, desire, and the relationship between self and other. Kohut helps explain the speaker's need for mirroring, while Honneth helps situate that need within a broader account of relational identity. Together, the theories support the argument that the speaker's desire to be named is not merely an expression of longing but a desire for reciprocal acknowledgement. Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic theory provides a possible supplementary perspective on the relationship between identity, desire, and the Other. In Lacanian thought, the subject's relation to identity is mediated by others and by systems of signification. Desire is also connected to the Other, making the subject's relationship with another consciousness relevant to the formation of identity. For this paper, Lacan's ideas can help illuminate the speaker's desire to become a presence that will not be forgotten. The concluding image of a lasting gaze suggests the wish to remain within another's awareness. Nevertheless, the term gaze should not automatically be treated as equivalent to Kohut's mirroring. The two concepts emerge from different theoretical traditions and have different meanings. Lacan remains supplementary. Kohut's mirroring offers the more direct framework for examining the speaker's need for affirmation, while Honneth's theory supports the discussion of reciprocal recognition. Lacan may be introduced briefly if the close reading of the final stanza requires a more detailed account of desire and the Other.

The present paper builds on these interpretations by foregrounding the reciprocal structure of recognition. Its central concern is the transition from the act of recognising another to the desire to receive recognition in return. Kohut's mirroring concept and Honneth's recognition theory will be brought together to examine this movement. The speaker's longing is not necessarily a demand for admiration. Rather, it can be interpreted as a desire for an acknowledgement that makes the speaker's presence and identity meaningful to another. The poem's movement from naming to being named provides the textual basis for this interpretation. The works reviewed above establishes that "The Flower" has been examined through metaphysical interpretation, psychoanalysis, phenomenology, semiotics, and cognitive poetics. Kim You-Joong's study is particularly significant because it already provides a psychoanalytic interpretation through Kristeva, while So Pil-gyun's study examines the poem's cognitive structure and reciprocal positions of recognition. Kwon's phenomenological approach also addresses the relationship between naming and meaningful existence. The present study does not claim that the poem has never been examined in relation to psychology or recognition. Instead, its contribution lies in bringing Kohut's concept of mirroring and Honneth's theory of recognition together to analyse the speaker's movement from granting recognition to yearning for it in return. This approach directs attention to the psychological significance of the poem's shift in perspective and examines how the desire to recognise another becomes connected to the desire to be recognised. The central argument is that the poem represents longing as a desire for reciprocal acknowledgement. The speaker does not simply seek emotional closeness; the speaker also wishes to possess an identity that is recognised and remembered by another. This interpretation provides a focused basis for the subsequent textual analysis. This research gap is provisional rather than exhaustive. A final claim about the originality of the study should follow a fuller search of Korean-language works and the reference lists of the studies identified here.

From Naming to Reciprocal Recognition: A Kohutian Reading of "The Flower":

In Kim Chun-soo's "The Flower," the speaker's psychological movement begins with the act of naming another individual. Before the speaker calls "her name," she is described as "nothing / more than a gesture." This description presents the other as an indistinct presence without an established identity or significance within the speaker's experience. However, when the speaker calls her name, she "came to me / and became a flower." The transformation suggests that naming establishes a meaningful relationship between the speaker and the other. Through this act, the previously indistinct presence becomes recognisable and acquires significance. The flower consequently represents more than an object of perception; it becomes a meaningful presence within the speaker's consciousness. This transformation can be examined through Kohut's concept of mirroring, provided that the distinction between naming and mirroring is maintained. Naming is not identical to mirroring in Kohut's theory. Rather, the act of naming can be interpreted as a literary expression of recognition through which the other becomes meaningful to the speaker. The poem therefore presents the establishment of identity as a relational experience. The speaker's recognition gives the other a distinctive place within the relationship, suggesting that an individual's significance may emerge through the acknowledgement of another consciousness. The psychological importance of this recognition becomes clearer in the speaker's subsequent question: "will someone please call my name / that suits my light and fragrance?" The shift from "I called her name" to "will someone

please call my name” marks a significant change in the poem’s direction. The speaker who initially grants recognition now expresses the desire to receive it. This transition introduces the central concern of reciprocal recognition: the wish to experience the acknowledgement that one has extended to another. The speaker does not merely seek the attention of another individual but desires to be recognised in a manner that corresponds to an individual identity.

Heinz Kohut’s self psychology emphasizes mirroring as a fundamental selfobject need, where individuals seek affirmation and validation from others to develop a cohesive self. Before the speaker calls “her name,” the other is “nothing more than a gesture,” an unformed presence lacking identity or significance. Upon the speaker’s act of naming, she “came to me and became a flower,” highlighting Kohut’s idea that a self emerges and is given meaning through the empathetic, validating gaze or recognition of another. This moment reflects how mirroring transforms a nebulous entity into a fully realized self, a process central to Kohut’s theory of self-cohesion and psychological well-being (Banai et al., 2005). The turn in the poem from “I called her name” to the speaker’s plea, “will someone please call my name that suits my light and fragrance?” expresses the yearning for reciprocal mirroring. The speaker desires to be seen and valued as they see the other—a core Kohutian theme expressing the need to be recognized, not just to recognize. This movement beyond unidirectional recognition into a relationship of mutual affirmation is essential for self-cohesion and self-esteem, demonstrating the vulnerability and dependence on others for identity formation that Kohut highlights as crucial to the self’s development (Banai et al., 2005; Gorday, 2000).

The final movement of the poem reinforces this interpretation through the lines, “You, to me, and I, to you, / long to become a gaze that won’t be forgotten.” The reciprocal structure of “You, to me, and I, to you” places both individuals within a shared relationship of longing. Recognition is no longer confined to the speaker’s initial act of naming; it becomes a mutual desire to remain meaningful to one another. The image of a gaze that will not be forgotten suggests the wish to be retained in another’s consciousness. From the perspective of Kohut’s self psychology, this image may be read as an expression of the desire for lasting affirmation, although the poem does not establish that such affirmation is achieved. The poem thus moves from the recognition of another to the speaker’s desire for reciprocal acknowledgement. Kohut’s concept of mirroring provides a framework for interpreting this transition as a desire for affirmation through another’s response. The poem’s significance lies not simply in the transformation of the unnamed figure into a flower but also in the speaker’s recognition that the desire to acknowledge another is accompanied by the longing to be acknowledged in return. Through this movement, “The Flower” presents identity as relational and recognition as an experience that acquires greater significance when it becomes reciprocal.

From Being Recognised to Relational Selfhood: A Honnethian Reading of “The Flower”:

Axel Honneth’s theory of recognition provides a social and philosophical framework for understanding the relationship between identity and interpersonal acknowledgement. Drawing on Hegelian philosophy, Honneth argues that an individual’s relationship with the self develops through interactions with others. In *The Struggle for Recognition*, he identifies love, legal rights, and social esteem as three forms of recognition associated with self-confidence, self-respect, and self-esteem (Honneth). These forms demonstrate that identity is not formed entirely through individual experience but is also shaped by the recognition received within interpersonal and social relationships. In Kim Chun-soo’s “The Flower,” this relationship becomes evident through the movement from the speaker’s act of naming another individual to the subsequent desire to be recognised in return.

The speaker’s declaration that the other “came to me / and became a flower” illustrates the significance of recognition in establishing a meaningful relationship. The act of naming transforms an indistinct presence into an individual who acquires significance within the speaker’s experience. However, the poem does not end with this act of recognition. The speaker subsequently asks, “will someone please call my name / that suits my light and fragrance?” This question introduces a shift in the relationship between the self and the other. The speaker who initially grants recognition now desires to receive it. Through this reversal, the poem presents recognition as a reciprocal process in which the individual who acknowledges another also seeks acknowledgement.

Honneth’s theory helps explain the significance of this transition. In “Recognition and Justice,” Honneth (2004) examines the relationship between recognition and the conditions necessary for individuals to develop positive relations with themselves. His argument provides a basis for understanding why acknowledgement matters beyond the immediate experience of being noticed. Recognition involves the experience of being regarded as an individual whose presence and identity possess significance. In the poem, the speaker’s desire for a name that corresponds to their “light and fragrance” suggests a wish to be understood in terms of an identity that is distinctive and meaningful. The speaker does not merely seek a name; the speaker desires recognition that reflects an individual sense of self.

Rossiter (2014), in examining Honneth’s recognition theory in relation to social work and social justice, discusses the importance of recognition for understanding social relationships and the development of selfhood. Although Rossiter’s discussion concerns social justice rather than literary identity, it provides a useful secondary perspective on the relationship between acknowledgement and the individual’s experience of self. Applied to “The Flower,”

this perspective draws attention to the difference between granting another person significance and experiencing that significance through reciprocal acknowledgement. The speaker's longing emerges from this difference: the desire to recognise another is accompanied by the wish to be recognised by another.

The concluding lines, "You, to me, and I, to you, / long to become a gaze that won't be forgotten," further emphasise the reciprocal dimension of recognition. The parallel construction of "You, to me, and I, to you" places both individuals within a shared relationship of longing. Neither individual remains exclusively the one who recognises or the one who is recognised. Instead, the poem presents a mutual desire to become meaningful within the consciousness of another. The image of a gaze that will not be forgotten suggests the wish for enduring acknowledgement. The speaker longs not simply to exist in another's presence but to remain significant in the other's memory and perception.

Neculau (2012), in his discussion of recognition and identity, examines the relationship between being oneself and being recognised by another. His work is relevant to the poem because the speaker's identity is expressed through a desire for recognition that is both personal and relational. The concluding image can therefore be interpreted as an expression of the wish to sustain a meaningful place within another's awareness. However, the poem does not establish that reciprocal recognition has been achieved. Rather, the speaker's longing reveals the continuing desire for such a relationship.

Ganis (2015) examines the relationship between insecure attachment, narcissistic vulnerability, and Honneth's recognition-theoretic reconstruction of psychoanalysis. This discussion offers a possible connection between psychological needs and the broader significance of recognition. Nevertheless, the speaker's plea should not be treated as evidence of insecurity or narcissistic vulnerability. Its significance lies in the desire for mutual acknowledgement. The poem presents the need for recognition as part of the relationship between selfhood and the other, rather than as a clinical condition. The relationship between Honneth's theory and Kohut's self psychology consequently strengthens the central argument of this study. Kohut's concept of mirroring explains the speaker's desire for affirmation, while Honneth's theory places this desire within a broader understanding of relational identity. The speaker's movement from "I called her name" to the plea for someone to call the speaker's name demonstrates that recognition is not merely an act directed towards another individual. It also involves the desire to experience acknowledgement in return. Through this movement, "The Flower" presents selfhood as relational and suggests that the desire to recognise another is accompanied by the longing to be recognised.

Lacanian Desire: To Be Recognised and the Gaze in Kim Chun-soo's "The Flower":

Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic theory may provide a supplementary perspective on the relationship between desire, identity, and the Other. In Lacanian thought, the subject's relationship with identity is mediated through language and the Other; desire cannot be understood entirely as an expression of an isolated individual's needs. This perspective can contribute to an interpretation of the speaker's plea, "will someone please call my name," as an expression of the desire to acquire significance through another's recognition. The final image of "a gaze that won't be forgotten" also invites consideration of the relationship between the subject and the Other. The speaker's longing to remain within another's awareness suggests that identity is connected to the desire to be seen and remembered. However, Lacan's concept of the gaze should not be treated as identical to Kohut's mirroring. Kohut's framework focuses on the psychological function of affirmation in relation to the self, whereas Lacan's account of the gaze belongs to a different theoretical understanding of subjectivity and desire. For this reason, Lacan remains a supplementary perspective rather than a central framework in the present study. Kohut's self-psychology and Honneth's recognition theory provide the principal concepts for examining the poem's movement from naming another to longing for reciprocal acknowledgement. A brief Lacanian reference may enrich the discussion of desire and the Other, but the central argument remains that "The Flower" presents recognition as a relational experience in which the desire to affirm another is accompanied by the desire to be affirmed in return.

3. THEORETICAL INTERPRETATIONS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS:

The act of naming in Kim Chun-soo's "The Flower" represents the transformation of an indistinct presence into a meaningful individual. At the beginning of the poem, the speaker states that before the act of naming, the other person was "nothing / more than a gesture." This description suggests that the individual exists as a perceptible presence but has not yet acquired a distinct identity within the speaker's experience. The act of calling the person by name changes this relationship. The speaker observes that when the name is called, the person comes closer and "became a flower." The flower therefore represents more than physical beauty; it symbolises the emergence of meaning through recognition. Naming, in this context, can be understood as an act through which an individual becomes distinguishable and significant within another person's consciousness. The poem does not necessarily suggest that the individual has no identity before being named. Rather, it indicates that identity becomes meaningful through an act of acknowledgement. The other person is recognised as someone worthy of attention, rather than remaining an anonymous presence. This interpretation can be developed through Jacques Lacan's understanding of language and subject formation. Lacan argues that the subject enters a world of meanings and social relationships through language and the symbolic order. Language does not simply describe an already

complete identity; it also shapes how the individual becomes intelligible within a social world. From this perspective, naming in the poem can be read as a symbolic act that establishes a relationship between the speaker and the person being named. The name gives the individual a recognisable position within that relationship. However, Lacan's theory should not be taken to mean that a name creates a person's entire identity. The poem is more concerned with the significance that emerges when one individual recognises another. Naming establishes a relationship in which the other person becomes meaningful to the speaker.

Axel Honneth's theory of recognition offers a complementary explanation. In *The Struggle for Recognition*, Honneth argues that an individual's relationship with the self develops through experiences of recognition within interpersonal and social relationships. Recognition enables individuals to experience themselves as persons whose needs, identities, and contributions matter. Applied to the poem, the act of naming becomes an expression of acknowledgement: the speaker gives the other person a meaningful place within their experience. The poem's movement from an indistinct "gesture" to a "flower" therefore illustrates the relationship between naming and recognition. The person becomes significant because the speaker directs attention towards them and acknowledges their presence. Nevertheless, the poem's deeper concern emerges when the speaker begins to desire the same recognition in return. Naming initially establishes the other person's significance, but it also makes the speaker aware of the importance of being recognised by someone else.

Thus, the act of naming contributes to the formation of relational identity by demonstrating how interpersonal acknowledgement can transform the meaning of an individual's presence. The poem suggests that identity is not merely an isolated possession; it also develops through the meanings individuals establish for one another.

Heinz Kohut's concept of mirroring provides a psychological framework for understanding the speaker's transition from acknowledging another person to desiring acknowledgement in return. In self psychology, Kohut emphasises the importance of interpersonal responses in the development and maintenance of a cohesive sense of self. Individuals require experiences in which their feelings, qualities, and achievements are acknowledged by others. Such responses contribute to the development of self-esteem, emotional stability, and a sense of personal significance. Kohut develops this argument through the concept of the selfobject. A selfobject is a person experienced as fulfilling important psychological functions that support the cohesion and stability of the self. One of these functions is mirroring, through which an individual receives affirmation and recognition from another person. In childhood, responsive acknowledgement from caregivers plays an important role in the developing self. Although Kohut's theory originates in psychoanalytic treatment and developmental psychology, the concept of mirroring can also provide a framework for interpreting literary representations of the desire to be seen and acknowledged.

In "The Flower," the speaker initially occupies the position of the person who recognises another individual. By calling the other person's name, the speaker gives that person significance and transforms an indistinct presence into a meaningful figure. However, this act of recognition also reveals the speaker's own desire for acknowledgement. The speaker asks:

"Like I called her name,
will someone please call my name
that suits my light and fragrance?"

These lines mark a significant change in the poem's direction. The speaker no longer remains satisfied with recognising the other person. Instead, the speaker expresses a desire to experience the same act of recognition. The phrase "Like I called her name" establishes a relationship between the recognition already given and the recognition now desired. The speaker wishes for another person to acknowledge an identity that corresponds to the speaker's own distinctive qualities.

Kohut's concept of mirroring helps explain this desire. The speaker seeks more than the simple act of being noticed. The request for a name that suits the speaker's "light and fragrance" suggests a longing to be recognised in a way that reflects the speaker's particular identity. The desired acknowledgement should correspond to who the speaker is, rather than reducing the speaker to an anonymous or interchangeable individual. The distinction between attention and mirroring is important here. Attention merely indicates that someone has been noticed, whereas mirroring, in Kohut's framework, involves a response that affirms the individual's experience of the self. The speaker's longing can therefore be interpreted as a desire for meaningful affirmation. The speaker wants another person to perceive and acknowledge the qualities that make the self distinctive. The relationship between the two individuals also illustrates the reciprocal nature of recognition. The speaker first offers recognition and subsequently hopes to receive it. This movement does not necessarily suggest that the speaker recognises the other person only to obtain something in return. Rather, the experience of acknowledging another individual makes the importance of reciprocal acknowledgement more visible. The speaker understands the significance of being recognised because the speaker has already experienced the act of recognising someone else. Kohut's theory is useful for explaining this psychological movement, but the poem should not be treated as evidence of a particular psychological condition. The speaker's desire does not establish narcissistic vulnerability or any other clinical

diagnosis. Instead, mirroring provides a theoretical means of examining the human need for affirmation and the role of interpersonal responses in the experience of selfhood.

Therefore, Kohut's concept of mirroring illuminates the transition from recognition given to recognition desired. The speaker's longing reflects the need to have one's individual qualities acknowledged by another person. The poem presents recognition as an interpersonal experience through which individuals not only establish the significance of others but also seek affirmation of their own identities.

Axel Honneth's theory of recognition provides a social and philosophical framework for understanding how interpersonal acknowledgement contributes to the development of identity. In *The Struggle for Recognition*, Honneth argues that individuals develop a positive relationship with themselves through experiences of recognition within relationships and society. Recognition is therefore not simply an expression of personal affection or approval. It is an important condition through which individuals come to understand themselves as persons whose needs, rights, and qualities deserve acknowledgement.

Honneth identifies three principal spheres of recognition: love, legal rights, and social esteem. These spheres are associated with different dimensions of self-relation. Recognition through relationships of love and care supports self-confidence; recognition as a rights-bearing person supports self-respect; and social esteem for an individual's particular qualities and contributions supports self-esteem. These dimensions are interconnected, although they are not identical.

This framework helps explain the significance of the speaker's desire in "The Flower." The speaker first recognises another individual through naming. The act transforms the other person from an indistinct presence into someone meaningful. However, the speaker subsequently asks whether someone will call the speaker's name in a similar manner. This request reveals that the speaker also wishes to occupy a meaningful position in another person's experience.

The movement from "I called her name" to "will someone please call my name" establishes the poem's central concern with reciprocal acknowledgement. The speaker's desire is not limited to establishing a connection with another individual. It also involves the wish to have one's own identity acknowledged within that connection. The speaker wants to be recognised as a distinct individual whose qualities deserve attention.

Honneth's theory helps clarify why this acknowledgement matters. An individual's sense of self does not develop entirely independently of interpersonal relationships. The ways in which others respond to an individual can influence whether that person experiences their identity as meaningful and worthy of respect. Recognition, therefore, connects individual self-understanding with the social relationships through which identity becomes meaningful.

The speaker's request for a name that suits their "light and fragrance" is particularly relevant to Honneth's concept of social esteem. Social esteem involves the recognition of an individual's particular qualities and contributions. In the poem, the speaker does not merely wish to be included in another person's awareness; the speaker desires an acknowledgement that reflects their distinctive identity. The imagery of light and fragrance suggests qualities that the speaker hopes another person will perceive and value. Nevertheless, the poem should not be understood as directly illustrating all three of Honneth's spheres. Its emphasis falls primarily on interpersonal acknowledgement and the appreciation of individual distinctiveness. The sphere of legal rights, for example, is not explicitly developed in the poem. Honneth's theory is most useful here as a broader account of the relationship between recognition and selfhood, rather than as a framework in which every element must be present. The concept of relational selfhood helps express the significance of this relationship. Relational selfhood refers to the understanding that a person's experience of identity develops partly through relationships with others. It does not mean that an individual has no independent existence. Instead, it recognises that personal identity acquires additional meaning through acknowledgement, response, and interaction. The poem's final movement towards mutual recognition reinforces this idea. The speaker expresses a desire for both individuals to become a lasting presence in each other's consciousness. Recognition is no longer presented as a one-sided act in which one person gives significance to another. It becomes a relationship in which both individuals seek to acknowledge and be

4. ACKNOWLEDGED.

Thus, Honneth's theory illuminates the relationship between reciprocal recognition and relational selfhood in "The Flower." The poem suggests that the experience of identity involves not only recognising another person's significance but also seeking a meaningful place within that person's world. Reciprocal acknowledgement becomes a means through which both individuals can experience themselves as distinctive and significant.

The concluding image of a gaze that will not be forgotten brings together the poem's concerns with naming, identity, desire, and reciprocal recognition. In the version of the poem supplied for this analysis, the speaker concludes:

"You, to me, and I, to you,
long to become a gaze that won't be forgotten."

The importance of these lines lies in their reciprocal structure. The movement from “You, to me” to “I, to you” presents recognition as an experience shared between two individuals. Earlier in the poem, the speaker describes naming another person and subsequently asks to be named in return. In the conclusion, this desire develops into the wish for a mutual and lasting presence in each other’s consciousness. The phrase “a gaze that won’t be forgotten” suggests a form of recognition that extends beyond a temporary encounter. The speaker does not simply wish to be seen once; the speaker longs to remain significant in the other person’s memory. The gaze therefore represents more than the physical act of looking. It can be interpreted as a symbol of attention, acknowledgement, and the desire to be remembered as a distinct individual. Jacques Lacan’s account of desire and the Other offers one way of interpreting this image. For Lacan, human desire is closely connected to the symbolic and interpersonal world in which individuals seek recognition and meaning. The subject’s relationship with the Other person or symbolic position through which the subject encounters language, social meanings, and desire is central to Lacanian thought. The subject’s understanding of itself is therefore not wholly independent of the responses and meanings encountered through the Other. From this perspective, the speaker’s desire to become an unforgettable gaze can be read as a desire to hold a meaningful place in the Other’s world. The speaker wants to be someone who continues to matter to another person, rather than someone whose presence disappears without leaving an impression. The desire to be remembered thus becomes connected to the desire for recognition. However, Lacan’s concept of the gaze requires careful distinction from ordinary looking. In Lacanian theory, the gaze is a complex concept concerning the subject’s relationship to visibility and the field of the Other; it cannot simply be reduced to another person looking affectionately at the speaker. Accordingly, the poem’s image can be read through Lacanian ideas about desire and the Other without claiming that the poetic gaze is identical to Lacan’s technical concept.

Kohut’s concept of mirroring provides a different but related perspective. Whereas the Lacanian approach draws attention to the subject’s desire in relation to the Other, Kohut’s concept of mirroring focuses on the affirmation that an individual receives through another person’s responsive recognition. From a Kohutian perspective, the speaker’s wish to remain unforgettable can be interpreted as a desire for sustained affirmation. The speaker wishes to be recognised in a way that confirms the significance of their identity.

Honneth’s theory of recognition further clarifies the reciprocal dimension of the ending. Honneth understands recognition as a relational process through which individuals develop a positive relationship with themselves. The concluding movement from “You, to me” to “I, to you” suggests that neither individual remains solely the giver or recipient of recognition. Both individuals desire to become meaningful to one another. This mutuality distinguishes reciprocal recognition from one-sided admiration or the desire for attention alone. The idea of being unforgettable also introduces the question of continuity. Recognition becomes meaningful not only through a single act of acknowledgement but also through the possibility that the relationship will endure in memory. The speaker desires an identity that remains present in another person’s consciousness. The gaze consequently symbolises a lasting interpersonal connection in which both individuals preserve the significance of the other. The conclusion should not, however, be interpreted as proof that the desired relationship has already been achieved. The language of longing indicates an aspiration rather than a confirmed outcome. The speaker expresses the hope that both individuals will become unforgettable to each other, but the poem does not establish whether this desire will be fulfilled. The tension between the wish for recognition and its uncertain fulfilment sustains the poem’s emotional significance.

Therefore, the concluding image expresses the desire for mutual recognition through the wish to be both seen and remembered. Read through Lacan, it reflects the subject’s desire for a meaningful place in the world of the Other. Through Kohut, it suggests the need for sustained affirmation, while Honneth’s theory illuminates the reciprocal relationship through which individuals acknowledge one another’s significance. Together, these perspectives reveal how the poem transforms the desire to be named into a broader longing for enduring interpersonal recognition.

5.CONCLUSION:

The analysis of Kim Chun-soo’s “The Flower” through Heinz Kohut’s self psychology, Axel Honneth’s theory of recognition, and Jacques Lacan’s concepts of desire and the Other demonstrates that the poem’s central concern extends beyond the act of naming to the psychological and relational need for recognition. The poem presents naming as an act through which an indistinct presence acquires significance within an interpersonal relationship. However, the speaker’s subsequent desire to be named in return reveals that recognition is not merely an act of acknowledging another individual; it also involves the longing to have one’s own identity acknowledged by another. Through this movement, the poem establishes a relationship between naming, selfhood, and reciprocal acknowledgement.

Kohut’s concept of mirroring provides a psychological explanation for the speaker’s desire to receive affirmation from another individual. The speaker’s request for a name that corresponds to their “light and fragrance” suggests a longing to be recognised in a manner that reflects individual distinctiveness. This reading demonstrates how the

need for recognition can be understood as a desire for meaningful affirmation rather than mere attention. Honneth's theory further develops this interpretation by locating the formation of selfhood within interpersonal relationships. The poem's movement from recognising another person to seeking recognition in return illustrates how the experience of identity is shaped by mutual acknowledgement. Lacan's concepts of desire and the Other offer a supplementary perspective on the speaker's wish to remain significant within another person's consciousness. Together, these theoretical approaches illuminate different dimensions of the relationship between recognition, desire, and identity without reducing the poem to a single psychological explanation.

The concluding image of a gaze that will not be forgotten brings these concerns together by expressing the desire for a lasting and reciprocal connection. The speaker does not merely wish to be seen but seeks to remain meaningful to the other person. The reciprocal structure of the concluding lines suggests that both individuals desire a relationship in which each acknowledges the significance of the other. Nevertheless, the poem presents this relationship as a longing rather than a guaranteed outcome. This distinction is important because it preserves the tension between the desire for recognition and the uncertainty of its fulfilment.

The significance of this study lies in its interpretation of "The Flower" through the relationship between the act of granting recognition and the desire to receive it. While existing psychoanalytic, phenomenological, and semiotic readings have explored the poem's concerns with language, meaning, and the recognition of another, the present study brings Kohut's concept of mirroring into dialogue with Honneth's theory of recognition to examine the transition from acknowledging another individual to seeking reciprocal acknowledgement. Lacan's supplementary contribution further clarifies the relationship between desire and the wish to occupy a lasting place in the consciousness of the Other. This combined approach extends the interpretation of the poem by demonstrating how its movement from naming to mutual recognition can be understood through both psychological affirmation and relational identity.

Ultimately, "The Flower" presents recognition as a shared human need through which individuals seek to establish significance in relation to one another. The speaker's longing reveals that acknowledging another person does not eliminate the desire for self-recognition; rather, it makes the importance of reciprocal acknowledgement more visible. The poem therefore suggests that identity becomes meaningful not only through the recognition one extends to another but also through the possibility of being recognised in return. By connecting naming, mirroring, desire, and relational selfhood, this study establishes that the poem's enduring significance lies in its exploration of the human wish to be known, acknowledged, and remembered. The movement from naming another to longing to be named ultimately transforms a personal desire into a broader reflection on the reciprocal conditions through which individuals experience their own significance..

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