

# **Documents of Survival and Trauma: Memories of the Korean War in Korean Novels of the 1960s**

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This article aims at rethinking how novels represented by battlefield scenes and published in the 1960s are important linking works between “novels of postwar” and “novels of division” in the history of modern Korean novels. The three novels, *Long day’s Journey into Night* by Kang Yong-jun, *The Revolution at Bangat-gol* by Oh Yu-Gueon, and *Market and Battlefield* by Park Kyung-ri, have been relatively neglected in the history of modern Korean novels although the literary acceptance of war experiences has been understood as an important research theme.

Writers in the 1950s showed a sense of doubt, defiance, and despair in “novels of postwar,” which reflected the fact that they could not be relieved of their war experience oppression. In “novels of division” writers in the 1970-80s presented the present lives of the nation after the war and attempted to deal with the sharp contradiction of a divided nation. In concretizing war experiences, novels published in the 1960s used battlefields for fictional time-space in an attempt to gain distance from the trauma of war. Namely, it gained the distance to see the historical war as fictional material as well as began to understand what the war was and why it had happened, resulting in full-scale scenes of the battlefields being fictionalized in a long story form in the 1960s.

Most Koreans experienced that they could make new historical situations during the April Revolution (4.19 Revolution) of 1960. Having escaped from the feeling of being victimized by the war, the novels seriously began with a reasonable understanding of the war in the 1960s. It should be considered that these novels concretized battlefields of the war are important linking works between “novels of postwar” and “novels of division” beyond the division era in the history of modern Korean novels.

Keywords: Korean War, 1960s, Concretizing experiences of battlefields,  
Distancing from trauma of the war, Vision against the age of national  
division

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## Novels Korean Literary History Forgot

In the history of modern Korean literature many studies have dealt with the Korean War and many war experiences have been reported. Generally, these studies can be divided into two: “novels of postwar” (*joenhu sosoel*) from the 1950s and “novels of division” (*pundan sosoel*) which focused on the end of the division through unification of the Korean nation. Of course it’s not clear that “novels of postwar” have been distinguished from “novels of division” in the history of modern Korean literature. If the first is considered to be related to the period of publishing (in general it is applied to works published in the 1950s), the second has been more emphasized for its recognition of the divided Korean nation (Song 1993:14), including the reasons for the war’s start in 1950. It’s very important to distinguish between “novels of postwar” and “novels of division” in the history of modern Korean literature using the criteria of whether or not the novel explores the reasons for the war, the unconditional famine of subsistence goods, the collapse of traditional morals, and even the degradation of humans in Korea in the 1950s.

In the argument presented in this paper, the historic event of the April Revolution (the civil revolution in April 1960) was essential as a political and historical turning point in South Korea and for the release of the monumental novel, *Square* (*Gwangjang*), written by Choi In-hun. As a new vision of the nation and the national history appeared in Korean society, a powerful literary consciousness of a social movement arose in the literary community after the April Revolution. Based on a critical recognition of the situation of a divided nation, many writers and critics debated a new literary vision which moved against the political situation as well. Especially, practitioners for the “national literature” (*minjok munhak*) movement in the 1970s actively insisted on the recovery of the whole Korean national community through peaceful unification, which was injured by the situation of the divided nation. Therefore, “novels of division” became similar to “national literature” in dealing with the situation of the divided nation.

Meanwhile, in the context of “novels of postwar” the Korean War has ideologically been represented by a narrator who lived at the home front during the war and in a dark and gloomy daily life after the war. Among the senior novelists of the war generation, a few novelists joined the army and wrote two types of stories in magazines like *Literature of the Front* (*Joensoen munhak*), *New World* (*Sinchoenji*), and *Art and Literature* (*Munye*). The first type of story was

propaganda to encourage patriotism among discharged soldiers or injured soldiers, and the other encouraged a fighting spirit among soldiers in the battlefields. Nevertheless, both merely portrayed conventional battlefield scenes that were enumerated for victory (Jung 1998:321). As they did not experience the war personally, their works couldn't provide lively descriptions of battlefields and only depicted passive impressions of the general war situation, i.e., they only experienced the war through the news.

But in the case of junior novelists, known as the “new generation novelists” (*sinsedae jakga*) in the history of modern Korean literature, the moment they understood that urgent daily life and tragic reality were basic conditions of Korean lives caused by the war, their works became representative of disillusion with the emptiness and despair of real lives. As the new generation novelists perceived Korean society after the war to be a stern and tragic space with whole orders of lives having been destroyed by the war, they investigated the human existential conditions, or asked “How can I live in Korea?” in their works. They were captured by the ideology of existentialism that pervaded Korea at that time, for they believed it could provide an explanation to improve the lives of depressed individuals by the war. But in the process of accepting existentialism, they couldn't base their view completely on it because of the urgent national situation, yet nor could they develop any interest in the historical and social context, and so they only devoted themselves to exploring the meaning of an “individual unintentionally entered in the situation” (Kim 1991:108). For that reason, the new generation novelists wrote stories with high ideals and abstracted methods for representing the real world, and further emphasized the themes of “there was no more vision in Korea (the case of Son Chang-seop's works),” “after the war it was impossible for better lives in Korea (the case of Oh Sang-won's works),” and “it was a lie for the struggle between left and right wings (the case of Jang Yong-hak's works)” (Jung 1998:337).

This article proposes to study “novels of postwar” that concretized the war experience, especially the battlefields at the time of narration. As noted above, although “novels of postwar” expressed radical skepticism and hostility of the real world and included the despair and nihilism of human lives after the war, it did not represent battlefield scenes as the story time-space. The writers of “novels of postwar” could not concretize the battlefields as historical facts, for they had little experience of battlefields or their consciousness and unconscious-

ness remained under the heavy oppression of the war;<sup>1</sup> thus, they were inclined to write only short stories to embody their themes. Naturally, it took time for the trauma of the war to be expelled and the battlefields to be expressed objectively, and this became possible in the 1960s.

They embodied the experience of the war, especially battlefield scenes, not as a short form showing intensively a section of reality in a simple situation but rather as a long piece concretizing the whole of the object in transition of characters lives, for their trial to explain the substance of the war in the 1960s. Namely, they gained the perspective to be able to watch the historical war as fictional material and to begin to understand what the war was and why it started. This was only possible with estrangement from the war, which allowed the full-scale scenes of the battlefields to be fictionalized in long novel form in the 1960s. Therefore, novels concretizing the experiences of battlefields in the 1960s signified the opening period of “novels of division” that tried hard to gain some distance from the trauma of the war, until the recovery of the whole Korean national community was achieved through peaceful unification.

This article, with reference to the novels of the 1960s, discusses the method of concretizing the war experiences and understanding what the war was for Korea, among the novels which are relatively indifferent in the studies on the history of modern Korean novels on the Korean War.<sup>2</sup> It is a meaningful work for building up a solid context of history of “novels of postwar” and for studies on conventions of concretizing experiences of the war and describing battlefields in “novels of division” and some *roman fleuve* (*daeha soseol*) that dealt

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1. The major “ew generation novelists” were born mostly in the northern region of the Korea Peninsula, which allowed them to continue writing after the war during their arrest. Because of their social position arising from their roots in the northern region, their ideals and political positions were always under public scrutiny in South Korea. Therefore, they could not help representing the war as the materials of their own fragmental experiences in document form of an individual or by limiting the depiction of the periphery of daily lives in postwar Korean society (Kim 1991:214).
  2. Many young novelists published novels concretizing the war experiences, especially on battlefields, in the 1960s. In addition to the three that will be analyzed in this paper, see Jung Hansook, *Broken Bridge (Keuneojin dari)*, Eulyu-Munhwasa, 1962.; Hong Sung-won, *A Camp of D-day (Didei ui pyeongchon)*, Donga Ilbo, 1964.; Yi Beom-seon, *Under the Daybreak (Dongteuneun haneul miteseo)*, Kukmin-Mungosa, 1969.; and Song Byoeng-soo, *Glacial Period (Ping-a sidae)*, Samsung-Mungo, 1969. Most of them wrote novels vigorously after the war, which focused on the war experiences in Korean society. They are different from novels from the 1950s since the above mentioned novels concretized and narrated the battlefields realistically.

with the war as material or backdrop in the 1970-80s, which is how they viewed and represented the war with the temporal perspective of ten years.

With this intention, this article examines how the Korean War wounded individuals, communities, and the nation, as well as how people and the South Korean polity attempted to escape physical and mental trauma in concretized novels depicting Korean War battlefields. The novels that will be analyzed in this article are *Long day's Journey into Night* written by Kang Yong-jun, *The Revolution at Bangat-gol* written by Oh Yu-Gueon, and *Market and Battlefield* written by Park Kyung-ri.

### **Exposing Trauma: Memories of an Internalized War**

First, *Long day's Journey into Night* written by Kang Yong-jun, originally published serially as a trilogy in the monthly magazine *Shindonga* in 1967, depicts the carnage that took place in the Nakdong River combat and Geoje prisoner of war camp, which were two very violent battlefields during the Korean War. The narrator in this novel describes the battlefield experiences by releasing his own memories. We can perceive the acute tension of battlefields as the main theme of this work, which puts the reader not at the rear but at the front line during the war.

We were in some mountain 20 kilometers southeast of Hapcheon, on August 31, 1950. The river, in front of our place 2000 meters away, long lie just like a very slim string and American soldiers fired their field guns like a killing time once in a while at this side valley of the highland over the river where we called there "*piuikang*" [the blood river] or "Yosahwatgoljjagi" [Yosahwat valley]. Although we could not even imagine how many soldiers from both sides let their blood flow between this river, at least we did know that the 4th division of the puppet army was defeated at this river and at "Daebongri-Gyegok" [Daebongri valley]. (Kang 1972:7)

The narrator was thrown into Nakdong River combat as a recruit of the North Korean Army and suffered a brutal struggle for survival to become a prisoner at Geoje prisoner of war camp. He witnessed Shin Chang-ho who complained of himself in the battlefields as a "bull pulled in a butchery," Bong-su who "was a

soldier of the North Korean Army but had been a descendant of an unearned landowner, so was arrested as the son of a reactionary two months ago,”(Kang 1972:54) and Bae Young-geol who was a sensual People’s actor. All were wretchedly killed in Nakdong River combat by American soldiers’ field guns. “Accidentally” recruited and arranged in the battleline, all of them were ceaselessly troubled with the fear of the battlefield and considered themselves to be “a victim” of the war until they were miserably dead. Also in the second and third part of this novel, characters at the prisoner of war camp were chagrined that they had been a prisoner because of a black American soldier’s ignorance. There was no information about why a black American soldier arrested them as prisoners of war in the story. Having thought that everything was caused by “accident,” they could not find clear reasons why they were in such terrible troubles, and they believed that they were victims themselves. The feeling of being victimized held by the characters that died tragically in the war clearly appeared in the murder scene of Taeheung who lived in the camp with them.

The narrator thinks that Taeheung’s father, an illiterate man, could not raise himself from the lowest class by hard-earned money. Providing himself with a horse-cart to overcome his poverty, he lived in “a colony in the beginning of capitalism” before the war. The narrator believes that Taeheung chose to be a puppet army officer, inheriting the rule of life from his father; “only for his own profits, he can utterly look away from honor or anything like that” (Kang 1972:66). Consequently, Taeheung’s choice meant not an ideal selection but survival. Becoming a double agent for survival because his father could not escape from the lowest class in spite of hard-earned money, he was cruelly killed by the camp’s left-wing group. He represented the enervative individual who was victimized by the violence of war in the story. Whatever idea he chose, he could not help being killed by the violence of war, similar to the young who were accidentally dragged to the battlefields and brutally died. In addition, Han Min-ho’s wife and the women from the northern region were victims of the war, prostituting themselves to South Korean soldiers or P.O.W.s near the camp for their survival. The narrator perceived all of them as victims of the war, as the narrator was the only survivor in that situation, which made him feel guilty. Nevertheless, as you know, there is no reason for the survivors of the war to experience a guilty complex. He did accidentally survive in the madness of that carnage, and in memory he was very sorry to the dead for having survived. All his reactions to the situation of the war were abstract and ideal proceedings.

When one watches himself dying piece by piece, glancing at his interior of a damaged body without any light appearing in the end for raising one's confidence, can you appreciate the press of eternal time that is maintained till the end of the Earth? That is, the fact that the idea of eternal time pressing on man's soul! Whenever it is very real that even the melancholic remark "God is dead," who can maintain one's own existence in that situation? (Kang 1972:204)

By chance, it hit me that the phrase in Revelation, "they slander the Lord whose power causes this disaster and do not attribute the glory to the Lord, reforming themselves." In this world some people argue that we should live with dead bodies in reason rather than in error. They are fucking communists. I don't know what the reason is, but a reason that exists surrounded with dead bodies cannot truly be the reason, at least? (Kang 1972:96)

It's the unique reaction to the war that the narrator directed a long and boring interior monologue at the survivors of the war, while Byunggil spoke disruptively and Han Min-ho, who was a captain of the camp guards, preached. As the reference to Revelation revealed in the character's monologue and dialogue, the men understood that they could not comprehend the situation caused by the war. The excess of abstract talkativeness derived from the worldview was a form of a helpless reaction as the Koreans could not comprehend the war and the world at that time. It means that the trauma of the war in a survivor's interior led to a long interior monologue in the absence of anybody to talk to, while another preached tediously to somebody.

In the story the survivors were troubled by their guilty complex, which was the internal trauma of the survivors, without a break. Byunggil, who witnessed the misery of multiple deaths and the ruin of humanity caused by the war, committed suicide due to his fixation on atoning for his guilt and delusional sufferings. However, the narrator expressed the trauma of the war through an interesting dream.

As I breathed to the peak and discharged sperm like throwing away after I had lain down with her, my partner was not Agnesina but ridiculously a leghorn hen. Also the fucking place which I had known to be her room was actually some straw matting of my house barn... What, I copulated

with a hen!... It's a dishonor, really a dishonor!... the image of the hen let me call the wife of Han Min-ho who had been a prostitute for foreigners and a woman who had prostituted herself with the battalion's sanitary inspector. And the image made my cock erect, after which I was soon very depressed due to the disgust of my animal instinct. (Kang 1972:240-1)

We can find that the narrator could not escape from the trauma of the war. Even in the dream, he could freely imagine beyond the watch of the camp system. It means the shameless violence of the war that a 20-year-old young man's sexual desire was represented as being transformed into copulating with a hen in the dream. It also reflected the survivor's sense of guilt that the image of his sex partner appeared as Han's wife or the northern woman one by one. As the narrator could not clearly recognize why the war broke out and why the young could not help being condemned and dying in the battlefields, he always suffered a sense of guilt that was an inevitable result, as every survivor was thought to have been responsible for the tragic war. For the process of healing the narrator reminisced about the memory of the battlefields, the root of his trauma, and could not commit suicide like Byunggil or endure the inhuman situation in a cynical manner like Han Min-ho.

In *Long day's Journey into Night* the narrator reminisced successively from the Nakdong River combat on Aug. 31, 1950, to the life of the camp. This memorandum style signifies the way of overcoming his trauma. The writer could depict the realistic scene of wounded soldiers in the battlefields in a memorandum-style story which originated primarily from the writer's own personal experiences,<sup>3</sup> for he had gained sufficient temporal perspective from the war.

These wounded soldiers of various and unusual sorts! One had both elbows severed; another with a wholly bloody face spouted a mass of blood from the mouth with every shout. After that he fell down rapidly. Another soldier with a broken neck, dangling freely, went on all fours. Some bit their arms strongly due to the extreme pain. A young soldier

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3. The writer, Kang Yong-jun, participated in the war as a North Korean soldier at Nakdong River in 1950, and he became a P.O.W. after deserting his post at that time. He was held at Chungju, Dongrae, and Geoje prisoner of war camps for three years and then set free as an anti-Communist prisoner of war on June 18, 1953 (Jung 1998:151).



cried out, calling his mom fervently. A farmer-style soldier, with his jaw-bone split from his nose which fell apart from him, touched his jaw often with two hands for felling strange, but he died soon. What a mess, really! (Kang 1972:93)

In the paragraph above, as the writer realistically described the terrible scene of bloodshed on the battlefield, he intended to concretize the cruel images of the war that were a real story, improbable as it seemed, at that time through the memorandum style, including the writer's desire to overcome the trauma of the war.

### **Impossibility of Healing a Community After the War**

It was not only at the frontline battlefields that the North and South Korean regular armies took a stand against each other. In the Korean War, irrespective of which army it was, when a military force moved, residents of the occupation zone were killed and wounded wretchedly according to which force was stationed at the village. Such civilian casualties were the most immediate and the greatest injuries suffered during the war. *The Revolution at Bangat-gol*, written by Oh Yu-Gueon, represents the damaged situations in which a rear village, not a frontline village, was swept over by the war.

It is a noticeable creation in this story that the reason for the carnage originated from the conflict among the village people before the war. The conflict between uptown and downtown was expressed in the first part of the story, which was shown as the reason for the carnage during the war. It was a new approach, which had not been shown in the "novels of postwar" from the 1950s, that the writer attempted to find the reason for the tragic war through exploring the internal history of the Korean Peninsula, although the work did not extend to examining the actual facts of the division and the class conflict and contradiction of social structure covered in the historical development.

There was a latent conflict in which the uptown villagers looked down upon the downtown villagers and had "joined in giving them a drubbing for killing time" for generations at Bangat-gol. So the downtown villagers had gotten increasingly angry at the uptown villagers. After the war broke out, a blood bath began as the uptown villagers became the right-wing and the downtown villagers became the left-wing. Deuk-bo and Man-ho, being partisans, intended to

“clean up the uptown villagers first” if it were possible. And Gi-nam, who just barely escaped death for the carnage of a conversion from the communism federation (*bodo-yeonmaeng*), with heartburning listed Sun-tae’s and Geum-sun’s family for execution. Han-su, a South Korean army officer, killed 200 downtown villagers after expelling the North Korean Army and returning to Bangat-gol, not because they were suspected of helping partisans or the North Korean Army but as an act of revenge for the murder of uptown villagers. Because Min-u’s uncle was the chairman of the village People’s committee for communism, he had a “natural hatred” against the excessive greed of his uptown villager friends. The repetition of massive tit-for-tat retaliation caused by individual resentments continued without exception at Bangat-gol.

The members of the community aimed not only at the chosen ideology of each villager, but also at “survival” in the whirlpool of the carnage. The main character Sun-tae showed diverse and even slightly contradictory actions for “survival” during the war, which reflected the inevitable instinct of naïve farmers for “survival.” Sun-tae, the hero in this story, had put South police and North communists to good use for survival and as soon as the war was over, he used them to rebuild the village. He foresaw that the communists “looked very gentle in every procedure but hid a sword inside” (Oh 1962: 27) and found a means for survival. As the North Korean Army was stationed at the village he played an active part as a Partisan for a while by following Deuk-bo to ensure his and his family’s survival. When the South Korean police came back he was questioned and sent to the mountain as a spy. At this time he informed the police of some ‘moderate’ information of the Partisans to the degree that he did not fall into danger. Sun-tae’s aim during the war could be summarized as “pay attention to, otherwise be damaged! Survival, first of all!” (Oh 1962:72)

The naïve farmers did not believe that the reason for the war and the will of recognition about the situation was not solely for survival. Although they understood the tragedy of the village as being related “to the situation” passively and inevitably, they strongly intended to rebuild the damaged village. This indicates that they believed in the sense of a closed village community, and that the individual’s survival equals the existence of the village. As we can see in the case of Sun-tae, members of a rural community who were able to survive by escaping from the violence of the war tried hard to reconstruct their destroyed village for their future. Nevertheless, the novel seems to suggest that they proceeded impractically with the recovery of the village.

The recovery of the village focused on developing a friendly settlement

between the uptown villagers and the downtown villagers as the mass murder was caused by the conflict between the two groups. Nearly the same number of people had been killed at each village during the war so they thought it was unnecessary to try to determine which side was right or wrong. They all insisted that “we need to forget the miserable past for the benefit of the future” in the long run (Oh 1962:233). First, for the friendly settlement and rebuilding of the town, they mixed blood through marriage between uptown and downtown villagers, which increased the population of the village. Sun-tae (downtown villager) married seven uptown widows and Seokman (uptown villager) married five downtown widows. This cross marriage aimed at preventing the town widows from leaving the village and allowed the war orphans to be brought up in a new community. The war destroyed the organization of human relationship and generated serious hatred which broke down the traditional social values in the town and directly caused the tragic experiences suffered by the town members. However, the newly-made family community was designed to fix the tragedy of the war idealistically in this story. Even if the traditional internal conflict retained in the town exploded with massive cross retaliation during the war, the town could be unified by the cross marriages between the uptown and downtown villagers after all. The writer, working in the 1960s, really longed to heal the trauma, even though the way of the recovery was impractical.

It was not presented in “novels of postwar” in the 1950s that the reason for the massive murder originated from the conflicts between villagers before the war or that the survivors eagerly wanted to rebuild the town destroyed during the war by reconstructing a new family community. It was possible that writers had gained some temporal perspective from the war and continuously groped for some creation from the despair. However, in *The Revolution at Bangat-gol* the process of idealistically healing the aftereffects did not include the critical recognition for the situational condition of the war. Even though it was a positive attempt to examine the cause of the tragic war based on the internal conflict that had lain dormant for generations, it could not illuminate the concrete reason based on a complete historical understanding and ended up concretizing an impractical recovery method. As in this story, the idealistic but unrealistic way of recovering the damage could be called emotionalism, and this form was repeated in “novels of division” during and after the 1960s. This approach was closely related to the “novels of division” from the 1970-80s, which dealt with the important issue of North and South Koreans forgiving and making peace with each other rather than obtaining a clear understanding of the historical facts

for the reason of the war.

### **Discovering the Will to Live: Considering the Ideology of the War**

The point at which an individual has been compelled to choose life or death in the battlefield is a moment of existential scare. Therefore, the characters experienced the disaster of the war directly while trembling with fear and groped for only survival in the war stories. But Park Kyung-ri in his book entitled *Market and Battlefield* showed that certain characters underwent a change in their recognition and view of the world due to the tragic war and represented that they dealt with the war by accepting it positively as a part of their life. This novel concretized the main character as he recognized himself and the reason for his existence little by little, by undergoing the war as an historical event.

In the first half of the story Ji-young, being not all open and romantic, realized the reality of life and strengthened her will to live through the experience of the war. She gained a new position as a teacher at Yeon-an near the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, but suffered from fastidiousness that originated from her young girl sentiment before the war. She disliked even the word 'love' as well as the trivial mistakes of her husband, Gi-seok. Examples are when he called her in Japanese in the past and cheated on the price in a bookstore or stole potatoes from another's field.

The market is the place where shining lights are glowing and loud voices become merry to the music to let a heart beat high joyfully. Every market-in any country or anywhere and anytime- has that music, even though it is not the Persia market which can take us to the fairytale world. The merry rhythm and the sweet melody are smiling at all. Somebody fights each other at times but when the market is closed they drink with each other loudly for peace, beating the tables cheerfully in a pub where the red lights come down. What is gained when they become enemies? They are just casual businesses who make friends with one another by chance.  
(Park 1999:131)

She had a romantic mind inclined toward a young girl's taste and fantasy in fairytale. It was shown in her moral fastidiousness for her to express her dissatisfaction of the real world to her husband with hatred before the war. It was a

preparation to show the tense transition of the character's recognition with the scene of the war in which Ji-young started her new position as a teacher at Yeon-an. Namely, her journey from the front at Yeon-an to the rear at Busan meant that she would find the good will of living in acceptance of the concrete conditions, by escaping from the closed world view of her fastidiousness.

In feeling the actual fear of war until her evacuation to Seoul, she promised that she "would survive even with meanness and commit theft for survival"(Park 1999:201). As she came back home after her refugee life, she changed her character to a strong and sturdy mother and wife. When her disliked husband Gi-seok was imprisoned, she tried to have him released from the prison and devotedly sent private supplies for him. And she piggy-backed her mother and served a funeral for her mother who had been killed by a soldier's gun when she went out to the Han River side to get food. She sold a bunch of cloth at the market for their children as well. Even Ji-young thought herself to be "a stubborn and disgusting, as well as clever and scary, woman for survival."(Park 1962:161) She gained a new will to live by accepting the conditions of the war positively through her personal experiences of the war.

Ji-young strengthened her will to live by accepting the extreme conditions of her life positively through the experiences of the war, while as a communist, Gi-hun found his enthusiasm for ideology to be an untruth and a contradiction of the concrete experiences of the battlefields.

Gi-hun, who was the main character of the concretized battlefields in the story, was criticized by his mentor, Seok-san, and his mate, Jang Deok-sam, and a Partisan woman through each dialogue. This indicates that the ideology of the communists who caused the war took a wrong way at that time. The anarchist Seok-san, who was Gi-hun's mentor and respected Bakunin, insisted that "there were too many people not to be involved in any system, dictatorship of the bourgeois or dictatorship of the proletariat" and that "true liberation of soul" was important, as Gi-hun emphasized class liberation through "fanaticism, expediency and violence"(Park 1999:298). Moreover, Jang Deok-sam criticized the intellectual communists who "had a cruel enthusiasm for revolution" and a Partisan woman insisted that "Communists must gather the power of the revolution based on devotion to the people" while she spoke about the case of Officer Cho who had converted to communism for love (Park 1999:265). As they all insisted above, communists who had stressed the need for the people's liberation were criticized for destroying the dominant principle as well as being absorbed in violence against human rights.

Although Gi-hun criticized those who had pointed out the critique of communism and the blindness of communists, he, as a communist and one who even thought that “Seok-san is wonderful when he said that” and “Jang Deok-sam looks ridiculous like a fool” and “women are hateful,” was ironically revealed to have doubts about his ideology and the aim of the war through the above quotes. Namely the remarks of Seok-san, Jang Deok-sam, and the Partisan woman were not only the voice of the doubts in Gi-hun’s mind but also his understanding of the reason of the war as he suffered the irony of realizing that he could not help experiencing the extreme dehumanization and, in fact, would fail in achieving his aim to liberate the people through the war.

Gi-hun acted externally according to the consciousness of communism but after he met Ga-hwa, who was his lover and became a Partisan in the mountain after meeting him, his internal doubts about communism began to appear in the mountain. He even betrayed his comrades in order to get her out of the mountain. As Ga-hwa was exposed while attempting to flee, Gi-hun shot and killed a chasing man and she was also shot in the last scene, which shows symbolically that Gi-hun had changed his thoughts of communism and his attitude according to this.

Compared with *Square* which presented an inspection of the ideology of the Korean War, *Market and Battlefield* might have been understood as a criticism of communism which did not describe the real North Korean conditions but only the exchange of ideological statements. But the novel has structural powers that concretized the struggle between different class characters, compared with *Square*, and its narration of the interior monologue through Gi-hun, who had acted as a North Korean Army officer in the middle of the war and who had been criticized by each different character concerned. *Market and Battlefield* has been depicted as expounding the transition of the characters’ outlooks on the world during the war. These are the positive sides to the war experience related to the valuable will to live discovered by Ji-young and the falsity of communism realized by Gi-hun, by distancing themselves from the trauma of the war.

### **Significance of Battlefield Novels**

This article has examined three novels which represented battlefield scenes of the Korean War and were published in the 1960s. In that decade, these novels had been relatively neglected in the history of modern Korean novels, although

the acceptance of the literary expressions based on the novelists' war-experiences has come to be recognized as an important research theme.

The Korean War affected Koreans in their lives that were oppressed like nightmares. The writers in the 1950s showed a sense of doubt, defiance, and despair in the 'novels of postwar' which reflected that they could not be relieved of the oppression of their war experiences. Moreover, the writers in the 1970-80s represented the present lives of the nation totally after the war in order to settle the sharp contradiction inherent in the divided nation in "novels of division." The novels published in the 1960s concretized the war experiences with battlefields established in a fictional time-space and attempted to gain some distance from the trauma of the war. Namely, sufficient distance was gained in order to achieve the perspective in which the historical war could be viewed as a fictional backdrop, as well as to begin to understand what the war was and why it occurred. This could only be achieved by a certain estrangement from the war, so that the full-scale battlefield scenes were fictionalized in the long novel form in the 1960s.

In *Long day's Journey into Night* by Kang Yong-Jun, as the narrator could not clearly recognize why the war had broken out and why the young could not help being condemned to death by dying on the battlefields, he always suffered from his sense of guilt that was the inevitable result in which every survivor was thought to have been responsible for the tragic war. As the writer realistically described the terrible scenes of bloodshed on the battlefield, he intended to concretize the cruel images of the war that were not probable, but a real story at that time, through the memorandum style, including the writer's desire to overcome the trauma of the war.

It was not presented in "novels of postwar" in the 1950s that the reason for the massive murder originated from the conflicts between villagers before the war or that the survivors eagerly aimed to rebuild the towns destroyed during the war by reconstructing a new family community. It was possible that writers had gained some temporal perspective from the war and continuously groped for some creation from the despair. However, in *The Revolution at Bangat-gol*, the process of idealistically healing the aftereffects did not include the critical recognition for the situational condition of the war. Even though it was a positive attempt to examine the cause of the tragic war, based on the internal conflict that had lain sleeping for generations, it could not reveal the concrete reason based on a complete historical understanding and ended up concretizing an impractical way of recovery. As in this story, the idealistic but unrealistic way of recovering

the damage could be called emotionalism, a form that was repeatedly shown in “novels of division” during and after the 1960s. This approach was closely related to the “novels of division” from the 1970-80s that dealt with the important issue of North and South Koreans forgiving and making peace with each other rather than obtaining a clear understanding of the historical facts for the reason of the war.

In *Market and Battlefield* Park Kyung-ri showed that certain characters undergoing the tragic war changed their recognition and worldview which was represented by the manner in which they dealt with the war, by accepting it positively as a part of their life. This novel concretized the main character as he recognized himself- and the reason for his existence- little by little, by undergoing the war as an historical event. The novel has structural powers that concretized the struggle between different class characters, compared with *Square* and its narration of the interior monologue, through Gi-hun who had acted as a North Korean Army officer in the middle of the war and who had been criticized by each different character concerned. *Market and Battlefield* has been depicted as showing the transition of the characters’ outlooks on the world during the war.

Most Koreans underwent an advance during the April Revolution of 1960 from which they gained the experience necessary to give them a fresh perspective on the recent historical situations. As they escaped from the feeling of being victimized that was caused by the war, novels seriously started to instigate the important process of developing a reasonable understanding of the war in the 1960s. The novels that concretized the battlefields of the war in the 1960s should be considered valuable as important linking works between “novels of postwar” and “novels of division,” and as extending beyond the division era in the history of modern Korean novels. Also, by depicting battlefield experiences, these novels evoke readers’ sympathies with the protagonist’s “need to survive” and can be understood as allegories of Korean society in the context of the slogan and movement in the 1960s to “Industrialize Korea.”

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