

Articles

Volume 19 Number 2

December 2016

The Review of Korean Studies

www.kci.go.kr

Article

Places of Initiation in Yun Heunggil's *House of Twilight*

Catalina STANCIU

Introduction

The primary aim of this article is to analyze the significance of certain places to the child narrator's initiation in Yun Heunggil's (b. 1942)¹ *House of Twilight* (*Hwanghonui Jip*) (1970).² Secondary aims include challenging the concept of formative narrative (*seongjang seosa*) and distinguishing between one's formation process and one's stage of initiation. Additionally, I discuss the child narrator's understanding of the surrounding world and others as being intermediated by his newly met friend, Gyeongju.

War and circumstances surrounding national division alter the topography of Jeongeup, a city in North Jeolla Province, which bears stories of loss and death. Due to drastic changes occurring to the lives of the city's inhabitants, the traditional roles of many places in this city were replaced by new ones. To the inexperienced child narrator, the meanings of such places become ambivalent or provoke the kind of emotions and mental dispositions that propel his initiation into theretofore unknown aspects of life and death.

The House of Twilight is a first-person narrative that tells the story of the child narrator.³ The story unfolds in Jeongeup during the Korean War (1950-1953) soon after the child narrator moves together with his family to a new place. Here, the narrator meets Gyeongju, a girl three years older. After

losing the house where the narrator and his family now reside, Gyeongju's family moved to a shanty which doubled as a tavern. By this time, Gyeongju had already become a traumatized child. Her brother, having converted to communism, ran away; one of her sisters committed suicide; and her second sister had become a prostitute before also running off. To make things worse, her father passed away and her mother had become mentally unstable. These harsh experiences and their cumulative effects shapes Geyongju's obsession with death. Her obsessive behavior is reflected through her aggressive displays of antagonism and sadistic games, which include: pulling the feathers out of a live sparrow, burning mice, and scorching ants alive. Gyeongju's dreadful family stories and her defective relationship with her deranged mother define the child narrator's first interaction with the social impact of the War.

Describing the War from the perspective of a child, and the initiation into the reality of post-War Korea circumstances, denotes one of the most representative characteristics of writers from the 1970s.⁴ These writers are generally referred to as those born in the 1940s, or the "generation of the child witnesses."⁵ Their literary works are mainly identified with "division literature" (*bundan munhak*),⁶ and the conflation between the division narrative and the formative narrative⁷ represents an important particularity of Korean literature in the 1970s.⁸

One of the most prominent writers of the "generation of the child

1. Yun Heunggil was born in Jeolla Province, and made his literary debut in 1968, in *Hangukilbo Sinchunmunye*, with the novel *Hweosaek Myeonryugwanui Gyejeol* (*The Season of the Gray Crown*). He is well-known for his short and long-length stories, such as *Hwanghonui Jip* (*The House of Twilight*), 1970; *Jangma* (*The Rainy Spell*), 1973; *Yang* (*The Scapegoat*), 1974; *Ahop Kyeolleui Guduro Nameun Sanae* (*The Man Who Was Left with Nine Pairs of Shoes*), 1977; *Mujigae Eorije Ddneunga* (*When Does the Rainbow Appear*), 1978; *Gieok Sokui Deulggot* (*Wildflower in My Memory*), 1979. He is also known for his novels—*Muksuui Bada* (*The Sea of Revelation*), 1978; *Emi* (*Mother*), 1982; *Wanjang* (*Armband*), 1982-1983; *Soradan Ganeun Gil* (*The Road to Soradan*), 2003. He has been awarded with various literary prizes, which include: *Hangukmunhakjakkasang* (The 4th Korean Literature Writer Award) for *Ahop Kyeolleui Gud-ro Nameun Sanae* (*The Man Who Was Left with Nine Pairs of Shoes*), in 1977; *Hyeondaemunhaksang* (The 28th Contemporary Literature Award) for *Emi* (*Mother*) and *Wanjang* (*Armband*), in 1983; *Hangukchangjumunhaksang* (The 15th Korean Creative Literature Award) for *Kkumkuneun Jaui Naseon* (*A Dreamer's Forest*), in 1983; and, *Daesanmunhaksang* (The 12th Daesan Literary Award) for *Soradan Ganueun Gil* (*The Road to Soradan*), in 2004.

2. *The House of Twilight* is Yun Heunggil's first division novel. It was published in March 1970, in *Hyeondaemunhak*. At that time, literary critics welcomed Yun's novel as a new approach for conveying the tragedy of war. Oh Saenggeun (1979, 18) appreciates that "through [Yun Heunggil's] emphasizing the inner emotions of the characters implied in the event rather than the event itself, the description of a tragic event [such as war] is transmitted in a more effective way."

3. Along the story his name is not disclosed; the only reference to him is through the first person singular, I.

4. Another important feature of the novels written by these writers is the adult's retrospection. Assured by a "sense of [temporal and spatial] distance" (Kang 2008, 43), these writers use retrospection as a literary technique to unveil episodes from their past, and recollect memories of war as children.

5. Some of the writers who were born in the 1940s and experienced the War during their childhood are: Jeon Sangguk (b. 1940), Jo Jeongrae (b. 1943), Yun Heunggil (b. 1942), Kim Wonil (b. 1942), Lee Dongha (b. 1942), Oh Jeonghui (b. 1947), and Hyeon Giyeong (b. 1941).

6. When discussing the novels dealing with the Korean War, the Korean literary history generally distinguishes between two main categories: "postwar novel" (*jeonhu soseol*) (frequently referred to as the novels of the 1950s), and "division novel"/"novel of division" (*bundan soseol*).

7. My approach to the formative narrative (*seongjang seosa*) encompasses both the formation novel (*seongjang soseol*) and the initiation story. Also, this narrative may include any of its possible subgenres, such as the novel of education, the novel of development, the novel of culture and so on. Nevertheless, for this article I mainly refer to the initiation story understood as a part of formative narrative.

8. The novels of formation (*seongjang soseol*) of the 1970s are often regarded as a special subcategory. Unlike what many literary critics appreciate as the first modern narratives of formation—such as Lee Gwangsu's *The Heartless* (*Mujeong*), Kim Yujeong's *Camellias* (*Dongbaekggot*), Hwang Sunwon's *Stars* (*Byeol*), *Rain Shower* (*Sonagi*), etc.—the formative narratives of the 1970s share the particularity of their connection with the narrative of division (*bundan soseol*) (Yu 2006, 111).

witnesses" is Yun Heunggil. Broaching a new perspective of dealing with the memories of war circumstances, and the realities of division, Yun has shown interest in the effects of both historical and social aspects on people's lives. Though Yun is similar to his contemporaries in terms of the basic tenets of the division novel, what sets him apart is his utilization of places (as venues of psychological and formative impact) and (home) town topographies, both notable characteristics in most of his writings. Unlike other novels of the 1970s, in dealing with the memories of the War and division, which focus more on the experiences of time, Yun's novels emphasize the places where such experiences occur, connecting historical circumstances and the spatial setting against which they developed. Additionally, in Yun's division novels,⁹ these places are closely related with the child narrator's process of initiation "as a passage of the young from ignorance about the external world to some vital knowledge,"¹⁰ such as the reality of war and death.

Furthermore, apart from the incipient awareness he is awakened to, the child narrator's identity formation is realized in a state of national division, a time when geographical borders, ideology, and national identity are being redefined. The connection between a young protagonist's process of formation and the socio-historical circumstances—those of division—are often interpreted as a key aspect in defining the formative narrative. When describing the *Bildungsroman* (novel of formation), Franco Moretti¹¹ suggests that it is an elusion of whatever may endanger the Ego's equilibrium, making its compromises impossible, emphasizing, thus, the importance of the historical events and their impact on the young narrators' evolution.

Literary research on Yun Heunggil's division novels generally refer to them as *seongjang soseol* (novel of formation),¹² stating that child narrators

discover themselves and the surrounding world through tragic aspects of life such as "death," "(mental) disturbance," "famine," or the "terror of war" (Lee 2011, 254). Apart from the terrible realities of life under circumstances of war, when interpreting *The House of Twilight*, previous research¹³ also refers to the metaphors of the tragedy of war,¹⁴ or the effects of discovering the evil of the child narrator's psyche (Lee 2011).

In this paper, I borrow Marcus' concept of "initiation," and reinterpret his theory on "initiation story," thus rereading Yun's *House of Twilight* as a story of initiation rather than one of formation. Another key element within the methodological framework of this paper is related to the importance of affective topography to the child narrator's psychology and initiation.

In *The House of Twilight* the child narrator is exposed for the first time to the reality of a world in which death occurs—both voluntarily and involuntarily—through observing the trauma of others, and experiencing its effects as his own. His personal confrontation with the aftereffects of other people's distressing experiences makes him sympathize with them. Moreover, unlike many definitions dealing with the narratives of formation which often emphasize the temporal aspect of a protagonist's initiation by invoking the importance of one's passage from childhood into maturity,¹⁵ in interpreting Yun Heunggil's *House of Twilight* as an initiation story, I argue that not only can one determine the values and characteristics of certain places, but also places *per se*, along with their connotations, contribute to the child narrator's initiation. In this case, two places transformed by the reality of war become relevant to the child narrator's process of initiation: the iron foundry and the tavern (Gyeongju's house).

9. The following novels of Yun Heunggil can be referred to as "division novels": *Hwanghonui Jip* (*The House of Twilight*), 1970; *Jangma* (*The Rainy Spell*), 1973; *Yang* (*The Scapegoat*), 1974; *Ddaelgam* (*Fuel*), 1978; *Mujigae Eonje Ddneunga* (*When Does the Rainbow Appear*), 1978; *Gieoksokui Deulggot* (*Wildflower in My Memory*), 1979, as well as his latest novel series, *Soradan Ganeun Gil* (*The Road to Soradan*), 2003.

10. This definition of the "initiation story" corresponds to that used by Mordecai Marcus (1960). This choice of terminology is built on Marcus' theory of "initiation story," especially his definition of the tentative type of initiation. I discuss this in more detail at later points in the article.

11. Even though Franco Moretti (2000, 12) refers especially to the European *Bildungsroman* (novel of formation), I will extend the understanding of this statement to the formative narrative in general.

12. For some of the research on Yun Heunggil's novels of formation, please see Nam 1992; Kim 1999;

Choe 1999; Jang 2005; Park 2006; Park 2008.

13. Previous research focusing only on *The House of Twilight* is extremely scarce. One of the few studies dedicated mainly to this story—though in comparison to Hwang Seokyeong's (b.1943) *Japcho* (*Weeds*, 1973)—is written by Son Yungyeong in 2012. Most of the interpretations on *The House of Twilight* can be found in general studies on Yun's division novels or formation novels.

14. Lee (2011) interprets deteriorated venues as metaphors for the War reality, while Yang (2009) analyses home as a place of conflict.

15. This process usually occurs on a temporal axis by pointing to a young narrator's long journey away from home.

Places of Ambivalence

If I borrow the anthropologist Setha M. Low and Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga's expression, the topography of Jeongeup city becomes, in a metaphorical sense, an "inscribed space" (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2007). According to the authors' interpretation, "inscribed spaces" are those "spaces" which have the quality of transforming into "places" as soon as people "form a meaningful relationship with the locales they occupy...attach meaning to space" (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2007, 185). Any personal or collective "experience is embedded in place," while any space where such a meaningful interconnection occurs "holds memories that implicate people and events" (*Ibid.*). Conferring a similar interpretation of "space" and "place," Yi-Fu Tuan (2001, 6) states that "what begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value."¹⁶

In this case, the narrator and his friend, Gyeongju, develop a relationship with the iron foundry and the tavern. These places suggest not only that Gyeongju's "experience is embedded in place," but also that these places *per se* affect Gyeongju and narrator's psychological compulsion and mental disposition, leading to shocking experiences.

The iron foundry and the space immediately surrounding it (a vacant lot next to the brick building) are transformed into a playground for the two children. While the playground can be considered an important place for child's psychological formation, in this story, the unusual qualities of the playground (the iron foundry) are endowed with ambivalent connotations. An abandoned place reminiscent of death and unhealed sufferings is fully charged with traumatic memories for Gyeongju; it is the place where her sister committed suicide.¹⁷ After her tragic death, it becomes a place where the aftereffects of seeing her older sister dead ceaselessly emerge, materializing into an obsession. At the same time, the iron foundry becomes a place where the narrator is initiated into Gyeongju's sadistic games, and learns about her sister's

suicidal act. For the first time, he is exposed to the terrifying and perplexing reality of death.

For Gyeongju, the iron foundry, and her own presence there, re-creates the scene of her sister's suicide, thereby debilitating her in the face of adversity. Still a young child, the child narrator is unable to "attach meaning" (other than that of a playground) to this place he frequently visits. Rather, he attaches a variety of emotions.

Another place of ambivalence which "holds memories that implicate people and events" is the tavern, Gyeongju's house. For the narrator, the view of this place bathed in sunset submerges him in feelings of "excitement," "curiosity," and "weird inescapable fantasy." Moreover, elements of the story, such as seeing the house from afar, observing Gyeongju's defective relationship with her mother, and the shock provoking episodes during his visits there, determines the narrator's process of "initiation." However, for Gyeongju this shanty/tavern does nothing but to revive the connection with her traumatic past. It is the place where, left alone with her mentally unstable mother, she develops hostile expressions of hatred and a desire for revenge.

Hence, the purpose of this paper is not to separately realize each of the two children's (the child narrator and Gyeongju) individual experience in relation to the two particular places. The child narrator's "initiation" unfolds upon the background of the iron foundry and the tavern that he discovers only in the light of Gyeongju's influential presence. Gyeongju is the one who initiates their playing at the iron foundry, and the narrator's visits to the tavern are profoundly marked by Gyeongju and her mother's behavior. The child narrator is an observer, and his perception of these two places is affected by Gyeongju's tragic family story and her own experiences. Thus, Gyeongju's traumatic experience makes her friend feel "distraught."¹⁸

As Mordecai Marcus (1960) explains, within the process of "tentative initiation," the subject faces the "shocking effect of a (certain) experience." However, in this story, before dealing with the "shocking effect" of what

16. While Low and Zúñiga's anthropological perspective of "locating culture" addresses how "place" is more meaningful than "space," I will use "place" to better evoke both the geographical aspect and the symbolical connotations of an existing place.

17. It has been argued that the depiction of a deteriorated house or place constitutes Yun Heunggil's narrative strategy for increasing the tragic aspect of the story and suggesting the negative effects of the War (Lee 2009, 209).

18. Previous research interprets Gyeongju's role as the child narrator's lesson of the evil (*ak*). For instance, Lee Hwajin (2011, 263-64) suggests that Gyeongju's "savagery" awakens and assimilates the narrator to "the world of the evil." Her presence is also interpreted as the symbol of the evil by Jo Guho (2007, 350), while Yang Mungyu (1997, 140) considers that Gyeongju introduces the narrator to a "bleak season" (Gyeongju's personal experiences) through which he can learn about the human nature—the unity between the good and the evil.

the child narrator personally experiences, he confronts the aftereffects of what he is witnessing. First, he involuntarily observes his friend's behavior and bears witness, in part, to her morbid story. Only through observing the impactful relationship between Gyeongju and the two places, and learning about the tragic history embedded in them, can the narrator discover these two places, establish his own relation to them, sympathize with Gyeongju, and slowly approach the "threshold" of maturity. The effect that the mere act of witnessing has on him is strengthened by the "shocking effect" of his own experiences. In a landscape that is defined by tragic events, as well as these events being obsessively "acted out"¹⁹ (by Gyeongju), the child narrator ends up experiencing things on his own.

The Iron Foundry—An Unusual Playground

One of the two places of ambivalent connotations is the brick building covered with dead ivy vines, formerly the iron foundry. In the novel it functions as a playground where the narrator and Gyeongju spend their afternoons.

When we climbed up on top of it and looked up, far above we could see the rusted pulleys that had been used for lifting things and the sturdy beams from which dangled three or four heavy chains. And far above that, where the spider webs hung tangled at a dizzying height, was the roof, shaped like an enormous monk's hood. From the glass skylight in the center of the roof a square shaft of light poured down and stood still, like a pillar high in the darkness, illuminating each of the countless specks of dust that floated in the air. ("The House of Twilight" 206-07)²⁰

The abandoned building looking "just as though a worn-out net had been thrown over it" is a place with a grievous history. The ones who used to run the iron foundry were twin brothers, one of whom died in battle. The other would later flee after becoming crippled in a fire at the foundry, where

he was working as a blacksmith. Doubling the tragedy attributed to this place, Gyeongju's sister hanged herself inside the building now believed to be haunted by demons.

The ambivalence of the foundry originates from such stories about tragic events occurring inside the brick building, which now has the role of a playground. The traces of death or physical mutilation, and the inherent suffering provoked by such tragedies engraves themselves into the brick walls of this building, thereby engendering the playground with unusual qualities. Children's activities are naturally supposed to unfold within a playground to mirror their serene world. Nevertheless, circumstances of historical or socio-political disquiet, such as war and territorial division, and the personal distress produced by them, can radically alter the features of a playground and impose their inscribed memories and reality upon it. Additionally, a reflective image of the children's (family) trauma and recollection of a sorrowful past are provided through their playing activity.

While playing, children greatly benefit from their imagination. However, in a situation of extreme adversity and its aftereffects, the imagination is limited because it can "reformulate only those concepts that were known previously" (Eisen 1988, 75). In this case, Gyeongju's imagination is dictated mostly by death and the multiple sorrows experienced by her family.

Gyeongju and the narrator become playmates. Choosing the abandoned iron foundry as a playground, Gyeongju shows signs of traumatic obsession as she repeatedly tells the morbid story of the death of her elder sister: "Look! Do you see that big beam there?... 'My big sister hanged herself there and died'" ("The House of Twilight" 207).

The first time she shares this morbid story Gyeongju does so with composure other children of her age envy; she feels proud of herself. In one scene, she mentions an unsettling event that once took place without interrupting herself from the preoccupation of handling a jar of honey, but not without checking for her audience's (the narrator) terrified reaction.

As the story develops, the act of mentioning her sister's terrible death whenever in the company of her friend turns into an obsessive pattern that Gyeongju cannot break.²¹ Not merely a desire to display coolness amid distress,

19. Dominick LaCapra (2002, 21) holds that in the process of "acting out, tenses implode, and it is as if one were back there in the past reliving the traumatic scene."

20. I use Martin Holman's translation (1989), *The House of Twilight: First English Collection by Korea's Most Original and Stylish Young Writer*, for every quotation from *The House of Twilight*.

21. This "fixation on the trauma" was identified as one of the features of the first description of PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) by Kardiner (1941), and still has continued to be perceived as one of

her behavior reveals her traumatic obsession with her sister's death. The image of her sister's "swinging back and forth with her tongue hanging out" is as recurrent in her mind as in her repeated story-telling, which is visually reinforced by her explicit gestures of beating the chain hanging over her head. Seeing the chain that caused her sister's death easily stimulates the recurrence of her overwhelming feelings associated with that earlier traumatic event.²²

Wielding the stick, she beat the chain hanging over her head with all her might. This was one of her bad habits. I often heard her tell me this gruesome story of a chain clanking against other chains as it swung slowly back and forth overhead like a clock's pendulum. ("The House of Twilight" 207)

Apart from "acting out" the morbid scene of her sister's death, Gyeongju also initiates games that take place on the vacant lot next to the brick building where the iron foundry is located. The nature of these games is sadistic as it mainly deals with torturing small animals: pouring gasoline on the backs of captured mice and setting them on fire, burning ants with a big magnifying glass, and pulling the feathers out of a live sparrow. "Playing" with the sparrow is reminiscent of a past episode the narrator witnessed. Her reaction of getting angry and stamping on the sparrow's feet "because it would not try to run away" awakens the memory of her gesture when she once saw a dead chick on the road. What makes her reproduce the same reaction is her destructive drive to annihilate the weak.²³ The chick, which was run over by an army truck carrying soldiers back from fighting communist partisans in Naejang Mountain, did not provoke any sympathy in her; instead it was only worth her disgust, manifested through a gesture of spitting on it. Also, the weakness of the sparrow, which did not even try to escape from being tortured,

prompts Gyeongju's disgust. Being weak or lacking courage leaves no space for sympathy in Gyeongju's heart, and instead, it only provokes a destructive drive which functions as a form of self-protection from the traumas she experienced.

The Tavern—The "House of Twilight"

Another place of ambivalence present in Yun Heunggil's depiction of Jeongeup city is the tavern where Gyeongju and her mother live. This place represents the consequences of war on Gyeongju's home and family. It is the place where Gyeongju's family is gradually shattered, leaving behind a traumatized child and a mentally disabled mother.

The appearance of the narrator, who moved with his family to Jeongeup, and the first encounter between him and Gyeongju, produce mutually antagonistic sentiments: the narrator perceives Gyeongju as an enemy and she conceives him as an intruder. Regarding him as an unknown newcomer, and moreover, a person who started living in the house which used to be possessed by her family, Gyeongju could not help but develop feelings of hatred. Originally having been the property of Gyeongju's family, one day after the liberation from Japanese colonial rule,²⁴ a stranger appeared and took possession of their house. After having been sold many times, the house was finally bought by the narrator's family. Gyeongju's family was forced to build a shanty from where the mother began selling liquor.

Deprived of the house her family used to possess, Gyeongju lacks the sense of home and family unity that she and her family enjoyed when Korea benefited from better circumstances. Also, reproducing her mother's hatred towards anyone who legally buys their former house, with glowing eyes of an "agile wildcat," Gyeongju, "the devil with the long fingernails" never misses a

the intrusive responses to trauma (Horowitz 1976).

22. According to Bessel A. van der Kolk (1987, 8), one's original experience is reinforced by dissociated reliving of elements of the traumatic event. Here, Gyeongju's dissociated reliving of elements of her sister's tragic death is the obsessive beating of the chain.

23. This behavior can be identified with what psychologists refer to as a proclivity to aggression, which also represents a response to trauma (Van der Kolk 1987, 2-3). Moreover, having lived through hostile circumstances, as well as having experienced a violent relationship with her mother, makes Gyeongju express her own offensive attitude towards those physically weaker than her (such as animals, or even the child narrator). Such an attitude is referred to as an outburst of aggression (American Psychiatric Association 2013, 272).

24. Even though often regarded as either "division novels" or "industrialization novels," Yun Heunggil's writings contain references to a more generous spectrum of time. While the structure of *The Road to Soradan* allows for temporal references relevant to both the adult life of the narrators (the age of industrialization) and the life of the child narrators (the War and first years of post-War period), a story like *The House of Twilight* presents indications of the colonial period and the liberation. Here, the trauma of Gyeongju's family has its roots during the liberation from the Japanese colonial power, when due to being known as a Japanese house, someone took possession of it by force. Nevertheless, the current war and circumstances of national division have amplified their trauma, and finally led to the disintegration of the family.

chance to scratch the narrator and rain words of abuse on him.

Not only does Gyeongju reproduce her mother's contempt towards the people who live in their former home, but her eldest sisters revolts against their mother. With the suffering brought about by her son leaving the family to join communist partisans and never returning home, the mother drinks and cries every day. Unable to cope with the perpetual scene of seeing her mother incapable of resilience,²⁵ Gyeongju's eldest sister commits suicide.

All my mother did every day was drink and cry, so my sister tried to kill her. But since she couldn't kill Mother, she decided to go ahead and die first. Sometimes I want to kill Mother too. Every now and then. And sometimes I will kill her." ("The House of Twilight" 210)

The passage quoted above holds the meaning of pain, passed down from one family member to another. The brother's decision to leave home following his communist conversion triggered the family's suffering as well as its disintegration; and the eldest sister's suicide occurs after she is sexually assaulted during an attempt to stop her brother from joining the communist party. Following this episode, Gyeongju's second sister, Gyeongok, also incapable of resilience, flees from home after involving herself in prostitution. "Freeing" herself from this unbearable sorrow, her solution adds to the disintegration of the family.

Not directly implied in this involuntary act of spreading the venomous effects of trauma to all the family members, the absence of the father nevertheless contributes to the family's dissolution. Without any explanation of the reason for the father's absence, the text lets the readers imagine circumstances produced by the War are to blame.²⁶

Gyeongju finds her mother guilty for her sister's death; this partly dictates the relationship between Gyeongju and her mother. Traumatized and incapable of sympathizing with her severely disturbed mother, the girl can only fantasize at the prospect of revenging her sister's death. In the sunset glow of one evening, Gyeongju tries to break her mother's arm by closing the window

while her mother's arm is caught dangling in the gap between the wall and the window. The voices of both Gyeongju and her mother's melt into a screaming sound of pain and menace.

Another scene that emphasizes the defective relationship between Gyeongju and her mother unfolds on one rainy day. The mother appears as if on a stage where the village people gather to see her. Apparently dressed in her best outfit, she laughs and dances while admiring herself in a broken mirror. The image reflected by the broken mirror is that of a traumatized woman who, through her act of madness, wants to recreate the atmosphere of the family picture she still possesses. The imprinted piece of paper holds the proof of the better life she once enjoyed: the company of all family members (her four children and her husband), as well as her youth and beauty. While dancing, she scatters bundles of bond certificates that used to pass for money during the Japanese colonial period.

The dancing mother is harassed by a village boy, Ingi, which makes Gyeongju attack him in order to protect her. Even though her daughter is left lying collapsed on the ground, it takes some time for her to stop laughing and intervene to help her daughter.²⁷ As best depicted in this scene, the aftereffects of the traumatizing family experiences reflect the defective relationship between mother and daughter.²⁸ Gyeongju's frequently fluctuating and unpredictable affective states, such as hatred (she wants to kill her mother) and love/care (she protects her mother), are determined by the quality of the relationship with her mother. As the mother is mentally disturbed, this causes a "chronic experience with enduring and intense negative emotions that can be excessively challenging" for Gyeongju (Lerner et al. 2003, 221); her capacity to regulate these emotions is questionable.

The tavern is a place that represents Gyeongju's family traumas.²⁹ Affected

27. The behavior of Gyeongju's mother could be also explained as an expression of PTSD. However, while her daughter's responses to trauma are mainly intrusive (explosive aggressive outbursts or flashbacks), the mother's way of coping is numbing as her ability to react affectively is blocked.

28. According to the theories on developmental psychology, "the quality and intensity of children's emotional experiences are affected by the quality of their relationships with their parents" (Lerner et al. 2003, 221).

29. In discussing the tavern (Gyeongju's house) as one important element of the "maternal space," Lee Hwajin (2009, 209) suggests that in this story the house is not a place of reconciliation, but a place which increases the conflict and creates a gap between Gyeongju's family members. However, the tavern cannot be endowed with the possibility of such a meaning ("maternal space") since it was not

25. Here, the term resilience is used with the following meaning: "the ability...to function well in the face of adversity" (Lerner et al. 2003, 231).

26. The father's presence is registered only by Gyeongju's family picture portraying the life they used to have before the family's disintegration.

by the family's disintegration, the defective relationship between the daughter and her mother is observed by the narrator. For him, the long-term effects of such an experience anticipate his formation.

The Child Narrator's Process of "Initiation"

Even though Yun Heunggil's *House of Twilight* is generally referred to as a *seongjang soseol* (novel of formation), I propose Mordecai Marcus' concept of the "initiation story." Borrowed from anthropology, he discusses the application of "initiation" to literary studies. Apart from reviewing the most common definitions of an "initiation story," he adds his own definitions according to the types of initiations he distinguishes. Among the three of them,³⁰ "tentative" initiation is the most suitable for the interpretation of *The House of Twilight*. In my reinterpretation of Marcus' theory of the initiation story, I understand the first two types of initiation story—"tentative" and "uncompleted"—as two incipient stages within which the gradually developing process of one's initiation, along which the anticipation of awakening to (external) reality and reaching maturity, can be sensed. The third type of initiation—"decisive"—represents a resulting state of awareness based on the previous stages.

While Gyeongju's mental and behavioral disposition is regarded as traumatic, the narrator's presence as a sympathizing observer of Gyeongju's life story and psychological compulsion is related to his process of "initiation."

As Mordecai Marcus (1960, 223) puts it, the "tentative initiations lead only to the threshold of maturity and understanding but do not definitely cross it." What matters at this stage, the author explains, is "the shocking effect of experience." For the child narrator in *The House of Twilight*, the shocking effects produced by his experiences are important to his learning process. The young boy does not fully awaken to the meaning of death or to the consequences of war on one's home and family. A "shock" is produced through

their house from the beginning. It became a mere living place and a means of gaining few money—used as a tavern—but never a home. Gyeongju's family had already lost their home that they used to enjoy together as a complete family they were once.

30. He classifies "initiation stories" into three types: "tentative initiation," "uncompleted initiation," and "decisive initiation."

certain experiences he has during his encounters with Gyeongju. This "shock" represents an incipient moment which anticipates his awareness.

Within a gradual process of maturation, Yun Heunggil depicts the stage of "initiation," showing how the narrator makes a transition from innocence to "some vital knowledge," such as the meaning of death. Moreover, due to his young age, the narrator cannot yet comprehend the circumstances in which Gyeongju's family is being shattered, or the true reasons behind the abnormal nature of her relationship with her mother. In other words, even though not fully aware, he is gradually approaching awareness. Therefore, it would be more appropriate to identify *The House of Twilight* as an "initiation story" rather than a "formation story."

The story provides examples of the child narrator's lack of full comprehension regarding the external circumstances and whatever he experiences through observing Gyeongju. For instance, seeing the battalion trucks on their way back from fighting the communist partisans in Naejang Mountain, the boy waves to them, and is confused by their lack of reaction. One of the soldiers "looked, then scowled, and suddenly his mouth began to twitch." Later on he "*realized* that this *queer twisted* expression was his struggle to respond" (italics added) to his greeting. Seeing the "truck with the *bitter smile*" (italics added) passing by, he is astounded to see that Gyeongju has no reaction. The narrator is unable to comprehending either the soldiers' or the girl's apathy. This experience will have a long-term effect on the narrator. But, at the time, he is merely capable of recognizing the perplexity of situation, though he attempts to identify the reason behind Gyeongju's behavior.

The reason Gyeong-ju did not immediately wave to the soldiers was partly because of the honey jar. But then, even when her hands were not occupied, I had never once seen her wave at the GMC (that's what we called the trucks) when they went by. ("The House of Twilight" 206; italics added)

This passage contains evidence of the narrator's gradual evolution of comprehension from an immediate type of reasoning (being busy with holding the jar) to entertaining a deeper understanding (he is curious to know why the girl would never wave to the soldiers). This process leads him to "the threshold of understanding."

Also, constantly listening to Gyeongju's story of her sister's death, the

boy is unable to understand why she keeps re-telling it to him. Listening to such a story represents a “monumental task” which causes him nightmares. It eventually leads the narrator to pose the following question (to himself): “Why did the girl rattle on about her dead sister all the time?” (“The House of Twilight” 208).

While being initiated into Gyeongju’s sadistic games, he feels that both her play and his joining her are wrong: “I sensed vaguely that there was something mistaken in my sense of complicity that had made me stick so close to Gyeong-ju all afternoon” (“The House of Twilight” 222; italics added).

Then, seeing Gyeongju and her mother crying after the fight that took place at the tavern, he is surprised by the sound of their crying, which struck him as a song of joy: “It struck me as a song of joy that they enjoyed on a regular basis, matching a particular melody and rhythm” (“The House of Twilight” 223; italics added).

Even though he cannot fully comprehend his experiences, the narrator is endowed by the author with sensibility and intuition. Furthermore, “the shocking effect” of his experiences leads, subtly but surely, to the “threshold” of awakening to essential aspects of the external world, which represents the initial stage of his process of formation. Apart from the “shocking effect of experience,” another element that influences the narrator’s “initiation” is a feeling of being “distraught.” According to Mordecai Marcus (1960, 223), “stories of tentative initiation typically show shocking experiences which leave their protagonists distraught.” Likewise, in this story, it is the sense of anxiety and confusion that lead to narrator’s future awareness.

There are two places endowed with ambivalent connotations that determine the narrator’s progress from innocence and ignorance about the external world to a “threshold” of understanding. The iron foundry is one of them. As explained, this place lost its previous function and now serves the role of a playground. Here, the young boy has to constantly listen to the same morbid story of the suicide, which is recreated in detail by Gyeongju acting out the scene. Also, he is initiated into a sadistic playing activity. Both the story and the games contain death as their most predominant themes. Oblivious of the meaning of death, and especially its voluntary aspect (the suicide), the innocent narrator is bewildered. The torturing small animals as a playing activity confounds this bewilderment.

The “repulsive story” of Gyeongju’s sister makes the boy wonder why

she is repeatedly telling it to him, while the visually descriptive details that accompany the story intensify its effects and extend it into nightmares about decapitation. Moreover, the reason why a person may choose to die, and the extent of pain that can be experienced while committing suicide, are beyond his imagination. It is the first time the innocent boy experiences—even though not personally—the reality of death: “At the same time it was impossible for me to imagine how a person could take his own life” (“The House of Twilight” 208).

Initiated into Gyeongju’s way of playing, the narrator’s reaction follows three steps.³¹ In the beginning, when his reluctance to take part in scorching ants alive gives way, he enjoys it.

At first I had no desire to join in this new entertainment; however, I gradually began to feel a sense of pleasure watching the ants....Before I knew it, I had become her accomplice. I did not hesitate to offer to help.... As we toyed with the ants as they squirmed out of the anthill, I savored the pompous sensation as if I had become a god. (“The House of Twilight” 220; italics added)

As illustrated, his initial lack of desire for playing the game that Gyeongju initiated soon transforms into cheerful glee. Nevertheless, a sudden feeling

31. Using Walter Benjamin’s (1892-1940) theory on children’s playing activity and especially on their interest for collecting objects, hiding and discovering them again as in a need to renew whatever is old, Son Yugyeong interprets Gyeongju and narrator’s playing activity as a discontinuation in time. In the moment of finding the hidden objects, the children experience an enthusiasm that may be viewed as an opportunity to put a halt to the cruelty developing in the children through sadistic game playing, so as not to develop into apathetic adults (Son 2012, 340-41). However, I do not emphasize the playing activity itself or the role it can have on one’s process of formation, but the child narrator’s attitude towards his new experience as a participant in Gyeongju’s games. Observing the gradual change within his reactions to the playing activity he is introduced to shed light on his state of mind. It starts from apathy, continues with a sense of pleasure, and culminates with the full satisfaction of feeling like an omnipotent god before gradually declining to an incipient state of fear and, finally, to fault. His fault of complicity anticipates his gradual evolution to maturity. Moreover, through examining the narrator’s attitude we can also understand Gyeongju’s psychology better, and vice versa. Their different states of mind, and expected process of development, can be illuminated through comparing their attitudes towards playing activities. While in the narrator’s case we can anticipate a progressive development, for Gyeongju—who already shows the signs of a psychologically traumatized child—we can rather predict a much greater possibility of “failed progress.” Even though Jed Esty (2012) uses the term “failed progress” when discussing the issue of characters’ formative process in relation with the colonized territories they inhabit, the matter of divided spaces can also be tackled as a specific backdrop to narrators’ psychological and formative development.

of fear emerges and makes him “sense vaguely” the fault of his complicity. Stepping back from the stage of enjoying his “playing at god” opens the way for acknowledging his wrongdoing which entails his “tentative initiation.”

The tavern, or the “house of twilight” as the narrator refers to it, is a place that deeply affects him, especially the experiences he has when he visits there. Given his curious and intuitive nature, the sunset and its reflection on the window of the tavern arouse his imagination and make him foresee an unusual experience.³²

Occasionally as the sunset blazed on the glass, I gazed at the window of the tavern that Gyeongju’s family ran. I would gradually end up submerged in a weird inescapable fantasy. I cannot really say what caused me to feel this way. But from the moment I saw this house, I immediately sensed a peculiar atmosphere, something like a dark, dank odor that surrounded it. (“The House of Twilight” 214)

Painted with the surreal nuances of a crimson sunset and sunk in the trancelike vapors of the alcohol sold by Gyeongju’s mother, the tavern envelops the young narrator with a “mysterious power” which makes him “secretly expecting that some bizarre event I could not comprehend would once again occur there.” The “peculiar atmosphere” of the house is also completed by an auditory element: the “long sharp cry” of Gyeongju’s mother. Apart from this, the window against which the sunset light is reflected is also representative of the ambience of the tavern. Though this study emphasizes the role of place, the dimension of time is also significant, especially when describing the tavern. As suggested by the title of the story, the distinctive feature of this house is

its window mirroring the twilight. Its beauty, which fascinates the narrator, contrasts with the trauma experience by the inhabitants of the house and the abnormal relationship between Gyeongju and her mother.

One episode in particular highlights the narrator’s “anticipation.” Watching from the doorstep of his house, he witnesses Gyeongju trying to break her mother’s arm between the window and the wall of the house. This sight and the sound of both of them screaming leave him incapable of offering any possible explanation: “I could no longer understand what was what. What was going on?” (“The House of Twilight” 223).

The aggression shown between Gyeongju and her mother, and the sound of their animal-like screaming, is a shock to the young narrator. Without being able to comprehend the nature of the relationship between Gyeongju and her mother, and the expression of violence, he connects the violence he witnesses with activities of animals. Their confrontation—in both its representations of hatred and love/care—causes great confusion. The portrait of Gyeongju’s mother held in the child narrator’s mind is impossible to rationalize. She is mentally disturbed, and her actions and behavior are clearly the bitter result of the many traumas she has experienced. Nevertheless, the narrator is shocked by her presence, the meaning of which he cannot grasp. He can do no more than wonder about the reasons for her ceaseless crying.

The tomb-like quietness and heavy morning fog descended over the tavern in front of the boy’s eyes in one scene is portrayed as uncanny. With a loudly pulsating heart, he enters the tavern. There a moment of traumatizing affect ensues. Trembling and desperately trying—but ultimately failing—to escape from Gyeongju’s mother, the boy experiences an episode in which the mentally insane and drunk woman physically abuses both him and her daughter. Mistaking him for her second daughter who left home, she begs him not to leave her again. Even though he eventually escapes, a few days later the boy again becomes the prisoner of Gyeongju’s mother, who now forces him to drink, sing, and dance. The next day he could not remember how his father came and forcibly took both him and Gyeongju to their house in order to protect them. Nevertheless, the shocking effects of such an experience of physical abuse (on both him and his friend) has future repercussions on his understanding of both Gyeongju and her mother’s behavior and the external circumstances of these events.

Two symbols represent the process by which the narrator’s “initiation” is

32. More than merely anticipatory of an unusual experience, Kim Juyeon explains the child narrator’s feeling as an indication for a special atmosphere that had been enveloping him. Such ambience is interpreted as a “ghastly air awaiting the emergence of a ghost,” and thus suggests the presence of the “Shamanistic atmosphere” within Yun Heunggil’s novels of the 1970s (Kim 2012, 254). According to Kim Juyeon, the narrator feels himself drawn to something “special” and out of the “common” world. The “common” world here most likely refers to external circumstances, or the reality of the War, about which he lacks comprehension. Other literary critics, too, read the experience of Yun Heunggil’s child narrators as mystic or religious—having either Shamanistic or Christian values which are often meant to function as a response to the inhumanity of the War. Nevertheless, I interpret this “special” atmosphere not as a mystically charged one, but as one deeply infused with traumatic experiences; its bizarreness is provided by trauma and mental disturbance, not by mysticism.

reinforced in the story: his new tooth and the ivy covering the brick building. Listening to the story of Gyeongju's family trauma, the narrator's bad molar would often hurt. Soon after Gyeongju and her mother disappear from the city and their tavern house collapses, the boy pulls out the tooth that "had given so much trouble for so long and threw it onto the roof of the house." The new tooth he is now waiting for the magpie to bring epitomizes a new stage in his coming of age process. The expectation for the new molar parallels the anticipation for greater understanding that comes with age.³³

The ivy vines covering the brick building of the old iron foundry, which had been dead for some time, are in perfect symmetry with the "worn-out" look of this abandoned place—a reminder of death. Regularly acted out by Gyeongju, the scene of her sister's suicide had become embedded in this place. The morbid interconnection that holds the memory of such a traumatic event and the person engaged in acting it out is symbolically represented by the lifelessness of the dried ivy vines. But the coming of spring in the following year surprises the narrator with an awakening to life—as if "after a long convalescence"—of the ivy he thought had been "burnt to death." The brick building that had evoked only memories of death now shines green under its "luxuriant leaves," ready to be endowed with new meanings, stories, and function.

Conclusion

In this paper I have shown the significance of places and topography to Yun Heunggil's narrative of formation. Contrary to previous studies of his literary work as formative novels (*seongjang soseol*), I differentiate between the

two concepts of formation and initiation, proposing the latter as the most appropriate for interpreting Yun Heunggil's stories. Implementing Mordecai Marcus' concept of an "initiation story," I have read *The House of Twilight* (1970) as such, interpreting the iron foundry and the tavern house as venues of psychological and formative impact for the story's young characters. In many cases, narrative formation describes a long and tedious process in time—often materialized as a (far away) journey that is spread with bitter experiences ("rites of passage") and significant encounters. However, by reading Yun's narratives of formation, I shift the focus from the importance of the temporal aspect to the spatial dimension. Thus, I argue that the latter can also contribute to the young narrator's process of initiation.

In the first part of the paper, I separately discussed two ambivalent places: the iron foundry and the tavern house, focusing on their meanings and the relationship between them and Gyeongju (the narrator's friend). The iron foundry and the vacant lot next to it were presented as places imbued with atypical qualities, where Gyeongju initiates the narrator into the mysteries of her sadistic games and the morbid story of her eldest sister's suicide. Gyeongju's behavior and attitude are interpreted as manifestations of her family trauma, which—observed by the narrator—adds to his process of "initiation." The tavern house was discussed in relation to Gyeongju's defective relationship with her mother, which also provoked great disturbance to the narrator. This place symbolically stands for Gyeongju's family trauma—passed down from one family member to another—and is suggestive of the consequences that war has on one's home and family.

In the second part of the paper, I connected the connotations of these two places in relation to Gyeongju's trauma with the narrator's process of "initiation." The ambivalence of both the iron foundry and the tavern house are best shown through this connection. While for Gyeongju, the iron foundry—though a playground—is fully charged with traumatic memories of her sister's suicidal act; for the narrator, it is the place where, for the first time, he is exposed to the terrifying reality of death. As for the tavern, it revives Gyeongju's connection with her family's traumatic past, also representing the place where the defective relationship with her mother develops. The tavern house produces a sense of "curiosity" and "weird inescapable fantasy" that transforms into a "shocking" experience of both mental and physical abuse. Both places and the experiences occurred therein make the narrator feel "distraught" and cause long-term

33. The pain endured by the child narrator throughout the story anticipates the losing of his decaying tooth in order to make place for a new one: "When she [Gyeongju] did that, my bad molar hurt so much I could not sit still, as if I had bitten a sour apricot" ("The House of Twilight" 207); "Whenever I heard her [Gyeongju's mother] cry, my decayed tooth ached so much I could not stand it" ("The House of Twilight" 216); "When I heard them [Gyeongju and her mother], my molar ached so much I could not stand it, as though I were chewing a sour apricot; nevertheless, I had no thought of covering my ears" ("The House of Twilight" 222-23). Symbolically, his toothache is felt during unbearable moments, such as the times when Gyeongju shares the "gruesome story" of her sister's death, or when he hears Gyeongju and her mother's "ghastly screams." Even though he cannot stand the toothache or the sight of Gyeongju and her mother's unnatural relationship, he ends up choosing to bear witness to such events anyway.

effects that anticipate his initiation.

The child narrator is both an observer of Gyeongju's behavior and a witness to her life story, as well as the person who sympathetically shares some of her feelings. Also, through his encounter with Gyeongju within the setting of Jeongeup city, and the "shocking effect of his experiences" that takes place there, the process of losing his innocence begins, and the first step towards the "threshold" of understanding is taken.

References

- American Psychiatric Association. 2013. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. Fifth Edition. Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Publishing.
- Choe, Hyeonju. 1999. "Hanguk Hyeondae Seongjangsoeolui Seosa Sihak Yeongu" [A Study on the Poetics of Narrative of Modern Korean Growth Novels]. PhD diss., Chonnam University.
- Eisen, George. 1988. *Children and Play in the Holocaust: Games among the Shadows*. Mass.: The University of Massachusetts Press.
- Esty, Jed. 2012. *Unseasonable Youth: Modernism, Colonialism, and the Fiction of Development*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Horowitz, Mardi Jon. 1986. *Stress Response Syndromes*. New York: Jason Aronson.
- Jang, Sojin. 2005. "Yuyeonui Seosae Natanan Abi, Eomi Imiji Yeongu" [A Study of the Parents Image in Children's Narration]. *Eomunyeongu* 33 (4): 259-82.
- Jo, Guho. 2007. "Bundanui Galdeunggwa Hwahaeui Nonli—Yun Heunggilui Bundansoseoleul Jungsimeuro" [A Study on the Issue of Division and the Logic of Reconciliation—With an Emphasis on Yun Heunggil's Novels of Division]. *Hangukeoneomunhak* 61: 347-69.
- Kang, Hyeran. 2005. "Yun Heunggil Seongjangsoeol Yeongu—Jeonjaeng Cheheomui Jakpumeul Jungsimeuro" [A Study of Yun Heunggil's Novels of Formation—Focusing on the Novels about the Experience of the Korean War]. MA diss., Gyeongnam University.
- Kang, Jinho. 2008. "1970 Nyeondae Bundansoseolui Seonggwawa Uimi" [The Meaning and the Outcomes of the Division Novel of the 1970s]. In Vol. 6 of *Geundaemunhak 100 Nyeon Yeonguchongseo*, edited by Seonyeong Lee and Yunshik Kim, 39-63. Seoul: Somyeonchulpan.
- Kardiner, Abram. 1941. *The Traumatic Neuroses of War*. New York: Hoeber.
- Kim, Chunseon. 2001. *Hanguk-Joseonhyeondaemunhaksa* [The History of Modern Korean-Joseon Literature, 1945-1989]. Seoul: Wolil.
- Kim, Jiyeon. 1999. "Yun Heunggilui Chogi Seongjangsoeol Yeongu" [A Study of Yun Heunggil's First Novels of Formation]. MA diss., Chungbuk University.
- Kim, Juyeon. 2012. "Syameonizeumeseo Gidokgyoro" [From Shamanism to Christianity in Yun Heunggil's Novels]. *Bonjilgwa Hyeonsang* 28: 246-61.
- Kim, Okja. 2009. "Yun Heunggil Seongjang Soseol Yeongu—Jeonjaengcheheom Seongjang Soseoleul Jungsimeuro" [A Study of the Growth Novel of Yun Heunggil—Focusing on the Novels dealing with the Experience of War]. MA diss., Hongik University.
- Kim, Yunsik. 1998. *Understanding Modern Korean Literature*. Edited and translated by Jang Gyungryul. Seoul: Jipmoondang Publishing Company.
- LaCapra, Dominick. 2001. *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Lee, Hwajin. 2011. "Yun Heunggil Seongjangsoeolui Segyewa Uimi" [The World and Meaning of Yun Heunggil's Growth Novels]. *Bangyoeomunyeongu* 31: 243-70.
- Lerner, Richard M., M. Ann Eastbrooks, Irving B. Weiner, and Jayanthi Mistry. 2003. *Developmental Psychology*. Vol. 6 of *Handbook of Psychology*. New Jersey: Wiley.
- Low, Setha M., and Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga. 2007. *The Anthropology of Space and Place: Locating Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Mordecai, Marcus. 1960. "What is an Initiation Story?" *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*. 19 (2): 221-28.
- Moretti, Franco. 2000. *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture*. New Edition. London: Verso.
- Na, Jongip. 2006. "Hanguk Jeonhusoseol Yeongu—6 · 70 Nyeondae Seongjangsoeoleul Jungsimeuro" [A Study of the Korean Post-War Novel—Centering on Growth Novels of the 1960s and 1970s]. PhD diss., Chosun University.
- Nam, Miyeong. 1992. "Hanguk Hyeondae Seongjangsoeol Yeongu" [A Study of Modern Korean Novels of Formation]. PhD diss., Sookmyung

- Women's University.
- Oh, Saenggeun. 1976. *Jeongjikhan Salmui Bultumyeongseong: Yun Heunggilui Jakpumnon* [Transparency of a Honest Life: Yun Heunggil's Literary Works]. Seoul: Doseochulpan.
- Park, Hyeonjeong. 2008. "Yun Heunggil Seongjangsoseolyeongu" [A Study of Yun Heunggil's Novels of Formation]. MA diss., Chung-Ang University.
- Park, Jeongeun. 2006. "Yun Heunggil Seongjangsoseol Yeongu—Akui Cheheomgwa Jukeumui Cheheomeul Jungsimeuro" [A Study of Yun Heunggil's Formation Novels—With an Emphasis on the Personal Experience of Evil and the Personal Experience of Death]. MA diss., Hongik University.
- Son, Yugyeong. 2012. "Yunyeonui Gieokgwa Gakseongui Sungan—Saneophwasidae Seongjang Seosaui Muuisike Gwanhan Ilgochal" [The Memory of Childhood and the Moment of Awakening—A Study on the Lack of Awareness of the Formation Narrative during the Era of Industrialization]. *Hangukhyeondaemunhakyeyeongu* 37: 323-51.
- Summerfield, Giovanna, and Lisa Downward. 2010. *New Perspectives on the European Bildungsroman*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Tuan, Yi-Fu. 2001. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Van der Kolk, Bessel A. 1987. "The Psychological Consequences of Overwhelming Life Experiences." In *Psychological Trauma*, edited by Van der Kolk, 1-30. Washington: American Psychiatric Publishing Inc.
- Van der Kolk, Bessel A., Alexander C. McFarlane, and Lars Weisaeth, eds. 1996. *Traumatic Stress: The Effects of Overwhelming Experiences on Mind, Body, and Society*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Yang, Hanjin. 2009. "Yun Heunggil Soseolui Gongganuisik Yeongu" [A Study on the Awareness of Space in Yun Heunggil's Novels]. *Hannameomunhak* 33: 203-21.
- Yang, Mungyu. 1997. "Bundan Mit Saneopsahoe Hyeonsile Daehan Dokteukhan Munjeuisik" [Awareness of the Special Issue of the Reality of Division and the Industrial Society]. *Hyeondaemunhakuiyeongu* 9: 137-60.
- Yu, Imha, "Breaking the Seal of Memory: A New Perspective on Memory of the Korean War in Korean Novels after the Post-Cold War Era." *The Review of Korean Studies* 9 (2): 111-42.
- Yun, Heunggil. 1989. "The House of Twilight." In *The House of Twilight: First English Collection by Korea's Most Original and Stylish Young Writer*. Edited and translated by Martin Holman. London: Readers International.
-
- Catalina STANCIU** (catalina_s2004@yahoo.com) is a PhD candidate at The Academy of Korean Studies, majoring in modern Korean literature. Her academic interests are war literature (*jeonhu soseol*) and division literature (*bundan munhak*).

Abstract

This article deals with one of Yun Heunggil's (b. 1942) novels, *The House of Twilight* (1970). The purpose of this article is to depict the child narrator's process of initiation during the Korean War (1950-1953) in relation with two particular places in Jeongeup, a city in North Jeolla Province. Accompanied by a child named Gyeongju, the child narrator pays visits to an iron foundry and Gyeongju's tavern house. Against the backdrop of these two spatial settings, the narrator interacts for the first time with the traumatic social impact of the War. He is introduced to the reality of death by Gyeongju's recollection of her family's trauma and through initiation into her sadistic games. Further analyzed in the article, these places, along with their ambivalent connotations, anticipate the narrator's maturation.

Keywords: Yun Heunggil, initiation, topography, division novel, ambivalent places