

Article

A Study on Trauma Aspects in
Cho Se-Hee's Novels—Focusing on
A Small Ball Shot up by A Dwarf and
A Thorn Fish Coming into My Net

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Introduction

The aim of this paper is to study the problems and causes of the trauma aspects arisen due to the rapid industrialization and urbanization that took place in Korea in the 1970s depicted in Cho Se-Hee's (b. 1942) *A Small Ball Shot up by A Dwarf* (*Nanjangiga ssoaollin jageun gong*) (1978) and *A Thorn Fish Coming into My Net* (*Nae geumullo oneun ga-sigogi*) (1978).

The 1970s was the time when due to Park Jeonghui's policy of rapid economic growth Korea was suffering social anxiety and disorder. The dictatorial government put economic growth in the first place, what caused a rise of tension between classes. People were facing severe social inequality and discrimination, and the underprivileged lived under constant threat of being hurt or oppressed by the ruling class. This was caused by the economic growth policies of the 1970s, when numerous factories were established to hasten industrialization and urbanization, and the labor required at factories was drawn from the countryside to the cities. The production capacity of these factories boosted the economic development, while, on the other hand, oppressing and unlawfully exploiting workers.

As a result, workers experienced serious trauma as they were socially marginalized and suffering from mental distress due to physically deprived lives under the unreasonable economic structure. They could not lead normal lives because of unfair profit distribution controlled by capitalists as represented by factory owners. At the same time, the fierce competition for material wealth and the unjust capitalist social system were also dictating rules of life to the capitalist class. Paradoxically, the ruling class was suffering from the lack of ethical consciousness and anxiety caused by oppression against workers.

The rapid modernization of the 70s deeply infiltrated into the new daily life causing anxiety and confusion, resulting in mental trauma or, sometimes, even giving up on life. Cho Se-Hee captured the negative symptoms of the industrialization era of the 70s in his series of novels *A Small Ball Shot up by A Dwarf* and expressed them through the narrative structure.

Judging by the characteristics of the form, "originality and integrity," and

meaning of the works in the series, *A Small Ball Shot up by A Dwarf* can be the most representative work among the main works of the 70s. *A Small Ball Shot up by A Dwarf* has a framed structure, starting with the first short novel *The Möbius Strip*, which matches the last novel, *Epilog*, and forms the outer frame of the whole story. In addition, the work consists of ten original high-quality fragments, which further proves its representative value (Kwon 1983; Kim 2002; Kim 2005, 5).

The series can be divided into three categories by the central narrative. First, the Dwarf family representing the working class, the second is the Eungang Group family—the capitalist class in opposition to the "Dwarf" family, and the third is Ji-seob and Shin-ae representing the middle class who empathizes with the protagonist (Kim 2005, 21-23; K. Lee 2005, 62). As a representative writer of the 70s, Cho Se-Hee depicted the reality of the time as a confrontational relationship between capitalists and workers.¹ The author approached his goal from a social point of view: he captured the meaning of the traumatic "symptoms" of the time such as individual anxiety, confusion of values, loss of subjectivity, etc (Lee 2000). In particular, he pays attention to the intense structural conflicts between capitalists and workers, and portrays traumatic symptoms more thoroughly than any other writer of the 1970s. Thus, this paper focuses on Cho Se-Hee's *A Small Ball Shot up by A Dwarf* and *A Thorn Fish Coming into My Net*, the most notable novels in the series *A Small Ball Shot up by A Dwarf*.

The main narratives of *A Small Ball Shot up by A Dwarf* and *A Thorn Fish Coming into My Net* focus on two different point of views: the Dwarf's as the working class and Kyeonghoon's as the capitalist. The author portrayed the traumatic symptoms that had surfaced due to inability to adapt to society as a result of a distorted worldview caused by the contradictions of capitalism, or lack of ethical consciousness. They both are showing compulsive behavior, trying to endure the reality more painful than death, or even thinking about giving up their lives in despair over the pain.

Analyzing the post-traumatic symptoms the protagonist is showing in *A Small Ball Shot up by A Dwarf* reveals a combination of symptoms of "terror," such as fear mainly caused by anxiety, "intrusion" the indelible imprint of

* This article is a revision of a paper originally presented at the 28th biennial AKSE Conference held in Prague, Czech Republic, April 20–23, 2017.

1. Kim Pyong-Ik (1993) argues the confrontational relationship between privileged class and working class of Cho Se-hee's *A Small Ball Shot Up by A Dwarf* for the first time.

traumatic moment, and the numbing response of surrender in “constriction” to avoid and reject certain events. On the other hand, in *A Thorn Fish Coming into My Net*, Kyeonghoon’s trauma, who experienced negative ethical awareness of the capitalist social system and worldview, includes “hyperarousal”—fear or anxiety that dangers may recur, “disconnection” due to the threat of loss and disintegration with the community, and feeling of “guilty” and “inferiority” in order to escape accountability for his crimes. A chronic and recurring trauma are expressed as a complex symptom (Herman 2005, 8).

In the end of the 19th century Sigmund Freud began his studies of trauma with a hysteria of a woman, and named the symptoms of repeated nightmares and hallucinations of World War I veterans as “traumatic neurosis” (Caruth 1996, 10). Since then, in the modern era, the concept of trauma has become widely used as a term to describe the situation of individuals and society as a whole. In 1980, when Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder was first listed in the Diagnostic Handbook, the American Psychiatric Association described psychological trauma as “generally beyond the scope of human experience” (Herman 2005, 32). Originally, trauma was meant by physical scars caused by external shocks. However, it has infiltrated politics, history, and culture beyond the scope of psychiatry, and active discussions are being conducted in the field of social psychology. In today’s psychiatric world, trauma is a post-traumatic stress syndrome, commonly used to describe a neurotic hysteria, meaning unhealed mental scars (M. Lee 2005, 126).

According to Freud (2004, 19), trauma is an inability to face loss or an “unhealed wound.” It is said that the subject of trauma loses interest in the outside world and has low self-esteem and that the individual’s obsession with loss appears to be a more serious problem than the event that caused the trauma. However, in Freud’s trauma studies, the role of an individual’s unconscious motives and inner psychology were taken seriously, but the role of external social reality was not considered.

Next, Jacques Lacan saw trauma caused by external shocks as the “collapse of the subject’s symbolic representation system,” which is a state of chaos that cannot be interpreted and integrated by linguistic order as it creates an internal disturbance as a super individual structure (Park 2010, 35–41). Therefore, the ego tries to protect itself from traumatic events through “suppression,” but in conflict with the power to suppress, a symptom of anxiety and neurosis is shown. In this sense, Lacan’s theory is valid for analyzing the unconscious

personal trauma, but since the opposing classes have different objects of desire, there is a limit to fully consider the strata of social traumatic events with opposing conflicts with “special historical conditions” just within Lacan’s frame.

However, according to Cathy Caruth, trauma is described as a sudden event which “at the time of the incident was not fully absorbed and experienced.” Caruth (1996, 60–62) believes that a trauma event reveals itself through traumatic and repetitive actions after the event, and the subject can confront the traumatic truth only after they acknowledge this.

On the other hand, Judith Lewis Herman (2005, 32) in *Trauma and Recovery* presented “commonality of pain” in contrast to Freud’s failure to provide causes of traumatic symptoms caused by external reality. She emphasized that “hysteria of women and battle neurosis of men are the same” (ibid. 33), and reinterpreted the causes behind them, stating that the traumatic symptoms form under the influence of external social reality as well as internal and psychological traumatic symptoms of individual. Herman (ibid.) explains that after a traumatic experience, the common denominator of psychological trauma is a feeling of “intense fear, helplessness, loss of control, and threat of annihilation.” She defined that the aspects of psychological trauma can be shown such as terror, disconnection, and restriction, etc, and that the symptoms of “terror” usually fall into three main categories: 1) Hyperarousal,² anxious fear that danger may recur; 2) Intrusion,³ appearing at the moment with the traumatic event; and 3) Constriction,⁴ conscious denial in order to avoid the event.

2. According to Herman (2005, 35–36), after a traumatic experience, the human system of self-preservation seems to go into permanent alert, as if the danger might return at any moment. The traumatized person startles easily, reacts irritably to small provocations, and sleeps poorly. According to similar studies, there are many of the symptoms observed in combat veterans of the First World War—startle reactions, hyper alertness, vigilance for the return of danger, nightmares, and psychosomatic complaints. Such patients suffer from a combination of generalized anxiety symptoms and specific fears. Their bodies are always on the alert for danger.

3. Long after the danger is past, traumatized person relive the experience as if it were continually recurring in the present. As though time stops at the moment of trauma. The traumatic moment becomes encoded in an abnormal form of memory, which breaks spontaneously into consciousness, both as flashbacks during waking states and as traumatic nightmares during sleep. Thus, even normally safe environments may feel dangerous (Herman 2005, 37–42).

4. When a traumatized person is completely helpless, and any form of resistance is futile, they may go into a situation of surrender and feel “freeze” when they are attacked. In the words of one of rape survivor, “I couldn’t scream. I couldn’t even move. I was paralyzed...like a rag doll” (Herman, 2005, 42–43).

According to the psychologist Josefina Card, her study of the Vietnam War veterans demonstrated that the traumatized people were more likely to have received treatment for problems with alcohol or drugs abuse after their return from the war. The men used alcohol and narcotics to try to control their “hyperarousal” and “intrusive” symptoms—insomnia, nightmares, irritability, and rage outbursts. However, due to these altered states keep the traumatic experience walled off from ordinary consciousness, disconnected, and isolated from others. Furthermore, the constrictive symptoms also interfere with anticipation and planning for the normal as well as the future life (Herman 2005, 44-47).

I was terrified to go anywhere on my own....I felt too defenseless and too afraid, and so I just stopped doing anything....I would just stay home and I was just frightened. (ibid. 46)

Next, the symptoms of “Disconnection” destroy the subject’s sense of “self,” which connects individuals and communities, thereby creating attachment to family, friendship, love, etc. Feelings of disconnection lead to disturbances between the connecting semantics and eventually destroy the sense of stability and self-esteem (Herman 2005, 51).

As noted above, Freud started the discussion about the concept of trauma, and it has continued in modern days by Herman and others. In this paper, I will analyze the traumatic experience of conflict between the characters in the two novels not only at a personal level, but also at the external level of social reality. To do this, I will refer to Freud and Herman’s theories of trauma. In particular, Herman’s “disconnection,” “constriction,” “guilty,” etc. will be further discussed.

In Cho Se-Hee’s representative stories *A Small Ball Shot up by A Dwarf* and *A Thorn Fish Coming into My Net*, I will examine how the violence of the ruling ideology was manifested in the 1970s, which problems were created by it, and what were the causes for traumatic symptoms of marginalized people. Therefore, this paper will explore the symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder through the characters in the novel, the causes of trauma through the above-mentioned Freud and Herman’s trauma theory.

Aspects of Trauma in Cho Se-Hee’s Works

Cho Se-Hee started his literary career in 1965 when his work *A Ship without Mast* (*Dotdae-eopnen jangseon*) was elected for the Kyunghyang shinmun’s annual literary contest. Cho was keeping silent for 10 years after winning the prize and started getting attention in 1975 after publishing *Blade* (*Kallal*), the first story of *The Dwarf* series. Soon after that in Winter 1976 *The Dwarf* series were announced. For 3 years, till Summer 1978, other works including *A Thorn Fish Coming into My Net* were published one by one and then 12 stories of *The Dwarf* was finished. The traumas can be seen in his works are different. But they can be classified as 1) trauma of being urban poor caused by disability to adapt to industrialization and as 2) trauma caused by struggling for existence in new capitalist social order and being unable to resist the pressure. According to this classification, Cho’s *Dwarf* series are divided into two parts. Part A is dedicated to the trauma of maladjustment to industrialization and Part B is the trauma of maladjustment to capitalist social order.

The Trauma of Maladjustment to Industrialization

Cho Se-Hee wrote quite a few works about maladjustment to industrialization such as *Möbius Strip* (*Moebiusu ui ddi*), *A Small Ball Shot up by A Dwarf*, *Living Expenses of Eungang Labor Family* (*Eungang nodong gajok ui saenggyebi*), and *A Thorn Fish Coming into My Net*. This can be called a key theme of Cho’s works. But as it is impossible to analyze all of them, *A Small Ball Shot up by A Dwarf* only is selected as the central object of Part A.

First, what caused the trauma needs close investigation in order to give consideration to the maladjustment to industrialization. An urban poor Dwarf, the protagonists of *A Small Ball Shot up by A Dwarf* cannot adjust to the era of industrialization triggered by Park Jeonghui’s policy of rapid economic growth. He loses his job and then gets frustrated by the reality. He just can live his life in lethargy. The Dwarf has never studied, so he is able to only perform low paid easy jobs like sharpening knives or wiping windows of high buildings to earn money for his family.

In order to escape from frustration after losing his job the Dwarf decides to try working as a circus assistant, but his family speaks against it. And the protagonist gets new trauma being unable to realize his dream. Getting older

and sick he loses his desire to live and falls into deep melancholy. He tries to anchor his last hope to his older son Yeongsu, but even the son cannot understand his sufferings. The Dwarf does his best for his family, but fails to adjust to new society and feels just constantly frustrated. Thus he can communicate only with his neighbor Han Jiseop. The Dwarf considers himself completely useless for his family and starts drinking. He cuts off connection to family and society, and lives in isolation and lethargy. Due to the city development plan, he is pulled out from the illegal dwelling. At the end of the story, he walks down the street in state of self-destruction, expressing his anger. Here we can see how the Dwarf's trauma of maladjustment is related to industrialization and urbanization.

The Trauma of Maladjustment to Capitalist Social Order

A Thorn Fish Coming into My Net (1978) is Cho Se-Hee's 10th novel focusing on the industrialization and urbanization of the 1970s, and was written after *A Small Ball Shot up by A Dwarf* (1978). Unlike Cho Se-Hee's other works that dealt with rapid social changes in the 1970s, this work also features the main character Kyeonghoon, who symbolizes the capitalist in the novel. As the main subject of the novel is the trial case of worker Yeongsoo and centers on Kyeonghoon, it reveals the positions of victims and abusers or workers and capitalists.

A Thorn Fish Coming into My Net depicts an incident when Yeongsoo, the first son of the Dwarf family, kills a younger brother of Eungang Group's president. The story is narrated by Kyeonghoon, third son of Eungang Group's president. All the problems named "thorn fish" are cleaned and covered, so only small and thin bones are remaining. This irony is used to show the reality of usual working classes when the privileged class using hypocrisy and luxury as leverage for exploitation the working class.

In case of Kyeonghoon's trauma in *A Thorn Fish Coming into My Net*, who experiences negative ethical awareness of the capitalist social system and worldview, readers can see his "hyperarousal," "disconnection," and feeling of "guilty" and "inferiority" out of his crimes. At first, Kyeonghoon reveals a symptom of "disconnection" when he is obsessed with the idea that he must behave himself in a good way to the president of Eungang Group, frequently

clinging to him in anxiety.⁵

In the 1970s, the regime of Park Jeonghui oppressed and exploited workers to accumulate capital. The country was ruled under the name of capitalism and economic priority along with industrialization and urbanization widely promoted. All they needed was the muscle power of the "workers" (p.284). The reason why Kyeonghoon can live in a luxurious mansion with a large garden and a swimming pool is his capitalist status inherited from his grandfather. Kyeonghoon is satisfied with his rich life and he is proud to be a perfect capitalist for his way of thinking and habits. He believes that the only way to survive in the fiercest war-like competition is forcing their workers to sacrifice themselves. Kyeonghoon doesn't reject this war to protect his property and even considers it sacred.

"We have a lot to protect. Because of that, we always have to mind things that can change the way things are. Many people believe that we have succeeded undeservedly, and will try to beat us the first chance they get. So we need to have the power either to persuade them or push them back. There are so many people who don't want to think about what we do for them. The thing my father was most afraid of is a war. It's strange, but social changes meant the same to him. Both of those could take away everything from my father in one moment. He didn't have to explain this to me. I also thought the same." (*A Small Ball Shot up by A Dwarf* 271)

Thus, Kyeonghoon thinks that only honor, success, and wealth are reasonable signs of capitalism. As love, faith, and respect are meaningless to him. To Kyeonghoon, it is natural for his everything to belong to him, which is his way of thinking as a big capitalist. He considers ethics, morality, order, and responsibility important for consistent economic growth, but also thinks that the accumulation of capital and his satisfaction of desires only can make him a perfect main agent. Nevertheless, Kyeonghoon is not happy. He is obsessed with the idea that he must show his father, Eungang Group's president, himself in a good way.

5. According to Herman (2005, 56), trauma impels people both to withdraw from close relationship and to seek them desperately. The terror of the traumatic event intensifies the need for protective attachments. The traumatized person therefore frequently alternates between isolation and clinging to others in anxiety.

Father was very happy when he understood that I was interested in his business and that I wanted to grow fast and start working. (*A Small Ball Shot up by A Dwarf* 278)⁶

This example is from the beginning of Cho's work. We can see that Kyeonghoon severely clings to his father, which leads to his frustration, a symptom of rupture and fear. The reason why Kyeonghoon is not happy is because of the wrong foundation of faith⁷ and values in his earliest life inherited from his father. According to Herman (2005, 56), "later elaborations of the sense of law, justice, and fairness are developed in childhood in relation to both care-takers and peers." Unlike the Dwarf who always wants to provide good education to his first son Yeongsoo, dreams about a better life, and teaches Yeongsoo how to establish a good relationship with others, Kyeonghoon's father just teaches him how to survive and compete with others. Actually, Kyeonghoon is not that strong, so he always feels insecure and frightened.

Kyeonghoon also afraid of his two older brothers since childhood, he shows the "hyperarousal" symptoms: oversensitive to his two older brothers since childhood.

I was afraid of my two brothers from the very childhood. Both of them were clever and strong. I had a tiny ambition to arrange toys, I always was an appreciative friend for them. A locomotive. A tank. An armored car. A plain. A gun. A machine gun. Even tiny soldiers were deprived. I just put sister's dolls and dollhouses on the bed and played there. And I whispered "Dad, turn the light off, our baby is sleeping," and pushed the tiny button on the lamp. They took weapons and gathered their military forces. My chest was tightened up, I was afraid they would invade the dolls' country and destroy the peace. Then they said I must pee. [...] I wanted to win by studying, but brothers were thinking only how to jeer teachers and never even opened a book. But they always got good marks. I was squashed. (*A Small Ball Shot up by A Dwarf* 277)

Kyeonghoon is bullied by his brothers in childhood, deprived of his toys, and experiences trauma which leads to disconnection with his family and break his trust, just leaving Kyeonghoon feeling inferior.⁸ So, the distrust has spread and he starts feeling that the world is faked. According to Herman (2005, 54), frightened people tend to find their families as fast as they can, but if they cannot get any response, their trust is broken. Once thrown from the community or family which has to provided care and protection, a person feels totally abandoned and lonely. So then, a person is excluded from intimate family and community ties, and the feelings of alienation and disconnection causes trauma (ibid. 56). He just wanted to get more attention from his father than his brothers, "I believed that when my brothers are absent I must get my father's sympathy" (*A Small Ball Shot up by A Dwarf* 278). He even wishes they were dead.

The very first pray I said in tears was that my two evil brothers would die. I would be glad even if they go to the Heaven, but it would be okay for them to die and be away from me. (ibid. 277)

Kyeonghoon unable to coexist even with family members cannot but live his life in distortion. Despite the fact he has everything he needs, Kyeonghoon cannot get himself free mentally and psychologically, due to a fierce competition with his evil brothers. So he is always nervous, frightened, and even after death threat he has no other option but to live. He constantly perceives almost pathologically negative emotions, struggling to exist in his community and real society. So confined in his inner-self, Kyeonghoon has biased views and even malice towards Eungang Group's employees. His distorted thoughts make himself closed inside and labelled a sinner. Not only does he bear malice towards company workers, but he openly expresses his absolute hostility to them. His disgust and hatred reach a peak. But Kyeonghoon cannot realize the cause of his problem. Instead, he conceals his weak soul and keeps pushing himself into a fierce battle for existence.

Thus these works of Cho shows how "the Dwarf" and "Kyeonghoon"

6. This and all other translations of *A Small Ball Shot up by A Dwarf* by the author. The author of this article translated all the citations from Cho's works into English unless otherwise mentioned.

7. According to Herman (2005, 54), "the belief in a meaningful world is formed in relation to others and begins in earliest life. Basic trust, acquired in the primary intimate relationship, is the foundation of faith."

8. As the normal child develops, her growing competence and capacity for initiative are added to her post self-image. Unsatisfactory resolution of the normal developmental conflicts over initiative and competence leaves the person prone to feelings of inferiority (Herman 2005, 53).

unable to adjust to the 1970's industrialization and urbanization get traumatized by intimidating new reality. In the case of "the Dwarf," he falls into lethargy, but for "Kyeonghoon," due to his dreadful family stories and his defective relationship with his cousin and workers, he goes through compulsive experience again and again. This is the way Cho Se-Hee's novels face the 1970's industrialization.

Aspects of Correspondence to Personal Trauma

Life in Lethargy—A Small Ball Shot up by A Dwarf

As mentioned above, Cho Se-Hee's *Dwarf* is illustrating trauma of the urban poor unable to adapt to new realities of the 1970's and apart from the society. A close look at symptoms of the Dwarf's post-traumatic stress reveals a complex of phobias that corresponds with fear caused by "hyperarousal," "intrusion," "constriction," and others depicted by Judith Herman.

The Dwarf has 5 jobs for his family: bond trading, sharpening knives, wiping high-floor buildings windows, installing pumps, and repairing water pipes. These are almost the only things he ever does in his life. He never studies, so when he loses his job and are unable to adjust to new working environment, he falls into deep depression. Besides, the Dwarf realizes that he is getting older and sick, so he tries to lessen his desires and ease his judgments, facing the reality. So, he decides to work as a circus assistant, but his first son Yeongsu and his wife oppose his decision. His dream is ruined in the end. As Herman points out (2005, 150-51), "when a victim abandons his inner autonomy, a world outlook, morality, principles, etc. for his existence, he closes his initiative and ability to judge." In other words, the Dwarf gets traumatized when is forced to lose his dream of being a circus assistant, and starts moving downwards. Through this anxiety the protagonist shows us a "penetration" symptom.

"Yesterday a humpback came to help me. He will come tomorrow again. I can't believe I have never seen this man before. We used to work together. Do you remember? A-a, yes.
Don't even think to use force to me."
"When did you say this man came?"

"Yesterday." [...]

I left father to my mother. There was no other person in this world who could take care of father but my mother.

"Father is sick." I said. (*A Small Ball Shot up by A Dwarf* 100)

Herman's "intrusion" is a kind of psychological trauma when a person is stuck in his past. One feels unsafe even in peaceful surroundings because the memory returns as flashbacks and nightmares. One of the special characteristics of "intrusion" is a phenomenon of "re-experience," when even after long time a person can vividly rerun his past experience (Herman 2005, 37-42). The Dwarf shows this symptom as he recalls the past event as if it happened yesterday although it was three and a half years ago.

"Do you remember the humpback came yesterday?"

"When?"

"Yesterday." I took my shoes off and ladled water out again. Father stopped my hand.

I said, "I don't know."

"It is useless to pretend that you don't know. I know everything."

"What are you talking about?" It happened not yesterday, but three and a half years ago. He was the first humpback I saw in my life. (*A Small Ball Shot up by A Dwarf* 98-99)

When the Dwarf receives notice of expulsion from his housing due to city plan and reconstruction, he cannot express his feelings, but he just reacts passively and gets new trauma. Unlike his family the Dwarf is obsessively reading books, seemingly indifferent and unconcerned. His behavior of ignoring the reality and his incessant and avid reading is an illustration of "constriction" symptom. In fact, an encounter with real estate agents who come without notification brings about fear and panic. The following is an illustration of the Dwarf's avoiding and rejecting of the reality.

Yeongho stepped forward to the board he turned away a second ago. Yeonghui was standing near a black car left in the alley entrance. They returned as they heard about a notice of removal. Who could do this? [...]
I saw Yeonghui coming this way. Her face was red. Agents told us to vacate the apartment and sell our housing. Father was reading a book.
It was the first time we saw our father reading. (*A Small Ball Shot up by A*

Dwarf 82-83)

The protagonist hopes to provide good education to his first son Yeongsu and dreams about the better tomorrow through his kids. But unable to make his wishes possible, he gets depressed, starts drinking, and falls into lethargy. According to Herman (2005, 44), people start drinking alcohol to control their “constriction” symptoms like insomnia, nightmares, irritability, and rage outbursts.

Father was sitting with his legs shoved on the handrail and drinking alcohol. I must wait till father would finish his drink. At the other end of the bridge a drunk fell asleep and snored. Father drank a quarter. That night father drank a half of the bridge drunk's portion. At night people turned the light off and went to bed. Only two houses were not sleeping, The house of the drunk from the bridge and ours. I thought father came back because he got drunk. Even my brother was not able to take the bottle from my father's hand and throw it away. (*A Small Ball Shot up by A Dwarf* 115)

The degraded protagonist loses dignity and strength, and lives in lethargy. It is hard for him to adapt to new society, so he excludes himself completely from social life. Herman (2005, 42-47) classifies such behavior as “constriction.”

“Don't stop me. I am too tired to do other things. Do you believe I was repairing water pipes not so while ago? I worked on high building walls using a rope to go down. But I can't do it now.”
“Father, you can stop working now, because we are.”
“Who asked you to work?” said father.
“The only thing you must do is going to school. This is your only duty.”
“Got it, father.” (*A Small Ball Shot up by A Dwarf* 99)

Herman (2005, 85-86) says that personal psychological degradation leads to a loss of a will to live. She believes that a desire to commit suicide in extremely hard circumstances can be classified as signs of resistance and self-pride. Suicide means an attempt to lead a life under the violent surroundings, and the victim has the most stubborn and strongest will enough to finish his/her life.

In the process of industrialization and urbanization, the Dwarf loses not only his job, but also his place in life. This ultimately leads to depression

and a feeling of powerlessness. As time passes, the trauma becomes more and more serious. To escape from the pain of reality, a person shows “intrusion” or distorted memory symptoms, or starts drinking and then collapses. So, the Dwarf finds himself in an extreme situation when he loses his house. He then expresses himself in complete destruction.

A Cycle of Cut-off Life—A Thorn Fish Coming into My Net

As we have seen in the previous section, *The Dwarf* depicts the serious trauma of the urban poor who is excluded from a new Korean society of the 1970s' industrialization era. But *A Thorn Fish Coming into My Net* depicts the trauma of Kyeonghoon, the capitalist class, who experienced negative ethical awareness of the capitalist social system and worldview. As the main subject of the novel is the trial case of worker Yeongsoo, Kyeonghoon, the narrator in the novel, confirms that worker Yeongsoo is sentenced to death, and returns home. He thinks he is going back to his daily life, but after returning home, Kyeonghoon shows a symptom of “hyperarousal” in which a group of thorn fish attacks him. Kyeonghoon suffers from nightmares and hallucinations as a result of the trial where Yeongsoo is declared a murderer in the name of the capitalist values.

In *A Thorn Fish Coming into My Net*, Kyeonghoon's self-consciousness during the trial process is insecure for some reason. He comes to his senses because of the voices of workers, as well as Yeongsoo's and Jiseob's. Although Kyeonghoon expresses the position of the capitalists who exercise power based on their capital strength, Kyeonghoon is praying for his brother's death for his benefit. As the voices of workers penetrate him throughout Yeongsoo's trial, Kyeonghoon's self-consciousness becomes unstable and causes inner conflict during the trial of Yeongsoo who kills his uncle.

At first, Kyeonghoon is shocked when workers starts to sing a song in front of a judge on the court. This was for the first time Kyeonghoon meets with the workers face to face, “they were standing all around me, yellow with only eyes gazing at my face” (p. 280). Kyeonghoon hears a song full of hostility and antipathy, and he feels fear and threat from the workers.

“Our president also has a good soul.”

“I've received a pay from him, but it is the odd money.”

It was a very short but surprising song. [...] My soul came back home. In

my imagination I took father's 22 small-caliber rifle and loaded a shotgun with explosives and came back. They were my target. (*A Small Ball Shot up by A Dwarf* 280-81)

In *A Thorn Fish Coming into My Net*, Kyeonghoon continues: "Sleepless days became very uncomfortable and I wasn't feeling alive at all" (p. 96). The unknown symptoms Kyeonghoon suffers from are caused by awakening during the trial, and such experiences change his perception of the capitalist logic. Reasons for the psychological pathology of Kyeonghoon, previously unknown, are gradually revealed.

"The more I listened, the angrier I got. As I listened to what he said, I understood that it was us who were the greatest evil in this world. We have destroyed human dignity and values, perverted justice and discriminated against other people based solely on their social class, and deprived many of their right to live human lives." (*A Small Ball Shot up by A Dwarf* 228)

This is the trial scene for the murderer, Yeongsoo. It shows that Kyeonghoon is more aware of what his grandfather, father, and uncle have been doing to protect their interests. From the perspective of the workers, the capitalists are making their life worse. Through the voices of Yeongsoo and Jiseob, Kyeonghoon is gradually persuaded by Yeongsoo and Jiseob. Kyeonghoon's self-consciousness turns unstable because of he is aware of different ideologies and classes. Therefore, in the middle of the novel, Kyeonghoon starts feeling skeptic and guilty about justifying his actions with the rules imposed by capitalism and industrialization. It was not his capitalist ideas that drives Yeongsoo to death, but rather his personal feelings—his worries about his brother, disgust with his cousin, and distrust of the working class that made him a perpetrator who takes a man's life and everything else from him.

"I fell asleep while reading a book and had a dream just before I woke up. In my dream, I cast a net. I put on my water goggles and went into the water to see what kind of juicy fat fish I managed to catch in it. There was a flock of them coming my way. But they were not fat. They were bony and gaunt, with huge thorns and pectoral fins sticking out. Hundreds and thousands of these big bony fish came into my net, rattling and rustling. I got scared. I went back up and rolled my net. There were countless sticklebacks caught

in it. They jumped out of the net and onto me, emitting tens of thousands of phosphorescent stems. Whenever they touched my body, my skin was torn. I cried for help from the pain and woke up." (ibid. 284)

This is the last part of the novel. Kyeonghoon leaves Yeongsoo after his being sentenced to death, and he returns home. After sharing the good news with his mother with whom he has a good relationship in trust, he falls asleep reading a book and has a scary dream about thousands of bony thorn fish attacking him. He wakes up from the nightmare. In the novel, nets and thorn fish are symbolic of the "confrontation/contradiction" relationship between workers and capitalists. Kyeonghoon feels pain from the attack of the thorn because he is conscious of the pain Yeongsoo goes through and feels remorse for it. The reason Kyeonghoon suffered hallucinations and insomnia in *A Thorn Fish Coming into My Net* is the crimes the "self" committed⁹—i.e., all the bad things Kyeonghoon has done in the process of industrialization and urbanization and tries to repress in his memories.

Kyeonghoon has everything, but he can never be free from the reality either mentally or psychologically. He always suffers from anxiety, fear, and even a threat of death. For him, the reality is unstable, and his struggle for existence is nothing but deathlike fear. Especially love and ideals cannot exist in this place but pain and fear only. In the end of *A Thorn Fish Coming into My Net* Kyeonghoon attempts to change himself before leaving his room and to adapt to a real society. But soon after talking with a bright loud voice, he comes to remember everything. Nothing is left but to return to his previous existence.

What sets *A Thorn Fish Coming into My Net* apart from other novels by Cho Se-Hee with a focus on the industrialization era of the 70s is the depiction of Yeongsoo's trial—important for Korean society—and the conflict between capitalists and workers narrated by Kyeonghoon. His uneasy consciousness emphasizes the unfair, unethical exploitation, repression, and violence against the working class that is in line with the process of industrialization. The symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, such as hallucinations and insomnia—abnormal symptoms that appeared in the novel immediately after Kyeonghoon returns home from the court show that the anxiety about

9. According to Herman (2005, 8), in order to escape accountability for his crimes, the perpetrator does everything in his power to promote forgetting.

Yeongsoo's death sentence is caused by his own guilt. Ultimately, through the character of Kyeonghoon who gets trauma, the novelist Cho Se-Hee shows the disruption of the community which inflicts mental and physical injuries on the Korean society facing both the violence and the nation's miraculous economic development in the 70s.

Conclusion

As above, we have examined the trauma experienced by protagonists of Cho Se-Hee's *A Small Ball Shot Up by A Dwarf* (1976) and *A Thorn Fish Coming into My Net* (1978)—two novels set in Korean society of the 1970's industrialization era. *A Small Ball Shot up by A Dwarf* delineates an urban poor Dwarf, who cannot adjust to the era of industrialization implemented by Park Jeonghui's policy of rapid economic growth. The Dwarf loses not only his jobs but also his house, totally outcast from a new Korean society, which drives him to frustration. Meanwhile, from *A Thorn Fish Coming into My Net*, it is found that the pro-tagonists of the privileged class, Kyeonghoon, also cannot adjust to the era of industrialization caused by Park Jeonghui dictatorial government. Due to the intense competition for survival, Kyeonghoon cannot but cut off all sorts of connections either from family or from society. Eventually, this leads to depression and negative emotions.

However, specifically, there are some differences between how the Dwarf and Kyeonghoon in dealing with their traumatic experiences. According to Judith Herman's "Trauma and Recovery," the symptoms of the Dwarf's Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder reveal a complex of phobias that corresponds with fear caused by "hyperarousal," "intrusion," "constriction," and others. But the symptoms of Kyeonghoon's Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder shown in *A Thorn Fish Coming into My Net* are related with the trauma caused by "hyperarousal," anxiety, as well as the "disconnection" from the family and the community, as it is also analyzed in Herman's work. Nevertheless, Cho Se-Hee's works shows that the Dwarf and Kyeonghoon both unable to adjust to the 1970's industrialization and urbanization process get traumatized under the threat of new reality. Their life falls into lethargy or they go through compulsive experience again and again. Cho Se-Hee's novels are the portrayal of the workers and capitalists facing the 1970's industrialization.

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to study the problems and causes of the trauma aspects arisen due to the rapid industrialization and urbanization in the 1970s of Korea depicted in Cho Se-Hee's *A Small Ball Shot up by A Dwarf* (1978) and *A Thorn Fish Coming into My Net* (1978). Cho's novels show how the Dwarf and Kyeonghoon unable to adjust to the 1970s' industrialization and urbanization get traumatized under the threat of new reality. In the case of the Dwarf, he falls into lethargy, but for Kyeonghoon, due to his dreadful family stories and his defective relationship with his cousin and workers, he undergoes compulsive experiences again and again. Cho Se-Hee's novels reveal how the 1970's industrialization has destructive influence on two classes each.

Keywords: Cho Se-Hee, Korean society of the 1970s, capitalist, laborer, industrialization, urbanization