

Breaking the Seal of Memory: A New Perspective on Memory of the Korean War in Korean Novels¹ after the Post-Cold War Era

Yoo Im-ha

This article aims to review what difference and meaning war memory narratives have during the post-cold war era contrary to the memory of the Korean War narrative during the cold war era produced in Korean literature after liberation from Japanese colonialism. This article will survey the characteristics of the war memory narrative structured during the cold war era and discuss them in comparison with those of the war memory narrative revitalized during the post-cold war era. During the 1950s, there was an attempt to construct war memory from the anti-communist and cold war point of view to accept a flood of social tragic anecdotes that overemphasized the tragic aftermath of the war. The original empirical characteristics of war memory novels tried to objectify the meaning of the war on the one hand and greatly decreased with the activation of an elaborate system of control, surveillance, and censorship on the other hand in the 1960s. However, the writers of the growth-experience generation that rebuilt Korea appeared after the middle of the 1970s newly admitted the fragmentary war memories of the growth period in the historical horizon and began to arrange the deaths and sacrifices of parents in a national historical context. The division narrative showed an extended understanding of history based on the historical awakening to war, criticizing the injustice of war from “the viewpoint of a young narrator,” a post-ideological subject toward war, and recording “public” father figures not yet included in public memory in history. In the division narrative of Korean novels appearing in the 1980s the turning point to overthrow and dismantle the public war memory produced by the anti-

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1. There may be a confusion that the diction of “Korean novels’ in this article can indicate both South and North Korea. Only the novel texts authored in South Korea are used. Accordingly, ‘Korean novels’ in this article mean “the novel texts created in the South.”

communism and cold war structure was *Taebaek sanmaek* (Taebaek Mountain Range) by Jo Jeong-rae. Various division narratives described national violence, the massacre of civilians, partisan warfare, and the difficulties faced by families with relatives who fought for the communists. This showed an aspect that fully used the vitality of progressive academic discourses and social activities. The paper ends with a review of the formal characteristics and politico-cultural significance war memory narrative had in the utterance of silenced memory of the marginal men in the post-cold war era. While this article reviewed the value of *Sonnim* (A Guest) that called out historical departed souls and made them present to dismantle the war memory of a nation-state confirmed meaningful literary examples that feminine subjects called out detailed feminine memories and made them escape from silence and frozen state in Park Wan-seo's various novel texts and Jo Eun's novel *Chimmugeuro jjeun jip* (A House Built of Silence). Through this review it is understood that the rewriting of war memory in Korean literature had been started along the right lines.

Keywords: The Korean War, sealed memory, lapse of memory, Memory of the Korean War, the division narrative in South Korean novels, war memory narrative, memory-rewriting, public memory, nation-state narrative, war trauma

The Problematic Characteristics of War Memory

A writer who had serially published a saga under the title *6/25* (the Korean War, June 25, 1950) in the early 1970s recalled the past, saying that he had been plunged into nervous despair because of the many difficulties and mental suffering in writing novels (Hong Seong-won 1987: 13). The reality of despair resulted from the facts that the Korean War was unfinished as yet and that the writer faced inability to fairly describe the enemy. As a result he spoke of feeling compelled to allot the content of his novels to the figures from South Korea (Hong Seong-won 1987: 14). According to his statement, this unfinished war was a socio-culturally established taboo of expression and a major cause that distorted the war memories the writer intended to reproduce.

The writing about the memories of the Korean War remains a sensitive issue in Korean society. The war memory has been untold in official history and has many stories that now need to be shared instead of remaining sealed memories and intentional oblivion. A divided system took root after the war transitioned

into a ceasefire system, and continuation of war-time mobilization system became the norm in Korean society, resulting in enforcement of regulatory devices on novel contents such as taboo subjects, control, surveillance, and censorship (Yoo Im-ha 2005: 128-32). Korean writers faced obstacles when they moved from an area of experiences to that of expression into a depressed cultural condition during the cold war era.

The Korean War was not resolved, and the 38 parallel was instituted as the cease-fire line. Accordingly, the general war memory could secure publicity and be distributed while the only memories based on anti-communism and the cold war ideology were involved in modern nation-state narratives. The memory of war has been controlled and exclusively managed by the national apparatus and affiliate institutions under the extended anti-communist and wartime system. The Memory of the Korean War in Korean society during the cold war era did not accommodate a critical mind, imagination, insight into history, and self-reflection (Yoo Im-ha 2005: 67). This gives a picture of the systematic and conventional substance of anti-communism. An academic hypothesis on the war and a deviant imagination could not be an object of academic discussion and neither could trigger serious discussion on aesthetic achievements. On the contrary they were controlled by the National Security Law and denounced by the supporters of anti-communism. Only until now has this situation started to change. The substance of the cold war ideology has maintained systematic inertia. Anti-communism is the political foundation of Korean society. The political reality and cultural conditions based on anti-communism cannot be confined to a small number of writers but may well be a normal outlook reflecting the periodical situation and cultural conditions. It is meaningful to examine closely the silenced memories and the intentionally blocked memories among war memories.

Contrary to the memory of the Korean War narrative² appearing in Korean novels during the cold war era after the Liberation, this article reviews what difference and meaning war memory narratives have during the post-cold war era. It arranges the characteristics of the war memory narrative composed during the cold war era and reviews the characteristics of the war memory narrative revitalized during the post-cold war era. The discussion will be on how the war memo-

2. The term “memory narrative” was originally used by Oka Mari (2003) and will be used as “a story based on the Memory of the Korean War” in this article.

ry was constructed during the 1950s connecting anti-communism with the cold war structure. A review is made on how far war memories appeared during the 1960s and the 1970s ending with how war memory changed in the current of the post-cold war. In particular a review will be made of the formal characteristics and politico-cultural significance war memory narrative had in the utterance of silenced memory of the marginal persons in the post-cold war era.

The Wounds of War and Anti-Communitic Composition of War Memory

In the midst of the war, a Korean poet Seo Jeong-ju sang a song about the wounds of war.

The frozen river is melting now.
Why is the river melting again?
What sorrow and delight
Make the river melt again?

Like a wild goose
Like a frostbitten goose in December
Breaking heavenly ice with breast
I hoped to have gone crying for life.

Why is the river melting again,
Giving this sunlight and wave to me?

Does it want dandelion and wormwood leaves
To bend their heads down once again?

On the hill of yellow soil
A flower bier
A crowd of widows
Does it want them to stand here and gaze once again?

The frozen river is melting now.
Why is the river melting again?

What sorrow and delight
 Make the river melt again?

– The full text of *On the Melting Han River*
 (Seo Jeong-ju 1994: 115-6)³

In the poem the shock of war is full of “sorrow.” The plants “dandelion” and “wormwood leaves” growing in the ruins signify sorrow. A bier passing on the hill and the crying of the widows following it also signify sorrow. The narrator looking at daily lives full of ruins and crying became suffocated with grief. The pain of war is the share of the bereaved women, children and old people. “A frostbitten goose in December” in the text signifies the existence of life-long sorrow that is “an objective correspondence” signifying the daily existence struggling with the difficulties during the wartime. “Why is the river melting again?” the narrator asked in return, looking at the sunlight shed on the place like ruins and the flowing river. The counter-question is a grumbling over the natural providence of spring coming in spite of the ruined daily lives. The author intentionally regrets that spring has come full of joy of life although grief has not faded away yet. The natural switchover of nature mixes well with the grief of the narrator looking at the ruins reaches the poetic stage of prescribing the waste landscape of the postwar. It is not possible to notice the voice to console the broken hearts. The voice is the spirit of the times to encourage comfort and the will of revival and looks like a voice enlightening the people uttered by the state.

Such a case of the postwar poems shows an original way of utterance of Korean literature toward the Korean War. The poems during the 1950s paid attention to the ruins and wounds inflicted rather than examining the true nature of war. The prose of literature toward war was not developed beyond the poetic objectifying of tragic wounds caused by the war. One of the main reasons was that the war narratives were busy describing overflowing tragic anecdotes in the tense situation of the continuing war and the life among the ruins. Korean postwar prose literature showed a languid trend contrary to the politics of resentment toward the communist system and ideology produced by the wartime mobilization system, communists, and impure leftists.⁴

3. The poems of Seo Jeong-ju including *Mudeungeul bomyeo* (Looking at Mt. Mudeung) produced during the wartime have enlightening poetic diction to console people in grim postwar reality and poverty and endure daily difficulties.

4. Examples of the politics of hate and exclusion based on anti-Communism can be found in the

The languid trend was above all a variant of resentment and interpreted as an unprocessed dramatic element of social tragic anecdotes. Yeom Sang-seop who constructed the basis of modern realism compared war to a shower in the novel *Chiwu* (A Shower) and described the hiding pilgrimage of a betrothed man who had fallen in love with the ex-wife of a North Korean Army officer in occupied Seoul as the background (Yoo Im-ha 2005: 68-9). As a result, in *A Shower*, an objective description short of making the tense reality of war conspicuous bleached the atmosphere of war that resulted in a description of a broken daily life. In the postwar masterpieces *Mildawon sidae* (The Mildawon Era), *Gwihwan jangjeong* (A Returned Soldier), *Heungnam cheolsu* (Retreat from Heungnam) and *Siljonmu* (A Realistic Dance), Kim Dong-ri powerlessly described the waste hearts of agonizing intellectuals in the home-front society during the wartime and the tragic aspects of family destroyed by the war (Jeong Jong-hyeon 2002). The situation of a destroyed family and the miserable frustration of intellectuals due to the war were not different from Hwang Sun-won. The short stories *Merry Christmas* and *Gogyesa* (An Acrobat) described the difficult daily lives in a refuge Busan and an aspect of despairing in impoverished social conditions. The writers of the older generation left the mobilizing policy of wartime literature they joined in the service during the war and showed a greater tendency to describe difficult daily lives at a refuge and dramatic anecdotes about displaced and dispersed people at the front (Yoo Im-ha 2002: 95). It is possible to indicate that a series of process accepting overflowing tragedies filled despairing antagonistic emotions of reality as well as the aftermath of tragedies with anti-communism and tried to describe tragic anecdotes scattered everywhere from an ordinary viewpoint rather than investigate the true nature of war.

The anecdotes about the tragedies produced soon after the war appeared in a trend of enormous national exodus immigrating into the South. There were wartime realities such as the shock of war, consequent destruction of everyday life, loss of hometown, the jeopardy of going to the southern part of Korea.

magazines and the texts of literary readers published during the period of 1950-1955 in which many war writers were active such as *Gonanui 90il* (Ninety Days of Distress) and *Jeokhwa samsak guinjip* (A Book of Nine Writers on Three Months' Communist Rule). Leading articles, poems, novels, and criticism contained in *Jeonseon munhak* (Literature of the Front) and *Jeonsi munhak dokbon* (A Literary Reader during the Wartime) clearly show encouragement of victory over the war, criticism of the North Korean system and of supporters that had led the invasion, and the will of national defense. But the main trend of materials and description in the postwar novels strongly concentrated on the aspects of the injured lives caused by the war.

Southern Korean cities like the wartime capital Busan and Daegu were economically prosperous even in the midst of the war. While the front was at a stalemate because of the intervention of the Chinese Red Army, the conditions of the rear regions rapidly lost communal warmth and became dehumanized in the midst of wartime prosperity. This shock can be found in the texts of most of the writers during the 1950s. Such postwar controversial novels as Jeon Gwang-yong's *Captain Lee*, Seo Gi-won's *Amsa jido* (A Map of Amsa), Son Chang-seop's *Bioneunnal* (A Rainy Day), *Ingan dongmul woncho* (An Abstract of Human Zoo) and *Ingyeoingan* (A Surplus Human Being), Yi Beom-seon's *Obaltan* (Accidental Fired Bullet), and Park Gyeong-ri's *Bulsin sidae* (An Era of Distrust) described the waste human characteristics in various ways with wartime rear reality as the background. They contained not only paralyzed human ethics due to the aftermath of war but also made life bitterer and full of spiritual anguish.

The description of postwar society and the aesthetic elements absent in thought are a critical investigation into war itself, the cause and process of war. Instead of the absence or the silence of an investigation into war, the repeated "tragic social anecdotes of war" always kept "the place of sufferings and victims" firmly. These cultural situation and repetition resemble the verification of thoughts caused by the wartime mobilization system and the repeated circulation of war memory. While keeping silent toward ideological problems and politically delicate affairs, writers dealt with tragic anecdotes of war and tacitly came to recognize a premise of violence of the communists even though it had not been told. One of the cases signifying such a premise is *Cainui huye* (The Descendants of Cain, 1956), a controversial postwar novel and one of Hwang Sun-won's masterpieces. This was a controversial postwar novel in dealing critically with the experiences of a great break of national community in the midst of the land reform of North Korea and rapid disappearance of humanity. The novel aimed at showing the violence of land reform led by the members of the Communist Party and the reality full of madness. The novel indicated that the communists made a peaceful farming village the place of murderous intent of Cain and violent daily life and described traditional landlords as an image of sufferers like Abel. The land reform of North Korea after Liberation was finely imaged in the paradigm of Cain and Abel, which was ultimately a figurative representation of the Korean War. Like the land reform, the war was regarded as an imprudent and violent crime. In spite of a jump in-logic, *The Descendants of Cain* was a successful novel in branding the North Korean socialist regime as a

Communist one soon after liberation belonging to the memory of the Korean War. The context of the text only declaring that the major forces leading to the collapse of community developed soon after the liberation were the communists. Throughout the 1950s, the writers did not distinguish the violence of war from the violence committed by the communists on the basis of enmity toward them. This phenomenon resulted from the firm experiences based on the belief that the anti-national forces were the communists who had provoked the war and as such were responsible for the very destruction of everyday lives. The negative memories resulted from the deaths of family members, dispersed family, and the loss of the basis of livelihood during the war. The war memories during the 1950s were constructed while amplifying a self-evident foundation that the very subjects provoking the war were the communists.

Postwar writers who had appeared around 1955 took the testimony about the injuries of the postwar society as literary tasks while recognizing war was violence to take human beings as things, facing death, and extreme poverty caused by the war and shivering from the fact that the true nature of tragedy was “the fading away of any human criterion” told by Erich Kalher (Langer 1975: 74).⁵ Contrary to the experienced anti-communism and the way of accepting tragic anecdotes of writers of the older generation, the literary testimony had a vector containing the brutality of war that forced the loss of humanity and the critical circumstance of existence. Oh Sang-won’s *Yuye* (Deferment) described the extreme experiences of battlefield, overflowing death, amputations, loss of places of livelihood, and painful existence at places where war refugees stayed through realistic feelings (Yoo Im-ha 2003: 309-11). Also, Seonwu Hwi’s *Bulkkot* (Flame) criticized the ideological violence of the socialists on the basis of Fabianism, while Jang Yong-hak’s *Yohan sijip* (A Collection of Poems of John) exposed the ideologues as inhumane who held mock executions at a POW camp in Geoje Island.

While writers of the older generation responded powerlessly to the overwhelming tragedy of war in the novels of the 1950s, postwar writers tried to testify positively the social misfortune and spiritual wounds caused by the shock of war. This distinction is a convenient one between the sense of the older generation and the sense of the youth. It was because postwar Korean literature was

5. Refer to Kim Sang-seon (1964), Cheon I-du (1974), and Kim Hyeon (1991) for the significance of literature of the postwar generation.

“the records of war experiences” (Jo Yeon-hyeon 1953). Also, it was because the strong anti-war consciousness “fighting against all the inhuman elements caused by war and supporting humanity” (Cheon I-du 1974: 226-34) was stored within the testifying records. The postwar novels did not objectify the experiences of the Korean War but described the spiritual wounds in the aftermath of war through tragic anecdotes, shivered with the brutality of war in the dehumanization of civilization to construct the anti-communist and cold war memory. Postwar literature testified on war and the direct aftermath from the viewpoint of a civilized man, objectified the original experiences of war and left the investigation into the real truth behind as a literary task after the 1960s.⁶

Literature of 1960s-70s and Classification of War Memory

Aside from Nam Jeong-hyeon’s “Slip of the Pen in *Bunji*” incident (1965), there were some open slips of the pen and censorship in the literature of the 1960s (Yi Cheol-beom 1972: 121). They are now a movie of the same name (Director Yu Hyeon-mok) as Yi Beom-seon’s *An Accidentally Fired Bullet* (1959), Park Gye-ju’s *Yeosu* (Loneliness on a Journey) published serially in the *Donga ilbo* (Donga Daily Newspaper), Gu Sang’s first drama “Suchi” (Shame, 1963) and Yu Ju-hyeon’s *Imjingang* (The Imjin River) originally published in a magazine called *Sasanggye*. It was later questioned by the government for it being later published in a magazine of the pro-North Korean residential league in Japan. There was no problem with Yi Beom-seon’s novel, *An Accidentally Fired Bullet* which was favorably received at the time of publication and still popular in literary history. When this novel was made into a movie in the 1960s, the movie was banned because it described very dark reality and a grandmother who had gone insane cried out, “Let’s go to our hometown (in the north)!” when a jet fighter flew over the roof of a house. There was a problem with Gu Sang’s first drama

6. The full-fledged discussion on literature during the 1950s became active at the turn of the 1990s together with the end of the cold war system. The period 1950s has been left as an uncultured area in literary history because of the shock of war and the preoccupation for a lack of aesthetics. But at the turn of the 1990s, co-studies and individual studies were confined to the discussions on medium-length and short stories from the synchronic viewpoint. With the help of the introduction of diachronic viewpoint, the analysis of the postwar long stories and the project on finding out aesthetic meanings became active. Refer to Yoo Im-ha (2002) for the trend of research of the 1990s toward postwar novels.

Shame because it also described very dark reality. In spite of the anti-communist work a writer or a director that contained high degree of humanism could not pass censorship boards because of minor infractions of the Anti-communist Law. Although Park Gye-ju was an anti-communist who had published his notes in *Jeokhwa samsak guinjip* (A Book of Nine Writers on Three Months' Communist Rule), the serial novel *Loneliness on a Journey* caused a problem. The publication of this serial novel in a newspaper about a trip to France was stopped because the issue of trusteeship and expressing the opinion on a neutral nation mentioned in the novel became an issue. Anti-communism forced the writers to avoid taboo subjects and follow guidelines by means of practical power and censorship to effectively end thoughts and imagination except public war memory.

There was no noticeable “slips of the pen” until Nam Jeong-hyeon’s “slip of the pen” in *Bunji* (The Land of Excrement) under the regime of Syngman Rhee of the Liberal Party in the 1950s and the early 1960s. Such cases of systematic violence as spontaneous censorship of the mass media, a ban on screening by the censorship authorities and interrogation started to visualize after the 1960s. In particular, the 1960s was the period the delicate regulatory system of the Park Chung-Hee’s government (that took power through the May 16th Military Coup d’état) in the field of culture and arts. As stated, cinemas attracted more attention than novels. This resulted from the surveillance and control of censorship authorities fearing any ripple effect in popular culture. A close investigation reveals that the discussion on such delicate problems in conflict with national ideology as trusteeship or neutralism suggested by the progressive camp was prohibited. This case can be found in the ban on serialization of Park Gye-ju. Whenever a delicate problem became an issue the ban on serialization in a newspaper was fatal to a writer. The discussion on the public memories of anti-communism or the cold war was also prohibited. The writers “continued writing carefully” by silencing or dropping the memories relating to families or relatives except the public war memories (Yi Cheol-beom 1972: 121)

Nam Jeong-hyeon’s slip of the pen in *The Land of Excrements* (1965) was a typical case showing how political freedom and the absolute freedom of artists arbitrarily judged the works of writers. The incident forced a look back on the division of and the reality of the Korean peninsula in a quasi-state of war and keenly realized the terror of severe censorship during the 1960s with anti-communism as a fixed line of national policy. In spite of “freedom of creation” guaranteed in the Constitution, systematic censorship made the public ascertain that

the involvement in a political situation could mean the violation of the Anticommunist Law. Nam Jeong-hyeon's slip of the pen made Korean writers confirm that freedom of creation could be preserved within the boundary of the Anticommunist Law. The voices of worry over the reality that freedom of expression was shrinking are found in a writer's questionnaire carried out by a daily newspaper (Yoo Im-ha 2005: 135-6).

In spite of the intention of writers, the confirmation that there would be a danger of involvement in the counterpropaganda of North Korea in a divided country made a situation censoring spontaneously delicate affairs through evasion, detour, silence and intentional oblivion (Yoo Im-ha 2005: 139). Also, "the twisted situation" and "the distorted situation" of the confrontation of a divided country made many war memories unuttered, silenced and forgotten intentionally. Under the complicated political situation of a divided country, a writer had to "try to possess a mind penetrating not the surface but the depth of reality" and "create a higher phase of mentality to deny and also approve the political reality" (Yi Cheol-beom 1972: 125). The mental level and insight of a writer are directly connected with social foundations and cultural capacity. The political situation during the 1960s resulted in adapting to the anti-communism and the mechanisms of censorship, becoming silent, adapting the war memories to the anti-communism, and schematizing.

The general trend of the novels relating to the war memory during the 1960s was to objectify and reflect on the tragic meaning of war with "the records of experiences" and to permeate anti-communism. In the character portrayal of Kang Sin-jae's novels, the political neutralism and objectivity shown in the novels of the 1950s disappeared. The loss of ideological neutralism resulted in strengthening the criticism against the communists as confirmed in the long story *Imjingangui mindeule* (The Dandelion of the Imjin River) dealing with war. Such a change of strengthening anti-communism directly shows that the portrayal of the communists shunned during the 1950s permeated anti-communism at the turn of the 1960s. However, the trend towards objectifying the meaning of war and reflecting on it can be found. Examples of novels that portrayed war via deaths and wounds of the young as well as the irony of a stalemate are Hwang Sun-won's *Namudeul bitare seoda* (Trees on a Slope.) and Seo Gi-won's *Jeonyaje* (The Eve of a Festival). Another case of criticizing the injustice of the divided systems between the North and South in the denial towards the revolutionary character of war and the moral corruption in South Korean society are Choe In-hun's *Gwangjang* (Open Square) and another case of regarding the

division and tragedy of war as an impregnated tragedy in the Japanese colonial period comparing it to an ideological incest such as *Wonhyeongui jeonseol* (The Legend of a Circle) by Jang Yong-hak (Yoo Im-ha 2002: 111-36).

The horizon was extended to the problem of division while taking war as an object of reflection beyond the standard of experiences testifying the wounds of war. The recognition began to be reflected that the breakout of war resulted from the establishment of the system of division. After Choe In-hun's *Open Square*, war memories formed a trend to make a national reality of division historical and recognize it. The writers leading this trend called "division narrative" was so-called "the growth-experienced generation."⁷ They tried to construct war memories even under the restrictions by pointing out "self-evident but unintelligible" fragmentary memories in the growth period overlapped with the 1950s.

The results of division narrative too manifold to enumerate in the history of Korean novels had accumulated abundant products up to the late 1980s (Yoo Im-ha 1998). Kim Won-il has presented the most results of division narrative for a very long time. Through "the viewpoint of a young narrator" quoted widely since *Eodumui hon* (The Spirit of Darkness, 1973) constructed war memories by overlapping the long and unintelligible absence of fathers, marginal men in the reality of division with the poverty-stricken growth period. The author devoted himself to the writing of novels to widen the "partial character of growth experiences" to the historical horizon, treat the familial tragedies caused by the war and upgrade them in the national tragic reality. The viewpoint of a young narrator was to objectify the painful childhood caused by the war that destroyed the comfortable family life and was a post-ideological situation looking at the tragic abyss. The subject of this narration was a false device to detour censorship and oppressive taboo in a flexible and aesthetic achievement made by an active adaptation toward the pressure during the cold war period. In addition to treating the violent symbols of war objectively, the viewpoint of a young narrator also had another positive point to secure room for criticizing the violence and falsehood of ideology. Special attention should be paid to the underlying conscious-

7. They were authors who grew up in the Korean War period. They were born before or after the 1940s, experienced the war in childhood and persistently pursued the division and wounds of war. They are Yu Jae-yong (1936), Hong Seong-won (1937), Yi Cheong-jun (1939), Han Seung-won (1939), Kim Ju-yeong (1939), Kim Yong-seong (1940), Jeon Sang-guk (1940), Mun Sun-tae (1941), Yi Mun-gu (1941), Hyeon Gi-yeong (1941), Kim Won-il (1942), Yi Dong-ha (1942), Yun Heung-gil (1942), Hwang Seok-yeong (1943), Jo Jeong-rae (1943), Yun Jeong-mo (1946), Kim Seong-dong (1947), Oh Jeong-hi (1947), and Yi Mun-yeol (1948).

ness of the author at this point. The author criticized the ideological falsehood of the North, the South, the right and the left under the *Yusin* (Revitalizing Reforms) running up to anti-communism and surveillance system that contained the critical consciousness to investigate a lot of official fathers like the ghosts of the times.

The ultimate meaning of war shown through the eyes of a young narrator is defined shortly as enormous falsehood unjustifiable in any cause and a violent whirlpool to force immense sacrifice. The war told and called out of the memories of the growth period was judged as a material evil forcing familial death, tragedy, mass violence and the madness of the times.⁸ Through individual memory for father, these writers carried out an aesthetic project to reinstate lost privileges, individual fathers marginalized in the public war memories based on nationalism to put them into national and historical memories. The war would be roused in a memory of refuge with “the excitement of picnic when leaving home for the first time” in fiction like Oh Jeong-hi’s *Yunyeonui tteul* (The Garden of Childhood) and Yun Heung-gil’s *Gieok sogui deulkkot* (Wild Flowers in Memory) and always appeared as original experiences like a languid nightmare. Besides, the war in division narrative has appeared in the form of “the crime and original sin to push the growth period into a pitch-dark night and poverty” like Kim Won-il’s *A Spirit of Darkness* and Yun Heung-gil’s *Jangma* (Rainy Season), “a tragedy that a nation was divided into two and fought each other” like Hong Seong-won’s novel *Namgwa buk* (The South and the North) and “the violence of ideological war full of madness when a lot of fathers became assaulters and victims” like Kim Won-il’s *Noeul* (Twilight) and Yun Heung-gil’s *Nat* (A Sickle).

The writers of “growth-experienced generation” connected autobiographical elements with national tragic reality and produced war memory narrative against the public memory of a nation-state. In the division narratives created by them during the 1970s and the middle 1980s, war memories were rather close to those of the second generation of “a leftist (communist) family.” Memories show the testimony of those who witnessed the violent ideological verification of furious nationalists caused by the refuge and the experience of coming from North

8. There is a scene with two fighting cocks are fighting. The village onlookers become disillusioned with the fighting of the cocks and leave the place. The scene of cockfighting is the conclusive imagery of the Korean War, describing the war monthly from January to October 1950 (Kim Won-il 1997: 268-320).

Korea, the madness of genocide and the bitterness full of familial deaths and sufferings.⁹ The main characters of memory were young sons and daughters murdered mercilessly in hometowns on the suspicion of fathers going to North Korea or leftist ideology or the relatives of rightists massacred by leftists. These are mature children who as victims or close relatives used survival instincts to become accustomed to the backlash of furious national power or the maneuvering of left-wing elements.¹⁰ In the novels, war memories hardly escaped from the boundary of gloomy growth experiences. The spaces of memory were always the hometown, silent and a poverty-stricken family, the nighttime the rightists and the leftists used violence on one another, a historical and nightmarish spot in despairing of the absence of fathers and carrying out the merciless torture and surveillance of mothers. They became writers while asking the world “Why are adults fighting with each other?” and seeing the efforts of mothers to keep them alive in the midst of being ridiculed as commie bastards or fatherless bastards¹¹ Children matured early due to the tragedy. In the tragedy of war that disturbs personal growth the memory of spiritual wounds are typically more fundamental and conscious while those of men are unconscious. While falsely structuralizing the fragmentary memories of war attained during the growth period allowed neither rightist nor leftist ideology in unifying and curing a nation. The works of these novelists who are novelizing war memories eventually made it possible for public father-figures to be incorporated in history.

It is significant that re-memorizing fathers and the war by the generation that has experienced growth and re-writing of memory to restore history were carried

9. The typical examples of comparing dramatically the violence of war with the diminutive and feeble existence of children are as follows: Kim Won-il's *Eodumui hon* (A Spirit of Darkness), Yi Dong-ha's *Jeonchawa daramjwi* (A Streetcar and a Squirrel), Yun Heung-gil's *Jangma* (Rainy Season) including Hyeon Gi-yeong's *Sunizamchon* (Uncle Suni), Yi Dong-ha's *Uulhan gwihyang* (Gloomy Homecoming), Jeon Sang-guk's *Abeui gajok* (Abe's Family), Mun Sun-tae's *Gohyanguiro ganeun baram* (A Wind Blowing toward Home) and *Cheoljjukje* (A Festival of Royal Azalea Blossoms), Yi Mun-gu's *Janghanmong* (A Long and Leisurely Dream) and *Gwanchon supil* (Essays of Gwanchon), and Kim Seong-dong's series *Jip* (A House).

10. In Kim Won-il's novels about division and war, state power mainly appears as surveillance of the police. The state power became the background of such massive body of punishment and violence as the arrest, torture and death of fathers and the detention and torture of mothers. The mother's overreaction and terror toward the police in *A Spirit of Darkness*, Noeul (Twilight) and *Burui jejeon* (A Festival of Fire) reflect physical and spiritual wounds caused by state power.

11. There are many cases but this article referred to Park Wan-seo, et al. (2004).

out under the Revitalizing Reforms system. The significance can be ascertained well by the fact that it evoked controversy as an example of a national literary theory overwhelming until the 1980s. The re-writing of war memory carried out under the yoke of the Revitalizing Reforms system was connected with the literary interest in the marginalizing classes in the trend of industrialization. This literary interest kept pace with the stream of historical novels to substitute historical memory with the history of the resisting subjects. This formed an atmosphere to regard the cultural status of Korean literature as a social movement almost equally in quality.¹² Accordingly, the war memory contained in division narrative became a litmus test enriching national literature through an ideological sympathy to heal the national division. Another significance of the war memory contained in division narrative is the fact that these writers prepared a foundation of the memories forgotten intentionally in the official memory of history to be restored. They were the very memories of innocent people massacred as Red guerrillas or Commies around the Korean War. They were forgotten in history as unpatriotic or as second-class people who were murdered rather than protected by the state. However, through the war memory contained in division narrative, fathers and familial tragedies were uttered and relocated in silence even restrictedly. The forgotten individual history of fathers began to be restored and relocated in national tragic history.

The Post-Cold War Era and Changes in War Memory

The history of Korean literature, the 1980s was the period when the spontaneous resisting discourse uttered in the 1970s changed the topographical map of war memory in the history of a country into a competing situation. In the then situation of democratization and social movement, the initiative of history based on anti-communistic nationalism rapidly headed for a downturn.¹³ Various socio-

12. Such typical historical novels during the 1970s as Hwang Seok-yeong's *Janggilsan* and Kim Ju-yeong's *Gaekju* (A Peddler's Inn) tried to show the healthiness of the history of the people and the resisting massive subjects different from the history of the ruler. Although the period was the Joseon Dynasty, the tactics of the resistance and the reforming will of the history of the people omitted in the official history of a modern state are connected with the re-writing of war memory contained in division narrative.

13. This distinctive character is in common with an argument that researches the Korean War in the field of politics positively after the introduction of revisionism (Lee Wan-beom 2001: 27).

cultural movements based on a nation, nationalism, the people and an ideological trend of anti-foreign power provided the motive. While the discussion on the popular view of history and the ideology of class deepens, war memory assumes a variety of aspects. In literature, the Massacre of Innocent People in Geochang returned as a text of novel like Kim Won-il's *Gyeoul goljjagi* (A Winter Valley). The process of growth and entrance into a company of a son from a dispersed family whose father had joined in the leftists or joined the North was reproduced in a novel like Yi Mun-yeol's *Byeongyeong* (Frontier). The silenced memories of partisans emerged as war memory narrative in Yi Byeong-ju's *Jirisan* (Mountain Jiri), Jo Jeong-rae's *Taebaek sanmaek* (Taebaek Mountain Range), and Yi Tae's *Nambugun* (The Southern Army). Among these the most socially influential masterpiece was Jo Jeong-rae's *Taebaek Mountain Range*.

Taebaek Mountain Range overthrew and dismantled the powerful positive power of anti-communism, restructured the history around the Liberation and the historical memory of the Korean War from "the bottom-up view" and made the oppressed memories come back. They were mainly a variety of individual memories such as the "leftist" families and partisans, the intellectuals who had chosen the North Korean political system and the figures who had gone to the South and joined in the partisan struggle. Although the composition of characters and placement were criticized as "left-wing deviation and anti-American" (Kim Byeong-ik 1991: 21-2, 179-80), the achievements of this work never faded away. The memories of the text were based on the autobiographical elements of the author centering on Boseong and Beolgyo, the silenced memories and testimony of partisans and other data. Moreover, the war memories of this work reproduced on the basis of the ideology of the public nationalism attained in academic achievements of "The Series of the History around the Liberation" that triggered the discussion of progressive discourse at that time formed the counter-memories against public memories. Including the North, South, left-wing, and right-wing, the memories of individuals belonging to both classes of the subjects of left-wing-oriented ideology and the lower classes were re-positioned from the margin of history to the center of text. The social response to *Taebaek Mountain Range*¹⁴ shows that anti-communism and the cold-war public character of the

14. As of September 2003, it was reported that 5.8 million copies of *Taebaek sanmaek* (Taebaek Mountain Range) were sold. Refer to *Munhwa ilbo* (Munhwa Daily Newspaper) on September 4, 2003.

history of a country deteriorated, preparing a momentum various war memories came to compete with one another.

From the viewpoint of “politics of memory,” Jo Jeong-rae’s *Taebaek Mountain Range* reached the top of the division narratives in the 1980s that contained the fresh viewpoint the complicated political changes and international situations soon after liberation. The text shows in a panorama the divided occupation of the Korean peninsula by the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., the puppet governments of the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., the process of establishing a single government the Republic of Korea with an inborn limitation of a divided country, the socio-economical reality of land reform, the despair of the lower classes due to the stagnant land reform, the desire for social reform and the process leading to civil war. The text narrates the process of the national community dashed to ideological antagonism soon after the Liberation and amplified inner elements of division leading to war. As showed in the background of five years between the Yeosu-Suncheon Rebellion (1948) that refused the suppression of the Jeju April 3 Incident and in the year 1953 when the Korean War Truce started, the war memories of war in this text reflected the viewpoint of the people on the basis of the academic results of a progressive trend toward the origin of division and the viewpoint of international politics. At least, the intention of the author helped overthrow modern Korean history after liberation and anti-communistic public memories toward war and unleashed intentionally forgotten memories.

Important is that the war memories of the author were restructured by the self-consciousness of human freedom and liberation considering the civilian massacre in Gwangju committed by the military dictatorial government of Chun Doo-hwan during the 1980s. The author tried to find out the origin of national violence in the 1980s both in the process of establishing the divided system and in the Korean War. The Korean War assumed the aspects of complicated wars such as regional war, civil war, and global war (Park Myeong-rim 2002: 32). The author painfully restructures the Korean War from the politico-cultural situation of the 1980s from the viewpoint of “the people’s equalitarianism and political liberation of classes.” The author reflected a social desire to call out the memories excluded in national public memories or forgotten intentionally and to consider modern history with the eyes of the oppressed. Kim Beom-wu included diverse memories of individuals recalling events before and after the war through the eyes of leftist intellectuals and families of those who hid in the mountains; the memories were of diverse range of individuals of different social classes such as traditional landlords, merchants, industrialists, soldiers, farmers,

sharecroppers, and intellectuals such as doctors and teachers were included in the characters who were in the process of returning home from Yeosu-Suncheon Rebellion, which occurred in October 1948 soon after the establishment of the Republic of Korea, to the release of anti-communist POWs. The return of the native at the end of the novel implies that he went toward the cause of historical struggle beyond a realistic struggle where the various strata of regional war, civil war and global war arrived in the divided system. The author imposes the reflection on historical implication on Kim Beom-wu considering the real situation and significance of the impartial world the lower classes eagerly desired and the real situation the Korean War expanded into the world war ceased along the DMZ. Kim Beom-wu changed the attitude from practical struggle to permanent historical struggle. The aim was to an ideological line to struggle for “history what should be” for the national independent establishment of a country, freedom and equality on a different phase from the hegemonic struggle in practical politics. He was transformed from a nationalist into a populist and again into an independent nationalist. In this process, he did not join in the American Military Government; he voluntarily enlisted in the People’s Army, after which he entered a concentration camp as a POW of the American Army. Afterward, he turned from practical struggle into historical struggle. His ideological change was the result of reflecting the intention of the author declaring that permanent historical struggle to secure “what should be” should be a share of the massive subject, the people. Kim Beom-wu’s transformation into historical struggle could be compared to the desire for democratization against the military dictatorship during the 1980s.

The writing of division and war memory to newly construct identity based on individual memories deviated from public memories and official history is not applicable only to the author of *Taebaek Mountain Range*. It is because at the turn of the 1980s the division narratives prepared by the above-mentioned writers born around the year 1940 in the stream of the post-cold war began to vitalize the oppressed individual memories and compete with historical war memories made as national narratives. The division narratives emerging after the 1970s were the first counter-memories against the self-duplicated single war memories under the anti-communism and the cold war period. While national narratives justified a project on the common sense to integrate a nation and create a people, a lot of individual memories appearing in division narratives are significant in “restoring and relocating individual memories” dropped in the official memories of division and war. The same thing is true of Mun-gu who wrote

series *Gwanchon supil* (Essays in Gwanchon) to a resistant poet Kim Ji-ha “As this *Essays in Gwanchon* was dramatized, I think my father and the others who had died with my father were reinstated to their lost privileges.” (Yi Mun-gu 2001: 157) The saying that division narratives have consoled the wounds of war and division since the 1970s, led innumerable historical departed souls to heaven and played a role breaking the seal of forbidden memories goes well with “The struggle for memories is the struggle for interpreting the actuality” (Assmann 2003: 104). As the frame of interpreting the actuality depends on how to monopolize the past the struggle for memory is a matter of securing identity and is closely connected with the justification for political hegemony.

The struggle for memories in Korean society was connected with the political changes in Korean society in the 1980s and the dismantlement of the cold war system. “The Gwangju Democratization Movement” in May 1980 soon after the spring of Seoul in 1979 bore to the contemporary intellectuals “fury, grief, despair and the consciousness of original sin still extant in silence” (Kim Hyeon 1990: 416), made them resist political oppression of the military dictatorships throughout the 1980s and also made them investigate the origin of national violence. In Kim Won-il’s *Burui jejeon* (A Festival of Fire) and *A Valley of Winter* and Yi Mun-yeol’s *Yeongungsideae* (An Era of Heroes) besides Jo Jeong-rae’s *Taebaek Mountain Range*, the literary groping of the second generation writers of the leftist families for war memories belongs to this. In these texts, war memories began to be told not as national official memories but as individuals and the history of families, and moreover the voices of various classes. Considering these instances, a recently highlighted viewpoint of oral history has been continued along with the trend visualized in literature at least after the 1970s (Kim Seong-su 2004: 306). While oral life history selects various individual history and put it on record and excavates newly a certain mentality and historical principle unevenly distributed in the times, literature is an act of arts falsifying forgotten voices through probability and reproducing a story by means of the characters that must have existed and the incidents that must have happened in a particular period. In this respect, either “the viewpoint of a young narrator” or “the return of oppressed voices” through “the bottom-up eyes” means the vitalization of individual forgotten or silenced memories unable to be included in the description of history centered on national heroes in the war memories of the history of a country. Together with the return of oppressed memories, various national heroes and laudable anecdotes of victory began to compete with the vitalized memories of historical departed souls and lose an absolute authority.

The aspect of recent novels dealing with war memories is worth paying special attention to as they show the surplus points that have not been recalled in a nation or a country. First of all, this article will review Hwang Seok-yeong's *Sonnim* (A Guest).¹⁵ This novel text dealing with the massacre in Sincheon took a way of describing the real situation of the massacre and the violence of the times full of madness as transient by calling out historical departed souls excluded in national official memories. In particular, in the simple dialogue of departed souls appearing in front of the text is a festival of celebration after driving the madness away. The passage shown in the process of restructuring the memory of massacre in this text is that of memory of the Sincheon Massacre Museum displayed in national official memory with particular restructured or distorted memories. The public character of the massacre museum prescribes national ideology and identity and indicates the display effects to produce common sense and, moreover, the facts of historical memory constructed by a modern nation-state. In Hwang Seok-yeong's text, the relics and fragments displayed in the museum are described as "an unacceptable historical act of barbarity committed by the U.S. Army next to the German Fascism," telling the real situation registered as national history and distributed as public memory. *A Guest* is a memory narrative made in the museum to dismantle the public character of historical memory and remember again the real situation of the bloody genocide within the same race. The voices of departed souls are the results of painful reflections on the original sin of reserved assault and injury and tell the appearance of different memories of individuals returning against the weathering of time. A dialogue developed by the departed souls without any enmity and passion any longer overcame the madness between the left and the right wing committed from soon after the Liberation to the war period through abundant utterance of individual memories and made a point of reconciliation. The things reproduced problematically in *A Guest* are the voices of "historical departed souls" roused up from the point of a crack made by public memory. These voices overcome hatred and testify in a low tone the worthlessness of the antagonistic actuality in these times. The voices of testimony erupted when the seal of memory was broken. The reality of memory that historical departed souls are returning means the deterioration of "hegemony that has controlled the past" (Dirik 2005: 259) called

15. The text is from Hwang Seok-yeong's *Sonnim* (A Guest, 2001). Those texts that are not dealt with but are used only as examples in this article are as follows: Kim Won-il (2002), Yim Cheol-wu (2004), Kim Yong-seong (2004), and Mun Sun-tae (2005).

“discontinuity of the past” by Pierre Nora and shows well the competition between historical memory accompanied by the dismantlement of the world cold war system and other memory narrative.

Another example of active memory narrative of the Korean War can be found in Park Wan-seo’s long novels and Jo Eun’s novels¹⁶ women become the main body of utterance. Park Wan-seo’s novels produce wonderful memory narratives female experiences and memories become connected with old-fashioned memories and reflective consciousness attained in modern world. In spite of the frequent intervention and self-reflection of the main body of the stories, the world of two novels authored by women show another memory aspect of only female experiences of history. These woman author memories of landscape of the times have “romantic narrative composition” (Giddens 2001: 33-42)¹⁷ within and are different from the description of women by the male writers.

The romantic composition of war memories shown in Park Wan-seo’s novels is characteristic of structuring into stories of the interrelationships of modern history connected with familial experiences in the minuteness of female daily experiences. A complete story is produced centering on concrete points of contact connected with individual, history, society, and reality. This secures concreteness different from in quality masculine viewpoints centering on abstract ideology or gigantic discourse rather than daily events or anecdotes and forms a new horizon of novels. In Park Wan-seo’s case, the flowery style of keeping distance from the eyes prepared in “the daily phase of experiences and discourses” and narrating stories is quite different from the male way of telling by dramatizing antagonism between heroic individuals attached to cause and moral duty and anti-heroes.

In *Mimang* (An Illusion), *Geuhae gyeoureun ttatteuthaetne* (That Winter Was Warm), *Eommaui malttuk* (Mother’s Post), *Geu manteon singaneun nuga da meogeotseulgga* (Who Ate All of the Singa?), *Geu sani jeongmal geogi isseosseulgga* (Was the Mountain Really There?), including the maiden work “Namok” (A Naked Tree), one of the characteristics of Park Wan-seo’s novels is the tragedy and injury of war permeated in family history and the female character to utter positively the memories. A novel of family history, *An Illusion* shows

16. The texts used in this article are as follows: Park Wan-seo (1992), Park Wan-seo (1995), Park Wan-seo (1995), and Jo Eun (2003).

17. This “romantic narrative composition” indicates the characteristics of the stories contrary to “narrative of conquest” appearing in the male stories told by Anthony Giddens (Giddens 2001: 31-42).

how a large family of commercial class in Gaeseong managing *ginseng* fields could settle down in South Korea as displaced individuals in the midst of the angry waves of modern history. *That Winter Was Warm* accuses a petty bourgeois of weak behavior comparing the dispersion of family and the tragedy of division to the different paths of life of a brother and a sister. The series *Eommaui malttuk* (Mother's Post) catch the strenuous efforts of a mother escaping from a pre-modern world entering modern world. *Who Ate All of the Singa?* and *Was the Mountain Really There?* are the autobiographical narratives of war memory coping with the angry waves of the Liberation, division and war at Hyeonjeo-dong a hilltop village in Seoul. These novels correspond to individual affected part of modern restraints based on autobiographical memories of a woman. In nine cases out of ten the memories are concentrated on the trauma of division and war suffered by family members. In particular, *Who Ate All of the Singa?* (hereinafter referred to as *Singa*) and *Was the Mountain Really There?* (hereinafter referred to as *The Mountain*) are the war memory narratives resulting from dangerous survival of the family left in Seoul under the communist rule and the tragic family history resulting in the death of her brother. The death of her brother who had a past record in the leftist movement in the text was placed deeply inside the unuttered memory narrative and was also an affair silenced for a long time. This memory of a woman utters a severe resentment toward the government that had deserted the people. What the infected part of memory shows is concentrated on the tragedy of how her brother escaped from the recruit of the People's Army and his soul was destroyed. The emergence of memories of her brother's destroyed soul and death after a long silence is secretly connected with the atmosphere of the times called the dismantlement of the cold war system. In the past the novel treated her brother as was sacrificed by the People's Army (Kang Jin-ho 2004: 325-34). However, *Singa* and *The Mountain* take off the feature of deviated anecdotes concerning the death of her brother after her long silence and present an original of memory. This change resulted from the essential change of the war memory map connected with the weakening of anti-communism and the cold war system.

Although Park Wan-seo's division and war memory narratives do not get out of the familial boundary, they are of significance in showing the symptom of the post-cold war mentioning the memories of women. They deviate from the intention of national narrative shown in the division narrative of the male writers as discussed before and are quite different in character. The war memory narrative of Park Wan-seo uttered from the viewpoint of a woman has secured a severe

and strong criticism asking back how irresponsible and worthless the confrontation and antagonism of ideology and war are from the viewpoint of laying emphasis on feminineness and regular values. For example, the strong protest in *Singa* and *The Mountain* is also a severe criticism how disillusioning and self-contradictory the state that had deserted the people is in verifying ideologically the suspect of taking sides with the communist and how improper the exercise of state power is.

While Park Wan-seo's memory narrative of division and war is an example presenting in a romantic composition the tragedy and injury of family history from the female point of view by means of excellent verbal description, there is another example of Jo Eun's novel *Chimmugeuro jieun jip* (*A House Built of Silence*), calling out women's silent memory in a self-examining and self-reflecting way. The value of this work is found in describing unuttered "silenced memory" of women in the form of oral history not in the exceptional character a female sociologist wrote a novel beyond her boundary.

A House Built of Silence is a text reflecting the implications about keeping silent the war memory of South Korean women who survived the cold war period. This text understands that by means of the silence, women could endure the harsh regulations of anti-communism to secure the safety of the family. The right of women to remain silent is regarded as an instinctive wisdom to survive. This work does not follow the traditional plot of modern novels with a "dramatic formula" containing a solution to conflicts but follows a way of narration according to the principle of memory. The writer calls this way as a "journey to memory." Unlike Park Wan-seo's novels, *A House Built of Silence* does not show the narrative characteristic equipped with narrative technique. Unlike Oh Jeong-hi's novels, it does not treat fearful rumors and the wounds of women's growth period caused by the fetters of poverty. The novels narrate the trauma of war originally deviating from the regular firm order and are different from the delicate technique of Oh Jeong-hi's novels. What characterizes Jo Eun as a writer very conspicuously is the feminine oral life history based on the principle of "the opening and closing of memory." "Oral life history" is a project to produce cultural collective memories composed of nameless individual history. Irrespective of a smooth theory and narrative plot the single history of official memory has, this project tries to reconstruct the real mentality of the times with silenced individual memories and arouse the silence memories of women. *A House Built of Silence* covers the period from the age of five when the war broke out on June 25th 1950 to the age of fifty-five when a candlelight memorial

was held in front of Gwanghwamun in 2000. The “journey to memory” crossing multiple places in the memories of lots of women while frequenting the past and the present is a process of the writing to look for “the memory untold by anybody” filled with the pains and sorrows of women.

The pace of the journey to memory takes mother’s silence toward the father’s absence as an important theme. The mother of the narrator kept silent talking about father and sporadic memory on father is not consistent. According to the mother, the father has changed from “a clean-handed official” into “a rigid man as a son of land-owner,” “an unfortunate man who cannot accomplish his desire because of the wrong political situation,” or “a thoughtless man who can not judge the political situation correctly and makes his wife and children suffer” (Jo Eun 2003: 270). These changes are interpreted as complicated affection toward husband and hatred toward the head of family who could not keep family safe because of the wrong situation. The narrator pays attention to how the stories of the mother about the father have changed while delicately mixed with the safety of family and the political situation. The mother’s flexibility in memory of father like “When the situation changed, mother’s stories of father also changed” (Jo Eun 2003: 271) changed in the midst of entering the society of severer surveillance and regulations after the May 16th Military Coup d’état. This flexibility derived from the self-inspection to conceal or change the interrelationships in a favorable way to the family.

There is not only the silence of mother toward father in *A House Built of Silence*. Here appear “my” memories prevailing both in her own home and her mother’s home throughout the growth period crossing the time sequence. Such memories of teachers in charge, fellow students and relatives she had met at an elementary school, a secondary school, and a college, appears like a piece of thread. For example, in *Taebaek Mountain Range* one of the characters who went to North Korea is connected with tender emotions toward mother and the “*Biography of Abraham Lincoln*” he presented to mother appears in the story told by the mother. Also, the memory of a senior, sister Jeongsun who became intimate by means of Jeong Ji-yong’s poem *Hyangsu* (Nostalgia) awakens from oblivion to newly appear together with the notice of her death while having a pleasant chat with college friends.

The floating of unpredictable memory is a trauma added to the forgotten and silent lives of women in the midst of a rapid stream of modern history and also contains the political implications inside. This is closely connected with the pressure produced by oppressive gender politics operating within an obstinate

patriarchal system and regulatory apparatus in Korean society regarding women as “unspeakable subordinate subjects.” Considering the political connection between pressure and silence, the memory utterances of silenced women are “the secret things of women that are never asked before.” This shows that the intention of the work pays special attention to calling out the forgotten or hidden surplus places in historical or official memory. *A House Built of Silence* tries to be faithful to showing the silenced facts of memory because of the political character far from the declaring values struggling for what should be and official ideology as showed in the novel and like the meaning of the word “journey.” The precise description of the inside of women enduring all kinds of suffering means it was not buried in gigantic discourses and the value of what should be to show the stricken lives of women through the utterance of the long silence of the period from the 1950s to the 1990s. This results in securing the significance of “the creation of feminine war memory” against the masculine official memory of war. Instead of aiming at a closed structure the completeness of modern novels have the principle of well-organized structure, *A House Built of Silence* did not depend on the theoretical sequence in the endless extension of various branches of memory and made a house connected with the calling out and forming silenced memories of women suddenly united, connected, and spread. This characteristic can be different in quality from Park Wan-seo’s storytelling of well-organized modern novels.

In that the autobiographical utterance of memory in Park Wan-seo’s and Jo Eun’s novels is the voice of feminine subjects that have gone through modern history. It is one of the literary examples supplementing the official memory in the history of a country and substantiating war memories. The feeling that the war trauma permeated in family history escapes from the silence and oblivion continuing for long and competes with the official memory in the history of a country is realistically felt. This was an unexpected phenomenon during the cold war period that had monopolized the historical memory. The war memories written by these two woman writers and the detailed memories of the injured women during the war are the traces of women’s lives. As a detailed example this characteristic is easy to understand. The lives in deserted Seoul, the absence and death of father, the defecting of a relative to North Korea, the death of a family member and a remarriage are the silenced and sealed memories not appearing in official history.

Conclusion: Return of Suppressed Memories after Breaking the Seal

The war memory in Korean society was a modern nation-state narrative and official memory of history formed by the substance of anti-communism before the stream of the post-cold war after the middle of the 1980s. The writers adapted themselves to the cold war system and anti-communism supporting the system for some time. The adaptation of writers shows that the obsession and taboo to maintain the standard of description within the boundary of anti-communism and social survival through self-inspection were a grim reality. Because of these cultural conditions the memories outside anti-communism were forgotten as silenced or sealed. This fact as a contradiction confirms the problematic value of various blank spaces and silence of historical memories. The silenced, sealed, and intentionally forgotten memories were the substances excluded on purpose of official history. It is understood that in reality only a nation can secure and circulate the public character that is directly connected with the absolute status of historical memory in the circulation of war memory based on the history of a country constructed by a delicate managing system of a modern state.

In Korean literature the war memory can be reviewed according to the cold war period and the post-cold war period like in Korean society. The war memory of the cold war period was subordinated to the hegemony of a nation-state or close to a single memory “manufactured” according to the political needs. The post-cold war period the absoluteness and monopolistic status of the war memory in the history of a country have disappeared in the midst of a turnabout of history and memory. While the memories of the minority individuals and the memories outside the people came to be vitalized, an abundant phase that the war memory narrative of individuals could compete with modern nation-state narrative was produced. This phenomenon is a natural politico-cultural aspect when the hegemony of history loses authority. One of the most remarkable aspects together with the vitalization of individual war memory in various cultural situations was the erupting of the cultural memories of various classes while disturbing the official memory symbolized as a national spokesperson and historical memory of the Republic of Korea that began as a divided country. Beyond the change of positions of history and memory the situational individual memories hold a dominant position has emerged. This phase of vitalizing individual war memories through the overthrow and dismantlement of historical memory has enabled the emergence of numerous memories against historical memories of a

modern nation-state.

The literary writing of war memory is close to an endless choice exercised at the crossroads of “either memory or oblivion.” Considering either the writing of painful memories or the choice of liberated oblivion and unhesitating life, the writing of war memory is “a project of condolence” (Weinrich 2004: 307-9) and “the reconstruction of reflecting on the past painfully and making it the present” (Bhabha 2002: 139). War memory came to be an exclusive power mechanism through being divided and reconstructed by power and official history. Power has manufactured taboos and self-inspection by oppressing and taking numerous individual war memories of various classes as unwholesome. The fact that particular war memory had been buried in silence and oblivion resulted from the operation of censorship system placed as power. The official war memory produced people adapting themselves to particular power and worked as oppressive knowledge through political effect. The silenced and sealed war memories of individuals not accepted as official memories could not be registered in the official history of the cold war period. In the exhibits of museums and official memories engraved on the monument for the war dead, there has been no room for individual experienced memories to join. These individual war memories began to be uttered in the division narrative during the 1970s. After the 1980s, war memory narrative in Korean novels began to be vitalized by breaking the chasm of the official memory of a state. Jo Jeong-rae’s *Taebaek Mountain Range* was a text of memory at the turning point. Also, in the stream of the post-cold war Hwang Seok-yeong’s *A Guest* enlarged the historical chasm made in the memory of a state more widely, treated the antagonism between the rightist and the leftist as vain to guide to heaven the departed souls of history in the madness of genocide. The war memory narrative of Park Wan-seo and Jo Eun tried to overthrow and dismantle masculine official memories from the feminine viewpoint. The memory texts significant telling silenced and sealed memories uttered from the viewpoint of women. Through this it is realized that the literary rewriting of war memory began to take root along with the post-cold war period.

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Yoo Im-ha is Professor of Korean literature at the Division of Liberal Arts, Korea National Sport University. He is interested in novels about national division, literary memory and circulation of war, oppression of anti-communism and the course of aesthetic survey of Korean literature, and the modern project of Korean literature and division between the South and the North in Korean literature.

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