

Modern Korean Literature (II)

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3. Literature in the Period of National Division

Literature and National Division

Although Korea divested itself from Japanese colonial oppression in 1945, division and confrontation in thought and ideology led to the nation being swept by superior political strategy, and the division into north and south was unavoidable. The confrontation between the left and right wing directly after Liberation extended into the literary arena as well. If we look at post-Liberation fiction, we notice such important story collections as Yi T'ae-jun's "Haebang chŏnhu" (Liberation before and after, 1947), Ch'ae Man-shik's "Chehyangnal" (Ritual day, 1946), Kim Tong-ni's "Mu'nyŏdo" (The shaman painting, 1947), Chŏng Pi-sŏk's "P'ado" (Waves, 1946), Pak Yŏng-jun's "Mokhwasshi purilttae" (When the cotton seeds are sewn, 1946), Pak T'ae-wŏn's "Sŏngt'anje" (Christmas, 1948), Yŏm Sang-sŏp's "Samp'alsŏn" (Thirty-eighth parallel, 1948), Pak No-gap's "Sashimnyŏn" (Forty years, 1948), An Hoe-nam's "Chŏnwŏn" (Countryside, 1946), and Hwang

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Sun-wŏn's "Mongnŏmi maül-ŭi kae" (Dogs of Crossover Village, 1948). In general these stories show two main streams. The first is a movement that saw literature as a mechanism that controls social behavior and that tried to connect that mechanism with an index of social ideas. Authors such as Yi T'ae-jun, Pak T'ae-wŏn, An Hoe-nam, and Pak No-gap, who attempted to cope with the realities of life through class consciousness, represent the first category; authors such as Kim Nam-ch'ŏn and Hong Hyo-min utilize decidedly realistic methods to theoretically support this approach. The second tendency attempts to find meaning in human life and existence through a broad perspective on literature and life. Ch'ae Man-shik, along with authors such as Kim Tong-ni, Kye Yong-muk, Chŏng Pi-sŏk, Ch'oe Chŏng-hŭi, Hwang Sun-wŏn, and Ch'oe In-uk, belongs to this stream. This tendency toward two fictional streams was of course directly linked to the confrontation between left and right in the literary world at that time.

In the case of poetry, so-called political poetry, taking a political ideological standpoint, destroyed a considerable amount of the lyrical poetic form. Among the works of those poets who attempted a transformation by bringing political ideology into their poetic beliefs, Kim Ki-rim's "Saenoraē" (Birdcall, 1948) is centered in ideology, O Chang-hwan's "Pyŏngdŭn Seoul" (Sick Seoul, 1946) and *Na sanŭm kot* (Where I live, 1947) clearly embody a poetic attitude aiming toward present realities. An ideological aim is also emphasized in Yi Yong-ak's *Orangk'ae kkot* (Violets, 1947). Nationalist poets produced such collections as Pak Tu-jin, Pak Mog-wŏl, and Cho Chi-hun's collaboration *Ch'ŏngnokchup* (Blue Deer book, 1946), Kim Sang-ok's *Ch'ojŏk* (Reed pipe, 1947), Yu Ch'i-hwan's *Saengmyŏng-ŭi sŏ* (Book of

life, 1947), Sŏ Chŏng-ju's *Kwuch'okdo* (Cuckoo's path, 1948), and Pak Tu-jin's *Hae* (Sea, 1949). These achievements considerably influenced post-Liberation poetic currents. Among them, *Ch'ŏngnokchip* was the subject of much interest. It became commonplace to read the poems in this volume as a poetic discovery of nature as object, and critics consider it an important accomplishment that continues the thread of post-Liberation lyricism. Pak Mog-wŏl's local flavor, Pak Tu-jin's intellectual proclivity, and Cho Chi-hun's classical spirit deepen each poet's poetic individuality. Sŏ Chŏng-ju's *Kwuch'okdo* finds balance in lyricism more than speculation and embraces a broad range of emotion rather than sensibility. Yu Ch'i-hwan's *Saengmyŏng-ŭi sŏ* contains many ideological themes, but the later *Ullŏngdo* (Ullŏng Island, 1948) and *Ch'ŏngnyŏng ilgi* (Ch'ŏngnyŏng diary, 1949) begin to show an interest in life's realities.

Trends in Postwar Fiction

The Korean War was a tragic event that solidified the territorial division of the country. The problematic nature of the division conditioned postwar Korean society. It was after the mid-1950's that the nation began to recover from the chaos of war. Rejection and defiance of the ideologies and political systems that had given rise to the war sprouted, and there appeared a struggle to establish indices and values for a new life. In the realm of literature, arts magazines such as *Munhak yesul* (Literature and arts), *Hyŏndae munhak* (Contemporary literature), and *Chayu munhak* (Free literature) appeared, and together with variety magazines such as *Sasanggye* (World of thought) and *Shini'aeyang* (New sun) they built a new foundation for literary activity.

Among the trends in postwar fiction, the first to note is the changes in the works of authors who debuted before Liberation, such as Kim Tong-ni, Hwang Sun-wŏn, and An Su-gil. Kim Tong-ni's critical interest in the chaos of the war and society is embodied in such story collections as *Kwihwan changjŏng* (Young man's homecoming, 1950) and *Hŭngnam ch'ŏsu* (Evacuation of Hŭngnam, 1955). And stories such as "Tŭngshinbul" (Life-size Buddha, 1963) and "Kkach'i sori" (Call of magpies, 1966) reveal his continuing quest for the meaning of human destiny. "Tŭngshinbul" concerns original sin and religious salvation. "Kkach'i sori" details the complicated psyche of a man returned from battle: his anxiety about death and thirst for life, his anger toward the enemy and guilt toward war buddies. The novel "Saban-ŭi shipchaga" (Cross of Sabean, 1957), set in a Christian context, deals with original sin and the search for the path to salvation. In *Ŭlhwā* (1978) he re-creates the world of native shamanic beliefs.

Hwang Sun-wŏn enlarged his authorial vision after Liberation and produced many fruitful works after the war. The change in his artistic world begins when he breaks free of the constraints of the short story. His stories such as "Kogyesa" (Acrobats), "Hak" (Cranes), and "Tok chinnŭn nŭlgŭni" (The old potter) are subtle descriptions of various aspects of reality, but with the publication of *K'an-ŭ huye* (Descendants of Cain) in 1954 he attempts a more complete formulation of life. The novel deals with the bloody terrorism in north Korea after Liberation, bringing a critical eye to bear on the tyranny of blind ideology, which tramples down the human will to freedom. The novel "Ingan chŏmmok" (Human grafting, 1957), together with "Namutŭl pit'al-e sŏda" (Trees on a cliff, 1960), dealing

with the overcoming of the misery and scars of war, observes postwar conditions. Notable are the author's broad perspective and humanist spirit. In these novels as well as in "Irwöl" (The sun and the moon, 1965) and "Umjiginün söng" (The moving fortress, 1973) he contributed to a broadening and deepening of the technique and spirit of contemporary Korean fiction.

An Su-gil's stories "Che sam inganhyöng" (Third type of humanity, 1953) and "Paeshin" (Betrayal, 1955) are acute portrayals of the distortion wrought by the war in the consciousness and values of the common people. His novel "Pukkando" (North Chientao, 1959), centered in a Korean family that has settled in that area, narrates stages in the history of the Korean people from the end of the Chosön kingdom to the Japanese occupation. This work utilizes the structure of an epic to embody the attachment of farmers to their land, and the underlying nationalist consciousness.

When the prospects for life in the postwar ruins became opaque, those authors who had directly experienced the reality of the war denied all that had been established and expressed opposition to established ethical perceptions and social values. The critical attitude toward contemporary realities and the historical consciousness shown by such authors as Chang Yong-hak, Kim Söng-han, and Sönu Hwi established important values in postwar fiction. Chang Yong-hak's "Yohan shijip" (Poems of John the Baptist, 1955) uses abstraction and hollow-sounding language to critically depict the damage wrought by ideology, people, and class upon individual existence in wartime conditions. His novel "Wönhöng-üi chönsöl" (Circular tale, 1962) connects the consciousness of an illegitimate child to the distorted circumstances of the territorial division of the people, and attempts to

find meaning in original sin. Kim Söng-han's fiction is notable for its creation of active practitioners of human dignity and justice, to the exclusion of passive, adaptable human types. "Obun'gan" (Five minutes, 1955) and "Pabido" (1956) describe resistance to illogical realities. Sönu Hwi, in stories such as "T'erörisüt'ü" (Terrorist, 1956), "Pulkkot" (1957), and "Ori wa kyegüpchang" (Ducks and insignia, 1958), emphasizes an activist attitude that stresses active participation and decisiveness in present circumstances. In the mid-1960's, this attitude and his concern with the responsibilities of the intellectual changed into a more passive stance marked by deeper introspection of the human interior. In stories such as "Shipchaga ömnün Gologoda" (Golgotha without cross, 1965) and "Mukshi" (Revelation, 1971) he is more concerned with describing the inner truths of humanity than examining history and contemporary realities.

Another notable trend in postwar fiction is the intensity of the reportorial literature that criticizes the irrationality and absurd circumstances of reality. Such stories revolve about passionate criticism of contemporary absurdities and irrationalities. Of course, where this spiritual tendency changes from outer reality to one's inner aspects, a self-awareness that attempts to deal with circumstantialness is pronounced. In stories such as "Hyölsö" (Writing in blood, 1955), "Mihegyöl-üi chang" (Unsolved chapter, 1955), "Yushilmong" (Washed-out dream, 1956), and "Ing'yö ingan" (Surplus humanity, 1958) Son Ch'ang-söp shows us people who have been consigned to the lowest levels of a dark, depressing reality. That most of the figures in these stories possess an abnormal character or are handicapped reflects not the shortcomings of humanity but of postwar realities. Yi Pöm-sön's "Hak maül saramtül" (People of Crane Village, 1957) emphasizes the

meaning of history and one's identity with the people, while "Obalt'an" (Stray bullet, 1959) and "Naenghyŏl tongmul" (Cold-blooded animals, 1959) offer criticism of absurd realities. "Obalt'an" in particular treats the problem of poverty and the spiritual degradation of unfortunate people due to the war, and indicts postwar realities diffused with frustration and failure. Ch'oe In-hun's fictional works such as "Kwangjang" (Square, 1961), "Kuunmong" (Nine-cloud dream, 1962), "Hoesaegin" (Gray men, 1963), and "Ch'ongdok-ŭi sori" (Governor-general's voice, 1967), which deal with the wandering of intellectuals tormented by degraded postwar realities, are distinguished by their unique composition. "Kwangjang" in particular depicts the ideological conflict of a divided people while indicting the insularity and the coercive group mentality of the North Korean socialist structure, and at the same time critiquing the social inequalities and loose individualism of South Korea. Chŏn Kwang-yong, in "Kkŏppittan Ri" (Kapitan Ri, 1962) criticizes a hypocritical human type that survives a transitional historical period through sly opportunism. Yi Ho-ch'ŏl describes degraded circumstances and the hollowness of life in works such as "Tarajinŭn saltŭl" (Wearing thin, 1962) and "Soshimin" (Common folk, 1964), which critically approach the issue of the realities resulting from the division of the people. Sŏ Ki-wŏn in "I sŏngsukhan pan-ŭi p'oung" (This full night's embrace, 1960) uses a wartime deserter's guilty conscience, wandering, and eventual destruction to describe the despair and soul-searching of the postwar age. In "Hwasandaegi" (Woman from Hwasan, 1952) and "Kaet maŭl" (Seaside village, 1953) O Yŏng-su seeks a genuine, unchanged human-heartedness amidst wartime suffering. Ha Kŭn-ch'an's "Sunan idae" (Suffering of two generations, 1957) captures the

pain of a father and son who have experienced both the suffering of the colonial period and the wretched tragedy of the Korean war. "Wangnŭng-kwa chudungun" (King's tomb and occupying forces, 1963) targets social changes that follow the stationing of American forces in Korea.

The activities of women writers contributed, in terms of fictional technique, sensibility, and style, to the establishment of a new fictional aesthetics in postwar fiction. They sought the meaning of existence for those surviving the confusion of postwar society, and in their profound descriptions of human consciousness, they quested for a new type of humanity. Among the best known of these authors are Son So-hŭi, Kang Shin-jae, Han Mal-suk, and Pak Kyŏng-ri. Through love conflicts, Son So-hŭi keenly shows us, in such works as "Ch'angp'o p'il muryŏp" (When the sweetflag blooms, 1956) and "T'aeyang-ŭi kyegok" (Valley of the sun, 1959), women's psychology. Notable in such works is the beauty of the pure love that transcends such conflicts. Kang Shin-jae uses a delicate, sensuous style in describing the ties between women's fate and the established moral code. "Chŏlmŭn nŭt'inamu" (The young willow, 1960), which depicts the pure love between a girl and her half-brother (an unusual family arrangement at the time), and "Imjingang-ŭi mindŭlle" (Dandelions on the Imjin River, 1962), which portrays the tragic love of a young person swept by wartime suffering, can be said to have transformed the linguistic sensitivity and sensibility of postwar fiction. Pak Kyŏng-ni's "Pulshin shidae" (Age of distrust, 1957) describes the degradation of contemporary society as seen through a woman's eyes. In "Kim yakkuk-ŭi ttaltŭl" (Daughters of Pharmacist Kim, 1962) she departs from her own experience and establishes a synthesized

viewpoint. And in "Shijang-kwa chŏnjang" (Marketplace and battlefield, 1964) she simultaneously utilizes the vision of quotidian people carrying on their everyday lives, and an ideological viewpoint toward war, in an attempt to analyze the inner aspects of the Korea War. Han Mal-suk's "Shinhwa-üi ta'ae" (Precipice of myth, 1957) criticizes the kind of postwar woman who lives only for the moment "Hayan tojöng" (White journey, 1960) describes the people of a new age, who oppose the philistinism and hypocrisy of the present age.

Lyricism and Experimntal Tendencies in Postwar Poetry

Among the changes in the world of postwar poetry, the expansion of lyricism is notable. A pronounced tendency toward the emotion of local flavor becomes apparent in the poetic world of Sŏ Chŏng-ju after the publication of his poetry collection *Kwich'okto* in 1948. Among his notable accomplishments, he makes possible the poetic refinement of regional dialect, and the balance and order of the poetic form are naturally constituted in the inherent meter. Between the publication of *Shilla ch'o* (Excerpts from Shilla) in 1961 and *Tongch'on* (Winter sky) in 1969 Sŏ Chŏng-ju's poetry descends into the oft-told world of the Shilla kingdom, which we could call the deepest abyss of his poetic world. His interest in Shilla reveals an antihistorical tendency, but this space is very important in that it is the home of the poet's imaginative powers.

The postwar works of Yu Ch'i-hwan are condensed in his *Ch'ŏngma shijip* (Ch'ŏngma's poetry collection, 1954) and *Yu Ch'i-hwan shusŏn* (Selected poems of Yu Ch'i-hwan, 1958). Before the war he had boldly attempted to introduce conceptualization more than poetic sensibility or lyricism, but after experiencing the war, he enlarged

both the sensory and the lyrical attributes of his poetry.

Pak Tu-jin, Pak Mog-wŏl, and Cho Chi-hun, the three members of the Blue Deer Group, reaped the most significant harvest in the post-Liberation poetry realm through their postwar poetic activities. In all cases, by focusing on perfecting their poetry, they consistently maintained the features that characterized their group. And while maintaining their collaboration, each underwent a gradual transformation in the postwar period that manifested characteristics unique to each. In poetry collections such as *Odo* (Afternoon prayer, 1953) and *Pak Tu-jin sŏnjip* (Selected poems of Pak Tu-jin, 1956) Pak Tu-jin uses repeated rhythms and superb musical language to express his beliefs. He sings of the life force of nature, and of nature as symbolic of human volition. His poetry collection *Kŏmi-wa sŏngjwa* (Spider and constellation, 1962) marks the beginning of an attempt to concentrate on the domain of contemporary life. Having experienced the April 1960 Student Revolution and the military coup of the following year, he values conviction in life and a constructive critical awareness more than transcendental beliefs. With *Susŏk yŏlchŏn* (Water-rock biographies, 1973) he attains a universal vision, based in his own consciousness that ranges beyond the limits of time and space. In this collection he attempts to raise poetry to the level of ethics and religion, and to do so he broadens his themes more than refining his technique.

In the period spanning his poetry collections *Sandohwa* (Wild peach blossoms, 1954) and *Nan. kit'a* ("Orchids" and other poems, 1959), Pak Mog-wŏl applies a delicate sensibility in re-creating traditional sentiment and lyricism, and brings into his poetic world the experience of everyday reality and life. In poetically configuring the

experience of everyday life, he departs from the sensuous simplicity of his early poems. His later poetry, as seen in *Kyōngsangdo karangip* (Fallen leaves in Kyōngsang, 1968), shows even better his transcendent view of life, and achieves a balanced perspective and a composed view of the relation between life and death.

After his 1952 collection *P'ullip tanjang* (Grass: fragments) Cho Chi-hun, in volumes such as *Yōksa ap-esō* (In the presence of history, 1959), sings of nature in poems about moderation, balance, and harmony, and expands his interest in societal realities amid wartime suffering

Pak Nam-su in his *Kalmegi somyo* (Seagull sketch, 1959) uses the image of a sea gull to represent wartime destruction and harsh refugee life. In his *Sae-ŭi amjang* (A bird's clandestine burial, 1970) he departs from a war-victim consciousness and in unself-conscious poetry he concerns himself instead with a quest for the essence of human life and the meaning of existence, and a history-based critique of materialism.

Postwar poetry was shaped by a new generation of poets appearing in the 1950's. Among these poets was a group categorized variously as the Traditionalists or the Lyricists. Their most important characteristic was their belief in individual emotion and sensibility, and their broad assimilation of the traditional world of nature into the poetic realm. Pak Chae-sam enlarged the scope of traditional poetry early on by incorporating the world of premodern sentiment and a regional sensibility. In poems such as "Urūm-i t'anūn kang" (Weeping river, 1959) he brings to life in rhythmical language the hollowness of human life and the pathos originating from therein. Yi Tong-ju and Pak Yong-nae produced a uniquely lyrical poetry based

in regional sensibility and lyricism. Occupying their poetry is crystal nature singing of love for one's native soil and the beauty of nature. Not surprisingly, their poetic sense is untainted, concise, and artless, and is expressed in simple language. Kim Nam-jo's 1960 poetry collection *Chŏngnyŏm-ŭi ki* (Flag of passion) sings in prayerful terms of a desire for a more elevated life. *Kyŏul pada* (Winter waves, 1967) displays spiritual richness with a skillful blend of sensuous language and dynamic images. In poetry based in lyricism, Chŏng Han-mo carries on an indomitable search for human love. After the publication of his poetry collection *Yŏbaek-ŭl wihan sŏjŏng* (Lyrics for a blank space, 1959), he seeks more primitive aspects of humanity along with the essence of purity. His uniqueness lies in the awe and praise with which he regards the human life force. Cho Pyŏng-hwa, in poetry collections such as *P'aegak-ŭi ch'imshil* (Seashell Chamber, 1952) and *Sŏul* (Seoul, 1957), which sing of everyday experience and the life environment, affirms human life and seeks welfare in any circumstances. His straightforward accounts of daily affairs give us the feeling of a positive perspective on human life.

The most pronounced quality of 1950's poetry appears in a new group of poets who took pains to accept the possibilities of language and to take contemporary realities as their subject. They groped for free-verse methods that would enable them to overcome tangled realities, confused circumstances, and endless material need. They rejected the tendency of the Traditionalist poets to confine themselves to the lyrical world of the inner self, which was severed from external realities. This group, frequently referred to as the Experimentalists or the Actualists, revolved about poets such as Kim Kyŏng-nin, Cho Hyang, Kim Kyu-dong, and Yi Pong-nae. The most

uniquely salient elements of their poems can be said to be an interest in linguistic technique and an expansion of poetic theme. In the majority of cases, their language is object-centered, their themes concerned with the darkness of urban culture. In the sense that they add a realistic dimension to the closed lyric world, these characteristics acquire an affirmative significance. In particular, we should take note of this poetry's critical awareness of various contemporary cultural phenomena and its embodiment of a poetic spirit that attempts to actively incorporate that awareness.

If we look at all the streams of postwar poetry, we see that the work of Kim Hyŏn-sŭng, who underwent a steadfast conceptual pursuit of self, grounded in absolute faith, and that of Ku Sang and Kim Ch'un-su, who in their poetic world targeted the meaning of existence and the possibilities of language, represent one strand among the trends of this period. In addition, poets such as Song Uk, Kim Ku-yong, Min Chae-shik, Sŏng Ch'an-gyŏng, Pak Hŭi-jin, Shin Tong-jip, Mun Tŏk-su, Kim Kwang-nim, Kim Chong-sam, Ch'ŏn Sang-byŏng, and Hong Yun-suk continued their efforts to expand and deepen their poetic awareness. Kim Hyŏn-sŭng sang of the human belief in the absolute, but proposed to safeguard humanity at the point of absolute solitude. His *Kyŏngohan kodok* (Indestructible solitude, 1968) is the fruit of his effort to bring an absolute state of solitude to the space of human existence. Ku Sang seeks to develop an aesthetic consciousness on a decidedly existential base. He does not accept sentiment devoid of a deep awareness of existence, nor does he rely on crude intellect lacking a basis in historical consciousness. In his "Ch'ot'o-ŭi shi" (Scorched-earth poems, 1956) the Korean War, which the poet himself directly experienced, becomes

through the agency of a transcendent poetic awareness the realistic world of a lyrical self and its object. Kim Ch'un-su, who seeks through language the existential meaning of the poetic object, attempts in his *Kkot-ŭi somyo* (Flower sketch, 1959) to expand his awareness of his own existence into the realm of contemporary reality. What he takes note of is the problem of the poetic awareness of the object, and in the collection *T'aryŏngjo, kit'a* ("Ballad" and other poems, 1959) the realm of existence is expanded into a realm of poetry devoid of conception and meaning.

Pak Pong-u's *Hyujŏnsŏn* (Cease-fire line, 1967), Kim Kwang-nim's *Sangshumhanŭn chŏmmok* (Grievous grafting, 1959), and Chŏn Pong-gŏn's *Sarang-ŭl wihan toep'un* (Once more for love, 1959) are other important works from this period.

Satire in Drama

Post-Liberation theater, having experienced the confusion of the 1945-50 period and the disasters of the Korean War, emphasized critical awareness and satire of societal realities, while beginning to clearly display a dramatic character. Ham Se-dŏk's "Kimi 3-wŏl 1-il" (March 1 of the kimi year, 1946), which dramatizes one aspect of the March 1, 1919, Independence Movement, and Yu Ch'i-jin's "Choguk" (Fatherland, 1948) are notable in the immediate post-Liberation period. O Yŏng-jin's "Sarainnŭn Yi Chung-saeng kakha" (His extant excellency Yi Chung-saeng, 1949) became a sensation, critiquing the downfall of a pro-Japanese who clings to self-interest after Liberation. Among postwar plays, Ch'a Pŏm-sŏk's "Pulmoji" (Barren land, 1957) and "Sanpul" (Forest fire, 1963) may be cited first. The former depicts despairing survivors unable to overcome wartime injuries. The latter

contrasts the falsity of ideology with instinctive human desires.

The emergence of Yi Kŭn-sam marks a change in postwar theater. His "Wŏngoji" (Manuscript paper, 1960) gave rise to the development of a new wave of Korean theater, one centered in traditional realism. While striving for an emphatically satiric theater, he boldly incorporates narrative methods and attempts technical evolution, leading the changes in postwar drama. His satiric methods and keen awareness of contemporary realities are borne out in "Widaehan shilchong" (Great abscondence, 1963), which criticizes the lives of the upper class and people who destroy themselves out of vanity and lust for fame. Plays such as "Che 18 konghwaguk" (18th republic, 1965) and "Taewang-ŭn chukki-rŭl kŏbuhætta" (The king rejected death, 1962) show an evolution in his satire and criticism of contemporary politics. Among the playwrights who emerged after Yi Kŭn-sam, there are those who show a sharp reaction to politics and other current affairs, but their works are outnumbered by plays that attempt to internalize contemporary issues and penetrate to the essence of human life. Pertinent examples are Im Hŭi-jæ's "Korae" (Whale, 1956), Pak Cho-yŏl's "Mogaji-ka kin tu saram-ŭi taehwa" (Conversation between two people with long necks, 1967), Yi Chæ-hyŏn's "Hæ ttŭnŭn sŏm" (Island sunrise, 1966), and Ch'ŏn Sŭng-se's "Mansŏn" (Full boat, 1964).

Overcoming the Postwar Mindset

Postwar Korean literature shows a transformation around the time of the student revolution on April 19, 1960. Accompanying the revolution was a great change in the awareness of literature. We might call this change, which followed changes in the political and

social systems, a change in people's attitudes toward contemporary realities. We see the rebuilding of lives ruined by the war, a departure from a victimization complex, and an active interest in contemporary realities. Conceptions of the purity of literature disappear in favor of a contemporary literature that embodies life force, will, and deep emotion. In particular, one element of the poetry establishment rejected the inward-looking lyricism displayed by postwar poetry and began to speak loudly of their "participation" in contemporary realities. This participation can be called an expression of the poets' intention to embody in literature the true value of life.

The leaders of this "participation" discourse were Kim Su-yŏng and Shin Tong-yŏp. After the publication of Kim's collection *Tal nara-ŭi changnan* (At play on the moon, 1959) he attempts to transform his poetic direction, seeking a unique balance between an experimental outlook and poetic lyricism. His discourse on participation, which emphasized literature and reality, is centrally informed by the notion of freedom. He concludes that the fearful violence that shatters the diversity and vigor of Korean culture is conditioned by a lack of political freedom. He argues for a revival of the true meaning of freedom as experienced through the April 19 revolution. The banter, curses, and backbiting appearing in his poetry reveal a satirical meaning aimed at the common people's timidity, which led to the thwarting of the revolution.

If we can say that Kim Su-yŏng's poetry seeks a harmony between lyricism and intellectual language, then Shin Tong-yŏp seeks through his poetry to unify traditional lyricism with historical consciousness. He traces through his poetry collection *Asanyŏ* (1963) the collapse of the traditional way of life as a result of historical upheavals. In

revealing the falsities of history and of contemporary realities, he puts forth a populist ideology, and in his epic poem *Kŭmgang* (Kŭm River, 1969), he expands his poetic vision to include a heated nationalist consciousness as well as a historical consciousness.

In the mid-1960's, the literary issue of participation in contemporary realities became the concern of all literati. That it was necessary for literature to express a belief in history and contemporary realities was accepted as an appropriate demand. There was a new awakening to the tradition of nationalist literature and its successors. The literary realm, which had been satisfactory as long as it dealt with the realm of individual sentiment, resumed its position between history and contemporary reality. It thereby departed from the shriveled imagination of postwar literature and freed itself of the war-related victimization complex.

Industrialization and Expansion of Social Awareness in Fiction

In the late 1960's, Korea entered a period of rapid industrialization. But along with a surge of materialism throughout society, there appeared a gap between haves and have-nots that generated social conflict. The movement of population from the farming villages to the large cities and the materialism centered in the urban middle class led to the pursuit of pleasure and amusement and the decline of culture into commercialism. In reaction to this trend, a movement arose to overcome class conflict and to recover a moral imagination. These sorts of social changes along with the phenomenon of cultural conflict exerted an immediate effect on literature. Starting in the mid-1960's, the task of studying the issue of the lives of common people gave birth to a theory of nationalist literature and to debates

that pointed in a variety of directions, while departing from the theoretical emphases on participatory and pure literature. Appearing during this period were such quarterly literary journals as *Ch'angjak-kwa pip'yŏng* (Creation and criticism), *Munhak-kwa chisŏng* (Literature and intellect), and *Segye-ŭi munhak* (World literature) as well as the arts journal *Munhak sasang* (Literature and thought) and poetry journals such as *Shi munhak* (Poetry), *Hyŏndae shihak* (Contemporary poetics), and *Shumsang* (Image). These various publications enlarged the base of literary activity.

The latter half of the 1960's marked the appearance of a young group of writers, known as the Han'gŭl Generation, who had not been educated during the colonial period. The emergence of Kim Sŭng-ok may be considered the start of the literary activities of this generation. His first literary work, as well as an individualistic ambition to progress beyond it, is seen in a nutshell in his 1964 story "Mujin kŏhaeng" (Record of a journey to Mujin). In this story, which utilizes a homecoming motif, the trends in the protagonist's consciousness summarize the internal conflict of everyday life and deviations from it. Kim Sŭng-ok's authorial sensibilities are revealed even more concretely in works such as "Sŏul 1964-nyŏn kyŏul" (Seoul: Winter 1964, 1965) and "60-nyŏndae shik" (1960's style, 1968). These stories detail the individual's existence as it is tied to everyday life and the consciousness of common people. In minutely describing the problem of contemporary realities captured through the individual's sensibility, Kim Sŭng-ok brings alive in his prose the sensation of a new style lacking in postwar fiction.

Yi Ch'ŏng-jun offers a contrast to Kim Sŭng-ok. If we can call Kim Sŭng-ok a writer of sensibility, then we can name Yi Ch'ŏng-jun a

conceptual writer. In such works as "Pyöngshin-kwa möjori" (Fool and idiot, 1966) Yi contrasts reality with concept, nihilism with volition. In the oppressive political conditions of the 1970's, he produced such issue-oriented works as "Somun-üi pyök" (Wall of rumor, 1971) and "Tangshintül-üi ch'önguk" (This paradise of yours, 1976). The object of interest in these works is the opposition of the human spirit to political and societal mechanisms and their tyranny. In "Chaninhan toshi" (Cruel city, 1978) he describes even more elaborately the meaning of closed circumstances and freedom from them. And in "Shigan-üi mun" (Time's gate, 1982), he shows us the meaning of time in making possible our awareness of human existence. This new theme of seeking human existence and the perfection of art in responding to it is proof of the possibility of confirming this author's belief in it.

Ch'oe In-ho gives us a world of short fiction that describes in a variety of techniques aspects of the existence and lives of individuals in a rapidly urbanizing living space. The urban space that becomes problematic in the course of industrialization and images of people meeting the crisis of stagnation caused by the loss of meaning of their existence in that space are the basic subjects of his stories. Such stories as "Sulkkun" (The boozier, 1968), "T'ain-üi pang" (Another man's room, 1971), "Tol-üi ch'osang" (Portrait of a stone, 1978), and "Kipko purün pam" (Deep blue night, 1982) added a consciousness of serious issues together with innovations in the world of Korean fiction as an industrial era was ushered in. Novels such as "Pyöltül-üi kohyang" (Home of the stars, 1973), "Pabotül-üi haengjin" (Fools' procession, 1973), "Körae sanyang" (Whale hunting, 1982), and "Kyöul nagüne" (Winter wanderer, 1983), featuring an urban sensibility,

sensitive psychological description, and dramatic incident, greatly expanded the mass readership for fiction.

Yi Mun-yŏl brings myth and history into his novels such as "Saram-ŭi adŭl" (Son of man, 1979) and "Hwangje-rŭl wihayŏ" (For the emperor, 1980). He writes fiction in the form of fables or historical novels with fictitious characters. In doing so he criticizes the circumstances of the present generation in a roundabout way, or symbolically fictionalizes them. Works such as "Yŏngung shidae" (Age of heroes, 1984), "Pyŏn'gyŏng" (Borderland, 1989), and "Uritŭl-ŭi ilgŭrŏjin yŏngung" (Our twisted hero, 1987) concern the circumstances of the division of the nation into north and south as well as the realities of the present generation. In these works he deals directly with the civil war-induced separation of millions of Koreans and with ideological conflict, thereby introducing a new dimension to the literature of territorial division. And in works such as "Chŏlmŭn nal-ŭi ch'osang" (Portrait of youthful days, 1981), "Kŭdae tashi-nŭn kohyang-e kajimot'ari" (You can't go home again, 1980), and "Kŭmshijo" (Garuda, 1983), which fictionalize his personal experience and his belief in art, conceptual themes such as art and life are manifested in a florid style.

From the 1970's on, the greatest problems to appear in the industrialization of Korean society are the living conditions of farmers who lag behind modernization, and the painful lives of urban laborers. Yi Mun-gu, in works such as "Amsŏ" (Cow, 1970), "Kwanch'on sup'il" (Kwanch'on essays, 1977), and "Uri tongne" (Our village, 1981), which deal broadly with the structural contradictions of agrarian society and the suffering of farmers, illuminates agrarian realities and the lives of farmers from various angles. In particular,

"Kwanch'on sup'il", a linked-story novel, is significant in tracing the rapid metamorphosis of the farming villages and the collapse of their traditional order.

The best contrast with agrarian realities during industrialization is offered by the lives of laborers living in the outskirts of the cities. Their lives can be called yet another social issue embraced by Korean society from the 1970's on. Hwang Sök-yöng, in his "Kaekchi" (Far from home) and "Samp'o kanün kil" (Road to Samp'o), set in laborers' work sites, probes problematic living conditions and their solution. The literary significance shown by the novella "Kaekchi" is that it captures the relationship between itinerant laborers and society. The author, using as a medium the problematic character shown by the protagonist, describes the laborers' struggle and defeat. "Samp'o kanün kil" symbolically illustrates one aspect of the 1970's, which were characterized by full-scale urbanization and industrialization.

Cho Se-hüi's "Nanjangi-ka ssoaollin chagün kong" (Little ball launched by a dwarf), shows the typical linked-story form, consisting of discrete stories unified into an episodic novel. In this work the dwarf and his family symbolize the class of people who have been oppressed and trampled on. Because of the winds of change sweeping out from the cities, instability of moral standards, and societal jealousies and alienation, they have lost the foundation of their lives. In its critical awareness of contemporary realities, its anti-realistic, uniquely terse style, and its shifts in point of view between narrator and setting, this work harmonizes with the linked-story form. It is considered one of the great achievements of 1970's fiction.

Yun Hüng-gil, in his linked stories "Ahop k'yölle-üi kudu-ro namün

sanae" (Man who was left as nine pairs of shoes, 1977) and "Chiksön-kwa koksön" (Straight line, curved line, 1977), also captures the societal contradictions caused by distorted industrialization. In these stories, the author, using a problematic individual as his protagonist, traces the maturation of consciousness from the shedding of self-consciousness, through devotion to the workplace, to a new self-awareness, while revealing the spiritual symptoms of this period.

Still another characteristic trend reflected in fiction from the 1970's on is a steady development of efforts to revive through fiction the tragic experience of the Korean War and the territorial division of the people. Works by Kim Wŏn-il such as "Ödum-üi hon" (Spirit of darkness, 1973), Noül (Afterglow, 1978), "Hwanmyöl-ül ch'ajasö" (In search of dissipation, 1983), and "Kyöul koltchagi" (Winter valley, 1987) embody on the fictional stage the historical tragedy of the territorial division of the Korean people. Noül, an in-depth description of the experience of the confusion of the immediate post-Liberation period and the upheaval leading up to the Korean War, emphasizes the contradictions of an ineradicable feudal social structure, contradictions that underlay the territorial division of the people and the Korean War. "Kyöul koltchagi", dealing forthrightly with the historical tragedy of ideological conflict, territorial division, and war, connects the source of that tragedy to the conflictual social structure of the colonial period.

In Chŏn Sang-guk's fiction as well, the majority of stories are related to the Korean War. Among his fiction, such works as "San ullim" (Mountain echo, 1979) and "Angae-üi nun" (Eyes in the mist, 1979) capture the painful lives of refugees. "Abe-üi kajok" (Abe's family, 1979) is notable for approaching the most fundamental issues

entrenched in the realities of a divided land. This novel uses the life of a woman who has lived through the war and postwar realities to point out the unhealed wounds of war. The character Abe symbolizes the tragedy of war and the pain remaining from it. His family are victims who must endure that pain. If we follow this line of reasoning we can say with assurance that all Koreans are no different from Abe's family.

Cho Chŏng-nae's *Pullori* (Playing with fire, 1983) along with his "Yuhŏng-ŭi ttang" (Land of exile, 1981) dramatically embody the realities of a divided land. His fiction, which puts wartime conditions on stage, illustrates how to dissolve the conflictual class structure that has occupied a place in traditional Korean society. The Korean War and the division of the land — the topics that interest this author — are considered to be in a process of dissolution as the contradictions of a social structure that has distorted the people's lives are further distorted by ideology. His novel "T'aebaek sarmaek" (T'aebaek Mountains, 1986) further expands this comprehension. This work, which depicts the period of upheaval between Liberation and the Korean War, is considered a valuable effort in the history of Korean fiction to overcome the division mentality.

In the eyes of critics the most unique accomplishment of the fiction establishment in the age of industrialization has been the emergence of the roman fleuve. Works such as Pak Kyŏng-ni's "T'oji" (Land), Yi Pyŏng-ju's "Chirisan" (Chiri Mountain), Hwang Sŏk-yŏng's "Chang Kulsan", and Kim Chu-yŏng's "Kaekchu" (Innkeeper), serialized over long periods in the 1970's, expanded interest in historical circumstance ranging up to contemporary issues. Cho Chŏng-nae's "T'aebaek sarmaek" and Yi Mun-yŏl's "Pyŏn'gyŏng", extending

through the mid-1980's, drew interest in the fiction establishment. These lengthy works were written on a vast scale never before experienced in post-1945 fiction. If we consider the issues making up the fictional subjects of these works, we can say that the fact that the Korean fiction establishment broadened its viewpoint and depth to the extent that it could incorporate such novels has an extremely important meaning.

Pak Kyŏng-rŭ's "T'oji" depicts the collapse and transition of an aristocratic clan during a century of historical changes ranging from the latter Chosŏn kingdom through the colonial period. At the center of the story that forms the narrative frame of this novel is a group of characters extending through four generations, and characters from various classes who become involved with them; lives of the people from each generation are shown. "T'oji" by designing a unit of blood relations called the family and connecting its expansion with generational change, and thereby creating typical people who live through the upheavals attending the modernization of Korean society beginning late in the Chosŏn period.

In Hwang Sŏk-yŏng's "Chang Kil-san" the will and life force of the masses take shape in the person of a man named "Chang Kil-san". The entire contents of the novel revolve about the life of this problematic individual, but not for the purpose of outlining him as a heroic figure. Through the lives of "Chang Kil-san" and the numerous people who follow him the work reveals in full scale the suffering and opposition of the Chosŏn period commoner class, who have lost the basis of their lives because of the tyrannical government of the ruling class, and their longing for a new life.

Especially noteworthy among the roman fleuves published in the

1980's is Cho Chŏng-nae's "T'aebaek sanmaek". This novel stages the period of upheaval in the national history that extends from Liberation, through the division of the nation, to the Korean War, and realistically examines the origins and factual nature of communist guerrilla activity in such events as the Yŏsu and Sunch'ŏn rebellions and the partisan campaign on Chiri Mountain. Through an inner magnification of historical space, the novel reveals thematic effects that focus on the development of the circumstances leading to the territorial division, and becomes a medium for embodying the whole meaning of our contemporary history. "T'aebaek sanmaek" overcomes the ideological taboos marking the oppressive reality of the early 1980's, demands a new objective recognition of the national division and the choice of ideology, and reflects on the fact that the tragedy of the national division and the Korea War originated for the most part among contradictions within the people. Its significance can be acknowledged in these respects.

The literary activities of women writers occupied an important position in the fiction establishment beginning in the 1970's. The fiction of such writers as Pak Wan-sŏ, O Chŏng-hŭi, Sŏ Yŏng-ŭn, Kim Ch'ae-wŏn, Kang Sŏk-kyŏng, Yang Kwi-ja, and Shin Kyŏng-suk consisted of many issue-oriented works that departed from what had frequently been cited as a female sensibility. These authors set forth as their theme the recovery of a moral consciousness and a system of values that had fallen into confusion amid contemporary change, and they challenge the issue of the reality of the national division and show efforts to overcome it. In some of their stories they visit labor work sites and problematize the unfairly neglected situation of women workers. And of course there are many works that capture

the interior world of people through elaborate description

Pak Wan-sŏ focuses on critiquing and satirizing the middle-class lifestyle. Works such as her "Toshi-ŭi hyungnyŏn" (Lean year in the city, 1979) and "Hwich'ŏnggŏrinŭn ohu" (Staggering afternoon, 1978) elaborately depict the lifestyle that takes shape around a family and keenly point out changes in societal values and standards. The reality of the merciless erosion of the values and ethics that have sustained Korean society and the human degradation resulting from materialism and the desire to advance at all costs are issues we can frequently encounter in Pak Wan-sŏ's fiction. Works such as "Ŏmma-ŭi malttuk" (Mother's hitching post, 1982) and "Mimang" (Unforgotten, 1990), even if they do not squarely confront the tragedy of colonial period history and the national division, succeed in revealing the erosion of old-time customs and the collapse of the value system caused by distorted societal upheavals. We can say that together with its critical recognition of contemporary realities, this authorial attitude is characterized by a "moral realism" that repeatedly inquires where the true significance of human life lies.

Ō Chŏng-hŭi's fictional world consists of many works that describe the destructive impulses of people isolated from everyday reality. These impulses are expressed in such motifs as physical handicaps, perverted carnal desire, and sexual barrenness. Her story "Chŏnyŏk-ŭi keim" (Evening game, 1979) is the best example of this characteristic. The most notable aspect of this work is its psychological description based on stream-of-consciousness. Discord with her father and memories of her mentally ill mother, now deceased, and her runaway older brother flash through the protagonist's mind. The unifying element in this fragmented story is the regressive and despairing

atmosphere that envelops the evening scene of father and daughter. The stories collected in O's 1980's anthologies "Yunyön-üi ttül" (Garden of childhood, 1981) and "Param-üi nök" (Spirit on the wind, 1986) begin to show a change in this trend: the intensity of impulse eases, to be replaced by a nihilistic attitude toward meaningless daily life. To be sure, stories such as "Yunyön üi ttül" and "Chunggukin köri" (Chinatown, 1979) depict the experiences of a bleak postwar childhood, but their emotional basis is the same as in other stories. In stories such as "Pyölsa" (Words of farewell, 1981) we can see that the development of the protagonist's self-awareness according to the life demands of contemporary realities is colored with a pronounced nihilism.

The largest portion of Sö Yöng-ün's works is occupied by this same nihilism and an untainted spiritual isolation. In "Samak-ül könnönün pöp" (Way to cross a desert, 1975) the inner world of a scarred Vietnam War veteran who wishes to return to daily life is expressed through the sympathy of an old man who lives in a world of illusion. The image of a naive, pitiful individual who suffers silently in the face of lethargy and a Philistine life can be seen in "Kwansa saram-tül" (Those in official housing, 1980). In "Mön küdae" (Dear distant love, 1983) a pronounced nihilism takes the form of affirmation and self-sacrifice. The nihilism that suffuses this story is expressed not in a denial of the world but in a positive, absolute affirmation.

We see similar tendencies in the works of Kim Ch'ae-wön. Stories such as "Ch'orokpit moja" (Green hat, 1979), "Aech'ön" (Tender spring), and "Kyöul-üi hwan" (Winter illusion, 1989) capture in a decidedly confidential tone the world of self-awareness. Works such

as Yang Kwi-ja's "Wönmi-dong saramtül" (People of Wönmi-dong, 1987) and Shin Kyöng-suk's "Punggüm-i ittön chari" (Where the organ once stood) are considered valuable fictional achievements gained through feminine writing methods based in one's inner rhythms and sensibility.

Poetry, Language, and Mass Consciousness

Korean society underwent a period of turmoil in the 1970's owing to its closed political culture and to waves of rapid industrialization. During this time, attempts to revive an impaired human life began to surface in the realm of poetry. This movement preserved the lyric character of poetry as much as possible while attempting to include the realities of life. By adding a higher dimension to the participation outlook of 1960's poetry, the movement was able to maintain an affective balance. It depicted through language images of warped humanity while displaying exalted emotions that transcend contemporary realities. In most of this poetry inhumane elements contained in that which is urbanized and civilized are denounced in witty language. Transposed values, a politics of violence, and the tyranny of a group mentality inexorably wear away in the language and imagination of utter freedom captured by the poets of this movement. But these poets never raised their voices, instead continuing to conceal their emotion behind a veil of language.

For Hwang Tong-gyu the period of industrialization from the 1970's on led to an expanded imagination and an exalted poetic spirit. If we look at his 1975 poetry collection *Samnam-e naerinün nun* (Snow falling on the three southern provinces) we see that the contemporary realities confronted so dramatically in the paradoxical

language he favors are approached from a critical recognition of political violence and its ruthlessness. To show how political violence can destroy an individual's unspoiled dreams and love, he presents in a poetic setting a cruel reality and a dark world in which dreams and love cannot be realized. In poetry collections from the 1970's on such as *Na-nŭn pak'wi-rŭl pomyŏn kulligo ship'ŏjinda* (When I see a wheel I want to make it roll, 1978) and *Kyŏndil su ōmnŭn kabyŏun chonjaetŭl* (Beings unbearably light, 1988), Hwang intensifies his interest in the essence of the world rather than in issues of contemporary reality. In the process he left us with his masterpiece of song, the linked-poem collection *P'ungjang* (Wind burial, 1984). This work is the outcome of the poet's effort to return to pristine nature and its essence.

Such poetry collections as Yi Sŭng-hun's *Tangshin-ŭi ch'osang* (Portrait of the beloved, 1981) and *Samultŭl* (Objects, 1983), Chŏng Hyŏn-jong's *Samul-ŭi kkum* (Objects' dreams, 1972) and *Saranghal shigan-i manch'i ant'a* (Not much time for love, 1989), and O Kyu-wŏn's *I ttang-ŭi ssŭŏjinŭn sŏjŏngshi* (Lyrics written in this land, 1981) and *Kakkŭm-ŭn chumok pannŭn saeng-igo shipta* (Sometimes I want to be noticed, 1987) are the work of poets excavating a new poetic world through poetic language and experimental technique. These poets differ from one another in their understanding of the poetic object and their attitude toward ways of expressing it through language, but they are similar in their moderate emotion, resourceful language, and abstruse techniques. Although there is a propensity toward an isolationism that adheres to the individual's inner consciousness, along with abstruse technique and a critical subject, their efforts to capture the revolution in poetic sensibility have

yielded practical results in terms of embodying the characteristics of a poetry of comprehending.

From the poets who emerged in the latter 1960's we have various unique collections such as *Mu-myǒng yǒnshi* (Unenlightened love poems, 1986) by O Se-yǒng, *Mangch'o kkot hana* (A single horseweed, 1983) by Yi Kǒn-ch'ǒng, *Hanghae ilchi* (Sailing diary, 1984) by Kim Chong-hae, *Yǒnp'il-lo ssūgi* (Writing with a pencil, 1984) by Chǒng Chin-gyu, and *Changja shup'yǒn* (Chuang-tzu poems, 1988) by Pak Che-ch'ǒn. While these works are endowed with intellectual insight into objects, they are devoted in greater portion to establishing poetic lyricism than experimental language. Though not ignoring traditional poetic lyricism, these poets attempt to revive an urban sensibility and to incorporate in their poetic world the truth of lives based in experience. The panorama of their own poetic world ranges widely from affective responses to the trivial of life to a refined spiritual level culminating in a state of Zen.

Among the literary trends reacting to the closed politics and society and the rapid industrialization of the 1970's, the most notable is populist poetry. The populist poetry movement, building upon the literary interest in participation in contemporary realities, expressed criticism and satire of corrupt political realities, and depicts images of the lives of the alienated masses through poetry. Populist poetry linked the poets' interest in and passion for contemporary realities with radical language, and occasionally reveals an overly ideological coloration. Kim Chi-ha's *Ojǒk* (Five enemies, 1970), by utilizing various traditional verse styles such as *kasa* (narrative poem), *ʻaryǒng* (ballad), *p'ansori* (oral narrative), and *sasŏl* (extended lyric), suggests new possibilities for narrative poetry. The satire in this

work, which reveals humor in some places and pathos in others, would have to be called an experiment in verse forms. Kim Chi-ha's literature next drew attention not for its social and ethical value standards but for its literariness. This attention came with the publication of his *T'anŭn mongmarŭm-ŭro* (With burning thirst, 1982), a collection of poems written during a long period of incarceration. The poems in this collection internalize his will to criticize and resist, while maintaining poetic tension through condensed emotion. He would seem to have proved through his own experience and his poetic configurations that the tragic sensation generated by lyric poetry can become the emotional basis for embodying even more intensely his poetic will.

Shin Kyŏng-nim in his *Nongmu* (Farmers' dance, 1973) realistically depicts the life and work of farmers who have been isolated in the course of the nation's rapid industrialization. His favorite poetic subject is the farming village, which is rough but whose setting gushes forth in an artlessness that is true to itself. The aspect of Shin's poetic oeuvre to which he has devoted the most effort is his marriage of contemporary poetry with the spirit of folksong. He holds dear the life and will of the collective masses as these survive in folksongs and considers the actuality of emotion based in life experience to be valuable. His epic poem "Namhangang" (South Han River, 1987) is considered a good example of how the populist emotion that suffuses folksongs can be freely resurrected in contemporary poetry and is able to preserve poetic tension.

Poet Ko Ŭn's direct confrontation with the gloomy political realities of the 1970's dates from his 1974 collection *Munŭi maiŭl-e kasŏ* (Going to Munŭi Village). The poetic world of this man who lived through

an age of despair possesses an imaginative power that is capable of incorporating an extremely broad and profound historical consciousness. His linked-poem work "Maninbo" (Genealogy of us all) and his epic poem "Paektusan" (Mt. Paektu) are perfect examples. "Maninbo" is inarguably noteworthy in the vastness of its scale and the comprehensiveness of its poetic spirit. In this work, which colorfully compiles aspects of the people's lives without restriction as to time or space, the effects of serialization are found in the charm of repetition and overlap. If "Paektusan" is said to be a narrative compilation of faith and introspection in the history of the people, then "Maninbo" can be said to integrate lyrical language with the people's lives and their truth.

The populist poetry movement continued with such works as Yi Shi-yŏng's *Manwŏl* (Full moon, 1976) and *Param sok-ŭro* (In the wind, 1986), Chŏng Hŭi-sŏng's *Chŏmun kang-e sap-ŭl sshitko* (Rinsing a shovel in the river at sunset, 1978), and Kim Myŏng-su's *Hagŭp pan kyokwasŏ* (Lower-level textbook, 1983). These poets use the realities of the lives of the masses as the basis of their own poetic emotion and turn their interest toward the poetic formation of a mass consciousness. Because their populist attitude is in many cases accompanied by a level-headed critique of contemporary realities, this critical receptiveness is itself in many cases as fixed as the emotional foundation of populist poetry. Ha Chong-o's *Sawŏl-esŏ Owŏl-lo* (From April to May, 1984), Kim Chŏng-hwan's *Chiul su ōmnŭm norae* (Indelible song, 1982), Pak No-hae's *Nodong-ŭi saebyŏk* (Dawn of work, 1984), Kwak Chae-gu's *Sap'yŏng yŏk-esŏ* (At Sap'yŏng Station, 1983), and Kim Yong-t'aek's *Sŏmjingang* (Sŏmjŏn River, 1985) are also good illustrations of the tendency toward populist poetry during this

period.

Among the new poets of this period are those who create works that approach contemporary realities, avoid narrow theorizing, and display a unique balance between intellectual language and descriptions of the impoverishment of people's lives amid the realities of urbanization. Well-known examples of their works include Kim Myöng-in's *Tongdunch'ön* (1979), Kim Kwang-gyu's *Anida k'iröch'i ant'a* (No, that's not it, 1983), Yi Ha-sök's *T'umyöngghan sok* (Lucid interiors, 1980), Yi Söng-bok's *Namhae kümsan* (Silk Mountain, Namhae, 1987), Hwang Chi-u's *Saetül-to ttün'inguna* (Birds leave too, 1983), and Ch'oe Söng-ho's *Taesöl chujibo* (Blizzard warning, 1983).

The activity of women poets since the 1960's has led to poetic achievements that are directly connected with the position they have established for themselves in contemporary Korean poetry — itself an important development in the poetry establishment. Belonging to this oeuvre are such poetry collections as Kim Hu-ran's *Üngye* (Musical scales, 1971), Kim Yö-jöng's *Pada-e naerin haessal* (Sunlight falling on the ocean, 1973), Hö Yöng-ja's *Öyöppüm-iya ötchi kkot-ppun-iryä* (More than flowers are pretty, 1977), Yu An-jin's *Chölmang ship'yön* (Book of despair, 1972), Kim Ch'o-hye's *Sarang kut* (Shaman ritual of love, 1985), Kang ün-gyo's *Hömu chip* (Book of nothingness, 1971) and *Pinja ilgi* (Poor person's diary, 1977), and Mun Chöng-hüi's *Honja munöjinün chongsori* (Bell tolling that fades all alone, 1984).

Contemporary Transformation of Theater and Folk Drama

Beginning in the 1970's, dramatic literature entered a revolutionary period. First of all, the basis of creative activity was expanded with the launching of *Yön'gük p'yöngnon* (Theater criticism), *Hyöndae*

yŏn'gŭk (Contemporary theater), *Tŭrama* (Drama), and *Han'guk yŏn'gŭk* (Korean theater), and other periodicals specializing in drama. In particular, a little-theater movement flourished, professional theater groups were created, and the activation of the dramatic arts in their entirety became possible. The most notable characteristic of this dramatic creation was the broad development of a movement that attempted anew to unify the principles of Western theatrical styles with traditional folk drama. The methods of traditional masked dance and oral narrative were researched, their aesthetic elements newly illuminated, and there were quite a few cases of attempts to re-create these genres in contemporary theater. As a result, contemporary Korean drama was assured a renewed possibility of sinking roots in traditional works.

O T'ae-sŏk, beginning with his play "Hwanjŏlgi" (Change of Season, 1968), delves tenaciously into the subtle psychological conflicts of the human interior. This work shows how terrifying the outcome can be of alienation of self and mistrust of others in the daily lives of contemporary people. A similar pattern appears in the same playwright's "Yuda-yŏ, tak-i ulgi chŏne" (Judas - before the cock crows, 1969), which dramatically captures the image and the inner suffering of a woman who is being destroyed in absurd circumstances. In works such as "Ch'obun" (Grass burial, 1973), "T'ae" (Lifecord, 1974), and "Ch'unp'ung-ŭi ch'ŏ" (Ch'unp'ung's wife, 1976) O T'ae-sŏk adds a historical consciousness and a traditional sense to psychological methods that seek the human interior. In these works, the traditional Korean lifestyle confirms the primitive life force and the instincts of humans. These works are part of a new theatrical movement that begins to seek, though contemporary theatrical

methods, the spirit of traditional open-air theater.

Yi Chae-hyön and Yun Tae-söng can be cited as playwrights who flourished in the genre of drama from the 1970's on. Along with criticism of the absurdity of contemporary realities, these dramatists utilized realistic methods to depict the human desire to escape life's suffering, and at the same time enlarged their interest in things traditional and historical. In plays such as "Söng-ung Yi Sun-shin" (Great hero Yi Sun-shin, 1973), "Ssölmul" (Ebb tide, 1974), and "Hwaga Yi Chung-söp" (Painter Yi Chung-söp, 1979) Yi Chae-hyön dramatically embodies the will to realize ideals nestled in the human interior. Yun Tae-söng, in plays such as "Mangnani" (Decapitator, 1969) and "Nobi munsö" (Slave document, 1973), turns his interest to contemporary adaptations of folk-drama styles. Works such as "Nö-to mökko mullönara" (You too, eat and leave, 1973), by opening the stage, choose to eliminate the distance between onstage reality and offstage audience. This technique, which we might call a dramatic transformation of open-air plays, was widely used by many dramatists through the 1980's.

There were a good many other significant works of dramatic literature from the 1970's on. Such plays as Ch'a Pöm-sök's "Sae-ya sae-ya p'arangsae-ya" (Bird, bird, oh bluebird, 1974), Ha Yu-sang's "Kkot sang'yö" (Flower carriage, 1970) and "Emille chong" (Emille bell, 1978), Kim Yong-nak's "Tongnija chön" (Tale of Tongnija, 1971), No Kyöng-shik's "Sojak-üi ttang" (Sharecropper's land, 1976), and Hö Kyu's "Muldoridong" are issue-oriented works that display theatrical perfection.

4. Conclusion

Modern Korean literature, while departing from the influence of the Chinese literary world, experienced the autonomous formation of a national literature. From the mid-nineteenth century on, there developed actively in every sphere a revolutionary movement that sought to overcome the contradictions of the feudal social system in Korean society, and there was a gradual expansion of a movement, centered in the intellectual class, to respond to the threat of invasive Western capitalist power. In the process of these societal upheavals, there was a demand for a literary style that would represent new life values and embody the consciousness of the age. This led to the beginning of the formation of a new literary style that expanded the basis of popular literary adaptations by way of the movement for a national language and literature, and that responded to the demand of the times for a national sentiment.

Owing to the invasion by imperial Japan, however, this new literary movement collided with a critical obstacle. The imperial Japanese colonial regime began by eliminating all rights and possession of the Korean people, and then strengthened and expanded in the direction of attempting to erase the very existence and spirit of the people. Because of these oppressive controls on culture, the cultural identity of Korean literature was damaged and the literature itself underwent a long period of trial. The liberation of Korea in 1945 became a new means for reestablishing literary directions and signposts. All anti-nationalist cultural vestiges of the colonial era were eliminated, and along with the foundation of a new

nation-state, the necessity of constructing a true national literature was a natural request of the times. During the experience of the tragedy of the national division and the chaos of the Korean War, however, the comprehensive recognition of the lives of the people in their entirety fell into a state of incapacity.

Looking back on this process, one can realize the great changes in Korean literature following upon changes in political and social conditions. Korean literature's greatest task is to free itself from contemporary circumstances and historical conditions and to expand literary self-awareness and aesthetic autonomy. To be sure, by making an issue of the literary phenomenon of a national consciousness, it becomes important to seek a comprehensive recognition of the valuable lives of the people as a whole. One would have to say, though, that the task of seeking universal human values based in individual literary creativity and embodying them artistically, are properly the very essence of literature.

<Abstract>

Modern Korean Literature

Kwon Young-min

Modern Korean literature has developed within the last century. Within this period, Korean literature has shown varied aspects reflecting the rapid changes occurring in Korean society.

Modern Korean literature began within the vicissitudes of modernization after the mid-nineteenth century. Much experimentation with literary forms took place at that time, including genres such as the Biography, Fable, New Fiction (新小說), Ch'angga (唱歌), New Poetry (新體詩), and New Drama (新劇). Such efforts led after the Japanese occupation to the forms of the modern novel and the free verse. Afterward, the experimental efforts produced the Class-Literature interested in addressing the various ills of society, and on the other hand, Modernist literature, seeking freedom in literature.

After Liberation and the Korean War, aspects such as the ideologies brought to the fore within the process of dividing the peninsula into North and South Korea, and the evils of war, were all reflected within the literature of the times. Various social ills occurring after modernization began in earnest, the desire for a democratic society, and thoughts on the true nature of man and society were all aspects that influenced the characteristics of Korean literature that has continued unto the present. Such changes in literature are meaningful as the true manifestation of the history of modern Korean literature.