Young-ha Kim’s 2013 crime thriller The Mnemonics of a Murderer is a tale of neurocognitive apocalypse, wherein selfhood built upon dissociative violence turns on its own self. In the novel, a retired psychopathic serial killer suffering from Alzheimer’s disease awakens back to action upon detecting his own kind on his trails, only to discover that all was merely an elaborate construct of his deteriorating mind. The outcome is no less deadly, however, for the revelation condemns him to exposure at the hands of his own prized faculties—his memories and deeds as a murderer. Expanding on the first-person narrator’s imploding microcosm, I claim that Mnemonics demonstrates the reflexive mechanism of dissociative violence by superimposing the two-pronged neuropathology of psychopathy and dementia upon the macrocosmic climate of anomy and degeneracy in post-millennial South Korea. The recent plague of spree killings attests to a deep-seated discontent with the growing chasm of socio-economic inequalities that betray the rosy prospects of abundance and security from the 1990s. Showing how the legacies of compressed modernity have become a reflexive mechanism of self-destruction, Mnemonics offers a chilling psycho-somatic allegory of dissociative social violence in its portrayal of a system avenged by its own depravity.

Keywords: psychopathy, Alzheimer's Disease, memory, dissociative violence, murder