

WHORING THE MERMAID:
THE STUDY OF SOUTH KOREAN HOSTESS FILM
(1974-1982)

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation focuses on cinematic representations of prostitute women in South Korean Hostess (*ho-sŭ-t'e-sŭ'*: a euphemism for prostitutes or bar girls in the Korean context of the 1970s and 1980s) films. This body of films is not only characterized for the exploitive employment of female sexuality but more importantly for the theme of women's extreme and perpetual sacrificial. Previous South Korean film scholarship has argued that the Park's state censorship operation critically influenced the formation and thriving of these hostess films, because the state censors condoned sexual materials in films to drive away the public attention from politics as well as to please producers and directors who were increasingly becoming critical with strict military censorship (Chung, H.,2005; Yu, S.,2004; Kim, S.,2000; Park, J.,2008).

While this scholarly account seems to be coherent that the genre is affected by the force of the state censorship, it does not fully explain how these films of, particularly, 'prostitutes' and their recurring theme of female sacrifice were constructed and canonized. My dissertation necessarily delves into this detail because hostess films were pioneered and thrived by some key directors of the 1970s. These directors founded a film movement, The Era of Image (1975) through which they committed to rejuvenate Korean cinema by delivering socially relevant issues combined with commercially viable aesthetics of cinema. The thematic and visual conventions of hostess films particularly involving with sexualized, working class female protagonists correspond to these artistic premises of this film movement.

While this research historically overviews the genesis of these films, it particularly focuses on previously under investigated roles of hostess directors and media industry that

critically provoked popularization of the films by aestheticizing and commercializing ‘female [sexual] sacrifice’ respectively. In doing so, I hope to read the South Korean hostess films more as culturally complex texts rather than by-products of the state power. At the same time, this research will illuminate cinematic representation of hostess women, or hostess sexuality which became a cultural epitome of women, during the 1970s and beyond.

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Chapter One

Introduction: The Birth of South Korean Hostess Films

She knew that this was the last evening that she would see him for whose sake she had given away her lovely voice and left her home and her family; and he would never know of her sacrifice. It was the last night that she would breathe the same air as he, or look out over the deep sea and up into the star-blue heaven. A dreamless, eternal night awaited her, for she had no soul and had not been able to win one. Until midnight all was gaiety aboard the ship, and the mermaid danced and laughed with the thought of death in her heart.

Den Lille Havfrue (The Little Mermaid) by Hans Christian Andersen, 1837

The only way to think the visual, to get a handle on increasing, tendential, all-pervasive visuality as such, is to grasp its historical coming into being. Other kinds of thought have to replace the act of seeing by something else; history alone, however, can mimic the sharpening or dissolution of the gaze.

Fredric Jameson (1)¹

This dissertation project was born on one of my usual movie-bingeing nights several years ago. I was watching randomly chosen 1970s movies that seemed merely to be Korean versions of sexploitation films. Their tacky titles, such as *The Rose that Swallowed Thorn* (1977), *Ms. Yang's Outing* (1978), and *The Woman I Threw Away* (1979), as well as the movie posters,

¹ Fredric Jameson, *Signatures of the Visible*. (New York: Routledge, 1990).

which were full of semi-naked women vulnerably posed in the center, were enough for me to regard this group of films as nothing more than typical low-brow adult fare.

In contrast to my assumptions, however, these movies were in fact not sex films but downright ‘sad films.’ The prostitute heroines in these films are victimized, abused, and exploited: one loses her arm at work and (figuratively) her voice (*Young-ja’s Heydays*, 1974), another goes insane (*Heavenly Homecoming to Stars II*, 1979), and some of them die (*Heavenly Homecoming to Stars I*, 1974, *The Rose that Swallowed Thorn*, 1979). In addition, these tragedies are empowered by the heroines’ relentless sacrifices for their families or men, which is very similar to Anderson’s tale of a woman’s sacrifice, *The Little Mermaid*. I soon discovered that these films were categorized as ‘hostess films,’² and they had been extremely popular, to the extent that they had actually saved the nearly bankrupt 1970s Korean film industry during the transition to the television era. The earliest example of this body of films, *Heavenly Homecoming to Stars* (Lee Jang-ho, 1974, hereafter *Heavenly*), drew the largest film audience of any Korean film up to that point. Another film that thematized a prostitute heroine, *Young-ja’s Heydays* (Kim Ho-sŏn, 1975, hereafter *Young-ja*), was released a year later, and it was ranked as the highest box office score of the year.³

Heavenly and *Young-ja* share a number of similarities. In terms of narrative, both films are characterized by the hostess heroines’ unconditional sacrifice for their family and men. These films revolve around a story of a young woman who migrates from her rural home to be a bread

² ‘Hostess’ is a euphemism for prostitutes or bargirls in the Korean context of the 1970s and 80s. I later explain in detail how this term was dubbed by the media. See footnote 9. Throughout this dissertation, translations for newspaper articles, Korean scholarly articles and government records are done by the author.

³ *Heavenly Homecoming to Stars* drew 464,308 film viewers to a single theater in Seoul during its 105 days of screening. *Young-ja’s Heydays* drew 361,213 viewers during 87 days. The box office records of these films, and other films I discuss in this dissertation, were taken from the *Korean Film Year Book* (Seoul: The Korean Film Council, KOFIC).

winner. As opposed to her initial goal of being successful in the city, the heroine gradually falls as she confronts a series of unfortunate events. In *Young-ja*, the heroine, Young-ja, is raped by her boss and loses her arm at work, which finally leads to her loss of hope and becoming a prostitute.

Similarly, in *Heavenly*, Kyōng-a, a rural migrant, meets a man at work. She is continuously forced to have sex with him (if not being raped). She reluctantly hopes to marry him and settle, but he soon leaves her for a woman who is better “wife material.” The despairing woman goes through a series of unsuccessful relationships and eventually becomes a bargirl. The heroines of these two films end up as tragic figures: Kyōng-a from *Heavenly*) commits suicide by taking sleeping pills, while Young-ja (from *Young-ja*) reluctantly chooses to marry a man who is as poor and disabled as she is, rather than marrying the man she truly loves (who has proposed to her) because she thinks that she does not deserve him.

Stylistically, *Heavenly* and *Young-ja* were distinguished by their strategic juxtaposition of the elements of realism and hyper-stylization. *Heavenly* and *Young-ja* realistically present the backgrounds and the places where the stories take place, including urban and slum areas, red-light districts, and lower class residences, which were shot on location using long takes on hand-held camera. The current social conditions were transparently delivered in these realist spatial representations. The cinematic renditions of these places are significant because the depiction of poverty (places and people) and illegitimate conduct (prostitution) could have conflicted with the terms of censorship, as had happened in other cases, in which realist films troubled censors

because of their depiction of “poor people/places in Seoul,” which was a “violation of the law” under the Park Chung-hee regime’s tyrannical film censorship.⁴

As opposed to these ‘dangerously’ realist portraits of poor places or red-light districts, the heroines of these films are idealized as extremely self-sacrificing and submissive. Young-ja moves to the city because she needs to support her rural family. Even after the tragic incidents she encounters (rape and the loss of her arm at work), she sends all the money she made from prostitution to her family to pay her brothers’ tuitions. Kyōng-a in *Heavenly* also migrated to the city, supposedly to take care of her mother.⁵ After moving to the city, Kyōng-a is continuously victimized by men with whom she has fallen in love. Nevertheless, she never contests or confronts the men who wrong her, but she willfully leaves them.

The stylistic elements empower this highly unrealistic quality of the heroines. Unlike the aforementioned realist portraits of places, the female protagonists are seen in a hyper-stylized and elaborate manner using extreme close-ups, fragmented body shots, and super impositions, which either exaggerate or negate a woman’s existence. Sometimes more elaborate cinematic techniques are employed, such as sound muting (*Young-ja’s Heydays*), intertitles (*Heavenly Homecoming to Stars*), or extreme slow motion (*Heavenly Homecoming to Stars*).

In addition, these women rarely own their point of views. Similar to Christine Gledhill’s observation of women in film noir, hostess women are predominantly shown from a male perspective or several male perspectives either by different characters (*Heavenly Homecoming to*

⁴ The state censorship under Park Chung-hee’s military regime (1960–1979) was notorious for its heavy regulation of cinematic depictions of social realism, including poverty and the working class. See Park Yu-hee’s “A Study on the Dynamics of Film Censorship and Representation of Sentiment during the Park Chung-hee Regime,” where she examines several censorship cases in which the content of films was critically impaired by the intervention of state censorship with regard to the films’ realism, 68.

⁵ Kyōng-a’s motive for migrating to the city is not shown as clearly as Young-ja’s motive. However, there is a brief scene in which her dialogue indicates that she is financially responsible for her mother, who lives in a rural home, when she writes a letter to her mother.

Stars) or different time moments (*Young-ja's Heydays*). As she argues, this kind of strategy provokes a “fractured, incoherent image” of women, which in turn divorces women from the realities of male characters. (80)

The record-breaking success of these two films was soon followed by dozens of similar films that contained the aforementioned themes, characters and visual strategies. The list includes, *The Woman I Threw Away* (*Naega beorin yōja*, Chōng So-Young, 1977), *I am a Number 77 girl* (*Na nūn 77 pōn agassi*, Pak Ho-t'ae, 1978), *Winter Woman* (*Kyōul yōja*, Kim Ho-sōn, 1977), *26x365 = 0* (No Se-han, 1979), *Ms. O's Apartment* (*O yang ūi ap'at'ū*, Pyōn Chang-ho, 1978) and *Do You Know, Kkotsuni?* (*Kkotsuni rŭl asinayo?*, Chōng In-yōp, 1979), all of which were ranked within the box office top three from 1974 to 1979 (see Fig. 1).⁶ Despite their conventional employment of homogenous plots and characters, these films achieved an unprecedented popularity, which was a rare case for domestic films in the period prior to the 50s and 60s.⁷ In recognition of the popularity of this strand of films, the press retrospectively labeled them “hostess films” (*ho-sŭ-t'e-sŭ*),⁸ as “hostess” was a euphemism for a prostitute or bar girl in the Korean context of the 1970s and 1980s.

⁶ The table is made by the author based on the data collected from Park Yu-hee's “A Study on the Dynamics of Film Censorship,” 56.

⁷ Lee Gil-sung noted that during the 50s and 60s, foreign films, especially Hollywood films, generally outperformed domestic films in terms of ticket sales. Even though this tendency continued throughout the 70s, the success of *Heavenly* and *Youngja* changed the general perception of domestic films as being less commercially successful than Hollywood films. Lee Gil-sung, “A Study of Movie Theater during 1970s of South Korea” (Seoul: KOFIC, 2004).

⁸ In reporting the financial success of *The Woman I Threw Away*, the *Kyung Hwang Daily* was the first to term this film, and previous similar films, as hostess films. *Kyung Hyang Daily*, 1978. 7.18.

Year/Ranking	1	2	3	4	5
1974	<i>Heavenly Homecoming to Stars</i> (Byul deul eui go hyang, 464,308)	<i>Yesterday's Rain</i> (Eo jae ne rin bi, 147,823)	<i>Earth</i> (Toji, 120,823)	<i>Kim Du Han</i> (Silok Kim Du Han, 68,980)	<i>March of Wives</i> (Ane deul eui hengjin, 55,730)
1975	<i>Youngja's Heydays</i> (Youngja eui Jeonsung sidae, 361,213)	<i>March of Fools</i> (Babo deul eui hengjin, 153,780)	<i>Insa Yeomoo</i> (Insa Yeomoo, 76,027)	<i>The Promise of Body</i> (Yook che eui yaksok, 69,522)	<i>Yong Ho Moon</i> (Yong Ho Moon, 47,050)
1976	<i>Suzanna of Love</i> (Korean/Hong Kong, Exact score Unknown)	<i>Women's Street</i> (Yeoja deulman saneun geori, 78,921)	<i>Secret Guest II</i> (Bimil gek II, 73,713)	<i>Never never forget</i> (jinjja jinjja it ji ma, 66,372)	<i>Run, not walk</i> (Gut ji malgo ddui eora, 47,985)
1977	<i>Winter Woman</i> (Gyeowoolyeoja, 586,147)	<i>Highschool Spunks</i> (gogyo yalgae, 258,978)	<i>Taekwon boy, maruchi, arachi</i> (taekwondongja maruchi arachi, 164,143)	<i>The March Song of Yalgae</i> (yalge heng jin gok, 147,567)	<i>Night Travel</i> (Ya heng, 135,047)
1978	<i>The Woman I threw away</i> (Naega beorin yeoja, 375,913)	<i>Ms.O's Apartment</i> (o yang eui apatu, 281,726)	<i>I am a No.77 girl</i> (Naneun chilsipchilbeon agassi, 217,249)	<i>Scar</i> (Sang cheo, 208,960)	<i>Sa Hak Bi Gwon</i> (Action/Martial Arts)
1979	<i>Heavenly Homecoming to Stars II</i> (Byul deul eui Gohyang II, 298,125)	<i>The Man I threw away</i> (Naega beorin namja, 239,718)	<i>Do You know Kkotsooni?</i> (Kkotsooni reul asinayo?, 216,628)	<i>Last Cup</i> (Majimak Chatjan, 199,773)	<i>Byungtae and Youngja</i> (Byungtae wa Younga, 180,858)

[Fig.1-1. Box office rankings from 1974-1979: Highlighted titles are hostess films. Other hostess films within the top 10 include, *The Woman on Asphalt* (app.120,000, 9th, 1978), *26X365=0* (app.178,000, 6th, 1979)⁹

⁹ Including this table, the viewer numbers for this dissertation are based on Seoul admission. This was before the box office system was computerized. Therefore, most archival box office records use Seoul admission for the rankings. The population of Seoul during the 1970s was around 8,000,000. The films that received a minimum of

The Directors of Hostess Films

When they were released, *Heavenly* and *Young-ja* were originally spotlighted as youth films rather than as hostess films.¹⁰ This is likely because these films were directed by young, 30-something directors who had not yet had successful commercial hits. The directors of these two hostess films garnered particular attention for their innovative stylistic elements: “a new sensibility for a new generation, in that they observed and recorded the lives of the young with a fresh, innovative visual sense ... the story of scary kids, growing freely like weeds plainly describes this public perception.”¹¹ *Film Magazine (Younghwa Japji)* stated that they offered “new aesthetics in raising new issues that were never treated in previous Korean films. Indeed, these directors signal a bright future of Korean cinema.”¹²

Media coverage of these young directors correctly predicted their massive popularity and cultural significance. Lee and Kim quickly became star directors with their hostess films and with further films in the 1970s and 80s, which literally saved the declining Korean film industry.¹³ In 1975, they teamed up with other young directors, including Ha Gil-jong and Hong Pa, to found a film movement, The Era of Image, through which they committed to generating an artistic revolution in Korean cinema. Their cinematic premise was a mixture of ‘The Old and New.’ Inspired by globally rising new wave movements, such as French New Wave and

50,000 viewers were usually considered to be moderately successful.

¹⁰ See a special column on the KOFA (Korea Film Archive) Website, http://www.koreafilm.org/feature/100_53.asp.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² *Young Hwa Jap Ji*, August issue, 1974. 138.

¹³ Along with their first hostess films (*Heavenly* and *Young-ja*), the films made by Lee and Kim during the 1970s dominated the Korean box office. Kim produced hostess films that were box-office hits throughout the 1970s, such as *Women's Street* (1976) and *Winter Woman* (1977). Lee produced *Rain of Yesterday* in 1975, which was another commercial success (ranked 3rd in terms of box office). Although he had to leave filmmaking for several years due to his conviction for using marijuana, he returned with *Declaration of Fools*, which was one of the most popular films of the 1980s.

American New Cinema, they pursued the mixture of long held tradition of Korean realism¹⁴ and the innovative aesthetics of the new wave films. These directors insisted that the lack of social realism was a major cause of decline in Korean cinema, and that this was instigated by the state's censorship regulation on realist depictions in films. They proclaimed that they would overcome this political oppression of films by adapting the meaning-laden artistic language that they observed in new wave films from other countries.

These directors' artistic visions, explicated through the movement, were saliently at work throughout their hostess films.¹⁵ Their adherence to the tradition of Korean realism is rendered through realist renditions of urban areas and lower class residences in the hostess films. The hyper-stylized, prostitute heroines of these films echo 'innovative aesthetics,' another major aspect of the movement, which the directors observed in new wave-inspired films where sex is progressively utilized as an innovative aesthetic device. Their commercially successful hostess films not only inspired dozens of similar hostess films to be produced, but they also led to other films exploring similar characters—women's sexual trajectories—expanding the representations of female sexuality.

When the concept of the hostess film was first designated by the press, it was usually applied to films that portrayed a rural woman becoming a prostitute in the city following a series of failures (mostly, failures in their relationships with men). Soon, however, the term was

¹⁴ See Chapter four in this dissertation for the history of realism in Korean cinema.

¹⁵ Ibid. An argues that it is not correct to see hostess films as direct products of The Era of Image because early hostess films as *Heavenly* and *Youngja* were produced before the movement. I partially agree with his point, but I would like to point out that such films were made only a year before the movement was founded and therefore must not be seen as irrelevant. Furthermore, some hostess films made by the members including *Heavenly II* (Ha), *Winter Woman* (Kim, 1977) and *Women's Street* (Kim, 1976) were born during the film movement and all ranked as box office top, which in turn provoked many offspring of hostess film. In this respect, I think that The Era of Image could be used as a crucial framework in discussing the generic tendency of canonical hostess films. More statistics on these movies are indicated in Chapter 4 in this dissertation.

extensively and interchangeably utilized for films dealing with a young woman's sexual adventures, regardless of the heroine's profession as a sex worker. *Winter Women* (1977), *The Rose that Swallowed Thorn* (1978), and *Heavenly Homecoming to Stars II* (1979) are examples that focus on the heroine who is not necessarily a sex worker (or at least a full-time sex worker). Park Jae-yoon states that these films were dubbed as hostess films mostly because of their "exploitive objectification of female bodies while dramatizing the decadence of sexual adventures" (123).

In this regard, it can be said that the concept of hostess films was identified less with the actual employment of a hostess woman and more with these films generally perceived and recurring tendencies regarding characterization and narrative construction. For example, *Wedding Dress in Tears I and II* (Byun, 1973, 1974) featured a hostess heroine and achieved respectable commercial success (ranked as 2nd). Nevertheless, they were rarely categorized as hostess films (even retrospectively), as they were predominantly considered melodramas.¹⁶ For one thing, *Wedding Dress in Tears* did not include the generic trope of a heroine who engages in multiple (sexual) relationships or who perpetually sacrifices for her family and man, which is pivotal in hostess films.

Rather, the film focused on a woman's romance with one man, which ended happily in marriage. Considering this case, hostess films should not be read as a particular type of film that specialized in the depiction of prostitutes, but rather must be read according to a broader cultural text that visualized and conceptualized the notion of female sexuality.

¹⁶ For the genre categorization of this film, see the Korean Film Annual Book of 1973 and 1974 (KOFIC). This can also be observed in many contemporary film reference sources, encyclopedias, internet portals, and film-related websites (<http://terms.naver.com/entry.nhn?docId=971156&cid=669&categoryId=1390>).

Park Chung-hee's Film Regulation and Hostess Films

Remarkably, this group of films, which openly dealt with themes as provocative as prostitution,¹⁷ were conceived during Park Chung-hee's notorious military rule, which severely controlled films. In particular, the films' success occurred soon after Park's *Yushin* (revitalization) system was implemented, which strengthened film regulation through strict censorship measures, to oppress public awareness of politics. In 1972, Park Chung-hee's military regime enacted the Yushin Constitution to guarantee his lifetime presidency, and Park heightened censorship of all media, including television, radio, and film, in an effort to suppress public criticism of his dictatorship.

As part of the Yushin Film Reconstitution, the Park Chung-hee government revised the Motion Picture Law (the 4th amendment) in 1974. Under this amendment, the government maximized its control over films, appointing the Minister of Public Information and Culture to oversee the implementation and application of most film-related rules. Furthermore, the enforcement of censorship became more severe, particularly through increased censorship of scripts: the number of returned scripts was a mere 3% in 1970, but this had skyrocketed to 80% by 1975.¹⁸

¹⁷ The depiction of prostitution was forbidden under the Motion Picture Law No. 9 (14th) which stated that "Prostitution should not be depicted in positive manner or justified on screen" (www.moleg.kr.gov).

¹⁸ Park Yu-hee, "A Study on the Dynamics of Film Censorship,"; these items were described for the film, *March of Idiots*, directed by Ha Gil-jong. 52.

Hostess films that deal with prostitution, particularly in the context of poor rural women inevitably selling their bodies, may seem risky under such a strict censorship operation. Aside from their thematization of prostitutes, however, many politically and socially critical or realistic themes, scenes, and characters had to be deleted under the Park regime. Films were censored or prohibited from showing certain items, particularly those that depicted current conditions in society and politics; for example, “poor people should not be shown in the streets of Seoul,” “one cannot satirize governmental authorities or violate laws,” “student demonstration cannot be shown or even implied,” and “one should not insult soldiers.”¹⁹

Indeed, considering these political circumstances, hostess films came into being during an unlikely period of history. Furthermore, the state’s heavy regulation of films led to the decline of the film industry, which is another factor that makes the proliferation of hostess films seem unlikely. The Korean film industry during the 1970s was already suffering from the growing popularity of television, and the situation was worsened by the Park regime’s double (script) censorship, which returned almost 80% of film scripts to be re-written.²⁰ Under this kind of tyrannical regulation, the number of film productions during this period plunged from 209 in 1970 to 83 in 1975,²¹ which makes the sudden blooming of hostess films remarkable with regard to the industry perspective. From 1970 to 1979, 8 of the 10 highest box-office films were hostess films (see Fig. 1).²²

¹⁹ *ibid*, 68.

²⁰ Park Yu-hee, “The Study of Dynamics of Film Censorship” 52.

²¹ Oh Jin-gon, “A Study of Media Policies during the Yushin System,” *Media Information*, No. 48, 2011. 240.

²² See the figure provided in Chapter 4 of this dissertation (4).

The Rise of Hostess Culture

The popularity of hostess films also spread to the larger cultural milieu, provoking the rise of hostess culture across various media, including television, radio, novels, and tabloid magazines. Despite the heightened media censorship, the 1970s witnessed an expansion of the media landscape, which was instigated by state-led industrialization. Newspapers and magazines, were circulated in larger numbers. A Korea's very first sexual tabloid magazine, *Sunday Seoul* for instance, sold over 60,000 copies of the initial issue within two hours of release.²³ The number of television sets was also rising, as the Park government actively promoted the distribution of televisions in order to boost the electronics industry.²⁴

Indebted to this thriving media industry, advertising and print media necessarily and vigorously focused on hostesses. As Lee Jin-kyung states,

While South Korean hostesses served their male customers in close bodily proximity in the 1970s, contemporary mass cultural representations of hostesses in serialized novels, tabloids, and films generated the similar effect of glamorizing their commodified sexuality through the distance created by these cultural media. In fact, "hostess sexuality" was a much more real and far-reaching presence as a virtual sexual commodity in the very material sphere of popular culture than in its nonvirtual counterpart.²⁵

Lee's observation of commodified hostess sexuality is pertinent that it was established by the media employment of hostess stars and real life prostitutes. For instance, the heroines of hostess films held exclusive contracts with some of the largest companies in the nation, such as confectionary and cosmetic companies. Tabloid magazines competitively issued stories about

²³ I discuss more about *Sunday Seoul* in relation to hostess culture in chapter five.

²⁴ Kim Sung-hwan, "From Park Chung-hee to *Sunday Seoul*: The Era of Television," *Kyŏngnyang ilbo* (online version) http://news.khan.co.kr/kh_news/khan_art_view.html?artid=201311221947195&code=210100.

²⁵ Lee Jin-Kyung, *Service Economies: Militarism, Sex work, and Migrant Labor in South Korea*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010). 103.

these hostess stars as major articles and used semi-naked photos of these stars for their magazine covers.

This commercialization of hostess was expanded also through coverage of real-life hostesses and prostitutes. One of the most popular tabloid magazines at this time, *Sunday Seoul*, often juxtaposed the coverage of hostess stars with erotically charged reportages and essays on real-life prostitutes.²⁶ During the heyday of hostess culture, actual sex workers participated in this commercialization of hostess sexuality. They published their own novels and essays based on their experiences of 'sex.' Some of these works were best sellers and were adapted for radio plays and films.²⁷ *I am a No. 77 Girl*, the top box office hit in 1978, was written by a real-life prostitute, Yoon Go-na, and then adapted for both a radio play and film. *Ms. O's Apartment* was based on a short novel of the same name by a former hostess, Oh Mi-young. These materials, written by real life sex workers, were extremely popular among film studios for adaptation. *Kyung Hyang Daily* reported how stiff the studio competition was for the film rights to *Ms. O's Apartment* when the novel was a bestseller in 1976.²⁸

Advertisements for these film adaptations highlighted the real-life background, titillating the audience and often guaranteeing a "firsthand experience of the sex industry."²⁹ Ads revealed the real names of the authors/prostitutes. Also, their names were directly utilized for the names of the characters in the films, such as Young A in *Young-A's Confession* (1978), Oh Mi Young in *Ms. O's Apartment* (1978) and Yoon Go Na from *I am a No.77 Girl* (1978).

²⁶ Lim Jong-su and Park Se-hyun, "Women, Sexuality and the 1970s presented through *Sunday Seoul*," *Korean Literature Studies*, Vol. 44, 2013.

²⁷ *Kyŏngnyang ilbo*, 12.8.1976.

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ *ibid.*

Significantly, the commercialization of hostess women not only packaged their expected sexual value but also their sacrificial nature, as with the heroines of the hostess films. Many of the tabloid articles and essays written on real-life prostitutes sentimentalized them by focusing on how hard-working and self-sacrificing these working class women were in support of their families.³⁰ Similar rhetoric was utilized in numerous interviews, surveys, and reports regarding hostess women. Namely, the discourse of female sacrifice was not only embedded within the filmic texts, but it also permeated the extra-textual materials, including movie posters, publicity materials, newspapers, and tabloids. In this dialogue between filmic and extra-filmic domains, the hostess woman and/or hostess sexuality quickly became a new cultural icon that guaranteed public appeal and therefore, commercial success.

Accordingly, this dissertation focuses on the following issues: A) hostess films that thematized such provocative subjects as prostitutes and working class sexuality were released and surprisingly thrived under the Park Chung-hee regime, which controlled films through a strict and conservative film censorship policy; B) despite their seeming sexual orientation, the hostess films were pioneered and formulated by artistically motivated directors of the 1970s, whose legacies were further supported by their film movement, The Era of Image; and C) using the cinematic conventions of the hostess woman, both inside and outside the film texts, the hostess films established a cultural discourse of *female sacrifice* by representing women's sexuality and bodies as things to be disposed of and sacrificed.

While this is a crucial subject for study, no full-length scholarly works have focused on hostess films, either in Korean or English. Hostess films have only been discussed as a part of the larger historical contexts of the film industry, censorship, genre, and gender. In writing about

³⁰ Lim Jong-su and Park Se-hyun, "Women, Sexuality and the 1970s presented through *Sunday Seoul*," 91–136.

1970s South Korean film history, Lee, Young-il, and Ho Hyun-chan looked at the relationship between the rise of television and hostess films.³¹ Some other scholars, including Yu Ji -na and Bae Byung-ho, provided historical accounts of Korean melodramas and discussed hostess films as a sub-genre.³² The works by Kim Sun-Ah, Hwang Hye-jin, and Cho Oe-sook offered feminist accounts of gender representation in Korean cinema and comparative views of the female protagonists in the hostess films.³³ Also, the scholars including Lee Ho-geol and Park Jae-yoon viewed the stars of hostess films, such as Chang Mi-hee and Yu Ji-in, in the larger context of the 1970s film industry and the culture of South Korea.³⁴

In terms of the historical background of hostess films, Ho and Lee pointed out the influence of television, which began to supersede the film industry in the 1970s.³⁵ According to these scholars, the film industry attempted to find more stimulating subjects that would differentiate them from television. Lee Ho-geol stated that hostess films were a result of the decline of the film industry and an attempt to lure back film audiences by “portraying women as sexual objects and producing movies targeting young audiences who were emerging as a major audience group.”³⁶

³¹ Lee Young-il, *Korean Film History* (Seoul: Sodo, 2004). Ho Hyun-chan, *Korean Film 100 Years* (Seoul: Munhak Sasang Sa, 2000).

³² Yu Ji-na, *Hankook Yeonghwa sexuality reul man na da (Korean Cinema meets sexuality)* (Seoul, Korea: Sengakeui Namu (Trees of Thoughts), 2004). Bae Byung-ho, “Melodramas and Sexual Difference: Analysis of *Heavenly Homecoming to Stars* (1974)” (Seoul: Seogang University, 1988).

³³ Cho Oe-sook, “Representation of Working Class Women in the 70s Korean Cinema,” M.A Thesis, 2004; Kim Sun-Ah, “Young-ja’s Face in *Young-ja’s Heydays*,” in *Film and Women: Looking at Korean Society and Women through Films* (Seoul: Korea Film Archive, 2007); Hwang Hye-jin, “Representation of Women in Early 1970’s Korean Films: focusing on the Relationship with Social Contexts,” *Animation Studies*, Vol. 17, 2009.

³⁴ Lee Ho-geol, “The Study of the 1970s’ Actresses,” Ph.D. Diss., Chung Ang University, 2001; Park Jae-yoon, “Seeing Stars: Female Film Stars and Female Audiences in Post-Colonial Korea,” Ph.D. Diss., University of Kansas, 2008.

³⁵ See footnote 25.

³⁶ Lee Ho-geol, “The Study of the 1970s Actresses,” 13.

The influence of television in relation to the changes in subject matter in films has been broadly discussed by Bordwell and Thompson (2002), Lewis (1998) and Hitchman (2013).³⁷ In the US context, as the television industry began to encroach into mainstream culture, film studios sought to market films with more provocative themes and visuals, such as sex, drugs, and violence, that were not offered by television. According to Bordwell and Thompson, many Hollywood films produced during this period celebrated sexual promiscuity (e.g., *A Guide for the Married Man*, 1967), adultery (e.g. *Boys' Night Out*, 1962), and female sexuality (e.g. *Sex and the Single Girl*, 1964).³⁸ In the similar context, Schaeffer focused on the re-emergence of American exploitation films in the 1960s on the cusp of the television era, in which the producers used sensational elements to attract the audiences that were being lost to television.³⁹

Another scholarly view attributes the influence of military censorship to the emergence of hostess films (Kim, S.,2010; Park, J.,2012, Chung, H.,2005; Hwang, 2003). Chung Hye-seung and Park Jae-yoon concur that under the ruling of the military president, Park Chung-hee, sexual content was implicitly waived from film censorship. The military regime condoned sexual subjects in order to steer public attention away from political issues.⁴⁰ Kim Shi-mu also noted that “some loosening of restrictions on sexual content was a kind of trade-off for repressions on political freedoms.”⁴¹ These scholars held that hostess films were an outcome of the government’s censorship measures for films due to their seemingly apolitical subject matter and narratives.

³⁷ David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson. *Film History*, (Oxford: McGraw-Hill, 2009), Jon Lewis, *The New American Cinema* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, April 28, 1998), Simon Hitchman, “American New Wave Cinema” <http://www.newwavefilm.com/international/american-new-wave.노스>.

³⁸ Bordwell and Thompson, *Film History*, 513.

³⁹ Eric Schaeffer, *Bold! Daring! Shocking! True: A History of Exploitation Films, 1919-1959* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, October 11, 1999).

⁴⁰ Chung Hye-seung, "Toward a Strategic Korean Cinephilia: A Transnational Detournement of Hollywood Melodrama" in *South Korean Golden Age Melodrama: Gender, Genre, and National Cinema* ed. Abelmann and McHugh (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005), Park Jae-yoon, “Seeing Stars”

⁴¹ Kim Shi-mu, *Lee Jang Ho*. (Seoul: KOFIC, 2000), 27.

The dynamics of film censorship and film genre have been broadly discussed by film scholars (Grieverson, 2004; Kuhn, 1988; Jacobs, 1997; Staiger, 1991; 1995).⁴² Jacobs' work on the fallen woman genre in relation to Hollywood's self-censorship views the force of censorship as a discursive tool that internally frames and governs the norms and ideas around the sexual status quo. Her focus on a genre and cinematic conventions instigated by self-censorship illustrates "not only the operation of censorship under the studio system but more specifically the representation of sexual difference within this context" (Jacobs, xi).

In terms of South Korean film scholarship, Park Yu-hee's work on the study of military government's film censorship (2010), Lee Jung-bae's views on the internalization of film censorship during the 1960s (2010) and Byun Jang-ho's take on the history of Korean film censorship (2000) conceptualize the institutional framework within which censorship was carried out under the repressive rule of the Korean military government. Park and Byun's work offer a historical overview of the dynamics of film censorship from the 1960s through the 1980s during the two military regimes. Lee's views of film censorship elucidate the new permutations of the film genre brought about by the changes in the military government's film censorship.

I assume that the commonly-held notion of intentional military censorship during the 1970s was deduced on the grounds of censorship having been an inconsistently applied measure. Lee In-jung described that the Park regime changed its film policies every year from 1973 to 1977, which caused the state officials and censors to be confused.⁴³ Park Yu-hee commented on film censorship during the military regime (196–1986) and described the random nature and

⁴² Lee Grieverson, *Policing Cinema: Movies and Censorship in Early-Twentieth-Century America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, May 24, 2004), Annette Kuhn, *Cinema, Censorship and Sexuality, 1909-25 (Cinema and Society)* (New York: Routledge, May 1988), Janet Staiger, "Self-Regulation and the Classical Hollywood Cinema," <https://journals.ku.edu/index.php/jdte/article/viewFile/1830/1793>. Lea Jacobs, *The Wages of Sin: Censorship and the Fallen Woman Film, 1928-1942* (Berkeley: University of California Press, June 1, 1997).

⁴³ Lee In-jung, "An Analysis of Korean Literary Film of the 1970s" *Cineforum*, Vol.8 35.

irrationality of military film censorship.⁴⁴ Film materials with even slight social commentary were censored, such as more than 45 minutes of *Holiday* (1968) being cut simply because it was too “gloomy.”⁴⁵ *Barefoot Glory* (1964) lost its entire end sequence because it was a “too realistic depiction of poverty.”⁴⁶ While these socially realist films were sensational censorship cases, hostess films that dealt with similar issues or provided equally realistic treatments of poverty, lower class life, and depressed characters survived the severe state censorship.

During the reign of Park Chung-hee’s military regime, especially in the period in which the Yushin Film Law (1974) and censorship operated, adult melodramas and action and comedy films, which had little to do with the current political and societal issues, stood as the major genres.⁴⁷ Admittedly, it is undeniable that such government policies indirectly provided a ground upon which sexually-charged films, such as hostess films, could be supported. Nevertheless, this does not fully account for the particular reasons why such a subject (hostesses/prostitutes) was specifically selected and finally made into mainstream Korean cinema.

Regrettably, previous Korean film scholarship has undervalued the contribution of the filmmakers, including Lee Jang-ho, Kim Ho-sŏn, and Ha Gil-jong. They pioneered this remarkable cycle of hostess films and helped it flourish, exercising an unprecedented level of cultural and artistic influence over Korean cinema, especially through founding a film movement, The Era of Image. More significantly, their formulaic construction of prostitute heroines that stereotypes sexually sacrificial women is manifest not just within their hostess films but it is ushered in numerous other popular films of the 1970s and beyond.

⁴⁴ Park Yu-hee, “The Study of the Dynamics of Film Censorship”

⁴⁵ Ibid. Park states that such government censorship practice was mocked as “The 8th Art” by film producers because of their random criteria. 51-53.

⁴⁶ See the interview with the director, Kim Ki-duk for the detailed anecdote of the censorship intervention with this film. <http://www.munhwa.com/news/view.html?no=2011101901033630136004>. *Munhwa Daily*, 10.19.2011.

⁴⁷ Park Yu-hee, “The Dynamics of Film Censorship.”

While the contribution of these key directors, in terms of founding the films along with the generic language of (hostess women) is tremendous, it has been largely neglected by film scholars and critics. Some scholarly works have focused on the subject of The Era of Image (An Jae-suk, 2001; Moon Gwan-gyu; 2012; Kang Sung-ryul, 2012),⁴⁸ by providing detailed historical accounts of the film movement. However, these works do not necessarily relate The Era of Image and the hostess films produced by the members of the movement. In particular, An denied a relation between the two for the reason that the first hostess film that was a commercial hit, *Heavenly* (1974), was released a year before the film movement was established. He also argued that the total number of hostess films directed by the members of The Era of Image is not significant enough to consider them as the sole progenitors of the genre.

Nevertheless, I would contend that the time lapse between the conception of hostess films and the film movement is not significant: the peak of the hostess cycle and the movement overlap in the period from the mid- to late-1970s. Some members, such as Kim and Ha, made their hostess films during the movement. In addition, the total number of hostess films directed by the founders of The Era of Image may seem low, but they were major box-office hits (all ranked within the top three) and had a significant impact on the Korean film industry of the 1970s.⁴⁹

A few scholars, including, Kim Sun-ah (2007)⁵⁰ and Yu Sun-young (2004)⁵¹ have broadly mentioned The Era of Image in their discussion of hostess films. Kim, in her analysis of

⁴⁸ An Jae-suk, "The Study of *The Era of Image*," Moon Gwan-gyu, "Historical Background and significance of *The Era of Image*" *Cineforum*, Vol. 14. 2012. Kang Sung-ryul, "Reading a Film Discourse through *The Era of Image*." *Cineforum*, Vol.14.2012.

⁴⁹ For the commercial scores of the hostess films made by these directors, see Fig. 4-1 in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

⁵⁰ Kim Sun-ah, "Youngja's Face in *Youngja's Heydays*" in *Film and Women: Looking at Korean Society and Women through Films*. (Seoul: Korea Film Archive. 2007).

⁵¹ Yu Sun-young, "Kwaminjok Project and Hostess Film" in *State and Everyday Life: Park Chung-hee Period*. Seoul: Hanwool Publication, 2004.

Young-ja, argued that the directors of this film movement commonly utilized the theme of a woman's (sexual) victimization in an attempt to allegorize the state oppression of the public. She noted that The Era of Image directors attempted to "register their hostility towards what they felt was an unjust power structure" (147). In a similar perspective, Yu claimed that female sexuality was generally shown in a highly abusive manner in the hostess films directed by the members of The Era of Image. She argued that this tendency is related to the directors' political resistance toward the authoritarian military regime.

Kim and Yu's readings are fruitful to the extent that they at least bridge the film movement and the general tendencies of the hostess films produced by the members. Nevertheless, I would argue that these analyses tend to overplay the importance of the directors' political resistance, as these were not explicitly addressed by the directors in their artistic premises. Throughout the statements, manifesto, and essays written by them, which I discuss in detail in Chapter four, the directors' political viewpoints and criticisms of the government were elusive at best, whereas the roots of their aesthetic inclination in the new wave cinema was repeatedly and saliently stated. Therefore, I think a more sufficient analysis would take into account the artistic contexts of the hostess films made by the directors in The Era of Image.

Lastly, dozens of studies have been conducted on gender representation in Korean cinema (Cho, 2010; Yu, 2000; Hwang, 2009; Baek, 2008). Within the realm of hostess films, Cho Oe-sook explains how working class female sexuality is negatively portrayed in hostess films as a social threat, and this is a response to the social tensions created by the massive rural migration of women during the period of industrialization.⁵² Yong Suk-won similarly focused on the representation of female sexuality in the hostess films, but he assessed the employment of

⁵² Cho Oe-sook, "Representation of Working Class Women in the 70s Korean Cinema," M.A.Thesis, Chung Ang Univ.2002.

sexualized women in these films as a cultural metaphor of resistance against the authoritarian Park regime.⁵³

All in all, the previous Korean scholarship on hostess films has been enlightening, as it has provided historical accounts of hostess films viewed in conjunction with politics and society. However, these works tend to overstate either the importance of the political conditions resulting from the military regime during the 70s, or the sexual aspects of the films, as implied in the Yang Yoon-mo's viewing of the 1970s Korean cinema in general, "[the 1970s] films were mostly divided into two groups: one, sexualized, commercial films, and two, pro-government films."⁵⁴ These scholarly viewings inevitably position hostess films as ideologically reactionary, symptomatic texts. Therefore, these accounts have left out other crucial cultural dynamics, such as the film movement and commercial tactics, which critically contributed to conceptualization of female sexuality.

In addition, while many critical readings are largely preoccupied with sexual aspects associated with hostess women, they focus less on how these hostess women are idealized for their self-sacrificing natures and self-victimization, which doubly demands women's sexual and bodily labor. I think this is a crucial issue that requires particular attention, as the cinematic discourse of female sacrifice was pivotal in hostess films and resonated throughout the larger media landscape of the 1970s. The contemporary mass cultural representations of these hostess women epitomized ambivalent feminine ideals, transforming the traditional female model of a 'good wife and wise mother' into a sexually self-sacrificing woman.

⁵³ Yong Suk-won, "A study on Adaptation Aspects of literature for hostess in 1970's -focused on <example writing> and <the street lived only by women>" *Korean Literary Studies*, Vol. 49 (2012.12) .

⁵⁴ This quote is excerpted from Mun Hak-san's "A Theory of the 1970s director, Ha Gil-jong" in *Cineforum*, Vol. 4 (Seoul: Dong Guk Univ. Press) 140.

Taking this into account, this dissertation makes the following contributions. First, I hope to re-locate hostess films as an academically valuable field with relevant texts that are critically infused with important social, political, and cultural currents. Previous Korean film scholarship tended to downplay these films, suggesting that they “did not exhibit any real analysis or criticisms of society, nor did they expose the irony of a society that put the heroines in such situations” (Min et al., 2003). or that they were reactionary products to the Park regime’s sexual politics, indicating that “hostess melodramas utilize explicit sexism by using women’s sexual and physical repression as a dominant strategy” (Yu, 143) and that “hostess melodramas exploit young working-class women’s bodies and sexuality and exclude them from citizens in the service of the Park’s regime’s project of nation building” (Kwon, 417). I contend that attaching such labels to these films without a deeper scrutiny of the genre is unfair because the genre has yet to undergo a thorough, systematic analysis of its formal elements and their significance with regard to society and culture.

Furthermore, this project contributes to the study of Korean film history by filling historical gaps that have been under-scrutinized or misconstrued. In the discussion of hostess films, previous Korean film scholarship predominantly emphasized how political force influenced the emergence of hostess films. It has not yet specified the involvement of the directors of The Era of Image and their collective vision with regard to cinema, which is relevant with regard to the generic terms of the hostess films. Viewing their hostess films through the framework of the film movement will be fruitful for historicizing not only the hostess films and the films of the 1970s, but also Korean films as a whole.

Last and most importantly, evaluating hostess films will help us to understand the representation of sexuality and women within the institutional dynamics defined by the interplay

among state censorship, film directors, and the media industry. Even though I am dealing with a particular film genre from a particular period, the representation of femininity in these films still resonates in contemporary Korean film texts. As mentioned previously, I am particularly concerned with the persistently recurring notion of female sacrifice, which locates a woman's labor and sexuality as a form of sacrifice (both thematically and visually). This general tendency was not limited to the genre of hostess films, as it was employed frequently to justify film narratives and commercial demands in later films in the 1980s. I hope my study can offer a foundation for forthcoming works to address texts with similar narrative devices and cinematic axioms related to women.

Methodology

For this dissertation, I combine archival research, textual analyses, and interviews with directors. Archival research on film laws, censorship rules, and notes to studios is critical to my project. I utilized government documents on Korean film laws and censorship as well as production notes from various sources, including the Korean National Assembly Library, the Korea Film Archive (KOFA), and the Korean Film Council (KOFIC). I viewed the box office records of hostess films and compared them with other genres/films. The detailed data on the ranking of hostess films are available through the KOFA's Korean Film Year Books.

Furthermore, I include interviews with directors of hostess films who were also founders of The Era of Image, Kim Ho-sŏn and Lee Jang-ho. These interviews reveal the protocols (both written and unwritten) of government censorship during the military regime and, more

specifically, how the depiction of prostitution in hostess films was not considered as serious as it was in other realist films. Although the interview material is not used as much as archival and textual evidence, this material is still pivotal, as the directors offer first-person accounts of the censorship operation and its influence on actual filmmaking practices. Also, their oral testaments regarding the foundation of The Era of Image support the notion that there is a shortage of studies on the film movement.

Lastly, textual and extra-textual analyses of hostess films are imperative in this dissertation. The conventions regarding the themes and visual techniques in the films—*Young-ja's Heydays*, *Women's Street*, *Winter Woman* (1975, 1976, 1977, Kim Ho-sŏn), *Heavenly Homecoming to Stars I* (1974, Lee Jang-ho), and a sequel (Ha Gil-jong, 1979) and *The Rose that Swallowed Thorn* (Chung So-young, 1979)—were extensively analyzed in conjunction with the socio-cultural, political, and other relevant historical circumstances.

I also examine movie posters, newspaper ads, articles, and essays on hostess stars and real-life prostitutes in tabloid magazines. With regard to hostess advertising, I focus on two things: first, the visual strategies used to frame the female body, and second, the accompanying ad copy, which sexual morals connoting the male sphere. These materials illustrate how studio strategies constructed femininity and female sexuality. Magazine and newspaper articles show the cultural dialogue between films and extra-filmic materials, which greatly contributed to the public conceptualization of female sexuality.

Chapter Summery

The Introduction provides the historical background of hostess films, showing how the genre was first named and illustrating the forces that brought these films into mainstream Korean culture. Chapter two provides a historical overview of the establishment of the Motion Picture Law and its censorship policies in the period from the Japanese Occupation to the Park Chung-hee government. The major focus is on the changes in the film laws and censorship system during the Park regime in relation to the hostess films. I review the previous scholarly arguments that addressed the government's implicit deregulation of sexual materials in films and its influence regarding the emergence of hostess films. I intend to corroborate this with a detailed investigation of how such policies were delivered to and acknowledged by film studios and directors. Finally, I relate the dynamics between state censorship and the hostess films to show how these films on provocative subject matter, such as sex workers and prostitutes, strategically circumvented the censorship regulations. For this, I case study Cheong So-young's hostess film, *The Rose that Swallowed Thorn* (1979) which juxtaposes cinematic depictions of the state development to that of sexual falling of a hostess heroine.

In Chapter Three, I scrutinize the genre conventions employed in hostess films, first by looking at the stylistic orchestration of realism and hyper-stylization (with regard to the heroines). I relate the cinematic constructions of the hostess women and narratives to the discourse on female sacrifice. I provide analyses on the two canonical hostess films which signaled the culmination of the cycle, Lee Jang-ho's *Heavenly Homecoming to Stars* (1974) and Kim Ho-sŏn's *Young-ja's Heydays* (1975). The investigation of these films demonstrates how they

construct the prostitute heroine utilizing the techniques suggested above. A range of visual/auditory elements, including camera movements, framing, and sound muting, and narrative devices, such as characterization and voice over/flash backs, are viewed in depth.

Chapter Four examines the pioneers of hostess films and their film movement, The Era of Image. I employ The Era of Image movement as a framework to help historicize the hostess films and the generic legacy of female representation. I concentrate on the movement's emphasis of the two major concepts of social realism and commercial aesthetics in conjunction with the thematic and visual strategies utilized in the hostess films. The chapter historically traces the Korean tradition of realism and the movement's adaptation of foreign film movements. In doing so, I illustrate how the film movement stabilized the hostess conventions associated with the construction of the feminine. Ha Gil-jong's *Heavenly Homecoming to Stars II* (1978), Lee Jang-ho's *Eo-Woo-Dong* (1985) and Kim Ho-sŏn's *Women's Street* (1976) are analyzed textually and contextually as examples of such films.

The ways in which hostess films presented women, both inside and outside the filmic texts, greatly contributed to the conventionalization of female representations in mainstream culture. Chapter Five focuses on the advertising strategies used in the artwork and copy of print ads for hostess films. It examines the commercial mechanisms and the ways in which hostess advertising framed female sexuality. The chapter also explores the stardom of hostess actresses and the media coverage of real-life prostitutes in the context of the growing popularity of tabloid magazines during the 1970s. I viewed articles from newspapers and magazines including *Sunday Seoul* (1968–1982), which was one of the most prominent tabloids during this period. The articles elucidate how the magazine dealt with the rise of hostess culture by juxtaposing hostess stars and real-life prostitutes, establishing the cultural predominance of hostess sexuality.

Chapter Six offers an epilogue and conclusion. It describes the decline of the hostess genre and its transition to other erotic sub-genres, including the *Madame* series and the erotic historical/period films. The theme of a sexual woman and her bodily and sexual victimization/sacrifice persists within the cultural politics of female sexuality under another military government led by Chun Doo-hwan's operation of film censorship. Although the demise of the hostess films occurred in the early 1980s, the legacy of the cinematic conventions of female sexuality and sacrifice resonate in these later erotic films as well as contemporary popular Korean films.

Chapter Two: Film Policies, Censorship and Genre

During the Park Chung-hee Regime (1961-1979)

The regulatory apparatus extends beyond any single institution to a "thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions."

Theresa Cronin quoting Foucault⁵⁵

Where there is repression or censorship, there is also "production," the calling-into-representation of the very content to be censored, and yet, or rather consequently, this calling-into-representation is never in a position of exteriority to the censorship.

Paul Morrison⁵⁶

Films are inevitably influenced by censorship, either as an obligatory form of government regulation or as a form of self-regulation by the film industry. The terms of censorship exercise strong power over films, specifically to the constituents of the film genre. As Jacobs correctly

⁵⁵ Theresa Cronin, "Media Effects and the Subjectification of the Film Regulation" in *Velvet Light Trap*. No. 63, Spring, 2009.

⁵⁶ Paul Morrison, "It's still the same old story": "Casablanca," History And the Erotic." *Neohelicon*. (2013) 40:209–223.

puts it: “Genre provides a focal point for the permutations of conventions of genre instigated by film censorship.”⁵⁷

In the case of South Korean cinema, especially during Park Chung-hee’s military regime, state-operated film censorship exerted unprecedented power over film studios and directors. During his military dictatorship from 1960 to 1979, Park revised the Motion Picture Law and its constituting film policies four times (1963, 1966, 1970, and 1973) after his promulgation of Korea’s first systematized Motion Picture Law in 1962. The fourth revision of the law, in particular, dramatically strengthened the censorship measures as part of Park’s national revitalization project, the *Yushin* system, which was carried out to secure his dictatorship and to heighten the Park regime's “capacity to suppress the resistance of workers, students and dissident intellectuals against authoritarian rule.” (Im, 257)

As a result of the fourth revision of the Motion Picture Law (1973), censorship enforcement became even stricter and films were required to pass multiple censorship viewings. At the initial viewing, scripts were examined by the board. They were examined again after shooting to see if the final product was consistent with the prior assessment. The censors focused on locating and deleting any depiction that was anti-authority or socially/politically realistic and critical. Given these circumstances, film producers and directors alike were increasingly becoming critical towards state film censorship. They attributed the drastic decrease of the film business in the 1970s to this state-operated film censorship.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Lea Jacobs, *The Wages of Sin: The censorship and the Fallen Woman Film*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997). P. x.

⁵⁸ The special survey on the subject, “The Reasons of Recent Decline of Korean Films” indicates a majority of producers and filmmakers consider the state censorship as one major cause of decline of Korean films. This survey was originally contained in *The Era of Image* (summer, 1978) and used by An Jae-suk’s “The Study of The Era of Image,” Due to the loss of the original document, I used the An Jae-suk’s data.

The Park regime's state censorship was notorious not only for its draconic, rigid nature but also for its highly inconsistent and irrational measures. During this time, the number of film productions plunged and many realist or socially conscious films became extinct, leaving predominantly apolitical, escapist genre films such as action/martial arts films, melodramas or government-financed propaganda films as major runners.⁵⁹ Many film scholars pointed out that hostess films were a direct outcome of Park's politically-driven film censorship (Yu, 2008; Kim, 2012; Chung; 2003). As Kim Shi-Moo states,

A military dictatorship had forcibly seized power in the government, and rather than presenting any fundamental solution for the social contradictions that began to surface in the 1970s, it focused instead on stopgap measures to minimize the anxieties of the public and steer them in a different direction...In the film world, the same irrational laws that had choked the art form since the 1960s were kept in place, albeit with some loosening of restrictions on sexual content. In other words, as a kind of trade-off for repressions on political freedoms, they relaxed ethical strictures to some extent.(27)

To a similar extent, Park Jae-yoon concurs that "sexual content (e.g., prostitution, adultery) was exempt from censorship practices with the military regime condoning sexual subjects in order to divert the public's attention away from political issues" (123).

These scholars share the view that the military government purportedly used film censorship to distract the public from political consciousness by controlling political materials in films while condoning censorship control on sexual content. Although it is difficult to argue that the Park regime forcibly channeled culture into the emergence of 'hostess films' in particular, if the Park government indeed did not regulate sexual subjects as severely as they did political and social matters, it is reasonable to think that it provided favorable conditions for hostess films to be engendered.

⁵⁹ According to Park Yu Hee's research, melodramas ranged from 35% to 52% and action films were 18% to 32% of the total genres of films produced from 1970 to 1979. Park Yu-hee, "The Study of the Dynamics of Film Censorship," 59-60.

More importantly, I am inclined to agree with this scholarly speculation because the Park regime's film-censorship rules clearly contained a clause that regulated the filmic representation of "the activity of prostitution, rape, or illicit sex outside of marriage."⁶⁰ Hostess films openly dealing with prostitute heroines, and frequent rape scenes involving them, are critical evidence that these films somehow survived censorship regulation. In fact, hostess films emerged and were popularized during this unlikely period, when Park's notorious film censorship was at its highest.

Furthermore, despite the criticisms raised about hostess films for their overt commercialization of female sex (Yu, J., 2000; Kim, S., 2012), these films were viewed positively by some film scholars because they at least dealt with important social problems, which other realist films could not (Yong, 2012; Kim, 2000). For instance, films during this period were severely cut by censorship measures even for the depiction of "not being able to afford coffee," because the depiction of poverty was highly discouraged.⁶¹ If Park Chung-hee's censorship was equally cautious with these hostess films that featured potentially troubling issues such as prostitution, rape, and working-class poverty to the same degree as it was with other realist films, hostess films might not have been fostered and canonized in mainstream Korean cinema.

Therefore, previous scholarship, whether it focuses on the obscenity of hostess films or on social relevance, inevitably brings up an important issue. How were hostess films with seemingly "obscene" themes and/or socially sensitive issues, both of which were problematic elements for Park's censorship criteria, granted permission for public viewing without much

⁶⁰ The clause (No.9-14) was the only sex-related rule of the Motion Picture Law (1966) and continued to remain even after the Park regime. Legal data including censorship rules and motion picture laws I use for my dissertation were obtained from the government archive, www.moleg.go.kr.

⁶¹ See Park Yu-hee's "The Study of Dynamics of Film Censorship Under the Park Regime." This case is a Lee Man Hee's film, *Holiday*, a socially critical, realist film, which depicts a poor couple trying to make a living.

alteration? According to the censorship records, although the films violate at least one item under the Motion Picture Law No. 9, the fourteenth of which I stated earlier, none of the films were prevented from having a public release because of their portrayal of prostitutes, prostitution, rape, or illicit sex.

In this respect, it is crucial to scrutinize the “unwritten protocols” of Park’s film censorship equally with written protocols. There was a varying degree of control over films with sensitive social problems presented through hostess heroines. While I do not intend to determine whether or not hostess films came into being as a result of unjust film censorship under the Park regime, my major focus is on the ways in which hostess films accommodated and negotiated the terms of state censorship, particularly in association with the representation of females.

In viewing such dynamics between state censorship and film, the following questions are inevitable: how was it possible that the state was willing to turn a blind eye on the explicit sexualization of women in hostess films when military-era film censorship was at its peak? Why were the social and political aspects of this group of films about female sexual workers not seriously considered socially relevant by the government at a time when censorship was so high?

This chapter aims to unravel the above issues, first by looking at the history of film policies and censorship, particularly during the Park Chung-hee regime. It also examines the interplay between Park’s state censorship and hostess films by viewing censorship records and notes, and comparing major censorship cases during Park’s reign in the 1960s and 1970s. With concern to the implicit deregulation of censorship practices on sexual materials, I include my interviews with two directors who produced hostess films, Kim Ho-sŏn and Lee Jang-ho. Finally, I analyze a hostess film produced under the reign of Park’s military censorship, *The Rose that*

Swallowed Thorn (Cheong, 1979) as a case study to show how this film strategically orchestrates visual and thematic elements to circumvent state censorship enforcement.

A Historical Overview of Korean Film Censorship Before the Park Chung-hee Regime

Ever since film began to take shape in the 1910s, the films of Korea were actively utilized as a propaganda tool. During the Japanese Occupation of Korea, Japanese authorities strategically used film censorship in order to suppress public thought and to promote Japanese customs and values as a part of an assimilation policy. The first systemized film censorship was established in 1926 by Governor-General Saito's administration as "Law No.59." With the enactment of Law No.59, the Japanese government exercised strict "central censorship regulations while delegating regulatory power to provincial police authorities who could concentrate on whether or not a film was detrimental to public peace and cultural customs on a localized level" (Yecies 64).

The censorship board operating under the Japanese administration tended to be profit-oriented because censoring fees from domestic and Hollywood films were quite lucrative. Therefore, the censorship board rejected very few American films. Out of an approximate total of 31,100 reels of feature films censored between 1926 and 1936, only fifty-two were rejected (Yecies 67). However, such a lenient standard predominantly applied to Hollywood films, not to Korean or Korean-Japanese films. The board strictly regulated domestic films with a socially critical tone or revolutionary themes. Namely, the 1940 "Chosun Motion Picture Law"

exclusively controlled Korean films through a series of regulations and requirements, including production control, an import quota system, prior (script) censorship, and producer registration.⁶²

The Chosun Motion Picture Law and its constituting regulations had a double purpose. First, the Japanese government sought to expand its film market in Colonial Korea, particularly by facilitating the importation of profitable Hollywood films. Second, the law aimed to strategically intervene in the entire process of film production, distribution, and exhibition. By prior censorship, the Japanese government was able to filter out any ideologically problematic materials even before the film was made, which in turn reinforced directors' self-censorship. Furthermore, the producer-registration system gave full authority to the Japanese government to determine and select producers who would work favorably with the Japanese authorities. Under this law, virtually all Korean films were made to be pro-Japanese propaganda films using the Japanese language and Japanese crews.⁶³

Ironically, these repressive rules of film censorship enforced by the Japanese government continued even after Korea gained independence from Japan in 1945. Shortly after the Liberation, the U.S. Army Government in Korea (USAMGIK) was temporarily based in Korea until the first Korean president, Rhee Syng Man, was inaugurated in 1948. During this period, the USAMGIK "covertly controlled the media to minimize leftist or communist influence over the South Korean population," with their control including newspapers, periodicals, and radio.⁶⁴ The temporary U.S. military government produced propaganda films, including news films and semi-documentaries that were charged with pro-Americanism, such as *Comrade (Jeon Woo)* and

⁶² The Chosun Film Law (*Chosun Younghwa Ryeong*) was enacted in August, 1940. The law was largely based on the Japanese film law. Under the section of censorship, the Chosun version had additional articles that regulated "inappropriate films for ruling Chosun." Kim Ryeo-shil, *Nation Projects, Colony Shadows* (Seoul: Samin, 2006). p.171.

⁶³ Ibid. p. 191.

⁶⁴ Ian Howard. "Korean Media Bias and Government Intervention in Media" http://uskoreainstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/2009_Yearbook_Howard.pdf.

March Forward (Jeonjin Daehanbo) (Min et al. 39). The production of news films continued until the termination of the Korean War. Between 1950 and 1951, dozens of news films were “produced by the U.S. Information Service...[but] only ten South Korean films were shepherded through production, distribution, and exhibition by the Korean Film Union (KFU), a leftist organization largely opposed to the controlling hand of the USAMGIK” (Diffrient 24). Similar to the Japanese Administration of Colonial Korea, the U.S. military government exercised dominant control over film in Korea in order to solidify Korea as a reliable political ally.

Furthermore, the USAMGIK decreed Military Government Ordinance No.68, “Regulation of the Motion Pictures,” which was soon followed by No.115, “Film Law,” in 1946.⁶⁵ With this law, the U.S. authorities abolished most of the Chosun Film Laws promulgated by the Governor-General of Chosun during the colonial period, but maintained the notorious “double censorship” of the previous Japanese administration, which mandated censorship before (scripts and/or subtitles) and after shooting the film (completed feature).⁶⁶ Through this double censorship, the U.S. censors sought to suppress ideologically “dubious” films. This practice applied not only to Korean films with leftist themes but also to Hollywood films such as *The Grapes of Wrath* (Ford, 1940) and *Key Largo* (Houston, 1948). These films were banned for public showing because they contained “negative images of America.” (Kim, 2000)⁶⁷

In 1948, Rhee Syng Man was appointed as the first president of Korea. His government did not gain a majority of votes so he amended the constitution, repressed the Congress, and established emergency law in order to enforce his unjust ruling (Min et al. 40). Rhee’s media policy was part of an attempt to secure his quasi-dictatorship. Rhee restricted the media as he

⁶⁵ KOFA (The Korea Film Archive) *Traces of Korean Cinema from 1945 to 1959*. P. 80.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Kim-gyoun. “American Military Cultural Politics seen through Foreign Diplomatic Policies” *The Study of Media and Culture*, Vol.17, 2001.

perceived them “as a threat to his power and shut down the *Kyunghyang* newspaper, the main opposition publication, and other moderate newspapers.”⁶⁸ In regulating films, rather than cultivating Korea’s own film policies and censorship rules, Rhee adapted the film censorship system largely based on repressive censorship policies utilized by Japanese authorities and the U.S. military government. Censorship duties were handled by the Bureau of Public Information (*gong-bo-cheo*). Although this was a temporary assignment that would be taken over by the Bureau of Film’s censorship later on, it implied that the government was determined to control films directly.

In 1949, the head of the Bureau of Film announced the “Policy for Domestic Films,” which indicated the government’s motive for films to be used as propaganda tools. The rules were simple, constituting only two articles. First, the government would not allow films containing incomplete sound and unclear images. Second, the government would not permit release of any films other than those that portrayed “*constructiveness of the nation* and purely artistic films.” (emphasis mine) (Bae 26)⁶⁹ Although these rules seemed to be less sophisticated at that point, lacking any detailed description of themes and images that films should not present, they made clear that the major premise of film censorship was to determine whether or not the film was conducive to “national development,” explicating the potential of the film medium as a powerful device that could be used for government propaganda.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Howard, “Korean Media Bias” See footnote 7 for the link of the article.

⁶⁹ Bae Su-kyung, *The Study of History of Korean Film censorship*. M.A thesis. 2004.

⁷⁰ Bae illustrates an episode that exemplifies Rhee government’s political control on films. The use of Russian composer, Chostakovitch’s music in a Korean film, *Janghwa Hongryoen* made a big stir due to Korea’s diplomatic relation with USSR at that time. The Minister of Culture and Education made a public announcement about the state censor’s negligence and that the music will be immediately replaced. “History of Korean Film The censorship” 26.

Nevertheless, censorship rules under the Rhee administration were not as strictly enforced on films as on press media, which were heavily guided by the government.⁷¹ The policy was not legally enforced at that point. Consequently, the films during Rhee's reign dealt with various social problems and issues with relatively freer representations than in previous periods and during the later Park Chung-hee military regime. Korean film historians referred to this period as a "honeymoon between film industry and the government," provoked by fewer governmental regulations and less censorship (Min et al. 47). This period witnessed an "explosion of creativity in filmmakers and produced many of the most significant films in Korean film industry." (Min et al. 47) earning this era the label, "the Golden Age of South Korean Cinema," in terms of both the number and the quality of films produced (Jeong, 2006; McHugh and Abelmann, 2009). With their candid social depiction and artistically infused aesthetics, certain directors, including Yu Hyun-mok, Han Hyung-mo, and Shin Sang-ok, and their works, such as *The Aimless Bullet* (Obaltan, 1961),⁷² *Mrs. Butterfly* (Jayu Buin, 1956), and *The Flower in Hell* (Jiok Hwa, 1958), respectively, largely contributed to this heyday of Korean cinema.

During this period, the first democratic, civilian film review board, The Civilian Film Ethics Board (*younghwa-yooli-weewon-hoe*), was established in 1957, consisting of 47 individuals from the various fields of film, music, art, and literature (Bae, 2004).⁷³ The board was a civil organization designed to create an anti-hegemonic, civil power in censorship so that it could secure freedom of expression and basic civil rights.⁷⁴ Despite such promising goals, the

⁷¹ Howard notes that Rhee issued a set of guidelines to publishers to ensure that certain articles would not be published. Not conforming to these guidelines resulted in many arrests during Rhee's administration. "Korean Media Bias"

⁷² *The Aimless Bullet* was produced at the end of the Rhee's regime but released later during the Park regime.

⁷³ Bae Su-syung. *The Study of History of Korean Film censorship*. M.A thesis. 2004.

⁷⁴ Kim Chung-gang, *The South Korean Golden Age Comedy Film, 1953-1970*. Ph.D Dissertation (UIUC)..131.

board was criticized by filmmakers and producers for its lack of legal power; it did not have any legal authority over films and could only make suggestions for filmmakers to revise their films. In other words, even if a film was successfully examined by the board, it had to receive final approval from the Ministry of Public Information. Because of the feeble nature of that organization, the board went through several systematic changes and reorganizations and eventually was replaced by the Censorship Board (1963) under the Ministry of Public Information after the Park Chung-hee military administration took office by coup d'état in 1961.

Park Chung-hee's Film Politics (1962-1978)
and the Activation of the Yushin Film Law and Censorship (1973)

With his military coup d'état on May 16, 1961, General Park Chung-hee seized control of South Korea. Park revised the Constitution, enabling him to suppress rights and the freedom of expression.⁷⁵ Moreover, in order to prevent possible resistance against his unjust achievement of political power, he immediately declared "Modernization of Nation (*choguk geundaehwa*) as a national agenda to appeal to the public. The Park regime vigorously used the media to impart his modernization project, for instance by "setting up amplifiers and distributed speakers and radio sets to even the remotest villages...the state's broadcast network eventually reached the entire country, and so, therefore, did the administration's anticommunist propaganda and educational messages to the citizens of the republic" (Jeong 132). Even from the early days of his rule, Park was aware of the potential of film, through which he attempted to earn public control and foreign currency simultaneously. Soon after his coup d'état, the Park government distributed a press

⁷⁵ The Reconstituted Law (5th) No. 18 -1. Bae Su-kyung. *The Study of History of Korean Film Censorship*. 40.

release to major newspapers titled, “Recommendation Policy of Superior and Enlightening Films,” which stated that the Park government would fully support citizens in watching “publically enlightening” films.⁷⁶

This statement demonstrates how determined Park was to employ film to facilitate state goals. It did not take long for Park to acquire total control over film production, distribution and exhibition by setting up a series of laws and infrastructure, including the Ministry of Public Information (1961), the National Film Production Center (1961), and the Motion Picture Law (1962). On January 20, 1962, the military government ratified its first film policy through the Motion Picture Law, which contained “twenty-two wide-ranging measures regarding the censorship fees, screening permits, producer registration, and importing, exporting and exhibiting films.” (Yecies and Shim, 2012)⁷⁷

Park’s film policy can be characterized by two major objectives. First, Park attempted to expand the Korean film industry into the global market in accordance with his goal of nation-building and modernization. Second, Park heightened government control over the process of film production through various means of regulation and reinforcement, including double censorship and a studio reward system for making propaganda films.

In systemizing the Korean film industry, the Park government emulated the successful models of Hollywood and Japan. Park mixed the “Japanese ethos of top-down mobilization and the U.S. ideas of technocracy with Korean nationalism to build a national film studio system” (Yecies and Shim 7).⁷⁸ Under this premise, the Park regime demanded very strict standards for

⁷⁶ Yu Sun-young. 340.

⁷⁷ Yecies and Shim, “Power of the Korean Film Producer: Park Chung-Hee’s Forgotten Film Cartel of the 1960s Golden Decade and its Legacy” *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Vol 10, Issue 52, No. 3, December 24, 2012. <http://japanfocus.org/-Brian-Yecies/3875>.

⁷⁸ Building Korea’s own film studio system, Park aimed to adapt Japanese zaibatsu system which enabled a few large family-run vertically integrated business conglomerates with a mixture of Hollywood’s system of corporations ran by elite studio owners. Ibid.

film studios. For instance, studios must be equipped with “more than three 35-mm cameras, a lighting system of more than 60 KW of power, sound recording capabilities, two full-time exclusively employed film directors and more than two contracted actors and actresses” (Min et al. 47). These requirements were unrealistic, especially for mid-sized, independent studios. Eventually, the law forced the studios to merge with each other; 65 small film studios were merged into 16 larger companies and again into 6 major companies until the revision of the law in 1963.⁷⁹

This reduction of the number of studios enabled the government to control films more readily: now with fewer and bigger film studios, the Park administration was able to efficiently intervene in film production, wielding more power over the industry. This also meant that government worked more closely with the producers and directors of these studios, often making both official and unofficial requests concerning film contents.⁸⁰ In my interview with Kim Ho Sun, one of the most prolific Korean directors of the 1970s, he stated, “one phone call from the Ministry of Public Information (where the censorship bureau belonged) could change one film to whole different other.”⁸¹

According to the Motion Picture Law, there were 4 major criteria under the section covering censorship measures:⁸² (1) Films should not depict anything that damages national authority or disrespects the Constitution, (2) films should not disrupt national security, public

⁷⁹ In addition to these requests, the 1963 revision added even more requirements including the minimum studio size of 661.15 m² and contracted technicians.

⁸⁰ This “unofficial” operation was common under the Park reign. Howard exemplifies the government’s retaliation against *Dong-A Daily* in 1975 for criticizing government. “Park pressured businesses to withdraw their advertising contracts with the daily. Park’s representatives sent to these businesses were often from the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA)” “Korean Media Bias and Government Intervention in Media,” http://uskoreainstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/2009_Yearbook_Howard.pdf.

⁸¹ This Interview was conducted by the author, 6. 15. .2013. Kim Ho-sŏn is also a director who produced a number of hostess films including, *Youngja’s Heydays* (1975), *Women’s street* (1976) and *Winter Woman* (1977).

⁸² Translation of these terms was done by the author. The actual materials were excerpted from the Korea Film Archive online data base on the state censorship. They are also available from Bae Su-kyung’s thesis, *The Study of History of Korean Film censorship* 2004.

morals, tradition and social orders, (3) films should not damage the image of any countries that have diplomatic relations with Korea, and (4) films should not discourage the spirits of citizens. As these terms of censorship highlighted, the foremost concern in regulation of films was to determine whether a given film conformed to the national agenda and if it also sufficiently functioned as a cultural imperative that “cultivates loyalty and a sense of belonging to the nation” (Park 71).⁸³ Indeed, as Yecies and Shim put it, the film industry during this time was reduced, “both literally and figuratively, to the status of a propaganda factory in which all productions were classed as either ‘hard’ or ‘soft’ propaganda” (4).

One case that involves Yu Hyun-Mok’s *Obaltan* (*The Aimless Bullet*, 1961) illustrates the nature of such film censorship under the Park regime, which functioned to serve national ideologies and anti-communism. *Obaltan* was produced under the prior regime led by Rhee, when film production was relatively less regulative than in Park’s military regime. This film is a story about a war refugee named Cheol-Ho, who came to South Korea to avoid communist persecution. His family suffers from extreme poverty; his sister becomes a prostitute for American soldiers and younger brother eventually robs a bank. Cheol-Ho’s wife dies while delivering their child, a situation complicated by her malnutrition. The film ends with Cheol-Ho’s demented mother crying and repeatedly saying, “Let’s go.”

The film was released on April 13, 1961, and garnered a heated response “especially from the intelligentsia; people even held spontaneous discussions after viewing” (Jeong 146). But the film was soon banned for public showing because it “too realistically” depicted the dark side of Korean society. More importantly, this film was accused of “suspicious ideological content.” (Jeong 146) The censors pointed out that the main character’s mother’s refrain of

⁸³ Park Sang-mi. “The Paradox of Post Colonial Korean Nationalism” *Journal of Korean Studies*, Volume 15, Number 1, Fall 2010, 67-93.

“Let’s go” seemed to suggest “Let’s go (to North Korea)” because of the background of the characters as war refugees. *Obaltan* eventually resumed screening 27 months after the ban, when it was nominated for an award at the 1963 San Francisco Film Festival.⁸⁴

With the second revision of the Motion Picture Law in 1966, the Park regime strengthened “double censorship” of films. In addition, the censorship viewing of the scripts had to be done twice: first by either the Korean Motion Pictures Producers Association or the Board of Korean Art and Cultural Ethics, and finally by the Ministry of Public Information. This rule may seem “generous”, with the government at least giving priority to producers in assessing films, but in reality, it was nothing more than the government’s strategic attempt to reinforce the industry’s self-regulation before their actual viewing. In any case, final censorship was done and confirmed on the government end, which could nullify the results of the prior censorship by the producers or the Board of Korean Art and Cultural Ethics. Therefore, the term “double censorship” actually meant multiple censorship viewings, ultimately supervised by the government.

As a result, producers and directors increasingly criticized the Motion Picture Law, particularly regarding the suffocating conditions of film censorship.⁸⁵ In response to such critiques, Park implemented a new reward system for the studios. If they produced “Superior Films (*woosoo younghwa*),” the government would confer upon them a license to import lucrative foreign films, which were very competitive under the screen quota system.⁸⁶ Superior

⁸⁴ Based on the memoir of a Japanese film critic, Sato Dadao, Bae Su-kyung speculates the major reason for dropping the ban is because Park Chung-hee got informed from someone that the film was highly praised at the festival. *The Study of History of Korean Film censorship*. P. 35.

⁸⁵ Ha Gil-jong, a film director and critic, severely criticized about a lack of realism in Korean films. He claimed that the state censorship must allow depictions of sex, poverty, human cruelty and other realist elements for better quality of films. *Chosun Daily*, 8.11.1973.

⁸⁶ The producers mostly competed for Hong Kong and Hollywood films. Yecies and Shim notes, “By the mid-1960s, foreign films, which were exhibited for two or three times as long as Korean films, were outperforming domestic films at the box office on a regular basis”. Young filmgoers preferred these foreign films over domestic ones for the

films mostly included propagandistic films and literary/historical films based on traditional novels and heroic tales. Many directors, including major “auteur” filmmakers such as Kim Su-yong, Lee Man-hee, and Yu Hyun-mok, participated in producing such films, contributing to the dramatic increase in the total number of films produced during this period.⁸⁷ Even though this reward system was apparently a stopgap, stick-or-carrot measure that was intended to relieve the growing complaints from the film studios, they had to accept it to acquire an import license, which usually brought them considerable commercial success.

If a film did not have a pro-government theme, it suffered from severe censorship. In 1971, Park issued an emergency executive order (*gin geup myoung ryoung*) to suppress the democratic movements that were increasingly occurring throughout the nation. The Park administration elevated the bar of censorship for all media content, imposing script censorship on TV dramas and stage plays. In terms of film, the government began to censor movie posters and theater boards. As Park’s military dictatorship became prolonged, the state censors were particularly wary of depicting the current condition of society and politics. The Park regime incessantly emphasized that films should be supportive of state authorities and policies enforced in a given period: “poor people should not be shown in the streets of Seoul”; “one cannot satirize governmental authorities or violate laws”; “student demonstration cannot be shown or even implied”; “one should not insult soldiers or public officers.”⁸⁸

In October 1972, Park Chung Hee decreed the “Yushin” system and issued a “Yushin Constitution,” which involved the renovation of the existing systems and laws. The Yushin

“narrative and aesthetic qualities” Hong Kong martial arts films, “spaghetti” westerns and James Bond action films were especially popular with this group.” Yecies and Shim. “Power of the Korean Film Producer: Park Chung-Hee’s Forgotten Film Cartel of the 1960s Golden Decade and its Legacy” The article is available at <http://japanfocus.org/-Brian-Yecies/3875>.

⁸⁷ Lee Man-hee’s *Late Fall* (1966), Kim Su-yong’s *Mist* (1967) and *Mountain Fire* (1967) and Yu Hyun-mok’s *The Guests of the last train* (1967) are exemplary works of Superior Films.

⁸⁸ Park, Yu-hee. “The Study of the Dynamics of Film Censorship System” 68.

system was established in order to guarantee Park's lifelong dictatorship and to suppress rising labor demonstrations and public democratic movements against his military dictatorship. Based on Japan's "Meiji Restoration" (*meiji-ishin*), the Yushin System "increased the sense of an impending communist threat among South Koreans, and thus allowed the state to tighten its grip on national discourse, residence records, and the media" (Park, S. 76).⁸⁹

By elevating the bar of regulation, the Park regime actively repressed press media, broadcasting, and film. Shortly after its announcement of the Yushin system, the Park government announced the First Five-Year Plan for Reviving National Culture and Arts (*munye joongheung 5 gaenyun gaehoek*) (1974-1978). This plan included these goals: "(1) promotion of national studies, (2) propagation of culture to the populace, and (3) introduction of Korean culture overseas." (Park 74)⁹⁰ On February 2, 1974, *Dong-A Daily* reported that the Park government had announced the release of 31.2 billion *won* (approximately 29.1 million U.S. dollars) for the first year, with 72 million *won* (approximately 40% of the total) to be spent on the film sector.⁹¹ The fund was mostly spent for the production of national films or government-supported propaganda films (*minjok younghwa/gukcheck younghwa*), and also for rewarding scenarios that had pro-government themes.⁹²

The criteria that the government set up for *Gukcheck Younghwa* (state-sponsored propaganda films) elucidate the primary motive behind the Park regime's agenda for films. The criteria were: (1) Films must contain the spirit of "Yushin," (2) films must be infused with

⁸⁹ Many scholars pointed out that Park's ideologies were derived from his previous military service in the Japanese army (Yi, 2006; Kim and Vogel, 2011). Park designed the Yushin based on the Meiji Yushin (Reform), the political revolution occurred by the Meiji Emperor.

⁹⁰ Park Sang-mi, "The Paradox of Post Colonial Korean Nationalism" *Journal of Korean Studies* Volume 15, Number 1, Fall 2010.

⁹¹ *Dong A Daily (Dong A Ilbo)*, 2.2. 1974. "The Five-Year Plan for the Revival of Culture and Arts: Budget for the First Year"

⁹² *Gukchek Younghwa* (Government Supported Propaganda Films) were produced from 1974-1976. These films were usually themed with anti-communism, war and national development project.

patriotism, (3) films must motivate the public to participate in the New Village Movement,⁹³ (4) films must encourage the increase of exportation, (5) films must inspire citizens to be efficient and skillful, and (6) films must be cheerful and artistic. During the year 1974, the number of *Gukheck Younghwa* soared to 38 (27%) from 12 (9.6%) the prior year, and remained around 20% until 1979.⁹⁴ The most commercially successful propaganda film released during this period was *Marching of Wives* (Im Kwon Taek, 1974). This film explicitly promotes The New Village Movement through the story of a city-born housewife who educates and enlightens rural housewives on how to develop their village. (4) films must encourage the increase of exportation, (5) films must inspire citizens to be efficient and skillful, and (6) films must be cheerful and artistic. During the year 1974, the number of *Gukheck Younghwa* soared to 38 (27%) from 12 (9.6%) the prior year, and remained around 20% until 1979.⁹⁵ The most commercially successful propaganda film released during this period was *Marching of Wives* (Im Kwon Taek, 1974). This film explicitly promotes The New Village Movement through the story of a city-born housewife who educates and enlightens rural housewives on how to develop their village.⁹⁶

Although Park's reward system and development plan seemed to aim for the overall growth of culture, it was no more than a systemized attempt by which Park efficiently orchestrated support and control, all of which was intended to force public compliance with the government's agenda. The government also revised the Motion Picture Law (the fourth amendment) in 1974. This newly constituted "Yushin Film Law" was distinctive in two ways.⁹⁷

⁹³ The major idea of the New Village Movement was to modernize villages and educate villagers through state-sponsored campaigns and assisted by a massive reallocation of government funds as well as by "spiritual guidance." Andrei Lankov, "Saemaul Undong Sets Model for Developing Countries" *Korean Times*, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/biz/2012/03/291_64301.html.

⁹⁴ Park Yu-Hee, "The Study of the Dynamics of Film Censorship," p. 60.

⁹⁵ Park Yu-hee, "The Study of the dynamics of Film Censorship", p. 60.

⁹⁶ *The March of Wives* gathered 55,730 audiences ranked as 5th on the box office in the year of 1974.

⁹⁷ Film scholars occasionally referred 4th revision as The Yushin Film Law implying that the revision took place in accordance with the Yushin System.

First, it administratively maximized government power over films. Under this law, the Park government appointed a Minister of Public Information and Culture, who was in charge of carrying out most film-related rules. The revision of the law provided full authority enabling the minister to permit, prohibit, or cancel an application for a film business. The Minister also had total control over ongoing film productions and could stop a film at any time even if it had passed the initial censorship.⁹⁸

Secondly, the censorship rules were not necessarily modified or added to, but enforcement became more severe (Park, Y. 52). Prior censorship became strengthened; the number of returned scripts was at a mere 3% in 1970 but skyrocketed to 80% in 1975. Some of the concepts that script censorship adhered to, such as “artistic quality” and “ideology,” were not clearly described, so these depended on each censor’s personal insight.⁹⁹ As a result, the censorship around this period was highly subjective and arbitrary; the outcome of the censorship was different depending on each censor and the social mood at a given time. Consequently, it negatively affected the film industry. Figure 2-1 demonstrates the dramatic decline in film productions after the enactment of the Yushin Film Law.

⁹⁸ Oh, 235.

⁹⁹ Yu Sun-young, “Gwamin Hwa Project and Hostess Films” other criteria for script the censorship include plagiarism, copyright and historical validity. 366.

Year	Number of Film Studios	Number of Films	Number of Theaters	Number of Film-Goers
1970	23	209	690	166,349,541
1971	23	202	717	146,303,355
1972	20	122	694	118,273,789
1973	12	125	662	114,625,241
1974	14	141	630	98,375,813
1975	15	83	602	75,597,977

[Fig.2.1: The decline of the Korean film industry during the early to mid-1970s]¹⁰⁰

A Popularity of Hostess-Melodramas

During the Park Chung-hee Regime

While the total number of film productions plunged, this period witnessed a stream of hostess films. The emergence of these films was remarkable not only for their number but also for the size of the audiences they drew. Out of the ten highest box-office scored films from 1970 to 1979, eight were hostess films.¹⁰¹ *Kyung Hyang Daily* (October 1, 1975) published an article titled, “A Boom of ‘Youngja’ films.”¹⁰² The article reports that out of total of seventy-five films produced in 1975, only three scored more than 100,000 audience members and these were all hostess-themed “*Youngja*” films.¹⁰³ As mentioned earlier in analyzing this pervasion of hostess films, some scholars have argued that the Park administration adapted a new approach that

¹⁰⁰ The table is redesigned based on the data excerpted from Lee Young-il’s *History of Korean Cinema* (Seoul: KOFIC, 1988).

¹⁰¹ See the figure I provided in Ch.4 of this dissertation. p.4

¹⁰² The writer must have used this term, “Young-ja Films” in referring to the prior success of *Young-ja’s Heydays* and other similarly themed films released afterwards.

¹⁰³ *Kyŏngnyang ilbo* on 10.1. 1975 “Repeated Failures, Domestic Films Succeed”

implicitly boosted less socially concerned films by loosening restrictions on sexual materials, which in turn contributed to the emergence of hostess films (Park, 2012; Chung, 2003; Yu, 2004).

Although it would be reductive to read hostess films as a direct symptom of the Yushin Film Law and the censorship practice, it would not be unreasonable to think that censorship provided an environment in which these kinds of films could be engendered. Around the time the Yushin Film Law emerged, hostess melodramas and other erotically charged films with female protagonists prevailed at the box office (Fig. 2-2).

Box Office Ranking/Year	1	2	3	4	5
1972	<i>Animal Woman</i> (Erotic Thriller)	<i>Dark Guest</i> (Action)	<i>Female Teacher</i> (Comedy)	<i>Shaman Island</i> (Horror)	<i>Good Driver, Gap Suni</i> (Comedy)
1973	<i>Witness</i> (War Film)	<i>Farewell</i> (Melodrama)	<i>Female Prison</i> (Drama)	<i>Wedding Dress in Tears</i> (Melodrama)	<i>When Taekwondo Strikes</i> (Action)
1974	<i>Heavenly Homecoming to Stars</i> (Hostess Film)	<i>Rain of Yesterday</i> (Erotic Thriller)	<i>The Earth</i> (Literary Film)	<i>Kim Doo-hwan</i> (Auto-biography/Action)	<i>The March of Wives</i> (National/Propaganda Film)
1975	<i>Young-ja's Heydays</i> (Hostess Film)	<i>The March of Fools</i> (Youth Film)	<i>Insa yeomoo</i> (Fantasy/Mystery)	<i>Promise of Flesh</i> (Melodrama)	<i>Yong Ho Mun</i> (Action)
1976	<i>Suzanna of Love</i> (Melodrama)	<i>Women's Street</i> (Hostess Film)	<i>Secret Guest II</i> (Action)	<i>Never, Never Forget</i> (Melodrama)	<i>Run, Don't Walk!</i> (Youth/Drama)
1977	<i>Winter Woman</i> (Hostess Film)	<i>A Joker in High School</i> (Youth Film)	<i>Maruchi Arachi</i> (Animation)	<i>Mischief's Marching Song</i> (Youth Film)	<i>Night Travel</i> (Erotic/Drama)
1978	<i>The Woman I Threw Away</i> (Hostess Film)	<i>Ms.O's Apartment</i> (Hostess Film)	<i>I am a No.77 Girl</i> (Hostess Film)	<i>Scar</i> (Melodrama)	<i>Sa Hak Bi Gwon</i> (Action/Martial Arts)
1979	<i>Heavenly Homecoming to Stars II</i> (Hostess Film)	<i>The Man I threw away</i> (Hostess Film)	<i>Do You know Ggotsooni?</i> (Hostess Film)	<i>Last Cup</i> (Melodrama)	<i>Byungtae and Youngja</i> (Youth/Drama)

[Fig. 2.2: Popular film genres during the 1970s]¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ The box office records are available from the KOFIC's Korean Film Year Book from 1972-1978. Seoul: KOFIC.

As this table demonstrates, hostess films were high-ranked starting in 1974, when the Yushin Film law was instituted. These films were most prominent in popularity and were a cultural force across literature, magazines, and films. Statistically, from 1970 to 1985, the number of novels dealing with prostitute characters was 102 out of a total of 2,918 fictional works published in major literature periodicals and magazines (Yong, 2012). Hostess or sex workers accounted for 87.5% of all female characters in films produced from 1971 to 1979 (Yu, 2003). Reflecting this phenomenon, the press media began to cover the growing popularity of the “hostess woman” around the mid-1970s. One of the most popular industry magazines at the time, *Film Magazine (Younghwa Japji)* serially covered the rise of hostess films and directors as a major historical case of Korean cinema with articles such as “New Era, New Directors” (August and December 1974), “Screen’s Young Power” (May 1975), and “A Recent Boom of Hostess Films” (June 1975).¹⁰⁵ These articles celebrated the fact that the success of hostess films largely contributed to the rejuvenation of the Korean film industry.

While the commercial contribution that hostess films established was evident, the critical quality of the films provoked polarized reviews. While some critics positively evaluated the films for touching upon relevant social problems such as working-class poverty and social marginalization of peasant women (Yong, 2012; Kim, S., 2010), others problematized hostess films’ exploitation of female sexuality, labeling hostess films as “undesirable,” “unethical,” and “obscene,” and claiming that they “negatively affect the moral values of the public.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Except for Hong Pa, all three directors produced hostess films.

¹⁰⁶ June, 1975. *Film Magazine (Young Hwa Jap Ji)*, *Dong A Daily* (4.16.1982) “Stripping Competition of Korean Films”

These dichotomized views towards hostess films – whether focusing on the obscenity of the films or on social aspects that viewers could relate to their own lives – inevitably brings up the important issue of how hostess films with seemingly “obscene” themes and/or socially sensitive issues, both of which were problematic elements for Park’s censorship criteria, were cleared for public viewing without much alteration. According to the censorship records for hostess films, such depictions were sufficient to violate at least one item under the Motion Picture Law No. 9, the fourteenth, which indicates, “Prostitution should not be justified on screen.” However, none of these films were restricted from public viewing for their explicit portrayal of prostitutes and prostitution.

Furthermore, the apparently problematic issues that these films dealt with, for example, rape (*Youngja’s Heydays* and *26X365=0*), adultery (*Women’s Street, Do You Know Ggosuni?*, and *The Rose that Swallowed Thorn*), and poverty (*Youngja’s Heydays*), remained intact despite the fact that these issues had led to major censorship cases for dozens of other realist films, such as *March of Fools*, *Holiday*, and *Night Travel*. The gravest penalty imposed upon hostess films was to not be recommended for exportation (*Heavenly Homecoming to Stars*, *Youngja’s Heydays*).¹⁰⁷ Out of ten major hostess films produced from 1971 to 1979, only two were cautioned for dealing with the theme of prostitution while not being prompted for deletion.¹⁰⁸

The most frequent comments were class-related, although the producers were not required to reshoot or delete, only advised to exercise “caution” or to be “implicit” at best. Some examples of comments include: “too overt depiction of class difference” (*I Am a No. 77 Girl* and *26X365=0*); “poverty should not be seen too explicitly; it might provoke class conflicts”

¹⁰⁷ These records are not open to the public as of the writing of this dissertation (2013). The records were personally retrieved by the author from the Korean Film Archive (KOFA) from June to August 2012.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

(26X365=0 II); and “it is not appropriate to portray a college girl going into prostitution; drop the name of the heroine’s university” (*The Rose that Swallowed Thorns*).”¹⁰⁹

Other comments were rather tedious, arbitrary, and subjective, with no grounding in the censorship rules: “loaned foreign words should not be abused and have to be deleted: ok (okei), bravo (brabo), very good (beri-goot)” (*The Woman I Threw Away*); “too many slang words” (*Women’s Street*); “one of the supporting female characters’ national identity must be changed to Chinese based in Hong Kong from Japanese” (*Confession of Young-a*); and “the ending is too depressing; change it to a happy ending” (*Young-ja’s Heydays*).”¹¹⁰

Among these cases, a 1979 major-hit hostess film, *The Rose that Swallowed Thorn* (Cheong, 1979) is a significant example that encapsulates the inconsistencies of the Park administration’s censorship operation and the film’s attempt to accommodate the terms of the state censors. *The Rose that Swallowed Thorn*, like other hostess films, presented some problematic issues that could have conflicted with the state censors, such as adultery and sexual promiscuity, not to mention prostitution. However, the film strategically circumvents these issues by negotiating the conditions of ideology, visuals, and narrative that would work in its favor in the view of the censors.

A Case-study of *The Rose that Swallowed Thorn* (Cheong, 1979)¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ The heroine, Rose’s university was originally *Ihwa* Women’s University, which was the best women’s college in Korea at that time.

¹¹⁰ This particular statement is based on the director, Kim Ho-sun’s interview by the author. June, 2013.

¹¹¹ I adapt the English title, *The Rose that Swallowed Thorn* from the Korean Movie Data Base (KMDB).

The Rose That Swallowed Thorn (hereafter, *The Rose*) is an adaptation of a book written by a female college student, Kim Mun-hyung. The novel was awarded a prize by a women's magazine, *Yeo Won*. Expectedly, it was sensational that a young college student wrote a work of adult fiction laden with grave social issues like military prostitution and female sexuality, boldly presented from a female point of view. The book version centers on the mental trauma of the heroine, Rose, who grew up in a U.S. military camp town, where she had observed military prostitutes. Due to her childhood memories of witnessing the lives of such unfortunate women, Rose consistently avoids any serious relationships with men. However, ironically, Rose becomes a prostitute herself, not out of a need for money but because of loneliness. She maintains her pride by refusing tips from her clients. The story ends bitterly, with Rose regretting her past when she finally encounters the true love of her life but cannot marry him.

The film version transforms the original novel into "suitable material" for the censorship viewing in two ways. First, it withdraws the issue of U.S. military prostitution, which might conflict with Motion Picture Law No.13 under the censorship standard that "films should not contain negative portrayals of a nation that has diplomatic relations with Korea." The first film that centralized the issue of U.S. military prostitution and the *Yang Gong Ju* (military princess) was *Silver Stallion Never Comes* (Jang, 1991).¹¹² This film was released long after the termination of another military regime, led by Chun Doo-hwan (1979-1986), who came after Park. Without the taboo subject of military prostitution, the film would have been deemed safer by the censors. Second, the film goes through a dramatic transformation once more at the end, by having Rose die, which renders the film morally correct and censorship-friendly.

¹¹² *Silver Stallion Never Comes* represents a story of a rural woman who becomes a camp town prostitute after she is raped by US soldiers.

The main character, Rose (Jang-mi), is a college student from a wealthy family. She is bored with her life and spends most of her time drinking and enjoying random sexual encounters. One day, on a train on her way home, she meets a married, middle-aged man and falls in love immediately. However, their love does not last after his wife discovers the affair and calls Rose's father to send her away. In order to cope with her loneliness, Rose begins working as a "pro bono" hostess, choosing not to get paid in order to keep her pride. After some time, she meets a man named Se-ho and becomes pregnant by him. Soon, Rose discovers that he was a quasi-prostitute himself, living with an older woman for money. Rose, devastated, wanders around the city and is eventually hit by a train.



[Fig. 2.3: Still cut from *The Rose that Swallowed Thorn*]

Even though the film modified the original book version in an effort to pass the state censors, it still contained arguable elements under Park's censorship rules, such as depiction of prostitution by a college girl, adultery, and sexual promiscuity. These kinds of issues provoked

controversy with other films produced in the same period. *Night Travel* (Kim Su-yong, 1977), for instance, is one of the most notorious censorship cases that occurred in the combined periods before and after the Park Chung-hee regime.¹¹³ *Night Travel* is a realist film that embodies the issues of the Vietnam War and state industrialization, implicitly viewed through the perspective of the heroine. The film was unable to pass the script censorship not only because of its overt depiction of a sexual heroine but also because it dealt with the aforementioned thorny subjects.¹¹⁴ When the film was finally viewed by the state censors, about 50 minutes (53 scenes) were cut, which reduced it almost by half.¹¹⁵

Night Travel is a good example to view in conjunction with *The Rose* because these films share many similarities, including the plot and the characterization of the female protagonist. *Night Travel* focuses on a woman's sexual journey just as *The Rose* does. The heroine of *Night Travel* is living with her current boyfriend; she is bored with her repetitive life and still misses her former boyfriend, who died in the Vietnam War. One day, she decides to escape her mundane life and embarks on a little "night outing." Throughout the night, she has several sexual encounters with random men. After this series of random sex acts, she returns home and goes back to her routine.

Both films thematize the sexual trajectory of a bored, single woman. However, the censors' treatments of these two films were dramatically different, in that *Night Travel* was torn apart while *The Rose* passed the state censorship without severe alteration. I suspect that this privilege was given to *The Rose* because it lacks a socially or politically bitter tone as opposed to *Night Travel*, which explicates the pain from the Vietnam War and the ills of an industrializing

¹¹³ Kim Ji-mi, "Original Novel vs. Film: *Night Travel*" *Idea of Literature (Munhak Sasang)* Vol. 38/1/435 (2009, 1) 198-205.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ *Dong-A Daily*, 12.3. 2010.

society from the heroine's point of view. According to the censorship records for *The Rose*, the comments were made mostly in regard to minor issues or were based on each censor's personal insight: (1) "delete the foreground scenes of the Blue House and the Central Government Office," (2) "reduce the sex scene between Rose and her boyfriend," (3) "drop the name of the college Rose attends," (4) "overall, the film is decadent," and (5) "the film does more harm than good."¹¹⁶

As these comments demonstrate, the censors neither took issue with the overall characterization of the heroine nor pointed out her "indecent" conduct, elements which badly impaired *Night Travel*. Furthermore, although the censors did not value this film highly (see comments (4) and (5)), the fact that they permitted it to be released without further viewing implies that they did not regard it as socially troubling or as a socially critical drama, as they did *Night Travel*.

Another possible factor that might have contributed to *The Rose* passing state censorship is that it features a considerable number of scenes that contain explicit symbols directly relating to major accomplishments achieved under Park Chung-hee's state project, "Modernization of the Nation" (*choguk geundaehwa*), and through his state-led industrialization. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Park Yu-hee argues that the Park administration particularly discouraged cinematic depictions of poverty and instead rewarded films that showed "development" or "modernization" of the nation. Throughout *The Rose*, modern apartments, trains, and bridges (e.g., *Busan Daegyo*: Busan Bridge) that were newly built during the Park regime are frequently seen in panoramic views and/or as backdrops.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ KOFA's unofficial records: personally obtained by author in June, 2012.

¹¹⁷ *Busan Bridge* was built in 1976 under the Park Chung-hee government. This bridge makes occasional appearances during Rose's visitation in Busan.

A similar strategy was mentioned by Kim Su-Yong, one of the major directors of the 1960s. Kim has stated that film directors during the Park regime used to make many “sacrificial shots” or “pleasing shots” for the state censors in order to save risky scenes from deletion.¹¹⁸ I think that such monumental scenes in *The Rose* could be considered in a similar context and that they were posited to compensate for the potentially problematic issues dealt with in the film.

Furthermore, *The Rose* utilizes these traces of modernization as morally charged metaphors that refer to justifiable punishment for the sexually fallen woman. For instance, the opening sequence begins with a bird’s-eye view of modern apartments. The camera flies around the apartment complexes in Echon Dong, the area where Korea’s first apartment building was built as a national project in the early 1970s. After showing a lengthy sketch of various apartment buildings, the camera goes into Rose’s home. As opposed to the somewhat documentary-like feel of the opening scene of apartments, the way the camera shows the inside of Rose’s apartment is highly eroticized. Accompanied by the ringing sound of a telephone, the camera slowly traces the phone cord from the living room until it reaches Rose as she picks up the phone, half-dressed and in bed. The camera continuously scans Rose’s entire torso from a low angle and in an intrusive manner.

Rose’s apartment later becomes a “hub” where most of her sexual relationships take place and where she supposedly becomes pregnant by a con-man.¹¹⁹ While the introduction sequence that explicates monumental, phallic apartment buildings offers a celebratory depiction of the “development of nation,” it also symbolically signals a prelude to Rose’s tragedy, which results from her sexual decadence.

¹¹⁸ Park Yu-hee. “The Study of the Dynamics of Film Censorship during the Park Chung-hee Regime,” P. 83.

¹¹⁹ Rose finds out that she is pregnant after she had sex with Se Ho, who previously had come to her apartment.

This kind of strategy appears again when Rose encounters the man she falls in love with on a train. A majestic view of the running train is seen in the foreground in the establishing shot, with the sun falling behind it. This scene is followed by Rose's appearance, and it becomes a critical motif for Rose's downfall and death, which occur later on. The sequence begins with Rose sitting next to a middle-aged man on a train. She deliberately leans onto the man, pretending to be asleep. The man tries to avoid her by distancing himself from her, and Rose "wakes up" and asks him to buy drinks. The man reveals that he is married, but Rose does not seem to care. He buys the drinks, and Rose more actively seduces him by making him light her cigarette. Soon, the man falls for Rose and they become sexually involved.

After this train sequence, Rose's life dramatically deteriorates. Her sexual relationship with the man is forcibly terminated by his wife and Rose's father. She begins working as a hostess at a bar to escape her loneliness, but her father discovers this and incarcerates her in a mental hospital. Rose's deteriorating life eventually becomes even worse when she learns that she is pregnant by a con-man who has duped her. She half-consciously walks around the city, buying toys for her unborn child. The last sequence takes place on a railroad. Rose, holding the toys in her arms, slowly walks along the tracks. She drops the toys and tries to pick them up. She suddenly hears the sound of a train and looks up. The camera shows her emotionless face in extreme close-up, intersecting it with a shot of the train coming toward her. The last shot stops on Rose's emotionless facial close-up and freezes, while the sound of the train continues to flow over the shot.

Cinematically, the train has been a ubiquitous emblem that represents the tension of modernity (Bottomore, 1999; Kirby, 1988).¹²⁰ In the social context of South Korea, railroads

¹²⁰ Stephen Bottomore, 'The Panicking Audience?: early cinema and the "train effect"', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 1999, Lynne Kirby, 'Male Hysteria and Early Cinema', originally in *Camera*

played a pivotal role in facilitating Park Chung-hee's efforts at rapid industrialization under the modernization project of the 1960s and 1970s. Park installed more than sixteen railways throughout the country to supply raw materials to factories.¹²¹ In addition, expanded railroads greatly contributed to the labor migration from rural villages to urban areas, which involved a large population of young women and men relocating to cities. A number of Korean films, including Kim Ki-young's *Fire Woman* (*Hwa Nyeo*, 1971), reflected this phenomenon by signifying the train as a prelude to the tragic journey that the peasant female protagonists are to face.¹²²

In *The Rose that Swallowed Thorn*, representations of apartments and trains perform a double duty: as a safety valve for state censorship and as ideologically-charged motifs that would please the moral codes of the censors. On the one hand, they stand for the "development of the nation," which was one of the foremost campaign agendas pushed by the Park administration. Such visual presentations of major achievements acquired during the state-led industrialization period were predominant enough that they must have pleased the censorship assessors. On the other hand, the film strategically utilizes such traces of modernity to justify the victimization of the "sexually fallen woman." Rose's occupation of these modern places – apartment and train – simultaneously establishes her as a full recipient of modernity and as a victim of it.

Conclusion

Obscura May 1988 6(2 17)

¹²¹ "Stations and People," KOCCA (Korea Creative Content Agency).

http://www.culturecontent.com/content/contentMain.do?search_div=CP_THE&search_div_id=CP_THE010&cp_code=cp0803. Also see the article from the *Dong-A Ilbo*, "Park Chung-hee's Railroad Modernization" 12.7.1965.

¹²² *Fire Woman* is an erotic thriller that depicts a peasant woman's sexual falling after her arrival in city.

There are numerous debates on the notion of film censorship revolving around “the extent to which prohibitions on the content of the films constitute a justifiable exercise of power” (Kuhn 2). According to Kuhn, the act of controlling films is problematic; first, censorship works to repress the rights and freedom of other people.¹²³ Second, such prohibitions tend to be controlled by one powerful person or institution. Kuhn’s account is particularly relevant to the state-operated film censorship during the Park Chung-hee regime of the 1970s, when films were regulated in an attempt to secure Park’s dictatorship as well as to disseminate state ideology and politics.

Hostess films were engendered and thrived when the Park regime’s irrational film policy and censorship laws nearly decimated the Korean film industry. These films persevered through the military government’s inconsistent and arbitrary censorship operation by simultaneously negotiating the terms of censorship and state ideologies. Such negotiation took place at the expense of women; while the filmic attempts were fruitful at least for the fact that hostess films touched upon relevant issues of society and class, they also potentially solidified the conceptualization of women and of female sexual activity. The generic employment of the sexually fallen woman or the victimized woman was offered to circumvent the censorship intervention under the totalitarian regime.

Although it is true that Park’s government force critically impeded the creativity of Korean filmmakers and the vitality of the film industry, hostess films addressed the key values of gender and politics within the realm of female sexuality. Furthermore, a group of auteur directors were deeply engaged with the emergence and popularity of hostess films. They strived to establish Korean cinema as socially relevant and artistic. Key hostess films directed by Lee Jang-ho, Kim Ho-sŏn, and Ha Gil-jong are extraordinary examples of how these films negotiated

¹²³ Annett Kuhn, *Cinema, The censorship and Sexuality, 1909-1925*. (London: Routedlege 1988).

forced censorship, particularly through their cinematic constructions of women. The next chapter concerns the major directors of hostess films and their film movement, *The Era of Image*, to analyze how they contributed to the cinematic genealogy of women infused with the *new wave* aesthetics and social realism.

Chapter Three: Strategized Conventions: The Narratives, Characters and Styles of Hostess Films

A young woman finally arrives in a city from a rural area which now seems too far away for her to return there. She gets a job as a housemaid in a rich man's house and is relieved that she can afford to buy herself a nice little dress and also send some money on her family. Soon afterwards however, her dream falls apart when she is raped by the man who owns the house. The girl is despised and kicked out by the wife of the man and goes to a brothel where she must endure on an everyday basis what first happened to her at the house.

The brief synopsis above may appear to be a story of a particular film but is actually a common archetypical narrative for many South Korean hostess (*hosŭt'esŭ*: a euphemism for prostitutes or bar girls in the Korean context of the 1970s and 1980s) films. Dozens of films from the mid 1970s to the late 70s utilized the aforementioned tropes of young girl's migration from a rural area, a social downfall instigated by rape or a similar type of sexual trauma and finally ending up at a brothel. The record-breaking box office success of two films, *Heavenly Homecoming to Stars* (Pyŏl tŭl ŭi kohyang, Lee Jang-ho, 1974) and *Young-ja's Heydays* (Yŏng-ja ŭi chŏnsŏng sidae, Kim Ho-sŏn, 1975), in consecutive years led to a hail of the films featuring the theme of "a-peasant-girl-becomes-a-prostitute" being released. The major works in this cycle include: *Women's Street* (Yŏja tŭl man sanŭn kŏri, Kim Ho-sŏn, 1976), *I am a Number 77 girl* (Na nŭn 77 pŏn agassi, Pak Ho-t'ae, 1978), *Winter Woman* (Kyŏul yŏja, Kim Ho-sŏn, 1977),

26x365 = 0 (No Se-han, 1979), *Ms. O's Apartment* (O yang ũi ap'at'ũ, Pyŏn Chang-ho, 1978) and *Do You Know, Kkotsuni?* (Kkotsuni rŭl asinayo?, Chŏng In-yŏp, 1979).¹²⁴

Korean newspapers during that time period severely criticized hostess films, pointing out that such films were just an expedient commercial resort that sought to overcome the recent decline of the film market. For example, a newspaper article, “Desperate Korean Films” addresses the problem that hostess films are a reflection of the fact that Korean cinema was losing its quality. It states that “hostess films only focus on stripping off actresses’ clothing to gain audiences.”¹²⁵ Film critics also mentioned that the presence of such obscene materials might lure young Korean girls into prostitution. *Kyŏnghyang ilbo*’s article, “Urge to clean up the *kisaeng* (female courtesan) tour for the feminist movement” records that the recent rise of sex tourism may be related to the growing popularity of hostess films.

These negative views of hostess films have changed little since the 1970s: contemporary Korean film scholars continue to criticize hostess films for sexual explicitness and lack of socially realistic representation. For instance, hostess films display “exploitive objectification of hostess bodies while dramatizing the decadence of their sexual adventures” (Pak, 123); “they did not exhibit any real analysis or criticisms of society, nor did they expose the irony of a society that put the heroines in such situations” (Min et al., 55); “hostess melodramas utilize explicit sexism by using women’s sexual and physical repression as a dominant strategy” (Yu, 143); “hostess melodramas exploit young working-class women’s bodies and sexuality by depicting them as ‘docile bodies’” (Kwŏn, 417).

¹²⁴ These hostess films are the ones that were ranked within the top five of box office of the year. The exact number of film goers and ranking are revealed in chapter four.

¹²⁵ *Kyŏnghyang ilbo*, December 8, 1978.

Other film scholars nevertheless attempt to view the thematic employment of prostitutes in hostess films in relation to the rise of female labor in urban areas and subsequent problems during the rapid industrialization period of the 1970s.¹²⁶ And these films dealt with actual social problems, such as sexual harassment and rape in the workplace, which frequently led to women winding up in brothels.¹²⁷ Kim So-yŏng, a Korean film scholar, sees the rise of hostess films as a symptom of state-initiated industrialization which “involved ex-ploitation of cheap female labor by controlling their sexuality” (185). Indeed, the late 1960s and the 1970s witnessed large-scale migrations of young women and men from peasant households to factories in cities. The number of female laborers who were over the age of sixteen during this period skyrocketed to 45.7% in 1976 from 26.8% in 1960. Kim asserts that the primary reason for the increase in the number of female laborers was because in Korean rural households, a filial daughter’s sacrifice for the sake of her male siblings or her parents was a “familiar and sacralized Confucian custom” (26). Thus a young woman’s sexualized service labor was mobilized “initially at the level of family and the domestic sphere through intersecting ideologies of familism and patriarchy” (ibid.).

In a similar social context, Lee Jin-kyung connects the issue of labor and sexual exploitation of female rural migrants to the emergence of the literary “hostess genre” on which the majority of hostess films were based.¹²⁸ Lee describes that the prevalence of the sexual

¹²⁶ Korea went through dynamic economic reforms and rapid industrialization during the 1960s and 1970s under the military regime led by President Park Chung-Hee. According to Kim’s report on Korea’s economic progress from 1961 to 1981, the GNP tripled from \$471 to \$1,549. The primary fields of exports—agriculture, fishery, and mining shifted to labor intensive, light manufacturing fields including textiles and garments industry. Kim Kwan S. “Industrial Policy and Industrialization in Korea, 1961–1982” <http://kellogg.nd.edu/publications/workingpapers/WPS/039.pdf>.

¹²⁷ Barraclough states that working class women and girls were central to the industrialization of South Korea. During this period, “over one million women worked in the light manufacturing sector, an industry with factories all over the peninsula.” A significant number of these female factory girls were drawn to sex work, with “no available vents for their ambition, or possibilities for making money.” Ruth Barraclough, *Factory Girl Literature Sexuality, Violence, and Representation in Industrializing Korea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 72.

¹²⁸ Lee Jin-kyung describes these problems as being related to female factory labor. The media of that era frequently showed anecdotal evidence along the lines of “young women’s desperate pleas seeking advice in the newspaper

harassment and sexual offenses against young female laborers often made sensual stories for a mass culture industry in the form of films, TV and tabloid magazines.¹²⁹ She points out that hostess novels such as *Hometown of Stars* and *Winter Woman* involve “hostess sexuality” and commercialized female bodies as aspects of rapid urbanization and modernization (101).

These scholarly viewings are useful insofar as they at least assess hostess films as socially relevant texts that deal with the real problems and hardships of the working class and prostitutes.

They however do not raise the issue of how specifically these ‘dangerous’ subjects could be rendered on screen given the notorious state censorship in operation during this time, as the state was particularly wary of the representation of lower class life and poverty.¹³⁰ As Park illustrates in her study of state censorship practices during the 1970s, the Park regime removed all scenes and characters or prohibited the exhibition of a film if a film was too indicative of poverty or anything against the national-development campaign during the Park regime (Park, 66–68). In hostess films nevertheless, such ‘dangerously’ realistic portraits of lower class life and poverty survived censorship without severe amendments or revisions when compared with other genre films.¹³¹

This detail is an important one because it provokes to think about other important elements that must have obscured such sensitive social issues that these films are predicated upon. Therefore in depth, textual analysis of hostess films is inevitable. I find that cinematic conventions of hostess films are strategically constructed and employed to secure such realist

columns.” The increasing exposure of the occurrences and offenses might have instigated the engenderment of hostess literature. *Service Economies: Militarism, Sex Work and Migrant Labor in South Korea*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 87

¹²⁹ Ibid. 85.

¹³⁰ See Park Yu-hee’s “The Study of Film Censorship System During Park Chung-hee Regime” in *Yōksa pip’yōngsa*, *yōksa pip’yōng* 99 (2012).

¹³¹ For instance, the scenes that contain the explicit depiction of police and lower class residents in *Young-ja’s Heydays*, brothels in *Women’s Street* and implied student demonstrations occurring on a university campus in *Winter Woman* remain intact whereas these kinds of cases were heavily regulated in Park’s examples of films.

issues from the censorship enforcement. I particularly pay attention to cinematic construction of prostitute (hostess) women in these films: while the films provide candid portraits of lower class life and poverty, characters, especially female protagonists tend to be remarkably idealized and imaginative. This manner of characterization is often marked by her extremely sacrificial nature: throughout the films, these women are continuously imposed to offer sex, body and life for the sake of their men, family and nation.

Many hostess films take place in urban areas and feature real life brothels and back alleys where prostitution was secretly operated. For example, portrayals of streets full of whore houses in *Women's Street*, illegitimate motel districts in *Young-ja's Heydays* and bars around military base camp in *Do you Know Kkosuni?* show existing sites of prostitution and sex services extensively using techniques usually associated with documentaries or realist films such as on-location shooting, long takes, long establishing shots and hand-held cameras.

On the other hand, characterization of the heroines is marked by its extreme nature of being overtly sacrificial and docile. Throughout their journey, women are continuously attacked, abused and exploited by male counterparts but they never contest or resist. Rather they are willing to sacrifice for the sake of their man, family and/or society. In the instances of *Young-ja's Heydays*, *Do You Know Kkosuni?* *Ms.O's Apartment* and *I Am a No.77 Girl*, the heroines increasingly makes greater sacrifices: leaving home to go to the city as a breadwinner-> becoming a prostitute to better support their families-> leaving their man to allow them to seek better futures (because now the women are no longer 'clean enough')-> finally ending up dead, sick or missing.

Characterization of prostitute heroines is often empowered by visual strategies that are anti-thetical to the realist mode of representation. The hostess woman tends to be seen in

extreme close-ups, fragmented body shots and super impositions which either exaggerate or negate a woman's existence. Sometimes more elaborated cinematic techniques are employed such as sound muting (*Young-ja's Heydays*), intertitles (*Heavenly Homecoming to Stars*) or extreme slow motion (*Heavenly Homecoming to Stars II*).

This chapter in this respect scrutinizes the formal elements of hostess films particularly focusing on the films' strategic juxtaposition of realism and idealization of the heroine. It simultaneously relates such cinematic constructions of hostess' bodies and narratives to the discourse on female sacrifice which work to dilute the socially acerbic subjects of films controlled by state censorship. Doing this will extend previous scholarly views of hostess films beyond simply seeing them as mere sexualized texts that seek to draw the decreasing number of film goers back to the theaters. In order to better understand the distinctive mode of representation of prostitute women in hostess films, this article offers comparative analyses to other cultural texts that centralize prostitutes and female sexuality in terms of characterization, narrative construction and stylization.

Finally, two canonical hostess films, Lee Jang-ho's *Heavenly Homecoming to Stars* (1974) and Kim Ho-sŏn's *Young-ja's Heydays* (1975) will be case-studied to highlight how they construct the prostitute heroine utilizing a range of visual/auditory elements from camera movements, framing and sound muting to narrative devices such as characterization and voice over/flashback.

Theme of the Prostitute and Fallen Woman in Popular Texts: Narrative and Characterization

The popular rendition of prostitutes or sexually fallen women is not unique to South Korean hostess films. It is prevalent in various time periods and cultures. It is found in places as varied as Victorian literature, early Hollywood films (e.g. fallen women films) and other national cinemas (Weimar street films), all of which employ prostitutes as a form of social satire or cultural text that subsumes the basic human values of desire, vanity and survival. Overall, popular representations of prostitutes have been ambivalent (Roos, 2006; Pullen, 2005; Pattnaik, 2009). As Patrice Petro notes, the idea of a prostitute developed into “an emblem for the cinema as a whole, typifying literary intellectuals’ simultaneous contempt for and fascination with an openly commercial (and hence “venal”) form” (8).

Petro mentions that the ambivalent social identities of prostitutes invited both hostility and defensiveness and that the prostitute became a primary icon that harbored multi-faceted meanings of life and society in various arts and cultural texts. In Weimar culture, Expressionist artists used the icon of the prostitute in various forms that reflect “facets of modern life as expressionists experienced... as the artistic personification that transgresses the social, moral and legal boundaries” (114). The socially transgressive nature of the prostitute is both celebrated and despised by the expressionists. On the one hand, the prostitute is a holy public figure. She is selfless and indiscriminating to humans and can liberate people from sexual and moral constraints. On the other hand, she is a quint-essential symbol of money and power in modern

capitalist society. She commoditizes herself all night just as “the shelves in supermarket are constantly refilled.”¹³²

Nevertheless, even as a symbol of capitalism, the prostitute is occasionally charged with positive values such as social activism and determination. These values allowed writers, including Bertolt Brecht, to deploy prostitutes to voice social criticism. Brecht’s prostitute characters such as Frau Hogge in *Lux in Tenebris* (1919) and Leokadja Begbick in *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* (1927) who are the owners of the brothel, represent “resourceful entrepreneurs and savvy business women” who learn to modify outdated and rigid middle class values of “cleanliness, thriftiness and hospitality” (Hanssen, 159–162). The prostitutes’ social activities are intermingled with the notion of the increasing visibility of women in the work place and the attainment of social power during the Weimar period. White collar women and prostitutes are sometimes similarly conceptualized as being representative of the “New Woman” in literature, both representing a dissenting voice that challenges the pre-existing discourse on sexuality and gender (Smith, 2008).

Positive portraits of prostitutes also appear in early Korean literature such as the New Novels (*sinsosŏl*), the novels that emerged during the Japanese occupation (1910-1945). For instance, Yŏng-ch’ae in Yi Kwang-su’s *The Heartless* (*Mujŏng*, 1917) is featured as a strong-willed woman who sacrifices herself by becoming a *kisaeng* to save her imprisoned father and eventually becomes a musician. Although she descended to become a sex worker, she is depicted in a positive light because she did not give up on her dream of becoming a musician. These kinds of positive views regarding the *kisaeng* character are also accentuated by the male protagonist.

¹³² The poem by Oscar Kanehl. “Nachtcafé” (1913). Quoted from Christiane Shonfeld’s “Prostitutes in Expressionism,” *Commodities of Desire* (Rochester: Camden House, 2000), 119.

He blames himself for having been a ‘hypocrite’ concerning her ‘background’ as a *kisaeng* and regrets that he left Yōng-ch’ae and did not marry her.

Perhaps these literary and artistic works on prostitutes were relatively more progressive and ‘generous’ compared to the representation of prostitutes in the cinematic context, because presumably literary and artistic products were less constrained by censorship than was the case for films over which censors had more direct and immediate control. In films, prostitutes tend to appear pre-dominantly in a negative light, typically being accused of overt sexuality, immorality and greed. Largely infused with the Victorian epitome of ‘fallen woman,’ prostitute narratives are prevalent in early cinematic texts such as fallen woman films (1920s), White slavery films (1930s) and Weimar street films (*Strassenfilms*, 1918–1933). If not prostitutes as in these texts, some variations of the sexually fallen women are ubiquitously present in films as a generic form of, for instance, ‘femme fatales,’ ‘vamps’ and ‘gold diggers’.

Some scholars see the roots of such negatively charged characterizations of prostitutes or sexually fallen women in early American cinema in Victorian models of characterizations of prostitutes (Campbell, 1999; Fishbein, 1986). In Victorian literature, the definition of a prostitute is often character-based and not simply sexually-based (Attwood, 2011). Ralph Wardlaw, an early Victorian writer, claimed that the term, prostitute was a “designation of character.” Prostitutes were characterized as women with weak will power and fatal moral flaws who “chose to select ‘the strength of the sexual propensity, and the comparative weakness of the moral principle’” (Attwood, 3). Accordingly, these Victorian prostitutes are often portrayed with common expressions such as ‘inherently immoral,’ ‘shameless,’ and ‘impulsive’ in their actions

other than which the practice of prostitution, because their choices were based on their innate nature of moral weakness.¹³³

This idea of the Victorian prostitute transferred to the silver screen in early fallen woman films the 1930s. The quality of the heroine in fallen woman films is typically defined as sexually aggressive, materially driven, exploitative (especially in their relationships with men) and unashamed (Jacobs, 1997; Vieira, 1999). Jacob's analysis implies that such negative qualities are not causally related to a woman's sexual activeness. In other words, she is bad not because she is sexually active, but she is 'innately' bad and sexual activeness is simply one of the innately negative qualities that come with being bad. Such characterizations inevitably locate the sexual woman in an immoral position. Jean Hollow in *Red Headed Woman* (Conway, 1932) is one of the most salient examples of such women: Lil (Jean Hollow) confidently 'intrudes' into her boss' house when his wife is away and seduces him. She persuasively convinces him when he tries to return to his wife. Other similar examples include, Barbara Stanwyck in *Baby Face* (Green, 1933), Mae West in *I'm No Angel* (Ruggles, 1933) and *She Done Him Wrong* (Sherman, 1933).

The characterization of the sexually fallen woman in early American cinema developed further and conventionalized into the more popular icon of the 'femme fatale' in noir films and later genres of action films or thrillers: numerous examples include Rita Heyworth in *Gilda* (Vidor, 1946), Barbara Stanwyck in *Double Indemnity* (Wilder, 1944), Jane Greer in *Out of the Past* (Tourneur, 1947), and numerous look-alikes, who remain as popular icons of the sexualized, evil woman. These women are characterized by their rejection of traditional womanhood, and therefore are a threat to the male. The *femme fatale* "threatens the *status quo* and the hero...uses

¹³³ Emma Liggins. "Prostitution and Social Purity in the 1880s and 1890s." *Critical Survey*. Vol.15 No.3. (2003).

sex as a weapon to control men, not merely in the culturally acceptable capacity of procreation within marriage” (Blaser, 1995)¹³⁴. Her sexual emancipation and breaking of the traditional norm of womanhood normally result in inevitable punishment in the end.

These inherently negative qualities attached to a prostitute/fallen woman in popular media usually call for the woman dooming herself at the end. As some scholars point out, the industry’s self censorship canonized the narrative in which the fallen woman is eventually destroyed in the service of the “moral standard of audiences” (Jacobs, p. 76; Fishbein, 1987; Staiger, 1995). Simply speaking, the fallen woman film could not have a happy ending, and if it did have a happy ending, it was “designed to fulfill a didactic function” (Jacobs, 76). The patriarchal discourse of the sexual woman ‘getting what she deserves’ became an axiom of early classical narrative films, whereby the narrative punishment of “downward progress” involves the fallen woman commonly ending up tragically with disease, destitution and early death (mostly suicide) (Attwood, 2010; Auerbach, 1982).

Indeed, the narrative device of the ‘downward progress’ of a fallen woman or a prostitute character works efficiently, fleshing out ideological norms of female sexuality. Also, applied to their social status, it solidifies representational stereotypes of lower class women. As Liggins exemplifies in her discussion of early Victorian prostitute literature, the working class status of the prostitute woman is often used to indicate her sexual openness.¹³⁵

Liggins argues that working class women tend to be attacked on the grounds of “their sexual knowledge and consequent impurity ... given that they have a ‘familiarity’ with and

¹³⁴ John Blaser, “No Place for a Woman: The Family in Film Noir,” 2008, <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/MRC/noir/np05ff.html>.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

‘completer knowledge’ of sexual matters than middle-class girls, therefore often considered very close to the shameless prostitute, even if they do not sell their bodies on the street” (41–42). Such stereotypes imposed on working class prostitute women function to justify the ‘prostitute narrative’ of a downward path, rationalizing the tragic ending of the prostitute.

As these examples demonstrate, the prostitute’s downward path is predominantly caused by her innate immorality and class background which is likely to be related to her sexual inclinations. The South Korean hostess films conform to this popular tendency of a downward narrative of a ‘fallen woman getting what she deserves,’ by giving the heroine either a pessimistic fate—by committing suicide (*Heavenly Homecoming Stars I*, 26X365=0), having an accident (*Young-ja’s Heydays*), or going missing (*Ms. O’s Apartment, Do you Know Kkotsuni?*), or an ambiguous ‘happy ending’ which gives the heroine an unpromising marriage or makes her work for others. However, I would like to highlight the fact that hostess films remarkably reverse the typical characters of prostitute women. Hostess women are seldom characterized as having inordinate sexual desires or material greed but instead are depicted as being inherently good and selfless in nature. As the female protagonists of the hostess films *Young-ja’s Heydays* and *Ms. O’s Apartment* exemplify, the hostess woman is exceedingly sacrificial for her family in the countryside; Young-ja sends all her money, which she has received as compensation from the insurance company for her arm that was mutilated in the factory, to her family. Ms. O prostitutes herself to pay medical bills for her sick father and college tuition for her brother.

However, as mentioned above, these virtuous traits of hostess women do not necessarily lead to happy endings, and the unhappy endings in turn dramatize and emphasize the sacrificial theme of the hostess woman’s life even more. Unlike the typical triumphant happy endings that

involve innocent, wholesome female characters in classic Hollywood films such as *Sabrina* (Wilder, 1954) and *Meet me in St. Louis* (Minnelli, 1944), hostess women are repeatedly degraded despite their underlying good natures and the sacrifices that they make that sufficiently justify their decisions to engage in prostitution.

The episode concerning the ending sequence of *Young-ja's Heydays* (hereafter, *Young-ja*) well portrays the persistence of the theme of sacrifice found within the context of the downward narratives of hostess films. The film originally presented Young-ja as dying in an accidental fire—the same ending as in the original novel. However, Kim Ho-sŏn, the director, changed this to having Young-ja marry a poor, disabled man that she does not love, while leaving her true love for the sake of his future.¹³⁶ Kim mentions that he wanted Young-ja to achieve “redemption” by at least giving her a chance to marry (a disabled man), and the director presumably regards this ‘redemptive’ act as being a ‘happy ending.’ The reason why Kim changed the ending inevitably begs the question of whether such a transformed ending constitutes ‘redemption’ or just another downhill turn in her life.

This ambiguous ‘happy’ ending can also be found in another hostess film, *Winter Woman*. *Winter Woman* traces the life of a woman who ‘philanthropically’ sacrifices her sexuality to redeem the death of an admirer who killed himself as the result of her denial of him. The shock of his death induces her to make her body available to whoever wants her. After a series of sexual encounters, she meets a devastated high school teacher to whom she imparts peace of mind, after which she begins a new life with him as a teacher for children with intellectual disabilities. These heroines are similar in their characterizations and the closure they are given.

¹³⁶ During his interview conducted for this dissertation, Kim stated that this version was designed in order to pass the censorship which would not have passed such tragic and pessimistic ending because it could be seen more “socially critical.”

Both Ihwa and Young-ja are prototypical examples of a ‘good woman’ with their selfless natures and naïveté implied by their lack of previous sexual experiences and desire. Nevertheless, they fail to become or achieve what they want but rather are put into positions where they have to live for the well-being of others.

In terms of technical aspects, the sacrificial and selfless heroines in hostess films are visualized in an abusive and exploitative manner. Some Korean film scholars have pointed out that the exploitative use of close-ups and fragmented body shots involving female protagonists is one of the dominant features of hostess films (Yu, 2000; Kim, S., 2012). Drawing on Laura Mulvey’s notion of woman as a visual spectacle in narrative cinema, Kim Sun-ah points out that Young-ja’s face in *Young-ja* is repeatedly shown using extreme close-ups. The moment of the heroine’s facial close-up brings the narrative to a halt and establishes the woman as a fetish (138). Yu Ji-na extends Kim’s argument that such employment of women in hostess films entitles the films to be classified as belonging to the ‘female body’ genre. The female body genre was originally termed by Linda Williams and elaborated by dozens of scholars including Carol Clover (1992) and Yvonne Tasker (1993). Williams states that such films are often marked by “bodily excess” generated through the “presence of the sexually ecstatic woman, the tortured woman, the weeping woman,” all of which provokes audiences’ active engagement (Williams, 5).

Nevertheless, I would argue that the representation of women found in hostess films is often shown in a way that de-eroticizes or actually obscures women’s presence. More particularly, the facial close-ups of hostess women in sex scenes tend to be predominantly de-eroticized. Instead of exaggerating women’s sexual engagement, hostess films rather focus on their ‘unnaturally’ emotionless facial expressions and static bodily movements. The woman is displayed as being somewhat ‘machine-like’ and lacking in human emotions even when she is

with the man with whom she is romantically involved. One of the hostess woman's defining characteristics is her 'selflessness,' which is visually rendered throughout these sexual scenes. As two stills from the hostess films, *Winter Woman* and *I am a No. 77 Girl* (Figure 3-1) below exemplify, many sex scenes involving the female protagonist and male counterpart contain facial close-ups of the woman concentrating on her emotionless static face. This distinguishes them from the typical construction of sex scenes that exploits the romanticized and exaggerated facial expressions of women who are engaging in sex: e.g. the famous "orgasm scene" from *When Harry met Sally* (Nora Ephron, 1989).



(Fig. 3.1. Gona in *I am a No.77 girl* and Ihwa in *Winter Woman*)

In addition, these female expressions are occasionally shot from the camera eye from the male point of view, using a high angle from which the male looks down on the heroine (Figure 3-2). Throughout *Winter Woman* and *Young-ja* including the sex scenes and other scenes where the heroine encounters men, the scenes tend to begin with a camera showing the woman looking upwards at the man relayed by camera shots showing the man looking down at the woman. For example, in *Winter Woman* Ihwa rarely owns a point-of-view shot. During the scene where Ewha

encounters Yo-sub, her first man at the cathedral, the camera shot predominantly employs the male point of view, looking down on Ihwa. When she engages in sex with her second love, Sök-ki, this type of ‘looking down’ male POV shot returns and captures her during the entire sequence.



(Fig. 3.2: A rape scene shot from the male perspective in *Young-ja's Heydays*)

Accordingly, the hostess woman tends to be ‘captured’ within the male perspective, which in turn hinders access to the woman’s presence. The camera technique is often accompanied and empowered by the thematic convention of a male voice over, flash backs and dream and fantasy sequences led by male characters. Two canonical hostess films, Lee’s *Heavenly Homecoming to Stars* (hereafter, *Heavenly*) and Kim’s *Young-ja* are germane examples of how these films orchestrate such visual and thematic elements.

An Erotic Tale of a Sacrificial Prostitute:

***Young-ja's Heydays* (Kim, 1975)**

and *Heavenly Homecoming to Stars* (Lee, 1974)

Young-ja's Heydays is one of the most popular and foundational hostess films that led to the canonization of the genre. It was released in 1975 by Kim Ho-sŏn. The film gathered an audience of 361,213 people, the highest number of box office of the year. This occurred only a year after that another successful hostess film, *Heavenly Homecoming to Stars* broke the annual box office record of the box office for that year.¹³⁷

To explain such huge financial success of *Young-ja's Heydays* critics and scholars pointed out this film's realism. Apart from this film's seemingly erotic tone that explicates a story of a prostitute, scholars argue that the film deals with social reality of lower class life which met the public desire to see something they could relate to their own realities (An, 1989; Kwon, 1999; Park, 1997)¹³⁸. Roh's analysis of *Young-ja's Heydays* indicates that the original book and the film both were consumed by large numbers of female factory workers and sexual workers.

¹³⁷ During the 105 days after premiere, *Heavenly* gathered around 465,000 filmgoers and also recorded the largest film audiences of the year of 1974.

¹³⁸ Pak Mi-suk (Park Mi-Sook), "Yŏnghwa rŭl t'onghae pon maech'un pogosŏ – Yŏngja ŭi chŏnsŏng sidae esŏ" (Report on prostitution through the film, *Young-ja's Heydays*), *Mal* (Words), December 1972), Kwŏn Ŭn-sŏn (Kwon Eun-sun), "Kŭ sijŏl, Yŏng-ja rŭl asinayo?" (Do you know Yŏng-ja from that period?) in *CINE21*, December 28, 1999. An Pyŏng-sŏp (An Byung-Sup), "Ŭmji ŭi insaeng ŭl t'onghae pon minjung ŭi sam kwa kŏn'gangsŏng—*Yŏngja ŭi chŏnsŏng sidae*" (Looking at the life and health of the Minjung through a dark life, *Young-ja's Heydays*) in *Cine-Reality, Imaginative Reality*, Chŏngŭmsa, 1989 .

Roh emphasizes that the film studios and directors may have reflected this particular consumer demographic which was gradually increasing among movie goers.¹³⁹

Young-ja is a type of melodrama in which a ‘girl with a heart of gold’ moves to a city and progressively degrades as she strives to earn money to send to her family in her rural home. The film begins with a scene of prostitutes being interrogated by police in a motel district located in a dimly lit area of Seoul. Young-ja, one of the prostitutes, is arrested by the police and runs into her old love, Chang-su, at the police station. In her flashback, the film goes back to the time when Young-ja first encountered Chang-su who worked for the owner of the house where she had begun to work as a housemaid. Chang-su immediately fell in love with her and wanted to marry Young-ja. However, he postponed his plan because he enlisted in the military to go to Vietnam. Meanwhile, Young-ja is raped by the scoundrel son of the homeowner and is repeatedly abused by him.

Soon afterwards, Young-ja is kicked out of the house by the son’s mother who blames and denounces her as an “ungrateful bitch.” From this point onwards, Young-ja’s life gradually goes downhill; after wondering about a series of meagerly paying jobs, she finally works as a bus conductor. She is happy in this job but loses her arm in an auto accident. She has nowhere else to go, so she goes to a brothel where she works under the name of Venus, the nickname she acquires because she only has one arm. The film returns to its beginning, where Young-ja reunites with Chang-su at the police station. Chang-su hopes to start a new life with her but their romance does not last very long. Young-ja thinks that she has been tainted by her experiences and will never be good enough for Chang-su. She decides to leave him and marry a man who is disabled just as she is.

¹³⁹ Roh Ji-Seung. “The Pleasure of a Lower Class Woman in the Movie *Young-ja’s Heydays* (*Yöng-ja üi* 全盛時代 [chönsöng sidae]”—An Essay on the Cultural History of Class and Gender” in *The Study of Korean Literature* (2008).

As the narrative demonstrates, Young-ja, despite her inherently good, selfless nature, undergoes events throughout the film—leaving home → amputation of her arm → prostitution → sacrificial marriage—that are progressively worse and impose bigger costs on Young-ja. Symbolically, these incidents that Young-ja experiences throughout this film, such as rape, injury at work and moving into sex industry, etc. are the similar type of issues frequently experienced by working class women particularly during the rapid industrialization period.¹⁴⁰

This thematization of working class hardships could be read in conjunction with the state concept that Park Chung-hee designed and campaigned for in order to expedite the industrialization process. The Park administration emphasized the spirit of “giving back” to the nation for the prosperity of the state. Participating in the national project of modernization was not optional but rather “the Korean people’s duty” (Park, 80). With the enactment of this campaign, the Korean people, particularly women were subjected as a public offering for the “greater good.” This vigorous national project that imposed sacrifices people was doubly worse for women. Lee Jin-kyung explains that states played a significant role in “mobilizing and legislating working-class women’s sexuality, that is, in industrializing sex.” (25).

The Park government established a series of laws, regulations and legal mechanisms during the 1960s and 1970s that were intended to indirectly facilitate the enlistment of working class women in the profitable sex tourism industry (22). During this time, women were not only utilized as cheap labor in sweatshops but also manipulated to meet the need for the sex workers. Park simultaneously promoted tourism as a source of foreign exchange “to replace that previously acquired through participation of Korean troops in Vietnam...the number of Japanese tourists to South Korea jumped from 96,531 in 1972 to 217,287 in 1973 in just one year

¹⁴⁰ Cho Oe-sook, “An Analysis of lower class women and female labors in the 70s and 80s Korean films,” Master’s Thesis (2002).

promoting sex tours...”¹⁴¹ The Park administration issued work permits that legitimized prostitution at hotels that catered to foreign travelers in 1973 in order to boost the tourism industry.¹⁴²

Young-ja configures the social ills that prevailed under the Park regime’s tyrannical rule and controls by depicting a young rural woman who suffers from the same kind of tragedy. The story of repression and poverty is realistically set in the existing lower class residence and red light districts. On the other hand, the female protagonist, Young-ja is seen in a highly non-realistic, hyperbolic manner which must have been used to protect the film’s vivid representation of lower class life from the intervention of censorship. The opening sequence in *Young-ja* epitomizes how the film strategically uses both figurative and realistic representation to execute its premise.

The opening sequence begins with the camera back-tracking a little boy who is slowly walking around back alleys. It is a dark night. The only thing that the audience can see is the dimly lit sign of a humble motel located in a presumably recognizable area in Seoul where small lodges and motels are crammed together in order to lure male clients. The subjective camera is hand held and aimlessly wanders every corner of the street showing drunken men passing by. Finally the camera stops to focus on some unknown woman’s face using an extreme frontal close up. She is waving her hand in strong denial. The viewers soon find out that she is a prostitute and the camera ‘eye’ was a police man. She is arrested and the man who was hiding behind her is seen running away. In the following scene, the heroine Young-ja appears in a similar extreme close up shot and is also arrested indicating that she is one of these prostitutes too.

¹⁴¹ Yoon Bang-soon, “Politics of Agenda Building in South Korea: Imperial Japan's Military Sexual Slavery Case” in *Handbook of Global Social Policy*. Ed. Stuart Nagel (Boca Raton: CRC press, 2000) 172.

¹⁴² Cho Oe-sook, “An Analysis of lower class women and female labors in the 70s and 80s Korean films,” p. 32.

The sequence conjures a documentary-like effect by offering a vulgar and yet sincere portrait of tenement life by displaying poor streets. The film invasively tracks the back of an anonymous by-passer on a small dark street. The extreme low key lighting obscures the faces of bystanders but only spotlights the dilapidation of the street: torn-off posters, blinking street lights and run down houses. However, these markers of lower-class poverty and desperation are conspicuously shown by the streetwalkers' shabby outfits and slouched postures. In addition, their status is metaphorized through degrees of visibility. The main characters do not appear until after the camera completes such a lengthy, meaning-laden sketch of the dark street in a city that is teeming with people and objects all of which are indicative of lower class reality.

This quasi-documentary introduction breaks its mood with representations of female characters, particularly through the use of close-up shots of the prostitute heroine accompanied by sound muting. Such a lack of sound is accompanied with the heroine's exceedingly visible, frontal close up that emphasizes her facial expressions either in pain, fear or arbitrarily emotionlessness. In the opening sequence, for instance, the first prostitute who is caught by the police and Young-ja are shown in their huge wigs while holding their artificially red lips wide open, supposedly screaming and denying that they are prostitutes. Because these visual indications are off-sound, the viewers are prompted to focus more on the visual elements.

What is striking in this sequence is the prominent contrast between the mode of representation which realistically renders the street by using hand-held cameras and location shooting. It simultaneously presents elaborate visuals of women using close-ups paired with muted sound which invokes her presence as an 'image' rather than an actual presence. This contrast establishes the woman as being 'incorporeal' in that she is simultaneously existent and non-existent. It resonates with feminist accounts of filmic representation of women: how women

and women's bodies are both visible and invisible in popular cinema. She must be 'corporeally' visible for male pleasure but at the same time she is invisible because her existence is imagined to reach such goal.

In numerous instances, a woman's body becomes a crucial means of accomplishing these ends. Williams has noted that because a woman's body invokes powerful sensations with her sexuality, women on screen have been inserted into various levels of cultural discourses and are subjected to various cultural functions that a given society needs to reinforce. This mode of address visualizes woman's labor (body) as amorphous and transitory and directly relates to the question of women's agency. Janet Staiger notes that woman's agency, or as she puts it, "the essence of woman" in movies is often seen as the "transitory object (here woman)" which works as "an ideological maneuver attempting to stabilize an eternal subject (here man)" (12).¹⁴³

The opening sequence of *Young-ja* is a prelude that shows how a woman is muted, victimized or sacrificed throughout the film. The muted voices of these two prostitute women are followed by the hands of the police man who captures them, and this symbolically represents the power dynamics between the dominated and the dominant. Throughout the film, this type of technique is used to present Young-ja in terms of a man's visual captivation. It is frequently shown especially when she is abused and sacrificed. For example, during the entire scene where Young-ja is raped by the son of the house-owner where she works as a housemaid, the camera presents a male POV. Young-ja is shown from the perspective of a male penetrator from a high angle (from top to bottom). The camera aggressively moves forward (and then moves to bottom)

¹⁴³Steiger particularly talks about the movies in the teen, how construction of women's representation was practiced even in the primitive cinema. *Bad Women: Regulating Sexuality in Early American Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995).

and puts her into a corner. Her frightened, tearful face is seen in increasingly larger facial close-ups.

The elaborated visualization of the woman presented above is reiterated and simultaneously contrasted with the realist sets of the *p'anjajip* (lower class residence) districts. After extensive panning which shows irregularly arranged *p'anjajip* on a vast land featuring a half-built apartment complex in the background, Chang-su, miraculously finds Young-ja in one of the tin houses, after she had suddenly left him. She is married to a man who is also a disabled amputee. Chang-su is embittered by the fact that the woman he loves is now married to somebody else. He can do nothing more than wish her happiness. Young-ja and Chang-su chat briefly, and then the film's final scene shows Chang-su and Young-ja's husband, whom she has just introduced to Chang-Su, cheerfully going for a drink behind a super imposition of Young-ja's face.



[Fig. 3.3: Superimposition of Young-ja]

This somewhat abrupt ending maximizes the bridge between realism and the stylization of the heroine in the opening sequence. Unlike the candid sketches of the *p'anjajip* district which includes the detailed backdrop of apartment construction sites, she is shown in an elaborate close-up and super-imposition over the images of two men riding bicycles and talking about going for a drink. Here, the last sequence ends with the formation of the homo-social couple while Young-ja amorously floats above. This nonsensical ending inevitably raises three questions: first, if it was meant to be a happy ending as the director claimed, why did this last scene fail to show either Young-ja and Chang-su or Young-ja and her husband together instead of two abruptly bonded males? Second, how does Young-ja's super-imposition function in this sequence? And finally what does Young-ja's "Heydays" eventually symbolize?

A meaning-laden copy line of another hostess film, *Winter Woman* directed by the same director seems to be deeply relevant to these questions. The movie poster positions brightly smiling Ihwa, next to the copy line that says, "Ihwa belongs to everyone but at the same time to no one." This tag line conceptualizes her as 'public property' but also excludes her existence from "everyone." To the same extent, Young-ja, the hostess woman, cannot be a central figure because she merely exists for the sake of these two men as a super imposed "belonging." In this sense, the film seems to have a happy ending less for Young-ja than for her men. Young-ja's "heyday" makes sense because her men are happy.



(Fig. 3.4: *Winter Woman*: “Ihwa belongs to everyone but at the same time to no one”)

Throughout the film, Young-ja is continuously excluded and subordinated to male characters through various techniques of fragmentation (facial and bodily close-ups), superimposition and sound mutation. These techniques function to accentuate and idealize the female sacrifice for the sake of her family and men—Chang-su and her disabled husband.

Similar visual techniques and thematic elements are employed in an equally successful hostess film, *Heavenly* which was released a year before. The film features the tragic story of Kyōng-a, a woman who migrated to the city and proceeded to fall into prostitution after unsuccessful romances with four different men. Kyōng-a encounters her first man, Yōng-sōk, in the company where she works as a typist. She believes he may eventually marry her, so reluctantly accepts, his imposition of pre-marital sex on her. Yōng-sōk soon leaves her for a woman he believes will be better bride-material than Kyōng-a. Abandoned, Kyōng-a meets the

second man, Man-jun. He constantly accuses Kyōng-a of infidelity which she did not commit. Kyōng-a descends into prostitution. The third man whom Kyōng-a meets on a new job is Tong-hyōk. He considers Kyōng-a to be his personal possession. He treats her as a sexual object and even brands his name on her body. The last man, Mun-ho seems to be her true love. Mun-ho takes her under his wing by providing her with a home and care. Kyōng-a soon falls in love and wants to build a new life with him but the man does not ask for her hand in marriage and will never do so. One snowy day, intoxicated with alcohol, she goes out to a deserted mountain and consumes a handful of sleeping pills with a handful of snow.

The film was a record breaking hit in 1974. It attracted an audience of 464,308 which led to the production of two sequels (1979, 1981). The film also won numerous awards, including the Best New Director Award at the Grand Bell Awards (1974) and the Baeksang Art Awards for Best Cinematography (1975), which demonstrated that the film was critically valued as well. Some critics attributed the success of the film to its candid depiction of the changes in women's life in an industrializing society: "Indeed, at the time, numerous women who came to the city during the course of Korea's industrialization and modernization worked as hostesses in bars, and the movie reflects this state of affairs."¹⁴⁴ Cho mentions that hostess films such as *Heavenly* are critical texts through which one can observe the "situations of lower class women during the period of industrialization" (4).¹⁴⁵

These accounts convincingly suggest that *Heavenly* deals with the 'real' issue of young peasant women during the migration period of the 1970s. However, the heroine, Kyōng-a is highly staged and dramatized with respect to her actions and emotional state which distances her

¹⁴⁴ Quoted from the notes on the film, Korea Film Archive. http://www.koreafilm.org/feature/100_52.asp.

¹⁴⁵ See Cho's "The Analysis of lower class women and female labors in the 70s and 80s Korean films" MA thesis (2002).

from realism. Furthermore, the manner of female depiction is often empowered by flashbacks or dream sequences led by male characters accompanied with elaborate visual techniques including slow motion/pacing, tableau shots and zooming.

The film begins with Mun-ho holding a white box which appears to be a funeral urn. The narration states that it belongs to Kyōng-a. The film flashes back to where Mun-ho first encountered Kyōng-a. The camera shows Mun-ho in a bar drawing someone in his sketch book. Then Mun-ho looks at the subject of his sketches, Kyōng-a, who appears in heavy make-up and wearing a flamboyant wig, which signal her current profession. The camera in a tableau exhibits her actions—sipping her drinks and smoking, slowly paced. The camera then returns to Mun-ho's drawing and his gaze towards Kyōng-a. She is shown again in another tableau with more dramatization: her repetitive drinking and smoking are again slowly paced using intense lighting, making her look somewhat 'staged.' The scene is exclusively framed for her. The presence of the bartender is indicated off-screen, only showing the hands of the bartender pouring drinks and lighting her cigarettes.

The 'staging' of Kyōng-a is maximized in the final sequence. The scene starts with a landscape view of a vast plain that is completely covered in snow. Kyōng-a appears out of nowhere and slowly walks in a zigzag manner towards the camera positioned in front of her. She stumbles and takes out the sleeping pills wrapped in her handkerchief. In an extreme close-up, she hallucinates and smiles at her very first love, Yōng-sōk whom she imagines running towards her. She soon recognizes that it is a hallucination. She frowns and slowly consumes a larger quantity of sleeping pills followed by a handful of snow. Her persistent dialogue with herself, "I should not fall asleep here," emerges as an internal sound which contradicts her consumption of sleeping pills.



[Fig. 3.5: Kyŏng-a's suicide in snow, *Heavenly Homecoming to Stars*]

In a manner similar to the opening sequence of *Young-ja*, the voice of woman is ‘internalized’ as a non-diegetic sound, if not muted. Furthermore, her actions—walking and taking pills and snow are slowly-paced and sometimes shown in slow motion which dramatize and emphasize her visuality. At the end of the sequence, the camera zooms onto her motionless body and then fades out. Her out-of-focus presence dissolves to the previously shown white box (urn) in the arms of Mun-ho who looks down on it. The film ends showing him mourning and the intertitle follows, “Farewell, Kyung-A...” This unexpected intertitle is significant because it seems to represent the collective voice of the four men with whom Kyung-A was involved. This collective voice sentimentalizes and implicitly establishes the woman as a victimized rural woman who moved to city to support her family but abused by the men who utilized and left her in pursuit of money and better lives.

The two films, *Young-ja* and *Heavenly* are very much in common with respect to their employment of cinematic techniques that involve the heroine. Both films exhibit a high degree of

aestheticization and mystification which operate in a manner that excludes the prostitute heroines from aspects of the films that explicitly represent the ‘real world.’ The endings of these films represent the exclusion of the female protagonists from the territory of the real world and these films implicitly position them as a ‘collective entity’ who sacrificed themselves for the sake of male characters.

These constructions of sacrificial women and the visual techniques function in a way that safeguards the realism of hostess films – working class issues and poor districts that are antithetical to the governmental campaign for the ‘development of the nation.’ Some key directors of hostess films who found and popularized the genre, revealed that they indeed attempted to secure realistic (social) commentaries by employing victimized prostitutes as a heroine. In the following chapter, I trace the rise of the film movement, *The Era of Image* (1975) which was founded by the leading directors of hostess films. By examining their manifesto focused on social realism and commercial art, I discuss how the works of these directors canonized the erotic tales of women’s sacrifices in their juggling of social realism under the state censorship and commercial necessities.

Chapter Four: ‘New Movies by a New Generation’: The Era of Image (1975) and Hostess films

“New Movies by a New Generation” – Film has to be a spear that would tear down the walls of authoritarianism. Have we ever had “nouvelle vague” in this country? We, as ‘protectors of screen,’ hereby declare that we will provide a cinema with new values and aesthetics by uniting the ideals and talents each one of us has.

From The Statement of Manifesto by *Youngsang Shidae* (The Era of Image)¹⁴⁶

A number of Korean film scholars have pointed out two reasons for the rise of hostess films. First, the Park Chung-hee’s military government’s film censorship heavily regulated any socially realist depiction of film, resulting in the production of ‘escapist’ genres including hostess films. Second, the growing popularity of television provoked the film industry to seek out alternative materials to recover their business, including erotic and action films (Chung, 2011; Yu, 2008). Indeed, during the Park regime, especially when the Yushin film law (1974) and censorship was operating, adult melodramas, action and comedy films that had little to do with the concurrent issues of politics and society soared as major genres. Although it is undeniable that this government force indirectly provided a ground where sexually-charged hostess films could be canonized into mainstream Korean cinema, it does not fully explain how and by whom

¹⁴⁶ Byun In-sik. *Towards Film, Towards Future*, (Seoul: Gong Gan Media, 1995). 215.

provocative subject matter such as hostess/prostitute was chosen and ultimately made into the canon when the power of censorship was at its highest.

To answer these who and by whom questions, I turn to a discussion of some key filmmakers, including Lee Jang-ho, Kim Ho-sŏn and Ha Gil-jong who initiated and popularized hostess films. Their cultural impact was significant not only in terms of their rejuvenation of the declining Korean cinema at that time, but also in terms of the artistic production of screening women that influenced films beyond their era.¹⁴⁷ These directors refused to remain as popular commercial filmmakers but took further steps to provoke a ‘cinematic revolution’ in Korea. By establishing a film movement, *The Era of Image* (1975), they sought to achieve both ‘social realism’ and ‘commercially viable aesthetics’ through which they hoped to innovate Korean cinema. In this chapter, I argue that these central premises of the film movement are infused within their hostess films, particularly in relation to their cinematic construction of prostitute heroines. Specifically through their recognizable thematic and visual strategies, the founders of the film movement stabilized and reinforced the ‘hostess convention’ of female sacrifice.

The contribution of these directors in regards to popularization of the films and their cinematic legacy is tremendous but previous Korean scholarship has yet paid a thorough attention on the subject. While I discourage a simplistic, auteurist cause and effect historical narrative, I highlight *The Era of Image* as one crucial framework for historicizing hostess films.

¹⁴⁷ For the exact numbers of the films produced by these directors, see Figure 4-1.

Hostess Directors and The Era of Image

Aged around mid-30s and still new to the business, their commercial success surpassed all expectations. With the record breaking success of *Heavenly Homecoming to Stars* in 1974, Lee Jang Ho signaled the boom of the hostess genre. Kim Ho-sŏn arrived the next spring with the release of *Youngja's Heydays* which gathered 361,213 filmgoers in its Seoul first run, beginning in February, 1975. Kim made two more box office top hostess films in consecutive years, *Women's Street* (1976) and *Winter Woman* (1977). Ha Gil-jong made a sequel to *Heavenly Homecoming to Stars* in 1978 – one of the most successful hostess films in the final phase of the hostess cycle.¹⁴⁸

Importantly, during this time, Lee, Kim and Ha grouped with other young directors, (Lee Won-se, Hong Pa) and a film critic, (Byun In-sik) to found a film movement, The Era of Image. Ahn Jae-suk writes, “the period of this young film movement (7.18.1975-6.30.1978) is usually determined based on the date when the members’ first made press announcement of its manifesto to the last summer issue of the same titled film journal, *The Era of Image*.”¹⁴⁹

Similar to how French New Wave directors teamed up through their film clubs and social gatherings around *Cinematheque*, these directors of The Era of Image frequently gathered around a little bar called, “Heart and Heart” in which many people in the film industry

¹⁴⁸ *Heavenly Homecoming to Stars II* gained 327,736 audiences. Ha Gil-jong, *To-to who came with White Horse (Baek ma ta go on Tto-tto)*.

¹⁴⁹ An Jae-suk, “The Study of *The Era of Image*,” 367.

occasionally held meetings. Lee Jang Ho remembers that the meetings were not just chatting and killing time; directors and producers frequently discussed specific business issues and even designed the films to submit to international film festivals.¹⁵⁰ As these social gatherings became gradually more frequent, Ha suggested that these young directors “should not waste their talents and overnight popularity but must use them productively in a way that could contribute to the future of Korean cinema.”¹⁵¹

Ha’s suggestion was taken up by some of the most influential directors and a film critic of the 1970s. They officially established the film movement in 1975 by announcing their manifesto. In this statement, they reveal that their goal is to rejuvenate the down-falling Korean film industry by pursuing two major elements of film: (i) socially realist issues and (ii) innovative aesthetics/artistic styles.¹⁵² They also emphasized that their ‘new films’ would be alternatives to the films that conformed to the military censorship.¹⁵³ This goal seems to be driven by a growing sense among people in the Korean film industry that Korean films were losing quality and audiences largely because of the state’s repressive film censorship that regulated socially realist depiction of films.¹⁵⁴ Simply speaking, these directors were tired of making films that lacked realism and functioned as propaganda films for the state. Although they did not directly criticize the government, they attempted to “register their hostility towards what they felt was an unjust power structure” through their films (Kim, 147).

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. An Jae-suk.25.

¹⁵¹ Ibid. An Jae-suk.26. As An indicates, their meetings were mostly personal gatherings. Unlike other socialist directors, e.g. the Latin American Film Movement, these directors did not directly criticize the government or make public statements about the regime. Instead, The Era of Image’s political resistance tends to be vague and nuanced at best. This can be observed from their somewhat idealist vision that focused on the ‘artistic revolution,’ which they believed, it *ultimately* overcome military repression.

¹⁵² Mun Gwan-gyu, “Historical Background and significance of The Era of Image” *Cineforum*, Vol. 14. 2012.

¹⁵³ Ibid, 369.

¹⁵⁴ In the survey conducted for the summer issue of *The Era of Image* (1978), 56% of the respondents consisted of producers and directors pointed out the state censorship as the biggest factor for the decline of Korean films. See Ahn Jae-suk’s “The Study of The Era of Image” 12.

Although the movement was short lived, activities went far beyond making films, including launching the same titled journal, *The Era of Image* in which the members distributed incisive writings and calling auditions for new directors and actors. Throughout the articles written by the members, this film movement repeatedly emphasized that a good film has to be realist and yet also has to be combined with commercially viable aestheticism. Such social realism has to be achieved through artistically charged, new kinds of aesthetics that would appeal the public. These somewhat contradictory elements of ‘realism’ and ‘art’ are significantly at work in the hostess films produced by the members of The Era of Image.

While I am not intending to generalize these individuals and apply their styles to all other hostess films, canonical hostess films made by these leading directors of the 1970s display a recognizable tendency, particularly a contrast between a realistically depicted background and an idealized female protagonist who is portrayed with prominently allegorical cinematic language. In this respect, viewing the ideals and objectives of The Era of Image could be one significant way to understand the generic language of hostess films.

I should note here, though, that hostess films are not direct by-products of The Era of Image. As An Jae-suk points out, the movement itself did not engender the hostess genre. Contradicting the argument of some Korean film historians who saw The Era of Image as directly responsible for the emergence of hostess films (Yu, S., 2004; Kim, S., 2007)¹⁵⁵, the first commercially successful hostess film, *Heavenly Homecoming to Stars* (1974) was released a year before the film movement was established. An further argues that the total number of

¹⁵⁵ Kim Sun-ah, “Youngja’s Face in *Youngja’s Heydays*” in *Film and Women: Looking at Korean Society and Women through Films*. (Seoul: Korea Film Archive. 2007), Yu Sun-young, “Kwaminjok Project and Hostess Film” in *State and Everyday Life: Park Chung-hee Period*. Seoul: Hanwool Publication, 2004.

hostess films directed by members of The Era of Image is not significant enough to consider these directors as sole progenitors of the genre.

It is correct that the film movement did not directly engender the birth of the hostess films and the total number of hostess films produced by the members is not remarkably high. Yet, the time lapse between the conception of hostess films and the film movement is not significant: the peak of the hostess cycle and the movement shares the same period of the mid to late 1970s. Some members, such as, Kim and Ha, made their hostess films at the same time they were participating in the movement. Also, I would point out that the total number of hostess films directed by the members of The Era of Image may be low but they were major box-office hits during the entire cycle of the films, making a significant impact on the Korean film industry of the 1970s.

As figure 4-1 demonstrates, hostess films occupied 8 out of the 10 highest grossing films of the 70s and the ones made by the members of The Era of Image were ranked within the top five of the decade. Their hostess films were exemplary works and were emulated in the works by other directors of the 70s and even of the 80s, with little variations. In particular, the recurring theme of the sacrificial prostitute and the exploitative image construction of female/sex that constituted hostess films made a significant impact on all other similar sub-genre prostitute/erotic films of the 70s and the 80s, conventionalizing the ways that woman's sex could be represented.

The Best Selling Korean Films From 1970-1979

	Title	Seoul Admissions	Director	Cast
1	<i>Winter Woman (1977)*</i>	585,775	Kim Ho-sŏn	Chang Mi-hee, Shin Sung-il
2	<i>Heavenly Homecoming to Stars(1974)*</i>	464,308	Lee Jang-ho	An In-sook, Shin Sung-il
3	<i>The Woman I Threw Away (1978)*</i>	375,913	Cheong So-young	Lee Young-ok, Yoon Il-bong
4	<i>Young-ja's Heydays (1975)*</i>	361,213	Kim Ho-sŏn	Song Jae-ho, Yeom Bok-soon
5	<i>Heavenly Homecoming to Stars II (1979)*</i>	298,125	Ha Gil-jong	Shin Sung-il, Chang Mi-hee
6	<i>Miss O's Apartment (1978)*</i>	281,726	Byun Jang-ho	Kim Ja-ok, Han Jin-hee
7	<i>The Man I Threw Away (1979)*</i>	239,718	Cheong So-young	Yu Ji-in, Yoon Il-bong
8	<i>The Testimony (1973)</i>	232,762	Im Kwon-taek	Shin Il-ryong, Kim Chang-suk
9	<i>Do You Know Kkotsuni? (1978)*</i>	216,628	Cheong In-yeop	Cheong Yoon-hee, Kim Chu-ryeon
10	<i>Toward That High Place (1977)</i>	201,418	Im Won-shik	Shin Young-gyun, Ko Eun-ah

[Fig. 4.1: The titles with a star indicate hostess films. Highlighted titles are the hostess films directed by the members of The Era of Image]¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ The table is re-designed by myself, based on the data from a film critic, Darcy Parquet's <http://www.koreanfilm.org/kfilm70s.html>.

The Rise of ‘Young Men’ Directors (*ch'ōng-nyōn-'gam-dok*) During the Depression of the Korean Film Industry

The 1970s witnessed scores of young, thirty-something directors, such as Lee Jang-ho, Kim Ho-sŏn, Ha Gil-jong, Lee Won-se and Hong Pa, who delivered films with a new generation of stars and young writers. The press dubbed the members of this group of young filmmakers, actors and writers, the “Third Generation.”¹⁵⁷ They had strikingly different styles and types of subject matter than was the case for the films of the 1960s. The Korean films of the 1960s were dominated by cinema pioneers such as Lee Man-hee, Shin Sang-ok and Kim Ki-young all of whom had started their careers at the beginning of the film industry in Korea. Though topics were varied, the 60s films are “literary films (*moon-ye-young-hwa*),” adapted from classic novels and traditional stories or government-supported “propaganda films (*guk-check- young-hwa*)”. If these 60s films were sincere adaptations of historical stories or films conforming to state politics, the 70s films featured more contemporary and innovative themes and stylization. They spoke for a generation that became disillusioned with the tyrannical government and less willing to conform than their previous generations.

More specifically, the 70s films began to focus on youth culture and the sentimentality that young people shared. The media termed this period as the “era of jeans, beer and guitars”

¹⁵⁷ *The Third Generation* originally referred to the generation of writers who were born after the liberation from colonial period (1945). They are the first generation who used Korean language instead of Japanese. The works by these writers were “believed to be more creative and independent” from prior literary works during the colonization. Because many young directors preferred to use these literary works for their films, these young directors in the 70s were also called, *The Third Generation Directors*. See Chung Joon Hun’s “1970’s Korean Film History: Yushin System and Films” 234.

through which they referred to the Western products actively consumed by young people. The films produced during this period reflected the youth culture of that period and their cultural consumption. For instance, *Heavenly Homecoming to Stars* and *March of Fools* employed singer-song writers popular at that time for the soundtracks of the films. The theme songs, “I will give you everything” for *Heavenly* and “Whale Hunt” for *March* were big commercial hits of the time. Some journalist from this period has testified that their OST albums alone were as successful as the movies.¹⁵⁸

After six years of being an assistant director under Shin Sang-ok,¹⁵⁹ Lee Jang-ho bought the film rights for the hostess novel, *Homecoming of Stars* written by Choi In-ho for his 1974 debut film, *Heavenly Homecoming to Stars*. This serialized novel was already popular among newspaper readers. Many directors and producers were competing for the movie rights to the novel.¹⁶⁰ Lee had been a high school friend of Choi, and this personal connection helped him acquire the film right. His film adaptation of Choi’s novel gathered 464,308 audiences when it was shown for 105 days in a single theater in Seoul. This audience tally exceeded the annual film audience record for a single film up to that point in time.¹⁶¹

One year later, another young film maker, Kim Ho-sŏn, directed *Youngja’s Heydays*, another film adaptation of a hostess novel, written by Cho Sun-jak. Kim’s debut film, *Fire Woman* (1973) had failed to garner attention. However, with *Young-ja’s Heydays*, he rose to become one of the major directors of Korean film history. It may be the case that Kim’s debut film failure pressured him into choosing a hostess novel as the basis of his second film, which

¹⁵⁸ <http://www.newsmaker.or.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=4552>.

¹⁵⁹ Shin Sang-ok is a major film director of South Korea during the 1950s and 60s. He directed at least 60 films in 20 years which labeled him as a ‘national director’.

¹⁶⁰ *Homecoming of Stars* was serialized from 9.5.1972 to 9.14.1973 for *Chosun Daily (Ilbo)*.

¹⁶¹ Kim Shi-moo. *Lee Jang Ho*, p.15. See *the Korean Annual Film Book* for the exact box office record of the year.

may have been influenced by Lee Jang-ho's previous record breaking success with a hostess film. Kim's hostess film scored another record for the year, gathering 361,213 audiences for 88 days of exhibition.¹⁶² Kim went on to concentrate on filming hostess novels including *Mobumjakmoon*, written by Cho Sun-jak, and *Winter Woman*, written by Cho Hae-il. The film adaptations of hostess novels, *Women's Street* (1976) and *Winter Woman* (1977), respectively, achieved the box office top each year, confirming hostess films as a commercially viable genre.



[Figure 4.2: *The March of Fools* (Ha, 1975) *Women's Street* (Kim, 1976) *Youngja's Heydays* (Kim, 1974)]¹⁶³

Meanwhile, Ha Gil-jong, another new comer without any previous directing experience entered the film industry with *The March of Fools* (1975), a socially critical tale about three college students. The film's critical tone led to it being heavily censored by the state, especially for the film's pervasive skepticism about government authority. The film nevertheless scored around 174,500 tickets during a 49-day period and was well-received by the press.¹⁶⁴ Lee Young il, a film critic/ historian writes that even though the overall quality of Korean films had decreased due to the state censorship, *The March of Fools* signaled that Korean films had a

¹⁶² The annual film book, 1975. KOFIC.

¹⁶³ Stills photos are excerpted from the Korea Film Archive (KOFA).

¹⁶⁴ Park describes that this film was censored about 30 minutes, including the depiction of the Army. See Park Yu-hee's "The Dynamics of Film Censorship and Representation of Sentiment during the Park Chung-hee Regime" *Historical Criticism*, No.99 (2012, summer)

promising future.¹⁶⁵ After several years without much commercial success after *The March of Fools*, Ha made a comeback with a hostess film, *Heavenly Homecoming to Stars II* (1978). The film was sufficiently successful to mend his reputation in the industry, which had experienced a downturn for several years, earning him a top box office spot.

From 1974 to 1979, these three directors dominated the Korean box office. Their talents and growing popularity led them to collaborate with rising young directors, Lee Won-se and Hong Pa, and a film critic, Byun In-sik to found a film movement, ‘The Era of Image’ (1975).¹⁶⁶ The Era of Image is the second film movement in South Korea following the KAPF (Korea Artista Proleta Federatio) film movement during the late 1920s, the colonial period.¹⁶⁷ Although these two film movements commonly emphasize ‘social realism,’ they are distinguishing in that the KAPF was an explicitly leftist film movement against the Japanese occupation, while The Era of Image focused more on artistic elements of cinema.

Their manifesto in the epigraph of this chapter describes the nature of the film movement. Through The Era of Image, the directors committed to make socially realist and yet commercially viable art films. Through these kinds of films, they believed that they could recover the downfall of Korean cinema. The members claimed that good films should be as realist as possible, i.e. be candid about social reality by addressing the contemporary political/social issues with which most people were dealing. From their point of view, Korean films controlled under the military government were hardly good films because cinematic depictions of reality were heavily regulated by the state censorship. However they believed that

¹⁶⁵ *Dong-A Daily*. 8.18.1975.

¹⁶⁶ Lee Won-se later left the group for his film schedule and for his replacement, another film director Hong Eui-bong joined the movement.

¹⁶⁷ Moon Gwan-gyu, “Historical Background and significance of The Era of Image”

their social perspective could be delivered with artistically profound cinematic language that would meet both critical and commercial needs.

Under this slogan, The Era of Image held various activities extending beyond making films. First, they recruited new talent (e.g. actors and directors) by holding auditions. According to Ahn Jae-suk, their auditions were quite successful. Throughout five auditions, they had about 910 applicants – perspective actors and directors combined and cultivated talented young directors. Among the ones who were selected by these auditions, Shin Seung-su and Chang Gil-su later became leading directors of the 1980s and produced prostitute films of their own, of which the sacrificial themes and characterization of heroines largely overlap with the canonical hostess films made by the directors of The Era of Image.¹⁶⁸ They became culturally significant events helped the artistic legacy of The Era of Image, which extend to the later periods.¹⁶⁹

Furthermore, similar to French New Wave directors united through *Cahier du Cinema* and Italian directors through *Cinema e Film*, the founders of The Era of Image published the same-titled film journal, *The Era of Image* (1977-1979). The articles for *The Era of Image* were authored by popular writers and film directors with whom the members were personally close. However, the journal's contents mostly consisted of articles written by members. They were prolific writers focusing on film criticism in addition to their filmmaking careers (with the exception of the film critic, Byun In-sik).¹⁷⁰

The articles featured in *The Era of Image*, expressed a great fascination with foreign film movements. The members proclaimed that Korean films needed 'new aesthetics' which could be

¹⁶⁸ Chang Gil-su made *Silver Stallion will Never Come* (1991) which earned him the best film at the *Baesang Art Awards*. Shin Seung-su debuted with *Dream of the Strong* in 1985 and produced numerous other films throughout his career. He won awards for the best director and screen writer at Baesang Art Awards in 1986 and 1987.

¹⁶⁹ Ahn Jae-suk, "The Study of The Era of Image"

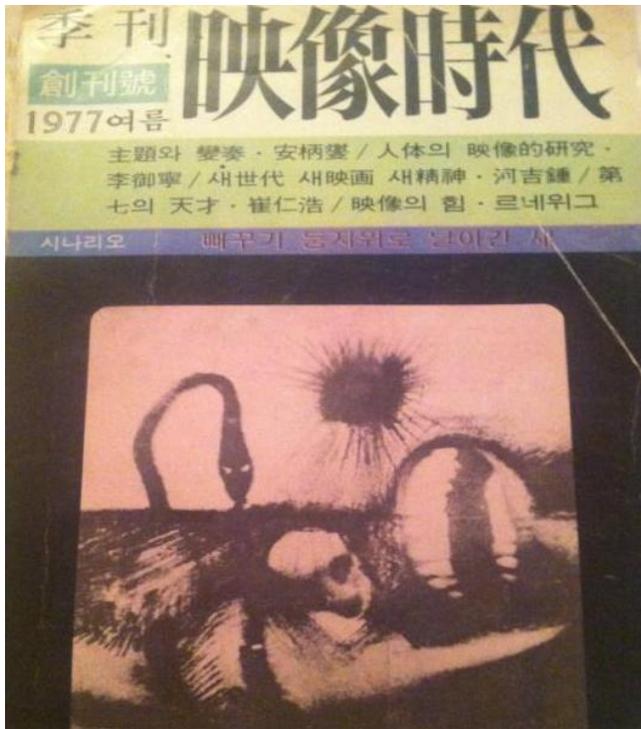
¹⁷⁰ For instance, Ha Gil-jong and Hong Pa started their film career as film critics before they went into directing.

observed in foreign film movements such as the French New Wave, Italian Neo-realism, and American New Cinema. Ha Gil-jong, in particular, revealed that he was greatly influenced by these film movements and argued that they must follow their innovation in order to “break down the old morals and traditional authoritarianism” which were decaying current Korean cinema.¹⁷¹

The members of the movement shared the belief that these film movements achieved cinematic “renaissance” through realism and depictions of social critiques of the time. Byun In-sik echoes a similar perspective in his article, “How to Make Films?” claiming that “Korean films have to use the global film language demonstrated in these films of the new wave.”¹⁷² Exemplary films members to which referred include Truffaut’s *Jules et Jim* (1962), Forman’s *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (1975) and Schlesinger’s *Midnight Cowboy* (1969). They praised these films for their social criticisms of the time and innovating stylization.

¹⁷¹ Moon, “A Study of Korean Film Movements” 372.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 375.



[Fig. 4.3: A Cover of *The Era of Image*'s 1977 launching issue: Stan Vanderveek's *A La Mode*]¹⁷³

Tradition meets 'The New Wave': Korean Realism and the New Wave Movements

The notion of 'realism' was not exclusive to *The Era of Image* but rather has a long history in Korean cinema. Realism has traditionally been a crucial element within the discussion of Korean cinema, not only as a type of aesthetics but also as a socially resistant mode of address. Kim So-yeon holds that the concept was initially used by leftist film critics during the colonial period:

¹⁷³ Cover page of the very first issue of the journal contains an experimental film director, Stan Vanderveek's work, *A La Mode*. Moon observes that the use of this particular painting illustrates how significant contemporary foreign film movements and artists were to *the Era of Image*. Moon, "A Study of Korean Film Movements" 374.

Terms such as “proletarian realism,” “materialist dialectical creation,” and “socialist realism” were all current then, and they were intended to advance the proletarian cause under the slogan of Bolshevism, as well as enlighten and mobilize the general public. Therefore, the critics pointed out anti-proletarian ideas and the lack of socialist ideology in the films of colonized Korea. *Realism was absolutely necessary to understand reality* (emphasis is mine). But that did not mean portraying reality as it appeared was sufficient. Rather, the key to proletarian realism was both the vision of a socialist future and an educational effect. As film professionals used the concept of realism to mean the representation of “reality,” realism was of course only defined in terms of themes. This kind of realism that centered on the representation of “social reality” had a broad effect on Korean cinema.¹⁷⁴

As Kim states, realism in Korean cinema was initially introduced as a “dialectics of resistance” during the Japanese colonization. Realism has continuously been emphasized to draw attention to the surrounding reality of colonialism and the discourse of resistance against the Japanese authorities. At that time, Italian neo-realism was suggested as a germane model for Korean realism, “favorable assessment of neo-realism’s potential was based on a high evaluation of the aesthetic elements of realism that were believed to have legitimacy and universality.” (Kim, 67) Kim notes that as early as the 1950s there were heated debates about Korean realism. In comparing Korean realism and Italian neo-realism, the writers of film magazines insisted that “Korean realism” should capture the ‘truth’ of Koreans who must have a ‘resistance’ mindset during the colonial period,” and also that, “local style needs to be combined with the ‘resistance’ mindset to represent the ‘Korean reality.’” (ibid.)

¹⁷⁴ See The Korean Film Council (KOFIC)’s special issue, “The Debates around Realism in the Korean Cinema” The article is available at: www.koreanfilm.or.kr%2Fjsp%2Fpublications%2Fdownload.jsp%3FfileNm%3DTheme65.pdf&ei=oeakUtgAOujF2AWn-YC4DA&usg=AFQjCNFKKNrXooq97UDt07O8tSajPWkJFQ&sig2=VPUz4vqkEBME3vaGKqx7qg.

This concept of realism was celebrated particularly by leading directors such as Kim Ki-young, Yu Hyun-mok and Shin Sang-ok who were renowned for their socially realist films. They trained the members of The Era of Image, e.g. Kim Ho-sŏn (by Yu) and Lee Jang-ho (by Shin) as apprentices. Not regulated as heavily as the later Park regime, these three directors pursued realist representations of post-war Korean society by using extensive long takes and location shooting. Byun In-sik, a film critic/member of The Era of Image, refers Kim Ki-young's early works including *Early Snow* (1958) and *Rebellion of Teens* (1959) and Yu Hyun-mok's *Aimless Bullet* (1961) as exemplary works influenced by Italian neo-realism.¹⁷⁵ Byun describes that these directors often held public discussions about the influence of Italian neo-realism on Korean cinema at events such as, "De Sica Retrospective" in which the major theme was "what De Sica has left us."¹⁷⁶

Italian neo-realism is one of the most influential film movements that emerged in the post-World War II era. It frequently positioned films counter to the cinema under Fascism with "the *techniques* of Neorealist filmmaking, specifically the stylistic commonalities found in the propensity of location shooting, natural lighting, the use of non-actors, and voyeuristic long shots, has largely obfuscated equally important and socially driven content and commentary."¹⁷⁷ Fascist Italy's repressive film policy which was similar to the Park regime's film censorship provoked these key directors of the 60s to pursue Italian neo-realism in their work.

Yu Hyun-mok is one of the successors of Italian neo-realism in Korean cinema. He is a figure who critically influenced the foundation of The Era of Image and the framing of the nature

¹⁷⁵ Byun In-sik, *Italian Neo Realism Theory*, 1965

¹⁷⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ Brent J. Piepergerdes, "Re-envisioning the Nation: Film Neorealism and the Postwar Italian Condition" *ACME*, 6 (2), 231-251, 232.

of the movement. Ahn describes that Yu was individually connected with all of the members of the movement long before the movement crystallized. For instance, Yu led several film circles and independent film movements, where Byun In-sik and Ha Gil-jong came before they founded the film movement.¹⁷⁸ Another member, Kim Ho-sŏn, was an assistant director of Yu, for about ten years. Considering each member's connection with Yu as a mentor, it is possible that Yu's pursuit of socially conscious films were embedded in *The Era of Image* and the films made by the members.

The major concepts that *The Era of Image* pursued – social realism and new aesthetics – are repeatedly emphasized in articles of their journal. They wrote about a wide range of films, not only Italian neo-realist films made by De Sica and Pazolini but also contemporary foreign films born out of French New Wave, New German Cinema and American New Cinema. Empowered by the universal trend of 'nouveau movement' in the 70s, they molded their movement based on these leading foreign film movements. The issues of *The Era of Image* contained special articles such as, "How to make films," "New Generation, New Films and New Spirit," and "Wim Wenders' Visual Senses." The members urged that they should enlighten themselves with the "global film language" found in new wave films.¹⁷⁹

In the launching issue of *The Era of Image* (1976), Ha Gil-jong writes that Hollywood was participating in the 'new wave' in films by challenging traditional social norms and mechanisms (32).¹⁸⁰ His analysis focuses on the changes in aesthetics in new wave cinema and argues that only this kind of "*cinematic coup d'etat* would enable Korean directors of current

¹⁷⁸ Yu Hyun-mok established *Cinipoem* (experimental film movement, 1963), *Korean Small Films* (independent film movement, 1970) *East-West Film Studies* (Study of Asian and Western Films, 1978)

¹⁷⁹ *The Era of Image* (*Youngsang Shidae*), Summer issue of 1976.

¹⁸⁰ *ibid.*

situation to address the beauty or ugliness of the real world.” (35).¹⁸¹ They believed that participating in these new wave movements and adapting certain aspects of their styles would help them solve Korean film’s utmost issues related to the lack of artistic motivation and dwindling film audiences in part caused by state censorship.

These premises to which Ha and other members of the movement were committed are significantly at work within their hostess films. Ha’s *Heavenly Homecoming to Stars II*, for instance, is filled with his inspirational references of new wave films that Ha has mentioned in the essays. In adapting these global aesthetics, he simultaneously reiterates the tendency of hostess films, which juxtaposes realistic elements and idealization of the heroine. Lee Jang-ho and Kim Ho-sŏn adhere to the globally rising notion of eroticism, which they observed from New American films such as *Midnight Cowboy* and other films that progressively thematized the issue of sex. In the following portion of this chapter, I analyze the hostess films directed by these three directors – *Heavenly Homecoming to Stars II* (Ha, 1978), *Women’s Street*, *Winter Woman* (Kim, 1976 and 1977) and *Eo-Woo-Dong* (Lee, 1985) – in light of the conditions proposed by The Era of Image.¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ *ibid.*

¹⁸² Although this film was directed after the heyday of hostess films, I use this film for my example, because this film manifests major hostess conventions of a prostitute heroine and the woman’s down falling life containing a series of sacrifices. I discuss this further in the later part of this chapter.

Localizing European Aesthetics:
Ha Gil-jong's *Heavenly Homecoming to Stars II* (1978)

Among the members of The Era of Image, Ha Gil-jong's films stood most for social and political criticisms. He asserted that films should not shy away from societal and political issues. Ha participated in the major democratic movement against the government dictatorship before going to UCLA for his MFA.¹⁸³ In the United States, he encountered a variety of films that had not been imported to Korea, including European art films, avant-garde films and New Hollywood films. Infused with his political inclination and inspiration from such novel works, Ha's films tend to be a mixture of social criticism and the aesthetics found in European 'auteur' films. His anthology of film reviews frequently celebrated the works by Wenders, Rosellini and Pasolini and his aspiration for these directors was saliently reflected in Ha's films.¹⁸⁴ Pasolini in particular stands strong in Ha Gil-jong's cinematic oeuvre. In fact, Ha Gil-jong's debut film, *The Pollen of Flowers* (*Hwaboon*, 1972) was criticized for plagiarizing Pasolini's *Teorema* (1968). This disqualified him from Korean Grand Bell Awards and Baek-Sang Art Awards.

Despite this unsuccessful outcome, *Pollen* displays Ha's personal vision of society using visual icons and metaphors which resonate in his hostess film, *Heavenly Homecoming to Stars II*. *Pollen* features a visitor and a family living in a deserted "Blue Mansion" where most of the action takes place. The entire family goes insane and destroys each other. The film was criticized

¹⁸³ Ha participated in the 4.19 democratic movement (also called April Revolution) occurred in the year of 1960 against electoral corruption operated under the Rhee Seung Man government.

for too many resemblances with *Teorema* especially the construction of the plot and the similarity of the character of the stranger who seduces all of the family members one by one. Some film scholars have praised *Pollen* for its highly experimental theme, given the nature of Korean society at that time and the bold critique of the authoritarian government– the obvious metaphor for *The Blue House*, the Korean presidential house.¹⁸⁵



[Fig. 4.4: Similar illustration (gender reversed) of *The Pollen of Flowers* and *Teorema*]

His debut work, *Pollen* failed at both the box office and critical reception. Ha's hostess film, a sequel to Lee Jang-ho's *Heavenly Homecoming to Stars*, more closely conforms to the

¹⁸⁵ Ha's brother and also an actor, Ha Myung-joong retrospectively describes that this film was heavily censored by the state censors to the extent that the story does not flow coherently. Although he does not mention specifically which scenes were censored but the final version shows that the film's reference to the Blue House somehow remains intact. *Korean Times*. 6.30.2008. <http://news.hankooki.com/lpage/people/200806/h2008063002543291560.htm>.

premises of the film movement by alternating between social criticism and the commercial aesthetics of hostess films. The film is a continuation of the first segment, *Heavenly Homecoming to Stars*. The film features a schizophrenic Su-Kyŏng who becomes involved with Mun-ho, the male protagonist from the previous story. Mun-ho suffers from having lost his woman, Kyŏng-a. who died in the first film. He meets a new girl, Su-Kyŏng at a bar. Su-Kyŏng is an occasional prostitute who aimlessly wanders around the city. She initially lies to Mun-ho that she is pregnant by him. However, she soon tells him that the child is not his and that she lied because she has nowhere else to go.

Mun-ho immediately recognizes that Su-Kyŏng has been abandoned by the father of her child. He attempts to redeem himself from guilt over having abandoned Kyŏng-a. who committed suicide in the first film, by taking good care of Su-Kyŏng and her child. Meanwhile, Su-Kyŏng gradually becomes depressed because she feels uncertain about nurturing a child. Her depression worsens over time and Mun-ho finally sends her to a mental hospital. As a single (step)father, Mun-ho resumes his art work to support the child. One day, Su-Kyŏng's young daughter accidentally dies by falling from the patio while Mun-ho is away for an exhibition of his paintings. Soon, Mun-ho himself also dies from leukemia. Without Su-Kyŏng knowing of all this tragedy that happened during her hospitalization, she is released from the hospital and realizes that there is now no one around her.

Heavenly II seems to be free of a politically critical tone compared to Ha's previous works, influenced by his recent commercial failures and the state's attention on his films which they believed were 'excessively political' (Kim, 1997).¹⁸⁶ Instead of using thorny criticism as

¹⁸⁶ Kim Su-nam, *Key Issues of Korean Films (hanguk younghwa eui jaengjum gwa sayu)* Moonye Madang, 1997, 28-33.

he did for *The March of Fools*, from which censorship caused him to remove a significant portion of the film, Ha in *Heavenly II* strategically juxtaposes expressionist icons and metaphors, which would tarnish realist views of industrialized Seoul with which the film seems to be critical.

Ha's implicit social criticisms can be observed through the dichotomized mode of representation that is recognizably gendered. In detail, Mun-ho is consistently seen amidst the remnants of industrialization, such as bus terminals, apartment construction sites and workers depicted in somber, documentary-like styles such as hand-held cameras and long-take panning. Sometimes these long take panning scenes zoom onto something seemingly irrelevant, for example, anonymous faces of construction workers and young laborers. This realistic manner of camera work is similar to the opening sequence of *Young-ja's Heydays*, in which the camera relentlessly tracks the back of an anonymous lower class passerby and spotlights the streetwalkers' shabby outfits and slouched postures.

Su-Kyōng on the other hand, appears in deserted and pastoral places, such as the sea shore and mountains, accompanied by an overtly dramatic mode, including slow motion, extreme close ups and crosscutting. For example, when Su-Kyōng makes her first appearance in the film, she is seen in a rustic area surrounded by a mountain. She sits on the ground and the camera shows her face in extreme close up. There Su-kyōng begins to sing an unknown song, which she repeatedly sings throughout the film. When she sings this song, her gaze becomes static and the camera occasionally cuts at a slow pace to objects she sees, such as birds, trees and the sky. This dramatic mode of representation is prolonged until the song ends. The meaning laden lyrics of the song are empowered by these techniques:

“I brought a chestnut all the way from Seoul and hid it in the kitchen. A flash of a chestnut goes to rats. The skin goes to father. The bone goes to mother. What is Su-kyōng going to eat? What is Su-kyōng going to eat?”

This is only the introduction of the film, and a great deal of information about Su-kyōng has yet to be revealed. Here, she is just a mysterious woman who sings an unknown slow song that almost sounds like a narration. The lyrics, which contain Su-kyōng’s own name, indicate that the song is made by her and implies that she is likely one of the rural migrants who moved to Seoul. Chestnuts are a typical staple food in rural households and it implicitly reveals her position as a bread winner of her family.

Throughout the film, Su-kyōng repeatedly sings and hums this song. When she does, the camera repeats the dramatically constructed movements described above. Some might point out that this mood imposed on the heroine could be rationalized with her mental instability, therefore Mun-ho and Su-kyōng do not share the same world view. However this tendency perpetuates even after she is released from hospital.

In the ending sequence, Su-kyōng again appears in the natural setting – this time by the sea in a long shot. Su-kyōng walks towards the camera sobbing because she has found out that her daughter and Mun-ho have died. She walks by the sea shore with the camera zooming onto her face while she gazes at something out of frame. Then the camera shows an abandoned, red umbrella flying towards Su-kyōng in extreme slow motion. We see her gaze following the movement of the umbrella in a long take, intercut with Su-Kyōng’s face. The umbrella then soars up into the air and the scene stops capturing the umbrella within the freeze frame shot.

The red umbrella floats aimlessly. This seems to symbolize Su-Kyŏng's life path of having been repeatedly abandoned (by the father of her child, Mun-ho and her deceased daughter). Stylization of the ending sequence once again features a woman in a highly mysterious and emblematic manner. One film director has revealed that this ending sequence employing an umbrella was known to be borrowed from *Ryan's Daughter*, a 1970 film by David Lean.¹⁸⁷ Indeed, the overall camera movement and the way it frames the heroine is quite similar to the opening scene of *Ryan's Daughter*. Although David Lean is not a name to which Ha frequently refers in his essays, Lean's visual styles that are known to have influenced many American New Cinema directors such as Spielberg and Kubrick¹⁸⁸ may have been appealing for Ha.

Although it is hard to see the ending sequence as the director's original work, the visual representation similar to *Ryan's Daughter* illustrates the director's commitment to deliver social reality through a 'new kind of cinematic language' which he repeatedly proposed throughout his articles for *The Era of Image*. While Mun-ho is a direct witness of social changes, therefore he is positioned among real places in candid manner, the heroine, Su-Kyŏng is distanced from this reality and is elaborated by meaning laden, and yet picturesque metaphors and icons infused with above inspirational references. In this way, this film conforms to and solidifies the tendency of hostess films by orchestrating the elements of realism and stylization associated with the heroine.

¹⁸⁷ Oh Seung-wook. An article from *Shin Dong A*, "Actress Special: Chang Mi-hee"
http://shindonga.donga.com/docs/magazine/shin/2012/09/21/201209210500006/201209210500006_3.html.

¹⁸⁸ Andrew Collins, "The Epic Legacy of David Lean" in *The Guardian*. 5.4.2008.
<http://www.theguardian.com/film/2008/may/04/features>.

Commercialization of Prostitute: Hostess films of Lee Jang-ho and Kim Ho-sŏn

The members of The Era of Image strived to establish their movement as a social and artistic entity that pursued socially concerned films using aesthetic terms. This premise was a mixture of The Old and New – the tradition of realism in Korean cinema as well as the global currents of new wave movements. However, the members also sought to ensure that their films would be ‘marketable.’ Their statement explicates this point: “only good films will appeal to the audiences and therefore save the struggling film market,” implying that they pursued not just socially relevant, but also commercially viable films.¹⁸⁹ If European cinema enlightened these directors about the aesthetics of cinema on a more profound level, American films provided a new paradigm regarding how to make films in a changing commercial landscape.

Hollywood films traditionally occupied a major market share in Korea since the nation developed its own industry during the 1950s. A majority of Hollywood films usually ranked within the top-ten list throughout these decades. *Kyung Hyang Daily* reports, “while domestic films receive about 1,000 audiences per day, foreign films receive an average audience of 3,000.”¹⁹⁰ In the 70s, films such as *Champ* (released in 1979 in Korea), *Exorcist* (1975 in Korea), and *Jaws* (1978 in Korea) sold high numbers of 553,719; 497,500 and 388,263 tickets respectively at a single theater in Seoul. In addition, the rise of what’s known as the ‘American

¹⁸⁹ Ahn Jae-suk quoting Chun Young Ho. P.28.

¹⁹⁰ 1977. 4.4

New Cinema,' with new styles and themes, e.g., *Midnight Cowboy* (1975 in Korea), arrived in Korea and garnered respectable success.¹⁹¹

This strand of American films was led by a new generation of young filmmakers whose styles were “thematically complex, formally innovative, morally ambiguous, anti-establishment, and rich in mythic resonance.”(Hitchman)¹⁹² The ‘innovation,’ among many reasons was to some extent “created by the advent of a more fragmented production system” after the major studios’ vertical integration was banned by the government. In addition, the termination of the Production Code in 1959 loosened up limitations on what could be represented on screen. This played a critical role in providing films with options for more provocative materials including drugs, violence and sex. As King mentions, if not for the end of the Code system, the violence in *Bonnie and Clyde* and the adultery in *The Graduate* would have been toned down (32).

This phenomenon of new films in America made its way to Korea. Among other elements that constitute New American Cinema, such as a higher degree of social criticism, sex and violence, screened sex became more prominent in Korean cinema. It is due in large part to state censorship which regulated films with social criticism or anything (e.g. violence) that might be seen as ‘resistant’ to the state. Nevertheless, sexually charged films mostly survived: one of the American films was imported to Korea around this time, *Midnight Cowboy*’s commercial success illustrates how screened sex became an element of appeal for commercial films despite state censorship.

Midnight Cowboy passed the censorship viewing and was released in 1975 in Korea ‘relatively’ soon after the film’s original US release in 1969 considering the film’s ‘notorious’

¹⁹¹ The article from the *Daily Economy* (*Maeil Kyungjae*) describes new Hollywood films were “winning” over domestic films. It mentioned *Midnight Cowboy* as one of the examples that were going strong on the Korean box office. 1975.12.08.

¹⁹² <http://www.newwavefilm.com/international/new-hollywood.shtml>.

reputation for its sensational issues (drug and prostitute) and sexual explicitness. A Korean release of this particular film signifies the changing mood of censorship during the mid-1970s. In explaining the tendencies of Korean state censorship around this time, Cho Jun-hyung states that the film market was increasingly shrinking in the early 1970s and most people in the film industry blamed state censorship (see Chapter Two).¹⁹³ In response to the growing criticism about state censorship, the minister of Culture and Broadcasting announced that the state would lessen their censorship of the arts (domestic and foreign films). I suspect the release of *Midnight Cowboy* might have reflected such relaxation of state censorship, although the mood did not last as long as Cho suggests.¹⁹⁴

More significantly, *Midnight Cowboy* received a good response from Korean audiences and made it into the top ten list for the year. The commercial success of the film would be one evidence that illustrates the growing interest in sex in Korean culture. Korean society began to witness the emergence of commercialized sex in popular culture in the 70s. For example, *Sunday Seoul*, a popular tabloid, began increasingly to feature sensational stories and reports about sex workers and business offered “quite overtly and unabashedly, their readership sexual pleasure and gratification in the earlier and cruder form of virtual commodification of female sexuality.”¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ Cho argues that such favorable mood towards screening sex did not last too long. The state censors entirely banned the screening of *Girl* (1975) an erotically charged Hong Kong film, for the reason it did not follow the censorship orders to edit several scenes. (96) However, I think such state decision was made not to debunk their relief of censorship policy but was made because it did not respect the censorship authority. This seems stronger because *Midnight Cowboy* was released in the same year of 1975 when *Girl* was banned for screening.

¹⁹⁴ *Midnight Cowboy* was screened in 1975 in Korea and scored app.150.000 film goers. *Kyung Hyang Daily* reports that domestic films are struggling at the box office whereas people are lined up for American films such as *Sting* and *Midnight Cowboy* (10.30.1975).

¹⁹⁵ Lee Jin-kyung, *Service Economies*, 251.

Cho's article elucidates that the sexual revolution was viewed in a positive light by the Korean media and that sex could be utilized as a 'new kind of aesthetic' on movie screens. The media suggested that Korea was somewhat 'left out' from the global tendency of sexual revolution. In this regard, the comments made by the directors of The Era of Image are meaningful. In Kim Ho-sŏn's introduction to his hostess film, *Winter Woman*, he labels his work as a 'progressive' film in which he sought to challenge the traditional norms of sex and patriarchy by thematizing sexual liberation. Kim states that the heroine of the film, Ihwa is not "subordinated to men or constrained within the norms of sexuality, but rather she 'liberates' herself from those values."¹⁹⁷

Technically speaking, *Winter Woman* doesn't seem to be visually sexual since the bodily exposure of the actors is extremely limited to the (back) torso because of censorship constraints. Most of sexual actions during the sex scenes are not visible and rather implied, out of frame. In addition, it is hard to consider the plot, 'progressive,' considering the continual sacrifices the heroine makes for her male counterparts throughout the film.¹⁹⁸ Kim Ho-sŏn otherwise frames *Winter Woman* as a "progressive film," employing the catch phrase of 'sexual liberation.'¹⁹⁹ His concept of 'progressiveness,' appears to be largely driven by the fact that the film deals with the issue of 'unleashed sex,' regardless of whether or not it's a voluntary choice of the heroine. In his interview, Kim repeatedly uses the expressions including, "innovation," "sexual revolution," and "progressive" – the similar rhetorical terms that the directors of The Era of Image utilized when they reviewed *Bonnie and Clyde* and *Midnight Cowboy*.²⁰⁰ These remarks made by Kim imply that his film might have been inspired by these films or at least he had high aspirations for them.

¹⁹⁷ *The Era of Image* (Summer, 1976), "Ihwa: Edelweiss in Winter" 101.

¹⁹⁸ See Chapter Three in this dissertation for the story and analysis of the film.

¹⁹⁹ *The Era of Image*, 101

²⁰⁰ *The Era of Image*, "New Generation, New Movies, New Spirit" 27-46.

Kim Ho-sŏn's series of hostess films epitomize the movement's focus of social realism and new aesthetics through commercialization of working class female sexuality. *Women's Street*, the third hostess film produced by Kim, quite 'bravely' delivers prostitute women's social hardship and stereotypes presented using an 'inside view' of the sex industry. The film presents a central character, Geun-ok as well as her fellow prostitutes who live in a small residential district where prostitution secretly operated. *Women's Street* focuses on Geun-ok's unsuccessful courtship of an elementary school teacher, Young-jun who accidentally encounters Geun-ok on the way to a house-visit for students. The film generates occasional laughs through Geun-ok and her gang of prostitutes appearing in Young-jun's school and classroom. Their heavy make-up and promiscuous outfits are ridiculed by Young-jun's students and other teachers.

Geun-ok's daily life includes portrayals of sexual scenes with male customers. However since she has fallen in love with Young-jun, she gradually comes to feel her spiritless smiles and customers' caresses are unbearable. Interestingly, the scenes showing her and her male customers' imposition appear more frequently as her disgust with her job increases. In this way, the film closely represents emotional changes that Geun-ok undergoes as a result of her work. But simultaneously, the film provokes sadistic pleasure by presenting Geun-ok who is in strong denial of touching and kissing by male customers. *Women's Street* maximizes this sadistic pleasure, using innovative visual strategies that emphasize on sexuality in the photographing of women. The camera becomes noticeably intrusive when Geun-ok is in pain or denial, or surrounded by (multiple) male customers, by showing fragmented body shots and extreme facial close ups (e.g. lips) of the heroine. This kind of visual scheme echoes photographing techniques involved with women in the 70s adult films (US). The identical poster art for *Women's Street* with the US sexploitation film, *Tomcats* (1976) would not be a coincidence (see Fig.5-5, 142).

In this regard, it is reasonable to see Kim's hostess films became gradually more progressive both in terms of the themes and visuals. If *Women's Street* experimented with the styles of US sexploitation films, *Winter Woman* challenges the traditional norm of female sexuality, by employing the theme of sexual revolution.

As regards Lee Jang-ho, a decade after the release of his record breaking hostess film, *Heavenly Homecoming to Stars*, he made *Eo-Woo-Dong* (1985), a historical drama featuring a gisaeng (equivalent to pre-modern version of sex worker). Although this film is a hostess/prostitute film framed within the historical setting of the 1948's pre-modern Chosun period, the overall aesthetic elements, involved with the heroine are innovatively stylized, following the very premise of *The Era of Image*, a mixture of the Old and New. *Eo-Woo-Dong* is a germane example that shows how the film intermixes the pre-existing ideals of woman with the progressive aesthetics of eroticism.

The film is loosely based on the true story of a woman named Eo Woo Dong. Although there is no record that she was politically engaged or resistant, the film version presents her as a strong heroine, who prostitutes herself in order to take revenge on corrupt bureaucrats who are believed to be responsible for class inequality.²⁰¹ She has been disowned by her noble family because she had a sexual relationship with a male servant she loves. She decides to sacrifice her body and sex to punish the evil authorities by becoming a *gisaeng* (female courtesan: prostitute for upper class men). In the end, she brings her short life to an end with the man she loves.

When the film was initially released, it was predominantly promoted on the basis of its eroticism as the ad copies of the film stated, "The biggest sex scandal during the Chosun Period!" Perhaps the most erotic scene takes places in which Eo-Woo-Dong 'orders' the King to kneel

²⁰¹ The story of Eo-Woo-Dong is available from various resources including encyclopedias and historical books. I used Doosan Encyclopedia, <http://terms.naver.com/entry.nhn?docId=1124732&cid=40942&categoryId=33383>.

down beneath her. She then pours alcohol onto her naked body and orders the King (fully dressed) to lick her feet. The King complies to her demands. The degree of sexual representation is remarkable that the scene, instead of showing a 'typical' erotic spectacle, visualizes (foot) fetishism, which could be considered 'revolutionary' given the time period. Similar to Kim's use of fragmented body shots, here the camera repeatedly shows the woman's feet in an extreme close up, alternating with the establishing shots of traditional sets. In this way, this scene exemplifies the director's pursuit of 'commercially viable, innovative aesthetics' at the expense of women's sexual exploitation.

Conclusion: The Legacy of The Era of Image and Prostitute-Themed Sub-Genre Films of the 1980s

The films made by the founders of The Era of Image appealed to audiences and critics employing innovative styles and themes. These films were created by young directors for young people with their recognizable culture and sentimentality. Inspired by global film movements that openly dealt with social issues and sex, their hostess films embraced and intermingled working class issues and the sexual revolution. The film movement's premises of realism and innovative aesthetics are infused within the hostess made by them. The stories about prostitutes are mixed with social commentaries and commercialized within sexually charged narratives, particularly through tales about prostitutes and other types of 'sexually' fallen women. Hostess

films made by the directors of The Era of Image became a focal point where female sexuality served commercially viable aesthetics.

Nevertheless, their ‘innovations’ boil down to depicting the sexual trajectories of prostitute and contradicts themselves by their construction of the ‘discourse of female sacrifice.’ Furthermore, although the popularity of hostess films decreased in the 80s, themes of women’s sacrifice and victimization exploited in hostess films remain solid in similar films with prostitute heroines or some variations of sexually fallen women. Erotic films of the 80s resonate with the conventions and cinematic strategies employed in these directors’ hostess films, which in turn solidified the trademark theme of sacrificial heroines.

Another rise of these 80s erotic films would not have been possible if not the hostess films’ phenomenal popularity in the previous era contributed by the members of The Era of Image. The victimization of prostitutes which embodies political wrongs and social ills sustains in later major commercial film like *The Silver Stallions will Never Come* (Chang, 1991) directed by a filmmaker who started his career through the audition held by The Era of Image. This film reiterates the story of woman’s sacrifice, a pivot of hostess films by narrating the life of a woman who is raped by US soldier and becomes a military prostitute in order to support her son.²⁰²

This cinematic discourse of woman’s (sexual) sacrifice is maximized by advertisements, publicity materials and tabloid articles associated with hostess films. The marketing and promotional terms used to sell hostess films often included abusive, sadistic and exploitative images and ad copies of women. And these kinds of commercial terms were reiterated in the articles and essays written for hostess stars and real life prostitutes. The next chapter discusses

²⁰² This film was directed by Chang Gil-su who was recruited through the audition that the founders of *The Era of Image* held as part of the campaign of the movement.

how industry strategically used eroticized rhetoric to please the audience thereby established the public discourse of female sacrifice.

Chapter Five: Industrializing ‘Hostess Sexuality’: Advertising, Stars and Sex Culture

“As flowers provide honey for bees, Soo-hee provided Love: Who hurts her? Men! You are all guilty!” – 26X365=0 (Roh, 1979)

It hurts me. Don’t pick me, just look. And just smell me” – Do You Know Kkosuni? (Chung, 1977)

“Unbreakable Shell’s moaning or Anger?” “Hurtful” “Splendid” – The Rose that Swallowed Thorn (Chung, 1979)

“The Woman We met, We Loved and We Threw Away, Young-ja !”– Young-ja’s Heydays (Kim, 1975)

The ad copies above concern major-hit hostess films that were prevalent during the 1970s. Advertisements for hostess films are largely characterized by an excess of hyperbolic words and images. In concert with the eye-catching visuals of the female protagonists, usually in skimpy outfits and vulnerable poses, advertising copy for many hostess films contained sexually explicit icons (flowers, shells, etc.) combined with highly abusive expressions including, “hurt,” “pick,” and “throw away.”

It is hardly surprising that many advertisements sexually objectify women often within the context of male aggression and dominance (Kilbourne, 1999). In commercializing hostess films, such exploitive skills are maximized combined with equally abusive narratives in the movies they represent. Male spectatorship implied within the filmic texts is reiterated in these

poster ads and publicity materials. In this respect, Laura Mulvey's critically influential essay, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1976) coherently argues that classical films produce the "gaze system" by positioning women as a passive bearer of the look. All cinematic conventions are organized around the woman's body as "site of sight" which functions to satisfy masculine voyeurism and fetishism (4-5).²⁰³

Within the context of hostess films, male spectatorship is constructed and empowered over three stages. First, it was initiated by the state censorship under the Park Chung-hee regime, which condoned sexual contents of films as a stopgap measure to distract political and social consciousness of the public (Kim, S.,2010; Park,J.,2012, Chung, H.,2005). Furthermore, hostess films purposefully and passionately utilized sexually constructed and ideologically-charged cinematic language associated with women. Lastly, advertising and publicity maximized these gender norms by commercializing 'hostess sexuality' in order to accommodate male audiences. Advertising strategies involved with the artworks and copy lines in the print ads of hostess films to both elicit sexual desire and provoke male guilt and sentimentality by dwelling upon the women's victimization and sacrifice. Cinematic discourse of female sacrifice presented throughout hostess films was empowered by these commercial techniques.

The aim of this chapter is to examine the mechanisms by which hostess advertising enacted the "patriarchal identificatory systems" connoting the male sphere.²⁰⁴ In order to do so, I examine movie posters and print advertisements to determine how ad copies and visuals index a masculine mode of seeing. Furthermore, the chapter scrutinizes the stardom of hostess actresses

²⁰³ Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in *Feminism and Film*. Edited by E. Ann Kaplan. (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press: 2000).

²⁰⁴ The term was borrowed from the article "Marilyn Monroe, 'sex symbol': film performance, gender politics and 1950s Hollywood celebrity," by Will Scheibel. Here he argues that tMonroe's performances enact the patriarchal identificatory systems that helped circulate her public image, which represented normative female sexuality in the 1950s. . *Celebrity Studies*, Vol. 4, Issue 1, 2013.

in conjunction with the growing popularity of tabloid magazines during the 1970s such as *Sunday Seoul* which simultaneously juxtaposed hostess stars and real life prostitutes, establishing the ascent of 'hostess sexuality.' By doing so, I locate hostess women as a metonym for the feminine ideals born in the face of changing politics, film and media industry and culture during the 70s in Korea.

The Depression of the Korean Film Industry and Changes in Audience Demographics

As discussed in previous chapters, a number of scholars have identified the 1970s as the lowest point of the Korean film industry, both in terms of the number of film productions and film goers (Min et Al., 2003; Lee Y., 2004; Lee H.,2001). In examining such depression of Korean film industry, previous Korean film scholarship has addressed the two major views that contributed to the retrenchment of the Korean film industry. On the political level, Park Chung-hee's repressive film policies that constituted strict studio requirements and a producer registration system critically resulted in a reduction in the number of film studios. Additionally, the Yushin Film Reconstitution in 1973 strengthened the criteria for movie theaters to install more amenities and facilities which in turn resulted in a remarkable decrease in the number of theaters nationwide, from 690 in 1970 to 472 in 1979.²⁰⁵

From the industrial perspective, the spread of television sets at home expedited as the state-led industrialization was operated during the 1970s. The Park government promoted the

²⁰⁵Lee Gil-sung, *The Study of Movie Theater Industry and Culture in the 1970s* (Seoul: KOFIC, 2004).

sales of television sets to help boost the electronics industry and simultaneously to use them in order to campaign government propaganda.²⁰⁶ Before this pervasion of television, film-going was the nation's standard mode of entertainment. The average annual number of movie-going was 5.4 times per year in 1966 but this plunged to 2.9 in 1976.²⁰⁷ Home television sets offered convenience and economical benefit. People preferred free entertainment at home over paying for movie tickets, of which price was gradually increasing from 1973.²⁰⁸ The rate of television ownership per one household was less than 1% until 1966 but it went up to over 50% in 1977.²⁰⁹

Park Chung-hee's state-led industrialization enacted other leisure activities that contributed to the decline of the film industry. Shin describes that during this period of rapid economic and industrial development, public participation in various athletic, outdoor activities increased, "people's interest in sports as spectators and fans rose since the families were searching for and were in a position to afford recreational, leisure, and entertainment activities."²¹⁰

These changes not only led to decreases in the number of film goers, but also changes in audience demographic. Prior to the 1970s, film audience was led by the so called, *go-mu-shin* (rubber shoes) group which derogatorily referred to lower class female audiences primarily consisting house-wives. These female audiences were major consumers of the melodramas which constituted the majority of Korean films during the 1960s.²¹¹ As television became

²⁰⁶ Kim Sung-hwan, "From Park Chung-hee to Sunday Seoul: The Era of Television" *Kyŏngnyang ilbo* (online version) http://news.khan.co.kr/kh_news/khan_art_view.html?artid=201311221947195&code=210100.

²⁰⁷ *Dong-A Daily*, 2.14.1976.

²⁰⁸ Lee Gil-sung, *The Study of Movie Theater* (Seoul: KOFIC, 2004).

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.* The exact rate starts as 0.61% in 1965. By the end of the late 1970s, nearly 80% of whole households owned television sets. 29.

²¹⁰ Shin Eui-hang, "State, Society, Economic Development in Sports Life Cycle: The Case of Boxing in Korea"

²¹¹ There are many scholarly works that offer how South Korean Melodramas advanced during the golden age of Korean cinema. See An Jin-soo's Ph.D Diss. (UCLA) 2005. *Popular Reasoning of South Korean Melodrama Films (1953-1972)*, McHugh and Abelmann, "Introduction: Gender, Genre and Nation" in *South Korean Golden Age Melodrama: Gender, Genre and National Cinema*. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004). 1-15.

increasingly available at home, they turned to soap operas and dramas which began to thrive around the early 1970s. Oh Jin-Gon notes that the 1970s was ‘the era of soap operas’ and this was led by TBC’s *Lady (Assi, 1970)*, KBS’s *Way of Women (Yeoro, 1972)* and MBC’s *Stepmother (Sae Umma, 1973)*. Highly melodramatic and tear-jerker plots and characters of these TV dramas were geared toward middle-aged, female audiences. Ham offers a historical anecdote that demonstrates the popularity of these dramas. According to Ham, “the rate of water consumption dropped during the time when *Yeoro* was being aired, because housewives stopped doing kitchen work to watch the drama.”²¹²

As a result, the 1970s witnessed a flow of younger audiences into movie theaters, including city migrants, factory workers and college students of the age of 20s and 30s (Lee, G.,2010).²¹³ According to Yu, 66.1% of the film audience of 1973 consisted of young people between in their teens-thirties.²¹⁴ Beginning from the mid 60s the production of ‘youth films’ gradually increased as a response to such changes in audience demographics.²¹⁵ In her study of film audience from the 1960s to70s, Kim focuses on the college students as a major film audience. She exemplifies that “*A College Girl Born in the Year of Horse (1963)* was made based on the studio’s estimate that the film would easily reach the breaking point, considering the increasing number of college student patrons.” (58)

Lee Gil Sung examines the young rural migrants who sought newly created jobs in urban areas during the industrial period of the 70s. In his interview, the publicity director of the Dan Sung Theater at that time shares the anecdote. He could notice that these rural factory workers

²¹² Ham Moon-shik retrospectively overviews the beginning of the television era in the article, “*Assi and Yeoro* Opened the Era of TV Dramas” *Aha Economy (Kyung Jae)* 1.17.2010.

²¹³ *Go Mu Shin* means cheap, rubber shoes which were prevalently consumed among lower class. The term, *Go Mu Shin* group pejoratively and metaphorically referred to such lower class people, especially lower class female audience.

²¹⁴ Yu Sun-young, “Kwanminjok Project and Hostess Films,” 382.

²¹⁵ Kim Su-mi, *The Changes in Korean Film Audience since 1963: A Case Study of Academy Theater*. MA Thesis, 2003.

were gradually occupying a considerable size of the film audience: “their bills were usually stained with oil and dirt and the number of those bills dramatically increased every weekend.”²¹⁶

Most significantly, the major consumer group of films of the 1970s was male. Yu reports that male patrons (62%) outnumbered female patrons by far (38%).²¹⁷ She argues that hostess films such as *Heavenly Homecoming to Stars* and *Young-ja's Heydays* released during this period were one of the major attributes to such tendency. Accordingly, the advertisements and publicity materials of hostess films were inundated with the elements designed to appeal young male audience. With their titillating titles, poster arts and ad copies, hostess films strategically and actively profiled male members for their target audience.

The Marketing and Advertising Strategies of Hostess Films

The available means of film advertisement during the 1970s were trailers, movie posters, theater boards, print advertising and radio and television commercials. Radio and television advertisements were not as predominant as print advertisements because print ads were more affordable and could reach larger audience. For instance, as early as the 1950s, movie posters had become ubiquitous: from streets and stores to telephone poles, movie posters were displayed to capture public attention (Chang, 2006).²¹⁸ The affordability of these print ads was a strong advantage because the film industry faced financial difficulties during the 1970s. According to Song Young-ae, approximately 80% of the total budgets for film promotion was spent on print advertising.²¹⁹

²¹⁶ Lee Gil-sung, “The Study of Movie Theater,” 109

²¹⁷ Yu, “Kwanminjok Project and Hostess Films” 382.

²¹⁸ Chang Ji-young, “The Study of Movie Posters of the 1960s and 1970s” M.A Thesis. 2006.

²¹⁹ *Se-Gye Daily*. Song notes that press books did not exist at this point. Movie posters and print ads were considered to be major means of film advertising.

In addition, newspapers and magazines were an efficient way to reach larger audiences because print media were circulated in growing numbers. During the period of state-driven industrialization, the sales of tabloid magazines and newspapers skyrocketed provoking national “the industrialization of visual imagery and its broader dissemination.”²²⁰ Magazines thrived rapidly: a newspaper article from *Dong-A Daily* reports on the popularity of monthly magazines at that time: “throughout the decade of the 1970s, the average number of 34 monthlies increased every year.”²²¹

Print advertisements of movies, whether in newspapers or as movie posters, were not separately designed.²²² Ads were usually in a single sheet format used ubiquitously for movie posters, magazines, newspaper ads and as fliers (see figure 2 and 2—1: *Do You Know Kkosuni?*). Ad copies were written at the initial stages of design but sometimes additional taglines were added by the theaters which were exhibiting the films.²²³

Before the 1980s, there were no professional, outsourcing companies which designed publicity materials. Film studios usually assigned art directors to design the print ads. If not, the art directors at the first run theaters where the films were released did the job.²²⁴ These materials featured theater’s logos, film’s titles and copy lines and also often incorporated the names of recognized stars and directors. Prior to the 1970s, ad designs were rather primitive: they tended to be visually overcrowded due to brightly colored, crude illustrations and still photos of multiple

<http://www.segye.com/content/html/2014/03/07/20140307004694.html?OutUrl=naver>.

²²⁰ Cited from Karen Carter’s discussion of publicity posters of Paris. “Unfit for public display: female sexuality and the censorship of fin-de-siècle publicity posters,” *Early Popular Visual Culture*, 8:2 (May 2010), 107 - 124.

²²¹ *Dong A Daily*, 1.4.1984. “The Era of Magazines”

²²² Lee Gil-sung, *The Study of Movie Theater and Culture* (Seoul: KOFIC, 2004).

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

characters. More than 50% of the advertisements for films released during the 1960s contained 6 or more cuts of still photos.²²⁵

Furthermore, the titles, copy lines and the names of the stars were predominantly written in Chinese characters, which were interchangeably used with Korean language in popular texts until 1972 (figure 1).²²⁶ 77% of movie posters during the 1960s were written in either Chinese characters or Chinese/Korean combined. The design of movie posters and print ads for hostess films of the 1970s are distinguished by this tendency. One notable difference is the use of Korean language instead of Chinese characters: ad copies were efficiently delivered in readily understandable Korean language and also in casual, conversational form. These copies were immediately recognizable because they were delivered in spoken language enhanced by colorful typography (figure 2 and 3).

²²⁵I cite this information only for a rough estimate derived from Chang Ji-young's study of movie posters. Chang sampled 120 films from the 60s and 70s.

²²⁶The use of Chinese characters in popular texts was very common until 1976 when government campaigned in favor of the use of Korean language for public texts.



[Fig.5.1: movie posters from the 1960s – *Yeon San Gun* (1961) and *A Tale of Jnaghwa and Hong Ryun* (1962)]

Second, many advertisements for hostess films publicized the writers of the original novels and directors of the films as opposed to the 1960’s print ads predominantly relied on the stars. Since the late 1960s, films were increasingly becoming adapted from successful novels due to the film industry’s attempt to minimize risk and potential commercial failures. A majority of hostess films were adaptations of books written by popular writers. Writers such as Choi In-ho (*Heavenly Homecoming to Stars*, 1974) and Cho Sun-jak (*Winter Woman*, 1976, *Women’s Street*, 1975) sometimes scripted the films themselves. Print ads of hostess films made it clear such involvement of these popular writers.

Some hostess films adapted works authored by real-life prostitutes. Hostess advertising highlighted such backgrounds and promised “firsthand experiences” in the industry.²²⁷ For instance, the real names of these authors/prostitutes were revealed in the ads and also utilized

²²⁷ *Kyŏngnyang ilbo*, 12.8.1976.

their names as the names of the heroines in films such as Young-a in *Young-a's Confession* (1978), Oh Mi-young in *Ms. O's Apartment* (178) and Yoon Go-na in *I am a No.77 Girl* (1978).



[Fig. 5.2: Movie Posters for *Do You Know Kkosuni?*, *The Rose that Swallowed Thorn* and *26X365=0*]



(Fig. 5.3: Newspaper advertisements for *Do You Know Kkosuni?* and *26X365=0*)



(Fig. 5.4:Movie Posters of *Young-ja's Heydays* (1975) and *The Woman I Threw Away* (1977))

In terms of the stylization of print-ads for hostess films, the images were much more simplified with fewer still photos or illustrations of one or two major characters. However they contained ‘visually aggressive’ sexual images of heroines. Movie posters and print ads for hostess films often centralize a single woman (heroine) centered and highlighted her with a prominent icon and symbol (figure2). Fewer visuals were often paired with and accentuated by eye-catching artworks, icons and letters in favor of overly abundant, mix-matches of illustrations that had characterized film advertisements during the previous era.

As might be expected of these films, the images constructed in the ads are highly eroticized containing semi-nude heroines in skimpy outfits and sexually suggestive poses. As previously mentioned, the designs of print ads were produced by art directors at studios or at the theaters where the film were scheduled to be released. These art directors were mostly self-

trained painters who did not have professional training or education.²²⁸ Considering their lack of professional experience in designing print ads for such sexually exclusive materials as hostess films, they occasionally copied the artworks from foreign film advertisements (Fig. 5-5). According to the interview with Lee Yong-hee, a publicity manager from the 60s to the 80s, many print ads for domestic films were designed based on publicity materials and movie posters from overseas.²²⁹

Print ads of hostess films display significant similarities to American pin up arts and exploitation film advertisings, particularly in terms of visual strategies involved with women including positioning, postures and overall designs. Richard Dyer describes the attributes of ‘new pin up art’ utilized by *Playboy* magazine, “the lighting and camera positions are often straightforward [but] the model is usually required to pose in willfully bizarre positions...it was indeed a disreputable form, associated with the dirty talk of men’s locker rooms and toilets.” (29)

In a similar a manner, hostess advertising emphasizes an exclusive visual focus on women’s bodies: visual saturation is provoked using women’s bodies and arbitrary postures (Fig. 5-4). Such bodily representations were combined with meaning-laden objects or letters attached to women’s bodies. Yu Ji-na mentions the movie posters made for hostess films: they often purportedly locate sexually-charged objects or letters on the center of woman’s body, usually around her genital area in order to attract the visual attention of the viewer (2004).²³⁰

²²⁸ Lee Gil-sung notes that only about 30 % of these ‘art directors’ received some level of education in art. 40.

²²⁹ Ibid. 102.

²³⁰ Yu Ji-na *Hankook Yeonghwa sexuality reul man na da (Korean Cinema meets sexuality)* Seoul, Korea: *Sengakeui Namu (Trees of Thoughts)*, 2004.



[Fig.5.5: Visual similarity between the posters of *Tomcats* (1976) and *Women's Street* (1976)]

Within the context of hostess films, such universal strategy is localized with the employment of familiar sexual metaphors. Women were located in the center attached with sexually associated metaphors such as flowers, shells, strawberries, etc. which are mostly associated with commonly-used sex jokes in reference to female body/genital. The familiarity of these fraternal sexual jokes operates to frame male spectatorship through tantalizing visualization of sexually charged metaphors and icons.

These sexual images are combined with and amplified by abusive and sadistic copy lines that emphasize female victimization imposed by not just male, but male in the ‘plural.’ The tag lines include “The Woman *We* met, Loved and Threw Away,” (*Young-ja's Heydays*) “Many men threw away Eun-ja (female protagonist) but she left them with smile,” (*Ms. Yang's Adventure*) “We all loved her,” (*Ms. O's Apartment*) and “Like the flower that provides honey to butterflies, Choi Soo-hee (female protagonist) gave love; who are hurting her? Men! You are guilty!” (26x365=0) These examples illustrate that a woman is victimized by anonymous, collective male.

Framing male as un-specified, in the plural is significant because it not only solidifies male spectatorship by empowering the male position but also induces a perverse form of male pleasure. The expressions such as “throw away” and “hurt” are addressed in the first person voice and explicate power dynamics. Simultaneously, these ad copies manifest men as ‘guilty’ but they do not bear moral conviction but rather function to establish innocuous, guilty pleasure combined with sexually charged metaphors as in the case of $26x365=0$.

Male guilt, although it is indicated, is conveniently redeemed by the woman’s willful, ‘giving’ nature. As these copies demonstrate, women “smile” and “love” men, however they treat women. Such characterizations of women are most explicit in the advertisement for *The Woman Born in the Year of Flower* (Roh, 1978). By using the first person (female) voice, the primary tag line illustrates, “I don’t think God gave me 34-24-35 for just one man.” Another copy line symbolically crosses over the lower part of the heroine’s body and says in response “[She is] a fortune you need to steal!” These tag lines highlight the woman’s ‘philanthropist’ quality so as to justify male guilt over ‘throwing’ her away or ‘hurting’ her.



[Fig.5.6: Movie poster and newspaper advertisement of *The Woman Born in the Year of Flower* (Roh, 1979)

Moreover, collective male guilt is resolved by excluding female both from the present and public space. A majority of tag lines describe women in the past tense (see examples above) so women become ‘a thing of the past’ which makes women’s existence as less relevant to the present world. Similar tactics could be used to locate women outside of the public sphere. The ad lines used for *Winter Woman*, “Ihwa belongs to everyone but at the same time to no one,” and for *The Woman Who Leaves Work in the Morning*, “Open the door for me!” deny or exteriorize the presence of women so that they function to redeem male guilt.

The tactics employed in these print ads of hostess films present women and the women’s body both as visible and invisible: she is visible for it has to be displayed for male pleasure. She is simultaneously invisible that her existence can only be fantasized or imagined for such goal. Women’s body becomes a crucial means to accomplish the ends. Similarly, women’s body

enables “the sexual saturation” that invokes the “most powerful sensations.”²³¹ Women on screen have been positioned into various levels of cultural discourses and have been subjected to varied cultural functions that a given society needs to reinforce.

In the social context of South Korea during the 1970s, the exclusion of women can be read in conjunction with the emergence of the capitalist patriarchy in Korea (Park, 2008). Based on Cho Hye-jeong’s analysis of gender construction during the period of state industrialization, Park argues,

A new patriarchal system became dominant in Korea in the process of industrialization and economic growth. With the advent of a highly industrialized capitalist society, the Korean male assumed both economic power and social dominance as a household’s exclusive source of income and as a member of the expanded, all-powerful public sphere. On the other hand, the Korean female was alienated from the realm of the public sphere and came under the direct control of one single man, her husband (136).

To similar extent, Park’s notion of social exclusion of women instigated by male dominance is shown in the advertisements of hostess films I discussed. The conventions of these ads demonstrate how such texts displayed hostess women as ‘disposable’ and ‘excluded’ from the public sphere. Women are not merely sexualized but more significantly victimized and sacrificed for the sake of the men’s presence and well being, which is the grand narrative of numerous hostess films including *Young-ja’s Heydays*, *Winter Woman*, *Ms.O’s Apartment*, *26X365=0*, etc. These rhetorical strategies were adapted in other popular texts that publicized hostess films and stars. They circulated cultural norms of femininity and reinforced male supremacy by both sexualizing and sacrificing female sexuality.

²³¹ Linda Williams, “Film Bodies: Gender, Genre an Excess,” in *Film Genre Reader IV* edited by Barry Keith Grant. (Austin: UT Univ. Press, 1986). 162.

Media Construction of Hostess Culture: *Sunday Seoul*

Various conceptualizations of ‘hostess sexuality’ were rendered in popular texts during the 1970s as hostess films became increasingly popular preceded by the boom of hostess novels. Lee Jin-kyung observes that the topic of ‘prostitution’ was monopolized by the mass market literature, popular film, and tabloid journalism of the 1970s. (80). For instance, from 1970-1985, 102 out of 2,918 novels printed in major periodicals and magazines featured prostitutes as major characters.

Radio was one of most significant sectors that was actively involved with hostess culture. Although the popularity of radio started to wane as television became prominent starting around the mid-1970s, it still maintained a relatively large reception among housewives and lower class. According to a survey conducted on young adults in 1980, radio ranked as the second major source for entertainment along with tabloid magazines.²³² Radio plays and dramas were particularly popular among other programs. Some successful radio plays that had previously proven their commercial appeal were adapted for television dramas and films. Several hostess plays including *Madame O’s Outing* and *I am a No. 77 Girl* were such cases. *Madame O’s Outing* for instance, was aired on the radio in 1973 and was filmed a decade later. This media circulation of hostess materials illustrates two points: one, hostess themes had a consistent and increasing demand. Second, this tendency must have to do with the decline of film industry of the 1970s that the prior success of these plays reduced the potential risk of commercial failures.

²³² *Mail Kyungjae (Economic Daily)*. 8.20.1980.

Press media frenetically participated in the boom of hostess culture. Newspapers and magazines competitively covered this phenomenon and related issues with hostesses, the sex industry and other sex related topics. *Kyŏngnyang Daily* published major articles on hostess films and stars, and occasionally juxtaposed them with the reports and columns on real-life prostitutes whose stories shared similarities with the hostess heroines in the movies (4.14.1975).²³³ These reports were often delivered as a form of essay written by intellectuals (e.g. professors, writers). However, the overall tone of the writing was highly dramatic. The stories contained poetic expressions and metaphors such as “they (prostitutes) are in their spring (in age),” and felt their “desires surge.”²³⁴

This journalistic attempt of interconnecting hostess films and real-life hostess/prostitutes was most salient in magazines and tabloids. In the beginning of hostess cycle around the mid-1970s, *Film Magazine (Younghwa Japji)* issued the articles about hostess films, from interviews with directors and actresses who popularized hostess films (August, 1974; May, 1975;) to reports on hostess/prostitute films in progress (June, 1975) The magazine progressively included additional materials that thematized sex as an extension of their coverage on hostess films. These materials include, “special column on “virginity,”” (December, 1974) “analysis of sex scenes on screen,” and “a story of nude show,” (April, 1975).

Sunday Seoul (1968-1991) was one of the most popular tabloid weeklies during the 70s and was one that largely contributed the dissemination of ‘hostess sexuality.’ The magazine received significant public attention by selling 60,000 copies of the initial issue within two hours of release.²³⁵ Park describes that the primary consumers of weeklies in general were lower class

²³³ *Kyŏngnyang ilbo*, “An Odd Tendency: Hostess Films Booming” (3.28, 1975) “Copying Youngja’s Heydays: Similar Hostess Films in Progress” (4.28.1975) “Real Life College Student Seduced For Prostitution” (4.14.1975).

²³⁴ See above article, “Real Life College Student Seduced by Prostitution Industry” (4.14.1975).

²³⁵ Lim Jong-su and Park Se-hyun. “Women, Sexuality and the 1970s presented through Sunday Seoul”

men (51%). It is because upper class men had multiple options for entertainment such as golf, fishing and hiking whereas lower class men had fewer and inexpensive options including drinking and reading tabloids.²³⁶ However, the sales record of *Sunday Seoul* indicated that it was actually consumed by both working class male and other groups of male readers including salary men and students.²³⁷

Targeting on male readership, *Sunday Seoul* sought to cover to both satisfy sexual curiosity and offer knowledge about the female sex. Sexually-themed articles occupied 16% of the total number of articles published during 1972, exceeded by serialized novels (30%) and articles about entertainment/celebrities (24%).²³⁸ Novels and celebrity articles were sexually-charged too, containing sexual themes and semi-nude pictures of actresses. Lim and Park note that before the mid-1970s, the magazine mostly covered stories from overseas because it was then hard to find sexual materials or conduct interviews and surveys on such provocative topics in Korea. Instead, the magazine predominantly used foreign articles and surveys, e.g. “Survey of Swedish men: Attractive female types,” (Vol, 21), “Sex Scandals of Foreign Female Stars” (1969) and “Eric Weber’s Column: The Ways to Seduce Women,” (Vol.21).²³⁹

By the mid-70s however, *Sunday Seoul* started to supply domestic materials as more materials about hostess culture become prevalent. With its slightly quasi-journalistic tone, I contend that *Sunday Seoul* commercialized working-class female sexuality, and simultaneously elaborated upon the discourse of female sacrifice – a benchmark theme of hostess films – by presenting hostesses and working class women altogether. First, the magazine handled sensational stories on real-life sex workers and sexual services including surveys, essays and

²³⁶ Ibid. PG#

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Ibid. P.112

reports. On one side, prostitutes represented immorality and social ills: e.g., “the current state of the so called, *yullak yosong* (literally meaning, fallen women – a common euphemistic term referring to sex workers during the 1960s and 70s) is a rather crackdown on one of the famous prostitution quarters and its aftermath.” Another article, “This is How the Girls of the Night are” focused on the sexual decadence of hostess women, which the article depicted as “another parasitic form of sexual exploitation” (Lee, 251).

On the other hand, some articles glamorized hostess women as “professional women,” “necessary workers in the industrialization era” or “modern-version courtesans” all of which positively labeled them as active agents of state industrialization (Lim and Park, 115). What is intriguing is that the increased coverage of hostess women occurred in tandem with the growth in the number of articles about female factory workers. These articles often equally treated factory women and hostesses in the same piece or profiled former hostesses who had moved into factory work or similar types of working class jobs and vice versa.²⁴⁰

Lee Jin-kyung point outs that factory women were generally perceived as ‘potential prostitutes’ during the 70s Korean society, because “for some female factory workers, casual and occasional sex work was a means of earning additional income to supplement their meager salaries.”²⁴¹ The articles often focused on how hard-working and sacrificial these working class women were to their families: “...worked eleven years day and night to support her three brothers,” “...factory female workers as breadwinners,” “...saved money for younger siblings.” (Lim and Park, 128-129)

Moreover, *Sunday Seoul* published a number of articles which included interviews and cover photos of the actresses who achieved stardom through their hostess films. The examples

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Lee Jin-kyung, *Service Economies*, 87.

include, Yeom Bok-soon (*Youngja's Heydays*), Ahn In-sook (*Heavenly Homecoming to Stars*) and Cheong Yoon-eee (*I am a No. 77 Girl* and *Do You Know Kkosuni?*).²⁴² *Sunday Seoul* covered general celebrity subjects such as biographies and films. However what made the magazine most sensational which led to it being deemed “Korea’s very first pornography magazine,” and a “Korean version of *Playboy*,” was the use of full-colored bathing suit covers of hostess actresses (figure 5). The magazine openly publicized and promoted these stars as eroticized female objects. This was *Sunday Seoul*’s novel attempt that any other magazines or newspapers dared not attempt themselves at that point of time.



[figure 5.7: Cheong Yoon-hee, a heroine of *Do You Know Kkosuni?* in bathing suit: cover photo in *Sunday Seoul*]

²⁴² Source.

The Era of ‘Hostess Stars’: The *New Troika*

As hostess films increasingly thrived along with other cultural ‘hostess’ products including aforementioned novels and radio plays, the actresses who played hostess roles became overnight stars. With the enormous successes of hostess films, the stars immediately received public attention and exerted unprecedented cultural power across popular media from tabloids, television and advertisements. Catherine Kerr argues that stars can be studied in two ways: as “an aesthetic, cultural phenomenon or as part of the larger story of corporate consolidation in the film industry.” (387)²⁴³ To similar extent, these hostess stars provided a foundation for star marketing and also became the focal point for public representations of female sexuality.

The heroines of hostess films were mostly new faces. Female protagonists from major hostess films including Ahn In-sook from *Heavenly Homecoming to Stars* and Yeom Bok-soon from *Young-ja’s Heydays*, started their acting careers in hostess film. Even though Ahn and Yeom were short-lived than other later hostess stars, their career paths are particularly notable because these actresses expended their careers into multiple venues, including musicals, television dramas and advertising. Career expansion was not common among film actresses prior to this period. Television and film were operated as separated fields. It was common practice for actresses to appear exclusively in films during the 50s and 60s. Lee Ho-Geol states that Yeom’s crossover to television after the success of *Youngja* became an exemplary case for other actresses (24).

²⁴³ Catherine E. Kerr, “Incorporating the Star: The Intersection of Business and Aesthetic Strategies in Early American Film” in *The Business History Review*, Vol. 64, No. 3, Autumn, 1990. 383-410.

The visibility of hostess stars on the larger media platform played a significant role in conceptualizing female sex in the cultural sphere. The emergence of the ‘New Troika (*shin troika*)’ which referred to three female stars – Chang Mi-hee, Cheong Yoon-hee and Yu Ji-in who simultaneously became A-list stars on the basis of their first hostess films immensely contributed to this trend.²⁴⁴ Richard Dyer claims that stars embody specific ideals at a given time and culture, and these ideals are embedded in a complex network of relationships among social values and structures. In this context, hostess stars embody set of politics and “function to uphold the status quo or expose and even subvert the ideological tensions around them through their public personas” (Dyer, cited in W. Scheibel, 2013, 5)

The New Troika appeared on screen at the same moment that hostess films began to gain the mainstream popularity. The term was established and used by the media as a catch phrase. Various newspapers and magazines competitively issued articles on these three actresses. Their popularity was an unprecedented case: *Dong-A Daily* issued an article that provided an in-depth analysis of the images of these actresses – from their acting styles and personalities to screen personas (3.11.1981). *Kyung Hyang Daily* reports that the “Korean film industry is now struggling because there are not many female stars like the New Troika” (10.8.1982)

The emergence of the New Troika is significant because these actresses engendered the notion of star marketing (Lee H., 2001).²⁴⁵ These actresses garnered a massive popularity shortly after their very first hostess works. They went further than earlier hostess stars by appearing in various fields including commercials, corporate brochures, clothing catalogues, calendars, not to mention television dramas. The cultural supremacy of hostess stars was empowered by the

²⁴⁴ These actresses were labeled as the *New Troika* named after previous *Troika* consisted of three major actresses of the 60s. Although the term, *Troika* was originally created to celebrate the emergence of these actresses, they mainly performed on movie screen, not like New Troika whose visibility was much wider as I discuss in this chapter.

²⁴⁵ See Lee Ho-Geol and Park Jae-Yoon for further study of the 70s female stars:

overall expansion of media industry during the 70s. Advertising was one sector that burgeoned in response to the rapid growth of television. The New Troika held exclusive contracts with major cosmetics and confectionary companies which were the biggest sponsors of media industry at that time.²⁴⁶

The New Troika was publicized for their sexual images validated in their hostess films. The three members of the New Troika all received a great level of media attention. However, Chang Mi-Hee, stands out as the most notable and talked-about celebrity and also a quintessential female sex symbol of 70s Korean society.²⁴⁷ Her stardom which Chang gained from a series of hostess films solidified her as a sex symbol and a victimized woman. After the commercial success of her first hostess film, *Heavenly Homecoming to Stars II*, Chang continued to take similar roles of prostitutes or sexually-fallen innocent women in such films as *Winter Woman* (1977), *Night Market* (1979), and *Hwang Jinee* (1986).

In *Winter Woman*, Chang plays a naïve college girl, Ihwa. When she experiences a secret admirer killing himself because of her denial, she decides to become a ‘philanthropist,’ who offers her body to whomever wants it. In *Night Market* Chang again plays a sexually innocent woman, Seung-ah. Seung-ah fails the college entrance examination. Later that day, she engages in involuntary sex with a man she meets on the street. Seung-ah feels humiliated, becomes sexually involved with a series of men but never truly falls in love. One day, she re-encounters the man to whom she lost her virginity to and feels sympathetic. Seung-ah starts a new life with him.

In these two films, Chang played nearly identical roles involving a woman who perpetually falls because of a man (or involuntary sex) and experiences multiple casual

²⁴⁶ Cheong Yoon-hee and Chang Mi-hee, for instance, were main models for *Kkosam* Cosmetics and *Korea* cosmetics respectively, which were two of top five cosmetic companies at that time.

²⁴⁷ Kim Sang-geun “30 years of Mysticism: Chang Mi-hee” *TV Daily* 5.9.2013.

relationships. These two female heroines are redeemed by ‘male saviors,’ but at the expense of their own sacrifices. In *Winter Woman*, Ihwa decides to dedicate her life to her former school teacher because she thinks she can offer him peace of mind. In *Night Market*, the heroine is redeemed by a man who brought about her downfall through quasi-rape. In these stories, a man becomes the alpha and the omega of a woman’s life. He is both the problem and the solution. The ‘solution’ comes at a price that woman must dedicate her life for him.

This formulaic process of a woman’s sexual downfall, victimization and sacrifice persists and becomes more extreme in Chang’s subsequent film, *Hwang Jinie*. This historical period film is based on a folklore tale of *Hwang Jinie*, a famous *gisaeng* (female courtesan) during the Chosun dynasty.²⁴⁸ In this film, Hwang supports her man by becoming a prostitute. As time goes by, the man increasingly becomes greedy and tries to sell her to strolling actors. Hwang notices his intentions but complies by voluntarily selling herself to them.

Although *Hwang Jinie* was released almost a decade later than Chang’s very first hostess feature, *Winter Woman*, the role she plays is hardly a variation of her role repertoire. The social status of Chang’s role and a plot structure that involves multiple male characters (and gradually worse men towards the end) are little different than those in *Winter Woman*. Park observes that throughout her movies Chang often plays is a woman who “smokes cigarettes, drinks alcohol, and has sexual relationships with different men, all of which are linked to the notion of modern decadence or moral decay in Korean society in general and Korean cinema in particular. She voluntarily offers her body to be used (or, in her mind, loved) by multiple men” (122).

Park’s examination is right about the point that Chang’s characters exhibit sexual decadence, but I emphasize that Chang’s roles always reinforced the discourse of female

²⁴⁸ The film adaptation of *Hwang Jinie* is greatly different than the folk lore. The ending of the film in which Hwang is sold to a traveling acting troupe was fictionalized in the filmic version.

sacrifice – she was never just a plain sexual woman but a sexual woman who is also self-sacrificial and dedicated to her men (in the plural). In that sense, what Chang represents through her characters is hardly a modern notion of female sexuality but rather a transgressive form that combines traditional norms of women with modernized ideals of female sexuality.

This tendency can be viewed in conjunction with Chang’s off-screen media representation. The media relentlessly harped upon Chang’s sex appeal rather than her performance. A special column in *Dong A Daily* states, “Chang Mi-hee compensates for her immature acting with her body. She acts using her body rather than facial expressions (1977.10.17). The overall media assessment of Chang’s overt sexuality remained constant over time. Subsequent articles in *Dong A Daily* (1986. 6.4) state, “Chang Mi-hee joins the movie industry’s stripping competition” (1986.6.4), “there are too many, unnecessary sex scenes in *Fire Nation*. While my original novel focuses on the male protagonist, the film pays too much attention to Chang Mi-hee (the heroine).” (1989.8.29).

Chang received media attention for her overt sexuality in light of her roles in films but she also suffered from relentless sex scandals with the CEOs and major politicians including a former president Chun Doo-hwan (*Dong A Daily*, 1981, 12.30).²⁴⁹ These scandals were later proven to be baseless rumors but nevertheless led to a complete media ban that prohibited Chang from performing and appearing in the media. The decision was made by the Ministry of Public Information and Culture on the basis of “issues related with the actress’ private life.”²⁵⁰²⁵¹ This harsh decision led the media to treat Chang sympathetically as a political victim.²⁵² Newspaper

²⁴⁹ These series of scandals eventually made the star leave the country. She left to America in 1986.

²⁵⁰ *Kyŏngnyang ilbo*, 12.3.1982

²⁵¹ When she was accused for “private issues,” some other female actresses who were suffering from the similar issues of scandals with politicians were banned from media. Other actresses involved in this incidence include Won Mi-kyung and Kim Yoon-mi.

²⁵² As a matter of fact, there were frequent secretive sex deals between female actresses and singers and politicians under the Park regime. The Park regime was often referred as “Yojung Jeongchi (salon politics)” which meant that

articles and particularly women's magazines, including *Kyŏnghyang Daily* (1984, 12.11) and *Women Dong-A* (1983, August) published interviews with Chang that focused on the hardships she faced as a result of political scandals.

The ban on Chang perhaps was imposed because of the media's victimization of her, as a martyr to the oppressive military government. The phrase used by governmental authorities in accusing the actress, "issues with the actress' private life," symbolically and paradoxically illustrates the point that female sex can be articulated, publicized and expensed but within the condition that it does not dismantle the political hegemony.

The ways Chang represented by media were contradictive to the most renowned female movie star of the 1960s, Choi Eun-hee.²⁵³ Although Choi played a variety of roles from a war widow, mistress, traditional mother and a military prostitute, Choi was predominantly publicized as a symbol of *Wise Mother and Good Wife*, the long-held Confucian concept that emphasizes woman's role of dedicating her life for husband and children. According to Park Jae-yoon, Choi was promoted as,

A hard-working actress and a devoted wife. Newspapers and popular women's magazines during the 1960s in particular contributed to the construction of Choi's image as a chaste, dutiful, and loyal woman. Numerous articles about Choi emphasized that she was "a great actress and a great wife at the same time." As an actress, she was in fact a working woman outside the domestic sphere. However, newspapers and magazines of the time tended to promote Choi's star image as a chaste woman devoted to her husband, director Shin Sang-Ok. (99)

his political activities occurred at *Yojung* (secluded salons and geisha places that specifically designated for public figures).

²⁵³ Choi Eun-hee appeared in numerous films from the 50 and 60s: her representative works include *Romance Grey* (1963), *Red Scarf* (1964) and *Hell Flower* (1958).

According to Park's survey on these actresses, while Cheong was described as "ideal wife," and "Wise mother," they identified Chang as an "evil temptress," and "neurotic, desperate woman." (124) These dramatic differences and changes in the construction of female stars represent the changing notion of femininity and/or female sexuality as Dyer has relevantly noted in his study of Monroe, "Monroe's image spoke to and articulated the particular ways that sexuality was thought about and felt in the period."

Shifts in the types of leading female stars from 'great mother and wife' to 'sexually fallen angel' can be related to social discourse of the 'body,' a concept which became crucial during the 1970s, coincided with the culmination of state-led industrialization. Korean scholars and historians have read 'body' as a defining cultural keyword of the 1970s (Yu Ji-na, 2004; Yu Sun-young, 2008; Lim and Park, 2013). Lim and Park argue that the concept of body is differently applied to men and women. Under Park Chung-hee's state initiated industrialization, men were required to offer their labor to contribute to the nation-building project, such as construction, ship-building, electronics, etc.

In the social context, women were imposed on both bodily and sexual labor. They had to support their family by various kinds of physical labor both in (domestic works) and outside (manufacturing, service works, sales) of homes. On the cultural front, women were positioned to serve sexual needs as a reward for male labor and as a government tool for distracting resistant political movements. (Park and Lim, 101-103) Doane's reading of women's body is relevant in this respect that "the essence of femininity is most frequently attached to the natural body...The body is always a function of discourse." (89).

My reading of women in the context of hostess advertising and the larger extent of culture and media, shares this scholarly viewpoint concerning the cultural employment of

women's body. The rhetorical strategy employed in advertisements and press materials of hostess films and stars illustrate how women were conspicuously sexualized in the changing culture and politics of the 1970s. However, I would also argue that it was not just the concept of female sexuality that became culturally predominant during this period, but the discourse of female sacrifice was also reinforced.

The premise of this chapter was to examine advertising strategies and publicity for hostess films and stars. Based on Christopher Lasch's view that sees advertising as an educational mechanism for new experiences, Schaeffer argues that "sexploitation advertising catered to the desire for new and different sexual experiences. Whether or not viewers engaged in oral sex, bondage and domination scenarios, extramarital sex, swapping or other practices, exploitation film ads invited them to consider the possibility through their images and copy" (31).

In a similar vein, hostess advertising actively profiled male spectatorship and invited male audiences by employing fraternal jokes and exploitative imagery in widely-circulated print materials. These tactics were often involved with abusive tag lines that victimized and sacrificed female sexuality in service of male supremacy and patriarchal ideals. Their images and sexual norms were mobilized and expedited by the expansion of the media industry. In delivering these hostess films and stars, media simultaneously supplied sexual trajectories and reports of real life prostitutes, which blurred the line between cinematic constructions of female sexuality and those of the real world. The case of Chang Mi-hee, the best known hostess star at that time encapsulates how media constructions of her as a sexual object and a victim resulted in 'social exclusion' of the actress just like numerous hostess heroines that she had starred.

Hostess women epitomize feminine ideals born in the matrix of changing politics, film and the media industry and culture during the 1970s in Korea. The traditional female model of a 'good wife and wise mother' transformed into the role of the sexually self-sacrificing woman wrapped in glossy images and casual jokes at the cusp of commercialized media culture. The visual and textual conventions of hostess sexuality in advertising, publicity and tabloid materials were modern forms of identifications which resonated with undefeatable patriarchal ideals of women. Cultural constructions of these hostess women and/or hostess body precisely meet on these socio-cultural demands of the 1970. Their sexual and bodily labor greatly contributed to the industrialization of the media and the nation, by supplying abundant materials on the previously unexplored subject of sex.

Chapter Six: Epilogue and Conclusion

“The power took charge of sexuality...it wrapped the sexual body in its embrace.”

Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality* (44)

The Aftermath of Hostess Films

Increasing consistently since 1974, the popularity of hostess films reached a peak in 1978: four of the highest grossing (domestic) films of the year were hostess films and six hostess films ranked within the top ten at the box office.²⁵⁴ However, the number of hostess films on this list started to wane beginning in 1979: three hostess films occupied second, third and sixth among the top ten. By 1980, no hostess films appeared on the list.²⁵⁵ Although some sequels of previously popular hostess films were produced in the early 1980s, including *26X365=0 II* (1982), *Ms. O's Apartment II* (1982) and *Youngja's Heydays II* (1982), they barely made their breaking points, signaling the end of hostess films' heyday.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁴ 1st: *The Woman I Threw Away* (375,913), 2nd: *Heavenly Homecoming to Stars II* (298,125), 3rd: *Ms. O's Apartment* (281,726), 4th: *I am a No.77 Girl* (217,249), 9th *Ms. Yang's Adventure* (128,962), 10th: *The Woman on the Asphalt* (123, 606). *Korean Film Year Book* of 1978. KOFIC.

²⁵⁵ *The Man I Threw Away* comes as 2nd with 239,718 audiences. *Do you Know Kkosuni?* was ranked as 3rd and scored 216,628 audiences. *26X365=0* (6th) scored 178, 239. Ibid.

²⁵⁶ None of these sequels made into the box office top ten list.

At the time, Film critics and journalists suggested the predecessor of this downfall of the hostess films was ‘excessive’ conventionality: “audiences must have become tired with the films’ all too-generic stories and characters,” “No more hostesses and prostitutes on screen,” “the keywords for the 1970s’ cinema led by hostess films are low quality and a lack of creativity.”²⁵⁷ Indeed, later hostess films from the late 1970s and early 1980s did generically repeat the stories and characters in sequels after sequels of the early canonical hostess films. Nevertheless, one must not view this downfall as the complete demise of hostess films but instead regard it as a ‘transformation.’ As I will argue in the next three sections, the signature tropes of sexual heroine and her perpetual (sexual and bodily) sacrifice resonate in the broader field of erotic cinema in the 1980s by expanding “erotic figures from hostesses to ordinary housewives, widowers, female college students, and even working women” (Lee, Y., 9).

Merging into the Erotic Cinema: 3S Policy and the *Madame* Series

Within the political context of the 1980s, the irrational film laws continued and repressed filmmaking practices throughout the period of the following military regime, led by Chun Doo-Hwan. Similar to previous president Park, Chun unjustly seized power by a coup d’etat (1980) a year after Park Chung-hee was assassinated. Although Chun practiced the same rigid measures to oppress the freedom of people as the Park regime did, the Chun government simultaneously

²⁵⁷*Dong-A Daily*, 5.26, 1979. The last two quotes are excerpted from *Dong-A Daily*, 11.15, 1979.

offered more liberalized policies as a carrot-and stick-approach.²⁵⁸ The best known example of this approach is “3S policy” through which the government promoted three sectors of sex, sports and (cinematic) screen. Known as *Woominwha jung chek* (the policy of the stupefaction of people), Chun deliberately used it to compensate for political repression in order to sway people’s interests away from politics. Under this policy, a wide range of entertainment events was initiated: Pro-baseball and soccer leagues were established and midnight theaters were opened when the nightly curfew was officially rescinded.

With regard to film policy, the Chun government “loosened the censorship on overt sexual expressions in films.” (Min et.al, 58) and reformed the Motion Picture Law (the 5th Reconstitution, 1984), taking the similar carrot-and-stick measure to alleviate the antagonistic mood raised among the filmmakers and producers while maintaining stringent measure for controlling film contents. As Kim Kyung-hyun has described,

The state which continued to give executive powers to former military generals throughout the 1980s, acceded to the demands of domestic filmmakers and relaxed the censorship codes, but only those governing the representation of erotic images; censorship of political themes remained firm. Depictions of sexual activity became ever more explicit, diverting the public’s attention away from politics by permitting the sex industry and quasi-pornographic images to proliferate. (35)

The amendment was a response to the growing public debate and criticism in public forums about the government intervention in filmmaking since the early 1980s.²⁵⁹ Under this reformation, a new clause, “improvement of film art” appeared.²⁶⁰ However, it did not mean that films were allowed to represent social problems and political reality freely. Instead, the

²⁵⁸ Shim Doo-bo and Jin Dal-yong, “The Korean Broadcasting Media,” *Negotiating Democracy: Media Transformations in Emerging Democracies*. edited by Isaac A. Blankson, Patrick D. Murphy (Albany: State University of NY Press, 2007).

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

amendment dramatically lowered the censorship standard for sexual representation: for instance, it was possible to expose women's breasts on the screen during this period (Fig. 6-1).

Consequently, sexual representation in films was more deployed as a typical cinematic scheme. Dozens of films focused on the story of sexualized heroine, resulting in "a flood of soft-core pornographic films into theaters, while social problem films continued to be suppressed." (Min et. al, 61).



[Figure 6.1: Publicity photo of *Yogwongyoegwon* (Park, 1982)]

Accordingly, the spectrum of heroines' social status and professions of these 80s' erotic films became expanded in various sub-genres of erotic films such as erotic historical/period films and the *Madame Series* (*Buin Series*) which predominated during this decade.²⁶¹ The *Madame Series* began its cycle with its first installment, *Madame Aema* (Chung, 1982) which was named after a French soft-core film, *Emmanuelle* (Jaekin, 1974). The film was remarkable for its depiction of the sexual adventures of an ordinary housewife, not a hostess or sex worker as in prior films.²⁶² This innovative theme was combined with an unprecedented level of bodily

²⁶¹ Largely influenced by this government policy, Lee notes that in 1982, 60% of the total production of Korean films constituted erotic films. "Cinema of Retreat," 10.

²⁶² It is also notable that a Hollywood film, *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, which has a similar theme of a

exposure and sexual spectacle, which possibly contributed to the film’s popular appeal in theaters by selling over 315,000 tickets in a single first-run theater.²⁶³ Clearly, the film’s commercial success signaled the era of erotic cinema. Since the initial release of the franchise in 1982, the series engendered twelve sequels as well as dozens of similar films.



[Fig. 6.2: *Madame Emma* I (1982) and V (1990)]

Madame Aema’s thematic employment of ‘ordinary female sexuality’ represented by a middle class, stay-at-home wife, rather than sex workers, might seem to normalize female sexuality by expanding the ways in which female sex can be represented. Yet, I find that the series progressively presents sexually obsessed female protagonists who are constructed as overtly sexual beings whose sexual desire is the most crucial issue of their lives.²⁶⁴ Although the

‘housewife sexuality’ was released in the same year and also ranked at the top of box office.

²⁶³ *The Korean Film Year Book* (Seoul: KOFIC) 1982.

²⁶⁴ For instance, in *Aema Buin 3*, the heroine spends most of her time going to clinic to consult her ‘excessive level’ of sexual dissatisfaction. The film is indebted to showing her sexual ‘practices’ which she has learned from consultations.

first installment of the series at least rationalizes Aema's sexual adventure by manifesting her past and personal background throughout the film such as her husband's cheating and ex-romances, the later episodes omit such details, instead focusing on the heroine's 'groundless' sexual fall.

Aema, from the first segment, is a wife from a broken marriage. Her husband is morally degenerate and violent: He has been cheating on his wife, and is now incarcerated for attempted murder of one of his clients. However, she is a devoted wife and visits her husband weekly. One day, on the way to visit him, Aema runs into a young artist with whom she falls in love. Their first encounter soon proceeds to a regular sexual relationship. As their relationship becomes more intense, he asks her to go to Paris with him, since her husband will soon be released. Aema reluctantly declines and returns to take care of her husband, knowing that she must endure his negligence and cheating no matter what.

The narrative of this first episode does not seem to be progressive. Contrary to this film's liberal subject in focusing on the woman's sexuality, Aema incarnates the patriarchal prototype of women within the similar narrative tropes of hostess films. The woman seems to be freed from social constraints, presented through her multiple sexual encounters, and yet ultimately makes a sacrificial choice for the sake of a man. Her sacrifice of sex and labor (in this case, domestic labor) are always guaranteed at the end, no matter what she does or how "liberated" she has been in between.

As the series develops, despite its excessive eroticization of women, the *Madame* series became considerably more progressive in its characterization of female protagonists and subjects, for example, homosexuality, impotence, and so on, and female characters. Aema divorces her husband in the second episode not because of his cheating or negligence, which was the major

cause of conflict in the previous episode, but because of her “sexual dissatisfaction.” From this point, the rest of the series focuses on Aema’s relentless sexual adventures without much narrative development. The series aired for more than a decade, but never again gained the remarkable success and attention that the very first segment achieved, possibly because of this generic tendency. Despite its conventionality, it is noteworthy that the series dealt with delicate issues such as divorce and marital problems associated with sex that were contested by a woman.

On the other hand, the erotic historical dramas faithfully maintained and solidified the legacy of female sacrifice presented in hostess films in a more salient and extreme manner. While these films are remarkably liberal in their (visual) depictions of sexuality, the narrative conventions and characterization of female protagonists hardly dismantled the previous notion of women as to be dispensed with and sacrificed in the service of patriarchal values.

The Erotic Historical Films:

Spinning Tales of Cruelty toward Women (Lee, 1985),
Surrogate Mother (Im, 1987) and *Mulberry* (Lee, 1986)

The 1980s witnessed a boom in historical/period films with noticeable eroticism. These films enjoyed a massive popularity throughout the period. Erotic historical films were adaptations of real historical events and characters, or historical fictions combined with soft-core pornographic elements. Korean scholars provided two major reasons for the re-emergence of these historical films. First, in order to ameliorate the increasing criticism raised by individuals in the film industry concerning the censorship of domestic films, the Chun government selected so-called “quality films” and rewarded a “subsidy around U.S. \$20,000 to a producer.” (Min et al.

64) Many historical films were produced to realize these government-nominated quality films, since the major criteria for the selection emphasized the films' "historical value and rendition of traditional Korean culture." (ibid)

In addition, the erotic historical film, *Pi Mark* (Lee, 1981), which won awards at the Venice Film Festival, precipitated this tendency. Directors competitively produced similar erotic historical films in order to submit them to international film festivals that promised domestic success once they were recognized. As Min et al. assert, "[producing historical films] was a fad especially in the mid-1980s and eventually became a mixed genre, blending with soft-core pornography. These historical films were frequently presented to international film festivals and some of them were commercially successful in the domestic market" (64). Films including *Spinning Tales of Cruelty towards Woman* (Lee Doo-yong, 1983), *Mulberry* (Lee, 1986), and Im Kwon-taek's *The Surrogate Mother* (1986) were recognized and accepted by overseas film festivals, including the Venice Film Festival and Asian Film Festival. These films captured international attention not only for their depiction of the pre-modern history of Korea, but also for the liberal depiction of sex, which was rarely seen in previous Korean films.²⁶⁵

The historical films of the '80s were predominantly female-centered. In her study of the erotic cinema of this decade, Lee lists historical films featuring female protagonists and their characters as follows:

The *yangban* aristocrat, who suffer from and is suffocated by neo-Confucian patriarchy in *Spinning the Tales of Cruelty towards Women*, *Hanging Tree* (Jung Jin-woo, 1984), *Eunuch* (Lee Doo-Yong, 1986), the commoner, who is oppressed by the tyranny of male *yangban* aristocrats or Japanese colonial authorities in *Blazing Sun* (Hah Myung-joong,

²⁶⁵Cho, Eun-sun. "The Female Body and Enunciation in *Adada* and *Surrogate Mother*". In James, David E. & Kim Kyung-hyun. *Im Kwon-Taek: The Making of a Korean National Cinema*. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press. 2002)

1984), *Mulberry* (Lee Doo-yong, 1985), *The Placenta* (Hah Myung-joong, 1986), *Potato* (Byun Jang-ho, 1987), *Adada* (Im Kwon-taek, 1987), *Karma* (Lee Doo-yong, 1988), various low-class people such as slaves in *Slaves* (Um Jong-sun, 1988), the courtesan in *Ōudong* (Lee Jang-ho, 1985), the hermaphrodite in *Sabangji* (Song Kyung-shik, 1988) to the shaman in *The Hut* and *Daughter of Fire* (Im Kwon-Taek, 1988)...²⁶⁶



[Fig. 6.3: Movie posters of *Spinning the Tales of Cruelty towards Women*, *Mulberry* and *Surrogate Mother*]

Although the female protagonists in these films seemed to be diverse, as Lee mentions, I find that there is also a common, salient tendency among the characters. These women are exclusively positioned as bodily and sexually exploitable, as female servants, courtesans, and surrogate mothers who often forcibly and sexually engage with upper-class male characters. Physical and sexual abuse performed on these lower-class women becomes a core of eroticized spectacle. Some scholars regard this mode of representation as cinematic allegorization of Chun Doo-hwan’s tyrannical military regime, which suppressed the people through “sexual politics.”

²⁶⁶ Lee Yoon-jeong, “A Cinema of Retreat: Examining South Korean Erotic Films of the 1980s” Ph.D Diss. University of California, Irvine. 2013. 28.

As Lee Hyun-kyung states, “the past which is represented in the historical films is imagined time and space. The Korean fifth Republic forced Korean historical films in the 1980s to represent the past overflowing the sexual spectacle of women. Most of the Korean historical films in the 1980s transposed political anxiety into sexual suppression of women.”²⁶⁷

Indeed, dozens of erotic historical films exploit lower-class female sexuality, presented through plots and characters that are remarkably similar to those of previous hostess films. Lee Doo-yong’s *Spinning Tales of Cruelty towards Women* (1984) is one example of a film that conforms to the formula. It has been arranged that the heroine, Gil-lye, will marry to a dead man from a royal family, following a Confucian tradition commemorating the untimely death of a young man. By marrying his spirit, she has to live as a widow from the beginning of her marriage. One day, Gil-lye is raped by a male servant who has been secretly admiring her. This incidence awakens her sexual desire and makes her continue a sexual relationship with him. She finally runs away from the house to live with him. However, her new life does not turn out well: The servant soon finds that he is infertile and forces Gil-lye to have sex with another “capable” man so that she can be impregnated with a male heir. Gil-lye reluctantly acquiesces to his demand. Soon after she delivers a son for him, he gives her a little dagger with which she is meant to kill herself because her body has been “tainted” by another man. Gil-lye complies and hangs herself.

In this film, the female protagonist is exploited not only for her sexuality, but also for her body (her womb in this case) in service of the Confucian norms of patrilineage. When she completes her duties in the service of the man, she is removed. A similar narrative is repeated in Im Kwon-taek’s *The Surrogate Mother* (1982). Here, a lower-class woman, Ok-nyeo, is

²⁶⁷Lee Hyun-kyung, “The Politics of Korean Historical Films in the 1970s~1980s” *International Studies of Literature and Language*, Vol. 43. (August, 2008) 388.

approached and offered a large sum of money by a man from a royal family to give birth to a son because his wife has failed to have male offspring. Ok-nyeo is forced to accept the offer by her mother, who was also a surrogate mother. After months of consummation, she finally conceives and delivers a son to the family. Ok-nyeo is then immediately asked to leave. However, she becomes increasingly affectionate towards the husband and misses her child. The jealous wife and the whole family convict the surrogate mother of her sexual greed. Devastated, Ok-Nyeo eventually hangs herself near the house where she delivered her son.

These films offer frequent sex scenes as part of woman's "duty" to men and exploit them as erotic spectacle. While this frequent depiction of female sexuality is more liberally employed for visual pleasure than in the hostess films of the previous decade, the characters are rather increasingly subordinated and victimized because the historical films represent a strict Confucian system during the pre-modern Chosun period. In her review of the historical films of Im Kwon-taek, a master of historical/period films, Cho states that even women's victimization and sacrificial deaths are represented as visual spectacle in Im's films, commenting that

By and large these films are centered on three elements: pre modern Korean as a historical setting, beautiful landscapes and victimized women. Women are abused, humiliated, tortured and sometimes killed in pristine natural settings. Absorbed into the beauty of mise-en-scene, the suffering women are aestheticized and scarcely allowed to articulate their pain (85).

I would extend her argument to state that this tendency of spectacularizing female sex and sacrifice is not limited to Im Kwon-taek's works, but instead is prevalent in most erotic historical films. As the two films described above utilize the tropes of lower-class women and spectacularize their sexual/bodily sacrifice, another Lee Doo-yong's film, *Mulberry* (1985), reiterates an eroticized tale of woman's sacrifice similar to hostess films by employing a pre-modern version of a "hostess woman." The female protagonist, An-hyup, is the wife of a

nomadic gambler who spends most of his time wandering around. She makes a living at home through prostitution. Still, she never complains about her husband, but always has new clothes and money ready for him in case he comes back. The people in the village, particularly the wives of An-hyup's patrons, collectively condemn An-hyup and destroy her house. Her husband comes back and the angry wives tell him his wife has been prostituting herself. He listens but does not get upset, as if he already knew. He calmly takes the money An-hyup has made through prostitution and leaves again (later, her husband turned out to be a secret "freedom fighter" against Japanese colonialists, and it becomes clear An-hyup was making money to fund the protest movement).

The three films discussed above demonstrate that women's sexual offerings are forced and ritualized along with (or as part of) their bodily labor: Prostitution (An-hyup), surrogacy (Ok-nyeo), and production of a male heir (Gil-Lye) are directed to serve the norms of patriarchy and/or national agendas. When a woman's value is "dispensed," the films conveniently discard her by forcing her to commit suicide (except in the case of An-hyup in *Mulberry*).²⁶⁸ Thus, the erotic historical films overlap with hostess films in relation to their characterization and narrative construction, but they are far more extreme and dogmatic than hostess films in terms of the discursive representation of female sacrifice. It is therefore hard to see the expanded spectrum of female roles in later erotic films as a progressive conceptualization of female sex; rather, it represents a more solidified and generalized form of popular films that constitutes patriarchal ideals of femininity. In this respect, Lee's description the Korean erotic films as a "Cinema of Retreat" seems appropriate; as she states, "the character in Korean erotic cinema does not step forward to progressive ends but retrospectively steps backward from his/her goal-oriented life.

²⁶⁸ An-hyup continues her prostitution. The last scene of the film shows her waiting for male customers (neighbors) at her home.

Sometimes, this step backward is reactionary, as seen in the nationalist retreat into the pre-modern” (194).

The Legacy Continues...:

The Discourse of Female Sacrifice in Contemporary Korean Cinema

The boom of these erotic films of the 1980s faded with the demise of the Chun regime in 1986. As two consecutive military dictatorships (1961–1986) spanning almost three decades were finally at an end, social realist “problem films” thrived under the wing of the Korean New Wave. This was possible because there were changes in political and social mood initiated by the subsequent president, Roh Tae-woo. He was democratically elected and established “constitutional safeguards against despotism, relaxation of censorship [in an effort to] extend the political center by discussion rather than force” (Min et al. 74). The Korean New Wave Cinema (the late 1980s–1990s)²⁶⁹ arose as a reflection of this relaxation of social oppression. The films under this movement dealt with various social issues, including the lives of factory workers (*Kuro Arirang*, Park, 1989), lower-class poverty (*Chilsu and Mansu*, Park, 1988), and student demonstrations (*Black Republic*, Park, 1990) which would have been impossible subjects to see on screen in the prior decades of military dictatorship.

Consequently, erotic films, which had occupied the major sector in Korean cinema for almost a decade, lost their position to these realist, social problem films. As erotic films retreated

²⁶⁹ The Korean New Wave films are distinguished by their heavily political nature. After the dismantling of the military government in 1988, film directors had more freedom of expression. Social films laden with political criticisms thrived during this period.

from mainstream Korean cinema, the story of woman's sexual victimization and/or sacrifice appeared to decline. Nevertheless, the tendency is still consistent in contemporary Korean cinema. In many popular Korean films, woman's (self-/forced) sacrifice is a key to solving male dilemmas, predicaments, or simply functions to sanctify male existence.

A contemporary Korean film, *Secret Sunshine* (Lee, 2009), for instance, is about a widow whose son is kidnapped, and depicts how she copes with her pain and guilt. The heroine is consistently accused of causing the deaths of her husband and son (figuratively) by her mother-in-law and neighbors; her mother-in-law disparagingly calls her a witch who "ate off" her husband and son. Thus, the heroine is viewed as a great sinner, not only because she lost those she loves, but even more significantly, for losing her "men." In order to redeem her guilt, she intentionally does sinful things, including having illicit sex with a man from her church. She thinks that violating one of the Ten Commandments will allow her to take revenge on God, who is responsible all this tragedy, and therefore may redeem the sin of losing her men.

Secret Sunshine epitomizes the everlasting concept of women's sacrifice and victimization. Similar to the commercial rhetoric employed in the hostess advertising (mentioned in Chapter Five) a woman is sacrificed not just for one man she is related to, but for men "in general." Although the female protagonist in this film is a devoted mother/wife, not a sex worker or sexually constructed woman, she martyrs her body (sex) for her men (son and husband). Again, the woman's sexual sacrifice is seen as a part of the feminine ideals in the service of males. A woman's body is still the most effective device to secure male existence and authority; as Staiger has relevantly noted, "trying to define the essence of woman by opposition also supposedly defines man, or, actually, vice versa, since in patriarchy man is asserted to be the original locus of meaning" (12).

Conclusion

Throughout this dissertation, I argue that the women of hostess films are victimized and forcibly assigned to sacrifice their body for social and cultural imperatives. First, I chart how hostess films survived and thrived during the period of military dictatorship and industrial depression. The beginning of this dissertation illuminates previous scholarship on the emergence of hostess films, arguing that Park Chung-hee's militarized film censorship indirectly offered favorable conditions for the conception of hostess films by loosening censorship regulations on sexual subjects in film. While this previous scholarly account offers one historical condition influencing the emergence of the films, however, I argue that it omits more fundamental questions of how specifically this problematic theme of the prostitute was employed and popularized by some key directors whose cultural influence became more powerful through their film movement, The Era of Image.

As mentioned in Chapter Three, some scholars, including Kim So-young and Cho Oe-sook, provide more detailed approaches to hostess films in the social context of the 1970s. According to these authors, such films reflect the social migration of peasant women during industrialization, a large number of whom fell into the sex industry due to their financial responsibility as breadwinners. Although this is a convincing argument based on a real historical phenomenon of the period, it still does not fully account for the flourishing of hostess films—particularly their recurring tendency related to narratives, characterization, and stylistic elements associated with prostitute heroines. In this sense, Gledhill's remarks are worth noting:

Language, fiction and film are no longer treated as expressive tools reflecting a transparent reality, or a personal world view, or truths about the human condition; they are seen instead as socially produced systems for signifying and organizing reality, with their own specific histories and structures and so with their own capacity to produce the effects of meaning and values. Thus, the “convincing” character, the “revealing” episode, or “realistic” image of the world is not a simple reflection of “real life,” but a highly mediated production of fictional practice. (68)

In other words, hostess films are more than films about sexual falling of rural women and they are more than the result of censorship practices. I have focused on the distinctive conventions of hostess films, most importantly a cinematic discourse of female sacrifice that is empowered not only by eternally sacrificial stories of prostitute women but also by various kinds of visualization that idealize, obscure, and/or mystify the images of woman. As discussed in Chapter Three, I argue that this manner of constructing a sacrificial heroine parallels with and works to secure the films’ realist spatialization, which sketches social currents of poverty and working class life—subjects that were heavily regulated by state censorship at the time.

Scrutinizing this generic tendency of hostess films, I delve into the practice of filmmakers of canonical hostess films, who pioneered and commercialized them through their distinctive styles and stories about the sacrifice of sexually fallen women. These filmmakers’ contribution to this canon of hostess films, including that of Lee Jang-ho, Kim Ho-sŏn, and Ha Gil-jong is tremendous. These directors united to propose cinematic premises of realism and commercially viable aesthetics through their film movement, The Era of Image. These aesthetic concepts correspond with “hostess conventions,” which establish a discourse of female sacrifice by representing women’s sex and bodies as to be disposed of and sacrificed.

Film studios and the media industry vigorously commercialized and amplified the conventional representation of hostess heroines. In commercializing these films, the publicity

materials accentuated sex along with the cinematic discourse of female sacrifice. In addition, the media coverage of these hostess films and their stars was combined with the personal trajectories of real-life prostitutes and sex workers, often idealizing these young women's sacrifice to their family. Empowered by the expansion of the media industry during this time, around the mid-1970s, the media representation of hostess women was ubiquitous and offered both a titillating sexual spectacle and patriarchal ideals of femininity.

Previous scholarship tends to downsize hostess films, even labeling them as the “films of shame.”²⁷⁰ Furthermore, scholars who take them more seriously, predominantly emphasize only two aspects in relation to hostess films. Some focus on the political conditions driven by the military regime and subsequent media policies which indirectly provoked the conception of hostess films (Chung, H.,2005; Yu, S.,2004; Kim, S.,2000; Park, J.,2008). Other works are indebted to feminist critiques of the films' overt sexualization of women. (Cho, 2010; Yu, 2000). While these works are correct to point out that the films often generically and commercially employ female sexuality, they do not elucidate that such female sexuality always comes as a form of sacrifice which crucially constitutes this body of films. Women's sex in hostess films is constructed as a “public offering (entity),” that is, set up to be sacrificed for the supposedly more imperative values of men and family. The aim of my examination of hostess films and subsequent erotic films is to demonstrate how this notion of female sacrifice that imposes woman's labor and sex as a form of compensation (both thematically and visually), is not limited to the genre of “hostess films,” but persists in other popular Korean film texts.

As a matter of a fact, the discourse of women's sacrifice is not uncommon in many popular texts, as I exemplified with Andersen's *The Little Mermaid* story in the beginning of this

²⁷⁰See Yecies Shim's PhD Dissertation, *Korean Cinema of Perseverance* 210.

dissertation. Within the context of Korean tradition, a story of a sacrificial woman has been a frequent subject in folklores, oral tales and classical literature, e.g., Shim Chung in *A Tale of Shim Chung*, who consecrates herself by jumping into the sea to make her blind father see. My viewing of the cultural supremacy of South Korean hostess films in this respect raises and a response to the question of, how this notion of female sacrifice is sexualized and predominated during the period of the 1970s and beyond.

Although hostess films' unprecedented popularity declined in the early 1980s, the thematic and visual exploitation of female sex became even more salient in the erotic films of this decade. Simultaneously, the status of erotic historical films was enhanced through international awards and recognition, which in turn contributed to the legitimization of female sexual exploitation on screen. These discursive generics of women resonate with contemporary Korean films, and tend to be taken for granted as a cultural epitome that serves patriarchal plot resolutions.

My work on hostess films and women is in the hopes of stimulating thoughts and new directions for evaluating these films, which have received such meager attention despite their conspicuous cultural supremacy over a half decade. Nevertheless, my final note to hostess films is optimistic. For one thing, even though almost all hostess films give 'brutal endings' to hostess women either by 'killing' or imposing them a 'lonely departure' which promises no better future for them, an alternative viewing of these women may be hinted by the fact that they are the only moral characters in the films whereas all other (male) characters are delinquent and maybe too violent. Viewing these gender dynamics in this regard would be another subject of study that establish hostess women and their distinctive journey, not merely as cultural salvation during the

“dark period of history,” but as more meaningful cultural texts that epitomize “a social-sexual dynamics being produced by history.”²⁷¹

²⁷¹ Christine Gledhill. “Klute 1: Film Noir and Feminist Criticism” in *Feminism and Film*. Ed. E. Ann Kaplan. (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000). 69.

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