

**(Beyond) Propaganda: Biopolitics and the Mode of
Fantasy in South Korean and Japanese Film During
and After the U.S. Occupation Period (1945-1979)**

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ABSTRACT

My doctoral dissertation, titled, *(Beyond) Propaganda: Biopolitics and the Mode of Fantasy in South Korean and Japanese Film During and After the U.S. Occupation Period (1945-1979)*, examines the generic formation of melodrama and documentary film in Korea and Japan under postwar U.S. Occupation in relation to American liberalism, capitalist modernity and neo- colonialism in East Asia. Drawing on approaches articulated in modern history and media theory, I take up the prominent theoretical issues of biopolitics, (post) coloniality and gender politics within the historical field of postwar Korea and Japan. I consider how postwar Korean and Japanese melodrama under the Motion Picture Association of Korea and Civil Information and Education in Japan controlled by U.S. Army military government played a role in making “American-style democracy,” which was based on a dominant biopolitical fiction concerning gender. I also discuss how propagandistic documentary films censored by the United States Information Service in Korea and CIE in Japan contributed to the formation of “postwar liberalism” as a technique of governmentality. I also explore the way that contemporaneous cinematic practices were employed in Korea and Japan to counter U.S. occupation policies. I explore how these practices, such as the melodramatic mode, social realism, and “sub-realism” and “magical realism,” as well as *direct cinema* and *cinema verité* style, all transformed dominant auteurism of (neo) realism, surrealism and Griersonian documentary style. On this basis, I assert that it is possible to differentiate films of the period into *self-reflexive modes of genre* and *modes of heterogeneous fantasy* that open up visions of an alternative to the capitalist biopolitical modernity imposed under both the U.S. occupation in Japan and Japanese colonial legacies in Korea.

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Introduction

-Liberal governmentality in South Korean and Japanese melodrama and documentary during and after the U.S. occupation period.

My dissertation, titled *(Beyond) Propaganda: Biopolitics and the Fantastic Mode in South Korean and Japanese Film During and After the U.S. Occupation (1945-1979)*, examines the generic formation of melodrama and documentary film in Korea and Japan under postwar U.S. Occupation in relation to American liberalism, capitalist modernity and neo-colonialism in East Asia. Drawing on approaches articulated in modern history and media theory, I take up the prominent sociocultural issues of biopolitics, (post) coloniality and gender politics within the historical field of postwar Korea and Japan. In order to understand the biopolitical and governmental aspects of film cultures under U.S. occupation, I focus on three main aspects: 1) the representations of soldiers and prostitutes of the U.S. military in melodrama films and how they constituted the dominant biopolitical fiction for nation-building and occupation; 2) the representation of various kinds of technology, such as medical or industrial facilities, in their relation to the human body (particularly in documentary films censored by the U.S. occupation authorities); 3) the social realist aesthetic and the magical realist aesthetic as these were used to challenge the conventions of the dominant biopolitical fictions of occupation.

Why are films of the U.S. occupation period and its aftermath in South Korea and Japan important for understanding postwar East Asia? After Japan's defeat in the Second World War, Korean and Japanese societies had no choice but to decide their future through negotiations with the U.S. occupation forces, which acted as a dominant voice in

areas ranging from politics, economy, and daily life to mass culture. This American influence occurred through the following two processes. It was manifestly focused on a large number of cultural policies, including censorship and utilization of mass media; more latently, American influence also prevailed in the unconscious of the Korean and Japanese people through their consumption of mass media, which allowed the U.S. to hide its real face as an absolute occupier in control of daily life. Because film was significant at the intersection between the manifest influence of policy and the latent influence of mass culture, a comparative reading of Korean and Japanese film under U.S. occupation has much to tell us about the politics and culture of postwar East Asia. Many scholars of Korean and Japanese film of the U.S. occupation periods focus on either empirical film policy or Americanization issues, especially through the frameworks of national cinema, film policy, and vernacular modernism.¹ Departing from the recognition of the limitations of the frameworks of national cinema and vernacular modernism, in my dissertation I employ the Foucauldian concept of biopolitics (or governmentality) and the concept of “colonial liberalism” to expand my analysis of Americanization in postwar Korea in comparison to the Japanese case of U.S. occupation. Historians and cultural theorists have employed the concepts of biopolitics and governmentality to explain how the modern nation-state exercises its power. More

¹ Cho Hye-jeong, *The Study of Film production during U.S occupation period* (Chuang University, 1997), Kathleen McHugh and Nancy Abelmann (eds), *South Korean Golden Age Melodrama: Gender, Genre, and National Cinema* (Wayne State University Press, 2005), Kyoko Hirano, *Mr. Smith Goes to Tokyo: The Japanese Cinema Under the American Occupation, 1945-1952* (Tokyo: Soshisha, 1998), Michael Raine, “Youth, Body, and Subjectivity in the Japanese Cinema, 1955-60.” PhD dissertation (University of Iowa, 2002), Kim Han-sang, “Uneven Screens, Contested Identities-USIS, Cultural Films, and the National Imaginary in South Korea, 1945-1972.” PhD dissertation (Seoul University, 2012).

specifically, they have used them to explain how imperialism employs the liberalism of the modern nation-state in order to form the colony and the colonial population. For example, Takashi Fujitani's research shows how the Korean people experienced the social policies of liberal population control during the Japanese empire.² Todd A. Henry also explores how Japanese imperial forces provoked colonial Koreans' various interests and desires through different cultural events and the industrialization of the colonial state in order to assimilate them into the Japanese multiethnic polity.³ Lee Grieveson suggests that the formation of governmentality or liberalism is a good theoretical framework for researching the production of norms of narrative form and characterization in screen cultures and classical cinema, which can be understood to model liberal subjects.⁴ In relation to imperial governmentality and the formation of film genre, for example, he argues that in the British context, new institutions of film production affiliated within political parties and state government led to the creation of a series of films--the creation of a documentary genre--that shows the importance of trade within the empire.

These discourses in the East Asian context insist that the Japanese empire is a multi-ethnic empire that engages in not only imperial militarism, but also colonial liberalism. In an extension of this previous research, I examine the Korean and Japanese films during the U.S. occupation period through the framework of biopolitical governmentality or colonial liberalism.

² Takashi Fujitani, *Race for Empire: Korean as Japanese and Japanese as Americans during World War II*, (University of California, 2011).

³ Todd A. Henry, *Assimilating Seoul: Japanese Rule and Politics of Public Space in Colonial Space*, (University of California, 2014)

⁴ Lee Grieveson, "On Governmentality and Screens," (Screen 50:1, Spring 2009) and ed. *Empire and Film* (British Institute, 2011).

First, I will briefly lay out the film policy of U.S. occupation forces in South Korea and Japan. There are two major institutes which were controlled and censored by the U.S. Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) in South Korea. The first one is the Motion Picture Association of Korea (MPAK) right after the Second World War and before the Korean War (1945-52). MPAK controlled the rightist film group, Chosun Film Building Headquarters, mainly limiting and intervening in the issue of the subjects of films, but letting Koreans produce and direct films. In the beginning, MPAK encouraged Koreans to produce newsreel films about the theme of liberation and democracy and later let them make other genre films such as a period film and literacy film. In the meantime, it also actively controlled two of the major film companies, the Korean Film Company (Ko-ryō yōng-hwa hyō-p'oe) and the Enlightenment Film Association (Kyemong yōng-hwa hyō-p'oe), which belonged to Chosun Film Building Headquarters, to make *Kwangbok films*,⁵ among other themes. The second institute was the United States Information Service in Korea (USIS-Korea). After the Korean War, USIS-Korea under the control of the U.S. military mainly produced non-fiction films such as newsreels and documentaries, hiring Korean filmmakers, apart from the Korean commercial genre film industry in the postwar era. In this way, USIS films are explicitly engaged in propagandistic characters led by U.S. liberalism. In the case of the Japanese film industry, Civil Information and Education (CIE) under the U.S. occupation forces (GHQ) controlled and censored Japanese film industries during 1945-52. *Idea pictures*⁶

⁵ *Kwangbok films* are the films of “the restoration of independence” made by the Korean Film Company (Ko-ryō yōng-hwa hyō-p'oe) and the Enlightenment Film Association (Kyemong yōng-hwa hyō-p'oe) under the control of the Motion Picture Association of Korea (MPAK) and they were focused on the national spirit and heroes of a time of tribulation.

⁶ The occupation forces (CIE) in Japan made the films in order to promote and disseminate democracy. The films were called *Idea Pictures*.

and CIE educational films were representative examples of promotional films of American liberalism and democracy. On the other hand, without the U.S.'s control and censorship, by focusing on the representation of U.S. military prostitutes, some commercial films which were made in the national film company, also explicitly engaged in U.S' intervention in governmentality in South Korea and Japan.

On the basis of the background of this institutional film history, more specifically, in Chapter One, I consider how *Kwangbok* melodrama made under the control of the Motion Picture Association of Korea (MPAK) was a genre that presented dominant fictions of masculinity and femininity and sought to produce national subjects. In comparison to Japanese melodrama censored by Civil Information and Education (CIE), I explore how these *Kwangbok* melodrama censored by the U.S. occupation played a role in making "American style democracy" and I discuss how the gendering of imperial film culture established the conditions for the reproduction of national subjects. Although in real history the U.S. Occupation forces exempted pro-Japanese imperialist forces in South Korea and Japan from responsibility for collaboration with Japanese imperialism and the war, and utilized them for establishing anti-communist nation-states, the melodramatic representations of *Kwangbok films* and *Idea Pictures* tried to create anti-Japanese liberal subjects. These representations were supported by the censorship of U.S. occupation forces, which hid this reality of collaboration with Japanese imperialism and emphasized anti-Japanese sentiments. In doing so, U.S. occupation authorities promoted a kind of discontinuity between Japanese empire and post-independent Korea led by U.S. empire, implying that Japanese empire is merely based on military violence. Existing film discourses have neglected the influences of U.S. occupation forces on these phenomena,

often reading these films as a national cinema supporting the construction of a new liberal democracy and rejecting Japanese militarism.⁷ For this reason, in analyzing these propagandistic melodramas, I focus on what I call the United States' colonial liberalism, whose dissemination was linked to the reproduction of gender roles in Korea and Japan.

In Chapter Two, I discuss how propagandistic documentary films whose production was supervised by United States Information Service in Korea (USIS-Korea) could be seen as a technique of governmentality that contributed to the formation of "postwar liberalism." Through a comparison with educational documentary films produced under the Civil Information and Education (CIE) Section in Japan, I also focus, in this Chapter, on the theme of "governing life" or "liberating life" in its intersection with industrial and medical technology in filmic representation produced by USIS-Korea. The USIS documentary films represent various kinds of technology, such as medical or military industrial facilities assisted by U.S. occupation forces, in their relation to the human body. I claim that this phenomenon implies that the U.S.'s economic and technical aid regenerated Koreans' subjectivity, which was broken during the Korean War. I emphasize that these documentaries describe Koreans' superiority and strong will, which enabled them to accept such U.S. aid effectively. Some preceding studies on USIS films, such as those departing from the concept of "vernacular modernism," only interpret this phenomenon as characteristic of the formation of a national cinema that contests and negotiates with Americanization.⁸ In contrast, I focus on the fact that the combination of

⁷ Lee Young-il, *Korean Film History* (Seoul: Sodo Press, 2004), Kim Mee Hyun, *Korean Film History* (Seoul: Communication books, 2006), *A History of Korean Cinema* (Korean Film Archive, 2006)

⁸Kim Han-sang, "Uneven Screens, Contested Identities-USIS, Cultural Films, and the National Imaginary in South Korea, 1945-1972." PhD dissertation (Seoul University, 2012).

the U.S.' technical aid and Koreans' strong will in the films is one of the significant characteristics of postwar liberalism led by U.S occupation forces. American liberalism never opposes this nationalism, but supports it. Moreover, the melodrama and documentary films dealt with in both Chapter 1 and 2 show that the reconstruction of the Korean and Japanese subject was first executed as a form of self-enlightenment or self-governing, and was tied with the nation-state only later. In this way, the strategies of representation of these melodramas and documentary films are very similarly a mechanism of liberal governmentality. In other words, Foucauldian liberalism focuses on how the governmentality of modern nation-states is executed not through the intervention of juridical and state power, but through the self-governing of social categories on the individual level. Needless to say, this self-governing is ultimately operated by capitalistic modern nation-states.⁹ As some scholars suggest, this liberal governmentality was utilized by Japanese imperialism in order to provoke the colonial subject's desires and interests; from this, I infer that strategies of representation in these films can be seen as an aspect of U.S occupation forces' effort to promote liberal governmentality.

Chapter Three turns to a significant commonality between postwar Korean and Japanese films, the emergence of the American military prostitute (*Yanggonju* in Korea and *Panpan* in Japan). Films represented these prostitutes as national victims of the U.S. occupation as well as allegorized them as contaminated bodies according to domestic sexual norms. Postwar hygiene policies, both colonial and national, provided local technologies that transformed femininity into a sign of the deviant body. The sexually liberated female body came to stand in for a perceived abnormality inflicted on the nation-state by the incurable body, and such deviant bodies were excluded from the

⁹ Michel Foucault, "Governmentality," *Power*, (New Press, 2000), 202-220.

biopolitical regime that necessitated a differentiation between the healthy and the unhealthy. By focusing on the mother prostitute excluded by both U.S. Occupation forces and the Korean and Japanese nation-states from the reproduction of normative gender roles (through the structure of a dichotomy between the mother and the prostitute), these films depict explicitly victimized female subjects who existed in a marginal space beyond the subjects recognized by U.S. liberalism. At the same time, I also call attention to the limits of these examples of biopolitical fiction and visibility, by noting what could be considered feminist melodramatic moments in which the incongruity between victimized and the liberated female bodies are exposed.

In this way, through Chapters 1, 2 and 3, I argue that the film policy and a certain aesthetics of the U.S. occupation were part of the exercise of biopower in forming the postwar nation-states of South Korea and Japan and their liberal subjects. In short, going beyond the framework of national films in which the governmentality of nation-states and ambivalence or resistance toward it are revealed, I focus on how the U.S. colonial liberalism negotiates with, and is complicit in nationalism in the formation of national film in South Korea and Japan. Previous research has rarely taken up this question. By emphasizing modes of biopolitics and governmentality shared in common by the contexts of Korean and Japanese cinemas, I also suggest how Korean and Japanese films could be seen as sharing and participating in a single transformative process driven by the same mode of representation (liberal governmentality). I propose to examine this transformative process, led by the U.S. occupation forces, in a manner which goes beyond the familiar dichotomy of Korea=the colonized and Japan=the colonizer, in order to show how the understanding of Japanese empire propagated by Cold War liberalism

and anti-communist governments led paradoxically to the occlusion of ‘Japanese colonialism’ as a historical experience.

However, by focusing on commonalities shared between Korean and Japanese films, I do not mean to maintain that Korea and Japan were the “same” victims of U.S. occupation forces in the final analysis. In particular, the meanings of anti-Americanism in Korean and Japanese films during and after the U.S. occupation period were markedly different. First of all, the left nationalist and socialist film groups such as Chosun Film Alliance in South Korea¹⁰ and the Japanese Independent Film Production in Japan¹¹ made some films and led film movements concerned with anti-U.S. occupation forces. Their anti-Americanism commonly reflected anticolonial consciousness through critiques of the U.S.’s hegemony in East Asia. However, anti-Americanism worked differently for rightists and liberalist groups in both Japan and Korea, by contrast to how it worked in the case of Korean and Japanese left nationalist or socialist film groups. The case of a Korean film group such as the rightist Chosun Film Building Headquarters, which made anti-Japanese and anti-communist films, could hardly be described as anti-American. However, if these films groups could describe the critique of Americanization, they were naturally engaged in anticolonial national consciousness and movements, revealing Koreans’ victimization by the Western powers of the U.S. and the Soviet Union.¹² On the

¹⁰ This film group competed with imported Hollywood films, making Korean national films. It also led the movement of protecting national film from the U.S.’s monopolization of the Korean film industry during 1945-50. This group often made films about the unification of the Korean Peninsula, criticizing the U.S. occupation forces and these films depict laborers, peasants, women and students as the central subjects of unification. *People’s Front* and *West-by-Southwest* are the most representative films of this type.

¹¹ This film group often made films criticizing U.S. occupation policies which obfuscated the history of Japanese imperialism in Asia and militarism, such as nuclear issues. (1952-60’s)

¹² This film group often made newsreel films called *liberation news* about the national independence movement supported by U.S. occupation forces. Therefore, it was hard to depict

other hand, right after the U.S occupation ended in 1952, some Japanese film directors made anti-American films that were connected with the nostalgia for the Japanese imperial past, by unilaterally portraying themselves as the victims of the Second World War.¹³ This can be read another way: that the nationalism in these revisionist films was different from films that encouraged nation-building through pro-Americanism, while also allowing South Korea and Japan to present themselves as victims of Japanese militarism. Unlike the South Korean case, this anti-American nationalism was not able to carry out an anti-colonial national consciousness, because it glorified Japan's imperial past without articulating or expressing its war responsibility. This is one of many examples of the historical difference between Korea's experience as a colony and Japan's imperial past; thus the victimized mentalities have different meanings.

However, the anti-American nationalism of films produced under the auspices of the national government has been substantially researched by Korean and Japanese scholar. Therefore, I will focus more on the role of U.S. occupation forces in relation to film, a role which reinforced liberal nationalism in Korea and Japan but occluded Japanese colonialism in the Japanese case and colonial collaboration in the Korean case. Moreover, although it has been widely known that both Korean and Japanese governments have been covering up the history of Japanese colonialism and its legacies, there has been little research on the U.S. occupation forces' crucial role in hiding these

anti-Americanism, but some films expressed the necessities of unification, implying the victimization of Western Powers, including the U.S.

¹³ For example, some of the most famous directors, such as Imai Tadashi and Kinoshita Keisuke who made films critical of Japanese imperialism earlier, made Japanese national films after U.S. occupation ended, which unilaterally victimize the Japan of the Second World War. The famous national films of this type were *Twenty Four Eyes* (Kinoshita Keisuke, 1954), *Tower of Hymeyuri* (Imai Tadashi, 1953) and *I Want to Be a Shellfish* (Hashimoto Shinobu, 1959). All these films were box office hits and victimized Japan and the Japanese without expressing any responsibility for imperialism and war.

responsibilities of both Korea and Japan. Above all, these matters have rarely been given attention in the field of film studies.

In the case of South Korea, this occlusion is due in part to the fact that existing scholarship in South Korean film studies rarely overcomes its desire for “colonial difference,” an attribute which takes the nation as its unit and depends on maintaining dichotomy of Korea=colony and Japan=Empire. This desire for colonial difference has the effect of obscuring colonial legacies focusing only on post-colonial pride. It does so even though it tries to focus on the dynamic relations of Japanese imperialism and U.S hegemony within the framework of “colonial modernity”.¹⁴ While there has been little comparative work exploring developments in either Korean or Japanese films in the early decades after World War II, a period when U.S occupation forces controlled their film industries, I intend to show that such a comparative approach based on in-depth historical research illuminates central problematics in East Asian film culture and East Asian modernity more generally.

-Resistance to biopolitical governmentality: colonial difference and the fantastic mode

A distinctive contribution of my comparative work on Korean and Japanese film culture is the proposal that “colonial difference” is not based on national difference, but rather involves gender difference, class difference, and cinematic specificity. By working in the comparative mode, I also hope to argue that postwar Korean media and culture

¹⁴ Kathleen McHugh and Nancy Abelmann (ed), *South Korean Golden Age Melodrama: Gender, Genre, and National Cinema* (Wayne State University Press, 2005), Lee Young Jae, *Chosen film in imperial Japan* (Seoul:Reality and Culture, 2008), Kelly Y, Jeong, *Crisis of Gender and the Nation in Korean Literature and Cinema: Modernity Arrives Again* (Lexington Books, 2010).

need to be reassessed in their encounters with Japanese media and culture, as well as U.S. occupation film culture, so that “colonial difference” can be understood beyond both “colonial modernity” and “national identity.” In particular, in the final chapter, following the discussion of cinematic aesthetics in melodrama in relation to the biopolitical liberalism I take up in Chapter 3, I argue that there were common cinematic practices in Korea and Japan that held the potential for an alternative to liberal colonial aesthetics. These practices twisted conventions by making use of the melodramatic mode, social realism, sub-realism and magical realism, often switching male-oriented fantasy forms into female ones. I will demonstrate how these kinds of practices resisted the dominant biopolitical fictions of the genre films and governmental documentaries of the U.S. occupation. I also argue that these common cinematic practices should be understood as constituting a “colonial difference” shared between Korea and Japan, rather than as national differences. I aim to show that this colonial difference functions as an agent of resistance to the aesthetics of the colonial liberalism of U.S. occupation forces.

By locating an agenda envisioning of resistance to U.S. liberal governmentality within my theoretical framework, I hope to show how cinematic theories and practices common to Korea and Japan, as well as the cultural cross-reading of film texts, can bring out the possibility of an alternative aesthetics to liberal propaganda. More specifically, in Chapter Three, I consider how melodramas represent the U.S. military prostitute as a subject excluded from modern nation-states, but in such a way as to be commensurate with the inclusion of both the male and the female liberal subject under the name of the family or pseudo-family system in Chapter One. Furthermore, I consider how this form of postwar family and maternal melodrama, which glorifies the fallen woman’s sacrifices,

repositions the excluded sexual subject within biopolitical sexual norms based on a dichotomy between the mother and the prostitute. However, the Korean and Japanese films I deal with in this chapter also contain moments that go beyond the dichotomy of biopolitical sexual norms: in these moments, the self-reflexivity of melodrama, which has been noted by feminist critics, allows for depiction of a fantasy of the female's narcissistic sexuality and her bodily pleasure which can be seen as a neo-realistic expression of her excessive and tragic death or suicide. Such aspects, which we find in both Korean and Japanese cinema, can be read as cinematic practices that resist the conventional form of melodrama associated with biopolitical liberalism.

In Chapter Two, by examining USIS documentary films using scripted scenarios and controlled camerawork in the Griersonian style, which is often tied to the educational propaganda of liberalism,¹⁵ I show how the liberal subject is represented in the films of U.S. occupation forces. I also consider fictions films produced as a response to these kinds of documentary films. For example, films like *The Sea Knows* (South Korea, 1961) and *Shinkūchitai* (Japan, 1953) that I deal with in my final chapter employ a self-reflexive and fictional form related to the USIS documentary. They utilize a social realist aesthetic that takes up contingent narratives and adventitious camerawork and angles. This social realism is the cinematic aesthetic that *Dokuritsu Puro eiga* (Japanese Independent Production films) strategically utilized to criticize liberal realism (i.e. melodramas and documentaries controlled by the U.S. occupation forces). I argue that the

¹⁵ See, Lee Grieveson and Bill Nichols's argument about the relation between Griersonian documentary and educational propaganda for liberalism. *Empire and Film* and "Documentary Film and the Modernist Avant-Garde," *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 27. No. 4, (Summer, 2001), 592, 599-604.

aesthetics of this Japanese movement overlaps with the filmic aesthetics of South Korean director, Kim Ki-young. Social realism enables the filmmakers in this case to depict subjects of discrimination or life in the military camp. Such, films are able to make a critique of past Japanese militarism and the U.S military, although in the guise of defending liberalism. Again, I suggest that this cinematic aesthetic can be read as a colonial difference shared between Korea and Japan under U.S imperialism. More, importantly, *The Sea Knows* depicts the longing for decolonization from this imperialism. It goes beyond simply revealing national differences between East Asia and the U.S. to depict, through the deployment of what I see as a kind of “magical realism,” a fantasy in which bare life revives. The emergence of such magical realism in postwar Korean films can be attributed to the influence of one of the most important film auteurs, Kim Kiyoung, who confronted the limitations of the neorealist film style that prevailed at the time in order to criticize the status quo and to testify to the ugly reality in Korea after the Korean War. Kim Kiyoung recalled the process of making his film of that time and said in the article, “When Making a Movie with Rebellious Spirit”:

In those days, when realist movies were the rage around the world, I thought our realism in Korea had lots of problems, too. Realist movies are a powerful resource in film art because they not only depict real life smoothly, but also attack the negative side of real life and demolish the rotten social order. Therefore, the realist filmmaker has to be more courageous and defiant.¹⁶

Kim was critical of neo-realist films and the conventional melodrama style of the time because they were not so sophisticated in revealing the “true” reality and did not suggest an alternative view of the issues. Within this context, Kim Ki-young, after making

¹⁶ Kim Ki-young, Journal, *Film Art*, (Film Art Press, 1992) 24-25.

neorealist style movies that focused on the social reality of the external world in the 1950's, began in the 1960s to forge a continuum between his neo-or social- realism and the inner world, seeking to revealing the truth of man's fundamental and base instincts by using expressionist aesthetics such as grotesque melodrama, magical realism, fantasy, and horror. Many South Korean genre films made at the time were influenced by his arguments, and began to engage with expressionism and fantastic characteristics. Since South Korea at the time did not have avant-garde movements contemporaneous with the European and Japanese ones, but this practice can be seen as a form of political radicalism, especially in light of censorship imposed by the dictatorship in Korea and unequal access to film technology.

In the 1960s, Kim Kiyong made three films in succession. Those are *The Housemaid* (1960), *The Sea Knows* (1961), and *Koryojang* (1963). These three films opened up a new path, which had never been explored in Korean conventional film aesthetics. By using expressionist and fantastic aesthetics, these films dealt with social and political realities such as the class and gender alienation of Korea's developmental modernization project, Japanese colonialism, postwar militarism, and dictatorship. Among them, in this chapter, I focus, especially on the relationship between magical realism and decolonization through *The Sea Knows*.

On the other hand, in Japan at the time, the film movement situated itself between social realism and surrealist film aesthetics. This was the so-called "sub-realism" movement of the 1950s.¹⁷ One of the most influential literature and film critics of the

¹⁷ To offer an additional explanation, Abe Kōbō says that while 'surrealism' reflects the irrationality of internal reality, by intensifying "internal realism," the 'documentary' absolutely includes external things. However, he points out that the external reality is inherent in the internal

time, novelist Abe Kōbō conceptualized sub-realism, arguing that while surrealism is situated somewhere “above” the level of reality, and documentary (or social realist style) touches on external things, sub-realism penetrates “beneath” the level of reality. He insists that any practice adequate to reality must be ‘mediated,’ entailing a process whereby internal reality can be connected with external reality. Therefore, sub-realism, for example, plays a role in transferring the irrationality of the internal dream, which is often a theme of surrealism, into the external reality, which social realism often includes. According to Kōbō, after the generation of surrealism, sub-realism should come; and it arrived during the 1950s in Japan. In fact, his argument affected Japanese social realism and the early avant-garde movement. Obviously, by utilizing the form of surrealistic fantasy, sub-realism was engaged in the neglected external reality at the time, the theme of war responsibility and responsibility of imperialism in the colonized countries, which had never been depicted in either social realism or surrealistic films in the early postwar period. Most famously, one of the Japanese Independent production film directors, Kobayashi Masaki, made a film, *The Thick-Walled Room*,¹⁸ based on Abe Kōbō’s novel, dealing with Japanese war prisoners in a U.S. military camp. It has a social realist style, but some parts were very sub-realistic, showing the protagonist’s unconscious sense of war responsibility toward Japan’s past colonized countries. Consequently, I claim that the concept of sub-realism can be compared with magical realism in South Korea in terms of

reality in an unconscious way and that the practice for reality can only be ‘mediated’ through the way in which the internal reality can be connected with the external reality. This practice can occur in the direction in which the internal reality is moved into external reality. We can call ‘sub-realism’ a kind of social existentialism in an ideological way. Toba Koji, *In the 1950’s: The Period of Documentary*. (Tokyo: Kashitsu Book Press, 2010). 54-55.

¹⁸ Kobayashi Masaki, DVD, directed by Kobayashi Masaki(1956;Criterion Collection, 2013)

revealing colonial difference and the possibility of decolonization, differentiating it from the (neo) realism and surrealism that were more dominant among auteurs in both Korea and Japan.¹⁹ This magical realism and sub-realism can make possible another cinematic aesthetics of colonial difference shared between Korea and Japan.

Another two Korean and Japanese films, *The Promise of Flesh* and *Yuka on Mondays* intensify the characteristics of the narcissistic female fantasy found in previous melodramas. They use motifs in Korean and Japanese film, such as the confessional female voice-over, the code of double suicide, and reversed SM roles between the female and male characters. The Korean film in particular shows the reversed S-M roles in which the male protagonist sacrifices for a military prostitute, who was excluded based on biopolitical sexual norms, and thus the film is able to depict the possibility of reversed governmentality (beyond the resistance of the female's narcissistic sexual desire or bodily pleasure or tragic suicide).

The reversed S-M roles in both *The Sea Knows*, and *The Promise of Flesh* enable the viewer to imagine the formation of an alternative subjectification, different from that of the liberal subject. Simply said, in the case of the latter film, in the formation of her fantasy, the female protagonist, who was abused sexually and is forced to play a role of the masochist, feels a masochistic pleasure by being forced not by men but by her own desire. Moreover, through the fact that the man, who played a sadistic role with her in their relationship, masochistically sacrifices for her by risking his life in the end, her S-M relationship is reversed. Also, in the former film, the colonizer, a Japanese woman,

¹⁹ Toba Koji, *In the 1950's: The Period of Documentary*. (Tokyo: Kashitsu Book Press, 2010).

consoles and helps her colonized Korean man not through mere sex, but through empathy and sharing shameful feelings with him. In this relationship, the conventional relations between colonizer and colonized based on discrimination and inequality are reversed. I will show that beyond the structure of hetero-sexuality based in the conventional S-M roles, roles symbolic of the structure of the relation between the victimizer and the victim of power wielded by the Japanese, the U.S. occupation and postwar militarism, we find that the sexuality of the protagonists in the films, experienced through various bodily pleasures based on individual singularity, creates an ethical relationship with the other, reversing the power structure of victimizer and victim.

According to Foucault, the formation of an ethical subjectification resistant to governmentality involves what he calls “individual singularity,”²⁰ in the relation with the other. In other words, for him, ethical subjectification means “the practices of freedom,”²¹ which enable the “individual singularity” to be visible in the relationship with the other’s existence in a political realm.²² This practice is not only a de-subjugation of the other based on the care of the self, but also makes the power relations reversible. He insists that reversing fixed power relations is the key point for the practices of freedom in constructing an ethical subject. Furthermore, for him, practices of freedom in the realm of sexuality involve not only controlling one’s pleasure based on conventional heterosexuality but also exercising bodily pleasure based on “individual singularity.” The meaning of controlling one’s liberal pleasure implies the ethical caring of the other. The ethical relationship with the other cannot be detached from the reversibility of power-

²⁰ Michel Foucault, *History of Pleasure, Volume 3, The Care of the Self* (Vintage Books, 1986), 42.

²¹ Paul Rabinow, *Foucault Reader*, (Pantheon, 1984), 245.

²² Foucault, *The Care of the Self*, 72-80.

relations and exercising singularity of self and other. Only these relations change the liberal pleasure into the ethical one.²³ In this way, as Foucault insists, the protagonists in the films I am discussing do not subjugate the dominant power through the moment of the reversed power relations. Put another way, the practice of freedom by de-subjugating to dominant power switches the subjectification of the biopolitical power into the ethical subjectification based on individual singularity. Additionally, Foucault explains that the fascistic and capitalistic power structure is reinforced through the fantasy based in conventional S-M roles in which the domination and submission is fixed and thus, the reversible S-M roles enable one to subvert the totalized fantasy form.²⁴ Furthermore, I will analyze this subversive moment, connecting with the film aesthetic subversion of “magical realism,” which enables the creation of the “fantasy of the colonized” and “feministic melodrama,” which makes the “fantasy of female subaltern” possible. Therefore, I will argue that how these heterogeneous fantasies which are mediated through “magical realism” and “female fantasy” in melodrama” produce alternative ethical subjects, subverting the totalized and male-oriented fantasy that continually reproduces liberal subject.

In conclusion, rereading colonial difference in this way has something in common with what H.D Harootunian calls “the strategies of comparability.”²⁵ He writes that the possibilities of comparability are inscribed not in national cultural and historical differences, but in the unequal and uneven material conditions that have left their marks

²³ Foucault, *History of Pleasure, Volume 2, Use of Pleasure*, (Vintage Books, 1982).

²⁴ Leo Barsani, Foucault, Freud, Fantasy and Power, *A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* April 1995 2 (1 and 2). 16-18.

²⁵ H.D Harootunian, “Some Thoughts on Comparability and Space-Time Problem,” *boundary 2* (Summer, 2005), 23-52.

on post-colonial cultures at an everyday level, within the crisscrossing of non-synchronous temporalities and spatialities. In this way, Kim Ki-young's auteur films are good examples of the kind of "colonial difference" that can be shared between South Korean and Japanese films. A mode of comparison that departs from the traditional (or typical) understanding of "colonial difference" emphasizes aesthetic conjunctions and a marginalized subaltern fantasy. Therefore, I propose that South Korean films can be rearticulated in their encounters with Japanese film aesthetics in order to remake "colonial difference" beyond both the colonial liberalism of Japanese and U.S. imperialism and the national identity of South Korean governmentality.

Chapter 1: “Dominant fiction” and “Biopolitical reproduction” of Occupied Korean and Japan: New Heroic Goodness and the God of Democracy in Family Melodrama (1945-1952).

-Heroic God and Goodness for New Democracy

After the Second World War, Japan underwent a one-hundred-eighty degree turn from a totally militarist and imperialist society to a considerably democratic or modernized one. South Korea also underwent a total transformation from a colonized and subordinated society to an independent sovereign one. In order to understand the magnitude of the social, political, and cultural tumult of the period, one cannot neglect the crucial role that audio-visual, mass popular media played in facilitating the process of this drastic transition. The U.S. occupation government utilized the power of this medium to the maximum level to deliver to audiences their messages on the necessity of demilitarization, remilitarization, democratization, and re-modernization.

As existing film studies discourses point out, mono-ethnic national films of both Korea and Japan during this period rely on the production of an anti-Japanese sentiment that is critical of Japanese imperialism. However, the role that U.S. occupation forces played in fostering the expression of this anti-Japanese sentiment has been largely unexamined.

In this chapter, I will show how the censorship policies of U.S. occupation forces played a role in the production of propagandistic films about rebuilding both South Korea, as a former colony, and Japan, as a former multi-ethnic empire, into mono-ethnic nation-states by emphasizing sentiments critical of Japanese militarism, even though the

U.S. soldiers and U.S. militarism were not visible in these films. I am particularly interested in the depictions of Korean male and Japanese female characters who function as agents for the U.S. occupation government that sought to disseminate the notions of independence and democracy by taking on the position of the new father in Japan and Korea. So, I will focus on melodramas that feature Korean males and Japanese females, including Choi In-kyu's *Hurrah Freedom* (1946)²⁶ and *The Day Before Independence* (1948)²⁷ from South Korea, and, Kurosawa Akira's *No Regrets for Our Youth* (1946)²⁸ and Kinoshita Keisuke's *The Morning of Osone's Family* (1946) from Japan.^{29,30}

Even though the directors of these films had collaborated with Japanese imperialism by making propaganda films in wartime, immediately after Japan's defeat they began producing films that propagated the ideology of democracy under U.S. occupation forces. Specifically, Korean directors were encouraged to include aspects of strong anti-Japanese imperialist sentiment on the part of the U.S. occupation forces in their films,³¹ whereas Japanese directors operated under a censorship policy that prohibited the representation of anything thought to be reminiscent of wartime militarism and imperialism.³² The Korean films of this period stick to traditional gender roles in which the male protagonist (pro-independence movement activist) is steadfast and thus respected by women, while Japan's films represent strong female protagonists

²⁶ *Hurrah Freedom*, DVD, directed by Choi In Kyu (1946; KOFA collection, 2004).

²⁷ *The Day Before Independence*, VHS, directed by Choi In Kyu (1948; KOFA collection, 2004).

²⁸ *No Regrets for Our Youth*, VHS, directed by Kurosawa Akira (1946; Homevision, 2000).

²⁹ *The Morning of Osone's Family*, DVD, directed by Kinoshita Keisuke (1946; Kinoshita Keisuke's complete box, DB-616, 2008).

³⁰ An Seok Yeong's *Patriot's Son* (1949) and Mizoguchi Kenji's *Victory of Women* (1946) have a similar phenomenon with these films, but I will limit the discussion to four films in this chapter.

³¹ Cho Hye Jeong, *The Study of Film production during U.S. occupation period* (Chuang University: 1997), 10-17.

³² Kyoko Hirano, *Mr. Smith Goes to Tokyo* (Tokyo: Soshisha, 1998), 236-242.

(particularly war widows who oppose militarism). The differences between gender representations in these two cases are related to the differences between the South Korean and Japanese national contexts and the U.S policy toward their respective film industries.

For example, Choi In-kyu's films were made by the Korean Film Company (Koryŏ yŏng-hwa hyŏ-p'oe) and the Enlightenment Film Association (Kyemong yŏng-hwa hyŏ-p'oe) under the Motion Picture Association of Korea (MPAK), which were set up by a right wing organization under the control of the U.S. Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK).³³ This institution imported and distributed American films and newsreels and also produced its own news films and feature films. MPAK also produced Korean films conveying anti-Japanese and anti-communist sentiments and promoting American democracy soon after the end of the war. Film historian, Lee Young il points out that MPAK abolished the law and censorship relevant to film and the film industry by Japanese occupation forces and put in anti-Japanese messages.³⁴ Kim Min Hwan also observes that MPAK mainly propagated cultural development based on the principle of democracy and building a liberal nation-state by provoking anti-Japanese sentiments.³⁵ In this context, Choi In-kyu also made a newsreel film entitled *National Referendum* (1948),³⁶ an enlightenment film designed to convince Korean people to participate in the vote to make a single democratic government in South Korea.

In order to convey such messages, images of heroic or regretful Korean men were utilized. The heroic Korean male was used to suggest how American democracy could

³³ See, Lee Young il, *Korean Film History* (Seoul: Sodo Press, 2004) and Kim Mee Hyun, *Korean Film History* (Seoul: Communication books, 2006)

³⁴ Lee, *Ibid*, 219.

³⁵ Kim Min Hwan, *The Statistical Research Division of the Office of Administration, HQ, USAMGIK* (Seoul: Nanam, 1991), 182-183.

³⁶ *A National Referendum*, directed by Choi In Kyu (1948; KOFA collection, 2004).

allow the Korean people to overcome their anti-Japan sentiments. In the plot of these films, the value of American democracy functioned as a savior, making Koreans independent from Japanese empire. The regretful Korean male was used to reflect on and erase his humiliating past of collaboration with Japanese imperialism.

Furthermore, Lee Young-il points out that films about the restoration of independence (*Kwangbok yŏng-hwa*) prevailed in the short period before the start of the Korean War (1945-50). Both Enlightenment film associations and Korea film associations focused on the national spirit and heroes in a time of tribulation. For example, they produced *The Chronicle of Ahn Jung Keun* (1946),³⁷ *The Samil Revolution* (1947),³⁸ *Yoon Bong-Gil Martyr* (1947),³⁹ *Yu Kwan Soon* (1948),⁴⁰ *Patriot's Son* (1949),⁴¹ *Hurrah Freedom* and *The Night before Independence Day*. These *Kwangbok films* emphasize the heroic images of historical figures in the independence movement against Japanese occupation.

For example, the protagonist in *Hurrah Freedom* is Choi Han Jung, a Korean independence fighter who is being pursued by the Japanese military police. During a debate among independence movement members, he persuades his comrades to fight against Japanese imperialism even though they know that Japan is going to eventually surrender. He says that our fight would be our heroic resistance to Japan's imperialism and a clear message of the Korean people to the world. He also says that the Korean

³⁷ *The Chronicle of Ahn Jung Keun*, VOD, directed by Ku Young Lee (1946; KOFA collection, 2004).

³⁸ *The Samil Revolution*, VOD, directed by Yun Bong-Chun (1947; KOFA collection, 2004)

³⁹ *Yun Bong-Gil Martyr*, VOD, directed by Yun Bong-Chun (1947; KOFA collection, 2003)

⁴⁰ *Yu Kwan Soon*, VOD, directed by Yun Bong-Chun (1947; KOFA collection, 2003)

⁴¹ *Patriot's Son* (1949), VHS, directed by An Seok Yeong (1949; KOFA collection, 2005).

people's desperate rebellion must happen now. Both Meehyang, who is a mistress of a Japanese police, but acting as a spy for him, and a nurse, Hyeja, admire Han Jung's commitment and are willing to sacrifice for him.

Also, in *The Night before Independence Day*, the protagonist, Mr. Min, is suspected of murdering a Korean and he illegally accumulates wealth during the Japanese occupation period. However, after being stabbed by bullies, his accuser, his daughter's boyfriend, saves his life. In critical condition, he confesses his deeds and apologies to his victim's family saying it was an accident. In the climactic scene, he dies on the day of Korea's independence and it is revealed in his will that he will leave all of his ill-gotten gains to Korea.

Both films emphasize, the heroic image of the Korean man, while representing the Korean woman as a passive and sacrificing figure. *Kwangbok films* are loaded with ideological messages delivered by strong men representing the ideal of independence and freedom. Through the actions of anti-Japanese Korean heroes, the film emphasizes that it was not only America's victory over Japan that led to Korea's independence. Korea's virulent new democratic subjects also played a crucial role in liberating the country from Japanese colonialism. In this way, the castrated Korean man's subject during the colonial period is rehabilitated and reconstructed.



Figure 1. Heroic images of Korean independent movement activists in *Hurrah Freedom* (left) and *The Night before Independence Day* (right)

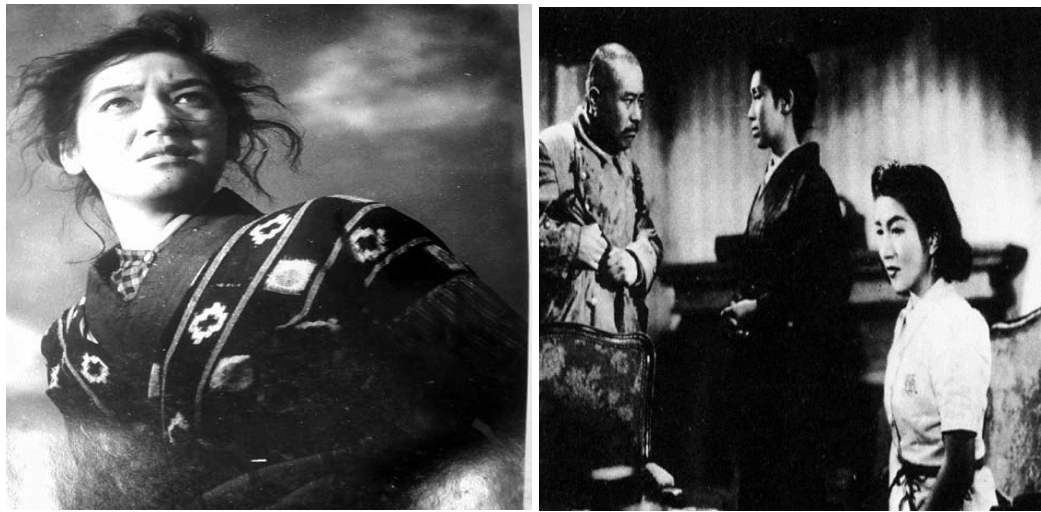


Figure 2. Strong figures of Japanese Women in *No Regrets for Our Youth* (left) and *The Morning of Osoné's family* (right)

On the other hand, Kurosawa, Kinoshita and Mizoguchi's films are "*Idea Pictures*" which promoted and instilled the ideology of democracy.⁴² According to Kyoko Hirano, one of the most interesting characteristics of the Idea pictures was that they dealt with women's liberation on the level of narrative, thanks to the Occupation policy promoting gender equality in postwar Japanese society. Consequently, female characters often delivered the new ideology of democracy, almost like an oracle delivering God's messages to the people. *Idea Pictures* were heavily loaded with ideological messages of democracy delivered by strong new women, the new goddesses of democracy. At the same time, paternal authority and masculine virtues were denounced. In other words, as the subjects of prewar Japanese militarism and imperial violence, male characters in those films lost privileged social power, and were culturally and socially castrated as a result.

In the article, "Woman and Film," Kido Shiro, a president of Shochiku film company at the time, contends that the occupation forces (CIE) focused on the media in order to disseminate democracy. He points out that in the CIE policy, a woman was regarded as more important than a man for the propagation of democracy in the domestic sphere. This film policy gives a clue for reading the representation of women in *Idea Pictures*.⁴³ The films of this period also reflect the policy Kido speaks of. In Kurosawa's *No Regrets for Our Youth*, Yukie (Hara Setuko), who is a daughter of a college professor, is spoiled and has a highly competitive spirit, but she runs away from home and stands

⁴² According to Kyoko Hirano, CIE forced the film motifs which emphasize the gender equality and human right issues and accuse politicians of militarism and war crimes in order to demilitarize and democratize. The films based on these motifs were called as *Idea Pictures* in order to differentiate them from commercial films. Kyoko Hirano, *Mr. Smith Goes to Tokyo* (Tokyo: Soshisha, 1998)

⁴³ Kido Shiro, "Woman and Film", (*New Film*, 1946, January). 4-5.

alone in order to stare at herself, as her father begins to support the Second World War. She goes to live with her father's student, Noge, who is an anti-war activist and her supporter. This choice can be regarded as her will, because she could live with her father in bourgeois comfort. Moreover, after her husband dies, she goes back to Noge's hometown and gains a lead for the enlightenment of farmers with her husband's parents. We can feel her strong ego symbolized as a democratic subject, exerting her will and bearing hard physical labor in devastated farms. The important thing here is the origin of her ego. Moreover, after Noge's death, she goes to his parent's house and obeys them, which implies that she makes her efforts for making her husband's will unregretful. This can be read as the return of the morality of the patriarchal family, rather than a democratic value.

Similarly, arguing that a militarist brother-in law drove innocent children to their deaths, Yusako (Sugimura Haruko) in Kinoshita's *The Morning of Osone's family* criticizes the fact that the brother-in-law gives the family much trouble by embezzling and habitual corruption. She objects to Japanese militarism with her own maternity, criticizing for sending her son to the war, film discourse has suggested that the mother of *The Morning of Osone's family* represents the Japanese mother's voice. As this maternal figure emphasizes peace in the discourses of postwar society, it is convincing to the viewer that she, who was a weak woman in the first place, comes to criticize the soldier, after she realizes the truth in the end.

However, what were real Korean men and Japanese women like during the colonial period and the period of total war? Although, as I mention above, the directors of *Kwang bok films* and *Idea pictures* almost invariably represented Korean men and

Japanese women at moments of conversion during prewar, the films downplay that these characters also participated in war collaboration. Recently, complex issues such as the “colonial subject and conversion” and “woman and war responsibility” have become academic concerns in History and Gender Studies in both Korea and Japan. Both disciplines are actively re-examining accepted frameworks that support both the dichotomy between resistance (anti-Japan) and collaboration, and the logic of multi-ethnic Japanese empire that employed the rhetoric of pan-Asianism in the prewar period to gain a superior universal subjectivity. However, in Film Studies and other studies of representation, these issues have not yet been examined in depth. Therefore, it is important to delve more deeply into the problem embedded in the filmic representation of Korean men and Japanese women.

Ironically, many actors and actresses, who emerged as new oracles of democracy, had also played virtuous traditional heroes and heroines supposed to propagate wartime propaganda, like the directors did. Despite the images of heroic men and new women and reborn Korean and Japanese societies, such images were not convinced because of the essential continuity of their same physical presence of actors and actresses. In a way, the fundamental discontinuity of social, cultural, and political reality between prewar and postwar was simultaneously impossible and thus, the continuity was internalized by the presence of same actors and actresses between prewar and postwar, although they performed different roles and thus, propagated different ideologies.

Taking the perspective of nationalism on Korean film history, film historians, Lee Young-il and Kim Mee-hyun insist that, although these directors including Choi In-Kyu made Japanese war propaganda films, they repented for their conversion by making

Kwangbok films which show the suffering and tragedy of independence movement fighters.⁴⁴ However, this description is overly simplistic, because it ignores the complicity of Korean politicians, intellectuals and the masses in the conversion, and irresponsibly overstates the heroic and national representation of independent movement fighters, who were only minority group. Therefore, Korean audiences easily came to identify with a suffering heroic protagonist and bought into the unilateral victimization at the hands of Japanese imperialism.

As for the Japanese case, a feminist film critic, Yajima Midori points out that Japanese mothers and wives depicted in Japanese melodramas are shown welcoming the postwar period without any sense of war responsibility and performing the roles of innocent mother or emancipated agent, while the Japanese male characters were depicted as suffering from the trauma of losing the war. However, she argues that postwar Japanese films secretly maintain a patriarchal system disguised in matrilineal, feminized representations.⁴⁵ In other words, father and husband figures are quite visible in these films, but hide themselves behind women's emancipation because of the trauma that stemmed from defeat in the war. Yajima emphasizes that maternity, which actually embodies the will of the father, is produced and manipulated by male subjectivity. Japanese motherhood, which has been regarded as one of the virtues of Japanese culture, is nothing but the site of the projection of man's desire.

⁴⁴ Lee Young-il, *Ibid*, 218. Kim Mee Hyun, *Korean Film History* (Seoul: Communication books, 2006). 108.

⁴⁵ Yajima Midori, "The Diligent Female Shaman," *Perspective of Encounter* (Cho Press, 1968), 17-29.

Therefore, the representation of women in the occupation period in Japan actually stood in for the Japanese male, who is represented as having been deceived by Japanese militarism and suffering from the trauma of losing the war. At the same time, the representation of men in South Korea of that period reflected the Korean people as if they had been totally innocent under the Japanese occupation. It is also important to note that these images were mobilized under the policies of U.S. occupation forces in both Korea and Japan. Considering all of these factors, it is clear that Korean men and Japanese women represented in the films functioned as innocent agents serving the fantasies of both “ruled” Korean and Japanese people and “ruling” American men, despite the fact that, in reality, there were many women in Japan and many men in Korea who supported and cooperated with Japan’s militaristic wartime policy. Such a neglect of the actual roles of Korean men and Japanese women in the war allowed for indulgence in an expedient narrative of victimization that erased the negative memory of the war and enabled Japanese and Korean communities to be united again. Moreover, this narrative enabled the American occupation forces to govern Japan and South Korea quite smoothly, because it allowed American occupation forces to act as heroes before the Japanese and South Korean public, by treating only Japanese military officers and politicians as enemies. This allowed for the expedient production of independent, liberal Korean and Japanese national subjects.

In short, imitating American democracy and freedom through the filmic representation of the ideal of male and female characters had the effect of erasing the negative past of Japanese militarism and collaboration. Therefore, by consuming these films, Japanese and Korean spectators could assume the position of the innocent women

and heroic men who were victims of evil Japanese militarism. Engendering a victim mentality, these films encouraged audiences not to examine their own war responsibility and collaboration critically. Through the representation of the victimhood of Japan and Korea by Japanese militarism and imperialism, enlightened democracy and mono-ethnic nationalism were reinforced under the hegemony of the U.S.

In this sense, historian Lim Ji-hyun's argument about the mechanism of victimhood nationalism focusing on Korea-Japan and Japan-U.S relations allows us to consider the relationship between these postwar propaganda films and the mechanism of building nationalism through victimhood narratives.⁴⁶ As Lim points out, victimhood nationalism gets transformed into historical culture on both conscious and sub-conscious levels, and feeds a specific form of nationalism that rests on the memory of collective suffering.⁴⁷ In the same way, these propaganda films reinforce victimhood sentiments via the suffering of heroic figures and these sentiments get assimilated into national history.

-Family melodrama as dominant fiction and biopolitical reproduction

Kwangbok films and *Idea pictures* take the form of family melodrama. This is related to the fact that the films function as the dominant fiction which provokes collective victimhood, through spectator's identifying with the suffering hero or heroine.

Kaja Silverman highlights the notion of "dominant fiction" in her study of American

⁴⁶Lim Ji Hyun, "Victimhood Nationalism in Contested Memories: National Mourning and Global Accountability", *Memory in a Global Age: Discourses, Practices and Trajectories*, 139. Aledia Assamann and Sebastian Conrad (eds), (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

⁴⁷ Lim Ji Hyun, *Ibid*, 138-139.

postwar melodrama that explores how gender roles are constructed and reproduced.⁴⁸ Drawing from Louis Althusser, she argues that the vulnerability of gender roles is strongly connected with the ideology of film, because ideology functions as the mirror in which these gender roles are formed. This mirror also allows for a kind of collective make-believe in the commensurability of masculinity and femininity.⁴⁹ Silverman says that, “the dominant fiction not only offers the representational system by means of which the subject typically assumes a sexual identity, and takes on the desires commensurate with that identity, but forms the stable core around which a nation’s and a period’s “reality” coheres.”⁵⁰ “The family melodrama” contains examples of this argument, because it is engaged in the formation of the dominant fictions present in the collectives of community, town, and nation.⁵¹ In precisely the same way, *Kwangbok films* and *Idea Pictures* utilize the dominant fiction of family melodrama and allow the spectator to sympathize with collective victimhood via the suffering hero or heroine.

Silverman also uses the theoretical category of “historical trauma” to attest to a radical loss of belief in the conventional premises of masculinity. She attributes this crisis

⁴⁸ According to her, the dominant fiction is more than the ideological system through which the normative subject lives its imaginary relation to the symbolic order. It is also informed by what Ernesto Laclau calls a “will to totality,” it is the mechanism by which a society “tries to institute itself as such on the basis of closure, of the fixation of meaning, of the non-recognition of the infinite play of differences. The dominant fiction neutralizes the contradictions which organize the social formation by fostering collective identifications and desires, identifications and desires which have a range of effects, but which are first and foremost constitutive of sexual difference. Social formations depend upon their dominant fictions for their sense of unity and identity. Social formations also rely for their continued survival upon the dominant fiction; both the symbolic order and the mode of production are able to protect themselves from interruption and potential change only so long as the ideological system commands collective belief—so long, that is, as it succeeds in defining the psychic reality of the prototypical subject. Kaja Silverman, “Historical Trauma and Male Subjectivity,” *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* (Routledge, 1992), 54.

⁴⁹ Ibid, “The Dominant Fiction,” 15-17.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 41.

⁵¹ Ibid, “Historical trauma and Male Subjectivity” 42.

in conventional gender roles to the historical trauma of the Second World War and the immediate postwar situation. For Silverman, historical trauma refers to any socially engineered or naturally occurring event that brings a large group of male subjects into an intimate relation in which they are, at least momentarily, unable to sustain an imaginary relation with the phallus. As a result, they withdraw their belief from the dominant fiction.⁵² However, she argues that the category of historical trauma also plays a role in reconstituting exemplary male subjectivity. By showing disavowal, projection, and female fetishism in which the female stands in for the male subject, the male subject denies their castration or identification with a castrated father.⁵³

This utilization of family melodrama can be seen in two Korean films that explicitly heroize a male protagonist who was castrated and suffered under Japanese colonial forces. He serves as model for a renewed subjectivity through the denial of his past castration. On the other hand, in Japanese films, the new Japanese subject is cured of his historical trauma through Japanese female characters who replace Japanese men castrated by U.S. occupation forces and who play roles as Japanese men. Therefore, along with the commensurability of the female and male subject, the male and female subject experiences renewal, not only of sexual identity, but also of Korean and Japanese identity.

Moreover, it is important to look at some of the extant discourse concerning the

⁵² Ibid, 55.

⁵³ Ibid, 120. Through postwar American melodramas which depict male trauma from the Second World War, Silverman researched masculinities, which worked to eroticize or privilege, not only to acknowledge but also to embrace, castration, alterity, and specularity. Although these attributes represent the unavoidable tropes of all subjectivity, they generally feature prominently only within the conscious existence of the female subject. Conventional masculinity is largely predicated upon their denial. Saying “no” to power necessarily implies achieving some kind of reconciliation with these structuring terms, and hence with femininity.

way female identity is constructed in relation to the national subject in family melodrama.

For example, Japanese film scholar, Ayako Saito points out:

What is at issue in postwar Japan is the relationship between historical trauma and the woman's body and the way in which affective discourse closely connected with femininity was used and abused in obscuring the structure of inclusion and exclusion in the emerging democratic public sphere of postwar Japan. Family melodramas often functioned as a bridge between physical reality and psychic realities, facilitating the drastic transition of society and people's lives in the postwar period. It was a process of reclaiming a dominant fiction, consolidation and social hierarchy based on 'domestic ideology.'⁵⁴

In this sense, family melodrama constitutes an important element in recreating the dominant fiction and in the process of nationalizing the female subject. Also, as Susan Hayward points out, family melodrama, demands that female characters are reinscribed into their 'Lawful' place as mothers and, therefore, function ideologically in their repression of female desire and reassertion of the woman's role as reproducer and nurturer. If the female character is unable to assume or resume that role, then she must stand aside or disappear.⁵⁵

Taking this into consideration, in *Kwangbok films*, the female subject who sacrifices herself functions as a helper or nurturer of the Korean male, and is reproduced as a Korean national subject. The Japanese female subject in *Idea Pictures* becomes the Japanese national subject, as a wife or mother embodying the father's will. In short, these family melodramas imitate American democracy and freedom by representing the "ideal" female. Through these representations, postwar propaganda films help in constructing

⁵⁴ Ayako Saito, "seeking for lost phallus", Kinoshita Keisuke's trilogy of tears (Eigagaku, no. 14, 2000)

⁵⁵ Susan Hayward, *Cinema Studies, The Key Concepts*, (Routledge, 1996), 244.

new standards for community in Korea and Japan, effectively erasing the negative past of Japanese militarism and collaboration in the process.

Similar to the relation between dominant fiction and dominant ideology, is the connection between governmentality and biopolitical gender discourse. As I examine above, after the Second World War and Korean War, the connection between the colonial nation of Korea and the empire of Japan as family-states was destroyed, so it was necessary for U.S. occupation forces to rebuild them as new liberal mono-ethnic nation-states under the name of the private sphere. The representation of the family again, though, not only touched on the question of the national subject, but also emphasized the importance of the individual free subject.

As a result, the myth of the heroic Korean father and new Japanese goodness as the symbol of a liberal subjectivity in the new era were reconstructed to efface the legacy of Japanese colonialism. In order to analyze this phenomenon, I will adopt the concept of Foucauldian biopolitics. Foucauldian biopolitics can be largely understood as an important concept to help analyze the formation a new liberal power that cannot be captured by state domination in both the framework of liberal political economy and sexual normativity. I will analyze this matter in-depth in relation to the framework of liberalism in Chapter 2. In this chapter, through the framework of the relation between biopolitics and sexual normativity, I will examine family reproduction, focusing on the representation of the mother and father.

Foucault argues that sexuality put down roots as a normative category of identity, which then came to be internalized as sexual orientation and, consequently, became important for the biopolitics of normalization. Concerning this relationship in the modern

nation-state, Hyon Joo Yoo points out:

The family-state relinquishes the core element of the modern sovereign state, what Michel Foucault calls pastoral power: the care of the civic body at an individual level of well-being, and leaves the organization of civic life to the private sector to the capitalist enterprise.... The impetus of the family-state is to rigorously discipline the feminine subject into a reproductive entity, both as a linchpin of the patriarchal symbolic system that holds together gender difference and as the biological and economic recourse of the patriarchal family. The feminine subject who is unable either to cope with the discipline or to be rehabilitated into family structure becomes an other to the normative gender order.⁵⁶

This biopolitical reproduction is clearly present in two Korean films, *Hurrah Freedom* and *The Night before Independence Day*. For example, the independence movement activist in *Hurrah Freedom* represents a new heroic male in the symbolic family⁵⁷ of the private independence organization who resists Japan to the end when he dies in a battle. In *The Night Before Independence Day*, the father, who once collaborated with Japanese forces, is restored by reflecting and regretting his misdeeds. In the end, his daughter's boyfriend takes on his role of the father in the family system. Similarly, an anti-war activist's wife and a mother who criticizes Japanese militarism are represented in two Japanese films, *No Regrets for Our Youth* and *The Morning of Osone's Family*. These women are reborn as strong reproductive subjects in the patriarchal family and replace the absent man's position in the family system. This representation foregrounds the new subject who criticizes Japanese imperialism and stresses democracy. This shows how the

⁵⁶ Hyon Joo Yoo, "Introduction", *Cinema at the Crossroads, Nation and the Subject in East Asian Cinema*, (Lexington books, 2012), 6.

⁵⁷ He is not married, but his landlord's daughter plays a role as his faithful wife and the woman who gave shelter to him plays a role as his symbolic lover. Through this, he becomes a symbolic patriarchal man and he arranges into the biopolitical sexual norm.

gender roles of man and woman are reproduced biopolitically under the gender normativity of patriarchy. In other words, through these family melodramas, U.S occupation forces tried to reconstruct a normalized subjectivity in Korea and Japan and rebuild their modern nation-states by promoting the reproduction of the domestic family in Korea and Japan. This is a mechanism similar to the one Foucault pointed out. He explained that modern nation-states are formed through the formation of biopolitical subjectivity based in the sexual normalization in the family. I insist that U.S forces could carry out their occupation smoothly because of the biopolitical reproduction of the family system based in these gender roles.

Along with the ideology of dominant fiction or dominant genre, we can also gain insight, in the realms of governmentality and screen theory, from Lee Grieveson's argument that the Foucauldian concept of governmentality and biopolitics should be applied when exploring the formation of film genre. He says:

Conceptual work on the production of liberal subjects might, for example, inform a rethinking of longstanding questions about the formation of norms of narrative form and characterization in classical cinema, which may be repositioned as modeling aspects of liberal selfhood. Classical cinema, it might be argued, is a particular technology of the self. In turn, specific films, cycles and genres may be conceptualized as symbolic spaces for the articulation of ideas about conduct, government and the liberal subject. Together, such films and cycles arguably do more than simply represent aspects of governance: they form part of structures of knowledge and power, and enact models of selfhood and conduct that participate in the production of liberal subjects.⁵⁸

In this sense, *Kwangbok films* and *Idea pictures* are family melodrama genre films and

⁵⁸ Lee Grieveson, On governmentality, (*Screen* 50:1, Spring 2009), 187.

the formation of the liberal subject in these films implies the creation of the democratic subject and reproduction of the family system in South Korea and Japan that U.S. occupation forces promoted. Most importantly, although these family melodramas can be interpreted by the concept of dominant fiction in relation to dominant ideology, these films also clearly emphasize an enterprising liberalism based in individual selfhood rather than the building of national and American imperial ideology based in the State. For example, the women in the two Korean films are reproduced as national subjects who leave home to help and nurture a national hero, but since their drive is based in their own sexuality, they are reproduced as the normative heterosexual subjects within a social body consisting of independence movement fighters and a group of activists for the enlightenment of farmers, which are outside of the national system as well. In the case of *No Regrets for Youth*, the female protagonist abandons her family, because she wants to enlighten herself and actualize her dream to be economically independent and sexually liberated. In order to enlighten themselves and satisfy their own sexual desires by nurturing their lover or acting as substitutes for his position, the women abandon their family which has feudalistic values about gender roles. This action implies that in order to be reproduced as an individual and liberal subject in the era of U.S. occupation, the feudalistic family, here representing Japanese militarism, should be destroyed and individualized. Of course, the individuality is eventually subsumed by the new family and nation-state, as selfhood is connected with the collective population in the logic of Foucauldian governmentality. To be more specific, in Foucault's depiction of governmentality, the State does not initiate the reproduction of gender roles. Even gender roles are later tied with the power of U.S. occupation forces and the nation-state, the

characters' actions come first from individual desire. What is at issue in the films is that not only does the whole family reflect the State as in a mirror, but also the individual governs and enterprises their selfhood far beyond the system of the feudalistic family as the totality. Thus, the female body which embodies the sexual normativity in the films is reproduced as a social body. This logic exactly overlaps with Foucauldian governmentality and the formation of biopolitical subjectivity. Lee Grieveson says:

“Government,” Foucault observed in a note on the history of the term and practice, ‘did not refer only to political structures or to the management of states; rather it designated the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed. Foucault’s research on the history of prisons and of sexuality, for example, suggested that this direction of conduct pervaded the social body; that it did not emanate from a centre; that tasks initially taken up outside the State were only later taken over by the State (what Foucault called a ‘governmentalization’ of the State) and that the direction of conduct was not directly or univocally tied to economic goals (even if they were frequently interconnected)... These ideas included the belief that the State had grown too big and inefficient, that many projects of governance could be better undertaken by the private sector, that welfare liberalism should be rolled back, and that government should produce an entrepreneurial self and an enterprise culture.’⁵⁹

In short, the idea that the damaged or lost family during the Japanese colonial period is reproduced as the new family or pseudo family in these *Kwangbok films* and *Idea Pictures* works in the mechanism of governing and enterprising the selfhood touched on conducting individuals or groups beyond the State’s control.

-Propagandistic Melodrama as emotional governmentality.

In the family melodrama of *Kwangbok films* and *Idea Pictures* which U.S. occupation forces actively censored and propagated, it is very hard to find the ideological

⁵⁹ Ibid, 183.

and aesthetical contradiction and rupture depicted as the symptom of a conflict between preexisting and new values. It is important to remember that before consumerism prevailed during the 50s and 60s, the reproduction of the liberal individual subject in the family system was most important during the period of US occupation in Korea and Japan (1945-50). Therefore, it is necessary to read these films through the lens of dominant fiction and biopolitical governmentality for nationalizing liberal subjects.

In contrast with the framework of dominant fiction and biopolitical governmentality, typically, the studies of melodrama focus on the positive meaning of capitalistic modernity and social change in which the contradiction and conflicts are between pre-modern and modern values. These discourses often discuss that melodrama reinforces the value of capitalism, focusing on the new and positive meaning of capitalistic modernity and changes of gender values. For example, Miriam Hansen's arguments on "vernacular modernism" reveal the importance of local and popular translation of cultural products of capitalist society. For example, Hansen points out that Classical Hollywood Cinema was a local reaction to and acceptance of European high modernist culture. Therefore, as Hansen suggests, in vernacular modernism there is a shift from elitist artistic practice to a familiar practice which is experienced through mass culture.⁶⁰

Ben Singer also argues that Melodrama emerged from below to reveal, and to describe myth, the common person's material vulnerability and "ideological shelterlessness" in modern capitalistic society. He said, "it dramatized the social atomization of capitalist *gesellschaft*, and remained a reflection of the cultural divisions

⁶⁰ Miriam Hansen, "The Mass Production of the Miriam Hansen, "The Mass Production of the Senses: Classical Cinema as Vernacular Modernism," Christine Gledhill, Linda Willams, eds., *Reinventing Film Studies* (London:Arnold, 2000).

of a society.”⁶¹ He also explains that it expresses, as Thomas Elsaesser has observed, “the struggle of a morally and emotionally emancipated bourgeois consciousness against the remnants of feudalism. Instead, it would be more apt to say that melodrama manifested the powerful new populist ideology of liberal democracy, even if the bourgeois champions of that ideology did not have populist aesthetic sensibilities.”⁶² In other words, he explains that Melodrama expressed that after feudalistic and sacred periods, there emerged the dreary ambiguity of an urban life in which people found themselves “helpless and unfriended,” in a “disenchanted” world of moral vulnerability and material insecurities.⁶³ From this perspective, Singer insists that melodrama was not only about an emergent liberal populism but also about the anxieties of a society undergoing incompatible moral, economic, and sociopolitical tumult.⁶⁴

At the same time, when non-western melodrama was read through the framework of the national cinema, it was often considered as an allegory of resistance against the new values of capitalism or capitalistic modernity. More specifically, the contesting and negotiating of existing and new moral and social values are characteristic of melodrama. Above all, in the book anthology, *Melodrama and Asian Cinema*, Wimal Dissanayake introduces some film scholars’ work on Asian films. For example, in discussing melodrama, postmodernism and Japanese cinema, Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto insists that Hollywood melodrama of the 1950s cannot be considered an exemplary model for the analysis of postwar Japanese melodramatic form because there are social and historical differences between the Hollywood context and the Japanese context, although the

⁶¹ Ben Singer, “Melodrama and Capitalism”, *Melodrama and Modernity: Early Sensational Cinema and Contexts*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001),148.

⁶² Ibid,132.

⁶³ Ibid,132.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 133.

studies of Hollywood melodrama of the 1950s are important.⁶⁵ Dissanayake also explains that Ma Ning examines how Chinese family melodrama of the early 1980s unfolds against the conceptual backdrop of symbolic representation and symbolic violence. In her view, the family takes a position of centrality in Chinese society. Ma Ning argues how the Chinese family melodrama, which is a significant form of social representation, describes the vital changes in Communist Party policies in the important conjunction between politics and aesthetics in socialist countries.⁶⁶ Also, he mentions that by analyzing the Indian film, *Andaz* Paul Willemsen emphasizes the necessities of thinking the difference between Western and non-Western social formations and historicities, by the operating of melodrama.⁶⁷

Within this context, similarly, many postwar melodramas of Korean and Japanese production during the U.S. occupation period reinforce the value of American capitalistic modernity and consumerism and contribute to the formation of liberal subjects. At the same time, they reveal the contradiction between accepting and refusing the value of capitalism in the process of contesting and negotiating with Americanization. However, as I mentioned earlier, the melodramas with which I'm dealing in this chapter are more focused on the reproduction of the liberal subject of the new family rather than the ambivalence toward accepting capitalistic consumerism. In other words, because these films were propagandistic melodrama censored by U.S. occupation forces, I have analyzed them in the framework of governmentality which is a more conscious, and infrastructural power formation, rather than ideological contradictions and ruptures.

⁶⁵ Wimal Dissanayake, "Introduction", *Melodrama and Asian Cinema*, (Cambridge University Press, 1993), 7.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 5.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 8.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that the value of biopolitical reproduction and the morality of liberal democracy are intensified through the characteristics of the melodrama genre. On the level of spectatorship, or the way the spectator receives the film, these examples of filmic governmentality were conveyed through excessive emotionalism and pathos. Ben Singer says, “Melodrama, as generally used today, refers to a set of subgenres that remain close to the heart and hearth and emphasize a heightened emotionalism and sentimentality.”⁶⁸ In his research on Hollywood melodrama, Singer provides some characteristics to support his definition of melodrama as concepts.⁶⁹ According to him, these concepts are “pathos,” “overwrought emotion,” “moral polarization,” “non-classical narrative structure,” and “sensationalism.”⁷⁰ He insists the definition of melodrama in the following terms: “One way to deal with the term’s general slipperiness is to stop trying to understand it as a genre and think of it as a dramatic mode.”⁷¹ I follow some of the above concepts, “moral polarization” and “pathos” in relation to melodrama in my discussion.

Singer’s suggestion that we see melodrama as a “dramatic mode in narrative” is very appropriate to these *Kwangbok films* and *Idea Pictures*. For example, Singer points out that the extreme moral polarization between good and evil-moral absolutism and transparency in which, “the hero and the heroine are very, very good; the villain and the adventuress are very, very bad” is one of characteristics of melodrama.⁷² Also he

⁶⁸ Ben Singer, *Ibid*, 37.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 38-39.

⁷⁰ 44-49.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 6.

⁷² Ben Singer, “Meaning of Melodrama”, *Ibid*, 47.

mentions that many recent scholars have interpreted melodrama's insistence on moral affirmation as a symptomatic response to the new conditions of moral ambiguity and individual vulnerability following the erosion of religious and patriarchal traditions and the emergence of rampant cultural discontinuity. Melodrama expressed the anxiety of moral disarray and then ameliorated it through utopian moral clarity.⁷³ Likewise, the plot of the above films is based on the simplistic moral dichotomy of a vicious Japanese militarism and a virtuous anti-Japanese military hero or heroine. For example, in the two Korean films, the Korean independent movement fighters are always heroic and perform virtuous deeds while the Japanese people are simply described as an absolute evil. Also, in the two Japanese films, the Japanese soldiers, who represent Japanese militarism, perform only bad deeds while the Japanese wife and mother, who represent the Japanese people, are innocent and symbolize the new hope of Japan. By utilizing this polarization typical of the genre, U.S. occupation forces intentionally promoted the notion of morality which is the value of "anti- Japanese imperialism and new American liberalism." In this sense, the heroic features which emphasize the anti-Japanese national freedom and the heroines who interrogated and criticized Japanese militarists for war responsibility are nothing but the symbol of moral reaffirmation as the necessity for the rapid change of postwar Korea and Japan.

According to Singer, this moral affirmation often is accomplished through "pathos."⁷⁴ He points out that the representation of pathos is partly a common element of melodrama and it generally involves a kind of dramatic intensity such as overwrought

⁷³ Ibid, 46.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 44.

emotion, heightened tension and tribulation, depicting the kinds of martyrdom, miscommunication, or helplessness characterizing pathos.⁷⁵

In *Hurrah Freedom*, the male protagonist is obviously a martyr, because although he escapes from the prison and is chased by Japanese police, he convinces his comrade to continue to fight with him against Japan and he dies in battle gloriously. Meehyang, who is confused morally about her relationship with the Japanese, asks him, “Doesn’t a person have the right to start a new life?” He answers, “Of course, we have, aren’t we strapping bombs on ourselves front and back and running to the center of the Japanese? ... “We must have a will power of steel and a burning passion.” Here, morally the resolution of Han Jung, who represents the will of freedom and independence, is filled in, and Meehyang moves by his remarks and cries out. This scene is described through the repetitive close-ups and it appeals to the spectator’s emotion (figure 3). In *No Regrets for Youth*, the female protagonist is also a martyr because she becomes a leader of the enlightenment movement of farmers instead of her husband, and her tenacity as a figure who overcomes the hardship of the vicious conditions, makes the audience have pity for her. We can feel her strong ego, through the repeated close-ups in which Yukie tries to accomplish her will, bearing hard physical labor in the devastated farms. And she narrates very emotionally, “I cannot defeat here, I am his wife and I am his wife.” Here, the dramatic moment, in which Yukie’s subject, which she chooses over her husband, Noge, for actualizing her freedom, is reproduced, is conveyed very emotionally.

⁷⁵ Ibid.45. While pathos involves an overwrought emotion, Singer explains that pathos also does not entirely overlap with it. Some melodramas register intensive emotions such as jealousy, greed, resentment and frustration and so on without the expression of pathos.



Figure 3. Close-ups of excessive emotional reaction of Meehyang to a Han Jung’s preaching in *Hurrah Freedom*



Figure 4. Close-ups of Yukie’s crying over her father in *No Regrets for Youth*. She cries, because she feels pity for her lover, Noge who is caught in prison.

In the earlier chapter, I read these family melodramas as a national cinema in the framework of dominant fiction and governmentality which focuses not on the ambivalence between the rejection and fascination toward Americanization but the complicity between U.S. occupation doctrine and South Korea’s and Japan’s consent. In order to reinforce dominant ideology and governmentality, these films utilize “emotional pathos,” explicitly through woman’s tears. Focusing on postwar films, Ayako Saito points out:

Woman's tears were shed to reconcile the irreconcilable, such as the collective war guilt, healing the wound of male subjectivity, in many dramas, melodramas and even comedies. This process of appropriation and subordination of a woman's affective expression to the dominant male subjectivity was most crucial to Japan's transformation from a militaristic and imperialistic society to a "democratic" one after the defeat of the war."⁷⁶

She argues that postwar filmic experience provided a "democratic public sphere" for male subjects and spectators in engaging with the psychic level, through healing by woman's tears. In *Hurrah Freedom*, Meehyang cries out, feeling compassion for Hang Jung who is about to go into an Independence fight with Japanese police. In *No Regrets for Youth*, Yukie feels pity for Noge who was caught in the prison for his anti-war activity and sheds tears (figure 4). Women protagonists in Korean and Japanese films shows compassion and cries for the male martyrdom hero and thus their pathos heals the national (male) trauma, sublimating his tribulation into collective victimhood on the unconscious level. In other words, women's affective expression has never been shown with their real experience, at least in these *Kwangbok films* and *Idea pictures* of biopolitical melodrama.

Consequently, as Singer also says, "'pathos" affirms the degree to which the power of pathos derives from a process of emotional identification or perhaps more accurately, of association, whereby spectators superimpose their own life melodramas into the ones being represented in the narrative,"⁷⁷ the spectator identifies with the conscious biopolitical subject through these emotional and unconscious ways, regardless of his or her own real experiences.

⁷⁶ Ayako Saito, "Seeking for lost phallus", Kinoshita Keisuke's trilogy of tears (Eigagaku, . no. 14, 2000)

⁷⁷ Ben Singer, 45.

The connection between cinematic ideology and psychoanalysis, on the level of emotionalism, unconsciousness and spectatorship, has already been established in film studies and shaped the development of a film theory that focused on the question of the spectator conceived as a textually implicated subject.⁷⁸ For example, Jean-Louis Baudry observes that the metaphor of cinematic apparatus is not limited to the technological aspects of film (although he said, “the popular perception of cinema’s scientific and technological origins are crucial to its reality-effect”⁷⁹), but is applicable to the entire institution of cinema: its means of promoting and distributing itself and its administration of the social spaces in which films are viewed. The cinematic apparatus achieves its specific effects (the impression of reality, the creation of a fantasmatically unified spectator-subject, the production of the desire to return to the cinema) because of its success in re-enacting or mimicking the scene of the unconscious-the psychological apparatus-and duplicating its mechanisms by way of illusion.⁸⁰

In this way, Lee Grieveson insists that the ideology, which combines with the aspects of unconsciousness, functions differently with the governmentality function, which does not involve the psychological aspects.⁸¹ However, as shown in biopolitical

⁷⁸ Christian Metz, *The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and the Cinema*, (Indiana University Press, 1986)

⁷⁹ Constance Penley, “Feminism, Film theory, Bachelor Machines”, *The Future of An Illusion: Film, Feminism and Psychoanalysis*, (University of Minnesota, 1989), 60.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 60-61.

⁸¹ Grieveson explains about the relation between Governmentality and psychoanalysis as below, “Foucault’s disputation of the model of ideology and the subject dovetailed with his critique of psychoanalysis, articulated most clearly in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, in which he proposed that Freud marked the culmination of a hermeneutics of the subject which located the truth of the subject in sexuality and rendered this truth ‘knowable’. Psychoanalysis stands alongside other human sciences that delineated the truths of subjectivity and that were enmeshed with a ‘bio-power’ or liberal governmentality increasingly focused on the understanding of individuals and populations – bringing ‘life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations’ – as a necessary step in regulating and managing them. The second and third

melodrama, I claim that the way governmentality is conveyed is similar to the way ideology is conveyed on the level of reception of spectatorship, because the representation of biopolitical subjectivity is conveyed through emotionalism and pathos, touching on the film character's and spectator's unconsciousness.

volumes of *The History of Sexuality*, published after Foucault's death, trace a history of subjectification beyond hermeneutics, both decoupling 'technologies of the self' from the modes of subjection central to liberal governmental rationalities and the human sciences and tracing the history of their interconnection." Grieveson, *Ibid*, 184.

Chapter 2: American liberalism and Biopolitical documentary in Kim Ki-young's USIS-Korea films: A comparative study of Japanese CIE films

-Koreans' rehabilitation in USIS film

After the propagandistic melodramas, which I dealt with in Chapter I, were made, in addition to mainstream genre films, a number of propaganda films were made under the United States Information Service in Korea (USIS-Korea) and the supervision of Civil Information and Education (CIE) in Japan after the Korean War. In these films made during the 1950s and 60s, the theme of American style democracy emerged as the alternative to the narrative of Korea and Japan's victimization by Japanese militarism and appears most explicitly in the "cultural film." By comparing the documentary cultural films of USIS with CIE films (as opposed to mainstream narrative films) in this chapter, I argue that American style liberal democracy is constructed at not only the ideological level but also at the biopolitical level, by touching upon political economics, as well as medical and military industrial technologies.

Kim Han-sang points out that the United States Information Service in Korea (USIS-Korea) organized a film production department that produced, imported, and distributed films, during the 1950s and 1960s after the Korean War. Although they officially named all newsreels and documentaries as "public information films," these films were called *munhwa yonghwa* (cultural films) in Korea. This term was applied to a vague category of films that were mainly distributed by government-level agencies for educational and propaganda purposes that included ethnographic, public information

documentaries, and educational features. Kim states, “These cultural films were closely followed by U.S. and ROK (Republic of Korea) public information agencies following liberation. When Park Chung-hee and his junta enacted the Motion Picture Act in 1961, they legally defined cultural films as films produced mainly from factual records in order to describe educational, cultural effects or social customs, from social, economic and cultural phenomena, and they obligated movie theaters to screen them before commercial features.”⁸²

More specifically, USIS-Korea’s film propaganda activities in the 1950s were occurred as part of a global control of USIS which was built as a U.S. foreign representative. From 1952 to 1960, the USIS-Korea’s film department moved to Sangnam studio and organized a full-scale film production system during that time, overlapping with the U.S. administration’s transition from Harry S. Truman to Dwight D. Eisenhower.⁸³ Therefore, Kim also says, “it is important to know the Eisenhower administration’s global strategy with USIS-Korea’s activities at the time. Eisenhower administration promoted “global imagery of integration” as the new strategic model, while the U.S. global strategies of the Truman Administration have been characterized by their “global imagery of containment,” including the Truman Doctrine and George F. Kennan’s blockade policy.”⁸⁴

⁸² Kim Han-sang, “Uneven Screens, Contested Identities-USIS, Cultural Films, and the National Imaginary in South Korea, 1945-1972.” PhD dissertation (Seoul University). 4-5.

⁸³ Ibid, 117.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 118. Also See, Christine Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 41-60.

On the basis of this background, according to Ho Eun, the USIS-Korea films produced in the 1950s often emphasized the themes of “reconstruction” and “U.S. aid” that were the goals of propaganda activities executed by one of policies of USIS-Korea. In other words, from a large perspective, these themes were the good reason for the establishment of the USIS-Korea’s film department and Liberty Production. The studio in Sangnam reflected the whole program of U.S. aid and rehabilitation of Korean society, equipped with state production facilities and its brand identity, “Liberty Production,” Ho explains that the task of Liberty Production in the 1950s was to promote and propagate these programs to Korean audiences. Consequently, the theme of economic and technical aid was repeatedly stressed in narratives of the USIS-Korea films during 50s and 60s.⁸⁵ For example, USIS-Korea made newsreels such as *Liberty News*⁸⁶ and feature films such as *With Hand and Heart*,⁸⁷ *Shipmates*,⁸⁸ *Island Doctor*,⁸⁹ *Coal*⁹⁰ and *Litany of Hope*⁹¹ and documentary films such as *The Mighty Han*,⁹² *Tank*,⁹³ *Master’s Hand*⁹⁴ and the films of Kim Ki-young (*Ward of Affection*,⁹⁵ *I am a Truck*,⁹⁶ *The Diary of Three Sailors*⁹⁷), were all about the reconstruction of Postwar Korea and U.S. economic support.

⁸⁵ Ho Eun, USIS film: The formation of U.S. hegemony and the education of Cold War modernity, Cultural film in South Korea in Cold War era (Korean Film Archive, 2011), 13-18.

⁸⁶ *Liberty News*, VOD, produced by USIS-Korea (1960; KOFA collection, 2011)

⁸⁷ *With Hand and Heart*, VOD, directed by Yang Seung Ryong (1962; KOFA collection, 2011)

⁸⁸ *Shipmates*, VOD, directed by Chun Sun Myung (Unknown year; KOFA collection, 2011)

⁸⁹ *Island Doctor*, VOD, directed by Chun Sun Myung (1965; KOFA collection, 2011)

⁹⁰ *Coal*, VOD, produced by USIS-Korea (Unknown year; KOFA collection, 2011)

⁹¹ *Litany of Hope*, VOD, produced by USIS-Korea (1962; KOFA collection, 2011)

⁹² *The Mighty Han*, VOD, produced by USIS-Korea (1963, KOFA collection, 2011)

⁹³ *Tank*, VOD, directed by Yang Seung Ryong (Unknown year, KOFA collection, 2011)

⁹⁴ *Master’s Hand*, VOD, directed by Han Tak Sung (Unknown year, KOFA collection, 2011)

⁹⁵ *Ward of Affection*, VOD, directed by Kim Ki-young (1953, KOFA collection, 2011)

⁹⁶ *I am a Truck*, VOD, directed by Kim Ki-young (1954, KOFA collection, 2011)

⁹⁷ *The Diary of Three sailors*, directed by Kim Ki-young (1955, KOFA collection, 2011)

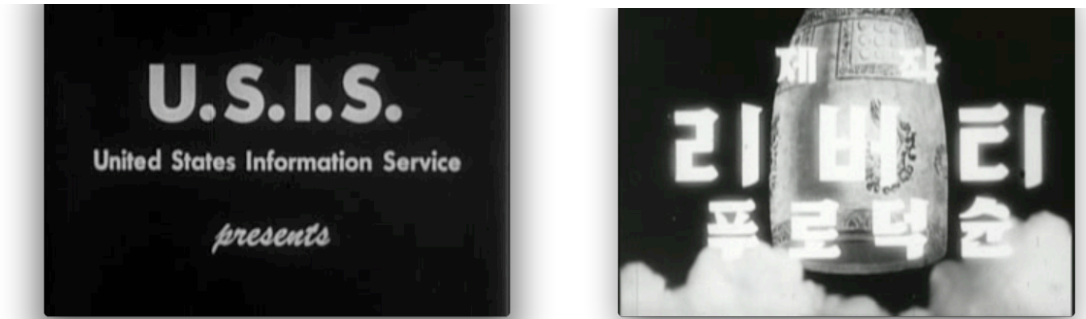


Figure 5: Opening credits of USIS films and Liberty Production films.

This phenomenon is very similar to the CIE films in Japan. Yuka Tsuchiya says that “CIE educational film was not simply the site of a power game between Japan and the U.S., but it was a process of forming hegemonic knowledge, ideas, desires, and expectations that would provide the cultural and psychological bases for U.S.-modeled capitalism. The U.S. government assumed industry and technology as the road to an affluent and modern Japan. In this sense, the CIE films were designed to extol the virtues of a culture of free market and technology.”⁹⁸ She explains that themes such as science, medicine and technology were depicted as main themes in the CIE educational films. That is to say, in many CIE films, the wonder for the advanced science and technology of the U.S. was repeatedly represented.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Tsuchiya Yuka, *U.S. Industry and Technology in the Cultural Cold War: Case Studies of Korea and Japan in mid 1950s* (Nazan Review of American Studies, Volume 33 (2011)), 191.

⁹⁹ For example, Tsuchiya explains that “a man representing a group named aoba-kai [the Green Leaves Association] who watched *Modern Highway* (CIE143) was impressed with the American highways, which looked like “beautiful patterns,” and wished that someday they would also have similar highways in Japan. Modern technology was closely associated with increased production. Also, a commentator from the Ministry of Fishery was “deeply impressed with *Men and Machine* (CIE70)” because the film showed “production power as the foundation of human life and social administration.” The “scientific” way of fire prevention, the “scientific” way to combat disease, and the “scientific” way to practice sports, etc., were commended by many commentators. Even *Atomic Power* (CIE36) gave a “wonderful impression to the audience about science and human [sic]” according to one woman-commentator.” Yuka Tsuchiya, “Imagined America in Occupied Japan: (Re-) Educational Films Shown by the U.S. Occupation Forces to the Japanese, 1948-

Within this discourse which the U.S technical aid was emphasized in both USIS and CIE films, I will focus on Kim Ki-young's three documentary films that explicitly show the rehabilitation of Korean bodies in relation to American technology. The films *Ward of Affection* (1953), *I am a Truck* (1954) and *The Diary of Three Sailors* (1955), all made by Kim Ki-young under the censorship of USIS, show how modern U.S. technology and advanced sanitation, combined with the strong national spirit of the Korean people, will rehabilitate and rebuild the lives of Koreans, which are depicted as damaged and destroyed after the Korean war. The story of these documentary films points to the problem of reconstructing the ruined body of the nation in the wake of the Korean War. That is to say, these propagandist films document Korean national pride and ethnic superiority by emphasizing Koreans' strong spirit while at the same time showing how advanced American medical and industrial technologies enable national health and provide Korea with a different kind of cure for the nation. By combining the U.S. technologies with the spiritual realm, these films contribute to the reconstruction of "the Korean liberal subject." First of all, we can see that the three films emphasize that U.S.'s scientific technology and that economic support helps the Korean people reconstruct their nation and rehabilitate their bodies.

Ward of Affections (1953) is one of the earliest films directed by Kim Ki-young and the first documentary produced by USIS-Korea. This film¹⁰⁰ is set in Severance hospital and depicts the rehabilitation of an injured war orphan, immediately

1952." (The Japanese Journal of American Studies, No. 13, 2002), 206-207.

¹⁰⁰ The film is a non-fiction documentary, but somehow dramatic, theatrical and subjective. Bill Nichols says that documenting something means creating a reality that is not objective but subjective. The filmmaking that Nichols espoused was essentially what we think of as the

after the South Korean army's rebuilding of Seoul during the Korean War. Through first-person voiceover narration, Chông Bok-nyô, a nurse at Severance, tells the story of Hong Sun-kil who lost his leg and his mother during the war. The film's main theme is how he recovers from his physical disability with the nurse, Bok-nyô's help. In *I am a Truck* (1954), the protagonist is an anthropomorphized truck damaged in the Korean War and abandoned in a UN cemetery. The truck is then moved to the department of car rehabilitation and dismantled. But with scientific and technological knowledge, disabled veterans disinfect the truck, repair its engine, and reassemble it. The almost dead truck is born again as a "new machine," which combines old and new parts to move freely again. Lastly, in *The Diary of Three Sailors* (1955), healthy sailors, who were trained in a military camp, repair and clean damaged ships and learn how to operate and rebuild ships. With the use of a sailing vessel, the sailors become mobile "new subjects" with access to the new world.

In *Ward of Affection*, Sun-kil is trying to recover from his injuries as quickly as possible and he finally stands up with the aid of a cane. Thus, he is depicted as a strong-willed child. The film presents Sun-kil's rehabilitation step by step: he gets out of bed, stands up, walks alongside the bed rail, and then finally walks with crutches. Each phase occurs to the rhythm of a fast tempo march. While Sun-kil's rehabilitation is shown to be successful, his triumph is short-lived, because he has to leave the safety of the hospital.

Griersonian documentary. The one-off definition he deployed was Grierson's own. According to Grierson, documentary should be an instrument of information, education and propaganda as well as "a creative treatment of reality." Bill Nichols, "Documentary Film and the Modernist Avant-Garde" (*Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Summer, 2001), 592.

Because Sun-kil has to “go out with a great burden of being a cripple...to the war-torn city, Seoul,” Bok-nyô worries about Sun-kil’s release from the hospital.

However, right after this scene, the film shows the scene in which soldiers appear and bring the boy into their vehicle and Bok-nyô’s narration continues, “See? We are not living in the world where people neglect an abandoned and frustrated boy in the street! Sun-kil’s pitiable circumstance provoked general sympathetic responses and he is able to offered an artificial leg based on the donation of 75,000 dollars by UN troops in Korea. All war orphans in Korea can be saved by this fun because it is sufficient for them, and thus, the newly built Chôjae Sujok Jôldan Adong Chillyoso [War Amputee Clinic for Children] will be critical for saving disabled children.” Through receiving the artificial leg, Sun-kil’s self-reliance grows, while the sudden appearance of the UN troops eliminates Bok- nyô’s worries about Sun-kil’s rehabilitation. (figure 6)



Figure 6: The artificial legs and Sun-kil’s practice, *Ward of Affection* (1953)

Similarly, *The Diary of Three Sailors* depicts the economic and technical aid of U.S.. Kim Han-sang points out, “After March 1942 when the Signal Corps Photographic Center was established, the U.S. War Department launched a newsreel series, *Fighting*

Men narrated by a soldier speaking typical soldier language.”¹⁰¹ Kim explains that “a speech given by Lt. General Wesley McNair at the Army War College likely influenced this discursive style, and this particular form of self-narration by soldiers became popular in film at this time.”¹⁰² He points out that Pare Lorentz’s *Diary of a Sergeant* (1945) is another soldier’s first-hand account of recovery following the loss of his arms and Kim Ki young’s *The Diary of Three Sailors* was very much influenced by this motif.¹⁰³ The film starts with a sailor, “I”’s narration in which a 17 years old sailor entered the ROK Navy and recalls his memory in boot camp. Including a narrator “I”, three sailors want to volunteer for the Navy. After taking their physicals, they pass their entrance examinations happy and proud. After they pass military training, the soldiers get different jobs. The film’s narrator takes charge of the ship navigation and repair, Kang goes to navigation school, and Ken takes on steam engineering. The narrator says that the U.S. navy has supplied ships and materials and that U.S training personnel have reformed the Koreans’ naval techniques. However, when “I” am learning about how to navigate, “I,” slips and falls off the bridge, when the ship is caught by the storm. He is transferred to a navy yard station, frustrated that he cannot be on board the ship. However, this tension quickly dissipates, and the film moves on to its next sequence with a long shot of the battleship against quiet music, in which the narrator is learning how to repair the ship. Finally, he succeeds in repairing the ship and he decides not to be on board and continues to work in ship repair. Ultimately, by showing that Koreans are quick to learn naval training with the

¹⁰¹ Kim, Han Sang, “Uneven Screens, Contested Identities-USIS, Cultural Films, and the National Imaginary in South Korea, 1945-1972.” PhD dissertation (Seoul University), 158.

¹⁰² Ibid, 158.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 158.

support of the U.S. Navy while overcoming physical and mental obstacles along the way, the film demonstrates how U.S Naval techniques and liberal military discipline enable Koreans to acquire a new subjectivity. (figure 7.8)

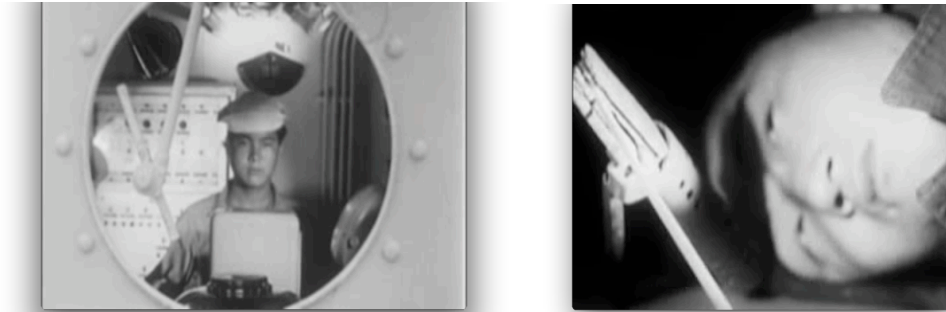


Figure 7: Close-up shots in which “I” become a navigator, but slips and falls off the bridge when the ship is caught by the storm, *The Diary of Three Sailors* (1955)

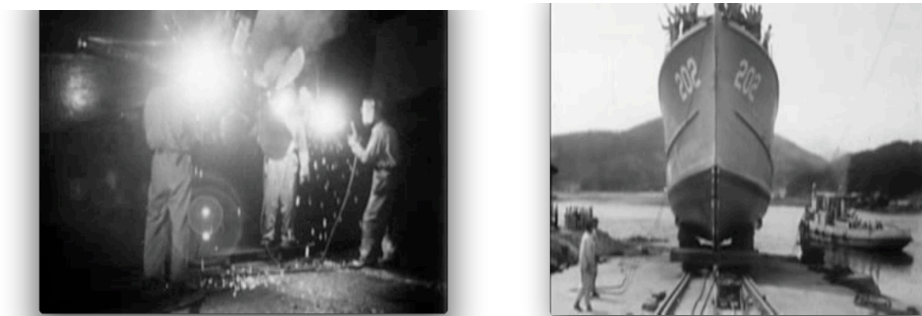


Figure 8: Long shots in which “I” succeeds in repairing a ship and sails a ship out to sea. *The Diary of Three Sailors* (1955)

I am a Truck, which is reminiscent of popular World War II American propaganda films, is also a first-person “documentary” narrated by a military truck. Kim Han-sang says, “in numerous children’s books of the era, a “talking Jeep” was featured and one of the OWI (United States Office of War Information) films, *Autobiography of a Jeep* (1943) presents an anthropomorphized truck, adding to this trend. Kim explains that the film’s description of the Jeep’s ability to cut through forests, navigate rivers, and board planes implies that the Jeep was utilized by military purposes.” He says that the

goal of these books and films is to help make people understand military equipment by anthropomorphizing it.¹⁰⁴ *I am a Truck* begins with the sound of a car crash followed by scenes of a UN army junkyard. The narrator is a broken truck dumped in this junkyard that is reborn as a new vehicle after being sent to a recycling factory of the South Korean military. When the truck is disassembled, it says, “My body was all damaged and rusty,” “I was completely taken apart,” “I was disassembled into tiny pieces,” “I was scared that I would not be recombined at all.” The film soon shifts to scenes of disabled veterans who learned how to work with wonderful American technology to clean and repair all the auto parts. As the truck-narrator says, “my stained skin and contaminated engine of my heart due to Korea war was now all cleaned up...After I saw the serious attitude of the Korean veterans and felt strong spirits of them as they were operating on me, my worries disappeared.”¹⁰⁵(figure 9, 10)



¹⁰⁴ Kim, Ibid, 160, also see, NFPF (National Film Preservation Foundation) (ed.) *Treasures from American Film Archives: 50 Preserved Films*: San Francisco: Water Mark Press, 2000.

¹⁰⁵ Kim Han Sang interpreted the fact Sun-kil’s recovery, a ship’s repair and a broken truck’s repair were attended by a small failure as a symptom of contesting identities between Americanization and South Koreans’ nationalism. However, I argue that the fact that after a small failure, rebuilding a new subject implies explicitly “liberalism” led by the U.S. In other words, the combination of U.S’s economic and technological aid and Korean’s strong will, which does not yield to a failure, is the metaphor of “postwar liberalism.” I will explain this in next section in more details.

Figure 9: Broken and dumped truck and that was then fixed by the Korean veterans. *I am a truck (1954)*



Figure 10: A newborn Truck, going to the outside. *I am a truck (1954)*

Connecting these film narratives to social and cultural phenomena at the time, Ho Eun points out that after Korean War, USIS was involved in the life style and bodily practices of the Korean people on a social and cultural level. He explains that USIS tried to establish power in relation to individuals through the body both directly and indirectly. While they executed policies of hygiene and health care as a form of direct contact, they also broadened indirect contact with Korean's individual body and life *qua* population through diverse media such as films, flyers and posters. Ho points out that the image of the U.S. in USIS film has an inseparable link to the Second World War and the Korean War, in which the U.S. was a staunch ally of South Korea, saving the latter from Japanese colonialism and from North Koreans' communism. The U.S. is thus depicted as helping South Korea reconstruct a modern liberal nation by executing programs of hygiene, welfare, material aid, and technology transfer.¹⁰⁶ In other words, USIS films functioned as some of most important mass mediums for propagating U.S hegemony and

its image as a leader or guide of world order. They did so by representing the images of a U.S that governed and protected the lives of the Korean people.¹⁰⁷

Yuka Tsuchiya also says that “the educational CIE films in occupied Japan were part of the U.S. re-education policy for Japan, and in a larger context, part of the American postwar project to export the “consensus culture” overseas. The purpose of “re-education,” as explained in the U.S. policy papers, was to “effect changes in certain ideologies and ways of thinking of the individual Japanese” by using “all possible media and channels.”¹⁰⁸ This is very similar with the role of USIS films.

- Formation of the Korean as a liberal subject and the rebuilding of South Korea as a liberal nation-state

Considering the historical context of relations between Korean rehabilitation and U.S.’s economic support, John P. DiMoia says that the United States and South Korea had already started to engage in technical and economic exchange from 1945 and it was active, notably during Korean War, although the security and viability of nation against communism is primarily important. He explains that:

Economic exchange administered through the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA) provided much-needed support to the government of ROK President Syngman Rhee, by assisting with critical infrastructure and basic necessities, rather than offering extensive training programs or power. In May 1948, the Korean War would bring dramatic change to this relationship and, even more powerfully, for the nature and scope of any future relationship of technical

¹⁰⁷ Ho Eun, *U.S.A's hegemony and Korean nationalism*, (Nation and Cultural Institute of Korea university, 2008)., 141-145

¹⁰⁸ Tsuchiya Yuka, “Imagined America in Occupied Japan: (Re-) Educational Films Shown by the U.S. Occupation Forces to the Japanese, 1948-1952.” (*The Japanese Journal of American Studies*, No. 13, 2002),194.

exchange, emphasizing medicine in particular. The diverse forms of American and international aid made available to South Korea would begin as early as late 1950, when it appeared that victory for the combined forces of American and United Nations (UN) armies was imminent. The humanitarian face of this scenario made for an appealing sell, offering to potential donors the possibility of contributing to the reconstruction of a nation unified through a brief conflict.¹⁰⁹

Ho Eun also explains that South Korea during the 1950s is the place where not only anti-communist U.S militarism was carried out, but also where U.S. “liberal democracy” and the “liberal economic system” were demonstrated and introduced. He insists that U.S government forces were regarded as a leader of the liberal era in which U.S hegemony on political economy was carried out. In order to do this, they induced “governmentality” to secure the intrinsic “life support system” of South Korea.¹¹⁰ This precisely overlaps with the Foucauldian idea of the liberal art of government.

In this context, the new subjectivity (independent, liberal and cosmopolitan) of Korean people in Kim Ki-young’s films can be also understood under the concept of Foucauldian governmentality and biopolitics. The narrative about governing and operating the human body (the leg) and the mechanical body (the truck and the ship) in these films explicitly symbolizes how technological developments are embedded in liberal economic strategies and political rationalities on the dimension of “Foucauldian biopolitics and governmentality.” Foucault says that “the things that government is concerned with are men in their relations, their links, their imbrications with those other

¹⁰⁹ John P. DiMoia, *Reconstructing Bodies: Biomedicine, Health, and Nation-Building in South Korea since 1945*, (Stanford University Press, 2013), 4-6.

¹¹⁰ Ho Eun, *Ibid*, 18-21.

things which are wealth, resources, means of subsistence and the territory with its specific qualities, climate, irrigation and fertility...”¹¹¹ Foucault says that:

The fact that a government is concerned with this imbrication of men and things, is confirmed by a metaphor that is invoked in these treatises on government, namely the ship. What does it mean to govern a ship? It means clearly to take charge of the sailors, but also of boat and its cargo; to take care of a ship means also to reckon with winds, rocks, and storms; and it consists in that activity of establishing a relation between the sailors, who are to be taken care of, the ship which is to be taken care of, and the cargo, which is to be brought safely to port, and all those eventualities like winds, rocks, and storms and so on.¹¹²

In this sense, for Foucault, government is the right disposition of things, so as to not lead to a form of the common good, but to an end which is convenient for each of the things that are to be governed. In the films, after the protagonist “I” decides not to go back to the ship, he says that each man has different skills and talents and that he now knows where he has to be. The narrator continuously says that he can build and repair ships and that he will leave other people to use them and that he is satisfied with his civilian job (*The Diary of Three Sailors*). Sun-kil also goes about his rehabilitation program in chronological order, such as getting out of bed, standing up, walking alongside a bed rail, and walking on crutches. In doing so, his body (leg) is replaced by a new and rehabilitated body (*Ward of Affection*). The broken truck, which was completely disassembled and separated into usable and unusable parts, was reconstructed using new parts and repaired parts according to accurate scientific knowledge (*I am a Truck*). This explicitly shows the individual being disposed of into “biopolitical life and order,” just as

¹¹¹ Michael Foucault, “Governmentality,” *Power*, (New Press, 2000), 209.

¹¹² Foucault, *Ibid*, *Power*, 209.

the whole population of “Koreans” was, based not on the common good but on the liberal order of individual convenience.

For Foucault, biopolitics marks the threshold of political modernity since it places life at the center of political order. In this theoretical perspective, there is an intimate link between the constitution of a capitalist society and the birth of biopolitics. Furthermore, biopolitics is a theoretical critique of the “juridico-discursive” model that assumes power is exercised as interdiction and repression in a framework of law and legality resting ultimately on the problem of sovereignty. In contrast, Foucault uses the notion of biopolitics to stress the productive capacity of power that cannot be reduced to the ancient sovereign “right of death.” While sovereignty mainly operated as a “subtraction mechanism” that seized life in order to suppress it, the new life-administering power is dedicated to inciting, reinforcing, monitoring and optimizing the forces under its control.¹¹³ Similarly, for Foucault it is precisely the discovery of population as the ultimate end of government that characterizes what he calls governmentality, or how governing is thought of and how power is exercised in the modern period. Here it is not the rationality of government in and of itself that is of primary importance, but the welfare of the population, and the means that government uses to attain these ends are themselves all in some sense immanent to the population. In short, Takahashi Fujitani clearly explains about Foucauldian governmentality as below, “In the modern regime of governmentality, practices of governing seek to optimize the life of populations by

¹¹³ Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 116-121

guiding conduct through a vast and deep assemblage of authorities, technologies, and knowledge and operate through the mobilization of desires and interests.”¹¹⁴

Moreover, the films represent “the hospital,” “the military camp” and “the sailing vessel” as what Foucault calls “heterotopias” during post war Korea, which create a different real space for liberal South Korea’s regime under U.S hegemony. *The Diary of Three Sailors* and *Ward of Affection* represent “the military camp” and “hospital” as a good place where navy volunteers and wounded patients can eat enough meat and foods, take baths and do laundry, where they are free to go home on holidays and where families can visit them as well. Operating or rebuilding a sailing vessel or a truck is related to navigating Koreans’ subjectivity which was immobile before, but now rebuilt and able to access the free and new world. By being able to enjoy a good life in a military camp and hospital, and by being able to operate the sailing vessel and the truck, naval volunteers, wounded patients, and the machine itself (the truck) represent the possibility of gaining “new life” and reconstructing “liberal subjectivity” as independent and international Koreans.¹¹⁵

In this light, I claim that these “heterotopias” were engaged in Foucauldian

¹¹⁴ Takahashi Fujitani, “Right to Kill, Right to Make Live Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans During WWII”, *Representation*; Summer 2007; 99; Research Library. 15.

¹¹⁵ The representation of the military camp in this film is similar to that of *Dear solider*, (1944) which takes place in the Japanese imperial army. After volunteer soldiers take a health check-up, they are arranged into the military camp and take military training, and then sometimes they enjoy entertainment by watching music performances, while enjoying good food and a clean and comfortable daily life. They are free to go to visit their home, and their parents are also allowed to visit them. The military camp in this film was propagated as a great place to improve Korean’s lives with cheerful music and a happy atmosphere. In this light, we can see that the two movies are very similar in terms of Foucauldian biopolitics and governmentality, although there are differences between *The Diary of Three Sailors* and *Dear Solider*, but I will leave my argument of this for the future projects.

biopolitics, in which all other real emplacements, that can be found within the culture, are represented, contested, and reserved. These sorts of places are all occupied or colonized places. In this light, we can know that Foucauldian governmentality and biopolitics, which improve and liberate colonial subjects, must have been effective for colonies and occupied places. This was realized in these films, through Foucauldian biopolitics, which was led by the U.S. and distinguished the states of domination that institutionalized and sustained those states for the flexible power-and-play in everyday life that Foucault calls “strategic relations.”¹¹⁶ It is interesting that Foucault uses the “mobile ship” as a metaphor for liberal bio-power just as the liberal Korean nation-state was symbolized in *The Diary of Three Sailors*. He says:

The ship is a piece of floating space, a placeless place, that lives by its own devices, that is self-enclosed and, at the same time, delivered over to the boundless expanse of the ocean, and that goes from port to port, all way to the colonies. The ship has been not only the greatest instrument of economic development but also reservoir of imagination. The sailing vessel is the heterotopia par excellence. In civilizations without ships the dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police that of the corsairs.¹¹⁷

Similarly with the liberal bio-power was symbolized as a mobile ship, Naoki Sakai and John Solomon explain about the characteristic of liberal governmentality as below, “with the advent of modern theories of political economy in the context of liberalism, a new series of objects and techniques were enabled, the aim of which was to render the

¹¹⁶ Michel Foucault, *Translation, Biopolitics, Colonial Difference*, (Traces: A multilingual Series of Cultural Theory and Translation, 2006), 19.

¹¹⁷ Michel Foucault, *Different Spaces: Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, (Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1994), 184-185.

principle of governance completely intrinsic and self-contained.”¹¹⁸ In this sense, the three USIS films show that U.S. led biopolitics/flexible power-play were exercised in the rebuilding of Koreans’ liberal subjectivity during the postwar period. Thus, they imply that the Korean nation-state, led by the U.S. had a complex “life support system” and could enter into the world system of liberalism.

-Biotechnology: American Technology and Korean Spirit

In these USIS films, American technologies are embodied in Sun-kil’s artificial limb, the repaired truck, the rebuilt sailing vessels, and the navigator’s bodies. At the same time, as I have analyzed above, these films also emphasize that the Korean orphans’, nurses’, sailors’, and disabled veterans’ strong will and spirit contributed to the successful operation of Korea. How can we interpret “Korean rehabilitation” in films that engaged both the advanced technologies of U.S occupation and a strong national spirit and culture?

This phenomenon also can be shown in the war films, *Embattled Korea* (1950)¹¹⁹ which was made under the war department, Air force and Navy which included USIS. A film advertisement emphasizes the fact that this film will show some exotic scenes of South Korea including its unique costumes and customs. At the same time, it alludes to how American technology, in this case color film, aerial cinematography, and American equipment shown in the film, bring these spectacular and exotic scenes of South Korea to the audience. For example, the promotional materials of the World Adventure Series introduce the film, as below:

¹¹⁸ Foucault, *Translation, Biopolitics, Colonial Difference*, 24.

¹¹⁹ *Embattled Korea*, FILM, directed by Homer Flint Kellems (1950; Missing)

HAVE KELLEMS, his color pictures are superb, and he is a splendid speaker. Your audience will be fascinated. Kellems brings you the only full-length first color film of South Korea now being offered anywhere. Plus the most unusually interesting exhibit—if you request it—of Korean costumes and native handicrafts. “Just the thing to pep up intermissions between reels!” Also, as stated in the press document, “All scenes in Embattled Korea” - aerial views of the country, South Korean villages, costumes of the people, their festivals and rituals, native troops on maneuver -- were filmed within the last 12 months.” Also, in another line, Spectacular color coverage of South Korea from Pusan to the 38th Parallel. The South Korean troops on maneuver. Their American equipment. The new embattled countryside- villages and rural folk. Quaint customs and rituals. Co. Kellems brings you the only existing color film story of South Korea Today!¹²⁰

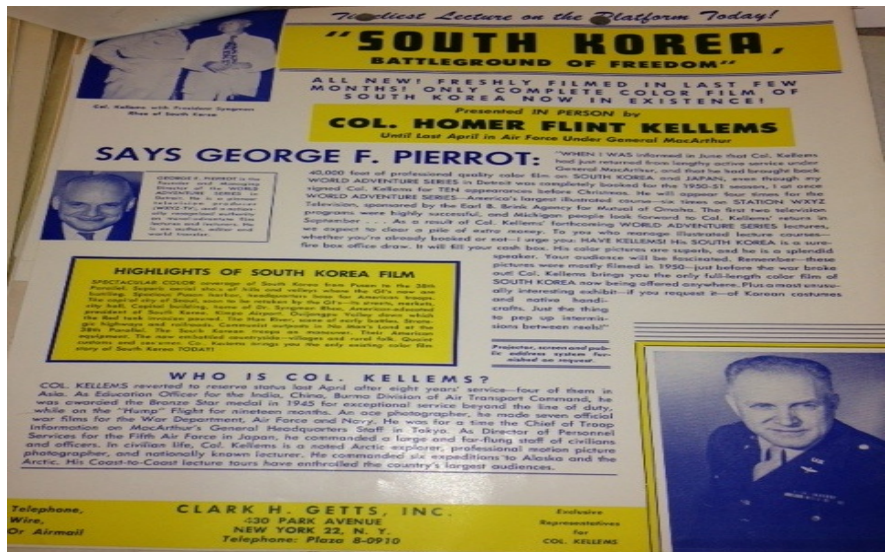


Figure 11. The advertisement flyer of a film, *Embattled Korea* (1950) says, “All new! freshly filmed in last few months! Only complete color film of South Korea Now in Existence!” from The World Adventure Series advertisement titled “South Korea: Battleground of Freedom”, from University news series press release (University of Minnesota, 1951)

¹²⁰ The World Adventure Series advertisement, University news series press release (University of Minnesota, 1951)

Similarly with Kim Ki-young's film, the advertisement of the film emphasizes how the superiority of American technology enabled the showing (or demonstration) of the uniqueness of Korean culture and customs which expressed the Korean spirit. More directly relating to the USIS films, the magazine *Culture and Custom*, first published in 1948, emphasize that both U.S. aid and a strong national spirit formed the complicated representation of the Korean during the 50s and 60s after Korean War. It was obvious that it was impossible to acquire such self-reliance subject without U.S. technical support. However, Koreans were supposed to be independent, both as subjects of their rebuilt nation and as members of the liberal and international world.¹²¹ Kim Han-sang interpreted the phenomenon of film representation on the combination of the U.S aid and the superiority of national spirit as a symptom of contesting identities between Americanization and South Koreans' nationalism. However, I argue that the fact that rebuilding a new subject with its own ethnic spirit implies explicitly "liberalism" led by the U.S. In other words, the combination of U.S's economic and technological aid and Korean's strong will, which does not yield to a failure, is the metaphor of "(postwar) colonial liberalism."

In order to explain the intervention of Korean spirit in U.S.'s technical and economic aid in relation to colonial liberalism, I will bring the work of Brian Larkin, who explores the ways that technology was utilized in colonial rule of the Nigerian film industry. He argues that colonial states produce colonized subjectivities by disembodiment of them from their rooted cultural world and "exposing" them (through the mediation of

¹²¹ *Culture and Custom*, vol.1 issue.2, 1948.

technology) to the circulation of ideas from around the world. He states, “Technology represents a world order in which the immaterial workings of God or the human spirit are subordinated to the power of science to rationally order and control the natural world. British mastery was part of the conceptual promise of colonialism and its self-justification--the freeing of natives from superstitious belief by offering them the universalizing world of science.”¹²² In this way, the spectacle of colonial rule was shaped through the building of complicated technological projects. Larkin explains that when imperial forces try to bring the logic of media in order to expose traditions to the free flows of ideas in the framework of enlightenment, and when the colonizers mobilize an legal system to explain technology, what is important is that there are traditions challenging the new technology to discipline and manage this instability.¹²³

However, Larkin also explains that Stephen Graham and Simon Marvin, who term this mediation “enhancement,” says that “how new technologies do not simply destroy older forms of communication but call into being new motilities and sometimes intensify older ones.”¹²⁴ Liberalist were less interested in emphasizing the native’s cultural difference than in asserting its presence in an aspiration toward cosmopolitan subjectivity conversant in a setting that is itself non-monolithic, ethnically speaking. In this context, radio, television, and cinema networks, like road works and steel plants,

¹²² Brian Larkin, *Signal and Noise/Media, Infrastructure, And Urban Culture in Nigeria* (Duke University Press, 2008), 7.

¹²³ Ibid, 7-10.

¹²⁴ Ibid, 6.

were infrastructural evidence of the political success of independence, the icons of new postcolonial nations.¹²⁵

One place where we see a possibility for aspirations to postcolonial internationalism in *The Diary of Three Sailors* is when Korean become new Korean subjects, embodying the U.S's technology while the narrator, "I," tells the entire story in English. Meanwhile, the anthropomorphized truck in *I am a Truck* is an American embodying the Korean's spirit who narrates his story in Korean. The representation of a Korean who speaks in English and an American who speaks in Korean is very significant in postwar Korea. In *The Diary of Three Sailors*, the Korean body, in which American technology is embedded, and the Korean who embodies "English" technologies [technology \neq technique in English] have something in common. It suggests that American mechanical and linguistic technology give rise to a "new life" to Koreans (ethnically already strong and superior!). Therefore, a Korean becomes not only independent from colonial subjectivity but also a universal subject who is more secure than before because he is conversant beyond the limitations of "Korean spirit." On the other hand, the American Truck in *I am a Truck*, who speaks in fluent Korean, is reborn through the modern Korean spirit and imported technological know-how. This is the basis for the reconstruction of both Korea and the Korean. It serves as an allegory for a Korean desire to participate as the subject of a postcolonial nation-state while maintaining an essentialized Korean subjectivity based in a notion of ethnic spirit.

Therefore, the film's narrative about the engagement of Koreans' spirits (both their inherently strong spirits) and the role of American technology in regenerating Korean subjectivity, satisfies Koreans' desire for being both autonomous and

¹²⁵ Ibid, 3-5.

cosmopolitan subjects. This can be interpreted via Derrida's argument of the relation of "biotechnology" to "autoimmunity." For Derrida, (auto) immunity is the mode by which religion (tradition or spirit) and science are reciprocally engaged in each other. The religion or spirit in which a technology is delivered over to a faith in an iterability allows human to identify the autoimmunitary logic.¹²⁶ He writes:

Religion's iterability presupposes the automatic and machinelike and it (the movement that renders religion and tele-technoscientific reason) secretes its own antidote but also its own power of auto-immunity. We are here in a space where all self-protection of the unscathed, of the safe and sound, of the sacred must protect itself against its own protection, its own police, its own power of rejection, in short against its own, which is to say, against its own immunity.¹²⁷

For Derrida, Religious (auto) immunity also has a biopolitical symptom. Thus, in the mechanical rules by which the religions say they evaluate life, they do so only by embodying a transcendental form of life. In this, "biological life is repeatedly transcendence that opens up the community, constitutively formed around the living, to the space of death that is linked to the automan...to technics, the machine, prosthesis: in a word, to the dimensions of the auto-immune and self-sacrificial supplementarity that is silently at work in every auto-co-immunity. He states that religion (spirit) "accompanies and precedes" what he calls "the critical and tele-technoscience reason, or better those technologies that decrease the distance and increase the speed of communications globally." ¹²⁸ It obviously links to the phenomena of capitalism and liberalism. In this

¹²⁶ Roberto Esposito, Translator's Introduction, *Bios: Biopolitics and Philosophy*, (University of Minnesota, 2008), xiv.

¹²⁷ Ibid, Also see, Derrida's "Faith and Knowledge", 44.

¹²⁸ Derrida, Ibid, 51.

light, I examined the regeneration of the Korean as an autoimmunitary subject in the terms of “biopolitics of biotechnology” in the context of postwar Korean liberalism closely in the earlier section.

-Postwar propagandist documentary as governmentality and infrastructure

These films are all “cultural films” (*Munhwa yonghwa*) in the form of non-fiction documentary, but they are somehow also dramatic, theatrical and subjective. In the 1950s in South Korea, many “cultural films” such as USIS films, war documentary films, and screen biographies of historical figures were made. Lee Sun-jin points out that the 50s “cultural film” mostly was concerned with representation and memory of the colonial period and the American life style within the documentary form, which was led by United States Information Services (USIS), starting with Bureau of Public Information and it was utilized to reproduce the dominant hegemony of the Korean State and U.S. occupation.¹²⁹

Looking at the global influences of national cinema, Lee Grieveson focuses on the relation between the formation of documentary and the cultural film by observing Britain in the interwar period. He argues that in the British context, new institutions of film production affiliated within political parties and state government led to the creation of a series of films that shows the importance of trade within the empire. He insists that these conditions of production led to the development of a film form and practice that came

¹²⁹ Sunjin Lee and Seung Hee Lee, eds., *Korean Cinema and Democracy*, (Sun-In Press, 2011, Seoul), 212-213.

later to be called “documentary.” He says that, “Documentary cinema emerged, and was established in the space shared by state and corporate entities; the capital-intensive investment in film was made with the goal of publicizing new economic and political forms.”¹³⁰ He also argues that Grierson’s political film theory sought to be related to a space for state-sponsored British cinema and to perform a liberal ideal of interdependence between individual and social formation. That is to say, a classical realism was the appropriate register for this kind of film production that engaged with ‘scene and setting,’ and ‘the sweep of events,’ with a proper focus on aspects of individual life. Furthermore, he insists that like the British state’s case, Grierson’s government-sponsored agenda on film, which is a practice of cinema that was positioned between the poles of economic individualism and collectivism, was also utilized to establish a political role for liberal countries such as the U.S.¹³¹

Connecting to this argument, in the postwar era, Bill Nichols also explained the relation between documentary and cultural film. What Nichols espoused was essentially the Griersonian documentary of the time as well. The one-off definition he deployed was Grierson’s own: “the creative treatment of actuality.” Bill Nichols explains that Grierson thought that the documentary was “a tool of citizenship,” that is, “a cinematic social pedagogy addressed by an individual or corporate author to the citizen of the modern industrial nation-state.” They played a crucial role in developing what Foucault would call “strategies of domination.”¹³² This phenomenon exactly overlaps with the fact that most cultural films made in South Korea during the post war take dramatized films and

¹³⁰ Lee Grieveson, “The Cinema and the (Common) Wealth of Nations.” (*Empire and Film*, British Film Institute, 2011), 4.

¹³¹ *Ibid*, 94.

¹³² Bill Nichols, *Ibid*, 599-604.

present intricate themes through this argument and assertion into the documentary form. Toba Koji also explains that Grierson's creative dramatization of actuality was utilized in both prewar and postwar propaganda documentary films. For example, CIE films occupy an important position in the postwar documentary film history (postwar cultural film) of 1950s Japan. This was mobilized by the GHQ, which propagated American lifestyle and democracy.¹³³

Linking Grierson's argument to the postwar in East Asia specifically, Markus Nornes points out that when the American Occupation utilizes documentary form in postwar era to democratize Japan (and Korea) as a process of "defascistization," views on the world became more structural. They gave the film form, and thus the documentary filmmaking heavily relied on scenario. He says:

Creative treatment of actuality came to mean the writing of a scenario, the casting of non-actors, and storytelling based on the continuity style of Hollywood. This was the standard in most of the world. Typical of the times, this film was highly pedagogical—as was its style. The film was completely scripted. Since the actors were non-professionals, their stilted performance clearly reveals the staginess of the whole affair. Furthermore, during all dialogue scenes, the director faithfully keeps the camera to one side of the stageline, deploys eyeline matching, and carefully stages the action with the shot-reverse shot figure. The director also employs all the other hallmarks of continuity editing, such as matching on action

¹³³ Toba Koji, *In the 1950's: The Period of Documentary*. (Tokyo: Kashitsu Book Press, 2010), 78-80.

and carefully transitioning using establishing shots.¹³⁴

This case is explicitly shown in the semi-documentary form of USIS films. For example, as I analyzed earlier, three of Kim Ki-young's USIS films are non-fiction documentaries, but these films are also very dramatic, which is one of the characteristics of typical Hollywood melodramas. For example, although the protagonists in these three films are successfully rehabilitated, they all face failure and frustration in the middle of the film narratives. For example, In *Ward of Affection*, although Sun-kil returns to society healthily in the end, a nurse, Bok-nyô worries that Sun-kil won't walk after he leaves the hospital. In *The Diary of Three Sailors*, although the film has a happy ending when the protagonist realizes his dream by being a ship repairman, he is first frustrated when he fails to become a ship's navigator in the middle of the narrative. Also, in *I am a Truck*, although an anthropomorphized Truck is finally reborn as a new and well-functioning vehicle, he was first afraid that he wouldn't be able to be repaired when he was sent to the Army's recycling factory and disassembled in the beginning of film. These dramatic characteristics of success and failure are intensified through the use of Hollywood style continuity editing, such as the shot-reverse shot, eye-line matching, and so on. Therefore, through both dramatic and actual aspects of the propaganda documentary film, the audience identifies with the idea of liberal governmentality of the film. Moreover, the fact that the films were scripted implies that they were censored and thus, it was hard for a director to describe the moments of spontaneity and naturalness of documentary beyond the propaganda of Griersonian documentary. For example, it was said that Kim Ki-young

¹³⁴ Markus Nornes, *The Cruel*, (Concentric: Literary and Cultural Studies 39.1, March 2013), 191-192.

was able to write his own scenario and make dramatic scenes for *I am a Truck*, and thus, in the film, he tried to emphasize how Korean spirit and imported know-how could give a life to the American Truck. By doing so, he wanted to establish Korean's national identity, contesting with American hegemony.¹³⁵ However, this success of combination was also the key to the message of postwar liberalism in postcolonial nation-states. In This perspective seems to have been the same attitude that public information agencies in South Korea, including USIS-Korea, employed when making cultural films.

Consequently, as Mark Nornes points out, “documentary film has a kinship with those other nonfictional systems that together make up what we may call the discourses of sobriety,”¹³⁶ citing Bill Nichols's remark that documentary was “a tool of citizenship.”¹³⁷ He cites Bill Nichols's argument, as in the passage below:

Science, economics, politics, foreign policy, education, religion, and welfare—these systems assume instrumental power; they assume that they can and should alter the world itself; that they can effect action and entail consequences. Their discourses have an air of sobriety since they are seldom receptive to “make-believe” characters, events or entire worlds. (Unless they serve as pragmatically useful simulations of the “real” one). Discourses of sobriety are sobering because they regard their relation to the real as direct, immediate, and transparent. Through them power exerts itself. Through them, things are made to happen. They are the vehicles of domination and conscience, of power and knowledge, desire and will.¹³⁸

I think this idea can be applicable not only to a radical documentary but also to propagandist documentary. Moreover, USIS films were shown by Mobile Education

¹³⁵ Kim Han-sang, *Ibid*, 157-160.

¹³⁶ Markus Nornes, *The Crux*, (*Concentric: Literary and Cultural Studies* 39.1, March 2013), 199

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, 199.

¹³⁸ Nornes, *Ibid*, 200. Also See, Bill, Nichols. *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1991.

Units that traveled to rural areas. The projection screens were sometimes located on vehicles such as Jeeps and Trucks. In this way, visual mass media, such as mobile documentaries, were effective not only in changing people's minds ideologically but also in engraving certain images in people's minds sensationally and physically. In this light, as Lee Grieveson suggests, the formation of governmentality or liberalism is a good theoretical framework to research the production of norms of narrative form and characterization in screen cultures and classical cinema, which can be understood to model liberal subjects. One might imagine that the USIS propagandist documentary film form itself functioned as one of "the technologies of the power" or the "liberal arts of government" in building "Koreans liberal subjectivity."

From this perspective, I claim that the propagandist documentary form of USIS film was a medium where Foucauldian governmentality and biopolitics were practiced through the mobilization of desires and interests. In general, cinema, especially national cinema, has been studied as an ideological apparatus (as an apparatus of the state). For Althusser, "ideology is the representation of the subject's imaginary relationship to his or her real conditions of existence."¹³⁹ Althusser said that "if it is true that the representation of real conditions of existence of the individual occupying the posts of agents of production, exploitation, repression, ideologization and scientific practice, does in the last analysis arise from the relation of production and the relations that derive from the relations of production. We can say the following: all ideology represents in its necessarily imaginary distortion not the existing relations of production, but above all the imaginary relationship of individuals to the relations of production and the relations that

¹³⁹ Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses", *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, (London, New Left Books, 1977), 110.

derive from them.”¹⁴⁰ Althusser says that “what is represented in ideology is therefore not the system of real relations, which governs the existence of individuals, but the imaginary relation of those individuals to real relations in which they live.”¹⁴¹ Fredric Jameson thinks of “representation” in relation to ideology. For Jameson, “representation” is the synonym of “figuration” itself, irrespective of the latter’s historical and ideological form.”¹⁴² He assumes in what follows that the forms of aesthetic production is connected in some way, with the replacement of representation.¹⁴³

However, the way these propagandistic documentary films relate meaning is based not only on fictional representations or ideology (superstructure) but also on non-fictional representation: the presentation of technology (mobile film itself) and the relations of production to viewers (infrastructure). Foucault mentions that “the multiplicity of individuals only exist when they are biologically bound to “the materiality” in which they live.”¹⁴⁴ He says that “what one tries to reach through this milieu in biopolitics is precisely the conjunction of a series of events produced by individuals, populations, and groups, and the quasi-natural events that occur around them.”¹⁴⁵ In this sense, the way these documentaries circulate and the way the spectators consume them is related to “governmentality” and “biopolitics.” Larkin also insists that analyzing media as technical infrastructure (economic and technological base) gives good

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 111.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 112.

¹⁴² Frederic Jameson, ‘The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism’, *Postmodern or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, (Duke University Press, 1992). 53

¹⁴³ Jameson 53.

¹⁴⁴ Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). 21.

¹⁴⁵ Foucault, *Ibid*, 21.

analytic reason for how these technologies functions as media systems. Larkin says, “Infrastructures are institutionalized networks that facilitate the flow of goods in a wider cultural and physical sense. Infrastructure refers to the totality of both technical and cultural systems that create institutionalized structures whereby goods of all sorts circulate, connecting and binding people into collectivities.”¹⁴⁶ In this sense, in propagandistic documentary film, what is “internalized” is not the “ideology” but the very mechanism of filmic projection. Taking these aspects into consideration, mobilizing people through media (documentary) as “propagandist form,” “infrastructure” and “apparatus of security” is overlapped with is intertwined with exercising bio-power on people and governing individuals as population (connecting individual to collectives). Also, these propagandist documentaries extend human subjectivity into non/semi-human subjectivity (technology itself or combined) on both narrative and spectatorial levels. This techno-human subjectivity is the so-called “liberal subjectivity” of postwar Korea.

¹⁴⁶ Larkin, *Ibid*, 5-6.

Chapter 3: Military Prostitution Melodramas as the embodiment of postwar Americanization in South Korea and Japan:

-Female body between biopolitical victimization and melodramatic resistance.

While the weak and damaged male subject is rehabilitated into a healthy and strong national subjectivity in the USIS films discussed in Chapter Two, the women who literally and visually embody both repulsion and fascination toward Americanization, and who deviate from sexual normativity, are represented in some maternal melodramas and in the melodramatic mode during the postwar period. As I analyzed in Chapter One, US occupation film production produced the dichotomous liberal female subjectivity split between a mother as a strong woman who plays a role in the familial reproduction or as a substitutive figure of the father and a modern girl who enjoys free love or a prostitute who gives sexual gratification to a man. This dichotomous female subjectivity was commensurate with patriarchal male desire in the biopolitical narrative of conventional melodrama. In this chapter, I will focus on the latter phenomenon in the body of the dichotomous female subject that, while fulfilling men's sexual desires, serves as an allegory for Korea as a national victim of U.S occupation when read through the lens of biopolitics—especially hygiene politics—and gender politics. This is the case even as it is excluded from the domestic fiction as a contaminated body.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Korean and Japanese melodramas often portrayed strippers, *yanggongju*, and *pan-pan* (prostitutes for American soldiers in Korea and Japan) who experience both economic exploitation and sexual liberation, as seen in the *The Flower in Hell* (1958, Shin Sang OK), *Three O'clock P.M in a Rainy Day* (1958,

Park Jong Ho), *Confession of Flesh* (1964, Cho gung Ha), *Carmen* series (1951,52 Kinoshita Keisuke), *Tragedy of Japan* (1953, Kinoshita Keisuke), *Street of Shame* (1956, Mizoguchi Kenji), *Pigs and Battleships* (1961, Imamura Shohei) and *Gate of Flesh* (1964, Suzuki Seijun).¹⁴⁷ These films reflect imbalances arising from issues of Japan's defeat, U.S. Occupation, and the Korean War by generally adopting maternal melodrama and the melodramatic mode. The representation of women in these films implies the loss of the Pacific War and the trauma of the Korea War, a period when the Japanese and Korean male lost his power in the most dramatic and crippling way possible, becoming the diminished subject of U.S. occupying forces. As Susan J. Napier points out, "the foregrounding of a Japanese and Korean mother/prostitute signifies a despoiled Japan and a Korea violated by the foreign conqueror and by the weakness of her would-be male protector."¹⁴⁸ In many melodramas and mixed genre films, women become both victims

¹⁴⁷ *Carmen* series, DVD, directed by Kinoshita Keisuke (1951,52; Kinoshita Keisuke's complete box, DB-616, 2008), *Tragedy of Japan*, DVD, directed by Kinoshita Keisuke (1953; Kinoshita Keisuke's complete box, DB-616, 2008), *Street of Shame*, DVD, directed by Mizoguchi Kenji (1956; Criterion Collection, 2008), *Pigs and Battleships*, DVD, directed by Imamura Shohei (1961; Criterion Collection, 2009), *Gate of Flesh*, DVD, directed by Suzuki Seijun (1964; Criterion Collection, 2005), *The Flower in Hell*, DVD, directed by Shin Sang OK (1958; KOFA collection, 2011), *Three O'clock P.M in a Rainy Day*, DVD, directed by Park Jong Ho (1959; KOFA collection, 2011), *Confession of Flesh*, DVD, directed by Cho gung Ha (1964; KOFA collection, 2009).

¹⁴⁸ Susan J. Napier points out that "Tadao Sato has also explored the ways in which the depiction of the father had radically changed in postwar Japanese cinema, emphasizing that the "tradition of patriarchal domination was virtually upended," and he "became increasingly a clownish figure or simply absent." Susan J. Napier, "Woman Lost: The Dead, Damaged, or Absent Female in Postwar Fantasy," in *The Fantastic in Modern Japanese Literature: The Subversion of Modernity* (London: Routledge, 1996), 56-7. Also, metaphoric discourses of "war and defeat" were often distinctly gendered in melodrama. Marie Thorsten Morimoto also insists that Japan's cinematic metaphors employed the following situations in the postwar period: "First, 'feminine' representations seem to prevail.... Second, the portrayal of the family as a nation focuses on its disintegration rather than its consolidation, aiming at the same time for reconstruction, or at least, the acceptance of the circumstances, which caused such disintegration." Marie Thorsten Morimoto, "The Peace Dividend in Japanese Cinema: Metaphors of Demilitarized Cinema," *Colonialism and Nationalism in Asian Cinema*, ed. Wimal Dissanayake. (Indiana University, 1994).

of U.S. occupation and unpleasant reminders of Japanese and Korean men's incompetency. Women in these films represent a defeated or victimized and contaminated Japan and Korea, particularly through their on-screen sacrifices. This phenomenon shares a common thread with Susan Hayward's argument that melodrama focuses on family matters: conflicts and related issues of duty and love, and displays of masochism in the form of the inner violence of the self-sacrificing mother or wife. For Hayward, melodrama is a genre that emphasizes the value of the petit bourgeois and patriarchal family, thereby perpetuating the subordination of women to dominant ideologies.¹⁴⁹

More specifically, the woman's body represented as victimized and contaminated in melodramas can be clearly explained in relation to biopolitics. Borrowing Foucault's notion of the body politics of biopower, Hyon Joo Yoo points out that:

In East Asia, modernization of the sovereign state occurs within the colonial relation: Japanese colonial administration instituted a hygienic regime comprised of biophysics and pathology as Japanese colonialism did in the colonies. In order to articulate the sovereign nation-state and its body politics, and in order to consolidate the modern subject into the fulcrum of the modern nation-state as part of the universal history of modernization that a sovereign state and subject must achieve, it was necessary to construct the body of the incurable, the other of the healthy body itself. Once the incurable body is established as the limited concept

¹⁴⁹ Susan Hayward, *Cinema Studies: The Key Concepts*, (Routledge, 1996), 238, 244. Hayward explains about woman's role as below, "In one way or another a female protagonist is reinscribed into her "lawful" place as a mother. In this respect, it comes as no surprise that melodrama functions not only as the repression of female desire but also as the reassertion of women's role as reproducers and nurturers."

of the healthy, the idea and instrumentalization of the normative body becomes tenable.¹⁵⁰

In terms of the relation between the modern nation and colonialism, this logic of body politics can be applied to the U.S occupation period in Korea and Japan. With this background, we can therefore read Japanese and Korean melodramas as national allegories in relation to body politics to indicate both the victimized and contaminated body of the U.S occupation that reveals a specific historical context of Korea and Japan.¹⁵¹



Figure 11 *Yanggongju* in military camp town in Seoul in the 1970's (left,) *Pan-pan* in military camp town in Tokyo (right), (Snow light Archive) photo by Kuwabara Shisei.

¹⁵⁰ Hyon Joo Yoo, "The Incurable Feminine Women Without a Country In East Asian Cinema," in *Trans-Pacific Imagination: Rethinking Boundary, Culture and Society*, ed. Naoki Sakai and Hyon Joo Yoo, (World Scientific Publishing Co., 2012), 170-172.

¹⁵¹ In this sense, Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto's emphasis on the difference between Hollywood and East Asian melodramas is apparent. Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto says, "the examination of melodrama in postwar Japanese cinema must take into account the fundamental difference between the position of the United States as a hegemonic superpower and that of Japan as a semi-peripheral country within the U.S hegemonic sphere. Postwar Japanese cinema's melodramatic form becomes intelligible only if it is correlated with this difference". Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, "Melodrama, Postmodernism, and Japanese Cinema," *Melodrama and Asian Cinema*, ed. Wimal Dissanayake (London: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 101.

In order to demonstrate this in depth, I will focus on four examples: *The Flower in Hell* and *Carmen Comes Home*, which explicitly shows ‘the ambivalent feeling’ toward repulsion and fascination toward Americanization; and *Tragedy of Japan* and *Confession of Flesh*, which adopt the maternal melodrama genre, centering on military prostitute mother figures. By looking at these four films, I will trace how female protagonists are victimized by the complicity between the gender and body politics of the patriarchal nation and American militarism. At the same time, I will pay attention to the fact that there are melodramatic moments in these films that go beyond the victimization project and hygiene politics. In the frame of melodrama as woman’s genre¹⁵² and melodramatic mode,¹⁵³ I will show how these films disrupt gender roles by exposing the contradictions

¹⁵² Many feminists see melodrama as a woman’s genre because it plays out women’s forbidden longings via the *mise-en-scène* of female desire and the subversions of the female spectator. Laura Mulvey, for one, argues that, “Ideological contradiction is the overt mainspring and specific content of melodrama...its excitement comes from conflict not between enemies, but between people tied by blood or love.” She goes on to say, “There is a dizzy satisfaction in witnessing the way that sexual difference under patriarchy is fraught, explosive, and erupts dramatically into violence within its own private stomping ground, the family.” In this sense, she insists that “the male subject no longer occupies his typical space in the workplace, the sphere of action. He is now in the domestic, female sphere, which is the passive sphere. In order to achieve a successful resolution to the conflict, the male subject has to go along with values for which the domestic sphere aims. As a result, he becomes more feminized in the process.” Laura Mulvey, “Notes on Sirk and Melodrama,” *Home is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman’s Film*, ed., Christine Gledhill (London: British Film Institute, 1987), 75-78.

¹⁵³ Linda Williams points out “the limitations of melodrama, which is often classified as sentimental and apolitical, as a “woman’s genre.” She also challenges us to redefine melodrama in different ways. She insists that melodrama should be read neither as bourgeois, Hollywood classical realism, a critical “norm,” nor as an anti-realistic, melodramatic, critical “excess.” She states instead that, “Melodrama is the fundamental mode of popular American moving pictures.” Distinct from specific genres such as the Western or horror film, it is neither a “deviation” from the classical realist narrative, nor is it located mainly in women’s film, weepies, or family melodramas (although these latter types can be included under melodrama).” Rather, Williams says, “Melodrama is a peculiarly democratic and American form that seeks dramatic revelation of moral and emotional truths through a dialectic of pathos and action.” Williams argues that realist cinematic effects—whether of seeing, action, acting, or narrative motivation—more often operate in the service of melodramatic effects. Linda Williams, “Melodrama Revised,” *Refiguring American Film Genres*, ed. Nick Browne (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 42-43.

of biopolitical gender norms and show woman's hysteria, melancholia, and sexuality through race and class conflicts.

-Female sexuality in *The Flower of Hell* and Defetishized female body in *Carmen Comes Home: Victims and Resistance to U.S militarism and Korea-Japan patriarchy*

The representation of the female body in both *The Flower of Hell* and *Carmen Comes Home* explicitly embodies the ambivalence between fascination and repulsion toward U.S. occupation. For example, although a prostitute, the character Sonya in *The Flower of Hell* is represented as a victim of biopolitical gender politics of U.S occupation and the Korean nation-state. This portrayal also goes beyond the contaminated and victimized visualization of the female body by capturing Sonya's narcissistic sexuality. Similarly, the stripper, Carmen in *Carmen Comes Home* is represented as both the contaminated (abnormal) and sexually liberated body of American consumerism through Japanese male desire. However, the display of her de-fetishized body implies her repulsion toward U.S. occupation.

Bruce Cummings states that "the US started intervening in the affairs of Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan in 1945 and this structure has persisted until recently. Japan was demilitarized and democratized during the early Occupation years and the United States was the one great power with central economic, financial, and technical force

adequate to restore the health of the world economy.”¹⁵⁴ Cummings argues that the American military’s modernization of Korea and Japan compromised their character and changed them into an acceptable, healthy, Americanized nation, or at least an approximation of it.

In this context, the subjects of sexualized performance (strippers) and military prostitution of the *The Flower of Hell* and *Carmen Comes Home* symbolize the ambivalent postwar Japanese and Korean feelings of frustration and recovery by portraying the body of female subjectivity in metaphoric victimization. The emblematic representations of the American military summoned Cold War anxieties and complex postwar subjects’ ambivalence toward the ambivalent relations of alliance and betrayal between Korean and American soldiers with whom they had to coexist, mediating this relation through representations of the soldiers and prostitutes. For example, the female bodies are made a spectacle during the dance sequences as the camera tilts up and down to fetishize Korean and Japanese dancers’ bodies in a full close-up shot. The shot enacts a symbolic humiliation for Korean and Japanese audiences, implying that the desire for America requires Korean and Japanese masculinity to be humiliated by the transformation of local women into promiscuous objects. Returning to the premise of the construction of a postwar identity inscribed on a contaminated female body (strippers and prostitutes), the intertwined male gaze of both Korean and Japanese audiences and the foreign spectators of the camp reflect a postcolonial imagination that provokes the fears and anxieties of postwar Korean and Japanese male sovereignty before the display of the

¹⁵⁴ Bruce Cummings, “East Asia and United States: Double Vision and Hegemonic Emergence” in *Parallax Visions* (Durham and London: Duke University, 2002), 205- 209.

sexualized local female body. The reflections are useful in understanding postwar Korea and Japan and their relations with American army culture. The local female body is sacrificed to the U.S. occupation in a symbolic exchange for access to modernity and/or for survival in an occupied society where males were dominant.

More specifically, the subject of military prostitution in director Shin Sang Ok's *The Flower in Hell* explicitly symbolizes the ambivalent feeling of postwar Korean toward Americanization by portraying both the victimized and liberated body of female subject. The symbolic representations of American military recalled Cold War anxieties and complex postwar subjects ambivalence toward the complicated relations of partnership and hostility between Korean and American soldiers with whom they coexisted, mediating this relation through representations of the soldiers and *yanggongju* (prostitutes who served American soldiers). The story of the film shows one of the male protagonists, Dongsik's various experiences in Camp town, a symbolic space of Americanization in Seoul, and contrasted with the miserable lives of Korean workers there.

The film depicts the American military Camp town as an ambivalent space of Americanization through two highly stereotyped two protagonists. The first, a camp town pimp named Yeongsik and his girlfriend Sonya shows characters who have accepted their situation of being parasitic on American army and express no moral rejection to prostitution. The second is consisted of Dongsik, a farmer who came to Seoul looking for his old brother Yeongsik, and Judy, who are reluctantly involved in prostitution but wishes to escape her humiliating situation. Both Sonya, who sells sex, and Yeongsik, who sneak into the American Army base to be involved in black market business, imply

the new types of postwar subjectivity that challenges the U.S' hegemony in negative ways and highlights the side effect of Americanization. By contrasting the characters in this way, the film aim to critique an idealized American liberalism, while undermining the actual dualism of male appropriation between the domestic sphere and the foreign occupation. This is seen in the Americanized subjects like Judy, whose body is contaminated by American soldiers but is eventually brought back to traditional life in rural communities with Dongsik. Interestingly, the *yanggongju*, who play a role as the female fatales of a Noir film, use sexual seduction and bilinguality (their ability of English) to help, Korean men who sneak into the bases and cunningly mediate between Koreans and American military. Ultimately, however, she is viciously murdered for her betrayal of the male/imperial order. As Paul Willemen points out:

US-style Western modernity is often represented via the rape and corruption of Korean womanhood. This made prostitution a particularity potent metaphor for modernity and its corrupting power from the outset. U.S modernity is further tainted by the cultural effects of occupation: military prostitution, which is particularly notable because it concerns the control of female sexuality: the site where popular culture and ideologies register and negotiate the transition from tradition to modernity.¹⁵⁵

Willeman argues that this is mostly dramatized in terms of the control of lineage and the generational transmission of values. In this sense, the female body is bilaterally exploited in the film, both enticing American soldiers' fascination with exotic Korean women and overlooking Koreans' misdeed when they steal American military goods for Korean's survival.

¹⁵⁵ Paul Willemen, *Detouring through Korean cinema*, Inter-Asia Cultural Studies, Volume 3, 2002. 579-580.

The mimicry of America is explicit in all of the *Mise-en-Scène*, and bilingualism pop music, but these are ironically appropriated to manipulate the western camp show spectators: the American soldiers who assume the dominant position in the biopolitical /postcolonial order. As the camera tilts up and down and uses panning in these sequences, with the Korean dancer's body in a close-up shot, the female body is reduced to a fetishized object. The shot allegorizes a symbolic occupied situation of Korean audiences, strengthening that the desire of American who occupied Korean man's gaze whose fetishize local women.

On the other hand, representing striptease artists as the leading roles, *Carmen Comes Home* begins with the scene where a female stripper named Carmen and her friend, Akemi return to Carmen's provincial hometown, a prewar countryside whose landscape remains uninfluenced by the wounds of war. The film features the two women in garish clothes and heavy make-up in stark contrast to the peaceful landscape of the countryside. Their presence, with their flashy, artificial appearance, disrupts the idyllic local atmosphere, as if a violent intrusion of new, occupied modernity had come to this localized community. In this peaceful town, children are playing in the yard to the accompaniment of a tune played by the blind music teacher whom Carmen once secretly admired but who has since married a very traditional wife. Carmen unwittingly humiliates the blind teacher, but she manages to eventually help him financially when she holds a small striptease show. Carmen, a foolish girl who believes that striptease is high art, performs despite the risk of being branded as a slut in the small town. The allegorical nature of the scene is explicit: A blind man, symbolic of the castrated Japanese male, is cured by two types of femininity—one, represented in the character of his devoted wife

who helps him in everyday life, and the other, represented by Carmen, a modern woman liberated by the American occupation who saves him from his financial crisis. In the end, however, Carmen leaves the small town condemned and ridiculed by the man and local people as a ruined body of occupational modernity and the wife is glorified as a normal and clean body. Therefore, as Hyun Joo Yoo explains, it is possible to seize what the healthy body implies only through its antinomy, the incurable body. In other words, Carmen is the embodiment of being without a proper nation-state of belonging; that is, the body without a hygienic nation.

However, importantly, *The Flower in Hell* and *Carmen Comes Home* depict female sexuality and subversive images, which are not captured by the dichotomy of the biopolitical gender norm between a mother and prostitute, against a victimization narrative and visuality through the frame of the ‘woman genre.’ Both films were made in the era of the “liberation of the body.” Both John Dower and Kim Kyung-il mention that Americanization was not limited to the military’s process of top-down modernization. Korean and Japanese people experienced American consumerism in daily life as well. For example, the occupation government was rumored to have introduced beauty contests, dancing, and striptease for people’s amusement. “Women’s liberation” became marked as the “liberation of the body.” Although the female body in the discourse of “liberation of body” is generally degenerated into commodity and fetishized and consumed through male desire and gaze, the performance of the striptease and dancing shows which gave expression to sexual desires then commonly suppressed, served as a sign of liberation from national tradition (figure 12). Both Dower and Kim say that affirmation of the body was an obvious rejection of the restraint and endurance forced by

Japanese fascism, and a spirit of independence could be found in the behavior of the rebellion of military prostitutes and strippers.¹⁵⁶ In this context, the two films can be read in the framework of what Laura Mulvey has called melodrama as ‘woman’s film’ in which the woman’s liberated body plays out women’s forbidden sexuality, the mise-en-scène of female desire and the subversion of the female spectator.



Figure 12: Liberation of body and bodily pleasure of strippers, *Carmen Comes Home* (1951)

The Flower of Hell focuses on the inter-colonial relationship between Sonya, a *yanggongju*, and an American soldier. Here, the body of the *yanggongju* functions as a metaphor for the cosmopolitan subject influenced by Americanization. Her body is juxtaposed with a postcolonial ambivalence of fascination and repulsion toward this secular mimesis of American military culture. Here we can see the ambivalent status of Sonya’s body. Literally, her body is supposed to be a sexual object for both American soldiers and the Korean male audience. For example, in the film, Sonya is literally

¹⁵⁶ John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat* (W.W Norton and Company, 1999), 170-175. Kim Kyung il, *Modern times and Modernity of Korea* (Baksanseodang, 2003), 179-182.

depicted as a fetishized sexual object captured in the voyeuristic gaze of both of American soldiers and Korean men, since she is always wearing a revealing American-style dress and heavy makeup. However, during the melodramatic moments she is not represented as a sexual object, but rather a sexual subject. Specifically, her room is composed as the *mise-en-scène* of her desire. For example, this is where she actively seduces the penniless Dongsik who cannot buy her as a commodity. As she reveals her own sexual desire, she looks at her erotic appearance reflected in the mirror and she is satisfied with it. In the film, she often looks at the mirror, implying that she identifies with the Hollywood actresses in the pictures hung on the wall in her room. In this scene, she is depicted as either a sexual subject or a narcissistic autoerotic one, rather than as a sexual object. (Figure 13,14)



Figure 13: Sonya looks at mirror, being narcissistic. *The Flower of Hell* (1958)



Figure 14: Sonya seduces Dongsik as a sexual subject. *The Flower of Hell* (1958)

Regarding female stars and the female audience's identification with them, Jackie Stacey argues that the binary system of "the masculinity" and "the femininity" that Laura

Mulvey suggests is not enough to explain the relation between the female star and her female audience, and that it is impossible to explain the historical, cultural process of female audience's identification using an outdated notion of identification rooted in psychoanalytic theory. Instead, for Stacey, the female audience's identification with the stars of film should be considered on the cultural and social level of consummation and amusement as well as the psychoanalytic level.¹⁵⁷

As I explained earlier, many feminist film scholars, including Laura Mulvey and Jackie Stacey, pay attention to the fact that the melodrama mode acts out women's forbidden longings, the *mise-en-scène* of female desire, and the subversion of the female spectator. Female melodramas privileged a female perspective through a female protagonist. The female protagonist in female melodramas is not in the action but in the emotions. The appeal of women's films for the spectator is the *mise-en-scène* of female desire. In this way, *The Flower of Hell* produces female subjectivity by thematizing female desire through the display of unspeakable sexual pleasure on the screen. This is despite the fact that Korean biopolitical sexual norms punish her sexuality with death in the end.

On the narrative level of *Carmen Comes Home*, Carmen and her friend's half-naked bodies are supposed to be the "objects" of desire that evoke pleasure in the male audience. But on the visual level, there is a scene in which Carmen and Akemi dance in the rural landscape without any spectators and in this scene, they feel bodily pleasure, instead of feeling their sexuality. (figure.12) The sheer cinematic presence and power of

¹⁵⁷ See, Jackie Stacey "From the Male Gaze to the Female Spectatorship" in *Star gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 126-128.

their lively bodies jumping around the rural landscape subverts any potential objectification. In fact, as we shall see, the final striptease scene where Carmen and Akemi perform in order to redeem their sin (so to speak) for having humiliated the blind teacher, seems nothing but a burlesque spectacle at first glance. Yet, here the director tries to undermine the “traditional” male gaze by constantly inserting shots of the rural audience who doesn’t pay attention to their performance, thus dissimilating or parodying the meaning of those fetishized bodies. (figure.15) In other words, women’s bodies in this sequence do not function as objects of voyeurism. Rather, they reveal the fact that femininity is constructed solely by a female character’s performativity. In other words, Carmen’s body is not the object of male gaze. There is a possibility that a female spectator will identify with the star, Takamine Hideko, who plays Carmen. As I explained above, in Jackie Stacey’s argument the female audience’s identification with the female protagonist can be imagined in these moments.



Figure 15. (From left to right) Shot/Reverse Shot of Carmen's Strip Show: The male audience member does not pay attention to the show, rather he sees a woman eating and feels hungry. *Carmen Comes Home* (1951)

This phenomenon is quite different from conventional male oriented Hollywood films which, relying on the stability of the gaze of the male characters and audience, usually treat women's bodies as objects of fetishism. The subversion of the relationship between male desire and female bodies in *Carmen Comes Home* should be understood in relation to its director Kinoshita Keisuke's own sexuality, for he is widely known as the "first" gay director in Japan. Therefore, as some researchers argue, it was actually men's bodies that were represented in his films as the objects of sexual desire. However, what I affirm here is that such de-fetishized female bodies can be found in other "striptease" films repeatedly made in the occupation period.

Given these symptomatic examples, Joanne Izbicki claims that the way of showing female bodies in immediate postwar Japanese films was far from a simplistic account of fetishism. These "striptease" films, she says, illustrate "the installation of female nudity as public, paid entertainment and as a vehicle for constructing a masculinized notion of liberation," while functioning as a vehicle for making men feel the vanity of liberation (pleasure).¹⁵⁸ She finally infers that these films include Japanese men's complicated desire to deny a mutual connection between Japanese female bodies and the gaze of the occupation forces. The subversive status of female bodies offers a

¹⁵⁸ Joanne Izbicki points out that the notion of "liberation and freedom", promoted by the occupation government and disseminated by the media, was strongly connected to the representation of the female body, examining some films made in the 1950s. Joanne Izbicki, "The shape of Freedom: The Female Body in Post-Surrender Japanese Cinema" in U.S.-Japan Women's Journal 23 (1998), 93-127.

clue to the nature of Japanese visual culture in the occupation period. Needless to say, the liberation of women, which was brought by occupation policy, is inscribed on Carmen's body. But at the same time, Carmen critically presents her body in an exaggeratedly performative way, since she knows that it is still constrained by the weakened gaze of the Japanese male and the controlling gaze of the occupation forces. In this respect, it is possible to say that *Carmen Comes Home* visualizes the moment of a negotiation between fascination and repulsion in relation to Americanization through the exhibition of liberated but defetishized female bodies.

-Broken Motherhood: National allegories and Mother's suicide: Victims and resistance to U.S military and Korean-Japanese patriarchy

Both *Tragedy of Japan* and *Confession of Flesh* depict the American Occupation and its aftermath through the representation of a prostitute mother. Already having lost her chastity as *Pan-Pan* and *Yangongju*, her contaminated body symbolizes the occupied and victimized nation. Yet, in these films, the children deny the history of their sacrificial mother—i.e., the history of the occupied nation—and choose their surrogate father—the U.S. occupation culture. The implication here is that children, who are influenced by the modernization of the Occupation period, deny national history and shift toward the new culture brought by Americanization. Therefore, the mothers' contaminated bodies function not only as a symbol of a victimized Japan and Korea but also as a means of exposing the “fictionality” of Japanese and Korean motherhood and its contribution to biopolitical dominant sexual norms of Korean and Japanese patriarchy. At the same time,

in the framework of what Linda Williams calls ‘melodramatic mode,’ both films employ the self-reflexive form of melodrama in order to critique the victimized female body through the complicity between U.S occupation politics and biopolitical sexual norms of patriarchal nationalism. We see two aspects of this in the scenes of the female protagonists’ suicides: the Brechtian-style ending and the excessively melodramatic ending, which reveal moments of resistance to the cruel realities female protagonists confront—realities in which the biopolitical sexual norm of U.S. occupation and the nation-state victimizes them.

The prostitute mothers in *Tragedy of Japan* and *Confession of Flesh* devote themselves to raising their children after their husbands’ deaths during the Pacific War by becoming *Pan-Pan* and *Yanggonju*. However, their children, who receive an American education, feel ashamed of their mothers and despise them rather than feel grateful for their sacrifices. In *Tragedy of Japan*, abandoning their mother, the son decides to be adopted as the son of a doctor, while the daughter runs away from home with her English teacher. In *Confession of Flesh*, the daughters marry a piano teacher and a disabled soldier. In both cases, the mothers are disappointed with them and finally commit suicide.

Tragedy of Japan depicts the American Occupation and its aftermath through the representation of a prostitute, Haruko. Having already lost her chastity by being pan-pan (a prostitute for American soldiers), she embodies the situation of Japan’s defeat. Her contaminated body symbolizes the occupied and victimized Japan. Yet her children deny the history of their sacrificial mother—i.e., the history of Japan’s defeat—and choose their substitutive father—for the son, the adoptive father who is a Western doctor, and for the daughter, her English teacher. It is implied that the fact that the children, who are

influenced by the modernization of the Occupation period, abandon sacrificial Japanese motherhood, is tantamount to the denial of Japanese history and a rapid shift toward the new culture brought by Americanization. The film seems to imply that the postwar generation's denial of history is distorted and that this is both the prostitute mother, Haruko's and Japan's tragedy. Ultimately, therefore, the film is critical toward the tremendous change in the attitude of Japanese society toward Americanization. By using the form of maternal melodrama, which emphasizes and idealizes the mother's self-sacrifice, the film tries to render Japan as the victim and depict the trauma of its defeat. This is one readily available interpretation of the film.

Indeed, the film is often read as a Japanese national allegory in existing studies. For example, Sato Tadao takes a humanist approach in his reading of the film as a national allegory of Japan. He points out that Japanese filial piety had been disregarded in postwar Japanese society and insists that it was caused by the forced Americanization. For Sato, Haruko embodies Japanese defeat because her children, educated in the postwar system, abandon her.¹⁵⁹ Mitsuyo Wada-Marciano also interprets the film as an allegory of the Japanese war trauma because it uses a conventional melodrama framework that always appears apolitical. She argues, "this film employs the excessive mode of melodrama so as not only to express cultural images of the wartime past, but also to make possible the reconciliation of the Japanese populace with the defeat. Both bring up the issues of Japanese melodrama as national allegories."¹⁶⁰ However, Sato Tadao's critique, in which the loss of the filial piety is caused by forced Americanization, this is simply

¹⁵⁹ Sato Tadao, *The World of Kinoshita Keisuke*, Haga Shoten, 1984, 164 -170.

¹⁶⁰ Mitsuyo Wada-Marciano, "The postwar Japanese Melodrama," in *Review of Japanese Culture and Society*, ed. Wada-Marciano, Vol. XXI, December 2009, 19-33.

located in a dichotomy of national conflicts between Japan and the US. Wada-Marciano also takes an old notion of the melodrama genre and inappropriately applies it to *Tragedy of Japan*. She presumes that melodrama is a sentimental and apolitical genre that reinforces the dominant ideology and thereby simplifies the complexity of melodrama discourses.¹⁶¹

In contrast, I will focus on how the film articulates a national allegory of Japan and Korea by exposing women's hidden emotional and ideological dilemmas and by focusing on the ambivalent status of women who embody both a repulsion and a fascination toward Americanization. For example, the representation of women in both *Tragedy of Japan* and *Confession of Flesh* embody the ambivalent feelings of fascination and denial toward American culture. This can be seen clearly in the tension between the prostitute mother whose body is subordinated to the American military and her college student daughters who enjoy the pleasures of modern life, such as exposing their bodies on the beach, dancing at night club, and shopping for western style clothing. In this sense, the liberated body of the women represented in the two films also celebrates women's sexual enjoyment and their free lives. In the case of *Confession of Flesh*, the prostitute mother actually devotes her life to her daughter's education. Although she earns money shamefully and lives miserably, she encourages her daughters to find a good occupation and marry a wealthy man. In other words, she believes in the values of capitalism and becomes materialistic. While the younger daughters are fascinated by American style modern life, the oldest daughter announces that she intends to marry a poor soldier who was wounded during Korean War and wishes to be a novelist. She is a traditional woman who is willing to support a man and reject her mother's materialism. However, when the

daughters discover that their mother is a prostitute, they all show contempt for her.

(Figure.13)

The allegorical nature of these characters is explicit. The mother's body symbolizes American capitalism and consumerism as well as the nation occupied by American military. The movie makes the point that the prostitute mother, who admires materialism, ought to be disdained by her daughters. By criticizing the mother, the film shows that the family's modern life and consumerism are dependent on American militarism, and thus American culture should be despised. Meanwhile, the attitude toward sexuality is conservative. The sexuality of the prostitute mother and second daughter who loses her virginity is vilified by the sexual norms of Korean patriarchy. Their sexuality, which symbolizes American values, is despised in the film. (figure 16, 17)



Figure 16. American soldier gives a necklace to the Mother and she thinks of her daughters and takes it. *Confession of Flesh* (1967).



Figure 17. In return, she allows him to have sex with her. Figure 18. She is delighted with the gift (a Luxurious handbag) from American soldier.

Next, I would like to pay attention to the duality of the mother's body. Most importantly, the two films portray their respective female protagonist mother's frustration in not being able to have economic freedom and sexual enjoyment. Their contaminated bodies function not only as symbols of a victimized Japan and Korea but also as a means of exposing the "fictionality" of Japanese and Korean motherhood and revealing its contribution to the dominant sexual norms of Korean and Japanese patriarchy. The mothers in *Tragedy of Japan* and *Confession of Flesh* are devoted and self-sacrificing mothers, as seen in many both conventional East Asian, and Hollywood, melodramas. As both Ueno Chizuko and Kwon Meyong A point out, the mother's self-sacrifice has a decisive effect on the formation of the Japanese and Korean super-ego. After Japan's defeat and a Korean War in which a strong male subject was absent, the sacrificing mother functions as the dominating principle for her children. However, the power of the father is hidden behind the representation of the self-sacrificing mother. In other words, she emphasizes that maternity, which embodies the will of the father, is made and manipulated by male subjectivity. In the end, motherhood, regarded as one of the virtues of Japanese and Korean culture, is nothing but the projection of male desire.¹⁶²

In other words, as Hyon Joo Yoo points out, postwar hygiene policies, both colonial and national, provided local technologies that transformed femininity into a symbol of the incurable body. The sexually liberated female body came to stand in for a perceived abnormality inflicted on the nation-state by the incurable body, and such deviant bodies were excluded from the biopolitical regime that necessitated a

¹⁶² Ueno Chizuko, *Collapse of Japanese Mothers*, (Columbia University Press, 2005), 250-260. Kwon Meyong-a, *How is a Family Story Represented?* (Seoul: Bookworld, 2000)

differentiation between the healthy and the unhealthy. In this framework of biopolitics, the motherhood of self-sacrifice portrayed in the two films, which should be sacred according to the notions of melodrama, becomes sexually depraved via the American soldiers in the film, thereby making the mother appear abject. In the beginning of both of films, the children feel guilty because of their mother's sacrifice, but they begin to despise her when they learn of her prostitution. Therefore, maternity, which functions as the source of the children's morals, is absent, and the mothers are not qualified as a substitute who embodies the husband's will. The system of the modern family is destroyed. The mothers, who turn to prostitution for economic sustenance and sexual pleasure, ultimately become women of outside of the home who can never reclaim their position in the family system. The principles of Japanese and Korean patriarchy do not allow them to do so, thereby imposing a punishment on their sexuality.

The two films reveal that the reason for the children's abandonment of their mother is the conservativeness of sexual norms of Japanese and Korean patriarchy. By showing fallen mothers, the two films underscore a mother's loss of sacred maternity caused by the need to support her children in postwar Japanese and Korean society. Thus the titles of the films imply the ironic tragedy that comes from a domestic sexual norm. The films prompt us to think of the meaning of the mother's death resulting from her children's pandering to Americanization during the Occupation and early Cold War period, and the myth of Japanese and Korean motherhood. The films criticize the loss of morality and they are critical of the myth of motherhood that has long functioned as the principle of the modern Japanese and Korean family. Even children, who experience

Americanization under the name of Cold War democracy, cannot be liberated from Japanese and Korean biopolitical sexual norms.

-Self-reflexive form of maternal melodrama and female hysteria

At the visual level, although the two films utilize the form of conventional melodrama, they do not often register a classical realist narrative. By using a self-reflective style of maternal melodrama along with depictions of the victimized female body, the two films clearly critique the biopolitical sexual norm of the complicity between the U.S. occupation and the nation-state. Here, Williams's argument of melodrama as realistically and politically inscribed is significant, especially when I claim that these two melodramas cannot be reduced to sentimental soap operas which support the dominant patriarchy. In addition to these two melodramas, some melodramas made by auteurs such as Douglas Sirk, King Vidor, Kinoshita Keisuke, and Cho Gung Ha, are representative of what Williams calls 'Melodramatic mode' in terms of their cinematic style, mixture of excessive and realist cinematic affects, and in the ways they deal with political issues. Williams's arguments have been very influential for scholars in both East Asia and the U.S. who are interested in broadening the definition of melodrama as mode.

For example, in the case of *Tragedy of Japan*, documentary footage of postwar social and political events appears as non-diegetic intervals between narrative developments. This footage shows the Second World War trials, the humanization of the Japanese emperor, the new constitution ceremony, a chaotic national diet, labor strikes, pan-pan, the double suicides in impoverished families, and so on. Cross cutting this

footage, the following sequences show Haruko's daily life in which she has to flee to another area from the war, hide in the cave to escape an air strikes, and after the war, she deals things illegally in a black market, and eventually becomes a pan-pan. The documentary footage shows that Haruko's individual tragedy is explicitly caused by the political changes of postwar Japanese society. It is not based on any of the film characters' points of view and it distances audiences from the main melodramatic narrative and prevents them from feeling entirely sentimental.

On the other hand, *Confession of Flesh* utilizes an emblematic mise-en-scène to visualize the unexposed consciousness of the characters. This is evident in the first scene of *Confession of Flesh* that begins with a tracking shot showing a music bar where American soldiers dance and drink and start fighting over a girl. The mother, called "the president of night," appears and looks down at the fighting scene from the dark and gloomy upstairs, and comes down to stop the fighting. The audience does not yet know she is a prostitute. However, after she breaks up the fight, one of the American soldiers comes to her room and gives her a pearl necklace, hugging her from behind. A close-up shot shows the mother's hand grabbing the pearl necklace for a long time and her daughter's voice-over overlaps, saying that she needs tuition for college. As melodramatic extra diegetic music begins, the mother lies down on the bed, putting the pearl necklace in front of her daughter's picture. The camera tracks again from her room to the music hall. American soldiers and people are dancing cheerfully to Jazz music. The camera holds the shot, to allow the spectator to interpret the meaning invested in it. Although it's never stated explicitly, the sequence makes it clear to the viewer that the bar is a brothel for American soldiers and the mother is the hostess selling her body to

American soldiers to support her children. The way this scene establishes the setting is very objective, because the camera takes an omniscient perspective that prevents the viewer from identifying fully and sentimentally with the main melodramatic narrative, even though the movie is the mother's self-narrative. This is almost an extra-diegetic mode of address, reaching out to the spectator who is prepared to find meaning through the cinematic style of melodrama. Therefore, the meaning of *Confession of Flesh* is materialized, and mapped onto the image through the signifying potential of the cinema itself, rather than replacing the expression of the unspeakable and invisible.¹⁶³

Although maternal melodrama (*Haha-mono* in Japanese), which is often based on, and concludes with, a Hollywood classical realist narrative,¹⁶⁴ shows moments of departure from Hollywood classical realist narrative, this film is starkly different. Regarding the self-reflexive form of Hollywood classical films, Barbara Klinger states, "classical Hollywood form requires a general effect of legibility and transparency, qualities obtained through a well-defined chain of cause-and-effect which ends in satisfying closure. The progressive film/genre departs from the classical system by either

¹⁶³ Laura Mulvey points out, "Sirk's melodrama movie makes use of objects or things that are taken out of their ordinary place within a scene to acquire added significance. Their objects are given a status through their framing, editing and melodramatic accompanying music, become symbolic signifiers with an added semiotic value. The audience deciphers these objects as they are transformed into significant images without the help of words. Laura Mulvey, "Delaying Cinema", in *Death 24x a Second, Stillness and the Moving Image* (Reaktion Books Ltd, 2006), 148.

¹⁶⁴ Classical realist texts reproduce bourgeois ideologies because they implicate the spectator in a single point of view of a coherent, hierarchically ordered representation of the world in which social contradictions are concealed and ultimately resolved through mechanisms of displacement and substitution. In this process, the spectator is "interpellated" as the "individual subject" of bourgeois ideology. Barbara Klinger, *ibid*, 30. Barbara Klinger, "Cinema/Ideology/Criticism" Revisited: The progressive Text, *Screen Incorporation Education*, Volume 25/Number 1/January–February 1984, 30.

paring it down to its barest essentials, so that cause and effect exist, but merely in the most minimal acknowledgement of that system of construction, more than as any kind of systematic illumination of narrative flow; or by exaggerating its principles (the structure of reversal in melodrama), so that the logic of the system is overdetermined in such a way as to stretch its credibility and legibility.”¹⁶⁵ Therefore, she also insists that the progressive film must avoid the compromising forces inherent in the conventional closure. Klinger says, “the excessive endings of Douglas Sirk’s films disturb the harmonizing tendencies of closure.”¹⁶⁶ The strong sense of ‘excess or irony,’ which rarely defines the endings, breaks the achievement of conventional endings and provides an alternative to this convention. These ‘excess’ and irony’ challenge conventional issues of ending to resolve contradictions unilaterally.¹⁶⁷

For example, like the ending scene of well-known Hollywood features *Stella Dallas* (King Vidor, 1937) and *Imitation of Life* (Douglas Sirk, 1955), the ending scene of the mother’s suicide in *Tragedy of Japan* and *Confession of Flesh* have this kind of ‘excess’ and ‘irony’, which differs from the conventional ending of maternal melodramas. In general, maternal melodramas idealize a mother’s self-sacrifice by first

¹⁶⁵ Barbara Klinger, *ibid*, 30.

¹⁶⁶ Barbara Klinger, *ibid*, 31.

¹⁶⁷ As Klinger points out, “among melodramas, Douglas Sirk’s films were highly valued by neo-Marxist critics as anti-realist texts. Sirk made use of melodrama to disclose the distortions and contradictions of bourgeois or petit bourgeois family ideology through parody or stylistic excess. Stylistic excess became a positive value, from an authorial to a generic trademark. Under this rubric, the films of Minnelli, Ray, Ophuls, Cukor, and Kazan came to stand alongside Sirk to mark the parameters of a new critical field. Moreover, Christine Gledhill explains that the subversion of Sirk and the dominance of the classic realist/narrative text influenced subsequent approaches to film melodrama. A central concern was to establish the nature of melodrama’s radical potential. The critique of classical Hollywood realist narrative meant that anti-realist excess came to be highly valued with neo-Marxist, while cine-psychoanalysis found in 50s family melodrama, which drew on the popularization of Freudian ideas, and self-consciously Oedipal screenplays.” Christine Gledhill, *ibid*, 7-11.

showing her children's regrets for the ignorance of their mother and then their ultimate reconciliation at the moment of the mother's death. However, these atypical films also present such self-sacrifice as hysterical, because of the heroine's bittersweet or ironic emotion toward her sacrifice, despite the fact that she voluntarily sends her children or husband away for their own happiness and leaves them. In *Tragedy of Japan* and *Confession of Flesh*, the mother's obsession with being rewarded for her sacrifice is unexpected and very excessively described. The mothers are represented as passive figures who rely on their children, but their reactions are excessive. For example, through an excess of mise-en-scène, the film shows the mothers continuing to ask their children not to leave them, it shows their weeping, newsreel footage and ironic music, all of which reveals the story of their miserable private life. Moreover, the mothers in both films commit suicide and their suicide is one of the expressions of their protest rather than a sacred self-sacrifice.

In other words, these scenes of mothers' suicides draw on Expressionist and Brechtian theatrical techniques to break or intensify the rules of classical Hollywood realism. In *Tragedy of Japan*, the mother's suicide reveals the 'irony' of the mother's dilemma between her sacrifice and desire by showing her suicide through a neo-realistic long take. This follows the scene in which her excessive acting and dialogue and music underscore her self-sacrifice. For example, in the film, the mother goes to see her son, who decided to be adopted by the wealthy family, to ask him to return home. After she is rejected, she says to her son, "I am just happy to hear you call me a mother, so it is alright to be adopted and I'll change the register. But a real mother gives birth by suffering the worst pain in the world. That pain is something only women can comprehend, and I gave

you birth, please remember, will you? You understand?” and the camera zooms in to show her bittersweet face. On her way back, she waits a long time for the train. However, when it comes she suddenly jumps aboard. Famous Japanese melodramatic music is used excessively in the conversation scene and a neo-realist style long take is used in the final suicide scene. This is important because it differs from the classical realist montage style used in the most of the film scenes. Therefore, the suicide scene is the best example of melodramatic irony and the mother’s hysteria. She expresses her unfulfilled desire through her suicide, even though it resists the dominant narrative of the film. *Tragedy of Japan* does not even show the children lamenting their mother’s death. (figure.19)



Figure 19: Haruko’s Suicide: jumping into the train (It was shot for a long take of the length of about 3 minutes), *Tragedy of Japan* (1953)

In *Confession of Flesh*, the mother’s suicide isn’t “ironic”, but it intensifies the generic practices of maternal melodrama in which a mother’s sacrifice is celebrated. For example, the final scene of *Confession of Flesh* is more like the final scene of *Imitation of Life* in which after mother dies, the daughters come running and crying for her, regretting their contempt toward their mothers. They cry out, “Why do you have to die? You only lived and sacrificed for your daughters. We killed you. We are murderers.” Moreover, in

the following scene, the dead mother's self-narration, "Please, entirely burn my body, my dirty body" overlaps their crying. The excessive background music and crying in this scene creates a distance between the film and its audience that creates a rupture in the dominant ideology. Even if not perceived by the mass audience, such distance and rupture may occur between the film and its narrative pretext.¹⁶⁸ (figure 20)



Figure 20. Mother's suicide and daughters' crying scene after her death, *Confession of Flesh* (1967)

From this perspective, one can find the radical potentiality of melodrama in *Tragedy of Japan* and *Confession of Flesh*, not only because it makes a Sirkian critique of bourgeois lifestyles and values but also because it has the possibility of real conditions of psychic and sexual identity which break or intensify the unity of the classic realist narrative. As Geoffrey Nowell-Smith says, in these films, "Music and *mise-en-scène* do

¹⁶⁸ Jane Feuer explains that, borrowing Paul Willemen's idea, the intensification was accomplished through the magnification of emotionality, use of pathos, choreography and music, and through aspects of *mise-en-scène*. And such intensification puts a distance, though not necessarily one perceived by the audience, between 'the film and its narrative', *Melodrama, Serial form and television today*, (Screen, oxford journal), 5-6.

not just heighten the emotionality of an element of the action; to some extent they substitute it.”¹⁶⁹ The mechanism here is very similar to that of the psychopathology of hysteria. In this sense, it is clear that the mother’s contaminated body is not only an agent bearing the national allegory of a victimized Japan and Korea, but it also carries out female hysteria or melancholia in a Japanese and Korean patriarchal order.¹⁷⁰

As Joan Copjec points out, “the hysterical in melodrama makes the female protagonist the limit of the world she brings into being, and she does so precisely by subtracting herself from it. What we might call the “narrative of retreat,” is when the heroine subtracts herself in order to support a consistent social order and to give a narrative resolution and clarity.” Copjec says, “The hysteric’s imaginary attempts at resolution create a flimsy structure, as anyone familiar with melodrama knows—and they are marked as such. The schematizations of early conventional forms are rigid and credible and the narratives of self-sacrifice common to the later forms still index the deep inadequacies of the social world they depict.”¹⁷¹ In this way, the hysterical solution intends not to erase the hysteric but to emphasize her erasure in order to have the possibility she will eventually be recognized.

¹⁶⁹ Gledhill, Christine, “Minnelli Melodrama,” *Home is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman’s Film*, ed. Christine Gledhill, (British Institute, 1987), 73.

¹⁷⁰ As for the general relation between woman’s victimization and hysteria, or melancholia, Linda Williams argues that “the position of the feminine subject of melodrama appears to be constructed to achieve a modicum of power and pleasure within the given limits of patriarchal constraints on women, although melodrama points to spectacles of intense suffering and loss through the victimized woman. She insists that melodrama repeats our melancholic sense of the loss of origins--impossibly hoping to return to an earlier state that is represented by the body of the mother.” Linda Williams, “Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess” in *Film Quarterly*, Vol.44, No.4 (Summer, 1991), 2-13.

¹⁷¹ Joan Copjec, “More From Melodrama to Magnitude,” in *Endless Night*, ed. Janet Bergstrom (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 265.

However, *Tragedy of Japan* and *Confession of Flesh* go further. The mothers in both films do not want to leave their children, and after the children abandon their mothers, the mothers commit suicide. At the narrative level, the mothers' suicides are more despairing and passive because they show that life without their children is hopeless. Yet at the same time, their suicide can be read as a more active retreat from the narrative so that the main conflicts are sutured into the dominant narrative, giving the audience a consistent social order. But, such retreat also reveals the contradiction of the whole situation that the female protagonist faces and thus, Mothers' suicides have a more contradictory impact on the audience. Their suicides may be depressing, but they also encourage the audience to rethink the irony of the events that drove the mothers to death. Interestingly, this 'hysterical retreat' of the mother's suicide is manifested in these two melodramas. Who drove the mothers to commit suicide? Were they only victims of American occupation forces? Or, did the children who despised their mother's occupied body abandon them? The duplicity of patriarchal nationalism that celebrates 'American democracy' and consumerism, but despises the female body contaminated by foreign occupiers drove the mothers to suicide. In any case, her occupied body is not just a victim, but conveys its hysterical excess to the audience or to the film text itself through the tragedy of suicide.

In this regard, the endings of *Tragedy of Japan* and *Confession of Flesh* are so hysterical and excessive that they prevent the viewer from being sutured into the social order. Copjec contends that the melodramatic genre as excess is not based on a diegetic reality in which we manage to express, but that it constructs instead an "indeterminate reality," about which we cannot say something definitive. This is because there is

something inherent in melodrama that performs excess, a hidden “more”, something that reanimates it.¹⁷² In this way, the mother’s tragic death from which she disappears reveals a hidden “more” that is the moment of victimization by the complicity of patriarchal nationalism and the governmentality of U.S. occupation powers. Furthermore, the mothers’ suicides are moments when the dominant narrative of melodrama is subverted by the element of “hysteria” that causes a rupture in this complicity.¹⁷³

In addition, the hysteria of the film text can be linked to Jonathan Flatley’s concept of the “affect of melancholia.” For Flatley, melancholia is what makes for the audience the conversion of a depressive melancholia into a way to pay attention to the world. It aims not to make you “feel better” or to redeem damaged experiences, but to redirect our attention to those very experiences.¹⁷⁴ Melancholia and the hysteria of the mothers in *Tragedy of Japan* and *Confession of Flesh* do not make audiences feel better but make them redirect or reanimate negative experiences, thus arousing the audience’s attention. The films’ mixtures of neo-realism and alienation effects encapsulate such experiences. Therefore, these films are closer to Sirkian/neo-Marxist melodramas such as *Stella Dallas* and *Imitation of Life*. The films also rescue the radical potentiality of melodramas from conventional sentimentality by combining melodramatic excess and

¹⁷² Ibid, 23-25.

¹⁷³ Ibid, 23-25. Also See, Geoffrey Nowell-Smith who also draws the anti-classic realist and psychoanalytic strands together by bringing in the Freudian concept of “conversion hysteria.” He says, “in hysteria, the energy attached to an idea that has been repressed returns to be converted into a bodily symptom. The “return of the repressed” takes place, not in conscious discourse, but displaced onto the body of the patient. In the melodrama, conversion can take place in either the actions of the characters or the body of a text. It is not just that the characters are often prone to hysteria, but that the film itself sometimes employs its own unaccommodated excess, which thus appears or is displaced or in the wrong place”. Christine Gledhill, “The Melodramatic Field: An Investigation,” *Home is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film*, ed. Christine Gledhill, (British Institute, 1987).

¹⁷⁴ Jonathan Flatley, *Affective Mapping: Melancholia and the Politics of Modernism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 1-3.

realism that are less like a classic Hollywood narrative and more like a Brechtian alienation effect.

In short, my dialectic reading, which rearticulates both feminist readings and allegorical interpretations, is necessary to understand the multi-layered meaning of the postwar Korean and Japanese melodrama. Although the production and characterization of melodrama are formed through the biopolitical fiction and liberalism based on the dichotomy of the victimized female body and liberated female sexuality, they allow us to not only appreciate the complexity of Japanese and Korean national films, but also to rescue the possibility of women's perspectives on melodramas from the limited framework of national allegorical sexual norms. They can also help us see the radical potential of melodramas by guiding critics to focus on the specificity of each filmic text that looks beyond its biopolitical U.S. occupational government in the framework of the melodramatic mode and Sirkian/Neo-Marxist melodrama.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁵ Barbara Klinger explains that “at the end of the 60s, Structuralist Neo-Marxism, in critiquing the notion of “popular art,” identified “realism” as the anti-value, in which could be exposed at once literary critical tradition, bourgeois ideology and manipulations of the capitalist culture industries. Neo-Marxist film criticism took the extension of the “great tradition” to cinema at face value and condemned Hollywood for its perpetuation of practices of the 19th century realist novel. However, they paid attention to Hollywood melodramas of the 1940s and 50s in their ideological criticism. Althusser focuses on art's specific relation to ideology. Central to Althusser's discussion of an aesthetic epistemology is the definition of a corresponding, distinctly Marxist, critical practice, whose function is to compose knowledge of art.” Klinger says, “this knowledge of art, like all knowledge for Althusser, ‘presupposes a preliminary rupture with the language of ideological spontaneity, and constructs ‘a body of scientific concepts to replace it’ The language of Althusser's aesthetic epistemology used to describe the text/ideology relation--rupture, break, internal distancing, deformation--foster this sense of reflexive, formal geography of the text, which by critical extension, can be viewed as internally empowered to engineer an ‘auto-critique’ of the ideology in which it is held.” She continues, “The potential of this perspective on the artistic text is elaborated within film studies to produce a critical and aesthetic category of films, designated generally as ‘progressive’.” Barbara Klinger, “Cinema/Ideology/Criticism” Revisited: The progressive Text, *Screen Incorporation Education*, Volume 25/Number 1/January –February 1984, 30-32.

Chapter 4: Beyond biopolitical governmentality: Resisting Propaganda, Transcending Genres

- U.S. occupation and Japanese colonialism in Kim Ki-young's films and Japanese Independent Production films

As I analyzed in the earlier chapters, U.S occupation period films (both USIS films and family and military prostitution melodramas) reflect the project of building a prosperous, monoethnic nation by depicting the South Korean and Japanese as biopolitical and liberal subjects, as well as by describing them as victims of Japanese militarism. In this chapter, I argue Kim Kiyoung's films of the 1960's and 1970's offer a critique of these victimization narratives and their biopolitical visuality, one that attempts to go beyond the dichotomy of anti-Japanese/U.S. versus pro-Japanese/U.S. sentiments. In order to demonstrate this, I will focus on two films, *The Sea Knows* (*Hyõnhaet'an ün algo itta*, Kim Kiyoung, 1961)¹⁷⁶ and *The Promise of Flesh* (*Yukche üi yaksok*, Kim Kiyoung, 1975)¹⁷⁷. Having similar cinematic practices with Japanese films, these two films sharply allegorize Japanese fascism, U.S militarization, and state violence in South Korea. Interestingly, I will note that these two films, while showing how the shadow of Japanese colonialism persists well into the postwar, demonstrate stylistic features that reflect the *intertwined worlds* of Japanese and Korean film-making during the postwar period. Despite Kim Kiyoung's acknowledged stature as a director, existing studies have given little attention to traces of these intertwined relations in his films.

¹⁷⁶ *The Sea Knows*, VOD, directed by Kim Kiyoung (1961; KOFA online collection, 2012).

¹⁷⁷ *The Promise of Flesh*, DVD, directed by Kim Kiyoung (1975; KOFA collection, 2012).

First, *The Sea Knows* depicts not only the violence of Japanese fascism by taking as its protagonist the “Korean bullied soldier,” but also exposes, through its representation of Korean volunteer soldiers, the absurdity of the system that was Japan’s “multi-ethnic empire” (a historical experience that was largely occluded in postwar Korean society). Also, the film depicts the thanatopolitics carried out by Japanese and U.S. militarism (acts of torture, punishment, and execution) that were rarely shown in postwar South Korean film. I argue that this film translates the style of Kim’s USIS films into a newly, self-reflexive form in a social realist style. At the same time, I show that this film shares commonalities with the Japanese Independent production film (*Dokuritsu Puro Eiga*)¹⁷⁸ in terms of having the same motifs of the “bullied soldier” and “romantic love,” which functioned as a mode of resistance to Japanese and U.S. militarism. Moreover, I will examine that *The Sea Knows* translates the social realist style and themes of anti-Japanese and anti-U.S. militarism belonging to *Dokuritsu Pro Eiga* into a “magical realist style”¹⁷⁹ and an “affect of shame” in order to suggest an alternative possibility of decolonization.

¹⁷⁸ *Dokuritsu Puro Eiga* was made by people who were expelled from major studios due to the Red Purge and the engagement of the Toho labor strike. Iwasaki Akira, the former head of production at Nichiei, whose association with Marxist ideology stretched back to his involvement with the Prokino group, was a central figure within Shinsei Eiga. Founded by former Toho union members in February 1950, Shinsei Eiga is a representative company of Japanese independent films and produced *Shinkuchitai*, in addition to producing several other politically charged works by Imai Tadashi and Yamamoto Satsuo. Because of their lack of studio backing, such social realist films benefited from the documentary-style veracity brought about by the necessity of location shooting. The theme of *Dokuritsu Puro eiga* was mostly labor’s conditions, anti-Japanese military and anti-nuclear campaign. See, Sato Tadao, 248-249.

¹⁷⁹ In general, Wendy Faris argues that “by combining realistic representation with fantastic elements so that the marvelous seems to grow organically out of the ordinary, magical realism destabilizes the dominant form of realism based on empirical definitions of reality and gives it visionary power. She says that it reports events that it does not empirically verify through sensory data, within a realistic, empirically based fiction, that the narrative voice seems to be of uncertain origin, and that the narrative is “defocalized.” In addition, because it witnesses and reports events

In other words, I will show that the social realist style in Kim's film depicts thanatopolitics (in Agamben's sense) that is in contrast with the Foucauldian biopolitics in USIS propaganda documentaries. And, I demonstrate that 'magical realist style' rescues an singular life from the dichotomy between a liberal subjectivity and bare life which is commensurate with the dichotomy between biopolitical and thanatopolitical narrative and visuality in both USIS propaganda documentaries and social realist styles.

The second film I examine, *The Promise of Flesh*, allegorizes the violence of postwar militarism through the oppressed body of Hyosun, a former prostitute and prisoner. The film translates the female confession narrative, sadomasochistic (S-M) roles, and the double suicide code of Japanese fallen woman or prostitute melodramas into a female fantasy led by a subaltern female voiceover, and with a *mise-en-scène* of marginalized female desire. I argue that the "unconventional confession voiceover" and "reversed S-M roles" in female fantasy allows the female victim not only to mediate male political trauma, but also to narrate her own memories beyond objectification, sublimating them into the hope of recuperating life from the female's masochistic death or suicide (a common convention in fallen woman or prostitute melodramas). *The Promise of the Flesh* critiques the violence of postwar militarism and U.S. occupation that was embedded in the symbolism of the female's tragic death in melodramas.

In other words, I will show that female confession voice-over in Kim's film depicts a female's alternative subjectivity which is not commensurate with a dichotomous liberal

that humans ordinarily do not, and therefore suggests the existence of forces that are not encompassed by reference to ordinary human perceptions of a strictly material reality, magical realism also constitutes what might be called a "remystification" of narrative in the West." See, Wendy B. Faris, *Ordinary Enchantments: Magical Realism and the Remystification of Narrative*, (Vanderbilt University Press, 2004).

subjectivity between the mother as a new woman who plays a role as the substitutive father and the modern girl or prostitute who embodies a sexually liberated body. Moreover, the female fantasy rescues the female's singular life from the female masochistic death in biopolitical melodramas.

Therefore, in this chapter, I will focus on how, through the fantastic mode (magical realism and female fantasy), both of the films make a critique of the Foucauldian biopolitical governing male body through its intersection with technology in USIS documentary films and dominant biopolitical fiction which controls female sexuality in family and military prostitution melodrama. In other words, I will demonstrate that two films have fantastic and unconventional modes of classical realism and melodrama and these aspects allow the making of a critique of Japanese colonialism and U.S. occupations.

-Multi-Ethnic Japanese Empire, U.S. militarism and Thanatopolitics in *The Sea Knows* (1961)

In the Korean title of the film, *Hyoŋhaet'an ūn algo itta*, the name Hyoŋhaet'an indicates the Korean Strait between Korea and Japan. Several colonial and *zainichi* (resident Korean in Japan) intellectuals employed the Strait in their literary works as a trope for colonized Korea. Based on a radio drama that was extremely popular in 1960, Kim's film was produced in 1961. Its production took place right after the 4.19 revolution against regime of the authoritative liberalism of Rhee Sungman (with its pronounced adherence to colonial legacies) and just before the coup d'état led by Park Jung Hee with the support

of U.S. militarism. The film could be produced in relative freedom from censorship by the Korean government and the U.S. In that sense, the film could describe the violence of U.S. militarism and multi-ethnic Japanese empire focused on a bullied soldier, going beyond the dichotomy of anti-Japanese/U.S. versus pro-Japanese/U.S. sentiments. This movement beyond the colonial dichotomies was very different from USIS films or mainstream films made during the immediate the Second World War and Korean War.

The story of *The Sea Knows* (1961) takes place in the Japanese military camp at Nagoya, just before the Japanese defeat in the Second World War, and centers on Aroun, a volunteer for the Japanese Army who was discriminated against and abused by the Japanese officer, Koiso, and the soldier, Mori. Later, another Japanese officer, Saito introduces the Japanese woman, Hideko. She consoles him and he falls in love with her. However, during U.S.'s aerial bombardment of Tokyo, he dies. The film points to the centrality of the linked theme of "the bullied soldier." For example, Aroun is a young student from colonized Korea, who is forced to do humiliating jobs, and suffers indignities like licking a Japanese soldier's shoes while bending over. The "Korean bullied soldier" reveals that there was a "bare life" in modern and liberal subjects who volunteered in the Japanese imperial army under Japanese imperialization policies (*kōminkaseisaku*) in which the Korean is a modern subject who continually refashions himself anew, and reconstitutes himself as a "universal subject" (Japanese), overcoming "his substratum" (Korean). Thus, under imperialization, the discriminatory distinction between Japanese and Korean was sublated into an indiscriminate one. However, the "Korean bullied soldier" shows there was discrimination and exclusion between Korean and Japanese modern and liberal subjects. (figure 22, 23)

The phenomenon of “the bullied soldier” often emerged in 50’s Japanese films as well.¹⁸⁰ Among them, one of the *Dokuritsu Puro Eiga* films, *Shinkuchitai*¹⁸¹ is particularly similar to *The Sea Knows* in terms of this motif. The story of *Shinkuchitai* centers on a Japanese soldier, Kitaro, who is harassed by beaten and tortured by veteran soldiers. He tries to run away from the army, but he is caught and taken to the front line, right before the Japanese defeat. The movie was made right after the U.S occupation, which allowed the “The bullied soldier” to play the victim of the Japanese military system. The film critiques the violence of Japanese wartime fascism, by observing dynamic human relations rather than making the protagonist and antagonist as either enemy or hero. This relates to the fact that the movie is a Japanese independent film production (*Dokuritu Pro Eiga*), which began from the early 1950s. (figure, 21,22)



Figure 21: Opening Scene of *Shinkuchitai* in Showa 19 year (1944), right before U.S’ s aerial bombardment of Japan (left), Figure 22: A physical assault in an army camp (right).

¹⁸⁰ Tanigichi senkichi’s *Akatukino dasso* (1950), Yamamoto Satuo’s *Shinkuchitai* (1952) and Kobayashi Masaki’s *Kabeatukino heya* (1954) have these motifs.

¹⁸¹ *Shinkuchitai*. DVD, directed by Yamamoto Satsuo (1952, New Japanese Movie Company, 2004).



Figure 23: Opening Scene of *The Sea Knows* in Nagoya (left), Figure 24: A physical assault in an army camp (right).

Shinkuchitai and *The Sea Knows* share commonalities. They both reject the simple dichotomy of anti-Japanese or U.S. and pro-Japanese or U.S. sentiments in the narrative of victimizing ordinary people during and after the U.S. occupation period. These films instead focus on the “the bullied soldier,” an individual who is victimized by the totality of the Japanese military system and the dynamic human relations in the army which go beyond mere racial discrimination. *The Sea Knows* reveals not only the violence of Japanese militarism, but also some aspects of Japanese multi-ethnic imperialism through the dynamic relations between a group of Japanese officers/soldiers and a Korean soldier, Aroun. For example, the Japanese officers, Koiso and Mori, discriminate against Aroun and another Korean volunteer, Inoue, because they think Koreans are inferior and can never be Japanese, even though they volunteered and are ready to die for the Japanese army and Emperor. On the other hand, another Japanese officer, Saitō, gives a strict warning to Mori not to abuse Korean soldiers, saying that Koreans also can be sons of the Japanese emperor (Kōmin) and modern subjects. The Japanese soldier, Nakamura, is also more sympathetic with Aroun’s ordeals and

introduces his niece, Hideko, to Aroun. Aroun and Hideko become lovers and Hideko consoles Aroun when he confesses his abuse. Aroun and Inoue complain to the Japanese army, saying that the way they are treated by the Japanese army is different from what the Japanese army promised, and want to cancel their volunteer service. *The Sea Knows* depicts the diverse forms of Japanese and Korean volunteerism, which was a taboo topic to be depicted during post war Korea, implying that Japanese imperialism was multi-ethnic imperialism that promoted not only the imperial people (Japanese)'s life but also the colonized people (Korean)'s life as equal.¹⁸² Therefore, the film observes Japanese colonialism more sharply without reducing it to the dichotomy of anti-Japanese and pro-Japanese sentiments.

Furthermore, by observing the absurdity of the “Multi-ethnic Japanese Empire” system, the film shows that there was no way to conceal the obvious contradiction between what the rhetoric of national integration and imperialization claimed and the reality of racial discrimination. That discrimination was based in Japanese mono-ethnic colonialism against the Korean population, but *The Sea Knows* shows, controversially, that some Koreans wished to go beyond the existing discriminatory barriers by becoming more Japanese than the Japanese of Japan proper (*naichi*) themselves. I explained Foucauldian biopolitics in relation to technological development and the inclusion of the

¹⁸² Naoki Sakai points out that in order to mobilize a large population of varying ethnic and historical backgrounds, it was necessary for the Japanese State to invent the philosophy of the multi-ethnic empire that could weave the desires of minority intellectuals and persuade them towards the policies of the empire. Although the Korean may be less Japanese in terms of the substratum, they are fully “Japanese” as subjects in their freedom to choose to be “Japanese” and to live and die and according to the universal laws of the Japanese state. See Naoki Sakai, *Two Negations: Fear of being excluded and the logic of self-esteem*. *Novel* 37(3) (Summer, 2004), 238-243.

population, when I analyzed USIS documentary films in an earlier chapter. However, this racism and exclusion toward a Korean soldier in the Japanese imperial army is not exactly same as Foucauldian biopolitical racism. Foucault analyses modern racism as a vital technology since it guarantees the function of death in an economy of bio-power. From these perspectives, racism allows for a fragmentation of the social that facilitates a hierarchical differentiation between good and bad races. The killing of others is motivated by the vision of an improvement or purification of the higher race, as well as those practices of “letting die” as can be seen in racism, especially in Nazism.¹⁸³ In a different way with Nazism, the bullied soldier, Aroun (and Kitaro in *Shikuchitai*) was supposed to gain a newer and more advanced life (modern and biopolitical subjectivity) and die for an honor as a member of the Japanese soldiers (citizens) under the *Naissen ittai* (Japan and Korean as one body) policy.¹⁸⁴ However, they are excluded from these positive biopolitics, which the Japanese empire officially proposed and was effective for Korean volunteerism, and they were humiliated, tortured and killed rather than die voluntarily and honorably.

In this sense, their exclusion is more based on “state of exception.” While biopolitics positively manages the “life” and “subjectivity” of the population concerned, it also simultaneously exercises fundamental constraints and suppression without law upon the bodies passing through it. Giorgio Agamben claims the institutionalization of law is inseparably connected to the exposure of “bare life.” Agamben denotes “bare life” designated an individual that may be killed by anyone without being condemned for

¹⁸³ Michel Foucault, *Society must be defended*, (Picador, New York, 2003), 225-235.

¹⁸⁴ As Takahashi Fujitani points out, Multi-ethnic Japanese Empire utilized the volunteerism in order to make the colonial people a biopolitical subject. It is also represented in the colonial Korean films.

homicide since he or she has been banned from the juridical-political community. While even a criminal could claim certain legal guarantees and formal procedures, this “sacred man” was completely unprotected and reduced to mere physical existence. Since he or she was ascribed a status beyond human and divine law, *homo sacer* became some kind of “living dead.”¹⁸⁵ Agamben’s “bareness” of life marks the flip side of a positive biopolitics whereby his account does not focus on the normalization of life, but on death as the materialization of a borderline. For Agamben, biopolitics is essentially “thanatopolitics.” Therefore, Aroun and Kitaro’s being bare life implies the fact the Japanese state of exception is always inherent to the liberal multi-ethnic empire that Japan officially proposed. The fact that an American war prisoner could be executed by the Japanese state of exception without holding a trial can be understood in this context.

The important thing is that this “thanatopolitics” in the film was explicitly shown not only in the Japanese military but also in the attacks of the U.S army on Japanese soldiers and innocent people. Inserting semi-documentary form, the film shows that U.S military technology takes Japanese soldiers’ and ordinary people’s lives away and destroys their battleships and a whole city of Japan formidably. In contrast to Foucault’s analysis of the relation between biopolitics and technology, with respect to the relation between thanatopolitics and technology, Timothy C. Campbell explains that Heidegger makes a critique of a technology, because he see a representation of the subject of technology as the revelation of the subject to the danger. Campbell says that “according to Heidegger, what can be said about this moment is that man is exposed to the danger of

¹⁸⁵ Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare life*, (Stanford University Press, 1998), 5-7.

revealing induced by technology.”¹⁸⁶ He states, “in Heidegger’s breakup of revelation into “unlocking, transforming, storing, distributing, and switching,” the power of technology’s “ordering” has been expanded to such a degree that man himself can be killed more easily.”¹⁸⁷

Campbell also explains that “this power of technology for danger is one that Agamben will read as proof of the power of thanatopolitics.”¹⁸⁸ He says, “In Agamben’s notion of remnant, an enormous multiplier of the danger that modern technology represents for mankind given the reciprocal inscription of being saved and being marked for death thanks to the operation of the state of exception.”¹⁸⁹ In this way, Aroun and Kitaro’s bare life was controlled by the state of exception of both Japan and the U.S., which obviously stands in contrast with Foucauldian biopolitical life which embodies the technological development of the U.S in USIS documentary films.

-Romantic Love and Shameful Feeling (affect called “shame of being human”)

One more important theme is “romantic love” (between the bullied soldier and the woman or comfort woman) in both films. In *The Sea Knows* and *Shikuchitai*, a woman

¹⁸⁶ Timothy C. Campbell, *Improper Life: Technology and Biopolitics from Heidegger to Agamben* (University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 3-15. According to Heidegger, Campbell explains that the revealing associated with technology is improper to the degree that it puts man at risk in his essence. Technology imposes itself on man but also positions him in relation to it so as to transform him into standing reserve, (*Bestand*) into an object of revelation. He states that put in this position, for Heidegger, man is enframed (*gestellt*) but also endangered, in which he is destined to be “ordered” for the future needs of technology.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 16. He points out that Heidegger introduces another possibility near the end of “*The Question Concerning Technology*” through well-known quote, “But where danger is, grows/ the saving power also.”

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 17. He states that “Agamben finds this moment of a ceaseless command as being on call for technology: life itself has somehow diminished such that it becomes easier to take the lives of those who have been ordered by technology.”

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 17

falls in love with a bullied soldier and provokes him to escape the army with her.

Romantic love between Aroun and Hideko in *The Sea Knows* is not based in mere sex or marriage, but rather based in a shared feeling of “shame.” Every time Aroun is abused by Japanese officers, he visits and confesses it to Hideko. Hideko, a Japanese woman, feels shameful toward Aroun who is being bullied by another Japanese. I argue that this other kind of “romantic love,” based in a feeling of shame, offers a possibility of resistance to Japanese imperialism and thanatopolitics in the film.

Naoki Sakai argues that romantic love between characters of a different nationality, ethnicity or race in the literary and cinematic representation can often be seen as the allegorical expression of international relations. According to him, romantic relationships involving submission and repulsion between a man and a woman and the reestablishment of these harmonious relations on the basis of the alleviation of such repulsion are often considered as fantastical solutions to the various conflicts that occur between nations and ethnicities.¹⁹⁰ However, a romantic love between Aroun and Hideko that is not harmonious in the film could function in resisting imperialism and militarism. Hideko’s agency can be read as a kind of resistance to thanatopolitics.

¹⁹⁰ Naoki Sakai, “On Romantic Love and Military Violence: Transpacific Imperialism and U.S.-Japan Complicity,” in *De/Militarized Currents: Gender, Race and Colonialism Across and the Pacific* (University of Minnesota Press, 2009).

Also, in particular, certain historians and sociologists claim that romantic love or international marriage between Japanese and Koreans was successfully mobilized by the Naisenittai policy (Japan and Korea as one) during the Japanese total war period. The representation of this kind of romantic love can be found in the above films. To give more particular examples, in *The Sea Knows* and *Shikuchitai* as well as *Akatukino dasso* (1950) and Suzuki Seijun’s *Shunpuden* (1965), which is a remake of *Akatukino Dasso*, a (comfort) woman falls in love with a bullied Japanese officer and provokes him to escape the army with her.

Furthermore, Ukai Satoshi points out that the Japanese in postwar political and cultural discourses have never publicly shamed themselves before colonial victims, while the shame of the Japanese is essentially the one set before the gaze of the Western victors, of the Americans especially.¹⁹¹ Likewise, although *Shikuchitai* and other Japanese *Dokuritu Pro Eiga* repeatedly depict anti-war and leftist social movements, these films victimize Japanese people within the U.S. occupation without criticizing their own past colonialism. War responsibility and depictions of colonialism that bear “shameful feeling” rarely appeared in Japanese films before the Japanese New Wave began. In this sense, Hideko’s shameful feeling as a Japanese in *The Sea Knows* was exceptionally described in the early postwar films. Here, I will trace the meaning of shame in the film.

Both Hideko and Aroun feel shame when he is abused. Aroun’s shameful feeling can be read as the “shame of remembering.”¹⁹² Drawing on Primo Levi’s work, Ukai Satoshi points out that “in order to survive the death camps, one has to obey guards against one’s will. Those who experience a collapse of will by pressure of punishment, warning of execution, and torture, continue to feel that they are even more inhumane than the assailants.”¹⁹³ He cites Levi’s sentence as follows, “It is man who kills. It is no longer man who, having lost all restraint, shares his bed with a corpse.”¹⁹⁴ In the film, Aroun confesses that he feels like he became a dog when he was punished, and as a symbol of becoming inhuman he imitates a dog’s sound to Hideko. In response, Hideko cries and says to Aroun that she feels hurts and that she cannot stand the “shame.” But Aroun

¹⁹¹ Ukai Satoshi, “The Future of An Affect: The Historicity of Shame”, *Traces* (1), (Cornell University press, 2001).

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

replies that “I don’t need your comfort, and I don’t know if I can call it love rather than sentimental comfort, because I hate the Japanese.” But later Aroun confesses through his voiceover, “Hideko cried for me and I cried too and her crying strangely relieved my pain.” He continues: “Who cares that she is a Japanese? It is a miracle that her crying relieved my pain. The essence of crying must be universal.” Here, Hideko’s shame as Japanese and Aroun’s shame as the “shame of remembering” were transformed into what Primo Levi calls the “shame of being a human being.”

Ukai Satoshi explains this as follows, quoting Levi, “although the survivors are not assailants, they feel shamed of belonging to the same species of humans as the assailants. The shame that the just man experiences another man’s crime; the feeling of guilt that such a crime should exist, that it should have been introduced irrevocably into the world of things.”¹⁹⁵ Satoshi states, “when Primo Levi spoke of the “shame of being human,” he was no longer a resident of the nationalist/humanist space. The “shame of being human” does not have an exteriority that the “shame of belonging to a nation” can easily assume.”¹⁹⁶

In fact, Hideko’s shame is different from guilt and it does not belong to national (Japanese) space. She feels ashamed of herself and responsible not only for Aroun, but also before Aroun’s presence. Hideko feels ashamed of herself as a human being before the victims because of the fact that she vicariously experiences “being inhuman.” Aroun also cries with shameful feelings as a human being because of the fact he experiences “being inhuman.” Aroun and Hideko share the same affect of shame as a human being at this moment, which cannot be attributed to any particular culture. It is nothing but

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 20.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 23.

something universal. This affect belongs to the future, which resists the present situation of racial discrimination and thanatopolitics of Japanese militarism.

In this sense, this affect called “shame” in *The Sea Knows* has nothing to do with resentment, but with a new relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. This “shame” shared between them is well expressed when Hideko provokes Aroun to escape from the army, saying that there is no reason for him to fight for Japan. It appears strongly again in the ending scene in which Aroun, who has died, is magically awakened and walks to reunite with Hideko. Their relationship, based in a shared feeling of shame, functions to resist the assimilatory logic of the Japanese military system.

-Magical Realism and Decolonization

The themes of the bullied soldier and romantic love are well expressed in both *The Sea Knows* and *Shinkuchitai* through a social realist style. For example, firstly, both films use long takes, tracking shots, deep focus, limited editing, location shooting, and documentary scenes, dealing with the social and political conditions of the Japanese military. These techniques make us experience “the physical reality” in which the characters were involved in the serial sequences of abuse in the army. Therefore, as in non-classical realist film, “the credibility of this film did not come from its verisimilitude but from the identity between the photographic image and its object.”¹⁹⁷ Secondly, there is no obvious assaulter and no obvious victim; acts of violence are contextualized within narrative events. The characters’ acting appears contingent, hesitant rather than

¹⁹⁷ Siegfried Karacauer, *Theory of Film: the redemption of physical reality*, (New York Oxford University press, 1960), 58-59.

determined, and motivated towards certain ambitions, desires, or aims. Although these films are character- rather than plot-led, there are no obvious heroes. This absence of heroes is an important characteristic of social realist cinema.

Moreover, while having a social realist style, *The Sea Knows* is somehow dramatic, theatrical, and subjective. This is related to the fact that the film is self-reflexive vis-à-vis the USIS films of Kim Ki-young. Although his USIS films such as *I am a Truck*, *The Diary of Three Sailors*, and *Island Doctor* are non-fiction documentaries, they take on qualities of a dramatized film and present intricate themes through arguments and assertions. *The Sea Knows* redeploys self-reflexively the dramatized documentary style of the USIS films, bringing together social realist style, subjective commentary about war issues, and semi-documentary aspects such as the first person narrative (Aroun's) and scenes of the U.S.'s aerial bombardment.

For example, the movie starts by showing the battleship that carries Korean volunteers across Hyunhaetan (southern sea between Korea and Japan). The battleship is shown through a full shot and the next shot shows a Japanese officer and the soldier, Aroun, talking inside of the battleship. The Japanese officer asks the soldier, "What's your name?" "I'm Aroun." The Japanese officer says, "Oh, Aroun [Korean name]," and he informs the other soldiers that he is regarded as a dangerous character. After the sound of a warning bell, a tracking shot shows the soldiers going to the barracks and on full alert. When the soldiers go to the barracks from the bridge, the camera tracks them through the wall. By doing so, the film obviously shows that the other side of the wall is a set that opens toward the camera, as if it were a theatrical setting that does not have a physical wall. The battleships are miniatures filmed from an aerial view. Following the

opening sequence, characteristic of unrealistic and self-reflective aspects of realistic documentary—foregrounding the set and theatrical setting—we see scenes characteristic of social realism: volunteers are arranged in Nagoya, doing daily jobs in the army.

A film historian, Lee Young-il points out that *The Sea Knows* (along with *The Housemaid* (1960) and *Koryojang* (1963)) opened up a new path, which had never been explored in Korean conventional film aesthetics and through these films, Kim Ki-young shifts his view into the inner world from social reality, revealing the truth of man's fundamental and horrible instincts and connecting it to the external world.¹⁹⁸ In contrast to his realist films such as *The First Snow* (1958) and *Resistance of Teenagers* (1959), which focused on the social reality of the time, he made *The Sea Knows* with more dramatic characteristics in the 1960's.

More specifically, *The Sea Knows* utilizes exaggerated dialogue, spectacular scenes, and “magical realism” in order to describe the theme of decolonization and to criticize the visualization of biopolitics in USIS films. For example, in the ending scene, the Japanese army sets fire to the corpses of those who were killed by U.S.'s aerial bombardment in order to hide the forthcoming Japanese defeat and horrors of attack of the U.S. Aroun is also thrown away in the hip of a corpse. Meanwhile, Hideko desperately looks for Aroun, calling his name out. During these moments, Aroun jumps to his feet from the heap of burning corpses, alive as if he is immortal and reunites with Hideko. This is a magical moment, because it cannot happen in the main realistic narrative. (figure 25)

¹⁹⁸ Lee Yongil, “Diabolical Desire,” in *Kim Kiyoung: Cinema of Diabolical Desire & Death*, (Pusan Film Festival Catalog, 1999), 151.



Figure 25. The magical moments of Aroun's rebirth from the heap of burning corpses and his reunion with Hideko

Regarding the discourse of “magical realism” in South Korean film, Kim So-young points out that Korean fantasy films of the 1960s partly activate and register the hesitation in the narrative and the visual, while also yielding to the mode of the supernatural to resolve the tension. They often resort to a dream structure and the use of subtitles that contain the supernatural within a more reasonable frame. This framing of the supernatural brings to mind Tzvetan Todorov's discussion of the fantastic genre, which often creates an effective tension by mobilizing a hesitation that is derived from an oscillation between the belief in the rules of Reason and the surplus that falls outside of it.

Kim argues that the fantastic genre should be considered in the relationship between colonial modernity and cinematic specificity. There is an engraved enchantment with “the magical” in the search for “the cinematic” in South Korean cinema. The magical is found in the mode of viewing, in addition to the mode of representation. The cinematic specificity of South Korean film formed during the colonial period is closely related to the configuration of modernity and to colonization. The magical aura found in the viewing environment, a kind of fantastic ambience, can mean both an enchantment with the colonial modernity that permeates the cinema and a charm that can dispel the evil Japanese/Western spirit that is attached to it.¹⁹⁹

Kim Ki-young’s film can be read in these discourses, but in a very complicated way. *The Sea Knows* does not depend on a simplistic dichotomy between anti- and pro-Japanese or anti- and pro-U.S. positions. Beyond Japanese independent films that employ social realism, this magical scene suggests the hope for humanity against war and the possibility of decolonization through Aroun’s vitality and his romantic love with Hideko who embraces Japanese war responsibility and shameful feeling. Also, Aroun’s unrealistic rebirth from his death leads the victims’ families to break through the wire entanglement and try to stop the burning of the corpses, believing that some of them are still alive. This magical moment shows the cruelty of the Japanese army that burned the victims of U.S. bombardment to hide the truth of the war, at the same time as it reveals the horrors of the U.S.’s attack on ordinary Japanese people. Therefore, one can say that the magical moment of (Aroun)’s rebirth and reunion with Hideko serves as an effective decolonizing agent toward Japanese colonialism and U.S militarism, suggesting a new

¹⁹⁹ Kim So Young, *Specters of Modernity*, 2001 Korean Cinema Project (The Japan Foundation Forum, 2001), 25-26.

relationship between Korea and Japan that stands against the governing of the life under the totality of Japanese empire, or the U.S. occupation forces in the case of USIS documentary films.

In order to disclose the relation between magical realism and decolonization in a more general context, I will bring in Wendy Faris's argument about Latin literature/film and colonialism. She points out that magical realism is often a cultural hybrid and it expresses many of the problematic issues that occur between selves and others in postcolonial discourses. She states that "magical realism has participated in transculturation processes that have resulted from encounters between different cultures for several reasons...Magical realism has developed in what Homi Bhabha and others have theorized as the indeterminate zone of the colonial encounter, a "place of hybridity." The hybrid nature of magical realism reveals a particularly intense dynamic of alterity. It does this through the "sustained opposition" of its "two opposing discursive systems" of realism and fantasy, which are locked in a continuous dialectic with each other...Therefore, the text suspended between those two discursive systems corresponds to the postcolonial subject suspended between two or more cultural systems, and so it is an appropriate mode in which to represent that situation."²⁰⁰

Also, Faris argues, "a more speculative reason is that the component of spirit in magical realism undermines many colonial paradigms. Magical realism would thus exemplify the idea, as expressed by Michel Foucault, that battles for control over

²⁰⁰ Wendy B. Faris, *Ordinary Enchantments: Magical Realism and the Remystification of Narrative* (Vanderbilt University Press, 2004), 134-135.

territories (whether actual or textual) are often motivated by a “hidden presence of the sacred,” hidden, that is, within the defocalized narrative of magical realism.”²⁰¹

From this perspective, she insists that magical realism can be seen as participating in the process of decolonization and that the political and cultural agency of postcolonial sphere are regained in literal and film texts. She argues that the magic in these texts is different from their nonmagical self-consciousness, which is based in “the question of authority.”²⁰² In contrast, magical realism carries out the possibility instead of authority. She says that “magical realism starts transferring discursive power from colonizer to colonized to offer a fictional ground on which to envisage alternative narrative visions of agency and history in a recently decolonized society.”²⁰³

In this sense, “realism” and “reflexivity” coexist and interpenetrate in *The Sea Knows* via Kim Ki-young’s combination of social realism and semi-documentary style with a dramatized form of documentary and magical realism. Furthermore, the magical realism of *The Sea Knows* shows the indeterminate zone of the colonial encounter, a “place of hybridity.” Here, the hybrid nature of magical realism reveals the particularly intense dynamics of alterity by translating the theme of “the bullied soldier” and “romantic love” and forms of social realism of *Shinkuchitai* into the colonial space in which the colonized and colonizer conflict or reconcile with each other.

In short, this “magical realism,” which gives rise to Aroun’s reborn and singular life from thanatopolitics, obviously functions as a critique of not only Japanese and U.S. thanatopolitics but also Koreans’ rehabilitated and biopolitical life based in liberal

²⁰¹ Ibid., 135.

²⁰²

²⁰³ Ibid., 136.

subjectivity as the whole population, which was propagated through USIS documentary films, embodies American technological development during the postwar.

-From female confession narrative into subaltern female voiceover in *The Promise of Flesh* (1975)

After Kim Ki-young made *The Sea Knows*, he continued to make melodramas that depict the compressed Korean postwar modernity expressed through gender dynamics. Among them, like *The Sea Knows* and *The Promise of Flesh* allegorizes postwar militarism (implying U.S occupation and Park Chung Hee's dictatorship), strongly interrelating with the motifs of Japanese films.²⁰⁴

The Promise of Flesh is a remake of Lee Man-hui's *Late Autumn* (1961), which was also remade by a Japanese director, Saito Koichi in 1972 and Kim Soo-young in 1981. Kim Tae-young also remade the original film, *Late Autumn*, recently in 2011. Although most of the remakes highlight the lovers' sorrowful emotions, *The Promise of Flesh* focuses more on the female protagonist's sexual trauma and her hope for recovery. This theme is straightforwardly depicted through a female confession narrative and an alternative female fantasy in which the female protagonist is no longer a victim but rather recovers her trauma and regains a hope to live.

²⁰⁴ With respect to interrelation between Korean and Japanese film, besides *The Sea Knows* and *The Promise of Flesh*, another of Kim Kiyong's films, *Koryeojang* (1963) has a strong interrelation with Japanese films. It shares the same motifs with Kinoshita Keisuke's *Narayama Bushiko* (1958). However, in this paper, I will focus on the two films above, which are more related with militarism and U.S occupation.

Because of the censorship of Park Chung Hee's *Yushin* system²⁰⁵ (1972-1979), the violence of the military dictatorship and U.S militarism were indirectly allegorized through her occupied body in prison. For example, when the protagonist, Hyosun, reenters into the prison, she is escorted along the high prison wall by a prison officer and a man. Although invisible to the people on screen, the viewer can see a South Korean flag flapping behind the wall. The man then asks the prison officer, "What's behind this high wall?" and the prison officer replies, "a city of its town; factories, a department store, even heaven's gate." At that moment, the non-diegetic roar of military boots is heard, as if soldiers were crowding in to capture Hyosun. This confirms the prison as symbolic of the South Korean nation-state whose military metaphorically occupies Hyosun's body. (figure, 27)

The film begins with Hyosun's flashbacks in which she narrates herself, while she takes the train in order to go to the place of promise where she is supposed to meet a man. In her flashbacks, she tells a story in which she became a prisoner after she accidentally killed the man who committed the sexual violence against her. She also came to have arrhenophobia after she was traumatized by male sexual violence and suffered from a suicidal impulse. *The Promise of Flesh* employs "the female confession narrative" to depict the trauma of a prostitute, criminal, and prisoner, Hyosun, which is caused by both Korean patriarchy and U.S. militarization. Hyosun's confession reveals her oppression and sexual violence and restores her sexuality as her own desire.

²⁰⁵ October 1972, Park Chung Hee dissolved the National Assembly and suspended the Constitution. Work was then begun on a new constitution, Yushin. The Yushin Constitution gave Park dictatorial powers. There were no limits on reelection. The president was also given the right to appoint a large portion of the National Assembly, which ensured a permanent majority for the ruling party. See Michael Breen, Web. October, 31.

The phenomenon of “female confession narrative or voice-over” emerged strongly in 1960s Japanese and Korean melodrama.²⁰⁶ The female protagonists in the films narrate their stories, confessing their crime or misdeeds and expressing regret and the desire for forgiveness to the audience. The confession narratives of these melodramas give shape to a shameful but socially respectable female self that is safe, productive, or sexual but neither subjective nor subversive. It is difficult to find a transgressive female voice or point of view, because they are merely the objects of male desire and the male gaze. This phenomenon can be connected to Christine Marran’s argument about Meiji fiction’s female confessional narratives in Japanese modern literature. According to her, the female narrative in Meiji fiction works to counter the spectacle of confession by framing the female speaking subject as rehabilitated. Female confessors strive to normalize or eliminate the perversity that would be a hallmark of later novels featuring male confessors. In other words, the aesthetic stance of the abject and social outcast is not available to females in Meiji fiction because the frame of repentance and social responsibility as an individual is what supports their self-narrative.²⁰⁷

In contrast to typical confession narratives, among Japanese melodramas that deal with the female body occupied by postwar militarism, *Yuka on Mondays* (*Getsuyôbi no Yuka*, Nakahira Kô, 1964)²⁰⁸ is particularly similar to *The Promise of Flesh* because of its

²⁰⁶ These examples are *A Wife Confesses* (Masumura Yasuzo, 1961), *The Gate of Flesh* (Suzuki Seijun, 1964), *The Confession of College Student* (Shin Sang Ok, 1958), *It is not Her Crime* (Shin Sang Ok, 1959), and *Drifting Story* (1960).

²⁰⁷ Christine L. Marran, *Poison Woman: Figuring Female Transgression in Modern Japanese Culture*, (University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 100-101.

²⁰⁸ *Yuka on Monday*, DVD, directed by Nakahira Kô (1964; Nikatu Film Company, 2002)

alternative female confession voiceover. The story centers on Yuka, a mistress of an old man who works for American officers. She narrates that the happiest thing in the world is to be loved by a man, but after the old man and an American officer abuse her sexually, she becomes doubtful about the way she has been living. (figure 26) The two films share commonalities. Each has a female protagonist whose confessional voice-over is different from the conventional female confession that makes female characters recollect and repent their crimes or misdeeds. In both films, a female narrator does not regret her crime; rather, her self-narrative or voiceover tries to make the audience sympathetic with her crime, thus preventing her from normalizing into dominant sexual norms. For example, in *Yuka on Mondays*, Yuka confesses to cheating on her patron to the police. However, Yuka does not take this confession seriously and talks abnormally fast, as if it is a joke. When the police ask her to admit her mistake, she denies it and runs away only to be pursued by the police again in a slapstick comedy style thus lampooning the serious conventional confession scene.

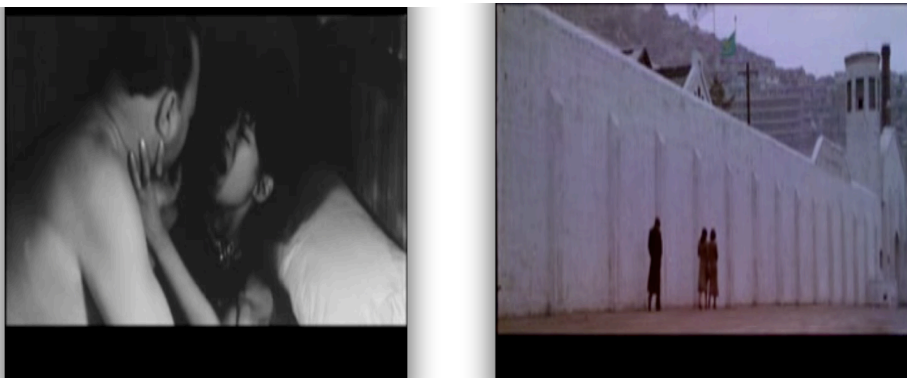


Figure 26. Yuka is sexually assaulted by an American soldier directly, *Yuka on Monday* (left). **Figure 27:** The prison, which captures Hyosun, implies the space of postwar military dictatorship (right), *The Promise of Flesh*.

In the case of *The Promise of Flesh*, when a man who kept her company asks Hyosun about the reason she killed a man, Hyosun does not answer to him. Instead, she narrates in an aside that only spectators can hear, “the prosecutor and jury asked me why I killed the man, but I couldn’t answer. I’ve been deceived by many men, but I couldn’t answer. They cut out my life with a knife in my body. I bleed so much blood. My resentment just exploded in shock.” The audience is, therefore, privy to her inner thoughts in which she accuses the perpetrators of sexual violence. Thus, we can be sympathetic with her suffering from which she was traumatized by the sexual violence. Moreover, the thing that made her confesses was “the male protagonist’s sacrifice” which helped her recover her belief about “a man”. After Hyosun knows that because a man kept her company to the prison, he didn’t even get a chance to escape and he was about to be arrested by the police, she finally confesses to him about what really happened to her. She shouts to him, holding onto the wire mesh fence, “Where are you? I’m sorry. It’s my fault. I despise and ignore everyone. From now on, I’ll try to trust people. I didn’t hate him. I just got fed up, exploded with all the abuse I received. We must meet again and you have to promise me, promise!” This is much different from the conventional confession narrative and voice-over in which the female narrator emphasizes the fact that she was not herself and was not normal at the time of her crime and must reconcile herself with sexual normativity or be punished with death in a maternal or fallen woman melodrama. In this way, Hyosun’s confession is a female authorial voice that hints at “alternative female subjective” issues that resist dichotomous liberal subjectivity (between a mother as a strong woman who plays a role in the familial reproduction and as a substitutive figure of the father and a modern girl or prostitute who gives sexual gratification to men and enjoys free love),

which is commensurate with patriarchal male desire in the biopolitical narrative of conventional melodrama.

This phenomenon shares a common thread with Kaja Silverman's argument on female voice-over. Silverman contests that the experimental feminist films carry out the anatomy of female voice through a disavowal, fantasy to narcissism, melancholia, and the negative Oedipus complex, dismantling female voice which is as relentlessly held to normative representation and functions as is the female body in the classical Hollywood films. In the same way, the female confession or voice-over of *The Promise of Flesh* rescues the female victim's own voice from a masculinized collective memory through the disavowal of her crime and fantasy of her narcissism based on a man's sacrifice for her.²⁰⁹

-From "SM roles based in Double suicide" into "One day marriage" and "Will to live"

One more important theme in *The Promise of Flesh* and *Yuka on Mondays* is that of S-M roles coded by double suicide. In both films, female protagonists have a S-M relationship with a man and attempt to commit double suicide.²¹⁰ However, in each film the

²⁰⁹ As for her narcissism fantasy, I will demonstrate it in later sections in detail.

²¹⁰ In Japanese theatre and literary tradition, "double suicides are the simultaneous suicides of two lovers whose *ninjo* (personal feelings), or love for one another are at odds with *giri* (social conventions or familial obligations). The tragic denouement is usually known by the audience and is preceded by a *michiyuki* (a journey scene in Japanese theatre which shows the characters dancing or conversing while traveling), a small poetical journey, where lovers evoke the happier moments of their lives and their attempts at loving each other. Lovers committing double suicide believed that they would be united again in heaven, a view supported by feudal teaching in Edo period Japan that the bond between husband and wife continued into the next world," See "Shinjū", Wikipedia, Web.

protagonists commit the subversive act of killing the men instead of dying together with them.

As some scholars on Japanese and Korean film have pointed out, the typical connection between a politically or historically traumatized man and a woman in (*yanggongju* or fallen woman) melodramas is often expressed through their pervasive SM relationship which reaches its zenith in a double suicide or the female's masochistic death.²¹¹ These narratives imply a man's defeat by the oppression of the South Korean dictatorship and *Anpo* struggles due to the U.S. occupation. Their trauma is reflected in their pervasive relationship with a woman. Women in these films represent nothing but the agency of male political and social trauma. However, in some melodramas such as Kim Ki-young's *Housemaid* (1960) and *Insect Woman* (1972) and Shinoda Masahiro's *Double Suicide* (1969) as well as Oshima Nagisha's *Japanese Summer Double Suicide* (1967), the double suicide functions not as a romantic death based on the female character's masochism, but as a subversive death caused by the abandoned woman's

²¹¹ See, Christine Marran and Kim So-young's argument about S-M roles. *Poison Woman: Figuring Female Transgression in Modern Japanese Culture*, (University of Minnesota Press, 2007). Kim So-young *Phantoms of Modernity: Fantastic Korean Films*, (Seoul: Seedbook Publisher, 2000). Also, I found this phenomenon in the melodramas. For example, in fallen woman melodrama such as *Three O'clock P.M in a Rainy Day* (1958, Park Jong Ho), *Drifting Island* (Gwon Yeong-Sun, 1960), *Floating Clouds* (1955, Naruse Mikio) and *Akitsu Spring* (1962, Yoshida Kiju), the female protagonist has an inappropriate relationship with a man who experienced Korean War or *Anpo* struggle. She comes to embody his trauma of and suffering from its aftermath and dies by illness or commits suicide after she is disappointed by the hopeless love.

revenge.²¹² In these examples, double suicide is a subversive act that highlights a woman's resistance to political violence rather than a man's political defeat.

Following the genealogy of this subversive moment in double suicide, in *Yuka on Mondays*, after Yuka is sexually assaulted by an American military officer, she dances with his patron, who lets her get abused by the officer, intimating that they should commit double suicide. However, in the end, she throws him into the river and quietly walks away alone. This scene is reminiscent of the omitted scene in *The Promise of Flesh*, in which Hyosun goes to prison after killing a sexual assailant as revenge for being raped by several men during the era of military dictatorship. This scene was omitted in *The Promise of Flesh*, but it was narrated in Hyosun's confession. Hyosun and Yuka's murder of their attackers is very subversive compared to the victim's masochistic death or tragic suicide in many other melodramas.

Furthermore, in *The Promise of Flesh*, double suicide is switched to a "one-day marriage" between the strangers. Hyosun, who thinks there is no reason to believe in this world, keeps trying to commit suicide, after being sexually abused by men during the era of military dictatorship. In the meantime, she runs into a strange lover, both innocent but sexually appealing, who suggests impulsively that instead of a lover's suicide, they should get married. Naturally, Hyosun is anxious about being betrayed by a man again, but she is happy with the man's proposal at the same time. Although her anxiety

²¹² More specifically, through the analysis of Shinoda Masahiro's *Double Suicide*, Nina Cornyetz shows that a female protagonist refuses to commit double suicide, which is based on social law (heterosexist and patriarchal wifely duty), and thus insists that it transgresses the conventional meaning of double suicide. Nina Cornyetz, *The Ethics of Aesthetics in Japanese Cinema and Literature: Polygraphic Desire* (Routledge, 2007). Also, see, Brett de Bary "Not Another Double Suicide: Gender, National Identity, and Repetition in Shinoda Masahiro's *Shinjuten no Amijima*," *Iris* 16 (Spring 1993): 49-56.

dissipates somewhat, even after he is late to meet her, she does not trust him entirely. When he suggests that they consummate their relationship on the train, Hyosun first rejects him. However, she experiences unexpected pleasure when she is overwhelmed by his sadistic sexual libido and submits to him. Unlike in her previous encounters, she asks him to stay with her for a while after their sexual relationship even though she is still doubtful about men, feeling suicidal despair about returning to the prison. After she comes to know that he stayed and traveled with her to the prison, even though he knows he will be arrested, she finally fully opens her mind to him. After she is released from the prison. She waits for him for years, but he never reappears. She narrates that she no longer has the will to come here and will go her way from now on, dreaming of a liberated and independent life.

Therefore, I argue that *Promise of Flesh* subverts the existing cultural meaning of double suicide by changing the codification of death and life. I suggest that the romantic death of heterosexual normativity in the double suicide is transformed into a woman's will to live through the "one-day marriage" and sexual pleasure in the film. Her sexuality is not mediated by the commodification of sex or the liberation of the body with promotion of a liberal U.S occupation modernity, which is often found in the conventional melodramas.²¹³ Rather, because she is an occupied, lower class prisoner who does not have economic power to enjoy various kinds of commodities, including sex, her sexuality comes only from her narcissistic fantasy, which is that the man will sacrifice for her. And through her fantasy, instead of experiencing a tragic death, she recovers the hope for a liberated life from the military dictatorship and U.S. occupation,

²¹³ I have explained how the female body and sexuality were fetishized by American consumerism in earlier chapters.

which are allegorized through the prison and its relationship to Hyosun's body at the beginning of the film. Therefore, the film transcends the limits of biopolitical melodrama genre which controls a female body, dividing the healthy from the unhealthy.



Figure 28. Hyosun feels a suicidal impulse, and she encounters a stranger who prevents her from her suicide. He appeals to her sexually and is sadistic toward her. *Promise of Flesh* (1975).



Figure 29. In the end, he sacrifices himself, following her to the prison.

-Female Fantasy and Interchangeability of SM roles for the critique of Postwar Militarism

As I analyzed above, the three scenes of the ritual of marriage, the consummation on the train, and their farewell in front of the prison can be explicitly read as Hyosun's fantasy. One aspect of the film that hints at this is the extremely dramatic mode with a theatrical *mise-en-scène*. For example, the dialogue, movement of figures, and setting are exaggerated and unrealistic. In the film, when the scene is changed into the next one, by using zoom in and out, tracking and tilt up and down, the camera shows the new place first with the establishment shot, then shows figures who entered into that place. The transitions emphasize the artificial setting and theatrical characteristics of the film.

The employment of unrealistic conventions is most vivid in the scene that portrays the ritual of marriage. When Hyosun's parole officer asks the man to show her that a woman needs a man and there is a reason to believe in this world, he counters that he does not believe it either. He rejects her request and disappears without notice to them. However, he appears again suddenly in front of Hyosun while she is visiting her mother's grave and says, "Let's have a wedding ceremony and I'd like to proclaim an eternal love with you." After that, we see in a crane shot that they run to the beach for their first date. Then the camera crane pulls back as they return to the forest and share a kiss. He suggests that they meet again in the evening, saying, "I'll have your ring by then. We'll get a room. We're married and we'll get pregnant in a day". However, when he fails to arrive, she anxiously soliloquizes that, "I'm not sure what he's trying to do and everything must be a fantasy." In this way, this scene of the "one-day marriage" is her fantasy, and quite unlike the male fantasy of the conventional double suicide.

Also, the last sequence in the film should be read as Hyosun's fantasy. Even after the sex with her satisfies his desire, the man sees her off at the prison. The film first

shows two people walking along the tall, white wall of the prison using a full shot and a long take, then suddenly switches to a close-up of the man's sad face. The man says with a quivering voice, "we have to bid farewell now. I won't forget you and it was very meaningful for me" but she does not respond to it at all. However, Hyosun turns on her heels to the prison door and she calls out to him after she realizes that he sacrificed himself to keep his promise with her. He then comes close to her and they cry out to each other over the prison door, regretting their farewell. He says that he will wait for her with the present for her, and agrees to her proposal to meet again. Immediately, however, he is arrested by the military soldiers and Hyosun shouts, "no, no." This scene is overlapped with a scene in the present day in which Hyosun also says, "no, no", waiting for him on the bench as if she was daydreaming the whole thing. We then see Hyosun retuning home on the train and her voice-over overlaps with the scene. She narrates that, "For years, I've been coming to this very spot, waiting for you. Now I've decided to let go of the past and go my own way. You gave me the reason to believe. My delusion of persecution has gone now. I no longer suffer from the past. Where are you now? I don't blame you for not coming. But I always worry about you." This scene is also obviously Hyosun's fantasy, because it clearly depicts the man who sacrifices himself for Hyosun's happiness through an exaggerated and theatrical *mise-en-scène*.

Hyosun's fantasy can be read through Elizabeth Cowie's analysis of melodrama as female fantasy. Cowie insists that in the feminist use of the psychoanalytic notion of fantasy, the desire of different subjects' positions can exist and the subject can adopt these positions in relation to variety of complex scenarios. In this constellation, female fantasy can be seen as one way of dismantling "bachelor machines" of masculinized

fantasy.²¹⁴ Connecting her notion of fantasy with female desire, she says, “fantasy as a mise-en-scène of desire is more a setting out of lack, of what is absent, than a presentation of a having, a being present. Desire itself coming into existence in the representation of lack, in the production of a fantasy of its becoming present. It can be seen, then, that a fantasy is not the object of desire, but its setting.”²¹⁵ Continuously she argues that, “Fantasy involves, is characterized by, not the achievement of desired objects, but the arranging of, a setting out of, desire; a veritable mise-en-scène of desire. The fantasy depends not on particular objects, but on their setting out; and the pleasure of fantasy lies in the setting out, not in the having of the objects.”²¹⁶

Using these discourses, we can see that Hyosun’s fantasy is not based on merely pursuing the love object, a man, but based on a setting out of her lack. For example, after Hyosun is released from a prison (which I established above as a symbol of the era of military dictatorship), she goes for several years to the place where they promised to meet again, but he never appears. Through the series of the film mise-en-scène described above, her inability to possess the desired object reveals her lack and desires. In other words, she, who has been treated as a sexual object and abused in various SM relationships with men, longs for a happy married life yet craves sexual pleasure through a SM relationship. Moreover, we know that beyond sexual pleasure, she pursues the trust of a human being through a reversed SM relationship.

²¹⁴ Penley, Constance “Feminism, Film theory, Bachelor Machines”, *The Future of An Illusion: Film, Feminism and Psychoanalysis*, (University of Minnesota, 1989), 80.

²¹⁵ Elizabeth Cowie, “Fantasia”, *Representing The Woman: Cinema and Psychoanalysis* (University of Minnesota, 1997), 133.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 133

Via the SM relationship between Hyosun and men in *The Promise of Flesh*, the film subverts the conventionality of SM relationship in which a woman always automatically is represented as a masochist in two ways. First, many melodramas tend to fetishize a woman who has been sexually abused as the object who takes masochistic pleasure.²¹⁷ We see this in the film's protagonist, Hyosun whose representation as a woman who was sexually abused implies that she has a masochistic tendency. However, through her confessional voice-over, the film clearly shows that she recalls her sexual and physical trauma and suffers from it, thus subverting this convention. Second, her SM relationship with the man who appears later in the development of the narrative allows for the interchangeability of their SM roles. As I explained above, in the beginning, she comes to have a masochistic sexual relationship with a sadistic treatment of the man, but their relationship is reversed in the moment which in a man does not run away, in order to keep her company to the prison, and gets arrested. In other words, in this moment, his sadistic desire toward her transforms into the masochistic self-sacrifice toward her, thus their SM relationship is not fixed but interchangeable.

Cowie also says that the key word for understanding S/M is fantasy. The roles, dialogue, fetish costumes, and sexual activity are part of a drama or ritual. The participants are enhancing their sexual pleasure, not damaging or imprisoning one another. A sado-masochist is well aware that a role adopted during a scene is not

²¹⁷ As for the general relation of women's victimization to hysteria or melancholia, Linda Williams argues that the feminine subject of melodrama appears to be constructed to achieve a modicum of power and pleasure within the given limits of patriarchal constraints on women, although the melodrama points to the spectacles of intense suffering and loss as masochistic through victimizing a woman. She insists that Melodrama seems to repeat our melancholic sense of the loss of origins--impossibly hoping to return to an earlier state that is represented by the body of the mother or woman. Linda Williams, "Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess" in *Film Quarterly*, Vol.44, No.4 (Summer, 1991), 2-13.

appropriate during other interactions and that a fantasy role is not the sum total of her being. In other words, the S/M subculture functions as a theatre in which sexual dramas can be acted out. Cowie comes close to a psychoanalytic view of fantasy not only in her suggestion of a split subject in S/M but also in her notion of fantasy as a scene, or a theatre, involving role-playing and the interchangeability of roles. Cowie ultimately contends that fantasy involves not an object of desire as in 'I want X' but a scenario of activities that depend upon the partner's participation.²¹⁸

In a similar way, in *The Promise of Flesh*, Hyosun does engage the man as a fixed desired object, but invites him to participate actively in her fantasy, beginning with the ritual of marriage and consummation on the train and ending with the last scene of their farewell. Most importantly, whereas Cowie's argument is focused on a middle class woman's fantasy, Kim Kiyong shows that Hyosun, who once lost her will for life because of the violence of the military dictatorship and the U.S occupation, regains hope for life by encountering a man who tries to understand her trauma and sacrifices himself for her. As I analyzed above, she is released from prison, overcoming a suicidal urge in order to meet him again, and this means she was liberated from the military dictatorship and U.S. occupation. She decides to go her own way without losing hope, saying he gave her a reason to believe, even though he does not appear. Therefore, her fantasy, indirectly, implies the recuperation of democracy and individual freedom, which resists life and death being governed by the military dictatorship and U.S. occupation. That is to say, her fantasy carries out the desire toward recovering a lost democracy, by imagining a man

²¹⁸ Elizabeth Cowie, "Fantasia", *Representing The Woman: Cinema and Psychoanalysis* (University of Minnesota, 1997), 131-132.

who was allegorized as the belief and promise for an end to the violence of military dictatorship.

As Linda Williams points out, “melodrama has achieved a modicum of power and pleasure for the female subject within the given limits of patriarchal constraints on women, although the melodrama points to the spectacles of intense suffering and loss as masochistic through victimizing a woman.”²¹⁹ *The Promise of Flesh*, within the form of melodrama, goes beyond these melancholic senses of this loss and carries out “alternative female fantasy” in which the female protagonist is no longer a victim but she recovers her trauma and gains hope for her singular life which is an alternative life form to biopolitical life controlled by the dominant sexual norm. In this way, in this form of fantasy of melodrama, the sexuality of the protagonists is exercised in the bodily pleasures which are based on what Foucault calls “individual singularity”, and “an ethical relationship with the other,”²²⁰ and can reverse the power structure of victimizer and victim. This reversible S-M role enables one to subvert the totalized fantasy form which is the fascistic and capitalistic power structure (governmentality) and is reinforced through the fantasy based in conventional S-M roles in which domination and submission is fixed.

²¹⁹ Williams, *Ibid.* 10.

²²⁰ Foucault, *History of Pleasure, Volume 3, The Care of the Self* (Vintage Books, 1986), 42.

Conclusion

-Co-production of films between *Zainichi* (Korean residents in Japan) and Japan as the possibility of communalism

Harry Harootunian says, in “Ghostly Comparison,” that what should inform a new kind of comparative practice is the “larger spectrality of societies deeply involved in fashioning a modernity coeval with Euro-America or Japan in East Asia yet whose difference is dramatized by the revenant which as appear as ghosts that have not yet died but have become repressed excess...ready to return...to hunt and disturb the historical present.”²²¹ His argument implies that comparisons do not necessarily come in the form of authentic community such as Europe and its Others (or Japan and its Others) or Post-European culture and the West (or Post-colonial culture and Japan) as the condition of difference, but come in other possibilities of “periphery” and other semiotic or aesthetic conjunctions mediated by different temporal and spatial dynamics.

By taking the strategy of comparison, beyond the dichotomy of Post-colonial culture (Korea) and Japan, especially in the final Chapter I argued that Kim Kiyong’s two films, *The Sea Knows* and *Promise of Flesh* redeploy the generic characteristics of propagandistic USIS films, Japanese social realism, and melodrama by twisting the documentary form, social realistic long takes, male-oriented confession narratives, and the double suicide code into unconventional modes such “magical realism” and the “form

²²¹ Harry Harootunian, “*Ghostly Comparison*,” *Grounds of Comparison*, ed, Pheng Cheah and Jonathan Culler (Routledge: New York and London, 2003), 189. Harootunian suggests “a new kind of comparative practice” by opposing the “spectre of comparison” articulated by Benedict Anderson, because that “spectre” remains definitively that of Europe (or Japan), which Anderson seems to continue to prioritize as a space, a location, and thus an incomparable point of origin.

of female fantasy.” In these unconventional and fantastic modes, unrealistic revivals from the dead and escape from the suicidal drive through the form of fantasy can occur. In turn, this produces an alternative life form to the biopolitical life form controlled by liberal governmentality and the flip side of it, the state of exception. In Chapter Three, I demonstrated that the military prostitute melodrama disturbs gender roles in that it explicitly exposes the contradictions of biopolitical gender reproduction. A woman’s contaminated body is not only an agent bearing the national allegory of victimization, but it also grasps her own affects, including hysteria, melancholia, and sexuality.

I suggest that such magical and excessive modes, as we see in these films, can be read as examples of “hetero-fantasies” in which minorities such as the bullied soldier, the incurable prostitute, and the occupied prisoner can have their sexual difference and class difference. These hetero-fantasies are related to “the colonial difference” that Harootyan discusses above. In other words, through hetero-fantastic and excessive cinematic moments (and through recalling “the spectrality of the past”), these films attempt to resist that gendering of life and death that allows for the governance of the whole population through a complicity between the South Korean nation-state and the empires of Japan and the U.S.

In addition, to show another explicit case of this colonial difference, I’d like to note that there was an actual co-production film movement between *Zainichi* (Korean residents in Japan) and Japan during the 50s. That was the film movement co-produced by socialist film directors Kamei Humio and Arai Hideo who partly belong to Japanese independent production and *Zainichi*, and Kim Sun-myung’s Tokyo Kino productions.

They made two important documentary films, *Children of the Base* (1953)²²² and *Chosen's Children* (1955)²²³ against the mode of representation promoted by U.S. occupation forces and the Japanese government.

Both of these films touch on the political interventions of the U.S. occupation forces and the Japanese government. The former film deals with the U.S.'s exploitation of Japanese children. "Japanese Entry Prohibited" military bases had proliferated to more than 700, occupying an area equivalent to the island of Shikoku and completely encircling Japan's children. The bases were built after the old houses were forcibly dismantled and children who used to live there were forced to run errands for the U.S. bases. The film depicts the situation at several bases through the eyes of children.

The latter film deals with the Korean minority's oppression by U.S. occupation forces and the Japanese government. In 1952, the Tokyo metropolitan Government Board of Education unilaterally declared, "all metropolitan Korean schools will close as of March 31, 1956." In protest, fellow *Zainichi* organized the Children of Korea Production Committee to save "ethnic education," and produced this film together with Kim Sun-myung and other members of the Korean filmmaker's collective. Based on compositions by students at the time, and including scenes of an old Korean woman from Kobe vividly recounting the many hardships she encountered before the war, the film shows about the history of the Korean minority whose lives were shaped by the discrimination and oppression of U.S. occupation forces and the Japanese government.

²²² *Children of the Base*, Film, directed by Kamei Fumio and produced by Kim Sun-myung (1953; Japanese Documentary film, 2004).

²²³ *Chosen's Children*, VHS, directed by Arai Hideo and produced by Kim Sun-myung (1955; Chongryhon Film Studio, 2004)



Figure 30: *Children of the Base* (1953)



Figure 31: *Chosen's Children* (1955)

Chosen's Children shows their learning of Korean in Korean schools and explains the series of events followed by the prohibition of Korean education, by using well scripted first-person voiceover narration of *Zainichi* Korean girls and boys and the provocative music of non-diegetic sounds. In doing so, the film has an educational purpose like Griersonian liberal elitism and socialist documentary of the Soviet style. But at the same time, the serial sequences of the films in between strongly use the characteristics of *cinema verite* by catching the contingent dialogues and synchronized sounds. For example, there are two explicit sequences that show this. First, the scene of the demonstration parade which objects to the prohibition of Korean language is shown by hand-held camera, and children's songs and people's shouts against the government's actions are heard through synchronized sounds. Also, in these scenes, suddenly, an old *Zainichi* woman shouts to the police, "You, Japanese, if you were forced to prohibit the use of Japanese, how would you be feeling?" Including her contingent remarks, these scenes are spontaneous moments which go beyond the educational documentary controlled by scripted scenario beforehand, and edited scenes afterwards. Second, as I

mentioned earlier, the film goes along with the *Zainichi* children's narration. But there is an unusual scene in which a long dialogue between a Japanese bus driver and *Zainichi* boys and girls occurs. When the children take the bus, the Japanese bus driver talks to them, "I heard your school would be closed. I feel really sorry for you" and he continues to talk, "I have been to Chosen..." and the Children ask him, "Really? Have you been to Seoul too? Are there a lot of big mountains? I envy you..." Then, the bus driver replies, "Yeah, it's beautiful, you must want to go... Take care," and drops them at the school. The children who get off the bus say, "It is really cold. Let's run together." This scene is shown by a natural daily conversation, which was not included in a scenario (which mostly based on the scripted first-person voiceover narration which brings intentional political meanings). This scene shows the naturalness and extemporaneousness of documentary, which is different from the educational documentary. In short, the film emphasizes the director's intentional editing and the scripted narration which shows political and social events, as well as utilizing *cinema verite* style, which emphasizes actuality as something captured spontaneously by a camera. Therefore, the style of the film is similar to *direct cinema* which occurred in the 60s in Europe.²²⁴ And this can be an alternative film aesthetic to Grierson's "creative treatment of actuality" which focuses on the writing of a scenario and storytelling based on the continuity style of Hollywood. In this sense, this social realistic documentary film can be markedly one example which is resistant to the aesthetics of U.S occupation forces, as seen in USIS films and CIE films. Moreover, the scene of this conversation implies the possibility of new relationship between Koreans and Japanese. We can observe their friendly relationship in the scene

²²⁴ Susan Hayward, *Cinema Studies, The Key Concepts*, third edition, (Routledge, 1996), 77.

where the Japanese bus driver has empathy for *Zainichi* children and the children are also favorable to the bus driver. In fact, as if it reflects the fact that the film was co-produced by Japanese and *Zainichi* film groups, the film focuses on the possibility of solidarity between Japanese and *Zainichi*, depicting ordinary Japanese people who participate in the demonstration parade and joint school art and festivals of *Zainichi* and Japanese children. In other words, these scenes suggest another possibility of “communalism” or “community” resistant to biopolitical governmentality, beyond “individual singularity.”

Jacques Nancy explains that the alternative community is neither based in some form of authenticity such as the nation-state nor the “society of spectacle” of capital liberalism, arguing that “Being-to exist” in this community is interacting with one another by the self, and the concept of interaction comes from a singular entity affecting the plural (or multiple entities).²²⁵ *Chosen’s Children* shows the moment of this imagined community. Ordinary Japanese people interacted with the other, the *Zainichi* (who belonged neither to the Korean nor to the Japanese authentic community, as they did not have citizenship of either of two countries in the film) by participating in a demonstration against the Japanese government and U.S. occupation forces, as well as feeling empathy for *Zainichi*. Beyond documentary narrative, this communalism can be found more explicitly in the form of co-production in which a *Zainichi* group produced, and a Japanese filmmaker directed on, the issue of a minority, the *Zainichi*’s sufferings. In other words, as shown above, by realizing a social realism style of documentary which is resistant to the liberal realism of the U.S. and Japanese governments, without reducing it to a form of national cinema, the practice of filmic co-production overlaps with Jacques

²²⁵ Jacques Nancy, *Being Singular Plural (Meridian: Crossing Aesthetics)* (Stanford University Press, 2000), 32-68.

Nancy's idea of the alternative community.

In the more specific historical context of postwar East Asia, the practice of this communalism can be connected with the common issue of decolonization. As is well known, Takeuchi Yoshimi declared not only a feeling of shame about the violence Japanese imperialists employed to invade Asian countries, but also his resentment against the postwar American imperialism which, just like Japanese imperialists, tried to take over large parts of East Asia.²²⁶ Thus, he did not discard the name of an Asia that would rely on something other than the agency of nationalism, and saw communalism (between Asia; or, “within Asia” or “among Asian countries or people”) as resistance to postwar imperialism. One might say that his thought on Asia can be actualized in the filmic communalism in these co-produced films between *Zainichi* and Japanese film groups.

²²⁶ To offer an additional explanation, Takeuchi Yoshimi focused on the unequal power relationship between the East and the West (or Europe). Takeuchi said, “it must be first recognized that Oriental modernity is the result of European coercion, or is something derived from that result” (53). In other words, modernity in the East first emerged when the East was invaded by the West, whose “capital (sought) to expand markets while its missionaries (were) committed to expanding the kingdom of God” (55). Even though through the eyes of Europe this historical movement of “self-preservation” and “self-expansion” was natural, its “invasion of the Orient produced resistance there, a resistance that was of course reflected in Europe itself” (55). See, Takeuchi Yoshimi, *What Is Modernity?: Writings of Takeuchi Yoshimi* (Modern Chinese Literature from Taiwan), (Columbia Press, 2015).

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Koryojang, DVD, directed by Kim Ki-young (1963; KOFA collection, 2005)

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