

Representing Sex and Sexuality: Requiem for Mother¹ Hyangjin Lee

As an effective medium of cultural criticism, film communicates the conflicting ideas of people regarding their changing social environments and human relations. This study adopts a cross-cultural analysis of Japanese and Korean cinemas, in order to evaluate the characteristics of gender representation in South Korea from an East Asian cultural perspective. With their close historical relationships, a comparison of Japanese and Korean cinemas merits a special discussion for this study. In particular, the shared 'Confucian' cultural traditions, the rapid Westernization process driven by external forces and the intensive years of state-led modernisation mark the contexts in which these cinematic discourses are situated. A critical examination of the cinematic parodies of cultural discontinuity and negotiation patterns of contemporary Japanese torn between the ideals of familiarity and foreignness in their daily lives, therefore, provides a balanced understanding of transitional Korean identity in recent years.

Four films were chosen for this study, two Japanese and two Korean nonsensical comedies about the unpredictable behaviour of ordinary people who contradict themselves because of their commitment to traditional community-oriented human relationships and because of their exposure to or pursuit of 'Western' ideals. The first pair of films are *The Funeral* (Ososhiki, 1984) and *Tampopo* (1986) by Itami Jūzō, the great Japanese film satirist. The counterparts of these films are *Farewell, My Darling* by Haksaeung Bugun Shinwi (1996) and *301, 302* (1996) by Park Chulsoo. Park, one of the most prominent South Korean directors, also enjoys an international reputation as a film satirist.

Both Itami's *The Funeral* and Park's *Farewell, My Darling* are comic dramas about the death of a father and the following family reunion. The various incidents amongst the people attending funerals and their behaviours and attitudes tend to allow an anthropological observation of the particular contexts. Directing the five-day funeral procedure in the form of a cinematic diary from the hearing of the news, Itami and Park show the transformations of women's roles based upon the needs of societies in transition and the vulnerability of women's positions from a male subjective point of view. The secondary roles of women in conducting the family rituals succinctly

reconstructed in the films express how the ideals of 'harmonious' familial relationships are exploited to stabilise and embellish the patriarchal system based on the sacrifice of women. The narrators of the films, the eldest son in *Farewell, My Darling* and the eldest son-in-law in *The Funeral*, introduce the hidden family histories, appropriating the suffering of mother and daughter (in-law). Although the two men are supposed to be the chief mourners in the funerals according to old customs, their detached voices let the audiences scrutinise the oppressive aspects of 'ideal' human relationships cultivated by the traditional norms of society.

Tampopo and *301, 302* use food as a central vehicle to represent the alienation of women in the family structure and in society. In *Tampopo* the central figure is a woman who, in order to succeed her late husband in the family business, desperately seeks to perfect the art of cooking noodles. In *301, 302* the main characters are two women who struggle for their own identities freed from traditional ideological constraints. In contrast to the heroine in *Tampopo*, who successfully transforms herself in harmony with her environment, the two women in *301, 302* isolate themselves from their own families and society. Ultimately, they destroy their lives through their bizarre and excessive obsession with food and cooking.

In discussing transitional identity in contemporary Japan and Korea represented in the four films, this study focuses on women's sexuality and role conflicts represented from male subjective points of view. The creative and experimental imaginations of Itami and Park in interpreting family melodramatic assets in Japanese and Korean cinematic traditions are encapsulated in the symbolic usage of food by, and division of space between, the different genders. The various images of heroines portrayed from male subjective points of view disclose the contradictory needs of the patriarchy in adopting the ideals of tradition and modernity. Especially, the motifs of food combined with the codes and conventions of sexuality are used to express the absurdity of the colonial and post-colonial experiences of the two peoples who seek to cope with the changes. A critical examination of Itami's and Park's works focusing on the issues related to male subjectivity in interrogating women's problems, therefore, allows the researcher to evaluate the two national cinemas as vital forms of social representation responding to changing cultural values in the respective countries.

Representing Sexuality and Male Subjectivity

Sexuality is socially constructed and maintained in symbolic relations. It functions "as a malleable feature of self, a prime connecting point between body, self-identity and social norms" (Giddens, 1993:15). Also, sexuality is defined "as being 'by nature' : a domain susceptible to pathological processes, and hence one calling for therapy or normalizing interventions; a field of meanings to decipher; the site of processes concealed by specific mechanisms" (Foucault, 1979: 68). As Foucault points out in *The History of Sexuality*, civilization in modern social life has achieved, through "discipline power," a control of basic inner drives. In modern social institutions, such as prisons and asylums, discipline power, just as within families, has produced "docile bodies" (Foucault, 1977). The bodies and sexuality of women as the powerless are produced by the desires of the patriarch, the subject of discipline power. Since "power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth" (Foucault, 1977: 194), sexuality as part of reality reveals the power relations in a society. Furthermore, power is the multiplicity of force relations and is ubiquitous. Power also includes the plurality of resistance emerging from a complex strategic situation in a particular society through discourses and discursive practices. Reality expressed by "docile bodies" , therefore, inherits the forces of resistance from below.

From a traditional Confucian view, a female body is the property of the patriarch, serving his procreative needs. Her existence is acknowledged through her biological reproductive functions, and her sexuality must be concealed as his private domain. Therefore, the ideals of womanhood, such as virginity, chastity, sacrifice and endurance, identify his claim to her body (Hogarth, 1996). Furthermore, the biological differences between men and women are used to foster their sexuality and gender identity through a set of stereotypes, such as spontaneity vs. passivity, and superiority vs. inferiority. In this discriminative identification process, women's sexuality is situated within a hierarchical order in familial society, and their sexual desires must not be open to public discourse. Also, their bodies should remain within the official social institutions, such as marriage and family.

In this sense, the representation of women's bodies and their sexuality, retained as they are by patriarchal power, means breaking the rules of silence. To avoid confrontation with such Confucian ideals, filmmakers, therefore, need a "dirty" body to

satisfy male fantasies and fetishist desires. She must be a “corrupted” woman disowned by the patriarch, i.e., either a prostitute or a divorcee. Her image is often associated with heavy make-up, revealing short skirts, large earrings and accessories, and smoking and drinking in public places. Through these discriminating dress codes, the corrupted woman reinforces the ideals of the virtuous woman who emphasises virginity and chastity. Sexuality inscribed by Confucian family politics is probably one of the burning issues in creating new identities in contemporary Korea. Given this basis, my discussion of the two films made by Park will focus on the relations between male subjectivity and identity questioning in re-asserting or de-mystifying the myth of motherhood through a comparison with Itami’s works.

The Vanished Mother in *301.302* and the Returned Mother in *Tampopo*

The destructive lives of the heroines in *301.302* are ascribed to their rejection of “motherhood”. In the opening scenes, two little girls talk about their mothers. The camera is within the little girls’ gaze. Facing the camera, they address the camera directly. Their mothers’ cooking skills are excellent but they did not like their mothers’ food. They want their mothers’ attention and prefer to be different from their own mothers. In the first girl’s recollection, a luxurious fridge full of instant junk food represents the image of her mother being absent. The American commercialized fast-food products substitute for her mother. In the latter’s, her mother is cutting meat beside a huge fridge at her stepfather’s butcher shop. Her second marriage has already violated traditions emphasizing “the chastity of married women”. Blinded by money, she neglects the stepfather’s sexual abuse of her daughter. Given the female parenting, the girls have refused to reproduce a mothering role. The obsession with cooking and extreme eating disorders is the resulting development of their perceptions of motherhood. The denial of motherhood claims back the female body from the patriarch. The emancipation of the female body from the patriarch is the symbol of her new sexual identity, but it is only achieved through the invitation of death.

In contrast, the widow in *Tampopo* struggles to reclaim her sexuality as a mother. Without the patriarch she cannot protect her only child from his bullying friends. She cannot cope with her life without a breadwinner. Goro, a milk truck driver, comes to substitute for her late husband. He assumes the role of a surrogate patriarch in her new

life. Her son, Tabo also accepts Goro in his late father’s place, wearing Goro’s cowboy hat and mimicking his every movement at the dinner table. For the widow, Goro gathers all the culinary secrets for success, which are only communicated between men. Her master chefs are from various social backgrounds, such as professional cooks, food connoisseurs, a rich businessman, drivers or beggars, none of whom believe that a woman can be a good professional cook. At the hands of men, the heroine is reborn as a great mother to satisfy the appetites of men—society.

Mary Ann Doane argues that, “sexuality is most unnatural and achieved only after an arduous struggle”: “one is not born with sexuality” (1988: 219). The three women’s struggles result from attempts to re-figure female sexuality constructed and maintained by a hierarchy within male-dominated societies. In Itami’s view, motherhood is a form of ultimately sublimated femininity. It embodies unbounded love and strength to embrace a society suffering from the retreat of patriarchy. A gangster in a white suit who appears in the opening scene is a personification of the director: the patriarch of *Tampopo*. He acknowledges the presence of the audience behind the camera, stating that “*Tampopo* is his film”. “*Tampopo*” (literally, dandelion) refers not only to his film, but also to his heroine and his noodle shop. *Tampopo*’s sexual identity as a mother is constructed by the needs of the patriarch. The close cultural connection between food and the female body is the main strain in Itami’s representation of motherhood. The sequences in the hotel room and at the seaside are an imaginary journey by the gangster looking for a natural mother figure in order to provide the gratification of food and sex, similar to a baby being breast-fed. The closing shot of a little boy sucking his mother’s breast and being nursed in her arms reinforces Itami’s messages. His interpretations of traditions and modernity in the search for a new identity are tightly enmeshed in Japanese male fantasies of motherhood.

In contrast, in Park’s view, motherhood is an ideological constraint suppressing women’s lives, restraining her within repressive familial norms. To support this view², Park does not idolize the female body through male fantasies in this film³. Rather, he reveals his gaze and appears to confess his insensibility as the dominant sex. The detective, who is investigating the disappearance of the woman living in flat 302, is the director’s other self. He visits the two women’s flats. The camera shows him through a little hole in a door from the woman in flat 301’s point of view and follows him entering

the other apartment. The initial camera movements suggest that the subjects of the camera's gaze are two women and the director reveals himself as the object of their gaze. In the end, the detective is informed of the secret of the woman who disappeared by the one left. One had killed the other according to the wish of the latter and had eaten her body. But the closing comment of the film leaves the audience with an open question: "So...is the two women's loneliness over?"

The titles of the two films imply the social identity of the three women. The two women in Park's film are referred to by their flat numbers, 301 and 302. In pre-modern Korea, patriarchal family relations defined a woman's social identity, such as somebody's daughter/wife/mother. These traditions still govern people's perceptions of women's identities, except in modern social spaces, such as in a hospital, police station or school. The woman in 301 is a middle class divorcee and the other in 302 makes a living writing for women's magazines. Despite their social and economic independence, their existence is not acknowledged by the existing familial society. Throughout the whole film, the camera completely isolates 301 and 302 from their society.

In contrast, Tampopo's sexuality as a mother secures her social identity. Her body is re-created by male desires. Her chef masters change the homely appearance of the middle-aged housewife into a glamorous, fashionable chef who would not be out of place in a trendy women's magazine. The refurbishing of her noodle bar is equated with beauty therapy for her body. As a symbolic gesture, they choose the name "Tampopo" for her newly opened noodle bar. When they remodel Tampopo's appearance and her noodle bar, they quietly leave the place like the heroes in a Western cowboy film. As suggested by choosing the name, dandelion, the ideal Japanese womanhood embodies both strength and femininity: a creative mixture of traditions and modernity (Schilling, 1999: 75)⁴.

The gist of Itami's representation of food is idolized motherhood: a traditional motherly figure wearing Western chef's clothes and serving Ramen, the Chinese origin noodle dish, signifies a newly constructed Japanese identity: their favorite dish. In this sense, Itami's motherhood is a modern project expressed in post-modern representations of food. It emphasizes the fact that the new Japanese identity is still firmly rooted in long-unuttered traditions.

The close cultural association between women and food inspires the creative imagination of many male filmmakers in depicting complicated power relations between the sexes. In "food films" made by male directors, the heroine often underpins adult sexuality with her extraordinary cooking skills, similar to a mother forming a love relationship with her child at the early oedipal "oral stage". For example, in a Mexican magic realism film, *Water for Chocolate* (Alfonso Arun, 1996), a Vietnamese film, *The Scent of Green Papaya* (Anh Hung Tran, 1994), and recent French films, *Chocolat* (Lasse Hasselstrom, 2001) and *Amelie* (Jean-Pierre Jeunet, 2002), the heroines enchant the world, which is full of misery, violence, hate or indifference among people, with the magic of food. Food in Ang Lee's films, *The Wedding Banquet* (1993) and *Eat Drink Man Woman* (1994), reveals unmentionable, underlying conflicts between parents and children and attempts to resolve them in a mutually acceptable manner.

On the other hand, male filmmakers' representations of the female body always remain at the centre of feminist criticism (Laura Mulvey, 1975; Claire Johnston, 1976; Rey Chow 1995; Maggie Humm 1997). For example, Doane argues that "[c]inematic images of women have been so consistently oppressive and repressive" and the "filming of the female body constructs and maintains a hierarchy along the lines of a sexual difference assumed natural" (1988: 216 and 217). However, the conflicts between the filmmaking practices and feminist concerns are not only problems in the cinematic representations of female bodies by male directors. On the contrary, as Sarah Sceats argues, contemporary women writers' use of food in representing women's images is also "problematic". According to Sceats, contemporary women writers tend to depict the fact that "as anyone who has cooked for a family will know, nurturing may be experienced rather as an enslavement than as a power" (1996: 118).

Indeed, men substituted as food providers for families, such as the father in *Eat Drink Man Woman* or the son's American, gay partner in *The Wedding Banquet*, still discuss the significance of a mothering role in family relations. Despite the twisted representations of power relations within families, the food giving and receiving relationships confirm the cross-cultural significance of motherhood. Feeding, cooking, feasting and starving cannot be easily recognised in the absence of the notion of motherhood. In this sense, the provision of food can be problematic equally for women and men authors or directors. Neither women nor men can be easily freed from the prevailing cultural

norms of their society. Thus, as Doane argues, the images of women created by women cannot be exclusively “either for her or of her”, delivering the “real women’s voices” (1988: 216). However, this prevailing tendency in filmmaking practices can not erase attempts to challenge sexuality confined within male-dominated society.

Park’s self-reflective story on the cultural connection between food and women can attest to the feminist concerns of male filmmaking practices. He does not seek to restore the close relationship between women and food, disclosing the destructive aspects driving them to desires for death. The male subjectivity expressed in Park’s film implies the director’s scepticism of the myth of motherhood. For him, nurturing is not maternal empowerment. Food is domestic enslavement and a stigma for women. Food need not necessarily be made by the mother; equally sexual relations do not need to be bound to the institution of marriage. Food is seen to inhibit their quest for a new identity in a changing world.

In *301. 302*, food is the metaphor of death to a woman who rejects motherhood. The woman in 301 obsessively cooks for her husband, but her husband is fed up with this. He stops talking to her, eating her food or having sexual relations with her. Her frustration results in an extreme eating disorder making her over-weight and losing “femininity” to accommodate the sexual desires of men. When she finds out about her husband’s affair, she cooks him his pet dog, the only object of love in their marriage. After their divorce, she moves next door to 302 where she finds a very gaunt, thin woman who re-imposes her desire to mother. The woman in 302’s eating disorder is the refusal of sex. Food makes her vomit, as it invokes her revulsion of men’s bodies. It reminds her of the death of a little girl who was found dead in the fridge at her stepfather’s butcher shop. The fridge’s darkness gives her the impulsive desire to return to the pre-natal stage of birth, thus re-entering the womb of her alienated mother.

Cannibalism in Latin American literature is the dominant motif of “the cycle of death and resurrection symbolized by the devouring, absorption and transformations of invasive European cultures” (Macey, 2000:56). On the other hand, cannibalism in *301.302* is a metaphor for the two women’s recurrent desire to achieve the state of death⁵. Instead of eating “the dead bodies of their enemies in order to acquire their virtues and strength”, the woman in 301 kills the “surrogate child”, cooks it and serves it up to her husband. Cooking the dog is her symbolic revenge to thwart his virility. The

psychological cannibalism of the woman in 301 is accomplished in a concrete form when she discovers the secret of the woman in 302: the desire to disappear. Since the woman in 301 decides that the woman in 302 is the object of her desires, she first forces the latter to eat her food but the latter’s body cannot stomach it. Their conflicts can only come to an end. The woman in 301 agrees to help the woman in 302 disappear. Cannibalism for them is the symbolic expression of denying men’s proprietorship over a woman’s body even after her death. Through the ritual of death, the two women set themselves free from male-dominated society and restore their identity in ultimate terms.

In comparison to Park, Itami’s post-modern representation of food as a “collection of fragments” (Bruns, 1998:100) qualifies a woman as a great mother with “good breasts” (Seats, 1996:118). His representation of motherhood clearly envisions the feminist critique of male directors’ use of the female body; “the ideas about the ‘natural’ female body or the female body and ‘nature’ are the linchpins of patriarchal ideology” (Doanne, 1988: 223). In the scene of the dying mother, serving the last family meal is the paragon of the self-sacrificing mother. Also, the scene in which a group of marriageable girls take western dining lessons at an Italian restaurant is an excellent parody of the way in which the director creates an ideal womanhood through the synthesis of traditions and notions of foreignness. On the other hand, the old woman in the late shop scene, who feels the softness of the cheese, French bread and peaches, provides a perverted image of “good breasts”. When squeezing the various foods and fruits, it is as if she is missing her soft, youthful breasts. It is a mirror image of a woman who has lost her femininity and reproductive capability.

Mythologies of Mother in *Farewell My Darling* and *The Funeral*

The first-person narrative structure of the two films gives a very similar effect to a Brechtian alienation effect. The presence of narrators helps the audience to keep a certain emotional distance from what occurs on the screen. Through this cinematic device, the directors seek to reveal male subjectivity in reconstructing motherhood as a myth of contemporary Japan and Korea. The comic representations of the commercialization of traditions lampoon the creation of a new Japanese/Korean identity as shown in their consumption of cultural products according to the instruction

of the manufacturers. In the film, the people are not only the passive agents of consumption but also the object of the commodity and of materialistic fetishism. On behalf of consumers, the two directors appear to look for a motherly figure, who can nourish them with fantasies of nature.

In *The Funeral*, the scene of the videocassette, *ABC for a Funeral*, parodies the absurdity of contemporary Japanese life: traditions are only comprehensible through the instruction of modernity. Thus, tradition becomes “foreignness,” and modernity is “familiarity” . In this scene, the narrator, Wabisake, and his wife, Chizuko, both of whom are acting professionally, practice their expected roles at the funeral, learning the performances recorded on the video-tape. Also, the professional management of the funeral by Satomi, who is the manager of the couple, and the funeral service man, Ebihara, are a satire on ready-made traditions as a cultural commodity. The scenes suggest that the Japanese cannot perform traditional ceremonies without reference to a detailed manual and professional advice.

On the other hand, the subjectivity in questioning contemporary Korean identity with Park’s film seems to be more convincing in revealing his sense of moral responsibility as the dominant sex. In the film, the narration starts in Park’s voice: “Now I am going to attend my father’s funeral, and the camera situated in my mind starts to roll.” Park starred in the narrator’s role⁶. In their personalized story documenting his father’s death, his privilege as a director in pursuing male voyeurism and the fetishism of the female body is disqualified. The camera captures his emasculated images as the new patriarch, who was told to cede the role of the chief mourner at the funeral because of his long absence from the village. Moreover, he is humiliated by the villagers because of the improper manners of his wife and daughters at funeral.

The death of the father in *Farewell My Darling* and *The Funeral* means the demise of traditional patriarchy. Traditionally, a funeral was a symbolic process announcing the power transfer from the deceased to his heir. It not only generates the authority of the patriarch, but also secures the family proprietorship. The authority of the new patriarch is re-affirmed by the patrilineal ancestor worship ceremonies passed down through the generations (Park, 1996: 57). However, the authority of the patriarch represented in both films is already dismissed as social and economic incompetence. In Park’s film, the eldest son is estranged from his family relations. In Itami’s film, the family line of the deceased

is extinguished due to the absence of an heir. The representation of funeral rites in both films is a dramatic device to dispute the validity of traditions in constructing a new identity⁷.

Motherhood is the main prop of their criticism of the repressive and exploitative power relationships within families. Park and Itami question the prevailing norms of society that take for granted suffering as a natural part of motherhood. “Why is it at my house?” , “What are the funeral expenses?” , “Him…my father?…” The initial response of Wabisuke, narrator of *The Funeral*, on the news of his father-in-law’s death is that of indifference. However, his refusal is immediately negated by the feminine spells of his wife, tears and a childlike face asking for his help. The father-in-law lived in the eldest son in-law’s old country house as his retirement home. The father was the passive recipient of care by his “filial” children. Wabisuke’s apathy about the funeral implies his skepticism about traditions emphasizing moral engagement in family affairs. Therefore, the actor, Wabisuke, takes the main role at the funeral, performing in front of the camera. His colleague, director Aoki, volunteers to document the event. And Wabisuke’s professional concerns lead him to appreciate the significance of a family bound by the nutrition and care of women. Through the emotional transformation of the narrator, *The Funeral* tends to suggest that the family is emblematic of reconstructing new identities in a contemporary Japan in danger of being de-masculinized.

Male subjectivity in mystifying motherhood and fantasizing a female body reveals the contradictory needs of the patriarch regarding the female body. The father’s images represented in the opening scene correspond to this idea of the director. In the opening scene, the father drinks *sake* (traditional Japanese spirits), wishing a long life with his young mistresses. He is never concerned about his wife’s feelings. Marriage secures female caring and nurturing for him, but her existence has gone unnoticed. The stingy husband picks up eels, ham and avocado on the way home after a health check at the hospital. The tightly packaged fresh soft meat signifies his unceasing appetite and sexual desire. Putting them in his mouth, he recalls the memory of the girls at the brothel he ran in Singapore during the war. He even named his daughter Chizuko after one of his mistresses. However, he cannot finish the dishes: his body becomes too weak to satisfy his appetite. He leaves the dinner table to go to bed and soon dies. A long life with young mistresses is his final wish. Yet, his wife regrets not sharing his death with

him and vows to live the rest of her life with the memory of her late husband. This is an idealised womanhood, which Itami wants to reconstruct in an attempt to address the significance of traditional family values.

The “mother-complex” of the narrator as a family head arises with the news of the father’s death. The old father cannot perform his masculine role. Similar, to the old father, the middle-aged narrator also shows a lack of masculine power. The studio scene reveals his own emasculated image as the patriarch. In that scene, the narrator and his wife are wearing kimono (traditional Japanese attire) and doing a TV commercial. A giant geisha (courtesan) and a male dwarf are at a tea ceremony. The image of a large woman and a miniature male is a parody of gender relations in contemporary Japan (Schilling, 1999: 75).

The reversed power relationship between the sexes reappears later in the film, reinforcing the ideas of idealised womanhood. In the woodland scene, the narrator is seduced by his mistress against his will. This scene is continuously cut by the swing scene, in which Chizuko idly rocks rhythmically on a swing. The sounds of the love-making in the woods, and the peaceful image of Chizuko on the penis-shaped swing create an extraordinary image of the beauty of a woman who stands aloof from noisy, worldly affairs. With nature as the open backdrop, the close-up of Chizuko’s long, white neck emerging out of her black kimono with the traditional hairdo from the back signifies the fetishism of the female body in Japanese cinematic language and art traditions. At the same time, her dignified image expresses the ideal womanhood constructed by contemporary Japanese men, who search for women wise enough to embrace both the impotent and the unfaithful patriarch with unbounded loyalty and forgiveness⁸. On the other hand, Wabisuke’s initial resistance against Saito’s seduction suggests his attempt to retain patriarchal authority and his refusal to retreat into an infantile stage which is governed only by primal desire⁹.

The attributes of motherhood, nurturing and caring for the family, are crucial in Itami’s representations of female sexuality. With regard to the depictions of the funeral as a performance, his ideas of tradition may be “emptiness”¹⁰. However, Itami’s view of contemporary Japanese identity is clearly marked by the presence of traditions in post-industrialized Japan. It addresses the values of family and traditions in isolating individuals in urban settings. The notion of motherhood to save the “face” of the

patriarch and restore his authority as family head provides definite moral tones to this sophisticated comedy. As in Tampopo’s dining scene at Tampopo’s house, Wabisuke’s Tokyo house scene in *The Funeral* conveys the director’s deep concerns regarding the absent father in contemporary Japanese family life¹¹. In this scene, Chizuko overhears Wabisuke tell the children about their grandfather’s death in a warm but firm voice. This scene informs us very well about Itami’s idea regarding the restoration of a father’s authority led by the wife’s supporting role. The post-funeral scene also confirms this message; the mother-in-law volunteers for a speech, insisting she is “the next of kin.” Through her strong image, the authority of the late father appears to be reanimated. The last scene, in which Wabisuke and Chizuko are waving to the people and holding hands, graphically expresses this verbal message of the director about strong marital bonds. In this way, Itami attempts to qualify traditions as the essence of the creation of new identities in contemporary Japan.

The motif of a father’s death in *Farewell My Darling* is used to feature devastating, complex family problems in the violent clash between tradition and modernity. The death of the father is the backdrop of the director’s self-reflective report on contemporary, conflict-ridden Korean family history¹². Despite the detached voice of the narrator in documenting the whole event, the subjective camera position reveals the strong emotional bond of the director to his mother. In the eyes of her beloved son, the mother is a victim of traditional familial ideals. Her whole life has been stigmatized as a family accessory and social outcast, concealed under the shadow of the patriarch. The conflicts and recent expectations of a society undergoing radical changes fail to dislodge the repressive familial norms depriving individuals of autonomy in their lives. The motherhood reconstructed by Park in this film conveys the idea that the identity question in South Korea in the late 1990s was still at a confusing stage rather than suggesting a creative articulation between familiarity and foreignness, unlike in Itami’s work.

The Confucian gender segregation rules in conducting the family ritual succinctly express the ways in which new ideas, such as freedom, equality and individualism, create conflicts and tensions between people. Women are supposed to provide labor, preparing for the banquet. Only men eat and drink. Women are also not allowed to serve at the altar or enter into the men’s space. In the film, the position of the camera

is initially identified with the narrator's gaze directed on the funeral site strictly divided into men's and women's worlds. This voyeuristic gaze conveys curiosity and pleasure. But this gaze is soon frozen on the mother who is in despair, helplessly observing the men's room at a distance. However, Park's emotional identification with her position does not go beyond sympathy for her. He does not berate traditions for devaluing the existence of women as mere family accessories because he cannot admit that his own mother's whole life has been meaningless. Instead, by separating the camera view from his own and situating it within the audience's view, on the screen Park appears to communicate the failure to demystify motherhood.

Park's representation of female identity and sexuality is confusing and contradictory. His "intended" ambivalence in featuring traditions is manifest in the opening scene and closing shot¹³. In the opening scene, the father sees his unborn grandson in his dream. His cherished dream of a successor to the family line is accomplished by the second daughter-in-law, but only in his daydream. She represents the "good breasts". Instead of resisting the controlling power regulating her sexuality and gender identity, she functions as a "docile body" attached to the power of the patriarchy. However, the last shot of the post-birth situation shatters her mythic image. When the director gives the sign, "Cut! Thank you", the shot is frozen, and the skilful actress reveals her real identity; the male fantasy returns to reality. Reality remains a power struggle between suppression and resistance.

On the other hand, the images of the "bad breasts" are problematic rather than confusing. Chansuk, the narrator's wife is working at a bar. She is a breadwinner and a self-employed business woman, her heavy makeup and profession working at a bar are used as props for the characterization of a "corrupted" woman. The bar girls attending the funeral and the sister-in-law of the deceased, who is the daughter's age of her rich husband, having sexual relations with a photographer behind the funeral site, are ubiquitous sisters of the eldest daughter-in-law. "Immoral" or "undesirable" relations with men are the common motif in identifying these "sisters." However, the representations of the corrupted woman reveal the director's dilemma. He cannot avoid casting a cold eye on his own wife, while embracing other "corrupted" women's antics. This is the fundamental contradiction in this familial society, the patriarch seems to be ready to accept the freedom and equality of women at the societal level but not yet

in his private domain. The hypocritical nature of social norms reinforced by bourgeois familial ideology in capitalist society only allows women's entrance into a man's world in so far as mourners are desperate to survive as social outcasts. The red lipstick, which the narrator's wife drops in the soup on the men's table, symbolizes women's isolation and aborted rebellion in familial society.

Creating a New Identity for a New Society

Film often presents a female body as a metaphor of larger social problems (Douglas, 1975). Associated with food, women's bodies, as providers, signify the object of basic human instincts and/or the sexual desires of men. Food is a universal symbol for the identification of human relations in changing societies amongst changing cultural values. Also, it plays a significant role in the deliberations of people upon their own identities in relation to others. The power of food is a "symbol of self-identity [which] derives from the particular nature of the symbolic process involved" (Ohmuki-Tierny, 1996: 169). The female body in the absence of mothering powers invites male sadistic sexual desire and frustrates masculine gender identity in ultimate terms.

The striking similarities in using food and the female body as a metaphor for the perplexity of human relations and repressed sexual desires are the prime references for this cross cultural analysis of the different representations of tradition and modernity in the four films. The comparative study of Park and Itami's work confirms that Park's films attempt to offer a serious cinematic critique regarding the repressive aspects of society's ideals pertaining to repressive familial relationships and women's inferiority. In comparison, Itami's internationally acclaimed films seem to be concerned with the voyeuristic pleasure of women's bodies or with the amusing behavior of the various characters in confused states, who desperately seek to position themselves as "deserving" members of various social institutions, including the family.

The two directors' representations of the co-existence of tradition and modernity in contemporary Japan and Korea can be summarized as follows. First of all, a comparative study conveys the different positionality of Korea and Japan in interpreting the past in reference to the changing needs of the people and their cultural norms. As Jan Vansina argues, "tradition is a process; it lives only while it changes" (1990: 251; Ohmuki-Tierny 1996: 169). Despite the ten-year gap between the films and the different paths

of modernization between the two societies, these two directors communicate the unresolved tensions between familiarity and foreignness in the creation of self-identity in their respective societies. However, Park's representations of transitional identity in contemporary Korea express the dynamics of a society experiencing chaos due to the violent encounter between long-standing cultural traditions and radical social transformations under foreign influences. On the other hand, Itami seems to suggest a more stabilized form of new identity in contemporary Japan, which is still adapting to the needs of the present society.

The specific ways in which Itami and Park project food and female bodies on the screen can be understood in the context of the conjunction of each of their own society's cultural traditions and foreign influences. Set against the heroines' struggles to satisfy or reject the "esteemed" roles lavished on them by male fetishism, the four films show the various types of traditional and western food, and table manners and conversations at the table. Through the food and eating scenes, they convey the changing perceptions, confusion and unstable psychological state of people in transition.

Note

¹This study [A Comparative Cross-cultural Study of Four Thematically Related Japanese and Korean Films'] was supported by the Asia Research Fund.

²Park emphasized that the family is an unavoidable restraint on individuals in contemporary life and in particular for women. As such it could be considered as a strong instrument of repression in itself (I interviewed the director in Tokyo in Summer 2001.)

³The very skillful makeup and their black and white contrasting attire transform the beautiful actresses into two grotesque characters: one is obese and the other is a pathetic gaunt figure.

⁴Itami stated that "the main female character is strong...—in nearly all of my films in fact *Tampopo* was an exception—a Western parody. It wasn't really about Japan at all" (Schilling 1999: 75). However as discussed here *Tampopo* also features a strong woman character who can transform herself in response to the demands of society. In this way traditions are recreated as the result of Western influences.

⁵Kim Kiduk's *Address Unknown* (2001) uses the motif of cannibalism in a similar way. The U.S. camp town prostitute eats her mixed blood son's body after he killed himself in despair at the total rejection of his existence in South Korea's racist society.

⁶In *The Funeral* the narrator's role is played by Tsutomu Miyazaki. However Itami was also a well-known actor. Itami and the heroine (Nobuko Miyamoto) were married with two sons as featured in the film.

⁷According to Choi Joon-sik "burial customs or funeral laws are always very exclusive and

conservative and therefore almost never receptive to outside influences" (Choi, 1996). If we accept this argument both directors' representations of the funerals are chaotic and the evident confusion can dramatically communicate the seriousness of the clash between tradition and foreign influences in people's daily lives.

⁸In his 1997 suicide note he claimed that only through his death would he be able to prove his innocence regarding an alleged extra-marital affair. The scene of Wabisuke's affair offers an interesting parallel to Itami's own alleged involvement especially when discussing levels of subjectivity as reconstructed in his films.

⁹For example there are: the love scenes and the last credit scene in *Tampopo* and the nursing scene in *A Taxing Woman* (1987). In the latter an old man is offered a nurse's breast to suckle.

¹⁰Hoel Beth (1998), "The Funeral" available at <http://students.haverford.edu/east/east260/projects/funeral.html> [2 September 2002].

¹¹Also in *A Taxing Woman* the tax evader sees the heroine's (the taxing woman) beauty through her caring for his son and proposes to her although the "threatening" divorcé is always in loose trousers with a short hair cut and neglects her own son. For details see Eric Willams and Lawrence F. Glatz (1993).

¹²Just as Itami made *The Funeral* after his father-in-law's death so Park made *Farewell My Darling* inspired by the death of his own father. Despite the similar motives of the filmmakers Park's representations seem to be more emotional and subjective in this respect. As the heir of the deceased, Park cannot maintain a third person's position since Confucian social norms exclusively identify the head and extent of a family. In legal terms a married woman belongs to her husband's family but a married man does not have any obligation to his family-in-law.

¹³Apart from the opening scene and the closing shot as well as his frequent appearance directing on the screen the director also created uneven effects in order to disturb the audience's identification with the characters. He deliberately mixed the nonsensical comic representation of the behavior of the people at the funeral, the documentary style filmmaking for the formal funeral rites and conventional story telling for the family's hidden history. For example, the scene of the first meeting between the mother and her estranged daughter starkly reminds the audience of a typical scene in a 1970s TV family melodrama. It greatly exaggerates the drama in order to play on the audience's feelings, but at the same time it is comical since it is obviously overdone. In an interview with the researcher, Park recalled that in the particular scene he asked his crew to create such a mood, using sad background music, long with slow motion, and typical melodramatic performances from the actresses. (Summer, 2000, in Seoul)

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韓国での性とセクシュアリティ表象について イ・ヒャンジン

本論は日本と韓国映画を文化交差的に分析し、ジェンダー表象の特徴の共通点と差異を見出そうとするものである。日韓映画の比較は、その緊密な歴史的関係ゆえに非常に意味深い。特に、儒教的な文化伝統、外圧による急速な西洋化、国家主導の近代化などの共通点が、これらの映画言説がおかれるコンテクストを共に構成している。本論が扱う四本の映画は、伝統的な共同体中心の人間関係と、「西洋的」な理想とのはざままで、矛盾を抱え、おかしな行動に走る普通の人々を描いたナンセンスコメディー、伊丹十三の『お葬式』（1984年）と『タンポポ』（1986年）、パク・チョルスの『Farewell, My Darling』と『301,302』である。この四作品に見える日韓社会のアイデンティティーの危機について扱いながら、これらの映画で男性の視点から表象される、女性のセクシュアリティと役割の対立に焦点を当てる。日韓の映画の伝統に展開される家族ドラマを、クリエイティブに実験的に表現した伊丹とパクは、共に食べ物を象徴的に用い、また男女間の空間的分断を強調する。描かれる女性像の多様性は、家父長制が伝統と近代社会の理想の間に揺れ動き、求めるものも相互矛盾を引き起こしていることを示している。特に食物とセクシュアリティ規範を組み合わせたモチーフは、ポストコロニアル時代の人々の経験の特異性と、変化に対応しようともがく姿を表現するために用いられている。

