

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

**Forging *Intercultural* Communication:
Korean Readers' Collective Responses
to English Feminist Texts
- Focussing on Cross-Cultural Gender Differences -**

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by

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**To forge in the smithy of my soul
the uncreated conscience of my race.**

**- James Joyce,
A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man -**

ABSTRACT

This research aims to institutionalize *Korean* experience in *English* studies by forging *intercultural* communication between English texts and Korean readers, interrogating through gender studies. Beginning with the poststructuralist theory on the author, text, and reader relationship in the western European intellectual community, it mostly deals with Korean university students' responses to English feminist texts such as *A Room of One's Own*, *Jane Eyre*, *The Color Purple*, and *The Handmaid's Tale*. My main argument is focussed on the cross-cultural gender differences in Korean readers through elaborating the engendering processes in the university classroom. It shows that performing a revisionary reading of the English feminist texts in the Korean university classroom plays a fundamental role in figuring out, shaking, and reforming gender relationships in the "present" Korean cultural context, because reading is the concurrent act to bring forward a transparent map of the intersection of gender and culture. Since the Korean women's movement and women's studies during the 1990s has been moving from the issue of women's rights into the issue of gender and sexuality, Korean university students' responses illustrate this transforming process of the gender consciousness in contemporary Korean society. Korea is now entering into a new stage of women's issues, and becoming very conspicuous in terms of the women's movement from a worldwide perspective. It is now moving into the age of politics of daily lives in the private domain, where each individual has borne witness to struggling with the issues in one's daily life, like the concept of female sexuality. By enunciating this *localized* experience on the border line space as a "Korean" "postcolonial" "feminist" critic in "English" studies, I attempt to establish the semiotic ground for the different productions of reference and meaning for cultural translation as well as cultural globality.

To

My mother, Young - Nim Song

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Chapter 1. Introduction : Institutionalizing Korean Experience in *English Studies*

We should remember that it is the 'inter'- the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the *in-between* space - that carries the burden of the meaning of culture. It makes it possible to begin envisaging national, anti-nationalist histories of the 'people'. And by exploring this Third Space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves.

- Homi K. Bhabha,
"The Commitment to Theory" -

What is significant is that the global is forged on the basis of memories and counter-narratives, not on an ahistorical universalism.

- Chandra Talpade Mohanty,
"Feminist Encounters" -

Since ^{the} mid-1980s when feminist literary criticism in English studies was moving on and widening into feminist politics in cultural studies, many discourses related to cultural politics have been focussed on institutionalization or the institution itself, mostly by western European lecturers in English studies. Most studies of institutionalization imply ^{that} the institutions as monolithic, invariable, or even inherently wicked, especially to ^{are} feminist lecturers in western European higher educational institutions. It is true that the institutions worldwide have not often been sympathetic to feminist politics, because institutions have their own histories, in most cases patriarchal histories, which are still in progress. However, if the feminist lecturers had only conceived of the institutions as culturally and historically fixed structures, they would have had less opportunities of transforming them into the women-friendly structures. For active feminist politics, the institution and institutionalization could be understood as convertible for the political space or the political activity in which the feminists' challenge begins. Meagan Morris says, "Institutionalization is not another name for

doom, that fate always worse than death. Rather, it's an opportunity and in many instances a necessary condition for serious politics" (179). Institutionalization is not always vicious but sometimes politically crucial, particularly for the non-western, non-European, and non-native English speaking feminist critics in English studies, like me.

In her article, "The Institutionalization of Feminist Criticism", Jane Gallop, working in the American institution, defines her terminology ^{concerning} the institution as follows:

The institution here is the literary academy, which is at once a discursive field, a pedagogical apparatus, a place of employment, a site of cultural reproduction, an agency of cultural regulation, and an institution generally marginal to power and values in American society. What we can most effectively say and do as feminists is mediated through this institution, its ideologies, values, structures, and its location in the world. (63)

While Jane Gallop's "institution" is only confined to the physically educational structures in America, my terminologies of "institution" and "institutionalization" ^{employ} the same and, at the same time, different concepts. They are not only confined to the physical structures in Korea, where I have been and am still working, but also widened into the worldwide literary academy, highlighting the border^{line} space of the distinctions between the western European and the non-western European countries, between the English-speaking and the non-English-speaking countries. Bringing forward my experience in Korean institutions through writing this thesis, I am going to try to institutionalize this *Korean* experience in *English* studies within the international institutions. Therefore, the institution in my writing means the *international* literary academy in English studies, combined with the gender studies. This is the precise way in which we, as feminist lecturers in English studies whether western European or non-western European, discard simplistic universalizing about gender and culture by

generating sophisticated paradigms for comprehending diversified differences among and within such homogeneous categories as “Korean experience”, “English studies” or “gender studies”. My research here is the very example of *localized* feminist discourse within cultural globality, linking English studies and Korean studies through interrogation from gender studies. It also challenges the disparities and distinctions between the theoretical/ scholarly work of English studies and the political/ pedagogic responsibilities of its practitioners. This challenge is largely influenced by the poststructural discourses on identity and subjectivity since the 1980s, connecting to the differentiated groups inside and outside the different national cultures. Barbara Gelpi, teaching at Stanford University, confesses her own experience of difficulty in carrying on teaching feminist literary criticism in 1980s America, mainly influenced by this process of transformation in English studies.

This (“Feminist Literary Criticism in the 1980s” course in 1988) was the last course I taught on the topic of feminist literary criticism, now almost a decade ago. As feminist thinking entered into the whole spectrum of literary history and theory, no single course could survey all its aspects. But there was a further development: disagreement over the very nature of what one group would call “identity” and another “subjectivity” created difficulties over the very content of the course, the range of work assigned as part of syllabus. (“Feminist Literary Criticism: an Historical Reivew”)

Barbara Gelpi’s experience, working in the multicultural and multiracial American context as a feminist lecturer in English studies, is quite different from my experience as a feminist lecturer in English studies, working in the unique and relatively homogeneous Korean context in terms of national culture and gender identity. I also imagine that a feminist lecturer in English studies, working in European context or British context, would have a different experience from Barbara Gelpi’s and mine. I am going to explore this difference in detail through the following chapters, based on my *Korean* experience

in *English* studies. It will also be different from another feminist lecturer's experience, working in the English-speaking context.

The institutionalization of *Korean* experience in *English* studies constitutes a specific example of "the performativity of discursive practice" in Homi K. Bhabha's term, dissolving a contingent tension within modernity between the pedagogy of the symbols of progress in terms of sophisticated theory and the "sign of the present" represented by identity politics bared in the archives of the "new" (*The Location of Culture* 245). On one hand, my discourse is expressing solidarity as a feminist lecturer in English studies; on the other, it is marking the location of difference resulting from the difference in the cultural context where I am working now. Homi K. Bhabha notices that the institutionalization of cultural difference, as a form of intervention, is similar to the strategies of minority discourses, participating in a logic of supplementary subversion.

The question of cultural difference faces us with a disposition of knowledges or a distribution of practices that exist beside each other, *absents* designating a form of social contradiction or antagonism that has to be negotiated rather than sublated. ("Dissemination" 162)

Abdul Janmohamed and D. Lloyd make clear this similarity, focussing on the subject position. They say "Becoming minor is not a question of essence but a question of subject position, which articulates alternative practices and values" (8).

What, then, is the postcolonial feminist critic's concrete job and how does she deal with "a question of subject position" for institutionalizing cultural difference? In "The Problem of Cultural Self-Representation", Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak suggests that she should represent and analyze the texts of the oppressed and the silenced, disclosing one's own positionality for other communities in power (56). Therefore, my thesis is a meticulous example of "new narrativization" in Spivak's term, in other

words, doing my homework as a postcolonial Korean feminist critic by investigating what it is that silences *me* as a *Korean* feminist critic in *English* studies through a *historical* critique of my subject position. In particular, my curiosity and interest in my own unique position, as yet unknown and unexpressed before writing this thesis, is going to indicate “the beginning of an ethical relation to the Other” (Landry 5), expanding to the exact activity of forging *intercultural* communication. Through this “new narrativization”, I wish to create the historical ground from which I can define myself as a “postcolonial” “Korean” “feminist” critic in “English” studies with a global perspective. My argument in this thesis is very much *historicized* based on Seoul, Korea in the 1990s. What I am emphasizing is that my thesis is not the representative of Korean argument in general, because the regional and generational cleavages in Korea, especially from a gender perspective, still remain wide owing to Korea’s fast industrialization during the last 30 years. Another Korean feminist lecturer, not in my generation in mid-30s or not teaching at the universities in Seoul, would have had a different experience and narrated a different argument.

Korea in the 1990s is a unique and fascinating *intercultural* text in terms of cultural value. It is now located on the *in-between* intersections of eastern Confucianism and western individualism in terms of cultural ideology, of the developing and the developed in terms of economics, of European democracy and Asian authoritarianism in terms of politics. All multiple categories and diverse disciplines are intertwining, together. Thus, the performative act of a revisionary reading of the English feminist texts within the Korean cultural context means a reading which brings into the eyes of Korean readers a lucid picture of the nexus of gender and culture in both English literary texts and Korean cultural context. The recent developments in theories of how gender is implicated in the reading process have depended on a changing view of the gendered

subject in a certain culture. For carrying on this research, it is necessary to consider some of the theoretical work in literary theory and cultural studies which is more welcoming to the notion of multiple interpretations from a different culture. My aim in undertaking this research is to explore the heterogeneity of the Korean readers' different responses to English feminist texts according to their gender identities, and to combine theoretical perspectives within the western European academia and empirical practices within the Korean university classrooms. The struggle of looking for meaning is a complex negotiation between the English texts and the Korean readers. The balance of power between the two is shifting and unstable. And, it is consequently impossible to characterize any strict rules and theories as well as to describe the detailed processes.

For this research, I have selected the following four English feminist texts: *A Room of One's Own* by Virginia Woolf which is now acknowledged as a classic of women's writing in English studies, *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte which has the first and most famous feminist character in the nineteenth-century Victorian English novels, *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker which has now become a feminist classic among the black women's writings, and last, *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood which has dealt with female sexuality in the public and private spheres in the futuristic dystopian genre. I have preferred English texts written in women's first-person narrative or its transformed writing style like the epistolary style in *The Color Purple* or the direct speech form in *A Room of One's Own*, because the women's first-person narrative in the English written texts is useful to shorten the distance of cultural difference between the English texts and the Korean readers, and to figure out the differences among Korean readers' responses in terms of their gender identities. I have also used the visual form of the literary texts, if it is available. Concerning the gender identities, my main interest is not on the narrators' side in the English texts but on the

readers' side in the Korean context, namely what point is different in Korean readers' responses and why is it? Through describing the Korean readers' responding positions, I will try to clarify the difference of Korean gender identities in the reading process, where my main interest is located. I have focussed more on the undergraduate students' responses in order to get more genuine Korean responses. At the postgraduate level, Korean students' responses would be more mixed and varied, influenced by their more multicultural experiences. I have not considered the whole number of students' responses, because this kind of statistical research is not my point for this cultural self-representation. In short, the purpose of my thesis is to designate gender identity difference from the diverse responses of Korean readers. At the same time, I hope to deconstruct the image of the implied reader in the English texts who is a white, native English speaker and to create a new image of the implied reader in those texts who is a non-native English speaker, a woman (or man) of colour with black hair and black eyes.

Chapter 2. The Blank in Poststructuralist Theory

Yet in this study of Orientalism I wish not only to expose the sources of Orientalism's views but also to reflect on its importance, for the contemporary intellectual rightly feels that to ignore a part of the world now demonstrably encroaching upon him is to avoid reality. Humanists have too often confined their attention to departmentalized topics of research. (Said 109)

The task for feminist criticism is to demonstrate how texts constitute gender for the reader in class- and race- specific ways and how these modes of femininity and masculinity relate to the broader network of discourses on gender both in the past and the present. ... It is a battle in which the legitimation of particular readings and the exclusion of others represent quite specific patriarchal, class and race interests, helping to constitute our common-sense assumptions as reading and speaking subjects. (Weedon 168)

The purpose of this chapter is to supply the intellectual arguments which form the theoretical background of my interdisciplinary cross-cultural research, "Forging *International Communication: Korean Readers' Collective Responses to English Feminist Texts - Focussing on Cross-Cultural Gender Differences*". My argument focusses mainly on "author-text-reader" relationships in poststructuralist theory and the links with feminist practice in Korea. For this task, I am going to begin with poststructural arguments relating to language, discourse, and power. In the second section, I compare the May Revolution in 1968 France ^{with} the Democratic Revolution in 1987 Korea. The third section deals mainly with French, German, and Anglo-American thinking based on the production and reception of discourse. And the most recent argument, postcolonialism, follows. In the fifth section, feminist practice and the cultural politics of reading texts are discussed. Finally, the possibility of gender differences in Korean reading is examined.

Since Romanticism at the end of 18th century granted the author an enormous authority to create a fictional world, the idea of literature has largely concentrated on its creator. In the Romantic tradition, authors were not connected with the socio-historical meaning of their fictive world because it was generally believed that those fictional worlds were created during moments of authorial 'inspiration', springing from her or his personal feelings and experiences. Throughout the 19th Century, the Romantic view of the author provided a strong incentive to produce many literary works, especially novels, where the authors could develop characters and societies more freely and fill the gaps in an imaginative world. However, in the early 20th century, T.S. Eliot questioned this authorial authority in his famous essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent"(1919), insisting that "Honest criticism and sensitive appreciation are directed not upon the poet but upon the poetry"(73). This was the first tenet of what was to become New Criticism, where the self-sufficient text replaced Romantic authorial power. At the turn of the century Freud suggested another new source of artistic creativity, the unconscious, which rejected absolute authorial control over the creative process. Then, via Saussurean linguistics and structuralism, in 1968, "The Death of the Author" was announced by Roland Barthes. This has become "the single most influential meditation on the question of authorship in modern times"(Burke 19). It also announces the beginning of poststructuralism, representing a radical overturning of the authority of the author and of institutionalized ways of reading. Now the individual reader could transform her or his former position as a passive consumer by enjoying textual plurality, multiple interpretations, and as a producer, the total openness of writing. Poststructural reading is a kind of writing, because the text's relation to its author, on the one hand, and its reader, on the other, is very much bound up with the signifying context in which the text is positioned. Because contexts are always constructed and plural, the language

in the text signifies, from among the innumerable possible connections, only that which readers distinguish in their specific reading. Therefore, the reader lives in the language and the language, not the author, speaks to her/him.

The lack of authorial control identified by psychoanalysis is gradually exchanged for the emerging image of culture as an authority. This is characteristic of the late 20th century postmodern world. It is not the author as a person but the culture as a whole that has produced a specific discourse in literary form. This is why culture is the central theme in discussing the poststructural notion of the referential power of language. Because existing culture is conveyed and circulated through language, the only means for human communication, the dominant power is inevitably always in control by human language. However, literature is the discourse of imagination most concerned with the unknown territory. As Roland Barthes argues, all literature is an entrance into language, as a "galaxy of signifiers" (S/Z 5). From this point of view, literary works could be politically revolutionary with what might be called an "integral language" (Barthes, "From Science to Literature", 5). For feminist practice, this argument is quite crucial because it provides an efficient clue to examining in present forms of gendered repression and subjectivity at the time of writing and to explore the future possibilities of gendered subjectivity at the time of reading. Power relationships between the individual and the social past, present, future have always existed in literary works. However, there is another possibility to examine, generally ignored and never noticed the recent western intellectual argument: the possibility of gendered subjectivity generated from the "cross-cultural" reading of literature. Alice Jardine in her book *Gynesis* points out the problem of the master discourses in the West.

It is clear that the master discourses in the West are increasingly perceived as no longer adequate for explaining the world : words and things no longer coincide, and all identities have been thrown into question. (99)

Then, what else could account and be adequate for explaining the world? Even though it can not give the complete answer, my research is going to provide a small proportion of the answer as an adventure of the signifier and an excess of exchange.

2.1. Language, Discourse, and Power in Poststructuralism

In the late Sixties, quite distinct thinking about language and power comes from the Tel Quel group. Their collective research on semiotics becomes the intellectual womb for poststructural ways of thinking. They explore a new approach and new points of view on human sciences in France and later in western Europe. Like the structuralists, their main concern is language, however, not language itself but language in its historical context, because the specific time and place are believed to decide its uniqueness. Basically, their avant-garde position is political, looking for a new scientific theory of writing and reading. For them, writing is not a simple representation but a complex production. Their ideas propose semiotics as a kind of politics and this has had a considerable influence on Linguistics, Philosophy, and Literary Theory. The Tel Quel group's work is based on language systems and semiotic processes through texts, with an emphasis on contextual plurality. The group conceives meaning as a systematic production within causal social institutions and systems of representation - ideological, historical, aesthetic, and political. Therefore, semiotics becomes not only part of human sciences but also part of social sciences. Semiotics is so important to poststructuralism because it suggests the possibility of social transformation through comparing different meaning systems of social actors. Kristeva suggests that semiotics as the science of the study of signs should develop as a method she calls 'semanalysis', a way of analysing the text as material production. She

perceives language as a dialectical struggle between two poles, the 'semiotic' as the pre-linguistic modality of psychic inscriptions and the 'symbolic' as representations of linguistic modality within a system of signs. Her comments on the 'semiotic' disposition clearly illustrate the political aspect of semiotics.

Identifying the semiotic disposition means in fact identifying the shift in the speaking subject, his capacity for renewing the order in which he is inescapably caught up; and that capacity is, for the subject, the capacity for enjoyment. ("The System and the Speaking Subject" 29)

Essentially, semiotics must take into account cultural power, because culture as with all human social activity is irresistible and pivotal to the confirming and shaping of everybody's life. In order to explain different patterns of political and economic development in non-western countries, as Samuel P. Huntington argues, a central variable is culture - the subjective attitudes, beliefs, and values prevalent among the dominant groups in society ("The Goals of Development" 22). For literary study, the main change in terms of cultural semiotics takes place with a new understanding of reading activity, where the political and aesthetic context of a text can be explored. There is no single theory of *reading*. There are only *ways of reading*.¹ Reading is the concrete activity which realizes the rhetorical dimension of language and other communicative acts, because rhetoric is concerned with the arts of discourse and persuasion in the context. Even though meaning is produced and fixed through the reading activity, it is only a temporary fixing and signifiers continue to float toward the next location in any discursive context. Both the plurality of language and the impossibility of fixing meaning are the fundamental stuff of poststructuralism. So, there is a place reserved at the table for discourse theory where Saussurean language as an

¹ In this chapter, the italicisation illustrates my own emphasis in my argument.

abstract sign system meets the desire for social change. Here, the power of discourse is presented and taken as a recipe for change. At this table, language becomes a political weapon and “what goes with language is reflection, criticism, renaming, and creation” (Rich 68).

Language for poststructuralism is never separated from social power; nor is it ever pure and innocent. Rather, language is always implicated in power. According to Roland Barthes, “to speak is to exercise a will to power” and in the domain of speech, there is “no innocence and no safety” (“Writers, Intellectuals, Teachers” 311). Therefore, the acts of representation and utterance are neither transparent nor neutral processes. They are always characterized by historical context and the social structure of power. Western representation of the Orient is an excellent example of discourse permeated by power, as Edward Said has shown in detail in his book *Orientalism*. There can be no such thing as a personal language. Inventing language is equivalent to inventing a whole form of social life. This is why Terry Eagleton names discourse itself as “the new transcendental hero” (*Ideology* 219) of the late 20th century. The notion of the “self”, inherent in Anglo-American thought since Romanticism, becomes nonsensical.

It is not something called the self that speaks, but
language, the unconscious, the textuality of the text.
If nothing else, there is only a “splendid unanimity”,
or a plural and neuter “they”. (Jardine 58)

The speaking subject is an individual not as an autonomous human being but as one captured by a specific time and place.

If all language is aimed at the social production of certain effects, it is also ideological as well as rhetorical. Discourse theory has developed from the theory of ideology, which is also related to the importance of signs. The term “ideology” is a discursive concept linked with poststructural notions of referential power. It is the

Soviet philosopher V.N. Voloshinov, “the father of what has since come to be called discourse analysis” (Eagleton, *Ideology*, 195), who brought to our attention the power relationship between signs and ideologies. He said, “Without signs, there is no ideology” (Voloshinov, *Marxism*, 9). As the sign becomes an area of class struggle, so language becomes “the medium of ideological conflict” (Eagleton, *Ideology*, 196). The notions of signs and the field of ideology are inseparable and overlapping. Because signs are always vitalized in a particular social situation, the play of social power between sign and ideology is illustrated by the form and structure of an utterance. Ideology operates as “a function of the relation of an utterance to its social context” (Eagleton, *Ideology*, 9). As soon as signs are fixed, power relations are also established. Ideological power is not just a matter of meaning, but of making meaning stick. The most common definition of ideology, a cultural apparatus to legitimate the power of a dominant social group or class, is based on this belief. This is the answer to why ideology has occupied such an important place in discourse theory with its complex signifying practices and symbolic processes in any one specific society. According to the poststructural argument, ideology is a matter of discourse rather than a matter of language, even if we agree that language itself is a complex signifying process rather than a monolithic system.

Julia Kristeva, the most conspicuous poststructuralist from the Tel Quel group, suggests “a heterogeneous, destructive causality” as the most characteristic poststructuralist qualification to previous points of view on language and discourse.

The linguist projects himself into it (the poem), identifies with it, and in the end, extracts a few concepts necessary for building a new model of language. But he also and foremost comes away suspecting that the signifying process is not limited to the language system, but that there are also speech, discourse, and, within them, a causality other

than linguistic: a heterogeneous, destructive causality. (“The Ethics” 27)

Here she emphasizes the power of language rather than that of linguistic structure and, further, the powerful influence of discourse rather than that of the language system. In short, this “heterogeneous and destructive causality” is equivalent to the historical specificity of time and place in the writing and reading context of a producing agent.

2.2. May 1968 in France & June 1987 in Korea

The Tel Quel group’s political way of thinking in the late 1960s was formulated in the socio-historical context of May 1968. It goes without saying that the shock effect of the May Revolution on western intellectuals was great. In reality, it did not succeed in changing the state political regime. Nonetheless, the May Revolution was primarily seen as a victory, not as a defeat, as the editorial introduction in *New Left Review* defined it (1). Before May, nobody could imagine a general uprising or revolutionary strike by the working class in an advanced capitalist society. However, here was what seemed a fundamental revolution, stimulated and prompted by students and intellectuals, actualized and taken over by millions of workers in France. It rapidly spread in spite of the negative response from the French Communist Party and the leadership of the trade unions. Andree Hoyles has depicted precisely the spreading flame of the strikers’ action:

From a few hundred strikers on 14th May at the Sud-Aviation aircraft factory in Nantes the strike spread rapidly; 2 million strikers by 18th May, 9 million by 24th May, reaching nearly 10 million two days later.
(9)

Before May, only 20 per cent of the 15 million French workers belonged to trade unions. But, the May Revolution suggested working class struggle was still possible and necessary for all capitalist Europe. Lenin's pronouncement in 1905 on social-democracy seemed to be still viable and even utilizable in 1960s capitalist-democracy:

Revolutions are festivals of the oppressed and the exploited. ... At such times the people are capable of performing miracles, if judged by the limited, philistine yardstick of gradualistic progress. ... Let the bourgeois opportunists contemplate the future reaction with craven fear. The workers will not be intimidated.²

The oppressed and the exploited, in this context, the working class in France, had played the exact role that Lenin described here.

What, then, was the cause and what was the solution? The fundamental issue was not a problem of increased financial payment to workers but a problem of general economic and social relations, as formulated by Marx: "Not merely increased wages, but the suppression of wage-labour" (Mandel 29). What the strikers demanded was social equality and freedom in the work-place and a radical change in the social power structure with a move towards a serious shaking-up of bourgeois power. A duality of power, powers of control and veto, emerged, confirming that the partial conquest of power was already objectively possible. But, the physical power of the great working class organizations, both industrial and political, was not harnessed enough to proceed beyond an intermediate stage. Intensified alienation within the productive process was one of the urgent issues to be solved. In order to minimize, from ^{the} capitalist class perspective, the exacerbated class struggle in France and later in other advanced industrialized countries, the issue of workers' control appeared as the main political

² V.I. Lenin, *Two Tactics of Social Democracy* (1905), quote from *New Left Review*, No.52 (Nov-Dec 1968), p.contents

issue in society. However, Ernest Mandel warned that workers' control should not be conceived of as an established schema that the vanguard was trying to force onto the real development of the class struggle. Rather, he suggested, the struggle for workers' control must constantly arise from the everyday reality experienced by the workers, their wives, the students, and the revolutionary intellectuals (31). In the situation where workers' unions and parties were not operating as the effective instruments for the achievement of power, their links with students and intellectuals as the vanguard had an important influence on the formulating of any future revolutionary mass uprising.

The role of the intellectual during the May Revolution was historically unique. Since then, there has been much discussion about the intellectual's role in political struggle in Marxist and Leftist communities. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak confirmed the unique role of the intellectual in the May Revolution, saying that even ten years later she was able to see how important the event was and adding, "There isn't in fact a group that can be called 'a group of intellectuals', that exercises the same sort of role or indeed power with social production" ("Criticism, Feminism, and the Institution" 3). Within this socio-historical context of the birth of the dual notions of power, powers of control and veto, the revolutionary intellectuals began to contemplate a theory of dual consciousness which could explain this unexpected turning point and break up the boundaries of their way of thinking through man's escape from alienation, because human consciousness was just like history which developed through an uneven but linear process. So, it is not an unpredictable coincidence that the several key articles of poststructuralism, like "The Death of Author" by Roland Barthes, "Differance" by Jacques Derrida, and "What is an Author?" by Michel Foucault, came out in 1968 and 1969. For instance, Derrida's critique of the metaphysics of presence is unthinkable without considering the social context of Paris in the late 1960s, based on an academic

background of Saussurean structural linguistics, Marxism, and psychoanalysis. This was the historical context of possibility in which poststructuralism was fertilized by the May Revolution in 1968.

These intellectual arguments of the early 1960s did not seem to overlook the voices of the oppressed and the exploited, due to the dominance of their claims of structural linguistics as a master discipline for the human sciences. Such static and inflexible totalizing ideas about language, mainly indebted to Saussure and Levi-Strauss, were gradually replaced by a more dynamic concept of human knowledge. The ignoring of the specificities of time and place resulted from the structuralist view of language as a structure of mind, and from Saussure's and Levi-Strauss's non-historical position. Language, according to structuralism, was basically understood as a self-containing system. But, Saussure's definition of language as a system of "*differences*" laid the cornerstone for Derrida's philosophy of "*differance*". For Derrida, language becomes an endless deferral and referral, where any attempt to focus and fix meaning can only figure as an illusion. Therefore, meaning is always historical, opening the path to complete indeterminacy.

This idea of complete indeterminacy brings in other issues related to political thought and to historical context, suggesting that the random play of meaning is locally and temporarily stabilized within cultural groups distinguishable from each other by relative comparison. If this relationship between indeterminacy and comparison is extended at most, the idea of nation, "a powerful historical idea in the West" (Bhabha, "Introduction", 5), is emerging as the largest unit of a specific culture. Nation as a powerful historical idea exists not only in the west but also in the whole world, especially in the smaller and smaller global world of the late 20th century. This ambiguous margin *of* and *between* nation-spaces is a fascinating field for poststructural

theories of narratives and discourse. The characteristics of comparative narratives are described and influenced by what is called “the discourse of identity”.

Comparison established boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, identifying the *other* in a mirror of similarity and difference; it defined alterity as part of the discourse of identity. (Pieterse 6)

As a foundation for my later use of the term “the discourse of identity” in the reading context, my argument is, from now on, going to concentrate on the contemporary historical specificity of Korea.

Korea has emerged as a focal point of the international economic community. It is a dynamic, newly-industrialized country averaging a double-digit annual GNP growth rate during 1987-1991. Alice H. Amsden names Korea “Asia’s Next Giant”, making it the title of her book on Korea’s economic development. Since 1987, Korea also has been noticed as the best example of “the third wave of democratization in modern era” (Huntington, “How Countries Democratize” 579) moving from authoritarian bureaucratism towards a democratic political regime. In the early 1990s, Korea as a nation is located in “*in-between*” space in the world economic and political geography. It is neither the First-World nor the Third-World. Rather, it is a “develop-ing” country, analogous to “a subject-in-the-making” and “a subject on trial” in Kristevan terms (“Oscillation” 167), focussed on its shifting position. The process of economic and political development in Korea is necessarily quite different from that in the western Europe. Vernon W. Ruttan’s argument illustrates the difference that exists between the developing process in Korea and that in the West.

The Euro-American route to democracy is closed to the presently less developed countries. The impulse for industrialization must come from the center of political power and spread outward into society rather than, as was the case in the West during the nineteenth century, coming from society itself. If the underdeveloped countries are to grow economically,

they must limit democratic participation in political affairs. (267)

This political-economic point of view is clearly contentious and, in this respect, Korea has become one of the important test cases among authoritarian economies. Since the Military Revolution in 1961 led by Park Chung Hee, the former president from 1963 to 1979, the urgent aim of the whole nation was economic growth. Political development towards democracy gave way to national industrialization. Under the military-led authoritarian government, spectacular advances were made mainly owing to export-oriented trade. For example, in the two decades up to 1986, annual GNP growth averaged nearly 10 per cent, and in the years 1986 and 1987, it was 12.9 per cent and 13.0 per cent respectively (Bank of Korea, *Monthly Bulletin*). Per capita GNP rose from \$87 in 1962 via \$5,569 in 1990 to \$10,640 in 1995, and the export growth rate rose to 36.2 per cent in 1987, 11 per cent in 1993, and 25 per cent in 1995.³ It was generally accepted that the rate of socio-cultural change in Korea during the last 30 years might be equivalent to that in Britain during last 200 years. Western values and knowledges were not always welcomed, though they sometimes competed with Korean traditional experience. However, the process of accomplishing economic development has had a great influence on every Korean's daily life. The political dimension of development lagged behind national modernization. Social equality and political freedom were held back in the name of economic development and national security during the cold-war era. Political justice had to take a back seat to economic growth objectives which included legitimate power, conflict management, and the regulation of social conduct. During the 1980s, there was an emerging discussion about

³ Data from Korean Overseas Information Service, *The Economy*, December 1991; *OECD Economic Surveys 1995-1996: Korea*, p.24,

understanding the relationship between political dynamics and the development process, not only in Korea but also in other developing countries, in general.

In the light of the great changes that have taken place in Asia, but also in Latin America and Africa, we now have to ask ourselves ... about the interaction between political systems and development, and about the impact of this interaction for a much better understanding of the political dynamics inherent in the development process, of the political implications of the choice of development goals, of the means to achieve them, of the social and ethical dilemmas that have to be faced in the development process almost each step of the way. (Soedjatmoko 484)

As the economic development process in Korea has taken a different direction from that in the West, the structure of political power also reflects very different attitudes towards power and authority. Cultural patterns are crucially linked to political thinking and political behaviour. Asian political culture emphasizes the centrality of the community's well-being rather than that of the individual. In 1985 Lucian W. Pye and Mary W. Pye argue, in their brilliant analysis of the relationship between cultural heritage and political development in Asia, "Western belief that progress should result in ever greater scope for individual autonomy is not taken as self-evident by most Asians, who are more inclined to believe that greater happiness comes from suppressing self-interest in favor of group solidarity" (26). This is why the political leadership in Asian countries often looks authoritarian and paternalistic from a western point of view. In particular, the Korean concept of greater happiness and group solidarity was originally determined by cultural aspects of Confucianism.

And yet there is a strong desire in Korean culture for equality, which has neither a democratic nor a liberal connection, but stems from a collectivist sentiment, and is expressed in the expectation, at one particular level, of being treated like members of a large Confucian family. (Kirby 10)

This is a characteristic of Korean culture which researchers and scholars on Korean studies have often called “Korean *familism*”. It was the 1945 liberation from Japan which suddenly exposed Korea to a strong flow of western culture. It resulted in an identity crisis with respect to Korea’s traditional culture, because Korea’s traditional ethics were predominantly emotional, setting forth absolute norms for personal attitudes and human relations (KDI 69-70). Throughout this process of economic, political, and cultural change, Korea in 1987 was straddling two stools, “having neither achieved democracy nor accepted authoritarianism, but the conditions for a democratic system were largely in place” (Kirby 9).

“The Democratic Revolution of 1987” in Korea was foreseen by nobody, just like the May Revolution of 1968 in France. For instance, *Wolgan Chosun*, a monthly news magazine in Korea, published a special issue focussed on the topic of “The False Image and Reality of the Middle Class” just 2 months before the Democratic Revolution. No articles in this issue took a positive position on the crucial role of the Korean middle class as the motor for social and political development. In actual fact, the middle class was the main power in the Democratic Revolution combined with the physical power of the university students, while the working class was the main power in the May Revolution supported by the university students as an intellectual vanguard as well as a physical power. The Democratic Revolution was not against the economic repression of the bourgeois middle class but against the political repression of the military-controlled authority. If May 1968 was considered as the “return” of the 1789 French Revolution struggle against repression, June 1987 could be considered as the “revival” of the struggle against the repression since the 1961 Military Revolution, which stopped the democratizing process after the 4.19 Students’ Demonstration in 1960.⁴ As I mentioned

⁴ 4.19 Students’ Demonstration on the 19th, April, in 1960, was the first democratic uprising against the authoritarian government in Korean society since the national

before, the intellectual's role in the May Revolution was remarkable, producing contextual poststructuralism. But, the role of Korean intellectual in the Democratic Revolution was quite similar to the "Organic" role in Gramsci's classification of 3 roles played by the intellectual, largely coming from the old culture but not necessarily conservative (10).⁵ Political pluralism as an ideology was the fruition of the Democratic Revolution. This Revolution was not due to economic problems. Labour unrest was not the principal cause nor were students alone capable of achieving the revolution. There is an invaluable article about the national opinion survey from 4th to 13th, in May, 1987, reporting that 85.7 per cent of self-identified middle class agreed with the statement, "We should promote human rights even if it delays economic growth" (*Hankuk Ilbo*, 9 Jun 1987).

Compared to the long history of class division in the West since the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century, Korea has a weak and short history of class division. In the West, a strong and independent bourgeoisie first achieved economic power in the late 18th century and gradually achieved political power after the Reform Act in 1832. This model of development of industrial capitalism seems to have been an indigenous phenomenon only in the West, indeed, only in England. In the case of Korea, capitalism was both a product and a response to imperialism, an important point which has formed the Korean bourgeoisie. In fact, three of Korean top four conglomerates - Samsung, Hyundai, and LG (Lucky-Goldstar) - were founded by men of commerce who began

independence in 1948. It was staged just by students and succeeded in changing the national political regime from a presidential government to a cabinet-form of government. But it had ceased to be by 1961 Military Revolution. In early 1993, contemporary Korean government has announced that the 4.19 Students' Demonstration has not been completed, yet.

⁵ He argues about organic intellectuals, "One of the most important characteristics of any group that is developing towards dominance is its struggle to assimilate and to conquer "ideologically" the traditional intellectuals, but this assimilation and conquest is made quicker and more efficacious the more the group in question succeeds in simultaneously elaborating its own organic intellectuals".

their careers during the Japanese colonial period.⁶ After the national liberation from Japan, Korea's particular form of capitalist development resisted a powerful role for big business in the political sphere, because the state, not the bourgeoisie, was historically the initiator and leader of the industrialization process, both in the colonial and postcolonial periods.⁷ The whole process of private capital accumulation in Korea since the colonial period has been filtered in one way or another through the state. Eckert insists that, in Korea, the bourgeoisie has historically demonstrated little capacity or willingness to look beyond its own narrowly defined class interests to envisage a capitalist system that genuinely embraces and accomodates the working class (112). It is from this socio-historical circumstance that a large industrial middle class, consisting mainly of clerical and technical white-collar workers, emerged in 1980s Korea. They seemed to be politically weak and interested only in the promotion of private benefit, having been most exposed to western bourgeois values of capitalism and individualism. Among intellectual and political circles, there were heated debates about the active role of the middle class in the democratization process of Korean society. In his article, "The Middle Class of Korea: Why Is It Timid?", Jai-Hyon Choe defined the "new" and "fragile" middle class of Korea as "silent", arguing that they would prefer personal advancement at the cost of the social change and political liberalization (345-63). In the same publication, Hyon-Jin Im developed further Choe's skepticism, saying that the middle class of South Korea lacked substantive existence and concluding, "it is premature and indefensible to call South Korea a middle class society" (364). Two

⁶ Carter J. Eckert argues this process in detail in the Chapter 2 of his book, *Offspring Empire: the Koch'ang Kims and the Colonial Origins of Korean Capitalism, 1876-1910*, published by the University of Washington Press in Seattle in 1991.

⁷ In particular, the Park regime since 1960s chose to cultivate a cooperative relationship with business leaders, gradually bringing them into the decision-making process through both formal and informal channels, showering public praise and honors on them for achieving or exceeding development goals, and selectively allowing them to become rich.

months before, February 1987, Zinn Dokyu even called the middle class “rootless entities” and argued that one major hindrance to the democratization process of Korea was “the conservative tendency of the middle class”(114). Therefore, the middle class in Korea was widely regarded as having a particular longing for preserving the current political system and as being extremely hesitant to act in a way that might endanger it. However, surprisingly, just as the May Revolution in France was caused by working-class spontaneity, i.e., spontaneity as “the embryonic form of organization, Lenin used to say” (Mandel 26), the Democratic Revolution was caused by a middle-class spontaneity which nobody could have predicted.

The May Revolution looked for a strategy of social structural reforms and demanded the production of a new order of consciousness. But, in the practical situation, the French Communist Party (PCF), who controlled the trade unions, rejected the actuality of a new politics. So, it came from outside the traditional working-class movement, from the students and the youth in general. The Democratic Revolution looked for a strategy of political reforms in a whole society. It had nothing to do with the Communist Party due to the unique national security situation and even the Opposition Party could not actually produce a new politics. It came instead from outside the parliament and, like the May Revolution, students were the main detonators and motors in the action related to the Park Jong Chol Torture Death Incident of January 1987.⁸ Unlike the May Revolution, the Democratic Revolution changed the political power structure and has been going on since. It has also changed the society's way of

⁸ Park Jong Chol Torture Death Incident destroyed the Chun Doo Hwan regime because of an extreme human rights violation. On 14 January 1987 the death by torture of Seoul National University activist Park Jong Chol at the hands of several police interrogators was reported in the Korean and foreign daily newspapers. This tragic incident, caused by the abuse of state power by police, became an instant cause célèbre of the democratic movement, which was now joined by the middle class. (cf. Dong Wonmo, “The Democratization of South Korea: What Role Does the Middle Class Play?”, *Korean Observers*, Vol.29, No.2, Summer 1991, 276-287.

thinking. From the start, it was easy to see the increasing power of the trade unions from 1989-1990 on and a more liberal and plural way of thinking among Korean intellectuals. Workers' control was a common factor to both struggles and became the main political issue after both Revolutions.

In both cases, the central role of the university was exposed. In the case of the May Revolution, the crisis in the bourgeois university - the authoritarian structure, the content of university education, the preparation of employment possibilities - was linked with aspects of the crisis of neo-capitalism and bourgeois society as a whole. Ernest Mandel pointed out this relationship very clearly:

The detonator role played by the student movement is a direct result of inability of neo-capitalism at any level to satisfy the needs of the mass of young people attracted to the university either by the rise in the mean standard of living or by the need for a massive reproduction of more and more skilled labour, as a result of the third industrial revolution.
(11)

French university students took their position against the existing bourgeois order which they saw as stifling the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat. However, the role of the university in the Democratic Revolution took on a different direction. The crisis in the much politicized university played an important role as the single spark which started political democratization and stimulated the "timid" middle class, even though the university students did not play the appropriate role as an intellectual vanguard. Both university students in general and the middle class demonstrated against the existing authoritarian political regime and fought for democratization; they were joined by more than one million citizens.

In the two Revolutions, the positions of the middle class were very different. The middle class in the May Revolution took the ruling class position, in opposition to

the working class. As Roland Barthes described in his book *Mythologies*, "The petit-bourgeois is a man unable to imagine the Other" (151). On the contrary, the middle class in the Democratic Revolution represented the ruled class position, confronting the military ruling class. Even though the middle class sought a stable livelihood and wealth, they realized what kind of role they had to play in the process of Korean history, as KDI described in 1986.

Out of this mixed concept of values the Korean people have yet to develop their own unique sense of values most appropriate to a nation striving to join the ranks of advanced nations. (70-71)

However, the way in which the Korean middle class demonstrated on the street illustrates very well what kind of democracy they were seeking. As *The New York Times* later recollected, they took to the streets to demand democracy, while they also chanted "order" loudly in the midst of demonstrations (13 March 1989). Wonmo Dong describes this characteristic of the Democratic Revolution as follows:

In this regard, it can be assumed that the Korean middle class believes in the continuum of *communitarianism* and *individualism*, rather than preferring one over the other. They seem to be neither for *liberal democracy* in the individualist mode nor for the *minjung* (people's) *democracy* in the communitarian mode. They are for citizens' democracy, which transcends class cleavage and the dichotomy of privatism and communitarianism. (281)

This significant democratizing process, which was demonstrated by the Democratic Revolution, has already received considerable global attention and is often compared with other Asian countries.

The Japanese people never fought for democracy. ... [It] was handed to them by Americans [during the 1945-51 occupation period]. ... A final factor working in favor of Korean democratization is that the people took direct action in a revolutionary

situation and forced political reform. It was not something bestowed by a foreign conqueror (as in Japan) or from above by a liberalizing but still dominate elite (as in Taiwan). (C. Johnson 22)

Both Revolutions inevitably changed the socio-cultural consciousness relating to feminist issues. Since 1968, a discourse and valorization of “woman” can easily be seen in French thought: “Feminism is the fashion of the day and the men on the left who have gone through Marxism, Maoism and the other ‘isms’ naturally stop at feminism as the only ‘valid’ movement which is left (to them)” (Jardin 92).⁹ The May Revolution caused a questioning of western systems of knowledge and, further, a turning of intellectual concern toward an interest in “*the feminine*”. Rosi Braidotti has interpreted this historical transforming process as the “feminization of philosophy”, arguing: “If women are presented in philosophy, it is to the extent that philosophy has no other way out; at this point it feminizes itself” (44).¹⁰ The British women’s movement has always made its own way, while keeping a close relationship with the French women’s movement. A women’s movement is not something which can be simply imported, because it is naturally generated from women’s cultural, political, and economic lives in the specific country where it takes place. In Britain, an equal pay campaign was already launched by women trade unionists during 1950s. But, it was not until 1968 that they made any real impact on the trade union movement. In 1971, Shulamith Firestone in her book *The Dialectic of Sex* brought up the reproduction issue, insisting on the elimination not simply of male privilege but of sexual discrimination based on biological sex itself. On the other hand, during the 1970s, “the politics of experience” was practised nationwide at the level of the consciousness-raising group. It was here that women

⁹ Danielle Haase-Dubosc and Nancy Huston, “L’un s’autorise et l’autre pas” <unpublished paper>, p.1; quote from Alice A. Jardin, 92.

¹⁰ Rosi Braidotti, “Feminisme et philosophie” <diss., Univ. of Paris I, 1981>, 44; quote from Alice A. Jardine, 93.

could awaken from their oppression by using this "politics of experience" to reinterpret their experiences, to speak of their bitterness, and to speak the unspoken. Because the personal was seen to be a causal aspect of the political at the consciousness-raising group, women in the group also felt that consciousness-raising should be a means to the development of a politics and not as an end in itself (Mitchell, *Woman's Estate*, 61-63). In 1976, Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley edited *The Rights and Wrongs of Women* and indicated some of the wrongs:

In England, our demands were two-pronged: on the one hand, for equal pay and work opportunities and, on the other, for a change in the sexual image and status of women. Both were badly needed. (42)

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the British women's movement mainly took over the socialist women's movement in terms of its interest in the structure of a patriarchal society, together with a new understanding of the historical development of patriarchy, psychoanalysis, and the construction of masculine and feminine psychologies. In short, it focussed on the centrality of ideological struggle.

The Korean women's movement was vitalized in the 1970s and valorized through the 1980s. Since universities offered women's studies courses in the mid-1970s, the Korean women's movement mainly took on the shape of liberal and Marxist feminism, concentrating on the social status of women, class and sexual discrimination, and cultural representations of women. The main issues of the Korean women's movement have been constructed as a product of competing discourses in each historical epoch. In the 1980s, the "woman labourer" identity discourse came via the Marxist feminists who sought recourse to *progressive* social movements in a wider social context. On the other hand, there was the "women as a whole" identity created by other (liberal) feminists who sought women's liberation on their own without recourse to other *progressive* movements. This liberal feminist movement has recently focussed on

the socio-cultural struggle against contemporary sex-culture. I shall develop this argument in section 4.1.1. and 4.2., "Gender, Sexuality, and Popular Culture in 1990s Korea". The May Revolution in 1968 France and the Democratic Revolution in 1987 Korea are both historically specific contexts. The 1968 May Revolution produced the poststructural way of thinking and the Democratic Revolution saw the English literary text offered to Korean readers for signification.

Since the liberation of 1945 from Japan, the role of the English language in Korean society has become more and more important, paralleling the close relationship with U.S.A. and an export-oriented trade economic development policy. In Korea, English is neither the native language nor the second language. It is only one of many foreign languages. English literary texts provide Korean people with the opportunity to read about the international world. The 1988 Seoul Olympics especially accelerated the rapid internationalization of Korean society. The new Free Abroad Travel Policy in early 1989 has led to the increasing necessity of the English language in Korean society, compared to the past. Richard Andrews's argument about the English language in an international context reminds me of the status of the English language in Korean society:

Readers in other countries might reflect on the politics of 'English' in their own contexts: How is literature seen in relation to the English language and to the subject 'English'? (10)

In the international community of the 1990s, English language is no longer just a language "of" or "for" ^{the} "English." Therefore, the field of English literature is also neither "Literature-in-English" nor "Literature-of-the English" (Montgomery 1). It becomes the field of 'english' studies. For Korean readers, the subsequent issue is what kind of English texts they would choose, because "the text establishes a sort of isle within the pleasure, grants a glimpse of the scandalous truth about bliss" (Barthes, *The*

Pleasure, 16). Among the innumerable English texts that have been written, there are readerly texts “linked to a comfortable practice of reading” and writerly texts “bringing to a crisis the reader’s relation with language” (14). For Korean readings of English texts, choice is absolutely critical, because the signifying boundaries of imaginative freedom are different, compared to native speakers’ readings. Korean readings are political because they contribute to the widening and diversifying of the English-centred meaning while not diminishing those meanings. According to Roland Barthes, the text is that social space which leaves no language safe, outside, and no subject of the speech-act in a situation of judge, master, analyst, confessor, decoder: the theory of the text can coincide only with a practice of writing (“From Work to Text” 64). However, we must differentiate the text from the literary work. The literary work cannot be completely identical with the text and is something more than the text. Wolfgang Iser clarifies this distinction between the literary work and the text and goes further, saying the realization of the text is not at all “independent” of the individual disposition of the reader.

The literary work cannot be completely identical with the text, or with the realization of the text, but in fact must lie halfway between the two. The work is more than the text, for the text only takes on life when it is realized, and furthermore the realization is by no means independent of the individual disposition of the reader - though this in turn is acted upon by the different patterns of the text. (“The Reading Process” 212)

So, now, the only remaining issue is what kind of English literary work is going to be chosen for a Korean reading. In order to search for the proper answer to this issue, my argument explores French, German, and Anglo-American thinking as well as theories of postcolonialism, focussing on the production and reception of discourse.

2.3. French, German, Anglo-American Thinking

When T.S. Eliot questioned common-sense knowledge, by which the individual writer could be completely in control of what was written, his attention was still focussed on the production process of the literary works. When a poet's relation to his predecessors was considered decisive, poetry as a product was not taken to exist as an open circuit, but still remained on the closed circuit as a sacred exhibition in the glass museum. The origin of writing as linear time-consciousness was still claimed as the most important factor in producing a certain discourse. However, since 1960s and more precisely after May in 1968, this focus on the production process of writing has shifted to reading as a process of consumption.

2.3.1. Roland Barthes

It is Roland Barthes who actively formulates anti-authorialism as an academic discourse, suggesting the reader's participation as the source of the unity of a text, because the unity of a text is not in its origin but in its destination. It is time that the authorship myth be converted:

The reader is the very space in which are inscribed, without any of them being lost, all the citations out of which a writing is made; the unity of a text is not in its origin but in its destination, but this destination can no longer be personal: ... we know that in order to restore writing to its future, we must reverse the myth: the birth of the reader must be required by the death of Author. ("The Death of the Author" 54-55)

Using the capital "A" for Author while using the small "r" for reader, he is seriously attacking the historical authority and the unquestionable power of authorship, which he is figuring here with the capital "A". For him, to assign an Author to a text is to impose

a brake on it, to furnish it with final signification, to close writing. On the other hand, he emphasizes that the destination of the unity of a text can no longer be personal. This idea of authorial absence alters the attention we give to the function of the author. As Foucault insists, we must contemplate the place where the author has disappeared.

Rather, we should reexamine the empty space left by the author's disappearance; we should attentively observe, along its gaps and faults lines, its new demarcations, and the reapportionment of this void; we should await the fluid functions released by this disappearance. In this context we can briefly consider the problems that arise in the use of an author's name. What is the name of an author? How does it function? (Foucault, "What is an author?", 121)

Within the discourse of the death of the author, Sean Burke argues, it is not enough to exclude the author, but we must recognize that the author has always been absent, that there never could be an author in the first place (16). Then, what else has been there? If there has never been an author, how do we explain the western idea that the human being is able to possess and express knowledge or consciousness by way of language? The death of the author, therefore, is not a simple statement but a fundamental question about the revaluation on the status of the "*subject*" in relation to knowledge in western Europe. It can be extended to the disappearance of the subject from language. From this point of view, a new understanding of the subject is urgently demanded. Roland Barthes, defining language as "the destroyer of all subject" (*Sade Fourier Loyola* 8), argues the author is nothing more than the instance of writing itself:

Linguistically, the author is nothing but the one who writes, just as *I* is nothing but the one who says *I*: language knows a "subject", not a "person", and this subject, empty outside of the very speech-act which defines it, suffices to "hold" language, i.e., to exhaust it. ("The Death of Author" 51)

Foucault explains the relationship between the author and writing as “the kinship between writing and death” (“What is an Author?” 116) and points out that specific difficulties attending an author’s name appear - the link between a proper name and the individual being named, and the link between an author’s name and that which it names, are not isomorphous and do not function in the same way. He concludes that these differences require clarification (121-122). It is because of these differences that the appearance of the writing subject is identifiable with the disappearance of the author, and that “*discourse*” rather than language, and “*subjectivity*” rather than subject have been more spot-lighted since then. Chris Weedon summarizes the new notion of *subjectivity* also as an extension of the long development of humanist discourse in western Europe:

The key distinguishing features of common-sense knowledge - its assumption of the transparency of language and its appeal to experience - rely on a particular understanding of the individual and of subjectivity. This understanding of subjectivity is itself the product of the long development of humanist discourse in Western Europe through which the God-given, socially fixed, unfree subject of the feudal order became the free, rational, self-determining subject of modern political, legal, social and aesthetic discourses. (78-79)

In place of this self-determining subject, poststructuralist thinking gives us a fluid and on-going subjectivity produced by a writing subject. This understanding of the product of the writing subject as a specific subjectivity is certainly different from the former understanding of the product of the socially fixed author as a static subject. However, this difference is “not a difference between but a difference within” (B. Johnson 4). Derrida’s questions about the new recognition of writing products as a function have resulted in a view of the importance of the very act of signification in a specific society:

How is writing - the common name for signs which function despite the total absence of the subject

because of (beyond) his death - involved in the very act of signification in general and, in particular, in what is called "living" speech? How does writing inaugurate and complete idealization when it itself is neither real nor ideal?

(Derrida, "The Supplement of Origin", 93)

These questions point to the signifying process of the writing activity, in other words, to what "happens" and what "keeps going" in the act of uttering, not in the sequence of utterances. This is the most crucial point in poststructuralism and where my main interest as a feminist literary critic is situated. Here is the place where everything exists, but *floating* and *drifting*; henceforth, pleasure or *jouissance*.

Along with his article, "The Death of the Author", Barthes's later book *The Pleasure of the Text* is the most memorable single text about the layering of significance, recommending to us "to read not for many meanings but for other meanings, to read against the grain of tradition" (Wiseman 7). For Barthes, the most obvious pleasure to be gained from reading is that of "making sense" of the text or arriving at its "secret" by following a hermeneutic trail from an initial problematic situation to its "solution". This is the pleasure offered by the "readerly" text and the kind of response that I most often encounter as a teacher of foreign-language texts.¹¹ Barthes encourages readers to go beyond this response, however, and to reach towards "bliss" rather than pleasure.

My pleasure can very well take the form of a drift. *Drifting* occurs whenever *I do not respect the whole*, and whenever, by dint of seeming driven about by language's illusions, seductions, and intimidations, like a cork on the waves, I remain motionless, pivoting on the *intractable* bliss that binds me to the text (to the world). Drifting occurs whenever social language, the sociolect, *fails me* (as we say: *my courage fails me*). Thus another name for drifting would be: *the Intractable* - or perhaps even: Stupidity. (Barthes, *The Pleasure*, 18-19)

¹¹ In section 3.3.2., I will discuss this point with Korean students' responses.

Based on this differentiation between the pleasure and intractable bliss, Barthes identifies the text of bliss as the logical, organic, historical development of the text of pleasure, because the avant-garde as the text of bliss is simply generated from a progressive, emancipated form of past culture. However, this bliss cannot be expressed in words, while pleasure can. So, any kind of criticism always deals with the texts of pleasure where everything is plural, never the texts of bliss where everything is beyond literary description. As he concentrates on the problem of the place of the human subject as a producer, operating within the practice of writing rather than as a biographical person, he also concentrates on the issue of the position of the human subject in the practice of reading rather than as an individual person. In other words, what he argues is “the possibility of a dialectics of desire, of an *unpredictability* of bliss” (Barthes, *The Pleasure*, 4). This intellectual journey in Barthes’s work is an extremely innovative and adventurous experiment in the imagination; Dennis Donaghue, in fact, calls him “that grand philosopher of the imagination”.¹²

But, who defines the specific text as a text of bliss rather than a text of pleasure, or vice versa? What happens when the reading subject feels the text of bliss? These questions have not yet been theoretically examined. Chapter 4, “Reading Korean Context from Reading English Texts” is going to provide some answers to these questions within the historical specificity of Korea. In the practical situation, the evaluation of the two sorts of texts exists only in the reader. Barthes clarifies:

He enjoys the consistency of his selfhood (that is his pleasure) and seeks its loss (that is his bliss). He is a subject split twice over, doubly perverse. (*The Pleasure* 14)

¹² quote from Mary Bittner Wiseman, p.7

Therefore, the reading subject is nothing but a constant counter-action as a splitting human subject. This is Barthes's most exciting contribution to the rewriting of the concept of the human subject. Mary Bittner Wiseman calls it a postmodern conception of the self or human subject and explains why she calls it that:

To call it postmodern is to suggest that central to modernism is a celebration of the self, the concept of which could not bear the weight or do the work that, finally, the celebration requires. (2)

On the other hand, Barthes brings into focus this reading process, considering it as a true science of becoming in a specific historical context:

Whenever I attempt to "analyze" a text which has given me pleasure, it is not my "subjectivity" I encounter but my "individuality", the given which makes my body separate from other bodies and appropriates its suffering or its pleasure: it is my body of bliss I encounter. And this body of bliss is also *my historical subject*. (*The Pleasure* 14)

This is *jouissance* to Barthes, where the body is regarded as the figuration of the unconscious and the unconscious as the representation of desire. And also, here begins the interweaving of the text and the body of bliss that ends in Barthes's rewriting the concept of the human body as part of his construction of a postmodern concept of the human subject. However, the inseparability of the spatial and temporal dynamics of difference in the social dimension is still not explored because the sign, as the mediator in conveying meaning, plays the role of what Barthes calls myth.

While the Saussurean sign is the word as precisely-defined static unit, the Barthes's myth is the mode of signification. Namely, the signification is the myth itself (*Mythologies* 121). As Roland Barthes illustrates very well with a diagram on page 115 in *Mythologies*, the word as the sign in the system of language becomes the signifier in the system of myth, which is read as a natural system, even though, in fact, it is just a

semiological system and has nothing to do with the truth. Myth is the repetition of a certain concept through different signs, confirming the normalized forms in which their origin is easily forgotten. The mythical concept can be signified by a very large number of signifiers. However, in the system of language, there is a comparable ratio between the portion of the signified and that of the signifier. In other words, the myth is the pseudo-orthodoxy which implies a kind of intentional persistence in a specific society.

Myth is basically a system of social communication, where a certain kind of value is made or transfused into myth. This value includes the insistence on a kind of behaviour which reveals its intention, transforming history into nature and meaning into form. For Barthes, myth is nothing but one of the speech types chosen by history, especially by the history of bourgeois ideology.

It is the bourgeois ideology itself, the process through which the bourgeoisie transforms the reality of the world into an image of the world, History into Nature. And this image has a remarkable feature: it is upside down. The status of the bourgeois is particular, historical: man as represented by it is universal, eternal. The bourgeois class has precisely built its power on technical, scientific progress, on an unlimited transformation of nature: bourgeois ideology yields in return an unchangeable nature. (*Mythologies* 141-142)

This paragraph brings me back to my former argument. Voloshinov says, "Without signs, there is no ideology" and Terry Eagleton defines the sign as "the area of class struggle". Barthes's argument goes further and expands the domain of the sign to include that of the myth, showing what has happened in a specific history. Even though he concludes later that myth is depoliticized speech, his real intention is, on the contrary, to give an active value to the prefix *de-*.

One must naturally understand political in its deeper meaning, as describing the whole of human relations in their real, social structure, in their power of making the world; one must above all give an active value to the prefix *de-*: here it represents an

operational movement, it permanently embodies a defaulting. (143)

Myth is always formulated and conveyed by the means of metalanguage as a kind of reservation . Owing to his own distinction between language-object, which '*speaks things*', and metalanguage, which '*speaks of things*', Barthes suggests that there is at least one type of speech that is the opposite of myth: that which remains political in the sense of revolutionary.

There is therefore one language which is not mythical, it is the language of man as a producer: wherever man speaks in order to transform reality and no longer to preserve it as an image, wherever he links his language to the making of things, metalanguage is referred to a language-object, and myth is impossible. This is why revolutionary language proper cannot be mythical. (146)

This theory of revolutionary language and the language of man as a producer in Barthes is directly connected to the purpose of my research, because there is a lack in terms of examining one type of speech as the opposite of "*western*" myth.

2.3.2. Jacques Derrida

Based on an intellectual indebtedness to three German philosophers, Heidegger, Husserl, and Nietzsche, Jacques Derrida began his work as a critic of Husserl, Levi-Strauss, and Saussure. While pointing to contradictions in their arguments, Derrida has developed his own theory called "*differance*" with its critique of the metaphysics of presence. In Saussurean linguistics, the arbitrariness and the differential character of signs are two correlative qualities which are inseparable from each other. Derrida uses writing to criticize metaphysics and to challenge this Saussurean binary differential system where the signifying aspect operates by the weaving of oppositions.

Though dissociation is a fact of our post-lapsarian state, it is assumed that we should still try to pass

through the signifier to the meaning that is truth and origin of the sign (This view's) inadequacy becomes obvious as soon as we reflect upon writing, and especially literature, where an organized surface of signifiers insistently promises meaning but where the notion of a full and determinate meaning that the text 'expresses' is highly problematic. (Gloversmith xvi)

For Derrida, as for Saussure, meaning is not the product of the interaction between the signifier and the signified but the product of the differences between signifiers. Derrida, however, goes beyond Saussure in arguing that meaning is not only plural but also liable to the characteristic of deferral; it is constantly deferred in the never-ending webs of textuality in which all texts are located. Therefore, the historical specificity of reading context can decide the textual meaning of all texts. The historical specificity of this research is 1990s Korea.

Derrida's own conception of language is epitomized by the word *differance* with the dead silence of the graphic difference between the e of difference and the a. It can refer at once to a myriad of meanings. But, if we analyze it in detail, there are several crucial factors which designate his theory, *differance*.

Within a conceptual system and in terms of classical requirements, *differance* could be said to designate the productive and primordial constituting causality, the process of scission and division whose differings and differences would be the constituted products of effects. But while bringing us closer to the infinitive and active core of differing, "differance" with an a neutralizes what the infinitive denotes as simply active, in the same way that "parlance" does not signify the simple fact of speaking, of speaking to or being spoken to. ("Differance" 137)

Therefore, *differance* is neither a word nor a concept; it is neither active nor passive. It rather indicates the middle voice between passivity and activity. In a classical language system, it would refer to the origin or production of differences and the differences

between differences, the *play* of differences (“The Supplement of Origin” 130). It has always conveyed the possibility of conceptuality with an origin structured in difference. Both spacing and temporalizing are the decisive factors to make the movement of signification possible, if each element that is said to be “present” appears on the stage of presence. In this research, the historical specificity can be substituted for both spacing and temporalizing in Derrida’s *differance*.

Combining the two senses of the French verb *differer* (to differ and to defer), Derrida develops his question concerning the metaphysics of presence in the West. At first he announces that the history of presence is closed: i.e., the history of being as presence, as self-presence in absolute knowledge, as consciousness of self in the infinity. This idea has fundamentally shaken western humanist discourses, where the underlying belief has been in absolute self-presence in human consciousness, and in the achievement of absolute knowledge as the end of human consciousness, which could only be the unity of the concept, logos, and consciousness without any *differance*. The long western history of metaphysics, human knowledge, and consciousness is attacked by Derrida’s *differance*.

The history of metaphysics therefore can be expressed as the unfolding of the structure or schema of an absolute will-to-hear-oneself-speak. This history is closed when this infinite absolute appears to itself as its own death. A voice without differance, a voice without writing, is at once absolutely alive and absolutely dead. (“The Supplement” 102)

For instance, Derrida expands on the idea about the “unconscious”, in ways contrary to the terms of an old debate in Nietzsche. For Nietzsche, the important main activity is that of the unconscious, and consciousness is only the effect of a force whose essence, ways, and modalities are not peculiar to it. But, now, Derrida argues that very force

itself is never present because it is only a play of differences and quantities. There would be no force in general without the difference between forces; and here the difference in quantity counts more than content and even more than absolute magnitude itself. However, from his point of view, the “unconscious” can be considered just as a “thing” rather than anything else. It is nothing more than implicit or disguised consciousness. This revolutionary transformation, removed from every possible mode of presence, is characterized by irreducible and delayed effects. And he concludes, “In order to describe them, in order to read the traces of the “unconscious” traces (there are no “conscious” traces), the language of presence or absence, the metaphysical speech of phenomenology, is in principle inadequate” (“Differance” 152).

On the other hand, the speaking subject “*I*” as a discourse of the transcendental ego has been examined again in terms of the subjective origin, the *I*, the *here*, the *now*. He prefers its objective conceptual content, as in “Whatever speaker is now designating himself is pleased” to the first-person narrative, as in “I am pleased”. This is the new philosophical concept of human language, which I argued in relation to the subject and the subjectivity in poststructuralism. Now, it seems that there is no need to know who is speaking in order to understand or even listen to it. As Roland Barthes introduces a new concept of human subject, Derrida also introduces a new concept of the speaking subject. He explains Husserl’s contradiction between *Gegenstandslösigkeit* (the absence of an object) and *Bedeutung* (the meaning) when Husserl writes that the word ‘*I*’ names a different person from case to case, and does so by way of an ever altering meaning (*Bedeutung*). Derrida questions the border line around the speaking subject, saying: “Once again the border seems less certain between solidarity speech and communication, between the reality and the representation of speech” (“The Supplement” 95). Recently, many analyses on the first-person narratives in the literary

texts illustrate Derrida's idea of the less certain border line around the speaking subject. As Roland Barthes pays attention to the social function of signs in the mythical semiological schema, Derrida also concentrates on the social function of meaning by urging a new understanding of the signifying function of the speaking subject *I*, which does not depend on the biographical life of the speaking subject, any more.

Whether or not perception accompanies the statement about perception, whether or not life as self-presence accompanies the uttering of the *I*, is quite indifferent with regard to the functioning of meaning. My death is structurally necessary to the pronouncing of the *I*. ("The Supplement" 96)

Now, we are reaching the triangular meeting place of "writing activity", "writing subject", and "death" in Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, and Michel Foucault, and here lies my main interest.

2.3.3. Michel Foucault

In his provocative article, "What is an author?", Foucault puts a heavy emphasis on discourse as the social function of meaning. However, his idea of transgressive history must be understood before his ideas about language, discourse, and author, because history is the fundamental factor in influencing language and discourse in terms of power. For Foucault, history is "not the order of things, but the surface disorder of things to the degree that they are spoken" (Bouchard 17). Transgressive process in history implies its characteristic, containing nothing negative and affirming limited being while confirming the limitlessness, just like "floating" in Roland Barthes. Therefore, its role is to measure the excessive distance that it opens at the heart of the limit and to trace the flashing line that causes the limit to arise ("Preface to Transgression" 35). Language is the only place where transgression will find its space

and literature is the only place where the recovery of language takes place in its own being as a reversal. Comparing the initiation of discursive practices to the founding of any scientific endeavor, Foucault's focus gradually moves into the author as a product, not as a producer, of a particular discursive function. From his point of view, the history of a concept, a literary genre, or a branch of philosophy - hold relatively weak and secondary positions in relation to the solid and fundamental role of an author and his works. However, his emphasis on the singular relationship between an author and a text is unique, suggesting that the writing itself is creating an opening where the writing subject endlessly disappears.

First, the writing of our day has freed itself from the necessity of "expression"; it only refers to itself, yet it is not restricted to the confines of interiority. On the contrary, we recognize it in its exterior deployment. This reversal transforms writing into an interplay of signs, regulated less by the content it signifies than by the very nature of the signifier. Moreover, it implies an action that is always testing the limits of its regularity, transgressing and reversing an order that it accepts and manipulates. ... Thus, the essential basis of this writing is not the exalted emotions related to the act of composition or the insertion of a subject into language. Rather, it is primarily concerned with creating an opening where the writing subject endlessly disappears. ("What is an author?" 115)

This is the notion of *écriture* in French, implying its dual meaning of the act of writing and the primordial as well as metaphysical nature of writing as an entity itself. In Jacques Derrida's theory, *écriture* means writing as the interplay of presence and absence in which ^{the signifier} represent the present in its absence. But, *écriture* in Michel Foucault signifies writing as the interplay of author as an individual and author-function as a discourse, because the author's name represents a particular way of existence of discourse and the author-function implies and reflects the existence, circulation, and

manner of certain discourses which are articulated on the basis of social relationships. His differentiation between author and author-function is extremely original and brilliant, with the differentiation between author as the individualistic authentic subject and author-function as a fluid and transient subject within a specific historical context. The most important investigation must be focussed “not only on the expressive value and formal transformations of discourse, but on its mode of existence: the modifications and variations, within any culture, of modes of circulation, valorization, attribution, and appropriation” (“What is an author?” 137). Because the author-function is always and everywhere bonded to the dominant and institutional structure in a society which is closely related to the realm of discourses, the author-function is only one of the possible discursive practices of the subject and only discourse itself can be substituted for the disappearance of the author in the name of “anonymity”. Chris Weedon clearly points out the importance of Michel Foucault’s work on discourse and its effects within poststructural thinking.

It is in the work of Michel Foucault that the poststructuralist principles of the plurality and constant deferral of meaning and the precarious, discursive structure of subjectivity have been integrated into a theory of language and social power which pays detailed attention to the institutional effects of discourse and its role in the constitution and government of individual subjects. (107)

My interest in Michel Foucault’s argument is derived from the “institutional effects of discourse and its role in the constitution and government of individual subjects”, which I will examine in the following chapters. Foucault’s response to the question, “Who is speaking?” is another question, “What (does it) matter who’s speaking?” (“What is an author?” 138).

2.3.4. Husserl, Heidegger & Gadamer

While French poststructuralist theory has concentrated on the changing perception of the process of discourse production, German theory has concentrated on uncovering recognition of the process of discourse reception, rooted in Husserl's work after the First World War. It transfers the traditional attention to the text and its author more enthusiastically into the reading activity. Launching the new philosophical method called "phenomenology", a science of pure phenomena, Husserl's main concern was how existing things are perceived by human consciousness. Human consciousness is the consciousness of something and actively constitutes or 'intends' it. So, everything not 'present' in consciousness must be excluded from human perception. This is why 'intention' and 'intuition' are the key words in Husserl. The aim of phenomenology was in fact the precise opposite of abstraction: it was a return to the concrete, to solid ground, as its famous slogan "Back to the things themselves!" suggested (Eagleton, *Literary Theory*, 56). Therefore, in Husserl's phenomenology, 'being' and 'meaning' as well as 'subject' and 'object' are always mixed with one another. Jacques Derrida argues in his criticism on Husserl, "The Supplement of Origin", that transcendental intuitionism is the mainstream in Husserl's "intentional" theory.

In any case transcendental intuitionism still weighs very heavily upon the formalist theme in Husserl. Apparently independent from fulfilling intuitions, the "pure" forms of signification, as "empty" or canceled sense, are always governed by the epistemological criterion of the relation with objects.
(98)

The transcendental subject in Husserlian philosophy is still the hero who perceives the world. This subject is to be seen as the source and origin of all meaning. However, Derrida argues the "originality" of language lies in its ability to function autonomously,

so that the language which speaks in the presence of its object erases its originality or makes it disappear. Its intention is cut off from intuition. In Husserlian phenomenology, a reader cannot go into the text as an active producer but remains outside the text as a passive recipient of a pure transcription of its consciousness. For Husserl, meaning is something prior to language and language is a kind of subordinate activity, acting just as a means to represent. This kind of relationship between meaning and language separated from a specific society is the most characteristic point of phenomenology. Terry Eagleton argues what is absent and problematic in Husserl's phenomenology:

It (phenomenology) promises to give a firm grounding for human knowledge, but can do so only at a massive cost: the sacrifice of human history itself. For surely human meanings are in a deep sense historical: they are not a question of intuiting the universal essence of what it is to be an opinion, but a matter of changing, practical transactions between social individuals. (*Literary Theory* 61)

It seems to me that this absence in Husserl's phenomenology becomes very serious from the poststructuralist point of view. "The sacrifice of human history" is too massive a cost in obtaining a firm grounding for human knowledge. For the precise debate on the reader's responses, his phenomenology needs its "intention" for human history in order to fill in this lack and to perceive it within the poststructuralist perspective.

Martin Heidegger, Husserl's most brilliant pupil, reverses Husserl's phenomenological philosophy, rejecting his transcendental subject. Rather, Heidegger begins his philosophy from a reflection on the intrinsic condition of human existence. So, he is often called "existentialist". Husserl's transcendental ego represents the latest stage of a rationalist Enlightenment philosophy, in which 'man' forms his own image on the world. However, Heidegger has partly decentred the human subject from this

imaginary position of dominance. For Heidegger, human existence is a dialogue with the world, and the more reverent activity is to listen rather than to speak; human knowledge always departs from and moves within what Heidegger calls “pre-understanding”. In his philosophy, understanding is very historical and time is the very structure of human life itself. Most eminently, his philosophy of language is quite different from Husserl's point of view on language because he believes human existence to be made up of language, just like time.

Only where there is language is there ‘world’, in the distinctively human sense. Heidegger does not think of language primarily in terms of what you or I might say: it has an existence of its own in which human beings come to participate, and only by participating in it do they come to be human at all. Language always pre-exists the individual subject, as the very realm in which he or she unfolds; ... In this sense of language as a quasi-objective event, prior to all particular individuals, Heidegger’s thinking closely parallels the theories of structuralism. (Eagleton, *Literary Theory*, 63)

Heidegger’s philosophical thinking is called “hermeneutical phenomenology”, distinguished from the “transcendental phenomenology” of Husserl, because it was based on historical interpretation rather than on transcendental consciousness. Therefore, for Heidegger, the meaning of language has a very social dimension and language belongs at first to the specific society before it belongs to each individual. Because of this, Heidegger’s “hermeneutical phenomenology” is useful and utilizable for the international frame of the author-reader relationship. But, it still needs more precise and concrete examinations about the interaction between the historical interpretation and language belonged to the specific society.

Hans-Georg Gadamer develops Heideggerian hermeneutics, further suggesting the meaning of a literary work is never weakened by the intentions of its author. The

cultural or historical context is the decisive factor in its meaning, because all interpretation is situational, influenced and constrained by the historically relative criteria of a particular culture. Gadamer's ideas on interpretation are rather closer to poststructural thinking, focussing on the importance of each context as well as understanding interpretation as a product. For Gadamer, all interpretation of a past work involves communication between past and present. The present is only understandable through the past, with which it forms an organic continuity, and the past is always understood from our present point of view. Gadamer's understanding about history is based on his belief that there is a single mainstream tradition which is inherited. But, this mainstream tradition in Gadamer is different from what the poststructuralist thinks about history, for instance, Michel Foucault's idea of transgressive history. Terry Eagleton argues;

History for Gadamer is not a place of struggle, discontinuity and exclusion but a 'continuing chain', an ever-flowing river, almost, one might say, a club of the like-minded. Historical differences are tolerantly conceded, but only because they are effectively liquidated by an understanding which 'bridges the temporal distance which separates the interpreter from the text; thus it over comes ... the alienation of meaning which has befallen the text'.
(*Literary Theory* 73)

Gadamer's ideas on interpretation are based upon earlier theories. Even though his hermeneutics are quite close to our recent thinking with its focus on history, and on telling us what we are, his position is still located within the German philosophical tradition, which acknowledges a small power domain for history and tradition as oppressive as well as liberating forces, and struggling areas of conflict and domination. This is the main difference between the French thinking since 1968, as I have argued before, and the German thinking since the First World War. Terry Eagleton summarizes the problem of the hermeneutic understanding of history in this way:

Hermeneutics sees history as a living dialogue between past, present and future, and seeks patiently to remove obstacles to this endless mutual communication. ... It cannot, in other words, come to terms with the problem of ideology. ... It refuses to recognize that discourse is always caught up with a power which may be by no means benign; and the discourse in which it most signally fails to recognize this fact is its own. (*Literary Theory* 73)

Such an absence of power struggle around the discourse in a society is considered as the weakest point of German thinking. But, their ideas on hermeneutics provides important and extensive understanding on the readers' side and has developed more recently since the 1970s into what is called "reception theory".

2.3.5. Wolfgang Iser

While Gadamer's concern was with past works, this newer intellectual circle called "the school of Constance", has concentrated on the reading process, in general, and invited into the picture the active reader as the real producer of meaning, a position quite similar to Roland Barthes' in "The Death of the Author". The Polish theorist Roman Ingarden provided the initial ideas about the text as "a set of schemata" in which the reader must participate through an act of concretization (276). For this actualization of the text, the reader is expected to bring to bear certain 'pre-understandings' about the text. From another angle, Hans Robert Jauss in the school of Constance has developed the social dimension of Gadamer's hermeneutics, locating the literary work within the specific cultural and historical context which produced it and exploring the relations between this and the changing context of its historical readers. German reception theory has contributed to a new field of literary history, in which the literary work is defined and interpreted by its diverse contexts of historical reception and reading, rather than writing, and thus is understood as a dominant form of evaluation and interpretation.

Wolfgang Iser, the important figure in the Contance school of reception aesthetics, argues that reading must be considered as a performance by the individual reader:

Literary texts initiate 'performances' of meaning rather than actually formulating meanings themselves. Their aesthetic quality lies in this 'performing' structure, which clearly cannot be identical to the final product, because without the participation of the individual reader there can be no performance. (*The Act of Reading* 27)

In addition, for the successful performance by the individual reader, he also suggests the strategies which texts put to work and the checklist of familiar themes which they encompass. His suggestion about the strategies and the checklist of the familiar themes is useful and utilizable for teaching literature in a specific classroom. But, what kind of strategies can we practise and for what reasons?

David Lodge evaluates Iser's work as "less 'mythical', more 'scientific' than the Geneva critics in his account of literary meaning as a convergence of text and reader". He compares Iser with the Geneva critics as well as Gadamer and Ingarden, saying that he, like them, privileges the experience of reading literary texts as a uniquely valuable consciousness-raising activity ("Introduction on Wolfgang Iser" 211). In Iser's theoretical scheme, reading literature gives the reader the chance to formulate the unformulated. Iser's reception theory is the product of western liberal humanist values: the reading process is expected to produce a unique experience in contemplating our own identities, questioning our beliefs, and later even revising them. Therefore, the reading process is a way to deeper self-consciousness and gives the reader much clearer ideas about her or his life. From this point of view, the most effective literary work is necessarily that which leads the reader to unfamiliar critical thinking about her or his routine life and customary experience. If the reader changes her or his way of thinking after reading the text, it would be a most valuable and successful text. In this case, the

text's role in terms of its potential effects is maximized, while its role as represented meaning is minimized. However, such a textual strategy is not enough to define a successful reading.

The unity of the reading subject - in other words, the reader's role as a textual structure and within a structured act - is also necessary for effective reading as "total consumption of the text" (*The Act of Reading* 29), because this consumption, in terms of Iser's reading act, is part of the process of production itself. In his earlier article "The Reading Process: a phenomenological approach"(1972), Iser explains the process resulting from the dynamic nature of the literary work and leading to the awakening responses within the reader.

It is the vitality of the work that gives rise to its dynamic nature, and this in turn is the precondition for the effects that the work calls forth. As the reader uses the various perspectives offered him by the text in order to relate the patterns and the 'schematised views' to one another, he sets the work in motion, and this very process results ultimately in the awakening of responses within himself. (212)

However, this awakening of responses as an interaction within the reader cannot be simply defined as private or arbitrary. What is private is the reader's incorporation of the text into her or his own experience. This dimension has various aspects, varying according to each person. But, as far as Reader-Response Theory is concerned, this can easily mean that the subjective response to reading comes at a later stage in the process of comprehension, namely, where the aesthetic effect results in a restructuring of the reader's experience. However, if there is an objective textual strategy for effective reading, something like a checklist of themes, how can we explain this private and subjective responding process linked with such objective criteria? This question is crucial in Iser's theory because the reader's subjectivity in value judgement is

formulated within this kind of intersubjective frame. Iser describes this process in detail.

The reason may be that a literary text contains intersubjectively verifiable instructions for meaning-production, but the meaning produced may then lead to a whole variety of different experiences and hence subjective judgements. Thus by ridding ourselves of the concept of the subjectivism/objectivism we can establish an intersubjective frame of reference that will enable us to access the otherwise ineluctable subjectivity of the value judgements. (*The Act of Reading* 25)

But, problems still remain with the issue of an intersubjective frame of reference as a textual strategy. How is it possible for the reader to get into the text and how can we explain this interaction from the position of the text? David Lodge says this area is one of the most useful ideas in Iser's impressively coherent theory: "his discussion of indeterminacy - the way in which 'gaps' or 'blanks' in literary texts stimulate the reader to construct meanings which would not otherwise come into existence" (211). At first, Iser invents the concept of "the implied reader" as a transcendental model to describe the structured effects of literary texts. Standing for the reader's presence in the text, the implied reader is devised without any predetermining of her or his character or her or his historical situation. In *The Act of Reading* (1978), Iser shapes his idea of the implied reader.

He embodies all those predispositions laid down, not by an empirical outside reality, but by the text itself. Consequently, the implied reader as a concept has his roots firmly planted in the structure of the text; he is a construct and in no way to be identified with any real reader. ... The concept of the implied reader is therefore a textual structure anticipating the presence of a recipient without necessarily defining him: ... Thus the concept of the implied reader designates a network of response-inviting structures, which impel the reader to grasp the text. (*The Act of Reading* 34)

Iser's concept of the implied reader developed into the conditioning force behind a particular kind of tension. This tension results, as Wayne Booth argues, from the difference between myself as reader and the often very different self. It is only as I read that I become the self whose beliefs must coincide with the author's. And Booth describes this tension in more detail from the reader's perspective:

I must subordinate my mind and heart to the book if I am to enjoy it to the full. The author creates, in short, an image of himself and another image of his reader; he makes his reader, as he makes his second self, and the most successful reading is one in which the created selves, author and reader, can find complete agreement. (138)

This stage is what I am aiming at in the classroom, linking the different cultural contexts. In Iser's functional model of reading, this tension in the reading process of anticipation and retrospection is pictured by the influence of '*gestalt*' psychology, which integrates discrete perceptions into a systematic discourse. The '*gestalt*' is not the true meaning of the text; at best it is a configured meaning. Therefore, it is inseparable from the reader's expectations.

This '*gestalt*' must inevitably be colored by our own characteristic selection process. For it is not given by the text itself; it arises from the meeting between the written text and the individual mind of the reader with its own particular history of experience, its own consciousness, its own outlook. ("The Reading Process" 219)

So, this '*gestalt*' space is located at the middle point where the intersubjective interaction happens between reality and imagination, which I shall demonstrate in the Korean context in sections 3.2.2. and 3.5.1. However, Iser's reception theory raises a serious epistemological problem: how can one discuss these schemata at all without having already concretized them? In speaking of the 'text itself', measuring it as a norm against particular interpretations of it, is one ever dealing with anything more than one's

own concretization? Iser presents the reader with a certain freedom which is only confined by the specific text, and therefore, only constrained by the text itself. Terry Eagleton compares Wolfgang Iser's idea of the relationship between the reader and the text with Roland Barthes'.

If Iser offers us a grimly 'normative' model which reins in the unbounded potential of language, Barthes presents us with a private, asocial, essentially anarchic experience which is perhaps no more than the flip-side of the first. Both critics betray a liberal distaste for systematic thought; both in their different ways ignore the position of the reader in history. For readers do not of course encounter texts in a void: all readers are socially and historically positioned, and how they interpret literary works will be deeply shaped by this fact. (*Literary Theory* 83)

Nobody denies both critics have turned our attention towards the important value of reading act. Their arguments result from the western liberal humanism, at the same time questioning it. However, as Terry Eagleton argues, their ignorance of the position of the reader in historical specificity, like Husserlian phenomenology, remains a very critical issue. The anarchic position of the reader in both critics must be redefined and retheorized by the historical specificity of where the text is going to be situated. This is what I examine in this research. In the 1990s when the post-modern debate is expanding into the post-nationalism influenced by the post-colonial debates,¹³ this issue is very crucial.

2.3.6. Stanley Fish

¹³ In the December, 1993, MLA conference in Toronto, Canada, a paper entitled "Is postmodernism postnationalism?" is delivered. On the other hand, across the Atlantic ocean, the joint conference on "Empire, Nation, Language" is organized by the Institute of Commonwealth Studies and the Institute for Advanced Study at the University of London and held in London from 2-4 December, 1993.

It is Stanley Fish who developed the theory of "interpretation" which complicates the simple Iserian phenomenological interplay between reader and text and smooths over the gaps of hermeneutical anarchy. At first, Fish objects to Iser's idea of the implied reader as the immanent structure in the text. Rather, he focusses on what happens to the reader's experiencing process; i.e., what the text does to the reader. This is a question of interpretation. The objective criterion in his theory is not predicated on the text as in Iser but on the reader, who is a member of a community. But, still "it is the reader who 'makes' literature", a view which is the same as Iser's.

This sounds like the rankest subjectivism, but it is qualified almost immediately when the reader is identified not as a free agent, making literature in any old way, but as a member of a community whose assumptions about literature determine the kind of attention he pays and thus the kind of literature "he" "makes". ("Introduction" 11)

This community, not the individual reader, produces meanings and is responsible for the emergence of formal interpretations. In Stanley Fish's reading theory, there is no debate about subjectivity, objectivity, and intersubjectivity. The interpretive community itself becomes the centre of reading authority, and thus includes the text and the reader, together. But, its perspective is not independent at all. The characteristic of an interpretive community is quite fundamental to the understanding of Stanley Fish's theory.

An interpretive community is not objective because as a bundle of interests, of particular purposes and goals, its perspective is interested rather than neutral; but by the very same reasoning, the meanings and text produced by an interpretive community are not subjective because they do not proceed from an isolated individual but from a public and conventional point of view. ("Introduction" 14)

If an interpretive community is neither objective nor subjective, who constitute this interpretive community and how? And, then, the next question is, "who is eligible to be

part of those interpretive communities?" Fish answers by defining eligibility in terms of those "who share interpretive strategies not for reading but for writing texts, for constituting their properties" (14). But, for me, this answer is problematic from the cross-cultural point of view, especially when we talk about texts written in English, which is the most widely spoken language in the world, since the idea of language competence defines some reading communities as "ineligible" or marginal in relation to native speakers. It seems that, for Fish, there is no reading and no producing the text without recognized interpretive strategies.

Again the point is that while there are always mechanisms for ruling out readings, their source is not the text but the presently recognized interpretive strategies for producing the text. It follows, then, that no reading, however outlandish it might appear, is inherently an impossible one. ("What Makes an Interpretation Acceptable?" 347)

Fish's concept of interpretive strategies in a specific interpretive community is instrumental in the sense that this is what controls the individual reader's responses. In short, these interpretive strategies are equivalent to extensions of community perspectives.

Fish's other important concepts are those of the informed reader and of literary competence. From his point of view, every reader in an interpretive community cannot enjoy the same amount of freedom for her or his own interpretation. Fish feels the necessity to establish a "bottom line" where he introduces the notions of "the basic data of the meaning experience" and "what is objectively true about the *activity* of reading" ("Literature in the Reader" 22). Here, the informed reader represents a self-instructing concept to increase the reader's informedness and competence through the sequence of each reader's reactions to the text. Fish defines and classifies these into 3 categories.

The informed reader is someone who (1) is a competent speaker of the language out of which the

text is built up; (2) is in full possession of “the semantic knowledge that a mature ... listener brings to his task of comprehension”, including the knowledge (that is, the experience, both as a producer and comprehender) of lexical sets, collocation probabilities, idioms, professional and other dialects, and so on; and (3) has *literary* competence. That is, he is sufficiently experienced as a reader to have internalized the properties of literary discourses, including everything from the most local devices (figures of speech, and so on) to whole genres. (“Literature in the Reader” 48)

I wonder how applicable this idea of the informed reader is in a practical situation, because the linguistic and literary dimensions in the reading process interact with dynamic and varied forces. In fact, from my cross-cultural point of view, all these 3 categories are problematic. According to Fish’s categorization, at first, a Korean reader educated in Korea cannot be an informed reader of an English text because she or he is not a competent speaker. Since English is a foreign language in Korea, most Koreans, even those majoring in English studies, are not competent speakers of English; American English or British English. However, they are usually very able in reading comprehension, owing to the nature of the Korean educational system. Related to this issue, H.H. Underwood describes his lecturing experience in Korea as following:

Korean students like to be lectured to, so I determined to be a good lecturer in English. It is a special skill, the elements of which include speaking loudly, clearly, not too slowly, writing hard vocabulary on the board (but not definitions, as Korean students know most words if they see them in writing). No compromise on content is necessary. (217)

On the other hand, most Korean readers of the English text obtain high standards of semantic knowledge, although not “in full possession of the semantic knowledge” of lexical sets, collocation probabilities, idioms, professional and other dialects, and so on. As non-native English speakers, they would never attain full possession of semantic

knowledge, especially, of prepositions, articles, and tenses. Is it, then, impossible for them to be the informed readers of English texts? Further, according to his third category of *literary* competence, Fish expects a reader “to have internalized the properties of literary discourses, including everything from the most local devices (figures of speech, and so on) to whole genres”. For Korean readers who have been educated in the English departments at numerous Korean universities, it is impossible to have this level of *literary* competence demanded by Stanley Fish. Can they not then claim to be the informed reader to enjoy making their own meaning from reading the text written in the foreign language? Stanley Fish’s notion of the informed reader must be revised from the perspective of its temporal and spatial positioning in Derrida’s terms.

Reading is neither a straightforward linear movement nor simply an accumulative experience. It is the complex movement of the initial speculation, transforming it retrospectively by highlighting some features and backgrounding others. If we consider this aspect of the reading process, we discover the theoretical hole in Fish’s schemata in its real social context. As Fish says, his method may be radically historical. But, in the globalizing era, his arguments on the informed reader and the interpretive community must include diverse cultural and institutional interpretations in a practical context. Because, these days, it is evident that no reader comes to the text “as a kind of cultural virgin” (Eagleton, *Literary Theory*, 89).

2.4. Postcolonialism and Gender

In the last section, my argument has been focussed on the production and reception of discourse. But, what is the main gap in the current arguments? Is there any other missing link in these theoretical arguments? Donald F. Bouchard exposes and

illustrates the political aspect of theory as an intellectual discourse of dominance, while talking about Foucault's work in *The Order of Discourse*.

Theory is the exclusive domain of a particular group and constitutes the active principle through which others of a different persuasion are excluded from the "fellowship". (24)

For Foucault, theory is not necessarily prior to practice: nor is practice the ground from which theory is elaborated. As far as the production of the discourse is concerned, there are large groups of others of a different persuasion who are excluded from the "fellowship". I argue points which exist within western culture and are mainly confined to Euro-centric discourse. European representation of the Other, including the Orient, is a particular kind of production of discourse which we call *colonial discourse*. Edward Said points to its long history and silent characteristics.

The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other. In addition, the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience. Yet none of this Orient is merely imaginative. The Orient is an integral part of European *material* civilization and culture. Orientalism expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles. (1-2)

Recently, owing to work in post-colonial theory, there are diverse and invaluable articles about the Western discourses which analyze and criticize non-western culture; for instance, Chandra Mohanty's "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse" in which she analyzes the western production of the "Third World Woman" as a singular monolithic subject. It goes without saying that Orientalism as a discourse

assumed an unchanging Orient, absolutely different from the West. Even these days, it is Europe and more recently U.S.A. that articulate the Orient and, more precisely, the concept that "Orientalism in its post-eighteenth-century form could never revise itself" (Said 96). This is why the recent post-colonial analysis of colonial discourse seems to be an attack on and radical challenge to Euro-centrism. This kind of post-colonial research must be considered as the scissors to cut the classificational relation between Western writing (and its consequences) and Oriental silence, the result of and the sign of the West's great cultural strength, its will to dominate the Orient. But, in contemporary post-colonial discourse, the image of cultural authority still looks ambivalent as long as it is caught in the analyzing act of composing its powerful representation of the silent subject, like Asia. Spivak describes the Asian intellectual silence in one sentence: "There are intellectuals in Asia but there are no Asian intellectuals" ("Criticism, Feminism, and the Institution" 3). In fact, if any Asian intellectual tries to create her or his own discourse as the counter-part to discourse in Europe, it looks almost impossible because the Euro-centric perspective has already worked out the basic material for historically controlling societies at different evolutionary stages. However, in the post-modern and the post-colonial era of the late 20th century, this task is left as the Asian intellectuals' duty, a duty which Asian history has passed to them. Jan Nederveen Pieterse in his excellent article, "Dilemmas of Development Discourse: The Crisis of Developmentalism and Comparative Method", argues the current frustrating issues in the development discourse in this field.

From the point of view of the centre, global space appeared transformed into a time sequence, with Europeans as the only contemporaries, the sole inhabitants of modernity. Empire, then, was a time machine in which one moved backward or forward along the axis of progress. This eurocentric perspective also served as a manual for imperial management of societies at different evolutionary stages. Europe defined the world. ... The naming

process itself was an extension of the process of conquest. (7-8)

Later, he suggests “polycentrism” as the substitute for Euro-centrism and for a transition in political discourse and culture. He also insists that polycentrism must be the fundamental way of thinking for developmentalism (19, 22). In cultural studies, especially in the case of cross or comparative cultural studies, the idea of polycentrism becomes quite valuable and utilizable for the production of discourse not “in” but “by” a specific society within an international cultural frame.

Nevertheless, if we pay attention to the area of feminist studies, this dilemma of current intellectual discourse confronts a more embarrassing issue, because there is no reserved place for feminist discourse from the cross-cultural perspective as one academic category in current intellectual discourse. In her inaugural lecture, “Forging the Missing Link: Interdisciplinary Stories”, Gillian Beer defines this problem of current disciplinary categories in intellectual discourse, concerning the area of feminist research.

In particular, feminism’s major contribution to intellectual life in recent years has been to pose such questions: it has challenged current categories, including disciplinarity itself, and has broken open the ideological assumptions that go to constitute classificatory systems. Such activity propels social change. (4)

Even though we agree that interdisciplinary research is necessary for feminist research, as she argues, another issue simultaneously emerges: “How thoroughly interdisciplinary is it possible to be?” (Beer 5). I search for the answer to this question throughout this research. Feminist research as an interdisciplinary subject and, as a cross-cultural subject, can be seen as the intellectual practice of “*Forging the Missing Link*” implying “an epitome of ‘*differance*’ in Derrida’s term: difference and deferral at once” as well as “absence and creature at once”. The discursive history of western representation of the

Orient is going to disappear in the melting pot named “harmonized *intercultural* (not only cross-cultural) solidarity”. In this melting pot, the ‘other’ is never outside or beyond us. But, within contemporary cultural discourse in reality, this ‘other’ emerges forcefully when we *think* we speak most intimately and indigenously ‘between ourselves’. Gillian Beer argues that interdisciplinary studies contribute to producing this discourse of “harmonized *intercultural* solidarity”:

The fascination with the ‘other’, and with the process of othering, has gone alongside the rise of interdisciplinary studies. The two may be connected. The concept of the ‘other’ still grants centrality to the subject-position of the speaker and may even continue the process of occupation and colonization that it decries. (8)

Therefore, from the contemporary poststructural way of thinking, the practical activity of reading English feminist literary texts in the Korean classroom becomes a concrete activity to dispel the fascination with the ‘other’. This reading process can be one of the processes that work to make othering disappear. Wolfgang Iser’s argument about the phenomenological reading process foresees the cross-cultural interweaving process between the English text and the Korean reader, which I will examine in detail in the next chapter.

The impact this reality makes on him(reader) will depend largely on the extent to which he himself actively provides the unwritten part of the text, and yet in supplying all the missing links, he must think in terms of experiences different from his own; indeed, it is only by leaving behind the familiar world of his own experience that the reader can truly participate in the adventure literary text offers him. (“The Reading Process” 218)

Among the recent arguments on post-colonialism in western intellectual circles, Europe appears as one Great Empire, in particular Great Britain in the area of English studies since the 19th century. After colonization, most countries colonized by Great

Britain took the English language as the official or first language and have been mainly influenced by English or more generally, European culture. Compared with many other Asian countries, the Korean experience of colonization is quite unique and very different from those countries colonized by western European countries. Korea was colonized not by the West but by the East, Japan, during 1910-1945. Even though Japan tried to abolish the Korean language and to force Koreans to use the Japanese language by state political power, it was not successful. Koreans did not lose the Korean language, in the end. However, English as a foreign language played an important role in colonial Korea as the agency of resistance against Japan's ISA (Ideological State Apparatuses), to use Althusser's term, imposed on Korean people. The English language served as a means of disavowal or as a substitute for the absence of their mother country's culture which had been suppressed and devalued by the imperial power.¹⁴ Although there was strong Korean resistance to the manipulation of language, the Japanese were more successful in exploiting female sexuality. Korean women were subjected to Japanese imperialism, in an un-heard-of form of colonization in world history. Japanese state power officially ordered Japanese elementary school teachers and administrative officers to choose and select "comfort women" from among Korean teenage girls. As a result, approximately 200,000 Korean women, tagged with "the present from the Great Japanese Emperor", were sent to battle fields outside Korea as sexual commodities for Japanese troops. In 1993, this issue of "the comfort women" became the main diplomatic issue between Korea and Japan, to the extent that urgent

¹⁴ Seung-Hee Roh even argues, exemplifying reading Shakespeare as an English Studies, "In reading Shakespeare translated into Japanese and studying him in the imperial language, the colonial subjects must have been twice deprived of their mother tongue", in her paper, "Re-membling with W.S.: A Prospect of Korean Feminist Studies in Shakespeare" delivered at the International Shakespeare Conference, entitled "Alternative Perspectives on Shakespeare: Feminism and Performance Criticism" held at Ajou University, Suwon, Korea, on 10 May 1997.

cooperative economic plans were postponed. While the Japanese government would have preferred to pay money as recompense, the Korean government was asking Japan to record the events in their history. During the G7 summit in Tokyo in early July, 1993, a woman correspondent from BBC2 interviewed the Japanese ambassador in Korea and asked about Japanese governmental policy on this issue. The Japanese ambassador refused to continue the interview, saying "Let's stop here. This is a very delicate diplomatic issue". But, BBC2 Newsnight broadcast this scene up to the point where he stood up and left. In Confucian Korean culture, the "comfort women" events are regarded as causing the most serious cultural damage in Korea's colonized history. The impact of this historical experience on Korean gender formation and on feminine chastity in Confucian culture is another research area in Korean women's studies.¹⁵ However, this "Comfort Women" issue has provided the invaluable opportunity to practise global feminism beyond nationalism. In the annual Korean Women's Studies Association Conference held on 3-4 June 1994, Hae-Shoo Shin, the President of the International Cooperation Committee in Korea for "the Military Sexual Slavery by Japan",¹⁶ presented her personal experiences from her work. Her experience showed the reconciliation as well as the conflict between nationalism and feminism in Korea. While nationalism exposes its limitation in understanding women's issues, since the gendered masculine state cannot speak for women, feminism provides international solidarity by considering this issue within the context of the movement for women's human rights (S. Lee 74).¹⁷ In short, since the liberation of 1945 and the Korean War

¹⁵ I will discuss this issue in detail in the following section 3.1.2.

¹⁶ This is the official naming for "Comfort Women by Japan".

¹⁷ Chin-Sung Chung argues that, in her paper "The Internationalization of Korean Military Sexual Slavery Women's Movement and the Value-Evaluation by NGO" presented at the 13th Korean Women's Studies Association Conference held at Seoul National University on 16 November 1996, this issue now has been changing and more complicated since Japanese nationalism was permeated into the Japanese NGO institutions. Some Japanese NGO institutions actually began to contact

during 1950-1953, traditional gender identity and sexual identity in Korea have changed tremendously and have become very much westernized because of American cultural influence.

Reading the English text in the Korean classroom means not only the reception of a discourse but also the production of a discourse. Considering such a special instance of colonization, it is expected that reading the English text will provide a valuable opportunity to search for Korean subjectivity, because “*subjectivity*” is used here to refer to the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, in Chris Weedon’s words, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relations to the world (32). In addition, this kind of interdisciplinary research is going to contribute to filling the gaps in *international* cultural studies and provide one example of globalism.

In world system theory, globalism itself is made the single overarching dynamic. The argument of globalism is taken to the point where nation-states are not units of development; only the world system develops. (Pieterse 21)

So, from now on, I would prefer to call this kind of cultural studies “global cultural studies” rather than “cross-cultural studies”.

2.5. Cultural Politics through Reading Texts

If all meaning is a contextual product, as poststructuralism suggests, it becomes necessary to examine the context of each and every reading. The politics of

personally each of the former Korean comfort women and to pay money in the name of “Asia Women’s Fund” established by the Japanese general public, but, in fact, patronized by Japanese government in 1995. Thus, the case of the Korean Comfort Women’s Movement in Japan has become the “failing and conflicting” test case between feminism and nationalism, while that in Korea has evidenced the “successful” test case between both.

signification are not seen in terms of a traditional reconstruction work on the text, but of a frontier of diverse interaction of "Ideology-in-General", which Althusser indicates as an immanent function, acting as basis for predicting specific ideological practices (150-52). According to this perspective, ways of reading can be exchanged for the art of rereading as the technique of analysis and interpretation. Thus, providing a position for the reader is a crucial factor, because it will decide the extent of the "already-read" aspect which a text must have in common with its reader in order for it to be readable at all. Wolfgang Iser argues that the novel as an artistic text includes a questioning of the normative values established in society. He describes this process as follows:

Though the novel deals with social and historical norms, this does not mean that it simply reproduces contemporary values. The mere fact that not all norms can possibly be included in the novel shows that there must have been a process of selection, and this in turn, as we shall see, is liable to be less in accordance with contemporary values than in opposition to them. Norms are social regulations, and when they are transposed into the novel they are automatically deprived of their pragmatic nature. They are set in a new context which changes their function, insofar as they no longer act as social regulations but as the subject of a discussion which, more often than not, ends in a questioning rather than a confirmation of their validity. (*The Implied Reader* xii)

This questioning results in varying degrees of negation which forces the reader to look for a desirable counter balance and to take an active part in the composition of the textual meaning. It illustrates the reader's subjective actualization of the potential meaning of the text through the reading process. Thus, the questioning and negation marks the starting point for the reader to make her or his own meaning:

He (the reader) discovers a new reality through a fiction which, at least in part, is different from the world he himself is used to; and he discovers the deficiencies inherent in prevalent norms and in his own restricted behaviour. (xiii)

Roland Barthes also notices this stage of negation and positively changes it into the meaning-producing act.

It is commonly admitted that to read is to decode: ... the reader is caught up in a dialectical reversal: finally, he does not decode, he overcodes; he does not decipher, he produces, he accumulates languages, he lets himself be infinitely and tirelessly traversed by them: he is that traversal. ("On Reading" 42)

Negation in Wolfgang Iser and decoding in Roland Barthes emphasize the reader's imaginative play with the text. The reader's searching for an alternative reality in the literary text is also legitimized in terms of "*the resisting reader*". Judith Fetterley uses this as the title of her 1981 book in which she adopts a feminist approach in order to analyze American fictions. The idea of the resisting reader encourages the reader to imagine power and its attribution in relation to the text and to determine an oppositional meaning to dominant knowledge. Critical reading as a kind of resisting examines how the discourse in the text contributes to the creation and circulation of meanings in society and how the reader understands the world in which she or he interprets and produces the meanings of the text. This critical reading leads the reader to an awareness of reading as a broader process, in which "reading the word is a part of reading the world" (Montgomery 3).

Women's reading as "an oppressed half of the population" (Mitchell, *Woman's Estate*, 35) has been the best example of resisting and marginalized reading. It produces discursive forms from the rereading of texts focussed on gender formation in society. Literary texts like novels may be read as expressions of women's experience already constituted in the real world beyond its fictional world, and/or as the repression of female subjectivity in society, and/or as specific examples of the construction and circulation of gender identity in language. In these diverse types of reading, boundaries

among different political and theoretical positions become problematic because they act as veils to prohibit us from figuring out the reality. In the case of women's reading, the world of a literary work is not only an objective reality, but also what in German is called *Lebenswelt*, reality as actually organized and experienced by an individual subject (Eagleton, *Literary Theory*, 59). In order to bring this process of the transformations of women's experience and the feminine into patriarchal culture, Alice Jardine creates a neologism, "*gynesis*". She explains its meaning as follows:

The putting into discourse of "woman" as that process diagnosed in France as intrinsic to the condition of modernity; indeed, the valorization of the feminine, woman, and her obligatory, that is, historical connotations, as somehow intrinsic to new and necessary modes of thinking, writing, speaking. (25)

Later, she defines it as a new kind of interpretant which has surfaced from the interactions among all the current discussions. This reading-effect produces a unique object, which is named as *gynema*.

This *gynema* is a reading effect, a woman-in-effect that is never stable and has no identity. Its appearance in a written text is perhaps noticed only by the feminist reader - either when it becomes insistently "feminine" or when women (as defined metaphysically, historically) seem magically to reappear within the discourse. (25)

Her creation of these two neologisms is very useful to designate women's experience as the resisting reader. She emphasizes first of all its diversity: "The "woman-in-effect" can only be thought of beginning with how the monological structures we have inherited are constantly reimposed and rearranged, and (particularly) with how women both mimic and reject those structures and even become their most adamant support systems" (48). This "woman-in-effect" created in reading a literary text is not a definable entity but a dynamic processing. As a result, a literary text can play an

important role in women's reading as "a productivity as a trans-linguistic apparatus" in Kristevan terms ("Word, Dialogue, and Novel" 36).

Since authorial authority disappeared, the reader's subjectivity has become the main issue in literary communities: how to encourage and describe the individual reader's subjective experience linked with objective language. This is a more ambiguous area than the area of authorial authority, because a literary text contains intersubjectively diversified factors for meaning-production, and the meaning-produced may even lead to a whole variety of different experiences and subjective judgements in the reader. Here, the boundaries between the author, the text, and the reader are dissolved and made fluid.

If reading removes the subject-object division that constitutes all perception, it follows that the reader will be 'occupied' by the thoughts of the author, and these in their turn will cause the drawing of new 'boundaries'. Text and reader no longer confront each other as object and subject, but instead the 'division' takes place within the reader himself. (Iser, "The Reading Process", 226)

Compared with Iser's uncertain division within the reader between text and reader, Roland Barthes more actively invites the reader as a character in the text and grants her or his subjectivity in the fictional world.

A way of connecting the reader to the theory of narration, or more broadly to a Poetics, would be to consider him as himself occupying a point of view (or several in succession); in other words, to treat the reader as a character, to make him into one of the characters (not even necessarily a privileged one) of the fiction and/or the Text. ("On Reading" 41)

Both arguments can be linked and extended further using the Kristevan concept of "intertextuality" via Bakhtinian "dialogism" as a never-ending play between the text of the subject (equivalent to the author & the text in Iser and Barthes) and the text of the addressee (equivalent to the reader in Iser and Barthes). In her article, "Word, Dialogue

and Novel”, in which she stands on the border line between structuralism, in employing the analyzing method of scientific objectivity, and poststructuralism in bringing new attention to the repressed in language, Kristeva introduces the Bakhtinian intersection of textual surfaces in the literary structure.

Writer as well as ‘scholar’, Bakhtin was one of the first to replace the static hewing out of texts with a model where literary structure does not simply *exist* but is generated in relation to *another* structure. What allows a dynamic dimension to structuralism is his conception of the ‘literary word’ as an *intersection of textual surfaces* rather than a *point* (a fixed meaning), as a dialogue among several writings: that of the writer, the addressee (or the character) and the contemporary or earlier cultural context. (35-36)

However, when and where is this intersection of textual surfaces activated? If it is the fundamental factor in producing the reader’s alternative meaning, how does it begin to work? It is at this point that Wolfgang Iser’s idea of “*gestalt*” supplies the virtual dimension of the individual reader’s own decision as to how the gap in the text is to be filled.

The literary text activates our own faculties, enabling us to recreate the world it presents. The product of this creative activity is what we might call the virtual dimension of the text, which endows it with its reality. The virtual dimension is not the text itself, nor is it the imagination of the reader: it is the coming together of text and imagination. (“The Reading Process” 215)

But, as I mentioned before as a problem in Iser’s theory, the real situation is quite different if we situate Iser’s argument in the practical social context, in this case in the Korean classroom teaching English studies, because the virtual dimension is not only the coming together of text and imagination but also influenced by the individual reader’s positioning in historical specificity. Thus, multiple factors contribute this virtual dimension.

There is a long and strong cultural heritage behind learning and teaching English studies. Probably the most dominant inherited view since Romanticism is the one that ties literature to the process of producing personal growth. This view influences the selection of the canonical texts in the classroom. Recently, this concern with the selection of canonical texts has become the central argument among teachers and lecturers teaching English studies in Britain or outside of Britain, because these canonical texts are the actual mediator of support for existing ideology. The chosen texts share certain characteristics.

First, most of them are male (indeed it is not unusual for some students' lists to include only male writers); second, they are generally from the middle or upper class, and are all white; third, they are all dead. To be included in the canon, writers must be seen to have written valuable texts; but is it a coincidence that these writers also belong to basically the same socio-economic, racial and gender group? (Montgomery 242)

This quotation implies the present predicament for those reading English literary works in the classroom, in particular, when lecturers would like to introduce and show a new ideology, a new way of thinking, and a new point of view. Stanley Fish also mentions that a specific stage of the conflict is reached whenever a new interpretive strategy enters a canonical area: "A new interpretive strategy always makes its way in some relationship of opposition to the old, which has often marked out a negative space (of things that aren't done) from which it can emerge into respectability" ("What Makes an Interpretation Acceptable?" 349).

Among the new interpretive strategies for producing new textual meaning, women's reading of English canonical literary texts, *gynesis* and *gynema* in Alice Jardín's terms, can become the most baffling and unsettling areas. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak clearly characterizes this difficulty in relation to her own teaching experience,

during her interview in New Delhi, 1987, when she held a visiting professorship at the Centre for Historical Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University.

The two areas you mention, English literature and the Women's Movement - are discontinuous, though not unrelated. They would bring each other to crisis. The teaching of English literature, if one looks at its definition, has very little involvement with the Women's Movement - not just in India, but elsewhere too. ... I think these are the two things, with my limited training, that I can do in the English literature classroom: to see how the master texts need us in the construction of their texts without acknowledging that need; and to explore the differences and similarities between texts coming from the two sides which are engaged with the same problem at the same time. The connection between this and the Women's Movement is discontinuous, though not unrelated, as I said, and each brings the other to crisis. ("The Post-Colonial Critic" 73)

Not only Spivak as a post-colonial critic but also British and American lecturers have felt this contradiction in their practical teaching situations. The main conflicting factors come from the present power of the institutional structure, as the editors of *Teaching Women*, subtitled "Feminism and English Studies", argue in the introduction: "We are also aware that the institutional structures of our education system, its assumptions about classroom practice and assessment procedures as well as about the curriculum, are often problematic for women" (Thompson 2). For instance, Patsy Stoneman, in her article "Powerhouse or Ivory tower?: Feminism and Postgraduate English", talks about her own experience working "against" as well as "for" the institutional power as an example of teaching practices "determined only partly by pedagogic ideals, and largely by the crannies of institutional space which we can infiltrate or commandeer".

Our five-year struggle to establish a Master's degree at Hull University, for instance, took place in a university which had never had an interdisciplinary course of any kind; experience proved that our only hope was to repeat exactly the structure of an existing course in Victorian literature. ... The result is that while every other Women's Studies MA in

England has a broad approach and a modular structure designed to facilitate part-time attendance, ours is unique in being taught wholly within the English Department and exclusively to full-time students. (96-97)

Even after surmounting this earlier stage of struggle with dominant existing powers, another kind of struggle within the teaching space follows. But, this is not only a problem for “feminism and English studies”, but also the problem of methodological strategy for any new interpretation. Roland Barthes is aware of this technical issue for semiotic signifying practice within the given teaching space and suggests attempting a pure form of a *floating*.

In short, within the very limits of the teaching space as given, the need is to attempt, quite patiently, to trace out a pure form, that of a *floating* (the very form of the signifier); such floating destroys nothing; it is content to disorient the Law; the necessities of promotion, professional obligations (which nothing henceforth keeps from being scrupulously fulfilled), imperatives of knowledge, prestige of method, ideological criticism - everything is there, but *floating*. (“Writers, Intellectuals, Teachers” 331)

Ironically, in order to practise *floating* in the classroom, the first object to be urgently transformed is the teacher’s discourse, which is the most powerful discourse in the given space and contains the ‘other’ in itself. As Roland Barthes argues, when the teacher speaks to his or her audience (in this case a group of young students), the ‘other’ is always there, *puncturing* his or her discourse. And, his or her discourse, though sustained by an impeccable intelligence, armed with scientific “rigor” or political “radicality”, would still get punctured. Therefore, during the last several years, in the area of teaching feminism and English studies, various kinds of teaching methodologies have been practiced in English-speaking as well as in non-English-speaking countries. Kate Begnal brings to bear her own teaching experience based on the transformative power of literature, a feminist analysis of ideology through connected teaching which

decentres the teacher's intellectual authority and validates students' potential ability to know. While suggesting the conscious openness to difference offered by the connected teaching method as an alternative way of teaching, she summarizes:

What makes such openness intellectually viable, giving it shape and coherence, is connected teaching, which shares intellectual authority between teachers and students, validating the differences among the women in the fiction and the students in the classroom. Otherwise, an instructor is faced with the impossible demand of omniscience from students kept artificially dependent. (292)

However, her experience is coming from an English-speaking western country. The practical situation of teaching feminism and English studies in a non-English-speaking as well as a non-western country, like Korea, is absolutely different from Kate Begnal's. This is definitely a discontinuous area from western experience of both theory and practice.

As soon as one steps out of the classroom, if indeed a "teacher" ever fully can, the dangers rather than the benefits of academic feminism, French or otherwise, become more insistent. Institutional changes against sexism here or in France may mean nothing or, indirectly, further harm for women in the Third World. This discontinuity ought to be recognized and worked at. (Spivak, "French Feminism", 150)

When I taught *A Room of One's Own* to Korean women students in the second semester of 1990, most of my students were confused and dissatisfied with my "nonexpository" way of teaching. My intention to abolish the power of my discourse in the classroom was not well understood by most students. They were even embarrassed by the unfamiliar way of teaching.¹⁸ In order to stimulate and figure out their own meanings by themselves, I think, we need more time and more opportunities for its practice. This

¹⁸ I will discuss this issue in detail in section 3.2.1., later.

is the real context of teaching feminism and English studies in “The Other World” of the planet, proving that it is an area of incomplete significance and enterprising exploration. What kind of reading responses we can get from this teaching context will be discussed in the next section.

2.6. The Possibility of Gender Differences in Korean Reading

Each act of reading, even by the same individual subject, is a new production of meaning, because each reader is an individual subject and the field of each reading is that of absolute subjectivity. Given this perspective on the activity of reading, arguments on gender differences as a reading-effect have recently been articulated. The meanings of sexuality - femininity and masculinity - vary and assume different notions from culture to culture as well as from language to language. The meaning of gender identity is both socially produced and circulated by various forms of discourse. In general, literary works are the best examples of discourse to examine and evaluate the relationship between the social meaning of gender identity and the various forms of discourse which produce it. For instance, in Britain, the role of fiction in the Women’s Liberation Movement since the late 1960s testifies to the transformative power of texts which raise questions of oppression and direct the reader toward new, more radical subject positions (Weedon 42). With nation understood as “a system of cultural signification” and nationalism as “large cultural systems” (Bhabha, “Introduction”, 1), comparative reader-response research between two national cultures has been undertaken during the last several years. Sung - ho Lee illustrates the comparative responses to literature by Korean and American college students in his Ph.D. thesis at the University of Pittsburgh (1985). What is most interesting to me about the results is

the different response patterns according to the gender of the Korean and American students. Men and women first-year college students in Korea respond differently to the same story, while the responses of men and women American students do not differ according to gender.

The differences by sex exist in the response patterns of the Korean students, but not in the response patterns of the American students. These findings seem to have resulted from their own cultural values - emotionalism, indirectness, and collectivism are emphasized and different social roles are expected for opposite sexes in the Korean culture, while rationalism, directness, and individualism are emphasized and relatively similar attitudes in social roles seem to be expected for opposite sexes in the American culture. (Sung-ho Lee 120)

Based on his research data, later on, he recommends additional research to discover more precisely what the man-woman differences are and why they occur (126). This is the beginning point of my research on gender differences in Korean reading. Even in 1992 Korea, students' responses to feminist teaching in class were quite different, even opposite according to their gender identities. During the second semester (Sept.-Dec.) 1992, I attended Haejoang Cho's postgraduate seminar class on "cultural theory" at Yonsei University, Seoul, Korea. My purpose for attending was the observation of her teaching methods and students' responses to that seminar course. After the half-term passed, from November on, students' responses to the seminar course began to change in different ways, mainly according to gender. While women students began to feel excitement and expectation about the course, men students confessed that they felt theory in this seminar course was seriously repressed, because it was not the dominant topic of discussion. While many postgraduate seminars were focussed on the impersonal arguments based on theories in the texts, the discussion in this seminar was concentrated on individual life experiences in Korean culture and related to current

cultural theory. While women students were fascinated with bringing their personal experiences as women in Korean society into the seminar classroom, men students were dissatisfied with and even confused by the non-theoretical discussion in the postgraduate seminar classroom. These were quite interesting responses and made me question our definition of theory..

Theory is inseparable from practice, just as text is inseparable from context. There is no given text and no self-evident context. Thus, Kristevan intertextuality permeates any text and any context. Each signifying practice is intertextuality, itself, as the transposition of one or more *systems* of signs into another, accompanied by a new articulation of the enunciative and denotative position. The object of the signifying practice in Kristeva is also the intertextuality of theory and practice itself, as well: “Not “applying” a theory, but allowing practice to test theory, letting the two enter into a dialectical relationship” (*Desire in Language* 1). However, in the pedagogical field of the humanities, this kind of practice to test theory is regarded within a particular context as deconstruction, which is not a theory that defines meaning. Jonathan Culler discusses deconstruction:

As a critical undoing of the hierarchical oppositions on which theories depend, it demonstrates the difficulty of any theory that would define meaning in a univocal way; as what an author intends, what conventions determine, what a reader experiences.
(131)

The signifying practice of English texts in the Korean classroom is a kind of deconstruction, showing that interpretation itself is “a form of the will to power and exists not as ‘being’ but as process, a becoming” (Barthes, *The Pleasure*, 62). In fact, interpretation as a signifying practice plays the Janus-faced roles of the establishment and the countervailing of a sign system, and potentially has revolutionary power in a society. Julia Kristeva explains the definition of signifying practice.

I shall call signifying practice the establishment and the countervailing of a sign system. Establishing a sign system calls for identity of a speaking subject within a social framework, which he recognizes as a basis for the identity. Countervailing the sign system is done by having the subject undergo an unsettling, questionable process; this indirectly challenges the social framework with which he had previously identified, and it thus coincides with times of abrupt changes, renewal, or revolution in society. (Kristeva, *Desire in Language*, 18)

Therefore, the process of the actual signifying practice is quite complex and difficult to describe in detail. The signifying practice of English texts in the Korean classroom includes the dimension of sexual differences, because an understanding of how discourses of biological sexual difference are prepared is the starting point in tackling patriarchal social structures in order to launch social change. I hope this signifying practice provides us with a view of new aspects of English literature and of Korean society and furthermore a new understanding of what we call life.

What literature often seems to tell us is the consequences of the way in which what is not known is not seen as unknown. It is not, in the final analysis, what you don't know that can or can not hurt you. It is what you don't know you don't know that spins out and entangles "that perpetual error we call life". (B. Johnson xii)

So, now, if someone asks me, "Is there a text in this class?" in Stanley Fish's terms, my answer would be, "No, it is just *us*", Korean readers, who are playing the unique game of the name, "interpretation", with an 'english' novel, because the novel is a system of perspectives designed to transmit the individuality of the author's vision.

Let me invite them to play the game, here.

Chapter 3. Signifying Practices in the University Classroom in Korea

While my argument in Chapter 2 is focussed on the diachronic theoretical arguments on poststructuralist theory since 1968, in this chapter I begin with the synchronous informative arguments on cultural studies in order to interpret and analyse Korean readers' responses. The purpose of this chapter is to make a bridge between two different cultures, connecting grand theory and local knowledge. In the first section, starting with the enunciation *from/on* cultural translation and moving on to the gender relationship in Korean cultural heritage, I will discuss teaching practice in terms of how to deconstruct an English text in the Korean university classroom theoretically and methodologically. In the second section, I will deal with their responses to an English feminist literary classic, *A Room of One's Own*, comparing their responses in 1990 and in 1997. In the third section, readers' responses to *Jane Eyre* are presented; and their responses to Afro-American women's writing such as Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* follow. The most radical text for this research, *The Handmaid's Tale* and readers' responses to it are mainly argued in the fifth section. Finally, I will examine engendering processes in the Korean university classroom. My discourse in this chapter is specifically located on the borderline between Korean reader and English text, connecting the past and present in terms of gender identity.

3.1. At the Intersection of Cross-Cultural Gender Differences

3.1.1. The Enunciation *from/on* Cultural Translation

If cultural diversity is a category of comparative ethics, aesthetics or ethnology, cultural difference is a process of signification through which statements of culture or *on* culture differentiate, discriminate

and authorize the production of fields of force, reference, applicability and capacity.

- Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* -

As Raymond Williams defines the term “culture” as “one of the two or three most complicated words in English”(87), it has become a major argumentative subject of intellectual inquiry in human science of the 1990s. While rejecting the idea that there is a proper ethics for its study, Fred Inglis argues that everybody agrees that the study of culture is a moral activity (xi). This is the point where the inevitable intervention of the communal value system works. Cultural studies are the study of values within a certain community, where culture is simply the system of humanly expressive practices by which certain values are created, renewed, and subverted. Mary Poovey also agrees with Stuart Hall’s view of culture as the basis of human activity resulting in a three-tiered enterprise, while she calls it ‘cultural criticism’ rather than cultural studies.

the study of culture as an interdependent set of institutional and informal practices and discourses; the study of the individual texts; the study of the role our own practice - in this case, teaching - plays in reproducing or subverting the dominant cultural formation. (10)

From this perspective, an individual’s experience from everyday life in the here-and-now has been highlighted in cultural studies. This is why cultural studies as an academic subject are considered an aggressive challenge to the conventional concept of disciplined scholarly research. For instance, in literary criticism, the development influenced by New Historicism leads the critical attention to texts outside the range formerly classified as *non-literary*, like social, economic and political documents in association with literary texts. The challenge posed by cultural studies to the old lines of intellectual thinking is the shifting of paradigms. Mary Poovey says, in short, cultural

criticism (cultural studies, in my term) changes the basic paradigm of our interpretive practice; as a consequence, the nature of the questions we ask changes (5). Christopher Norris makes clearer the new business of the critical intellectual, that is, no longer to speak up for truth and the universal values of ethico-political justice, as against the forces of ignorance, prejudice, ideological 'false consciousness', and so forth. Rather, he continues, "it is to expose the power-seeking interests that mask behind every such rhetoric of enlightenment, every such attempt to monopolize the discourse of reason, principle and virtue" (68). Among critical intellectuals in many separate disciplinary subjects, the role of literary critics in English studies has increased immensely as well as become more demanding, because English studies have been an important subject by means of which many people from different cultural histories could communicate and understand others. Since English as a language has become the most widely spoken in the world and the native tongue of the past and present global power, English studies have become "the first parent of Cultural Studies" (Inglis 30). Nobody would deny that English-literature-in-England was the centre of intellectual energy in the humanities at the start of the epoch (Inglis 33). What, then, in the international intellectual geography of the 1990s, is the role of a non-native literary critic in English studies working in a Confucian culture, like me standing on the borderline between two cultures? This question sets up the starting line where my informative and descriptive *enunciation* in this chapter is located, different from the mainstream literary critic's highly sophisticated arguments.

Homi K. Bhabha is the leading figure who has noticed this borderline non-signified space and launched its theoretical analyses, suggesting the new language sign, *international* and 'in-between' space. He raises the issue in his edited book, *Nation and Narration*, where most essays are concerned with the British national consciousness.

He asks “What kind of a cultural space is the nation with its transgressive boundaries and its “interruptive” interiority?”(5). His interpretation of the national consciousness as a cultural space leads us to a new cleavage of the *international* and ‘*in-between*’ space as incomplete signification.

The ‘locality’ of national culture is neither unified nor unitary in relation to itself, nor must it be seen simply as ‘other’ in relation to what is outside or beyond it. The boundary is Janus-faced and the problem of outside/inside must always itself be a process of hybridity, incorporating new ‘people’ in relation to the body politic, generating other sites of meaning and, inevitably, in the political process, producing unmanned sites of political antagonism and unpredictable forces for political representation.

(4)

In his recent book, *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha develops this idea of *international* and ‘*in-between*’ space which implies “theoretically innovative” and “politically crucial”, focussing not on the duration or product but on moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences.

These ‘in-between’ spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood - singular or communal - that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself.

(1-2)

However, this ‘newness’ from the borderline work in ‘*in-between*’ spaces does not mean the continuum of the past and present. Rather, “it creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation” (7). In “The Commitment to Theory” first published in 1989, Bhabha had already argued for the importance of a Third Space, which later gives way to the *international* ‘*in-between*’ space in terms of the production of meaning through its enunciation. He insists, “The production of meaning requires that these two places be mobilised in the passage through a Third Space, which

represents both the general conditions of language and the specific implication of the utterance in a performative and institutional strategy of which it cannot 'in itself' be conscious" (36). By emphasizing the importance of language and utterance in a Third Space, he summarizes this unconscious relation as an ambivalence in the act of interpretation (36). Like Michel Foucault, he also considers "it's a problem of verbalisation" (Foucault, "The Minimalist Self", 8).

If we adapt his idea of the Third Space to the *international* space, the issue of verbalisation becomes quite complicated. In a different cultural context, each signifier even in the same language carries different meaning owing to the different cultural connotations. Moreover, if two different languages are used in two different cultures, the signifying process becomes much more entangled. From my own experience of delivering a paper on New French Feminisms both in English in Hull, Britain, in February 1988 and in Korean in Seoul, Korea, in December 1992, this is obvious though this is not the place to enter into details.¹ My experience provides a particularly complex and perplexed example, because the different social concepts related to terms like sexuality and gender in both cultures are interacting with culture and language. This episode confirms and illustrates Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's view of *gender* as a shifting signifier:

In what way, in what contexts, under what kinds of race and class situations, gender is used as what sort of signifier to cover over what kinds of things. It really is a discovery which arises through actually attending to texts. ("The Problem of Cultural Self-representation" 52)

If culture, language and gender are working together as different categories in this *international* space, the problem is not only limited to verbalisation or enunciation, but

¹ For this analysis, intellectual arguments on linguistic systems and cultural connotations in both languages and cultures concerning the specific terms such as sexuality and gender are required. I think it will become another research project.

also extended to translation. Since the politics of translation takes on an incredible decisiveness based on the poststructuralist belief in language as the social process of constructing and circulating its meaning, my *enunciation* in this chapter is quite complicated, determined by these three categories - culture, language, and the social concept of gender. From her translation of Bengali author and activist Mahasweta Devi's *Imaginary Map* into English, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak points out, "it is not bodies of meaning that are transformed in translation". What she wishes is "to consider the role played by language for the agent, the person who acts, even though intention is not fully present to itself" ("The Politics of Translation" 177). Especially, in her opinion, the feminist translator must consider language "as a clue to the workings of gendered agency"(Ibid.). For her, the crucial problem of translation is the rhetoric in that other language, because rhetoric may be disrupting logic in the matter of production of an agent, resulting in "the loss of the literarity, textuality and sensuality of the original writing" (186, 189). She gives advice to the translator from a Third World language (in my case, Korean):

In my view, the translator from a Third World language should be sufficiently in touch with what is going on in literary production in that language to be capable of distinguishing between good and bad writing by women, resistant and conformist writing by women.

She must be able to confront the idea that what seems resistant in the space of English may be reactionary in the space of the original language.
(186)

If I employ her views on translation of the literary text, my translation in this chapter is grounded in my own experience during the last 10 years working in as well as floating across two cultures, while embracing gender studies. My translation, however,

is more intertwined with Korean and English, working in both directions - English texts for Korean readers and Korean readers' responses for English readers.

I think my empirical experience is the preparation for the task of cultural translation between English text and Korean reader.

Chandra Talpade Mohanty brings up the issue of the politics of experience, saying "we cannot avoid the challenge of *theorizing* experience" (77). While focussing on the importance of analysing and theorizing difference in the context of feminist cross-cultural work, she points out the necessary generation of discourses with diversity and pluralism which are grounded in an apolitical as well as individualized identity politics. This is the way in which the questions of *historical interconnection* are often transformed into questions of discrete and separate histories as well as into questions of identity politics.

Through this theorization of experience, I suggest that historicizing and locating political agency is a necessary alternative to formulations of the 'universality' of gendered oppression and struggles. This universality of gender oppression is problematic, based as it is on the assumption that the categories of race and class have to be invisible for gender to be visible. (75)

Mohanty's experience of working in American society produces an interest in race and class which is different from mine, teaching foreign language and culture in Korea. In my situation, the category of cultural difference rooted in the Confucian cultural heritage is really problematic and contradictory concerning this 'universality' of gender oppression. My work, while based on Mohanty's historical and political specificity, also needs a different intervention in the politics in terms of cultural authority, i.e. Confucianism in Korea and ^{the} intellectual discourse in western academic community. Homi K. Bhabha considers the enunciation in *international* and "*in-between*" space

itself as a political practice and constantly emphasizes the importance of its social signification. In my case, the enunciation means global signification.

The aim of cultural difference is to rearticulate the sum of knowledge from the perspective of the signifying position of the minority that resists totalization - the repetition that will not return as the same, the minus-in-origin that results in political and discursive strategies where adding does not add up but serves to disturb the calculation of power and knowledge, producing other spaces of subaltern signification. ("Dissemination" 162)

Therefore, an interdisciplinary approach in my working situation is necessary, since the analysis of power and knowledge involves social, economic, political as well as literary and linguistic factors. It also requires me to acknowledge the emergent sign of cultural difference at the borderline moment as a kind of translation, because translation has the provisional and performative nature of cultural communication. Interdisciplinary cultural translation is produced by the simultaneous movement between theoretical and performative discourse. In this case, the subject of provisional discourse is positioning in a dialogical or transferential situation, making the linkage through the 'untranslatable' in the cultural hybridity. This borderline culture of hybridity, Bhabha proposes, articulates its problems of identification and its diasporic aesthetic in an uncanny, disjunctive temporality, that is, the time of cultural displacement, and the space of the 'untranslatable' ("How newness enters the world" 225). According to him, this is the process which he later identifies with the cultural globality in the *international* and '*in-between*' spaces. Thus, the *enunciation* from cultural translation on the borderline of cultural difference must put forward the first step toward the cultural globality.

The theoretical recognition of the split-space of enunciation may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity. ("The Commitment to Theory" 38)

My work dealing with Korean students' responses to English feminist texts, under Capra's catch-phrase "Think globally, Act locally!"(434), is going to be one of many projects to *forge* this cultural globality, producing the *intercultural* feminist discourse. So, now, I shall move on to the gender relationship in Korean cultural heritage in order to provide the instructive background for *historical interconnection*. Also, this is the ground work for English readers' understanding the cultural difference which, later on, will be seen in Seoul in 1990-1997, when and where I have conducted my research, collecting Korean readers' responses.

3.1.2. The Gender Relationship in Korean Cultural Heritage

"What do we know about South Korea?"
 - Peter Popham, *The Independent*,
 11 July 1996 -

It is definitely clear and obvious that Korean women, even at the present day, have an inferior status to Korean men. A survey conducted in the U.S.A. during January - March 1990 with 427 questionnaires from 4 different states (Washington, Michigan, Virginia, and Pennsylvania) ~~indicates~~ that 60.27 % of American respondents felt that Korean women were inferior in status to Korean men, while only 9.46 % thought that they were equal to Korean men. But 20.09 % of subjects also said they did not know, while only 1.18 % thought that Korean women had superior status to Korean men. What is more interesting is that 74-75 % of those with a Protestant religious preference or no religion as well as 80 % of those with a radical political orientation believed that Korean women "enjoyed a status inferior" to that of Korean men (Eun Ho Lee 573-574).

Keith Howard points out the titles of three books in English on Korean women, “Shamans, housewives and other restless spirits”, “Virtues in conflict”, and “View from the inner room”, as evidence of Korean women’s unequal position (4). Contemporary Korean women, whether inside or outside of Korea, have suffered from their Confucian cultural heritage even at the threshold of the 21st century. The sharp and serious conflicts, - I can even call it “war” - between the two sexes emerged in Korean *imagined* cultural communities during the 1990s.

A 28-year old Korean-American woman, who emigrated at the age of 3 and was educated at UCLA, describes the gender relationship related to marriage within the Korean-American community in 1995 as follows:

I also have arguments with my Korean women friends; they don’t speak up because they don’t want to be labeled as feminists, but in my opinion, a feminist is somebody who wants equality and doesn’t discriminate by gender. A lot of women constantly worry about finding a decent man. It’s so sorry; they don’t judge him by how much they love him, but by whether he’s firstborn or secondborn, or if his mom is a widow, things like that. (69-70)

Her description shows well the point where Western individualism and Confucian familism meet, which I shall discuss in the next chapter. Later, she analyzes the hierarchy of gender and age in social relationships among Korean-Americans.

Working with first-generation Korean men has made me realize I have to acquire this technique. I have to smile even though I’m insulted. If I were older and had prestige, men would think I had proven myself and that I know what I’m doing.

Even in Korean-American organization of 1.5-generation people,² all the top positions go to men. The women get slave wages. I think this will continue until the women on the bottom get experience. I’m constantly being reminded that I’m inexperienced, young, and female. (72)

² They were born in Korea, but mainly educated in America after their immigration.

It is young Korean-American women who have been experiencing fierce conflict in the gender relationship between two cultures in their everyday life. Recently, I have discovered a most interesting phenomenon related to their awakening to their hyphenated national gender identity as “Korean-American” “women”. After young Korean-American men and women have lived in Korea in order to learn the Korean language for several months, men students usually decide to come again, while women students mostly decide *not* to come to Korea again. This evidence confirms the unequal and inferior socio-cultural position of Korean women. The above quotation by “Maeun Koch’u” (a pseudonym which means “hot pepper”)³ provides an exemplary case of what kind of predicament a young “Korean-American” or just “Korean” woman experiences in a social setting.

Another tragic example of Korean women’s suffering from their cultural heritage, abandoned in silence for almost a half century, is found in the case of Korean Military Sexual Slavery Women by Japan. This is a unique and unheard-of case in which the power relationship interacts between colonialism, nationality, sex and class. Inheriting the modernized licensed prostitution system established in 1872 by the Japanese government through the public announcement of freedom for prostitutes, not only Korean but also Asian Military Sexual Slavery by Japan within the Japanese comfort station system had its own characteristics. Chin-Sung Chung, a prominent member of the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan explains why it was unique in world history.

³ The fact that she used a pseudonym for this writing proves and confirms the patriarchal conservatism now predominantly existing in Korean-American community in LA, if we consider that Victorian woman novelists like George Eliot and three Bronte sisters had to use pseudonyms for their publications in the patriarchal Victorian society.

The stations were strictly and exclusively for the use of soldiers. They were systematically planned, established and controlled by the Japanese imperial government and they were set up almost wherever military units were stationed. Most of the comfort women were supplied by Japanese colonies. The women were drafted by force; they were not treated as human beings but merely as military necessities. As I discussed at the outset, these characteristics have much to do with Japan's unique cultural history. (25)

Since the Korean women's movement has contributed to overcoming the traditional ideology on female sexuality in the 1980s, on 14 August 1990, Hak-Sun Kim at the age of 67 came forward at the church group's office in Seoul to tell her story as a Korean Military Sexual Slave. There are many reasons why they have had to keep silent until the beginning of the 1990s. It is easy to imagine that the main reason must be the lack of understanding, sympathy, and responsibility for such a disgraceful history in Korean society.⁴ For instance, Keith Howard says the families of comfort women feared the ostracism they would suffer if the shameful past was discovered. Later, he argues that one further factor came into play, their age, and that the women had nothing left to lose (7). However, I think his point of view is too simple and narrow. The most influential reason why they could not reveal their past in public, in my opinion, was the Confucian traditional ideology on female sexuality - mainly female chastity and fidelity, symbolized by the silver knife.⁵ It is obvious if we hear their testimonies about their experience.

⁴ If two retired women professors - Chung-Ok Yoon in English and Hyo-Jae Lee in Sociology - had not felt the responsibility to history as the peer generation with Korean Military Sexual Slavery Women, it would not have been possible for Korean Military Sexual Slavery Women to come out. Prof. Yoon's article in a daily newspaper in the early 1990s, "Reports on Korean Comfort Women (literally, 'voluntarily offered body corps')" awakened many Koreans' forgotten memories.

⁵ When a woman, especially a married woman, was seen to be unfaithful, she was expected to kill herself with the small silver knife which she always kept with her.

The victims in the testimonies reported that they had no other choice but to accept the men and that they served at least 6-10 soldiers and, at most, more than 50 soldiers a day. When different military units passed by the station, it was especially hard to count the numbers. Soldiers sometimes queued up early in the morning, while late-comers complained and even fought amongst themselves. The soldier had only 2 to 10 minutes; then, the woman was obligated to receive another soldier. (Shin 68)

If the Korean Women's Movement had not been developed strongly enough to challenge the Confucian cultural heritage on female sexuality, they could not have come out even in their old age. What, then, does the Confucian cultural heritage mean and how does it have an influence on the gender relationship in Korea?

Throughout Korea's recorded history of more than two millennia, the patriarchal gender relationship has been predominant. But the precise degree of gender hierarchy linked to women's lives has been different throughout the political regime in its history.⁶ For instance, during the Shilla dynasty (57 B.C.-935 A.D.) three unmarried princesses became the ruling queens thanks to their genealogies. The blood lineage was the valued category, not the gender identity, even though this was possible only in the absence of a male heir. During the Koryo dynasty (918-1392), the social institution of plural marriage was popular, which the new ruling legislators, at the beginning of the new dynasty, Chosun, considered to be principally responsible for social confusion. They declared Confucianism to be the State religion of the new dynasty. Confucianism emphasizes loyalty, filial piety, ancestor worship, and, especially for women, fidelity and chastity. The basic idea of Confucianism is expressed by "the three fundamental

In the crucial moment of rape, she could use it for her own protection.

⁶ Young Choung Kim's *Women of Korea: A history from ancient times to 1945* (Seoul: Ewha Womans University Press, 1979) deals with this specific point, in detail.

principles and the five moral disciplines” in human relations.⁷ Confucianism regards the union between man and woman as the root of all human relations, which extends from the relationship between father and son to that between ruler and subject, emphasizing the hierarchy. They drew a sex segregation as a social custom with the woman’s “inner”, private or domestic sphere and the man’s “outer”, public or official sphere. In the Confucian view, the law of nature thus accorded woman an inferior position based on the Chinese cosmology of the *yin/yang* complementarity and strengthened male superiority.

She had to obey her superiors: when unmarried, she had to follow her father’s orders; when married, those of her husband; when widowed, those of her son. This was the subordination of the inner sphere to the outer sphere. (Deuchler 231)

When the Chosun ruling elite established the Confucian transformation, women were positioned at the core of this transformation for reshuffling the whole social structure. While discriminating married women’s status as either primary/legitimate or secondary/substitute wives, the singling out of one wife and her children as a man’s rightful spouse and legitimate heirs was a fundamental task for stabilizing social structure linking the patrilineal genealogy to political power. This social division depended largely on women’s social status, and women therefore became the upholders as well as the victims of an unequal social system. Michel Foucault’s view of the relationship between power and sexuality, especially controlling sexuality in order to sustain the political power, could be adopted to analyze their ruling system, because

⁷ For instance, between sovereign and subject, justice and righteousness should mark the relationship; between father and son, there should be affection; between husband and wife, there should be matrimonial etiquette which confirms the segregated gender roles; between the younger and the elder, precedence should be given to the elder; between friends, faith should reign over the relationship. Even if it is evident that it has been weakened by western cultural influence since the liberation of 1945 from Japanese colonialism, Confucian values have still permeated strongly into Koreans’ everyday life.

they set up a new social reigning structure through manipulation of female sexuality. Martine Deuchler argues that “lineage organization was directly connected with the political process” (10) through the Confucian transformation in the early Chosun dynasty. Exclusive emphasis on the male succession resulted in a daughter’s alienation from acquiring status in lineage matters.

In the Confucian Chosun dynasty, marriage was not an affair between individuals, but between families. The purpose of marriage was to guarantee “uninterrupted continuation of the descent group” in two directions, taking the living as the starting point - toward the dead and toward the unborn (Deuchler 237). Marriage was the precondition for adulthood, and to remain unmarried was socially unthinkable. Throughout Korea’s long history, there is no specific period which witnessed a large group of redundant single women like Victorian England. Hyungsook Yoon, in her article “Gender and Personhood and the Domestic Cycle in Korean Society” researched at a village located 20 km northwest of Seoul in 1985-1986, focusses on the Korean way of naming a newly married daughter-in-law. She discusses the relationship between marriage and personhood from a woman’s position.

Young people are thought of as attaining social adulthood when the new bride enters her husband’s household. There is a contradiction here, however, since young brides are called “new babies” (*sae-agi* in Korean) by their parents-in-law. This suggests that as a subordinate member of the husband’s household, she is given a minimum adult status. Young brides are also thought to be incapable of thinking and acting independently as social adults.
(6)

This naming is the exact example of the poststructuralist belief in language which produces, conveys, and circulates the social meaning in a certain community, as I have already argued in Chapter 2. A Korean feminist scholar insists that the Korean language

with its several levels of honorifics not only reflects but also helps to reinforce the inequalities in social status based on gender, age and social positions (Soh 34). Married women's lives usually reach a considerable degree of autonomy and maturity, when they have their own daughter-in-law. This could explain why young Korean-American women check "whether he's firstborn or secondborn, or if his mom is a widow", when they consider marriage with a certain man.⁸ In the Confucian cultural heritage in Korea, women's personhood is not defined by their female sexual identity. Through the process of participating in the cycle of the domestic group, women achieve the formal and permanent personhood from the agnatic household. However, since ancestor worship symbolizes and signifies their confirmation as a family member, married women attained full social personhood only after death, as an ancestress (Yoon 46).

How, then, does this gender relationship from the Confucian cultural heritage have an influence on women's work in the public domain in contemporary Korea? After the liberation from Japan in 1945 and National Independence in 1948, Korean women achieved gender equality, not through their suffrage movement as in Britain, but by having it automatically given to them according to the democratic constitution. However, as Bodde noticed as early as in 1953, the concept of gender equality is fundamentally alien to the Confucian philosophy, which regards society as an "ordered inequality" (48). Chunghee Sarah Soh says that one may refer to Korean society as a "Patriarchal democracy" (34). She shows, in contemporary Korea, how the Confucian cultural heritage has greatly influenced women's work in the "outer" sphere. She examines women's experience in politics. The title of her article is itself a barometer for the gender relationship in contemporary Korea: That is, "Compartmentalized

⁸ Another economic factor influences this question because the widowed mother-in-law traditionally became the burden of her daughter-in-law. In most cases, the eldest daughter-in-law must be morally and financially responsible to serve and take care of her parents-in-law.

Gender Schema” influenced by the social custom of sex segregation, in which the main tradition dictates that a boy and a girl after the age of 7 must not sit side by side. Pointing out the coexistence of contradictory dual ideologies of gender relations in Korean social structure, she argues that the organizational pattern of social behaviour in male-female interactions has become complicated and pluralized in order to juggle the opposing ideologies of sexual equality and male superiority (43). She explains in detail how the gender relationships work in the three levels of social interactions.

At the social level, the Koreans are inclined to practise democratic egalitarianism in gender relations, especially in the public formal situations in which individuals interact chiefly as social categories. However, at the group level, in which individuals know each other personally, the traditional Confucian ideology of gender relations tends to guide people’s behaviour. It is at the individual level of person dyadic interactions, especially in private informal situations, that the choice between the two opposing ideologies of gender relations is the most fluid and generationally influenced. (43-44)

Even though the Koreans’ way of life looks quite westernized externally, in fact, the Confucian cultural heritage is internally deeply rooted in their everyday life. In other words, the traditional ideology of gender hierarchy and the social custom of sex segregation have immensely influenced the gender relationship in contemporary Korea. This is what I have confronted in my everyday teaching and what my students bring into the classroom with its diverse transformative forms.

3.1.3. Deconstructing English Texts in the Korean University Classroom

The interpellation of the reader in the literary text could be argued to have a role in reinforcing the concepts of the world and of subjectivity which

ensure that people 'work by themselves' in the social formation.

- Catherine Belsey, "Constructing the Subject: Deconstructing the Text" -

In the Korean university classroom, my role as an English teacher focusses on the cultural translation, as I have argued in the first part of this section. The first condition for teaching an English text in a Korean classroom demands my self-awakening, keeping a distance from both cultures as well as from the power granted to my enunciation by the pedagogic situation in the Confucian tradition. Mary Poovey confirms the relative autonomy of "our" power in any kind of teaching circumstances: "For, no matter how rigid the institutional or curricular constraints we work under, one of the conditions that almost always obtains in the work of teaching is the relative autonomy of *our* power over what actually occurs in the classroom" (14-15). If I compare her teaching situation with mine, however, I would say the power of my enunciation is much stronger than that of hers, thanks to the hierarchical relationship between teacher and student, according to age category in this case. My argument on Roland Barthes's idea of *floating* in the "Cultural Politics through Reading Texts" section in Chapter 2 directly relates to the issue of the power given to the teachers' enunciation in the Confucian pedagogic circumstances in Korea. Thus, my enunciation must mediate self-consciously between two different cultures, while straddling both. Teaching not only English studies but also gender studies through reading cross-cultural texts is a very complicated process of negotiation between inclusion and exclusion. Pointing out that Reed Way Desenbrock redefines the "practical difficulties" of reading texts written in another culture as a "theoretical issue", Trimmer and Warnock confirm that contemporary theorists have revalued the role of the reader by arguing that meaning is not what "an author puts in a work, but what we can make of the work here and now"

(2). But such theories for both of them assume an undifferentiated concept of reading, and thus fail to represent the cross-cultural situation. Anuradia Dingwaney has experienced a similar issue from teaching cross-cultural literary texts.

It is our belief that cross-cultural reading based on this model of translation can give rise to a potentially disquieting but highly interactive situation by ensuring that the mediations in cross-cultural literary texts, including the mediation of reading itself, will be recognized and scrutinized. (48)

Because the central ISA (Ideological State Apparatus) in contemporary capitalism is the educational system (Belsey 46), the teaching methodology to change the students' way of thinking emerges as the most important issue for my own purpose. The best idealistic model may be a kind of Derridean reading as deconstruction in my teaching context. Catherine Belsey describes what it is in detail:

It is the work of Derrida which has been most influential in promoting deconstruction as a critical strategy. Refusing to identify meaning with authorial intention or with the theme of the work, deconstruction tends to locate meaning in areas which traditional criticism has seen as marginal - in the metaphors, the set of oppositions or the hierarchies of terms which provide the framework of the text. (54)

Nonetheless, whenever I try to guide them to read the text in this way, in practice, I have confronted the obstacle which British teachers never experience. The issue is not culture but language, English. Young-Oak Lee defines "English" for Koreans as one of the most difficult languages in the world to learn (213). The depth and width of reading texts are limited by the Korean students' English proficiency. Since Korean undergraduates majoring in English language and literature usually take two or three fiction courses during their four years of study, they can read 7 or 10 fictions during their university course. It is true that although the teacher is very

ambitious she is aware of students' limitations as non-native speakers. My experience of teaching English texts to Korean students shows me that there is little space to teach gender studies, combined with English language. This is why I have used and enclosed the visual and translated texts such as *The Color Purple* and *The Handmaid's Tale* for this research. Young-Oak Lee argues that, since the translation is the predominant means of getting at the novel, there is very little time left for discussing various elements of a particular novel. She says frequently a novel study cannot be completed on schedule (210). When Sung-ho Lee argues that the Korean reader and the English text share a very little of the aesthetic field (263), not only cultural distance but also language proficiency become the problems. This is the main reason, as I will show in the following sections, why I have moved from teaching an English language and literature course to teaching a "Gender in Literature" course to collect Korean readers' responses for this research. In the English literature course, I could not shake the students' patriarchal way of thinking, because we had to struggle in the sea of English language, spending much time and energy on idioms and literary allusions. Even if I wish to use novels written in a difficult style using complex sentences, such as *The Color Purple* or *The Handmaid's Tale*, I must retreat from my ambition, mainly because of their foreign language proficiency.

Cultural translation linked to gender issues is more problematic. If the students on the specific English studies course are not well equipped with English language proficiency, the translation of cultural difference or, even further, a Derridean way of reading for the production of textual meaning is impossible. For a western reader, it might seem obvious that the selection of first-person narrative English novels would shorten the distance between the female first-person narrator in the English texts and the male/female Korean readers, thus encouraging reader-text identification. When we are

discussing subjectivity in poststructuralist theory, the first-person narrative, “I” as a speaking subject, appears as the crucial discussion because it is language which enables the speaker to posit himself or herself as “I”, the subject of a sentence. Emile Benveniste, one of the leading theorists in this area makes it clear why it is incredibly important:

‘I’ cannot be conceived without the conception ‘non-I’, ‘you’, and dialogue, the fundamental condition of language, implies a reversible polarity between ‘I’ and ‘you’. Language is possible only because each speaker sets himself up as a *subject* by referring to himself as *I* in his discourse. (225)

This is the western view on the importance of the first-person narrative. But, I have a slightly different reason for selecting the first-person narrative texts from a Korean point of view. The first-person pronouns, both singular “I” and plural “we”, constitute indicators for conveying the contradictory value systems between western individualism and Confucian familism. Sung-ho Lee suggests this different usage of the first-person pronoun between the cultures as the reflection of different ways of thinking in both cultures - i.e., inductive or indirect in Korea vs. deductive or direct in America.

For example, Koreans are deeply concerned about congenial family relations, while English and American peoples are more self-assertive. A Korean says “our wife” instead of “my wife”, “our house” instead of “my house”, and “our country” instead of “my country”. Both in speech and writing, Koreans tend to omit the pronoun “I”, while Americans and English men frequently refer to themselves with a proud “I”, English and American people are generally direct or deductive in their writing, while Koreans are, for the most part, indirect or inductive. The sequence of words and ideas in the two languages reflect these differences. Thus, although a topic sentence will most frequently appear at the beginning of an English paragraph, it is usually at the end of the paragraph in Korean. (261-262)

Therefore, I expect that, for Korean students, reading the first-person narrative English texts will highlight the issues involved in cultural translation. The process of reader identification with the narrator also involves taking a stance at a distance from traditional Korean thought patterns, pushing them into a western individualistic subject position.

Korean readers' gender identity is regarded as another factor by which to discuss their subjective position. Chris Christie quotes Stuart Hall's assertion, that is, according to their cultural background, an audience can 'accept', 'negotiate' or 'oppose' the preferred reading of a text (52-53). But, in a cross-cultural reading context in the classroom, these processes of accepting, negotiating and opposing are mixed up and impossible to describe, like the postmodern contradiction in which we discuss the process of producing, only dealing with the final product. If I compare my women students' responses to Sara Mills', this difference is obvious. She argues that early feminist theorists describing the reading of female-authored texts by women tended to concentrate on the discussion of role models and identification. Through her research on students' responses, she feels that identification becomes problematic in figuring out a female reader's subjective position.

There is a similar problematic tendency to consider the depiction of female characters in women's texts as presenting female readers with role models with whom to identify. Identification is a problematic concept in reading: the notion that we somehow align ourselves with a textual representation and form our notion of self with respect to it seems simplistic. (30)

In the cross-cultural reading context, this kind of identification or assimilation with the female characters by female readers is not so serious as in Britain, because of many categories of difference like language, culture, time, space, and so on. However, in the

case of male readers', their refusal to accept the gender issues in the text is conspicuous. Their negating distance is much greater than Sara Mills' male students' responses. In other words, female readers' responses to the feminist texts are much more sympathetic than male readers' responses. As Imelda Whelehan notices, the implied feminist reader in English feminist texts which I use for this research has had a certain fixed image. Korean women students' responses will contribute to deconstructing these texts, bringing diversity and heterogeneity to the western women's discourse.

The implied reader is largely a mirror image of the 'mainstream' feminist critic: she is white, middle class, heterosexual and knows a 'good' book when she reads one. This model reader is a willing participant in feminist critical resisting rereadings; but having decanonised certain readings of 'classic' female texts, other readings and other texts are arguably canonised in their place. (218)

In poststructuralist theory, the process of meaning production is complex between involvement and detachment, and the balance of power between text and reader is shifting and provisional. In the cross-cultural reading context, this grand theory is accepted and rejected at the same time in the very complex process. In the next section, I will show how it works in the Korean university classroom, hoping it will make a partial contribution to "the institutionalization of difference *within* feminist discourses" which Chandra Mohanty suggests as the crucial question in the 1990s ("Feminist Encounters" 74).

3.2. On *A Room of One's Own*: Searching for Female Subjectivity in Korean Context

3.2.1. "English Reading" Course in 1990⁹

⁹ This short paper was delivered at "Feminist Theory: an International Debate" Conference held at the University of Glasgow on 12-15 July 1991 and the abstract was published in *Journal of Gender Studies* by the Centre for Gender Studies at the

When I ask you to earn money and have a room of your own, I am asking you to live in the presence of reality, an invigorating life, it would appear, whether one can impart it or not.

- Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* -

- * Year: 2nd
- * Size: around 40 students
- * Gender: women-only
- * Major: English Language
- * Time: 2nd semester in 1990
- * Text: English written text

3.2.1.1. Design of the Study

The following responses were mostly collected in the second semester of 1990 when I was carrying on a kind of pre-survey for this thesis. Because this section is revealing the embryo stage of this research, the students' responses in this section have disclosed the Korean social ideology on gender issues in 1990. The first semester in 1990, I chose *A Room of One's Own* as my set-text for the English Reading course. One point which I should make clear is that the publication of a Korean version of *A Room of One's Own* had partly influenced my selection of it as a text. Although we were reading the text in English, Woolf's highly sophisticated English was too difficult for Korean students to understand without the support of a Korean translation. *A Room of One's Own* is the written form of Woolf's speech to the students at Newnham and Girton in October, 1928. Because its form is direct speech to the audiences, I thought it was the best text for giving my students a chance to think about themselves through the Woolfian question, "what we women are". Even though it was not a creative literary work, this book gave me the precious opportunity to see how Korean students would respond to Woolf's feminism and what kind of ideas Korean students could obtain about

the relationship between women and literature. Before I confirmed my intention, I had had a talk with several senior women lecturers who have taught English language and literature in Korean universities. Most of them said *A Room of One's Own* would be very difficult for the freshmen at a junior college.¹⁰ But, I pushed it, thinking it was a great opportunity to try. I would see my students' responses to Woolf's speech about the classical theme "Women and Fiction" from the feminist perspective. I had two classes and each class had 40 students. Because it was an evening class, half of the students had a job. (This was very important, compared with my teaching in the second semester. I will come back to this, later.) At the beginning of the term, they seemed to be stressed by the text. But, during each class, I gave detailed explanations which encouraged them and helped their understanding. To my relief, 4 weeks later, they adapted themselves to my teaching and Woolf's language. The more difficult it became, the more energy they put into it. The issue was not the difficulty of reading English but their passion and interest in the text. We enjoyed that class together. However, we couldn't finish that book during one semester. Language was the main barrier in our reading of the book. And this is the practical situation of teaching English literature in Korea, in spite of their enthusiasm.

Before I began my second teaching of *A Room of One's Own*, I attended an invaluable conference in order to work out the new format for my research. It was the ELLAK¹¹ International Symposium, held at the Academy of Korean Studies from

¹⁰ At the Annual Seminar of the Korean Society for Teaching English Literature held on 28 June 1997, this topic about Woolf's English was discussed. From their teaching experiences, several lecturers insisted that we could teach Woolf's novels like *To the Lighthouse* to the second-year students and others suspected whether they could teach it to the same year students. One of my students having taken this course told me that it was the most difficult and challenging course among the whole curriculum.

¹¹ ELLAK is the Abbreviation of the English Language and Literature Association of Korea which has over 1,500 members.

August 13 to August 16, 1990. The title "New perspectives in English Studies and Teaching" was directly linked to teaching English literature to Korean students. I was able to foresee the direction of Korean academic research in English Studies at the conference mainly concerned with teaching method and feminist literary criticism.

With my experience from my first teaching and from participating in the ELLAK International Symposium, I planned a kind of field survey based on my teaching of *A Room of One's Own*. During the second semester, we covered only three parts of the text (parts 1,3,6) in terms of detailed reading of the text by explanation and translation. I thought I had better keep a lecturing style rather than a seminar style, in order to give detailed explanations about the sociocultural background and the English language. In the second semester in 1990, I was teaching second-year students, and my teaching style was mostly lecturing. As Prof. Underwood mentioned in his article which I quoted in the section 2.3.6., Korean students prefer the lecturing style of teaching. Postgraduate research in Korean universities mainly proceeds by students' giving of papers and discussing themes together in a seminar. But my students are undergraduates in a junior college.¹² If I try a seminar style on this course, I would worry that they would be confused. On the reading list for this lecture, I classified the articles according to the main idea of each part as well as suggesting some general introductory articles, mainly written in Korean, including my article, "Maggie Tulliver and Girton College". In

¹² The English department at Hanyang Women's Junior College in Seoul, Korea, has 200 students in its 2-year curriculum: 120 non-working students at day class and 80 working students at evening class. The purpose of education at junior college is not academic research but skills and techniques through training. We have special admission regulations for the working students at evening class, which is similar to that for mature students in the British universities. While most non-working students are coming to the college directly after they graduate from high school, most working students are coming to the college after having worked for 4-5 years in society. Considering the Koreans' passionate attachment to higher education, many students at women's junior college - both working and non-working - are ambitious to transfer to the 4-year university.

addition, this was the only article which was written in English. Even though we were dealing with the English text, my teaching language in the class was Korean. I wished my students to look at Korean women's routine lives with new eyes, while they were reading the English book, *A Room of One's Own*. The weekly newspaper, *The Women's News* published since 1989, was especially helpful for understanding the contemporary Korean women's lives. In order to check the development of my students' awakening, I decided to use a questionnaire to test on the various stages.

3.2.1.2. Findings

At the introductory class, I tested my new students with the first questionnaire about their preparation for this course. These five questions were also very important for the preparation of my own teaching method. Most students who had seen the movie, "Dead Poets Society", pointed out the last scene as the most impressive one to them. When the teacher, who introduced non-stereotyped teaching method to his students, left the school because of the objection from narrow-minded parents and head master, all the students honoured him by standing on the desk despite this being during another teacher's lecture. This question aims to make my students think about what the 'fixed idea' means. Not many students had been to any lectures or seminars concerning feminism. And, the most interesting answers were to the last question, which is "Select the best woman writer in your opinion without consideration of time and place, and explain why you choose her". Half of the students chose the contemporary Korean women writers, whose works they had read very recently. And, half chose western women writers, including Emily Bronte, Simone de Beauvoir, and Louise Linsler. However, there was no student who chose Virginia Woolf, because the translations of

her works were not popular.¹³ The most frequently cited Korean woman writer was Hye - Rhin Jeon, who had mainly translated Louise Linser's works and who committed suicide in 1965. In addition, Louise Linser was the most frequently cited Western woman writer.

By the fourth week, when I realized that they could adapt themselves to my teaching method and to Woolf's language from former experience, they were filling out their second questionnaire form. This questionnaire form was designed by Prof. Haejoang Cho who is an expert in Korean patriarchy in the Department of Sociology, at Yonsei University. The significance of some sentences in the questionnaire may not be immediately apparent to a western reader. However, in the Korean context, those sentences manifest serious aspects of Korean patriarchy, like items No.10 and No.12. For example, No.10 in Questionnaire 2 of my appendices is "I don't congratulate those having a male child any more enthusiastically than I do those having a female child just because the new baby is a son". Sexual discrimination in Korea has been frequently conducted even by women, during the pregnancy through their decision to have an abortion, as soon as they know an unborn baby is female.¹⁴ Concerning the contradictory items No.24, "I have thought about and seriously considered many of the above mentioned issues before taking this course", and No.25, "I have never been interested in or concerned about those issues", almost 75% of my students answered "definitely yes" to No.25.

¹³ In 1997, several translated texts from Woolf's writing are available in Korea. But, they are not popular, yet, mainly due to Woolf's highly intellectual language and discourse.

¹⁴ Eun-Shil Kim interrogates the discursive power of son-preference practices and reveals its negotiating and contrasting structures, while illustrating the middle-class women's efforts to give birth to a son and their subjectivity of son-preference. (cf. "Female Gender Subjectivity Constructed by "Son-Birth": Need for Feminisms?", *Asian Journal of Women's Studies*, Vol.1, 1995, 33-57); Since July, 1996, this examination about the baby's sex during the pregnancy was legally forbidden in Korea.

From the beginning of this lecture, I thought I should deal with the theme of sexual violence, even though Woolf did not mention it clearly in the text. In Korea, it is an urgent theme, because social consciousness on this matter is not yet keen enough. And, sexual discussions are regarded as a taboo in Korea, where strict Confucian values still persist. However, sexual violence against women seems to be reaching a stage where it cannot be overlooked any more.

“In the 80s, some 5,000 sexual violence cases were reported to the police every year. However, if one considers that the reported cases are only the tip of the iceberg, the situation is extremely serious.” said Choi Young-Ae, director of the soon-to-open Korea Sexual Violence Relief Center. Choi said that according to the data of the Korean Institute of Criminology, the reporting rate of Korean sexual violence victims registered only 2.2 percent. (“Relief Centre for Sexual Violence Victims to Open” 4 April 1991)

As shown in my appendices, I linked Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own* to the movie, “The Accused”, via the case of Judith Shakespeare. The youngsters nowadays are the video generation. And, I thought watching the movie would be more effective for raising their consciousness than reading the book. I had had a discussion with many Korean experts about what movie was the best for my lecture and for my intention. “The Accused”, “Lipstick”, and the contemporary Korean movie, “Only because you are a woman” were among the programmes mostly suggested by them. At first, I had planned to make students compare a western movie and a Korean movie on the theme of sexual violence. However, my colleague, a feminist film critic, suggested that this requirement was of so high a level for them that it would only produce psychological confusion and that it would not help my intention.¹⁵ Therefore, I chose “The Accused” with two

¹⁵ The situation would be different in 1997, because Seoul is now marked as the 6th biggest market for US Hollywood film industry.

articles about that movie, because I thought “The Accused” showed very well not only sexual violence but also the power of a dominant ideology. One article was written in English by an American man and the other was written in Korean by a Korean woman. In some sense, this movie was more effective than the text in raising my students’ consciousness of their current lives in Korean society. When we were watching the movie together in the video room, 7 minutes after the beginning, one student fainted and fell down from her chair. I was very surprised at the accident. But, most students were more surprised about what was going on in the movie. It was chilly and the heating system as usual was not operating in early November. She was moved to the college nursing room and she missed that class. Later, she told me that she was shocked from the beginning and that she couldn’t endure the disgust to Sarah in the relief centre shown in the enquiry scene.

In the essay question on my course, I also inserted the English requirement to improve their ability in reading comprehension. The five themes were selected by myself because I thought those themes linked *A Room of One’s Own*, “The Accused”, and our contemporary lives. In their essays, many students mentioned that this lecture was very useful to them because it gave them an unusual opportunity to think about themselves as “we, women”. Some students’ responses to the text and to the movie were more encouraging, saying that they had been awakened by this lecture, because it gave them an invaluable chance, thinking they should transform themselves from passive objects who didn’t think about their sexual identity, to active subjects recognizing their female identity. I know the issue of how much their actions would change in practical life remains a question. However, that is another topic.

The third questionnaire form was mainly focussed on the text itself. Among twenty questions, students were asked to answer five. They most frequently chose

questions No.1, "Is there a lesson to be learned from *A Room of One's Own*?", No.13, "Is there anything in *A Room of One's Own* that has a hidden meaning?" and No.2, "Is *A Room of One's Own* well written?" The more serious students rated this text as well written. Nevertheless, there were some students who considered it not well written, because the reader could not read easily, catch the meaning easily. For them, the greatest difficulty was not the vocabulary but the long sentences and the word order. On average, they mentioned they could see the sentence structure in Woolf's writing after the mid-term examination. In section B, most students rated the text +2(good), then +1(fairly good), and rarely +3(one of the best), this especially by the first-class students. However, there was no student who matched it on the minus scale.

The last questionnaire form deals with the teaching method of my whole course of lectures. Because of the limitation in time and space, I cannot give detailed analyses of the whole 21 questions. My analyses will be somewhat generalised. On the first question, "What was most difficult for you in reading and understanding *A Room of One's Own*?", most students pointed out the sociocultural background and Woolf's English, with very similar frequency. They definitely considered that Woolf's unique fluid style was the main reason for the difficulty in understanding. On the third question, "How helpful was the lecture on English language for your understanding of the text?", half of students answered, "They could not understand the text without the lecture on English language" and the other half selected, "They could read the text by themselves if they had had enough knowledge of the sociocultural background". On the fourth question, "Did the lecture with detailed explanations about the themes and the sociocultural background have any influence on your understanding of the text?", about 90% of the students confidently marked the No.3 as an answer, i.e., "I could not understand the themes of *A Room of One's Own* because it took place in a different

sociocultural background, even though I had thought about those issues before.” Chastity and prejudice are the English concepts that most impressed them during the lecture. My students selected “dominant power in a society” as most closely related to the Korean social context. However, on the ninth question, “Which theme is the least closely related to you and the Korean social context?”, most students answered, “NOTHING”, which means that all five themes are related to the Korean social context. However, as distinct from the other questions, many students did not answer No.9 at all. Maybe this is because they did not have any clear ideas about five themes in relation to Korean society. Concerning the video “The Accused”, they said it was pretty useful in understanding the theme, “sexual violence”, which Woolf did not mention clearly and that it was very shocking or pretty shocking to them. On the twelfth question, “Having watched “The Accused”, rate the following items from the most understandable theme to the least understandable”, they pointed out “victimization” and “chastity” as the most understandable themes. I think this is the characteristic answer for Korean women. In our Confucian society, virginity is still the precondition for women in marriage. Even though Woolf did not mention it clearly, my students’ responses in 1990 showed their instinct towards self-protection in Korean society.¹⁶ This is a good example of the distinctive responses in reading the other culture.

Sentence structure is considered to be the most improved area of their reading comprehension ability, after taking this course. On the nineteenth question, in which I thought of the effect of these lectures, they answered that my lectures would have an influence on their way of thinking, as well as on their way of living in the future. But this extent would be not “definitely” but “pretty” and “slightly”. Concerning the last two questions, they wrote their opinions freely. All of the students said that they would

¹⁶ In 1997, their responses would be different, because the social discourse on sexuality in Korea has changed so fast since 1993; See the section 4.2. in this thesis.

like to take a similar course if offered. They even suggested it should be a compulsory course for women's junior college students. Several students wanted a different text because both Woolf's English and Woolf's feminism were difficult for them. What they felt should be mostly developed for this class was the expansion of the discussion programme, because they thought discussion by themselves was more important than the improvement of their English language. Some of them mentioned that English was unbearably difficult at the beginning of the course, but a very close and detailed reading with the grammatical explanation improved their reading comprehension ability. They said the course was not easy; however, the result was satisfactory.

In addition, what satisfied me was their gratitude to me for offering this course of lectures. They said they were so lucky because they could take this course just before their graduation. Because a junior college requires a two year registration, it was their last academic semester. They thought it best to take this lecture in the spring semester of their second-year or in the fall semester of their first-year. For consideration, I enclose a sample report written by one student, In-Shil Han.

3.2.1.3. Conclusion

In this section, I have surveyed the Korean circumstances surrounding teaching feminist literary criticism in a foreign language department. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak says in her article, "Feminism and Critical Theory",

Reading literature "well" is in itself a questionable good and can indeed be sometimes productive of harm and "aesthetic" apathy within its ideological framing. My suggestion is to use literature, with a feminist perspective, as a "nonexpository" theory of practice. (84-85)

From my experience of trying a “nonexpository” theory of practice with a feminist perspective, I absolutely agree with Spivak's suggestion. At a private meeting, many students told me they were discontented with my “nonexpository” way of lecturing, because I, as a lecturer, tried not to express my own opinion to them. I would like to be just a guide in looking at what we women are in both cultures rather than to be a one-way messenger. I thought if I began to give them my opinions in a classroom, where my students were accustomed to an authoritarian teaching method, it would not be helping them to find meaning for themselves.

Comparing my second teaching with my first teaching, I found a small difference. In the first semester, half of the students had had work experience for 4 or 5 years and were still working. In the second semester, most students did not have work experience and they came directly from the high school to the college. There was a difference between these two groups' responses. The group of working women students could not read too much or very fast, compared with the group of women students who were only studying. However, they felt, recognized, and sympathized with women's issues in society much more keenly than the second group. Examining this comparison will be my further task.¹⁷

In this section, I would like to insist that teaching feminist literary criticism in the “*Third World*”¹⁸ necessitates the lecturers' keen consciousness of their own society and very careful lecture planning. During the first semester in 1991, I was teaching the first-year students a current English course focusing on journalistic English. During the

¹⁷ The section 4.1.2., “The Case of the Working Women's Discussion Group” in fact resulted from this difference between these two groups, especially in its organizing stage.

¹⁸ This italicisation emphasises its specific usage in my writing. My definition of “Third-World” here is absolutely dependent on my personal and subjective feeling. The term “Third-World” is employed to illustrate the psycho-cultural distance from western Europe, rather than simply reflecting the national economic status as in general usage.

lectures, we had no chance to talk about women's issues. But, I asked them to write an essay on two articles from daily newspapers: one entitled "75% of U.S. women experienced violence from men: *MS. Magazine*", and the other "Relief centre for sexual violence victims to open". These students also confessed that it was a rare chance to think about their sexual identity. However, their conclusions were just the opposite to what I expected from their writing. They were passive and submissive. They thought that the best way to protect themselves from sexual violence was to maintain their images as chaste women. Their opinions and voices were so conventional. Therefore, if the lectures in a society, where social consciousness is not sensibly aware of women's issues, do not show very carefully the sexual discrimination in their own society, then, teaching feminist issues in the *Third World* will be far from raising their subjectivity.

Another point of consideration for lecture planning is the gap between the point of view of lecturers and that of the students. When I selected "The Accused" for my teaching, I thought it was better than the other films because it showed the whole social structure and the diverse feminist issues. But, my students' taste was different. Without any other supplementary materials, they did not understand what "The Accused" was telling us. Out of three movies, "The Accused", "Lipstick", and "Only because you are a woman" which I asked my students to watch, two-thirds of the students selected and sympathized with the recent Korean movie, "Only because you are a woman". Even though I thought that the themes in this movie were not well expressed, my students responses were quite to the contrary. Some students wrote that they didn't understand "The Accused", while they found many feminist issues in "Only because you are a woman". Their responses gave me a lesson on what kind of teaching method would be the most helpful and effective for Korean women students.

Having taught students at a women's junior college for nine years, I can honestly say that the introduction of English feminist literature to Korean readers can stimulate and awaken the potential feminist consciousness in contemporary Korean society. It can also contribute to the formation of a women's spiritual union in Korea with an eye to international sisterhood, and help to initiate a collective effort in society at large. However, the big question that still remains for Korean lecturers of English language and literature courses is how to create and develop a new teaching model adapted to the sociocultural context of teaching English feminist literary works for non-English-speaking students. The solution is central to the cause of putting an end to blatant sexism in Korean society. One method might be "feminist reading" through the use of English literature from a cross-cultural perspective. And also, the development of new teaching models in the *Third World* should be recognized in terms of international readers of English texts from the perspective of sexual textual politics.

3.2.2. "Gender in Literature" Course in 1997

She lives in you, in me, and in many other women who are not here tonight, for they are washing up the dishes and putting the children to bed. But she lives: for great poets do not die; they are continuing presence; they need only the opportunity to walk among us in the flesh.

- Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* -

- * Year: all (1st-4th)
- * Size: around 50 students
- * Gender: mixed
- * Major: all subjects
- * Time: the 1st semester in 1997
- * Text: translated text

The following students' responses to *A Room of One's Own* contrast with section 3.2.1. in many ways. These responses were collected during the most recent

semester, in late April, 1997, from a mixed group of students in terms of gender, academic major, and year of study from one of the 4-year universities in Seoul, Kyunghee University, which has approximately 20,000 students in the undergraduate course. Since the "Gender in Literature" course was newly created in the second semester in 1995,¹⁹ the diversity and heterogeneity of student groups varied from semester to semester. This particular group of students was composed of around 50 men and women students, majoring in almost all subjects. However, I must make clear that the students from literature (both Korean and English), music, and fine art subjects contributed significantly to the course, especially this programme on *A Room Of One's Own*, as my sample essays are going to reflect. In terms of gender, this group was well balanced as half and half. Among 10 literary texts from various cultures which I selected for this "Gender in Literature" course in 1997,²⁰ *A Room of One's Own* was located in the middle as the fifth programme, mainly dealing with the theme of women's writing, which was an impossible and unthinkable theme in 1990. Offering 3 hours a week, the programme on *A Room of One's Own* was designed to include lecturing and writing, without discussing the themes from the text, and in this way was differentiated from the other 9 programmes. Even though we used a translated text, I thought Woolf's language and expression were not easy for Korean undergraduate students to understand in order to formulate their own ideas on the text. In addition, there were not many social issues in the text which were familiar to them and which they could discuss in the classroom, together. My lecture on Woolf and *A Room of One's Own* provided

¹⁹ This course was newly created, in accordance with the blossoming discourse on gender and sexuality in Korean university campuses since the early 1990s, which I shall argue in later sections 4.1.1. and 4.2.3.

²⁰ In the later section 3.3.3., I will explain the characteristics of this "Gender in Literature" course and how I have been organizing and dealing with the whole semester programme in detail, because *A Room of One's Own* was taught in an exceptional way, differentiated from the other 9 programmes.

the contextual meaning of the text and Woolf's writing. Therefore, they could achieve through this lecture more understanding of the text and context of *A Room of One's Own*. However, in spite of this lecture, most students agreed that the text did not make much of an impression on them, both women and men. Most students could not make their own meaning from reading the text. One man student, Choon-Hun Lee, a third-year in Korean literature,²¹ compared Virginia Woolf to the ghost in Charles Dickens's *Christmas Carol*, because she took him here and there, past and present, while talking to him of things of which he could not clearly grasp the meaning owing to their implicative and metaphoric usage (1). Though he took into consideration that he had read the translated text, he thought it was not a matter of translation but a matter of Woolf's language itself (1).

The number of students who had already prepared their essays on *A Room of One's Own* before the beginning of the class was only 8, the least among 10 programmes during that semester.²² However, those writings were wonderful and fascinating in terms of their qualities. It seemed to me that, once *A Room of One's Own* began to communicate with each reader's autobiographical experience, then, it touched them deeply and directly stimulated their vague desire to become creative writers. Their writing mainly embodied their future wishes. Nonetheless, each student responded to a different "implied reader" in the text and produced a different "gestalt" in Wolfgang Iser's terms, which I have discussed in section 2.3.5. In particular, her or his establishment of a position as a writing subject was distinctively different from that in

²¹ Especially, in this section for "Gender in Literature" course, I am disclosing the individual students' year and major, because those are quite important factors to understand their ways of thinking, differentiated by their age and subject.

²² The selection of specific subject for writing essays was completely dependent on their own decision. I asked them to submit at least 6 essays out of 10 during one semester. Therefore, their decision to write an essay on a specific text completely depended on whether they could communicate well with the text or not.

her or his other essays. For writing about *A Room of One's Own*, her or his writing subject was inclined to a sort of creative writing, not the normal kind of critical writing. This was the most noticeable characteristic of both men and women students' responses to *A Room of One's Own*. Frankly speaking, I had never expected such an extraordinary way of responding to Woolf's articulated language from this small portion of students from, as I say, literature, fine art, and music departments. In other words, their responses were another lesson to me. In particular, women students' writings in the third and fourth year were more experimental than men students, employing a more sensitive, indirect, fluid writing style in Korean.²³ The most impressive essay was written by Chae-Young Lim, a second-year in music specializing in the violin. She wrote an answering letter to Virginia Woolf, looking at her contemporary everyday life-setting in 1990s Korea and comparing it with Woolf's opinions in the text through a corresponding Korean writing style, which I cannot fully demonstrate or bring forward here. Later on, most students who had submitted those creative writings said that they were inspired by the articles on Virginia Woolf and Helene Cixous written by Korean women professors in *Speaking as a woman, Writing with the body* published by the Alternative Culture Group in early January, 1993, in which I was actively involved. This rewarding process taught me that a feminist lecturer's teaching, especially in non-western as well as non-European societies, should not be confined to the classroom space but go along with her experimental cultural politics outside the academic institutions, but still within her own culture, as I have noted in Spivak's comment in section 2.5.

²³ This group contrasts with another student group in the second semester in 1996, when I had also taught *A Room of One's Own*. In that semester, most students came from science subjects, like medicine and dentistry, and their responses to *A Room of One's Own* did not have any remarkable point.

Two men students in Korean literature responded to Woolf's message from their own standpoint. Not only women but also men needed economically secure conditions for good creative writing, they insisted. However, one man student went beyond the issue of writing, reaching the repressed aspect of Korean masculinity as the familial bread-winner.

I have heard quite often from my seniors and friends that they would write creative works if they had £150,000.²⁴ For creative writers - men and women, together - the economic conditions are fundamental and essential. A man, especially, in Korean society, expected to be a successful bread-winner for the family, must subordinate his desire to masculine responsibility. We have also wished to inherit money like Virginia Woolf. (Chong-Hun Lee; a third-year in Korean literature 1)

Now, his response illustrates an important characteristic of Korean masculinity in this very fast industrializing society. Through the economic development since the 1960s, the social ideology on separate spheres has still persisted and places on men the dutiful burden of familial financial security. In Korean modernization, this idea of separate spheres according to gender identity has been strongly reinforced in the 1970s and 1980s. Nonetheless, in the 1990s, younger Korean men in their 20s began to awaken to the severe repression arising from that functional gender role. They wished to live in their own way.²⁵ Another man student, Hyun-Shik Kim, a third-year in Korean literature, wondered whether good creative writings would necessarily be produced in economically secure conditions. Bringing forward several examples of Korean men novelists as well as world-famous men writers like Tolstoy, he argued that men could produce wonderful works even in hopeless economic situations. He did not notice they

²⁴ This amount is approximately equivalent to Korean currency.

²⁵ One book published in 1995 was entitled "You would die if you have a job in the business company", written by a young man in his early 30s. He showed and disclosed the inhumane aspect of the masculine business world, while reflecting how the work is enormous and endless in Korean business companies.

had kept wives, though not good wives. Even though he would not reject or object to Woolf's opinion, he could not agree with Woolf, because her opinions were quite prejudiced from his point of view (1).

While men students' responses were mostly concentrated on Woolf's main message, women students' responses mostly paid attention to metaphor, image, and writing style in the text, after taking Woolf's main message for granted. Among those metaphors, the mirror was the most appealing one. Jung-Won Lee, a second-year in Korean literature, thought that this mirror metaphor played a magnificent role in Woolf's writing, linking to the fairy tale of Princess Snow-White. She thought Woolf reversed this image of the mirror metaphor. She made a comparison of mirror metaphors between those two works. While the mirror in the "Snow-White" story played a disappointing role to her, making women sexually attractive and mentally deficient, the mirror in Woolf's writing played an encouraging role, making women awaken to the idea that women had been undervalued and underestimated. Specifically, Woolf's phrase, "Women have served all these centuries as looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size" (37), was strongly imprinted in her mind. Then, she added that the advertizing copy phrase on her translated text cover told her, "This book is for women who are rejecting their roles as men's mirror" (2). Here, her response implies that her personal opinion was not separated from her social community but partly influenced by it. On the other hand, this advertizing copy phrase reflects an important sign for Korean society, i.e., the newly linked relationship between feminism and commercialism in 1990s Korea, especially in the book-publishing market economy. In entering the 1990s, the Korean economy has been improving and Korean society has been changing with extreme speed, especially on gender issues. This speed of change since 1990 could not be

imagined in any other developed western country. Related to this social phenomenon, the marriage between feminism and commercialism has created a big market mainly built up and supported by Korean women in their 20s.²⁶ So, how goods are advertized through images and copy has become the most important issue in stimulating the blooming social desire of young Korean women.²⁷ As a result, we can see through Jung-Won Yoon's writing that the mirror metaphor joined Woolf's writing in the English text to the submerged women's desire in the Korean context, jumping over all boundaries except that of gender. This is a good example of *intercultural communication*.

On the contrary, two men students from English literature concentrated on a different metaphor in Woolf's writing. They picked up the room as the most decisive metaphor in *A Room of One's Own*. Eun-Sung Chang, a fourth-year, put his essay title as "Is there any vacant room?", saying that he was ambivalent in deciding this title between "a vacant room" or "a single room". Then, he immediately decided to take "a vacant room" because this title indicated more directly Woolf's ideas on androgyny and had a more expansive and wider meaning than "a single room". However, he utilized the rhetoric to the utmost, making his essay title into a questioning sentence.

By this title, I am asking Woolf whether it is possible for men and women to compromise concerning feminism as a political movement. I wonder whether the reconciling neutrality, based on Woolf's androgyny, could solve the contemporary women's issues in Korean society as well as in the world. I wish, by this questioning title "Is there any vacant room?", to point out and pick up the hidden hypocrisy in Woolf's feminism" (3).

²⁶ I shall argue more in detail in section 4.2., explaining how it has linked with female sexuality, at large.

²⁷ During the 1990s, many autobiographies by successful Korean women professionals have been high on the best-seller list. This phenomenon in the publishing market has produced the "New" image of Korean women and the "Woman hero" of an older generation - from the early 30s to late 50s - in the public culture.

He criticized Woolf's view on androgyny and accused her of being "politically incorrect" and "deceitful". On the surface, his argument seemed very sincere and resolute. But, deep down, he was too naive and innocent to understand the feminist political strategy of Woolf's refined double-dealing.

Hee-Chul Park, a fourth-year in English literature, also noticed the important metaphor of "room", comparing it in Woolf's writing with the same image in *Jane Eyre*. To him, the rooms in *Jane Eyre* - the red room for Jane and the attic for Bertha - symbolized women's repression in patriarchal culture, while the room in *A Room of One's Own* symbolized women's liberation and more towards a women-only utopia, which men could not go into, nor disturb. But he was puzzled in the sixth part, because Woolf seemed to him to reverse what she had been saying up to then. His own question was, "Why does Woolf suggest androgyny as the last solution to women's issues? Is that due to the limited social awakening in 1920s Britain? I could not understand why she decided to focus her conclusion on that issue" (2). His response definitely reminded me of Elaine Showalter's earlier attack on Virginia Woolf in *A Literature of Their Own* (1977).

Not only men students but also women students were dissatisfied with Woolf's conclusion. Joo-Yeon Lee, a second-year in English literature, was doubtful about the actualization of Woolf's ideas of androgyny in a real situation. However, she defended Woolf from a wider perspective than men students.

Woolf may pray that both man and woman in her speech would stay in that unfamiliar stage and space. Starting from the past historical disparity, passing through the innumerable social hurdles, Virginia Woolf is now looking at the future possibility of reunion between two sexes. By using the expression, "woman-manly" and "man-womanly", Woolf is desperately exhorting us, "We must march towards that direction and arrive at that destination". Only her ideal idea, androgyny, will establish the

balance between two sexes in the future and fill the gap in the past and present uneven disparity. But, is it possible to achieve it, in reality? (2)

Joo-Yeon Lee's narrative, evaluating Woolf's writing, was more positive and sympathetic than the men students'. Another woman student, Chae-Young Lim, expanded Woolf's idea on androgyny to Woolf's secret desire in *A Room of One's Own*. In her letter to Virginia Woolf, she finished her writing, saying "You may wish that people would no longer cite your speech in the near future, rather than that people would read it again and again as a canonical text, since their continuing citations would be an indication of an existing and circulating social discourse on sex discrimination" (2). Her other responses were actually beyond my expectation. She was the only one among 8 students who noticed Woolf's comment on women's relationships to women.

It is often said that a masterpiece is born through many people's involvement and everybody's cooperation, because it is located in the interweaving process by many people as well as by time and space. Woman is, in most cases, accustomed to hide and repress herself or to suspect other people when they are interested in herself or her work. I consider this is the main cause of such an unbalanced relationship between the two sexes. Women must develop themselves through more relationships with other women. (2)

Her unique perspective, I could guess, would come from her own experience as a violin player in the university orchestra, in which many people's involvement as well as everybody's cooperation must be necessary.

It is most interesting that two men students from Korean literature responded to Woolf's androgyny in the opposite way to two other men students from English literature. While Eun-Sung Chang and Hee-Chul Park from English literature read Woolf's conclusion as her giving way to dominant patriarchal social ideology, Choong-Hun Lee and Hyun-Shik Kim, both third-years from Korean literature, read the same

point as a radical conclusion and, even, the subversion of Woolf's noble and moderate narrative tone in the text. For them, the most uncomfortable point was that Woolf did not accept sex difference, at all. They had never imagined, it seemed to me, a character like Orlando. Even though they asserted, in their essays, that sex discrimination should vanish in the world, they concluded that Woolf's idea, that a woman could not produce a masterpiece if she was not androgynous, was wrong. Their responses show the different scope of imagination influenced by their main subject in the Korean situation. This different scope of imagination results in a distinction from the other two men students of English literature within the same gender identity. This kind of difference would not be discovered in an English literature course, where most students would come from the same discipline. This is a good example, explaining why gender studies as an academic subject is bravely challenging and shaking the disciplinary and departmental boundaries within the contemporary academic institutions.

On the other hand, there was a most remarkable comparison in one woman student's writing between *A Room of One's Own* and the contemporary Korean novel, *The Times* of 3-volume length, written by Hyung-Kyung Kim and published in 1995. In her autobiographical third-person narrative novel, *The Times*, Hyung-Kyung Kim has reviewed her past life as a woman and reformulated her life-story through a psychoanalytic narrative as a woman novelist. In one of her interviews, she asked why we, Korean women novelists, could not deal with our lives, more directly, as the raw material for our creative writing. For Korean readers, the most striking point in *The Times* was her sincere and honest confession through courageous confrontation with her past experience of sexual violence. And this is the main reason why she employed the third-person narrative for this autobiographical novel. She could not yet confront that specific past history through the first-person narrative, and the third-person narrative

allowed her to keep a certain distance from it. In another essay, Hyung-Kyung Kim wrote, "At this stage of my career, I think that writing my autobiography is inevitable and compulsory. Otherwise, I feel intuitively, I cannot go forward and keep pursuing my life and my work as a woman novelist". Se-Jin Eun, a third-year in fine art education, told that she could not help being reminded of Hyung-Kyung Kim's touching autobiography while she was reading Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*. Even without mentioning Judith Shakespeare in seventeenth-century Britain, she had consulted the contemporary Korean woman novelist's factual life-story in 1990s Korea. Se-Jin Eun wrote in her essay that she had cried at midnight when she was reading Woolf's imaginative description of Judith Shakespeare in part 3 of *A Room of One's Own* (3).

As this section has shown, there is a big difference and wide gap in Korean students' responses to *A Room of One's Own* between 1990 and 1997. This illustrates that the social changes concerning gender issues in Korea have occurred to a great extent during the last seven or eight years. Since the Democratic Revolution in 1987, the social awakening of feminism, the women's movement and gender issues has changed immensely, intertwining with political and economic development in Korea. In the 1997 Korean classroom, I can bring out the main theme of *A Room of One's Own* and deal with it more directly. However, at the same time, this classroom is emerging more sharply as a battlefield of competition among many different social ideologies, brought by students from the society into the classroom. Even though, in this section, I have dealt with only 8 students' responses to *A Room of One's Own*, their essays have represented the diversities on gender issues in Korean society. Therefore, the cultural politics arising through reading the text from a feminist point of view have become more and more urgent and a feminist strategy for classroom reading must also be

developed, while negotiating many different ideologies from the students, and thus, from the society itself.

3.3. On *Jane Eyre*: Self-Fulfillment with Romantic Love and Women's Work

3.3.1. "The 19th Century English Novel" Course in 1994

I am my husband's life as fully as he is mine. No woman was ever nearer to her mate than I am: ever more absolutely bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh.

- Charlotte Bronte, *Jane Eyre* -

- * Year: 3rd
- * Size: around 40 students
- * Gender: mixed
- * Major: English Language and Literature
- * Time: the 2nd semester in 1994
- * Text: English written text

The following Korean students' responses were collected in the second semester of 1994 by a friend of mine teaching at one of the 4-year universities outside Seoul. This course was specifically focussing on the nineteenth-century English novels, dealing with *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre* together, during one semester. Most English departments in Korean universities have this curriculum in the third-year programme. The teaching purpose of this undergraduate course is not for being a professional scholar in English Studies but for being an intellectually trained general citizen with a wide perspective on English culture. The amount of reading in one semester is usually 400-500 pages. Most Korean lecturers in English Studies prefer an English novel text with a definite message and the appropriate reading length. This consideration of length is a very important factor in deciding how many texts to teach in any specific semester. Another important factor is whether or not there is a translated or interpreted Korean

text. In most cases, 2-3 English written texts are read together in the classroom and an additional 2 or 3 texts are used in translation or in visual form (Su-Yong Jeon; Young-Oak Lee).²⁸ Also, in most teaching situations, ~~the~~ English language is not used for understanding English texts.²⁹ In particular, for this research, I preferred to use ~~the~~ Korean language for the discussion of the text in the classroom in order to figure out the more Korean characteristics from the students' responses. I have kept in mind Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's opening phrase in his excellent book, *Decolonizing the Mind* in 1986.

The language of African literature cannot be discussed meaningfully outside the context of those social forces which have made it both an issue demanding our attention and a problem calling for a resolution. (4)

Even if the teaching context may be slightly different from the literary text, I have decided to use Korean language, more directly linking the English textual analyses in the Korean classroom to the contextual phenomena of Korean social forces. In fact, except in very rare and special cases, Korean language is normally used for teaching English written texts. However, during the last several years, the teaching of English literature in the English language has been encouraged by the universities, thanks to the shift in governmental position under the slogan of "globalization". As a result, the number of courses for teaching English literature in the English language is now slowly increasing.

Because the lecturer of this course selected *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*, romantic love emerged as the main theme of the course. In most of the students' final

²⁸ They presented their teaching experiences of English and American novels at the Annual Seminar of the Korean Society for Teaching English Literature, held at Seoul National University on 28 June 1997. Later, this issue was thoroughly discussed with other participants.

²⁹ H.H. Underwood's article in 1990, included in the bibliography, deals with his experience of teaching English literature in English in Korea, describing his position as standing "at the edge".

term papers, chiefly "the women students", the comparison between the two novels was frequently discussed. A woman student confessed that she was not impressed by the romantic love between Jane and Rochester and provided the reason why: "Because it was just after reading *Wuthering Heights*, in which the supernatural and mysterious love between Heathcliff and Catherine was very powerful, I was not really impressed by the romantic love in *Jane Eyre*" (Mi-Kyung Kim 3). Another woman student made a more analytic comparison between Heathcliff and Rochester.

The kinds of love in both novels are quite similar in one sense. But, at the same time, they are quite different in another sense. The similarity, I can say, is that both are unworldly strong eternal love based on an immutable creed, while the difference results from the way in which the lovers have been pursuing and searching for their transcendental love. Heathcliff's love for Catherine is even represented as destructive and infuriated. On the other hand, Rochester's love for Jane is represented as passionate and cordial. Heathcliff is tied up with Catherine, even reaching the savage stage; Rochester yields to Jane's intention to leave him. From this perspective, I can make a contrast between the two men's love. Heathcliff's love is the wild flower in the mountain and Rochester's love is the cultivated flower in the green house. (Hee-Jeong Sohn 2)

Through the course, the theme of romantic love appealed more to women students than men students. Quite often, women students identified with Jane's position, praising her exceptional courage in loving her master. Young-Mi Won evaluates Jane highly from this perspective.

I think about Jane's love and suffering. If I were Jane, could I take that path? In most cases similar to Jane's, loving a partner of superior social status, we have usually closed and hidden our mind to the partner and protected our female selves from pain and suffering. Therefore, I am very much impressed by her bravery to pursue that kind of love. (1)

Not only women students but also men students were moved by Jane's attitude to her love. A man student pointed out that to him the most impressive scene was Jane's confession of her love for Rochester, saying "Charlotte Bronte creates this scene bravely and blatantly as even a reader judges this scene as immoral or defiant in terms of a woman's initiative. I hope this is going to be predominant in our society, as well" (Hyun-Woo Park 1-2). His language distinctively reflects his ambivalent attitude towards women's taking the initiative, presenting the last sentence as a sort of diplomatic concession to a woman lecturer who is now marking his essay. This kind of essay is quite common, especially written by men students in taught courses on gender issues.

There was a very interesting comparison between Jane's love and the "instant" love among the contemporary Korean young generations, so-called "New Generation" or "X Generation", because their everyday style of love has already moved toward what Anthony Giddens once named "plastic sexuality"(2).³⁰ On the other hand, there was a serious objection to Jane's love from the feminist point of view, especially in the early stage, because Jane could not ignore Rochester's social position. Thus, Young-Mi Won criticizes Jane's love as the Cinderella complex and, she thinks, later on, that the image of Rochester has been fixed in herself and confirmed by herself. When Jane decided to go back to half-blind Rochester, her position changed slightly since she now thought that Bronte intended to show women's moral superiority to men. In particular, she was not sure about herself in the same situation, whether she would go back to Rochester or

³⁰ He insists that "plastic sexuality" is the characteristic of contemporary sexual life, replacing the pure relationship of romantic love: "The emergence of what I term plastic sexuality is crucial to the emancipation implicit in the pure relationship, as well as to women's claim to sexual pleasure. Plastic sexuality is decentred sexuality, freed from the needs of reproduction.... At the same time - in practice - it frees sexuality from the rule of the phallus, from the overweening importance of male sexual experience."

not. And she connected Jane's love with the contemporary Korean concept of love and her peer generation's life-style related to love, which she depicts as selfish rather than sacrificial (2-3). Most students guessed, because the references were not easily available, that the representation of Jane's love in the text was greatly influenced by Charlotte Bronte's romantic imagination and her unrealistic dreaming. However, they still wished to have similar experiences themselves: "Though I think Jane's romantic love is quite idealistic and imaginary, I would like to see that kind of love in reality. And, if possible, I even want to experience it myself" (Hee-Jeong Sohn 3). A mid-nineteenth-century English writer and a late-twentieth-century Korean reader are now meeting together under the umbrella marked "Romantic Love". Within the same gender boundary, the differences in time and place are dissolving and recombining. However, another woman student was disappointed about the ending, because Charlotte Bronte did not go beyond romantic love and, finally, limited Jane's life to a typical woman's role, just as the mate of a man (Ji-Yeon Choi 2). This was an unusual response for this group of students, but makes a good point of connection as well as contrast with Korean women university students in Seoul, who concentrate more on women's work rather than romantic love. I will discuss this point in the following section.

Another common topic on *Jane Eyre* is the patriarchal male figures in the text. Both Rochester and St. John are regarded as patriarchal figures from different perspectives. Rochester's intended bigamy, his prompting of Jane's confession of love through the rumor about his marriage with Miss Ingram, showering Jane with expensive materialistic presents, and finally keeping her as his lifelong mistress, are thoroughly criticized as a selfish authoritarian male desire (Mi-Kyung Kim 2; Young-Mi Won 3). St. John is also criticized mainly by women students for his instrumental attitude to marriage (Mi-Kyung Kim 2; Mi-Sung Kwon 2). They also notice that they

could easily find such patriarchal figures in our contemporary Korean society. John Reed is also regarded as a savage representative of those patriarchal figures. But, it is interesting that men students discussed the relationship between Jane and the male characters as well as the writer's attitude to describing them, while women students just criticized each characteristic of those patriarchal figures. A man student insists that those figures including Brocklehurst at Lowood school have had a "greatly positive" influence on Jane's development of moral strength, because, otherwise, Jane would not have been such an exceptionally appealing woman character to worldwide readers (Won-Woong Kim 2). What a male egoistic evaluation that is! He perceives Bronte's representation of male figures as a woman writer's strategy. Another man student is also dissatisfied with Bronte's portrayal of those male characters, because, in his opinion, she completely neglects them in the latter part of the text. He wished that Bronte had shown their later relationships with Jane or their own lives after Jane's union with Rochester. Especially, he complained of Bronte's simple and primitive description of John Reed. In short, he regretted that Bronte did not express any revenge or reward to those male figures, while just concentrating on Jane and Rochester (Hyun-Woo Park 2). Now we can see the different scope of students' views according to their gender identities. While women students are mainly focussing on Jane's struggle for self-fulfillment like the majority of feminist discourses in the western European countries, men students are instead focussing on the characters' more interactive relationships in the text. I think this is mainly due to their different experiential distances in identifying with a woman narrator. Men students cannot easily submerge into Jane's narrative. A man student even criticizes Jane's first-person narrative as "too theatrical" and Bronte's story-telling as "quite often fast developing" (Won-Woong Kim 2). But, he does not go further. On the contrary, a woman student defends Jane's narrative position, even

though she also had a similar impression of it in the first few chapters, saying “Jane must set up her narrative position as a little bit histrionic to evoke her readers’ attention and sympathy. But, it is too obvious, to me” (Young-Mi Won 1).

On the other hand, Bertha Mason took on a very specific role as a barometer to distinguish men and women students’ positions as readers. No men students paid any attention to Bertha Mason at all as an independent character in the text, often calling her “Rochester’s mad wife”. But, women students have perceived Bertha Mason as Jane’s alter ego without recognizing possible racial difference, which I shall argue in the following section. They even began to feel curious about the “Bertha Mason” in their own consciousness.

I think every woman has had Bertha Mason in her deep consciousness. However, so long as society is not prepared to accept a woman’s recognition of her “Bertha Mason”, she will keep that mad shape forever. Due to social customs and tradition, we may have repressed and hidden our “Bertha” in our mind. I also may not be an exception, even without being conscious of it. (Hye-Kyung Moon 4)

She now recognizes her “split” subjectivity, living in patriarchal culture. Nonetheless, it is interesting to pay attention to how she starts her own writing. Beginning her essay entitled “Self-Recognition and Woman’s Consciousness in *Jane Eyre*”, she describes her writing subject as “not a feminist”. And she adds, “Rather, I feel uncomfortable with what feminists have advocated. I only admire Charlotte Bronte’s intellectual power and very brilliant point of view.³¹ For me who has never seriously considered myself as one of the female sex before, this essay is going to provide an interesting exploration of my female self” (Hye-Kyung Moon 1). Even though she is explaining

³¹ There are several students’ responses admiring Charlotte Bronte’s writing and her point of view. A woman student compares Charlotte Bronte to Elizabeth in *Pride and Prejudice* in terms of sensible judgement and reasonable critique. (cf. Mi-Sung Kwon 1)

that she has had no consciousness of her-being-female sex, she is already prepared to look at her self with a certain distance. Then, at the end of her writing, she acknowledges that she might have already kept another Bertha, her alter ego, in her self. Her writing process, even in a short piece of 4 pages, clearly shows what kind of influence the English feminist text could have on Korean women readers. They can keep a proper distance from the English text, owing to multiple contributing factors like gender, language, culture, time, and national identity, in order to investigate and observe Jane's female self-development as well as her own while reading it. This is quite different from Sara Mills's observation in the British classroom, where women students' identification with women characters in the text as role models becomes problematic in figuring out a woman reader's subjective position, as I have already discussed in the last part of section 3.1.3..

3.3.2. "English and American Novel" Course in 1995

"No, sir! I am an independent woman now."

"Independent! What do you mean, Jane?"

"I told you I am independent, sir, as well as rich:

I am my *own* mistress."

- Charlotte Bronte, *Jane Eyre* -

* Year: 2nd

* Size: around 40 students

* Gender: mixed

* Major: English Language Education

* Time: the 2nd semester in 1995

* Text: English written text

The following Korean students' responses were collected in the second semester in 1995 when I was invited to teach a specific course in the English Language Education department at one of the 4-year universities in Seoul. According to their curriculum, it was the first introductory course on the English and American Novel, offering 3 hours a week. For this course, I selected *Jane Eyre* and *The Scarlet Letter* as set-texts. Having

majored in the same subject, these second-year students were quite close to each other and had followed similar curricula. Most of them had experienced more or less the same lecturers and courses. Before my teaching, however, they had never experienced the close and precise reading of a specific English novel text. I planned to read the texts in detail and to provide as much relevant information as possible, while suggesting a varied range of references. As a result, most of them mentioned in their final term papers that they really enjoyed the detailed reading of the nineteenth century English and American novels, seen, at the beginning of the semester, as a Wonderland to them. Since one semester was composed of 16 weeks in the Korean academic year, I focussed more on the text *Jane Eyre*, which occupied two-thirds of the whole course. I adopted more of a lecturing style than a seminar style with several presentations by students on specific themes to provide more information on the text and its context. However, I had to skip some chapters in the novel, because of the limited proficiency in the English language of the students. In order to follow the textual content, they had to fill in those parts with the translated Korean text.

During the discussion session, there was a quarrel between men and women students. They argued against each other, especially about Rochester's attitude to his marriage proposal to Jane. Most of the women students were uncomfortable and dissatisfied with Rochester's gesture of showering her with materialistic presents, which Jane considers the act of "gilding refined gold"(Bronte 290) which makes her disgraceful: "The more he bought me, the more my cheek burned with a sense of annoyance and degradation"(297). Men students could not understand, and wondered why this was. They asked "Then how could Rochester show his heart to Jane as a master who loves his "paid subordinate"?"(165). Even one third-year man student, who had already done his military service for two and a half years and just come back to the

university,³² considered Jane's response as an over-reaction or exaggeration. Women students answered, "Because of that difference in their social positions, he must look for another way to express and show his love to Jane, rather than simply using his financial power over her". One woman student described it as "disgusting", even though she could not say that Rochester's intention was not true or sincere: "I think Rochester unconsciously ignores and disregards Jane as an equal subject, even if he does not intend it. Therefore, I really admire Jane when she makes a decision to leave him. From my point of view, Jane who is equipped with a strong moral sense could not bear this situation of bigamy. She might evaluate her marriage with Rochester as one of lifelong double subordination" (Sun-A Kwak 5). However, men students did not agree with most of the women students' ideas. I think this phenomenon results from their dating experiences, influenced by the contemporary courtship culture in Korea. In most cases of dating, men are basically responsible for the financial and economic contributions. Though women pay for their dating expenses quite often, it is generally considered as a trivial or extra contribution. The first or the most important meetings are mostly financed by men, because it is generally assumed that men will take the initiative in dating and courtship. This financing is one of the most notable characteristics of contemporary Korean masculinity where the economic development and growth have been highly valued within the society. It is still said that Korean husbands are not comfortable with their wives making more money or earning higher salaries than themselves. Money is fundamentally activated as a tool of power between men and women in courtship.

³² Most Korean men students must do military service for some period during their university days, from 6 months to 26 months. It can be postponed by their graduation, as well. Having them in the discussion class, sometimes, the teacher must be aware of their language play with comparatively inexperienced young men and women students, especially when we talked about the everyday life experience related to gender issues.

On the other hand, women students quite often made comparisons with contemporary Korean women novelists like Ji-Young Gong, whom I will discuss in detail in the section 4.2.2. Hee-Young Jeon said that it was not strange to her, living in such a strong patriarchal society, that the nineteenth-century English woman had already written what she wanted to say nowadays (1). Her response definitely shows why *Jane Eyre* has been a beloved text worldwide during the 150 years since its publication. Nonetheless, she criticized Charlotte Brontë's ambivalent attitude of searching for female subjectivity within the socially dominant ideology related to romantic love, comparing her with the Korean "kisaeng", Jin-Yi Hwang, in the Chosun dynasty.³³ In other words, she was not satisfied with Jane's marriage to Rochester in the end. Rather, she suggested that Jane should marry another man in a similar social class, because this alternative marriage would provide the Victorian readers with much more courage and hope (6). What she objected to is Charlotte Brontë's unrealistic romanticization.

Most of the women students who were strongly involved in the course were not content with Jane's union with Rochester. Another woman student linked Jane's marriage to Brontë's later decision to marry Nichols and criticized it as follows:

Reading the text from a feminist point of view, focussed on women's work and love, *Jane Eyre* has many problems in it. I also could not understand Charlotte Brontë's factual decision to get married to Mr. Nichols. When she rejected three proposals of marriage before him, I could guess she might have her own determination as a single woman. I wondered what could lead her to make that decision. Did he have any specific attraction to strongly appeal to Charlotte Brontë?

In the novel, Jane also followed the same track. In the earlier part, she announced that she wished to

³³ Jin-Yi Hwang was a famous feminist in Korean history, who voluntarily led a life against the Confucian patriarchal social ideology as a "kisaeng", an acknowledged prostitute to entertain ruling class men, freely meeting and having affairs with highly learned upper class men and discussing diverse issues, like writing poems. She left many poems and a kind of legend as a Korean feminist in 17th century Korea.

have wider experience and more diverse social relationships. However, in the end, she said that she was satisfied with living and caring for disabled Rochester. I could not understand what she really wanted. In order to understand Jane's decision, do I need to experience such a powerful and romantic love?
(Yoon-Hee Lee 7)

Here, she did not have self-authority and wondered about her own ideas because of her inexperience. She evaluated herself, unconsciously, not as an single individual but as an unpractised young girl. This is a good example of Korean women's lifelong process of obtaining personhood, which I have already discussed in section 3.1.2. In particular, what we can read from her response reflects the fact that Korean women university students in their early 20s are longing for independent professional women's lives, without even considering marriage. In Korean university campuses of the mid-1990s, the circulating propaganda tells of this tendency. That is, for a woman university graduate, getting a job is obligatory, while getting married is optional. Yoon-Hee Lee is now deconstructing the western canonized feminist text from her position, as a Korean woman university student. She also affirms that she has wished to live as a strong liberated woman and that, for this purpose in her life, she thought she needed more opportunities to practise responsibility, confidence and self-discipline (7). But, there was a contrasting opinion to hers. Sun-A Kwak declared that she was puzzled about the ending, because she could not make her decision on that ending yet, whether she would approve or object to it. For her, Jane's self-fulfillment was only acceptable when it was considered as a nineteenth-century written text. And she went further, saying "I also might not go beyond the setting in Korea of the 1990s". Her realisation can also be regarded as a valuable lesson from reading a text written in a different time and place. On the one hand, she regretted its ending. But, on the other, she would like

to admire Jane's courage and energy to pursue and act in order to overcome her given circumstances (5).

Several women students confessed that they could not criticize and object to Jane's success in both areas of women's work and love, because she had done her best even if her life could not be evaluated as a social success by most men. Jeong-Yeon Lee analysed why she evaluated the text in this way:

When I was planning to write the report on *Jane Eyre*, I was planning to object to and reject the ending. However, finally, I cannot do it. On the contrary, I must praise and sympathize with what Jane feels and acts. Later on, I contemplated what transformed my initial ideas. In my opinion, it is mainly due to Jane's way of speaking to me as a reader, showing her own feelings and ways of thinking honestly, directly, and powerfully. The most impressive point, which I have learned from this course, is that understanding an English novel even written in a different century offers me an unusual opportunity of experiencing *pleasure*³⁴ from reading the text. (9)

And, in the following sentence, she thanked me for providing such an invaluable experience. I as a lecturer was also fascinated by her response. She is now reaching towards Roland Barthes's ideas on the texts of pleasure, though not reaching the stage of the texts of bliss, yet, which I have already argued in section 2.3.1. In fact, I had wondered whether I could evoke and bring my students to this reading stage with an English written text. Also, she reacted exactly and successfully to my intention of choosing a first-person narrative text in order to call up Korean readers' emotional as well as critical responses. Her response gave me a good lesson for my further teaching. In other words, very careful teaching planning and very cautious communication with students, in terms of a teacher's self-control and language control in the teaching setting, played an important and decisive role for reaching that stage.

³⁴ my emphasis.

If I compared women students' responses to men students' during this course, the differentiation was conspicuous, as the number of examples of students' essays for my quotation is now illustrating. While men students were more concerned about their professional knowledge of the English and American novel, women students were more concerned about the story-telling development in the text. If I just confined them to the story-telling, men students were more focussed on Rochester's fall and loss of his power, while women students were more concerned about Jane's attitude to Rochester and her economic viability. Because they were second-year students, they had not yet thought seriously of their future jobs. However, this course stimulated them to meditate on it. The most important impact of this course on students, especially women students, was the contemplation of their future jobs in Korean society and the recognition of the fundamental importance of women's economic abilities, which would enable them to live as independent human beings. Here is a pertinent example.

My father has always told me to have a good professional job and that he would support me financially whatever I want to learn. Until now, I have simply taken his offering as a parental duty. But, taking this course has awakened me to the fact that financial independence is the precondition to live as a subjective human being, even not as a woman, in this capitalist society. Maybe he felt guilty for what he had done to my mother, because he rejected her and demanded a divorce when she wanted to study more abroad. So, my Mum's life has just followed the traditional housewife's life-style. Probably he does not want his daughter to live in that way.

Several days ago, while I was preparing this essay, I was really fascinated after discovering *A Room of One's Own* by Virginia Woolf. It seems that she is officially confirming my newly forming idea. I'll go that way. (Hee-Young Jeon 4)

As Hee-Young Jeon's writing shows well, women students were more likely to identify themselves with Jane than men students. This was one of the reasons why men students could not identify impressive or interesting meanings in the text.

The distance between a woman narrator and men readers is much greater than that between a woman narrator and women readers in terms of gender identity. Instead, women students had experienced difficulty from a different aspect in situating their writing positions as "feminists", which I suggested as essay topics. They related that they considered themselves feminists by then. However, when they were asked to write those essays from a feminist point of view, they began to ask themselves, "Am I sincerely a feminist?" Sun-A Kwak points out that such an insecure writing position illustrates that she was still accustomed to the patriarchal culture, just as she was to breathing, which she could not change at the moment.(4) Her awakening was also invaluable because it would furnish her with a new "feminist" perspective from then, onwards.

Nonetheless, it is interesting, especially in this course, that no students noticed or identified with Bertha Mason in the text. Most of my students simply ignored her. This is also a quite remarkable characteristic of the Korean reading of *Jane Eyre*, if we consider the dominant feminist discourse on Bertha on both sides of the Atlantic. Ania Loomba, working at Delhi University in India, shows how the racial difference in Renaissance Drama and Shakespeare Plays has influenced Indian reading in her classroom setting. According to her, Indian students, particularly women students, felt uncomfortable with the representation of and the violence against the racial difference in those dramas and plays (38-64). But, in the Korean classroom, racial difference does not play a role like that in India. It is even invisible as a blind spot. This is mainly due to the fact that Korea has been a racially homogeneous country throughout its 5,000-

year history, not mixing up with Black or White to the same extent as any other western country. Even though I cannot deny that Korean blood lineage has been mixed up with the other Far Eastern Asians, their shapes and skin colours are quite similar. So racial difference did not become a big issue in contemporary Korea until the country began to accept Southeast Asians as the workforce in the early 1990s. However, I think it is not only a matter of the non-existence of racial difference in Korea but also the well-known issue of Koreans' narrow understanding of *the other*. Owing to Korea's long history of homogeneous culture and geographical isolation, the lack of depth and width of Koreans' understanding of *the other* and cultural difference has been quite notorious. Since the 1990s, a conspicuous discussion on Korean unification has been burgeoning among Korean intellectuals, especially women intellectuals in the Alternative Culture Group, insisting that we South Koreans must prepare for the "cultural" unification, along with the "political" "economic" unification with North Koreans in the near future. Therefore, the improved understanding of cultural difference and *the other* is a urgent task for Korean people in general. This cultural, social, and historical contextualization provides an answer as to why Korean readers do not actively read the race category in the text, unlike most Third World readings of *Jane Eyre*.

What I have practised in teaching *Jane Eyre* in this specific course taught me how to produce a wonderful Korean "recipe" with the enormously diverse "ingredients" from the First World feminist discourses on *Jane Eyre*.³⁵ In the beginning, most of the students - men and women, both - were quite puzzled by my position as a feminist

³⁵ These two words, "recipe" and "ingredient", are inspired by Nancy Fraser's article, "Solidarity or Singularity? Richard Rorty Behind Romanticism and Technocracy" in *Praxis International*, Vol.8, No.3, October 1988, 256-283. However, Spivak considers that her article itself still remains a list of ingredients, not, as it claims to be, a "recipe"(323). (cf. "Scattered Speculations on the Question of Culture Studies", *Outside in the Teaching Machine*, London and New York: Routledge, 1993, 255-284.)

lecturer. This implies that the category of the lecturer's gender identity had not seriously come into their learning or reading experience before. But through the course, especially discussions and presentations, they could produce their own meanings based on their gender identities from reading an English written text and living a Korean context at the same time. Their responses are good examples of "the decolonization of the imagination" in the Kenyan writer Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's phrase as well as exact answers to Spivak's question, "Who decolonizes? And how?" (Landry, 237), while experiencing by themselves how their Korean reading subject is produced. On the other hand, more significantly, their diverse responses are teaching themselves, that is, they can remain aware of the differences and deferments within the same generation with the same national identity, according to the differentiation of gender identity.

3.3.3. "Gender in Literature" Course in 1996

I'm just writing to write because I cannot help it
There is a voice, there is an impulse that awakens up
that dormant power which smites torpidity I
sometimes think dead.

- Charlotte Bronte, *Roe Head Journal*³⁶-

- * Year: all (1st-4th)
- * Size: around 60 students³⁷
- * Gender: mixed
- * Major: all subjects
- * Time: the 1st semester in 1996
- * Text: translated and visual texts

The following responses were collected in the first semester of 1996 when the "Gender in Literature" course was offered to all students at a 4-year university in Seoul,

³⁶ This is the unpublished journal from the Bonnell Collection in the Bronte Parsonage Museum.

³⁷ I must make clear that I am not going to deal with all students' responses to *Jane Eyre*. Since the number of students' submitted responses are various according to the specific programme, this class size is not always the same number of students' responses which I am going to deal with for my argument.

Kyunghee University, which has approximately 20,000 students in the undergraduate course. It was not a major/ obligatory course but a non-major/ optional course in which everybody who was interested could take part. Therefore, the range of student groups was very wide and varied in terms of gender, major, age, and year. This specific group was made up of about 60 men and women students, majoring in almost all subjects. Even the students in fine art education and in environmental engineering were sitting together in the classroom. Concerning their gender identities, the course was made up of 50% women and 50% men. In terms of age and year, it was as varied as from 19 to 27 and included first-year to fourth-year students. More particularly, in the case of the men students, 10% of them had already finished military service which meant that they had already experienced the absolutely homogeneous masculine culture in Korea.³⁸ Teaching such a mixed group of students, I, as a lecturer, had to be very careful to design the course so as to call up and verbalize students' responses with maximum diversity. This course was composed of 3 parts: a 4-week theoretical part, a 10-week reading part, and a 2-week examining part. In the 10-week reading part, I proposed Korean, American, British, and Canadian literary texts. English language was not a relevant category for selecting the set-text for this course. So, the course was free from the burden of learning a foreign language. Even when we used the visual form, our main focus was not on visual representation through techniques like sound or scene, but on the story-telling narrative similar to the literary text, in accordance with the basic teaching purpose of this "Gender in Literature" course. If the literary set-text had a visual form, most students preferred to watch it. In the case of English written texts

³⁸ From my experience, this is a very important factor to widen the scope of students' bringing experience into the classroom. Their experience had a positive or negative influence on their own attitude to the dominant Korean masculinity. These men students' writings are normally critical or sympathetic with much clearer views on gender issues, while the younger men students' writings are comparatively shallow and superficial.

from America, Britain, and Canada, we mainly used the translated texts as well as their visual forms. Sometimes, we used both for the specific text and made the comparison. *Jane Eyre* was one of these examples, using both translated and visual texts. After the 4-week theoretical lecturing part, I offered *Jane Eyre* as the initial text, because I thought it demonstrated well, from a woman's point of view, the building-up process of gender identity in the earlier stage of patriarchal capitalism, which still influences contemporary capitalist society. For this reading part of the course, I changed my teaching style. While the theoretical part had required a lecturing style, this reading part was mostly composed of students' presentations and group discussions. For their presentations, I suggested several themes and the reference list related to the set-text in my lecture plan, distributed at the beginning of the course. Their decisions on which of 10 texts they would present and which of 5 or 7 themes they would select were completely dependent on her or his own intention, even if some negotiations were necessary for maintaining the teaching structure of the course.

However, before they came into the classroom, each student had to prepare her or his own solicited writing of no more than 3 pages, in order more clearly to designate her or his own ideas on the set-text. This is supported by Derrida's ideas on the speaking subject, in this case, the writing subject, the *I*, the *here*, the *now*, as I have already argued in section 2.3.2. On the other hand, this solicited writing was a good preparation for the students to participate actively in the discussion programme. For this discussion programme, I asked students to make small groups of 6 or 7 members by themselves for each discussion. This kind of grouping was useful for two purposes. Firstly, they could produce their own opinions more freely in the small size discussion groups and, secondly, they could experience by themselves how different the other students' ideas were from their own. In short, they could see and feel for themselves

the similarity and difference in their ideas through this discussion programme. After the discussion, every group - in this case, all 8 groups - summarized their discussions and the presider of that specific programme reported it to the other students in the classroom. So, all students could hear what kind of topics and opinions were discussed simultaneously in the same classroom. Thus, the students in the classroom were not passive recipients but were involved in all kinds of programmes as active producers of "Korean" meaning, through preparing their solicited writings, presenting the main themes from reading the text and references, participating in the discussion programme, and summarizing and reporting what her or his group had discussed. Whenever we were reaching the end of every programme, each student could realize how much their ideas had been transformed through these processes. In this "Gender in Literature" course as a whole, students' responses varied according to their gender identity as well as the range of their autobiographical experience. I cannot simplify or definitely conclude that women students were more sympathetic and men students were not. Gender identity boundaries did not work in that simple way. The students' responses in this course were much more diversified than those in the English Studies course. Rather, each student's autobiographical experience was a more influential factor in changing their former ways of thinking. But, if I just confined this issue to the first programme on *Jane Eyre*, I might simplify like that. How much each student was influenced or transformed by taking this "Gender in Literature" course was largely affected by what kind of person she or he was. If she or he had had wide observation and a long perspective, and practised a self-retrospective way of thinking, she or he transformed, to a great extent, her or his former ways of thinking through the course. Therefore, the success or the failure of the cultural politics of feminist reading in the

classroom was immensely indebted to the interactive and interweaving process between the multiple relationships among teacher, students, and texts.

Let me return to the text *Jane Eyre*. Most students began their short writings by explaining how and when they met this translated text in their lives. Two women students mentioned that they read it, for the first time, when they were in the fifth-year of primary school.³⁹ One of them analysed her reading experience as a reading subject, divided into three stages.

This is my third reading. When I was 10 years old, I read the edited text for children for the first time. When I was 18 years old, in the last year of my high school, I read the complete text in translation. In my first reading, I skipped the pages with embarrassment and an unpleasant feeling from reading about adults' passionate love. In my second reading, I kept a distance from Jane's strong-minded personality with coldness and aloofness, because I could not accept and be satisfied with Jane's union with Rochester, a man 20 years her senior. But, now, in my third reading, I can feel more sympathetic to Jane's position and it seems possible for me to understand Charlotte Bronte's spiritual outcry. (Hae-Joang Ha; a third-year in history 1)⁴⁰

While most women students began their writings by remembering their reading experience, several men students began with their uncomfortable feeling at situating themselves as reading subjects of the "famous feminist text", *Jane Eyre*. This was more prominent in the relatively older men students' writings than the first-year or second-year men students'. Chang-Sun Kong, a fourth-year in law, said, "I cannot watch "Jane Eyre" with an easy and comfortable feeling at all. This is the first time for me to feel

³⁹ In 1990, I and my colleague had roughly checked what ratio of Korean university students had already read *Jane Eyre* before they came into the university. In the case of women students, half of them had already read it, while, in that of men students, less than a quarter of them had already read it.

⁴⁰ Especially in this section, I am disclosing the individual student's year and major, because those are quite important factors for understanding their ways of thinking, differentiated by their age and experience.

** Here and elsewhere, titles in inverted commas indicate film versions of written texts.

that watching a video is far from enjoying myself. I think this results from the fact that I have to say something and write down my opinion about this feminist text" (1). Another man student also stated his position, announcing that he was neither a feminist nor a pursuer of the feudal patriarchy, but that he definitely could not sympathize with contemporary Korean feminist propaganda (Sang-Hee Choi; a fourth-year in administration, 2). Their ambivalent feelings in positioning themselves as speaking (or writing) subjects about this "famous feminist text" illustrate that feminist messages in Korean society are still marginalised, not so much permeated into everybody's everyday life as in the western Europe.

Asking men students to write something about *Jane Eyre* led them to look at Korean contemporary social reality from an unfamiliar point of view. Sang-Hee Choi wondered why this text had been so powerfully appealing to Korean readers until now and concluded the reason was that women's equal status was not yet guaranteed in Korean society, where, if a young woman began to speak out her own ideas about something, she would be still considered as *coarse* and *vulgar* (2).⁴¹ He is now representing the typical Confucian views on women, reminding me of Elizabeth Rigby's notorious criticism of *Jane Eyre*. His impression of *Jane Eyre* was not much different from hers in 1848. Myung-Jin Kim (a second-year in law) brought his own experience. When he looked for the film "Jane Eyre", the assistant in the video shop, a male high school graduate, asked him spontaneously, "Is it an action movie?". Myung-Jin Kim was surprised by his response and thought that this reflected the current stage of Korean feminism among the general public, which we must take as a very serious social problem (1). Related to Myung-Jin Kim's experience, another man student, Yoon-Sung Lee (a fourth-year in English literature) objected to my selection of *Jane Eyre* as the first

⁴¹ My emphasis, because these two words are exactly the same as Elizabeth Rigby's description of *Jane Eyre*.

starting text. Reading a foreign feminist text was not desirable for understanding Korean social reality, he thought, because the lesson from reading *Jane Eyre* would remain just a message in a vacuum for the Korean women's movement (1). He recognized the wide gap between the mid-nineteenth-century English text and the late-twentieth-century Korean readers.

Most women students accepted *Jane Eyre* more comfortably, evaluating the woman character, Jane Eyre, as the most appealing and charming point in the text (Yeon-Soo Lee; a fourth-year in Korean literature, Ji-Hyun Lee; a first-year in Children and Living, A-Young Kim; a first-year in Biology). A man student also identified "Jane Eyre" as a representative woman character of the nineteenth century, comparing her with Ada in the recent film, "The Piano". From his point of view, these two women characters were remarkable in resisting and subverting their given circumstances and both suggested the role model of how women self-esteemed and valued themselves as human beings, not just as women (Young-Jun Lee; a second-year in Journalism).

However, women students seriously attacked Rochester, because his love was not seen as sincere and honest. From their points of view, Rochester's so-called "love" did not concord with what he had done to Jane, in other words, his intended bigamy. But, their specific responses showed slightly different perspectives. Yeon-Hee Hong (a fourth-year in Music) described what her idea of love was: "If Rochester really loves Jane, he must confess and explain his situation to Jane before their marriage. Without sincere understanding of the partner, without respect and esteem, without faith and trust, how could he call her "my second self and best earthly companion" (Bronte 282)?" (2). Now she is in the position of approving the pure relationship of romantic love, contrasted to the emerging "plastic sexuality" which I mentioned in section 3.2.1.. This phenomenon of split and polarity from students' responses clearly indicates the current

stage of Korean social discourse and ideology on love, marriage, and sexuality, as I will argue in detail in section 4.2. Another woman student, Song-Hee Yang (a first-year in law) wished to defend Rochester, even though she doubted his sincerity. From her point of view, Rochester had done his best for his mad wife, which proved that he was not a naturally evil man at all. She even felt pity and empathy for Rochester's miserable married life (1).

It was, nevertheless, very interesting that in this group, unlike the former groups of students, only men students paid attention to the economic inequality between Jane and Rochester and the crucial influence of its subversion in the ending. Han-Young Park (a fourth-year in law) guessed that, without this subversion, Jane would not come back to Rochester and admitted that this was the practical reality in this capitalist society (1). Woo-Jong Byun, a third-year, also thought like that, but he considered this issue was relatively linked to the writer, Charlotte Bronte, herself. In his opinion, Jane's rejection of Rochester's materialistic gifts resulted from Bronte's inferior materialistic position. Incidentally, his major was in business administration. Later on, in an essay he brought to class, he imagined that the Victorian readers' responses would be quite similar to the contemporary audiences' responses to Nam-Jun Paik⁴²'s postmodern video art - embarrassment and excitement at the same time. Men students' perceptions from reading *Jane Eyre* imply they are more practical and realistic in looking at the relationship between Jane and Rochester, while women students are more emotional and sentimental.

Bertha Mason was only noticed by the fourth-year men and women students, majoring in Korean literature. Both considered Bertha as a determining character, making *Jane Eyre* alive and vivid. Their responses were much sharper and more critical

⁴² He is a famous Korean video artist, mostly working in Germany and now in New York.

than the others'. Yeon-Soo Lee saw the double layered structure in *Jane Eyre* and took Jane's leaving Rochester not only as one specific woman's anger and anxiety at her partner's betrayal but also as a process of development after confirming male violence to women. Then, she continued:

Bronte's intention in creating Bertha Mason tells us that the main theme of *Jane Eyre* is not romantic love, as we have thought, but a concrete illustration of male falsity and violence behind it. But, finally, could Bronte be free from the "romantic love" ideology? The ending shows us that she couldn't be free at all. This is the textual limitation of the newness in *Jane Eyre*. (2-3)

Dong-Su Han went further and concentrated his writing on Bertha, because, from his point of view, *Jane Eyre* was regarded as a typical example of the Cinderella complex which diverted his main interest from Jane Eyre in the text. Instead, he would like to save the dead Bertha and revive her speaking. His response was very exciting to me, since I knew that he definitely did not know Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*. His writing was more radical and critical than any women students, contrasting with my earlier description of women students' fondness for the woman character, Jane Eyre. He asked why we, in this late twentieth century, still consider *Jane Eyre* a feminist text, when it is seen by himself as no more than the canonical text of the Cinderella complex.

I will focus more on his distinctive opinion.

The film, "Jane Eyre", failed to represent women's independence and liberation through Jane Eyre's life. On the contrary, I can read the issue of woman's emancipation and the conflicting structure of gender identities, more significantly, through Bertha Mason. If this film (or literary text) had been written from Bertha's point of view, it would have dealt with women's issues more deeply and extensively. (1-2)

At this moment, it must be noticed that Yeon-Soo Lee read the literary translated text and Dong-Su Han watched the visual text. One would say that the film could not be considered as Bronte's text but Franco Zeffirelli's. It seems that the film was a more romanticized and less powerful text than Bronte's literary text. Sun-Kyung Choung (a first-year in nursing) reported that the image of Jane in the film and that in the literary text were very different. She thought the film had transformed the most appealing characteristics in the literary text into a melodramatic version for its commercial success (1). But another woman student, So-Young Kim (a third-year in history), responded in an opposite way, moving from watching the film to reading the novel, because she was much touched by Jane's courageous and independent ways of thinking and living: "This novel was a fresh shock to me. Honestly speaking, it stimulated my unconscious Cinderella complex and transformed it into an invaluable awakening, that is, I must make by myself my own way of life confident and courageous in this sex- as well as age-discriminated society" (1). Her response is provocative in both aspects. One is her subconscious connection of sex and age as the categories of discrimination in Korean society. Even though the issue of age discrimination was not at all expressed in *Jane Eyre*, she expanded the issue of sexism into the issue of ageism, one of the most distinctive characteristics of Korean Confucian culture, as we have already seen in Sang-Hee Choi's earlier writing. As a "young" "woman", she recognized her doubly discriminated social position by sex and age, and unconsciously linked both in her writing. The other interesting point in her writing is the way in which she accepted Jane's story as related to the Cinderella complex. She read it as the feminist text to awaken her to her own inner Cinderella complex, standing on the opposite side to Dong-Su Han's views on the text. Isn't it an interesting phenomenon related to their gender identities? For me, Dong-Su Han's opinion, that the Cinderella complex just needs to

be recognized in order to be overcome, implies that he does not see how it actually constructs women's ways of experiencing their lives, which is different from men's. Two men students (Han-Young Park and Woo-Jong Byun) give more attention to practical features of power than to the ideological.

As in the other courses, the ending seemed to be most problematic to both men and women students, particularly to experienced mature students. They wondered whether this ending could be acceptable as a truly happy marriage.

Can we say that this is a truly happy marriage for both of them? The ending, in which an heiress decided to marry a disabled man who once betrayed her in the name of "love", only reflects the Victorian social ideology. In other words, the text implies that a woman's happiness was absolutely decided by her marriage based on romantic love. It would be a very rare case in the contemporary society where divorce happens quite often.⁴³ (Chang-Sun Kong; a fourth-year in law 1)

He is sceptical of Jane's happy marriage with Rochester, comparing it to marriage in contemporary Korean society. Another man student, Jun-Seok Song, a third-year in law, also disagreed with Jane's marriage as well as Bronte's ideas on marriage, from a somewhat different viewpoint:

I object to Bronte's ideas on marriage, which she considered the destination of romantic love. Of course, it is desirable if we can manage our lives in that harmonized way. However, the reality is harsher than her ideas. These three factors, love, marriage, and sexuality (or just sex) do not always go with one another.

To me, the more important mistake in Bronte's writing is caused by her own belief which I strongly reject. The last destination or purpose of a woman's life should not be her marriage with a loved man. Marriage is another departure for a different life

⁴³ In 1997, it was reported that one of six Korean couples divorced and this divorce ratio was as high as that in Germany or France. However, the implication of this phenomenon is different, because, in Korea, living together before their legal marriage was not so popular as in western Europe.

style. Every woman, like every man, must be responsible for her life in the world, even without mentioning existentialism. Marriage should be, for both of them, an alternative beginning of a new life in terms of equal enlargement of their selves, contingent to their love relationship. If that marriage did not become an interactive relationship, like Jane's with Rochester in terms of caring, it must be unwelcome. I believe that marriage must be beneficial for both, together. (1)⁴⁴.

Here, his response to Jane's marriage illustrates that the Korean concept of marriage is now changing from the patriarchal ideas in the father's generation to the egalitarian ideas in the son's generation, introducing the fresh image of "new" Korean men. However, his future life-style in reality will be another issue. But, for women students, the dissatisfied feeling from this problematic ending was more serious and severe, because they could not envisage a better ending than Jane's marriage to Rochester. One of them manifested the woman's predicament in a real setting: "Then, what type of life must be Jane's alternative? The slogan only exists in the ideal, while we cannot find or create any alternative way of life in reality. I think this is not only Bronte's limitation in the nineteenth century but also ours in twentieth-century Korea" (Yeon-Soo Lee; a fourth-year in Korean literature 3). She is now looking through women's bafflement with the ideology of 'romantic love' from nineteenth-century Britain to twentieth-century Korea, while crossing over the boundaries between writer, text, and reader within the same gender identity.

During the discussion programme, the ending of the novel also emerged as the most contentious point. For example, one group of 7 members - 3 men and 4 women - could not reach any conclusion about this ending. Among 7 members, 3 of them - one man and two women - were positive about Jane's marriage, taking it as the progressive

⁴⁴ When a man student submitted such a thoughtful writing, it was quite often that he was now seriously negotiating these issues in his personal life.

process of her romantic love. They even considered that it would be a betrayal if she would not marry Rochester owing to his disability. Another 3 members - one man and two women - were negative about Jane's marriage with Rochester. Even if Jane willingly decided her marriage, they thought, her marriage with Rochester was nothing more than self-sacrifice, demanding of Jane a lifelong role of a Holy Mary, while Rochester's love for Jane was still doubtful. These three students tried to calculate how much Jane and Rochester loved each other, like their economic equality. They also criticized Bronte's perspective on marriage and its ending, reflecting her monolithic and simplistic views on marriage. One man student did not make any decision about Jane's marriage, only suggesting that Jane should have contemplated her marriage with Rochester more seriously and reasonably, not emotionally like in the text. He thought Bronte's omission of this process was a mistake, because marriage was directly linked to the most resolute and solemn reality with which every individual must experiment and struggle through her or his everyday life. These responses illustrate the diversity and heterogeneity of Korean concepts on marriage, even among the same generation of university students in their early 20s.

As my analyses of the students' responses in this group have shown here, the students in the "Gender in Literature" course participated more actively in every programme, liberated from reading the foreign language text. Another distinctive differentiation from the English Studies course derived from the students' side, i.e., whether they had voluntarily chosen the course based on their personal interest and intellectual curiosity, or whether the course had simply been given to the students as a compulsory hurdle which they must pass. Students' imaginations and responses to the text in the "Gender in Literature" course were more directly connected to Korean social reality and influenced by its nature and structure. Specifically, as my sample essays

implied, there was a large portion of students from the law department in this group. This resulted partly from the famous legal case in 1994/1995 Korea on the sexual harrassment of a woman postgraduate student by a man professor at a very privileged Korean university.⁴⁵ It seemed to be urgent for men students, especially of law, to understand the gender issues in contemporary Korean society for their future benefit.

Most students in this course responded to the text from the story-telling aspect, not from the literary or theoretical aspect. For this teaching methodology, planning, projecting, and organizing tasks were necessary for the teacher's side. During the presentations and seminars, I have been very cautious about projecting my subject position through my own speaking to students in an effort to secure more freedom to practise Roland Barthes's *floating* in the classroom as I have argued in section 2.5.. My main concern was whether my verbalisation, as the most powerful discourse in the classroom, was faster or wider than the speed and range of their thinking. I hoped to lead them to observe their everyday lives with their own eyes and not to impose my ideas. Therefore, the communication between teacher and students, and between themselves in the group discussion, have played an important role in stimulating and awakening their gender-centered consciousness as well as in expressing and describing their own ideas on gender issues.

The most fascinating peculiarity in this "Gender in Literature" course emerges as the concurrent multiple dynamics of crossing over as well as deconstructing many kinds of boundaries. In particular, the collusion and the web of intrigue between gender identity boundaries are extremely exciting and remarkable, because they provide the imaginary map of gender formation and gender change in Korean cultural context, as I

⁴⁵ It was almost the first legal case on sexual harrassment, not sexual violence, called "Assistant Woo's Case". Since the man professor failed in the court, this case had stirred Korean society with a new perspective on sexual harrassment.

have been depicting in this section. In her article, “Representing Women: Re-presenting the Past”, Gillian Beer argues that we need to be alert to the processes of gender formation and gender change through our reading experience, while confirming that this freedom is uniquely offered by literature.

One of the most important apparent freedoms that literature offers us is that of crossing gender in our reading experience, disturbing the categories within which society regularises our activities. (72)

In my teaching classroom, we have maximized “the most important apparent freedoms” through our reading experience, not focussed on the writer/reader relationship like that in Gillian Beer’s argument but on reader/reader relationship among one another. And this mapping out of gender formation and gender change in Korean culture provides one element of cross-cultural gender differences for the future gender-related transformations inside/ outside Korea.

3.4. On *The Color Purple*: Thinking back through Our Grandmothers

3.4.1. “Gender in Literature” Course in 1996

This quilt is obviously the work of a person of powerful imagination and deep spiritual feeling. Below this quilt I saw a note that says it was made by “an anonymous Black woman in Alabama, a hundred years ago.” If we could locate this “anonymous” black woman from Alabama, she would turn out to be one of our grandmothers - an artist who left her mark in the only materials she could afford, and in the only medium her position in society allowed her to use.

- Alice Walker,

“In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens” -

* Year: all (1st-4th)

* Size: around 60 students⁴⁶

⁴⁶ I must make clear that I am not going to deal with all students’ responses to *The Color Purple*. Since the number of submitted students’ responses varies

- * Gender: mixed
- * Major: all subjects
- * Time: the 1st semester in 1996
- * Text: translated and visual texts

The following responses to *The Color Purple* were collected in the first semester of 1996 from the same student group as in the section 3.3.3. This programme was marked as the sixth among 10 reading set-texts in that specific semester. I intentionally selected this text *The Color Purple* to bring out the gender issues as well as the racial issues at the same time. I hoped the students could read the multiple repressed factors in the text. On the other hand, Korean people's need to understand Afro-American culture has been demanding and urgent as the Los Angeles Riot had already proved in late April, 1992.⁴⁷ The home culture in Korea was not much different. Most Koreans learned about Afro-American culture by watching Hollywood films at the personal and private levels, not through the school curricula at the official and public levels. Only the students from the English department would be a little bit different. Even though I suggested using both film and translated text, it was obvious, especially in this programme, for most students to prefer watching the film to reading the translated text because it was less easily available.⁴⁸ On the other hand, in Korea, the film, "The Color Purple", by Steven Spielberg was more popular than the literary text by Alice Walker. Even in the undergraduate course at the English department, the English written text of *The Color Purple* was not welcomed, mainly due to Alice Walker's writing style.

according to the specific programme, this class size is not always the same number of students' responses which I am going to deal with for my argument.

⁴⁷ In the beginning, the Rodney King accident had nothing to do with Koreans. However, it sparked the disparity of misunderstanding between Korean-American and Afro-American in that region. In 1996, *East to America* was published for its commemoration through Korean-Americans' autobiographical narratives. The cultural misunderstanding was the main cause of the L.A. Riot, providing a good example of the fact that the *other* must be in ourselves.

⁴⁸ *The Color Purple* was translated into Korean in late the 1980s. But, later on, this translated text was almost forgotten due to its unpopularity and the publisher has never published more copies of this translated text until now.

Consequently, Korean undergraduate students would not be individually regarded as “the informed reader” from Stanley Fish’s point of view, because they were not equipped with both *language* and *literary* competence, as I have already discussed in section 2.3.6. But on the other hand, they have collectively belonged to the particular interpretive community, which Stanley Fish took into account as the centre of reading authority affected by a public and conventional point of view. In fact, in their responses to *The Color Purple*, there were not such diverse or even contradictory differences from individual to individual as those to *Jane Eyre*, even though they belonged to the same group. In short, their individual responses to *The Color Purple* did not have the wide range of differences, while those to *Jane Eyre* have already showed a remarkable diversity in section 3.3.3. This difference must be attributed to the fact that the relatively familiar Victorian text allowed individual differences to emerge, while the unfamiliar Afro-American text elicited a primarily group response, not yet diversified. This comparison between their responses to *The Color Purple* and those to *Jane Eyre* has brought out a very intriguing topic about the relationship between the individual reader and the interpretive community in terms of the influential authority. On the other hand, this differentiation of students’ responses between section 3.3.3. and section 3.4.1. implies that the distance between the social structure in the specific text and that in the specific interpretive community, in terms of similarity and dissimilarity, has played an important role for the purpose of whether analysis should focus on the individual reader’s unique response or the collective responses from the specific interpretive community.

Many students began their essays with the self-recognition that they were ignorant of Afro-American history and culture, in particular in the 1920s and 1930s which was the main background period of the film, “The Color Purple”. To most

Korean undergraduate students, Afro-American and Black women as a whole have remained as the imaginary *other*. In most cases, their knowledge of Afro-American culture was concentrated on racial issues. At least three students - two men and one woman - said that, before they watched the film, they expected race discrimination to be the main theme as in many Hollywood films on Afro-Americans. One woman student, Song-Yi Han, a second-year in philosophy,⁴⁹ noticed that the film's dealing with sex discrimination was unique, distinguished from other Afro-American films which deal mainly with race discrimination (2). Sung-Bo Oh, a second-year in philosophy, said that this film provided him with a rare experience because he was moved and surprised by the film itself, which he had never experienced from any kind of Hollywood films before (1). Another man student, Suk-Won Park, a third-year in journalism, said that he was uncomfortable while watching this unfamiliar story. But, he concluded that Afro-American patriarchal culture was not much different from Korean contemporary patriarchal culture (2).

The most common response by both men and women students to *The Color Purple* was they had experienced a process of very complicated feelings while they were watching the film. And this experience of complicated feelings led them to examine themselves as gendered subjects. Several first-year women students seriously asked themselves, "Am I really an owner or master of my life?" (Su-Yeon Song, a first-year in clothing, 1; Sun-Hee Wón, a second-year in philosophy, 1) or "Do I have the will-power to keep female subjectivity throughout my life?" (Young-Ran Yoon, a first-year in business,⁵⁰ 1), after looking at Celie's extreme repression. Another two women

⁴⁹ Especially in this section, I am disclosing the individual student's year and major, because those are quite important factors to understand their ways of thinking, differentiated by their age and experience.

⁵⁰ From the 1996 first-year students, Kyunghee University selected students not for the business administration departmental level but for the business school level. They can choose a more specialized major in their third year.

students pointed out, as the most impressive phrase in the film, Celie's brave reaction to Albert when she was getting in the car for leaving: "Yes, I'm pore, I'm black, I'm ugly. But, I'm here." (Jun-Hee Lim, a first-year in business, 1; Hee-Young Kim, a third-year in chemistry, 2).

However, men students' responses to *The Color Purple* illustrate several peculiar characteristics, different from their responses to *Jane Eyre*, even though they were the same group. While men students' responses to *Jane Eyre* did not show any conspicuous characteristic related to their gender identity, their responses to *The Color Purple* did disclose the unconscious male egotism as the privileged gender group in this patriarchal culture. Because, in the film "The Color Purple", the relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed was definitely corresponding to the relationship between man/male and woman/female gender identities, it seems to me, they had to say something about women's painful oppression throughout history. This was why an accusation about Celie's lack of self-awakening in the earlier stage of the story was frequently discovered in their writings (Young-Jun Lee, a second-year in journalism; Suk-Won Park, a third-year in journalism; Un-Hyung Che, a second-year in philosophy; Sang-Won Park, a fourth-year in finance). *By contrast*, one woman student, Jae-Eun Oh, a second-year in nutrition, defended Celie from their accusations, saying that Celie could not use the word "rejection" in her living circumstances (1). However, one man student, Un-Hyung Che, a second-year in philosophy, could not bear Celie's silent submission at the beginning, which he could not accept as the real situation. He said, "In the film, the exaggeration in representing Afro-American women's oppression was too severe" (2). Consulting his experience of being a "proud" son in Korean society, he could not sympathize with or even believe Celie's extravagant repression. Another man student, Young-Jun Lee, a second-year in journalism, linked Celie's passive

subordination to his peer group of women students, blaming them for their passive attitudes in confronting the harsh realities.

Reaching university graduation, women students often said, "I'll get married if I cannot get a job". Many women chose to escape from the realities rather than challenge them and accepted the social convention, while many men did their best to do their future duties as bread-winners in the family. Women, with both possibilities, did not take an active way to make their lives subjective but often decided to stop at the current stage. They seemed to have never thought that their actions created the discriminated and isolated images of women in the society. It is very stupid and foolish if they would just blame social institutions and customs without making an effort themselves. My critique, here, is not simply the result of my-being-male. I wish that women would ask themselves whether they have ever made any kind of excuse like "because I am a woman", before. I hope they are not timid. (2-3)

Through his narrative in his writing, we can read his ambivalence in accusing women students of timidity, because his writing is supposed to be read and evaluated by a woman lecturer. When the woman and man gender identities overlap with the teacher and student relationships, a woman lecturer must try to read between the lines. What I am trying to say now is that his writing would be different in terms of the narrative tone, if it were supposed to be read by a man lecturer. Namely, it would be sharper and higher than now, as an exact example of cultural politics in different situations, in this case, from the students' side.

Another remarkable point in men students' writings is that they have often re-examined their gender identity by looking at women's obvious oppression. Han-Young Park, a fourth-year in law, declared that he wished to take Celie's process of searching for subjectivity from a *humanist* point of view, not specified as a *feminist* point of view (1). His opinion reflects no more than male egotistic discourse as saying, "I'm not a *feminist* but a *humanist*". He wished to erase the gender differentiation boundary

keeping the distance from the oppressed as the oppressor. Another man student, Sang-Yeui Suh, a fourth-year in administration, also took this political position, insisting that women's unequal status must be regarded from a *humanist* point of view, rather than a *feminist* point of view and confirmed, again, "I'm not a feminist at all" (1). In the writings by third and fourth-year men students, sometimes, I could find the same definite as well as stubborn anti-feminist discourse, even a misogynist point of view. This is my actual teaching environment concerning gender issues. Also, it is an exactly demonstrative evidence of what Spivak pointed out as the discontinuity between the academic feminism in the classroom and the sexism outside of the institution, especially in the Third World situation (150), as I have already discussed in section 2.5. The similar anti-feminist opinion was also suggested by Woo-Jong Byun, a third-year in business administration, defining, in general, that men were superior to women, even though it was his mother that he mostly respected in the world (1). It is not strange to encounter men students' mystified asexual image of their mothers in their writings.⁵¹ A more contemplative and serious way of thinking might be the writing by Seung-Whan Kim, a second-year in nutrition. He was questioning and suspecting this gender differentiation boundary, exemplifying his own experience.

Many people asked me why I chose nutrition as my major subject. They expected to hear from me a kind of grand (or meta-) historical cause, asking me with curiosity, "Why...?" or "How...?". I just selected it, simply because I liked it. Whenever I told them this reason, they looked at me like an alien. "Simple unfamiliarity!" Yes, it is simply unfamiliar. That's all. (2)

⁵¹ This phenomenon results from the peculiar Korean concept of mothering, which I will not bring forward here because of its complexity mainly influenced by the long history of Confucianism. No western theory on mothering could explain this complexity.

His experience shows that the gender differentiation boundary in Korean culture was strongly established and the social role-play according to gender identity was seriously differentiated, even to the extent of identifying “nutrition” with “cooking” and hence “women’s work”. Seung-Whan Kim’s self-recognition as a male subject crosses over the gender boundary and leads him to wonder, “Could I act like Celie if I were in her situation?”. His way of thinking on his gendered subject is located on the front line ahead of the other men students. Probably, Sung-Jun Kim, a third-year in journalism, is on the last line, selfishly counting his good luck because he was born as a man in this strongly patriarchal culture (2). Maybe Hyun-Sang Choi, a first-year in law, would stand between the two, while manifestly admitting his male egotistic way of thinking.

I think Albert is not an exception but just an extreme case. Men tend, consciously or unconsciously, to ignore and disregard women. I also prefer a gentle and submissive woman to an active and subjective woman. I am also accustomed to say “You are not woman-like”. It seems to me that I was naturally born with the Confucian patriarchal ideology. I cannot explain why I could not reform that point of view. (1)

He honestly acknowledges his patriarchal way of thinking and takes it as “natural born”. His writing is a good example of male ambivalence, like Young-Jun Lee’s. He can understand feminism as a knowledge with his brain, but he cannot accept it as a practice in everyday life with his heart.

On the other hand, Celie’s life in the film, “The Color Purple”, reminded a number of students of their *real* grandmothers, who had led similar lives through out twentieth-century Korea. Several students compared Celie’s life with their *imaginary* grandmothers in the Chosun dynasty during the years 1392-1910 (Hye-Jin Lee, a first-year in business administration; Young-Jun Lee, a second-year in journalism; Hee-Young Kim, a third-year in chemistry; Sung-Jun Kim, a third-year in journalism). In

fact, Jong-Ha Ryoo, a first-year in law, brought his *real* grandmother's life into his writing, looking at Celie's life.

My grandfather was not much different from Albert in the film. So, my grandmother's life was like Celie's... He was rich and had four mistresses. How and what did my grandmother think about it? Did she accept everything obediently as the unchangeable social convention? She would have concealed her anger and anxiety, similar to Celie's. Since my grandfather died at the age of 35, my grandmother lived by herself during the following 40 years. She died 5 years ago, when I was doing military service. I wish to ask her what she thought of her own life. (2)

His writing illustrates well what the general Korean women's lives in the early twentieth century were like. It was not much different from Celie's life in 1930s America.

However, Woo-Jong Byun, a third-year in business administration, picked up Celie's episode of incest with her step-father as the most differentiating point from Korean *imaginary* grandmothers' repression in the Chosun dynasty. Like other themes on sexuality, incest had not been a familiar theme to Korean people until the "Kim Bo Eun Case" in 1994(?).⁵² Many students, especially women students, said that they could not believe the incest episode in the film. For instance, Song-Yi Han, a second-year in philosophy, confessed, "I had to rewind the film over and over again in order to listen to Celie's first sentence, because I thought I had misunderstood what she said. That is, "I gave birth to two babies instead of my mother when I was fourteen". Is it possible? Then, it spontaneously reminded me of "Kim Bo Eun's Case" (1).

⁵² "Kim Bo Eun" (Bo-Eun Kim) was a second-year student majoring in dance at one of the 4-year universities outside of Seoul. Her boyfriend killed her step-father who had sexually abused her since the age of 9. Because her mother was economically dependent, she and her mother could not escape from him. The court acknowledged her boyfriend's guilt, but reduced his jail period. This case stirred the whole country with the theme of incest.

On the contrary, the “wife-beating” theme is relatively familiar to Korean students. It has long since emerged as a serious women’s issue in Korea. This is why several students said that they were shocked by Celie’s advice to Harpo, “Beat her”, when Harpo consulted with Celie about how to get along well with Sophia. Jung-Mai Kim, a first-year in business, said that she could not believe that Alice Walker put exactly the same sentence in the English written text. She wished to read the English text in order to investigate exactly how Alice Walker depicted Celie’s response (2). Another man student, Sang-Ho Lee, a third-year in economics, read Celie’s “Beat her” as the concrete sign of the narrow limitation of her female consciousness and awakening (1). Concerning the “wife-beating” issue in Korea, the most serious aspect relates to traditional custom. It was not considered as social and public violence but as familial and personal violence in the name of the inherited culture supported by the Korean traditional proverb, “Wife and Dried Cod must be beaten every three days”. This resulted in a worse situation for the beaten women, because they were not often supported by the police. Since it was reported that “wife-beating” had not been a sudden happening but a continuing psychological symptom in Korea,⁵³ it frequently became the main cause of a cruel murder case.⁵⁴ Therefore, they have known well the serious harm of “wife-beating”. Their strict blame for Celie’s phrase, “Beat her”, arose from this sociocultural background.

⁵³ Hye-Sun Kim argued the several characteristics of “wife-beating” in Korea in her paper, “The Research on the Continuity of Wife-Beating: focussed on the beaten wives’ experiences staying at the shelter”, delivered at the 13th Korean Women’s Studies Association Conference held at Seoul National University on 16 November, 1996.

⁵⁴ The most recent murder case was called the “Lee Sang Hee Grandmother Case” in 1995. Sang-Hee Lee, seventy-two years old, killed her daughter’s lover, who had beaten her daughter for several years. However, in the initial report, her daughter, forty-five years old, reported herself as his murderer. Two days later, it was revised.

Two women and one man student reported that this film provided them with a new perspective on human relationships in Korean society. In her writing, “A Woman’s Way”, So-Young Kim, a third-year in history, told how “The Color Purple” gave her a new perspective for looking at various human relationships between husband and wife, father and daughter, sister and brother, as well as Black and White (1). Also, she noticed Celie’s decisive relationship with Shug. But she initially identified Shug not as Celie’s female friend but as Albert’s mistress. So-Young Kim defined their relationship as “exceptional” and “ironical”, because she took it as the relationship between a wife and a mistress in the typical love-triangle relationship. It is true that Steven Spielberg minimized their lesbian relationship in the film. However, this is not the genuine reason for her misreading of their relationship. In Korea, there was no public space to situate the social discourse on lesbian identity or lesbianism until November, 1995, when just 6 lesbians politically *came out*.⁵⁵ Therefore, influenced by these factors, So-Young Kim completely missed Alice Walker’s intention in writing *The Color Purple*. Alice Walker once described how she began to think of writing *The Color Purple* as follows:

Ruth said, “And you know, one day the wife asked the other woman for a pair of her drawers”. Instantly the missing piece of the story I was mentally writing - about two women who felt married to the same man - fell into place. And for months - through illnesses, divorce, several moves, travel abroad, all kinds of heartaches and revelations - I carried my sister’s comment delicately balanced in the centre of the novel’s construction I was building in my head. (453)

No man student notices their relationship as crucial for Celie’s awakening and transformation. They just mentioned it, superficially. In fact, this group of students hardly noticed the importance of the relationships between/ among women, which was the prominent theme in *The Color Purple*. And, this is one of several differences from

⁵⁵ I shall argue this issue of lesbian politics in Korea in later section 4.3.2.

the next group of students in section 3.4.2. Instead, they have paid attention to Celie's heterosexual relationship. Sung-Bo Oh, a second-year in philosophy, said that he began to see heterosexual relationships, in general, in a different way (2). Actually, only a few students have noticed Celie's sexual relationship or sexual experience in the film. For Korean university students accustomed to watching the romanticized and mystified sexual intercourse in Hollywood-version films, Celie's sexual experience was seen as very unusual. Only one woman student, Su-Yeon Song, a first-year in clothing, said that, for her, the most shocking phrase throughout the film was Celie's. "It seems that I am his toilet".

It is most interesting that men and women students have evaluated two different factors as the main cause for Celie's awakening. While men students considered that Celie's inheritance was the main reason for her new life (Sung-Jun Kim, a third-year in journalism, 2), women students indicated Celie's education and her diverse human relationships with those around her as the main reason for her subjective life (Hye-Jin Lee, a first-year in business, 2). Men students were, again, keen to focus on Celie's economic situation and materialistic prosperity like in their responses to *Jane Eyre*. Nevertheless, women students' convinced responses to Celie's interactive human relationships remind me of Carol Gilligan's famous research, *In a Different Voice* (1982), in which she figured out the gender difference in the establishment of men's and women's consciousness. Women, she argues, establish their sense of identity through relationships with others, while men, on the whole, have a more sharply-differentiated sense of an individual ego-boundary. In spite of this difference, Young-Ran Yoon, a first-year in business, has concluded that, after looking at Celie's oppression, awakening, and transformation, women and men must not be discriminated, but only differentiated (2).

3.4.2. "Gender in Literature" Course in 1997

Me and Sofia work on the quilt. Got it frame up on the porch. Shug Avery donates her old fellow dress for scrap, and I work in a piece every chance I get. It a nice pattern call Sister's Choice.

- Alice Walker, *The Color Purple* -

- * Year: all (1st-4th)
- * Size: around 50 students⁵⁶
- * Gender: mixed
- * Major: all subjects
- * Time: the 1st semester in 1997
- * Text: translated and visual texts

The following responses to *The Color Purple* were collected in the first semester of 1997 from the same group as in section 3.2.2. This programme was marked as the third among 10 reading set-texts in this specific semester. In particular, in this semester, I intentionally located this programme on 18 April 1997, because there was a very valuable cultural programme from 11 April to 17 April 1997 in Seoul. It was the 1st Women's Film Festival in Seoul (WFFIS), held at Dongsung Art Centre in the middle of Seoul.⁵⁷ Through the programme, around 30 films were shown, in parallel with competitions for future women directors, diverse kinds of discussions, and different thematic seminars. For *The Color Purple* programme, two precious films were in the list with other programmes from almost all over the world. They were Alice Walker's documentary interview programme, "A Woman Warrior" (1993), which deals with

⁵⁶ I must make clear that I am not going to deal with all students' responses to *The Color Purple*. Since the number of students' submitted responses varies according to the specific programme, this class size is not always the same number of students' responses which I am going to deal with for my argument.

⁵⁷ As a whole, audiences of approximately 20,000 participated in this Women's Film Festival in Seoul (WFFIS) during just 7 days and it was financially successful. Several international film festivals have been held in Korea starting with the 1st Pusan International Film Festival in September 1996.

African women's "clitoridectomy" and its physical and psychological impact on them, and the radical black feminist film, "Born in Flames" (1983) directed by Lizzi Borden set in an imaginary Afro-American women's demonstration in New York. This film festival was very useful and helpful for my dealing with the "Gender in Literature" course in that specific semester. It provided good background knowledge not only for *The Color Purple* programme but also for the whole 10 programmes. Particularly for *The Color Purple*, this Women's Film Festival in Seoul (WFFIS) played an important role in reducing the great distance between Afro-American and/ or Black women in the text and Korean men and/ or women undergraduate students in the context, in terms of cultural difference and their understanding of it. Accordingly, the students' responses in this group to *The Color Purple* reflected more diversity and heterogeneity among themselves, compared with the former group in 1996.

Another point distinguishing this group from the former group in section 3.4.1. implies that, literally, the video generation has now emerged and begun floating into the classroom. Their knowledge of the cinematic techniques and various genres of films was quite high and articulated, compared with the former group on *The Color Purple*. They could produce more meanings from reading the frame structure as well as the camera work in particular scenes. For instance, one woman student noticed the camera work, in the beginning of the film "The Color Purple", like the close-up to Celie's step-father's hands when he was taking out her baby from Celie and the bigger exaggerated men characters' faces from Celie's view at the bottom. She said that the effect of those scenes resulted in the audience's feeling of fear, which was similar to Celie's (Chae-Young Lim, a second-year in music, 1). They could read the visual text not only from the story-narrative perspective but also from the image-representation perspective, which I did not intend for this "Gender in Literature" course. In general, the visual text

has been more welcomed than the written or translated text by both teachers and students in the 1990s Korean university classroom. On the other hand, another woman student, Chae-Lin Kwon, a fourth-year in Korean literature, accused Steven Spielberg for his highly skilful manipulation in evoking an audience's sentimentality, while he reduced and minimized the important characteristics of Shug Avery in Alice Walker's written text (2). As soon as they began to watch the film, they recognized that this film would show them the multiple factors of women's repression (Jin-Kyu Oh, a first-year in business, 1), and this invited them to create more active and subjective meanings.

Like the former group of students, most students expected the racial issues to be the main theme in the film with a more humane and humanized story than the other films on Afro-Americans, because they knew of Spielberg's recent film on Jewish people's suffering during World War II, "Schindler's List" (Ki-Woong Song, a second-year in economics, 1; Joong-Min Sohn, a third-year in politics, 1). They anticipated a similar impression from watching, "The Color Purple". In fact, many students began their writings with their impressions and meetings with the internationally acknowledged famous brand, "Steven Spielberg".⁵⁸ As I said above, Chae-Lin Kwon accused Steven Spielberg for his over-exaggeration. The other man student, Gil-Soo Moon, a first-year in business, also brought out a similar topic in his writing. He thought it looked very funny that this "stereotyped" feminism film was directed by Steven Spielberg, "the first-class money-making male director", and, in the Korean video classification system, it was allocated into the "melodrama" section, which is the specific film genre to elicit women's tears. He has now viewed the circulating and

⁵⁸ Another reason for the Korean young generation's conspicuous interest in Steven Spielberg is influenced by his new business project with a Korean entertainment enterprise, Cheil Chedang. His business company, "Dream Works", signed up to join with the film business unit in Cheil Chedang in 1996, sharing the manufacture of visual products and distributing them to the commercial market in Asia as well as worldwide.

distributing business system as a whole and evaluated this phenomenon as “a cultural irony” (2). I feel that his response exactly describes the relationship between audience, film, and director concerning the visual text, “The Color Purple”, in Korea, which can be superimposed on the relationship between reader, text, and writer in the written text, *The Color Purple*. Probably, in the case of the English written text, three more factors of the English language, Walker’s writing style, and the director/ writer’s different gender and racial identity must be added for its comparison. In other words, Gil-Soo Moon’s response has clarified the position of the film, “The Color Purple”, in Korean society, showing where and how it is now located relating to the feminist consciousness among the general public. Another man student, Choong-Hun Lee, a third-year in Korean literature, told his own experience of meeting with Spielberg’s “The Color Purple”.

Once, I watched, “The Color Purple”, with a friend of mine. He asked me whether it was truly made by Steven Spielberg. He blamed me for renting an extremely boring film. Honestly, there was no entertainment such as Steven Spielberg’s other films have usually provided us with.

However, after taking this “Gender in Literature” course and watching the film, again, I have felt that it was uniquely made by Steven Spielberg’s pure innocence, recalling his alienated experience in his childhood. Even though he is now the most powerful and influential figure in the contemporary Hollywood film industry, he had been no more than an isolated Jewish boy from his peer group. (1)

While reviewing the changing process of his reading (watching) subject, Choong-Hun Lee’s writing shows how most Korean undergraduate students, especially men students, are going to be responding to the film, “The Color Purple”.

Many students summarized their impressions of *The Color Purple* into one phrase, “moving and touching”. Several women students wished to read the translated

text again, which is a response in common with the former group in the section 3.4.1. But, no man student reached that stage of moving into a subsequent reading. This means women students were more moved than men students, even though they had been relatively accustomed to similar kinds of stories. Instead, one man student, Dong-Hyun Ahn, a fourth-year in Korean literature, sharply described his impression of the film, saying "It was very moving. But, at the same time, it forced me to be moved" (1). Their feeling of being moved and touched is a good sign of lessening distance in terms of cultural communication between the imaginary setting in the American film and the real setting in the Korean society.

Another common response with the former group in section 3.4.1. relates to the main theme of Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, i.e., "thinking back through our grandmothers". But, no students in this group brought their *real* grandmothers into their writings. Two women and two men students said the film had inevitably reminded them of our *imaginary* grandmothers in the long Korean history. Bo-Yeon Hong, a fourth-year in music specializing in Soprano singing, linked the fictional world in *The Color Purple* to the factual world in Korean history as follows:

Honestly speaking, the happy ending is only possible because it is a fictional story. In the factual world, it is very rare that Celie's oppressed life could have achieved the happy ending. There would have been a great number of women who had such oppressed lives and finally died in those oppressed situations. I think, probably, the fact of being able to write Celie's story, itself, symbolizes happiness for a woman. (2-3)

Now, she sees the politically important relationship between women's oppression and women's writing, on which the feminist literary studies have focussed. Another man student also raised this topic on women's writing, but he looked at it from a slightly different view.

Alice Walker has fictionalized wonderfully as well as magnificently her Afro-American grandmothers' *subjugated* lives. Then, how many Korean literary works have we had in order to fictionalize our Korean grandmothers' *subjugated* lives for international readers in terms of feminist aesthetics?" (Dong-Hyun Ahn, a fourth-year in Korean literature, 2).

Permeated with the nationalistic discourse, his narrative is now passing through the multiple boundaries of ethnicity, nationality, race, gender, and writer/ reader relationship, with the lenses marked as "women's writing". The other woman student, Hee-Jun Kim, a fourth-year in music specializing in mezzo-soprano, put only one sentence, saying "While I was watching the film, I could not help thinking of our grandmothers as well as our great grandmothers in Korean patriarchal history" (2), which seems to me the bridging epitome of Afro-American women and Korean women, together. Oh-Suk Song, a third-year in law, stated more frankly that it was a shame that our Korean grandmothers' lives until the early twentieth century had not been much different from the Afro-American grandmothers' in the film, "The Color Purple". He said this visual text was very effective for his awakening to Korean *imaginary* grandmothers (2).

This group of students noticed more cautiously and precisely the various relationships between women and women in the text, compared with the former group of students in 1996. More women students paid attention to the plural relationships between women than men students, like between Celie and Shug, between Celie and Netty, between Celie and Sophia, and so on. Hee-Jun Kim, a fourth-year in music specializing as a mezzo-soprano, was immensely impressed by the women's interactive relationships which were powerfully represented in the film. Actually, in her writing entitled "Women's Relationships to Women in "The Color Purple"", she compared women's lives in *The Color Purple*, dividing them into two groups of Celie and the

others including Shug, Netty, and Sophia. Two women and one man student concretely indicated the exact scene of Shug's singing a song, "Celie's theme" and Celie's shy smiling as the most unforgettable scene throughout the whole film (Hyun-Joang Kang, a second-year in mathematics, 1; Bo-Yeon Hong, a fourth-year in music, 2; Gil-Soo Moon, a first-year in business, 2). However, it is very stimulating to me that another woman student, Chae-Young Lim, a second-year in music specializing in violin, searched for the reason why and how Celie and Shug could communicate so well. She looked for the common points between two women and concluded that their repressed experiences as women in that patriarchal society would lead them to establish such a warm and strong human relationship, which seemed to her very powerful and even to go beyond a heterosexual relationship (2). Then, she brought in her horrid feeling after watching "A Woman Warrior" at the 1st Women's Film Festival in Seoul (WFFIS): "They must have shared their black cultural tradition and black inherited customs like clitoridectomy in "A Woman Warrior". Even if they have not followed those kinds of cultural customs, I am quite sure, their common experience of sharing that historical heritage would have tightened and strengthened their bonding relationship" (3). Her last question called attention to her own cultural environment, asking, "Then, how can I build up my relationship with other women like Celie and Shug in the film?" (3). But, Chae-Lin Kwon, a fourth-year in Korean literature, could not be completely satisfied with Celie's relationship with Shug, because, to her, Celie's subjectivity established through her relationship with Shug was seen as not strong and stubborn but still fragile. Similar to one man student's alternative suggestion for the marriage-ending in *Jane Eyre*, Chae-Lin Kwon also proposed an alternative building-up process of Celie's subjectivity in the film. She thought we needed to know, more precisely, Celie's inner transformation towards female subjectivity and her detailed motivations. Her response

results from watching the film without reading the written text. What she missed is Alice Walker's very careful writing process through Celie's letters to God.

In fact, men students tended to evaluate harshly Celie's relationship with the other women. Jin-Kyu Oh, a first-year in business, is the best example, saying that he thought, in the beginning, Celie had enjoyed that enslaved life with masochistic psychology (2). No woman student would think of Celie's life in this way. He bravely uncovers the male-centred unsympathetic narrow mind. While he evaluated Sophia highly for searching for female subjectivity by herself, he evaluated Celie unsympathetically for searching for female subjectivity through the interactive relationship with the other women. And he picked up Celie's saying, "Beat her", as a definite example of her feeble moral strength as well as her irresolute determination. Again, the theme of "wife-beating" appears to this Korean man as the testing device for Celie's current stage as a subjective woman.

It is very interesting that, to most men students, such powerful human relationships between women were seen as unfamiliar as well as mysterious, because, in this heterosocial and heterosexual culture, they had never imagined the fact that women's homosocial and homosexual relationships could be much more influential and forceful than they had thought. Here is an example of how they felt about female solidarity in *The Color Purple*.

The most appealing theme in *The Color Purple* is the female solidarity. I take for granted the strong relationship between Celie and Netty, because they are natural-born sisters. But, I think they are closer than usual. However, Celie's relationships with Shug and Sophia seem to me quite unfamiliar and unusual. Then, why is it? I began to contemplate why I have thought like that. Maybe it is because of my prejudice on the fraternity between/ among men and the solidarity between/ among women. My experience in military service would unconsciously influence me to disregard the solidarity, which is indeed no more than the social scenario by Korean

patriarchal culture. (Oh-Suk Song, a third-year in law, 2-3)

Through my own experience of teaching *The Color Purple*, several men students' honest responses to the women's strong relationship in *The Color Purple* have become new findings, because, until now, no discussions in Britain or in Korea have revealed how differently men had thought of women's strong relationship and how unfamiliar to them it was. I am not sure yet whether this is only characteristic of Korean men's responses or not. Another man student, Choong-Hun Lee, a third-year in Korean literature, employed two words, "alien and fresh", in order to express his impression of it. He compared the main characteristics between fraternity and solidarity.

While fraternity between father and son or between brothers uses antagonism and alienation to maintain the group, solidarity aims to enlarge the group by embracing and identifying with others. If fraternity is built upon the dogmatically assured bonding, solidarity would be constructed upon the emotionally sympathetic bonding. This is my feeling from watching "The Color Purple". (1)

It is fascinating to hear this comparison from a man student. Then, he continued to pick up three scenes as concrete examples which led him to feel these differentiations. The first example was when Celie and Netty were playing together, while clapping and singing to each other in the sunset. The second example was, beyond his imagination, he said, when Shug awakened Celie to the sexual zones in her body by touching and sensitising. And the third example was more moving when Celie and her women friends welcomed Sophia in front of the prison after her 8-year jailed life (1). His response is provocative to me because it clearly illustrates how and where the "Korean" "men" students can fill in the gaps created by their national and gendered identity by confronting the visual text, "The Color Purple".

Hyun-Joang Kang, a woman second-year student in mathematics, raised a very ~~important~~ point even though she did not recognize the significant meaning of her opinion. She said, "This film has suggested a new feminist message contrasted with the images of women from the existing feminist message" (3). Unintentionally, she is now making a sharp comparison between the feminist message in "The Color Purple", focussing on women's solidarity, and the feminist message in contemporary Korean society, focussing on an individual woman's subjectivity as well as self-actualization. Among the feminist discourses from the Korean women's movement, the history of the women's solidarity discourse is comparatively young. Since the Korean women's movement and feminist discourse had to be broadened and strengthened in society, the emphasis on the differences between/ among women had taken a back seat. But, since the 1990s when the Korean women's movement and the feminist discourse have been popularized, it is now no longer possible to escape from this topic. The most conspicuous factors separating Korean women, until the current stage, have been class and generation.⁵⁹ This is why Hyun-Joang Kang considered the solidarity message from *The Color Purple* as "the new feminist message", even though it is not new at all within the western feminist discourse. She has unconsciously proposed the barometer for Korean feminist discourse, forcing us to see the point we have reached. But, another man student, Chul-Min Kim, a second-year in law, submitted a much wider view than Hyun-Joang Kang's. He wondered why he felt that message was new and connected it to the issue of cultural difference as well as cultural relativism, asking himself what he would have done if he were in Celie's situation. Then, he concluded that any individual's life could not go beyond that sociocultural boundary, thinking of what a powerful and decisive role the cultural context played in an individual's way of life. In

⁵⁹ I will discuss these differences in sections 4.1.1. and 4.2.

addition, he emphasized the importance of cultural relativism, saying “Even though I have found several kinds of feminist messages in the translated text, *The Color Purple*, I cannot accept all of them. If the particular feminist message cannot be adopted into *our* culture, I also cannot take it for any kind of reason while maintaining respect for *our* tradition”⁶⁰ (2). His response, here, clearly reflects my predicament as a Korean feminist lecturer dealing with non-Korean cultural materials to stimulate Korean students’ awakening to their engendering process for further social change. Probably, “the particular feminist message” in his writing means, I think, the lesbian relationship between Celie and Shug, because he said that he was surprised at how Alice Walker described and expressed female sexuality in the text. Nevertheless, what I am most provoked by in his writing is his dubious narrative, unconsciously decorated with cultural relativism. On the one hand, he looks like an intelligent Korean undergraduate, insisting on the importance of cultural relativism. But, on the other, he is revealing his subconscious resistance to taking the feminist message in the name of “maintaining respect for *our* tradition”. His mixing-up in his narrative position between the singular and plural first-person narrative is the linguistic signal of his secret objection through blurring the boundaries between *I* and *we*, as well as the cultural signal of Korean collectivism, differentiated from the western individualism. Like most non-western men’s positions on any kind of feminist discourses influenced by western European culture, he confirms that “the particular feminist message from the other culture” should not be *ours*, but *theirs*. Now, he is using the national and cultural boundaries more effectively and strongly, while erasing the gender identity boundary. This is an exact example, especially for feminist lecturers like me, of why we need to establish *intercultural* feminist discourses in this globalizing era. Incidentally, he is the only one

⁶⁰ My emphasis.

who praised Alice Walker's writing style, which he thought more eloquent and direct for revealing Celie's repression.

Like the men students' self-examination of their-being-male es' in the former group in section 3.4.1., men students in this group also looked back through their gender identity and reviewed what it had meant to them. Gil-Soo Moon, a first-year in business, said that he gave a higher score to Sophia than to Celie, and explained why: "My unconscious male egotism, desiring a submissive wife like Celie while submerged into male superiority, might lead me to act in the opposite way on the surface" (1-2). Ki-Woong Song took a further step, wondering how thoroughly he had been understanding the opposite sex in the practical situation.

The film does not provide a clear answer to the man and woman relationship. It seems to me that we must invest more time and energy to understand each other. I have considered myself as a man who tried to understand the opposite sex. And, I have still thought like that. But, I wonder whether the understanding on my side has meant a sincere and equivalent understanding on their side. However, I am confident, at least at the moment, of not becoming a man like Albert in the film. (2)

He now recognizes the differences in the conceptual meanings to each engendered individual, even when they are using the same vocabulary. Choong-Hun Lee, a third-year in Korean literature, pointed to cultural custom as the biggest obstacle to his progressive ideas on sex equality. And, he added, "Rationally, I have objected to sex discrimination and taken sex equality as natural. But, in my deep consciousness, I must acknowledge that I do not wish to give up the given privilege of being a man from this patriarchal society" (1). While I am reading his writing, I have wondered whether he would make the same point, several years later, when he occupies a good social position which will strengthen and heighten his male-ego. The cultural politics of the engendering process in the classroom must extend to the cultural politics of sex equality

in the society, regarding its time and space. However, at the current stage of social reality, it remains as a question.

Men students' self-inspection of their gender identity is necessarily linked to their ideas on femininity and the image of their future wives and partners. At least three men students declared that they wished their future wives and partners to be lifelong companions, treating each other as equal sexual subjects. But, their individual emphases and concrete examples imply distinctive differentiations in their conceptual meanings of "lifelong companions". Gil-Soo Moon, a first-year in business, insisted that the wife would be no longer the husband's possession and that the wife must psychologically avoid treating her husband as her master, exemplified in Celie's answer to Albert, "Yes, sir" (2). Ki-Woong Song, a second-year in economics, confessed that he used to say "I want to meet a *feminine* woman". But, after watching this film, he tried to define his own meaning of *feminine* and reached the conclusion that, at least, he had not wanted "The Angel in the House". He wished to have a partner or wife with whom he could share his life through interactive communications. Therefore, even if he could *understand* Albert, he could not *forgive* him (2). Another man student, Joong-Min Sohn, suggested a similar opinion to Ki-Woong Song's. Moreover, he envisaged a transformed heterosexual relationship, associated with the democratization process in the Korean society. No one would deny or resist the inevitable sociopolitical wave of democratization, even, within the heterosexual relationship (2). This is the prediction by a Korean undergraduate majoring in politics for three years.

Again, Celie's saying "I'm pore, I'm black, I'm ugly. But, I'm here" was regarded as the most impressive resonating phrase throughout the whole film by both men and women students. Dong-Hyun Ahn, a fourth-year in Korean literature, considered it as the concrete phrase representing the main theme in "The Color Purple"

(1). Another woman student, Hee-Jun Kim, a fourth-year in music specializing in mezzo-soprano, indicated, apart from that specific phrase by Celie, the scene in which Celie secretly spat into the lemonade glass, while she was delivering it from the kitchen to her father-in-law. Hee-Jun Kim accepted Celie's grinning in that scene as her particular way of revenge as the oppressed, proving that the oppressed would not remain oppressed forever (2). Another man student, Oh-Suk Song, a third-year in law, brought two words, "violence and subordination", as the thematically representative vocabularies, while making a comparison with several crime cases in recent Korean society (2). On the other hand, Chae-Young Lim, a second-year in music specializing in violin, proposed another single word as its theme and that was "freedom" (2). But, a woman student senior to her, Chae-Lin Kwon, a fourth-year in Korean literature, raised the doubtful question of Celie's achievement of freedom. She saw it from the view of the social structure.

The main narrative in the film is focussed on and following the relationship between black men and women, which seems to me exceptional. In fact, my ideas have never reached or imagined the specifically repressed relationship between Afro-Americans. This film has confirmed that a sex repressed structure exists even within the same repressed group. Celie is the victim of this doubly repressed social structure. ... Even if the film finishes with a happy ending, I wonder whether Celie is going to be free from this repressed social structure. So long as the wrongs of the social structure in terms of race and sex are not revised, she will not be completely free, but entering into another kind of repressed structure. This idea makes me sad and depressed. (1-2)

It is women students who have more directly and frequently connected Celie's story to social reality, and believed in less Celie's happy ending and freedom in the practical social context, as I have already exemplified with Bo-Yeon Hong's opinion in my earlier argument. Men students have believed in Celie's final freedom more naively and

sincerely. One man student even suggested that “Celie seemed to share her freedom with a certain girl in the train when Celie gave a piece of chocolate to her after leaving home” (Gil-Soo Moon, a first-year in business, 2). While men students take Celie’s process of awakening as a gradually developing process in the imaginary world, women students take it as a painfully transforming process in the realistic world. Women students’ autobiographical experiences as the gendered subjects in the Korean society have taught them that women’s self-awakening is not easy but poignant. This is the main reason for the difference in their perspectives on Celie’s process of awakening. The different distances of women and men students’ identifications with Celie, mainly influenced by their gender identities, are also mediated by and mixed up with their different autobiographical experiences, corresponding to their different gender formations.

Another exciting common response with the other students’ group relates to Celie’s inheritance from her step-father. In two former sections, 3.3.3. on *Jane Eyre* and 3.4.1. on *The Color Purple*, only men students take Jane’s or Celie’s inheritance into account as the most determinate and decisive factor for their achievement of female subjectivity. Again, in this group, only some of the men students noticed it and accused Alice Walker of engineering this plot. While Chul-Min Kim, a second-year in law, is positive because of its important influence on Celie’s new life, Ki-Woong Song, a second-year in economics, and Joong-Min Sohn, a third-year in politics, evaluate this inheritance episode as damaging for Celie’s subjective character as well as Alice Walker’s subjective writing.

As I have argued in this section, this group of students have displayed a wider range of diversity in their responses to *The Color Purple* than the former group of students in 1996 in section 3.4.1. I think there are several reasons for this difference. Many students in this group have been more closely attached to the Afro-American

culture through watching films and living in America themselves. Several students mentioned their living experience in America, or even in the Southern part of America. For instance, Dong-Hyun Ahn, a fourth-year in Korean literature, writing from his living experience in Southern America for several months, definitely defined Celie's "Afro-American" identity as the marginalized and repressed group in American culture, even without considering it as a "woman" identity (1). Another important reason for their diverse responses is the sociocultural influence on gender issues from outside the classroom. The best example in this particular semester is the 1st Women's Film Festival in Seoul (WFFIS). During this film festival, I suggested they should watch several films like "A Woman Warrior", which are not easily obtainable from video shops in Seoul. Through this process, they could have prepared sharper eyes and equipped themselves with more critical views. For example, Chae-Lin Kwon, a fourth-year in Korean literature, begins her writing by defining "The Color Purple" as an Afro-American women's epic, which could be located in the opposite position to the White-American men's official narrative in the *so-called* history (1). These students' responses illustrate well that the diversifying processes of multicultural gender discourses are now going on in the 1997 Korean university classroom,

Apart from this difference of diversity in their responses, this group of students' responses in 1997 have several points in common with the former group of students' responses in 1996. The most conspicuous common factor is the men students' active and fascinating involvement in this specific programme. As I have already argued in section 3.4.1., they have seemed to speak as the obviously oppressing gender group as represented in the film. But, I think another reason is also behind it, which is a quite "Korean" characteristic. Since the Korean feminist discourse and women's movement have been popularized, women's repressed experience in Korean culture or in any other

cultures has become quite familiar to women students. So, to women students, Celie's story is not unusual or unfamiliar, as it is to men students. In most men students' cases, they have rarely had the opportunity to think seriously about their gendered processes and gender relationships before. In particular, the first-year men students had scarcely contemplated these issues until watching the film, "The Color Purple".⁶¹ This is one of many reasons, related to gender studies, why men students' responses are comparatively active. For most of the men students, taking this "Gender in Literature" course means the starting point of thinking of their gender identity after entering into the classroom, while most of the women students have already thought of their gender identity before entering into the classroom. The most important teaching purpose of this "Gender in Literature" course must be to provide both men and women students with the opportunity to think of themselves as gendered subjects, looking at the similarity and difference among themselves, at the same time.

Catherine Belsey and Jane Moore once suggested that reading a text from a feminist point of view should become the cultural accelerator to change existing gender relations.

A feminist does not necessarily read in order to praise or to blame, to judge or to censor. More commonly she sets out to assess how the text invites its readers, as members of a specific culture, to understand what it means to be a woman or a man, and so encourages them to reaffirm or to challenge existing cultural norms. (1)

In my teaching classroom setting, "a feminist" in Belsey's paragraph should be changed to "both men and women students". Through their reading experience of the visual and

⁶¹ This phenomenon is related to the Korean educational system in the middle and high schools which have This italicisation is for my own emphasis.

⁶¹ This phenomenon is related to the Korean educational system in the middle and high schools which have a mostly sex-segregated educating structure. I shall discuss this relationship in section 4.2.3., while dealing with the literary text *The Pornography in My Mind*.

translated texts, *The Color Purple*, they have understood or begin to understand what it means to be a woman/ “Korean woman” or a man/ “Korean man”, while confirming or reversing the existing Korean cultural norms on gender relations. As I have discussed in this section as well as in the former section 3.4.1., for Korean women and men students, reading the Afro-American women’s lives has been a great lesson to themselves for their further reading of Korean gender formations as well as Korean gender relations.

3.5. On *The Handmaid's Tale* : Nationality, Territoriality, and Communication

3.5.1. “Public Culture and Feminism” Course in 1994⁶²

It (expressing yourself) is opening yourself, discarding your *self*, so that the language and the world may be evoked through you. *Evocation* is quite different from *expression*. ... Maybe the writer *expresses*; but *evocation*, calling up, is what writing does for the reader.

- Margaret Atwood, “An End to Audience?” -

- * Year: postgraduates
- * Size: around 13 students
- * Gender: supposed mixed (but, in fact, women-only)
- * Major: sociology
- * Time: the 1st semester in 1994
- * Text: translated and visual text

3.5.1.1. At the Intersection : A Canadian Writer meets Korean Readers.

⁶² This short paper was delivered at the Women’s Studies Network Association 9th Annual Conference held at the University of Glamorgan, UK on 5th-7th July 1996 and published in *Coming Unstuck: Feminism's Spaces and Places of Change* under the title of “Nationality, Territoriality, and Communication - Korean Context from/on Canadian Text -”. The editors of this book are Karen Atkinson, Sarah Oerton, and Gill Plain and the publisher is Taylor and Francis, 1997; My paper, “Nationality, Territoriality, and Imagination - The Case of Margaret Atwood” delivered in the Centre for Comparative Literature at the University of Toronto on 21 Oct 1993, played an important embryonic role in the development of my argument in this section.

In his provocative article, "What is an author?", Michel Foucault calls into question the unique relationship between an author and a text, suggesting that the writing itself is creating an opening space where the writing subject endlessly disappears. For him, discourse as the social function of meaning substitutes for the traditional concept of the author. Writing is redefined as the interplay between author as an individual and author-function as a discourse, because the author's name represents a particular mode of existence of the specific discourse and the author-function implies and reflects the existence, circulation, and manner of certain discourse within the specific socio-historical context. This is why his idea of transgressive history must be understood before his ideas about language, discourse, and author. For Foucault, history is not the slow linear progress of human consciousness but a transgressive process. Transgression takes the form of a spiral, containing nothing negative and affirming limited being while confirming the limitlessness.

Margaret Atwood as a Canadian author has become one of the best examples of Foucault's ideas on author-function and transgressive history in terms of "national consciousness".⁶³ She shows language is the unique place where transgression will find

⁶³ For my argument on Margaret Atwood in the Canadian context, I prefer to use this term, 'national consciousness', rather than 'nationalism' or 'nationality'. As Benedict Anderson defines the nation as 'an imagined political community' and shows the origins of national consciousness in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Europe, I think the case of Margaret Atwood is the Canadian counterpart, looking for this imagined political community in a Canadian context while linking the discontinuity-in-connectedness between print-languages (I think about the role of publication and publisher, like House of Anansi Press which played an important role to raise and lead the literary nationalism in 1960s and 1970s Canada), national consciousness, and nation-states. (cf. Benedict Anderson, 1983, "The Origin of National Consciousness" in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 15.) Ernest Gellner says, 'Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness : it invents nations where they do not exist.' (cf. Ernest Gellner, *Thought and Change*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1964, 169.) However, I would like to focus on an individual's self-awakening process of her national identity. So, I have selected the term, 'national consciousness', because it implies my focus better than the other terms.

its space and literature is the excellent territory where the recovery of language takes place in its own being as a reversal. She represents one particular discourse of the national consciousness in the Canadian history. In Margaret Atwood's writing, her national identity as a Canadian is even stronger than her sexual identity as a woman. While Elizabeth Barrett Browning, the English woman poet, looked for her literary grandmother as a poetess, Margaret Atwood, the "Canadian" "woman" writer, began to look for at first the "Canadian" writers, not the "woman" writers in Canada. This is a conspicuous factor among major women writers in English-speaking countries. In the witty autobiographical forward entitled "Great Unexpectations", Margaret Atwood described her situation in 1960 when she was looking for Canadian writers: "For one thing, I was Canadian, and the prospects for being a Canadian and a writer, both at the same time, in 1960, were dim. ... Canadian writers, it was assumed - by my professors, my contemporaries, and myself - were a freak of nature, like duck-billed platypuses"(xiii). In those days, being a Canadian was a much more serious issue than being a writer. Even the awakening of being a Canadian was the revolutionary act: "It was at Harvard then that I first began to think seriously about Canada. Even the idea of thinking seriously about Canada had something shocking about it: seriousness and Canada just didn't seem to go together. It was almost revolutionary"("Canadian-American Relations" 384). At last, by the time she was about 21, she had certainly found and helped to found a tradition of Canadian writers. In other words, she is a producer as well as product of 1960s and 1970s literary nationalism in Canada. For instance, Atwood's 1972 publication *Survival* symbolizes the systematic pattern of a Canadian national literature and announces a simple statement, "We exist". Since then, "survival" has been the main theme in Atwood's major writings. In *The Handmaid's*

Tale, she deals with this theme evidently, while experimenting with it even in writing style, genre, and narration.

In the current cultural studies area, this argument about the national consciousness is now emerging as the pioneering field, especially in this globalization era in which we are experiencing the breakdown of national, cultural, physical and geographical boundaries by technological developments in everyday life setting. As I have already argued in section 3.1.1., Homi K. Bhabha notices the importance of this borderline non-signified space and emphasizes the enunciation in a Third Space as an ambivalence in the act of interpretation.

Therefore, the purpose of my paper is to explore Bhabha's Third Space, through verbalisation of the cultural communication between a group of Korean readers and a Canadian writer, focussing on the intersection of two national consciousnesses in the process of reading literature, which maps out the people's hidden psychology in an imaginative world. In order to do this, the positionality of my *localized* discourse is one of standing on the borderline of *international* and "*in-between*" space between Korea and Canada.

3.5.1.2. Cultural Communication : Korean Readers' Responses to *The Handmaid's Tale*

For the purpose of this research, since 1994, I had looked within Korean academic institutions for a postgraduate group which would be well prepared for a productive discussion on female sexuality. There were not many candidates for my purposes.⁶⁴ After contacting several groups, the "Public Culture & Feminism" Course in

⁶⁴ Since 1994, I have taught this text in several courses in English Studies and Women's Studies. In most cases at undergraduate level, the theme of female sexuality in the text was superficially mentioned. Undergraduates need more explanation than their own discussion. However, even in the English course at

the Sociology department at Yonsei University in Seoul was chosen. The number of students was around 10-13. Most of them were first-year postgraduates from 23 to 28 years old. Only one of them was a married Ph.D. candidate in her late 30s and there was a Japanese postgraduate majoring in Sociology at Yonsei University. Exceptionally, during this term, all of them were women. That was an unusual case even in a course on feminism. The discussion on *The Handmaid's Tale* was held on the 26th of April, 1994 as a Canadian programme between "Orlando", the British/European film, and "Three Colours : Blue", the French/European film, among the foreign public cultures. The translated text was used for the class discussion⁶⁵ and we watched the film for the genre comparison.

The most prominent and common response was an uncomfortable feeling. They did not enjoy reading it, at all. Nor it was pleasurable. Most of them were irritated by the story and narrative in the text. One of them who could not bear Atwood's "violent" writing⁶⁶ went back to the last part of the text, "The Historical Notes", after she read several early chapters, because she was looking for a commentary to aid her understanding. However, unfortunately, she was much more confused after reading it, because this epilogue was the best example of Atwood's violent writing through the text, subverting the female persona's first-person narrative of the whole story by the male academic's patriarchal interpretation. Another student confessed that she would

the postgraduate level, this text is considered too radical to discuss in the classroom because of its representation of female sexuality.

⁶⁵ This is another issue between language and literature in the Korean context, where English is a foreign language. But, for the configuration of Korean readers' responses to the English text, I think this methodology of using Korean translated text and discussing it in the Korean language in the classroom is the best way to figure out opinions on female sexuality in a specifically Korean context.

⁶⁶ Since Sherrill E. Grace suggested 'violent duality' as the characteristic of Margaret Atwood writing in *Violent Duality: A Study of Margaret Atwood* published in 1980, surviving through 'violent duality' has been a symbol for the Atwood system concerned with the process of overcoming the polarization of world, and self, as well as the hierarchical power structures which such divisions produce.

like to avoid reading the text, if possible, because she had known the story from watching the film several years ago. But, this time, while she was reading the text, she had an unspeakable and ambivalent feeling about Atwood's writing:

During my reading of the text, I have had an ambivalent feeling. That is, I am very much struck by Atwood's highly elaborated and delicate writing, while I am feeling a chill creep over myself. The text says too many things, but I can't grasp what they are, in detail. I have felt a complicated feeling, but I can't describe what it is. Now, I can see myself hesitating and wavering still about my position, because I can't find any language to analyze my feeling which implies that something wrong has been said and defined, related to the term "female sexuality". (Choung-Rhan Cho 1)

This writing shows well the reader's involvement with the text and distance from the text, which can be the ambivalent counterpart of Atwood's violent writing on the reader's side.

Female sexuality in the Canadian written text and in the Korean socio-historical context had gradually emerged as the main topic of their discussion. All of them pointed out the "Ceremony" section as the most awful and terrifying part of the whole story. None of them had ever imagined such a mechanical act of fertilization, where love, passion, tenderness, any kind of human communication, even sexual desire was forbidden. They said it was very disturbing and shocking, especially this paragraph:

My red skirt hitched up to my waist, though no higher. Below it the Commander is fucking. What he is fucking is the lower part of my body. I do not say making love, because this is not what he's doing. Copulating too would be inaccurate, because it would imply two people and only one is involved. Nor does rape cover it : Nothing is going on here that I haven't signed up for. There wasn't a lot of choice but there was some, and this is what I chose. (HT 104-105)

In very cautious mood, an opinion was suggested that this “Ceremony” scene was reminiscent of the case of Korean Military Sexual Slavery Women by the Japanese state power during the Japanese colonial period from 1910 to 1945. Their situations were quite similar. Referring to the Handmaid’s dutiful “work” as a sexual slavery, the colonization of female sexuality by state power was thoroughly discussed. For Korean women readers, Offred’s story was not a future tense but a past history. This mechanical fucking, as a collective act, constituted the repetition of a historical patterning from the 1920s and 1930s in Korean history.⁶⁷ In her CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) interview, Atwood had already remarked that every event in the text was now happening or had already happened somewhere in the world: “I clipped articles out of newspapers. I now have a large clipping file of stories supporting the contents of the book.”(97) Moreover, this scene confirmed that *The Handmaid’s Tale* could be classified as a “historiographic metafiction” in Linda Hutcheon’s terms. But this depended not only upon the writer’s input but also upon the reader’s output. For Korean women readers, it seemed that *The Handmaid’s Tale* traced “the processing of events into facts, exploiting and then undermining the conventions of both novelistic realism and historiographic reference”(1989: 78). The Gileadean Handmaids must perform this mechanical act of fertilization once a month as “two-legged wombs, sacred vessels, ambulatory chalices” (*HT* 146) for the “white” species in the name of the Gilead. But Korean Military Sexual Slavery Women had to suffer this mechanical act of penetration many times in a day, normally 30 or 40 times and even over 80 times.⁶⁸ In

⁶⁷ As Gilead state power put a small tattoo on the fertile female body as a national resource and allocated it to the Commanders in the text, Korean women who made up 80% of those placed in Asian Military Sexual Slavery Women by Japan, involving approximately 100,000 to 200,000 women, were sent to battle fields outside Korea as sexual commodities for Japanese male sexual desire, tagged with ‘the present from the Great Japanese Emperor’.

⁶⁸ This is quoted from what the former Korean Military Sexual Slavery Women confessed in the Korean documentary film on themselves, “The Murmuring”.

both cases, women were exchangeable sexual commodities. While talking with Cathy Davidson for *MS* magazine, Atwood remarked “I didn't invent a lot”(26) in *The Handmaid's Tale* : “I transposed to a different time and place, but the motifs are all historical motifs”(24), confirming again that everything in the text had already occurred in some society. What she implied here was the crucial issue of how we have chosen to construct history. Offred imagined “From the point of future history .. we'll be invisible” (*HT* 240). Nonetheless, Korean Military Sexual Slavery Women were not invisible, but prominent and clearly imprinted in Korean history, though not in Japanese history. Korean women readers' responses to this scene exemplified how Atwood explored the evils of the dominant system of hierarchical dichotomies which encoded a society's political, cultural, and psychological values, while forcing her readers “to recognize their blindness and responsibility” (Grace 13) in a specific socio-historical context. However, there was a strong objection to reading the text in this way, because that kind of reading defined Korean women as historically victimized objects from a worldwide perspective, as if we were seen as *the other* through western eyes, as in other sensational discourse about the non-western world in the contemporary western society. There was a tension during this discussion about the “Ceremony” section. Then, the discussion moved to the power relationship between husband and wife, especially at the moment of sexual intercourse.

Female sexuality in Offred's story was colonized not only by state power but also by economic power in everyday life. In the Republic of Gilead, women were not

It was released for the first time at two commercial theatres and two university theatres in Seoul from 29th of April to 13th of May, 1995. Later, its showing was extended for two months in Seoul and revived several times at various places. It was warmly and passionately welcomed by the younger generation of Koreans and won the Ogawa Shinske Prize in 1995 Yamagata International Film Festival, the Jury Special Mention at 1996 Amsterdam Amnesty International Film Festival as well as at 1996 Munchen International Documentary Film Festival.

allowed to have any financial property or hold a job. However, even in the pre-Gilead days, when “the narrator”⁶⁹ realized that she would have no longer been allowed to hold a job or property or even her own “Compucount”, she was filled with rage, anxiety, and humiliation: “Desperation alone should have driven me. But I still felt numbed. I could hardly even feel his hands on me”(HT 191). She felt that financial inferiority meant sexual colonization. She could not make love as usual and her body began to be stiff.

I felt shrunken, so that when he put his arms around me, gathering me up, I was small as a doll. I felt love going forward without me.

He doesn't mind this, I thought. He doesn't mind it at all. Maybe he even likes it. We are not each other's, any more. Instead, I am his. (HT 191)

Many factors influenced the colonization of female sexuality at personal and public levels in the text. In relation to this episode, Korean women readers brought in a newly coined metaphor for female bodies circulating in contemporary Korean society. That was “the washing board”,⁷⁰ which illustrated that the wife's body must be ready in the name of the marriage whenever the husband needed it. This kind of power relationship in terms of sexuality was in many cases paralleled with the wife's economic disability in capitalized patriarchal Korean society. A student described her feeling after looking at the Gileadean society as follows:

While watching such a strange and unthinkable society, I began to think that we also may live such a strange and unthinkable society if someone outside of our social system and cultural value is watching our society. In addition, if this story shows the extreme of our social discourse around female sexuality, it also may imply that we are living in a closed society, subordinating our female selves to

⁶⁹ Here, I use this term because I don't know her name in the pre-Gilead days. I think this is another aspect of Atwood's language play with the naming in the text.

⁷⁰ This term is used for describing a wife's passive and subordinate sexuality within marriage in the Korean film, “A Story of Marriage”(1992). Another sexual metaphor for a married woman's position in that film was the bed in the bedroom. Since then, this metaphor ‘the washing board’ has gained wide circulation to indicate current attitudes to female sexuality among young Korean women.

the patriarchal social system and cultural value in our society. (Ji-Yeon Lee 2)

Now, she began to look at herself with a certain distance within the Korean context, defamiliarizing her own socio-historical context. Therefore, the theme of female sexuality in *The Handmaid's Tale* has stimulated Korean women readers to recognize the positionality of their national and sexual identities within contemporary Korean society.

The fragmented writing style, tricky genre, and Offred's scattered narratives were clearly noticed by most of them. Their impression was that the future tense in the text had had the effect of the present tense, because they felt that this whole story was now happening in Korean contemporary society. It was a very frightening story. But, nobody denied that it was a part of Korean contemporary society. They had mostly admired Atwood's persistent and persevering writing style with particular interest. That was another important discussion about the text. Why were this writer's perceptions so different from those of the other British and American women writers'? Even though the translated text was used for this discussion, they noticed that Atwood's writing style was very different from their other reading texts, whether written in Korean or translated into Korean. One of them suggested that someone who had never been marginalized could not have this kind of point of view and maybe could not keep this fragmented writing style so pertinaciously from the first sentence to the last question, "Are there any questions?"(HT 324), because nobody could understand what a poignant feeling it was without her own experience. During that discussion, it was also said that men could not understand women's marginalized experience and the colonizer could not know how the colonized had been repressed and exploited through their everyday lives. But, they did not mention racial issues at all, because Korean society had never had racial conflict

until the foreign workers from South East Asia came into Korea since 1990, as I have already argued in section 3.3.2.. Of course, whether this characteristic in style, genre, and narrative could be Canadian or not was also discussed, and followed by further discussion about the difference between the novel and the film. They regretted that there was no strong tension in the film, which most of them considered as the most manifest characteristic of the text. They considered the reason why the film was so disappointing compared with the novel was, firstly, because the director was not a woman and, secondly, not a Canadian. It was also said that the film was a non-Canadian product, except the initiating imagination. For me, this response was quite exciting if we considered that Atwood had defined herself at first as a Canadian and then as a woman. To Korean women readers, the writer's sexual identity had appealed more than her national identity as ^a more influential factor in her creative imagination, emphasizing their better understanding of women's communal experiences.

Their responses to "The Historical Section" expressed also the ambivalent duality, just like Atwood's writing strategy. On one hand, they felt happy that the Republic of Gilead had disappeared and the new society where people could talk about the Handmaids in public domains had come. But, on the other hand, they were very disappointed about the way in which the male historian scholar, Pieixoto, had treated Offred's story, because they considered it Offred's silent screaming to publicize her "survival", saying "I exist here as a woman". When they were describing this sentence, I was secretly very much surprised at the exact coincidence of vocabulary, because they had never read any informative articles about the "survival" theme in Margaret Atwood. Furthermore, one of them described Offred's narrative as her substitute for her life, dangerously continued in desperate circumstances. At the last stage of their discussion, they were reaching a secure agreement that it was another kind of repression, to ignore

anyone's effort to preserve her self in an urgent situation, which they had never thought of before, even if it was looked on by others as trivial. Nobody could accuse the others of this triviality because no one could fully understand the whole situation of *the other*. Their last response to "The Historical Section" is instead the violent question, "How do we expect that Pieixoto as a male academic could understand how desperate Offred's life was as a Handmaid in Gilead?"

The Handmaid's Tale as a postmodern text did work successfully to expand these readers' reading from the text to their own living context. It had wonderfully evoked and called up, as Margeret Atwood said, the Korean readers' way of looking at themselves in Korean context with a new point of view. One of the students said that *The Handmaid's Tale* forced her to contemplate two issues: One was her sexual identity in Korean society, i.e., how different her situation was from women in the Republic of Gilead. The other was how the patriarchal ideology about child-bearing and rearing had dehumanized women's lives with an incredibly forceful power and influence. By this reading act, they illustrated that they were the writers as well as the readers of the postmodern text, *The Handmaid's Tale*. At the same time, they also practiced the proposition that all texts were not fixed at all, but always waiting for the subjective as well as creative interpretation. These students' responses to *The Handmaid's Tale* showed the reading process of self-conscious awakening to differences and commonalities through cultural communication.

3.5.1.3. In the *International* and "*In-between*" Territory : Reading Korean Context from/on Canadian Text

Since the early work of Roland Barthes's "The Death of the Author" (1968) and Wolfgang Iser's "The Reading Process: a Phenomenological Approach"(1972), the

relationship between the text and the reader has been conceptualised as more of a socialization process. However, there is a missing point in Barthes and Iser. Terry Eagleton points out that Roland Barthes and Wolfgang Iser ignore “*the position of the reader in history*”, namely the specific socio-historical context (*Literary Theory* 83). This discussion of “*the position of the reader in history*” is directly linked to the arguments on postcolonialism in the 1990s, because the reader’s self-conscious reading becomes the starting point of self-representation by producing the subjective discourse *from/on* the reading act in a specific history. Haejoang Cho, working on postcolonialism and gender studies in Korea, defines from her position the term “*colonial*” as the counterpart of “*postcolonial*”.

In my writing, I call “colonial” society the society which does not have its own discourse to explain its own problems, which can not produce its own autonomous theory to analyse its social phenomena. Here, the term, “colonial” means the phenomena of disconnection between the knowledge and the life in that society, rather than the concrete colonized historical fact of that society. (22)

Korean women readers’ responses to *The Handmaid’s Tale* have illustrated the possibility of postcolonial discourse on Korean female sexuality and what kind of social discourse has been going on around female sexuality at the public level within Korean society.

Because of its socio-historical heritage of Confucianism,⁷¹ Korean society has not until recently allowed discussion of female sexuality in public domains, such as the

⁷¹ Since the Yi dynasty took Confucianism as the spirit of the national foundation in 1392, Confucianism has become Koreans’ fundamental way of thinking and had a powerful influences on Koreans’ way of life. It emphasizes loyalty, filial piety, ancestor worship, and, especially for women, fidelity and chastity. The basic idea of Confucianism is expressed by ‘the three fundamental principles and the five moral disciplines’ in human relationships. For instance, between sovereign and subject, justice and righteousness should mark the relationship; between father and son, there should be affection; between husband and wife, there should be the matrimonial etiquette which confirms the segregated gender roles; between the

classroom within an academic institution. Owing to the Korean women's movement and the democratization of Korean society in the 1980s, the social awakening about sexuality has dramatically increased through the 1990s. In particular, the New Generations born in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when Korea was achieving a certain level of economic development, are now beginning to shake this Confucian cultural heritage.⁷² However, they are now standing on the borderline between the globalizing social process of westernization and the Korean web of strong Confucian tradition. Their sceptical response to ^{the} traditional concept of female sexuality at the private level as "the washing board" reflects their recognition that the wife's sexuality has been socially defined as subordinate to her husband.⁷³ However, they do not go further to discuss their own subjective female sexuality, stopping on the awakening level. This means that the social discourse around female sexuality in Korean society is not an easy topic to discuss and not as sophisticated and diversified as in western European societies, yet. Rather, they understand sexual intercourse within marriage as a power-game between two sexes.

Nonetheless, their response to female sexuality at the public level illustrates the diversity of Korean national consciousness based on Korean women's collective experience in history. It shows that the social discourse on Korean Military Sexual Slavery Women has been widely circulated in contemporary Korean society,⁷⁴ since

younger and the elder, precedence should be given to the elder; between friends, faith should reign over the relationship. Even if it is evident that it has been weakened by western cultural influence since the liberation from Japanese colonialism in 1945, the Confucian value has still strongly permeated Koreans' everyday life.

⁷²I will discuss it in detail in section 4.2..

⁷³I will discuss it in detail in section 4.2.4.

⁷⁴For instance, at the annual Korean Women's Studies Association Conference held at Ewha Woman's University in Seoul, Korea, on 3rd - 4th June 1994, Prof. Hae-Shoo Shin delivered her paper, "Nationalism and Feminism : Their Reconciliation & Conflict in the Case of the Korean Military Sexual Slavery by Japan". She demonstrated her own experience during the last 2 years, while working as the

Hak-Sun Kim in her late 60s became the first former Korean Military Sexual Slavery Woman who told her experience at the church group's office in Seoul on 14, August 1990 which I mentioned in the section 3.1.2. This is why the "Ceremony" scene has become for them the best example of what Wolfgang Iser terms "*gestalt*" - that is, the meeting point where the intersubjective interaction happens between historical reality and the reader's imagination ("The Reading Process" 219). In this case, the "*gestalt*" arises from the meeting between the Canadian text, *The Handmaid's Tale*, and the individual mind of the Korean reader from its own particular "collective" experience from history. Readers' national and sexual identities are working simultaneously through the reader's involvement in and distance from the text, while floating on this non-signified territory of the national consciousness. In addition, their ambivalence to this "*gestalt*" substantiates Bhabha's argument about the national consciousness as a cultural space rather than a definite entity.

This act of reading a text from another culture from a feminist point of view can question and answer at the same time the universality of gender oppression and the homogeneity of national consciousness, which still remains in many western feminist discourses. By this experience of a reading act, I can say that historicizing and locating the reader's response can provide an essential alternative to formulations based on universality and homogeneity. As Chandra Talpade Mohanty insists in her article, "Feminist Encounters: Locating the Politics of Experience", the crucial questions in the 1990s concern the construction, examination and, more significantly, the

President of the International Cooperation Committee in Korea for the Military Sexual Slavery by Japan. Two years later, Young-Sook Shin and Hye-Ran Cho have invaluable published the widely researched article, "On the Characteristics and Special Nature of the Korean 'Military Comfort Women' under Japanese Rule", in *Korea Journal*, Vol.36, No.1, Spring 1996, 50-78. Now, the autobiographical testimonies by 19 Korean Military Sexual Slavery Women are also available in the English translated text, *True Stories of the Korean Comfort Women* (1993), edited by Keith Howard and translated by Young-Joo Lee, London: Cassell, 1995.

institutionalization of difference *within* feminist discourses (74). For her, working in American society, this universality of gender oppression is problematic, based as it is on the assumption that the categories of race and class have to be invisible for gender to be visible (75). But, my experience working in “*English*” Studies as a “*Korean*” feminist critic has shown, and I have argued in this section, that readers from one culture can respond to texts from another culture for creating their own subjective discourse without imposing a false “universality” and a national “homogeneity”. What is at issue here is rather a cross-cultural interaction in the *international* and “*in-between*” territory where the postcolonial feminist critic can discover a *localized* gendered oppression within a *heterogeneous* national consciousness.

3.5.2. “Gender in Literature” Course in 1996

And of course she is, the new one, and Ofglen, wherever she is, is no longer Ofglen. I never did know her real name. That is how you can get lost, in a sea of names. It wouldn't be easy to find her, now.

- Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale* -

- * Year: all (1st-4th; but, in fact, mostly 1st)
- * Size: around 40 students
- * Gender: mixed
- * Major: mainly dentistry and medicine
- * Time: the 2nd semester in 1996
- * Text: translated and visual texts

The following responses were collected in the second semester of 1996. The composition of this group was distinctive from the other two groups of sections 3.3.3. and 3.4.1. in 1996 and sections 3.2.2. and 3.4.2. in 1997. Almost 80% of students were from the first-year in dentistry or medicine and the other 20% were from oriental pharmacy, politics, administration, and so on. But, among first-year students from dentistry or medicine, there was a conspicuous difference between women and men students. While most men students entered this dentistry department directly from high

school, most women students entered it after they had experience in other departments or at other universities. There were also first-year married mature women students in oriental pharmacy, and one of them had already given birth, which made this group very different from the other groups. Among first-year women students majoring in dentistry, at least five had already spent two or three years at other universities majoring in other subjects. One of them had a very individual experience with her B.A. in finance from one of the privileged mixed universities in Seoul. After her graduation, she had a job in a communications company and worked there for one year. However, she soon discovered the glass-ceiling in that patriarchal male-dominated structure. Then she decided to attend university again, for a secure job in the future. On the other hand, one mature student in oriental pharmacy had taught history in middle school for five years and quit her job after her marriage. Then, she decided to have another job, several years later, and entered university again.⁷⁵ Those mature women students brought more women-centred experience into the classroom and they played important roles as opinion leaders through that whole semester in this group. That was the most distinctive difference from the former two groups in 1996 and 1997, in which most men students were senior to most women students. In Korean culture, gender identity was often mixed with age identity influenced by Confucianism. Sometimes, in a certain context, age identity operated much more strongly than gender identity.⁷⁶ Thus, in this group, gender and age identities operated together and, especially in this programme on *The*

⁷⁵ This peculiar phenomenon about mature women students in dentistry and oriental pharmacy reveals the culturally severe gender inequality in the work place in Korean society, even though the Equal Employment and Pay Act was passed in the National Assembly in 1991. Comparatively, dentist and pharmacist as a job are welcomed by women due to their independent working conditions and higher incomes in contemporary Korean society.

⁷⁶ The most eminent example is the case of Korean grandmothers over sixty, because in their asexual age, in most cases, they are respected by the family as well as the public, thanks to their old age and experience.

Handmaid's Tale, students' responses to both translated and visual texts were various and diverse, even contrasting on certain topics, because of the wider range of their experiences.

When I decided to put *The Handmaid's Tale* on the reading list in the "Gender in Literature" course, I had a definite purpose and a clear intention. In Korean society, the social discourse on female sexuality and body politics had already bloomed and circulated since the early 1990s. However, the intellectual discourse within academia has not begun yet, even though it is very crucial in the commercialized postmodern society.⁷⁷ From my point of view, *The Handmaid's Tale* was an appropriate text to deal with those themes in the classroom. However, I needed to put it as the last programme among 10 set-texts, because I hoped that, by then, many students could properly understand the interactive relationship between female sexuality, the patriarchal political regime, and state power. This was a quite delicate and difficult issue to discuss at undergraduate level, when most students like this group, composed of many first-year students from dentistry, medicine, and oriental pharmacy, were not familiar with this kind of topic. So I decided not to have a discussion programme divided into several small size groups. Instead, I read several students' solicited writings to the other students in the classroom after the group presentation. During the group presentation, I had to be alert to what those students presented and control it very skilfully for the other students' better understanding from a feminist point of view. In fact, *The Handmaid's Tale* was not an easy programme to understand for Korean undergraduate students. But, once they began to understand the deep narrative and structure in the text, their responses were distinctively divided according to their different gender identities.

⁷⁷ I shall discuss this disparity between society and academia concerning sexuality and body politics in section 4.1.1.

In the beginning of their writings, many students wondered why Margaret Atwood, a famous Canadian feminist writer, had written *The Handmaid's Tale*. Most men students raised this question and answered that they did not know or could not guess her intention. One man student, Sung-Ho Kim, a third-year in politics, insisted that, for the feminist message, this dystopian setting in *The Handmaid's Tale* was not desirable, even if Margaret Atwood aimed to stimulate and awaken the general public to the power relationship between female sexuality and the patriarchal political regime (2). Another man student, Sang-Min Yoon, a first-year in dentistry, also caught Atwood's warning message, but his main attention was somewhat different from Sung-Ho Kim's. His main concern was more focussed on the sexual relationship based on individual responsibility and personal sincerity.

What is Atwood's message in this film? Probably it is a warning about something. It seems to me that Atwood warns against irresponsible and unfaithful sexual intercourse, by showing the unbearable living condition, environmentally and politically. In other words, Atwood advocates the loyal and sincere sexual relationships based not on pleasure but on devotion. (1)

If we consider Atwood's interview with Hermione Lee at York University, U.K., in which she said that she intended in *The Handmaid's Tale* to parodize and satirize the mechanical nature of contemporary instant sex-culture in America, Sang-Min Yoon's response corresponds well with "the implied reader" in *The Handmaid's Tale*, as "a textual structure anticipating the presence of a recipient without necessarily defining him" (Iser, *The Act of Reading*, 34). In fact, Atwood's writing purpose and writing style are good examples of how a woman writer could reverse the normal male use of the female body. Once Linda Hutcheon argues, "The body of woman, when used by men, is colonized, appropriated, even mystified; when used by women, that body reveals its fertility and self-sufficient sexuality, even if it parodically uses the conventions of the

masculinist nude tradition in order to do so" (*The Politics of Postmodern^{ism}* 158). Women students easily recognized Atwood's parodical representation of the female body as soon as they watched the film. Hee-Joang Han, a first-year in oriental pharmacy, considered Atwood's writing as "masquerade prosecution against the chauvinistic Christianity" (2). Another woman student identified her primary response to *The Handmaid's Tale* with a Korean woman poet, Seung-Hee Kim, bringing Seung-Hee Kim's paragraph in her own writing.

If a man has written this novel, I would call it intuitively and instinctively "religious pornography just for men". But, when I consider that the writing subject is a feminist writer, I wish to read it as "a thrilling message from a leading feminist to other women comrades, while anatomizing the religious, sexual masculine dictatorship. (Seung-Hee Kim; Quote from Su-Hyun Kim, a first-year in medicine, 2)

On the other hand, one man student, Byung-Ho Lee, a first-year in medicine, told of his unpleasant experience of misunderstanding Atwood's message in the film from its advertising copy.

On the cover poster of the video tape case, a physically attractive man is holding a woman tight while kissing her fervently. And, the advertising copy says "New Sex Moral in the 21st Century" and "Handmaids, Their Forbidden Love", as if this film is another version of a romantic love story. After I watched the film, I recognized that this copy is a kind of deceit or cheating. How could they put that copy on "The Handmaid's Tale"? (1)

Like Gil-Soo Moon's comment on the circulating and distributing system concerning *The Color Purple* video tape in section 3.4.2., Byung-Ho Lee's response, here, also reveals the process of how the film "The Handmaid's Tale" was accepted and circulated in the Korean society. When I watched the film in the theatre in 1990 Seoul, I still remember, most of the audience were embarrassed and confused by the story, partly

because of their disappointment and partly because of their misreading. Nevertheless, Byung-Ho Lee's writing is more revealing of a certain aspect of Korean society than Gil-Soo Moon's writing in terms of the social discourse on female sexuality. If there had been a definite social discourse on the power relationship between female sexuality and patriarchy in Korean society, the film distributors could not have attached that "silly" advertising copy to *The Handmaid's Tale*, which completely distorted and even subverted its main theme in the name of commercialism. Therefore, Byung-Ho Lee's unwelcome experience with the advertising copy reflects that, in contemporary Korean society, feminist consciousness and discourse are manifestly not dealing with the theme of female sexuality, yet.

After watching the film, many Korean men and women students were simultaneously reminded of the handmaid or the surrogate-mother custom during the Chosun dynasty in Korean history. In the surrogate-mother custom in the Chosun dynasty, most women who had become the surrogate-mother for the ruling class family, "yangban", came from extremely poor families. They had to take the role of the surrogate-mother mainly due to extreme poverty.⁷⁸ Young-Soo Kim, a third-year in politics, interpreted the vocabulary, "handmaid" in *The Handmaid's Tale*, in his own way. He took it as a combination between the surrogate-mother and the prostitute. He could not understand why the handmaid should be deserted "only because of her physical condition in terms of fertility" (1). He reads the superficial narrative structure, but is unable to go deeply into the narrative structure. Another woman student, Mi-Hyun Park, a first-year in dentistry, had a more comprehensive idea of the handmaid,

⁷⁸ The famous Korean film director, Kwon-Taek Lim, made a film on the surrogate-mother in the Chosun dynasty, entitled "Surrogate-Mother" (or "Handmaid"). It was a miserable story of a poor young girl. This film was awarded several prizes at several international film festivals, including the Venice International Film Festival.

thinking that, probably, every culture had had its own cultural custom of the surrogate-mother and that this custom was directly connected to the ownership issue, i.e., who could possess an individual woman's womb (2). Her response now penetrates the fundamental theme of *The Handmaid's Tale*.

Most students, both women and men, employed the words, "shock", "surprise", and "distress", in order to describe their response to *The Handmaid's Tale*. While women students predominantly admired Atwood's pungent observations and well-considered imagination, men students prevailingly expressed their anxiety and agitation. Su-Hyun Kim, a first-year in medicine, praised the technique by which Atwood had effectively connected and closely interwoven many important independent issues like gender, state, power, religion, and sexuality. Su-Hyun Kim evaluated *The Handmaid's Tale* as a rare masterpiece for visualizing the depth and width of sexual repression imposed on women (2). Another first-year woman student in dentistry, Young-Mi Jeon, said, "How could she imagine such a horrifying world? Atwood forced me to think of many issues, at once, like the meanings of my-being-femaleness, sexual intercourse, love, sexuality, and so on" (1). Hae-Yeon Kim, a first-year in oriental pharmacy, introduced an anecdote about how she had become aware of severe environmental pollution.

Once I walked into the rain without an umbrella. Later on, I was surprised when I found dark stains on my arms: But, this film provided me more shocking and startling emotion for many hours after watching it. (1)

Men students were also surprised at Atwood's description in *The Handmaid's Tale*. But, their emotions responded in a different way from women students'. Sang-Min Yoon, a first-year in dentistry, declared, "It is a very disturbing story. It is difficult to imagine and must not become reality" (1). Sung-Ho Kim, a third-year in politics,

wished to share his feeling with women students and questioned, with curiosity, women's feelings during their reading processes.

I, even as a man, could feel anxious about the story while I was reading through the translated text. Then, I was thinking of women's responses to this text, how they would have been disturbed and distressed by this story. (2)

It is very interesting to discover the slightly different conceptual meanings of the words "shock" and "surprise" between women and men students. In fact, their emotional responses are different.

The Ceremony scene evoked the most feelings of annoyance and irritation among both women and men students. But, women students' responses were much more horrified, even though both women and men students considered it as the most vexing and irking scene in the film. For example, one man student, Tae-Yoon Hwang, a first-year in medicine, simply said it was unbelievably shocking to him (1). But, two women students, Young-Mi Jeon and Min-Kyung Lee, told of their feelings in more detail. Young-Mi Jeon, a first-year in dentistry, said that the Ceremony scene led her to contemplate what the concrete act of sexual intercourse meant to women and men. Even if the Ceremony was described as their duties for the sake of the state, she said, it was seen as too inhumane and brutal. Another woman student, Min-Kyung Lee, a first-year in dentistry, felt much more exasperated by that scene, comparing it to a kind of pornographic scene (1). Women students' feeling of being upset by that specific scene was audibly obvious, which illustrates their relative closeness to Offred in *The Handmaid's Tale* in terms of their gender identification. They could also read Atwood's sociopolitical message about the female body better than men students.

While no men students paid attention to Atwood's serious message on female sexuality and body politics in the text, women students made explicit various responses

according to their age and experience. Hae-Yeon Kim, a first-year in oriental pharmacy, was annoyed by the fact that the female body was abused only for the state's purpose of continuing the species. She thought it should be treated as a national resource with respect and honour. Then, she concluded that women's sexual role as a continuing vessel through pregnancy and child-bearing must not be undervalued, but respected by the society as a whole (2). She makes a kind of grand generalized discourse not from her own experience but from her learned knowledge and idealized lessons. But, a mature married woman student, Hee-Joang Han, a first-year in oriental pharmacy, picked up the "survival" theme from reading the text. She accepted Offred's story very heartily, because Offred's bearing a baby was urgent for her "survival". But, Hee-Joang Han knew how that process was distasteful, saying, "Because of my experience of giving birth, I can fully understand Offred's terrified feeling when I am reminded of my own experience in the hospital. It was horrible when I perceived that my body was mistreated" (2). Even though Hee-Joang Han produces her own meaning based on her own experience, however, she cannot extend it to the social meaning. Her response still stays at the personal level. Jin-Mi Choung, a first-year in oriental pharmacy, viewed the female body and female sexuality within the social discourse and social structure.

The social discourse on the female body, which insists that female sexuality is separated from reproduction, now reflects the active and subjective women's life-style in our society. Because patriarchy has defined the female body only as a reproducing vessel, it is said that women have to take reproduction as the most important means to achieve their desire and existential cause. But, I wonder whether this is true or not. (2)

Now, she sees the relationship between the female body and reproduction within the patriarchal social discourse in the Korean society. I think her way of thinking is not usual but exceptional among first-year university students in Korea. Though she does

not have autobiographical experience of reproduction, she has been quite accustomed to this kind of discussion while majoring in sociology for three years. This kind of unknown factor emerges from the students' solicited writings in this group. Another mature woman student, Mi-Kyung Kim, a first-year in dentistry, raised a very "Koreanized" curiosity, questioning how the Wives in the film like Serena Joy could keep their position without bearing their own child. Now, her question is located between "for the sake of the state" and "for the sake of the family". Since Korean "*familism*" has been evaluated as a quite peculiar characteristic of Korean culture, with an emphasis on the legitimate blood lineage, the legitimate wife's bearing a baby "for the sake of the family" has also been quite a familiar theme to Korean people. However, if the legitimate wife could not bear a child, then, she would achieve neither family membership nor personhood. Also, she would be completely ignored and disregarded within the familial community. From this cultural background, Mi-Kyung Kim wondered how Serena Joy could keep her power without her own giving birth. Her question is now a little bit separated from Atwood's imaginative social structure. But, it is a good indicator of the different concepts on child-bearing between the Republic of Korea on the earth and the Republic of Gilead in the air.

On the contrary, Mi-Hyun Park, a woman first-year dentistry student, made a very provocative comparison of the socially significant signs in the text and in English-speaking western countries. Wondering what kind of link existed between the red color in *The Handmaid's Tale* and the scarlet color in *The Scarlet Letter*, she picked up the social sign in Atwood's naming system. She expanded her former ideas on the ownership issue of "woman's womb" into the signification system in Gilead. Since the naming system of the handmaid could be identified with the ownership of the handmaid's womb, as in the examples of the handmaid's name, "Offred" signified with

“Of-Fred” and “Ofglen” in my initial quotation signified with “Of-Glen”, Mi-Hyun Park identified the handmaid’s name not as a proper noun but as a normal noun. Then, she brought forward a similar example from the old-fashioned married woman’s surname in the English-speaking countries, like Mrs. someone. She insisted that this should also be considered as a normal noun, because it was not indicating a specific person’s individuality (2). Her charming idea now penetrates the essential nature of the patriarchy with the example of the signifying process of naming in both factual and fictional worlds. Her response is one of the best examples among the students’ responses in this group in order to illustrate the relationship of language, power, and discourse which I have already discussed in the section 2.1.

Apart from Offred, Moira was regarded as the most remarkable figure in *The Handmaid’s Tale* from the students’ point of view. I have noticed that most of the women students considered Moira as the feminist figure, more sympathetically than Offred. Yeon-Hee Kang, a first-year in dentistry, said that, to her, Moira was the most impressive character and that, therefore, she was very surprised and struck when Offred met Moira again at the secret nightclub. She thought Margaret Atwood should have saved Moira in some part of the story (2). Another man student, Young-Soo Kim, a third-year in politics, even expected Moira’s re-appearance as a woman warrior or a feminist leader, not as a prostitute in the secret nightclub serving the ruling class men. He could not understand Margaret Atwood’s intention in providing the reader with no possibility for the feminist imagination. Both women and men students’ responses to Moira symbolize the process of their intersubjective interaction between reality in Atwood’s writing and imagination in their mind, as in the “*gestalt*” psychology.

Men students were more alert to the power relationship between the state and the individual concerning the theme of sexuality. Sang-Min Yoon said that he would object

to any kind of state intervention into the individual's life, without consulting and collecting the citizens' diverse opinions. He did not believe any kind of political propaganda by the state, ornamented with "for your own sake". But, he acknowledged that he could not completely reject it, as his past life proved (1). Compared with Sang-Min Yoon's view focussing on an individual's relationship with the political state power, Sung-Ho Kim, a third-year in politics, saw the political power system as operating through female sexuality. He exemplified the "Salvaging" scene, in which the ruling power punished a politically resisting member in the name of "illicit and illegal sexual intercourse". Sung-Ho Kim said, "The ruling class controlled and utilized female sexuality to maintain their dominating power. But, I think, the worst thing is that they have disguised their intention of abusing the handmaid in front of the public again, this time, in the name of chastity" (2). He now refines the nature of the masculine state power. Another woman student, Ki-Young Kim, a first-year in dentistry, suggested an actual example from Korean history of what Sung-Ho Kim proposed. She exemplified the founding period of the Chosun dynasty, beginning in the year 1392.

When the ruling class in the Chosun dynasty decided to adopt Confucianism, it was designed to focus on controlling and managing female sexuality dividing women into two groups of legitimate wives and plural illegitimate mistresses. Then, they strengthened and heightened this system through marriage to secure their dominating power as the ruling class, "yangban". (2)

Her opinion is exactly the same as I have already discussed in section 3.1.2. The second example which she brought was the Korean Military Sexual Slavery by Japan, as was precisely shown in the former section 3.5.1. and will be shown more in the next section 3.5.3. In this group of students, their responses to *The Handmaid's Tale* were less concentrated on the Korean Military Sexual Slavery by Japan than in the "Popular Culture and Feminism" course in section 3.5.1. However, they touched on very

diversified themes in the text. Moreover, in this group, there was one response most clearly distinguished from the other students in the same group as well as from the other groups: it was from the devout Christian, Min-Kyung Lee, a first-year in dentistry. She felt that Christianity seemed to be insulted by Margaret Atwood, because, in her opinion, Atwood should not use Christianity as the background of such an awful story (1). Her response seems to me the lowest level of Korean students' responses to *The Handmaid's Tale*. In this case, the reader's sharing of gender identity with the writer's through the first-person narrator's does not have any kind of influence or advantage, at all. However, this is not a general case but an exception.

As with the students' dissatisfied responses to the endings in *Jane Eyre* and in *The Color Purple*, both women and men students were disappointed at the ending of *The Handmaid's Tale*. Nonetheless, I must make clear that this "ending" in their writings mostly meant the ending made by Harold Pinter and Volker Schlöndorff, not by Margaret Atwood herself. Most students considered the film's ending as relatively weak and mystically romantic, when Offred, now regaining her name Kate, is waiting for her new baby as well as Nick in a village setting. Young-Soo Kim, a third-year in politics, felt discontented and dissatisfied because this final scene had a negative influence, diminishing the feminist messages in the film and lessening Margaret Atwood's intention in writing this imaginary SF story. He had the impression that the message from the film finally rested in the romantic love and the heterosexual relationship. Alternatively, he suggested, at least, that the ending in the film must imply more hopeful feminist messages for the future (2). Another woman student, Su-Kyung Kang, a first-year in dentistry, compared the ending of the film and that of the translated text. She approved Margaret Atwood's ending, because the ending in the written text, "The Historical Notes", showed its political message well. However, she disapproved

of Schlendorff's ending, because it erased the main theme in *The Handmaid's Tale*, "the control of female sexuality by state power", and transformed it into an individual woman's romantic love story (2). Whenever a man director adapts a woman writer's written text into a visual form, commercialism always permeates that transforming process. But, in most cases, these transformed visual forms are not welcomed by Korean university students.

Most men students' responses arose strikingly from gendered reading positions which were as detached as possible. Their involvement with the text was rare and the ambivalent detachment was noticeably dominant in their writings. For instance, Young-Soo Kim, a third-year in politics, said he finally felt relieved at the story, because all the men characters in the film were not always represented as dictators or rulers (2). I think his response indirectly implies why men students could not be involved in the story, and this kind of response from men students meets what Atwood may be aiming at in her writing of *The Handmaid's Tale*. Other men students also evaluated the film as poor, because it provided impressions, entertainment, or emotion. Sang-Min Yoon, a first-year in dentistry, thought the story moved too fast in spite of proposing many implications. He acknowledged its uniqueness, but it could not provide him with pleasure (2). Young-Soo Kim's response was the same. Joang-Woo Park, a third-year in administration, complained that men characters were not rightly represented in the film and that Atwood simply ignored men.

It is such a boring film. A friend of mine could not bear the story and even went out to play computer games. It seems to me that the film is dealing with many important issues. However, from the beginning, I was worried about how the story was going to be developed. It is definite that the film is talking about how female sexuality is exploited by the state political regime. But I, as a man, cannot accept it as a feasible futuristic story. Instead, the factors working against its happening are dominant in my mind. On the contrary, I am interested in the

silent men characters around handmaids, as well as the army forces around the ruling class men. (1)

No woman student could take such a definite detachment from *The Handmaid's Tale*. Compared with the students' responses to the other texts of *A Room of One's Own*, *Jane Eyre*, and *The Color Purple*, the differences in students' responses to *The Handmaid's Tale* between women and men students are more conspicuous as well as more distinctive. It means that their practical knowledge as differently forming gendered subjects through their bodily experience have taken different routes. The theme of female sexuality in *The Handmaid's Tale* now emerges as the barometer for checking how the gendered subjects would take their different reading positions. Among men students, Jae-Hwok Lee, a first-year in dentistry, was the only exception, because he categorized this film basically in the tradition of dystopian entertainments. Locating "The Handmaid's Tale" as a thriller and suspense film like George Orwell's "Nineteen Eighty-Four", he enjoyed the tensions and suspenses in the film, rather than reading the film from the gender perspective (2).

Women students also responded to the film with conflict. But it was different from men students' reaction. Yeon-Hee Kang, a first-year in dentistry, said naively "If I were in Offred's situation, I would want to be checked as negative in the fertility test. I might not be able to survive through that unbearable circumstance" (2). From her narrative, it is definite that her bafflement results from her identification with Offred in the film. Ju-Eun Park, a first-year in dentistry, urged that the most impressive scene was the scene in which Offred told Nick, "My name is Kate". Ju-Eun Park was moved by Offred's speech and, from that scene, she began to be freed from the extremely repressive tension. From her point of view, that was the only humanized meeting throughout the film (2). At this stage, her response indicates the important relationship between individual identity as a human subject and its corresponding naming, even if

she does not develop this issue further. Now, her focus on the control of naming points to an intrinsic aspect of the poststructural way of thinking in the film, which comes from a different perspective from Mi-Hyun Park's in my earlier discussion in this section. On the other hand, Hyun-Ju Oh, a first-year in dentistry, mentioned that she was very frustrated with the Aunts in the Red Centre. Quoting the historical fact of the Korean Military Sexual Slavery by Japan, she indicated that the Japanese women elementary school teachers had accomplished a similar job, though both were not exactly the same. As the Aunts in The Red Centre took charge of brainwashing the Handmaid's gendered individuality, the Japanese elementary school teachers took charge of selecting young teenage girls with well-developed female bodies and sending them to the Japanese troops. Hyun-Ju Oh said that it was disastrous that women must play such an inhumane role to keep up the handmaid system in the Republic of Gilead (2). Her response is not much different from western feminist scholars' anxious responses to the institutionalized system of Aunts in *The Handmaid's Tale*.

In short, women students' responses to *The Handmaid's Tale* in this group are more seriously perplexed and frightened while picking up many detailed episodes from reading or watching *The Handmaid's Tale*. In particular, their emotional feeling is closely related to their gendered experience, physically and mentally, in Korean society. However, men students' response to *The Handmaid's Tale* is more superficially described and outlined while looking at the whole political structure in the imaginary Gilead. They could see the main theme in the film, but they could not see what each episode is telling them. This difference in reading *The Handmaid's Tale*, women's more active involvement and men's rather passive detachment, is the most distinctive phenomenon in terms of gender differences, compared with other students' readings of the other texts in this research.

Let me present another contrasting response from another group of Korean women. At Yonsei University in Seoul, a special course for women leaders in diverse areas has been running since September, 1993. It is not a purely academic course but a kind of further learning course. In every semester, approximately 30 women leaders have registered. Most of them are over the age of 50 and have travelled many times and to many places throughout the world. They are the professionals, the relatives or the executives of Korean giant conglomerate companies, and the wives of ruling-class men. The lecturer of this course selected this film, "The Handmaid's Tale", for the group discussion on female sexuality and state power. However, rich, intelligent, and ruling-class Korean women responded to "The Handmaid's Tale" very negatively. Their frustration, bewilderment, and embarrassment were comparatively prominent as their common responses to "The Handmaid's Tale". However, their frustrations come from a different cause, compared with the women students in my classroom. They chiefly identified themselves with Serena Joy, the Commander's wife in the ruling class signified with blue colors in the film, while young women students mainly identified themselves with Offred, the Commander's Handmaid as the ruled class signified with red colors in the film. Even within the boundary of the readers' same gender identity, in this case, age and class identity boundaries are operating together in the opposite way to the women students'. Within my teaching classroom, gender identity alone is the most manifest differentiating category for comparing students' different responses to the specific text. Therefore, it is true that Korean readers' "collective" responses in my research must be confined to Korean university students, mostly in their early 20s, focussing on the gender difference.

However, even among Korean university students in their early 20s, a wider range of diversity exists in their responses to *The Handmaid's Tale*. In the second

semester of 1994, I once brought the film, “The Handmaid’s Tale”, into my classroom during the “English Conversation” course, which was compulsory for the first-year women students. Most of the around 30 women students came directly from high school. Their baffled feeling from watching the film was much deeper and stronger than that of women students in the “Gender in Literature” course in 1996. The differentiation between the two groups is conspicuous in terms of subject studied and personal experience, in parallel with the change of social consciousness on gender and sexuality. In those days of 1994, the theme of female sexuality was extremely unfamiliar to first-year women students. Accordingly, their processes of finding meanings were disappointing. But only one connection spontaneously emerged between them and “The Handmaid’s Tale”. That was the Korean Military Sexual Slavery by Japan, the Korean women’s collective experience from the colonized history. Even to the eyes of the young Korean women in their early 20s who had not yet awakened to their female sexuality, that connection had become clearly visible. This episode signals how strongly that specifically colonized history of female sexuality has been imprinted in every Korean woman’s consciousness of sexuality. Apart from this issue of the Korean Military Sexual Slavery by Japan, another two issues had been proved as the most outstanding connections between *The Handmaid’s Tale* and the Korean readers in this “English Conversation” course group in 1994. Those two issues were the surrogate-mother custom and the founding process of Confucianism through manipulating female sexuality by the ruling class in the Chosun dynasty, as this “Gender in Literature” course group in 1996 has already shown in their responses.

3.5.3. Open Lecture in 1996: “State Power and Female Sexuality in *The Handmaid’s Tale*”

I cannot avoid seeing, now, the small tattoo on my ankle. Four digits and an eye, a passport in reverse. It's supposed to guarantee that I will never be able to fade, finally, into another landscape. I am too important, too scarce, for that. I am a national resource.

- Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale* -

* Time : 6:30 p.m. 9 May 1996, Thursday

* Place : Yonsei University, Seoul, Korea

* Audience : mainly under- and postgraduates

This open lecture programme was organized by the Women Students' Union at Yonsei University,⁷⁹ in cooperating with the Alternative Culture Group. The title of this open lecture series was "Re-reading Feminist Films" composed of 4 programmes. It aimed at reading the women-centred films from a feminist point of view. "The Handmaid's Tale" was the first programme and the Korean film, "301.302" followed. The third programme was the German film, "Keiner liebt mich" and the last programme was the New Zealand film, "Once were warriors". The Women Students' Union prepared the informational booklet for the whole lecture series including students' and lecturers' articles on each programme. In the case of "The Handmaid's Tale", an audience of over 100 came into the large lecture room while the film was showing. Almost 70% of the audience were women undergraduates and postgraduates. After finishing the film showing, the lecture and discussion programme began at 8:30 p.m. and it continued for more than one hour. Because my article "State Power and Female Sexuality in *The Handmaid's Tale*" was already published in that informational booklet, I did not need to repeat the theme in detail. As soon as the film finished, it was obvious to everybody in that lecture room that most of the audience were frightened and

⁷⁹ The Women Students' Union at Yonsei University was separated from the mixed Student Union in May 1988, thanks to the Democratic Revolution in June 1987. Now, the large mixed universities in Korea have Women Students' Unions, separated from the Student Union. For instance, the main activities of the Women Students' Unions at the mixed universities in 1996 and 1997 have focussed on sexual harrassment and sexual violence on the campus.

threatened by the fictionalized story in the film. The most direct and notable response from the audience was “I could not understand the film at all”. There was a certain agreement in silence among the various members of the audience. Most undergraduates were wondering what they could catch as the main message from the film. In the former section 3.5.2., those first-year students were an exceptional group among first-year university students, as I have already illustrated. For the undergraduate students in Korea, “The Handmaid’s Tale” even as a visual text was not an easy programme. For instance, Seung-Woo Yang, a first-year man student in theology at Yonsei University, wrote his indescribable impression after watching “The Handmaid’s Tale” as follows:

I cannot understand this film. There was no specific message and no climax in the story-developing process. I, who had really enjoyed action films or comedy films, could not understand why this film was made and why we watched it. In the beginning, it seemed that something would immediately happen. But nothing happened in the end. It is said that this film dealt with social issues, especially women’s issues. However, I think nothing was properly dealt with in the film. Only in the beginning, the film gave that kind of impression.
(11)

I think his response was not an exception among the audience in that lecture room. While the first-year students in section 3.5.2. had prepared their reading on the “female sexuality” theme in *The Handmaid’s Tale*, together with cultivating their gender-centred consciousness through the “Gender in Literature” course, the wide range of the audience in this open lecture encountered this theme without any preparation. Therefore, the audience’s responses during the discussion session were varied, in accordance with their diversified experience from the first-year students to the Ph.D. course students. This factor made the discussion session more fascinating.

After my short introductory lecture, the discussion started within an uncomfortable and strained environment. Most women students were puzzled by the

colonization of female sexuality as sexual slavery and women's severe repression in the film. One woman student opened up the discussion session, questioning her impression of the film:

I've learned that female sexuality had been colonized by the patriarchal capitalist society. But that slogan has only remained a theory in my mind. It is more threatening and frightening to watch it in the visualized scenes. It seems to me that this film shows the concurrent location of female sexuality in the male dominated social structure by revealing the secretly sealed facts. How can Margaret Atwood imagine such a misogynist society? Would you give me more information about the writer?⁸⁰

Probably, Korean students from English departments might know Margaret Atwood. However, the other students from other subjects would not know her well. Even though several of her novels have been translated into Korean, Margaret Atwood is not yet a "well-known" English-speaking Canadian writer in Korea. So I gave more precise information about Margaret Atwood and *The Handmaid's Tale*, mainly dealing with the Evangelical Fundamentalist New Right Movement in mid-1980s America, which stimulated Margaret Atwood to write it. This background information explained why she created the misogynist theocracy, the Republic of Gilead. In her interview with *The New York Times*, dated 17 February 1986, Margaret Atwood⁹ resolutely declared her intention to write *The Handmaid's Tale*.

A lot of what writers do is they play with hypotheses. It's a kind of 'if this, then that type of thing'. The original hypothesis would be some of the statements that are being made by the Evangelical Fundamentalist Right. If a woman's place is in the home, then what? If you actually decide to enforce that, what follows? (Rothstein C11)

⁸⁰ This is quoted from the recorded cassette tape at this open lecture.

During the discussion about this topic, we compared the mid-1980s American misogynist discourse from the Evangelical Fundamentalist New Right Movement to the mid-1990s Korean misogynist discourse from Korean men in their 50s and 60s, especially those who were in decision-making positions in the contemporary Korean society.

Another question about the handmaid's identity was also raised by a woman student. She was very much impressed by the colour classification for signifying women's social function including biological ability and the way in which the handmaid's identity was represented by the naming system in the Republic of Gilead. In the film, when the new Ofglen appeared and mechanically told Offred, "I am Ofglen", this woman questioner said, she was almost shocked and startled. Then, she wondered how the handmaid's naming and identity were described in the novel, i.e., whether they were the same or not. So I made clear the handmaid's naming system in the Republic of Gilead, which was supposed to remain stable exclusively during the three-time Ceremony period in one ruling class man's house. Then, I added:

Atwood did not give any other names to Offred through the text, except her provisional name, "Offred", at the Commander's house. This is the important difference in naming between the film and the novel. In the film, she told Nick, "My name is Kate". But, in the novel, Margaret Atwood leaves her name as an absolutely floating sign. There was only one scene when the handmaids in the Red Centre called their names in secret through whispering to one another. One feminist scholar once guessed her name as June.⁸¹ But, that was simply her guessing, not a definite clue. I think giving her name as "Kate" lessened the effect of Atwood's intention on the handmaid's drifting female identity.

⁸¹ Harriet F. Bergman suggested Offred's former name should be "June". She argued, "The list of names at the beginning of the novel, whispered in the Red Centre, indicates that it is probably "June", since every other name in the list is assigned to a character"(853). (Cf. "'Teaching them to Read': A Fishing Expedition in *The Handmaid's Tale*". *College English*. 51 (1989): 847-54.)

Two other questions also came from women undergraduate students. One was about the women's relationship between Serena Joy as a legal wife and Offred as a mistress or concubine. The comparison of this relationship between the film and traditional as well as contemporary Korean culture followed. Most students agreed that the definite hierarchy between Serena Joy and Offred was more similar to that relationship in Korean traditional society, which naturally brought in the historical fact from the "surrogate-mother" custom in the Chosun dynasty. Therefore, this custom was a clear connection between female sexuality in Korean history and female sexuality in the text, *The Handmaid's Tale*. But they thought the handmaid system in the text was far worse than the surrogate-mother custom in Korean history. The other question was about the Ceremony scene in the film, which was considered the most awful scene by most of the audience. It seemed to women students that everybody in the Ceremony scene was playing a masquerade or a play. They thought that the seriousness among all characters in that Ceremony procedure seemed, at first, very strange and suspenseful and, later, very ironical and even comical. Then the discussion gradually moved into the next topic, whether the "historical patterning"⁸² in the film has already happened or is still happening.

As I have already discussed in the former sections of 3.5.1. and 3.5.2., the most evident example of the "historical patterning" to Korean audiences was the case of the Korean Military Sexual Slavery by Japanese state power during the colonial period. Many opinions and much information about the recent on-going process were presented by many participants. They informed me about the important meeting held in Manilla,

⁸² In her interview with *MS* magazine, as I have already quoted in section 3.5.1., Margaret Atwood said "I transposed to a different time and place, but the motifs are all historical motifs". Later, she declared more clearly that *The Handmaid's Tale* was written to visualize "the historical patterning". (Cf. John Goddard. "Lady Oracle". *Books in Canada*. 1:8. Nov 1985, 8-10.)

Phillippines, on the 27-30th, March, 1996. It was the 4th Joining Conference for the Asian Military Sexual Slavery by Japan, in which approximately 150 people including the former Asian Military Sexual Slaves to Japan from Korea, Taiwan, Indonesia, and the Phillippines, as well as feminist activists from those countries and Japan had participated. At the end of the Conference, they signed a resolution ~~to~~ hold the International Symposium on War and Militarism as well as ^{to} request the Japanese government to accept the proposals by the Commission on Human Rights in the United Nations. On the other hand, one man student said that there was a moving television programme on the former Korean Military Sexual Slavery Woman living in China, just two weeks ago. It was the well-known weekly documentary serial programme, "People to People", shown at 10:15 p.m. on the 24th April, 1996, Wednesday, on KBS1 TV. I also had watched this specific part, entitled, "Homecoming, 59 years later". It was not only moving and touching but also tormenting and heartbreaking, because it did not tell factual happenings in the past but showed concurrent consequences of that "historical patterning", the Japanese colonization of Korean female sexuality by abusing state power. Hak-Soo Choung, a former Korean Military Sexual Slave for Japan, had lived in a small village in the Republic of China since the second World War ended. She could not come back home for many reasons, including her former life as a comfort woman. Her life was extremely miserable and poor, even ^{though} she got married consecutively to two Chinese men. After diplomatic relations between the Republic of Korea and the Republic of China were established in 24 August 1992, she met a Korean businessman and he arranged her return to the hometown she left 59 years ago. Most of her family and relatives had died or lost touch. However, the more pitiful factors were her spoken language and present nationality. Though she met her elder cousin's brother and his family, she could not

communicate with them properly because she had almost forgotten the Korean language. Even for everyday life, she needed help from a translator. On her first day home, she was excited. But, soon, her excitement gradually lessened, mostly due to this inconvenience. On the other hand, her official nationality was another problem because her passport was issued by the Republic of China. She could visit her hometown as a temporary traveller in spite of the high travel fare. But she could not live in her hometown as an inhabitant. This was an ironical tragedy, resulting from the past “historical patterning” of the Japanese colonization of Korean female sexuality.⁸³

Thanks to one man student’s information, our discussion on the relationship between state power and female sexuality was accelerating and broadening, while looking for other “historical patterning” examples diachronically through Korean history as well as synchronically worldwide.

The theme of “birth-control” linked to family planning policy emerged as the next topic. A woman lecturer in anthropology, Eun-Shil Kim, took this issue from Korean economic development planning since the 1960s. That connection concerning birth-control was almost unnoticed and forgotten, but it was an inseparable link between state power and female sexuality in many developing countries, even these days. The other postgraduate woman student from sociology described her impression of the newly-delivered handmaid in the “Birth Ritual” scene in the film, uttering only one phrase, “like a disposable cup in the bin”. After her giving birth, everybody left there with her new-born baby, while this handmaid was still crying on the bed. This postgraduate woman student could not endure their cruelty and the sociopolitical ideology of the “Birth Ritual” in the Republic of Gilead. Superficially, this “Birth

⁸³ In June 1997, another former Korean Military Sexual Slave for Japan living in Phnom Penh, Cambodia was looking for her relatives and in early September she has finally met her siblings in Southern Korea. Now this kind of news from other regions in Asia is no longer unfamiliar to Korean people.

Ritual" episode was seen as a communal blessing and congratulation on bearing a baby, not, however, to the biological mother but to the legal mother. But she pointed out that the real agent controlling this ISA (Ideological State Apparatus) in Althusser's term on giving birth was not the social community influenced by its cultural tradition but the political regime influenced by its constitutional purpose to keep the white human species going. This woman postgraduate student realized that she had never considered or even imagined that state power had controlled female sexuality through the birth-control policy. Nevertheless, it was a well-known fact to scholars in development studies that birth-control policy has been treated as one of the most important governmental policies in order to achieve national economic development. Korea is now considered a successful case, reducing its birth rate below 2% per annum since its ambitious launch of economic development planning. Eun-Shil Kim explained how it had worked in the Korean context.

In Korean history, the first social discourse on the relationship between reproduction and female sexuality is the family planning policy, one of many modernized programmes designed by the Korean government. Supported by the existing administrative policy and the newly created ideological social discourse, the family planning policy has been efficiently accomplished through ruling and controlling the fertile female body at the national level. It has finally produced a modernized image of the nuclear family with two children and an exemplary model of qualified modern mothering in Korean society. Thus, the family planning policy in our recent history is a good example of the sociopolitical discourse influenced by the colonizing and colonized relationship between state power and female sexuality.

In fact, in her article "To Grow with Women's Studies" in *Changing Lives: Life Stories of Asian Pioneers in Women's Studies* (1994), Hyoung Cho had already provided a concrete example of this relationship between state power and female sexuality,

bringing her own experience while she was carrying on the research in late 1970s, focussing on the role of women in the Korean national family planning policy, sponsored by a feminist group within UNDP. The main concern of her research was to find out what women did to achieve this success. To her, many of women of reproductive age seemed to be “involuntary victims” of the policy. She discovered that to be sterilized was perceived as a duty of a virtuous wife to her husband and thus to his ancestors in the Korean context. A majority of the women suffered side-effects, which had not been fairly reflected in the previous and subsequent research by scholars and planners, mostly male. She ^{recounted} her experience as follows :

Having become aware of all this, I could not help thinking of family planning in terms of a male conspiracy, manipulating women as agents and targets of the policy. It was no more than a project typical of the patriarchal system around the business of human reproduction, involving the family, the community, the government, and society as a whole. There was no room at all to allow the concept of “a woman’s right to control her own body” to enter in the whole process of the planning and execution of the policy. (57)

After looking at the relationship between state power and female sexuality in the Korean context, another lecturer from sociology, Eun Cho, brought an opposite example of the birth-control policy from Singapore. The Singaporean government has been encouraging fertile women to give birth in order to heighten the national birth rate, offering better housing conditions and several social benefits. Even if state power could not *compel* women to give birth as a civic duty, it has practically forced them to go in that direction. In the mid-1990s globalized world, the social discourse of heightening the national birth rate has circulated not only in the developed European countries but also in the developing Asian countries. In Korea, it is just burgeoning in the corner, without gaining any attention from the public, yet. While the audience were

talking about the concrete and realistic “historical patterning” synchronically and diachronically, I simply added more information to their discussions, quoting Linda Kauffman’s idea of two theocratic models for the Republic of Gilead. They were the protestant Boston society in *The Scarlet Letter* and the Islamic fundamentalist society in Iran, in those days ruled by Ayatollah Khomeini (235).

As my discussion in this section has illustrated, the gender difference in the audience’s responses in this open lecture was not clearly visible. Actually, no men students contributed or articulated their opinions or responses in front of the audience in that lecture room. They were physically attending that programme, but in fact they were absent in terms of ideas and ideologies. Only one man student brought factual information. In this open lecture programme, it was not a duty to prepare their solicited writings before its beginning, unlike the men students’ situations in former section 3.5.2. What this phenomenon told us implies the reconfirmation of their different positions as gendered reading subjects. Through reading the visual text of *The Handmaid’s Tale*, the difference in the responses between women’s enthusiastic involvement with the text and men’s indifferent detachment from the text has been confirmed, again, in this open lecture programme. Linda Hutcheon guessed this disparity in the readers’ responses to *The Handmaid’s Tale*, corresponding to their gender identities. In her book *Canadian Postmodern* (1988), she argued, “This simultaneous mixture of involvement and distance created by the reader’s gender identity makes *The Handmaid’s Tale* perhaps Atwood’s most postmodern novel to date” (156). Korean readers’ responses in both sections 3.5.2. and 3.5.3. have proved how “this simultaneous mixture of involvement and distance created by the reader’s gender identity” operated in the historically specific setting of mid-1990s Korea. In short, their responses have proved that *The Handmaid’s Tale* as an English written feminist text

provided Korean women and men readers with the most valuable opportunity of enjoying the processes of creating facts and generating meanings, most triumphantly, among the four texts of *A Room of One's Own*, *Jane Eyre*, *The Color Purple*, and *The Handmaid's Tale*, which I have utilized for this research.

3.6. The Engendering Processes in the Classroom

It is clear that the reader is not addressed in a unified way and that she has a range of options available to her: s/he is part of a negotiated process over the meanings of the text and about the range of subject positions which she will adopt or resist. It will be in the interest of readers to recognize some of the subject positions and reject them, whilst others will be adopted.

- Sara Mills, "Reading as/ like a Feminist" -

Teaching gender studies through reading texts is an exciting and challenging task. It is a valiant adventure and valorous exploration of gender formation and gender relations in the Korean cultural context. Performing a revisionary reading of the text in the Korean university classroom plays the role of laying a foundation stone in order to figure out, shake, and reform gender relationships in the Korean cultural heritage, because reading is the concurrent act to bring before the eyes of both women and men readers a transparent map of the intersection of gender and culture. However, in the concrete process of the signifying practice in the classroom, not only cultural politics but also classroom politics are necessary and inevitable for a feminist lecturer, especially in a culturally patriarchal context like Korea. The classroom, particularly in the "Gender in Literature" course composed of all-year students from all different subjects, has been emerging as a kind of battlefield in which many differentiated and diversified ideologies are competing with one another. Thus, stabilizing meaning in that classroom is an

extremely political action. Through the teaching processes of projecting courses, planning curricula, performing lectures, presentations, and discussions, the feminist lecturer in the Korean classroom must be sharply and simultaneously aware of every kind of enunciation within the classroom. But this awareness by the feminist lecturer in terms of classroom politics has taken on characteristics according to the specific programme. Whenever we are dealing with Korean cultural products⁸⁴ as set-texts, the lecturer's attention is not necessarily intensified because students' responses to the Korean cultural products are not so diverse as those to the non-Korean cultural products including the English feminist texts. Korean students are too familiar with the Korean cultural products to defamiliarize them. Korean students' identifications with the writer's gender identity via the narrator's in Korean cultural products are nearer than those in non-Korean cultural products. Korean women and men students' gender differences in reading Korean texts are mostly decided by the narrator's gender identity and the narrative style intertwined with the story-telling structure. Encountering the Korean texts, they could recognize relatively easily the location of "the implied reader" within the texts. On the contrary, whenever we are dealing with non-Korean cultural products, the diversities and varieties in their responses are maximized. Korean men students' responses to *The Color Purple* and *The Handmaid's Tale* in sections 3.4.2. and 3.5.2. are good examples. Nevertheless, these diversities and varieties are only possible when the Korean social consciousness on gender issues has been also diversified to the same extent, as I have shown in the comparisons between 3.3.3. on *Jane Eyre* and 3.4.1. on *The Color Purple* as well as between 3.4.1. and 3.4.2., both on *The Color Purple*. For research focussing on cross-cultural gender differences, the gender consciousness of

⁸⁴ Because I have included Korean films, which do not have corresponding literary texts, in my syllabus of this "Gender in Literature" course, I prefer to employ "cultural products" rather than "literary texts".

the interpretive community as a whole must be considered the preconditions. Otherwise, it is not possible to get each individual's differentiated opinions on gender issues. This relationship between an informed reader and an interpretive community to which the informed reader belongs appears as the most fascinating link, especially in the case of reading the cross-cultural gender difference. On the other hand, this intersection of cross-cultural gender differences has arisen as an extensive cultural space of rich resources. It is even impossible to categorize these diversities.

In this research, I have mainly dealt with the students' solicited writings as their responses to the English feminist texts, because I wish to focus on the writing subject. Section 3.5.3. is the only exception. But in the actual teaching situation in the classroom, various kinds of different responses have emerged spontaneously through the students' utterances, and the lecturer in the classroom must deal with and respond to them spontaneously as well as simultaneously. This is why classroom politics is so important within a heterogeneous group of students. Considering this teaching situation, in my case, classroom politics have not always paralleled cultural politics. This needs a transformed aspect of cultural politics. In other words, I must sometimes hide my real thoughts as a feminist lecturer and only stimulate the students in the classroom to verbalize those issues by themselves. This indirect teaching method is more effective than my own direct verbalization to them. Thus, in the case of teaching gender studies through reading texts in the Korean classroom, classroom politics are more urgent and requisite than cultural politics. The feminist lecturer must be technically as well as politically well-prepared for swimming in the sea of gender and culture which has multi-layered social ideologies. However, in the English studies courses, these classroom politics are less demanding than those in the "Gender in Literature" course.

In the English studies courses, especially in the Korean cultural context, cultural politics are emphasized more than classroom politics. Most Korean students who have decided to attend English studies courses are normally aiming to learn the English language, and thus, English-speaking culture. Most of them have never expected to learn gender issues from reading English written texts. Recently, the number of new faculty members in the English departments of Korean universities, who have Ph.D. degrees in feminist criticism in English studies in the U.S.A., is now increasing. But, still, their areas of study, within English studies, are not classified as feminist studies in English by the old-fashioned categorization. The existing institutional structures are still too strong to situate feminist or gender studies in English studies. It is a doubly marginalized field within Korean university institutions. Spivak once said, "English literature and the Women's Movement - are discontinuous, though not unrelated. They would bring each other to crisis" ("The Post-Colonial Critic" 73), as I have already quoted in section 2.5. It is true, in the Korean context, that English studies and gender studies are now discontinuous, even though they are not unrelated. But, Spivak's intention to talk about this discontinuity between English studies and gender studies cannot be adopted directly into the Korean context, because the locations of English language and English studies in the Korean context are different from those in Spivak's speaking context. In the Korean context, English language proficiency like the TOEIC or TOEFL score will guarantee an individual student's future prosperity. And, these days, this rose-colored expectation is blooming along with the "globalization" slogan at the national level. Owing to this practical context, learning cultural differences from reading English written texts must give way to learning efficiency in language from speaking, listening, reading and writing English as a foreign language. It goes without saying that gender studies must also give way to it. There is no space in English studies

to insert gender studies as a classified division. These different motivations on the students' side are well illustrated in both sections on *Jane Eyre* between the English studies courses in 3.3.1. and 3.3.2. and the gender studies course in 3.3.3., in terms of the length and the diversity of each section. While the Korean students in the gender studies course are more interested in their gender identities and gender relations, like the British students who are attending gender studies courses offered by English departments at British universities, the Korean students in the English studies course are more interested in improving their achievement of English language proficiency. Therefore, in this research, the Korean students in the gender studies course have responded more enthusiastically than those in the English studies course. This is why the cultural politics are more demanding and required in the English studies course, rather than the classroom politics. Now, it appears as an urgent task for Korean feminist lecturers in English studies to combine both areas, gender studies and English studies, and to set up this combined subject as an independent academic field within the Korean university institutional structure.

However, the accomplishment of this urgent task should not only be limited within the academic institutional level but also extended to the social level concerning its consciousness of gender and culture. Also, the feminist lecturer's work in the institution needs to broaden and widen to reach the same extent on the social level. If her cultural politics is confined to the classroom, reforming the engendering processes from a feminist point of view, by dealing with Korean as well as non-Korean cultural products, would not bring any political effect or result in any social change. Her teaching in the classroom should be accompanied by her cultural politics in the society. The comparison between sections 3.4.1. and 3.4.2., both on *The Color Purple*, reflects how different the teaching effect was through the engendering processes in the

classroom, when it was accompanied and influenced by the 1st Women's Film Festival in Seoul (WFFIS). Specifically, the Korean feminist lecturer dealing with non-Korean products should be keen to intervene in the production processes of the social discourse and the diverse cultural products in Korea, because her intervention should be considered the groundwork as well as collaborative work for the current or further engendering processes in the classroom by accelerating its speed and broadening its width. But, in reality, especially in this postmodern capitalist society, the feminist lecturer's intervention into the process of producing social discourse and diverse cultural products by dealing with mass communication politics is not an easy task, particularly in a rapidly commercializing society like Korea. For instance, in sections of 3.2.2. on *A Room of One's Own*, 3.4.2. on *The Color Purple*, and 3.5.2. on *The Handmaid's Tale*, students' responses illustrate how and where feminist interventions should have possibly taken place. In Korea, the marriage between feminism and commercialism has already been accomplished, and it now results in producing pseudo-feminism. When both women and men students are bringing those feminisms into the classroom unintentionally and through ignorance, then it is time for classroom politics. For effective and efficient engendering processes in the classroom, especially from a feminist point of view, a feminist lecturer's cultural politics, performed in practice at the social level, is as important as her classroom politics through teaching of gender studies at the intellectual level. Therefore, solidarity and cooperation among feminist lecturers in English studies or any other subjects are inevitable as well as demanding. In my case, The Alternative Culture Group has taken on this unique role. Thus, from my own experience in the Korean cultural context, I would say that this is the most important factor for the *appropriate* engendering processes in the "historically" located classroom, as in non-western and non-European countries. Otherwise, no one would carry through

that kind of alternative experimentation in that specific cultural circumstance. In fact, the academic institutional structure is too rigid to allow that kind of alternative experimentation, as my experience will imply in detail in section 4.1.2. We need to view more and farther visions beyond the current engendering processes in the classroom.

Then, what would be the influential factors, from the students' side, for the beneficial engendering processes in the classroom in the Korean context? As my whole discussion in this Chapter 3 has illustrated, the students' varied and diverse autobiographical experience is the crucial factor for the engendering processes in the classroom. To Korean university students, gender identity is not the foremost differentiating classification. Even within the same gender identity boundary, the range and category of differentiation in terms of gender consciousness is varied. If I roughly compare the women students' groups to the men students' groups, this range of differentiation within the same gender identity boundary is more prominent and conspicuous in the men students' groups. This phenomenon implies that society allows and provides men students with more opportunities to obtain diverse living experiences, as Virginia Woolf once mentioned in *A Room of One's Own*. In the Korean practical situation, men students' experience during the period of military service has transformed their consciousness of gender identity from that of university students to that of proper adults in a society, while most women students' experience is just confined to their home and university. Women students' consciousness of gender identity has never been transformed or confused during their university days. For Korean women students, marriage is the decisive opportunity to think seriously about their gender identity, which I will discuss in detail in the following sections of 4.2. and 4.3.2. On the other hand, both women and men students' former experience before their university days is also the

fundamentally influential factor for their engendering processes in the classroom. In most cases, the student groups which are least transformed through the "Gender in Literature" course is usually the third and fourth-year men students in law, economics, business, and administration subjects who were brought up as eldest sons outside Seoul.⁸⁵ But, ironically, the most transformed student^vgroup among men students are also those students in law, who have already finished their military service ^{are}and now preparing to enter society. They could seriously change not only their consciousness of gender identity but also their viewpoints on life. For example, one of the men students in law in the "Gender in Literature" course in 1997 wrote me a letter, saying "I have lived as a paralyzed man with only one leg of patriarchy, while imprisoned in the nest of the State Law Examination. This "Gender in Literature" course has provided me with an immensely potent medicine. Now, I can see other leg is growing up in my body and, soon, it will come out from my body. I very much appreciate your effort at leading me to take such an effective medicine to cure my paralyzed leg. Thank you!!! From a disabled student in law with only one-leg" (Myung-Jin Kim, a second-year in law).

The theme, "sexuality", is the most challenging and puzzling issue to Korean students who are participating in the engendering processes in the classroom. Owing to the Korean cultural heritage on sexuality, i.e., keeping silence on this theme, most women and men students have not yet acquired ideas or language on this theme. Now, in 1990s Korean society, it is obvious that there is a missing link between their practical experience and their ideological language. Whereas men students' inattentive responses to *The Handmaid's Tale* are shown in sections 3.5.2. and 3.5.3., it seems to me, women students' enthusiastic responses in the same sections reflect that they, by contrast, could

⁸⁵ The explanation of the combination of factors is very difficult, because each factor is linked with the past and present Korean cultural heritage on gender formations, specifically in the case of men.

have developed their language on sexuality through their bodily experience. This disparity between experience and language related to the theme, “sexuality”, exists not only in the women students’ case, as western feminists have insisted, but also in the men students’ case. Moreover, the same disparity between sexual experience and language on sex is an issue not only for university students but also for all Koreans, irrespective of gender and generation. Section 4.2., “Gender, Sexuality, and Popular Culture in 1990s Korea”, will describe the location of the “Korean” discourse on sexuality. I think this phenomenon is the most peculiar characteristic in 1990s Korean gender studies. Bringing the “sexuality” theme into the classroom and leading both women and men students to discover their language of sexuality based on their own sexual experiences is going to be the next stages of the “*proper*” engendering processes in the Korean university classroom. Thus, it is now time to consider the wider scope of gender and sexuality in Korean contemporary culture.

Chapter 4. Reading Korean Context from Reading English Feminist Texts

4.1. The Changing Processes of Gender Consciousness in Korea

4.1.1. The Women's Movement, Women's Studies, and Feminist Studies in English Literature in Korea¹

I make no apologies for being egotistical. In this particular I attempt an improvement on other autobiographies. Other autobiographies weary one with excuses for their egotism. What matters it to you if I am egotistical? What matters it to you though it should matter that I am egotistical?

- Miles Franklin, *My Brilliant Career* -

This section is focussed on the Women's Movement, Women's Studies and the Feminist Studies in English Literature in Korea since 1986 intertwined with the recollection of my female self's growing-up process as a student and teacher. As a "non-western researcher and lecturer" in "English feminist literary criticism"², I will "narrate" my own experience during the last ten years from being a student in the UK through doing research on female first-person narratives in English texts to teaching university students inside and outside institutions in Korea. I first came to the UK on the 13th of August, 1986 as a British Council Study Fellow for one year. It was the most important and conspicuous turning point in my life. When I applied for the British

¹ This short paper was based on my autobiographical experience focussed on women's movement and feminist literary studies in Korea since 1986. Part of this section was published in the occasional paper, "Feminist Teaching in Practice - Outside the Institution -" published by the Department of English at the University of Hull, UK, in August, 1993.

² For me, these two categories are a hostile contradiction, because both locate me in doubly terrifying and marginalized territory in terms of culture. If I was not doing English studies but social science or Korean studies, then my female self's growing-up process would be quite different.

Council Scholarship in Seoul, November 1985, my research title was “Women Characters in Victorian Novels”.

During the lecture courses in Oct. & Nov. 1986 at the Faculty of English, University of Cambridge, I was so embarrassed about what I heard in the lectures. Even when I could understand what they were saying in English, I couldn't understand the contextual and cultural meaning, namely what they were talking about. Why were they talking about sexuality, masculinity, and femininity? What did they mean by Victorian masculinity? What was the relationship between those terms and feminist literary criticism? If you consider that we Koreans didn't have exact terms as counterparts of sex, sexuality, sexual intercourse, and gender, you could imagine how confused I was in my mind in getting the appropriate meanings. Since language was the instrument of thought, I was just like an alien of colour, directly from another world which had a completely different “signifier” and “signified”. In Korean, one term could be generally used for those four meanings and it had different meanings according to the speaking and listening context. In fact, it was at the annual Korean Women's Studies Association Conference in June, 1989 when for the first time this issue was evoked and discussed as the main academic topic. In recent days, among those 4 terms, the Korean counterpart of sexual intercourse has become widely used, accompanied by the frequent use of Korean counterparts of sexual violence as well as sexual harassment. However, in 1986, I couldn't make any meanings from reading Toril Moi's *Sexual / Textual Politics*. Even though I attended her seminar as part of the SPS (Social Political Science) programme, I couldn't understand the contextual meaning.

From March 1989, I renewed my teaching as a full-time lecturer in the English Department at Hanyang Women's Junior College, where I had already worked as a part-time lecturer in 1985-1986, after I finished a MA in Women and Literature at the

University of Hull. However, I could not adapt what I had learned from Britain into my teaching situation just as I could not write my ideas in Korean properly. In August, 1990, there was a conference which proved invaluable in figuring out my problem. It was the ELLAK international symposium, held at the Academy of Korean Studies from August 13 to August 16, 1990. The title, "New Perspectives in English Studies and Teaching" was broken up into postmodernism, deconstruction, and teaching English literature to Korean students. Among 10 guest lecturers, 3 were British: Alan Durant from Strathclyde University (but, soon, he moved to Goldsmith's College, London, as the Head of Department.), Steven Connor from Birkbeck College, London, and Christopher Norris from the University of Wales, Cardiff. While I was talking with Alan Durant, I confessed my problem of being unable to write my ideas in Korean. Immediately, he pointed out the possibility of solving my problem from another perspective. "You had better keep on writing your professional articles in English, as far as you are doing English studies. Then, you can get an academic readership from the international intellectual community". He awakened me to the importance of different readerships, which I had never thought of before in Britain and which had led to some confusion in my mind in Korea. Also, he and Christopher Norris gave me professional advice which confirmed that my *intercultural* Ph.D. research project would be possible. On the other hand, I could hear Korean senior lecturers' various experiences of teaching English literature to Korean university students inside the institution. However, there were no feminist teaching styles among those experiences from my point of view.

After this ELLAK symposium, I undertook two kinds of tasks at the same time. One was the revision of my *Mrs. Dalloway* paper, "Madness, Marginalization, and Power in *Mrs. Dalloway*", originally prepared for English readers and delivered at the Hull seminar, in order to have it published in *The Journal of ELLAK* which was the

main academic journal for Korean university lecturers in English studies. The other was the translation of the part of my MA dissertation related to *Jane Eyre* into Korean to publish it in *Contemporary English Literature*, the semi-academic publication for more general Korean readers. Because *Jane Eyre* was the most famous and beloved English text among Korean readers, it would be the appropriate text to get a general Korean readership as well as to transform my ideas on gender studies in English terms into a written production in Korean terms. I expected to experience for myself this gap and distance from floating between two cultures through this writing procedure. It was not an easy task. It took longer than I had imagined. After I finished this translating job, I made many people read it, checked which paragraphs and which expressions they couldn't understand and revised them. I had completely finished this job in November, 1990. Then I could feel my feet were attached to the earth in the Korean peninsula, no longer in the air. After this job, I felt I could write in Korean properly. Many Korean readers - women and men - were interested in my critical analyses, which they had never noticed in the text before. In addition, their responses invaluablely supplied me with clear views on women's literature in Korea and the regrettable realisation that we had very few women critics in terms of feminist literary criticism. On the other hand, 1990 was the year when I taught *A Room of One's Own* to my students in a classroom in an institution. While I was doing this pre-survey and when I finished its teaching in mid-December 1990, I felt this was a possible and worthwhile research project to undertake. My students' responses were quite optimistic and Wolfgang Iser's lecture in May, 1989, at the Semi-Centennial Memorial Conference at Hanyang University in Seoul, Korea, was quite useful and helpful for producing this pre-survey article. Fortunately, my article, which is now inserted as the section 3.3.1. in this thesis, was accepted by two conferences. One was the "Feminist Theory: an International Debate" Conference held

in Glasgow on 12-15 July 1991 and the other was the 5th annual Women's Studies Network (WSN) Association Conference held in London on 6-7 July 1991. Throughout the conferences, I began to realize that this feeling of alienation from other participants would never stop in my life, so long as I continued my professional career. From now on, my talk will concentrate on the Glasgow Conference, where I delivered my paper. There were officially 288 participants on the list. Among those, only 5 (3 Indians, 1 Syrian, and I) were regarded as women of colour. Even if this conference was entitled "an International Debate", for me, it was not. It seemed to me a "western-European debate". My paper was allocated to the "Cultural Communication" section, with two other papers from Italy and India. When three of us had finished speaking, only one question came from the floor about the first paper from Italy. And no more! I was so disappointed because my experience had led me to expect diverse but nonprofessional questions on gender issues in current Korean society. Later on, when I met the audience at my seminar individually, they told me that they could not make the connection between the image of Korea in their mind which they had had from watching TV and the women in that society. There was no "Cultural Communication" and it was impossible. Once again, I sharply recognized that I myself was a Third-World woman for ever and ever. On the other hand, I was convinced that my research project was very much worthwhile because it could fill the blank page on the *international women's studies geography*, which I had experienced during the last several years. Women's studies had been developing fast and must clearly take different directions according to diverse national cultures. Therefore, *intercultural women's studies* were necessary to deconstruct the worldwide patriarchy for the reconstruction of a more humanized planet. From my point of view, it was time to demand *international solidarity and sisterhood*.

Even though this task would be an innovative and intrepid adventure, I thought, I was well placed to advance and explore this gap in terms of my own identity.

After I went back to Korea, in September 1991, I was asked to write up my ideas related to women's issues in our society by the editorial board of the newspaper at my college. I agreed to do it, thinking that this was a good practice for my journalistic writing. Since I published my professional article on *Mrs. Dalloway* in winter, 1990, I didn't get any responses at all from the Korean academics except a few women university lecturers. When I published it in *The Journal of ELLAK*, I intentionally put the specific phrase, "This paper was originally prepared for, and delivered slightly differently at, the annual 'Women and Literature' seminar programme of the University of Hull, U.K., in Nov. 1987". I wished to show that this paper was related to feminist criticism on *Mrs. Dalloway* and waited to see what kind of responses I would get from Korean academics in English studies. However, the result was disappointing. Postgraduate students in English studies couldn't understand my analyses of the text, even when they read it precisely. When I told a woman senior professor my feeling about those readerships from Korean academics, she said that my English argument based on Kristevan theory was too sophisticated for Korean readers to understand. Therefore, I decided to move my next training field from professional writing in English to journalistic writing in Korean. In fact, we did not have as many and as varied feminists as in western European countries. The urgent task on women's issues was to stimulate the general readership and to get moral support and a positive response from as many ordinary citizens as possible. This was the direct way to deconstruct the patriarchal social consciousness. In my opinion, middle-class housewives hadn't moved yet. But, once it would begin, it could have enormous power to change the Korean social system just as we have seen in the success of "The Democratic Revolution of

1987". But, at the moment, it remained just a potential. Many Korean women had been educated at university level, well-trained in Korea, sometimes even in a western country, but suffered under the Confucian cultural heritage.³ When I had an occasion to get together with middle-class housewives who considered their lifelong job only as remaining in the private sphere, sometimes I felt the impulse to read aloud Emily Davies' article to them, in which she insisted that women had just the same citizenship as men, when she worked for the establishment of Girton College, Cambridge. My participation in the Glasgow Conference also confirmed again that I must move into journalistic writing in Korean as soon as possible. The title of my article in the Hanyang Women's Junior College Newspaper was "Romantic Love and Sexual Violence". My main argument was that these ideologies were not different from the feminist perspective, because they were based on the mythology in which a woman was basically defined as a sexual being rather than as a rational being. It drew widely on the social ideology linked with sexuality in western history as well as the social phenomena linked with sex-related culture in contemporary Korean society. The length was 7,000 words in Korean and it was published in mid-October.

As soon as it was published, considerable responses emerged. I was invited by several women students' groups and received several personal letters, asking me to meet each of them in private. I was really surprised because I regarded this article just as the beginning of my journalistic writing. Those responses reflected what Korean young women in their early 20s had been searching for. They had been living in the confusion between the future expectation and the present reality. They wished to live as

³ In 1989, it was reported that about 65% of unemployed married women would like to have jobs and that it was an increase from 53.8% in 1985. Also, 66.3% of women college graduates seek employment. (The 2nd Ministry of Political Affairs, "A Survey on People's Consciousness Concerning Women's Roles and Situation", 1989, 43)

independent individuals, but they were not courageous enough to manage that sort of life because there were various difficulties and barriers in reality. My article literally “sparked” the confusion in their mind. While I was moving around several students’ groups during October and November, 1991, a certain agreement was created among them. They would like to organize a women’s issues discussion group and to continue meeting regularly. Most of them belonged to my department, both working students at evening class and non-working students at day class. Later on, this group was naturally connected with The Alternative Culture Group, which had had various discussion groups and projected diverse cultural events including publication. The first preliminary meeting was held on the 17th December at the office of The Alternative Culture Group in Seoul. Over 10 participants discussed what kind of topics we would select for the programme. However, while we were discussing it, we found a remarkable psychological distance and difference between the two groups - namely those who had had a working experience in a society and those who entered the college directly from secondary school. Therefore, the theme “working women” was chosen as the first topic for us and *Open Society Autonomous Women* published by The Alternative Culture Group in 1986 was selected as the first text for our discussion from the 7th January, 1992.⁴

Apart from the Working Women’s Discussion Group, during 1992, I was very much involved in the annual publication of The Alternative Culture Group. The issue was closely related to my field, women’s literature, and its title was *Speaking as a woman, Writing with the body*, published in early January, 1993. It was mainly argued on the basis of women’s representation in Korean literature, women’s writing in Korean

⁴ The consciousness raising activity of the Working Women’s Discussion Group will be discussed in detail in the next section 4.1.2. as one of many small women’s groups, composed of around 10 members, which make up the women’s cultural movement in 1990s Korea.

literary history, feminist criticism of specific Korean and foreign literary works and the current arguments in western societies. It also had several creative writings including Korean rereadings of Virginia Woolf and Helene Cixous. In this publication, I wrote a critical article on the current best-selling novel, *I want what I have been denied* by a Korean woman writer, Yang Kui - Ja, which was advertized as "the feminist novel". My argument was concentrated on social discourses in advertisement as well as in journalistic articles, and analyses of the text itself based on reader-response criticism. Through this writing task, I could get much clearer views and more confidence on my professional work. My participation in the editorial board meeting for this issue itself was also a marvellous learning process for this purpose, which I could not get at any other place in the world. In my lifelong history, the year of 1992 will be recorded as "the year of blessing" with both groups - the Working Women's Discussion Group and The Alternative Culture Group, because they have confirmed that I am not "the ugly-duckling"⁵ in Korean society any more.

On the other hand, the year of 1992 was also memorable in terms of my career, because the Korean Society for Feminist Studies in English Literature was launched in September and it has held a monthly seminar programme from then onwards. The Society began to publish a Journal twice in a year, one in Korean and the other in English since June 1995, when I was working for the Society as the Secretary-General. At the moment, in July 1997, the Society has already published four volumes of its Journal and has over 200 members including the postgraduate students. We are now planning to hold a conference in February 1998 on "Feminist Literary Criticism in

⁵ This is the resonance from the supervision on *The Mill on the Floss* with Gillian Beer, my Cambridge supervisor who led me to dip my toes into English literary criticism since 1986. In those days, my self-image was quite similar to Maggie Tulliver's, i.e., "the ugly-duckling in St. Ogg's", as a *Korean* research student in *English* literary criticism at Cambridge.

English Studies: Theory and Practice". However, problems still remain because they - feminist studies in English literature - are not considered to be an independent teaching or researching area in the Korean academic classification as well as in the institutional teaching division in Korea. Also, the Society is not powerful and strong enough to raise and create the subjective discourse as Korean feminist critics in English literature.

Then, what is happening in the women's movement and women's studies in 1990s Korea? It was in the 1980s that the Korean women's movement emerged as a social movement and distinguished from the former women's movement in Korea in terms of socio-political transformation (Shin 450). As I have already argued in Chapter 2, the Korean women's movement in the 1980s could be divided into "woman labourer" identity by the Marxist feminists and "women as a whole" identity by the liberal feminists. The representative institutional association for the former is the Korean United Association of Women's Organizations which was created, thanks to "The Democratic Revolution in 1987", with 21 women's movement institutions nationwide in 1987 and now it has increased to 24 institutional members in 1995. It was the main institution which had formed women's political power through the regional organizations. While considering the women's movement as the sub-unit of the progressive social movement, they have been searching for the socio-political transformation focussed on the class struggle, because they believe the main cause of contemporary patriarchy is based on capitalism.

On the contrary, the representative institutional association for the latter is The Alternative Culture Group, which was launched in 1984 by a group of lecturers and postgraduate students in women's studies at the diverse universities. While considering the women's movement as an independent social movement, they have been searching for a more diversified social transformation focussed on the everyday life style. It

initially aimed to demonstrate, through a series of publications, an opposition to the existing patriarchal and authoritarian culture, mainly targeting middle-class intellectual women even though its final target will be women as a whole. The Alternative Culture Group became the pioneering feminist group working on the cultural movement, which was what distinguished it from the other feminist groups in 1980s Korea. Now it has grown up with more than 500 members and achieved social recognition as the feminist cultural movement camp.

In the 1990s, after the fall of the socialist countries of Eastern Europe, the progressive women's movement has been diverted to various new social movements. Along with this, a new identity of "woman as victim" has emerged as women's organizations with various backgrounds have formed a coalition for women's issues, mainly focussed on sexual violence and sexual cultural politics. This transformation of the progressive women's movement from the 1980s to the 1990s results in the following two outcomes. One is to construct a "women as a whole" identity through linking the diverse women's movement organizations under the name of "We, Women" in Korea. The other is to link with the institutional women's movement organizations outside of Korea beyond the national boundary, as we can see in the case of the Korean Military Sexual Slavery by Japan (Joo-Hyun Cho 154). Apart from the transformation of the progressive women's movement, since the late 1980s, the voluntary small women's groups have emerged as the centre for women's self-satisfactory movements creating women's own culture (Yang-Hee Kim 15). This social phenomenon reflects that women's issues are now able to permeate into Korean women's everyday lifestyle. The next section on the case of the Working Women's Discussion Group will show how this has been achieved and is still developing.

In Korean history, the first recognition of women's issues as social problems was around the 1920s, when Korea started to open its doors to western countries under Japanese colonialism. During the 1930s and 1940s, any kind of Korean women's movement was always connected with the National Independence Movement. After the Korean War in the early 1950s, women's consciousness was rapidly raised, because many women were forced to work in society and take responsibility as the bread-winner. During the sixties, women's social status had come out prominently as the economical labour force contributing to the fast Korean economic development. Later, in 1975, the UN proclamation of "Women's Year" had a great impact upon the women's movement in Korea. Even though the Research Centre for Asian Women (RCAW) at Sookmyung Women's University was for the first time opened in September of 1960 and the first Korean scholarly journal about and for research devoted to women's issues, *The Journal of Asian Women*, was born in December of 1962, it was in the 1970s when women's studies courses began to be taught as an academic subject. For example, Ewha Womans University for the first time launched an interdisciplinary research project in women's studies in 1975 and, 2 years later, owing to the outcome of this project, an undergraduate course was first given and the Korean Women's Institute was also founded incorporating the research components related to women's issues. In 1984, the Korean Women's Studies Association (KWSA) was established and the first issue of *The Journal of Korean Women's Studies* was published in 1985. Since then, KWSA has published one issue every year, and from 1996 it has published two issues each year. The number of universities to offer a women's studies course at the undergraduate level was 24 in 1985 and 69 in 1990. However, there was a noticeable difference in women's studies courses which have begun since 1988. Hyoung Cho argues that most universities which have opened a women's studies course since 1988 must respond to,

and accept, the Women Students' Unions' requirement to establish a women's studies course for women students' benefit (205). As for degree courses, Ewha Womans University⁶ established the Department of Women's Studies in 1982, which began to award MA degrees. Since 1990, the department has offered Ph.D. degree programmes. More recently, women's studies programmes for Ewha undergraduates have expanded greatly, offering 15 different courses from an introductory course to more specialised topics (Ii-Sook Chung 8). In 1990, Keimyung University and Hyosung Catholic University also opened MA degree courses and, in 1996, Hanyang University and Sungshin Women's University. In 1997, Dongduk Women's University follows. And now in 1997, 13 universities have their own research institute related to women's studies and 3 women's universities have already set up women-specialised libraries. Moreover, in 1995 and 1996, several international conferences on women's issues were held in Korea to figure out and examine the gender identity of Asian women within global feminism.⁷

In parallel with this fast expansion of teaching women's studies at universities, research on women's studies has also expanded widely and transformed its main focus from "women's work" to "women and gender". Myoung-Ok Lee has investigated the intellectual structure of women's studies and its changes over two successive time periods, the 1980s and 1990s, in Korea.⁸ According to her, "women and gender",

⁶ Ewha Womans University is recorded as the largest women-only university in the world, with its 110-year history and more than 20,000 students.

⁷ For example, "The 1st International Conference on Feminism in Asia" by the Korean Women's Institute, Ewha Womans University in May 1995; "Envisioning Asia's University Coeducation in the 21st Century" by Yonsei University in May 1996; "The Rise of Feminist Consciousness Against the Asian Patriarchy" by Asian Center for Women's Studies, Ewha Womans University in May 1996; "Gender and Politics of the College Curriculum" by the Research Institute for Asian Women at Sookmyung Women's University in May 1996; "Informal meeting of experts on social education for women in the context of human rights" by Keimyung University and UNESCO in June 1996.

⁸ She collected five major journals on the subject of Women's Studies for analysis.

“women and literature”, “women and law”, “household work” and “domestic violence” were the new research themes in the 1990s. “Women’s welfare”, “family”, and “women’s work” have been studied continuously during the two periods, but “women’s education” and “women’s history” have been reduced in frequency in the second period (203). The most focussed and researched area in the first period was “women’s work” (185) and that in the second period was “women and gender” (192).

At an interview with *The Women's News* (27 June 1997) on “The Fruition of the Women's Movement during the last 10 years”, Congresswoman Mi-Kyung LeePark⁹ and the feminist activist Kyung-Sook LeeOh have confirmed that this transformation from “women’s work” to “gender and sexuality” is already underway in the Korean women’s movement. They also pointed out that the Korean women’s movement has now moved into getting and showing the popularization of public women’s power (7). However, for Korean women, the theme of “gender and sexuality”, especially sexuality, is not an easy topic, as the 1997 Korean Women's Studies Association Conference has proved to ourselves, Korean feminist scholars, how far we must travel for Korean feminist scholars to have our own ideas on female sexuality. The main theme of the Conference was the feminist approach to sex-culture and sex-education in Korea. Eun-Shil Kim argues, “In contemporary Korea, the diverse discourses on female sexuality are now raised and circulated, while they are in conflict with and contradictory to each other.

Multidimensional analysis was used to examine the authors’ intellectual relationships in two-dimensional map and cluster and factor analyses were used to classify the represented authors by subject areas. In addition, an author co-citation analysis was performed to show the changes in the intellectual structure of Korean women’s studies. The test period set in 1985-1994 was divided into the first five-year-period (1985-1989) and a subsequent five-year-period (1990-1994).

⁹ This surname is the newly circulated sign since the International Women's Day, 8 March 1997, showing that she is now participating in the cultural movement to co-use both parents’ surnames in order to abolish the exclusively paternal lineage and set up the maternal lineage, at the same time. This is a good example to show the characteristic aspect of Korean women's movement against the Confucianism.

We can no longer avoid discussing this theme, sexuality in Korea. The social situation has forced us to undertake theoretical and methodological research on sex-culture and sex-education".¹⁰ Throughout the Conference, it is evident that the generation is the most distinctive factor for Korean feminist scholars to situate their positionalities concerning the theme of sexuality in Korea, and I will show how they have taken different shapes according to their class and generation in section 4.2. Therefore, it is in 1990s Korea that the women's movement, women's studies, and feminist studies in English literature in Korea have to connect and communicate with each other, because feminist studies in English literature are able to illustrate one of many examples of how culturally diverse feminists have been searching for their own language on sexuality in order to help and provide for Korean feminists clues for creating their own language as sexual subjects.

4.1.2. The Case of the Working Women's Discussion Group¹¹

Internationalizing a course on women and literature involves knowing and accepting difference. Achieving a global perspective requires more than adding literature by international women writers.

- Kate Begnal, "Knowing difference" -

4.1.2.1. Floating Across the Cultures

¹⁰ This is a quotation from her paper, "Popular Culture and the Formation of Sexual Subject" delivered at the Korean Women's Studies Association Conference held on 21 June 1997 at Sookmyung Women's University in Seoul, Korea.

¹¹ This short paper was delivered at the Northern Network Seminar, 19 June 1993, at the University of Teesside, Middlesbrough, UK and finally published under the title of "On the Border Line: floating across the cultures" in *diatribe*, Vol.2, Autumn/Winter 1993/4, by the University of Southampton, UK.

Nicole Ward Jouve begins her provocative book, *White Woman Speaks with Forked Tongue*, with this sentence, “No one who writes today can or should forget their race and their gender”(vii), while suggesting criticism as autobiography. In this section, my “positionality”¹² as a speaker is also based on my autobiographical experience, as a “dispersed” Korean lecturer as well as a “dispersed” non-western feminist critic in English studies. I adopt this term “dispersed” to show my distance from both cultures not only geographically but also psychologically.

My experience during the last several years has ranged from being a student here, doing research on female first-person narratives in English texts, to teaching women students inside and outside universities in Korea. So, I have been floating across two cultures, two languages, and two ways of thinking. It inevitably reminds me of Roland Barthes’ argument on “floating”, which he defines as “the very form of the signifier”, as I have already argued in section 2.3.1. in this thesis. According to him, floating destroys nothing, but is content to disorient the Law (“Writers, Intellectuals, Teachers” 331). In the following article, I will focus on my concrete floating across different sign systems, connecting feminist scholarship in Britain and feminist political practice in Korea. For this task, my discourse in this section is located on the space “*in-between*” narration and argument.

4.1.2.2. The Intertextual Power of Literature

As I have explained in the former section 4.1.1., the Working Women’s Discussion Group was organized in December 1991 influenced by my journalistic

¹² The term, “positionality”, here has the same usage of Spivak’s, when she is talking about “a sort of transaction of the positionality” between the western feminist listener who listens to her, and herself, signified as a Third World informant. (cf. “The Problem of Cultural Self-representation” in *The Post-Colonial Critic*, ed. Sarah Harasym, New York & London: Routledge, 1990, 57)

writing, "Romantic Love and Sexual Violence", in the newspaper at my college. We selected the theme "working women" as our first topic, based on the members' main interest and common issues.

The first term (Jan. - Feb. 1992) was composed of eight programmes, meeting every week. We focussed on readings and discussions related to the theme "working women". The second term (Mar. - Jun. 1992) was also composed of eight programmes, meeting every other week. This term, we focussed on movies and discussions related to women's lives in specific cultures. During the first term, the non-working day class students gradually lessened and finally disappeared. New members who were not my students but office workers from several companies began to participate. On average, 10-15 members were attending regularly and several were attending irregularly. By the end of June, their female selves hadn't shifted yet, and were just superficially inclined to a new way of thinking. Even though the process of change was so vague and slow for 6 months, we gradually recognized our serious predicament; we did not know ourselves. Knowing ourselves was the precondition for gaining access to our subjectivity and confidence. We therefore decided to undertake the task of exploration, "Looking at myself, who I am and what I am" during the third term (Jul. - Aug. 1992) as well as to record our discussions in written form by using a cassette player at every meeting.

At first, several senior members including myself undertook this task. Our meeting was more or less similar to the self-narrating scene in the movie, "Sex, Lies, and Videotape". Because I voluntarily took charge of recording and producing the weekly written leaflet during this third term, I had to listen to my own narratives and write them down on paper. It was a huge task. However, I was deeply impressed with what I experienced through adopting this procedure. It was an invaluable opportunity to look at my "self" from a certain distance. When, in my MA dissertation at Hull, I

criticized female first-person narratives in *Jane Eyre* and *Aurora Leigh*, I was extremely fascinated by the uniqueness of these narratives. The task of listening to my own narratives fascinated me equally. "Yes! it's me! Now, I can understand why and to what extent I was so chaotic in my past life." Listening to my own "speaking self" was a unique experience and different from my "writing self", because speaking was so spontaneous that there was no time to conceal my hidden desire in the oral immediacy. It seemed to me an appropriate example to apply Kristeva's formulation of "semanalysis", a way of analysing the text as material production and studying language as a signifying practice, as a discourse produced by a speaking subject. It simultaneously expressed and concealed, persisted in and resisted the Korean systems of signs, while telling me who I was and what I was, not only through the fixed content of my speaking but also through the process of transforming my consciousness into the act of speaking. The most striking part was the role of enunciation in the act of producing an enonce as an oral utterance.¹³ It reminded me of Emile Benveniste's early work on enunciation, which later influenced the development of Kristeva's theory of the semiotic.¹⁴ The material constituents of the spoken text were imbued with numerous enunciative markers, clearly indicating the presence of the speaker within the enonce. This interdependence of the enunciation and the enonce was, for me, a self-reflexive process which produced the effect of constituting subjectivity in language. Even though the Kristevan concept of "intertextuality" is generally confined to the written literary

¹³ I'm employing two terms, enunciation and enonce, as used in French linguistic and semiotic theory and leave them untranslated, because these two forms of discourse are the main issue, here. The enunciation is defined as an individual act of producing an utterance or text, an act which leaves behind its traces in the resultant utterance. On the other hand, the enonce is the linguistic object, the oral or written text, which is produced by every individual act of enunciation. In most cases, it is emphasized on its closed, static, completed nature.

¹⁴ See, for this relationship of Emile Benveniste and Julia Kristeva, *Julia Kristeva*, by John Lechte, London and New York: Routledge, 1990, 69-73.

text “as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another” (“Word, Dialogue, and Novel” 60), this spoken text also could be an example of Kristevan “intertextual” productivity spanning the divided sectors of my mind as well as of the symbolic barrier in Korean society. In order to speak, in Korean, of my experiences which western feminism had led me to identify in English, I was engaging in a process of reflexive self-translation in which subjectivity emerged not exclusively identified with one culture but somewhere straddling the two. Thus, my narrative of self illustrated a complex signifying process.

On the other hand, the existence of an audience was another facet of the intertextuality. The verbal form of my utterance was fundamentally influenced by its situation and audience. In my research on the written literary text, these contextual factors were never seriously considered. The audience in the literary text remained silent even though the narrator addressed “a reader”. By contrast, the specific context of my utterance reminded me of what Voloshinov argued in his article, “The Construction of the Utterance”:

It is in the course of a particular speech interaction, itself generated by a particular kind of social communication, that this utterance, as a unit of speech communication, as a meaningful entity, is assembled and acquires a stable form. Each type of communication organizes the utterance in its own way, structures it in its own way, and completes its grammatical and stylistic form, (namely) its type-structure. (116)

This experience was unexpected, but immeasurable. When I suggested that each woman should transcribe her spoken text by herself after recording, they welcomed my suggestion and finished it several weeks later. We also decided that, in order to represent each of our speaking selves in the written form, we would have to depend on each individual’s opinion.

All of us were enthusiastically participating in this task. We spent several separate nights together without sleeping, but describing and figuring out our past individual lives. As the time passed during each night, we could feel that something was springing up among us and binding us tightly together. It was the love, the understanding, the energetic sympathy that produced this sisterhood and solidarity. Whenever we finished our discussions at dawn, each narrator gained confidence and clear views on her past which, before, had been vague in the mist. It was a unique time when I could examine in practice the power of female first-person narratives not in the English literary text but in the Korean social context. This task brought about stimulating and encouraging responses from all participants. One confessed "Even though it needs lots of patience for me to listen to my own "speaking self" in the cassette player which is a perfect mess, it makes me understand and awaken to my problems due to looking at myself as a third-person out of my "self"" (Working Women's Discussion Group 167). There was another comment on the influential role of audience: "By means of the task of self-narration, I could look at myself with an objective point of view and I could find out the potential power in myself while the others in the group were analyzing and evaluating my past life" (171).

The social class division in Korea is more flexible than that in Britain. Owing to the nation's rapid economic development during the last 30 years, each Korean's life has changed very much, in general. Most of the members in our group were from the lower-middle class and the range of each individual's experience was quite expansive. Through this task of self-narration, we were frequently moved by each others' past lives which illustrated each individual's moral strength to confront environmental difficulties without timidity and her enthusiastic way of thinking about how to transform those difficulties into better living circumstances. For each of us, this was the first

opportunity to look at ourselves, seriously. In other words, what we spoke was what we had never spoken before.

4.1.2.3. Collective Subjectivity

We finished this programme in July, before the third term was finished. Heated discussions followed for two weeks about what we were going to do next. I strongly urged that each person should take charge of one weekly programme, selecting the theme, preparing and organizing the programme, and taking the chair for that discussion session. Several members objected to my suggestion because it was felt that it would be too heavy a responsibility for them. Even though they had worked for several years at various kinds of companies, they had been doing it just as “a working girl”. I felt that the time was right for them to channel their budding self-confidence into concrete action and insisted that they both organise and lead the whole programme. It could strengthen their growing-up female selves. After much objection and debate, most of them were willing to undertake the tasks and looked forward to new experiences. So, our programme after August became open to any theme, corresponding to each member’s own interest.

However, it was quite interesting that the Korean translation of Jane Austen’s *Pride & Prejudice* was chosen as the text for the first topic, “marriage”. By chance, the first presider had read this book those days and she thought it was an excellent text to describe marriage for the women’s part and to provide many communicative issues. Even though it was not directly relevant to our contemporary lives, she thought, the marriages in *Pride & Prejudice* showed the archetypal idea of marriage. We were making a comparison between an English literary text of the late 18th century and the Korean social context of the late 20th century, even if, explicitly, our discussion had

nothing to do with the English language. But, this English text provided the opportunity to look at our everyday lives from a considerable distance. We focussed on what was relevant and what was irrelevant to our own experience. First of all, we agreed that the happy-marriage ending was not desirable in our situation, and moved to another issue of whether marriage itself was necessary for a woman's self-satisfaction in our everyday lives. Nobody took a positive position. Even though the decision to marry is often made by the individuals' concerns, a woman's role as a wife-mother and a daughter-in-law is highly demanding and subordinate to the husband's family. Later on, we discussed our ideas on work as the alternative to marriage and acknowledged that some of us did not consider their work as a lifelong career. We also discussed the way in which several Korean women writers dealt with the subject of marriage.

Later themes of our meeting included studying laws like The Equal Pay Act and The Family Act, reporting on social welfare, and surveying prostitution in Korea. Of course, every presentation bred enthusiastic discussion. Gradually we began to think of what we should do in relation to our individual future. Some of the group quit their current jobs and planned further study and further training even overseas. They began to value their work as much as their marriage. In December 1992, one of them had left her previous employment for a position with higher salary and status. Several months later, in April 1993, I received a letter from Canada, saying another member of the group had embarked on further studies there. Even though we only met every fortnight during the fourth term (Sept. - Dec. 1992), our discussions and their fruition still greatly influenced our lives and our way of thinking. In December, 1992, we published what we had done and talked about during the last 12 months in the form of a booklet, *My Own Thinking(?) And Your Sympathy*. Several paragraphs from their postscripts were translated and are enclosed in the Appendices section of this thesis. This piece

demonstrates the process of empowerment through the development of self-confidence and subjectivity.

All of this, however, was made possible by one precious aspect of Korean culture. Human relationships within the family are quite intimate, compared with those in western culture. In Korea, collectivism and the consciousness of belonging are much stronger than individualism and separate consciousness. Our group combined western philosophical ideologies with their reliance on narration and communication, and Korean cultural values with their emphasis on interconnection and intimacy. This experiment admirably justified my idea, "Think globally, Act locally".¹⁵ In current Korean society, a small community is more urgently needed for female subjectivity, where women can share their common experience and where they could play a role as a mirror for each other. The main issue is the kind of small communities, in which we are able to get self-confidence, and how we can launch these communities.¹⁶

What I am saying probably reminds of the consciousness raising movement of the 1970s in the U.K., where the "Images of Women" topic was very much discussed. We have also experienced this and produced "Images of Our Own" through our own discourse. Such a movement has not yet reached nationwide status. The present socio-cultural and economic-political situation in Korean society is quite stimulating for the feminist movement. Out of this, discussion groups on culture and gender studies have

¹⁵ This idea, "Think globally, Act locally!", came into my mind since I went back to Korea. It was 1992 when I found exactly the same phrase in *The Turning Point*, by Fritjof Capra, London: Flamingo, 1983 (First published in 1982), 434.

¹⁶ The Working Women's Discussion Group's experience, in terms of its organization and activities from the feminist movement perspective, was published in the written article form, "Wait a moment! Please don't talk about anything while I'm in the toilet!", in *The World where I would like to live: Social Movement and I*, which is the 10th anniversary publication by The Alternative Culture Group in Nov. 1994. In that article, three members including me have written our personal experiences in the Group and described how the Group has influenced on everybody's everyday life.

been organized. For instance, in September 1992, the Society of Feminist Studies in English Literature was organized and we have had regular seminars every month. But, there is still a disparity between the academic world and the larger society. Ordinary Korean women have never been in a position to take advantage of the socio-political momentum to change their disadvantaged lives. For example, while British women were concentrating on their political issues like the Suffragette Movement, Korean women were sent to the battlefield as sexual commodities for Japanese troops under Japanese colonialism (1910-1945). After national independence in 1945, Korean women automatically achieved voting rights not through their own political struggle but through a change in constitutional law. In this historical context, our new experience of collective subjectivity as ordinary Korean women is quite invaluable, ignited by the intertextual power of literature.

4.1.2.4. ON THE BORDER LINE

I have no theory to account for my experience with the Working Women's Discussion Group in Korea, even though the task of self-narration is related to Kristevan "intertextuality" in some aspects. Is there any theory to interpret this process of our empowerment? Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak defines her work as a post-colonial critic as follows:

I think my present work is to show how in fact the limits of the theories of interpretation that I am working with are revealed through the encounter of what can be defined as 'non-Western material'.
("Criticism, Feminism, and The Institution" 8)

But, is my experience in Korea "non-Western material"? Whether the answer is "Yes" or "No", the following question is going to be quite challenging: Where is the border line between the East and the West in terms of culture? Korea as a nation is also ON

THE BORDER LINE of “*in-between*” spaces in terms of economic, political, and cultural world geography. It is neither the First-World nor the Third-World. Rather, it is a “develop-ing” country as a nation-in-the-process-text and a country of present progress. The western way of life and the eastern way of thinking are blended together in our everyday life.

Not only Korea but also my positionality which I define at the beginning of this section are located in the space of “incomplete signification”. Homi K. Bhabha suggests the advantage of this “incomplete signification”.

What emerges as an effect of such ‘incomplete signification’ is a turning of boundaries and limits into the ‘in-between’ spaces through which the meanings of cultural and political authority are negotiated. (4)

But how can I, for instance, negotiate the meanings of cultural and political authority in order to *internationalize* a course on women and literature? Kate Begnal has suggested that “connected teaching” in incorporating teacher and students is the answer, using women’s writing by non-British and non-American writers. Her methodology shares intellectual authority between teachers and students, validating the differences among the women in the fiction and the students in the classroom (285-294). It seems to me that varied experimentation and diverse co-operation are still needed, in answer to the question, “Is this the right classroom to adopt such a methodology?” All I can do at the moment is to keep on exploring this “incomplete signification” ON THE BORDER LINE, while floating across the cultures.¹⁷

¹⁷ In July 1997, the Working Women’s Discussion Group intends to publish a book based on their individual as well as collective experiences from 6-years of activities and their female selves’ growing-up processes. On the other hand, the Group has organized a specialized camp since 1996 for highschool girl students to prepare and plan their ways of life and ways of thinking as “subjective” “working” “women” in Korean society. Until now, it has been held twice at Jinju in Kyungsang Namdo on 15-18 August 1996 and 26-29 July 1997.

4.2. The Concept of Female Sexuality in Popular Culture¹⁸

The question I would like to pose is not, Why are we repressed? but rather, Why do we say, with so much passion and so much resentment against our most recent past, against our present, and against ourselves, that we are repressed? By what spiral did we come to affirm that sex is negated? What led us to show, ostentatiously, that sex is something we hide, to say it is something we silence?

- Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* -

4.2.1. Marriage in 1990s Korean Popular Culture

My title may suggest that I am going to show the visual images of female sexuality in Korean popular culture, as someone might expect if a western feminist critic were to speak on a similar subject. But my argument in this section, about Korea since 1993, will take the form of a cultural criticism, focussed on the socio-historical discourse and textual analyses of three novels, two films, and one TV drama, mainly written by women. It will show the on-going process of how contemporary Korean women have been struggling with the Confucian cultural heritage in order to search for sexual subjectivity.

In section 4.1.1., I described how I had major difficulties with the multiple terms for ideas related to sexuality available in English, at Cambridge in 1986, which did not match the severely limited expression available in Korean. Since the issue was evoked and discussed at the annual Korean Women's Studies Association Conference in 1989, those terms have gained social currency immensely fast. In 1991, the Korea Sexual

¹⁸ The earlier version of this section was delivered at the East Asian Studies Seminar on the 24th, January, 1996 at the University of Durham and at the Gender Studies Seminar on the 30th, January, 1996 at the University of Hull, UK and it will be published in *Under Construction: Gender and Class in Contemporary Korea* edited by Laurel Kendall by the University of Hawaii Press in Winter 1997/98.

Violence Relief Center opened in Seoul for the first time. As Korean economics and, recently, politics as well, have changed so rapidly and dramatically, Korean concepts of sexuality have also changed incredibly since the Democratic Revolution of 1987 (Howard 1995: Shin 1996), which transformed the authoritarian military political regime of the last 30 years into a citizen's democracy.¹⁹ For instance, during the year of 1995, the most popular topics among university students were sexuality, sexual identity, sexual subjects, and so on. There are many reasons for this phenomenon, and in this section, I shall focus on the emerging process of social discourse on female sexuality, dealing with the stories of married women in the age range 25-35. The reason for this is that, in Korea, the social discourse on female sexuality completely outside of marriage has yet to be developed.

The novel, *Marriage* by Su-Hyon Kim, a famous TV drama writer and novelist in her 50s, was published in 1993 and made into a television drama in 1994. The novel has achieved a wide readership and the television drama was even more successful. The main story in *Marriage* is about three sisters, - Chi-Yong(34), So-Yong(32), and Chae-Yong(25) - and their respective marriages. It shows that the three sisters have very different perceptions of marriage, according to the time they went to university. Another novel, *Go Alone Like the Musso's Horn* (musso ui ppulchorom hon'jaso kara)²⁰ by Ji-Young Gong in her early 30s, was also published in 1993 and made the best-seller list as soon as it appeared. It focuses on the marriages of three woman friends, Hye-

¹⁹ This is one of the main reasons why Hak-Sun Kim in her late 60s became the first former Korean Military Sexual Slave to Japan who felt able to come forward to tell her story at the church group's office in Seoul on 14, August 1990.

²⁰ "Musso" is the Korean name for the animal which scientifically belongs to *Rhinoceros unicornis*. The most characteristic image related to this novel is that it has only one horn. But, apart from the unicorn which only existed in western myth, historically it has lived in South Asia and Africa. Thus, "the Musso's horn" in the title implies and emphasizes the independence and subjectivity in real social circumstances.

Wan, Kyong-Hye, and Yong-Son. All of them are aged 31. This novel was also disseminated as a play, performed for 7 months in 1994, and as a film in 1995. Both transformations were successful. The film, “Mommy has a lover”, was released in May, 1995, and considered financially quite successful. The main theme of this film is a woman’s love affair outside of marriage and it deals with the sexual lives of wives in their late 20s. It challenges the long history of female fidelity and chastity in Korea, influenced by Confucianism. The novel, *The Pornography in My Mind*, was published about the same time as this film, written by Byul-A Kim in her mid-20s. This is her first novel and bravely deals with a previously forbidden theme. The novel rebels against the sexual double standard and insists on the existence of female sexual desire in contemporary Korea, where adultery is still illegal. More recently, in September and October 1996, two cultural products directly attack this issue on adultery. One is a TV drama, “The Lover”, and the other is a film, “The Adventures of Mrs. Park”. Both are commercially successful. They are raising the raging topic of a love affair outside of marriage and the desertion of wives in their mid-30s. Therefore, my argument will concentrate on the changing process of the Korean women’s concepts of female sexuality linked to the social transformation, by analyzing the three novels, two films, and one TV drama between 1993 and 1996.

4.2.2. On the Border Line: Inside/Outside Marriage

In order to understand the marriages of Korean women in their early 30s, it would be helpful to look at the social circumstances in which they were brought up. They were the first of the baby boom generation, born in 1960-1965 when Korea had just launched its ambitious economic development plans.²¹ Their childhood coincided

²¹ Korea’s rapid economic development began in 1961. Korea is considered one of

with the 4.19(April, 19th) Democratic Demonstration in 1960, the 5.16 (May, 16th) Army Revolution in 1961, and the New Village Movement in the late 60s, which played an important role in changing Koreans' life-style from the agricultural to the industrial (OECD 1996). They were also possibly the first generation to go to school, side by side with their brothers. As Wonmo Dong (1988) argues, they learned democracy, in which liberty and equality were the fundamental ideas, as an academic subject, not as something to practise in everyday life.²² From the beginning of their university days around 1980, they were pushed into the whirl of the extremely violent demonstrations, demanding national political democratization which older generations had never experienced.²³ In those days, various slogans and ideologies related to democracy were strongly imprinted in their minds as a meta-discourse. However, they never examined these democratic values in the setting of everyday life.

Go Alone Like the Musso's Horn shows this generational characteristic, accepting both theory and practice in separate ways. On the other hand, looking at their mothers' lives, Korean women in their early 30s believed that their marriages would be

the few countries that has managed the transition from a rural, undeveloped society to a modern economy in just one generation. Since 1963, economic growth has averaged 8 percent a year, bringing a twelve-fold increase in output while per capita income has risen seven-fold during the same period. (*OECD Economic Surveys: Korea*, Paris:OECD, May 1996, 124)

²² Wonmo Dong argues that one of the most serious contradictions of Korean education in the 1970s and 1980s was the unrealistic emphasis on the virtue of liberal democracy in the school curriculum, because this emphasis was quite incongruent with the reality of military-controlled authoritarianism in Korea.

²³ Although the student movement in Korea has a historical tradition, dating back as early as the 15th century, it failed to receive scholarly attention until 1980s when it became a daily ritual. For the characteristics of the Korean student movement in the 1980s, see Wonmo Dong, "University Students in South Korean Politics: Patterns of Radicalization in the 1980s", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol.40, No.2, Winter/Spring 1987, and Seok-Choon Lew, "Student Movement in Korea: Structure and Functions", *Korea Journal*, Vol.33, No.1, Spring 1993. For a historical and evolutionary analysis of the Korean student movement, see Doh-jong Kim, "The Korean Student Movement in Retrospect: From Mobilization to Institutionalization", *Korea Observer*, Vol.24, No.2, Summer 1993.

different. As the Korean standard of living has changed very fast, they believe that the Korean way of thinking has been changed with the same speed. This is the point where their tragedy begins. As Hye-Wan in the novel says, their mothers “teach daughters to live differently from themselves, but teach sons to live like their fathers” (Gong 83-84). The result is the enormous conflict which the daughters’ generation experiences between the real and the ideal.²⁴ Even though during 16 years of schooling they have learned that equality is an important democratic value, there is no place to teach them how women have experienced inequality within the social institution of marriage. Many married women of this generation have experienced similar processes of self-awakening, like Yong-Son who has tried to kill herself at the beginning of the novel. She says, “Where have I been during the last 8 years of my marriage?” and concludes, “Though I don’t want to accept it, I’ve been a sincere graceful maid who has to carry out whatever he says” (109). Korean wives in their 30s can’t envisage an alternative in everyday terms, if they don’t want to sacrifice themselves like their mothers’ generation.

What, then, are their husbands’ ideas about marriage? Kyong-Hye’s husband thinks that after a woman has given birth, her body is unable to provide the pleasure he desires. He announces to Kyong-Hye, “Enjoy your sexual life. But, I won’t divorce you because it will socially damage the reputation of my family” (204). For him, a medical doctor and university lecturer, the idea of marriage means his sexual pleasure coming from the female body. He expects Kyong-Hye to play the role of “The Angel in the House”, which is the epitome of 19th century Victorian femininity. According to

²⁴ There is a report on the serious difference in gender-role expectation among students. In 1994, the Korean Association for Democracy and Sisterhood surveyed 214 primary and middle school students, asking whether they would like to be a woman like mother (to girls) or a man like father (to boys). In the case of girls, 52.3% answered “No” and 42.3% answered “Yes”. In the case of boys, 69.6% answered “Yes” and 24.5% answered “No”. (KBS<Korean Broadcasting Station> TV, *Morning Ground* (nationwide talkshow programme), “I don’t want to live like my mother”, 14 June 1995)

Kyong-Hye, he says it very simply and reasonably enough “to make her feel as if there is no problem, as long as she finds her proper sexual partner outside of marriage” (204). So, Kyong-Hye has gone back to her old boyfriend and “checked how he feels after intercourse, even with the light turned on”. When she sees his response is different from her husband’s, she is consoled because this confirms that she is still sexually attractive (205-206). Kyong-Hye’s response shows a distinct difference from that of her mother’s generation in terms of a woman’s concept of female sexuality. The mother and grandmother generations accepted the sexual double standard as a woman’s fate, and put their sexual energy into rearing children, identifying themselves as asexual strong mother figures (Deuchler 265).²⁵ However, Korean women in Kyong-Hye’s generation give priority to self-identification as a sexual being. This is the sign of women’s changing concepts of their individual female self, while the mystified ideology of mothering and family, which have repressed Korean women for a long time, has collapsed.²⁶ However, Kyong-Hye’s friend, Yong-Son, is a tragic example of these confusions between the Confucian cultural heritage and her individual desire. Once her advice to the third friend, Hye-Wan, reveals exactly the same concept of marriage as their mother’s generation: “You must accept and bear. ... Every woman has suffered and endured” (276). But, why must only a woman suffer and endure?

This question leads Hye-Wan to choose to stand outside of marriage. Hye-Wan’s case is more complicated owing to her son’s death. Her son dies in a traffic

²⁵ In the Korean Confucian power structure between the sexes, the woman’s position was clearly subordinate. However, a woman as mother could exert lasting influence on her child’s intellectual and emotional development, thus acquiring limited authority.

²⁶ Martina Deuchler argues that the pattern of Confucian behaviour for women demanded the rigidity of a stereotype which did not allow for individual variations. In other words, Confucian society historically acclaimed particular women not for their individuality, but for the degree of perfection with which they were able to mimic the stereotype. (258)

accident while he is following Hye-Wan on the street. On that day, Kyong-Hwan, a part-time university lecturer, refuses to take care of their son, even though Hye-Wan has to go to work. This is the story which deepens and strengthens Hye-Wan's sense of guilt as a mother. After their son's death, they go to a party for their university friends. (They graduated from the same university.) When they come back from the party, they quarrel and Kyong-Hwan rapes her. This illustrates the essence of the power structure in patriarchal marriage, where a husband legally possesses and dominates a wife's human rights through sexuality.

Don't argue and analyse like that. Can you understand? You're a married wife. Behave like other women! Like other wives! Why do you think you are an exception? ... Then, as soon as he entered the gate, he ripped off her clothes. After slapping her cheeks several times, he forced her to part her legs. It is not his violence itself which causes her to yield, but her recognition that it writes "The End" for her marriage! ... Maybe you don't want to see it. Your still young wife is talking with her old friends and enjoying laughter like in her single days. You don't want to see it. So, you need to confirm it. You are mine even if you act like a single woman. To confirm it and feel it, nothing is better than sex. ... I have never dreamt of being a Cinderella. If I wanted money or social fame, I would not have married him. But, this is not what I want. At least, this is not. No, Not! (82)

Now, this scene shows clearly an example of "wife rape" in Korean society under the name of legal marriage. Husband rapes wife when he feels his intellectual, financial, and social inferiority, because rape is the most effective way to exercise the masculine power which the patriarchal culture bestows on him. This very primitive idea of considering a wife as one of her husband's possessions, not as an independent human being, still exists among highly educated couples in 1990s Korean society.²⁷ In short,

²⁷ In Korea, "wife rape" is not officially considered as a crime in the category of sexual violence in the name of the Criminal Law Act. Young-Hee Shim argues, based on her research in 1990, that 67.3% of Korean married women have experienced

female sexuality, especially a wife's sexuality, appears as a target to possess, own, dominate, and conquer.²⁸ Even though Hye-Wan has spent a long time with Kyong-Hwan who hasn't had any mistresses or any routine violence in everyday life, the issue of sexuality still remains a problem and leaves them as complete strangers to each other. Is it a really difficult issue to communicate seriously about sexuality?

Another novel, *Marriage*, deals with the relationship between female sexuality and money, a prominent theme in many Victorian novels. It shows the extent to which a woman's life-style depends on the social circumstances of her teenage years. Let me show the eldest, Chi-Yong's marriage. She succeeds in getting married after an episode of threatening suicide, because her mother refuses to accept her boyfriend as son-in-law due to his poor economic situation. Chi-Yong's mother sees marriage as a way of achieving social advance and material prosperity, like the Victorian concept of marriage. This is also one of many social ideologies of marriage that have appeared in Korea since the 1970s. Owing to the fast economic development in Korea during the last 30 years, it is generally said that we could see in Korea the various social phenomena of the last 100 years and the diverse social ideologies of the past 500 years. Everybody has a different point of view on marriage, according to one's gender, class, and generation, which this novel shows well. Now, in Korean society, the issue of social communication between different generations becomes a serious matter (Dong, "Generational Differences", 2).²⁹

"wife rape" and only 35.5% of those experienced wives recognized it as sexual violence. See Young-Hee Shim, *Women's Social Participation and Sexual Violence*, Seoul: Nanam, 1992, 253-254.

²⁸ For instance, the term "washing board" is used to describe a wife's passive and subordinate sexuality in the Korean film "A Story of Marriage" in 1992. Another sexual metaphor for a married woman's position in that film is the bed in the bedroom. Since then, this metaphor "the washing board" has gained wide circulation among young Korean women to indicate current attitudes to female sexuality.

²⁹ The generational factor is one of the most important explanatory variables for attitudinal and behavioral patterns of the contemporary Koreans. Wonmo Dong insists that no other country in the world has been beset with as serious a problem

So, generation is one of the important factors for identifying someone, like race in U.S.A.. Later, the episode of Chi-Yong's struggle brings more serious psychological damage to her, especially when she finds out her husband has had a mistress. It heightens her feeling of loss and betrayal. In her suicide note to Chae-Yong, Chi-Yong confesses "After almost one year of marriage, I could say that in my mind I have continuously wished to die" (S. Kim, II: 179) and adds "When I finally discovered his relationship with the other woman, 5 years after my marriage, I have been close to death" (II:180). Chi-Yong, who "loves nothing but her feeling of love" (II:164), tries to begin a new life with another married man. However, she feels more desperate when she notices that all he offers is abuse, while keeping his marriage safe. Chi-Yong is too faithful, sincere and naive to struggle with the violence of patriarchal social culture. Like Yong-Son in *Go Alone Like the Musso's Horn*, Chi-Yong commits suicide as the most extreme resistance to being a woman.

But the youngest sister Chae-Yong's situation is different. Her two ideas, that she desires a kind of social protection through getting married and that marriage is an economically practical contract, have forced her to stay inside of marriage. Even when she discovers during her honeymoon that her husband is in the bath with his mistress and that it is clear her marriage seems "like putting her head into a bag, filled with snakes" (I:153), she realizes that she is now trying "to find any clues or excuses to keep her marriage" (I:205). Through this process, Chae-Yong awakens the unconscious anxiety in herself to stand outside of marriage. Chae-Yong is among the fairly young generation who have already experienced the material prosperity in 1980s Korea, unlike her elder sisters in their 30s. What she says now points to the quite remarkable change

in Korean woman's way of thinking, because it is even opposite to her sisters' generation.

The eldest Chi-Yong lives with love and the second eldest, you, lives with an ideal. I don't want to live in such a poor marriage. 5 years after my marriage, planning to buy a smaller apartment from little, meagre savings, having an almost empty refrigerator with only a gimchi jar, ... No, I am not sure whether I can manage that kind of poor life. (I:21)

The marriage between Chae-Yong, who perceives marriage as a financial proposition as well as love as a fantasy, and Hyon-Sop, who must bow to his parents' hope of becoming a family-in-law of a university professor, shows how the desire for money and class is activated in the social institution of marriage. It is supported by two kinds of bribe: the BMW which Chae-Yong receives as soon as she comes back from the honeymoon, and the sum of £200,000 which her mother-in-law gives her when Chae-Yong discovers Hyon-Sop's illegitimate son. Because Hyon-Sop's family are not highly educated even if they are quite rich, they would like to be related to a university professor. Here, we must not simply apply the Anglo-American or British notion of social dynamics between class, education and money, to the Korean context. What Hyon-Sop's family needs is honour and respect from the public. In the novel, Chae-Yong's father has been a university professor in Law for almost 30 years. But he does not know how to make much money. That is his wife's job. During the 1970s and early 1980s, middle class Korean wives called "*samonim*" or "*pokbu'in*" now in their 50s have often made more money than their husbands' salaries by trading estates and houses. Chae-Yong's mother is a good example of many Korean women who could do all the things that would provide their family with a secure identity as "modern" and

“middle class”.³⁰ That’s why she has favoured Chae-Yong’s marriage over her other daughters’.

The second eldest, So-Yong’s way of thinking is quite opposite to Chae-Yong’s. She was deeply involved in the Democratization Movement in Korean universities in the 1980s. The following dialogue between the two sisters shows the tension between the two different opinions, easily seen in contemporary Korean society, about the relationship between money and female sexuality inside marriage.

“What’s the matter with your marriage, whatever happens? Remember you did it for money! Isn’t it a big deal if they give you sums so vast you can’t spend them in a life-time? I don’t suppose you refuse it, do you?”

“Who says that I did it for the money? Am I off my head, money-mad? Did I take nothing but money into account?”

“Stop yelling and be honest with yourself! You decided to marry him just because of money. Apart from money, then, what made you decide to marry? Tell me. What’s there? Does it make sense that you decided to marry him straight after the first meeting, without any hesitation? Why? What for? What made you sure? What deceived you? You didn’t know anything about his character, his way of thinking, his future life plan, his sexual habits or history, I mean, whether he can be a proper partner for you, or not. You only knew that he is a healthy man and the heir to great wealth. What do you and we know about him? Tell me if we do. How could you decide your marriage on such poor information and such short reflection? How could you go forward to marriage? How foolish, how selfish, how irrational are you?” (I:170)

In this scene, So-Yong cruelly takes off the final mask from Chae-Yong which hardly hides her great shame. Chae-Yong, who has already made a lifelong deal “because she

³⁰ Haejoang Cho’s forthcoming article, “Living with the Conflicting Subjectivities of Mother, Motherly Wife and Sexy Woman - A Transition from Colonial-modern to Postmodern”, deals with their generational characteristics in detail, compared with their daughters’ generations. See *Under Construction: Gender and Class in Contemporary Korea* edited by Laurel Kendall published by the University of Hawaii Press in Winter 1997/98.

does not want to fail in her marriage" (II:16), calculates very carefully the possible difficulties and disadvantages when she decides to stand outside of marriage. Even though she graduates from university, she cannot prepare anything for her independent life, not even her determination.

"Say... what do you think of my future if I divorce? I'm not interested in studying. Wasting time at home, while becoming a family disgrace as a divorced daughter, then, marrying again? To whom? I don't want to have a job. I may not have so many opportunities to meet a nice man as when I was single. Then, imagine that I shall have to agree to another arranged marriage. This time, to whom? To what type of man? Not a bachelor, of course, but a widower or divorced man without any child. Can I find any man who just suits my taste? If my next marriage is going to be just like this one, then, isn't it better to remain within this marriage? I could consider it as my second marriage, couldn't I?" (II: 71-72)

Chea-Yong has never needed any courage to confront any kind of harsh realities. While looking at her, So-Yong concludes that Chae-Yong is basically different from herself and accuses her, saying "You can keep your marriage with receiving stinking money and endless presents from your husband's dirty fault" (II:41). In fact, So-Yong and Chae-Yong reflect the most prominent differences between Korean women in their 30s and 20s. The former have built up their female selves during the fast developing period of Korean capitalism with critical thinking about the political regime. On the contrary, the latter have already experienced the abundant consumption in everyday life while giving priority to their individual selves.

4.2.3. The Marriage Story of the "Missy"³¹

³¹ This term was first used in 1994 in the marketing advertisement of a grand department store in Seoul. As soon as it came out, it was widely adopted to indicate a particular kind of housewife, who looked like a single woman. Even the copy writer herself was surprised at its speed in acquiring social meaning. Later, it has also created specific images of women and femininity.

The new term, "Missy", has been invented and circulated in Korean society since 1994, because it spotlights the strong desire of young Korean wives in their late 20s, who are vigorously looking for an alternative way of life. The term "Missy", which is not an English word but only sounds like it, has permeated into Korean society extremely fast, as soon as the advertising industry picked up the social implications of this specific generation's flamboyant desires, which Dennis M. Hart points out as the characteristic of the new middle class (43).³² The essential condition of being a Missy relates to how to be looked at. Hoo-Ran Kim describes a typical example of looking like Missy as following: "a woman walking through a shopping mall in a tight leather miniskirt and long boots and with her short hair flipped" (30). Among the genres of cultural production, film is the best representation of this kind of social desires. Their desire is not confined to material possession but also extends to an active and blatant form of sexuality. While Kyong-Hye in *Go Alone Like the Musso's Horn* and Chi-Yong in *Marriage* decide to have lovers as a reaction to their husbands' relationships with mistresses, the Missy jumps into this in response to her own feelings and desires. Another fundamental condition of getting membership of the Missy club is her professional job. The film, "Mommy has a lover", released in May 1995, deals with the extramarital love story of two Missys.³³ The main figure, Un-Chae, a freelance illustrator for a children's book publisher, satisfies all the conditions of the Missy. After a 7-year marriage, she possesses quite a luxurious apartment, an able husband, a pretty daughter, and the most important condition, that is, her own professional job.

³² Dennis M. Hart insists that the new middle class in Korea symbolizes not only economic success but social and cultural success, to which, thanks to fast industrialization, almost all Koreans aspire.

³³ Most of the audience for this film were housewives in their 30s and 40s, not in their 20s. It was considered a success, though not a "great" success, seen by 100,000 people during 2 weeks in Seoul. (*Cine21* <weekly film magazine>, No.8, May 1995, 18)

However, she falls in love with Chin-U, a foreign exchange dealer, as she gradually finds out he is gentle, generous and sweet. In this process, Un-Chae does not consider his financial situation at all, unlike Chae-Yong. Un-Chae only considers what she wants to do. Until recently, in Korean public discourse, it was very common to see women's reluctance and shame when they intentionally or unintentionally had a lover outside of marriage. However, Un-Chae never expresses that kind of feeling. For the Missy, the sexual double standard in contemporary Korean society seems to be completely ignored. The advertising copy for this film boosts young Korean wives. It begins with "What? Only once a month? One o'clock in the afternoon, why isn't she at home?" Later, it reports a survey's findings, saying "64% of the Missys want to have their lovers! - But, the other 36% have already had lovers!" It sounds as if having a lover is the essential condition of being a Missy. In the film, Yun-Su, another Missy and Un-Chae's friend, has taken a step further and finally divorced. In the end, her lover becomes her second husband. Un-Chae also goes back to her former position because Chin-U leaves for a foreign country with his wife on his promotion. This ending is quite exceptional in terms of sexual liberation from the wives' point of view. No woman is punished for her fall, which is different from the stereotype in Korean films. The audience's response at the first showing is reported as divided, according to gender identity. Specifically, men complain about the ending because it seems to glorify a wife's affair and women express no complaint about the story (Ahn 15). Since the social discourse on sexuality came out in the early 1990s, it seems young Korean women have refused to take on their cultural heritage concerning female sexuality. At least, if we confine the images of women and female sexuality in Korean popular culture of the 1990s, it seems to be true. The particular characteristic of this generation is well described in the first-person narrative

of the recent novel, *The Pornography in My Mind*. It shows in detail how Korean women in their late 20s have been building up their sexual identity.

The Pornography in My Mind employs the literary form of fictional autobiography, written by a 26-year old wife. In the Afterword, she makes clear the purpose of her writing with a very definite, but modest tone.

I only hope that this novel is able to console, at least, the girls with ballooning curiosity, the unmarried women full of conflict and sense of guilt, and the married women enthralled by the risk of loss from the exposed secret and resigned to the stereotype duty of mothering. I think they can be more honest than now. (B. Kim 284-285)

In other words, she is writing a young woman's autobiographical experience of resistance to female fidelity and chastity as symbolized by the silver knife in strict Confucian culture, because she believes that "There is no door in the world made on purpose not to be opened, even if there are locked or rusty doors" (285).³⁴ Therefore, the first-person narrator, "I", the second child of the Han family, has tried to get her own sexual identity. She represents the diverse characteristics of Korean women in their 20s, building up her female self since the late 1980s, when the dominant socio-cultural discourse began to move on to sexuality. One of those is that she would never give up her own desire in her life in order to do her best for familial duty. Like the Missy of her peers, she gives the first priority to her individual self. This is the main difference from the other Korean women, even only slightly older Korean women in their 30s, the last generation brought up in the communal environment. I-Pun says, "I have realised that all the lessons from my parents' generation are no more than old-fashioned preaching

³⁴ This novel has played an important role in Korean society in terms of sexual politics, because it has brought the forbidden theme of female sexuality into the public sphere on a nationwide talkshow programme on TV. However, it is confined to marriage. (KBS-TV, *Morning Ground*, "Wives' Sexuality, Is it time to talk, now?", 21 June 1995)

and they have choked me for 19 years". For her, the only significant point is "The fierce desire which filled me through and through was never to be a self-sacrificial victim!" (178-179). This forms a striking contrast with anything we might expect to hear from Korean women over 40. In pursuit of this aim, I-Pun has tried every kind of experimentation and taken an ambivalent attitude, naive and cunning at the same time, in her sexual relationships.

Anyway, sexual relationships did not so much provide excitement, as satisfy my curiosity in some sense. I am a very skilful single woman, and employ myself without crossing the boundary of what is acceptable. I wasn't conscious that my skill could only be accepted by a gentle, polite partner. At that time, I was too brave to be afraid of anyone or anything, at all. (186)

At the age of 24, when she has experimented with her anonymous partner in all of the secrets in the world which she has been curious about for a long time, she says that she feels absorbed in the ecstasy which she has never experienced, before (259). Later, she asks herself, "When can I enjoy sex like playing computer games or bowling? As many people can". In the course of this process, I-Pun has examined her way of thinking and describes how "The temptation toward deviation and the old-fashioned morality, these contradictory values are fighting each other in my mind" (256-257). In contrast with Korean men and women in their 30s who define their lives with a meta-discourse, she defines human life as just a simple game of standing inside or outside an accepted boundary (256). For her generation, sexual relationships would be the first opportunity in their lives to decide their subjective positions on a specific issue. Teenagers are not normally allowed much freedom in making any kind of decision, because of strong social and familial pressure for university admission. This is precisely the scene of her inner conflict.

I have already experienced the tedium of morally ethical life as well as the striking ecstasy of deviation. However, I have quite often surrendered my hands to the hand-cuffs, compromised and had to follow what they call morality. I feel that in the moral life there lies far less danger, because many people, unlike me, have chosen that way of life. (257)

After that experiment with the anonymous partner, I-Pun accepts she is “now standing outside the boundary” and recognizes “Until now, I have only wished to explore outside of the border line” (257). But, her real conflict comes later, as soon as she feels pregnant. Her narration here seems a regress, saying “That deviation was too adventurous an experiment” and “Outside the boundary, I have awakened many things which I have never felt inside it” (263). When it becomes clear that her pregnancy was an imaginary and psychological symptom, she admits “To me, the world is as wide as the range of my experience”, because from now on, she is “not going to accuse anyone as beyond the pale and she herself is going to be confident of standing outside” (267).

What I see as the most interesting point in this novel is that it shows the changing process of the Korean concept of female sexuality in one specific individual self, speaking from a woman's position. Through I-Pun's first-person narrative, the reader can follow the process of searching for female sexual identity, subjectively as well as concretely. While most female characters in Korean novels worry about their fall in the case of marriage, I-Pun, when she considers her marriage, announces, “Because I'm not his possession, I don't have any complex about being a broken vessel, not at all” (270). In short, she has her own definition of virginity.

I don't think I was dirty or broken. When I blushed with his first gentle kiss, I felt my virginity newly coming into bud. It is not that I am not a virgin, but that I can be a virgin always, whenever I stand in front of my true love. This is my own definition of virginity. (271)

Probably, at this stage, may be noticed a wide gap concerning the concept of female sexuality between Chae-Yong and I-Pun, even though both are the same in their mid-20s. While Chae-Yong's story is told from the point of view of her mother's generation, I-Pun's story is narrated from her own generation. What I mean by saying this is the distance between two writers' perceptions of female sexuality. Korean women in their 20s and 50s have experienced the different processes of building up their sexual identities. The former has concentrated more on her individual desire and the latter has been more concerned about her materialistic desire with the familial duties. For I-Pun, the first consideration for marriage is what she herself desires, not what she can get in terms of materialistic prosperity. Therefore, for I-Pun, the most important point comes through her own experience through her female body. So, to her, marriage means the duty of bearing and rearing his baby in her womb (271). She only hesitates to decide on marriage because she is not sure whether she could keep her liberated way of life, even after marriage. In the end, she finally decides to settle down with him, because she is confident that he has the special skill to cure the other's scar, not to hurt it. In Korean culture where the unmarried woman's sexual experience implies the big dangerous burden and every woman is mostly educated to recognize sex negatively, a young woman could have the invaluable chance to restructure her way of thinking on female sexuality through her own sexual experience (Y. Cho 94). I-Pun's transformation shows well that a woman could get the subjective point of view on female sexuality through such a process of building up her sexual identity from her own experience. In addition, I-Pun's husband is described in the novel as an ambiguous and anonymous character and this is also one of the strategies in women's writing.

4.2.4. The Challenging Experimentation for the New Sexual Morality

Since September 1996, a TV drama "The Lover" has stirred Korean society with an extramarital love story among high professionals in their mid-30s. It reached 36.3% of the second audience rating in October 1996 (K. Kim 27). It was even discussed in the National Assembly because of its strong social influence with the challenging theme related to a married woman's sexuality. This episode reflects how powerful the TV medium is in terms of subverting the traditional ideology on female sexuality. The heroine, Yo-Kyong is a married career woman working at the project development company. She has a 9-year old daughter attending elementary school. However, she has a problem with her husband, U-Hyok. He is a typical example of so-called "Company Man" brought up in Korea's industrializing period in the 1970s and 1980s. He has been devoted to the company for his professional promotion and social ambition. He has been almost unable to communicate with Yo-Kyong. This circumstance provides the clue for Yo-Kyong's falling in love with Un-O, her new lover. He is a professionally successful businessman in his late 30s. Like Chin-U in "Mommy has a lover", Un-O also has a soft, gentle, and sweet personality, symbolizing the new masculinity in 1990s Korea. He also has the perfect wife and two boys. There is no definite reason to fly from his family. However, like the Missys' love story in their 20s, "The Lover" explores the adventurous and forbidden theme in the TV medium. In particular, the extramarital love story of women in their 30s must be considered with their familial duties. Many married men in their 40s and 50s have called the broadcasting company to complain about this drama, questioning "What does it want to say?" But, a feminist scholar evaluates it highly, saying "This drama explores a serious approach to an important message rather than simple interest" (S. Soh 104). For western readers, the extramarital love story as the main theme is quite familiar and there is nothing new about it. However, in the Korean cultural context, it has usually been

labelled as immoral and, especially the wife's extramarital love story brings fatal damage to the family. Even though the Missy's extramarital love story in "Mommy has a lover" is regarded as a new cultural phenomenon in 1990s Korea, it has not been strong enough to influence to shake the socially dominant discourse by challenging the patriarchal ideology on female sexuality. But, "The Lover" is different. There are, I think, two reasons for this. One is the difference in media - film and TV drama - and the other is the heroine's generational difference - in their 20s and 30s. As a medium, TV is much more conservative and influential than film in representing everyday realities, because of the wide range of its audience. It can even permeate into the smallest private space like a room. On the other hand, for the discussion about the extramarital love story in their 30s, the issue of familial duties is much heavier. Therefore, it raises a serious social question about the relationship between Korean familism and female sexuality. In her article comparing an American film, "Falling in Love" (1984) and a Korean TV drama, "The Lover" (1996), Chan-Hui Yom argues that the implied meaning for the ending, in which Un-O and Yo-Kyong separate and come back to their original homes, can be read in the same way as the ending of "Falling in Love", in which each divorces and separates from the former spouse, because in "The Lover" every episode in the later programmes seems to be artificially directed towards their returning to their own families (59). This artificiality is mainly motivated by the conservatism of the Korean audience.³⁵ Nonetheless, for me, this TV drama is now located in a prominent position in terms of raising the social discourse on the middle-aged wife's sexuality. Until recently, in Korean culture, a wife's subjective sexuality has been erased in the web of the family-in-law's complicated relationship, or invisible

³⁵ In fact, the woman writer attempts to put their sexual intercourse episode in the earlier programmes. After many audiences called the broadcasting company in order to strongly object to this scene, the writer has never again tried to show their sexual desire in the later programmes.

owing to her subordinate power relationship with her husband, as we have seen in Hye-Wan's case in *Go Alone Like the Musso's Horn*. However, in the mid 1990s, a wife's subjective sexuality is now emerging through the loosening and weakening of Korean familism. It implies that the familial function in Korean society has been changing. In short, the sympathetic communicative relationship between two individuals becomes more important than the functional relationship with the role play as a husband and wife, or as a father and mother.

In the same month, in September 1996, a film illustrated a middle-aged wife's more radical story. "The Adventures of Mrs. Park" searches for the new morality in terms of a wife's sexuality and subjective individuality. The film employs the romantic comedy genre, but it is not the same type easily seen in Korean commercial films since the 1980s. I call it an "*alternative*" romantic comedy that slightly twists its conservatism. Most romantic comedies in Korean films end with a happy marriage, strengthening and heightening the patriarchal ideology. Nonetheless, this film ends with Pong-Kon's second marriage, subverting the socio-culturally traditional morality, i.e., the absconding wife must come back home for everybody's happiness and familial security. The film begins with an 8-year old boy's narration, in the elementary school classroom, about why he has had two fathers. According to him, Pong-Kon, his mother, has absconded because she could not endure the patriarchal charisma of her husband, Hui-Chae, a company baseball team director. Their unconnected communication is illustrated from the first scene, eating together at the table. After Pong-Kon's desertion, Hui-Chae employs a private detective, X, to track her down. But, through the process of looking for Pong-Kon, X falls in love with her and finally marries her. This film shows the wife's different life-style from the Missy's in terms of social class. Pong-Kon has a very humble dream of becoming a singer and it motivates

her abscondence. She comes from a definitely lower class than Un-Chae in "Mommy has a lover" and Yo-Kyong in "The Lover". In most cases, middle-aged lower class wives in Korean popular films have been represented as submissive to a very patriarchal husband owing to their economic inability. But, after absconding, Pong-Kon has made money by herself and taken private lessons to turn her dream into reality. The film poster hints that Pong-Kon is possessing two men, at the same time, by embracing them while bursting into laughter, while Hui-Chae and X are staring fiercely at each other. In fact, the film director himself worries about the conservative audiences' responses to this uncommon story and its unexpected ending.³⁶ It reflects the fact that, in the 1990s, Korean wives of the middle and lower classes are searching for their individuality and sexuality more subjectively, influenced by the Korean women's movement since the 1980s which has delivered the message of self-actualization to young women. The feminist assertion is now widely popularized not only by middle class wives but also by lower class wives. One research survey carried out in the same month says 59% of Korean married women have felt the instinct to abscond and they have resented their marriages when their husbands attack their pride (Kwak, "Park Bong-Kon's Abscondence", 169). This film has had a great commercial success; approximately 170,000 people saw it during only the first three weeks in Seoul.³⁷ However, the film critics' responses are divided according to their gender identities. A male critic has praised the new director's successful experimentation, transforming a serious event in reality into the cheerful elopement and romantic restarting point in the film (M. Lee 64). He has praised the director's cinematic imagination and his representation of technique.

By contrast, a female critic has attacked the same point because the film ignores the most important factor, i.e., why a housewife has absconded from home, and excludes

³⁶ His interview is quoted from *Cine21*, No.71, 24 Sept-1 Oct. 1996, 24.

³⁷ Reported in *Cine21*, No.74, 15-22 Oct. 1996, 26.

the main drama, while just relating with the enjoyable episode (Kwak, "Review", 254). I agree with her in part. But I would like to point out the social message of its cheerful and, finally, victorious ending for Pong-Kon's search for her subjective individuality. And this ending is indebted to the director's witty and humorous touch in dealing with the episodic story in the "alternative" romantic comedy genre. If he had begun with the realistic serious touch, he could not ^{have} arrived at that destination. How to represent is as important as the story itself. As I have argued with "The Lover", the difference in the media is the crucial issue for how to develop a certain story with a radical message in society. Feminist aesthetics and politics have to be negotiated into the particular cultural production. These two stories, "The Lover" and "The Adventures of Mrs. Park", have exemplified how and why the media differentiation is very important in challenging the traditional ideology. Chang-Soon Lee, the director of "The Lover", emphasizes his intention to expose that we are now living in "The Age of Hypocrisy". In other words, he wishes to reflect the fact that the traditional morality formed in Confucian culture still persists, and is opposite to contemporary social reality. He insists, "It is time that the new morality be shaped from social agreement through diverse kinds of discussion" (105). Both stories have experimented with the possibility of founding a new morality concerning the middle-aged wives' subjective sexuality and individuality. The social discourse around these two stories has shown that female sexuality in 1990s Korea is no longer symbolized by the silver knife or dominated by Confucian fidelity and chastity.³⁸ Rather, it becomes the barometer for individual subjectivity.

³⁸ Hye-Ran Park argues that Korean married women past their 40s are also very much interested in searching for their identity as sexual subjects through extramarital love, because the priority of their desires is now moving from materialistic prosperity and familial security to subjective individuality. However, she diagnoses that most of them are now standing on the borderline between fantasy and reality. See Hye-Ran Park, "The Desire standing on the Borderline between 'Already' and

4.3. In the *International* and *In-between* Territory

4.3.1. Korea as a Nation Subject-in-the-Making

In the production of the nation as narration there is a split between the continuist, accumulative temporality of the pedagogical, and the repetitious, recursive strategy of the performative. It is through this process of splitting that the conceptual ambivalence of modern society becomes the site of *writing the nation*.

- Homi K Bhabha, "Dissemination" -

My discussion in this section is not narrated as the representative of Korean feminist critics, but only produced from my own positionality as a *Korean* feminist critic in *English* studies, because I can imagine that other Korean feminist critics in the different disciplines would discuss this theme from different perspectives. As I have already discussed in section 2.2. by comparing the intellectuals' roles in both revolutions of May 1968 in France and June 1987 in Korea, Korean intellectual tradition has now become very important from the recently highlighted issue, postcolonialism and gender, in becoming a speaking subject through the Korean knowledge-generating system. The issue of whether Korea has had a unique knowledge-generating system grounded on the Korean's everyday life has emerged as crucial for investigating whether Korea could be considered as a nation subject-in-the-making in Kristevan terms. It is influenced not only by Korea's colonized history in the early twentieth century but also rooted in the long Korean history since the Chosun dynasty in the late fourteenth century. Since the mid-1980s, there have been postcolonialist discourses among fairly young Korean intellectuals in the humanities. How the colonized history has influenced the Korean knowledge-generating system has become the main issue. It is obvious that the Japanese colonization deprived Korean

people of their “subjective” language which could explain Korean people’s everyday life and repressed Korean people’s way of thinking in order to assimilate it into a Japanese way of thinking. If Korea has experienced a different type of colonized history from those of other Asian countries colonized by the western countries, what is the main characteristic of this difference? How does the Japanese colonization influence the Korean knowledge-generating system? Then, later, how has the western cultural colonization happened in the Korean contemporaneity?

As many western intellectuals have noticed, the superficial phenomenon of Japanese colonization of Korea appears different from the western colonization of other Asian countries. At least, the former is differentiated from the latter in the following three points. Firstly, when Japan had officially colonized Korea in 1910, Korea was in the self-developing process of its own modernization. Korea was not much behind Japanese modernization in social development, unlike many other countries colonized by the western European countries. Japan invaded Korea not with the political catchphrase of “modernization” like the western European countries but with the military power. Secondly, the Japanese colonization period of 36 years was relatively short, compared with other Asian countries’ colonization by the western Europe usually for several centuries. This is one of several reasons why Korea did not lose the Korean language as the national official language. Thirdly, Korea was colonized by a culturally and racially similar Asian country, in particular geographically located as a neighbour with which Korea had historically kept up an equal diplomatic relationship and which Korean people had even long considered as culturally inferior (H. Cho, *Right there*, 49). Based on these historical facts about colonization, many people would guess that Korea’s colonized relationship with the western subject during the colonization period would be insignificant, in theory, compared with other Asian countries colonized by the

western Europe. However, in practice, Japan was eager to follow up and take after the western countries after they had kept their national independence and achieved the colonization of Korea. In those days, Japanese identity longing for national modernization was standing on the border line between Europe and Asia which still influences the contemporary Japanese identity in the East Asian region (Byung-Han Cho, 25; Sung-Jin Gong, 57-58; Min-Yeop Sung, 93-94). For the successful colonization of Korea, Japan must learn the fundamental philosophy, the practical strategy, and the administrative policy from the western European countries. Therefore, during the colonization period, Korean intellectuals' relationship with the western subject was much more complicated than other Asian colonized countries' intellectuals' relationship with the western colonizing subject, as I have already showed in section 2.4. with the case of English studies in the colonized Korea. But, both of the most important points for my discussion here - the objectifying process of Korean identity and the exploitation of the subjective language - were not much different from those in other Asian colonized countries in terms of the characteristic nature of colonization. The situation was far from generating Korean knowledge for speaking subjects based on Korean everyday reality.

After the liberation from Japan in 1945, Korean intellectuals' relationship with the western countries was strengthened and intensified through their close relationship with America. As the Korean intellectuals' reaction to the Japanese colonization, the American way of thinking was passionately welcomed by Korean intellectuals. The Korean anthropologist, Kwang-Oek Kim described that specific process of the American colonization in Korean history as following:

Here, we need to contemplate how deeply we understand America which provided us the new philosophical perspective and how America has built up the diplomatic relationship with Korea influenced by the American perception of Korea. It is natural

that the generation of Korean intellectuals in those days, educated by the previous generation of Korean intellectuals to know only the uncritical subordination to Japan, did not have the critical ability to accept American culture more subjectively. They had ardently and simply accepted the American way of thinking as well as the American way of life without thorough understanding of American culture. Their urgent task was to sweep away the relics of Japanese colonization as soon as possible. Because they did not understand correctly and precisely the imported culture from America, the process of receiving American culture was one of trial and error which failed to adapt it properly to Korean society. (94)

Therefore, since 1945, America has emerged as the new colonizing country to Korea, politically, economically, and culturally. Before Korean people could create their new subjective Korean identity, the new colonizing process by America was begun. In other words, the colonial subject newly formed by America substituted for and covered over the old colonial subject of Japan. Haejoang Cho argued that, after the liberation from Japan, the Korean intellectuals' colonization as speaking subjects was contradictorily deepened and heightened (*Right here 72-73*). Since the Korean government launched its economic development in 1961, there has been a flowering of conspicuous nationalistic discourse inviting the general citizens of Korea to pay attention to the diverse governmental policies, according to the Park regime's political interest. This nationalistic discourse was mainly focussed on the economic development towards national modernization, which is now evaluated as a successful case in development studies. But it was far from Korean "subjective" discourse. It is since the 1980s that the postcolonial discourse has been raised and discussed among Korean intellectuals, in parallel with the democratization movement. For this task to build up Korean subjectivity, what we urgently need are the diverse intellectual communities to generate arguments and discussions based on Korean everyday life. In the case of the women's

movement and women's studies in Korea, they have already begun to be organized and active since the 1990s, as I have illustrated in section 4.1.1. with an example of the Korean Society of the Feminist Studies in English Literature. They are now and potentially in the future the knowledge-generating centre of Korean postcolonial discourse.

Along with the postcolonial discourse in the Korean intellectual communities, the discourses on Confucian capitalism in the East Asian region have already been discussed. Since the East Asian countries have proved, in mid-1980s, that non-western countries also could achieve considerable development politically and economically, many intellectuals worldwide have paid attention to the influence of the Confucian cultural values to the economic development in the East Asian region. Considering these interests in the worldwide intellectual communities, Korea as an imagined community is now located on a unique stage in terms of the Confucian capitalistic modernization. The positionality of Korea as a nation is now standing at the *intersections* of the developed and the developing countries, economically, of authoritarianism and democracy, politically, and of communitarianism and individualism in terms of human relationships. There have been argumentative discussions among researchers and scholars in Korean studies about these locational characteristics of Korea and its advantage for further development. During the 1990s, many articles on the diverse reasons for the Korean economic development have been published and the Confucian cultural values concerning human relationships have been highlighted as an important factor in Korea's economic development. The best example is Kwan-Chun Lee's article, "Back to the Basic!": New Interpretation of Confucian Values in Korea's Economic Growth" published in 1995. He insists that both aspects of the Confucian ethic - the creation of dedicated, motivated, responsible, and educated

individuals and the enhanced sense of commitment, organizational identity, and loyalty to various institutions - have resulted in all the neo-Confucian societies like Korea, having at least potentially higher growth rates than other cultures. He reevaluates the Confucian cultural values on the fundamental importance of "human relationships".

This ethic, which has contributed to economic development, stresses that the self is a centre of relationships. That is, the dignity of the self is understood in the context of a network of human-relatedness. This is in striking contrast to the Western tradition of self which stresses a tremendous consciousness of one's rights. (112)

A Korean sociologist, Sang-Jin Han suggests the Korean experience as a new model linking the rich cultural tradition to the new visions for civilization.

The rich cultural traditions, whether they be Confucianism, Buddhism or anything else, need to be creatively interpreted and reinvented to formulate a globally-oriented civil solidarity; those cultural activities seem to be of particular importance in the present day of post-modern turns. It is probably in this sense that one may expect that new visions for civilization will also come from East Asia. It is indeed tempting to think about this possibility, and it will be as much so in the future as it is now. (16)

These reevaluations of the contemporary Korean experience as a nation-subject are also closely intertwined with the Korean women's everyday life experience and the Korean women's movement, focussing on the female self in each individual as well as on the female communities in women's groups, as I have already argued in section 4.1.2., dealing with the case of the Working Women's Discussion Group since 1992.

The result of Korean economic development requires Korean feminists to take different strategies from the Korean women's movement of the 1970s and 1980s. Since the 1990s, the paradoxically contradictory capitalism has permeated into Korean people's everyday life. It is proved that the elite feminist movement in the 1980s no

longer appeals to Korean people. The intensively compressed modernizing process of Korean capitalism has brought a practical predicament for Korean women, especially Korean women in their 30s who are now standing on the front line, struggling with the authoritarian traditional patriarchy in the familial network as well as in the workplace. Women characters in the literary text *Go Alone Like the Musso's Horn* in section 4.2.2. and in the films "The Lover" and "The Adventures of Mrs. Park" in section 4.2.4. are good illustrations of these problems. The contemporary discourse on female sexual subjectivity by Korean women in their 20s reflects another signal of the new phase of the Korean women's movement in the 1990s. However, their individual everyday life experience as Korean women in their 30s and 20s are not yet linked to a political movement towards social change. At the moment, the main issue of the Korean women's movement is whether they could accumulate their individual experience in the everyday life-setting and whether they could generate their "subjective" "gendered" language as a socially powerful discourse to assert their experience as sexual beings in the Korean society. *The Pornography in My Mind* and the film, "Mommy has a lover" in section 4.2.3. are the exact examples of this accumulation of Korean women's sexual experience.

On the other hand, the politics of difference among Korean women, particularly among Korean feminists, is another factor in forming and organizing feminist political power to bring forth social change. For Korean feminists, the urgent task is now searching for a utilizable method and practical strategy for creating a harmonized women's voice coming from the multiple and diverse female subjectivities. What we need at this stage is an experimental spirit in the *localized* Korean cultural context in order to deconstruct the patriarchal cultural heritage and reconstruct female solidarity in the Confucian capitalism. For instance, the concrete women's movement in 1997 Korea

has created several “virtual” occasions and spaces for this purpose. The Feminist Community Camp was one of the excellent cases of these “virtual” occasions for practising the *localized* Korean experience, which was organized for Korean feminist activists in their 20s and 30s by The Alternative Culture. Most participants were members of The Alternative Culture, the various feminist organizations like the Feminist Society in the “chollian” cyber space, the consultants of the Korean Institute of Sexual Violence, graduate students in women’s studies at various universities in Korea, etc.. They have produced a video tape and published a booklet of 101 pages entitled “Feminist Community Camp” from their camp programmes on 17-19 January 1997. The actual fruition from this Feminist Community Camp is a discussion group with about 20 members in order to prepare the practicalities for actualizing several feminist living communities, sharing everyday life together. The young Korean women in their 20s in this group have had the stubborn and strong desire to make their own subjective lives liberated from their parents’ repressive demand for their daughters’ marriage in their late 20s, which has been one of the practical predicaments in Korean women’s everyday life-setting, wrestling with the traditional cultural heritage in women’s marriage. They have realised that economic independence from their parents’ financial support would become the crucial factor for their future negotiations with their parents, mainly with their mothers.

Another example of these “virtual” spaces partly given birth from this Feminist Community Camp is the feminist cafe “Koma”, opened on 13 May 1997. “Koma” in Korean old terms means the morally strong and persevering woman, the female image coming from the myth of national consolidation. It has been a unique feminist space for having feminist cultural programmes, like reading feminist poems, having a women-only concert, dancing parties, and feminist artists’ exhibitions. Also, it has provided an

informal meeting place among the feminist activists. Whenever the feminists go there, they can meet other feminists working in other fields. Thus, it has become the special centre for the feminist networking in Seoul, Korea. After I experienced the feminist cafe “Koma”, I recognized the important and decisive role of this physical space for making connections among the feminists and creating feminist solidarities in Korea.

The feminist publications are also a different kind of “virtual” space to collect women’s voices and generate feminist discourses by accumulating Korean women’s diverse experiences. Even though there have been several publishing spaces for printed matters, the most ambitious publication for the general female public was launched in May 1997. It is the quarterly feminist journal, *IF*, advocating the catchphrase, “Laugh! Subvert! Play!”. While the annual journals from The Alternative Culture have targetted the university graduate middle class women, the new feminist journal, *IF*, has targetted the more general and ordinary women public as a wider range of audience. The importance of these “virtual” occasions and spaces reflects the concrete action of the feminist politics *within* difference for creating Korean female subjectivities and producing Korean women’s speaking subject in the *in-between* territory within the Korean culture.

Daniel Bouchez emphasizes the importance of Korean studies in understanding the East Asian culture, speaking from his own experience of researching Korean studies throughout his life: “All my life I have studied Korea with the conviction that in trying to understand East Asian culture from a western perspective, we cannot understand it if we exclude Korea, as Korea occupies a central position in East Asia (“Re-defining Korean Studies” 6). His explanation implies the crucial role of Korean women’s experience for the worldwide women’s movement as well as the global gender studies. Korean women’s experience and the women’s movement in the East Asian Confucian

culture can provide the new perspective of forging *intercultural* communication between the western European women and the eastern Asian women, based on their different experiences in each historically different cultural context. Even in the East Asian region, forging *intercultural* communication between Korea and Japan is the urgent task for producing an Asian feminist discourse. In her article, "The Tradition and Modernization of Women's Repressive Mechanism: A Comparison of Korea and Japan", Chin-Sung Chung argues that both patriarchies in Korea and Japan aimed to subordinate women as a whole to men, but that the Japanese patriarchy was worse than the Korean patriarchy in terms of women's subjective social transformation, because the Japanese patriarchy was directly linked to a commercially possessive structure and a politically fundamental nationalism (160). For instance, there is no degree course in women's studies in Japan in spite of women's studies courses opening in the university curricula, while there are the several degree courses in women's studies at several Korean universities since 1982. The institutionalization of the women's movement in Japan is more difficult than in Korea. However, Haejoang Cho perceives this difference between the women's movements in both countries was influenced not only by the historically different culture but also by the different development stages of capitalist in both countries. She explains her realisation of those differences between Korea and Japan through contemplating her own experience.

In the early 1990s, I had stayed in Japan for a month, and I had chances to meet feminists in the Kyoto and Tokyo area. After seeing different feminist groups in Japan, I said at a meeting with feminists, "I have an impression that Japanese feminists are devoted too much to little themes. Korean feminists are more geared towards bigger themes". I think it would be hard to find a project for Japanese and Korean feminists to work together because of the differences in style. Ms. Ueno Chizuko replied to me, "We used to work on bigger projects until a while ago. I think it is not simply a cultural difference". To be frank, I was offended at that time. I thought the different

style in feminist movement in two countries was a cultural difference, not a matter of different stages of capitalistic development or history of the movement. I felt as though Ms. Ueno Chizuko was saying "Japan is more advanced than Korea, and we are more advanced than you in feminist movement". (Koreans feel persecuted by Japanese unconsciously because Korea has once been a Japanese colony.) Now I can understand what she meant. We cannot ignore the change that occurs accordingly to the level of capitalistic development or the level of GNP. The time has come when the economy is the overwhelming influence on all other areas of society, consumerism in particular. Korea does not need the elitist feminist struggles for ultimate justice any more. Rather, individuals started gathering under the issues in daily lives. We are now entering into the age of politics of daily lives. (160)

Haejoang Cho's experience has shown the crucial relationship between the women's movement and the capitalistic development in both Korea and Japan. From the worldwide perspective, the recent transformation of the Korean women's movement has reached a conspicuously remarkable position, which I shall discuss more in detail in the next section 4.3.2. This comparative argument on the differences in the women's movement in Korea and Japan implies and designates the *location* of the Korean women's movement and Korean women's studies in the *international* and *in-between* territory. In the 1990s, Korea is now passing through the crucial stage of the women's movement from the worldwide view, while enunciating its *localized* experience. This kind of enunciation in the *international* and *in-between* territory is the politically crucial action to figure out Korea as the nation subject-in-the-making. Homi K. Bhabha points out this process as follows:

The performative intervenes in the sovereignty of the nation's self-generation by casting a shadow between the people as 'image' and its signification as a differentiating sign of Self, distinct from the Other of the Outside. In place of the polarity of a prefigurative self-generating nation 'in itself' and

extrinsic other nations, the performative introduces a temporality of the 'in-between'. (147-148)

Korean women's experience as sexual subjects and Korean women's enunciation as speaking subjects are going to reveal the decisive stage of multiple *intersections* which the western developed countries have already passed (or missed) and the non-western developing countries have not yet experienced. And, at the same time, they will visualize the prospects for issues on gender and sexuality in 21st century Korea, viewing from these multiple *intersections*.

4.3.2. The Prospects for Issues on Gender and Sexuality in 21st Century Korea

I perceive my current task as one aimed at locating these scattered visionaries and developing a true sisterhood. I look forward to the day when I will work in a larger community of practicing visionaries, whom I view as the building blocks of a new feminist society. "How?" is my current area of research.

- Hyoung Cho, "To Grow with Women's Studies" -

My specific reading on the concept of female sexuality in Korean popular culture in section 4.2. may provide the impression that the concept of female sexuality in Korean society is now at quite a similar stage to that in Britain in the 1970s, when every kind of women's issues had come out in realistic novel form. My argument may recall Margaret Drabble's *The Millstone* (1965), Fay Weldon's *Female Friends* (1975), and Zoe Fairbairns's *Stand We At Last* (1983). What kind of story, then, can we expect in 21st century Korea? It is not difficult to imagine that a more resistant revolution than nowadays will come out against sexual repression in future Korean culture. Many young Korean woman novelists have confessed that it is in marriage that they have

begun to recognize their repression as a woman for the first time in their lives. A woman novelist, Su-Yeon Oh, describes this process in an interview with other young woman novelists in their mid 20s.

When I went into real society after my university graduation, everything was different from what I heard at the school. Everything was a lie. That's my feeling. They must teach about real situations, not just talk about the inequality between men and women. While I was adapting myself to the social structure, I began to think about my life as a woman. I found that the problem was I have never considered myself as a woman before. Both marriage and the family system have intensified my repression to a very high degree. I think the most important thing is that I am living as a woman, not that I am repressed because of being a woman. ... For me, being honest to myself means the realisation that I am a woman and I am living as a woman. So, naturally, my writing incorporates this awakening and now I'm in the middle of struggling with how to do it well. (165-166)

As this interview shows, this young generation has a much clearer idea of their sexual identity. Thus, they would like to create the image of a new woman, who has already passed through the struggling process and appeared as a subjective woman. I-Hyon Shin, another participant in that interview, also wants to create a socially and sexually subjective woman, and identifies this desire as resulting from her own experience as a woman in Korean society (166). These are the guiding signals for the future direction of Korean women's writing as well as a more liberated social discourse on female sexuality.

My argument on the changing process of female sexuality in Korean popular culture from 1993 to 1996 provides the specific image that Korean women are now striving to form their sexual subjectivity in the public domain against the Confucian cultural heritage. However, in the real society, most Korean women are mainly participating in this struggle as passive consumers of those cultural products, not as

active cultural producers. When they are able to intervene in the making process of cultural products as subjective consumers with the feminist point of view, the Korean concept of female sexuality can be transformed for their sexual subjectivity faster than at present. A survey of 300 married women in Seoul in 10-12 December 1996 reveals that the majority of Korean married women are not yet inclined to be sexually subjective, even if they are now strongly influenced by the social discourse on sexual liberation. According to this survey, 55% of them consider sex with the husband as the wife's duty. Only 22% underline the priority of sexual desire and another 22% point out the confirmation of their love as its purpose. On the other hand, 93.7% of them have never thought of divorce because of dissatisfaction with their sexual life. Only 6.3% have considered divorce related to this reason. However, 35.4% of them have been tempted by an extramarital love affair, because of discontentment with a husband like Yo-Kyong in "The Lover". But it is noticeable that 27.7% are tempted only owing to sexual instinct ("Talk about Women" 1996). In order to transform this stage of the Korean concept of female sexuality, more diverse discussions and discourses have to come out. This will then help to form a new sexual subjectivity and morality. At the moment, what we urgently need is the flourishing of more diverse discourses derived from various aspects of women's sexual experience.³⁹ Haejoang Cho emphasizes the fundamental importance of this experiential process for forming a new subjectivity and nurturing it, especially in non-western, colonial societies like Korea, which had never struggled to achieve suffrage and therefore lost the opportunity to learn how to organize women for an institutional reformation ("Feminist Intervention" 150-151). From this perspective, the recent social discourse on homosexuality is also a precise example of

³⁹ From this perspective, the main theme of the Annual Korean Women's Studies Association Conference, held on 21 June 1997, was focussed on "The Feminist Approach to the Sex-Culture and Sex-Education in Korea".

this new wave coming from more diverse experiential discussions. Since January 1995, books, films, and TV dramas have begun to deal with homosexuality as their main theme, although none of the main characters in the best-selling novels has yet been a manifest homosexual. However, it is very interesting that the minor characters in the novels, mainly in women's writing, are often implied to be homosexuals.⁴⁰ In the university campus, meanwhile, their political movement has gone into action. The homosexual student unions have organized and published a monthly newspaper. The Korean lesbian community, "kkirikkiri" (with peers), was organized on the 27th November 1995, with 6 members and has grown up to 200 members in only one year (Kkirikkiri 1996). In May 1996, they opened the lesbian cafe "Lesbos" in Seoul, one year before the feminist cafe "Koma", and this cafe has played a politically important role as the cultural space to collect Korean lesbians' voices from their marginalized experience in Korean society. One year later, it is considered financially successful. In 1997, the political power of Korean homosexuals has grown strong enough to organize the Queer Film and Video Festival. It is planned to be held in Seoul on 22-26 September 1997. This is going to be the biggest cultural programme planned by Korean homosexuals in Korean history.

Looking at Korean culture with a certain distance, I think the year of 1995-1996 will be recorded as a key period in the social discourse on sexuality, especially on female sexuality.⁴¹ It is an interesting coincidence that *OECD Economic Surveys* (May

⁴⁰ For instance, in *There is no Hanako* (1994), Yun Choi leaves in the last scene the possibility of reading the heroine's lesbian identity, describing her and her friend, as "sometimes colleagues, sometimes partners". In *If Mozart is alive* (1995) by Mi-Jin Kim and in *The Thought of the Knife* (1995) by I-So Kim, the minor characters are described as homosexuals. On the other hand, Kyong-A Song deals directly with the lesbian issue in *Trout and Sweetfish* (1994), even if she has represented this issue in the imaginary space which she herself created.

⁴¹ In particular, the year of 1995 is remarkable in that housewives began to talk about wives' subjective sexuality by themselves in the public domain. Apart from the

1996) also focussed on 1995 as the year in which the level of per capita income in Korea reached over \$10,000, which will double to \$20,000 by 2001 (13). Besides, Korea has achieved membership ^{the} of OECD in 1996. Since the national economy has had overwhelming influence on all other areas of every individual's daily life, as Haejoang Cho has shown through her own experience during the last several years in section 4.3.1., nobody could ignore the differentiation of life-style even in the same society that occurs according to the level of capitalistic development or the level of GNP. Korea is now entering into a new stage of women's issues, and becoming very conspicuous in terms of the women's movement from a worldwide perspective. At the annual Women's Studies Network (WSN) Conference on "Women's Studies in an International Context: Debates and Controversies", held at the University of Portsmouth, UK, on 8-10 July 1994, Nawal el Sadaawi, a famous Egyptian novelist as well as feminist activist working in Egypt and USA, in her opening lecture, "The Politics of Women's Liberation in an International Context", emphasized the gap in the women's movement from the worldwide perspective between the western European countries where mainly sexuality is discussed, and the developing countries where women's rights are more of an issue (S. Lee 75). I think that the Korean women's movement is now standing on the border line between these extremes, just as Korea's economic stage now stands on the border line between the developed and the developing countries. In other words, we are moving into the age of politics of daily lives in the private domain, where each individual has started struggling with the issues in her daily life, like the concept of female sexuality. Therefore, I am sure that, from now on, the concept of female

novel, *The Pornography in My Mind*, Chae-Kyong Lee and Young-Mi Kim published *Sex Talk written by Housewives* in March. The two writers confessed that they were able to write the book because they are "ajumma" (married women), who can freely talk about sex as women officially privileged in terms of sexual experience. See Chae-Kyong Lee and Young-Mi Kim, *Sex Talk written by Housewives*, Seoul: Ji-Sung Sa, 1995, 7.

sexuality in Korean society is marching faster than before towards sexual subjectivity, located on the border line between the Confucian cultural heritage and western views of sexual desire, in this globalized village.

Chapter 5. Conclusion : Enunciating a *Localized* Experience on the Border Line

We need to have a community of language in which we can produce a *localized* discourse through exchanging our ways of thinking and our ways of enunciating. Without the mediated language community, it is unreasonable and unwise to express your individual self. Only when we have the new language community of "*our own*", does it become possible both to know the importance of personal stories and to make the writing of those stories an exciting and meaningful act.

- Haejoang Cho,

Reading Texts and Reading Lives -

The value of English studies in the English-speaking countries is different from that in the non-English-speaking countries. If the value of English studies in the English-speaking countries like America lies in cherishing and sustaining a critical voice supple enough to collaborate with the past while strong enough to challenge it (Gubar 5), the value of English studies in the non-English-speaking countries like Korea lies in comparing each Korean's everyday life with that in the non-Korean cultures and creating a Korean subjective discourse based on the characteristics of their everyday life experience. Looking at "myself" through looking at "the other" is always useful and preconditional for creating a new subjectivity. As I have shown through Korean university students' responses to English feminist texts in Chapter 3, defamiliarization of their everyday life from reading English texts becomes the first step in forming their subjective way of thinking and managing contemporary life. As the second step, they need to have their own community of language, in which they can produce a *localized* discourse through exchanging their ways of thinking and ways of enunciating, as Haejoang Cho insists in the epigraph to this conclusion (245). The classroom discussions in my teaching situation have provided them with this invaluable

opportunity. Then, as the third step, I wish them to change their life style influenced by this new knowledge, awakened by classroom discussions. For this process of producing Korean *localized* discourse, the role of the English text is quite crucial for mirroring themselves with a certain distance by looking at the different culture. The interactive influence between Korean readers and English texts is maximized while passing through this process. Such an interworking relationship helps Korean students to recognize their gendered subjects with the sharp temporality of the transitional, the emergent provisionality of the “present” of the 1990s Korea, forging the linkage through the unstable elements of English literature and Korean life. This conspicuous stage of “the dangerous tryst with the ‘untranslatable’” (Bhabha, *The Location*, 227) is beneficial and, even, necessary for producing a *localized* knowledge through enunciating the “untranslatable” experience on the border line.

Only when we have prepared this *localized* knowledge with the historical provisionality of the “present”, do both cultural translation and cultural globality become possible. For this purpose, what we need is to revise our understanding of the nation as the sign of the modernity under which cultural differences are homogenized in a monolithic view of society. Rather, as Bhabha suggests, the idea of the nation must be understood, in its ambivalent and vacillating representation, as an ethnography of its own claim to being the norm of social contemporaneity (*The Location* 149). Most of my arguments in this thesis are mapping out “the Korean norm of social contemporaneity” in the 1990s focussing on the gender identity difference. The spatial-time of gender and cultural difference and my enunciation of these cultural differences have been moving from the space of demographic plurality to the border line space for the negotiation of cultural translation and cultural globality.

Not only the act of enunciating a *localized* experience but also the location of enunciating a *localized* knowledge are crucial in terms of their political impact on changing and contributing to cultural globality via cultural translation. In the case of a “postcolonial” “feminist” critic, especially for a “non-western European” “feminist” critic, I think, the location of enunciating a *localized* knowledge is much more important than the act of enunciation itself, because analysing and theorizing difference through carrying on feminist cross-cultural research has to take its origin from a precise cultural position. Since feminism defines itself as a politics of everyday life, the process of “theorizing my experience”, rejoicing in its postcolonial genealogy, should include the border line space of enunciation and creative practice, displacing cultural hierarchies and generic categories. Thus, a postcolonial feminist critic’s accomplishment will establish the semiotic ground for the different productions of reference and meaning for the cultural globality. On the other hand, it will contribute toward lessening the power of the Euro-centric culture as the cultural common sense as well as creating the *localized* subjective discourse based on her working field.

The positionality of my enunciation as a “Korean” “postcolonial” “feminist” critic in “English” studies is different from those of the enunciations by the “famous” postcolonial critics in English studies like Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Edward Said, and Homi K. Bhabha, who are mostly working in the American intellectual community as the “diasporic” “postcolonial” critics. I think the main difference between the positionality of my work and theirs comes from my relationship with my national culture as a feminist critic of *English* studies working within *Korean* culture, so that cultural distance is necessarily structured into my daily working experience. However, we share the most important and fundamental aspect of a postcolonial critic’s task. That is, wherever we are located as “postcolonial” critics, we need to look at “my” (or “our”)

everyday life with the new sense of “Who am I?” (or “Who are we?”) and “What am I?” (or “What are we?”).

What is crucial to such a vision of the future is the belief that we must not merely change the *narratives* of our histories, but transform our sense of what it means to live, to be, in other times and different spaces, both human and historical. (Bhabha, *The Location*, 256)

For the tasks of cultural translation and cultural globality by the “postcolonial” “feminist” critic in “English” studies, working in the non-western European, non-English-speaking countries, I would like to emphasize the decisively crucial roles of the enunciation of *localized* experience as a speaking subject on the border line. The institutionalization of that *localized* discourse has the potential to expand the line to a space in which *intercultural* communication may be forged. Thus, this procedure by a “postcolonial” “feminist” critic would contribute to create an *intercultural* feminism in this globalized spatial-time.

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APPENDICES

I. 3.3.1. On *A Room of One's Own* : “English Reading” Course in 1990

1. Questionnaire 1: Introduction

- 1) Have you seen the movie, “Dead Poets Society”? If yes, point out the most impressive scene and briefly describe your thoughts and feelings.
- 2) Explain the term, “fixed idea”. Give an example of it in your daily life.
- 3) Have you read any writings on women’s studies or participated in any lectures or seminars concerning feminism? If yes, please explain in detail.
- 4) Point out any materials on Korean women that you have read or seen and give your own opinion on Korean women.
- 5) Select the best woman writer in your opinion without consideration of time and place, and explain why you choose her.

2. Questionnaire 2: Consciousness Raising

* This questionnaire form is originally designed by Prof. Haejoang Cho, Department of Sociology, Yonsei University in Seoul and translated by So-Hee Lee.

* Following are 25 questions to do with your attitude and behaviour.
Please choose only one of the three replies.

- (1) definitely yes.
- (2) I don’t know.
- (3) definitely no.

- 1) I always share the expenses of any meetings including dates with my boyfriend. ()
- 2) I feel comfortable about going to see a movie or going to a restaurant by myself. ()
- 3) I feel comfortable about traveling long distances alone. ()
- 4) I have already gone on at least one trip by myself. ()
- 5) I am not over anxious about conforming to others’ ways of life. ()
- 6) I don’t derive self-identity from the sameness of kinship, hometown, educational institution, or membership in the same organization as others. ()
- 7) I am prepared to speak out about current issues, such as resource exhaustion, population problems, nuclear weapons, pollution problems, and the domination of technology by the developed countries. ()
- 8) My social manner and attitude toward the opposite sex is the same as toward the same sex. ()
- 9) I am not overtly interested in the personal affairs of others such as their marriages. ()
- 10) I don’t congratulate those having a male child any more enthusiastically than I do those having a female child only because the new baby is a son. ()
- 11) I think that husband and wife must equally share the housework and child-rearing, in the case where both have a job. ()
- 12) I think that I, as a daughter, am responsible for my own parents as much as I, as a wife, am responsible for my spouse’s parents. ()
- 13) The form of my marriage ceremony will not be a stereotyped one. ()

- 14) I have come to the conclusion that sexism in society can not be overcome simply by one's own volition as an able woman. ()
- 15) I don't spend more than 20 minutes a day just to smarten myself up. ()
- 16) I am not hesitant in speaking out about social injustice, e.g., the exploitation of women by the mass media. ()
- 17) I am not afraid that I will be alienated from my community as a result of my activities. ()
- 18) I have confidence in my ability to express myself at any time and in any place. ()
- 19) I am supportive of women asserting themselves courageously and bravely. ()
- 20) Without being inhibited by the gender of the person to whom I am speaking, I can comfortably speak with men on topics such as cooking and child-rearing or with women on such topics as politics and economics. ()
- 21) I disapprove of and reject the mass media's exploitation of women as sexual objects (for example, advertisements, dramas, films, etc.). ()
- 22) I believe that all members of the family are responsible for carrying out the domestic chores, and that especially the husband and wife are equally responsible. ()
- 23) I don't rear my children differently according to their gender based on sex differences. ()
- 24) I have thought about and seriously considered many of the above mentioned issues before taking this course. ()
- 25) I have never been interested in or concerned about those issues. ()

3. Questionnaire 3: On the Text itself

* This questionnaire form is quoted from *Literature Education in Ten Countries: an Empirical Study*, by Alan C. Purves, Stockholm: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), 1973.

A. Directions: Answer the following questions as carefully and honestly as you can. Here are a number of questions that might be asked about *A Room of One's Own*. Some of these are more important than others. Read the list carefully and choose the five (5) questions that you think are the most important questions to ask about *A Room of One's Own*, and write what you think in Korean on your answer sheet.
(*AROO* is the abbreviation for *A Room of One's Own*.)

1. Is there a lesson to be learned from *AROO*?
2. Is *AROO* well written?
3. How does *AROO* build up? How is it organized?
4. What type of story is *AROO*? Is it like any other story you know?
5. How can we explain the way the people behave in *AROO*?
6. Are any of the characters in *AROO* like people you know?
7. Has the writer used words or sentences differently from the way people usually write?
8. What happens in *AROO*?
9. Is *AROO* about important things? Is it a trivial or a serious work?
10. Does the story of Judith Shakespeare tell you anything about people or ideas in general?

11. How is the way of telling the story of Judith Shakespeare related to what *AROO* is about?
12. Is the story of Judith Shakespeare a proper subject for *AROO*?
13. Is there anything in *AROO* that has a hidden meaning?
14. When was *AROO* written? What is the historical background of *AROO* and its writer? Does the fact that the author is British tell you anything about *AROO*?
15. What kinds of comparisons, references to things outside *AROO* or writing devices are used in *AROO*?
16. Does *AROO* succeed in getting you involved in the situation?
17. What does *AROO* tell us about people you know?
18. What emotion does *AROO* arouse in you?
19. Is there any one part of *AROO* that explains the whole story?
20. What is the writer's opinion of, or attitude toward, the people in *AROO*?

B. Directions: We would like to know how you personally would compare this *AROO* to other stories you have read. If you think it is one of the best stories you have read, rate it +3. If you think it is one of the worst stories you have read, rate it -3. Here is a scale:

one of the best	good	fairly good	fairly poor	poor	one of the worst
+3	+2	+1	-1	-2	-3

Make the number of the rating you would give this *AROO* on your answer sheet in space B.

4. Questionnaire 4: On the Teaching Mehtod

- * The replies and feedback from this questionnaire will be used to improve the teaching method in this class. Please choose and write your answer.
1. What was the most difficult for you in reading and understanding *AROO*? ()
 - 1) long sentences
 - 2) the sociocultural background
 - 3) Woolf's English
 - 4) my own ability in understanding English
 2. If you think that the English in *AROO* is very difficult to understand, what is the main reason? ()
 - 1) long sentences
 - 2) vocabulary
 - 3) Woolf's unique fluid style
 - 4) word order
 - 5) inserted clauses and words
 3. How helpful was the lecture on English language for your understanding of the text? ()
 - 1) I could not understand the text without the lecture on English language.
 - 2) I could read and understand the text by myself with a dictionary.
 - 3) I could read the text by myself if I had had enough knowledge of the sociocultural background.
 - 4) I could have read and understand the text by myself without the lecture.

4. Did the lecture with detailed explanations about the themes and the sociocultural background have any influence on your understanding of the text? ()
- 1) I could fully understand the themes of *AROO* without the lecture because I had always thought about those issues.
 - 2) I could fully understand the themes of *AROO* without the lecture even though I had never thought about those issues before.
 - 3) I could not understand the themes of *AROO* because it took place in a different sociocultural background, even though I had thought about those issues before.
 - 4) I could not understand the themes of *AROO* because it took place in a different sociocultural background and because I had never thought about those issues before.
5. Do you think that the references were very useful for your understanding of the text? ()
- 1) I could not have understood the text without the references
 - 2) They were pretty useful to understand the text.
 - 3) They were not useful at all even though I had read them.
 - 4) I cannot say anything because I haven't read yet.
6. Having read *AROO*, rate the following five items from the most understandable theme to the least understandable. ()
- 1) victimization
 - 2) sisterhood (solidarity)
 - 3) chastity (sexual violence)
 - 4) consciousness raising
 - 5) dominant power in society
7. Select the three English concepts that most impressed you during the lecture on *AROO*.
8. Among the five themes discussed in the lecture, which one is most closely related to you and the Korean social context?
9. Which one is the least closely related to you and the Korean social context? Please clarify that reason.
10. Is the movie, "The Accused" useful in understanding the theme, "sexual violence", which Woolf did not mention clearly? ()
- 1) very useful
 - 2) pretty useful
 - 3) slightly useful
 - 4) so so
 - 5) not useful at all
 - 6) I don't know.
11. What's your impression after watching the movie, "The Accused"? ()
- 1) very shocked
 - 2) pretty shocked
 - 3) slightly shocked
 - 4) so so
 - 5) not shocked at all
 - 6) I don't know.
12. Having watched "The Accused", rate the following five items from the most understandable theme to the least understandable. ()
- 1) victimization
 - 2) sisterhood (solidarity)
 - 3) chastity (sexual violence)
 - 4) consciousness raising

- 5) dominant power in society
13. How useful is the discussion programme for your understanding of *AROO*? ()
- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| 1) very useful | 2) pretty useful |
| 3) slightly useful | 4) so so |
| 5) not useful at all | 6) I don't know. |
14. If you think that the discussion programme was useful for you, which aspect was most influential? ()
- 1) the summary of the theme itself
 - 2) the improvement of my willingness to participate in the group discussion
 - 3) its application to Korean society
 - 4) the understanding of British society where Woolf had lived
 - 5) the sharing of the opinion and thought with my colleagues
15. What do you think was the level of your consciousness on women's issues before you took this class? ()
- | | |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1) very high | 2) pretty high |
| 3) so so | 4) slightly low |
| 5) very low | 6) I don't know. |
16. Have completed this course, do you feel that you have gained more knowledge and consciousness of women's issues? ()
- 1) I gained much more new knowledge and consciousness of women's issues.
 - 2) I gained some new knowledge and consciousness of women's issues.
 - 3) I could confirm what I already knew.
 - 4) I could not gain any of what I expected from this course.
 - 5) There was no new knowledge to gain.
17. Do you think that your reading comprehension has improved as a result of taking this class? ()
- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1) very improved | 2) pretty improved |
| 3) slightly improved | 4) so so |
| 5) not improved at all | 6) I don't know. |
18. If your reading comprehension ability has been improved after taking this course, which of the following is most improved? ()
- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1) vocabulary | 2) sentence structure |
| 3) style and word order | 4) reading speed |
19. Do you think that this course will have an influence on your way of thinking as well as on your way of living in the future? ()
- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1) definitely influential | 2) pretty influential |
| 3) slightly influential | 4) so so |
| 5) not influential at all | 6) I don't know. |
20. In this course, you concentrated on feminist literary criticism using English text *AROO*. Would you choose a similar course if offered?
21. Write your opinions freely on what should be strengthened and on what should be changed in the teaching method of this class.

5. Essay Question

Question: In *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Woolf described the kinds of difficulties Judith Shakespeare would have confronted, if she had tried to get some training in her craft in the sixteenth century (p.47). Clearly, she said, "No girl could have walked to London and stood at a stage door and forced her way into the presence of actor-managers without doing herself a violence and suffering an anguish which may have been irrational - for chastity may be a fetish invented by certain societies for unknown reasons - but were none the less inevitable." (p.49)

Here is an example of the sexual violence, not in the sixteenth century but in the twentieth century, in which we are living, now. The script for the "The Accused" bumped around Hollywood for four and a half years until actress Kelly McGillis was attached to the project. Written by Tom Topper and Joan Tewkesbury, it was inspired by the 1983 sexual assault incident at Big Dan's Tavern in New Bedford, Massachusetts, U.S.A..

(cf. *American Film*, October 1988)

Watch the movie "The Accused", and read two articles, "Sexual violence is the reflection of the rotten power" by Korean feminist poet, Jeong-Hee Koh, from *The Newsletter of the Alternative Culture* in July 1989 and "Women and more women" by Bruce Bawer from *The American Spectator* in January 1989. Then, prepare your answer on these two questions.

- I. Choose and sum up the main ideas in each paragraph from Bruce Bawer's article. Please write them in Korean.
(no more than 3 pages in A4 size)
- II. Argue and discuss your opinions on at least two of the following five ideas, mentioning Woolf's writing and the movie, "The Accused".

[The Five Ideas]

1. victimization
2. sisterhood (solidarity)
3. chastity (sexual violence)
4. consciousness raising
5. dominant power in society

6. A Sample Report: A Dominant Power in Society

In-Shil Han

(1) Introduction

As a woman, I have often thought about sexual egalitarianism. When I was young, I considered the attitudes and behaviours of others, e.g., my family, friends, and teachers, as a matter of course. However, since I entered college and I was exposed to a much wider world, my way of thinking has become much broader, especially on the theme on which I concentrated - the role of women in society. The main cause of

contemporary women's disadvantage is the influence of a dominant view of the role of women in society. Such roles and images are taken for granted by women themselves, and, needless to say, by men. The prevailing view of the role of women in society says that she is to play with dolls in childhood, she is not to learn of public activities but is to learn about domestic affairs. As she gets older she is to marry, and with her husband as her legal protector, she is to take care of her husband and children without concern for public affairs.

As a result of such expectations, women are encouraged to possess a passive character and to live at home peacefully without going out of her home boundary from where she was born and to where she will die. Such a view of womanhood has been defined by the conventions of society, so that each woman has been framed by the social view of womanhood from her birth.

I will discuss the dominant images of women in society taking into consideration the themes from the movie, "The Accused" and from the book, "*A Room of One's Own*", written by Virginia Woolf. I also explore the kinds of images of women which should be improved in our Korean society.

(2) Body

a. "The Accused"

The main story of "The Accused" goes as follows: A woman is raped by three men. Later on, she is helped by another woman and it is made clear that society allowed her to be sexually victimized as a by-product of its view of women in society.

This movie tells a story of sexual violence and reveals clearly the social aspect of women's victimization. In spite of being raped, Sarah is laughed at by a customer in the shop where she is working. Even though Kathryn's male colleagues hold a socially high rank, they stand in a similar position to the onlookers of the rape. Just as the onlookers in the bar did nothing to help: on the contrary, they enjoyed watching the rape and even applauded it, so too, many men, many of whom are of high social rank do nothing about the victimization of women.

In the movie, other examples of this are shown on T.V., advertisements, and amusement machines like pinball machine, which use sex as a theme and emphasize the "sexy" woman. These reveal the social conventions that regard women simply as sexual beings. Also, by socially encouraging masculine and violent sports like hockey or boxing, male excitement, consciously and unconsciously, is induced and sometimes leads to acts such as sexual violence.

b. "*A Room of One's Own*"

In her book, Woolf states that women must be financially and socially secure in order to be able to write effectively. Woolf has surveyed the circumstances of writing by looking at the social and historical context in the twentieth century in which she was living.

Men's universities like Cambridge and Oxford were established in the 12th or 13th centuries with vast financial power. On the contrary, women's universities like Newnham or Girton were established in economical poverty in the 19th century. Most of the books written about women assert attitudes accepting the inferiority of women to men. In this way, men have regarded women as the mirrors to reflect and magnify their own egos. Men have increased their desire to possess and, thus, a dehumanization process has been accomplished. Historically women have been forced by their parents

to marry. Furthermore, wife-beating was commonplace even in the 16th century England - the country famous for advancing democracy. It goes without saying that women were not educated. Before getting married, women had to devote themselves to their fathers and after getting married, they were given away to their husbands.

On the other hand, the writer said that if Shakespeare had a sister, she would have been destroyed by social convention and sexual oppression. If a woman with genius had attempted to practise her creativity in society, her talent would have been regarded as heretic. It would have been said that this woman is mentally deranged, therefore, psychologically trapped by the social norms. This is why women used to publish their works, anonymously. Women writers were resigned to a limited social experience, and they had to stand in hard circumstances because of social criticism and the absence of a women's cultural tradition.

Woolf tells us that the oppression of woman's creative energy has been a result of social conventions and that it has been actualized through a predominantly male-oriented society.

(3) Conclusion

We have observed the social attitudes expressed in the movie "The Accused", and Virginia Woolf's work "*A Room of One's Own*". Although in some ways the circumstances of women have changed, the inequality between the two sexes and the consciousness-raising of men and women still remains as homework to be accomplished. Then, where do we draw the front line of action in order to overcome such inappropriate views of womanhood in Korea?

First, we must set an agenda because we women show a marked trend of neglect towards women's issues. It must be accomplished in and of ourselves. In lawyer Katheryn's case in the movie, "The Accused", we can easily see how we fall short in the area of consciousness raising. In the beginning, she considers Sarah's case not from the point of view of a woman but from that of a lawyer. But finally she realizes that the group of which she is part is not made up of colleague lawyers but is made up of fellow women. The new awareness of Katheryn is what every woman should achieve.

Second, we must ceaselessly endeavour to shatter the social taboos and customary traditions which keep women enslaved. We simply should not accept transgressions against women in society. We should extend our range of activity and shatter existing social conventions in order to assert ourselves as dignified human beings. We must do so until we stand on an equal footing with men.

Third, women must endeavour to improve their economic and social situations. From their parents' care to their husbands' care and under the protection of their sons again, women should not lose their originality and dignity. Such of development is possible only with the proper economic and social circumstances. Accordingly, I think that the economic and social status of women is a basis for the whole equality of two sexes.

Fourth, the appropriate view of the role of womanhood is necessary. It is true that the view of womanhood promoted in current society is not what we want. Then, what is the appropriate image of women? Perhaps, the image in direct opposition to the dominant image in current Korean society would be the most appropriate one. We should recognize the differences between the two sexes. Also, it is necessary that we

each have an appropriate view of manhood and of womanhood co-existing in harmony. It seems that this is a problem to be resolved correctly through careful consideration.

As we have seen, women's issues are not solved easily and simply. So, we should gear ourselves up to make efforts for the guarantee of the rights of women through much trial and error.

- * This article was originally written in Korean and translated into English by the writer and corrected by Michael Kastner, an American lecturer in the Department of English, Hanyang Women's Junior College, Seoul, Korea.

II. 3.2.2. On *A Room of One's Own*: "Gender in Literature" Course in 1997

< The Syllabus for the 1st Semester in 1997 >

- * Course: Gender in Literature
- * Lecturer: So - Hee Lee
- * Year: 1st - 4th
- * Major: All Subjects

1. The Purpose of the Course

Since the 1990s when the social discourse on gender/ sexuality has flourished in Korean society, the representation of gender/ sexuality in literature has been considered by many people. Through the course, the history of sexuality, the definition of gender and sexuality in Korean society is going to be investigated. The relationship between the representation in the literary (and cultural) products and the socio-historical context which produced them is also going to be focussed upon.

2. The General References for the Course

- * Michel Foucault. *The History of Sexuality. Vol. 1: An Introduction.*
Tr. Kyu-Hyun Lee. Seoul: Nanam, 1990.
- * Yeol-Kyu Kim, et al.. *Feminism and Literature.*
Seoul: Moonye Publishing Co., 1988.
- * The Alternative Culture Group. *Feminist Literature.*
No.3, Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1987.
- * *Contemporary World Literature* <quarterly journal in Korea>.
Vol.17 (special issue on feminism and literary criticism).
Seoul: Yeolumsa, Winter 1988.
- * *The Theory of Feminist Literature.* Ed. The Literature Division
of the Research Committee on Korean Women.
Seoul: Creation and Criticism, 1990.
- * Taek-Young Kwon. *Poststructuralist Literary Theory.* Seoul: Minumsa, 1990.
- * The Alternative Culture Group. *Speaking as a Woman, Writing with the Body.*
No.9, Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1992.
- * Chris Weedon. *Feminist Practice & Poststructuralist Theory.*
Tr. Ju-Hyun Cho. Seoul: Ewha Womans University Press, 1993.
- * Toril Moi. *Sexual/ Textual Politics.* Tr. Ok-Hee Lim, Myung-Ho Lee,
Kyung-Soon Choung, Seoul: Hanshin Publishing Co., 1994.

3. The Weekly Programmes & The Specific References

*** The 1st Week (7 March): Introduction to the course focussing on the new writings on love, sexuality, and marriage**

- * Michel Foucault. *The History of Sexuality. Vol. I: An Introduction.*
Tr. Kyu-Hyun Lee. Seoul: Nanam, 1990.
- * Anthony Giddens. *The Transformation of Intimacy - Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Society.* Tr. Eun-Kyoung Bae and Jung-Mi Hwang. Seoul: New Wave, 1995.
- * Su-Ki Kim, Dong-Jin Suh, Hweak Um. *Sex, Pornography, Eroticism: Beyond the Pleasure Nightmare.* Seoul: Real Culture Research, 1994.
- * Jeffrey Weeks. *Sexuality.* Tr. Dong-Jin Suh and Kyu-Hyoung Chae. Seoul: Real Cultural Research, 1994.
- * Haejoang Cho. "Marriage, Love, and Sexuality". *New Writings on Love.* No.7, Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1991.
- * Dae-Hyun Choung. "The Myth of Love". *New Writings on Love.* No.7, Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1991.
- * Sang-Wha Lee. "The Liberation from Fantasy and Mythology". *New Writings on Sexuality.* No.8, Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1991.
- * Pil-Wha Chang. "Searching for Subjectivity in Sexuality, Love, and Marriage". *New Writings on Sexuality.* No.8, Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1991.
- * Yeon-Wha Song, et al.. "Cinderella: The New Reading of the Princess Story". *New Writings on Love.* No.7, Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1991.

*** The 2nd Week (14 March): Sexuality and Literature, Knowledge and Power, Reading and Writing**

- * Yeol-Kyu Kim, et al.. *Feminism and Literature.* Seoul: Moonye Publishing Co., 1988.
- * Michel Foucault. "What is an Author?". *Poststructuralist Literary Theory.* by Taek-Young Kwon. Seoul: Minumsa, 1990.
- * Chris Weedon. *Feminist Practice & Poststructuralist Theory (Ch.5 & 6).* Tr. Joo-Hyun Cho. Seoul: Ewha Womans University Press, 1993.
- * The Alternative Culture Group, "Discussion: Feminist Literature and the Women's Movement". *Feminist Literature.* No.3, Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1987.
- * The Alternative Culture Group, "Discussion: Language for Survival, Language for Life". *Speaking as a Woman, Writing with the Body.* No.9, Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1992.
- * Seong-Nae Kim, "For Women's Self-Narration Style and Women's Writing Style". *Speaking as a Woman, Writing with the Body.* No.9, Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1992.

*** The 3rd Week (21 March): Korean Literature from the Perspective of Gender and Society**

- * Choung-Hee Koh. "The Stream of Korean Women's Literature". *Open Society, Subjective Women.* No. 2, Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1986.

- * Young-Hee Kim. "A Critical Survey of the Theory of Women's Literature". *Creation and Criticism* <a quarterly journal in Korea>. Autumn 1988.
- * Young-Hee Kim. "The Fictionalization of Women's Issues". *Creation and Criticism*. Summer 1989.
- * Choung-Hee Koh. "Where is Women's Literature Located?: Beyond Materialism towards the Realization of the New Humanities". *Literature and Thought* <a quarterly journal in Korea>. February 1990.
- * Haejoang Cho. "Women's Culture and Feminist Literature: Searching for Subjective Language free from the Gendered Stereotype". *Literature and Thought*. February 1990.
- * Myung-Ho Lee, et al.. "1980s Korean Literature from the Perspective of Women's Literature". *Creation and Criticism*. Spring 1990.
- * Yang-Sun Kim. "The Popularity and Anti-Femininity of Women's Issue Novels by Men Writers". *Creation and Criticism*. Spring 1994.
- * Hae-Kyung Park. "Women's Search for Self-Identity in the Privatizing World". *Literature Village* <a quarterly journal in Korea>. Autumn 1995.
- * Su-Jung Shin. "Three Types of Women's Writing going through the Disillusioned Desert". *Literature Village*. Autumn 1995.

*** The 4th Week (28 March): Foreign Literature from the Perspective of Gender and Society**

- * Sung-Kon Kim. "Contemporary Anglo-American Feminism and Feminist Criticism". *Contemporary World Literature* <a quarterly journal in Korea>. Autumn 1988.
- * Ji-Moon Suh. "The Stream of Feminism in English Literature". *Feminist Literature*. No.3, Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1987.
- * Kyung-Soon Lee, "Postcolonial Feminism". *Contemporary Literature Today*. Vol.31. Summer 1992.
- * Virginia Woolf. *A Room of One's Own*. Tr. Mi-Ae Lee. Seoul: Yemoon, 1990.
- * ---. *Killing the Angel in the House*. Tr. Hae-Sook Tae. Seoul: Doorae. 1996.
- * Jung-A Han. "Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*". *Speaking as a Woman, Writing with the Body*. No.9, Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1992.
- * Jung-Ho Choung. "Sexual Difference and the Political Unconsciousness of Women's Writing: Helene Cixous's New Writing Strategy". *Contemporary Criticism and Theory* <a quarterly journal in Korea>. Autumn/ Winter 1992.
- * Il-Hyoung Park. "New Reading and Writing of 'The Laugh of Medusa'". *Speaking as a Woman, Writing with the Body*. No.9, Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1992.
- * Toril Moi. *Sexual/ Textual Politics*. Tr. Ok-Hee Lim, Myung-Ho Lee, Kyung-Soon Choung. Seoul: Hanshin Publishing Co., 1994.
- * Young-Kyun Na, et al.. *Understanding Anglo-American Women's Novels*. Seoul: Minumsa, 1994.

- * Doris Lessing, et al.. *To Room Nineteen*. Tr. Sook Suh, et al..
Seoul: Minumsa, 1994.
- * Annie Leclerc. *Parole de Femme*. Tr. Eul-Mi Choung.
Seoul: Yeolumsa, 1990.

* **The 5th Week (4 April): *Jane Eyre* focussing on Gender and Class, Sexuality and Love (including the film)**

- * Charlotte Bronte. *Jane Eyre*. Tr. Gun-Sam Lee.
Seoul: Eulyu Moonwhasa, 1988.
- * Jung-Hwa Oh. "Jane Eyre - Charlotte Bronte's Subverting Slave".
Understanding Anglo-American Women's Novels.
Seoul: Minumsa, 1994.
- * So-Hee Lee. "Jane Eyre: A Governess's Love Story".
The Journal of Feminist Studies in English Literature.
Vol.1. 1995.
- * ---. "Women's Writing in *Jane Eyre*: Focussed on the First-Person
Narrative". *The Journal of English Language & Literature*.
Vol.41, No.1, Spring 1995.

* **The 6th Week (11 April): Gender and Society in Wan-Suh Park's Novels**

- * Wan-Suh Park. *The Standing Woman* (1989). Seoul: Segyesa, 1993.
- * ---. *Are You Still Dreaming?*. Seoul: Samjin Project, 1989.
- * Kyung-Yeon Kim, et al.. "For the Right Tradition of Women's Literature
- On Wan-Suh Park". *Woman 2*. Ed. The Research Association
on Women and Society. Seoul: Changjaksu, 1988.
- * Hye-Ran Park, et al.. "Taking Off the Mask of Femininity".
Writer's World <a quarterly journal in Korea>. Spring 1991.
- * Haejoang Cho. "What is the Criticism in Wan-Suh Park's Novels?".
Writer's World. Spring 1991.
- * Joo-Hyun Cho. "The Ideology of Romantic Love and Marriage".
The Ideology of Marriage. Seoul: Real Culture Research, 1994.
- * Choung-Hee Kim. "The Paradox of Sexuality in Capitalism: Focussed
on the Home based on the Marriage". *The Ideology of Marriage*.
Seoul: Real Culture Research, 1994.

* **The 7th Week (18 April): Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (including the film)**

- * Alice Walker, *The Color Purple*. Tr. Jung-Hyo Ahn.
Seoul: Moonkyung Publishing Co., 1986.
- * Jung-Soon Shim. "The Completion of the Subjective Self: The Cases of
Two Heroines in *The Color Purple* and *A Woman Warrior*".
Contemporary Literature Today. Vol.17, Winter 1988.
- * Eun-Kyung Choi. "The Human Possibility and the Longing for
the Transition". *Understanding Anglo-American Women's Novels*.
Seoul: Minumsa, 1994.
- * So-Yeon Park. "The Symbol and the Epistolary Writing Style
in *The Color Purple*". *Speaking as a Woman, Writing with the Body*.
No.9, Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1992.
- * Myung-Ah Shin. "The Research on the Womanists in Alice Walker's
Novels". *The Journal of Feminist Studies in English Literature*.

Vol.1, 1995.

* **The 8th Week (25 April): Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own***

- * Virginia Woolf. *A Room of One's Own*. Tr. Mi-Ae Lee. Seoul: Yemoon, 1990.
- * ---. *Killing the Angel in the House*. Tr. Hae-Sook Tae. Seoul: Doorae. 1996.
- * Jung-A Han. "Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*". *Speaking as a Woman, Writing with the Body*. No.9, Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1992.
- * Ji-Moon Suh. "Virginia Woolf's Literary Chronology". *Contemporary World Literature*. Vol.31, Summer 1992.

* **The 9th Week (2 May): *I want What I have been Denied* by Kui-Ja Yang (including the film)**

- * Kui-Ja Yang. *I want What I have been Denied*. Seoul: Sallim, 1992.
- * So-Hee Lee. "Several Thoughts on Feminist Literature". *Speaking as a Woman, Writing with the Body*. No.9, Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1992.
- * Hyoung-Joon Jin. "The Mythological Becoming of Femininity". *I want What I have been Denied*. by Kui-Ja Yang. Seoul: Sallim, 1992.
- * Charlotte Perkins Gilman. *Herland*. Tr. Young-Mi Sohn. Seoul: Jiho, 1995.
- * Gloria Steinem. *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*. Tr. Dong-Hun Kwak. Seoul: Real Culture Research, 1995.
- * Sang-Hee Yoon. "Reading Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions". *New Writings on Marriage 2 (Outside)*. No.12, Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1996.

* **The 10th Week (9 May): *There is no Hanako* by Yoon Choi**

- * Yoon Choi. *The Collected Works Nominated for the Yi Sang Literature Prize: There is no Hanako*. Seoul: Literature and Thought, 1994.
- * Tae-Dong Lee, "The Fiery Struggle with Everyday Life". *The Collected Works Nominated for the Yi Sang Literature Prize*. Seoul: Literature and Thought. 1994.
- * Chan-Je Woo. "Internalization of the Scar, Socialization of the Resonance". *The Collected Works Candidated for Yi Sang Literature Prize*. Seoul: Literature and Thought, 1994.
- * Hae-Hyun Park, "Joy in the Empty Centre". *Literature Village*. Winter 1994.
- * In-Ja Choi. "A Woman with the Cage". *Literature Village*. Winter 1994.

* **The 11th Week (16 May): *Go Alone like the Musso's Horn* by Ji-Young Gong**

- * Ji-Young Gong. *Go Alone like the Musso's Horn*. Seoul: Moonye Madang, 1993.
- * The Alternative Culture Group. "Discussion: New Writings on Marriage". *New Writings on Marriage 1 (Inside)*. No.11, Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1996.

- * Haejoang Cho. "The Marriage Story in the Men Dominating Republic 1".
New Writings on Marriage 1 (Inside). No.11,
Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1996.
- * So-Hee Lee. "Marriages in the Popular Culture".
New Writings on Marriage 1 (Inside). No.11,
Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1996.
- * Sul-A Han, et al.. "The Fantasy and Power of the Romantic Marriage".
New Writings on Marriage 2 (Outside). No.12,
Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1996.

* **The 12th Week (23 May): The Pornography in My Mind by Byul-A Kim**

- * Byul-A Kim. *The Pornography in My Mind*. Seoul: Dapge, 1995.
- * Ae-Ju Chu. "Is it possible for a woman to possess rights concerning her own body?" *New Writings on Sexuality*. No.8, Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1991.
- * Choung-Hee Kim. "An Analysis of Women's Premarital Sexual Intercourse". *New Writings on Sexuality*. No.8, Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1991.
- * Su-Yeon Oh, I-Hyun Shin, Kyong-A Song. "Interview: Young Woman Novelists Think like This". *Sangsang* <a quarterly journal in Korea>. Vol.8, Summer 1995.
- * So-Hee Lee. "Marriages in the Popular Culture".
New Writings on Marriage 1 (Inside). No.11,
Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1996.
- * Haejoang Cho. "The Marriage Story in the Men Dominating Republic 2".
New Writings on Marriage 2 (Outside). No.12,
Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1996.

* **The 13th Week (30 May): The Three Korean Films <Three Friends>, <Corset>, <Dogday Afternoon> and One Dutch Film <Antonia's Line>**

* **The 14th Week (6 June): The National Memorial Day**

* **The 15th Week (13 June): The Final Examination**

< Translated by So-Hee Lee >

III. 3.3.3. On *Jane Eyre*: “Gender in Literature” Course in 1996

< The Syllabus for the 1st semester in 1996 >

- * Course: Gender in Literature
- * Lecturer: So - Hee Lee
- * Year: 1st - 4th
- * Major: All Subjects

1. The Purpose of the Course

Since the 1990s when the social discourse on gender/ sexuality has flourished in Korean society, the representation of gender/ sexuality in literature has been considered by many people. Through the course, the history of sexuality, the definition of gender and sexuality in Korean society is going to be investigated. The relationship between the representation in the literary (and cultural) products and the socio-historical context which produced them is also going to be focussed upon.

2. The Weekly Programmes & The Specific References

* The 1st Week (6 March): Introduction to the course focussing on the gender, sexuality, literature, knowledge, and power

- * Michel Foucault. “What is an Author?”. *Poststructuralist Literary Theory*. by Taek-Young Kwon. Seoul: Minumsa, 1990.
- * Chris Weedon. *Feminist Practice & Poststructuralist Theory* (Ch.5 & 6). Tr. Joo-Hyun Cho. Seoul: Ewha Womans University Press, 1993.
- * The Alternative Culture Group, “Discussion: Feminist Literature and Women's Movement”. *Feminist Literature*. No.3, Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1987.
- * The Alternative Culture Group, “Discussion: Language for Survival, Language for Life”. *Speaking as a Woman, Writing with the Body*. No.9, Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1992.
- * Sung-Nae Kim, “For Women’s Self-Narration Style and Women’s Writing Style”. *Speaking as a Woman, Writing with the Body*. No.9, Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1992.

* The 2nd Week (13 March): Korean Literature from the Perspective of Gender and Society

- * Choung-Hee Koh. “The Stream of Korean Women’s Literature”. *Open Society, Subjective Women*. No. 2, Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1996.
- * Young-Hee Kim. “A Critical Survey of Women’s Literature Theory”. *Creation and Criticism* <a quarterly journal in Korea>. Autumn 1988.
- * Young-Hee Kim. “The Fictionalization of Women’s Issues”. *Creation and Criticism*. Summer 1989.
- * Choung-Hee Koh. “Where is Women’s Literature Located?: Beyond

Materialism towards the Realization of the New Humanities".
Literature and Thought <a quarterly journal in Korea>.
 February 1990.

- * Haejoang Cho. "Women's Culture and Feminist Literature: Searching for Subjective Language free from the Gendered Stereotype".
Literature and Thought. February 1990.
- * Myung-Ho Lee, et al.. "1980s Korean Literature from the Women's Literature Perspective". *Creation and Criticism*. Spring 1990.
- * Yang-Sun Kim. "The Popularity and Anti-Femininity of Women's Issue Novels by Men Writers". *Creation and Criticism*. Spring 1994.
- * Hae-Kyung Park. "Women's Search for Self-Identity in the Privatizing World". *Literature Village* <a quarterly journal in Korea>.
 Autumn 1995.
- * Su-Jung Shin. "Three Types of Women's Writing going through the Disillusioned Desert". *Literature Village*. Autumn 1995.

*** The 3rd Week (20 March): Foreign Literature from the Perspective of Gender and Society**

- * Sung-Kon Kim. "Contemporary Anglo-American Feminism and Feminist Criticism". *Contemporary World Literature* <a quarterly journal in Korea>. Autumn 1988.
- * Ji-Moon Suh. "The Stream of Feminism in English Literature".
Feminist Literature. No.3, Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1987.
- * Kyung-Soon Lee, "Postcolonial Feminism".
Contemporary Literature Today. Vol.31, Summer 1992.
- * Virginia Woolf. *A Room of One's Own*. Tr. Mi-Ae Lee.
 Seoul: Yemoon, 1990.
- * ---. *Killing the Angel in the House*. Tr. Hae-Sook Tae.
 Seoul: Doorae. 1996.
- * Jung-A Han. "Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*".
Speaking as a Woman, Writing with the Body. No.9,
 Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1992.
- * Jung-Ho Choung. "Sexual Difference and the Political Unconsciousness of Women's Writing: Helene Cixous's New Writing Strategy".
Contemporary Criticism and Theory <a quarterly journal in Korea>.
 Autumn/ Winter 1992.
- * Il-Hyoung Park. "New Reading and Writing of 'The Laugh of Medusa'".
Speaking as a Woman, Writing with the Body. No.9,
 Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1992.
- * Toril Moi. *Sexual/ Textual Politics*. Tr. Ok-Hee Lim, Myung-Ho Lee,
 Kyung-Soon Choung. Seoul: Hanshin Publishing Co., 1994.
- * Young-Kyun Na, et al.. *Understanding Anglo-American Women's Novels*.
 Seoul: Minumsa, 1994.
- * Doris Lessing, et al.. *To Room Nineteen*. Tr. Sook Suh, et al..
 Seoul: Minumsa, 1994.
- * Annie Leclerc. *Parole de Femme*. Tr. Eul-Mi Choung.
 Seoul: Yeolumsa, 1990.

*** The 4th Week (27 March): Jane Eyre focussing on Gender and Class,**

Sexuality and Love (including the film)

- * Charlotte Bronte. *Jane Eyre*. Tr. Gun-Sam Lee.
Seoul: Eulyu Moonhwasa, 1988.
- * Jung-Hwa Oh. "Jane Eyre - Charlotte Bronte's Subverting Slave".
Understanding Anglo-American Women's Novels.
Seoul: Minumsa, 1994.
- * So-Hee Lee. "Jane Eyre: A Governess's Love Story".
The Journal of Feminist Studies in English Literature.
Vol.1, 1995.
- * ---. "Women's Writing in *Jane Eyre*: Focussed on the First-Person
Narrative". *The Journal of English Language & Literature*.
Vol.41, No.1, Spring 1995.

* The 5th Week (3 April): Gender and Society in Wan-Suh Park's Novels

- * Wan-Suh Park. *The Yielding Afternoon* (1977). Seoul: Segyesa, 1993.
- * ---. *The Beginning of Living Days* (1980). Seoul: Segyesa, 1993.
- * ---. *The Standing Woman* (1989). Seoul: Segyesa, 1993.
- * ---. *Are You Still Dreaming?*. Seoul: Samjin Project, 1989.
- * Kyung-Yeon Kim, et al.. "For the Right Tradition of Women's Literature
- On Wan-Suh Park". *Woman 2*. Ed. The Research Association
on Women and Society. Seoul: Changjaksu, 1988.
- * Hye-Ran Park, et al.. "Taking Off the Mask of Femininity".
Writier's World <a quarterly journal in Korea>. Spring 1991.
- * Haejoang Cho. "What is the Criticism in Wan-Suh Park's Novels?".
Writer's World. Spring 1991.
- * Joo-Hyun Cho. "The Ideology on Romantic Love and Marriage".
The Ideology of Marriage. Seoul: Real Culture Research, 1994.
- * Choung-Hee Kim. "The Paradox of Sexuality in Capitalism: Focussed
on the Home based on the Marriage". *The Ideology of Marriage*.
Seoul: Real Culture Research, 1994.

* The 6th Week (10 April): There is no Hanako by Yoon Choi

- * Yoon Choi. *The Collected Works Nominated for the Yi Sang Literature
Prize: There is no Hanako*. Seoul: Literature and Thought, 1994.
- * Tae-Dong Lee, "The Fiery Struggle with Everyday Life".
The Collected Works Nominated for the Yi Sang Literature Prize.
Seoul: Literature and Thought. 1994.
- * Chan-Je Woo. "Internalization of the Scar, Socialization of the Resonance".
The Collected Works Nominated for the Yi Sang Literature Prize.
Seoul: Literature and Thought, 1994.
- * Hae-Hyun Park, "Joy in the Empty Centre". *Literature Village*.
Winter 1994.
- * In-Ja Choi. "A Woman with the Cage". *Literature Village*. Winter 1994.

* The 7th Week (17 April): Alice Walker's The Color Purple (including the film)

- * Alice Walker, *The Color Purple*. Tr. Jung-Hyo Ahn.
Seoul: Moonkyung Publishing Co., 1986.
- * Jung-Soon Shim. "The Completion of the Subjective Self: The Cases of

Two Heroines in *The Color Purple* and *A Woman Warrior*".
Contemporary Literature Today. Vol.17, Winter 1988.

- * Eun-Kyung Choi. "The Human Possibility and the Longing for Transition". *Understanding Anglo-American Women's Novels*. Seoul: Minumsa, 1994.
- * So-Yeon Park. "The Symbol and the Epistolary Writing Style in *The Color Purple*". *Speaking as a Woman, Writing with the Body*. No.9, Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1992.
- * Myung-Ah Shin. "The Research on the Womanists in Alice Walker's Novels". *The Journal of Feminist Studies in English Literature*. Vol.1, 1995.

* **The 8th Week (24 April): The Mid - Term Examination**

* **The 9th Week (1 May): *I want What I have been Denied* by Kui-Ja Yang (including the film)**

- * Kui-Ja Yang. *I want What I have been Denied*. Seoul: Sallim, 1992.
- * So-Hee Lee. "Several Thoughts on the Feminist Literature".
Speaking as a Woman, Writing with the Body. No.9,
 Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1992.
- * Hyoung-Joon Jin. "The Mythological Becoming of Femininity".
I want What I have been Denied. by Kui-Ja Yang. Seoul: Sallim, 1992.

* **The 10th Week (8 May): *The Times* by Hyoung-Kyoung Kim**

- * Hyoung-Kyoung Kim. *The Times*. Vol.1,2,3.
 Seoul: Literature Village, 1995.
- * ---. "A Smoking Woman". *The Remembrance of the Green Tree*.
 Seoul: Literature and Intelligence, 1995.
- * Hye-Kyung Lee. "The Freedom of Writing, the Freedom of Breathing".
Literature Village. Winter 1995.
- * Bo-Sun Ryoo. "Turning Back for Searching for the New Subjectivity".
Literature Village. Winter 1995.

* **The 11th Week (15 May): *Go Alone like the Musso's Horn* by Ji-Young Gong**

- * Ji-Young Gong. *Go Alone like the Musso's Horn*.
 Seoul: Moonye Madang, 1993.
- * The Alternative Culture Group. "Discussion: New Writings on Marriage".
New Writings on Marriage 1 (Inside). No.11,
 Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1996.
- * Haejoang Cho. "The Marriage Story in the Men Dominating Republic 1".
New Writings on Marriage 1 (Inside). No.11,
 Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1996.
- * So-Hee Lee. "Marriages in the Popular Culture".
New Writings on Marriage 1 (Inside). No.11,
 Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1996.
- * Sul-A Han, et al.. "The Fantasy and Power of Romantic Marriage".
New Writings on Marriage 2 (Outside). No.12,
 Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1996.

* **The 12th Week (22 May): *The Pornography in My Mind* by Byul-A Kim**

- * Byul-A Kim. *The Pornography in My Mind*. Seoul: Dapge, 1995.
- * "Is it the Right Time to talk about Wife's Sexuality?".
"Morning Ground". KBS TV. 21 June 1995.
- * Ae-Ju Chu. "Is it possible for a woman to possess rights concerning her own body?" *New Writings on Sexuality*. No.8, Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1991.
- * Choung-Hee Kim. "An Analysis of Women's Premarital Sexual Intercourse". *New Writings on Sexuality*. No.8, Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1991.
- * Su-Yeon Oh, I-Hyun Shin, Kyong-A Song . "Interview: Young Woman Novelists Think like This". *Sangsang* <a quarterly journal in Korea>. Vol.8, Summer 1995.
- * So-Hee Lee. "Marriages in the Popular Culture". *New Writings on Marriage 1 (Inside)*. No.11, Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1996.
- * Haejoang Cho. "The Marriage Story in the Men Dominating Republic 2". *New Writings on Marriage 2 (Outside)*. No.12, Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1996.

* **The 13th Week (29 May): Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (including the film)**

- * Margaret Atwood. *The Handmaid's Tale*. Tr. Sung-Ho Choung. Seoul: Literature and Thought, 1990.
- * The Film Reading Group in the Alternative Culture Group.
"The Handmaid's Tale: The State Control of the Sexuality and Reproduction". *New Writings on Sexuality*. No.8, Seoul: The Alternative Culture Press, 1991.
- * So-Hee Lee. "A Study of the Women's Work in *The Handmaid's Tale* - Focussed on the Handmaid's Work".
The Journal of Feminist Studies in English Literature. Vol.3, 1996.

* **The 14th Week (5 June): The Korean Film <Dogday Afternoon>**

* **The 15th Week (12 June): The Final Examination**

< Translated by So-Hee Lee >

IV. 4.1.2. The Case of The Working Women's Discussion Group

1. Responses to the Task of Self-narration

1. Hyun-Mi Hahn, "Looking at myself changing during the year of 1992", *My Own Thinking(?) And Your Sympathy*, Seoul: The Alternative Culture, 1992, p.167.

I have participated in the working women's discussion group since the first meeting, in Jan. 1992. Until June, I took part there without any definite consciousness. However, after the "Looking at myself, who I am and what I am" programme, in July, my attitude was completely changed. Even though it needs lots of patience for me to listen to my own "speaking self" in the cassette player which is a perfect mess, it makes me understand and wake up to my problems due to looking at myself as a third-person out of my "self". ... Throughout this self-narrating task, I have found out my problems - a sense of inferiority and a delusion of persecution which should be overcome. Since then, I have regarded my participation in that group as a task aimed at getting self-confidence in my life.

2. Hyun-Joang Hong, "Waiting for the exciting age of 30", *My Own Thinking(?) And Your Sympathy*, p.171.

By means of the "Looking at myself, who I am and what I am" programme, I could look at myself with an objective point of view and I could find out the potential power in myself while the others in the group were analyzing and evaluating my past life.

2. Responses to Self-Confidence & Subjectivity

1. Mi-Kyung Lee, "A fresh turning point - the working women's discussion group", *My Own Thinking(?) And Your Sympathy*, p.173.

At first, I went there just to 'look at' what kind of meeting it was. After I read the several annual issues published by The Alternative Culture Group, I could recognize "Yes, that's it. That's right!" But, that was all! While a friend of mine, who had a similar way of thinking to mine, actively visited this working women's discussion group and kept on participating in it, what I had done was just to envy her and remain as an outsider. I hesitated, feeling timid and fearful whether I could join in this group or not, because it would require me to reform my former way of thinking.

However, as soon as they began to speak the first sentence, I couldn't remain just an outsider. What they said was exactly what I said and their repressed feelings from their everyday lives also existed in myself. All of them were longing for real transformations in action, not simply in thought. I, who was afraid of the conflict between the ideal wish and the practical disadvantage, could see the hopeful flash at that meeting.

I have been finding myself, keeping in mind the proverb, "The latest moment in one's consideration is the fastest moment." (Yes, that's right!) I am really grateful that I could have this fresh turning point in my life by meeting with the working women's discussion group.

2. Hyun-Mi Hahn, "Looking at myself changing during the year of 1992",
My Own Thinking(?) And Your Sympathy, pp.168-169.

I have experienced several precious changing points in my life during the last year, which are more definite if I compare myself in 1992 with myself before then. For example, I could respect myself, whereas I used to indulge in self-torment, considering myself worthless as dust, and I could overcome the hostile feeling against men, etc.. However, the most precious experience which I acquired from this group is the awakening: i.e., these changes are most simply given not by anybody else but gradually recognized by myself in the group of people who have sympathized with each other and had a developmental influence on each other.

3. Hyun-Joang Hong, "Waiting for the exciting age of 30",
My Own Thinking(?) And Your Sympathy, p.171.

Since the age of 24, I have thought of the age of 30 as the turning point in my life. It seemed, at the age of 30, I could do something outstanding with ability, vitality, and self-confidence based on a solid foundation. But, until last year, I had been afraid of becoming 30-years of age. First of all, the number 30 was unfamiliar to me and I hadn't prepared anything at all for that age. However, now, at the end of 1992, I am waiting for 30, with a rapidly beating heart. Such an enormous "revolution" (only this word can do justice to the extent of my changing) was made possible by my meeting with the working women's discussion group, last June.

4. Ha-Kyung Choi, "Working women's discussion group and my everyday life",
My Own Thinking(?) And Your Sympathy, p.174.

What has the working women's discussion group meant to my life from the first day?

Firstly, I became aware how tactfully we - at least I - have been repressed by the social structure around not only myself but also ourselves.

Secondly, I could accept my social status more honestly after recognizing this repressing social structure.

Thirdly, I could speak with my own voice after accepting my social status more honestly.

In short, the working women's discussion group played an important role in guiding me to stand on my own feet and has given the most special meaning to my whole life.

5. Eun-Young Kang, "Little Bird's Fierce Flapping",
My Own Thinking(?) And Your Sympathy, p.175.

Early this year, meeting with the working women's discussion group made me feel less lonely, given me courage and confirmed the possibility of sharing my life with others. How exciting it is even to talk and discuss with people who are living and wish to live passionate lives! However, from now on, just passion is not enough for any of us. We urgently need further training in self-development, and fierce wing-strokes for higher and farther flying.

3. Essay: As a Working Woman in Korea

Several years ago, I came to this workplace and held a position publishing advertising magazines. After the foundation was established in our company, the magazine section was transferred to the foundation and I remained in the PR section. Publishing the magazines was a very interesting job. Now, my only pleasure is editing a quarterly newsletter. It's boring, not interesting. After I read Hae-Soon Cho's writing, "Professional Women's Reactions and Strategies in the Workplace" in *Dominant Culture, Masculine Culture*, published by The Alternative Culture in 1988, I was really shocked and began to think about my professional preparation for this job, very seriously. With little possibility to change my current job into another, how can I overcome this situation in which I'm not interested and confident at all? If I become the director of a department in the future, can I deal with this business efficiently? But, my answer was, "No, I'm not well prepared". Therefore, I decided to develop and train my professional ability even in this position, in order to construct my own secure professional area. At first, I began to continue learning the foreign language, English, and to understand my business with an overall perspective. And then, I considered how to solve women workers' problems with other women colleagues.

For instance, I've been sexually harassed several times by my boss. Suddenly, he had hugged me from the back. He had told me once, "If you allow me to hold your hand, I'll allow you to pass this door." When I mentioned his behaviour to one of my colleagues, she confessed that she also had the same experience. Later, we decided to tell our experience to other women colleagues in the union meeting, because we felt that it was necessary to expose his sexual harassments in public. We felt shame to talk about it. But, we must do because being silent about it has been the blind spot in the sexual harassment issues. But, no satisfactory strategy came out from our discussion. Most of us were worrying about the worse influence on our everyday business, because he had the power to make a decision in our workplace. This is my situation and experience as a working woman that led me to the Working Women's Discussion Group in The Alternative Culture.

by Hyun-Joang Hong in *My Own thinking (?) And Your Sympathy*,
published by The Working Women's Discussion Group,
Seoul: The Alternative Culture, 1992, p.57.

<Translated by So - Hee Lee>