

**ANALYSING THE LITERARY REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN
SOUTH KOREAN FILMS: THE CASE OF *JEWEL IN THE PALACE* AND
THE HEIRS.**

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**A RESEARCH THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF LAW, ARTS
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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for an award of a diploma or conferment of a degree in any other University or Institution.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my mother, Margaret Amuti, whose dream I am fulfilling.

To my husband, Vincent Juma, thank you for your love and unwavering faith in me. To my children, Phyllis and Faith, thank you for your patience. Balancing my love for you and my studies would have not been possible without your understanding.

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OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

This study subscribes to the following operational definition of key terms:

Patriarchy: A socially constructed ideology which reifies male supremacy at the expense of the female gender.

Chosun Dynasty: The last and the longest-lived imperial dynasty (1392-1910) of Korea. It's Korean dynastic kingdom that lasted for approximately five centuries.

Sageuk: Drama based on historical figures which incorporates historical events and uses a historical backdrop.

OECD: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

LFPR: Labour Force Participation Rate.

FILM: A modern art that uses technology to stylize real life through visual narration in order to reach and influence the thoughts and feelings of the audience.

ABSTRACT

The study examines the roles assigned to female characters in Korean films and whether or not such roles are patriarchal. Specifically, the study analyzes the assigned roles of female characters and examines the images of female characters in Korean films. In addition, it sought to establish the connection between the roles of women as represented in Korean films and the social traditions of Korea. The study is limited to the films, "Jewel in the Palace," directed by Lee Byung-Hoon and "The Heirs," directed by Kang Shin-Hyo and Boo Sung-Chul. These two films were selected through purposive sampling since they share thematic boundaries. The study adopted a qualitative research design and used observation and examination of episodes drawn from the films to generate data. The study is based on the assumption that the images given to the female characters are stereotypical and that there are specific roles assigned to women in the films. The data was then analyzed in line with the specific objectives of the study. The tenets of Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem's radical feminism aided in the analysis and interpretation of the selected films. The findings add to the debate revolving about the images portrayed of women in patriarchal societies. The findings establish that women have continuously been emasculated, and the roles assigned to them are always stereotypical to resonate with the underpinnings of a patriarchal society. In cases where women seemed to rise above patriarchal ideologies, women were portrayed as a power-hungry gender that uses evil means to acquire power. However, despite acquiring power, the study established that the complexities of patriarchy still transferred real power to men. Nevertheless, the study established that despite the supposed evil means that women use to acquire power, they are conscious of the oppressive nature of patriarchy, and they strive to challenge it.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Literary studies, since the twenty-first century, continue to be interested in the ways the female gender is treated. Literature is a society's soul and provides fertile grounds where social constructs like gender can be investigated (Pankhurst ix). Consequently, literary critics have used literature to capture the portrayal and treatment of the female gender. According to Chetambe Mutali:

The place of the female person in society and literary texts has become an important area of investigation, whose aim is to achieve gender equity in a society that has hitherto been patriarchal. The literary work today is such that works of art are increasingly being interrogated in terms of how they portray female characters .(16)

In lieu of these arguments, this study extends the interrogation of the female gender to films. The study conceptualizes films as verbal texts that put the female gender at the center to mirror the portrayal of the female characters in societies. Thus, the study analyzes two Korean films, namely: "The Heirs" and "Dae Jang Geum". The latter is translated to read "Jewel in the Palace". Films are important grounds for the study of the portrayal of the female gender because of the great diversity of its audience. It is likely to be a melting pot of opinions, belief systems, philosophies, and attitudes. Particularly, the study focuses on the portrayal of the female characters in the films.

The film, “Jewel in the Palace” is directed by Lee Byung-Hoon, a professional who has received accolades for the best director. His characters have won different awards in various categories. Some of the works he has directed include period (historical) dramas such as: “500 years of Josean” (1983-1990) and “Hur Jun” (1999), among others. The film, “Jewel in the Palace”, is based on the story of Jang Geum, the first female royal physician of the *Josean* Dynasty. The film has so far received a peak viewership rating of 57.8% (Myung-Ho: 208). On the other hand, “The Heirs” is directed by Kang Shin-Hyo and Boo Sung-Chul. The duo are renowned directors who have stewarded many other films such as; “Midas”, “Marrying a Millionaire”, “Tazza”, and “The Age of Innocence”, among others. The teen film “The Heirs” received immense popularity rating across Asia and won the 2014 Seoul International Drama Awards.

The choice of these films for the purpose of this study was premised on some reasons. Firstly, *sageuks* (historical drama) besides its overwhelming viewership in many countries, provided a platform for looking at, in a historical context, the role of women. Secondly, the choice of “The Heirs”, a teen romantic film, aided in looking at the role of women across the barriers of age, class and how these roles assigned to the women gender transcend temporalities. The study aimed at establishing the place of woman in the society. Besides, the study conceptualizes films as platforms where the nuances of women voices can be highlighted.

Despite Korea featuring amongst stronger economies with vibrant democracies, the country continues to project many cases of gender disparity. In particular, the female gender has been boxed into a subordinate position to men. The US Library of Congress observes, 'In traditional Korean society, women's role was confined to the home. From a young age, women were taught virtues of subordination and endurance to prepare them for their future roles as wives and mothers. Her duty was to her husband and his family'. The observation by the US Library of Congress signifies the aspect of patriarchy where a woman's role is already cut out for her in Korean society. Thus, knowledge in the Korean society is tailored around female submission to men. In this regard, women are sidelined in both the economic, political, and social spheres. This is echoed by Jinyoung Kim et al. who observe that:

In Korea, there is still a significant gender gap in labour market participation. According to Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) data, only 55% of Korean women from ages 15 to 64 are in the labor force compared to 65% for OECD countries on average. The Republic of Korea's female labor force participation rate (LFPR) substantially lags behind the male participation rate of about 77% which is close to the OECD average 79%. The modern Korean woman faces various dimensions of inequality-social, cultural and economic. (4)

Indeed, the disparity of gender in the labour market is replicated in the political sphere. According to Kim et al., 'in 2008, only 41 women were elected to the 299 seats in the National Assembly' (6). This data translates to 13.7% of women elected into the National Assembly and further highlights the female voice's emasculation. A critical look into both public and private sectors yields the same

result. The picture grows grimmer when examined in terms of leadership positions held by women in the public and private sectors. Based on a survey conducted by GMI Ratings (2013), the fraction of women on corporate boards is only 1.9% in the Republic of Korea against 11.8% in OECD countries. In a more incisive look, the survey revealed that 19.5% of corporations with more than 100 employees had no female executives. Hence, Korea ranked 43rd out of the 45 countries surveyed of the worst countries in gender disparity.

The evidential data from both the public and the private sector is a replica of Korean society's patriarchal nature. According to Chung-Hee Soh, Korean socio-cultural practices are highly gendered and patriarchal (193). Soh posits that the Korean socio-cultural practices are tailored so that "the eldest son has special duties to his parents, brothers, sons, wives and daughters" (193). According to Soh's observation, the hierarchy places the female gender last. The gendered nature of the Korean society gives this study the impetus to evaluate the portrayal of the gender issues in Korean films. Films, thus, provide a medium for the articulation of gender politics. Therefore, through feminism as a critical lens, the study not only provides a nuanced role of women in the films but also simplifies some of the conundrums surrounding gender in Korean society.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The literature about women in Korean films and specifically in South Korea has continued to attract scholarly attention. Consequently, issues such as the perception of feminism, the impact of media on national identity and culture, and representation of women and relationships in Korean drama have attracted much literary criticism (Choe 19; Kim 28; Cariappa 11). Film has the power to not only influence attitude but also to inculcate attitudes. This emphasizes on why sensitivity to any cinematic projection of any gender is paramount. Therefore, the study strives to critically examine the roles assigned to women in Korean films under investigation and whether or not these roles are patriarchal. With the aid of a feministic lens, the study's subject is investigated through the roles assigned to the professional female characters in the films. The female characters stick to the script as assigned to them hence providing the possibility of revealing the role and position of women in South Korean society.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The study examines the representation of female characters in Korean films by addressing the following objectives:

- i. To analyze the assigned roles of female characters in the selected Korean films.
- ii. To examine the images of female characters in the selected Korean films.

- iii. To establish the connection between the roles of women as represented in the selected films and the social traditions of Korea.

1.4 Research questions

The research seeks to respond to the following questions:

- i. What are the assigned roles to the female characters in the selected Korean films?
- ii. What images are depicted by the female characters in the selected Korean film?
- iii. What is the connection between the roles of women and the Korean social traditions as represented in the selected films of study?

1.5 Research assumptions

- i. There are specific roles assigned to the female characters in the selected Korean film.
- ii. Images given to the female characters in the films are stereotypical.
- iii. There exists a connection between the role of women as represented in the films and the social traditions of Korea.

1.6 Justification for the study

For decades now, television has not only undergone a considerable change but has also substantially impacted on the transformation of societies in the world.

Silverstone Rogers argues that “television creates an ‘ontological trust’ in society through the consensus view it projects” (194). Neil Peart reinforces the invaluable contribution of the media in society. He avers that media has a tremendous influence on a society’s cultures and identities. Briandana Riziki and Iintan Soliha-Ibrahim further emphasize that:

Television, radios, newspapers, magazines and films play a virtuous role towards the society. All the mediums function as socialization agents, which is not only to inform and to entertain society, but also to educate them. It transmits the values and social norms in life. (1)

The debate by Silverstone, Peart and Riziki and Soliha-Ibrahim regarding the role of media in the society gives the impression that television functions as a platform through which a society can mirror itself. In order to identify with television channels, the channels play films that resonate with a society’s ideologies. Therefore, films provide grounds for the analysis of the subject of study-patriarchy and the role of women in Korean society.

Studies have been done on gender issues in Korean films, yet specific interest on the role of women in the films has remained elusive. Filling this gap provides a new impetus to the advancement of debate around gender and particularly the role of the female gender in Korean society. Indeed, Lee observes that Korean drama offers a platform for countries to interact with their culture. This assertion shows, hitherto primarily, that there is a possibility of films providing the avenue to

understanding the Korean culture, among them, the role of women in the Korean society as configured through the female characters in the films.

Kim observes that the Confucian model of the family has remained largely intact in Korean custom throughout the twentieth century (149). This study thus seeks to ascertain whether the films under study depicts the same and to possibly bring change on societal perception on patriarchy.

1.7 Scope and Delimitation

The study is limited to the evaluation of roles assigned to the female characters in the films under study. The roles assigned to the female characters give illustrations on how women are perceived in Korean society. The study limits itself to two South Korean films, namely, “Jewel in the Palace” and “The Heir”. The films were purposively sampled because they depict different political, economic and sociological eras. The study analyzes the major female characters such as Seo Jang-Geum, Choi Keum-Young, Lady Han, Lady Jung and Court Lady Choi in the film, “Jewel in the Palace” and Cha Eun-sang, Mrs. Jung Ji Sook, Madam Han, Madam Yoo and Rachel Yoo in the film “The Heirs”.

The study restricted itself to the two films because of the issues of accessibility and translation. The Korean films are mostly filmed in Korean languages hence making it difficult for the researcher to access more films.

1.8 Literature Review

This section reviews previous literature relating to Korean films. In particular, a review of the literature that relates to the elements of patriarchy and the role of women in Korean society helps to highlight the gap of the current study.

In his analysis of the images of female characters in Korean movies, Lee Young-Joo reveals that women are stereotypically portrayed and their worlds so controlled that the only way they succeed in acquiring power is through suicide (110-112). Films, Young- Joo argues, are made in the interest of the public and are therefore likely to manifest the cultural aspirations such as women's oppression. This study relates to and provides critical grounding to the current study. Borrowing from Young- Joo's findings, this study sought to evaluate the role of women in Korean society through the roles of female characters in the selected films of study. According to Lee, "Cinema can be seen as another reality, a mirror of the reality.' (110). Per Persson's arguments resonate with Lee. He observes that 'cinema can create and change the cultural climate, create a rule, and even change the way people understand literature' (4). He further adds that movies are powerful tools that aid in influencing attitude change, emotional impact, and other behaviors. The assertions of the above scholars prove that films provide ground to study societal ideologies. A film cannot be written and directed in isolation. As an art, it cannot exist in a vacuum; thus, it is indeed ideal in the societal analysis.

Ramasubramanian Srividya gives analysis about experiencing and understanding other people's cultures through interaction, personal experience, or the mass media. The study looks at films as grounds for shaping identities and perceptions of other peoples' cultures. The study asserts the importance of films in understanding the socio-cultural set up of different nations and communities. He observes that:

Our understanding about other cultures and nations around the world is often colored by our memory of these places that we have received through mediated visual information. Although numerous interrelated social forces might contribute to our perceptions of others, mass media portrayals undoubtedly play a very important role in influencing peoples' attitudes towards out-groups, especially when presented in very realistic ways in media such as films. Films play an important role in shaping ethnic and national identities, especially in the absence of much face-to-face interactions with these groups. (243)

The above assertion portrays the media as a realistic way of presenting ideologies in societies. It enhances an understanding of media as a platform for analysis of societal ideologies. Ramasubramanian further adds that:

The pervasive influence of film as a medium makes it an important source of information in shaping our perceptions of other cultures especially because many films are set in foreign locales. (245)

Therefore, the appreciation of the uniqueness of Korean Films involves understanding of Korean History and culture, which has shaped both the creativity of its filmmakers and the action of its characters. Serene Zachariah states:

Korean drama is part of the Korean wave that came in from the 1990s and has shown exceptional influence on the Korean ethos- be it culture, politics, economy, or foreign relations. Since the 1990s, Korean drama has overtaken most Asian broadcasting

networks and has dominated the market and has also captured the attention of the western audience. (1)

The above assertion shows that Korean film is embedded in Korean culture, thus mirroring Korean society in terms of its culture, politics, and economy. Modern Korean country has undergone severe turmoil. The country has endured the fall of the age-old *Choson* Dynasty, the oppressive rule of the Japanese, division of the country by the cold war, a long hard struggle to establish a real democratic state, and suffering from the meltdown of the Asian economic crisis. Before 1910, the Korean peninsula had been ruled by a single monarchy, the *Choson* Dynasty, a social and political order that had remained stable for over half a millennia. However, as Japan expanded its sphere of influence in Asia during the end of the 19th century, which included victories over China and Russia, Korea finally came under the direct control of its Eastern neighbor. The Korean historical turmoil is depicted in Korean movies, especially in the way women are portrayed. Lee states that:

A filmic depiction of society cannot be fully understood in isolation from its dominant ideology. Films tend to exhibit an underlying ideology that is embedded. Film can reflect and at the same time perpetuate the ruling ideology of society. (1)

Stringer, Julian and Chi-Yun, Shin state that Korean film has been heralded as the ‘newest tiger’ of Asian cinema. In 2004, South Korea became one of the only countries in the world where the local films outsold Hollywood films and the Korean director, Park Chan-Wook, awarded the Grand Prix at the Cannes (2005). In her book “South Korean Golden Age Melodrama 6,” Kathleen, McHugh and

Nancy, Abelmann write that the recent boom of Korean cinema since 1999-in and outside of its small territory has gained global enthusiasm and academic attention. The variety of Korean cinema, from commercial popular genre films to festival-circulating art films, has proven that Korean cinema is one of the most noteworthy and promising film industries.

However, studies indicate that women in Korea are victims of the patriarchal characteristics that have seeped their way into the film industry. Women are portrayed in movies as second class citizens and victims of patriarchal societies.

Park observes that:

The Korean film industry has undoubtedly been male-dominated and Korean films have consequently constructed their narratives and images of female stars in particular ways to produce patriarchal myths about femininity and female sexuality in Korean society. (20)

Park's observation highlights male dominance in Korean films. As depicted in the films, Korean society emasculates and discriminates against women while transferring all the powers to men who, in turn, treat them as inferior beings. Gumede observes that: "in patriarchal societies, the women's task is to work in the fields, to cook for their husbands and to rear the children" (6). Gumede's sentiments echo the issues of discrimination of women in the political and economic sectors, further emphasizing the patriarchal attitude that women are only meant to take care of their homes and husbands. Therefore, women are sidelined and discriminated against in such societies. The areas of work and role

for women tend to be domesticated and restricted to siring and rearing children. In addition, Cariappa observes that:

South Korea faces the critical issue of gender inequality in a number of areas and contexts. According to the Global Gender Gap Index by the World Economic Forum, South Korea ranks 108 out of 153 countries, among the few advanced nations with such a low rank. (5)

Zachariah observes that Korean dramas are enveloped in the societal elements which portray women as mute, voiceless, and complaisant (6). She further argues that gender inequality in South Korea is majorly propagated through traditions and cultural practices at home and workplaces.

Cariappa interrogates the perceptions of Koreans on the way women are expected to behave in society and how the media influences their views (636). The study investigates diverse opinions on feminism, gender equality and women's rights. The role of the internet in encouraging stereotypes as well as in fighting them in Korea is interrogated. His study employs a mixed-methods approach and scholarly discourse. The study analyzes various forms of media, including movies, variety shows and social media- specifically Instagram and Twitter. Also, Cariappa observes that: 'sexism is still a pressing issue in various aspects of South Korean life, and the media promotes certain restrictive conventional roles for Korean women'.

Yu observes that women have always been part of Korean cinema even though they were marginalized (261). She further points out that women characters in black and white silent films made during the Japanese occupation were played by men, who were as pretty as women. She identifies Chen Kiage's *Farewell my Concubine* (1993) or John Madden's *Shakespeare in Love* (1998). Yu's observations point to a possible objectification of women in the roles they play in films. It is interesting to find out whether gender discrimination or other patriarchal issues are the reasons women were not allowed on the screens. However, the critical departure for this study is to establish the role these women serve in films since they were allowed to grace the screens.

Richard, Howson and Brian Yecies delve on the patriarchal issues in the Korean film industry. The duo observe that the South Korean film industry represents a masculine-privileged gender regime that over the last few decades has shown a newfound strength both at home and abroad (14). Their study looks at the growing number of unheralded female writers-directors operating in both the independent and commercial sectors of industry, challenging the masculine privilege. In this article, the scholars, contextually, explored the work of five of these female writer-directors. The study addressed the question of female writer-director finding a voice within the Korean film industry that challenged the traditional gender stereotypes within the industry and in the wider Korean culture. The second question addressed looked at how Korean experience connected to the

western experience. The study concluded that, although the work of these female writers-directors indeed challenges tradition and gendered stereotypes sustained within the hegemony of men, such challenges represents moments of reformism rather than revolutionary systematic change. This study, however, is interested in how patriarchal hegemonies are entrenched through the roles assigned to female characters in Korean films.

Campbell Kohrs gives credence to the current study when he holds that, ‘Issues of representation and patriarchy in the film must be analyzed so that viewers can be informed about what they are really consuming and alter their behaviour accordingly’ (p.n). Representations in the film reflect the reality in the society; therefore, the roles portrayed in Korean films are close if not the reality in Korea.

Jack Reams add that:

In the real world, our actions reveal who we are. In the same way, a character’s actions inside a story reveal who they are. Action here would be defined as anything a character does as a primary act. In other words, a character’s actions are the cause, not effect.
(5)

Reams further states:

While action is truly independent of context, a person’s actions reflect a conscious or unconscious decision. A person may say something, or think something, but it lacks the solid significance of an action performed. Actions cannot be undone, and therefore are often the most reliable and concrete proof of what kind of person a character truly is. (6)

Jeff Smith shows gender representation of 53 films in the category of gender, which had shown that majority characters were males, and only 7 were female

(3). Brady argues that ‘Korea has traditionally been and still is a highly gender divided society’ (10). Jung states that ‘the transformation of Korea into a modern industrialized state has reinforced traditional Confucian patriarchal gender roles, forming industrialized capitalist patriarchy. What this has meant is that much of Korea’s modernization has been instigated and controlled by men, while Korean women have been relegated for the status of passive tools or men’s subordinates. (26)

The scholar Lee Young Joo looks at women as succeeding in acquiring power through suicide, Cariappa looks at South Korea as a country marred by issues of gender inequality in many areas while Richard, Howson and Yecies looks at the male domination as reflected in the film writers and film directors field. In addition, Jeff Smith looks at the number of females characters verses the number of male characters in 53 gender category films which depicts gender inequality. These issues show that patriarchy remains deeply rooted in Korean society. The review further reveals that limited studies have been conducted on the role of women in Korean films. Therefore, this study sets to ascertain or refute claims of patriarchy in Korea as reflected in the films.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

The study employed Feminism as a theoretical framework with a special emphasis on radical Feminism. Janet Richards states that:

The essence of Feminism has a strong fundamental case intended to mean only that there are excellent reasons for thinking that women suffer from systematic social injustice because of their sex; the proposition is to be regarded as constituting Feminism.(1)

Radical Feminism is a strand of Feminism that sees the oppression of women as the most fundamental form of oppression that cuts across race, culture, and economic class. Bianca Talbot opines that radical Feminism originated from the feminist movement in the late 1970s with proponents such as Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem. It is defined as a movement that is opposed to patriarchy and sexism and aims at achieving major social changes (261). Radical Feminism believes that women face exploitation in terms of their sexuality; that women's oppression began in the bedroom. According to Steve Jackson and Sue Scot, rape, sexual violence, pornography, and prostitution are all manifestations of male domination. (17)

Elizabeth Dobie states that Feminist movements stretch back into the nineteenth century; the modern attempt to look at literature through a feminist lens began to develop in the early 1960s. Modern-day Feminism is traceable to Virginia Woolf, especially in her book, *"A Room of One's Own."* Mary Eagleton refers to Woolf as the founding mother of the contemporary feminist debate. Other pioneers include Simone de Beauvoir, especially through her book *"The Second Sex."* The patriarchal society uses everything to justify the position of the woman as subordinate to the man. Beauvoir asserts:

Legislators, priests, philosophers, writers, and scientists have striven to show that women's subordinate position is willed in heaven and advantageous on earth. The most mediocre of males feels himself a demigod as compared to women. (11)

Beauvoir's assertion depicts the reality of women's position in a patriarchal society, which upholds male domination. Man is supposed to dominate and be treated as superior to the woman. This assertion further signifies that across the realms of power, science, and education, a woman's place should be inferior.

Elaine Showalter observes that British feminists generally take a Marxist position, protesting the exploitation of women in life and literature. They view this as connected by being parts of the material world. Like Marxists in general, they see literature as a tool by which society itself can be reformed.

According to Betty Friedan (National Organization for Women), liberalists believe oppression exists because of how men and women were socialized, supporting patriarchy, and keeping men in power positions.

For centuries, western cultures had operated on the assumption that women were inferior creatures. Mutali states that Feminism is understood to be that system of thought that is concerned with the place and status of women and girls in society (23). Meyer observes that Feminism examines how images of women in literature reflect patriarchy. This perspective of understanding literature arises out

of the feeling that the female has, for a long time, suffered discrimination and outright oppression by the patriarchal system.

The desire to break the myth of male superiority and female inferiority is at the core of the radical feminist theory. Mutali observes that; 'radical Feminism believes that patriarchal society treats the female as a mere appendage of the male. The woman is treated as though she lacks a complete human identity independent of man' (24).

Shay Welch states that 'radical feminists see the basic division in all societies as that between men and women, and state clearly that; men are the oppressors of women' (2). Patriarchy is the term used to describe this universal oppression. The aim of radical Feminism is, therefore, to overthrow patriarchy and male power. Patriarchy and male domination are two strands of radical feminism which this study hinges on. The first strand aids in the depiction of women as fighters, especially in the field of employment. The second strand argues out the belief that women are oppressed by their gender as women and also by the class system. Feminism tries to re-ascertain the view of a woman as a human being with equal rights, just like a man.

The study looks at women as depicted in different socio-economic set-ups and tries to ascertain if there is patriarchy in Korean films and how it reflects Korea as a country.

1.10 Methodology

This section details the research methodology for this study. It includes the research design, the targeted population, the sample and sampling techniques, the research instruments, as well as the data analysis procedure.

1.11 Research Design

This research used the qualitative approach in data collection, interpretation, and analysis. Nahid Golafshani states that ‘qualitative research uses a naturalistic phenomenon in context-specific settings such as real world setting [where] the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest’ (4). Also, James McMillian and Sally Schumacher hold that qualitative research ‘describes and analyzes people’s individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts, and perception’ (qtd. in Odanga 33). Films, which are the subject of this study, are a product of the society and serve to reflect the society in several ways. In this regard, therefore, they provide platforms for the nuanced analysis of the role of women by merely having a concise analysis of the roles scripted to women characters in these films.

The study adopted an analytical research design as a type of qualitative research. Analytical design is a non-interactive research design that interprets data from the selected sources (McMillian & Schumacher 19). This design was appropriate because this study analyzed the selected films to make conclusions. Films emanate from socio-political backgrounds; thus, this study considered them as non-interactive sources yet with the high possibility of providing a clear picture of the Korean social system. The role(s) of women falls within the precinct of patriarchy, which is a socio-political phenomenon.

1.12 Population

The population of this study was Korean films thematizing socio-cultural issues addressed in Korean films. In particular, films that portray or rather address issues of gender and the role of women were of significant preference of choice of the population. These films address themselves to the gender conundrum that continues to manifest itself through several cultures across the world.

The two films under study were selected from different pools of categories. The first category was a pool of twenty-five *sagweks* (Appendix 1), while the second category was twenty-five teen romantic films (Appendix 1) based on a school setting.

1.13 Sample

The study adopted purposive sampling. The choice of purposive sampling was because it prefers sampling based on the study purpose and variance. This technique employs the deliberate choice of participants. According to Etikan Ilker et al.:

The purposive sampling technique, also called judgment sampling, is the deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses. In this technique, the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience. (3)

In this regard, the sampled films, “Jewel in the Palace” and “The Heirs”, were settled on with emphasis on age, political era, modernity, and tradition. The selected films are ten years apart in terms of production and debut hence encapsulating political era and modernity versus tradition. Besides, the research settled on the two samples because they share thematic boundaries making them appropriate for the concerns of this study.

1.14 Data collection

Data collection refers to the gathering of information needed for the study. The research relied on both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was obtained through observation and examination of episodes drawn from the video CDs of “Jewel in the Palace” and “The Heirs”. The data derived from the film episodes were then recorded in line with the specific objectives of the study and aligned with the role of women in Korean society. The study collected data related to

concepts, opinions, values, and behaviors of female characteristics in the two films.

1.15 Data analysis

The primary data collected was analyzed using both Narrative and Discourse analysis through a radical feminist lens. The core activity in the narrative analysis was to formulate concepts presented by female characters in the films based on their different experiences in different contexts. Discourse analysis involved analyzing the script and various written texts to make sense of the role of women in Korean films.

The secondary sources derived from books, journals, theses dissertations, and the internet further helped in the interpretation of data. Other relevant materials on the depiction of female characters in Korean films were consulted to support the primary data.

The study was structured into chapters, with each chapter addressing a single objective of the study.

1.16 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are crucial to research; as such, it was of importance to delve into that area. Ethical principles of research, according to Vanclay et al, deals with the aspect of respect for participants, informed consent, no harm to the

participant, and no use of deception. These ethical principles were of no importance since the research participants were fictional characters. The participants were representations of the role of women in Korean films under study, instead of the real people. Nevertheless, the question of the dilemma was the issue of permission from the directors and the actors.

CHAPTER TWO
THE ROLES ASSIGNED TO FEMALE CHARACTERS IN KOREAN
FILMS *THE HEIRS* AND *JEWEL IN THE PALACE*

2.1 Introduction

This chapter looks into the roles assigned to the female characters in the two films, “The Heirs” and “Jewel in the Palace”. Zambonelli Franco et al. observe that a role is an abstract description of an entity’s expected function. This function takes four features, which include: permissions, activities, protocol, and responsibilities (360). Eileen Loudfoot, on the other hand, looks at roles in terms of three strands: role as a part acted by a person, role as the expected pattern of behavior, and role as a set of rights and duties. She further adds that roles provide a bridge between societies and individuals (268). This study has majored on roles as the expected pattern of behavior, rights, and duties assigned to characters in the two films.

The roles assigned to the female characters in the films provide a platform for understanding the responsibilities considered, exclusively, as women tasks in Korean culture. Therefore, filmic depiction of characters’ role reflects the cultural ideology of Korea. The film can either strengthen a positive perception of the roles assigned to the women or negate it. Alzahrani Fahad posits that:

Gender representation in media influences how people perceive gender issues since some specific gender roles uplift and strengthen the images of men. These films clearly show the gender power structure where men are depicted as the stronger sex. (534)

The above observation asserts gender representation in the media as a great influence to the general perception of gender. Film is an example of media; as such, the content in film reflects the trending ideology and the prevailing attitude in the society from which it is derived. This study's analysis bases on the assertion by Angelica Nicoleta that:

Culture influences thinking, language and human behavior. The social environment, in which individuals are born and live, shapes their attitudinal, emotional and behavioral reactions and the perceptions about what is happening around. The same applies in the case of assigned /assumed roles in society based on gender.
(31)

This chapter thus is based on the assumption that the roles assigned to the female characters are based on the social-cultural environment of Korea. This chapter therefore, analyzes the role of female characters as assigned in the films. The chapter majors on:

- a. Roles assigned socially
- b. Roles assigned politically
- c. Roles assigned economically

The above strands form the focus of this chapter as they are tied to the first objective of the study. It is not possible to analyze the roles with the exception of social, political and economic strands as these strands are culturally configured.

In line with the first objective, this chapter explicitly looks at the functions assigned to women in the Korean films under study.

2.2 Synopses of the Korean films under study

This part of the chapter gives a summary of the films under study.

2.2.1 The Heirs

“The Heirs” is a Korean film by the directors, Kang Shin-Hyo and Boo Sung-Chul, and written by Kim Eun-Sook. It is also called “The Inheritors”. The film has twenty episodes presented in the Korean language but with English subtitles. The story shows the lives of the children of the rich who stand to inherit their parents’ businesses. It unfolds around the life of Cha Eun Sang, a hardworking young girl from a poor background caught up in the fight between Kim Tan (heir *Jejuk* Empire) and Choi Young-Do (heir *Zeus* hotel and resort). The main character Cha Eun Sang leads us into the lives of the wealthy inheritors as she interacts with them at the Empire High School.

Cha Eun Sang is a humble girl from a poor family. She juggles her studies and many part-time jobs. Her mother, who is deaf and dumb, works as a housekeeper to the Empire family, where she has to put up with Tan’s crazy and disrespectful mother. Her only sister, Stella, lives a deceitful life in the United States.

Kim Tan is an assertive boy from a wealthy family and heir to Jejuk Empire. Despite the immense wealth, Kim Tan’s family has many problems. Kim has to put up with an almost perfect half-brother who sees him as a rival, with an uncaring

father and a domineering stepmother who despises Tan's mother. The director of Empire school, Tan's stepmother, never loses a chance to remind Tan's mother that she is and will always be a mistress.

Choi's family is also similar to Tan's family. Mr. Choi raises Young Do harshly and never allows him to be defeated in anything. He does all this to cover up for his shortcomings and cut up the image of a role model. The truth, however, is that Mr. Choi is an imperfect being who changes women secretly and mostly has them in his office. Young Do, because of the harsh upbringing, grows into a domineering character who likes bullying other students in school. When his father gets imprisoned, Young Do decides to look for his long lost mother.

Rachel Yoo, the heir to RS International's family, is no better. Her mother raises her single-handedly. She grows into a strong and irrational girl who always wants to have her way. She becomes lonely when Tan decides to turn down the planned engagement that was done between them as children. The multimillion RS International company does not help either. Other characters in the film include Tan's mother, Ki Ae, Rachel's mother, Madam Yoo, Kim Nam Yoon, The chairman *Jejuk* Empire, Mr. Choi, Young Do's father, and Lee Bo Na.

The film explores class-related issues. The rich are surrounded with the poor who live in abject poverty. The rich desire to maintain their social status, and this puts

them in a collision path with the poor. Tan's brother, Won, has to live a lonely life because he marries to save their company and not out of love. Rachel's mother almost gets into a loveless marriage to gain respect as Mrs. Choi. In addition, Tan has to face constant reprimands and threats for refusing to honor his engagement to Rachel Yoo. These conflicts form the basis of the film.

2.2.2 Jewel in the Palace

The film "Jewel in the palace" is written by Kim Young-Hyun and directed by Lee Byung- Hoon. The film has fifty-four episodes in the Korean language but with English subtitles. The story is set in Korean society at a time when patriarchy is valued, and the male gender is dominating the social structures.

The main character, Su Jang Geum, is from a poor background. Geum is born to a former royal guard and a former royal court lady and raised in a remote village. Her life changes during a village wrestling match when her parents' true identity is revealed. Her father is executed, her mother assassinated, and she is sent to the palace as a young bride. In the palace, Jang Geum works tirelessly and diligently despite the torture and humiliation she receives because of her poor background. Together with Lady Han, Jang Geum is framed and prosecuted by the power-hungry Choi clan. They are charged with treason. She is exiled to Jeju Island, where she meets Jang Deok, a daring and outright doctor who cares less for status.

Jang Deok decides to train her in medicine upon realizing her unbowed personality.

Jang Geum endures the torturous training methods of doctor Deok. A few years later, she returns to the palace as a royal physician. Jang Geum works with determination. She is assertive and precise. These qualities endear her to the King, who makes her first and the only female royal physician in charge of the King. Consequently, the King accords her the title of *The Great Jang Geum*.

There are also other significant characters in the film. They include; Min Jeong-Ho, Choi- Keum-Young, King Jung Jong, attendant Park, Baek Han, Lady Choi, Jang Deok- Gu, Seo CheonSoo, Choi Pan-Sul, and Park Myeong-Hee. The film is marred with conflicts of status, greed for power, corruption, and patriarchy. It is based on the true story of the *Joseon* Dynasty.

This film explores the social structures upon which the lives of women are based but with emphasis on the palace. The young girls are taken in as new brides after passing the virginity test. Therein, they are treated as King's women.

2.3 Social Roles

This part shows how the social structures are reflected in the roles assigned to the female characters.

Social roles, according to Edge Sage are ‘expectations from a group about how certain people are supposed to look and behave’ (4). Social roles are dictated by social norms (rules that indicate the expectations and behavior in a particular setup). Claudio Masolo et al. posits that ‘roles are concepts that are unary predicates connected to patterns of relationships’ (268), while Zambonelli defines roles as ‘abstract description of an entity’s expected function.’ He bases his definition on four attributes: responsibility, permissions, activities, and protocols. Loudfoot adds that a role is a set of rights and duties, a part that one acts, and a role as an expected pattern of behavior. This study employs Zambonelli’s definition of roles as a set of duties and as an expected pattern of behavior. Thus, it looks at the duties assigned to female characters and how they are expected to behave.

Park notes that traditional Korea was a strict patriarchal society. Korean women were subjected to their fathers, then their husbands and then their eldest sons over the course of their lives. The social structures portrayed in the films under study are tied to traditional Korean principles. The doctrines and traditions dictate the roles assigned in the films.

In the film “The Heirs”, Cha Eun Sang is seen as a sex object by the men she delivers food to. It is not her work that identifies her but her looks. They observe;

‘A pretty part timer I see. High School?’

Cha Eun Sang: The bill is on the box.

The men: When does your part time job end? Should *oppa* take you on a motorcycle ride?

Cha Eun Sang: No. Give me the money.

The men: Don’t play hard to get...*Oppa* will pick you up from work.

Cha Eun Sang: (Makes a call) Yes, hello. I’m in the second year of high school and currently have a part-time job.

The men: Who are you calling?

Cha Eun Sang: The Police Station. (Episode 1)

The men pay her very fast and let her go. They have neither respect for her job nor the fact that she is an underage girl. Instead, they are attracted to her beauty and would wish to seduce and force her into accepting to have an affair with them. This obsession with Cha Eun Sang shows how a patriarchal society objectifies women. They are not appreciated for what they can do but rather for their looks. The feelings of entitlement that these men portray shows that women do not even have a right to say no. One wonders what would have happened had Cha Eun Sang not called the police station.

In the film, “Jewel in the Palace”, the new brides are given the rules of the palace. They are informed of their roles as the King’s women. Their virginity is tested before acceptance into the palace. As women, they are not supposed to do anything that contradicts male dominance. The King, in this case, represents male

supremacy and the systems objectification of women. The first thing they are told is their relationship with the King. 'This is the palace. All women who enter the palace are the King's women. We do not allow anything less than perfection both in conduct and speech' (Episode 3). The new brides have no choice but to obey. Ironically, this status of being King's women is propagated and sustained by women.

The new brides are supposed to keep themselves for the King. They only follow orders, not ask questions. When the King takes an interest in any of them, they are supposed to obey him completely. A case example is depicted in episode 29 when the King develops an interest in Yeun Saeng. She has to submit without complaint. She is clipped after that to ensure no harm comes to the King. The senior court ladies give her instructions on how to conduct herself when with the King. 'First of all, you must not smile or reject his touch. No matter what he does to you, you must not make a sound. We are clipping your nails to prevent any harm to his body' (Episode 29). The act of clipping her symbolizes disarming. The nails represent personal weapons. The clipping explains the length the society would go to ensure women are completely submissive to men.

Even though the King favors Yeung Saeng, she still cannot have attendants and is not accorded respect because she has not attained the title of *Sook Won* (a title awarded after a lady has become the King's woman and has conceived). Respect

is only accorded to women who have fulfilled the patriarchal set roles. In these roles, a woman has to sire children, especially male heirs. Saeng, therefore, does not get the respectful title until she bares a child. Their role is tied to giving birth and being voiceless. Yuen Saeng has to conceive before she gets full recognition and respect as the King's woman. Victoria Swart notes that "a woman found power when she became the mother to a son; respect was given to the role of a mother in the home" (3). This observation shows the condescending attitude with which women are treated in a patriarchal society. Superior status was, on the other hand, a preserve of the males, whether infant or adult. This role undercuts the role of women as obedient to the dictates of tradition where men dominate. Lee posits that:

In today's Korean society, Confucian principles still form the basis of relations. Of prime importance are the two principles of segregation and obedience. Korean culture sustains a structure of gender segregation that privileges men. At its center is the idea of spatial segregation that restricts the role of women to the private affairs of the family. As an extension of this segregation principle, the virtue of obedience ensures the supremacy of men and the subservience of women even in the private spheres as a woman moves through the three phases of female identity recognized in Korean culture from daughter to wife to mother. (71)

The assertions by Lee portray the inferiority with which women are treated in the Korean society. Lee's observations resonate with what happens in the film, "The Heirs", where Tan's mother, Madame Han, is treated as a non-entity by the Chairman, Kim Nam Yoon, and his second wife, Mrs. Jung. Mrs. Jung cages Tan's mother for giving birth to the Chairman's second son. Women from a low social background should not be associated with superior men. As such, Madam

Han's movements are restricted to ensure she does not embarrass the Chairman.

Madam Han is therefore punished for breaking the patriarchal order:

Mrs. Jung: What was I supposed to do? You were letting her run freely outside, so I had to reel her in and hide her.

Chairman: I know. It's all my fault.

Mrs. Jung: It's good you know. I'm never going to change the family tree. That's why I invited her in. So I could keep her in my cage, and make sure that she gets nothing until she dies. (Episode 2)

Consequently, Madam Han is confined to a house like a prisoner. Her work is to stay in the house, do what she is told to do and say nothing. This treatment ensures she gets no dignity and esteem as the Chairman's wife, a punishment for breaking the patriarchal order.

In the film "Jewel in the Palace", it was a taboo for a woman to access and examine the health records of the king, whether she was a physician or not. The mere sight of these records accorded a woman a death penalty without trial. This is seen in the case of Jang Geum when she deliberately accesses the king's medical records. The desire to clear lady Han's name pushes her to do the socially unacceptable act of accessing the king's medical records. The queen saves her on condition that she proves her innocence (her suspicion of the king's misdiagnosis).

Queen: However, the reason I've postponed your death is because you firmly believe the king's illness is due to misdiagnosis and because that's why you took out his records, is that so?

Jang Geum: yes

Queen: Can you prove it? No, I don't need to hear your answer.

Prove it. If you prove it, then you'll live or else, you will disappear forever. (Episode 44)

For being a woman, Jang Geum has to work on finding the misdiagnosis or risk losing her life. The society expects nothing but death to women who try to break the social hierarchy. It is in this respect that the Queen is not willing to give Jang Geum a chance to prove her allegations. Giving her a chance to prove her point would be a challenge of patriarchy.

The social roles assigned to the women are tied to the hierarchical system to ensure they maintain the social class system. Women are used as tools to reify the social class system. In the film "Jewel in the Palace", there are rules given to the new brides being admitted into the Palace. As they are admitted into the Palace, the brides are warned against losing their dignity to the lower rank. In addition, Jang Geum is treated with contempt because she is from a poor background. The other new brides mock and scorn her; 'You are from a peasant class. You don't know the basics. Weren't you adopted by the liquor place? My uncle told me.'

Furthermore, rules guide selection of the new brides. The new brides are selected from the middle and upper classes. They are reminded of their class and told to keep it in mind:

And you've been selected from middle and upper class families. Therefore, in identity, you're distinct from the servant girls and the nurses who are chosen from the servant girls. You must display dignity to them. (Episode 3)

In the film “The Heirs”, the same hierarchical system applies. Cha Eun Sang faces scorn and discrimination from rich children, such as Lee Bona. They hate her for being poor and brave. Lee Bona complains to Chan Young, her boyfriend, who is equally from a poor background, and Cha Eun Sang’s best friend. It is the woman who suffers the social status order and not the men as the men are a symbol of patriarchy.

Bona: I don’t like Cha Eun Sang. I really hate her. I totally hate her. I hate her alot.

Chan Young: Don’t be like that

Bona: I hate her even more, when you say that. She’s just a poor, dirty bitch, but she looks down on me and doesn’t even get intimidated by me! (Episode 1)

The woman’s role is to uphold the class system and those who fail to obey face dire consequences. In the film “Jewel in the Palace”, the deposed queen is forced to commit suicide because she violated the class system and ran out bare feet to see her son. A man can walk bare feet just like the king would do, but if a woman did the same, she faced the consequences. She says: ‘It can’t be. He’s not a king who’d kill his son’s mother because she ran out on bare feet to see her son’ (Episode 1). The subordination and inferiority treatment of women is evident in the quote as the deposed queen hinges herself to being the mother of a son and not explaining herself explicitly as the queen. Her expectations of the king are proven wrong when she is forced to take poison. This shows that men ensured that the patriarchal order was upheld at all costs.

In the film “The Heirs”, when Madam Han attends parents’ meeting at Empire School, she has to pretend to be Cha Eun Sang’s mother as she is not allowed to represent her son. Representing her son would tie her to the chairman, yet she has no social standing. Mrs. Jung, the Director, makes things very difficult for her and ensures she does not stay to attend the meeting:

Mrs. Jung: She is a person I haven’t seen (Pretending not to know Madam Han).

Principal: She is the mother of Cha Eun Sang, who transferred this semester.

Mrs. Jung: Is that so? Do you have anything you want to say?

Madam Han: Well... I have heard a lot about you, that you are Tan’s mother.

Madam Han excuses herself to the washrooms to try and ensure her plans succeed. However, the harsh reality hits her as Mrs. Jung follows her. The women are used to ensure the social order is maintained; thus, Mrs. Jung has to ensure Madam Han leaves the meeting before her identity is revealed.

Mrs. Jung: Are you in your right mind?

Madam Han: I can’t come with the right mind so I had some medication before coming. I must be crazy.

Mrs. Jung: That’s why you should go home and get out of here now! If you don’t, you will break Tan’s engagement. (Episode 9)

Mrs. Jung ensures that Madam Han obeys the hierarchal social system. A person of her class and status cannot be the mother to the chairman’s son or attend parents’ meetings. She should not be anywhere in the sphere of prestige.

The patriarchal society uses women to tame those who do not conform to the traditions and roles. The character Lady Choi (*Jewel in the Palace*) rallies the other court ladies to disregard the appointment of Lady Han as the highest kitchen lady, citing her low birth as a problem. They rebel, and in the end, the appointment has to be revoked:

Listen. We can't serve you as our superior lady. How can we serve a person of lowly birth as our Highest Lady? So withdraw from your position. If you don't, then we will not participate in sacrificial rites or any other feasts. (Episode 23)

In the film "The Heirs", Mrs. Jung ensures Madam Han pays for socializing with the high class (the chairman) and giving birth to his second son. She denies Madam Han the opportunity to meet her intended in-laws. Mrs. Jung ensures that she is the only one entitled to such privileges:

Mrs. Jung: In-laws? Who? Did you forget that Tan is my son?

Madam Han: Stop showing off. You will come to regret it.

Mrs. Jung: Regret.

Madam Han: I am sure Tan will be glad when he finds out that his mother lived being treated this way.

Mrs. Jung: Are you threatening me?

Madam Han: If that is how you heard it too bad. (Episode 2)

Mrs. Jung constantly reminds Madam Han that she is nothing in that house. She assures Madam Han that she will always be a mistress:

Mrs. Jung: You are being ridiculous

Madam Han: What!

Mrs. Jung: You must think that you really have become the lady of this house hold after constantly hearing 'second Madame' here.

But as long as I am in this house, you will forever remain my husband's mistress. I will make sure that you stay as a mistress. Do you understand? (Episode 2)

Her treatment is echoed by her son Tan's thoughts; 'Another woman's purse, another woman's house, another woman's husband. A person who is forever unfortunate because she desires to have another person's things' (Episode 2). Madam Han can never have anything called hers, a punishment for breaking the patriarchal order. The house she lives in and the material things she enjoys at the expense of her dignity can never be hers. Though she gave birth to the Chairman's son, he would never be her husband, and the son would equally never be hers. A hefty price she has to pay.

The above discussion shows the societal perception of women in a patriarchal society. These social roles are stereotypical as they map out specific behavior expected of the women. Those who fail to conform to the set social role pay dearly. Alice Eagly and Valerie Steffan observe that:

The content of gender stereotypes arises from perceiver's observation of people's activities and these activities are determined primarily by social roles. Gender stereotypes arise when women and men are observed typically to carry out different social roles. (749)

The gender role stereotypes arise from the social roles assigned to the female characters. The social roles assigned to the female characters are patriarchal as they reify the superiority of the male and the inferiority of the females.

2.4 Economic assigned roles

This section focuses on the economic roles assigned to the female characters, with illustrations from the films under study. Economic roles deal with work and economically viable positions. Feldberg and Glenn look at work as defining a person's class and status in the social structure (536) while the economic position is related to the means of production and occupation. The economic assigned roles, therefore, deal with issues of financial impact, wealth creation, and sustenance of wealth.

In the film “The Heirs”, the chairwoman Empire School, Madam Jung Ji Sook, works tirelessly. She runs the school, ensures Won does his work, provides for Tan financially, and runs the *Jejuk* Company as well. She has shares in the company and looks for ways to secure the company's future by supporting the engagement of Tan to RS international heiress, Rachel Yoo. The economic status she has commands authority wherever she goes. This is seen at the parents' meeting, as she is honored.

Similarly, in “Jewel in the Palace”, Jang Guem's mother is industrious. She works to provide for her family. Lady Choi ensures that her family maintains their economic status by providing a link into the palace chain supply and always ensures the brother has the royal supply tender. Mrs. Park Hee –Nam, Cha Eun Sang's mother, in the film “The Heirs”, works tirelessly to provide for her

daughters. Even though she is deaf and mute, she does her work diligently. Her dedication to her work prompts Madam Han to accord her accommodation when she has nowhere to stay. Even when mistreated by the mistress, her dedication to her work and humility remain intact.

In the film, “The Heirs” Madam Yoo, Rachel's mother, works tirelessly to build an empire. She owns the RS international together with many other businesses. Her intentions to marry Mr. Choi, Young Choi Do's father, are purely economic, and when it can no longer hold, she breaks it off. The financial prestige is seen when she provides the outdoor attires for all the students during The Empire High Student's camping fete.

The main character in “The Heirs”, Cha Eun Sang, works very hard. She studies while doing several part-time jobs to supplement the little that her mother earns. Despite her busy schedule, she still gets time to study and tops her class. When they move into Chairman Kim's house, she assumes the duties of her mother even though she already has a part-time job besides studying.

These roles depict the changing societal standing on women empowerment, as women can now own companies, institutions, and command respect. They are also able to solely take care of their families, as seen in the case of Mrs. Nam and Mrs. Yoo. Nicoleta observes that:

Culture influences thinking, language and human behavior. The social environment, in which individuals are born and live, shapes their attitudinal, emotional and behavioral reactions and the perception about what is happening around. The same applies to the case of assigned or assumed roles in society based on gender. (31)

From the above observation, we can conclude that the Korean belief concerning the role of women is changing. The directors of the two films under study, who base their work on the prevailing attitudes and beliefs in their society, assigned the female characters economic roles according to the prevailing trend in their society. Yoon Park asserts that Korean films construct their narratives to depict women in ways that reproduce patriarchal myths about the female gender in Korean society. As such, we can conclude that the societal view on patriarchy is being contested as reflected in the study. The female characters in the economic roles are fighting patriarchy by working hard to provide for their families in a male-dominated society.

2.5 Politically assigned roles

This section deals with politically assigned roles. The political strand encompasses issues of power, authority, and leadership. Larmore states that 'political philosophy must use political concepts such as power, and its normative relative, legitimation' (2). David Easton opines that, "Politics is concerned with understanding how authoritative decisions are made and executed for a society" (383). Jean Blondel further adds that political leadership deals with manifestation

of power. This section hence looks at the authority, economic status, and power that the female characters wield in the film and how it reflects on Korean society.

Today, women are working to advance economically and politically in Korean society. Park argues that even though women have a huge part in Korea's economy, it has not positively affected their status. He adds that women have political positions, but they do not have enough power to change anything in Korea. This is reflected in the films under study. Women are assigned roles to oversee the running of the monarchy in the film "Jewel in the Palace". In the film, the king's mother directs issues about the leadership of the country as well as domestic affairs. She designates Lady Han as the highest kitchen lady after a fair and just competition. When Lady Han requests for a rematch after being disrespected by the court and kitchen ladies, the king's mother accepts her request and assigns the queen to oversee the competition.

In the film "The Heirs", women are assigned roles of directors. Mrs. Jung is the director of the Empire School. She is also a major shareholder of the *Jeju* Company. Madam Yoo is the director and owner of the RS International and other companies. Mrs. Jung and Madam Yoo command respect wherever they go.

In a patriarchal society, a man is not supposed to recognize the potential in a woman. This causes problems for the king in the film “Jewel in the Palace”. The king's frequent visits to Jang Geum's quarters and his morning walks with her, forces the king's mother to take action and propose Jang Geum as a royal concubine. She does this out of worry for her son's rule, which stands to face ridicule and mockery because of his closeness to Jang Geum (Episode 52). The decision to make Jang Geum a concubine is the societal trap to restrict her to the set roles of women in a patriarchal society. This is seen when the king's appointment of Jang Geum as his royal physician causes rebellion and outcry. The ministers and scholars, who are all men, rebel and sign petitions to try and stop the king from making Jang Geum his royal physician. They term the king's decision and action as outrageous. In addition, when the king attempts to make Jang Geum a 7th rank official, the ministers write thousands of petitions to stop it. The King refuses to heed to the petitions of the ministers forcing him to sacrifice Sir Ming in order to protect Jang Geum. Someone must pay for breaking the hierarchical order.

In the film “The Heirs”, Mr. Choi fails to recognize the ambition and wisdom in Madam Yoo. Even though they are engaged, he makes all decisions about their marriage and their businesses. This leads to a confrontation between him and Madam Yoo:

Madam Yoo: Why is there an article going out about a contract?

Mr. Choi: It's too early-oh, the marriage article? I told them to put out a different article one time, so now I'm repaying my debt.

Madam Yoo: How can you do this without discussing it with me even once?

Mr. Choi: Once the news is released, the stocks will skyrocket. If there's anybody who needs to repay loans, give them a hint.

Madam Yoo: Didn't you think that I needed that kind of hint too? Postpone the article for two days. I'll take care of the stocks within those days. (Episode 11)

Mr. Choi's treatment of Madam Yoo before marrying, says a lot about the treatment of women in male-dominated societies. His behavior becomes the beginning of their fallout. The plans begin to fall apart because Madam Yoo refuses to bow to the patriarchal laws.

In the film "Jewel in the Palace", the queen advises the king and his mother whenever need arises. She is assigned the duty of ensuring the highest kitchen lady is elected justly. She does this entirely and even advises the king's mother to give the winner full authority. She says, 'I think if someone is put in a position, she should have appropriate authority for order' (Episode 23). This shows that women are given power with limited authority. The society does not respect leadership qualities in women. Though elected as the highest Kitchen Lady, Lady Han still has to work on getting the full authority about her position. The queen thus observes Lady Han's win and makes the following observations. 'Amazing; you knew their preferences and considered them in your cooking.' She thus gives

the winner, Lady Han, her full authority, but warns her that the power given to her is temporary.

In the film “The Heirs”, women hold power but with limited authority. This is seen when the chairman falls sick and is not able to run the company. It forces Mrs. Jung to mobilize support through all means possible in order to stand in for the chairman. She has to use crude means to woo the chairman’s brothers to her side. In the end, she loses, but not everything, as her name was in the family tree of the chairman.

Women are assigned roles in fighting for power. This is depicted through the character Mrs. Jung in the film “The Heirs”. When the chairman falls ill, she uses her resources and power to try and overthrow the chairman. She tells Tan that being his legal guardian gives her the power to take his shares in the company. In addition, she tells him that they live in a world of greed: ‘We take, we lose, we take over, we get taken over...Welcome to the world of greed, my son’ (Episode 19).

Women are used as tools to attack and bring down fellow women for the continued existence of male supremacy. This is seen in the film “Jewel in the Palace” when Lady Choi frames her friend Myeong because Myeong reported her to the senior court ladies. She was reported for adding wolfs bane root

and *cinidiumofficinale* with garlic to the king's grandmother's food to make her illness worse. Lady Choi does this to protect the reputation of the king, who had given the order and to ensure power stays in her family. She thus frames her friend with a guard. She claims she saw them entering the warehouse at night. Myeong is forced to pay for her alleged sins with death. Luckily Lady Han manages to save her.

Lady Choi orders Keum Young to hide a talisman, which will change the sex of the baby in the queen's womb into a girl. She explains, 'This is to change the prince in the queen's womb into a princess.' This she does to ensure the queen has limited power because the birth of a prince comes with great power, whether he becomes the crown prince or not. In doing this, Lady Choi ensures her family ties to palace power are strengthened. Lady Choi has to bribe the head lady to ensure there are no further investigations on the talisman issue. When Lady Jung calls for thorough investigations into the matter, the head Lady refuses and say, 'Some things are better left alone.'

The films portray women as power-hungry individuals who would do just anything to have power. In the film "Jewel in the Palace", the hunger for the position of the Highest Kitchen Lady drives Lady Choi into leading a rebellion against lady Han after lady Han is chosen as the highest kitchen lady. She ensures the court and kitchen ladies do not obey Lady Han. This action leads to a rematch

which sees Lady Han as the winner again. Lady Choi does not take this lying down, and she collaborates with the royal physician to frame Lady Han and Jang Geum for treason. This leads to Lady Han's exile and her ultimate death. Lady Choi takes charge, enjoys the power she has always wanted but is still not satisfied. She urges Keum Young to look for more power and says, 'The lesson we must learn is that we need more power' (Episode 29).

In the film "The Heirs", Mrs. Jung does everything to ensure Madam Han gets nothing. She uses every opportunity to remind her that she is not part of the family. She says, 'the person who is not part of this family is you, the person who lives here...I let you have the master bedroom. You got what you wanted, so just shut up and stay there, and don't run around. Don't you know that you and I aren't supposed to be caught in one frame?' She ensures Madam Han is not added to the family tree hence walks out with nothing. Furthermore, she sets the brothers against each other. Their fights mean victory for her because the more they fight, the easier it becomes for her to take over Jeju Company.

In conclusion, the above depictions show women as challenging the patriarchal set order for the role of women. The women are assigned powerful positions, but without authority, thus their powers are limited. The limited powers that the women wield force them to be power-hungry individuals who would do just anything to acquire power.

2.6 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter analyzed the role of female characters in the Korean films “Jewel in the Palace” and “The Heirs”. From the chapter, the study finds that women are undermined and portrayed as objects in the patriarchal society. The women are charged with the duty of maintaining the social class system at all costs in order to uphold the patriarchal order. Economically, society does not recognize their hard work without attributing it to the male. In addition, political roles depict women as power-thirsty beings who are ready to get power at all costs. Those in power, operate with limited authority as the full authority lies with the men.

However, women are portrayed as challenging the patriarchal order. They are standing up to contest the male positions, as evident in Mrs. Jung in “The Heirs” and Jang Gaum in “Jewel in the Palace”. This reflects radical feminist view of seeking social change in the way the society view women. The social, political, and economic roles assigned to the women in the films are specific and stereotypical, reifying the males and subordinating the females. The roles assigned to the female characters in the films reflect the gender role in Korea.

The films are directed by male directors who are operating under Korea’s attitudes and beliefs. The roles are thus configured based on what they experience and believe in Korean society. The aspect of patriarchy is deeply rooted in Korea, a country grounded on Confucianism principles, and dictates the assigning of

gender roles. To summarize this chapter, female characters are subjected to a world of male domination and patriarchal power. The next chapter looked at and evaluated the images given to the female characters in the films under study.

CHAPTER THREE

IMAGES OF FEMALE CHARACTERS IN THE FILMS “JEWEL IN THE PALACE” AND “THE HEIRS”

3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the images assigned to the female characters in the Korean films under study. Stuart Hall postulates that “image refers to what is represented in the media” (2). He further observes that representation deals with assigning meaning to things or pictures depicted on screens. Based on Hall’s definition, this study conceptualizes image as the presentation of the portrayal of the female characters in the films “Jewel in the Place” and “The Heirs”. Hence, the study looks at an image of a character as a representation of that character. An image is formed from a mentality; therefore, the images given to the female characters in the Korean films are based on a cultural mentality of the picture that women should portray. Lee opines that:

In today’s Korea, Confucian principles still form the basis of gender relations. Of prime importance are the principles of segregation and obedience. Korean culture sustains a structure of gender segregation that privileges men: At its center is the idea of spatial segregation that restricts the role of women to the private affairs of the family. As an extension of this segregation principle, the virtue of obedience ensures the supremacy of men and the subservience of women in the private spheres as a woman moves through the three phases of female identity recognized in Korean culture; from daughter to wife to mother. (71)

The above assertion explains that, in a male-dominated society, Korean society in this case, there are specific images given to the female characters. The images, as Lee posits, must be images of women submission to men as men take more

assertive and authoritative roles. The study examines this kind of relationship with regard to the portrayal of women deduced from the roles assigned to them in the films under study.

3.2 Female characters as Victims of Circumstances

In the films, “Jewel in the Palace” and “The Heirs,” female characters are depicted as victims of circumstances. Nash defines a victim as "a morally wronged party" (5). From his definition, the study deduces that a victim is a character who is morally and unjustly wronged. The female characters suffer unjustly for things they cannot control, such as being women from a low social background in a patriarchal society.

Society victimizes women who stand for justice. Only males are expected to uphold justice. As such, a woman who tries to fight for justice has to pay. The character, Park Myeong, in the film, “Jewel in the Palace”, falls victim to a death penalty due to her discovery of Lady Choi's plot to poison the King's grandmother. Her knowledge of the Lady Choi's plot leads to her proposed death sentence. She is framed, an easy excuse to get her out of the way. Her secret admirer, the officer who guards *Manchan* Gate, whom she had saved, is used to frame her. This is evident in what Lady Choi says in episode three:

Lady Choi: I saw Lady Park and some man...entering the warehouse together at night.

Lady Noh: Isn't that why ...you've spoken ill of Lady Choi?

Lady Park: That isn't true!

Lady Noh: If you've disgraced yourself that way, it is proper for a court lady to end her life, and yet you even tried to frame your friend. You ought to pay for your sin by death. (Episode 1)

For a crime she did not commit, she is forced into committing suicide. It is ironical that the order to silently kill the king's grandmother, which was discovered by Myeong, was from the king but is perpetrated by the women (Lady Choi and the leadership of the court ladies). The helpless Myeong had to take the poison forced on her. Despite her victimization, Myeong survives but lives as a fugitive and later dies as a fugitive.

In the film, "The Heirs", Cha Eun Sang suffers significantly for her low social status and for being loved by Tan, an heir to a powerful business empire. The chairman forces her to break off her relationship with Tan after Tan's engagement to Rachel Yoo ends. The relationship is seen as a break from the patriarchal order and such must be stopped at all costs. The chairman blames Cha Eun Sang for everything happening to Tan. He says:

I forgot that you poor kids don't have shame. How could the love of 18-year-old be so reckless and shameless? Thanks to you, Tan lost Rachel, his family, and became ridiculed by the world. How much more are you going to ruin him? (Episode 16)

When his threats fail, he resorts to sending Cha Eun Sang's family to exile without consideration for Cha Eun Sang's forthcoming final examinations. She suffers unjustly for things out of her control. Tan's love becomes a thorn in her flesh as it makes Rachel Yoo to turn her into an object of scorn and mistreatment.

Rachel Yoo mistreats her when she bumps into her at Tan's house in the USA. She accuses Cha Eun Sang of stealing from Tan's house, intending to humiliate her. She throws her suitcase down the stairs and ransacks her bag:

Cha Eun Sang: What did you just do?

Rachel Yoo: My mistake. Just like the fact that you and I ran into one another in this house.

Cha Eun Sang: I told you there was no situation that would cause misunderstanding. Keeping in mind the owner of this home who let me stay a night, I'll suppress my anger and leave.

Rachel Yoo: Are you toying with me? How are you to simply leave? You were here with the keys, when the owner wasn't even here. How can I know that nothing's been taken? Open it.

Cha Eun Sang: Excuse me!

Rachel Yoo: I thought you didn't want to be misunderstood. So I'm telling you to open it, then.

Cha Eun Sang: Fine. I'll open it. (Episode 2)

Rachel Yoo does this to humiliate Cha Eun Sang just because she found her in Tan's house. Cha Eun Sang thus becomes a victim of circumstances. Her suffering is compounded by the fact that she accepted a rich man's help despite the fact that she comes from a poor background. This shows the extent of cruelty in a patriarchal society.

Women are used to reify the culture of the social class system and to victimize other women who try to break the order. In the film, "Jewel in the Palace", Jang Geum, daughter of the former Royal Military Guard, Seo Chun Soo, who died a

fugitive, becomes a victim of scorn. The other new brides treat her with contempt for coming from a low-class background:

The new brides: Take her out. You are from a peasant class. You don't know the basics.

Jang Geum: why do you say I don't know the basics?

Young Ro: weren't you adopted by the liquor place? My uncle told me. You know him too don't you? He is a guard of the main palace and he runs a dance bar, Sir Yoon Mak-Ke. I don't know how your kind got into this palace, but I cannot sleep in the same room with you. (Episode 4)

Jang Geum's decision to hide her birth has placed her under constant abuse and rejection. It is ironical that Young Ro, who throws her out, is not even a daughter of a guard but merely a niece to a guard while Jang Geum, on the other hand, is the daughter of a Royal Military Guard.

In the film "The Heirs", Cha Eun Sang suffers greatly for her social class. She becomes a victim of scorn and constant ridicule because of her poor background. Rachel Yoo sends her to the Garbage cans when she goes back to Tan's house to get her name card (a form of identity card issued by the police in place of withheld identification documents). She asks about her name card, and Rachel Yoo confidently tells her that she threw it in the garbage cans. The truth is that she never saw the name card. This sends Cha Eun Sang to the garbage cans:

Cha Eun Sang: I left the name card here. The Police officer's name card

Rachel Yoo: Why do you need to find that? I threw it into one of the garbage cans.

Cha Eun Sang: Which garbage can?

Rachel Yoo: The one outside the gate.

Tan: You threw it away?

Rachel Yoo: Throw away what. I didn't even see it. (Episode 2)

Cha Eun Sang's rummaging the garbage cans symbolizes a form of societal punishment for associating with a man of a higher social class. The hierarchy of class must be upheld. However, upsets or attempts to do so are meted with all possible means to tame them.

In a patriarchal society, a woman is expected to be docile and humble, unknowledgeable, not ambitious, and not intelligent. In the film "Jewel in the Palace", Jang Geum seems to go against these prescribed societal expectations of women. Her perceived break away from the norm puts her in trouble. She is awarded the title of *The Great Jang Geum* by the king, an act which causes great uproar in the council. The uproar forces the king to sacrifice Sir Min Ho in order to save Jang Geum. Jang Geum's desire to learn and know more makes her a victim of reproach. The senior kitchen ladies continually punish her for being in one mistake or another. She is flogged and sent out of the training ground.

In the film "The Heirs", Cha Eun Sang's unwelcome ambition and intelligence cause her to be exiled. However, this experience only teaches her to stand up for what she believes in. The chairman exiles her and her family because she loves

Tan. But she learns never to oblige and never to play victim. Consequently, she stands up to the chairman and sets her boundary:

Chairman: How could you be so bold in telling me to my face that you met Tan?

Cha Eun Sang: Tan is nice, honest and warm. That's why I liked Tan very much.

Chairman: How can you be so presumptuous?

Cha Eun Sang: Because it's not wrong for me to like Tan.
(Episode 18)

In the film, "Jewel in the Palace", Jang Geum is victimized and accused of treasonous activities. Jang Geum is Myeong's daughter hence she has inherited her father's culinary prowess. She is thus exiled to *Jeju* Island. Instead of falling victim, she turns it into an opportunity to learn medicine and eventually become a physician. She comes back to the palace as a royal physician. This position lands her into more trouble as she is scorned by the ministers. To tame her, the ministers petition to have her as a royal concubine.

In "The Heirs", Tan's interest in Cha Eun Sang makes her a victim of scorn from the rich students. The Heirs like Young Do, make it their duty to ensure Cha Eun Sang lives a miserable life at Empire High.

3.3 Female characters as objects

The films depict female characters as objects. Chiara Rollero and Noma Piccoli look at the object as an item to be viewed and evaluated. They thus define

objectification as the treatment of individuals as objects to be viewed and evaluated on appearance. Besides, Immanuel Kant argues that objectification is the state of exchanging a being with humanity with the status of an object. Martha Nussbaum, on the other hand, describes objectification in terms of seven features. Nussbaum postulates that: Instrumentality, denial of autonomy, inertness, tangibility, violability, ownership, and denial of subjectivity are the strands that make up objectification. She describes instrumentality as the treatment of a person as a tool for the objectifiers' purpose, denial of autonomy as the treatment of a person as lacking in autonomy and self-determination, while inertness as treatment of a person as lacking in agency and activity. Besides, he describes tangibility as the interchanging of a person with other objects, violability as the treatment of a person as lacking boundary, ownership as the treatment of a person as something that can be owned, bought or sold while subjectivity as the inability to consider a person's experiences and feelings.

Female characters are sexually objectified, as seen in the two films under study. Sandra Bartky observes that 'sexual objectification is the tendency to consider or treat a person as a sex object, as a body to consume (26)'. This shows that the female characters are not treated as beings but rather as items owned. Bartky further adds that:

Objectification occurs when a person's bodily parts or functions are separated from her personality and reduced to the status of mere instruments or regarded as if they were capable of representing her. (26)

Tanjare Mckay observes that sexual objectification is the depiction of women as sex objects for male sexual pleasure.

The society depicted in the film "Jewel in the Palace" objectifies women sexually. This is seen when the new brides are treated as sexual objects. They are regarded as the King's women, and he can have his way with them whenever he likes. They are forced to take an oath of silence to adhere to the principles of the society:

Lady Jung: I do not allow any type of betrayal of His Majesty.

New Brides: I do not allow any type of betrayal of His Majesty.

Lady Jung: I do not commit adultery with the eyes.

New Brides: I do not commit adultery with the eyes.

Lady Jung: I do not commit adultery with the mouth.

New Brides: I do not commit adultery with the mouth.

Lady Jung: I do not commit adultery with the hands.

New Brides: I do not commit adultery with the hands.

Lady Jung: I do not commit adultery with the heart.

New Brides: I do not commit adultery with the heart. (Episode 9)

The contents of the oath point to the female characters being the objects of the King; he owns them. Their bodies cease to be theirs and belong only to the King. The King thus literally owns several women. The oath is mandatory, symbolizing

the extent of maintaining and sustaining patriarchy. In addition, when Young Saeng is chosen by the King, she is instructed to obey everything the King says. She later becomes a royal concubine known as '*Sook Won*' (the King's woman). Also, this is portrayed when the head lady Noh is forced to kill a court lady who conceived after being raped by the Chinese envoy. Lady Noh says:

When I was young, one of the girls under me was disgraced by a Chinese envoy in the Guest house and her pregnancy was discovered by others at full term. The rules of court ladies are more strict than the laws of the nation, thus there is no exception even though it was an envoy's wrong doing. So I made her commit suicide. (Episode 9)

The above illustration shows how society stamps the domination of the male over females. The Chinese envoy walks away scot-free after sexually assaulting a court lady, who, on the other hand, is forced to commit suicide. This act expresses male supremacy. According to radical feminism, rape expresses male supremacy.

Marianne Hester observes:

It is the construct of male and female sexualities that we may observe the central dynamic of male domination over woman. Men are socially constructed as dominant and women as erotic and sexy. Rape is an expression of male sexuality because male sexuality is about male power. (68)

In addition, Jackson and Scott assert that; 'Sexual violence is an enactment of male power' (3). This is further illustrated by the female physician students in the film "Jewel in the Palace", who are used as objects to please men at the feasts. Though the government had banned the use of female physicians as dancers in feasts, the scholar-officials still practice it. Professor Lee says: 'All the students will go to the Minister of Finance tomorrow morning. There is a big feast at his

house tomorrow. You'll have to help with the feast' (Episode 33). When Jang Geum tells him that they have practical lessons the next day, he says the lessons are not important. He says that though the practice of using physician ladies as dancers had been banned, it was a habit and could not die easily.

In the film "The Heirs", women are sexually objectified. When Cha Eun Sang makes her deliveries at the motorcycle shop, men see her as a sexual object. They look at her lustily: 'A pretty smart part-timer I see, high school?' (Episode 1). They ask when her part-time job ends so that they take her out. They do not respect her or the fact that she is a minor. To them, a woman is a woman. Madam Han is another character treated as a sexual object. She lives in the chairman's house but only owns the bedroom and nothing else. Mrs. Jung warns her not to think of anything else: 'I let you have the master bedroom. You got what you wanted, so just shut up and stay there and don't run around' (Episode 6). Mrs. Jung reminds her that she is a mistress and will forever remain one; 'You must think that you really have become the lady of this household after constantly hearing 'second Madame' here. But as long as I am in this house, you will forever remain my husband's mistress. Do you understand (Episode 6)?' Thus, she remains a mistress until the end.

Mr. Choi is another character that treats women as sexual objects in the film "The Heirs". In Young Do's flashback (Episode 9), he remembers his father bringing

home many different women. Young Do gets the opportunity to confront him when he caught Mr. Choi red-handed: ‘Did you do this when mum was around or was she just one of those women?’ According to Mr. Choi, women are objects of sexual pleasure. After his engagement with Madam Yoo, he continues to change women like clothes. She saw a woman leave his office as she was talking to Secretary Yoon, and when Mr. Choi found her with Mr. Yoon he got furious and cautioned her against talking to men. She retorted with a threat; ‘Should I have seen him in my office like you always do?’ (Episode 9) Mr. Choi is a representation of the patriarchal society that views women as sexual objects. These show how the female characters are objectified.

The women are always reminded to keep the codes and laws of a male-dominated society. This is illustrated in the welcoming speech of the New Brides by the Highest Kitchen lady in the film “Jewel in the Palace”. In this context, the highest kitchen lady says: ‘This is the Palace. All women who enter the Palace are the King’s women. We don’t allow anything less than perfection, both in conduct and speech’ (Episode 2). The speech is a reminder to the new brides that the King owns them; they are his property.

In the film “The Heirs”, women from low social class are treated as objects. The chairman reminds Madam Han that she was just some cheap sparkly object. He

further instructs her to warn Tan to keep off Cha Eun Sang because she is also just cheap and sparkly. He says:

I got fooled by what was cheap and sparkly. The household has become a laughing matter. Tell Tan with boldness. When you don't know what to choose, you pick the most expensive one. Tell him to wake up and not pick what is cheap and sparkly or he will end up like his father'. (Episode 18)

The chairman thus views women as cheap sparkly objects to be chosen. To him, all women are objects. The only difference is their material, whether cheap or expensive. In male-dominated societies, women are objects.

Women are used as objects of power acquisition. This is depicted in the film "The Heirs". The chairman orders Tan to make things right with Rachel Yoo, for she is his insurance. As an illegitimate child, he needs insurance to be able to have power:

Chairman: You are different from Won.

Tan: Yes, because I'm an illegitimate child.

Chairman: That's why you need Rachel! This is for you! You need an insurance to have power! And she is the best Insurance you've got! (Episode 10)

The same is seen when Mrs. Yoo consoles Rachel after the termination of her engagement to Tan. Rachel warns her mother to stop using her for sale:

Mrs. Yoo: Forget him quickly

Rachel Yoo: I don't need your advice. From now on, don't interfere with my life.

Don't think about using me as your business either. I am not a product for sale this season. (Episode 15)

In the film “Jewel in the Palace”, Lady Choi is used as an object for power acquisition. She commits all sorts of evil to ensure power stays in her family. She even uses Keum Young to do more evil in the name of acquiring and sustaining power. From the above illustrations, women are indeed used as objects of power acquisition.

3.4 Female characters as Leaders

Female characters are portrayed as powerless leaders whose authorities lie with the males. Haugaard and Ryan states that power is our capacity to do things. In addition, powerful people are powerful by virtue of their capacity for action or ability to make things happen (5). Therefore, this study looks at the female characters ability to do things and make things happen without interferences from the male characters. According to Mathew Fairholm, leadership is:

Getting others to do work the leader wants done essentially separating the planning (management) from the doing (labor). Key elements of these perspectives include control, prediction, verification, headship and science based measurement. (20)

In this regard, a leader is responsible for planning and directing the work that is to be done. As people do the work, a leader does a supervisory role and has the powers to determine the direction the activity is taking. Gary Yukl adds that a leader influences others to understand the objective and agree to an action plan (8).

The above assertions centralize leadership as the ability to influence and facilitate others to move in a specific direction. This is a duty that requires power and complete authority. However, despite having leadership positions, women leaders in the films, “Jewel in the Palace” and “The Heirs”, seem to lack the real power that defines leadership. Women leaders in these films are captives of the Confucian principles that uphold patriarchal hegemony. Park posits that, in the Korean Society, political positions given to women in Korean society are devoid of any tangible authority. That:

The women, who have managed to rise in the power hierarchy especially through the national constituency, have generally been confined to women’s issues in their activities. They participated as functional representatives of women rather than as professional politicians. Thus, their participation was concentrated in an area which is given low priority in legislative activity. As a result, their power was insignificant. (61)

These observations paint a grim picture of women and leadership in Korean society. Women seem to have an illusionary power that is only in conformity with the patriarchal ideologies. Men continue to pull strings as women occupy less glamorous positions that are devoid of the authority that defines power. This is indeed replicated in the films, “Jewel in the Palace” and “The Heirs.”

In “The Heirs,” Mrs. Jung is the director of Empire High and runs *Jeju* Empire. The position of the director, by all definition, is a powerful position at the center of decision making. Powerful as the position may appear, a chairman, a man, is put in place. Mrs. Jung, thus, despite the perceived power, is answerable to the

chairman. She must get directions from the chairman regarding any actions taken in the school.

Interestingly, these women seem to know that the power they hold is fluid, if not illusionary. This is evident when the chairman falls ill. Mrs. Jung takes advantage of the chairman's absence to consolidate her power. She sponsors a motion that would dethrone the chairman and makes herself a powerful director. The motion, however, suffers in the hands of those who seem suspicious with women leadership, effectively reaffirming the dominance of male hegemony. In another instance, the respect accorded to Mrs. Jung as the director of Empire High seems not to translate into real power. This is evident in the way Tan treats her. When Tan's shares rise in the company, he abandons all the respect he has for Mrs. Jung. He summons Mrs. Jung at will and treats her badly. The ensuing dialogue is evidence to the powerlessness of Mrs. Jung:

Tan: Mother you need to get me out of this house. I want to go to school. I'll be waiting.

Mrs. Jung: Money, glory and power. It's good right? You can even order me round ! (Episode 16)

This dialogue portrays a woman who, despite being in the position of a director, knows exactly where the real power lies. The commanding tone of Tan characterizes the condescending attitude that a patriarchal society has towards women's leadership.

Similarly, Madam Yoo, the owner of RS International and other businesses, is powerful and an exemplary leader. However, this power is useless as long as a man is not in place to monitor its excesses. For her to get recognized and accorded respect, Madam Yoo has to get married to Mr. Choi. Consequently, power seems to have been naturally transferred from Madam Yoo to Mr. Choi under this marriage. Mr. Choi makes decisions, on her behalf, without consultations. Madam Yoo must obey and align herself with the decisions made by Mr. Choi, even though she is the owner of RS International and other successful businesses.

The scenario in "The Heirs" regarding women and power is also evident in "Jewel in the Palace." In this film, women hold leadership positions devoid of the power to make critical leadership decisions. The King's mother seems to be the King's guide on leadership matters. However, she only does it from the shadows, and not even the King respects her critical role. The King's mother is indeed aware of her 'uselessness' even though she is an invaluable figure in the King's leadership. Because of her perceived 'uselessness,' even by her son, she has to blackmail her son to have things done in the right way. For instance, in the case of Professor Shin, The King's mother has to starve herself in order to force the King to fire Dr. Shin. She also starves herself to force the King to retract his planned decree. The King plans to force the ministers to surrender part of their land. She tells the King:

You worry about me? Then how come you don't listen to me at all since that last event? Why did you discharge our relative physician Lee Hyun-Woo and assign me a negligent physician? (Episode 37)

The tribulations of the King's mother compound the challenges that women face in patriarchal societies. For women to get appreciated for their roles in patriarchal societies, they must work doubly hard including invoking emotive subjects as evident in the King's mother in order to get their way. Aware of the powerlessness they face in the gendered society, women resort to all means possible, including and not limited to deception to have their power intact.

Similarly, this powerlessness of women's power is evident in the roles directly assigned to the King's mother. The King's mother is the head of domestic affairs. One of her roles is choosing the best lady of the Royal Kitchen. However, the King who assigns her this role seems not to recognize these powers. The King pronounces himself on the subject of the best lady of the Royal Kitchen. Despite this role being in the mother's docket, the King declares the winner without involving or recognizing his mother's power. The King says, 'The wild berries are the best food for me, and you're *Chosun's* best Lady of the Royal Kitchen' (Episode 21). Upon realizing his mistake, the King apologizes, 'Oh, no, mother it was only my opinion of her. You should decide as you are supervising the competition.' Even though the King apologizes, the damage is already done. The King's mother thus makes a decision based on the King's judgment, effectively robbing her of her powers. She says, '...I think the King's will is firmer than mine; therefore, to respect the King's will; I designate Lady Han as the Highest Lady of

the Royal Kitchen' (Episode 21). This shows that even as a leader, her powers remain limited.

In "Jewel in the Palace," Lady Jung is handed power on suspicious grounds. First, she is portrayed as a diligent and hardworking leader. She is, however, surrounded by greedy people who soil her good work, thereby limiting her powers. When she is appointed to the highest rank, the highest kitchen lady, it is not done on the grounds of her obvious intelligence and diligence but by the assumption that she will be manipulated and used as a puppet.

The head lady: Isn't that why she's the best? Lady Choi can take care of the important tasks and she can just be there as a puppet.

Lady Noh: 'She is someone who enjoys songs and poems so she does prefer to stay away from complicated matters.

Head Lady: Yes! That's it. I press from above and Lady Choi, from the bottom. If she can act as a puppet, then it would be the same as you being here. (Episode5)

The conversation between The Head Lady and Lady Noh is a glimpse of the conundrum that faces women empowerment and the complexities of patriarchy. While men can be accused of the subjugation of women, women seem to be the perpetrators of women's emasculation by men. Instead of supporting a woman who has proven herself witty and should be allowed to fight gender inequality, these women plan to use her only as a puppet. They are being used by the males to advance male superiority. Hence, this shows the extent of male supremacy that even in senior positions; women still have to dance to the tune of the males.

Women's power is loathed by men. In “The Heirs”, challenging male supremacy is a suicidal venture. Cha Eun Sang and her family are exiled for challenging the chairman's order. She is taken out of Seol even though she is about to take her final examination. She only rests when the chairman is sick and bedridden. As a punishment to challenging male patriarchy, by engaging with the chairman, Mad Han has to live like a robot for eighteen years. She lives for all those years with nothing. She tells Cha Eun Sang's mother, 'I didn't think my life would be like this either: someone else's house, someone else's bags, someone else's husband. I am being punished for coveting them. A man's wife, my son's mother; I couldn't be either of them' (Episode 19). Therefore, Madam Han lives a very miserable life.

In the “Jewel in the Palace,” Lady Jung triggers a threat to her life for trying to assert her authority and eventually hold the real power. She sets the standard for picking the next highest kitchen lady by declaring that:

I'll give you opportunities regardless of your age if you work hard and hone your skills. Do you understand? And I'll pass this position of the Highest Lady to the most skilled person, so work hard. (Episode 5)

This declaration is interpreted as a war cry by her male counterparts. She is considered confrontational and upfront to leadership. Besides, Lady Jung's efforts to find the culprit who had placed the talisman in the middle kitchen backfire as the head lady and lady Choi goes ahead of her. She is forced to rethink her action plan as they plan to kick her out of her position and the palace. Lady Jung, as a leader, tries so hard to stand by what she believes in despite the limitations of her

power as the highest Kitchen lady. In the matter of the talisman, she clearly states her position to the Head Lady, who is her superior without fear. She says:

Lady Jung: The police must investigate

Head Lady: No need for more trouble. Don't you know how this can get out of control...?

Lady Jung: I know but we must get to the root of this

Head Lady: Just let it go this time

Lady Jung: I can't do that!

Head Lady: You can't do that?

Lady Jung: We should report treason regardless of rank, even if you're my superior. (Episode 11)

This clearly shows how Lady Jung stood for what she believed in, even though, in the end, she has to bow in order to save Jang Geum's life. She advises Lady Han to stay honest and disciplined. She says:

I believe that food shouldn't be used as means for something else whatsoever, so I wanted to make that straight as I leave the palace. That is my only wish before I die. I think of you as the person who could continue this will of mine. Do not think I will favor you because of that. So, win with your own skills and your attitude towards food and straighten up the kitchen according to my will. This is the last request I leave to you. (Episode 12)

Lady Jung has to instill her virtues in Lady Han in her effort to fight patriarchal social standing. The virtues raised by Lady Jung dwell on professionalism and sincerity in performing leadership duties. Though she suffers for challenging the patriarchal authority, which is sustained by the Head Lady and the Lady Choi, she encourages Lady Han to fight bravely. This shows that as a leader, her powers were insignificant, and the authority accorded to her could not aid her in

straightening out the evil and corrupt practices perpetrated in the kitchen. The women leaders thus have positions of power but with limited authority.

3.5 Female characters as Fighters

In the films, “Jewel in the Palace” and “The Heirs,” female characters are depicted as fighters who strive to assert themselves and have things done. According to Larsen and Jordan, assertive individuals, with confidence, express their feelings directly and honestly while ensuring that the rights of both parties are observed (2).

Jang Geum, in “Jewel in the Palace,” puts a spirited fight to learn since her childhood. In the film, education is left for the upper and the middle class. Jang’s mother would want the norm to be observed. However, Jang would hear none of these. Despite the several flogging by her mother, she ensures she goes to school to learn. This is evident in the conversation between Jang Geum and her mother:

Jang Geum: I was just going to stay at the school and come right back.

Myeong: You went to the school again to secretly learn?

Jang Geum: Eun Sung and Yun Kwon (scholar officials children), they all learn, why can’t I learn?

Myeong: They are sons of *yangban* families and you are only a daughter of the Low *baekjeong* (butcher /slave) class. (Episode 2)

Jang's determination pays off as her mother gives up on punishing her because she strives to learn. Instead, her mother begins teaching her; thus putting her in the path to challenge the social order regarding knowledge acquisition.

Jang Geum struggles to stay afloat when her mother dies. Hunger drives her into Guk Duk's family. Because she wants to survive with the Duks longer, she warms herself to them. She helps Duk's crazy wife. Duk's wife has back problems, and this is what Jang Geum uses to win the hearts of the Duk's family. She supports and empathizes with Duk's wife because of the pain she frequently suffers. This is particularly evident in episode three. She says, 'Stay still. Warm it up like this; it's good for your back. You are suffering from pain every day. Please lie down. Thanks for taking care of me' (Episode 3). The compassionate gesture gives her the opportunity to stay in Duk's family for two years.

In "Jewel in the Palace," Jang Geum, as a new bride from a low-class family, fights to remain in the palace. The palace maintains high standards of patriarchy. Particularly, women are not expected to be ambitious, and any attempts to do so are met with severe consequences. Contrary to these expectations, Jang Geum is highly ambitious, a virtue that sends her into the herb garden, a place that is described as 'a place of no return.' Lady Jung and Lady Han plead with the head lady to spare Jang Geum the punishment. As a result, she is sent to the herb garden instead of being cast outside the palace. Nevertheless, this does not come

so easily. Lady Jung and Lady Han have to forfeit their salaries for three years for this to happen. As it would turn out, however, the herb garden is no better as evident in Lady Han's advice:

You may think its better than being cast out of the palace but as you know already, for a court lady the herb garden is a place of abandonment. And of course, you won't be able to join the competition which means you won't be able to become an official court lady. Whether you will stop working, it won't matter or stop trying as you have been abandoned as a court lady. That's for you to decide. (Episode 7)

Even Lady Han's words do not darken her dream of becoming the highest kitchen lady. She packs and leaves for the herb garden. She arrives at the herb garden and is greeted by sleeping and drinking workers. None is working; even the supervisor is drunk and asleep in the field. She asks the workers how come they drink during working hours, but their response is a question on whether she wants to join them. She approaches the superior who demoralizes her even more. He says: 'Don't do anything. Don't walk around as if there is hope in this place. Either sleep or drink all day, just don't do anything' (Episode 7).

She does not lose hope and decides to rearrange the office, but when the supervisor asks her, she tells him they ought to be a responsible citizen:

Supervisor: Hey, what are you doing? I told you not to do anything.

Jang Geum: I can't do that.

Supervisor: What, you can't do that?

Jang Geum: No.

Supervisor: How come?

Jang Geum: You and I are being paid to do the work for the country and if I don't even do this I would go crazy. Though you may find comfort in hopelessness, I can't, I must find some hope growing herbs or grass. (Episode 7)

Jang Geum refuses to bow to hopelessness. She learns that, at the herb garden, they have been trying to grow *astragalus* for twenty years, and it does not grow. So, she decides to make it her target, and she achieves it. She says, "I will use it as my goal. I will set my goal to grow this *astragalus* herb" (Episode 7). When seeds grow, everyone gets excited and sees a ray of hope. "Nice, it's something to celebrate" (Episode 7).

The workers at the herb garden are rejuvenated. They ask Jang Geum where they can join hands. Even the supervisor finally adorns his official robe, a sign of taking responsibility for his position. This determination and fight leads to her being recalled into the palace. Her joy of being recalled back to the palace is short-lived as she and Lady Han are accused of treason and exiled to *Jeju* Island. On the way to *Jeju*, however, Lady Han dies, leaving grief-stricken Jang Geum alone. Her desire to go back to the palace makes her try escaping four times without success. She decides to train to be a physician so that she can turn to the palace as a physician. She fights to get her way back to the palace.

Jang Geum succeeds in getting into the medical training school, where she meets Prof Shin IkPil, who makes her life miserable. Finally, she qualifies, and she is

posted to the Royal Pharmacy. Upon arrival as physician ladies in the palace, Jang Geum and her friend Shin Bi are met with cruel court ladies who treat them as servants. When they try to leave, they face even more threats. ‘How dare a physician lady talk back when a court lady is ordering you (Episode 34)?’ As if that were not enough, she is abandoned in a presumed plague-stricken village. Her friends, at the Royal Pharmacy, lie to her and abandon her at the village to die. She survives and comes out stronger.

Patriarchal societies do not recognize intelligence in women. As an established royal physician, the only post Jang Geum is offered is that of a royal concubine. Determined, she pleads with the King to let her be a physician instead of a concubine. She fights tirelessly as a physician, and this makes the King recognize her profession as a physician. The King accords her a title *The great Jang Geum*:

I give Jang Geum, whose medical skill exceeds all others, the special title, *Great Jang Geum*, an equivalent to 3rd class, the position and rank of a Royal Cabinet Member and I appoint her as my personal physician.

And since it violates the law to appoint a woman to a high government office, she will have a title not listed in the Law Book, but she will be given the title *Great Jang Geum* equivalent to the position and rank of 3rd class Royal Cabinet Member. It won’t pass down by hereditary and apply only to physician lady Jang Geum as an exception. Though she will be a Royal Physician as a 3rd class Royal Cabinet Member, she will not oversee the Royal Pharmacy, but she will only be in charge of my health.

Official Min, write up the order and issue to Jang Geum. (Episode 53)

When other cabinet ministers question and claim it will impair the Law Book, the king says that it is his command as the king. ‘Listen, listen everyone, I command this with the authority given to me as the King so stop arguing about this.’ However low this achievement may be, it is evidence of how the determination to succeed propels Jang Geum to overcome and break patriarchal principles.

The highest kitchen Lady Jung is another fighter in the film “Jewel in the Palace”. After being appointed as a puppet leader, she decides to fight for her position. She reorganizes the order of the court ladies and orders Keum Young, who was considered to have the perfect palate, to sit next to her mates and learn with humility. She sets a standard for her predecessor by stating clearly that the next highest kitchen lady will not be appointed but will be elected through a competition:

I will give you opportunities regardless of your age, if you work hard and hone your skills. Do you understand? And I will pass this position of the highest lady to the most skilled person, so work hard. (Episode 5)

She works so hard and fights her way to ensure that she achieves her target. She leaves the palace officially after conducting a fair competition that sees Lady Han elected as the highest kitchen lady. The head eunuch, knowing who she is and what she is capable of, assures her that she would automatically win:

Head Eunuch: I heard you became the head of the Royal kitchen

Lady Jung: Yes

Head Eunich: Why? Have you gone tired of playing and deciding to be a puppet now?

Lady Jung: Yes, I have gone tired of playing alone and deciding to play along to the peoples' rhythm.

Head Eunich: It will surely be fun. The world's only lady Jung will be playing to others rhythm? It will surely be fun.

Lady Jung: Come often and watch.

Head Eunich: Lady Jung, you win. (Episode 3)

Lady Jung wins but at the cost of her life. This is a price she has to pay for disobeying the principles of a male-dominated society.

In the film "The Heirs," Mrs. Jung is determined and fights for her share in the *Jejuk* Company. She does this by ensuring her name is on the family tree.

When the chairman tries to sweet-talk her out of it, she tells him she would never remove her name from the family tree:

Chairman: Eat a lot of healthy food.

Mrs. Jung: Don't be so kind to me. Even if you act that way, I'm not removing my name from the family tree. (Episode 2)

She thus ensures that she gets a fair share of the *Jejuk* Company. When her plan to overthrow the chairman backfires, she is served with a divorce. However, she walks away confidently because she has the family tree as her savior. She blatantly tells the chairman that she would not go empty-handed:

Let's do that. This time, I should be well prepared and do it. I may not take the whole Empire Group for myself, but I can at least cut it in half. That's the power of family register. (Episode 19)

Besides Mrs. Jung, Madam Han is another fighter in “The Heirs”. When she finds out that her son loves Cha Eun Sang, she decides to secure her son’s happiness by terminating the engagement between her son and Rachel Yoo. She sets up a meeting with Madam Yoo in order to end the engagement. Even though Madam Yoo treats her with contempt and disrespect, she fights and resorts to blackmail to end the engagement:

Madam Han: Thank you for giving me your time Rachel’s mother. Since you’re busy, I’ll cut it short...

Madam Yoo: Please do so.

Madam Han: Tan and Rachel’s engagement, I want to formally end it.

Madam Yoo: Even if it does break, shouldn’t that be on our side? Whose opinion is this?

Madam Han: That is Tan’s and my opinion.

Madam Yoo: That...I’m not sure what I should call you...but anyways Tan and the opinion of the person in front of me, I have no interest in. And why do I have to have these important discussions with the person sitting in front of me?

Madam Han: Because they are important discussions, it should be with me because I am Tan’s mother.

Madam Yoo: The Tan’s mother that I know is President Lee (Mrs. Jung).

Madam Han: I know what you think of me. I know how you see me too. I’m used to it. But that doesn’t matter. They are too young to be tying themselves into the company funds and promises, Tan and Rachel. So, this engagement...

Madam Yoo: To have it with an illegitimate son is a waste for my Rachel. Since my daughter’s future is on the line, there is nothing I won’t say. I hope there won’t be any future chances where we will have to see each other’s faces again.

Madam Han: I wasn’t going to go this far, but.... (Episode 15)

At that point, Madam Han removed a picture of Madam Yoo kissing secretary Yoon and used it to blackmail Madam Yoo into calling off the engagement. Indeed, she fought and succeeded.

In “The Heirs”, Cha Eun Sang decides to fight for her family pride and dignity. She musters the courage and faces the chairman after being exiled. She chooses to stay by Tan’s side:

Chairman: How could you be so bold in telling me to my face that you met Tan?

Cha Eun Sang: Tan is nice, honest and warm. That’s why I like Tan very much.

Chairman: How can you be so presumptuous?

Cha Eun Sang: Because it is not wrong for me to like Tan.

Chairman: Taking my money, my grace and liking my son is wrong.

Cha Eun Sang: The money that you lent me, I will repay you shortly. But since you gave it to me without me knowing, I too, will pay you back depending on my situation without laziness. (Episode 18)

She uses the fact that the chairman had paid off their debts without her knowledge to blackmail her into leaving Tan. She stands her ground and speaks her mind boldly to the dreaded chairman.

In conclusion, these characters show their determination and perseverance in fighting for what they believe in. Therefore, it is true to say that the female characters depicted in these films are determined fighters who would use extreme

means to achieve what they want. It shows how the female characters are challenging the patriarchal order with the aim of defeating it.

3.6 Female characters as Evil

In the films, "The Jewel in the Palace" and "The Heirs," women characters are depicted as evil. According to Daniel Haybron, an evil person is guilty of the gravest offense. Laurence Thomas reinforces this position that an evil person does harm delightfully (77). John Kekes equally notes that 'evil consists of undeserving harm to people, whereas a person is evil if she is a regular source of evil' (47). The study looks at an evil character as one who delights in performing harmful acts to others. Particularly, the study examines the characters of Lady Choi and Mrs. Jung in "Jewel in the Palace" and "The Heirs," respectively.

In the "Jewel in the Palace," Lady Choi is depicted as the most evil of the characters. The evil in her is propelled by her desire to maintain her family's position in power. As a kitchen lady, Lady Choi ensures that the food supply tender goes only to her brother. In turn, her brother pays a percentage to the prime minister. The prime minister is an ally to the ruling king, who is on a mission to avenge his mother's death. As such, the plot to poison the king's grandmother is an order from the king and being carried out by the right prime minister. The execution of the plot thus lands on Choi's family with the direct deed being done by Lady Choi. However, when Myeong sees Lady Choi poisoning the king's

grandmother and reports to the taster lady, Lady Choi frames her. The desire to maintain the status quo leads her to frame her friend Myeong. Lady Choi says she saw her with a man, something that is forbidden since all the court women were king's women. 'I saw Lady Park and some man entering the warehouse together at night' (Episode 1). It is important to note, however, that Lady Choi does this evil, betraying her best friend, Myeong, because of her desire to keep power.

In another instance, because of greed for power, Lady Choi uses a talisman to change the sex of the fetus in the queen's womb. She sends Keum Young with the talisman to hide in the main kitchen. 'Hide this in the middle of the kitchen; this is to change the prince in the queen's womb into a princess.' The plot to change the child's sex is very dear to Lady Choi as she does not want the queen to give birth to a son. Being a patriarchal society where boys are highly valued, a baby boy would give the queen more power and favour. The queen giving birth to a son would also interfere with her family's royal supply chain. When Keum Young is caught, Choi tells her, 'No matter what happens, you must never talk about it. I will take care of whatever happens so be strong' (Episode 11). It is ironical that as a mother figure in Keum Young's life, she is supposed to teach her virtues and not vices, but she does the latter. Indeed, she takes care of the events which followed as she bribes the Head Lady and ensures that the investigations are interfered with before they are completely stopped.

The evil nature of Lady Choi is also evident during the competitions for the highest kitchen lady. The competition is between her and Lady Han. To have the upper hand, Lady Choi has organized to have Lady Han's ingredients spoiled. If she succeeds, Lady Han will be kicked out of the palace and would equally be held hostage until the end of the competition. When Lady Han finally wins despite Lady Choi's plan against her, she plans to discredit and frustrate Lady Han in the new position. She plans to lead a rebellion among the courts. Lady Han's win infuriates Lady Choi even more, and she sets a plan to lead a rebellion among the court ladies to disregard Lady Han's appointment. She succeeds.

When a plague breaks out in the palace, and the patients are quarantined outside the palace, Lady Choi takes advantage of the situation. She ensures that Lady Jung is sent out of the palace as well. With the exit of Lady Jung, she is proposed by the Head Lady and subsequently appointed as a substitute for Lady Jung. This evil plot is evident in the conversation between the Head Lady and Lady Jung:

Head lady: There must be a designated leader and Lady Choi is perfect for it.

Kings mother: Have Lady Choi work as the highest lady but she will act as a substitute until Lady Jung comes back. (Episode 18)

Lady Choi's appointment as a substitute to Lady Jung gives her the authority and opportunity to mistreat other court ladies. She sends Lady Han and Jang Geum to the guest house to serve the temperamental Chinese envoy. 'You take Jang Geum to the guesthouse and take good care of everything' (Episode 18). At the

guesthouse, Lady Han and Jang Geum suffer, and at one point, they are thrown in jail.

The evil nature of Lady Choi is also evident when she fails in a rematch to have the position of the highest kitchen lady. She frames Lady Han and Jang Geum and accuses them of treason. Consequently, Lady Han is killed, and Jang Geum is exiled to *Jeju* Island. In addition to that, she frames the Head Lady and ends up as the head lady herself. She then uses her acquired powers to appoint Keum Young as the highest kitchen lady.

Lady Choi's attainment of power reveals her as dangerous and vengeful. She uses her wrongly acquired power to eliminate those whom she considers potential enemies. As a result, she plans to kill Yeong, who is pregnant and has become *sook won*/ consort. She is using Lady Yeul Yee, the Royal physician, to ensure that Yeong is diligently poisoned and eliminated, a plot that the Royal physician falls for. Yuel advises her on the food to serve Yeong:

Keum Young: But keep serving her *Kaoliang* dish.

Yeul Yee: Yes, soon she will have difficulty breathing and she can even suffer paralysis or spasms.

Lady Choi: Then

Yeul Yee: The baby can't live

Lady Choi: So that can happen only with food?

Yeul Yee: Yes. And they are good food for all other pregnant ladies.

Lady Choi: Right.

Yeul Yee: No one can find out about it. Besides the stroke happens suddenly, so it will be hard to question me for any responsibility.

Lady Choi: You must stop it this time. She is already a ranking lady now and if she gives birth to a prince.

Keum Young: Then we won't be able to do anything to Jang Geum.

Lady Choi: You must stop it by any means. (Episode 42)

Lady Choi sets up a plan to eliminate Sang Yeong because giving birth to a child would raise her position but giving birth to a prince, would make her untouchable. This thus poses a serious risk that Lady Choi is not willing to take. However, her plan to kill Sang Yeong fails. The extremely dangerous nature of Lady Choi is exposed when she plots to eliminate the Royal Physician, the ally she has been using to deal with her perceived enemies. However, her world comes crumbling down when these attempts fail. She meets her fate while running away from justice.

Similarly, in "The Heirs," Mrs. Jung Ji Sook, the director of Empire High, is portrayed as evil. She is the second wife of Kim Nan Yoon, the chairman, and owner of *Jeju* Group. When the first wife dies, Won's mother, she establishes her position as the first wife, all for the wrong reasons. She mistreats Tan's mother and uses every chance to remind her that she is and will always remain a mistress. She considers Tan's mother, an outsider who does not qualify to be part of the family tree (episode 4).

During the parents' meeting, Tan's mother is only able to attend as Cha Eun Sang's mother as she is not recognized as Tan's mother, the fact that Mrs. Jung exploits to the fullest. Her presence sets blood boiling on Mrs. Jung:

Mrs. Jung: Are you crazy? Are you in your right mind?

Tan's mother: I can't come with the right mind so I had some medication before coming. Why? Ah, I don't know. It's out of my hands now. And also, for the first time in my life, I came to the parents meeting and I am feeling so hyped. So, do it moderately chairwoman.

Mrs. Jung: If you have time for this, you should take care of your son. Does it make sense for him to use his fist at Empire High? Your son is ruining the reputation of Empire High, all on his own. You don't know that right?

Tan's mother: You always call him "my son" at times like this. All kids fight as they grow up. (Episode 9D)

Mrs. Jung blackmails Tan's mother into leaving the parents' meeting. 'You should get out of here if you don't want to break Tan's engagement' (Episode 9D).

Chairman Kim Yoon falls ill and is hospitalized. Mrs. Jung, instead of rushing to be by the chairman's side, decides on getting the chairman's voting rights. She organizes a secret meeting to sway people to her side. Mrs. Jung uses Won and Tan as an excuse to lure the chairman's brothers to her side. She tells the chairman's brothers of her lack of trust in Won's and Tan's management of the company. 'I have no trust in Won and Tan. My husband built this empire with his life. I have no doubts about their ability to protect it.' When asked to go straight to the point at the meeting, Mrs. Jung says how the chairperson neglected his brothers. She reminds the chairman's brothers that the chairman neglected them

and left them nothing. She uses this opportunity to extend an olive branch only if they would take her side:

Was he always the sole owner? He had a war against his brothers, you people. It was his victory after exhausting fights. However, no victory lasts forever. The war can be started again by those who seek victory. As you know, I have no children or family. You thought that you had lost your chance forever. I think I can give it back to you. Be on my side. When Won and Tan get their inheritance you will never get another chance. (Episode 19D)

Mrs. Jung bribes the chairperson's brothers to cross over to her side. She arrives at the hospital late, and when Tan asks why she is late, she responds by claiming she had to take care of business because it was obvious the chairman could not wake up. Mrs. Jung tells Tan that being his legal guardian, as stated in the family register, gives her the rights to take his shares in the company. When Tan threatens to make Won his legal guardian, she threatens him with the inheritance. This shows how evil she is, not even the sight of the gravely ill chairperson can change her heart:

Okay, go ahead. You and your mother leaving without a penny sound good enough for me. Give and take, remember? Sometimes a harsh lesson is the right medicine. We take, we lose, we take over, and we get taken over...welcome to the world of greed, my son. (Episode 19D)

Mrs. Jung, welcomes Tan to her world full of greed and hatred. She organizes the passing of a motion to kick the chairman out of the company. She loses, with the motion being dismissed and the chairperson divorcing her. He asks her why she did what she did, but she says she has no regrets:

Chairman: Mrs. Jung Ji Sook, while I was laying down, I heard you caused quite a commotion.

Mrs. Jung: I didn't gain anything from it.

Chairman: That's why you should have waited a little bit. All those years, you had borne them quite gracefully. Why did you kick the opportunity of being rewarded? What you have been waiting for on your own?

Mrs. Jung: I wanted more. It was long planned.

Chairman: I also have a plan like that. That's why I wanted to see you. Mrs. Jung Ji Sook, let's get a divorce.

Mrs. Jung: Let's do that. This time, I should be well prepared and do it. I may not take the whole empire group for myself, but I can at least cut it in half. That's the power of family register. (Episode 20)

The proposal by the chairman to divorce her exposes her even further. She is delighted that the divorce will allow her to walk away with half of the wealth.

In conclusion, the above image of the female character as evil shows the extent to which society uses women to entrench and uphold patriarchal ideologies that can only work against the journey to women empowerment based on the film as a mirror of reality.

3.7 Chapter conclusion

This chapter has established that the images given to female characters are stereotypical. It is anchored on radical feminist principle that strives to change the society's view on patriarchy by accepting a woman as a valuable part of society. Female characters are objectified, a trait in a male-dominated society. The efforts

of women to free themselves bear no fruits. Female characters are also portrayed as leaders but with limited authority. They are depicted as leaders who cannot exercise their full powers because of the restrictions of the male-dominated society.

Furthermore, female characters are depicted as evil beings that carry out the evil schemes laid out by men. On a positive light, women are portrayed as fighters. They fight to challenge the established patriarchal norms. This effort, however, results in short-lived victories, a sign that the Korean society has a long way to go regarding the attempts to uproot the patriarchal practices.

The next chapter looks at the connection between images of women in the films and the social traditions of Korean society.

CHAPTER FOUR

**THE CONNECTION BETWEEN: THE ROLE OF WOMEN AS
REPRESENTED IN THE FILMS AND THE SOCIAL TRADITIONS OF
KOREA**

4.1 Introduction

This chapter, using the films under study, looks into the connection between the role of women and the social traditions of Korean society. In this study, Korean films assumed to be anchored on the social practices of Korea. In a nuanced way, the study sought to establish the connection between the roles assigned to female characters in the films and the social traditions of Korea.

4.2 Social Traditions of Korea

Social traditions are norms by which a society orientates its members and pass from one generation to another through social processes (Itulua-Abumere 2; Graburn 6). The products of these social process are members of the society who cherish, in totality, the cultural norms of the particular society in ways that impact socioeconomic and political realms. Therefore, this study looks at the social traditions of Korean society as set standards of conduct that guide the daily routines of its members and are passed through socially robust processes.

The study posits that Confucianism is one of the umbrella social norms dominant in Korean society. Confucianism, Kim espouses, is “a philosophy or attitude that

is concerned with human beings, their achievements and interests” (18). Rachel Chan observes that South Korea is among the societies whose cultures are rooted in Confucianism principals (1). Under Confucianism, Chan argues, socioeconomic and political spheres of Korean society have been gendered in their activities (1). While on this practice, importance has been given to family life, ancestor worships, and filial piety. At the center of this Confucianism, however, is patriarchy that legitimizes men and gives them power while assigning women subordinate and inferior positions to men (Chan 2). Consequently, the value of the male gender has resulted in other social practices such as infanticide and concubinage (Chan 2).

Chan’s observations on the Korean practice of Confucianism portray a grim picture of male-female relations. Indeed, Maynes’ attempt to contextualize Confucianism and put it into a historical perspective serves to reaffirm Chan’s evaluation of Confucianism in Korean society. Maynes posits that historically, Confucianism discouraged interaction between men and women and implemented strict gender roles (78). Since the tenth century, Maynes observes, males and females were separated at the age of seven and remained segregated throughout their lives, marriages were arranged, and betrothal was arranged when the bride and the groom were still young (78).

4.2.1 The connection in social roles

In the film, “The Heir,” there is evidence of a connection between Confucianism principles of the Korean society and the roles assigned to women. Men objectify women as evident in the way the Chairman treats Madam Han. The Chairman sees Madam Han as a cheap object, and the little respect he may accord her is because of the existence of a son, Tan. He controls all the moves that Madam Han makes and dictates the terms. To keep her totally under his grip, the Chairman uses, Mrs. Jung, a woman, to ensure that Madam Han is at, all times, at the mercy of the Chairman.

Similarly, in the film, “Jewel in the Palace,” women are mere objects. Objectification of women is evident in the way the new brides are treated. The King sees them as sex objects at his disposal. His choice of women in the palace, for sexual purposes, depends on his taste, preference, and mood. Indeed, this resonates with Maynes’ assertion that in Korean society, women are inferior to men, and the social structures put women at men’s convenience and disposal. The King chooses the women in question, and they are ordered to obey without saying a word. This is further replicated in “The Heirs,” where Mr. Choi equally treats women as sex objects. He is engaged to Madam Yoo, but he still has the liberty to solicit for women.

Moreover, the helplessness of women in the hands of men in Korean society is evident in the way marriage decisions are made on their behalf. In the film “Jewel in the Palace,” the King’s brides were chosen at the tender ages of two and trained on expected codes of conduct. Similarly, in “The Heirs,” Rachel Yoo and Kim Tan’s betrothal is done when they are both babies. In both cases, the betrothals are done when the girls are young, have no choice, and are not expected to change. Thus, the girls have to respect the choices of their parents; in this case, fathers and obey their husbands unquestionably. According to Kim, a society that practices Confucianism, which is akin to the Korean society, models a superman and the center of the universe (18). Women, as reflected in the total submission of women in these films, must bear in mind the obligation to obey the supermen.

Confucianism ensures women obey men all their lives. According to Maynes, a woman, as a girl, revered her father, as a wife, devotes herself to her husband and, as a mother, obeys her son. In all stages of her life, a woman belongs to a man. In “The Heirs,” Madam Han devotes eighteen years of her life to her husband, the Chairman, obeys her son Tan and stepson Won. She obeys without being respected. When Madam Han decides to leave the Chairman, he tells her that he is the overall decision-maker and will decide how and when she leaves. This shows how he owns her. In “Jewel in the Palace,” new brides are constantly reminded that they belong to the King, body, and soul. The King has a right over them and picks them at will.

In Korean society, women are tasked to ensure the male lineage spans generations. This has made women value the boy child to the extent that they feel so valueless should they fail to give birth to male children. In doing so, according to Allan Johnson, women's feelings of worthlessness for their inability to give birth to boys are evidence of successful psychological torture. In "The Heirs," Mad Han has to reel in and covered under the Chairman's son because she gave birth to the Chairman. Lack of children, especially a son, forces Mrs. Jung to impersonate Madam Han as Tan's mother. Madam Yoo has to form a marriage alliance with Mr. Choi as she lacks a son even though she has an intelligent and smart daughter. In the "Jewel in the Palace," Saeng has to conceive before she can be accorded the full respect she deserves as the King's woman. Lady Choi tries to kill her out of fear that she might give birth to a son, a situation that will make her untouchable. In addition, when the queen conceives, Lady Choi resorts to witchcraft and uses a talisman to try and change the sex of the queen's child from a prince into a princess. The birth of a prince would make the queen very powerful; as such, it would interfere with Lady Choi's affairs in the palace. These depictions show that the patriarchal society's expectations of women are of inferior positions while the superior ones are relegated to the males.

Also, women are socially responsible for maintaining the social class system, which places them at the lowest cadre. In "The Heirs," Cha Eun Sang is treated with contempt at Empire High School because of her social standing. The girls at

Empire High School use every opportunity to remind her of her poor background. The Chairman exiles her for failing to leave Tan. According to the Chairman, a girl of poor background is not worthy of his son. Cha Eun Sang's frustrations because of her poor background are also evident in the struggles of Madam Han. Mrs. Jung restricts her movements and takes her title as 'Tan's mother' away from her. This is a measure to punish her for breaking the patriarchal order by being the mother of the Chairman's son, yet she is from a low social background. The Chairman uses every chance to humiliate her. He orders her to ensure Tan makes an expensive choice of a woman, not a cheap object like herself.

In the "Jewel in the Palace," the new brides are picked from reputable and wealthy families. Jang Geum is humiliated and ridiculed when she is selected as a new bride, as a favor from the then crown prince. In the same vein, Lady Han is humiliated by the court ladies upon her appointment as the highest kitchen lady. The court ladies openly tell her that someone of her social standing cannot lead them. Her social background informs Lady Choi's decision to rally the palace ladies against her. As a result, she steps down from her position as the highest kitchen lady.

The social configurations in a patriarchal society indeed confine women to specific roles such as begetting males, maintaining the social class system, and being objects owned by the males. This perpetuates male superiority, an act that

radical feminism stands against. Women should not be subordinated and treated as inferior to men.

4.2.2 The connection in economic roles

Women in the films are portrayed as working hard to provide for their families and maintain their financial positions. In “The Heirs,” Mrs. Jung is assigned the role of the director of Empire High School and a major shareholder of *Jejuk* Empire. She is intelligent and diligently works to raise the standards of Empire High School. She commands respect at the school, and this is seen during the parent’s meeting. Similarly, in “The Heirs,” women are assigned the images of hard workers. Madam Yoo establishes RS International and other businesses. She is a principled leader who executes her duties effectively. Indeed, this concurs with Marian Palley’s assertion that despite the oppressive Confucian principle that oppress women in Korea economically, so many women have risen to challenge it, embrace hard work and grow economically.

Cha Eun Sang in “*The Heir*” works extremely hard to assist her deaf and dumb mother. She does several part-time jobs, assists her mother at Jejuk’s house, and still manages to remain on top of her studies. In “Jewel in the Palace,” Jang Geum also works tirelessly and polishes her culinary skills in the kitchen, thus beating Lady Choi in the competition for the highest Kitchen lady. She is sent to the herb garden where no one returns. At the herb garden, when all seemed lost, she works

hard grows *astragalus*, a very important herb. This act leads to her being recalled back to the palace. When she is exiled to Jeju Island, she works obediently under the troublesome doctor, Jang Doek, and graduates as a royal physician. The life of Cha Eun Sang and Jang Geum, according to Cho Yonjoo is women's struggle to break away from the oppressive rules. Yonjoo argues that this is possible through commitment to work and balance between work and the social demands that patriarchy demands of them.

In addition, as a royal physician, Jan Geum saves the Community from a presumed plague, the queen from a misdiagnosis during stillbirth, the prince from chickenpox, and the king from a major misdiagnosis thus leading to her being assigned the role of the king's physician. She is further accorded the title 'The Great Jang Geum.' In "Jewel in the Palace," Lady Jung works hard and streamlines the kitchen. She works on ensuring the right principles are passed over in the kitchen. She creates a store office to monitor the use of supplies in the royal kitchen in order to curb wastage.

These economic roles show how women are standing up to contest patriarchy in society. The women in the films are portrayed as excelling in their areas of jurisdiction, the fact that patriarchy disregards. According to patriarchal principles, anything good and excellence should be associated with the males and

not females. Just like radical feminism calls for a rise against patriarchy, so are these characters contesting it.

4.2.3 The connection in political roles

In the political sphere, women in the films are portrayed as power-hungry individuals who would do just anything to acquire power. In “Jewel in the Palace,” Lady Choi’s desire for power propels her into framing her friend Myeong. She also sets a trap to ensure Lady Han loses to her in a competition for the highest kitchen lady. The lust for power drives her to the point of resorting to witchcraft to ensure the queen does not become powerful. Besides, she plots and frames Jang Geum and Lady Han for treason leading to Lady Han’s death and Jang Geum’s exile to Jeju. Lady Choi becomes the highest kitchen lady, but she is not satisfied. She thus attempts to kill Saeng and her unborn child but fails. She, however, frames the head lady and becomes the head lady herself. She rises to power but is not satisfied. She advises her niece, Keum Young, that the lesson they should learn is that they need power and more power.

In the film “The Heirs,” Mrs. Jung tries to overthrow the chairman when he falls ill. She rallies the chairman’s brothers against him and sets his sons against each other. Moreover, she mistreats Madam Han and ensures that Madam Han’s name does not appear in the family register. When her plan to take over Jeju Holdings fails, she agrees to a divorce but leaves with half of Jeju Empire. However,

according to Palley, the portrayal of women as power-hungry falls under the wider strategy by patriarchy to continue marginalizing and disempowering women.

Despite having the power, real power seems to reside with men. In the “Jewel in the Palace,” the King’s mother makes decisions based on the King’s word. In the matter of the highest kitchen lady, which is her jurisdiction, the King intercepts her and decides on who the highest kitchen lady should be. Another character is Lady Han, though appointed as the highest kitchen lady, her powers are limited. This is seen when the court ladies rebel against her. This forces her to call for a rematch, and upon winning, she requests the queen for complete authority, something that the queen accords her but cautions her that the complete power is temporal. The King’s appointment of Jan Guem as his personal physician causes uproar among the ministers and the scholars.

In addition, when the King accords Jang Geum, the title of ‘The Great Jang Geum,’ the scholars and ministers write petitions to have her as a concubine. According to the men, it is unheard of to have a woman as the King’s doctor - a high office that commands respect. In the film “The Heirs,” the powers of Madam Yoo are limited. She owns a powerful Empire, RS International, yet she still needs Mr. Choi to be powerful. She agrees to a betrothal between her daughter and Jejuk’s heir Kim Tan in order to acquire power. Another character in the

same film is Mrs. Jung. Mrs. Jung fights to consolidate her shares and powers at Jejuk Holdings. The chairman controls everything; thus, Mrs. Jung has to bribe the chairman's brothers to support her in her fight for the chairman's position. Even though she is the director of Empire High School, Tan, a student at the school, calls her at will when his shares rise. She thus has to obey Tan.

Politically, therefore the women are assigned positions of power without absolute authority. The complete power still lies with the men, thus reifying male superiority.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter looked at the connection between the role of female characters in the film and the socioeconomic and political traditions of Korea. It is based on radical feminist principle that focuses on idealistic view to eradicate inequality between the male and female gender. The study revealed that Korean socioeconomic and political practices are based on Confucian principles. The analysis further shows that the roles assigned to the female characters are stereotypical and based on patriarchy. Women are mere objects that are inferior to men. In addition, they have the responsibility of keeping the male lineage alive. Economically, women are portrayed as hard workers but remain captured by the Confucianism ideology. In this case, even when they get economic empowerment, they must still seek support and approval from men. On the political front, women are portrayed as

capable of every possible evil as long as they gain power. However, despite acquiring power, the real power resides with men. Hence, men can manipulate these women all the time to their advantage.

The next chapter summarizes the study, gives the findings and recommendations for further studies.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the research findings, concludes the specific research problem, and gives recommendations for further studies.

5.2 Summary and conclusions

The aim of this study was to analyze through adoption of a radical feminist theoretical framework, the role of women in Korean films, as portrayed in the films, “The Heirs” and “Jewel in the Palace.” Chapter one explored and analysed existing literature concerning women and film in South Korea. In addition, it outlined gaps that the study has aimed to fill. Chapter one marked the objectives of the study which became the basis for chapter two, three and four.

The study presented the roles assigned to female characters in the films under study in chapter two. The study established the various roles assigned to female characters in the two films. Female characters are assigned social, economic, and political roles based on patriarchal underpinnings embedded in Confucian principles. The study found that: the social roles assigned to the female characters are stereotypical and patriarchal. In addition, the female characters are rising up to take up economic roles. However, the political roles assigned to the women are devoid of absolute authority, thus limiting their power. These findings indeed

affirmed the assumption that there are specific roles assigned to the female characters in Korean society.

Secondly, in line with the second objective, the study looked at the images given to the female characters in chapter three. It sought to address the question; what images are depicted by the female characters in the films? The study found out that women characters in these films are portrayed as victims in male dominated societies. They are also treated as sexual objects, taken advantage of because of their gender and use as objects of acquiring power. Furthermore, female characters are depicted as leaders without absolute power. In addition, they are portrayed as evil and aiding in the sustenance of male dominance. They are assigned images that depict women as inferior to men, images that reify males and reinforce patriarchy. However, female characters are also portrayed as fighters, rising up against patriarchy.

Finally, this study affirms that there is a connection between the role of women as represented in the films “The Heirs,” “Jewel in the Palace,” and the social traditions of Korean society in chapter four. South Korea is a country deeply rooted in Confucianism whose principles upholds patriarchy, which reifies male domination. This is replicated in the roles assigned to the female characters in the films under study. The roles uphold and sustain male domination while assigning women subordinate and inferior positions. In addition, the images portrayed by

the roles assigned to the female characters clearly depicts patriarchy. Discussions in chapter four affirm the connection. The social, political, and economic roles portrayed in the films under study, are based on the social traditions of Korea. Indeed, the film is a mirror of society. The male dominance, perpetrated by Confucian principles in Korea, is depicted in the films under study.

The study came up with the following findings. Firstly, the roles assigned to the female characters are stereotypical. Secondly, the roles assigned to the female characters in the film reflect the social traditions of Korean society as they are based on patriarchy and embedded in Confucian principles. Finally, though assigned stereotypical roles in a patriarchal society, the female characters in the films are continuously challenging patriarchy by going against the patriarchal principals, thus there is the hope of the eventual break away from the patriarchal shackles that subjugate women.

The study, therefore, concludes that the roles assigned to female characters are anchored on the cultural set up of the country of origin. The films “The Jewel in the Palace” and “The Heir” depict the social order in Korean society.

5.3 Recommendations for Further Study

The study made the following recommendations:

1. This study delimited itself to the analysis of the role of female characters in the Korean films “The Heirs” and “Jewel in the Palace.” The study, therefore, recommends an analysis of the role of male characters in the selected Korean films.
2. There is a need for nuanced comparative studies of Korean society with other cultures across the world regarding the depiction of female characters in films in relation to the social traditions of those cultures.

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The Heirs. Directed by. Kang Shin-Hyo and Boo Sung- Chul. MBC, 2013.Film.

APPENDICES

Appendix I: A list of South Korean Films

	Name of the film	Year of Production		Name of Film	Year of Production
1	Jewel in the Palace	2003	26	The Heirs	2013
2	Wind of the Palace	2007	27	Heartstrings	2011
3	Jumong	2006	28	Love Alarm	2019
4	The King and I	2007	29	Class of Lies	2019
5	Moon embracing the Sun	2012	30	Secret Campus	2006
6	Painter of the wind	2008	31	Orange Marmalade	2015
7	Warrior Baek Dong-Soo	2011	32	Moment at Eighteen	2019
8	Damo	2003	33	Sassy, Go Go	2015
9	Emperor of the Sea	2004	34	To the Beautiful You	2012
10	Rooftop Prince	2012	35	Who Are You: School 2015	2015
11	Queen SeonDeok	2009	36	School 2013	2012
12	The Legend	2007	37	Reply 1997	2012
13	Hong Gil Dong, the Hero	2008	38	Master of Study	2010
14	Bridal Mask	2012	39	White Christmas	2011
15	Arang and the Magistrate	2012	40	After School, Lucky or Not	2013

16	The Great Seer	2012	41	Ma Boy	2012
17	Iljima	2008	42	Jungle Fish	2008
18	The Kingdom of the winds	2008	43	Seonam Girls High School Detectives	2014
19	Sword and Flower	2013	44	Jungle Fish 2	2010
20	The fugitive of Joseon	2013	45	Adolescence Medley	2013
21	Empress Ki	2014	46	Boys over Flower	2009
22	The Great King Sejong	2008	47	A- Tee 2	2019
23	The King in Love	2017	48	Cheese in the Trap	2016
24	God of War	2012	49	Dream High	2 0 1 1
25	The Princess' Man	2011	50	Page Turner	2016

Appendix II: Graduate School Approval Letter



KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

E-mail: dean-graduate@ku.ac.ke

P.O. Box 43844, 00100
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Internal Memo

FROM: Dean, Graduate School

DATE: 30th November, 2020

TO: Mornica Ayuko Amuti
C/o Literature, Linguistic & Foreign Languages Dept.

REF: C/50/CE/25255/2013

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROJECT PROPOSAL

This is to inform you that Graduate School Board at its meeting of 11th September, 2020 approved your Research Project Proposal for the M.A. Degree Entitled, "The Role of Women in Korean Films: Analysis of Jewel in the Palace and the Heirs".

You may now proceed with your Data Collection, Subject to Clearance with Director General, National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation.

As you embark on your data collection, please note that you will be required to submit to Graduate School completed Supervision Tracking Forms per semester. The form has been developed to replace the Progress Report Forms. The Supervision Tracking Forms are available at the University's Website under Graduate School webpage downloads.

Thank you.


HARRIET ISABOKE,
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NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION



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