

The Family Culture in Korean Narrative Literature: Focusing on ‘Maternity vs. Anti-Maternity’¹

Kang Jin-ok

Maternity is the foundation for forming a family along with paternity and a basic element guaranteeing the continuity of life. This maternal figuration has been important material and the subject of the history of narrative literature from mythology through ancient novels to modern novels. This paper surveys how the maternal figuration in Korean narrative literature has been reproduced in relation to its opposite, anti-maternal figuration. As a result, this paper ascertains that the nature of maternity and anti-maternity have taken on a new meaning while reflecting each socio-cultural context according to the times and genre.

While maternity versus anti-maternity in shamanist mythology was embodied in the basic nature of shamanist imagination, which emphasized abundance and fecundity, the then ethical norms, family system and familial ideology in ancient novels functioned as a standard of prescribing maternity vs. anti-maternity. While the nature of maternity vs. anti-maternity in classical narrative literature was depicted as conflicts between opposite characters, it also appeared as conflicts between opposite values coexisting inside a character in novels since modern times. As stated above, this paper ascertains that at the present time when the traditional role of sex is dissolved, maternal values are an important foundation for forming various types of family and are recognized as a universal human virtue irrespective of delivery and sex.

Keywords: maternity, anti-maternity, maternal values, Korean narrative literature, family culture, social care

1. This work was supported by the Korea Research Foundation Grant funded by the Korean Government (MOEHRD) (KRF-2005-042-A00039).

Preface

Nowadays, the dissolution of the traditional family is a problem being faced by Korean society, according to the demands of constituents pursuing a variety of values in rapid social changes. As society industrialized, familial relations went through various changes. Since the Asian economic crisis, economic problems such as bankruptcy of family finances have been identified as important causes accelerating the dissolution of the family. It is a remarkable phenomenon that the number of mothers going away from home has risen and the number of parents abandoning their obligations, including the nurturing of their children, has gone up. Since the 1990s, literary works by women writers has also paid attention to feminist desires and self-consciousness, showing a tendency of digging into them, and a tendency of being faithful to the desires of women themselves rather than the profits of a familial community.²

On the contrary, mass media have been reproducing the figuration of family members worthy of so-called familial myths. The following dramas seem to reproduce an ideal of the medieval familial ideology according to the modern context: *Bumonim jeonsangseo* (A Letter to One's Parents), a family drama depicting the harmony between a respectable father with love and tolerance, a good wife and wise mother, and exemplary sons and daughters; *Wanjeonhan sarang* (Perfect Love), a drama depicting a self-sacrificing woman who considers only her husband and children before her death; and the drama *Rosemary*. Meanwhile, the paradoxical counterevidence of familial myths appears as conflicts between a stepmother and the children in *Cheongukui gyedan* (The Steps to Heaven) and the happy-ending plot that the children of the former wife get over the harmful scheme of the stepmother in *Hoejeon mokma* (Merry-Go-Round). Both succeed to the tradition of stepmother narratives and anti-maternity mythology since the medieval times.

Mass media pay attention to familial mythology because of public interest in the material, and this seems to show both the recognition of the critical situation of today's familial problems and the ideal solution they dream of. The reproduction of familial mythology is based on the fantasy that the maternal home is an ideal shelter where the mother, at the center, is represented by self-sacrifice and

2. See Eun Hi-gyeong's *Geunyeoui sebeonjjae namja* (The Third Man of Hers) and Jeon Gyeong-rin's *Nae saengae kkok harubbunin teukbyeolhan nal* (Only One Special Day during My Life).

devotion. Though the sense of value has been developed considerably according to social changes, the theory of managing real lives is still bound to traditional familial ethics. The fact that both extreme views of an absconding mother and a self-sacrificing mother co-exist provides an important clue to grasping the real nature of today's familial problems. While the demand for independence and self-realization by women is rising, the maternal mythology based on two axes, sacrifice and devotion, continues to have an influence on daily phases. This paradoxical situation will eventually lead to conflict and confrontation.

In order to objectively understand the realistic situation before us, it is not enough only to make an issue of the visible present aspects, because both extremes are the phenomena traditional ideas have brought about. Therefore, this paper aims to establish the origin of both extremes through literary works. Since literary works reproduce the typicality of contemporary lives, this study surveys, as a standard, the mythical narrative which is the prototype of Korean literature and a way of figuring maternity reproduced in ancient novels that succeeded it. In order to effectively deal with the enormous research topic, this paper focuses on the existence of maternity (good mother) versus anti-maternity (bad mother), because the aspect of 'the confrontation between maternity and anti-maternity' reproduced in narrative literature reflects more concretely the sense of maternity at the time when the literary work was produced. The maternal phase becomes more conspicuous through its opposite anti-maternal nature and the concrete aspect appears differently according to the genre and socio-historical context.

This paper surveys literary works that reproduce the construction of confrontation between 'maternity and anti-maternity' and shows the characteristics of the society who enjoyed the works. By using the maternal aspects that are embodied in modern and contemporary literature, this paper also searches for maternal values corresponding to today's socio-cultural situation and surveys Korean family culture.

2. Maternity vs. Anti-Maternity Shown in Mythical Narratives

1. The Original Aspect of Maternal Principle: *Samseung halmang bonpuri*

Samseung halmang bonpuri (Myth of the Three Goddesses Governing

Childbirth) is a myth about goddesses governing childbirth and nurture that shows the basic principle of maternity and is narrated orally in “Buldomaji” (a shaman song), a song that contains the origin of pregnancy, childbirth and nurture. In “Buldomaji,” the two myths explaining the history of Jeoseung-halmang (Gusamseung) who takes the soul of a dead child and Saengbul-halmang (Samseung-halmang) who is seated as a goddess of childbirth and nurture are narrated orally. They are connected in the ceremonial context and embody the divinity and authority of Samseung-halmang.³

Gusamseung-halmang, who was born the daughter of the Dragon King of the East Sea, is expelled because she has made many mistakes while growing up. For her livelihood, she learns the way of being a goddess governing life from her mother. Severely scolded by her father, she comes to this world without learning the way completely. She blesses the wife of Imbaksa with a baby. But she doesn't know the way of delivery, leaving the wife of Imbaksa at death's door. Imbaksa appeals the unfair treatment to Heaven. The daughter of Myeongjin-guk is recommended to the King of Heaven who is looking for a goddess governing life to solve the problem. Owing to the opposition of Gusamseung-halmang, the two women bet on the blooming of flowers in front of the King of Heaven. The daughter of Myeongjin-guk who blooms flowers in all their glory becomes Saengbul-halmang, while the daughter of the Dragon King of the East Sea who blooms withered flowers became Jeoseung-halmang. When the daughter of the Dragon King of the East Sea puts a curse on a newly born baby with a sprig of flowers and warns it will get various diseases in a hundred days, the daughter of Myeongjin-guk says she will provide presents and food for the baby and persuades the daughter of the Dragon King of the East Sea to be good and make peace each other. The two goddesses drink a farewell drink and go to this world and the underworld respectively as Iseung-halmang and Jeoseung-halmang. The ceremony reproduces the process of conflict and reconciliation of the two goddesses in performance.

Jeoseung-halmang is turned out because of her misbehaviors like impiety and discord with kinsmen; whereas, Saengbul-halmang is described as a character of positive values who coexists peacefully through filial piety, family concord, and construction of a bridge over the deep water and has 'a flourishing flower on the one hand and a reviving flower on the other hand.' This discrepan-

3. Refer to Hyeon Yong-jun 1980 for the order of exorcism of *samseung halmang bonpuri* and *buldomaji gut*.

cy between the two goddesses is apparent before the victory of Samseung-halmang in a bet on blooming flowers. The ability to bloom flowers abundantly signifies plentiful vitality and proves the capability of the goddess governing childbirth. Meanwhile, Gusamseung who fails in assisting childbirth, endangers a life, and shows barrenness by blooming withered flowers is seated as Jeoseung-halmang.

The figuration of the two goddesses in Samseung halmang bonpuri represents maternity that bears and protects a life through pregnancy, childbirth and nurture and anti-maternity that signifies death and barrenness. The aspect of Samseung-halmang who blesses someone with a baby and protects and nurtures it as a virgin has a mythic symbol showing the original view about maternity. The confrontation between the two goddesses reproduces a shamanist imagination praising a maternal victory by expelling anti-maternal elements. The incident of Daebyeolsang, a god of smallpox threatening to children, with Samseung-halmang shows an absolute belief and expectation toward the authority of maternity. Thus, the phenomenon that the doings of Samseung-halmang appear in the forms of a struggle like confrontation (betting on blooming flowers and a struggle with Daebyeolsang) is a plot that shows her powerful and firm divinity. Strong power is essential not only in pregnancy and childbirth but also to protect a child. In a traditional society whose infant mortality rate was high, it was believed that the help of powerful gods or goddesses would stop infant diseases. The plot of a bet and a struggle is used as a device to confirm the authority of divinity and reproduces the form of expelling the anti-maternal phenomena by maternal authority.

The efforts of Samseung-halmang to protect lives appear in both confrontation and reconciliation. It was to preserve the health and life of a child through the reconciliation with Jeoseung-halmang. Such an endless love toward life and positive confrontation against the elements, contrary to life, expresses well the attributes of love and protection of life that maternity has.

The figuration of Samseung-halmang as a healthy, beautiful, and intelligent virgin is a metaphor showing the original theory of the life of maternity. It symbolizes the divinity full of vitality. However, in pregnancy and childbirth corresponding to the practicality of maternal principles, conjugal unity emerges as an important element. The sincerity of a husband is emphasized more in childbirth than in pregnancy. The cases of Imbaksa who builds an altar and prays to Heaven to save his wife and of proud Daebyeolsang who submits to and earnestly begs Samseung-halmang for his wife's safe delivery show part of the folk

customs relating to pregnancy and childbirth in a traditional society where childbirth was considered more important an incident than pregnancy. The fact that a child is born by means of the mother's birth pains and the sincerity of the father shows how the attitudes of father and mother should be when meeting a new life.

2. *Chilseong puri*: Maternity vs. Anti-Maternity Represented as a Real Mother and a Stepmother

*Chilseong puri*⁴ focuses on the familial problem of relations between husband and wife, mother and son, father and son, and between brothers and it assumes the character of a familial myth. The father Chilseong deserts his wife Maehwa and children and leaves his house, hating her when she bore seven sons at one time. The mother makes every effort to nurture the seven sons and volunteers to make a sacrifice for them, recognizing the difficulty of nurturing seven sons without another's help. In the narrative which focuses on the realistic hardships of life for a single mother and her seven sons, the tragedy of the family was caused by the irresponsibility of the father who abandoned his obligation to support his family.

The seven sons search for their father. The father who is living with a second wife welcomes them, makes them study, and establishes familiar relations with them. The stepmother envies her husband who shuns her to take care of the sons of his former wife and buys off a fortune-teller. The stepmother pretends to be sick and says to her husband that the livers of the seven sons are a medicine for her illness. Chilseong makes up his mind to sacrifice his seven sons for his second wife. This behavior by the father brings about a narrative response, the appearance of the devoted real mother to save her seven sons. The real mother who becomes a big deer provides her liver and saves the lives of her sons. The seven sons who were saved by their mother's sacrifice fight a decisive battle with the stepmother.

Father's behavior shows a lack of understanding by the father who has lost objective cognitive power toward the reality of life. In the past history, he deserted his wife and seven sons by running away from home and this lack of under-

4. There are alternative versions of the shamanist myth *Chilseong puri* and Hong Na-re closely reviews the different aspects of these versions (Hong 1997:7-18).

standing is regarded as another expression of 'lack of father'. As the inability of understanding the reality of life becomes an element to worsen the immediate familial problem, it is practically the same as a lack of the role of the father.

The real mother solves the danger to her sons that was caused by the father's lack of cognitive ability. The mother who gave up her liver to save the lives of her sons realizes the image of a self-sacrificing and devoted mother. Here, the real mother and the stepmother are distinguished as a devoted mother and as a bad mother who tries to kill the sons for her own benefit. The sons who were saved by the sacrifice of their real mother uncover the conspiracy of their stepmother and restore their home by reviving their real mother.

Thus, the two mothers, a real mother and a stepmother, show opposite attitudes toward the sons. The real mother becomes a mother through pregnancy and childbirth and is a being that plays the role of mother. Though her husband abandons her soon after childbirth, she is a devoted mother who is pleased to sacrifice her own life for her sons. Her grown-up sons revive their mother and the dissolved family is restored. Meanwhile, the stepmother becomes a mother through marriage. The situation develops where she must play the maternal role to the sons of the former wife who suddenly appear without the pre-stage of becoming a mother. The stepmother, who is not accustomed to maternal roles, becomes anxious and conflicts with the sons of the former wife when her husband restores a familiar relation between father and son. To resolve the conflict, she organizes a conspiracy and tries to kill the sons. This attitude is contradictory to the attitude of a real mother who sacrifices herself for her sons.

The stepmother is motivated by jealousy. The existence of the seven sons of the former wife who intervene in the intimate relation between her and her husband can be recognized as an obstacle to hurting the affection and solidarity with her husband. It is an anti-maternal behavior that the stepmother organizes a conspiracy and attempts to kill the seven sons. The fact that the stepmother has no children functions as an element showing her anti-maternal phase, compared with the fact that the real mother has seven sons.

The thorough punishment of the stepmother, the revival of the real mother at the end, and the restoration of the familial relation creates an ideology that praises and views self-sacrificing and devoted maternity as a matter of course. The victory of maternity and the punishment against anti-maternity can also be regarded as a plot showing that the life of a woman and mother are meaningful only in relation to sons. It shows that self-sacrificing maternity will eventually be compensated as a mother of sons, highlighting the absolute sacrifice and

devotion of a mother. The status of the real mother who overcomes difficulties, revives brilliantly as a mother of sons, and becomes the center of a family seems to help the mother adhere to the familial concept by blood and the female identity as a mother of sons. Such recognition is confirmed in the conflicts between wife and concubine and between stepmother and sons of the former wife that are repeated in family novels during the second half of the Joseon dynasty.

Chilseong puri is a myth about the origin of the family, showing the process of forming a family through the marriage of Chilseong and Maehwa and childbirth, where the structure of the family appears as a conjugal family. Such a family form shows that the group that inherited this myth regarded such a conjugal familial form as a typical one (Seo 1988:95). Moreover, this myth shows the recognition for obligation and the role of each family member in familial relations. It presents the roles of a father who should support his family as the head of the family, a mother who bears and nurtures her sons and daughters, and the sons who should solve familial problems and inherit the family line.

Recognition of Maternity in Ancient Novels

In ancient novels with their medieval narrative style, a mother is generally a marginal person behind her husband and sons and works as an assistant to help her sons grow (Jeong 2002:242). But the roles of a mother are mostly concentrated on childbirth and nurture. This phenomenon reflects the situation that the roles of a mother secured a typical character suitable to the patriarchal ideology when ancient novels were written. Therefore, if in an ancient novel ‘a mother’ is highlighted in front of the narrative and works as an axis leading the narrative, it is not through a typical mother showing a maternal phase but through a bad mother showing anti-maternity. Novels of the stepmother-type which focus on the conflict between a stepmother and sons of the former wife and novels of the type with conflicts between wife and concubine are the works highlighting women as the central figures. This paper will review anti-maternal phases realized through the villainous types of characters, and search for the recognition toward maternity that is pursued through them.

1. *Sassinamjeonggi*: Maternity vs. Anti-Maternity Appearing in the Relation between Wife and Concubine

Lady Sa and Lady Gyo, the major characters in *Sassinamjeonggi* (Record of Lady Sa's Trip to the South), are related as a wife married in poverty and a concubine. As she bore no son for a long time, Lady Sa persuades her husband Yu Yeon-su to take a concubine to produce an heir and positively joins in showing the concubine into the house. However, since Lady Gyo bears a son, the latent conflict stemming from the hierarchy within the family begins to slowly emerge. Lady Gyo who would like to be a concubine of a court noble rather than a wife of a poor man of virtue makes a positive effort to accomplish her desire. When pregnant, she goes to a shaman, asks the fetus's gender and practices magic to change the daughter into a son. All these efforts are aimed at securing her position as the mother of a son who will succeed to the family line. Meanwhile, Lady Gyo who is as proud as a peacock because of her son feels anxious when the legal wife, Lady Sa bears a son. Lady Gyo together with her adulterer Dongchang develops a tragic situation to harm Lady Sa. Infatuating Yu Yeon-su by dancing and singing, fabricating evidence and situations, and raising the degree of the plot to do harm, Lady Gyo marches toward the ousting of Lady Sa.

Lady Sa is an extremely virtuous and modest wife, an intelligent daughter-in-law, and an affectionate mother. The conspicuous examples of maternity in Lady Sa's features appear largely in two cases. First, Lady Sa shows an open-minded love to the sons who will succeed to their family. The fact that Lady Sa loves Lady Gyo's son equally like her own son shows her sense of value of attaching importance to the family rather than an individual. Her behavior toward her husband, Lady Gyo, and the son of Lady Gyo are features of an ideological person devoted to the continuity and prosperity of the family beyond the biological view of maternity. This is contrasted with Lady Gyo's behavior of pursuing her private desires. Second, Lady Sa shows concern for the safety of her sons. In the passage when she faints upon hearing the news that her son Ina is missing and upon meeting him at home when she thinks he is dead are exceptionally passionate considering her reasonable character. These two phases coexist in Lady Sa's maternity, an ideological aspect showing a revival of patriarchal ideology and blood love toward her real son. Such maternity by Lady Sa can be affirmed in her other roles and is based on her fine character and her distinguished nature, culture, and morality that are cultivated by education.

In the maternal features of Lady Gyo, the phase of maternity and its opposite phase of anti-maternity are largely coexisting. First, let's look at the maternal phase of Lady Gyo. When pregnant for the first time, she asks a shaman about the fetus's gender and bears a son by practicing magic to change a daughter into

a son. Such an eager desire for a son proves that a private desire is preferred to maternity. However, in the passage where she laments bitterly over the death of her second son Bongju, she shows pure maternity. Maternity is also shown where she refuses Dongcheong's proposal to kill Jangju, but various complicated phases are mixed in the passage intriguing against Lady Sa by taking advantage of the son's death. The outburst of Lady Gyo's wicked anger implies an increasing psychological mechanism when her sorrow for her son's death is changed into hatred toward Lady Sa. Lady Gyo internalizes self-consciousness as a victim more conspicuously at this point; the maternal love and private and selfish desire coexisting within Lady Gyo collide. As a result, Lady Gyo attains the prize position of a legal wife, not to mention the ousting of Lady Sa.

The anti-maternal behaviors in Lady Gyo's figuration are largely composed of an attempt to kill Lady Sa's fetus and another attempt to take advantage of her own son. Lady Gyo secretly puts an abortive medicine into Lady Sa's medicine, but Lady Sa always vomits whenever she takes the medicine. Even though Lady Gyo ordered a maid to put Ina into the river and to leave no trace behind, the maid put the baby in the bush and saved the baby. In order to expel Lady Sa, Lady Gyo takes advantage of her own son several times. By burying a wizard thing and making her own son fall ill, Lady Gyo positively takes advantage of her son's death to expel Lady Sa.

The ideological values appearing in the conflict between Lady Sa and Lady Gyo have a few layers that have the effect of showing the figure, ethics, and maternity of the character comparatively. The role of a wife seems to be central in *Sassinamjeonggi* and is mainly composed of the conflict between a wife and a concubine. But the roles of wife, mother, and daughter-in-law also appear equally important because in the familial structure during the Joseon dynasty, a wife was a daughter-in-law and mother before playing the role of wife. Therefore, maternity emerges as an important element in comparing characters. Wise and virtuous Lady Sa is a benevolent and maternal woman. On the contrary, cunning Lady Gyo is an obscene and anti-maternal woman who takes advantage of even her own son. It is because her desire has priority above all. Lady Gyo, who takes advantage of her son's death to strengthen her position within the family, actually sympathizes with the suggestion of Dongcheong to kill the son, which works as a decisive momentum toward an unrecoverable and destructive ending.

The relation between a wife and a concubine can be complementary from the standpoint of the husband but is antagonistic from the standpoint of the wife. This relational perception is a serious problem because the wife and the concu-

bine have a different social status according to the marriage system. But there is a bigger problem for Lady Gyo who emphasizes private desire than for Lady Sa who gives priority to the benefits of the family. Apart from a wife who is supported legally and systematically, a relatively unstable concubine usually takes relation-oriented action to achieve her firm status. Lady Gyo who positively uses her beauty and talent to fulfill her desire is criticized because she focuses on establishing relations through the medium of sexuality. Sexuality is an axis of her desire and works as a means to realize another desire. This is an intolerable misbehavior from the viewpoint of Confucian feminist ethics which lays emphasis on chastity.

It is very suggestive that sexuality forms an axis of desire of Lady Gyo who is embodied as an obscene wife and an anti-maternal mother. This tells us that the two axes of the age, the ideology of chastity and the ideology of maternity that govern women, are closely connected with the oppression of femininity. This can be confirmed in the fact that Lady Yim who becomes a concubine after Lady Gyo's ousting is a virtuous person, helps Lady Sa, and nurtures Ina with maternity. This shows the recognition of writers and readers of ancient novels who think the qualities of 'maternity and anti-maternity' revealed in women are connected with characters.

From the viewpoint of feminist desire, there are new clues regarding the figuration of Lady Gyo. They show the conflict between maternity and anti-maternity, presented as a topic in feminist novels since modern times, in that Lady Gyo realized and pursued her femininity.

2. Novels of the Stepmother-Type: Maternity vs. Anti-Maternity Revealed in the Relationship between a Real Mother and a Stepmother

The novels of the stepmother-type are developed on the axis of the conflict between a stepmother and the sons of the former wife. This type of narrative establishes the stepmother as an evil character and the conflict within a family is dormant from the very beginning of the stepmother's appearance. The conflict is in proportion to the growth of the son whom the stepmother bore. Such conflict in the novels of stepmother-type can be largely summarized into two elements.

First, there is the problem of property rights that appears in the earlier novels (Kim 1996:146). For instance, in *Janghwa hongryeonjeon* (Rose Flower and Pink Lotus), whose main topic is the conflict between sons and daughters of the

former wife and the stepmother, the problem of heir doesn't become conspicuous. The dormant conflict between the sons and daughters of the former wife and the stepmother becomes explosive over the issue of property rights. Lady Heo, who thinks highly of property as marital conditions, desires to keep the property rights and to protect the future of her and her son. Consequently, the conflict between the sons and daughters of the former wife and the stepmother enters on a grim phase.

Second, there is another problem for heirs that appear in the later novels (Kim. 1996:147). It is only through her sons that a woman is able to secure her status under the system of clan rules. Not to speak of bearing a son, the son's status within the family is very important. Meanwhile, in the case of the lack of a legitimate eldest son, it is possible for a son of the stepmother to become an heir. The stepmother desires to make her own son the heir of the family and plots to remove the obstacle, the son of the former wife. As a result, the conflict between the sons and daughters of the former wife and the stepmother appears as an extreme confrontation.

In the novels of the stepmother-type, the problem of a stepmother stems from an innate character, which concretely appears as discrimination between children of the former wife and her own children. The stepmother who is bad to children of the former wife also becomes a benevolent and devoted mother to her own children. The criticism against a stepmother centers on the anti-maternity to love only her own children, to maltreat the children of the former wife and even to threaten their lives. Such maternity of a stepmother appears as an enlargement of selfish self-love. It is at this point that the maternity of a stepmother is criticized. A stepmother is a titular mother of all the children of the head of a family. The problem is that it is difficult to take such a positive attitude; however evil the character of a stepmother is, she doesn't always do evil from the beginning. As her own son grows older, she worries about the future of her and her son and comes to have desires. So adherence to her son of flesh and blood induces misbehaviors. Such behavior by the stepmother to give priority to her son violates the basic premise to protect all the children of her husband. The ending when an anti-maternal mother is punished emphasizes that a woman should bear and nurture a son to maintain patriarchy, give priority to familial orders rather than her private desires, and sacrifice herself. Therefore, such private and selfish desires against familial orders become an evil object to be punished. For these reasons, the immoderate maternity of a stepmother toward her son is criticized and rejected as misbehavior which harms familial orders.

Trying to make her son an heir instead of the legitimate eldest son is a behavior that challenges patriarchal order and shows matrilineal adhesion to blood. In the family system of the Joseon dynasty, to become a mother of the heir means to have considerable authority within the family. In spite of the cause of familial inheritance to succeed to her husband, the adhesion to her own blood shown in the conflict of succession works secretly as an unconscious desire for the preservation and succession of her blood. Thus, the stepmother's desire to give priority to matrilineal blood can be a challenge to the patriarchal and centered on patriarchal blood.

In later family novels of the stepmother-type, the conflict of succession between a stepmother and the sons of the former wife assumes the form of a conflict caused by the son of the concubine (*changseongamuirok*) or the form of a conflict between an adopted son and a legitimate son that the legitimate mother who bore a son after making an adopted son an heir tries to break the adoption. The denial of a breach of adoption and the reconfirmation of an adopted son and heir, which appear in long novels like *Seonghyeongongsukyeolgi* and *Eomssihyomuncheonghaengnok*, show part of the familial actuality which was implemented in the second half of the Joseon dynasty (Park 1998:268-74). This is the conflict between the consciousness of orthodox clan rules and the consciousness of clan rules by blood. In the above novels, the head of the family represents the former and the mother the latter whose insistence is rejected by the head of a family (Park 1998:280-1). Raised by the mother in the consciousness of clan rules by blood, the matrilineal consciousness to make her son an heir in the cause of the lineage of her husband works as a more powerful motive. The phenomenon that the familial conflict becomes conspicuous appears in a more negative way as priority is given to a private desire, especially the desire of a mother (Park 1998:281).

The figuration shown in novels of the stepmother-type can be summarized as follows. First, there is a case of the real mother versus the stepmother. The sorrowful emotion of a dying mother whose children are left behind appears in her earnest will toward her husband and children. Such a mother usually takes the remarriage of her husband for granted and asks her husband to remarry a virtuous woman who will take care of her children well. Foreseeing the uncomfortable relation between a stepmother and sons and daughters of the former wife, she thinks highly of the character of the stepmother. However, contrary to the dead real mother showing sincere love toward her sons and daughters, the stepmother develops uncomfortable relations with sons and daughters of the former

wife.

Second, a stepmother has the two-sided maternity of a real mother and a stepmother. The name stepmother was named from the standpoint of sons and daughters of the former wife and means a mother who succeeds their real mother. The existence of 'stepmother' has complicated maternity because she is a stepmother to sons and daughters of the former wife and a real mother to her own sons and daughters. In the novels of the stepmother-type that have a pattern in characters and narrative structure, a stepmother has 'maternity when she is established as a real mother' and 'maternity when she is narrated as a stepmother' at the same time. The fact that different roles and behaviors coexist in a character shows the gap between consanguine maternity and non-consanguine maternity. The fact that the character as a stepmother assumes instability in general is due to the way of existence to accept and play the antipodal roles. The complicated phase of the figuration of a stepmother, containing the tendency of self-dissociation, has been embodied in the narrative of inner conflicts that occurs within a character in the history of novels since the modern times. Thus, stepmother-type characters are worth being noticed as the pre-stage for the modern type of characters with a problematic tendency.

Modern and Contemporary Aspects of Maternal Figuration

1. Choi Jeong-hi's *Jimaek*: Maternity vs. Anti-Maternity Appearing as Motherhood and Femininity

The inception of *Jimaek* (The Layer) (1994) has the heroine, Eunyeong, arranging the household goods which are going to the *gisaeng* (female entertainer) house in Seoul where she will work as a needlewoman. With the death of her husband as momentum, Eunyeong who was confident in her choice realizes her situation as a marginal woman and finds out that she is nothing but a concubine and mother of an illegitimate child who cannot be guaranteed legally or systematically. In spite of being 'an intelligent woman that has read many progressive books', Eunyeong feels contempt when she is rejected in the work field and finds herself as a needlewoman at a *gisaeng* house after the death of her husband. Suffering from the stern realities of life, Eunyeong who was confident in her identity and was a brave woman falls into self-examination, discontent, anxiety, and fear. She becomes a believer of religion, suppresses her love toward

Sanghun, and leaves Seoul with determination to internalize maternity as religion.

Eunyeong's attitude toward Sanghun is antinomical. Though she has a keen desire for Sanghun, she abandons it for the happiness of her children. However, Sanghun is actually an indispensable person because she wants Sanghun earnestly above all and not just to have her children's names entered in a family register and to solve her present hardships. Meanwhile, in the background of choosing maternal values after suffering from the serious conflict between femininity and maternity, there are the examples of remarried women like Buyong and Hasun's mother that Eunyeong positively refers to. Buyong, who is a concubine of a rich man in Jeollado, knew 'there would be no problem if she had money' but experiences conflict and confusion because of her irresistible longing for her separated daughter and her hate against the son of the former wife. Moreover, she conceives a child with her loveless husband. Hasun's mother is a worried woman who left her daughter to someone else and sends living expenses to the child because her remarried husband dislikes her. The two characters are separated from their daughters owing to remarriage and suffer from pain owing to worries about them. In the figuration of Buyong who suffers from the double pain owing to motherhood of her real daughter and hate against the son of the former wife, the aspect of a stepmother-type character can be found.

The narrative point of *Jimaek*, centering on female characters corresponding to socially marginal persons, shows a certain difference from narrative literature of the former times, which were described from the standpoint of the real wife and sons and daughters of the former wife. While narrative literature of the former times criticized the stepmother and concubine, this writing describes the joys and sorrows of these characters objectively or from their viewpoints. Though the desires such as Eunyeong's love and Buyong's economic abundance intrude into the motive of their marriage, the reason for their choice is presented persuasively and such elements don't work as a negative quality in the figuration. On the contrary, the situation of suffering characters becomes conspicuous as a result of such choices. Seen from the viewpoint of maternity, a dualism appears in the figuration of these characters. Though the maternal quality toward their own sons appears conspicuously, there is a limit to the concrete realization owing to realistic conditions.

While brokenhearted by missing her own separated daughter, Buyong suffers from the hatred toward the son of the former wife. Her hatred toward her stepson is caused by the stepson's extreme antipathy toward her. Such an attachment

to her own blood and antipathy toward sons and daughters of the former wife follow the structure appearing in novels of the stepmother-type. The blood-centered view of family also appears in the male character; a good example being Hasun's stepfather who loves his wife but rejects his stepdaughter.

The examples of Buyong and Hasun's mother become so good a reference that Eunyeong makes up her mind to suppress her affection toward Sanghun and indulge herself in the self-sacrificing role of a mother. Such a situation seems to reflect part of the then family culture. It reflects the situation that in an atmosphere of accepting remarriage, the problem of children among all the problems caused by remarriage is left unsolved. The behavior of the husband of Hasun's mother, loving his wife but not loving her daughter, shows the then situation that the centrality of a legitimate son based on familial views by blood was dominant.⁵ The fact that the structural pattern of conflict of the stepmother-type narratives is reproduced in the example of Buyong shows that the social custom or idea of the former times connected with this continues. In spite of realizing her desire toward Sanghun, Eunyeong's attitude of refusing remarriage based on the negative example of the relation between Hasun and her stepfather reflects the then realistic recognition that maternity and feminist desire could be incompatible. This seems to be supported by the fact that her volition toward maternity appears in a desperate effort to upgrade and internalize maternity in the religious phase.

Troubled with the choice between femininity and maternity, Eunyeong chooses maternity. This proves that maternity is the most important feminist virtue and also an expected role of a woman. In Eunyeong's case, there works the consciousness of a marginal person who wants her fallen status to be compensated by devoting herself to ruling values and wants to elevate her pride. Her maternal volition of devoting herself to the absolute value of maternity and choosing the painstaking way is associated with the attitude of a seeker of truths that devotes oneself to religion and muddles through the bitters of life. Such attitudes of feminist characters can be found in other works of Choi Jeong-hi.⁶

5. A similar phenomenon can be found in Choi Jeong-hi's *Cheonmaek* (The Heaven's Layer). Yeoni, the heroine, is a character who is troubled with her husband who doesn't accept her son and with her son who dislikes his stepfather.

6. For instance, such a character as Chaehi in *Ingansa* (Human Affairs) who isn't related to maternity and pursues feminist desires—who indulges in luxury, is faithful to her emotion, neglects her child and leads a dissipated life with men—changes into the incarnation of maternity to take care of her handicapped children as a self-sacrificing mother at last.

The maternity elevated to a religious level in the works of Choi Jeong-hi demands self-sacrifice and devotion in practice that can be compared with those of a truth seeker. Such a phenomenon has a double-faced relation to the fact that feminist desires awakened within female characters are reproduced more vividly than in other works. As the conflict between feminist desire and maternity is vividly described, the maternal figuration elevated to a religious level shows a more transcendental tendency. The attitude of internalizing maternity is applicable to the work to make sacrifice and devotion meaningful as a way of overcoming the conflict. Such bestowal of meaning seems to be the process of making the cause of devotion toward maternal values.

Choi Jeong-hi's view on maternity, the appearance of a transcendental intention, appears in her pro-Japanese literature and involves the possibility of connection with militarist maternity. 'The mother of a militant nation' to beautify militarism and to be mobilized in it elevates maternity to the religious level in her former works and the biological maternity to the contrary is criticized as a blind and ignorant maternity.⁷ The biological maternity which values the lives of her sons and daughters above all else is negated as the anti-maternity. 'Knowing blind affection before her eyes and killing her sons and daughters with her hands' is a militarist maternity to beautify participation in a war and death in battle. Such recognition of maternity is reproduced in her pro-Japanese novels, *Yeomyeong* (Daybreak) and *Yagukcho* (Wild National Plant) (Lee 2002). Moreover, in Choi Jeong-hi's speeches, the process of a mother becoming aware of militarist maternity through reproach of her son who learned the ideology of militarism is shown.

2. O Jeong-hi's *Baramui neok*: Maternal Role and Maternity vs. Anti-Maternity Appearing in the Search of Identity

O Jeong-hi's female characters have offered a new possibility for feminist literature since the 1980s and are married women who seem to lead comfortable lives but actually are the ones who show a deep interest in the original self beyond their daily lives. Eunsu, the heroine of *Baramui neok* (The Soul of Wind)

7. "In every respect, an ignorant mother only knows blind affection before her eyes but by no means recognizes the large and brilliant future...After all, such a mother will kill her sons and daughters with her hands...Above all, the power of mothers is essential in order for the youths of the peninsula to be brave soldiers" (Choi Jeong-hi's Speeches).

(1986), runs away from home for the first time after about six months of marriage, wanders from place to place, and comes back home repeatedly. Her husband who was tired of his wife's habitual running away from home declares a separation. Missing her child very much, Eunsu goes to the kindergarten and takes the child to the city where she used to live in her childhood. She wants to know what the scene of the first part of her unidentified memory—the yard where the black rubber shoes lie—means. It may be the first clue to the memory to know who she is. Since puberty when she learned about her adoption, Eunsu has been troubled with the consciousness that the place she lives is not her house and that disturbs her at times. Her desire to know who she is results in repeatedly running away from home and wandering.

There are two different selves to Eunsu. The first self is Eunsu who tries to find out self through the memory of childhood. Her desire to know about her origins appears as repeated, habitual running away from home. The second self is the present Eunsu who is a wife and mother good at housekeeping. The two selves appear in incompatible relations with such different time as the past and the present in the background. The behavior of Eunsu, conflicting between the two selves, is recognized as the one that causes anxiety and is difficult to understand to neighboring characters. Eunsu's wandering to discover who she is shows instability in her life and an inability to settle down in daily life. Though her desire is serious enough to abandon daily routine, it just seems incomprehensible to her family (i.e., her husband and mother-in-law who want daily stability). Considering that her son Seungil is a child who needs to be protected, her habitual running away from home should be criticized as an inappropriate behavior, neglectful of a mother's duty.

Eunsu's habitual running away from home cannot be understood by her husband, Sejung, who dreams of an ordinary daily life. He doesn't try to approach the core of the conflict located inside her. The character of Eunsu, who doesn't reveal herself, can be another cause. This shows the lack of communication between husband and wife. Such a relational aspect that only to accomplish respective roles are considered to maintain conjugal relations completely doesn't raise the necessity of understanding each other substantially. Such a phenomenon can be applicable to the accomplishment of the role toward maternity. How much Eunsu loves her son as a mother can be judged only through the accomplishment of her role as a mother. Under the circumstances, the maternal role of Eunsu who habitually runs away from home cannot coincide with the maternal role that is generally expected. Therefore, in spite of her earnest maternity, she is

judged and rejected as an anti-maternal mother by her husband and mother-in-law.

After she was expelled from her husband's house, her desire toward her son becomes much stronger. She is keen on showing her love toward her son and wants her son to be a complete anchor for her, but even her sincere desire couldn't quell her whirling wantonness. Though the self-confirmation as a mother existed as part of Eunsu along with her search for her origin, it appears that the two selves couldn't coexist, because her habitual running away from home works as a restriction that cannot satisfy the social expectations as a mother. Though her son was invaluable to Eunsu, she was upset over a basic problem that couldn't be solved by her son. Only after a lot of wandering and offering real precious things—a mother to her son and a stable marriage life—as sacrifices, she reaches the first part of memory. The young Eunsu, who witnessed her parents' death and an unbearable miserable scene, tried an instinctive self-defense to escape from the nightmare by forgetting the external injury, and buried part of herself together with the memory. Eunsu who arrives at the place by herself reaches her hand out toward young Eunsu.

“Come on, my young soul, a wandering soul like wind, let endless yearning go to sleep and come back to me.” (O 1986:275)

This calling of Eunsu reminds us of the memorial ceremony which invokes the spirits of the dead. It is the invocation of her soul for the days of wandering like a phantom. As mistress of the ceremony, Eunsu sees her two selves unified as one and being born again can be compared to a hero of heroic narratives, culminating the long journey of expedition. The numerous wanderings were journeys of investigation to meet her ego. The joint journey with her son shows that the search for her ego and the role of mother were parts of Eunsu. Her external injury was caused by the violence of war. However, the meaning of the long journey to cure the injury is not confined to a historical phase of the war. It says that before the socially described roles of a wife or a mother, the most important thing in a women's life is to confirm their identity and to be true ones. Eunsu's search for her ego culminates in restoring completely her juvenile memory and compromising with her ego in memory. Considering the end of the work, it is expected that she will find her ego, finish long wanderings, and be born again as the subject of her life. However, will she be born again as a proud mother who doesn't mind her neighbors' eyes?

3. Gong Seon-ok's *Bulgeun podaegi*: Maternity and Unified Femininity

While the feminist novels in the 1990s are developed as the narrative of daughter, the works of Gong Seon-ok, who has written with the topic of maternity itself, are remarkable owing to the narrative developed by the voice of the mother. Though the mostly unmarried single mom heroines of Gong Seon-ok's writings are unstable beings socially or economically, they are quite satisfied and comfortable irrespective of their actual conditions. Because they are filled with love toward life, they are able to overcome their unfavorable actuality. Children are the origin and meaning of life. In spite of the bad conditions, the mothers are the beings who take care of children, i.e., invaluable life and find the power and reason to live.⁸

It seems that in the figuration of maternity in Gong Seon-ok's works that inherit part of so-called 'absence of father' narrative tradition, the aspect of mythic female characters is fully reproduced. Like the repeated ordeals of Yuhwa, mother of the Goguryeo birth myth, the mothers in Gong Seon-ok's novels are women who suffer from their own hardships and realize their own motherhood. Maternity is an important motive and identity in itself where they can rediscover themselves. Such maternal recognition and ability isn't something that was given to women from the beginning. While suffering from severe hardships, it is a gift that they find for themselves. It is important that such maternal recognition is the identity they confirm for themselves in the process of severe conflicts with the myth of maternity. This is where the maternity of Gong Seon-ok's female characters is distinguished from maternal ideology.⁹ The difference between the maternity shown in Gong Seon-ok's characters and the existing deified maternity can be found at the point where they are described as subjective and strong women who realize and get over the contradiction of patri-

8. This phenomenon forms the mainstream of Gong Seon-ok's writings in his early novels to *Susubateuro oseyo* (Come to the Sorghum Field).

9. The familial relation based on marriage, i.e., the relation based on the love between man and woman, can disappear; nevertheless, it is an original value that cannot be abandoned and shows love toward life. It shows a certain distinction from maternal ideology in that it is based on the basic love toward living life free from various conventions that form the familial relation—relational formation through marriage, childbirth, or blood relation; the mothers are healthy and frank enough to reveal their behaviors unworthy of motherhood—drinking, smoking, sexual desire, or deviate behaviors.

archy. They are described as positive and tolerant figures with primitive power (Kim 2005:107).

While Gong Seon-ok's *Bulgeum podaegi* (A Red Quilt for Babies) maintains the characteristics of her writings, meaningful changes are attempted in its firm structure and the way of describing characters and its thematic consciousness. It is evaluated that this work overcame the stereotype of the former writings to a considerable degree. The novel centers on Yeongmae who is the second wife of Huijo and the stepmother of brother and sister, Taegeon and Byeonghye and mother of her own sons and daughters, Taejun, Inhye and Suhye. The story begins with Inhye's homecoming after receiving Huijo's call to nurse Yeongmae. The narrative method that focuses on Inhye differs in its viewpoint from existing stepmother-type narratives that target the stepmother and her sons and daughters from the standpoint of sons and daughters of the former wife. Development of this narrative is closely connected with the writing's intention to re-illuminate the situation of a stepmother covered with conventional views and to search for the possibility to unify femininity and maternity. To realize such thematic consciousness, this writing uses the love of Yeongmae and her sons and daughters as a central motif. By doing so, a new type of character that can overthrow the narrative custom of the novels of the stepmother-type is created.

When her fiancé dies in an accident, Yeongmae volunteers for school service in a remote rural area to cover up being an unmarried mother, bears Taejun, and accepts the marriage proposal of the widower Huijo who promises to have her son entered in the family register. After marriage, she is a teacher for forty years, takes responsibility for supporting her family, and lives as a faithful wife, daughter-in-law, and self-sacrificing mother to the sons and daughters of the former wife. While the sons and daughters of the former wife are brought up enjoying all the benefits under the protection of her mother-in-law and husband, the sons and daughters of Yeongmae are laid aside and brought up feeling relative deprivation. As a result, the social success of the sons and daughters of the former wife is compared with the failure to socially adapt by the sons and daughters of Yeongmae—the wickedness of Taejun, the pride of Inhye, and the abnormality of Suhye.

The motif of 'an unmarried mother' works as an important clue to understanding the character of Yeongmae. The fact that she became pregnant, which violated a taboo in the then society where virginity was valued, shows that she is a woman who affirms feminist desires. Such a characteristic goes side by side with the maternal phase of Yeongmae to nurture the sons and daughters of the

former wife devotedly. It suggests the axis of the pattern of characters this writing aims for. Yeongmae's femininity appears as follows: even though 'more than ten years have passed since menopause' and she is seriously ill, she feels 'physical ecstasy in spite of the pains of sexual intercourse with Huijo; she 'sheds tears' 'feeling comfort nobody has ever given to her when Huijo's body sticks close to her body;' and she 'confesses frankly that she would like to get such pains more than ten times' (Gong 2003:69-70).

Such consciousness of Yeongmae appears by looking at the problems of her sons and daughters. She accepts untouched such seemingly abnormal phenomena as the immorality of Taejun, Inhye's luckless love affair and an abortion, and the pregnancy of Suhye. The attitude of Yeongmae, affirming her children's love and desires as they are regardless of the moral standards, shows her absolute affirmation toward life itself that is innate in them. Inhye inherits such a viewpoint, which works as an important axis solving familial problems.

Inhye is brought up and neglected in favor of her stepbrothers and stepsisters, eats another's salt at a relative's house in Seoul, and earns her school expenses by working from the high school course. Naturally, she has wrath and antipathy toward unilateral familial relations. Though she plans to go study abroad to get away from her family, she is forced to come back home to nurse her mother and gets involved in familial problems such as Taejun's marital discord and Suhye's pregnancy. In this vortex, the old lover, who betrays her devoted love and leaves her, comes back and the pains of her broken heart and the memory of her agonies increases. Suhye's pregnancy works as the momentum where the painful memory of the mother—anxiety and fear of an unmarried mother—meets the injury of Inhye represented as abortion. Inhye blots out the memories of injury and pain in her mind and the mother embraces and comforts her. The mother who sympathizes with Inhye's pains through her own experiences shows original love and the will to protect life without regard to social common notions. The mother urges Inhye in regards to Suhye's abortion to respect the femininity and love of Suhye, and the child. Such a mind of the mother revives wholly in the mind of Inhye, who hears Suhye leaving for the hospital to have the abortion and runs after her to stop her. Through communication with the mother, Inhye blots out her gloomy memory, is reconciled with her ego, and comes to understand the mother's mind. Through a process Inhye realizes the absolute value of life.

Podaeagi is a baby's quilt. It is compared to the breast of a mother from the standpoint of nurturing a child and to the womb from the standpoint of nurturing

life that will continue the next generation. While children are brought up wrapped in *podaegi*, the mother becomes more and more vacant. A 'red' *podaegi* symbolizes vitality and love. A worn-out one is a symbol of the protection and nurture to all lives. *Podaegi* that is an instrument to embrace and nurture life symbolizes equal maternity to all lives. It is a medium that will make reconciliation possible.

A social common notion or prejudice doesn't matter to the breast of *podaegi*. Yeongmae, who opened her eyes toward life through experiences of injury and pains, is able with great love to embrace all lives in the world. Reconciled with her ego through the love of her mother, Inhye cures her injury and follows her mother's way by sharing the experiences of pains and injury. She makes up her mind to protect the daughter of Suhye, a mentally handicapped and unmarried mother, and nurtures her with love. The father Huijo takes a red *podaegi* from Yeongmae's clothes chest and gives it to Inhye. It connects the mother's love with the child of Suhye. The red *podaegi*, which symbolizes the femininity and maternity of Yeongmae, is a band of love and life that solves familial conflicts and connects reciprocal minds.

The maternity of Yeongmae who nurtured the sons and daughters of the former wife more devotedly than her own sons and daughters is based on love and respect toward life. This shows an aspect of a great mother who is the origin of life beyond familial relations by blood. When such maternal energy can be extended from the category of her own children to the children of others, it is said that it appears in sisterly love (Donovan 1985:92). Gong Seon-ok's maternity is not confined to the biological side based on childbirth; the strong solidarity of her female characters is another phase of maternity that is extended to social care.¹⁰

The peak of maternal values in Gong Seon-ok's writings can be seen in *Susubateuro oseyo* (Come to the Sorghum Field). The heroine Kang Pil-sun supports five sons and daughters in all; her own two sons from different fathers, the two daughters of her friend O Eun-ja, and a son named Bomi that her younger sister deserted. A family formed in such a way shows the aspect of a matrilineal

10. "In *Tieodoneun namu* [A Wandering Tree], while the father is wandering from one construction site to another, the mother forms the central axis of all relations around the father as the root of the family. While all the women of the father form solidarity centering on the mother and 'my' hometown, their sisterly love is based on the maternity of the mother" (Kim 2005:109-10).

society. Pil-sun's response to the ex-husband of her younger sister shows that her behavior doesn't come from the mind but comes from spiritual enlightenment attained through severe life experiences. Pil-sun who knows 'what it is to be cold and hungry' thinks about human duties first of all when she sees the ex-husband of her sister and his son in rags (Kim 2005:113). The aspect of Pil-sun who reconfirms a desire of life through this experience shows a new phase of maternity. The maternity that she shows is the maternity extended to the meaning of social care based on love toward life aside from biological parity and reproduces original maternal values. There, we can see the aspect of a great mother showing original love toward the whole life that bears and nurtures all things. It is of great significance that the realization of Pil-sun's indiscriminative maternity not to adhere to blood relation but to care devotedly for her friend O Eun-ja suggests a concrete possibility that maternal values are extending to a social phase. Owing to such a power, her maternity could work even as a power embracing historical injuries (Kim 1995:118-24).

Maternal Values and the Prospect for Family Culture

In the works of women writers since the 1990s, there appears a new type of female character who listens to her own thoughts and seriously searches for feminist desires free from maternal mythology and the ideology of chastity. Meanwhile, how does the relation between this kind of woman and maternity coexist? It seems that literary works don't fully realize such an alternative aspect yet. The expectations toward romantic love and romantic familial mythology are still reproduced.

If maternity is the central axis constituting the home, a protective shelter from uncertain worldly confusion, how can maternal values be reproduced and pursued in a situation where the changes in sexual roles and the forms of family are diversified? Can't maternal values be established as universal human values aside from the distinction of sexes? The so-called course of learning paternal can be understood as a clue to concrete changes. Becoming a different type of father from traditional paternity along with the new aspects of fatherhood like house-husband is creating a paternity that approaches the traditional roles of maternity. After all, a husband, a wife, and all the members of a family should be accustomed to humanistic values that emphasize such relations as consideration, understanding, and love while practicing such values in actuality. Will it be a

method to solve the problem? When the social recognition and condition that the reciprocal roles are respected and practiced in spontaneous light, how admirable it will be if they are practiced at home!

Nowadays, the forms of family are changing. It becomes difficult to say that the notion of a family composed of parents and sons and daughters through marriage is unique. In the case of Western Europe, various communal forms of family including a homosexual couple, a family with adopted sons and daughters, and a family of single father or mother appear and exist without premising blood homogeneity through marriage or childbirth. The roles of the sexes that have been distinguishable traditionally are also collapsing. Though such changes are perceived in literary works, they appear conspicuously in the artistic works of the screen media. In the film *Mister jubu quiz wang* (Mr. Househusband King of Quiz) (2005) that deals with a full-time househusband, there appears a father who is good at housekeeping and is taking good care of children instead of the busy mother who is working outside the home. It provides the momentum to reconsider the fixed idea about traditional sex roles. It is not a strange situation that the traditional roles of mother are realized through fathers. The comic picture *Banjjogi* (Mr. Half), published in the late 1990s, embodies the aspect of a father sharing household affairs and childcare.

These phenomena are examples showing that the changes of family culture have already been visualized. Then, how can the ‘maternity,’ which took charge of childbirth and childcare in the traditional family culture and played an important role in the formation of familial relations, respond to the changing family culture? In the examples above, we can see a father who is playing the role of mother. Instead of the mother, who is working outside of the home, the father takes charge of solving daily familial problems, and protecting and nurturing children. The maternity that has been accomplished traditionally by mothers have been roles imposed on other women irrespective of childbirth or men like fathers. The maternal role related to childcare, even within the changing family culture, is necessary and the ‘maternal role’ Sara Ruddick suggested is very suggestive (Ruddick 2002:21). The roles of mother are necessary. However, they are not imposed on a particular sex or women who have special experiences but are the roles that everybody can do.

Gajokui tansaeng (Birth of a Family), directed by Kim Tae-yong in 2006, is a film showing a new possibility of discourse on family culture and is worth noting. This movie shows a new type of family constituted by people who are not blood related. Centering on the house of Mira, the new family is a matrilineal

family not of blood relation, composed of a daughter, Chae-hyeon, and two mothers. Their relations are not connected through marriage or biological childbirth. The relationship of this non-blood family is compared to the relation between Mira and her real younger brother, Hyeong-cheol. Complications begin when Hyeong-cheol suddenly visits the house. Meanwhile, the family had no news from him for five years after his discharge from the military. Hyeong-cheol introduces Musin as his wife who seems older than him by twenty years and begins an uncomfortable living arrangement with Mira. When Chae-hyeon, the daughter of the former wife of Musin's former husband, comes to see her mother, dormant conflicts arise. Mira, Musin, and Chae-hyeon, all connected by Hyeong-cheol, live together after Hyeong-cheol runs away from home, and they come to form a familial relationship because they are all lonely persons with injuries and need reciprocal care.

The process that persons with different experiences form a familial community is omitted and their complications begin after Chae-hyeon leaves. The story of another family, the brother Gyeong-seok and the sister Seon-gyeong is not a common affair. Seon-gyeong, who has complicated emotions toward her mother and half brother, tries to go abroad to escape from her mother and comes to nurture Gyeong-seok after her mother's death. The love between Gyeong-seok and Chae-hyeon becomes a medium and the story of two families develops.

In spite of a considerable discrepancy in age and a difference of character and experience, Musin and Mira confirm sisterly love on an equivalent basis. It is possible when recognizing mutual differences. Also, the maternity shown in the process of caring for Chae-hyeon may have been realized in the form of mutual care. At the end of the film, when Hyeong-cheol returns with a pregnant woman, Mira drives him away and locks the gate. With the gate as a border, the scene where the non-blood relation of the three women and Gyeong-seok are inside the house and the blood relation of Hyeong-cheol and the pregnant woman he brought home are outside the gate distinguishes the familial relation. The comparative structure between Hyeong-cheol outside the house, trying to live upon Mira under the pretext of blood relation, and the persons inside the house, caring for one another with affection despite the non-blood relation, raises the question 'What is a true family?' It shows a new familial notion based on love and sympathy aside from the blood-centered familial idea.

In this movie, the female characters don't have any parity. Gyeong-seok's sister, Seon-gyeong, is unmarried and Chae-hyeon's two mothers don't have childbirth experience. However, they realize maternal values through nurturing

themselves and extend their horizon. The process is also remarkable that Seon-gyeong, who had a strong partiality toward her mother, comes to understand her mother with time while nurturing Gyeong-seok. It is the process of reinterpreting the history of the mother through maternity and to also find out the history of the daughter Seon-gyeong. It is embodied in the passage reinterpreting the contents of memory about Gyeong-seok's mother. The expression 'filthy' of Gyeong-seok was just the expression of Seon-gyeong's hatred against her mother. In Seon-gyeong's reinterpretation 'She was warm-hearted,' there contains the changing process of her perception, while understanding the history of her mother's life through maternal experience and also finding out her own history and identity as a daughter. The story of Seon-gyeong and her mother shows the transition from 'the narrative of daughter' to 'the narrative of communication between mother and daughter.'

The narrative tradition of absence of father is also reproduced in this film. Irrespective of parity, the fact that women are playing the role of mother in both families can be understood as signifying that maternity is a unique attribute of women. Nevertheless, this movie provides us with an opportunity to question the conviction, i.e., the relativity of family and blood relation, which is rooted deeply in us. Among the problems caused by a blood-centered familial ideology adhering to blood relations, our topic, 'Hindrance to extension to the social phase of maternal values', will be indicated.

As stated above, we can confirm that the main virtues constituting various forms of family are maternal values, and appear as forms of love and care irrespective of childbirth, sex or blood relations. In order that these maternal virtues may work positively in the modern family culture, it seems that the following alternatives must be provided. First, it is necessary to understand that the so-called notions of maternal characteristics—care, consideration, understanding, love, and others—are the values that not only women but also humans should have. The so-called maternal values are not exclusively female but are the values that should be generalized as human values. Second, it is necessary to provide a unified value system to cultivate mature humans to realize the character of both sexes at a time when the traditional sex roles are dissolving. Third, since the change of familial types is an unavoidable phenomenon, it is necessary to discuss openly and agree on the family roles in order to prepare for the emergence of various types of family. Maternal values that worked as the foundation, that made familial solidarity possible, should not be confined to mothers, i.e., women. The positive aspects that such values have should be learned irrespec-

tive of being a man and woman.

Conclusion

Together with paternity, maternity is not only the foundation for forming a family but also a basic element to guarantee the continuity of life. This maternal figuration has been reproduced as important material from mythology through ancient novels to modern novels. This research aimed to review how maternal figuration in Korean narrative literature has been reproduced in relation to anti-maternal figuration. Through this, it has been confirmed that maternity and its opposite quality, anti-maternity, have reflected the socio-cultural context respectively, according to the times and genre, and have become newly significant.

Samseung halmang bonpuri (Myth of the Three Goddesses Governing Childbirth) is a shamanist myth of the goddesses governing childbirth and nurture that shows the basic principle of life and shows the opposite characters such as life versus death, abundance versus sterility, and health versus illness. These features realize the attribute of maternity versus anti-maternity. Meanwhile, in *Chilseong puri*, maternity and anti-maternity appear through a real mother and a stepmother and also as fecundity (many children) vs. sterility (no children), life (revival) vs. death (punishment), and love vs. jealousy. Through this, it can be known that shamanist mythology takes shamanist imagination, emphasizing abundance and fecundity as a basic quality.

In ancient novels, maternity versus anti-maternity appears through a legitimate wife versus a concubine or a real mother versus a stepmother, and such qualities as virtue vs. vice and modesty vs. obscenity actually result in good versus evil. It is thought that they derive from the character of a person. Moreover, the evil persons are those who are aware of their desires and pursue them and show strong adherence to blood relations and exclusiveness. Here, the then ethical norms, the family system, and familial ideology work as a standard regulating maternity vs. anti-maternity.

In classical narrative literature, the qualities corresponding to maternity vs. anti-maternity are described in the form of conflicting through the figuration of opposite characters; on the contrary, in the post-modern novels, they appear in the way that opposite values coexist and cause conflict in a character. While the figuration of maternity is connected with a socio-historical discourse, the expectations for maternity are reproduced as the mainstay of supporting the house and

family through self-sacrifice and devotion, even in post-modern narrative literature. In Choe Jeong-hi's writings at the end of the 1930s, maternity vs. anti-maternity becomes conspicuous owing to the conflict between maternity and femininity. These characters are intellectual women who practice free love and don't maintain social norms, and they show the change of perception through frustration. The higher the consciousness toward femininity, the stronger the will to idealize and internalize maternity as belief of a religious phase is. In O Jeong-hi's writings from the 1980s, the role of mother and the search for self-identity embody the aspect of maternity vs. anti-maternity. Though the heroine is expelled from the house, owing to mutual keen conflict and is on the brink of being deprived of the role of mother, she restores the first clue to the memory she is searching for and reaches her own basis.

Feminist literature since the 1990s shows various responses to the oppressive mechanism of maternal mythology. In particular, the writings of Gong Seon-ok confirm feminist identity and newly establish that the relations between the world and women are uttered in maternal voices. In her works, femininity and maternity are mutually recognized, unified, and coexisting. Moreover, the maternity of Gong Seon-ok aims for an absolute affirmation toward life itself and shows the figuration of a great mother realizing spontaneous vitality. Such maternal figuration realizes a clue to social care beyond biological maternity that is based on blood relation.

Kim Tae-yong's 2006 film entitled *Gajokui tansaeng* (Birth of a Family) shows a new possibility of discourse on family culture. This movie introduces us to a new type of family that is not constituted by blood relation. The comparative structure between the persons outside the house and the persons inside the house raises the question 'What is a true family?' It shows a new familial notion based on love and sympathy and not a blood-centered familial idea. Also, the process is noticeable that the women without parity are aware of the maternal values through nurture, widen their horizons of perception, and extend it to social care.

The positive side of maternity is not solely a feminist area but should be understood as a universal human virtue. As maternal values can be used as a teaching guide for mature humans of both sexes, it is necessary to provide a value system which unifies both sexes at the present time when the traditional sex roles are dissolving.

References

Janghwa hongnyeon-jeon (Rose Flower and Pink Lotus)
Sassinamjeonggi (Record of Lady Sa's Trip to the South)

- Choi, Jeong-hi. 1994. *Jimaek* (The Layer). *Jeongtong hanguk munhak daege* 13. Seoul: Eomungak.
- Donovan, Josephine. 1985. *Feminist Theory: the Intellectual Traditions of American Feminism*. Trans. Kim Ik-du and Lee Wol-yeong. Seoul: Munye chulpansa.
- Gong, Seon-ok. 2001. *Susubateuro oseyo* (Come to the Sorghum Field). Seoul: Yeoseong sinmunsa.
- _____. 2003. *Bulgeun podaegi* (A Red Quilt for Babies). Seoul: Samsingak.
- Hong, Na-re. 1997. *Musok sinhwa chilseongpuriui yeongu* (A Study on a Shamanist Myth). M.A. thesis, Ewha Womans University.
- Hyeon, Yong-jun. 1980. *Jejudo musok jaryo sajeon* (A Dictionary of Shamanist Data in Jeju Island). Seoul: Singumunhwasa.
- Jeong, Ha-yeong. 2002. "Gosomeole natanan moseongsang" (A Maternal Image Shown in Ancient Novels). *Hanguk gojeon yeoseong munhak yeongu* 4. Seoul: Hanguk gojeon yeoseong munhakhoe.
- Jeong, Sun-jin. 1994. "Moseonggwa yeoseongui galdeung—choejeong-hi's 'jimaek,' 'inmaek,' 'cheonmaek'eul jungsimeuro" (The Conflict between Maternity and Femininity—Centering on Choe Jung-hi's 'The Layer', 'The Human Layer' and 'The Heaven's Layer'). *Hanguk eoneomunhak* 32. Seoul: Hanguk eoneomunhakhoe.
- Kang, Jin-ok. 2005. "Gojeon seosa munhake natanan gajokgwa yeoseongui jon-jae yangsang" (The Aspect of Existence of Family and Femininity Shown in Classical Narrative literature). *Hanguk gojeon yeoseong munhak yeongu* 10. Seoul: Hanguk gojeon yeoseong munhakhoe.
- Kim, Eun-ha. 1995. "90nyeondae yeoseongmunhakui saeroun ganeungseong (2) gongseon-oknon" (A New Possibility of Feminist Literature during the 1990s II, An Essay on Gong Seon-ok). *Yeoseonggwa sahoe* 6. Seoul: Hanguk yeoseong yeonguso.
- Kim, Jae-yong. 1996. *Gyemohyeong gososeolui sihak* (The Poetics of Stepmother-Type Ancient Novels). Seoul: Jipmundang.
- Kim, Mi-yeong. 2005. "Gongseon-ok soseole natanan saengtaehakjeok sangsangnyeok gochal" (A Survey on Ecological Imagination Shown in

- Gong Seon-ok's Novels). *Hyeondae munhak iron yeongu* 24. Seoul: Hyeondae munhak iron hakhoe.
- Lee, Byeong-sun. 2005. "Choejeong-hi soseole natanan moseong yeongu" (A Study on Maternity Shown in Choe Jung-hi's Novels). *Yeoseong munhak yeongu* 13. Seoul: Hanguk yeoseong munhak hakhoe.
- Lee, Sang-gyeong. 2002. "Ilje malgiui yeoseong dongwongwa gungukui eomeoni" (The Mobilization of Women at the End of Japanese Imperialism and Mothers of a Militarist Nation). *Feminismyeongu* 2. Seoul: Doseochulpan dongnyeok.
- O, Jeong-hi. 1986. *Baramui neok* (The Soul of Wind). Seoul: Munhak sasangsa.
- Park, Yeong-hi. 1998. "Jangpyeon gamun soseole natanan moui seonggyeokgwa eumi" (The Character and Meaning of Mothers Shown in Long Family Novels). In *Gojeonsoeolgwa seosamunhak* (Classical Novels and Narrative Literature). Seoul: Jimundang.
- Ruddick, Sara. 2002. *Maternal Thinking: toward a Politics of Peace with a New Preface*. Trans. Hye-jeong Lee. Seoul: Cheolhakgwa hyeonsilsa.
- Seo, Dae-seok. 1988. "Chilseongpuriui yeongu—sinhwajeok seonggyeokgwa seosasjeok seosulgju" (A Study on Chilseongpuri—Mythical Character and Epic Narrative Structure). *Jindanhakbo* 65. Seoul: Jindanhakhoe.
- Sim, Jin-gyeong. 1998. "Moseongui seosawa 90nyeondae yeoseongseolui saeroun gilchatgi" (The Narrative of Maternity and Finding a New Way of Feminist Novels during the 1990s). *Yeoseonggwa sahoe* 9. Seoul: Hanguk yeoseong yeonguso.

Kang Jin-ok is a professor in the Korean language and literature department of Ewha Womans University. Her specialty is orally transmitted folklore. She is interested in the examination of Korean's thinking system and cultural grammar, focusing on legendary narratives and shamanist mythology as her research objectives.