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Shim, Jung Soon

SELF VS. TRADITION: IMAGES OF WOMEN IN MODERN AMERICAN AND KOREAN DRAMA

Ph.D. 1984
I dedicate this work to the loving memory of my late Mother and Sister, and to my Father, who all gave me a reason to finish this work.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people have given me a helping hand in the course of this project.

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to Dr. David Bertelson, the committee chair, who helped me through the long, strenuous process of dissertation writing with such understanding patience and so many insightful comments; and also to my committee members, Dr. James McCutcheon, Dr. Donald Worster, Dr. David Stannard and Dr. Alice Chai, who not only helped me with their constructive comments but also inspired me with their firm belief in the American ideal of equality and individualism in the course of the dissertation process. On the Korean side, I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness to Professor Yu, Min-yong for his warm support and help.

I also want to express my heartfelt thanks to playwright Kim, Cha-rim; and especially to Megan Terry for her wholehearted, sisterly help and support in composing a chapter on herself.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a study of the images of women in modern American and Korean plays written by leading male and female playwrights from the 1920s to the early 1970s. It deals with Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, and Megan Terry on the American side and Kim Wu-chin (김 우진), Yu Chi-jin (유 치진), and Kim Cha-rim (김 차림) on the Korean side.

Women in modern times—both American and Korean—have become more concerned with their identity as they have experienced changes in their social roles and values. The 1920s marked the beginning of modernity in the history of American sex roles; the Victorian feminine ideal ended and a new generation identified with the flappers began. The same period witnessed a similar phenomenon with the appearance of the New Woman in Korea.

Assuming that literature reflects society and that the writer is a very sensitive antenna whose perceptions are faithful to what is going on in society, this study examines how the authors formed their perceptions of and attitudes toward women, their changing roles, morality, and values in a particular culture and society, and how these have all materialized in their portrayal of women characters. It also speculates on what these images of women tell about the authors' gender, society, and culture.

Character analysis is the main mode of interpretation, with a focus on the question of the identity of women in relation to socio-economic and psychological factors: how a woman defines her identity;
whether she fulfills herself; how she views happiness, love, and marriage; and finally, why she does what she does.

The results of this analysis suggest that most of the female characters examined here experience an identity crisis because of the conflict between their own self-aspirations and traditional role expectations. The analysis also indicates that male authors depict female characters more or less according to the culturally stereotypical ideas about women, whereas women authors attempt to create unconventional role models for women. It also suggests cultural idiosyncrasies: female characters in plays by American writers show a relatively stronger sense of individuality than female characters drawn by Korean writers. All these similarities and differences offer us insight into the positions of women in the more individualistic culture of America versus the family and group-oriented culture of Korea.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Context and Setting

People in the modern age are becoming more and more individually oriented. Value systems embracing the attitudes toward morality and the sex roles of previous ages have lost meaning for wo/men in the wake of the modernization process, leading them to become more concerned with self and encouraging them to find meaning within their individual selves. This is true both of America and Korea. The former as an industrialized country and the latter as a rapidly industrializing one have exhibited all these effects, though in different degrees, in the course of industrialization.

Changes have also taken place in women's roles and the way women define their identity. Women in both countries are becoming more assertive about their individuality and equal rights. But beneath this modern drive traditional forces still affect women powerfully, creating confusion and conflict. Their histories in both countries in the modern age are characterized by the tension between these two opposing tendencies: one initiated by women themselves as a way to assert their individuality and the other representing the traditional expectations imposed by the larger male-dominated society.
In America the traditional ideal of women was manifested in the nineteenth century by the cult of True Womanhood, which buttressed female submissiveness, purity, chastity and domesticity particularly for those of the middle and upper classes. A similar ideal prevailed in Korean society during the same period for women of the same classes. The Confucian-based ideal of the Virtuous Lady was esteemed by the society as the symbol of female submission, obedience and chastity, and women were expected to strive hard to emulate it.

Social myths reinforce social creeds as well as reflect them. These two different myths inculcated in essence the doctrine of women's sphere: the presumption that women's place is the home and their roles are properly those of wife and mother. They should define themselves in relation to men, for they have no identity in their own right except as "the other." As a result, self-effacement and invisibility are considered more virtuous than self-assertion and visibility.

In America, the 1920s mark a strong break with the concept of True Womanhood. The winning of the suffrage in 1920 after a long struggle epitomizes this change. Demanding the right to vote posed

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2 These classes refer to 양반 (Yangban) and 종신 (Chungin) classes of the Yi Dynasty.

3 Chik-su Son (진수 손), 이조시대 여성교육연구 (Yijo sidae yosong kyoyuk yongu) (Seoul: Songgyungwan Taekakkyo Chulpanbu, 1982), pp. 34-40.

a challenge to the doctrine of woman's sphere and in this sense represented an "assertion of the individuality of women and their self-interest."5 Also the new generation of women represented by the flappers asserted their equality in their personal lives through the pursuit of sexual freedom. Although the women's movement stagnated during the next decade, women had increasing accessibility to education and employment. World War II was a milestone in this regard because more women worked outside the home than ever before in American history. During the 1950s, however, the cult of domesticity was revived. The disruption of family life during the war prompted a renewed emphasis on it. Women who voluntarily left their jobs received the approbation of society because their actions meant more jobs for men. Although woman's sphere was thus reinforced, this trend was reversed in the late sixties by a revitalized women's movement which proclaimed that women as a class shared a common plight and needed a political solution to many of their problems. The movement was a demand for and assertion of identity and equality on the part of American women.

In America, therefore, the historical forces of change regarding women came largely from internal social dynamics. For Korean women, the source of change was predominantly the West. The first such influence can be traced back to the introduction of Catholicism, which awakened many women to their equal right to attend religious services

alongside men. The first Korean school for girls was established by an American woman missionary in 1885. By the 1920s Korea witnessed the appearance of the New Woman, who was educated in modern schools and believed in such untraditional ideas as equality and freedom. These women, like their Western counterparts, practiced their ideals in their private lives through sexual freedom and were consequently severely criticized.

The women's movement in Korea first emerged in the late nineteenth century when the nation opened its doors to foreign countries. The infiltration of foreign elements created a sense of crisis within Korean society. This led to the belief that the people had to be enlightened through education if the nation was to survive. Women constituted half of the population, and thus the emphasis of the women's movement was on educating them. After Korea's annexation by Japan in 1910, the women's movement merged with the national independence movement. During the 1920s the issue of women's liberation surfaced briefly when Japan somewhat liberalized its colonial rule, but it was soon submerged as Japan stepped up its oppression and prepared for war with China.

After World War II Korea was subjected to a series of liberalizing influences. The liberation from Japanese rule in 1945, the American military rule that followed, the Korean War in 1950 and the stationing of U.N. forces, all directly exposed Korea to Western cultures. More women had the opportunity for education and employment and became more conscious of what other women overseas were doing. The women's movement changed its emphasis from patriotic efforts to women's
political and economic equality. During the late sixties and early seventies, it gained momentum partly as a result of the women's movement in America. Thus, in both countries women have continuously struggled against their traditional place and sought to pursue their individuality and equal rights as changes concerning their roles, education, and employment occurred. This similarity provides a point of departure for the study that follows.

Specific Aims and Justification

My aim is to examine and compare first the images of women in modern American and Korean drama written by leading male and female playwrights between 1920 to the early 1970s; second, how these images of women evidence the authors' perceptions of and attitudes toward contemporary women, their roles, morality and values; and third, how these images reflect the authors' gender, society and culture.

The basic assumption of this study is that literature reflects society. This view was advanced by Taine in the nineteenth century and since then has been developed by many scholars in a variety of ways. Such an approach sees literature as a transcript of contemporary manners, a manifestation of the spirit of the age. Later Marxist critics like George Plekhanov and Georg Lukacs incorporated the socialist perspective by arguing that literature reflects the class struggle and is written from the point of view of a social class.

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7 Laurenson and Swingewood, p. 54.
The same position was reaffirmed by Raymond Williams in this century. He said that writers work within society: "Society is not something fixed beyond them but their activity is an activity within it."³

The standards for artistic evaluation are set arbitrarily by each critic. Taine, for example, proposed the use of three factors--race, historical period, and social milieu--for the analysis of literature.⁹

For Lukacs, fidelity to socialism was the touchstone of artistic creativity; all literature should be measured by the criterion of the socialist vision of "lasting human types."¹⁰

One of the persistent problems in approaching literature as a reflection of society is the inherent tendency to ignore the creative autonomy of the writer. There have been constant efforts from Taine to Williams to allow some measure of autonomy to the creative spirit. Taine included a psychological explanation of the creative process. He argued that all great change was rooted not in the social structure but in man's soul: "The psychological state is the cause of the social state."¹¹ Raymond Williams attempted a synthesis of the view of literature as a reflection of society and one that sees it in intrinsically artistic terms. Robert N. Wilson in his book The Writer

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¹⁰Laurenson and Swingewood, p. 54.

¹¹Laurenson and Swingewood, p. 39.
as Social Seer offers a similar view that the artist is a "very sensitive antenna whose perceptions are faithful to what is going on around him." Thus he discusses literature in the context of the social history that nurtures it and the psychological contours of the writer's life.

While the tension between these two views seems to be persistent, what is most important for my purposes is that literature communicates the "general feeling tone of a culture" and thus "the implicit assumption of value and attitude that underlie the surface flow." This point is most relevant to my attempt to discuss how the images of women portrayed by writers over the span of fifty years from about 1920 to the early seventies reflected social and cultural changes concerning women's roles, values, morality and their sense of identity. At the same time, I give consideration to the individual psychological factors which led each writer to create certain literary images of women and thereby aim at connecting writers' psychologies with their social and cultural contexts.

Between 1920 and the early seventies the women's movement in America underwent a cycle of advance and retreat and advance. The same is generally true of the women's movement in Korea although the pattern is not exactly the same. Fifty-odd years is long enough to trace many changes in women's roles and the idea of femininity.

In addition to this, the decade of the 1920s marks the beginning of modern drama both in America and Korea. Modern American drama,

13 Wilson, p. 10.
by common critical consent, begins with Eugene O'Neill.\textsuperscript{14} In Korea Kim Wu-chin first wrote plays based on Western realism and thereby launched modernism in Korean drama. Since Kim Korean drama, like its American counterpart, has been influenced by the international literary climate.

Many studies have been done on images of women in fiction, but only a few have considered such portrayals in dramatic literature. Furthermore, no attempt has yet been made, to my knowledge, to understand American and Korean drama from this particular perspective. One can also draw inferences concerning the interrelationships between the two cultures in this century by tracing and examining the American cultural influence in terms of images of women and their values manifested in Korean drama. This last point alone constitutes a meaningful study of American culture on an international level.

\textbf{Methodology}

This study employs a mixture of approaches--historical, sociological, psychological and literary. Since its focus is on images of women in drama, character analysis is the main mode of interpretation. The analysis will explore the question of woman's identity in relation to socioeconomic factors: how she defines it; how she does or does not fulfill it; how she views happiness, love and marriage; and finally why she does what she does.

To examine how and to what extent these images are possibly related to the author's view of and attitude toward women of his/her time, this study makes extensive use of biographical and autobiographical materials. For the playwrights for whom the relevant literature is not available, personal and telephone interviews have been conducted.

Selection of Material

By its nature this study is highly selective. My purpose in using selected plays by selected authors is to show that the traditions and changes observable in the larger society are reflected and analyzed in the world of dramatic literature. I am not arguing that all the work of any of these playwrights will bear the same precise interpretations as those I offer in the following chapters. The playwrights chosen have merited significant public and social recognition. Eugene O'Neill, as mentioned before, marks the beginning of modern American drama and is by common consent one of the country's greatest dramatists. The twenties and the thirties were his most active period as a writer. Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller are considered the leading playwrights of the post-World War II period. But Williams' forte was in creating women characters, and his is more

relevant to my study. For Korean male playwrights, I chose Kim Wu-chin and Yu Chi-jin for the post-World War I and the post-World War II periods respectively. Kim Wu-chin marks the beginning of modern Korean drama and made the most prominent contribution to it in its nascent stage. Yu Chi-jin helped to solidify the foundation of modern Korean drama through his multifaceted career as a playwright, director, theater administrator and educator.

The selection of women playwrights was restricted to the post-World War II period. This is necessary because there were no professional women playwrights in Korea before that time. Moreover, women playwrights in the sixties and early seventies in both countries portrayed female characters who were a sharp contrast to those created by male playwrights. Megan Terry was one of the leading playwrights of the late sixties who attempted to create "theater for women" by writing plays and performing for women. She is also one of the most publicly recognized women playwrights.

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16 For this selection, I consulted the following books: Tu-hyon Yi (두현 이 )(Hanguk singuksa) (Seoul: Seoul Taehakkyo Chulpabu, 1966); Tu-hyon Yi (두현 이 ) 한국 연극사 (Hanguk yonguksa) (Seoul: Minjungsogwan, 1973) and Min-yong Yu (민용 유 ), 한국 현대 희곡사 (Hanguk hyoendae huiyoksa) (Seoul: Hongsongsa, 1982).

I selected Kim Cha-rim. She is that country's first professional woman playwright and also the first one who created women characters based on her experience as a woman.  

Plays were selected for analysis in terms of the following criteria: first, the central character of the play must be a woman with sufficient prominence and elaboration to warrant discussion; second, the main plot of the play should permit the discussion of issues particular to women such as the problem of sexual identity and the double standard; and third, plays have been given public recognition for their merits in the form of publication or production.

Studies of women's history written from a feminist perspective have been passed over in favor of those written from a neutral perspective. The feminist perspective here refers to a self-consciousness in terms of which a woman sees a man as "the other." It seeks to order the female past from within its own consciousness and considers the traditional periodization of history written from a male point of view irrelevant to the history of women. For example, Gerda Lerner in her book The Female Experience: An American Documentary calls for a new historical methodology to describe the experience of women more appropriately by tracing their life stages and the turning points in individual lives or the development of feminist consciousness in

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18 The selection of Kim Cha-rim was based on books identical with those used for the selection of Korean male playwrights.

various stages: defiance of traditional roles, definition of sisterhood, the search for new structures, and the expression of feminist ideology. Feminist history books have been omitted first, to ensure as an introduction to the main discussion a balanced historical overview of women of both countries; second, no book on Korean women’s history has yet been attempted in terms of feminist methodology.

Limitations

I encountered a very practical difficulty while conducting interviews concerning Korean male authors. The interviewees happened to be close relatives of the late playwrights and were reluctant to share information concerning the playwrights' view of and attitudes toward women. This was in sharp contrast to their American counterparts: for example, Tennessee Williams even confesses in his autobiography Memoirs that he was a homosexual.\(^\text{20}\) In my estimation this particular difficulty is rooted in cultural usages that discourage talk about sexual matters and women, especially when it touches even slightly on male dignity. Hence I had to rely upon whatever materials I could gather in conducting this study.

Chapter Summary

In the introductory chapter that follows, the historical experiences of American and Korean women are compared and contrasted to make the subsequent discussions of plays more meaningful.

Chapter III deals with the two representative post-World War I playwrights, Eugene O'Neill and Kim Wu-chin. The main thrust of this chapter is to examine how modern these men were in their attitudes toward women and how their attitudes influenced their creation of women characters.

Chapter IV focuses on two playwrights of the post-World War II period, Tennessee Williams and Yu Chi-jin. The analysis ultimately aims at bringing to light how the mid-century post-war ethos influenced the way these playwrights portrayed women characters.

Chapter V deals with Megan Terry and Kim Cha-rim, the women playwrights of the sixties and the seventies, who wrote plays out of a strong female consciousness. This chapter implicitly explores how different their women characters are as compared to those created by the male playwrights.

A concluding attempt is made to compare and contrast the similarities and differences in the images of women portrayed by male and female playwrights and by American and Korean playwrights. Based on this discussion, further cultural implications are explored.
CHAPTER II
WOMEN OF AMERICA AND KOREA IN THE MODERN AGE:
THE PURSUIT OF INDIVIDUALITY AND EQUAL RIGHTS

An important twentieth century trend is an increasing emphasis on the question of identity. Generally speaking, it is an aspect of the "modernization" process related to the passing of the grand systems of meaning—beliefs in religion, values and morality—which sustained people, whether American or Korean, in previous centuries. This is reflected in literature as a struggle for selfhood.¹ For American and Korean women the question of selfhood has become increasingly important during this century as they have experienced numerous changes in their social roles and values. Consequently they have come to challenge traditional feminine ideals and role expectations, assert their individuality and act in terms of their own self-interest. In this chapter, I will examine how this quest for identity is manifested in history and in drama, the most social of all literary genres.²

Women of America in the Modern Age

The era after World War I is frequently taken as the beginning of a new era in America. The post-war period, the so-called "Roaring

Twenties," witnessed changes in moral standards, the rise of new beliefs among intellectuals, and the flowering of a literary revolt against the genteel tradition in letters in a context dominated by automobiles, jazz, movies, and big business. These transformations were largely the result of industrialization and urbanization as well as the "faith in self" which emerged from the spiritual vacuum left by the shattering experience of the war.

What is significant for this study is that the 1920s marked the beginning of modernity in the history of American sex roles. This era constituted a cultural divide for American women: the end of the Victorian feminine ideal and the beginning of a new generation identified with the flappers. The apparent demise of the old feminine ideal was a product of a generation that was increasingly preoccupied with the question of self. In actuality, however, the old feminine ideal did not die out completely but was only eclipsed temporarily by the new feminine idea. It emerged as the new ideal lost its appeal in the late twenties. It surfaced again in the fifties. Thus the tension and interplay between these two opposing ideals characterize the history of women in this century.

The nineteenth century Victorian feminine ideal of "true womanhood" made cardinal virtues of "piety, purity, submissiveness and

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domesticity. Its basic premise was the doctrine of two spheres which held that the true woman's place as daughter, sister, but most of all as wife and mother was unquestionably in the home. She was defined and differentiated with reference to man as "the other" the subject. Men were the movers, doers, actors, and women the passive and submissive responders.

The same code also stressed that women were morally and spiritually superior to men because of their highly developed intuition, refined sensibilities and especially because of their life-giving maternal powers. As female spiritual and moral superiority was emphasized, female sexuality was deemphasized to the extent that women were taken as "passionless" creatures.

The doctrine of the separate spheres was undercut by the winning of the vote in 1920. In that year, the Nineteenth Amendment giving an equal suffrage to women became a part of the U.S. Constitution. It was the result of a long struggle waged by suffragists, who were mostly middle-class, white educated women such as Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and later Carrie Chapman Catt. The struggle had been going on ever since the first Women's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls in 1848. Feminists had initially fought for the abolition of black slaves and in so doing found that they had their own rights to fight for as well.

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Suffrage was "the essence of feminism in that it asserted the individuality of women and their self-interest." These were implicitly denied by the doctrine of separate spheres. Because of this individualistic or self-oriented aspect of the suffrage movement, many women responded to it with hostility. Among the well-known opponents were some of the prominent public women of the time, like Annie Nathan Meyer, writer and economist; Ida Tarbell, journalist and historian; and Priscilla Leonard, poet. Called anti-suffragists, these women organized against their own political emancipation because they believed that the vote would encourage behavior so patently male and so straightforwardly individualistic that it would threaten the traditional family. Opposition from men as well as women themselves necessitated an adjustment in the justification for the suffrage.

By the turn of the century feminist leaders had dropped the emphasis upon the equality that they originally supported and were advocating the special contributions women would make as wives, mothers and as homemakers. The vote was won only after they invoked the doctrine of women's sphere to justify the suffrage.

The vote, however, did not bring about equality of the sexes as the suffragists had expected. In taking woman's sphere for granted the suffragists did not attack the core of the problem--women's inferior position in the family. Thus after the Nineteenth Amendment, the organized women's movement fell apart and women's political and

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8Degler, p. 350.
economic progress stagnated. Despite all of this, however, the woman question was still being asked, and belief in equality did not die. The younger generation of women in the 1920s expressed their concerns in a private rather than a public way.

Characterized by a boyish, slender figure which denied the essential distinguishing marks of womanhood, the flapper represented the new feminine idea. Flappers welcomed premarital sexual experimentation, smoked and asserted their right to drink with men. They rebelled against the double standard that the Victorian sexual code imposed upon women. There are differing views regarding the flappers and their sexual revolt, but they were serious in their own way. Whereas the suffragists stressed such public rights as education and a career as the way to equality, flappers were intensely self-conscious and concerned entirely with private rights. They were continuing the women's movement in their individual lives as personalized rather than collective experience.

Many forces came into play in fostering the sexual revolution. Psychoanalysis played a central role. With the spread of Freudianism by the 1920s, sexual impulses were considered normal for both

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9Paula S. Fass, for example, says in her book The Damned and the Beautiful (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977) that the young of the twenties did not use sex and morals as a basis for conscious generational revolt. She argues that their sexual attitudes and practices, which were different from those of their elders, were the result of prolonging youth and the emergence of school culture in which sex became a private decision.

10Filene, p. 152.

sexes, and more and more Americans discarded the notion that women must remain celibate until marriage. This loosening of the old moral code led to an increase in premarital sexual experiences.\textsuperscript{12}

Women also had more accessibility to all levels of education. At the same time, the increasing development of a consumer society, in freeing them from the drudgeries of housekeeping by providing modern power appliances, enabled many to take jobs. Growing economic opportunities for women and changes in their morality resulted in the loosening of family ties. This was particularly true in urban centers, where the insistence upon freedom was extended to family responsibilities. An increase in the divorce rate followed all these changes. In 1910, there were 8.8 divorces for every 100 marriages, but by 1920 this figure increased to 13.4 and by 1930 to 16.6.\textsuperscript{13}

The mood of revolution also permeated the literary scene. The Puritan ethic in literature was attacked and a new view of human nature and its biological needs advanced. Glicksberg calls this new outlook the "sexual revolution."\textsuperscript{14} It naturally had its ramifications in drama, of all the literary arts "the most social, the one most immediately responsive to the context from which it emerges and in which it appears."\textsuperscript{15} According to Joseph Wood Krutch, the year 1918


\textsuperscript{15}Freedman, p. 1.
denotes the emergence of serious American drama. Before this date, plays were commonly performed either to exploit the talents of popular performers or as entertainments on "a level below that of artistic pretension." They were intended to be a popular entertainment and hence conventional manners and morals were upheld by barring unpleasant subjects. This is clearly illustrated by Owen Davis, a playwright of the time, in describing the standard female character:

Our heroine must be pure at any cost, or else she must die. There could be no temporizing with the "wages of sin are death" slogan. In all my experience I never once saw it successfully defied.

The transition from moralism to realistic settings, characters, situations and themes was visible by the end of the war. Eugene O'Neill was the first major American playwright to portray men and women with uncompromising realism. It was also he who, for the first time on the American stage, gave a fallen woman the stature of a protagonist and allowed her to enter the sanctuary of marriage. Anna Christie (1922) thus signified a "break in the theatrical traditions of sexual morality," although the play remains very conventional in other ways.

Women's issues became the subjects of many plays of the time. For example, Rachel Crothers, an outstanding woman playwright, wrote

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17 Krutch, p. 12.

18 Owen Davis, I'd Like to Do It Again (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1931), p. 102.

the largest number of plays that dealt with the role of women, the double standard, divorce and economic independence. She condemned the double standard in *A Man's World* (1910) and analyzed the tension between motherhood and a woman's career in *He and She* (1911) while the women's movement was still growing. By the thirties when it had stagnated, she changed her stand and affirmed in plays such as *Mary the Third* (1923) and *When Ladies Meet* (1932) that women had to marry and to be loved. This trend was more or less true with other playwrights of the time. 20

By the end of the 1920s, it was becoming clear that women were not winning equality in their private lives any more than in their public lives. This was mainly because the younger generation of women failed to develop any institutional or organizational base for their new self-consciousness. In the 1930s, the argument concerning sexual equality was suspended as people confronted such compelling circumstances of the Great Depression as massive male unemployment. The conservative impact on society almost precluded any change in the traditional female role.

World War II ended the Depression and brought a large number of women out of the home and into industry. Furthermore, it weakened taboos against the employment of married women. Because of the sudden manpower crisis, women became a precious asset. For the first time in American history almost seven million women joined the labor force.

and 75 percent of them were married. Opening male jobs to women was regarded as an "emergency measure," however, and they continued to be paid less than men. As more and more women joined the labor force, they gained personal knowledge of this discrimination and the need to correct it. This helped to prepare the setting for the revival of the women's movement in the 1960s.

At the end of the war, returning veterans quickly reclaimed their "rightful places" in the economy. As the "back-to-normalcy" drive gained momentum in the post-war era, the doctrine of woman's place surfaced again and American women were exhorted by the society to return to their homes. Millions of women left their jobs immediately after the war. Also Freudian assumptions came into general acceptance during this time and provided an intellectual justification for sexual inequality. Thus the average age of marriage for American women dropped to the lowest level anywhere in the Western world and the birth rate soared. Middle-class women succumbed to societal pressures regarding the proper sphere for women, and by the 1950s the return of the cult of domesticity was complete. Hence the women's cause made little progress.

Although women's traditional roles were generally idealized and in large measure fulfilled by many American women, their lives in


actuality were not so traditional as appearances might suggest. Employment of women, which dropped sharply immediately after the war, rose again owing to the post-war economic boom. By 1952, some 10.4 million wives held jobs--two million more than at the peak of World War II, and three times the number employed in 1940. Increasingly the working wife became a common feature of middle-class America. Thus in the post-war period there was this tension between the societal imperative concerning women and their actual social situation regarding employment.

It was not until the mid-sixties, when a generation preoccupied with the elimination of prejudice and discrimination reached maturity that the women's movement came to life again. There were several historical and social factors that contributed to this resurgence. The large-scale advance of women into the labor force during World War II and their realization of discrimination have already been mentioned. Women activists in the sixties who were committed to civil rights or anti-war organizations discovered that they were more often than not relegated to secondary positions in the struggle. Like the old suffragists who discovered their own cause while fighting for the abolition of slavery, feminists now realized their own oppression on the basis of sex and set out to win equality.

The women's cause gained further momentum when the President's Commission on the Status of Women was formed by President Kennedy in 1961. It was the first official body to make a thorough study of this subject in the United States. In 1963, the Equal Pay Act

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23Chafe, p. 182. 24Harris, p. 155.
was passed by Congress. This act required that in the fields it covered, women doing the same jobs as men should be paid the same salary. This was the first piece of Federal legislation in American history prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex.25

By 1963, the conditions were ripe for Betty Friedan's polemical work *The Feminine Mystique*. This book sounded the new ideological keynote of the women's movement. Friedan charged that American women had been victimized by a "feminine mystique," which defined female happiness as total involvement in the roles of wife and mother. She argued that the "problem without a name" which American women today have is not sexual but one of identity—a stunting or evasion of growth that is perpetuated by the feminine mystique. Hence she suggested that American society was in need of a drastic reshaping of the cultural image of femininity in order to permit women to reach completeness of self without conflict with sexual fulfillment. She urged women to make a new life plan, which would integrate a serious, life-long commitment to society and to a career outside the home with marriage and motherhood.

By the mid 1960s, the women's movement had come to life. It was made up largely of middle-class women who wished to revive the century-old struggle to achieve equal status in society. Like most social movements, the women's movement consisted of different groups. On the right was the National Organization for Women (NOW) formed in 1966 by Betty Friedan. Comprised mainly of well-educated professional women, NOW represented a reformist approach committed to

25 Degler, p. 442.
changing the social structure from within through legislation and persuasion. On the left were Women's Liberation groups, made up of younger and more radical women, who were convinced that revolutionary change was the only answer to sexual inequality. Through consciousness-raising, sharing common experiences in small groups, these younger women sought to understand what it means to be female and to explore ways to overcome the sources of oppression in their lives.

Despite divisions and controversies within the women's movement, the demands common to most feminists were the proposed Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution, the rights of women on welfare, reforms in abortion law, and full-time child-care centers.26

The new women's movement was not merely the revival of the old. Women in the sixties challenged the institution of the family and male and female roles. Thus they were different from the old suffragists, who continued to think of women as the better half and extended women's special sphere to society to justify the suffrage.

These efforts to find a new identity for women were extended to drama and theater arts, and by the late sixties a group of women playwrights emerged who wrote about women's issues from a feminist perspective. Such playwrights included Megan Terry, Myrna Lamb, Maria Irene Fornes, Rosalyn Drexler, Rochelle Owens and many more. Prior to this time, women playwrights had depicted women characters in many roles. But more often than not they portrayed such figures as society's dependents, who could not find satisfaction in leading

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independent lives or the keepers of social and moral standards during times of personal and national crises, or at best characters who began to question their dependent position. 27 By contrast these new women playwrights, who established themselves as spokeswomen for the feminist cause, sought to reveal women as creative, feeling individuals. Many rebelled against an emphasis upon women as sexual objects.

Although a clear definition of feminist drama has not yet been established, the central focus of these plays is the oppression of woman. Janet Brown defines feminist drama as plays with "an oppressive socio-sexual hierarchy" setting in which an agent, a woman, opposes this hierarchy. Or if an agent does not oppose the hierarchy, plays suggest that the struggle is hopeless and cast the blame on the hierarchy rather than on the women characters, who are either sympathetically satirized or depicted as helpless victims. 28

These plays were performed by the feminist theater groups which emerged in the early seventies as an outgrowth, particularly of radical feminism. These groups sought to explore and express women's identity, potentialities and the nature of their oppression through


theater performances. Roberta Skla, presently the artistic director of the Women's Experimental Theater, lucidly commented on the goal of women's theater as the search for a new identity:

Women's theater is created by women who are in a state of experiencing the fact that they are women in new ways. What they want to do as they create is share this experience with other women, bringing them into this new state of awareness.29

These groups differed in one important aspect from their male-dominated counterparts. They were collective in their approaches to shaping a theater piece. Experiment and improvisation were working methods. Hence instead of a director defining the performance, cast members expected to develop their ideas to a limited degree. Through consciousness-raising sessions, these groups derived their materials from the actual lives of women. Through their performances they attempted to create a communal art experience by fostering sisterhood among audiences and interaction between audience and performer.

Feminist theater groups like Womanrite Theater Ensemble, Westbeth Playwrights' Feminist Collective and the Cutting Edge created and performed pieces ranging from women's history in Anne Hutchinson, to rape in Rape-in, to mother-daughter relationship in Daughters. Among other topics were male-female relationships, the unemployment of women, and lesbianism. Many of these theater groups had disbanded by the early eighties as the women's movement once again lost energy.

In general, the women's movement in America represents women's struggle to attain their individuality and equal rights. It was an

independent effort, based upon a clearly identifiable ideology: the belief in women's equality. In the pursuit of their goals, women challenged the traditional feminine ideal and morality, and eventually they came to attack the institution of the family as the root of their inequality. At the core of the women's movement is the quest for a new identity for women, and for this reason it can be regarded as the "cutting edge of the Age of Faith in Self."\textsuperscript{30}

In the history of Korean women after the beginning of modernization in the late nineteenth century, a similar continuity in the quest for selfhood and in challenging the traditional feminine ideal can be identified. However, because of particular historical, political, and cultural circumstances peculiar to Korea, the women's movement until the nation's liberation in 1945 was an integral part of the nationalistic cause rather than a cause in its own right.

Women of Korea in the Modern Age

The modern age in Korea began when the so-called "Hermit Kingdom" was opened to Japan in 1876, to the United States in 1882 and thereafter to other Western countries. Foreign influence generated a sense of crisis within Korean society, and the "Enlightenment Movement" came into being. This rested on the idea that the nation's wealth and strength should be promoted by internal innovations and by the introduction of Western culture and technology. Education was emphasized as the basis for enlightenment, and with this came the idea that the education of women, who comprised half the population, was

\textsuperscript{30}Rapson, p. 384.
important. This trend had gained momentum by 1905 when Japanese aggression toward Korea became more open.

The modern awakening of Korean women, however, can be traced back to the coming of Catholicism via China in the eighteenth century Catholicism preached that anyone who believed in God could go to Heaven after death regardless of sex, class or wealth. This message of human equality and an afterlife provided consolation especially to Korean women, who had to live under severe social inhibitions and restrictions. In contrast, Confucianism offered no such vision. The number of female believers increased and in the persecution of Catholics in 1839 about two-thirds of the martyrs were women. This event marked the symbolic beginning of the modern awakening of women in the sense that it had previously been unthinkable that a woman would be willing to give up her family and life to follow the dictates of her own belief.

31 Yong-ock Park, 한국 근대 여성사 (Hanguk kundae yosongsa) (Seoul: Chongumsa, 1982), p. 58.


33 Kim, p. 198.


Traditionally women were socialized to live up to the Confucian ideal of the "Virtuous Woman" by behaving according to the guidelines of womanly behavior: chastity, proper speech, proper appearance, and womanly tasks such as weaving and entertaining guests. Furthermore, a woman must obey a particular man—before marriage her father, after marriage her husband, and in the event of the husband's death her son. Woman was a creature born to obedience. The faithfulness of a wife to one husband was such a strong social custom that young widows of good, respectable families often chose death by drowning or hanging. Furthermore, the relationship between husband and wife was guided by the separation of their functions into the woman's inner/domestic duties and the man's outer/public ones.

The ideal of the Virtuous Woman was a product of a patriarchal, Confucian culture that put a primary emphasis on family, ancestor worship, and the duty of filial piety. The Confucianists stressed the hierarchical order of society based on the notion that each human being had to recognize his or her proper position in society and stay there. Their view derived from the cosmological belief that heaven (yang) dominated earth (yin), and correspondingly, male had precedence over female. To them, the law of nature accorded woman an inferior position.

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36 Chik-su Son (최수 순), 이조시대 여성 교육 연구 (Yijo sidae yosong kyoyuk yongu) (Seoul: Songgyungwan Taehakkyo Chulpanbu, 1982), pp. 34-40.


Like the nineteenth century American ideal of the Lady, the Korean ideal of the Virtuous Woman stressed in essence the doctrine of separate spheres based on sex. Whereas the American lady, although endowed with such stereotypical traits as purity, piety and subservience, was chivalrously put on a "pedestal," the Korean lady was surrounded by no such a romantic aura. Based on the law of nature that accorded women an inferior position by birth, the Korean ideal was more rigid and stark. It also reflected a cultural context that stressed clear social categories based on a hierarchical order that did not allow much room for social mobility.

Because of the rule of separation of the sexes that persisted throughout the nineteenth century, Korean women were inevitably cut off from opportunities for independence in social activities. They were denied the benefits of formal education. What resulted was a significantly higher percentage of illiteracy among women than men and a general lack of professional skills among them. Nevertheless, a challenge to all that the ideal of the Virtuous Woman represented came again through Christian missionary efforts, especially in the establishment of schools in the late nineteenth century.

The first modern school for girls--Ewha Haktang--was founded by Mary Scranton, an American woman missionary, in 1885. This marks the beginning of modern education for Korean women. Scranton faced much difficulty mostly stemming from the Confucian prejudice against such education. Still, as the public became more keenly aware of the necessity of enlightenment and education, the number of mission schools increased. By the turn of the century, such schools for girls
were established in major cities across the country. Through their educational work the early American missionaries played an important role in bringing about a significant "revolution" in the history of Korean women. Young girls learned a new style of life and democratic ideas to some degree and came to question the idea of male predominance over the female emphasized by the Confucianists. 39

The stated educational goals of these girls' schools were far less than revolutionary, however. Scranton's educational philosophy stressed making Koreans "better Koreans only." 40 To Lulu Frey, a successor at Ewha, the goal of women's education was not to make women independent members of society to compete with men, but rather to equip them with a wider vision as mothers with the important mission of educating their children. They were to implant in their sons the social ethic of justice and honesty, and to educate their daughters as true wives. 41

The emphasis American missionaries placed on womanly functions in their educational goals must have been based on their appraisal of the current Confucian social realities of Korea. At the same time, it also reflects their own social background and their commitment to late nineteenth century domestic feminism. This movement of

39 In-su Son (인수 손), 한국 여성교육사 (Hanguk yosong kyoyuksa) (Seoul: Yonsei Taehakkyo Chulpanbu, 1977), p. 257.


married women of the middle- and upper-classes focused on various social and church-affiliated clubs and organizations and was concerned with service to other women and society. Its members viewed their social activities as an extension of womanly duties at home and involved themselves with issues concerning child welfare, education, diet, purity of foods, housing, and sanitation—all of which fell within the traditional sphere of women's activities. These feminists differed from feminists whose primary object was the achievement of individual opportunities for women such as the vote. That the Women's Foreign Missionary Society, which sent Mary Scranton to Korea, was one of the women's associations that American women participated in during this time is obviously relevant in this cross-cultural context.

Just as American women found a channel for their social participation through church organizational activities in the late nineteenth century, Korean women gained experience in social activities through church-related organizations. This was specially true of Korean women leaders who later participated actively in the March 1 Independence Movement, the nation-wide anti-colonial protest against Japanese rule in 1919. After Korea became the protectorate of Japan by treaty in 1905, numerous women's organizations—Christian and non-Christian—were founded by women of the upper-class to educate other women. These organizations were concentrated in the urban areas. They supported girls' schools, sponsored public meetings and publications, and promoted the patriotic cause. For example, Women's Friendship Association

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42 Degler, p. 326. 43 Kim, p. 201.
(Yowuhoe) formed in 1898 set a goal of educating women and promoting women's rights, and waged a sit-in demonstration against concubinage in front of the King's palace. Women's Association for National Reparation (Kukchae Paesang Puinhoe) founded in 1907 participated in activities to raise money to pay back the nation's debt to Japan. 44

The women's patriotic movement came to a peak with the March 1 Independence Movement in 1919. After the annexation of Korea by Japan in 1910, many Koreans resolved to regain independence at any cost. In 1918, President Wilson's Fourteen Points and the principle of Self-Determination gave new impetus to the efforts of these patriots. The leaders were intellectuals who had studied in America or Japan. Women leaders of the movement--Maria Kim, Esther Hwang, Yu Kwan-sun, Kwon Ae-ra, and O Yun-hi--were all Christians. 45 Although crushed by the Japanese military, the movement significantly provided an opportunity for women to liberate themselves by joining the nationwide struggle and leaving the inner quarters of the home to which they had been confined.

Thus the women's movement in Korea during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries coincided with the cause of patriotism. It stressed the education of women and patriotic functions such as raising funds to pay off the national debt. In its emphasis on women's education, the Korean women's movement was similar to the women's movement in America in the late nineteenth century. Also

44 Yidae Chulpanbu, p. 242.
the social activities to which Korean women devoted themselves were womanly and altruistic as were the conservative reformist movements in America such as social purity and temperance. Whereas the more radical American feminists pursued education, career and economic independence as the way to equality, Korean women leaders advocated education as a prerequisite to fostering women's talents and improving their way of life in order to strengthen the country. This was generally true until Korea's liberation from Japan. However, after the March 1 Independence Movement failed in 1919, the women's movement took a different turn.

The decade of the 1920s is regarded as a significant era in the history of Korean women. Son In-su characterizes it as the time during which the "issue of women's liberation surfaced unprecedentedly." The appearance of the Korean "New Woman" epitomized what was taking place. By this time social conditions had changed substantially for women.

The Japanese somewhat liberalized the political situation by turning from a rigidly military approach to a less oppressive "Cultural Rule." Korean intellectuals who led the movement now channelled their frustrated efforts into the creation of a new culture. Thus the 1920s witnessed the New Literature and New Drama movements as elements of such an effort.

The New Drama movement from the outset assumed characteristics of a social movement rather than those of pure art. It drew mainly

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46Filene, p. 227. 47In-su Son, p. 301.
upon the Western drama tradition for its ideas and forms as did the New Literature Movement. It was initiated by intellectuals who had studied or were studying Western drama in Japan or China. Most of them came into contact with it at the universities that they were attending, but some studied it at professional drama schools or in theater groups in those countries. Opposing the commercial theater of the time, this movement aimed at promoting the appreciation of art among the general public. Of many theater groups that were formed during this time, "Towelhoe" and "Kukyesul Hyophoe" (Society for Theater Art) were the most active. Kim Wu-chin, the first modern playwright in Korea, was an active member of the latter. Through these theater groups Western playwrights such as Shakespeare, Ibsen, Strindberg, Hauptman, Gorki and O'Neill were introduced to Korean audiences.

The mood of change permeated society and thus had a considerable impact on women. Prior to the 1920s, only a small number of them benefited from formal schooling. However, during this time, educational opportunities for women increased considerably, and a women's university and a medical school were founded. Accordingly the number of educated women greatly increased. Also other women's organizations including the YWCA were founded, and other campaigns were waged for social purification and against prostitution, smoking, drinking. Women's social activities thus did not change much from those of women's organizations at the turn of the century. Women also had made inroads into highly professional activities such as medicine and aviation as well as literature, art and theater. More women entered the labor force as well, usually in such manual labor sectors
as mills and factories. The number of women workers in factories consequently rose from 15 in 1900 to 17,464 in 1925 accounting for 21.7 percent of the entire work force. Thus by the 1920s, women were working in many sectors of the society.

The New Woman began to appear in literature, painting, music and drama. She usually was someone with a high-level of formal schooling, and who advocated women's education, their equality with men, and freedom of choice in love and marriage. These attitudes were based on an awakened sense of self on the part of new women, but in most instances their modern consciousness was manifested in the pursuit of sexual freedom, the "liberation of sex." Often these women became involved in love affairs with married men, and hence they were subjected to strong social criticism.

These pioneer women novelists, Kim Myong-sun, Kim Won-ju and Na Hye-sok and the first woman singer of Western music Yun Sim-tok, were good examples of such new women in the 1920s. They had studied either in Japan or Europe, and they were "at least vaguely aware of the international trends concerning women and the necessity of women's liberation." They advocated this in their writings and tested their beliefs with their lives. Na Hye-sok's poem "Nora" illustrates such

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49 Hyo-jai Lee (효재 이) and Chu-suk Kim (축숙 김), 한국 여성의 지위 (Hanguk yosong ui chiwi) (Seoul: Ewha Yoja Taehakkyo Chulpbanbu, 1976), pp. 143-144.

50 In-su Son, p. 301.

a belief. Written in 1925, the poem reads: "I was a doll. A daughter doll to father. A wife doll to husband . . . Let go of Nora . . . into the air of freedom . . . A Human Being I am." 52 A strong sense of self and the struggle to pursue life as a human being are vividly expressed in this poem. It rejects the traditional code of "predominance of male over female" and the morality inherent in the ideal of the Virtuous Woman. Actually all of these four women became Noras by either leaving their homes or having free relationships with men. All of their lives were characterized by such tragedies as suicide, divorce, schizophrenia or self-imposed exile. For instance, the first Korean soprano Yun Sim-tok fell in love with the playwright Kim Wu-chin who was already married, and ended her life with him in a double-suicide. The price for asserting self against the traditional norms was high indeed.

The tragic endings of these exemplary new women cannot be simply attributed to their own failures. This point becomes clearer when one juxtaposes the Korean New Women with their American counterparts the flappers. Both pursued sexual freedom and a single-standard morality, but the Korean women were blamed much more for their conduct. This reflects the particular social circumstances of Korea as the nation sought to deal with modernization. The American New Women emerged as a natural result of gradual social change throughout the nineteenth century involving industrialization, changes in woman's role and the women's movement. By contrast, the modernization of

52Quoted in Se-hyon Chong (세현 정), "한국 여성과 신문화 운동" (Hanguk yosong ui sinmunhw wundong), 아시아 여성 연구 (Asea yosong yongu), 10 (1972), p. 33.
Korea began with the introduction of foreign values during the late nineteenth century. From then until the 1920s, a relatively short period of time, Korea underwent abrupt and rapid social change. This meant that its traditional society and culture based on a rigidly patriarchal, hierarchical order could not easily absorb changes in woman's roles or in moral standards. The rebellion of these new women--although few in number--against the established order brought them into direct conflict with prevailing assumptions. The most liberal attitude toward what was happening stipulated that "the boundary of women's liberation must not surpass the natural duties of women; the respect and independence of women as individuals must not take precedence over their submission to man."\(^{53}\) In this respect, the "first generation" of New Women was "victimized in the process of transition from the old society to the new one."\(^{54}\) The second generation of new women in the 1930s made solid contributions as intellectuals to various sectors of society without having to undergo the ordeals suffered by the first generation, partly because they did not advocate women's liberation as their predecessors had.

The zeal for women's liberation declined during the 1930s as Japan established the puppet state of Manchuko in 1932 and moved toward full-scale war with China. It furthered tightened its colonial grip on Korea because of its strategic logistical importance. The Japanese Assimilation Policy sought to eradicate the Korean language and culture. During this dark age for the Korean people, women's

\(^{53}\)Chong, p. 339.

\(^{54}\)In-su Son, p. 301.
organizations were forced to merge with Japanese organizations, and Korean women leaders were pressured to cooperate with the assimilation policy. It was not until after Korea's liberation from Japan that women's liberation surfaced again. Thus during the 1930s, the women's movement in America and Korea stagnated although for different reasons--economic recession in America and the oppressive political situation in Korea.

Korea's liberation in 1945 and the historical events that followed contributed to weakening the hold of traditional morality over Korean women. The country became more directly exposed to Western culture. Upon Japan's surrender, the United States established military rule in the southern half of Korea, and the controversy with the Soviet Union followed over the issue of Korea's independence. This ultimately led to the outbreak of war in 1950, the arrival of the U.N. Army represented mainly by U.S. troops, and their continued stay in Korea thereafter.

All these events fostered the liberalizing influence of imported standards of thinking and conduct. For Korean women this resulted in the "loosening of the absolute Confucian code of the precedence of man over woman." The tenacity of social traditions weakened slowly during the 1950s but gained momentum thereafter.

After liberation the women's movement shifted its focus to the question of women's rights and the vote. Women's organizations, such as Korean Women Citizens' Party (Taehan Yoja Kugmindang) and Korean

Patriotic Women's Society (Hanguk Aeguk Puinhoe), were formed immediately after liberation and mounted campaigns for women's rights and legal equality. They actively participated in such political movement as opposing the trusteeship rule of Korea by the Allies. The National Constitution (1948) guaranteed individual freedom and sexual equality in political, economic and social life. In view of the fact that there had been no independent women's movement, it can be fairly said that "equality was rather granted to Korean women than attained by them."\textsuperscript{56} Still, opinions differ concerning this point.\textsuperscript{57}

In 1950, the Korean War broke out. Its effects on Korean women were similar to those of World War II on American women. The war brought about the large-scale entry of married women into the labor force. It resulted in an enormous number of war widows, whose husbands were either killed, disabled, or kidnapped by the North. Women suddenly had to shoulder the traditionally male responsibilities of making a living, and this made them realize the necessity of economic independence. The number of working women rose dramatically from only 9,847 in 1922 to 3,893,000 by 1968,\textsuperscript{58} although discrimination in terms of low wages and sex-segregation was still practiced.

\textsuperscript{56}Hyo-jai Lee (효재 이), \\여성과 사회의식 (Yosong kwa sahoe uisik) (Seoul: Pyongminsa, 1978), p. 13.

\textsuperscript{57}For example, Kyong-nam Paik (경남 백 ) in her \\한국 여성 정치론 (Hanguk yosong chongchiron) (Seoul: Munumsa, 1981), p. 124 argues that women's equality was guaranteed in the Constitution as the result of women's contribution to national liberation.

\textsuperscript{58}Paik, p. 122.
Other factors that contributed to the massive entry of women into the work force were urbanization and industrialization. These were encouraged by a national policy of economic development after the two political revolutions of 1960 and 1961. Consequently, societal attitudes toward working women changed. Generally before the Korean War women who worked outside the home were viewed with ambivalence. Professional women such as doctors or teachers were respected but women in menial labor such as factory workers or housemaids were regarded with contempt. During the fifties the public attitude toward women's work changed, and by the sixties the phrase "tapping women's resources" was frequently heard. The number of women seeking higher education also rose. In 1945, women college students numbered 1,068, accounting for only 13.9 percent of the whole college or university population. By 1970 the number rose to 32,641, or 22.3 percent of the whole college or university student population.

Social changes finally reached the institution of the family—the mainstay of Confucian culture—and marriage practices. Traditionally marriage was arranged by matchmakers and decided upon by the parents of the partners concerned. The chastity of women was unilaterally emphasized, whereas men could have numerous relationships with impunity. After liberation, however, marriage became more and more a personal matter based on love between partners. As love became a more important basis of marriage and as society offered more


60 Paik, p. 137.
opportunities to women who were becoming more self-conscious, women's attitudes toward marriage also changed. Obedience and chastity, which were unilaterally required of women and forbade remarriage even after the death of one's husband, lost meaning. Also there was a loosening of the rigid traditional sexual morality among women. Extreme examples such as the "liberated wife" syndrome appeared. Some married women proclaimed their freedom by having extra-marital relationships. Although the number of these sexually free wives was few, their impact on the general society was enormous. They were a hot subject for popular novels and the cinema well into the sixties. By then women were also saying concerning divorce that "if marriage is intolerable, it's better to separate." Accordingly, the average divorce rate rose to 0.66 percent during the period from 1967 to 1976, three times as much as that of 0.18 percent during the period from 1947 to 1956.

Most people also opted for the nuclear family, living separately from their parents, usually the husband's. By 1970, 70 percent of the entire nation's population was living in this way. But the Korean form of the nuclear family differs from that of the West. Except for the separate residences of the spouses and their parents, many of the characteristics of the traditional extended family system

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61 Yo-sop Chong (요성 정), "전반하는 한국 여성의 애정윤리" (Chonhwan hanun Hanguk yosong ui aejong yulli), 헌천 동아 (Yosong Tong-A), Feb. 1968, p. 131.

62 Yo-sop Chong (요성 정), "한국 여성의 가정에 관한 연구" (Hanguk yosong ui kachigwan pyonchon e kwanhan yongu), 아세아 여성 연구 (Asea yosong yongu), 19 (1980), 54.
remain—economic and psychological interdependence between parents and their offspring, and the importance of the eldest son as the successor to the family line.63

In the 1960s and thereafter, stimulated by the women's movement in Western countries, Korean women came to develop an increased understanding of women's rights. As a consequence women's organizations proliferated. In 1973, United Women's Committee for Promotion of the Revision of the Family Law (Pom Yosong Kajokpop Kaejong Chokjinhoe) was formed with the special goal of rectifying discriminations against women inherent in Family Law. This committee drafted amendments to the Law, and submitted them to the Judiciary Committee of the National Assembly. Although only some of their amendments passed the National Assembly, the campaign was significant in that it was not waged by a handful of leaders but was undertaken as a nationwide movement. Other women's organizations ranged from special interest groups designed to promote consumer protection, friendship, and understanding among women pursuing identical careers to groups concerned with social services, cultural development, and community activities. The women's movement in Korea never reached the point, however, of radically attacking the institution of the family as the core of sexual inequality as did the American women's movement in the sixties.

In drama and theater, women became very active after liberation. In 1947, a theater group named "Women's Small Theater" was founded by Pak No-kyong. This group was comprised of women only, and it

63Hyo-jai Lee and Chu-suk Kim, p. 42.
performed Western plays, such as Henrik Ibsen's *Doll's House* and Lillian Hellman's *The Watch on the Rhine*. Before it grew to full maturity, it was dissolved because of the Korean War.

It was in the late fifties that the first professional woman playwright Kim Cha-rim emerged at the head of a whole procession of women playwrights that were to follow. Although some women novelists of the 1920s tried their hand at playwrighting, this was not their main interest. Based on her own contemporary experiences Kim wrote plays in Western dramatic form with a strong woman's consciousness. She also initiated a plan for establishing a woman's theater, which later materialized into the "Women's Theater" group.

A second Women's Theater (Yoin Kukchang) group emerged as a succession in spirit with Kang Yu-chong as its leader. It was intended as a theater group consisting of women only. In its founding message it proclaimed its intention to promote pan-national and pan-cultural theater activities within and outside the country. An interesting point was that its activities were envisioned as society-oriented:

Women's Theater is literally a group of aspiring women. . . . We take pride in announcing that we intend to round up the wisdom of homemakers, based on the delicate strength unique to women. . . . Wouldn't homemakers' skills be needed in the popular culture movement as well? . . . .

Our Women's Theater is not of a leisure class which can afford indulgence in the theater for theater's sake, nor does it want to be. We want to be more productive. How proud would it be if we could serve and be a help in bringing about a happy society, one that is full of smiles and liveliness?64

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64 Quoted in Min-yong Yu (민영 유), "여인출장 사 " ("Yoin Kukchang' sa), in 語言이라는 이들의 전자 (Yongmang iranun irum
This statement shows the group's strong interest in general social causes, but the cause of women does not emerge as a conspicuous goal. The group has survived for about twenty years now and has made contributions to Korean drama in its own way. It has trained women in theater arts, produced plays dealing with women, foreign as well as native, and popularized Tennessee Williams' plays. In presenting women and their unique experiences on stage, it is similar to feminist theater groups in America. For example, in 1975, the International Year of Women, this group produced Kang Song-hi's Yokkwang (Counter-light) and Terence McNally's Next, discussed the images of women depicted in these two plays, and dealt with women's problems with people from various sectors of society. Whereas the American women's theater groups have created an alternative theater for women totally different from the established theater, this group approached the question of women as a part of an interest in larger social and cultural matters. It was followed by several women's theater groups after the sixties.

Thus the women's movement in Korea was part of a larger patriotic enlightenment movement from the late nineteenth century until Korea's liberation from Japan in 1945. By virtue of this association, it grew through cooperation and ties with enlightened males as comrades. Paralleling this movement was the evolution of a modern consciousness --a sense of self--on the part of women. It was a revolt against

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65 Asea Yosong Munje Yonguso, p. 56.
the traditional feminine ideal and here Christianity and the modern education promoted by American missionaries played a significant role. The emergence of New Women in the 1920s and their advocacy of women's liberation, although not realized, continued the revolt. After liberation, the women's movement shifted its focus to the issue of women's liberation. The large-scale influx of Western ideas resulted in a change in women's attitudes toward marriage, divorce and traditional morality. This phenomenon gained further momentum after the mid-sixties. Women became more and more conscious of their equality and rights partly due to rapid social changes brought about by industrialization, and partly due to the influence of the women's movement in Western countries, especially America. But woman's role and man's role were still securely separate, and women's demands were limited to the improvement of the social and economic status of women on a "personal basis" rather than being aimed at fundamental changes in social structures that would further equality for all women as a group. In sum, in the Korean women's movement the causes of individuality and equal rights, although ultimately desired, did not stand out clearly as the leading goals of the movement as they did in America. This seems partly due to the unique circumstances of a nation undergoing rapid modernization, and also partly due to the rigid Confucian cultural base that had endured for hundreds of years.

On the other hand, the history of the American women's movement is one of a long independent struggle against a male-dominated system, and women have won their rights one by one. Along with this, there was the revolt against the Victorian feminine ideal and moral standard.
The emergence of the new generation of women called flappers in the 1920s epitomized such a trend. By the late 1960s, women came to demand basic social changes in the pursuit of full autonomy for women, but this time their demands were rooted in consciousness of women as a group.

Because the women's movement is, in essence, the assertion of individuality and the pursuit of equal rights, women both in America and Korea have shared similar goals. They have challenged continuously the traditional idea of woman's place and morality although the patterns and characteristics of their movements may not have been the same.

In the following chapters, I will examine how playwrights of both countries came to terms with the social change concerning women and how their views of women are materialized in the creation of their female characters.
CHAPTER III
THE POST-WORLD WAR I PERIOD:
THE UNFULFILLED NEW WOMAN

Eugene O'Neill (1888-1953)

The post-war decade witnessed a weakening of traditional values and beliefs in America. There was a significant loss of faith in God and belief in a spiritual version of love. For many these were replaced by a scientific view of love, specifically in terms of Freudian psychology. In literature writers of the "lost generation," such as Dreiser, Fitzgerald, and Eugene O'Neill, rebelled against "Puritanism"--which acknowledged physical love only by genteel indirection and taught the lesson of virtue rewarded--and did not fear to take up sexual themes. It was a "sexual revolution in literature."¹ O'Neill not only explored deeply the questions of sex and neurosis in his works but also in rejecting the tradition of the genteel romantic idealization portrayed men and women with uncompromising realism. Although O'Neill is a many-sided figure as a playwright and defies stereotyping, in this particular respect he stands out as a rebel against convention and "epitomizes the Freudian period."²

If the loss of faith in God gave rise to an attraction to Freudianism in the larger society, a similar process can be found in O'Neill's life; his discovery of his mother's morphine addiction, his rebellion against his religious belief, and the endless search for belonging through love. The question of belonging is actually the most persistent theme of O'Neill's plays. He once wrote that "Behind the smaller themes of all my plays lies a larger theme, namely, that sickness of today which is caused by man's loss of religion and his need to find some substitute for it." As one of the most biographical of playwrights, he used the stage as his mirror; the sum of his work comprises an autobiography. Actually writing itself for him was part of his search for belonging. Gelb says that O'Neill, a perfect example of the rootless, rebellious renegade, would probably have died an early death except for his passion for writing. If his writing constitutes a search for belonging on a philosophical level, his continuous relationships with women and his three marriages represent a parallel search. This search leads back to his formative years; it was deeply rooted in the unhappy marriage of his parents, James O'Neill and Ella Quinlan.

Ella Quinlan was the pampered daughter of a middle-class Irish Catholic family, which provided her with a reasonable amount of culture.

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including a higher education. During her school days at St. Mary's Academy, Ella aspired to become a nun. In vivid contrast, James O'Neill, an actor with no formal schooling, had fought his way up from poverty to become a self-made man. Whereas Ella was reserved, a little spoiled, romantic and innocent, James was gregarious, adaptable, materialistic, and endowed with a charm that made him universally loved. By temperament, by upbringing, by education, Ella was suited to be the sheltered lady-wife of a prosperous businessman like her father. Her romantic strain and naiveté became the source of her life-long tragedy. James, on the other hand, had a different motivation in marrying Ella. He was certainly aware that she could not adapt to the wandering life of an actor, but he was ambitious and wanted to break away from his lower-class background by marrying her.

Ella soon realized the gap between the romantic existence that she had envisioned and the tumultous life of an actor's wife. On top of this, James's premarital affair with another woman was exposed and became a source of scandal. Ella could never get over her deep conviction that she should have been a nun. She was cruelly hurt when her convent schoolmates from wealthy Irish Catholic families cut her for marrying an actor. She always harbored the feeling that theater people were not her equals. Her frustration prevented her from adjusting well to the role of wife and mother and contributed to her later drug addiction.

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While Ella was travelling with her actor-husband, their second son Edmund died of measles at a very young age. Ella developed an intolerable sense of guilt, which she spent the rest of life trying to shift onto her husband and her other children. Eugene's birth proved disastrous to her and the rest of the family. Because Ella had a difficult delivery and was slow to recover, her doctor gave her morphine to ease her pain. She continued to take the medicine to free herself from feelings of loneliness and anxiety and thus to make life endurable. Her own problems affected her ability to care for Eugene, and so the O'Neill's hired a nanny, Sarah Sandy. Although Eugene was not physically neglected, he apparently had very little maternal love at a time when such love is of maximum importance to a child. This seems to have created a powerful sense of not belonging, of rootlessness on O'Neill's part.

In O'Neill's insecure relationship with his own mother can be found the genesis of his ambivalent attitude toward women. Sheaffer attributes this ambivalence to the fact that during his formative years O'Neill had two opposite kinds of mothers rooted in his imagination: one type represented by Ella, who made him feel rebuffed when she retreated into her own private world; the other type represented by Sarah Sandy, who was always there when he wanted her.\(^7\)

O'Neill's discovery of his mother's addiction intensified his sense of rootlessness and prompted him to search for a more sexual love. He prayed to God to redeem his mother, but Ella was not spared.

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O'Neill's faith in the divine scheme of things and in divine love was destroyed, and finally at fifteen he decided to stop attending church. After his loss of faith in God, O'Neill took to drinking, became familiar with whorehouses at a relatively early age, and thus launched himself on a search for belonging. He seems to have found some brief solace in prostitutes, and later he compared them with "Mother Earth, endowing them, as he had done in so many of his plays, with... the capacity to 'solace man and give him comfort.'"

His search for belonging continued through his other relationships with women and his three marriages. O'Neill was unconventional in that he married several times but not in his attitude toward women.

O'Neill's view of women was basically sexual. He talked of girls as pigs, and his idea of the perfect marriage was one in which "My wife and I will live on a barge... I'll live at one end and she'll live at the other, and we'll never see each other except when the urge strikes us." Woman to him was an object of either love or hate rather than of friendship and understanding. This seems to a large extent due to the influence of his own parents' incompatible marriage in which they could express "their love only in cycles of punishment and reconciliation." This particular sentiment was what made O'Neill sympathize deeply with Strindberg. Strindberg too was the offspring of incompatible parents. He was constantly tortured as an unwanted son and could not cope with his disastrous relationships with women.

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8 Gelb, p. 927. 9 Gelb, p. 246

10 Gelb, p. 9.
In Strindberg's plays, O'Neill found "one of the motivating forces of his parents' relationship with each other and the resultant effect upon him."\(^{11}\) O'Neill himself acknowledged his debt as a playwright to Strindberg when he accepted the Nobel Prize in 1936.

O'Neill's first marriage to Kathleen Jenkins in 1909 seems to have been at best a passionate search for belonging which ended as "a joke, a lark,\(^{12}\) as O'Neill later termed it while he could not resist her striking beauty nor the fact that he could arouse her ardor, deep within there was the sense that he was not capable of inspiring love nor worthy to be loved.\(^{13}\) Clearly this sense was the product of the psychological trauma resulting from his relationship with parents who did not care much for him. This marriage lasted briefly. O'Neill's father opposed the match and sent his son to Honduras. O'Neill himself also avoided seeing Kathleen and his own son Eugene O'Neill Jr. during about the three years he was legally married. The marriage ended in 1912. Later Kathleen reminisced that "We were two people ignoring one another's existence.\(^{14}\)

O'Neill became involved in a love affair with Louise Bryant before his second marriage to Agnes Boulton. Louise was a symbol of the daring and emancipated New Woman. She was recklessly eager for romance

\(^{11}\)Gelb, p. 234.


\(^{13}\)Sheaffer, O'Neill: Son and Playwright, p. 148.

\(^{14}\)Quoted in Sheaffer, O'Neill: Son and Playwright, p. 145.
and fell in love with O'Neill when she was the mistress of John Reed. At the same time she was determined to make something of herself as a writer. O'Neill was passionately attracted to her: "When that girl touches me with the tip of her little finger . . . it's like a flame," he maintained. Louise weighed the two men and married Reed because she thought he could do more for her own career and would become more famous. She left O'Neill to go to Russia with Reed to cover the revolution there. O'Neill was still in love with her and took to excessive drinking. Louise became "a leading figure in his pantheon of indomitable womanhood," and Nina, the heroine in Strange Interlude, is said to be modeled after her. His experience of foundered romance with an unconventional woman seems to have brought him a realization that "love was beautiful only in accepted roles in society." 

O'Neill married Agnes Boulton in 1918. Agnes resembled Louise Bryant not only in appearance but also in that she was a short story writer and considered her career as important as her husband's. She thought that she was as entitled to live her life as O'Neill was to live his. He was very possessive and demanding in love. Once he

15Quoted in Sheaffer, O'Neill: Son and Playwright, p. 350.


17Sheaffer, O'Neill: Son and Artist, p. 244.

18Frazer, p. 63. 19Gelb, p. 517.
said to Agnes: "I want it to be not you and me but us ... in an aloneness broken by nothing. Not even by children of our own. ... this must be my life--our life--from now on." He wanted her to find her exclusive reason for existence in him and his work, but she was not so single-minded as he wished her to be. Agnes herself says that O'Neill wanted a woman who was "mistress, wife, mother and valet"--all basically traditional female roles. Instead of fulfilling the expectations of his possessive love, she demanded things of him. Because of this they often quarrelled.

By the time of his second marriage, O'Neill's ambivalent attitude toward women had become clearer: his possessive love was counterbalanced by spells of hate. While still courting, he professed to Agnes: "I wanted to consummate the physical act because I thought it would free me from you ... And when I saw you leaving this morning ... I hated you with a fierce hatred. You were unattainable--because I saw that, I tried again to hurt you." When he was under these spells, he even showed sadistic tendencies. Once he pushed her away and slapped her hard across the face when he thought she was flirting with another man. At another time he tried to drag her by the hair across the dunes. These moods were usually triggered by excessive drinking.

O'Neill's second marriage lasted nine years and produced two offspring, Shane and Oona, despite the fact that he did not particularly want children. The marriage seemed doomed to eventual failure

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20 Quoted in Sheaffer, O'Neill: Son and Playwright, p. 409.
21 Boulton, p. 58. 22 Boulton, p. 65.
by his excessive drinking, possessiveness, and Agnes's unwillingness to play all the roles he expected of a woman. Their incompatibility became clearer by 1926, when O'Neill met Carlotta Monterey, who was to become his wife for the remainder of his life.

Carlotta was an actress who had acted in O'Neill's play *The Hairy Ape* and had been married three times. O'Neill felt drawn to her not only by her beauty but by her maternal solicitude and strength. She recalls that his childlike quality elicited her motherliness:

> He never said to me, "I love you, I think you are wonderful..." He kept saying, "I need you, I need you, I need you,"... And he did need me, I discovered... he was never in good health. He always had a cold. He wasn't properly fed or anything... Well, that's what got me in all my trouble with O'Neill—my maternal instinct came out.

She was sympathetic, understanding and intensely interested in his work, whereas Agnes used to say that she was bored by so much talk of the theater. Furthermore, Carlotta was a good homemaker, and this seems to be one of the most important factors that eventually won over O'Neill. What distinguished her from women like Agnes and Louise was that Carlotta happily defined herself in traditional terms as a wife, mistress, secretary and friend. She was thus his womanly ideal. The way she conceived of herself is clearly indicated in a letter sent to one of her friends:

> I am wife, mistress, housekeeper, secretary, friend & nurse so have no time to worry about my personality being submerged or my career being ruined. We were interested & amazed at the number of women in New York, who (absolutely without one shred of

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23 Quoted in Sheaffer, *O'Neill: Son and Artist*, p. 234.
real talent for anything) are eating their hearts out to be some one--to be talked about--to be alluring! They are rotten wives & bad mistresses & poor unhappy wretches.24

She devoted her life to O'Neill. He himself seems to have finally found in her a person to whom he could "belong," as he confesses in a letter to one of his friends:

To say that Carlotta and I are in love in the sense of any love I have ever experienced before is weak and inadequate. This is a brand new emotion and I could beat my brains out on the threshold of any old disciple of Aphrodite out of pure gratitude for the revelation! . . . We "belong" to each other! We fulfill each other!25

Although they often fought during the latter part of their marriage, they always reconciled and remained together until O'Neill's death in 1953. He fully appreciated her sacrifice and devotion, and left a will in which he made her his sole heir and executrix.

Thus this brief sketch of O'Neill's relationships with women shows that as a man he had a traditional view of women and expected each one to be mother, wife, mistress and secretary to him. He was searching for "belonging" through these women in the absence of God and spiritual love, and he seems to have found it in a woman with the qualities identified as traditionally feminine--loving, giving, and nurturing. This reality runs counter to the fact that as a playwright he rebelled against the genteel romantic tradition of the


25 Bryer, p. 171.
American theater, popularized Freudian ideas through his plays, and experimented with many dramatic forms as "the progenitor of avant-garde in American drama." When his concept of women was personified in his plays, these characters were portrayed as essentially sexual beings, Anna Christie and Strange Interlude are good examples.

Anna Christie

O'Neill won his second Pulitzer Prize for Anna Christie in 1922. This play was a popular success, running for 177 performances, and was well received by critics. It is about a prostitute, and the characters are based on the real people O'Neill mingled with—prostitutes, sailors, stevedores—when he was rooming at Jimmy-the-Priest's following his return from South America right after his marriage to Kathleen Jenkins. Though writers have always been fascinated by fallen women, few have been so obsessed by them as O'Neill. Out of forty-five published plays, he deals with a total of fifteen streetwalkers in eight plays including Anna Christie, and another five plays have prostitute figures as off-stage characters. He was sympathetic toward these women, and tended to think of them as victims of society, as evidence of the injustice and cruelty of life. This seems partly due to the fact that he was familiar with them and their stories. He met many who told him of their long

27 Boulton, p. 279.
28 Sheaffer, O'Neill: Son and Playwright, p. 100.
struggles to live by respectable standards. The same sense of being trapped by circumstances is expressed in this play.

The heroine Anna is a twenty-year-old prostitute. At the beginning of the play, she comes to Johnny-the-Priest's saloon, the address of her father Chris, whom she has not seen since her childhood. She is now worn out and sick and in search of a "rest cure." As she reveals later, her fall from innocence to prostitution was entirely the result of her ill fortune: her father deserted her by turning her over to her mother's cousins in Minnesota; they virtually enslaved her on their farm; one of the cousins ruined her when she was sixteen; and after that she became a prostitute. She is thus portrayed as a victim of circumstances.

Naturally Anna's view of men is filled with hate. Even her own father is not spared. She tells Marty, another prostitute she meets in the saloon, that she has come to her father in order to get some rest:

I sure need the rest! I'm knocked out....
But I ain't expecting much from him. Give you a kick when you're down, that's what all men do.
(With sudden passion) Men, I hate 'em--all of 'em!
And I don't expect he'll turn out no better than the rest.29

Although she is a fallen woman, helplessly victimized by circumstances, what distinguishes Anna is that she has a strong sense of self. She ran away to St. Paul to become a nurse because she hated

29 Eugene O'Neill, Anna Christie in Selected Plays of Eugene O'Neill (New York: Random House, 1967), p. 50. Subsequent references to this play are indicated by page numbers following citations in the text.
her cousins so much that "I'd killed 'em all if I'd stayed" (51). But she did not find any fulfillment as a nurse, and that finally drove her to prostitution:

Being a nurse girl was yust what finished me. Taking care of other people's kids ... caged in, when you're only a kid yourself and want to go out and see things. At last I got the chance--to get into that house. And you bet your life I took it! (Defiantly.) And I ain't sorry neither. (After a pause--with bitter hatred.) It was all men's fault --the whole business. (52)

She is self-willed in that she chose to walk into the "house" in defiance of her helplessness as a fallen woman, and she does not regret that she did. Paradoxically, through her choice she was only following the path that patriarchal society expected of a fallen woman. This tension between her sense of self and the value system that society inculcated her remains unresolved throughout the play.

The "joint" she was in was raided, and she was jailed. She could not stand being "caged up," became sick, and was sent to the hospital. Having nowhere to go, she comes to her father in search of mental and physical belonging. Chris, Anna's father, takes her to the coal barge where he lives.

The question of a double-standard of morality surfaces as Mat Burke, a ship stoker, emerges upon the scene. Mat's ship was wrecked in a storm, and he is adrift, when Chris's coal barge picks him up. By this time, Anna feels rested and as "clean" as though she had taken a bath. Her cynical and hard attitude has disappeared and she behaves decently.

Mat is a good example of a working class machismo. Stage directions describe him as "a powerful, broad-chested six-footer, his face
handsome in a hard, rough, bold, and defiant way. He is about thirty, in the full power of his heavy-muscled, immense strength" (63).

Physical strength is the source of male ego for him. He recalls how he survived the shipwreck:

That was a terrible time, God help us. (Proudly.)
And if 'twasn't for me and my great strength, I'm telling you--and it's God's truth--there'd been mutiny itself in the stokehold. 'Twas me held them to it, with a kick to wan and a clout to another and they not caring a damn for the engineers any more, but fearing a clout of my right arm more than they'd fear the sea itself. (67)

He also firmly believes in the double-standard and in the chastity of woman. He speaks of the prostitutes that he has met so far: "The only women you'd meet in the ports of the world . . . isn't woman at all. . . . They're looking to steal the money from you only." (68)

Anna, from her experience with men, instinctively figures out what kind of person Mat is, and she plays a decent girl to make herself more attractive to him. She lies that she is a governness. Thus she subscribes to the double-standard that Mat upholds despite her feelings of hatred and defiance toward men, for she has internalized conventional values and does not see any alternative ones. On the other hand, Mat is enthralled with the idea that she is the first "real, decent woman" that he has met so far, and falls in love with her at first sight. Subsequently he proposes to her.

Anna begins to go out with Mat against her father's wishes. Chris wants her to marry a "steady fallar got good yob on land," but she is willful and defies him: "Ain't I got a right to have as good a time as I can?" (73). She is assertive. But when it comes to the
question of marriage, her self-assertiveness is overcome by a sense of guilt about being a fallen woman. She does not want to lie to Mat about her past, for she is a victim to O'Neill, not a victimizer. Anna tells Chris why she cannot lie to Mat in order to marry:

> If I'd met him four years ago--or even two years ago--I'd have jumped at the chance, I tell you that straight. And I would now--only he's such a simple guy--a big kid--and I ain't got the heart to fool him. . . . But don't say again he ain't good enough for me. It's me ain't good enough for him. (75)

This statement shows that Anna truly regards herself as unworthy of marrying Mat, who after all has slept with many prostitutes. She is judging and defining herself in terms of the double-standard. Finally she tells Mat that she loves him but cannot marry him.

Not being able to understand her, Mat exhibits a typically sexist response: "... you're the like of them women can't make up their mind till they're drove to it. Well, then, I'll make up your mind for you bloody quick" (84). Chris orders her not to do anything that Mat says. Anna here asserts her independence of these two men and their chauvinistic attitudes:

> First thing, is, I want to tell you two guys something. You was going on 's if one of you had got to own me. But nobody owns me, see?--'cepting myself. I'll do what I please and no man, I don't give a hoot who he is, can tell me what to do! I ain't asking either of you for a living. I can make it myself--one way or other. I'm my own boss. So put that in your pipe and smoke it! You and your orders! (85)

Finally she confesses her past and completely puts herself at Mat's disposal: "I sized you up as a different kind of man . . . and that was why I got stuck on you, too. I wanted to marry you and fool you,
but I couldn't. Don't you see how I've changed? I couldn't marry you with you believing a lie" (88).

Mat's male ego is hurt because he has been cheated, and he becomes furious with Anna:

... I'd have a good right to smash your skull like a rotten egg. Was there iver a woman in the world had the rottenness in her that you have, and was there iver a man the like of me was made the fool of the world, and me thinking thoughts about you, and having great love for you, and dreaming dreams of the fine life we'd have when we'd wedded! (89)

He reveals the hypocrisy inherent in the double-standard. He himself is familiar with the ropes in the "hookershanty in port," but he cannot love a woman who has slept with "any man for a dollar or two." Furthermore, he thinks that Anna has "done wrong" by betraying his faith in her purity. He leaves the barge to get drunk and does not come back for two days.

Chris now realizes that he is responsible for Anna's bad fortune, and he pleads with her to forgive him. She again shows that she has "a heart of gold," in forgiving him right there: "There ain't nothing to forgive, anyway. It ain't your fault, and it ain't mine, and it ain't his neither. We're all poor nuts, and things happen, and we yust get mixed in wrong, that's all" (93). Here again O'Neill confirms his view of the prostitute as a helpless victim of circumstances. Anna decides to go back to her old way of life. Then, her father reveals that he is sailing for South Africa on the Londonderry as the bosun in order to provide her with a livelihood.

Mat comes back to the barge, tormented by his love for Anna. He cannot accept a fallen woman and demands that Anna tell him she
had lied. She refuses and implores his forgiveness: "Oh, Mat, don't you see I've changed? Can't you forgive what's dead and gone--and forget it?" (98) When he does not shift his ground, she becomes angry: "You been doing the same thing all your life, picking up a new girl in every port. How're you any better than I was?" (99). Thus she protests against the hypocrisy of the double-standard, but this is lost upon him and only draws his anger: "Is it no shame you have at all? . . . you hardened in badness" (99). He wants to have his own way and after compromising his male-ego somewhat he says finally that "If I was believing--that you'd never had love for any other man in the world but me--I could be forgetting the rest" (100). Because, he adds, "I'd change you to a new woman entirely, so I'd never know, or you either, what kind of woman you'd been in the past at all. (100)

Anna hails Mat's condescending attitude because she feels redeemed by his acceptance of her. All this while she has submitted herself to his decision regarding marriage. Inherent in her behavior is the assumption that man is the doer and woman the receiver: that it is he who must decide about marriage. Mat makes her swear an oath on the cross that he is the only man in the world she has felt love for, and so he agrees to marry her. Then he learns that he and Chris are to sail on the same ship to South Africa.

Thus the play ends on a seemingly happy note. Whether it was meant to be a happy ending remains a question. This is clear in the final scene. At the last minute before sailing, Mat, a devout Catholic, finds out that Chris and Anna used to be Lutheran. He is
filled with "a sort of bewildered foreboding" and says: "Oh, God, help me! ... There's some divil's trickery in it, to be swearing an oath on a Catholic cross and you wan of others" (103). Furthermore O'Neill himself explains the ending as follows:

I wanted to have the audience leave with a deep feeling of life flowing on, of the past which is never the past—but always the birth of the future—of a problem solved for the moment but by the very nature of its solution involving a new problem. ... It would have been so obvious and easy—in the case of this play, conventional even—to have made the comma at the end of a gaudy introductory clause, with the body of the sentence still unwritten. (In fact, I once thought of calling the play Comma.)

It seems obvious that O'Neill intentionally avoided the traditional tragic ending for a fallen woman. Actually for the first time in the history of the American stage a prostitute is given the stature of a protagonist and allowed to enter the sanctuary of marriage. Despite this fact, however, O'Neill seemed to have a reservation about making the ending purely happy as Mat's discovery of religious differences at the last minute suggests.

O'Neill portrayed the character of Anna sympathetically. Her fall was the consequence of such circumstances as her father's desertion and her cousin's forced attentions. He even suggests through Anna herself that her tragedy was the fault of individual men and


not of an oppressive patriarchal society. He also endows her with such individualistic qualities as a strong sense of self and independence. Thus she expresses her personal feelings—hatred and love toward men. She also has such positive attributes as a heart of gold and honesty. These traits redeem her from being an otherwise flat stereotypical character with a self-effacing and subservient attitude toward men. That O'Neill intentionally created an unconventional prostitute who asserts her self and protests the double-standard seems to indicate that he, as an author, was sensitive to the changing morality of women in contemporary society. However, he saw to it that Anna was cleansed of her past by her love for Mat, and her final redemption comes through him. Thus in this play O'Neill affirms his view of woman as a sexual being and marriage as a place for her to "belong."

Strange Interlude

O'Neill broke theatrical tradition with this experimental nine act play. It was the longest play ever staged professionally in America, featuring an intermission for dinner. It ran for 426 performances to full houses when the Theater Guild produced it in 1928. This play won O'Neill his third Pulitzer Prize.

Strange Interlude is a good reflection of American society during the 1920s. Otis W. Winchester says that it is a "remarkable metaphorical description of America's strange interlude, the 1920s," in

the sense that it reflects public attitudes toward several prominent controversies of the day: psychoanalysis, theological and ethical questioning, and rampant hedonism. Similarly Edwin A. Engel says that it is a morality play of Everywoman with Nina, the heroine, a typification of the American woman of the day, the civilized woman who is neurotic as a result of general unfulfillment. 33

The play is based on the real story of a girl whose aviator fiancé was shot down just before the Armistice. O'Neill said of the girl that she had gone to pieces from the shock; she had married, not because she loved the man, but because she wanted to have a child; and she hoped through motherhood to win back a measure of contentment from life. 34 The character of Nina is said to be modeled after Louise Bryant, O'Neill's former lover and a New Woman. 35

Nina is described as a new woman of the time, a twenty-year-old college student, an "athletic girl of the swimmer, tennis player, golfer type," 36 with bobbed hair. The action revolves around her relationships with the various men in her life: Ned Darrell, her lover; Sam Evans, her husband; Charles Marsden, her lifelong admirer and friend; Gordon Evans, her son; and Gordon Shaw, her one-time

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34 Gelb, p. 629.

35 Sheaffer, O'Neill: Son and Artist, p. 244.

36 Eugene O'Neill, A Play: Strange Interlude (New York: Horace Liveright, Inc., 1928), p. 51. Subsequent references to this play are indicated by page numbers following citations in the text.
fiancé, who was killed in the First World War. The play covers a twenty-five year time span from the time Nina is twenty.

At the beginning of the play, Nina is on the verge of a nervous breakdown because of guilt and regret over not having given herself to her fiancé Gordon Shaw, who died in the war. She says:

Gordon wanted me! I wanted Gordon! ... I knew he would die and I would have no children, that there would be no big Gordon or little Gordon left to me ... And yet I did refuse! I didn't make him take me! I lost him forever! ... Why did I refuse? What was the cowardly something in me cried, no, you mustn't, what would your father say?

(37)

That "cowardly something" in her was her fear of her moralistic and possessive father and all he stands for—the moral conventions of the cultured New England environment in which he had brought her up and the ethic of restraint and repression he had forced upon her.

Professor Leeds was a paternalistic, stern, and protective father:

Little Nina was never allowed to touch anything ... she used to sit on his lap ... cuddle against him ... warm in his arms before the fireplace ... warm in his love, safely drifting into sleep: ... "Daddy's girl, aren't you?" (51)

It was Professor Leeds who had prevented Nina from marrying Gordon by prevailing upon Gordon's sense of honor in arguing that marriage would be unfair to her if he should be killed.

Compared with Anna, who regards her loss of innocence as a fatal blow and herself as a fallen woman unworthy of marriage unless redeemed by a man, Nina is untraditional in that she regrets her abstinence from sexual fulfillment. Her regret has a deeper implication: it is a revolt against the conventional morality which her father
represents. Now she declares her break with this morality and announces her rebellious belief that she will be happy and fulfilled by giving herself to other men:

I must learn to give myself . . . give and give until I can make that gift of myself for a man's happiness without scruple, without fear, without joy except in his joy! When I've accomplished this I'll have found myself, I'll know how to start living my own life again! (35)

She is the new woman in the sense that she no longer is held back by social conventions or moral scruples in the pursuit of her selfhood. But the irony is that she sees her fulfillment in terms of "giving" herself to men for their happiness, which is a traditionally feminine characteristic. Rejecting her father's plea to stay at home, she leaves in order to find happiness in nursing wounded soldiers at a veterans' hospital.

Nina gives herself wantonly to the wounded soldiers at the hospital, but she does not "convince the men of her love or herself of her good intentions" (65). Her promiscuity makes her more desolate and guilt-ridden than before. When she finally returns home a year later, her father is dead. Dr. Ned Darrell, a twenty-seven-year-old neurologist, who has been studying Nina's case, prescribes marriage as a cure for her miserable state. He persuades Charlie Marsden, a writer and student of Professor Leeds as well as Nina's long-time friend, that she should marry Sam Evans:

... that's just what she needs now, someone she cares about to mother and boss and keep her occupied. And still more important, this would give her a chance to have children. She's got to find normal outlets for her craving for sacrifice. She needs normal love objects for the emotional life Gordon's death blocked up in her. Now marrying Sam ought to do the trick. Ought to. (68)
Ned's analysis is Freudian in that he sees Nina's problem in terms of a repressed desire for love which can be channelled through marriage, a husband and children. Charlie persuades Nina with the same arguments: "... it's time you were having children--and when children come, love comes, you know" (83). In a way, Ned and Charlie determine the next phase of life for her from their male-centered point of view. Being lost and desperate, she is persuaded by these male voices: "I want children. I must become a mother so I can give myself. I am sick of sickness" (83).

Nina and Sam get married. She becomes pregnant and feels "contented and placid." She even begins to love him. But the moment of happiness is brief. Sam's mother informs Nina that there is hereditary insanity in the family and advises her to have an abortion. Nina's expectation of happiness is shattered, and she confesses her motive in marrying Sam: "I don't love him! I only married him because he needed me--and I needed children!" (111). She says that she is leaving Sam. But she is again overcome by a sense of guilt: "... it's not his fault ... it's mine ... I wanted to use him to save myself ... I acted the coward again ... as I did with Gordon" (111). Sam's mother also implores Nina not to leave Sam. She re-affirms traditional morality in insisting that "You give your life to Sammy, then you'll love him same as you love yourself" (112). Thus torn between her sense of self and self-aspiration and the traditional morality that tells her to sacrifice her self, Nina again gives in to the latter. She has been taught by society to define herself in relation to man as a lover, wife, and mother, who always gives, nurtures, and sacrifices.
Sam's mother, however, suggests that Nina can have another child by someone else and that Sam need never know. The older woman believes in "being happy" as the guiding principle of life because she does not believe in God:

I used to be a great one for worrying about what's God and what's devil, but I got richly over it living here with poor folks that was being punished for no sins of their own, and me being punished with them for no sin but loving much. (115)

The loss of faith in God is a problem that is not unique to Sam's mother. It is Nina's and also, symbolically, the problem of every woman living in her age. This belief in happiness appeals to Nina because it has been a long time since she lost faith in God the Father. Her painful experience of Gordon's death, her father's death, and her own frustration and sense of guilt were enough to question God the Father:

We should have imagined life as created in the birth-pain of God the Mother. Then we would understand why we, Her children, have inherited pain, for we would know that our life's rhythm beats from Her great heart, torn with the agony of love and birth. . . . wouldn't that be more logical and satisfying than having God a male whose chest thunders with egotism and is too hard for tired heads and thoroughly comfortless? (81-82)

O'Neill perceptively raises the question about the difficulty of modern woman in identifying with a male God. Here he uses this argument to explain the hedonistic tendency of women of his time. Forty years later Megan Terry raised the same question but with a different purpose. Thus Nina is persuaded by Sam's mother and now her pursuit of happiness is intensified: "I want to be happy! . . . it's my right . . . and my duty!" (115)
After having an abortion, Nina selects Ned Darrell to father her baby. She is momentarily held back by a sense of guilt about having to betray Sam and to give herself to someone without love or desire. But soon she feels justified because it is "a case of Sam's happiness" and her own. To have a baby by Ned, Nina tells him about her abortion and the family secret, and prevails upon his sense of guilt: "... you aided and abetted God the Father in making this mess." (146)

Nina becomes pregnant with Ned's baby, and falls in love with him. By this time, she has completely transformed herself from a guilt-ridden girl, who desires to give herself, into a possessive mother. Stage directions describe pregnant Nina with "a triumphant strength about her expression, a ruthless self-confidence in her eyes" (159). She feels happy and contented as a mother:

... my child moving in my life ... my life moving in my child ... the world is whole and perfect ... I am a mother. (161)

Nina wants to marry Ned, but he refuses her proposal. He cannot accept her because of his double-standard of morality: "I don't respect you! I know too much about your past!" (180) He is a scientist, a neurologist who considers himself "immune to love through his scientific understanding of its real sexual nature" (62). It is he who fully understands why she became promiscuous, and it is he who prescribed marriage for her. He himself has had many affairs too. But because of his male ego, he "couldn't share a woman--even with a ghost," not to mention "the living who have had her" (70-71). Moreover, he feels that Nina is a sinister force that wants to "own
his life" and ruin his career. Thus fighting his attraction to her, he departs for Europe, leaving her with a broken heart.

Ned returns, however, tortured by his love for Nina and asks her to elope with him. This time she refuses: "I'm not your old mad Nina. I still love you. . . . But now I love my baby too. His happiness comes first with me!" (227). She adds that she does not feel guilty but rather "proud" because she has made Sam happy. Nina is very different from Anna, who totally subjects herself to Mat and hails his acceptance of her as her redemption from her sordid past. It is Nina who proposes to Ned first of all, and it is she who refuses him when he comes back to accept her proposal. She takes the initiative as the doer. She does not even feel any moral scruples about what she has done. While the underlying motive of these actions is her determination to be happy, Nina defines her happiness in terms of her role as a lover, a mother or a wife. This point makes her similar to Anna, who also finds fulfillment in becoming a wife. Nina suggests to Ned that they continue to be lovers, and he accepts. Now surrounded by Sam, Ned, Charlie, and her baby, she feels perfectly happy:

My three men! . . . I feel their desires converge in me! . . . to form one complete beautiful male desire which I absorb . . . and am whole . . . . I am pregnant with the three! . . . . husband! . . . . lover! . . . . father! . . . . and the fourth man! . . . . little Gordon! . . . . he is mine too! . . . . Why, I should be the proudest woman on earth! . . . . I should be the happiest woman in the world! (234)

Her happiness, however, basically comes from the fulfillment of her womanhood, and hence it is subservient to the passage of time.
Eleven years go by. At thirty-five, Nina begins to be aware of her limitations as a woman: "... at forty a woman has finished living ... life passes by her ... she rots away in peace" (241). She realizes how shallow her sense of fulfillment was with the three men and feels tired of her relationship with them. Thus she sees that she has wounded everyone in her pursuit of happiness, and that the only source of happiness left to her is her son, Gordon: "These men make me sick! ... I hate all three of them! ... they disgust me! ... the wife and mistress in me has been killed by them! ... thank God, I am only a mother now! ... Gordon is my little man, my only man!" (259). She becomes jealous of the growing bond between Sam and Gordon, and fearful that she "means nothing" to her son.

Another ten years pass. Nina becomes more and more desperate in her pursuit of happiness, this time through her son. Her rivalry with Madeline, Gordon's fiancée, is pathetic. Nina does not want to lose her son: "If he marries her, it means he'll forget me! ... She'll use her body until she persuades him to forget me!" (295). Nina asks Ned to tell the truth about Gordon in order to end the engagement, but Ned refuses her request. Gordon leaves with Madeline. Nina feels that her own son has become a "stranger" to her, and that even motherhood could not bring her fulfillment:

My having a son was a failure, wasn't it? He couldn't give me happiness. Sons are always their fathers. They pass through the mother to become their father again. ... they could not stay with us, they could not give us happiness. (351)

Ned overcomes his love for Nina and leaves her. When Sam dies of a heart attack, she does not feel guilty because she made him.
happy. Now that everybody is gone, she wants to marry Charlie, who has waited all this time. Ironically he is a surrogate father figure, whom she rebelled against at the beginning of the play.

Thus O'Neill creates in Nina a New Woman who loses faith in God and determinedly pursues happiness through sexual freedom without moral scruples. Whereas Anna can only protest the double-standard, Nina carries out her revolt against traditional morality. This indicates again that O'Neill shared the revolutionary mood of the 1920s concerning women and their changing sexual morality. However, he validates Nina's struggle to be herself only within the context of the sex-specific roles of wife, mother, and mistress: happiness to her is attainable in her relationships with men by giving herself to them. In this respect, she is similar to Anna who finds happiness in becoming a wife. Both Nina and Anna, despite their strong sense of self, are basically stereotypical. Furthermore, the way O'Neill portrays Nina as a victimizer in her pursuit of happiness and her failure in finding fulfillment seem to reflect his ambivalent feelings toward the New Woman. He ends this play by having Nina turn to Charlie, a father figure, whom she rebelled against at the beginning. Hence he suggests that a woman's pursuit of selfhood is hard to realize and so he endorses the traditional idea that her happiness is still to be found in a man.

Kim Wu-chin (1897-1926)

If the post-World War era was a revolutionary period in America, the same period was also a tumultuous one in Korea. In the 1920s in Korea the modern enlightenment reached its peak. The penetration
of foreign forces since the late nineteenth century had promoted a sense of crisis and awakening among the Korean people. The March 1 Independence Movement in 1919 was the high point of this trend. After it was aborted, however, people turned their energies to the "New Culture" Movement. Offshoots of this movement were the "New Literature" and "New Drama" Movements. During this time the number of educated women increased considerably, and accordingly the New Woman appeared. She supported the liberation of women and asserted her independence in the pursuit of sexual freedom. This was the era in which Kim Wu-chin lived, a time when self-assertiveness on the part of many women reached a high point.

Kim Wu-chin is the representative playwright of the 1920s as well as a poet and critic. He was the first playwright who formally studied Western drama and attempted to express his own life and creative zeal by means of that art form. As a young intellectual who had grown among an oppressed people, he had a strong sense of social responsibility. This led him to initiate the New Drama Movement by founding the Society of Theater Arts (Kukyesul Hyophoe) with a group of about twenty other Korean students studying in Tokyo. Their goal was to instruct the Korean people living under the tyrannical rule of the Japanese through drama performances. They studied and staged both classical and modern Western drama including plays by Shakespeare, Goethe, Chekhov, Hauptman, and Gorki. Their efforts in the early 1920s contributed greatly to introducing modern

\[37\text{Min-yong Yu (민영 우), "한성에 대한 도전과 환경" (1) (Insup e taehan tojon kwa chwajol), Yonguk pyongnon, No. 12 (1975), p. 54.}\]
Western drama since Ibsen as well as to establishing a pure modern drama tradition in Korea, as opposed to the commercial theater.

As the nation's first drama critic familiar with Western literary trends, Kim almost contemporaneously introduced Western expressionism—the general term designating rebellion against realism—to Korean literary circles, and he tried his own hand at expressionistic works. He also introduced modern Western drama to the Korean public through such critical essays as "Modern European and American Playwrights" (Hyondae kumi kukchakka), "On the So-Called Modern Drama" (Sowi kundaeguk e taehayo), and "Man and Superman--A Critical Study of Its Philosophy." In the first of these Kim discussed the lives and works of Eugene O'Neill, Alan A. Milne, Luigi Pirandello and Karel Capek, and he pointed to their significance in the history of Western drama. Kim introduced O'Neill's Beyond the Horizon (1920), Anna Christie (1921), The Hairy Ape (1922) and Desire Under the Elms (1924) through a series of critical essays. Here he described O'Neill as a versatile but not an original writer, and he said that this versatility was typical of the American character. These efforts all show how open and sensitive Kim was to Western literary trends in the early years of the modern age in Korea.

What makes Kim a truly representative figure of his time, however, is his own life. It reflects in microcosm the conflict and

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39 Wu-chin Kim (우진 김), "구미 캐니션 캐치 소개" (Kumi kundae chakka sogae), "시대 일보" (Sidae Ilbo): copy in the possession of Prof. Yon-ho So of Korea University, Seoul, Korea.
interplay between the traditional Korean culture and the modern Western culture that his society was coming to know. The strict Confucian tradition in which he was reared came up against the influence of the Western culture which he imbibed through his education. This conflict between the old and the new constitutes the basic theme of most of his plays, and it is central to his portrayal of women characters.

Kim was born in September 1897 at a time when the traditional feudalistic system of the Yi Dynasty was disintegrating. His father was a man of noble birth and held an important government position. As the nation was colonized by Japan in 1910, he lost his position and became a wealthy businessman, who owned a school and several companies. He took special pains in educating his first son Wu-chin in an extended patriarchal family context in which the Confucian moral code was strictly enforced. This traditional upbringing accounts for the internal conflict and confusion Kim experienced when he later was exposed to and came to sympathize with modern Western ideas.

Kim’s mother died when he was six. Thereafter he had to live with his father’s five wives including concubines, and played the role of the eldest son to ten half brothers and sisters. The complicated family situation seems to have made young Wu-chin an introverted and lonely personality.

According to Kim’s son, Kim Pang-han, Kim Wu-chin was a very filially pious son. Following his father’s command to study

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agriculture as the heir to the family estate, Kim went to Japan in 1915 to enter the Kumamoto Prefecture Agricultural School. Furthermore, he honored his father's wish by marrying the sixteen-year-old daughter of a Confucian scholar the next year when he was nineteen years old.

Kim studied hard and graduated summa cum laude. He won honors for his efforts from King Yongchin, but by 1919 when he entered college, his heart was not in studying agriculture. Furthermore, he had already become a fervent individualist, believing in democracy and freedom. This is clearly indicated in his diary, written at the time when the idea of independence from Japan, inspired by President Woodrow Wilson's advocacy of national self-determination, filled the air. He wrote about his belief in democracy:

> The course the age takes is a great truth and I believe that the democracy that Wilson proclaims today should prevail at home, in the family, and in society.41

On another occasion he expressed the same belief: "Self-determination is the only ultimate goal to us today."42 Kim also showed a unique response to the death of the last king of the Yi Dynasty in 1919. This had triggered the fury and anger of the Korean people against Japanese rule. He grieved over the death of the king but insisted that:

> The history of our Taehan [Korea] has hereby come to an end . . . The Monarch of our ancestors has now passed away. I am mourning his death deeply.

41Wu-chin Kim (우진 김), Diary, 29 January 1919.

42Kim, Diary, 7 March 1919.
But our task now is to generate a new life, a new force and a new meaning hereafter. Let us proceed! Let us obtain new life!  

This statement shows that Kim regarded the end of the Yi Dynasty, although it meant the complete subjugation of Korea to Japanese rule, as the passing of an old era and simultaneously the beginning of a new one.

Kim's strong belief in democracy and self-determination extended to his own life. He rejected his father's strict order to study agriculture and instead chose to follow his own inclinations and study the humanities. In the English Department at Waseda University in Japan he came into contact with Western ideas through literature, philosophy, and drama. Of the Western thinkers Nietzsche and Marx made the strongest impression upon him. Kim's belief in "free will" was influenced by Nietzsche, and his pseudonym Chosong (초성), meaning burning star, was taken from Zarathustra's utterance "You, burning star!" He also sympathized with Marxian socialism. His interest in social problems and his efforts to help the lower classes despite his upper class status were based on his sympathy with socialist ideas. For example, he took care of the stevedores of Mokpo city when they went on a strike.

Of the Western playwrights, Kim like O'Neill admired Strindberg. Like Strindberg, Kim was interested in the question of male-female

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43 Kim, Diary, 28 January 1919.

44 Tu-hyon Yi (두형 이), 한국 신극사 연구 (Hanguk singuksa yongu), (Seoul: Seoul Taehakkyo Chulpanbu, 1966), p. 108.

45 Yi, p. 108. 46 Kim, Diary, 24 August 1924.
relationships. His unhappy experiences with women including his father's five wives and also his own wife, whom he apparently did not love, influenced his ambivalent attitude toward the opposite sex. His interest in Strindberg was thus enhanced by their similar attitudes toward women.

Kim's iconoclasm is clearly manifested in an unpublished series of articles "New Blue Books" (Sin chong kwon), titled after Strindberg's Blue Books. In these articles Kim pungently criticized Confucian morality and tradition. In "The Mysterious Power of the Record" (Kirok ui maryok), he argued that his countrymen should free themselves from a dependence upon their predecessors and become truly civilized men who think and judge independently. He pointed to Confucianism as an example of outmoded tradition:

The most ominous idolatry of Confucianism is to form opinions based on those of one's predecessors. How strongly have these influenced the forming of the consciousness of the Korean people?47

Thus Kim criticized the authoritarianism and classicism embedded in the consciousness of the Korean people. He concluded that what makes a genius is a free will which is not paralyzed by the power of the record. Kim's iconoclastic belief in a free will that denies the idolatry of tradition was extended to his criticism of the traditional view of women's chastity. In an essay titled "Jus Primae Noctis" (Choya kwon), Kim said that the emphasis on women's chastity in Korean society is the result of the Confucian idea of the dominance of men over women.

47 Wu-chin Kim (우천 김), "기록의 마력" (Kirok ui maryok), Manuscript, No. 2.
... this belief, this morality, and this superstition are nothing but the product of the belief in men's superiority to women and the possession of the weak by the strong. In order to keep a female permanently under his command, a male demands the monopoly of virginity, utilizing his economic and physical power as his weapons. 48

Furthermore, he criticized women themselves for accommodating to such norms. He regarded with pity those who follow men's standards without reservation:

Pitiful women. When they want to fulfill their missions--love and reproduction, male superstition of virginity blocks them and controls their rights to life and death. 49

Despite Kim's liberal criticism of the traditional belief in virginity, his attitude toward women was still limited in that he saw their mission as basically restricted to love and reproduction--the traditionally feminine roles. Although he was liberal enough to criticize the worship of virginity, he was not liberal enough to see alternative roles for women. This tension between liberal and traditional views of women mirrors the social reality of his time, represented by the new and the traditional woman.

Kim finally concluded that Korean women needed the "awakening of Nora" in terms of their consciousness and physical control over their right to virginity. In the light of this belief, his extramarital love affair with Yun Sim-tok is understandable. Yun was a New Woman and a famous soprano of the day. Like other New Women,

48 Wu-chin Kim (무진 김), "조약권 : Jus Primae Noctis" (Choya kwon), Manuscript, No. 2.

49 Kim, "조약권 : Jus Primae Noctis" (Choya kwon).
she was open and liberal in her relationships with men. She was not limited by the double-standard of sexual morality, and because of this she was cited as "a bad example" in order to teach Korean women the womanly virtues. Nonetheless Kim fell in love with her and continued this relationship several years before the two finally committed suicide together. The reasons for his suicide are complex and will be explained later. Nevertheless his serious relationship with Yun well reflects his iconoclastic view of traditional sexual morality.

After graduation from the university Kim had planned to start in Korea a little theater movement similar to what was currently popular in Western countries. But his aspiration for a life of his own was frustrated again. He could not overcome his filial obligation as the eldest son and gave in to his father's wish to become the head of one of the latter's businesses. Kim described his inner conflict:

Tragic is Father who, despite his victory in the struggle with his own destiny, is nonetheless threatened by the new forces because the time is inauspicious for him! It is not that I don't possess the power and the weapons to resist tradition. But do I have the strength to overcome my affection toward Father King and my compassion toward the tragic hero? . . . Am I not Hamlet? What if I carry the seed of the tragedy to cry out "the time is out of joint"?

This statement clearly shows the extent of his frustration and anguish stemming from the conflict between his filial duty and his own

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50 Yon-ho So (연호 서), "김 무진이 문예 비평론" (Kim Wu-chin ui munye pipyong non), 문예 진흥 (Munye chinhung), (Jan. 1982), p. 37.

51 Kim, Diary, 19 June 1924.
aspirations. Here he insinuated that his father represented the tradition of familism, and he saw himself as the bearer of the new individualistic values.

Such a family atmosphere was doubtless repressive to Kim. His frustration was further increased by his seemingly loveless relationship with his wife, whom he lived with out of fear of his father. He treated her with pity, not with love. He even turned for companionship to either his stepmothers or sisters-in-law, not his wife. The unusually long time gap between the birth of his first and second children evidences his loveless marriage, for traditionally a woman's main function was to have children. Kim came to call his home a prison, and he compared himself to a caged bird in his diary written in English:

I sing the song of the heartbreaking bird in the gaol. The bird sings nothing but his yearning toward getting freedom, dreaming the old days' life . . . Now I am the bird without freedom and oppressed.52

His frustration here seems to have been insurmountable. Finally he left his family and an enormous fortune behind and committed suicide with his lover Yun Sim-tok. In an article which he wrote a few days before he left home for good, he confessed his belief about how one should live:

However foolish one may be, one should live one's own life in the way one wishes according to one's uniqueness and worth . . . Men are bound by tradition, norms and morality. I am now putting into action the declaration of revolt against all these extraneous things.53

52 Kim, Diary, 19 June 1924.
Clearly Kim regarded himself as an individualistic rebel against such repressive traditions as Confucian familism and filial piety. His suicide was the ultimate denial of "all these extraneous things," and thereby the victory, in a sense, of an "inborn individualist," as he called himself. Kim's own son calls his father "a victim of the time and the feudalistic tradition." In any case, Kim was an individualistic iconoclast, and this same quality characterizes his idea of drama.

Kim viewed drama as a tool for social change and the spiritual salvation of humanity. He certainly partakes of the enlightenment mood that was prevailing in the twenties. In an essay about modern drama he argued that its significance lies in its mission of spiritual salvation for humanity and in its goal of edification of and recreation for the masses. In another article "Advising Creative Writing" (Changjak ul kwonhamnida), his idea of drama as a means for social change is manifested more clearly. In this essay, he suggested four basic themes as the subjects for creative writing: first, creative writing should deal with the question of social classes in an effort to overcome them; second, it should aim at bringing changes to the traditional Confucian morality by reforming people's lives and creating a new morality; third, it should deal with such women's issues as love, marriage and maternity; and fourth, it should deal with such

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54 Kim, Diary, 2 July 1923.

55 Pang-han Kim, " 김 무진의 로맨틱한 소설 " (Kim Wu-chin ui romaentic han choehu), p. 354.

56 Wu-chin Kim (무진 김), " 창작을 전하자 " (Changjak ul kwonhamnida), Manuscript, No. 2.
basic questions as life, death, God, and the ideal. Kim's plays can fairly be regarded as the materializations of his ideas of drama. All of his plays have a strong sense of society. The two that are examined in this study—Yi Yong-nyo and The Disillusionment of a Ragged Poet (Tudogi siin ui hwanmyol)—deal with women's issues. The former treats women's social oppression through the life of a prostitute and the latter the conflict between new and traditional values in the case of a New Woman. Simultaneously Kim's liberal and traditional attitudes toward women are manifested in these plays. He attacked the double-standard of sexual morality, and yet he still saw women's role in traditional terms.

Yi Yong-nyo

This play (1925) was the first Korean drama written in the form of Western realism. It is also the first modern Korean play dealing with the subject of prostitution.

The play is set in Mokpo, a provincial city in the southern part of Korea during 1924 and 1925, when urbanization and industrialization had just begun to take place. The central character of the play is Yi Yong-nyo, a twenty-eight-year-old prostitute. Initially she lives at Madam An-suk's house with her three children. She was once an ordinary but uneducated housewife in a lower class family. Since her husband Chong-un deserted her to become a vagabond, she has been a prostitute to make a living for herself and her children.

57 Kim, "창각은 왜합니까 " (Changjak ul kwonhamnida).
58 Min-yong Yu (민영 류 ), Personal interview, 15 January 1983.
Stage directions describe Yong-nyo as a typical lower class woman, stricken with poverty and a hard life. She is "emaciated from the difficulties of living and enduring too many childbirths, and has a darkish pale look peculiar to the poor working class people."\textsuperscript{59} She is, however, characterized as having a "strong individuality." She has "the power of youth that appeals to the opposite sex," is "strong yet full of womanly love that would hold and comfort a man in her arms," and has "powerful and rhythmic movement and language" (42). What makes her unique is that she sees her profession only as "a means for survival." Prostitution is about the only form of support for a woman who is uneducated and utterly lacking in resources and yet has three children to support. Whereas O'Neill's Anna entered the same profession after her fall from innocence and after trying a nursing job, Yong-nyo has no alternative except to become a prostitute because of her need for some kind of livelihood.

At the beginning of the play, Yong-nyo has been called out by customers who were solicited by An-suk. Yong-nyo's ten-year-old son Kwan-ku and thirteen-year-old daughter Myong-sun, while waiting for their mother, get into a fight. Madam An-suk sides with Kwan-ku.

\begin{quote}
Myong-sun: ... I am an easy mark. Only because I am a girl. (cries out loud)

Kwan-ku: ... Right, you, nothing but a foolish wench. All wenches are slaves of men. Ask Mom whether it's true or not. (39)
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{59} Wu-chin Kim (우진 김), 이 영 녀 (Yi Yong-nyo), in Kim Wu-chin 작품집 (Kim Wu-chin chakpumjip), ed. Min-yong Yu (Seoul: Hyongsol Chulpansa, 1977), p. 42. Subsequent references to this play are indicated by page numbers following citations in the text.
This scene sets the tone of the whole play--women's social oppression.

Yong-nyo returns after rejecting the request to have sex with a group of men. She protests to An-suk against this arrangement: "Although this thing is my rice bowl, I will never let it happen like tonight. Even if I am dying" (46). Here she strongly asserts herself, and in this regard, she is different from the stereotypical prostitute, who would have given in to her role expectations. To this An-suk responds patronizingly: "Look. You should have some more patience. Haven't I told you my past story of when I was your age? . . . Close your eyes for once, and get it over with" (46) This remark further provokes Yong-nyo and she cries: "Cut it out! . . . Money, the Enemy! Money, the Enemy! . . . Am I worse than a dog? I said I don't want it. Why? Why?" (47) To An-suk, Yong-nyo's protest is beyond comprehension. She shows the classic response of a madam: "Everything will be over once you empty your room and leave her tomorrow. Who stole you to be in debt? . . . Dirty wench! Presumptuous! . . . Disgusting!" (47). By making money, not the male-dominated system, responsible for the prostitution of these women, Kim portrays them as victims of the social, in this case capitalistic, environment.

Both Yong-nyo and An-suk are involved in prostitution, but they have different views of it. Yong-nyo considers it merely "a means" to make a living and so tries to keep her integrity intact. This is why she protests against the group sex request. An-suk was "forced into prostitution by her parents even before she understood what sex was" (35). Ever since then she has been engaged in this profession.
She has learned to conform to the ways of the world. Stage directions describe her as one who has "thoroughly realized that things like ideals and goodness do not have anything to do with this world," and therefore she firmly believes that "there is no survival unless one says 'white' when the world says so, and says 'black' when the world says so" (35). She worships money and its power that can "change our destiny" whereas Yong-nyo wants to "spit on that guy's face and throw the money at it" (46). To Yong-nyo her integrity counts for more than money.

The way Yong-nyo perceives her social oppression as a woman is very unique. Instead of finding fault with men like O'Neill's Anna, who "hates men," or the social system that had driven her into prostitution, she attributes her hard life either to the lack of money or ultimately her destiny. Learning that her former lover, who jilted her, has gone bankrupt, Yong-nyo simply responds: "For him to end up in this way is his destiny, and for me to live this hard life is my destiny" (45). Even An-suk subscribes to the point of view that everybody has his/her destiny: "One is born with one's own destiny .... It suffices enough if one could manage to earn a living, have children, support them, and have some worldly pleasures" (45).

Resigning themselves to destiny is a pattern of response expressive of hopelessness and a device to alleviate the painfulness of their situations. These two women are clearly aware that there is no way to change their hard realities into better ones. According to Yu
Min-yong, this sense of destiny characterizes the Korean consciousness. Throughout the play, all the characters give in to it. Only Yong-nyo resists unsuccessfully.

Yong-nyo resigns herself to destiny in some respects but at the same time she asserts herself by aspiring to educate her son. Her motivation is not clear, but probably she sees it as the last hope of extricating herself from her wretched situation. She does not care about her daughter's education at all. This shows that despite her strong sense of self, Yong-nyo accepts the patriarchal values which preach the predominance of males over females. This is why she plans to fulfill herself through her son. In this respect she is similar to O'Neill's Anna, who asserts herself against the double-standard but ultimately seeks fulfillment by marrying a man.

Yong-nyo is finally thrown out by An-suk for her disobedience, and at the same time she is taken by the police and put behind bars for thirty days on a charge of prostitution. After this the chief of police introduces her to Kang Yong-won, a member of the city council and a man of great power and wealth derived from the cotton trade. Kang extends charity to her, employs her in his cotton mill and lets her stay in the servants' quarters in his house. But this charity turns out to be a strategem with a more carnal purpose.

Yong-nyo rejects Kang's advances and earns her living by hard work as a mill girl. Her independence draws derision from other residents of the servants' quarters--the cook, the rickshaw man and

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Yu, "인숙에 대한 도전과 좌절" (1) (Insup e taehan tojon kwa chwajol), p. 59.
his wife, and the steward and his wife. They do not understand Yong-nyo's defiance of her boss--an authoritarian and benevolent figure to them--nor her stubbornness in sending her son to school. Mrs. In-bom, the Steward's wife, Mrs. Ki-il, the rickshaw man's wife, and Chom-dol's Grandmother, the cook, all find fault with Yong-nyo:

Mrs. In-bom: ... If she thinks about how she lived in the past, she cannot be so stubborn. Her husband, let alone providing food, sneaked and sold even the rice box. Can she think of educating her brat? To hell with it. She should either comply with the proposal or give up sending the brat to school.

Mrs. Ki-il: True ... One should live according to one's own destiny.

Chom-dol's Grandmother: If I were her, I would be willing to do whatever I am told to do. (51-52)

Their assumption is that a woman should be submissive and obedient--an assumption defined by the male-dominated culture. Their sense of destiny further consolidates such a belief. Hence it is natural that they do not understand Yong-nyo's position.

Yong-nyo's assertiveness creates another problem. She protests to the foreman of the mill against "working a human being like a dog or a pig," and as a result is laid off from work. Taking advantage of this situation, Kang renews his attempt to conquer her. Only Ki-il, the rickshaw man, understands her predicament and supports her and advises her not to give in to Kang's blackmail: "In this situation, someone can only end up suffering an ordeal, not knowing what to do ... Rather than giving in to who has the money only because you are a helpless woman, better offer your body to a dog or a pig" (57). This statement only shows that Ki-il is discontented with his economically deprived situation but not with the sexist society.
Yong-nyo, however, threatened with the loss of livelihood and driven by her wish to educate her son, has no choice but to comply with Kang's proposal. The pressure of having to make a living is too overwhelming to resist. She is again victimized by the environment.

In the meantime Yong-nyo is informed that her vagabond husband has died. So far she has waited for him to return and remained unmarried, thereby keeping her own kind of faithfulness to a faithless husband. It is implied that she is eventually jilted by Kang.

Yong-nyo then lives with Yu, who is described as "a stout and strong laborer who looks as if he partakes of the enormous energy of primitive nature" (63). His "twitching lips and glaring eyes" seem to tell of his "overpowering sexual energy." He is a typical chauvinist and regards women as nothing but sexual objects. Not being able to cope with his excessive sexual energy, and suffering from malnutrition, Yong-nyo falls ill. Being a man of strong instinct, Yu cannot put up with this. He shouts at her as she lies ill in bed:

Sprawled out again today . . . You're going to work me to the full. How come you make lying in bed your business? . . . Have some sense of shame. Why should it be only me who has to work day and night? You find all kinds of excuses to lie in bed and pass time. Quit that useless thinking and pull yourself together! (64)

To Yu, a woman is only worth keeping either as a sexual object to satisfy his desire or as an extra source of income through her work. Otherwise, she is simply a burden on him. Sick, Yong-nyo does not fulfill any of these functions, and for this reason she has become the target of all his hostilities. Because of this view of woman, Yu makes an unsuccessful attempt to molest Yong-nyo's daughter.
Myong-sun. Myong-sun confesses to Mrs. Ki-il how Yu almost raped her and mistreats her sick mother:

Mother went to work at the factory and I was alone at home. If I didn't scream, I would have been undone . . . . Since then, I cannot go near him when he is alone. At night when my mother groans, I want to dash at him and stab him to death. Why do guys pester women all the time? (68)

In this scene Kim Wu-chin shows a true sympathy toward women. This is also the first time in this play that Kim lets a minor character express her discontent with men. Mrs. Ki-il, another minor character, also confesses her grudges against men and advises Myong-sun not to marry;

Come to think of guys, none of them are guiltless . . . . I wouldn't feel revenged even though I could take out their livers and bite them! Please never get married! Who will blame you here in Mokpo city if you don't marry as long as it's not a backward rural area? If only a woman can make a living for herself. If you work at the rubber factory for three years, they will pay you seventy Chun.61 (68)

Mrs. Ki-il's deep-seated hostilities toward all males reveal the extent of her oppression by her husband and her lack of economic self-sufficiency is the reason for not breaking out of this oppression. Despite her clear consciousness of the oppressive treatment of women by men, she does not in fact have any other alternative except to stay married. The social situation so far has not allowed women any other choice. But it is changing now in the wake of industrialization and women can have jobs. In her situation she can only advise Myong-sun to get a job in order to be independent.

61 Korean unit of currency during the early part of the twentieth century.
When Myong-sun suggests divorce, Mrs. Ki-il explains her helpless situation: "I don't know how to obtain a divorce if I wanted it. Married women in Korea are not allowed to do it at their own discretion" (69). Furthermore, she has a typically traditional view of marriage which rests upon her sense of destiny: "... you cannot have the way of the world at your disposal. ... Unless you are a striking beauty and thereby win a good husband, you have to stick with a husband until your death even though you may not like him" (60). Actually Mrs. Ki-il's belief that a woman's beauty can provide her an alternative is only a fantasy. Because the society looks askance at any type of excellence in women, whether it is physical or mental. Thus it preaches that "the life of a beauty is short," meaning that a beautiful woman is luckless.

Yong-nyo dies of malnutrition and exhaustion. Myong-sun and Mrs. Ki-il continue talking not knowing that Yong-nyo has died in the other room. Reversing her belief in a woman's beauty, Mrs. Ki-il sums up what beauty has meant to Yong-nyo, an underprivileged woman in a sexist society:

Beauty has been a curse to her. Beauty is good for the eye, but doesn't mean that her words are heard ... Don't marry. With your father dead, what could she have done by herself? On top of that, she had the ambition to send her son to school. (70)

By portraying Yong-nyo as a victim, Kim Wu-chin criticizes an oppressive social system which commodifies a woman's body in exchange for money and by a tradition sees women primarily as sex objects. He also endows Yong-nyo with a strong will and sense of self, which makes her try hard to preserve her integrity. Kim's sympathetic and
untraditional attitude toward women, however, has its limitations, which are manifested in his depiction of Yong-nyo. Despite her untraditional characteristics she still attempts to fulfill herself vicariously through her son. Furthermore, Kim subjects her to the ultimate defeat of death, and does not provide even a ray of hope. He also depicts Yong-nyo as always blaming either money or destiny for her miserable situation rather than men themselves. She never criticizes or challenges male dignity. At best, Kim could only allow an indirect criticism of males through minor characters like Mrs. Ki-il or Myong-sun.

In these respects, Kim sharply contrasts with O'Neill in his portrayal of Anna Christie. Anna, like Yong-nyo, is a prostitute who has a strong sense of self but attempts to fulfill herself through a man. Nevertheless O'Neill makes Anna a more vividly individual character by personalizing her feelings of hatred toward men and he permits her an individual victory in marriage.

While Kim, as a playwright sensitive to the liberal trends of the time, could hold an untraditional view of women, he could not transcend his own patriarchal culture and society that demanded conformity. Because he could not resolve the conflict between the tradition and modernity in his own life, it was beyond his imagination that a woman like Yong-nyo could overcome it either. The result is a contradictory character in whom the tension between her modern sense of self and the traditional role of a woman remains unresolved. Then, as if he himself was curious to explore what alternative there is for a woman with a career, Kim went on to deal with a New Woman in Disillusionment of a Ragged Poet (Tudogi siin ui hwanmyol).
Disillusionment of a Ragged Poet (Tudogi siin ui hwannyol)

This one-act play (1925) is known to be an "autobiographical drama," in which the relationship between the hero and the heroine supposedly reflects that between Kim Wu-chin himself and his lover Yun Sim-tok. Kim's attitude toward the New Woman is clearly manifested in this play. Set in a traditional Korean household in the 1920s, the play consists of exchanges between a poet Won-yong, his wife, and his friend Chong-cha, a New Woman.

At the beginning of the play, Won-yong is fervently reciting his love poem for Chong-cha in a loud voice, indifferent to the fact that in the inner room his wife is trying to put their baby to sleep. He is a thirty-three-year-old poet so devoted to his own world that family routines do not concern him much. This character greatly resembles the playwright in terms of age, profession, and philosophy of life. The baby is finally awakened and cries. Won-yong's mother scolds him for being inconsiderate. Chong-cha then enters.

Chong-cha is a twenty-eight-year-old so-called New Woman. She has a career and is already sufficiently known to be reported in the newspaper once in a while. She has lived her life "according to her own belief" regardless of what others have said. She smokes, something that is unimaginable to a traditional woman. She is open and liberal in relating to men. A man has even committed suicide because she did not requite his love.

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62 Wu-chin Kim (우진 김), 꾸더기 시인의 환멸 (Tudogi siin ui hwannyol), in 김 우진 작품집 (Kim Wu-chin chakpumjip), ed. Min-yong Yu (민영 윤) (Seoul: Hyongsol Chulpansa, 1977), p. 25. Subsequent references to this play are indicated by page numbers following citations in the text.
Won-yong courts Chong-cha despite the fact that he is married, but she is not easily manipulated. She responds to his courtship with nonchalance, saying that she does "not want to sacrifice others" meaning Won-yong's wife, "against her conscience" (27). Won-yong and Chong-cha are equally matched in terms of education, career, and intelligence. Since both maintain their respective strong positions, the conversation between them is laden with tension.

Won-yong's attraction to Chong-cha seems to be partly motivated by his romantic desire to escape from his family and his responsibilities. She symbolizes for him freedom from familial tradition:

Beautiful, young ... Free without parents or siblings, not bothered by progeny. Besides, all men of caliber and fame are attracted to you as butterflies are attracted to a spring flower . . . . I believe that you are the happiest, freest person in the world. (22)

His view of Chong-cha contrasts sharply with that of his wife, for whom he shows contempt. Even the traditional womanly virtue of submissiveness operates here as a source of his anger:

Is that a human being? Nothing but a dummy with a human mask on. . . . When I throw a tantrum at her, she goes yes, yes. Even when I criticize her groundlessly, she goes yes. Even when I call her names and slap her, she goes yes, yes, yes. At most she says "Why do you do this to me?" Can you stand it? Even a worm wiggles when touched. Better live with a worm. (23)

Won-yong is perfectly justified in blaming his virtuous wife because in his patriarchal cultural context a woman's existence depends upon her husband, who has almost absolute power and authority over her. Moreover, Won-yong's marriage seems to lack love just like that of Kim Wu-chin. To him his wife represents the traditional bind from
which he wants to free himself. Hence his unreasonable hatred of her traditionally virtuous behavior.

Because she is aware of women's position in society by virtue of her education and her career experience, Chong-cha sees through Won-yong's selfishness. Instead of being persuaded by this talk, she takes a firm stand on moral grounds: "You'll be content if everything becomes your plaything. But human conscience is not to be played with" (24). Her idea of love is moralistic: "Love ... grows ... from conscience. Love forgets about self. Love is humble. There's nothing more precious and valuable than this in this terrible world" (24). Won-yong's male ego is hurt and he becomes angry. His admiration of her now turns into contempt for women: "You don't understand me. Fool! Your name is woman" (24).

Won-yong and Chong-cha have different ideas of love. Whereas his is self-centered, hers is altruistic and selfless. In her strong insistence on her belief, Chong-cha is untraditional. Still the self-effacing quality in her idea of love is not very different from what has been required of women traditionally. Whereas Chong-cha's sense of self is limited by her moralistic and traditional idea of self-effacing love, Nina's strong sense of self in Strange Interlude knows no limit and her pursuit of selfhood has no moralistic restrictions. To be happy she even cuckolds her husband.

Chong-cha time and again clarifies her moral position: "I cannot sacrifice my conscience ... I cannot be faithful to my feelings at the cost of my conscience. One should learn to control one's own life" (27). Won-yong's frustration is further intensified and so is
his contempt of woman. He finally reveals himself to be clearly chauvinistic. He calls her "a New Woman with a hackneyed mask on," and expresses hatred: "Woman, prolific in reproduction and lacking in brains! . . . I cannot stand the obnoxious way that you, New Woman, are pouring words naturally from your red lips" (28). His attitude toward the New Woman, reflecting Kim Wu-chin's, is highly ambivalent. Won-yong is attracted to Chong-cha, and both admires and envies her for her liberal, untraditional, and free life style. He wants her to exemplify these qualifications in his relationship with her while he expects his wife to be submissive. However, he feels repulsion when Chong-cha strongly asserts her belief in moralistic love.

As the conversation becomes more heated and biting, Chong-cha moves to leave. At this moment, Won-yong's wife Kyung-sun enters. It turns out that the two women are former classmates. Their conversation reveals more about the contrast between them. Chong-cha, despite her achievement, envies Kyong-sun's married life: "How could I ever know that you have become the wife of a famous poet? . . . I envy you. You with a renowned poet and a cute baby son" (30). She even feels remorse about the single life she has chosen when she compares it with her friend's ordinary married life: "We were of different temperaments. But we dreamed about our future together . . . Now one has a sweet home, while the other lives a life spoken ill of by the world" (30). Although she is a New Woman, Chong-cha cannot get over the traditional idea in a patriarchal society that a woman should find her happiness in marriage. Thus she constantly oscillates between her sense of self and the traditional role of a woman.
Kyong-sun, although married, is not happy either. She is a traditional but educated housewife. Probably because of her education she feels more frustrated by a married life in which she is inhibited by Won-yong. To her he is an authoritarian and chauvinistic figure. This aspect of his personality sharply contrasts with the liberal and romantic suitor he tries to be for Chong-cha. Kyong-sun almost cries out with surprise when she recognizes Chong-cha, but, suddenly reminded of her husband's presence nearby, she suppresses her emotion. On her part, she envies Chong-cha's free life: "I am thus confined to the home... too late to get out of this life" (30). She reveals to Chong-cha that she is not even allowed to go out freely.

Won-yong intervenes in the two women's conversation. He blatantly shows his contempt for his wife, calling her "idiot," and orders her to "Go away! Your God-given calling is to nurse a baby" (31). In this scene, he shows himself to be a typical traditional male who believes in the predominance of men over women. Kyong-sun, despite her sense of self and her education, has consented to be an obedient and submissive wife as society tells her she must. She does not even answer back. She only cries.

Chong-cha sympathizes with Kyong-sun as a woman and protests to Won-yong: "Is violating a good wife's freedom a poet's God-given calling?" (31). She advises her friend:

Is it true that you don't have freedom, why don't you follow the example of Nora? (holding Kyong-sun's hands) You don't have to be the same as other ordinary women. (31)
Angry with Chong-cha, he further reveals his traditional view of women:

Home is a prison. That is my belief. Once a woman becomes a man's wife, she loses her freedom as a human being. The eternal life of a woman is here. (32)

At this point, the confrontation between Won-yong and Chong-cha reaches a climax. She criticizes his irresponsible, carefree, chauvinistic way of life:

What a belief! So, make her bear a child, sew your clothes, and cook for you, while you, calling yourself a poet, wander around freely and idly doing nothing. After having sacrificed another's life, you enjoy your singing. Is that a so-called ragged poet? (32)

Chong-cha reveals herself to be a truly New Woman. Holding to her belief in equality, she protests the idea of the predominance of male over female and the separation of male and female spheres.

Won-yong tries to justify a married life in which he has all the prerogatives as the husband over his wife by citing "destiny":

If forming a family is a misfortune to her, it's her destiny... Only because I had some fame as a poet, she dashed at me and lured me. If she had asked me to commit suicide, I would have done that. But this idiot didn't even want that--she only wanted to establish a family. This now is the so-called home-sweet-home. It is your destiny, one that once you put your foot into, you cannot withdraw from. (32)

Chong-cha scorns the idea of destiny to which Korean women attribute their oppressed lives: "Destiny! That's your last excuse. Poor man!" (33) Accepting it means resigning herself to the traditional feminine role assigned by the male-dominant society and culture.

Thus Chong-cha is truly a New Woman who has a strong sense of self, coupled with a keen consciousness of women's oppression and
inequality. This is why she rejects the idea of destiny which Korean women have traditionally accepted. Despite all this modern awareness, however, she has not totally freed herself from the traditional values and expectations of women, and herein lies her dilemma. When it comes to her happiness as a woman, marriage still remains to her an unfulfilled dream. Also, her pursuit of self is limited by her idea of altruistic and self-effacing love based on traditional moralism. In creating Chong-cha as at best a confused New Woman torn between self-aspiration and traditional expectations, Kim Wu-chin was materializing his own ambivalence toward the New Woman. He firmly believed in the individualistic values of the West, and yet he was not able to transcend the traditional cultural context in which he was rooted. The conflicting attitude toward women of Won-yong, the author's alter ego, further validates this point.

Won-yong admires and envies Chong-cha for her untraditional and free life style. In this respect, he is untraditional. But he hates her when she strongly asserts her belief in moral love or women's equality, thereby hurting his male ego. His attitude toward his wife is purely that of a traditional male, who steadfastly believes in male predominance over the female. Thus he views women as the objects of either love or hate.

Kim Wu-chin's ambivalence toward women can be partly explained by several facts of his life. That he lost his mother at an early age and was brought up in loneliness under his father's five other wives, that his marriage was arranged by his father regardless of Kim's own feelings, and particularly that his lover Yun Sim-tok was so liberal and open in her relationships with men that she might have
inflicted no little pain on him—all contributed to his forming a view of women that was delicately balanced between love and hate.

In this respect, Kim is similar to O'Neill, who also had an ambivalent attitude toward women. In *Strange Interlude* O'Neill creates a New Woman, Nina, who, like Chong-cha, has a strong sense of self. Chong-cha, despite her career and achievement, feels unhappy because she has not fulfilled the traditional roles of a woman. Similarly Nina sees her fulfillment only in terms of traditional women's roles. The values of the two women are basically male-oriented. However, Chong-cha's pursuit of fulfillment is controlled by her moralistic idea of love whereas Nina's is not limited by any traditional moral restraint. In her pursuit of happiness through sexual freedom Nina even victimizes others. Still she can marry and have children without having to pay the price for such a pursuit. But Chong-cha dismisses sexual freedom as immoral and writes it off as a means of fulfilling herself. Nevertheless, she has to pay a high price for having a career by remaining single.

This contrast between the two women seems to reflect the difference between the American and Korean societies in the 1920s. First, the Freudian view of sex was in vogue in America, and the discussion of sexual freedom was possible there even in drama. In Korea Confucian traditional morality was still dominant, and the discussion of sex was taboo. This is indicated by the fact that while the Korean New Women of the twenties were sexually free, Kim, a self-professed individualistic rebel, could not project this reality into his play. Second, the contrast between the two women also offers
some insight into the social positions of women in both countries at that time. Like Nina who had freedom to work as a nurse and to marry when she wanted, American women then seem to have more alternatives than their Korean counterparts. Korean women, like Chong-cha who had to choose between a career and a marriage and still suffered out of misgivings for not fulfilling the other, found it almost impossible to have freedom to move between the two alternatives. This contrast between American and Korean women continued to exist in the mid-century and is reflected in the plays of Tennessee Williams and Yu Chi-jin.
Tennessee Williams made his debut in New York with *The Glass Menagerie* in 1945, the year World War II came to an end. In the period that followed, a conservative "back-to-normalcy" mood prevailed in the American society and women's conventional place was emphasized. Women were exhorted to return home from their wartime employment. Freudian psychoanalytic theory, which emphasized biological differences between male and female, became a pervasive influence in this period and reinforced this ideal. Thus the traditional woman's role was idealized and was actually fulfilled by many American women. Still the reality of their lives was less traditional than surface appearances might suggest. Employment of women, which dropped sharply immediately after the war, rose again with the post-war economic boom. Increasingly the working wife became a modern feature of middle-class America.¹ Thus in this period American women had to deal with the tension between socially prescribed roles and alternative roles involving employment. As a man sensitive to women's circumstances, Williams could not be oblivious to this tension, as his women characters amply manifest.

Williams is one of the major playwrights of the post-war period. His success is largely attributed to his superb characterization of women, mostly women of the South. Critics emphasize the Southernness of Williams' women. Signi Falk identifies them as two types: Southern gentlewomen, who represent the culture and gentility that disappeared with World War I, and Southern wenches, who seem to know instinctively that sex is the only valid expression of life.2 Hedwig Bock labels Williams' female characters as social misfits, who often cling to their own views of an ante-bellum Southern society which no longer exists.3 Further scrutiny, however, reveals that the problems of Williams' women characters are not uniquely "Southern" but rather reflect the general tension between the dual roles of women--traditional and modern--that post-war American society experienced. Here lies Williams' merit as a leading writer sensitive to the ethos of his time. This tension had been ongoing in the modern age, for it was also dramatized by O'Neill.

Williams, like O'Neill, sympathized with the Freudian view of sexuality. While both rebelled against a repressive sexual morality, the former followed a more eccentric course. Williams was a homosexual, as he confesses in his Memoirs.4 He insinuates that his

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homosexuality was an act of rebellion against traditional male/female relationships and the institution of the family. "My thing is revolution," he insists, "personal and artistic, I trust, but not militant and not underground, and I feel it will accomplish itself, possibly even during my lifetime, without general violence." He links his homosexuality to his unhappy childhood: "I had been the victim of a particularly troubled adolescence. The troubles had started before adolescence: I think they were clearly rooted in childhood." So also was the formation of his sympathetic attitude toward women.

Williams, like O'Neill, is an autobiographical author. He made constant use of the people he knew, the places he loved and the conflicts he felt. He himself has averred that his plays are a direct outgrowth of his life. His sympathy for women seems to be related to his strong attachment to and affinity with the women of his early life. This grew out of the unhappy marriage of his parents, Cornelius Coffin Williams and Edwina Dakin.

Edwina Dakin was the daughter of an Episcopal rector in Mississippi. Although her parents were not rich, the atmosphere of her home was eminently that of a peaceful and decent middle-class family. She was a typical Southern lady, always concerned with propriety to the extent that Williams calls his mother and sister

5 Williams, p. 238.
6 Williams, p. 11.
"victims of excessive propriety."\(^8\) Her efforts to be a proper wife even when she was sick can be glimpsed in her own statements:

> Many were the times I dragged myself out of bed to fix dinner, for I believed that even though feelings were strained between my husband and myself, I should cook for him. . . . In spite of the pain, I made a point of being cheerful, for no man wants to come home to a sick and complaining wife.\(^9\)

Edwina, however, was not exclusively a proper Southern lady. She had a strong interest in her own self. This aspect, rather unusual for the typical submissive lady, seems to have been influenced considerably by her own mother, who was the dominant figure in her own household. Her mother was "one of the first women to do what the majority do today, embark on a career"\(^10\) as a teacher. According to Edwina, her mother "always held the upper hand," and her father "depended on her and felt confident she would somehow manage things."\(^11\) Because she was brought up in this rather liberal and permissive atmosphere, it was natural for Edwina to develop a strong self-interest.

Edwina was a New Woman. She received a college education when "most girls did not bother with higher education but aimed frankly at getting married."\(^12\) She wore knee-length dresses when most girls

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\(^8\)Williams, p. 61.


\(^10\)Williams, *Remember Me to Tom*, p. 160.

\(^11\)Williams, *Remember Me to Tom*, p. 164.

\(^12\)Williams, *Remember Me to Tom*, p. 169.
appeared in longer ones. She enjoyed dating and called herself "pretty much of a butterfly in my teens," joined the D.A.R. and took part in amateur theatrical productions. Eventually she developed a secret ambition to become a musical comedy star. However this was frustrated because "ladies in those days were not allowed such careers except in amateur form."  

She seems to have been quite an outgoing woman for the time. Still, because she lived in the South, she could not forget about the traditional role of a woman. Like any young Southern lady, she had many gentlemen callers, and she enjoyed their chivalrous behavior. She says of women's suffrage:

> Men were extremely courteous and attentive. In one sense, it was a wonderful step forward when women fought for and won suffrage, for the woman of today would not be where she is without it, but I think although women gained something, they also threw away a great deal in demanding supposed equality.

Thus it was natural that she considered herself "an old maid" when she reached twenty-one and was still single. Then she met Cornelius Coffin Williams and married him. She did this for typically romantic reasons. She thought that Cornelius was "a handsome, personable young man," and "his thoughtfulness" in sending red roses to her sick bed "impressed" her as did "the telephone calls every night." Her son

\[13\] Williams, Remember Me to Tom, p. 173.
\[14\] Williams, Remember Me to Tom, p. 183.
\[15\] Williams, Remember Me to Tom, p. 171.
\[16\] Williams, Remember Me to Tom, p. 179.
\[17\] Williams, Remember Me to Tom, p. 185.
Dakin speculates that "Cornelius's family tree must have impressed her." 18

Thus one can find in Edwina a strong tension between traditional feminine expectations and self-affirmation. This tension also characterizes many of Williams' women characters, including Blanche in A Streetcar Named Desire and Maggie in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. Williams was familiar with it, if subconsciously, from his early years.

Edwina's marriage to Cornelius was an unhappy one because of their different personalities. Cornelius descended from "makers of Tennessee history" 19 but he himself was a salesman for the International Shoe Company. He hated his job and took this out on his family because they meant to him confinement of another sort. Thus his home was hardly a peaceful place. Moreover, he was a very traditional man with a sensual disposition. Edwina remembers that he was "a man's man" with a great taste for poker and for light ladies. 20 This was another source of distress to her. Contrastingly, to Edwina, the word sex was simply taboo as it was to most well-bred women in those days. 21 The sensual dominating male figure who keeps appearing in Williams' plays--Stanley in Streetcar Named Desire and Big Daddy in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, for example--are modelled after his own father.

19 Williams, Remember Me to Tom, p. 184.
20 Williams, Remember Me to Tom, p. 34.
21 Williams and Mead, p. 22.
Not surprisingly, Cornelius was also devoted to money. He resented every penny he gave to his family whereas he gambled money lavishly in poker games. Money was the only means by which he could assure his power and domination over a household in which he was not popular. Bickering over each cent made Edwina's and the children's lives miserable. She was humiliated at being forced to scrimp, make do, merely exist in a drab middle-class environment foreign to the genteel life she had enjoyed in Mississippi. There was nothing much she could do in this situation except to become a "worthy adversary in verbal combat," as Williams remembers her. It was mainly the lack of economic self-sufficiency that restrained her from divorcing Cornelius. When she finally obtained a divorce in her sixties, she says that she felt relief:

> It is peaceful in St. Louis now that I no longer live on the edge of an emotional precipice. I wouldn't advise anyone to go on through what I did if they could possibly get out of it, but I knew no way. In my ears often echo the words of fury I heard so many times: "Take the children and go! Go home. Just get out!" But my parents had so little, I could not throw myself and the three children on their shoulders. We were Cornelius' responsibility.

Williams himself describes this marriage as ill-conceived: "It was just a wrong marriage, as wrong as a marriage could be, and never should have happened to a dog, let alone two desperate human beings,

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24Williams, Remember Me to Tom, p. 205.
and their bewildered children." 25 This statement reveals that Williams was bitter and disillusioned about his parents' marriage, and possibly about all marriages as well as the traditional roles of men and women. He never intended to marry. When his mother advised him to marry after he became a successful writer, he answered: "I have no idea of ever marrying. I couldn't bear to make some woman unhappy. I'd be writing and forget all about her." 26 It is noteworthy that his reason for staying single is based on sympathy for women rather than hatred toward them. This sympathy reflects the sensitivity to the female world which he had acquired during his childhood.

With her desire to love her husband and her aspiration to be an actress frustrated, Edwina, like most unhappy mothers and wives, held on to her two children--Rose and Thomas (he later changed his name to Tennessee) as "two objects upon which she could lavish the love and attention which she was unable to give her husband." 27 Cornelius was frequently away on selling trips. Lacking a father figure, the children's lives were dominated by their mother. Williams remembers that she did not seem to want him to have any friends: "the boys were too rough for her delicate son, the girls were too common." 28

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25 Williams, Remember Me to Tom, p. 205.
26 Williams, Remember Me to Tom, p. 240.
28 Williams, Memoirs, p. 15.
Williams' ill health during childhood brought him more and more under his mother's influence. When he was five years old, he contracted diphtheria which left him partially paralyzed for about two years. His mother became overly protective of her son, and as a result he changed from "a little boy with a robust, aggressive, almost bullying nature," to "a sissy," much to "his father's discontent." The physical weakness resulting from his illness limited his friendships to his sister Rose. Thus Williams' sensitivity to the feminine world seems to have been acutely influenced by his attachment to his mother and sister during his formative years.

Contrastingly, Williams' relationship with his father was ridden with friction. Because Tom preferred to read or write rather than play baseball, his father contemptuously referred to him as "Miss Nancy." When Tom developed a close relationship with a girl named Hazel during his high school days, Cornelius interfered and separated them arbitrarily. When Tom failed R.O.T.C. in college, Cornelius was infuriated at this evidence of spinelessness in his son. Finally he took his son out of college and put him to work as a clerk typist. After this, it was his grandmother's financial support which enabled him to finish his college education. It is understandable that Tom hated his father, whom he described as "a personification and culmination of the crudity and insensitivity" to which he, his sister and mother had been subjected.

29 Williams, Memoirs, pp. 11-12.

30 Nelson, p. 21.
Rose, Tom's sister observed her father abuse her mother and lived in fear of him. Having a gentle and sensitive nature, she could not endure this unhappy atmosphere too long before she began to lose her mind. Finally she was sent to a sanitorium and subjected to a lobotomy.

Another cause of Rose's tragedy was Edwina's possessiveness and puritanical propriety. Williams recalls that his mother's possessiveness, which prevented him from having any friends, also applied to Rose—to her "friendships and little romances"—with "more tragic consequences."31 Her problem was, according to Williams, that of "a very normal—but highly sexed—girl who was tearing herself apart mentally and physically by those repressions imposed upon her by Miss Edwina's monolithic Puritanism."32 Doctors prescribed for Rose a therapeutic marriage. But according to Williams, the idea of a therapeutic marriage was unthinkable in a ministerial family and consequently she began to lose her mind.33 Williams saw Rose "a moth figure crushed by the brutal world,"34 and this became a recurrent theme in his plays.

Rose had been an inseparable friend to Williams throughout childhood. With her lobotomy he lost her in a final way, and his sense of loss and loneliness must have been devastating. He found in writing

31 Williams, Memoirs, p. 15. 32 Williams, Memoirs, p. 119.
33 Maxwell, p. 27.
34 Tischler, p. 54.
an escape from reality which made him acutely uncomfortable, whereas Rose withdrew totally.

Thus Williams' disillusionment with marriage, his dislike of the Southern tradition of "propriety" and his belief in the Freudian view of sex all came into play in causing him to renounce a traditional man-woman marital relation and opt for untraditional and unrepressed homosexual ones. In addition, his familiarity with and affinity for the feminine world accounts for his sympathy for and even identification with women. Speaking of A Street Car Named Desire, he identified himself with Blanche and said "I am Blanche." This is probably why Williams could create such superb, complicated and vivid female characters. For the same reason, women to him seemed to be beings embodying the human condition in his plays rather than distinctive creatures with natures different from men.

Despite his sympathetic and understanding attitude toward women Williams could see little alternative for them. Although his homosexuality could be a materialization of his rebellion against a sexually repressive tradition, he could not create heroines who successfully rebel against tradition. That they always pay for what they have dared to want is well illustrated by Blanche's case in A Streetcar Named Desire. Repressive and difficult circumstances

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are like those that he himself experienced as a deviant homosexual in the conservative and conformist social climate of the post-war era.

**A Streetcar Named Desire**

This play is considered to be Tennessee Williams' most famous and best play. It not only won the Pulitzer Prize and the New York Drama Critics Award for 1948 but has the record of one of the longest runs in American theatrical history, 855 performances. Along with *The Glass Menagerie* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, this is one of the most well known of Williams' plays to Korean audiences. Whereas *The Glass Menagerie* is autobiographical and contains many private revelations, *A Streetcar Named Desire* portrays the more universal problem with which we have been concerned of women living in the modern age—the conflict between traditional expectations and the pursuit of personal aspirations.

The central character of this play Blanche Dubois is considered to be "Williams' finest creation." Blanche is probably based on Williams' sister Rose, the moth figure. Her merit lies in her complexity. On one level she is certainly the Southern gentlewoman, who represents a culture and a gentility that no longer exist. In this aspect she is a misfit in modern society, too fragile and gentle to cope with the reality in which she finds herself: "a moth figure crushed by the brutal world." On another level, however, she is also the "tiger," who aggressively asserts herself sexually and, by

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37Falk, p. 47. 38Fischler, p. 54.
virtue of her old Southern aristocratic background, poses a threat to Stanley's masculine pride and lower-middle-class status. Thus Blanche personifies the tension between the traditional expectations of a woman and her modern self-consciousness. I will examine her as a Southern gentlewoman first.

The setting of the play is an ethnically mixed neighborhood in a modest section of New Orleans. The bar around the corner, the bowling alley and Fritz's garage typify its lower-middle-class atmosphere. When Blanche first appears on the stage, she is described as a fragile Southern belle, with "delicate beauty (which) must avoid a strong light" and with an "uncertain manner . . . that suggests a moth." Delicate as a moth and dressed in white, she brings to this section of New Orleans, another reality, that of the world of the old plantation. The stage directions state that "her appearance is incongruous to the setting," (245) symbolically suggesting her future trouble and conflict with this environment.

Blanche has come to the Kowalskis in a desperate search for shelter and rest after a series of tragic incidents in her life. She explains to Stella why she has come: "I was so exhausted by all I've been through--my nerve broke . . . I was on the verge of--lunacy almost!" (254)

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39Tennessee Williams, A Streetcar Named Desire in The Theatre of Tennessee Williams, Vol. I (New York: A New Directions Book, 1971), p. 245. Subsequent references to this play are indicated by page numbers following citations in the text.
When she was sixteen, Blanche fell romantically in love with and married a handsome boy who wrote poetry. He turned out to be a homosexual, and when she found this out, he committed suicide. The loss of the family's Southern plantation--Belle Reve--and a series of deaths in the family placed increasing burdens on her. She had to cope with these problems by herself, for Stella had left to make her own living. Disheartened by her husband's death and the loss of Belle Reve, she attempted to fight loneliness with sex:

After the death of Allan--intimacies with strangers was all I seemed able to fill my empty heart with . . . I think it was panic, just panic, that drove me from one to another, hunting for some protection.

(386)

Things became worse when she lost her job as an English teacher because she was found trying to seduce a school boy. She was finally notified by her landlord and the mayor of Laurel to leave the hotel and town.

Elia Kazan, who directed the play, characterized Blanche's main drive as an effort to "find protection." He has thus far sought support and consolation through others, especially men. She is motivated by a sense that she is soft and a belief that for a "delicate moth" to receive protection and thereby to survive she has to be attractive. She says:

I never was hard or self-sufficient enough. When people are soft . . . they've got to put on soft colors, the colors of butterfly wings, and put a paper lantern over the light . . . It isn't enough to be soft. You've got to be soft and attractive.

(332)

Her self-image is traditional in the sense that it is based on the belief that woman should be the object of adoration and protection by men. This is why she is so conscious of her age and appearance. She frets about her passing beauty: "I am soft. I am fading now! I don't know how much longer I can turn the trick" (332). Throughout the play, she constantly mentions her looks and even chides Stella for having gained weight. Thus Stella advises Stanley: "Admire her dress and tell her she's looking wonderful. That's important with Blanche. Her little weakness!" (27).

This search for protection is so desperate that she does not scruple about being deceptive or dishonest. She tries to win Stanley's sympathy by her charm and flattery: "Would you think it possible that I was once considered to be--attractive?" (278). But he reacts to her crassly: "I once went out with a doll who said to me, 'I am the glamorous type, I am the glamorous type!' I said, 'So what?' . . . . That shut her up like a clam." (278-279) Then she flatters him: "When you walked in here last night, I said to myself--'My sister has married a man.'" (280) But this is cut short again by Stanley's curt response, "Now let's cut the re-bop!" (280)

Realizing that her search for protection from Stanley is impossible, Blanche looks toward Mitch as someone to hang onto. This is her main motive in her efforts to marry him. He seems to be her last possibility for finding a haven. When Stella asks her, "Do you want him?," Blanche answers:

I want to rest! I want to breathe quietly again! Yes I want Mitch . . . very badly! . . . if it happens! I can leave here and not be anyone's problem. (335)
Blanche becomes particularly deceptive in her relationship with Mitch. She does everything to make him want her. She lies to him about her age and says that Stella is older than herself. Also she covers the lights with colored paper shades and goes out with him only at night but never in sunlight so that he cannot see her face clearly. Her date with him is exhausting. She ends up trying to be gay because she believes that "the lady must entertain the gentleman" (341).

Blanche's last hope for marriage is shattered when Mitch finds out about her past and rejects her. How desperately she seeks protection from him is revealed by her confession: "You seemed to be gentle--a cleft in the rock of the world that I could hide in!" (341) Mitch shows the traditional double-standard response. He tells her that he does not want to marry her any more because she is "not clean enough" to bring into the house with his mother. He now has a different intention and demands what he has been missing all summer. Blanche drives him out by shouting "fire." Thus she is, on this level, a gentle and fragile person who sees women, including herself, as primarily bound by what society tells them to do: find protection and happiness through men by being prim and proper.

If Blanche is a moth woman, she is at the same time a tigress. Williams himself characterizes her as "a delicate tigress, with her back to the wall." While she is gentle and fragile, she has a fierce desire for life at any cost. She remained at Belle Reve and

fought to save it. She pursued her "flighty" inclination and married a boy who had something different about him: "a nervousness, a softness and tenderness which wasn't like a man's" (354). After his death, she fought loneliness with promiscuous sexual relationships with men, for she believes that "the opposite of death is desire" (387). It is this aspect of her character that comes into play in her struggle with Stanley. Ironically the genteel tradition that she represents pits her against him.

Blanche is, as she describes herself, "a cultivated woman, a woman with beauty of the mind and richness of the spirit and tenderness of the heart" (396). She loves poetry, art, literature and music. She clings to the old gentility in which ladies were always protected and honored by men. This is the reason why she remained at Belle Reve and struggled to hold it together. It symbolized such a world.

Stanley, however, is "a different species" (258). He is crude enough to pitch a blood-stained package of meat to his wife and insensitive enough as to remove his shirt before Blanche, saying "Be comfortable is my motto" (266). Furthermore, he is a male chauvinist, revelling in sexual pleasure. His character is described in these stage directions:

Animal joy in his being is implicit in all his movements and attitudes. Since earliest manhood the center of his life has been pleasure with women, the giving and taking of it, not with weak indulgence, dependently but with power and pride of a richly feathered male bird among hens . . . He sizes women up at a glance, with sexual classifications, crude images flashing into his mind and determining the way he smiles at them. (265)
Stanley believes that "every man is a king," (371) and he has been a king in his relationship with Stella. To him woman is only a sexual object, and he has dominated his wife, ordering her around and being waited upon by her. He controls the money of the household and never gives any to her except when he wants to. Once he gives her ten dollars to allay his guilty feelings after beating her up.

Blanche's gentility and refinement are at odds with Stanley's crudity and insensitivity. The struggle between them develops when her efforts to influence Stella and his need to dominate his wife clash. From the beginning Blanche tries to win Stella's sympathy and to remind her of their superior and genteel family background. Stella shows sympathy with Blanche for her tragic marriage, waits upon her and tries to shield her from Stanley. On the poker game night, Stella leaves a cold plate for him to take her sister out to a restaurant. These behaviors hurt his male ego. Later Stella even calls him a "pig" and a "Polack." Angered, he shouts:

"Pig--Polack--disgusting--vulgar--greasy!"--them kind of words have been on your tongue and your sister's too much around here! What do you two think you are? A pair of queens? Remember what Huey Long said--"Everyman is a king!" And I am the king around here, so don't forget it! (371)

The first clash between Blanche and Stanley takes place over the question of Belle Reve. He has dreamed of owning it himself. Now learning about its loss, he believes that Blanche squandered the family property. He confronts her point blank:

There is such a thing in this state of Louisiana as the Napoleonic code, according to which whatever belongs to my wife is also mine--and vice versa. (281)
In the light of the fact that he has been dominant so far in his relationship with Stella, this statement is merely another endorsement of his belief and the words "vice versa" do not really mean anything. Blanche responds to him, without losing composure, by saying that her male ancestors exchanged the land for their "epic fornications."

The struggle between these two becomes more intense during the poker night. Stanley orders Blanche to turn the radio off. Ignored by her, he pitches the radio out of the window. Noticing this, Stella calls him an "animal" and Stanley strikes her. Blanche takes her sister up to Stella's neighbor Eunice. When he realizes that his wife has left him, Stanley throws back his head and howls her name. Stella returns quietly at his call, and they "come together with low, animal moans" (307). The next morning Stella is serene and happy.

Not being able to understand Stella, Blanche suggests to her that they can get out of this situation by opening up a store of some kind. But Stella indifferently responds that she is not in anything that she has a desire to get out of. Blanche continues to remind her sister of their genteel upbringing and obliges her to acknowledge her husband's crudeness and thereby her own degradation:

He acts like an animal, has an animal's habits!
... There's even something--sub-human--something not quite to the stage of humanity yet! ... Stanley Kowalski!--survivor of the Stone Age!
Bearing the raw meat home from the kill in the jungle! And you ... waiting for him! ... Maybe we are a long way from being made in God's image, but Stella ... there has been some progress since then! Such things as art--as poetry and music--such kinds of new light have come into the world since then! ... Don't hang back with the brutes! (323)
Stanley overhears this and now wants to destroy Blanche or at least get rid of her. He exposes her sordid past to Mitch, thereby destroying her last hope. Finally he rapes her when Stella goes to the hospital to give birth. By pulling Stella down to the level of a sexual object he destroys her ideals and beliefs. Now there is only one way left for her, a complete withdrawal from harsh reality into lunacy.

When Stella hears Blanche's story of being raped, she does not want to believe it. In order to continue living with Stanley—especially after she has a baby—Stella chooses not to believe. More important to her is her own survival, and thus she accepts Eunice's advice: "No matter what happens, you've got to keep on going" (406). In the past, she left Belle Reve to make her own way, leaving Blanche all by herself. She is the more practical of the two.

Another important reason why Stella can endure life with someone so different as Stanley is because they have a satisfying sexual relationship. After the poker night, Stella tells Blanche, who cannot believe that Stella loves her husband: "But there are things that happen between a man and a woman in the dark—that sort of make everything else seem—unimportant" (321).

A marriage based on sexual satisfaction is not without sacrifice on Stella's part. Life with Stanley means accepting everything on his terms. She must forget about her genteel upbringing and totally resign herself as a female to his male supremacy. She has compromised herself to be a submissive wife to Stanley. For this reason she hates Blanche for reminding her of their genteel past life: "Don't you
think your superior attitude is a bit out of place?" (321). To sur-
vive she refuses to believe the story of her sister's rape and sends
her to a sanitorium.

Thus Blanche's tragedy stems from the conflict between the
traditional ways of the Old South and her own self-inclinations.
The former have influenced her to such an extent that she remains
convinced of the propriety of clearly defined male and female roles
and seeks male protection so that she can relax and be truly feminine.
On the other hand, she has a strong self-inclination. Her marriage
to a homosexual boy, her sexual aggressiveness and her defiance of
Stanley demonstrate this. Fulfillment to her means satisfying these
conflicting desires. That Williams could not resolve such desires
suggests that as an author sensitive to the social climate of the
post-war era he could not see any solution to the tension between
the traditional and alternative roles for women within the society
of his time. In the repressive social climate of mid-century America,
he could only see merely defeat for one who rebels against feminine
propriety through sexual aggressiveness and challenges male supremacy.
Williams offers the only possible solution for women through Stella,
total acceptance of the female role prescribed by society. The
repressive atmosphere that crushed Blanche might be one that Williams
as a homosexual found suffocating as well.

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof

When this play was presented at the Morosco Theater in New York
on March 24, 1955, the critical consensus was that it was a powerful
and significant drama. It won its author the Pulitzer Prize for drama
for the second time in 1955 and the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for the best play of the 1954-1955 season. The same two prizes won by A Streetcar Named Desire in 1948. This play is one of the most known plays of Williams in Korea.

In the twenty-year period between 1940 and 1960, during which Williams wrote his major plays, his portrayal of female characters changed from women who live through their illusions of the past as Blanche in A Streetcar Named Desire and Armanda in The Glass Menagerie, to women who accept the reality of their lives, such as Maggie in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. 42

Act 3 was rewritten incorporating changes suggested by Director Elia Kazan. Of Kazan's several suggestions for the play, Williams only agreed that the character Margaret should be portrayed more sympathetically. This was, Williams says, because Maggie the Cat had become steadily more charming to him as he worked on her characterization. 43 It is this version, the so-called Broadway version, that I will examine here.

Set in a Mississippi Delta plantation home on Big Daddy's sixty-fifth birthday, the play focuses on Maggie's struggle. Her situation is like that of a cat on a hot tin roof, frustrated and agonizing


43Tennessee Williams, "Note of Explanation," in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, in Five Plays by Tennessee Williams (London: Secker & Warburg, 1976), p. 93. Subsequent references to this play are indicated by page numbers following citations in the text.
but firmly refusing to jump off. The source of her ordeal involves two things: an inheritance from Big Daddy, her father-in-law, and her alienation from Brick, her husband.

Big Daddy has cancer and does not have long to live. Maggie fears that Gooper and Mae, Brick's brother and his wife, have a better chance of inheriting Big Daddy's plantation than Brick and she do. Gooper is an established lawyer and has been running the plantation for Big Daddy for three years, while Brick has quit his job as a sports announcer and taken to drinking. Gooper has five children. Brick and Maggie have none and never will unless Maggie can win back his love. She cannot stand the fact that she is childless and calls Mae "a monster of fertility" and their children "no-neck monsters" (4).

Maggie is utterly frustrated in her relationship with Brick. He had a friend, Skipper, for whom he truly cared. She suspected that their friendship was not normal and convinced Skipper that there was something perverted in his relationship with Brick. In an effort to show that he was not a homosexual, Skipper slept with her. When his attempt to prove himself failed, he committed suicide.

After this Brick became an alcoholic and is indifferent to everything. He does not know that his father is dying of cancer nor even care about his inheritance. Believing that Maggie is responsible for Skipper's death, he punishes her by refusing to go to bed with her. Thus, everything in her struggle for an inheritance seems unfavorable to her. Her only advantage is that Big Daddy, who dotes on Brick and has not written his will yet, is waiting for Brick to straighten out.
Unlike Blanche, who regards herself as a soft gentle woman in need of male protection, Maggie is a practical-minded and strong-willed fighter. She accepts her reality and clearly knows who she is and what she wants. Her practicality is rooted in her experience of poverty and a hard life while she was growing up. She is keenly aware of the power that money affords: "I've been so God damn disgustingly poor all my life! . . . Always had to suck up to people I couldn't stand because they had money and I was poor as Job's turkey" (24). This experience strongly motivates her firm determination to gain the inheritance.

Maggie has been a strong-willed fighter all her life. Through her past experience she has learned that nothing can be achieved without struggling. She fought for her marriage to Brick against his love for football stardom and his close friendship with Skipper. She gave an ultimatum, "now or never" and succeeded in getting him to marry her. After marriage when she felt her relationship with Brick was threatened by Skipper, she fought off Skipper by convincing him that he was a homosexual. A Diana Trophy won at the intercollegiate archery contest symbolizes her role as a fierce fighter. In her practicality and fighting spirit, she is far from being a traditional woman. But these qualities are counterbalanced by opposite qualities, thus creating the contradiction that characterizes Williams' women characters.

Maggie's assumptions about her role, especially in her relationship with Brick, are traditional in many respects. She sees herself as a lifetime nurturer and helpmate to him:
I'm facing the facts. It takes money to take care of a drinker and that's the office that I've been elected to lately . . . Two people in the same boat have got to take care of each other. (24)

Because she subscribes to the role that is prescribed for women by the society, a life without wedlock and a husband is unthinkable to her. She justifies her concern for money as an integral part of fulfilling a nurturer's role. Her struggle for the inheritance and for Brick's love are closely interrelated for her.

Maggie's endorsement of traditional expectations for women partly comes from her practical-mindedness—in this case, her shrewd perception of women's position in the South and the patriarchal atmosphere of Big Daddy's plantation where she lives. She is clearly aware that women are inferior sexual beings in the South. She remembers having seen Mae, once a cotton carnival queen, "sit on a brass throne on a tacky float an' ride down Main Street, smilin', bowin', and blowin' kisses to all the trash on the street" (6). She also observed an incident in which somebody spit tobacco juice on the smiling face of a cotton queen riding in a parade.

Big Daddy, to Maggie, is the epitome of patriarchal values. His 28,000 acre plantation is his kingdom, and he rules it with absolute power. His "mighty richness" satisfies his male ego and enhances his sense of power. Maggie describes him as "a Mississippi redneck." Woman is the means of demonstrating his sexual competence. He has never loved his wife—Big Mama—except as a sexual object: "I slept with Big Mama til . . . I was sixty and she was fifty-eight and never even liked her, never did!" (49). Believing that his
illness is only a spastic colon, he boasts of his plans for sexual conquests based on his wealth:

I'm going to pick me a choice one, I don't care how much she costs, I'll smother her in--minks!
... I'll strip her naked and choke her with diamonds and smother her with minks and hump her from hell to breakfast. (51)

In this environment Big Mama is only a traditional, dominated wife. She has totally accepted Big Daddy's values as her own. Concerned with Brick's childlessness, she advises him: "Y'know what would be his fondest dream come true? . . . if Big Daddy has to pass on . . . You give him a child of yours, a grandson as much like his son as his son is like Big Daddy" (115). She further believes that childlessness is the wife's fault and thus blames Maggie:

Big Mama: Fair or not fair, I want to ask you a question, one question: D'you make Brick happy in bed?
Margaret: Why don't you ask if he makes me happy in bed? (20)

This conversation shows the contrast between Big Mama's traditional way of thinking that it is the woman's role to serve man and Maggie's self-conscious demand for a fair deal between man and woman.

Thus Maggie's practicality motivates her to conform to the role assigned by a patriarchal society and function skillfully within it. But what redeems her from being a purely manipulative and calculating person is the fact that she truly loves Brick. Sex is an essential part in her idea of a husband and wife relationship. To feel fulfilled as a woman, she needs sexual gratification. Hence Brick's refusal to go to bed with her causes her deep anxiety and frustration:
You were a wonderful lover . . . . if I thought you would never, never, never make love to me again--I would go downstairs to the kitchen and pick out the longest and sharpest knife I could find and stick it straight into my heart, I swear that I would! (9)

Because she views her relationship with him as primarily sexual, Brick's potentially homosexual involvement with Skipper threatens her marriage.

Maggie's idea of sexual love, however, conflicts with Brick's idea of friendship between two men. He does not get over the loss of Skipper. He considers his friendship true and good and therefore superior to the sexual love that he had for Maggie. Thus he describes his relationship with her as one in which they "never got any closer together than two people just get in bed, which is not much closer than two cats on a fence--humping" (66). His view of his relationship with Skipper contrasts with this: "One man has one great good thing in his life. . . . Not love with you, Maggie, but friendship with Skipper was that one great true thing" (27). Therefore he advises her to "take a lover" (9).

Maggie does not want to take a lover partly on account of her love for Brick. When he says that he would not divorce her for being unfaithful and that she can leave him, she replies: "Don't want to and will not! Besides, if I did, you don't have a cent to pay for it but what you get from Big Daddy and he's dying of cancer!" (22). To her winning back his love and securing his share of the inheritance are inseparable aspects of her survival. She is tenacious and determined: "But one thing I don't have is the charm of the defeated, my hat is still in the ring, and I am determined to win!" (10)
She keeps herself attractive for the time when he will see her again as other men see her. Actually she is confident and proud of her attractiveness as a sexual being: "last week in Memphis everywhere that I went men's eyes burned holes in my clothes, at the country club and in restaurants and department stores" (21). She is clearly conscious of her sexual appeal and attempts to utilize it in attaining power. Here she contrasts with Big Mama, who is impervious to the sexual politics and does not even convince Big Daddy of her love after having slept with him for forty years.

Finally when Gooper comes up with a tentative plan for trusteeship of the plantation, Maggie counterattacks by presenting her last card---announcement of her pregnancy, which is a lie. Big Daddy decides to write his will, which he has been postponing in anticipation of Brick's child.

Maggie then succeeds in forcing Brick into bed by throwing his liquor out the window. Her victorious last speech to him reflects her strong will and her view of herself as primarily a nurturer:

Oh, you weak, beautiful people who give up with such grace. What you need is someone to take hold of you--gently, with love, and hand your life back to you, like something gold you let go of--and I can! I'm determined to do it--and nothing's more determined than a cat on a hot tin roof--is there? Is there, baby? (123)

Thus the play ends with the victory of Maggie the cat: a strong-willed, power-conscious practical woman of the modern South. If these qualities make her a modern woman, her self-perception and belief in patriarchal values are still traditional. She basically regards her role as that of a lifetime helpmate and nurturer to Brick. Her
happiness presupposes marriage with all the privileges attached to it--security, status and sexual fulfillment with her mate. She wins it vicariously through men by means of skillful manipulation. She manipulates Brick into marriage, Skipper into committing suicide and Brick back into bed. Thus she succeeds by accepting the existing male order and by skillfully functioning in it.

In both A Streetcar Named Desire and Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Williams presents women in crisis situations: Blanche in a predicament seeking a man's protection and Maggie in her lonely struggle for Brick's love and inheritance. Williams grants victory to Maggie, the realist, who accepts the male order and woman's socially prescribed role. Stella also accepts Stanley's terms and continues to survive in this world. On the other hand, Williams dooms Blanche to an ultimate defeat, for she defies male supremacy as represented by Stanley. Curiously, for all these women sexual adjustment is the key to survival: Maggie wins in her struggle by succeeding in getting Brick to bed; and Stella continues her marriage with Stanley based on a satisfactory sexual relationship. On the other hand, promiscuous sexual relationships with men outside wedlock turn out to be Blanche's downfall. These portrayals seem to reflect Williams' own perception of the social climate of his time. He could not ignore the repressiveness of mid-century America that emphasized a subordinate place for women.
If a conservative mood characterized post-war American society and its idealization of the feminine mystique, the same period for Korea was a tumultuous one which witnessed her liberation from Japan, U.S. military rule, the Korean War, the involvement and stationing of the U.N. forces there and finally the division of the country. Culturally these events further intensified the influence of Western culture that had been taking place since the late nineteenth century and thereby the tension between traditional and modern values.

Yu Chi-jin is considered the leading figure of Korean drama, and his most active period covers all of this tumultuous era. While Kim Wu-chin implanted the seed of New Drama based on Western realism in Korea in the 1920s, Yu as the central figure of the New Drama Movement (Singuk Undong) popularized the drama of realism in the 1930s. For forty years thereafter he devoted himself to elaborating the structure of modern Korean drama.

Yu's secure fame in the history of Korean drama can be attributed to several factors. As a devoted activist, he formed the Society for Dramatic Arts Research (Kukyesul Yonguhoehoe) in the 1930s and established the Drama Center in the 1960s to promote the dramatic arts. He made a significant contribution in many other ways. He started his career as a playwright, but later his activities were extended to include drama criticism, education and directing. He has written some forty plays which deal with Korean social realities
at different historical stages, and hence they have great appeal to Korean audiences. 44

Kim Wu-chin found in his time a parallel to his own conflict and wrestled with it in a serious private struggle. Contrastingly, Yu Chi-jin was more of an activist playwright, who had a strong nationalist consciousness that prompted him to formulate a pragmatic idea of drama as a means of educating people. Because Yu lived through a period in which Korea was more exposed to international trends, he was well versed in contemporary Western drama, including Tennessee Williams and Eugene O'Neill.

Yu was born on November 19, 1905, the first son of a poor herbal medicine doctor in Tongyong, a port city in the southern part of Korea. Yu's father was a firm believer in Confucianism and naturally did not support the new Western-style education which was becoming popular at the time. Thus Yu started his education in a traditional private village school and later transferred to a modern elementary school. His wish to continue his schooling was frustrated by his father's order to work in the post office. The elder Yu did not think it necessary for his son to receive further education. The emphasis on national enlightenment, however, which followed the March 1 Independence Movement in 1919, caused Yu's father to change his mind and permit his son to study further in Japan.

A significant event during his stay in Tokyo influenced Yu to formulate his life's goal more clearly. This was the Tokyo Earthquake

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and the massacre of innocent Korean residents in Japan that ensued. Charges were fabricated that Koreans had invaded the country to take revenge on the Japanese for their colonial rule of Korea (Kwandong Tae Chinjae). These charges were aimed at diverting the Japanese people's attention in a crisis situation and thereby suppressing possible unrest due to discontent with the economic recession of the 1920s. Yu himself barely escaped death.

This experience caused Yu seriously to consider his role in the cause of national independence. He decided to devote himself to dramatic art,45 thus refining his earlier vague idea of pursuing art in general. He based this decision on a realization that 80 percent of the Korean population was illiterate and the best means to educate them was through spoken rather than written words.

At the same time Yu was greatly impressed by the French thinker Romain Rolland, who in his People's Theater described drama as the fastest and most effective means to enlighten the ignorant masses. Yu acknowledges this point:

Romain Rolland's People's Theater influenced me greatly in establishing my position. I was further spurred by my anger and antagonism toward Japan and the Japanese . . . . I will shy away from the indirectness of general literature and will take drama which is more direct.46

The idea of "direct and enlightening" drama seems partly to explain why most of his plays are realistic in form.

45Chi-jin Yu (치진 유 ), "모든 부르 노래의 아쉬움" (Motda purun norae ui ashwium), 문학사상 (munhak sasang), May 1973, p. 263.

By clarifying his goals in life, Yu resisted and finally disobeyed his father's wish that he study medicine and instead chose to study English literature at Nipkyo University, which was run by Americans. He describes his vacillation between filial piety and his own desires:

Shall I choose medicine as Father wants or shall I take the road which I have already decided to take as my own? I did not want to be a doctor, but at home they believe that I will be a doctor. I was at a loss. A man of foresight said that "Even if you do not follow your parents' wish in the matters of education and marriage, you do not necessarily disobey them." According to this, I decided to go my own way.47

Indeed Yu himself frequently experienced the tension between his role as a traditionally pious son and his own independent aspirations. As far as his personal life was concerned, he always ended up following his own inclination. This was true of his marriage as well. While Yu's choice of a career was based on nationalistic considerations, he was not opposed to accepting Western ways of sharpening his own skills. During his college days, he became intensely interested in the Irish playwrights associated with the Abbey Theater such as John M. Synge, Madame Gregory and particularly Sean O'Casey. As Yu himself states:

O'Casey exerted a strong influence on me. My admiration for him is deeply rooted. To begin with, his social situation and environment were similar to mine. The pathos that weighed heavily upon my head like destiny—the kind that Koreans feel under Japanese oppression and contempt—made

47 Yu, 투쟁자서전 (Tongrang chasojon), p. 103.
me easily sympathize with O'Casey's Irish kind of pathos. Also his poverty was comforting enough to me in my poverty. He was poorer than I, and received education much later than I.48

Yu further says that he learned dramaturgy from O'Casey, especially the latter's unique blend of laughter and sorrow geared to enhancing the effects of sadness. 49 Thus personally attracted to and professionally influenced by O'Casey, Yu wrote "A Study of Sean O'Casey" for his degree thesis when O'Casey had just written a few plays.

Drawing upon Western dramaturgy and his own nationalistic motivations, Yu elaborated a conception of enlightening drama that combined aesthetic and social as well as entertainment functions. It can be summed up as follows: theater should be in the forefront of criticizing society and reconstructing human beings; drama which is not entertaining is doomed to failure; theater should be sensitive to the ethos of the time; drama should be constructed in such a way as to appeal to audiences; and theater should function as a "magic glass of beauty." 50 Most of his plays are manifestations of these ideas of drama. This is certainly true of the two plays that I am going to examine in this study--Sisters I (Chamae) and Sisters II (Chamae). 51

Before discussing these plays, it is necessary to explore Yu's attitudes toward women. Generally speaking, as a playwright strongly

48 Yu, "동양 자서전" (Tongrang chasojon), p. 111.

49 Yu, "동양 자서전" (Tongrang chasojon), pp. 112-113.

50 Yu, "동양 유치전 : 우리 생애, 사랑, 작품 " (Tongrang Yu Chi-jin: ku ui saengae, sasang, chakpum), p. 43.
interested in social and political causes, Yu's view of women is an
integral part of his view of the destiny of the nation. He portrays
women as historical agents rather than as strongly individualistic
characters. The nationalistic cause for him overshadowed other issues
such as the Freudian view of sex, which his contemporary Tennessee
Williams was exploring in his plays.

This last point becomes more evident in Yu's essay about
Williams' conversion to Catholicism, which was written during his
visit to America in 1957. Yu acknowledges that Williams' three plays
--The Glass Menagerie, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof and A Streetcar Named
Desire-- introduced a new issue to Korean audiences. Concerning the
question of sex and Williams' conversion to Catholicism, Yu says:

> Sex has penetrated into everyday life so overwhelmingly in America and Europe . . . . Thus
> the world of sensuality that Williams was pursuing
> has become so routinized and common that it has
> lost its glamour. Thus Williams has to wash his
> hands of the world of sensuality that he used
> to resort to in order to maintain his standing
> . . . . It seems that he has realized that profound questions of life should be explored in
> terms of the spirit rather than the flesh.51

This statement shows that Yu certainly does not believe in sex as
a possible answer to the questions of life. The flesh was not a
serious matter to him as it was to Williams.

Yu's general view of and attitudes toward women are well mani-
festated in his depiction of his mother in his autobiography. He
describes her as a typically traditional Korean woman of the early

51 Chi-jin Yu (치진 우), "극장과 테네시 윌리엄스: 그의 입로에 부쳐" (Kukchakka Tenesi Williams: ku ui ipkyo e putcho), pp. 6-8; draft in
the possession of Tok-hyong Yu, son of Chi-jin Yu.
twentieth century, restricted to the inner quarters of the household. All she knew was devotion to her husband and eight children. When her fourth son died of an illness, she went to his tomb every day and cried her heart out. Not being able to overcome her sorrow, she finally converted to Christianity.

Yu shows a deep understanding and sympathy for his mother. Concerning her sorrow, he says that "the death of a son who tried hard to live seems to have seriously traumatized her." Also when he was leaving for Tokyo to study, his mother "cried as if lost as she handed over the Korean food she had prepared for her departing son." Yu recollects the leave taking:

How could I imagine truly how a mother feels about sending her young child to a foreign land thousands of miles away. Suppressing the tears, I turned my back toward her. I must make good even for the sake of this Mother. I started walking with renewed resolution.

Yu's view of his mother is basically traditional in that he conceptualizes her in terms of sacrifice and submission. This view seems to have influenced his general attitudes toward women. Unlike Kim Wu-chin, who was at best ambivalent toward women, Yu shows compassion and sympathy toward them.

Yu's first marriage was traditional. His motive in marrying was a sense of duty toward his mother rather than love for his wife.

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52 Yu, (Tongrang chasojon), p. 45.
53 Yu, (Tongrang chasojon), p. 46.
54 Yu, (Tongrang chasojon), p. 72.
55 Yu, (Tongrang chasojon), p. 72.
He himself was not interested in marriage, but he felt an obligation to her as the eldest son. He does not give "filial piety for Father" as a reason for his marriage; instead he evidences considerable compassion and sympathy for his mother:

My heart was already in drama . . . the cozy family life could not be an object of interest to me. But when I think of Mother, I could not stubbornly persist in my position. How can I ignore the most honest wish of Mother, a wish that can be fulfilled only if I comply, that she wants to have a daughter-in-law and a grandson. Mother who suffered ineffably trying to rear eight children.  

This statement reveals that Yu's sensitivity to what it means to be a woman in Korean society and his willingness by marrying to compensate his mother for the sacrifices of her life.

Thus Yu married a woman whom his mother chose for him. His bride made a devoted wife and took good care of his parents and siblings without complaint. Still, Yu confides that "he regarded this good person as merely a wife but could not see her as the object of passionate love." This feeling became clearer when he met the woman who would become his second wife, Sim Chae-sun, a New Woman. Finally he divorced his wife and married Sim. Despite his divorce, he did not seem to have any grievances against his first wife. Rather he shows understanding and pity: "What is life? On the other side of my pursuit of happiness was an innocent woman who had to cry a lot." It seems that although he was well aware of women's difficulties and

56 Yu, 동향 자서전 (Tongrang chasojon), p. 114.
57 Yu, 동향 자서전 (Tongrang chasojon), p. 114.
plight in a sexist society and could extend sympathy and pity toward them, he did not want to sacrifice his ideal of marriage.

In contrast to his first marriage, his second was based on love. Sim was from an aristocratic family dating back to the late Yi Dynasty before Japanese rule, had an excellent education, was a teacher, and was one of the few women who wrote plays. She was not a traditional woman who staked everything on marriage:

I was not interested in marriage that much. My belief was that if I should marry at all, I would observe the personality and integrity of the prospective partner for years and if I still liked him I would marry him. Otherwise I would remain single and devote myself to film or drama, or I would become a nun. 59

At one point she wanted to be a cinema director or an actress. At the same time, however, she could not totally transcend the traditional role of a woman that contemporary Korean society imposed on her. Hence the conflict she felt between her inner drive to pursue her own aspirations and the traditional expectations of a woman. She sought to express her inner drive by choosing a husband on her own. Sim explains her reason for having accepted Yu's proposal: "I have seen men on my mother's side, who were of aristocratic stock, practice concubinage. And I chose a man who was devoted to his work in the midst of economic difficulties." 60 She further confides that she was sorry for Yu's first wife, but "nobody at least at that time could prevent our love based on the camaraderie formed in our devotion

59 Yu, 동양 자녀전 (Tongrang chasojon), p. 156.
60 Personal interview with Chae-sun Sim (재순 심 ), 22 May 1984.
This relationship seems to have continued throughout their married life. Years after Yu's death, Sim confirms again that her relationship with her husband was not a traditional one but a comradeship. At the same time, she adds that she was always invisibly supportive of her husband. This seems to be due partly to her traditional self and partly to Yu's traditional expectations of a wife.

Thus in his most important relationships with women throughout his life Yu encountered both traditional and untraditional women. He had basically traditional attitudes toward the opposite sex but these were counter-balanced by his sympathy with and understanding of women. He never rebelled against tradition as Kim Wu-chin did.

This point is clearly manifested in Yu's relationships with his son Tok-hyong and daughter In-hyong. In an essay about his daughter Yu states that he wanted her to become an actress. The reason for this was "not because my profession is drama nor that I intend to bring about a revolution against the popular trend of despising actresses," but that he believed in sex-typed professions. He says: "The only profession assigned to women by heaven is to marry and to bear children. If there is a profession for women other than this, it will be studying arts." Yu never resorted to "Confucian

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62 Personal interview with Chae-sun Sim (채순 심 ), 12 January 1983.
63 Chi-jin Yu (치진 유 ), "여매생과 예술 " (Yodaesaeng kwa yesul), p. 5; draft in the possession of Tok-hyong Yu.
64 Yu, "여매생과 예술 " (Yodaesaeng kwa yesul), pp. 11-12.
tradition" in his education of his children. He wanted In-hyong to have a career and hence sent her to America for study in the 1960s when there were not many women studying abroad. Nevertheless, says Tok-hyong, a leading drama director and educator in Korea, Yu's education of his children was based on clearly divided sex-roles. He was more strict toward his son than his daughter.

Yu himself endorses this point in an essay titled "Women of the Two Extremes." Here he says that an ideal woman to him is a woman who is a generous mother and a passionate lover. He describes the former as "a woman of great virtue" who has "a generous personality" and the latter as "a woman with intelligence but with a particular and whimsical personality." If the image of an ever-giving mother relates to the traditionally submissive and sacrificing woman, that of the passionate lover seems to reflect the untraditional woman. The tension inherent in his ideal of woman is a comment on the larger social context of mid-twentieth century Korea in which traditional and new values coexisted. This dualistic image reflects a certain difficulty in defining his position as a playwright. As a nationalist he wanted to keep traditionally Korean values, and yet as a man educated in Western ideas he could not ignore the merits of new values.

65 Personal interview with In-hyong Yu (인형 유), 22 May 1984.
66 Personal interview with Tok-hyong Yu (덕형 유), 22 May 1984.
67 Chi-jin Yu (치진 유), "양귀비의 여성" (Yang kuktan ui yosong), 조경 (Chokwang), Feb. 1938, p. 294.
In his two plays under the same title *Sisters* (Chamae) I and II, Yu portrays traditional women and New Women. In both plays they are depicted in terms of a particular historical and social environment rather than as individuals with strong personal characteristics.

**Sisters I (Chamae)**

Yu Chi-jin wrote an essay about this particular play when it was first produced in 1936. Here he tells about his intent in depicting two sisters:

In *Sisters I* attempted to portray women of different eras—the traditional woman represented by the older sister and the woman of the new era by the younger sister. Their age gap is only two or three years but in terms of their life style the gap extends over half a century. The older sister married at the age of fifteen or so according to feudalistic tradition. The younger sister chose to study following the trend of the new era—love for learning. Thus the two sisters are opposites, respectively representing the Old Woman and the New Woman. But both of them suffer from the same problem: the problem of marriage. The older sister married uneducated as a traditional woman does and is deserted by her husband on account of her ignorance. The younger sister, an educated woman, remains single because of her learning. This utterly banal question is familiar to us everyday. Isn't there the dislocation of time inherent in this question, that cannot be ignored? How many women should cry because of this wrong anachronism?

Clifton Fadiman says that the function of a playwright is to point out in one's play the visible contradictions of one's own time. In this aspect, *Sisters* will do its part for our time.68 It is clear in this statement that he intended this play to be some kind of social criticism. To what extent remains a question.

68Chi-jin Yu (최진 유), "자매에 대하여" (Chamae e taehayo), _Kukyesul_ (Kukyesul), May 1936, p. 10.
Sisters is a three-act play. It is set in the 1930s when the old way of the late Yi Dynasty was approaching complete collapse and was being replaced by the new capitalistic system under Japanese rule. The action takes place in the home of Kim Wun-ho, a declasse aristocrat.

Kim Wun-ho's eldest daughter Mrs. Yun is a twenty-eight-year-old typically traditional woman, passive, submissive and self-effacing. She followed her parents' wish to marry into the Yun family when she was fifteen or so. After serving that family for more than ten years, she is deserted by her husband on account of her lack of education and ignorance. Her husband settles in with a New Woman, who is a college student. Mrs. Yun then sues for divorce.

On the day of the proceedings, however, Mrs. Yun suddenly changes her mind and asks her father to cancel everything. She is now more concerned about her separation from her son in case the divorce is granted. Learning that the custody of her son Sang-chol will go to his father with the granting of a divorce, she cries to her father:

No! No! That ... is my son ... How can I live without him? How should I make the innocent child suffer tribulations under a stepmother? Sang-chol is innocent. Please cancel the suit. I'll return to their house and live with that concubine in the same house. I don't care if they beat me and pull me by the hair.69

Mrs. Yun has challenged male supremacy by filing a divorce suit.

She has refused to acquiesce in her husband's practice of concubinage

69 Chi-jin Yu (치진 유), ㅈfat (Chamae), ㅈfat (Chokwang), July 1936, Act I, p. 351. Subsequent references to this act of the play are indicated by act and page numbers following citations in the text.
Unlike most traditional wives, who would have endured it. Nevertheless, her desire to keep her son now outweighs any other considerations. At the root of this desire is the cultural assumption that a woman should find all her life's meaning through the male, whether a husband or a son. In a patriarchal society, a woman is expected to depend on a husband or on a son for survival as well as for psychological fulfillment.

Mrs. Yun's pathetic appeal to keep her son is lost upon both of her parents, who are perfectly integrated in the patriarchal society. Her mother Madame Cho expresses her view of women as subordinate to men: "... the owner of the child is his father. A mother does not have any right to her own child" (351). Only Mrs. Yun's younger sister Chong-suk, an educated modern woman who is more open to accepting another woman as an individual, supports this position. Chong-suk sends a telegram to the court to cancel the trial, but the divorce has already been granted.

Continuing her struggle to keep her son, Mrs. Yun unsuccessfully sends an intermediary to her ex-husband to nullify the divorce decision. She loses her son in exchange for an alimony of 2,000 Won, falls into utter despair and attempts suicide. Finally she recovers and acknowledges her limitations as a woman in a male-dominated society:

However hard a woman may try, she is not to win over a man. That is the way of the world. I won in the suit, but come to think of it, I lost it after all. The loser is myself. (I:351)

Mrs. Yun's way of thinking is basically traditional. She is culturally conditioned to regard herself as a loser only because she
has lost custody of her son. The fact that she has won the suit and attained her original goal of alimony does not matter. Here she is only repeating the Korean popular belief that "for a woman to lose is to win." In this sense she is a victim of the patriarchal tradition.

Mrs. Yun's younger sister Chong-suk is very different from her. Chong-suk is an independent twenty-six-year-old New Woman, a graduate of Tokyo Women's University summa cum laude. She knows that her father borrowed money from Kang, the son of a lifetime servant of his, to pay for her education. Now she wants to pay off the debt by working but finds that she is overqualified for any job available in her society. Finally she applies for a position as a salesgirl in a fish store. This is unthinkable for a daughter of an aristocratic family.

Madame Cho's attitude toward her daughter's job contrasts with Chong-suk's. To Madame Cho a salesgirl's job is a disgrace to her family: "I would feel ashamed if Kim Wun-ho's daughter sells fish" (I:347). Chong-suk, however, has independent and individualistic values:

I hate the job more than you, Mother. But I wanted to help the family by working at any job . . . . I've tried hard to find a decent job, but I couldn't find one. To finance my education, Father sold his estate and he's getting . . . . I have to pay off the debts to Mr. Kang. (I:349)

Chong-suk's problem here is that nobody understands her struggle to be an independent individual. To her mother her education is a family honor, not an individual achievement; or if it is an achievement, it should be used to enhance her value as a marriageable woman. So
her mother now implores Chong-suk to marry into a rich family by arrangement:

Change your mind and marry. You've met the matchmaker sent from the nouveau riche family. They are enormously rich. Once you marry into that family, you don't have to talk about a poor job. Listen to your mother . . . . Can't I enjoy the shadow of your prosperity? (I:349)

Chong-suk's father Kim Wun-ho shows more understanding and insight about her problem. He recognizes that it is the society not his daughter that is to be blamed. Here Kim is a mouthpiece of the author Yu Chi-jin:

Even a hero has his own time. She has not met her own time yet. If only the time is right, with her learning there's nothing she cannot do. You know the country magistrate of Cholson, Mr. Yang. At his prime age, he cut his topknot, learned how to write in Korean, and then became the magistrate. Compare him with her. It's only because she is a woman. If she were a man, she might have easily become the governor of the province. (I:348)

Based on his estimation of his daughter's potential for achievement, Kim supports her efforts to find a job, and he advises her to follow Mr. Kang to Seoul. Kang supposedly has a wide range of acquaintances and has promised to find her a position.

Suppressing a sense of humiliation, Chong-suk follows the former servant. It turns out, however, that he has a secret desire for her. Learning that Kang made advances towards his daughter, Kim loses his temper. His sense of honor as an aristocrat is affronted. In his heart he still feels himself Kang's master: "What? That damn
son of a slave! To his own master's daughter!" Chong-suk exhibits a different response. She cries because she cannot overcome either a sense of shame as a member of an aristocratic family or the frustration of an educated woman in a society which does not allow women opportunities. She clearly sees the power of money in a rapidly modernizing culture and so she tries to reason with her father: "Please don't say anything. He is our creditor . . . . One that is in debt is a slave, one that is creditor is a master." (II:218) Here she is expressing the philosophy of a modern capitalistic society.

Mr. Kang is a man of this new age. As the old feudalistic system collapsed, he left Kim's house, tried many different trades, succeeded in accumulating wealth and now appears to the world as a self-made man. Deep within, however, he still resents the old system which dictates one's place by birth. He has a secret admiration for Chong-suk, and their class difference frustrates his wishes.

Kang confronts her parents regarding his "indecent attempt to hold Chong-suk's hands." Their conversation reveals sharply the contrast between Kang's new values and those of the old aristocracy:

Madame Cho: . . . Don't you see that there are people above you and below you in the human world?

Mr. Kang: You mean I am like a dog . . . that a fellow like me is not allowed to hold the hands of your daughter nor sit alongside or mix with you. To be frank with you I just wanted to touch her hand. Is that a sin? What sin is that? Furthermore I am an unmarried man. And Miss Chong-suk is an

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70 Chi-jin Yu (चिजिन गु), जा भाई (Chamae), जो शाह (Cho-kwang), Aug. 1936, Act II, p. 218. Subsequent references to this act of the play are indicated by act and page numbers following citations in the text.
unmarried girl . . . . If I were a son of an aristocrat like you, it would have been a great honor to her.71

Kang's egalitarian values are unacceptable to Madame Cho, who still clings to the idea of class and hierarchy. Kang realizes that there can be no resolution of the conflict between these two different sets of values. He has a change of heart and becomes a ruthless creditor. At his demand for payment of all debts, Mrs. Yun throws the alimony money that she has received at his feet.

Both Kang and Chong-suk subscribe to the new values based on individualism and independence. Whereas Kang extends these values to the question of marriage, Chong-suk is not ready to transcend class and accept his love on an individual basis. For a girl of an aristocratic family it is unimaginable to marry her former servant. Hence her mind is closed to the possibility of romantic attraction to him. At the same time she does not want to marry into a nouveau riche family through arrangement according to her mother's wish. She is independent enough to reject such a system because it ignores individual freedom of choice. She is thus caught between her traditional values and modern values. She confides her dilemma to her older sister:

Chong-suk: Shall I call the matchmaker as you wish? And meet the partner through arrangement? . . . . I am too sensible to do that. I am already twenty-six.

Mrs. Yun: Right. Those of you who have an education marry by love, they say.

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71 Chi-jin Yu (치진 유), 차례 (Chamae), 소량 (Chokwang), Sept. 1936, Act III, p. 257. Subsequent references to this act of the play are indicated by act and page numbers following citations in the text.
Chong-suk: I wish I had courage to do that. What love affair can I expect at this age? Isn't it awkward to start one now? ... As I come to think of it more and more, my future is bleak. (III:261)

Marriage seems to be an insoluble dilemma to her. She even envies her older sister for having married early: "If I had married when I had no discretion, my prospect would not be this gloomy" (III:261). Thus she is utterly confused over the question of marriage.

Chong-suk does not find fulfillment either in her job as a fish seller. As poor as it is, she can get it only after her father buys drinks for the people at the store, who first rejected her for being overqualified. She has no choice but to accept whatever comes because in a traditional and closed society women's place is only at home. She hates the job and feels trapped and finally resigns herself to despair: "I am done. Done" (III:262). At the end of the play, the two sisters grieve over their hopeless destinies.

Yu Chi-jin identifies the source of the problem of these two sisters as a society in transition from traditional to modern. He never considers the problem male supremacy. Mrs. Yun, the Old Woman, is jilted by her husband because of a New Woman concubine. Chong-suk is unhappy because her new values and aspiration to have a career are at odds with traditional societal assumptions of women's roles. Williams' Blanche in A Streetcar Named Desire is similar to Chong-suk in that she is also torn between traditional expectations of women and her pursuit of self in a changing society. In sharp contrast to Yu, however, Williams personalizes the cause of Blanche's destruction in Stanley, a male chauvinist.
Both Yu and Williams subject women who challenge established male supremacy to defeat. Yu never allows Chong-suk to fulfill her aspirations in any way. She is blocked on all sides by society. Blanche becomes insane. Furthermore Yu does not give his heroine a strong sense of individuality. Chong-suk never expresses her personal feelings against males nor directly questions male dignity. By contrast Williams portrays Blanche's sexual assertiveness and her challenging male dominance represented by Stanley.

Whereas Yu does not suggest any hope for the two sisters, Williams suggests through the Stella-Stanley relationship sexual adjustment as a possible survival strategy for women. Sex is taboo as a topic to Yu. This indicates a basic attitudinal difference between Korean and American society in the mid-twentieth century. In the former talking about sex in public was still forbidden whereas in the latter the same subject penetrated every aspect of life, as Yu himself states in one of his essays.

To Yu, who was strongly interested in social and nationalistic causes, problems relating to women were part of larger social and national problems. Being basically a traditionalist, believing in male dominance, Yu never considered male supremacy the root of the "social problems" of women. On the other hand, Williams, a sexual rebel, was sensitive to the questions of sexual repression and male-female relationships. That Yu could not see any hope for women, the weaker sex, is not merely a comment on his personal perspective but beyond that on the society in which he was living—a society which was predominantly male supremacist.
Sisters II (Chamae)

Yu's unique view of women is more clearly manifested in *Sisters II*, written after another national disaster, the Korean War. This play (1955) deals also with the story of two sisters. Here the impact on their lives of a particular historical time and event, the Korean War, is enormous. In an essay about this play, Yu Chi-jin explains his intent:

In this play, I wanted to portray a woman who was physically and mentally violated and destroyed in the Korean war and her spiritual struggle that lost the way to Salvation. Hence I originally titled this play as "Despair." 72

His ultimate purpose, however, is nationalistic as he further says:

I as an author cannot be honored more if one is reminded of our realities by confirming the degradation of man in the image of the sister portrayed in this play. Man is already lost in meaninglessness and when he is involved in war—an anxiety-causing and fearful explosive, he is in an even more desperate situation. 73

The play is the story of Song-hi, a college girl who became a prostitute because of the Korean War, and the triangular relationship involving her younger sister Ok-kyong, a famous poet Choe Yol and herself. The setting is Pusan, a refugee city in the southern part of Korea.

Ok-kyong, the younger sister, is living in the basement of a house where poor war refugees have come together. Her mother has

72 Yu, "자매 작자의 말" (Chamae chakcha ui mal), p. 3: draft in the possession of Tok-hyong Yu.

73 Yu, "자매 작자의 말" (Chamae chakcha ui mal), pp. 6-7.
recently died, and she earns her own living as a typist. The war has made it imperative for her to be economically self-sufficient. She is attempting to honor her mother's wish that she find and live together with her older sister, from whom she was separated by the conflict. In the same basement lives a famous poet Choe Yol. Ok-kyong, still a girl full of dreams and innocence, secretly loves him.

One day Ok-kyong's employer Kim Tae-sok brings her older sister Song-hi to her. He found her in the red-light district in Seoul. Ok-kyong is dismayed to learn that her sister has fallen into prostitution. They were from a good family; their father was a professor. Song-hi was a college student majoring in vocal music; she had even given a concert. The war changed her life completely. While fleeing from north Korea, she was captured by the Chinese army and raped.

Ok-kyong wants to honor her mother's last wish and so encourages her sister by saying that they can depend on each other and live together. Song-hi, however, has lost the will to live, especially after finding out about her mother's death:

I am the object of mistreatment and shame in this world. How can a prostitute for Yankees give you any psychological support? Only death waits for me. 74

Song-hi's self-esteem has been damaged irreparably by the loss of her innocence, supposedly the most important quality for an unmarried girl in a traditional society, and by the fact that she is a prostitute. The complete turn from her previously happy life further

74Chi-jin Yu (Chi-jin Yu), 乍애 II (Chamae), (Seoul: Chinnunsa, 1955), p. 21. Subsequent references to this play are indicated by page numbers following citations in the text.
damages her self-image, and she hates herself. She almost has become an alcoholic and carries poison pills for suicide. Now that her only hope of seeing her mother has evaporated, she attempts suicide by throwing herself into the water.

The poet Choe Yol unexpectedly risks his life to rescue her. He puts her in a hospital and works as a longshoreman to pay her bill. Song-hi cannot understand the reason why he saved her. She has a deep-seated hatred for men after experiencing all kinds of mistreatment from them. Ok-kyong tries to explain Choe's respectability, but her sister interprets him differently:

Because you are young and pretty, he has desire for you. That's why he plunged into the water and saved me. Just like your boss Kim who brought me down here to draw some compliment from you. . . . I know better than you what's in the guts of those humbugs. All male animals are Satan in human disguise. (25)

Having been abused by men as nothing but a sexual object, she views the male as essentially a sexual animal. To her more genuine relationships between males and females are unimaginable.

Choe has his own reasons for his heroic deed. To Song-hi's question why he saved her he answers: "In your struggle to die, I found myself" (30). Actually he himself has attempted suicide several times. With a poet's imagination and intuition he sees in Song-hi a helpless fellow human being victimized by the times. Furthermore he finds her a kindred spirit. To Ok-kyong, who is worried about her sister, he says:

Your sister's state is the true state of a human being. . . . If a person has a mind to think, who would observe this reality and still not go crazy? Don't take it as an aberration. Let her be herself. (20)
Choe's view of Song-hi and her plight is not complicated by sex or any patriarchal social convention. His sympathy and attraction toward her are based on a sort of camaraderie. This seems to be possible only because he is a poet whose vision and world are not necessarily dictated by conventional expectations.

Choe finds the possibility of a meaningful relationship with Song-hi, a fallen woman in the eyes of traditionally-minded men. He seeks to convince her of her worth and thereby tries to introduce her to a value system that does not assess a woman in terms of her virginity but in terms of individual human merit. He thus says of her lost innocence:

Your holy innocence is still alive. It is holding up its head like a bud sprouting afresh deep in your heart. . . . That you wanted to die bears witness to that fact. If one loses that particular innocence, one does not even want dying. (31)

Spoken in a man's voice, the voice of authority, Choe's statement revives in her a hope that she may fulfill herself as a woman. Depending on this encouragement, she regains a more positive sense of self and naturally falls in love with him, for he has helped her to find again the meaning and worth of her life as a woman. This fact reveals that despite her advanced education and her pre-war aspirations for a career as a professional singer, subconsciously she is traditional in that she assumes the status of the second sex in her relationship with a man.

Song-hi's love for Choe, however, encounters an obstacle in Ok-kyong's love for the same man. Ok-kyong feels jealousy toward her older sister as she becomes closer to Choe. Despite her
untraditional economic self-sufficiency, Ok-kyong has also basically
traditional values regarding male-female relationships. Finding it
difficult to understand Choe's love toward her sister, Ok-kyong asks
Uncle Kat-cha, a resident of the basement, about men's attitudes toward
women: "Can an adult man truly love a woman with a past?" (42).

Uncle Kat-cha basically has the same traditional values as Ok-
kyong. His attitudes toward women sharply contrast with those of
Choe. To the former, a fallen women does not deserve a man's love
and in her dwells an evil spirit seducing men. Women are like fruits
either fresh or old, and so he advises the poet:

   Mr. Choe. You have a strange personality. Why do
you avoid one that is fresh, colorful and plump,
and prefer one that is spoiled and smelly, sear
and malformed? . . . . Song-hi is bad . . . . How
she covet a man that her own sister likes . . .
(47)

Uncle Kat-cha's assumptions about women are basically sexual. By
contrast Choe's relationship with Song-hi is based on a deep under-
standing of each other as victims or comrades of war. They have found
in each other a reason for existence. Besides, he has never thought
of Ok-kyong more than as "a cute sister."

Song-hi overhears this conversation between the two men and
realizes that she is involved in a triangular relationship. Instantly
she determines to leave Choe for her sister's sake, partly because
she is reminded of the traditional belief that prohibits rivalry
between sisters over a man and partly because her self-image as a
fallen woman tells her that she does not deserve a man's love. She
says:
My body and mind are worn-out like useless old machines. However hard I may try, I cannot function fully as a human being. Things like love and life don't suit me. (60)

The same traditional prohibition against rivalry between sisters over one man also dominates Ok-kyong's consciousness. She too is reminded of her obligation to fulfill her mother's wishes and over­comes her jealousy toward Song-hi. For her sister's sake, Ok-kyong now renews a previously rejected marriage proposal from her boss Kim, whom she does not love. She unsuccessfully volunteers to be his wife. They, however, pretend as if they are engaged in front of Song-hi, but she sees through this pretense and says in tears: "You must not sacrifice your truth because of our moral rule against sisters' rivalry over a man" (6). Thus for both sisters, self-assertion in the pursuit of their love is secondary to the fulfillment of the traditional expectations of women, in this case those of dutiful daughters and good sisters. They sacrifice their individual desires and preferences to be faithful to what society tells them to do.

Thus Song-hi returns to the red-light district and her former profession. With the renunciation of love her despair returns, for it means the ending of the possibility of her self-fulfillment through a man. Also love between her and Choe is a desperate struggle to escape from the pessimism of life accentuated by the war.

Ok-kyong seeks out Song-hi and persuades her to return home. Ok-kyong also asks Song-hi to forgive her "shameful emotion." Song-hi answers:

No more words. Please take care of Mr. Choe. That will straighten out our relationship and preserve our heaven-ordained law and justice. How can I be
an impeccable older sister if I interfered with my younger sister's romance? The guilt of having estranged you from Mr. Choe heavily weighs on my bosom. Unless I remove it from my bosom, I cannot face you nor live for a minute. (67)

Song-hi here shows herself to be a typically self-effacing traditional woman. She sacrifices her individual self to fulfill the cultural imperative of an older sister as society has taught her. She even implores Choe to accept Ok-kyong's love, but he is impervious to her appeal. To him their love is destined: "Our destiny has been decided already. Song-hi is mine and I am Song-hi's as we ourselves and others know" (69).

Song-hi cannot forsake her moral obligation as an older sister, but this requires much pain and agony on her part. Thus torn between the cultural imperative and her love for Choe, she ends her life by taking poison. Dying, she confesses her true feelings to Choe and Ok-kyong:

To say the truth, I tried hard to repel the thought of you from my memory, but it never left me like an obsession. . . . Sorry, Ok-kyong. Forgive me, I feel so comfortable in Mr. Choe's bosom. I told you not to deceive your natural desire. It must have been said for myself. (73)

Thus Yu portrays Song-hi as a victim of the times, the Korean War. In doing so, he surely shows pity and sympathy toward women. In this play too, however, he never questions male-dominant values as the source of her tragedy. Song-hi finds fault with her loss of innocence but not with traditional values. Actually she is victimized by the male-dominant society that tells her to realize herself through a man and that stresses chastity as a woman's supreme value and friendly affection between siblings. Like Chong-suk, who
initially attempts to fulfill herself through a career but is unnerved by the pressure of patriarchal society, Song-hi, despite her former career plans, loses her self-esteem with the loss of her innocence. Both women basically subscribe to traditional values.

Yu's women characters are thus docile and lack fortitude and inner strength in the pursuit of their self-fulfillment and happiness. This point becomes more obvious when they are compared with Williams'. Coincidentally, **Sisters II** and **Cat on a Hot Tin Roof** were performed in the same year, 1955. Both Song-hi and Maggie find themselves in a patriarchal society that emphasizes woman's place. Both try to fulfill themselves through men: Song-hi as a lover to Choe and Maggie as a wife to Brick. Whereas Song-hi sacrifices her self to conform to the traditional moral code of an older sister, Maggie is an individualistic go-getter. Maggie fights tenaciously in the pursuit of her goals and happiness. To her the end justifies the means. Thus she does not care about her chastity and sleeps with her husband's friend Skipper. By manipulating people around her, she finally wins her goals. These radical differences in the characters of these two women reveal the differences between Yu's traditional view of women and Williams' more individualistic view of them. But more importantly these differences reflect the societies and cultures of Korea and America in the mid-twentieth century. The former, despite the liberalization of values and sexual morality regarding women after World War II, still idealized women's place and chastity and proscribed the public discussion of sex. The other, despite its
conservative mood emphasizing women's place, was relatively more open to the question of sex for women and their pursuit of individual self-interest.

Women characters portrayed by Eugene O'Neill, Kim Wu-chin, Tennessee Williams, and Yu Chi-jin, despite some variations in individual characteristics, basically subscribe to the traditional patriarchal, familial values. They may be strong-willed like Kim's Yong-nyo and Williams' Maggie, pursue happiness through sexual gratification like O'Neill's Nina and Williams' Blanche, and even have hatred toward men like O'Neill's Anna. But they all basically desire marriage and want to fulfill themselves in the role of helpmate and nurturer of men. They define themselves as the second sex.
CHAPTER V
WOMEN IN REVOLT

Megan Terry (1932-)

In the 1960s the women's movement re-emerged and by the early seventies the ideas it generated influenced the theater through a group of women playwrights, the so-called feminist playwrights, who had unique views of and assumptions about women and the theater. They rebelled against the stereotypical social definition of women as sexual objects by revealing them in their plays as creative self-actualizing individuals. They believed that their messages could not be conveyed and expressed through male-dominated theater forms, and they used experimental techniques in their playwrighting and productions. Their play structures are episodic and accidental as opposed to the conventional male linear and progressive play structures. Their production techniques are collective and improvisational. Members of the performance are expected to develop their ideas as creative individuals whereas in a conventional production a director defines the performance.

Megan Terry is a leading feminist playwright of the seventies although she finds the term too limiting because she also sees herself as a humorist, humanist and many other things.¹ She believes that

women are incredibly strong. In an interview with Dinah Leavitt, she says of women in the seventies:

Each woman is her own leader. . . . All of the things the Victorian fathers feared are coming true because an educated woman is going to demand her place in the sun.²

Here "strong" indicates qualities opposite to stereotypical assumptions about women: dependent, passive, selfless, etc. Terry defines a strong woman as "a creative person who makes decisions and is independent and self-actualizing."³ Her belief in the strength of women, "physical, mental and psychological,"⁴ seems to have developed out of her experience with strong women around her, and her own life has been a strenuous actualization of this belief.

Terry was born on July 22, 1932 in Seattle, Washington, the eldest daughter of Harold Joseph Duffy, Jr. and Marguerite Cecilia Henry. All the women in her mother's and father's families were strong pioneer women who first travelled on wagons to the West coast and worked alongside the men. Terry tried to emulate them.⁵ Of these strong women that she came to know personally her mother was the most important figure in Terry's early life. She recalls that her mother was "a strong healthy woman," whose legacy is "an independent and creative mind."⁶ Terry feels lucky that she had such a mother when

²Quoted in Leavitt, p. 286.
⁴Telephone interview, 28 June 1984.
⁵Telephone interview with Megan Terry, 18 August 1983. Hereafter designated as Telephone interview, 18 August 1983.
⁶Telephone interview, 18 August 1983.
she thinks about O'Neill's and Williams' mothers as depicted in their plays. Terry's mother was a New Woman of the pre-World War II period. She attended college where she acted in drama performances. Later she wanted Terry to be an actress and always encouraged and supported her theatrical aspirations. Eventually she managed her own florist shop at a time when few women ran their own businesses. Moreover, there is a tradition of women directors, musicians and novelists in Terry's family. Jeraldine Brainsiks, for example, a pioneer in the field of creative dramatics for children, is her cousin and had a great influence on her. It seems obvious that these strong-minded women with careers provided role models for Terry to emulate.

Her father also helped her to be independent in a way different from that of her mother. He taught her physical skills and techniques by sharing activities with her. He took her camping, hunting, and fishing from the time she was two and taught her how to live in the wilderness without difficulty. This training became a great advantage to her when her father entered the armed forces during World War II, leaving her and her mother behind. Her mother worked for a living while young Terry looked after the home, and thus they survived the difficult war years.

After the war when she was fourteen, Terry's parents divorced. To young Terry this experience was a traumatic one, and probably one that awakened her for the first time to the social position of women:

My father won custody of my sister and me. I found then that children could be forcibly taken away from

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⁷Telephone interview, 18 August 1983.
their natural mother. It was a profound shock to me. My mother's grief was overwhelming and I'll never ever forget it.8

Another strong woman who influenced Terry in her formative years was Mrs. Florence James, the director of the Seattle Repertory Playhouse. When she was seven Terry began participating in grade school dramatics and staging theater games in her own backyard. By seventeen when she was taken in by the Playhouse as a member, she had already read Chekhov and the Irish and ancient Greek playwrights. Her experience with the group matured Terry in terms of dramatic skills. Moreover, her association with Mrs. James reinforced Terry's burgeoning belief in the strength of women. Mrs. James "walked around with a copy of Jefferson under one arm and a cigarette, and when she was not directing or lecturing, she ran for office in the Progressive Party."9 Mrs. James and her husband Burton ran their theater as a cooperative effort according to their democratic beliefs. Everyone received the same wage. They were not "elitist" nor did they believe in "hierarchy." To be accepted to work at the Playhouse meant more than mere apprenticeship. It meant that one was a part of the family.10

Terry internalized all these democratic values. She utilized them at the age of twenty-one when she was a student at the University of Washington and simultaneously began teaching at the Cornish School


9Personal interview with Megan Terry, 22 August 1982.

10Telephone interview, 18 August 1983.
of Allied Arts, where she worked to organize the Cornish Players. She did not limit membership in her group to students at the Cornish School. Instead she accepted and began to train anyone, from teenagers to old people, who was willing to work.

The Cornish School was a private institution founded by Nellie Cornish in the 1920s "as a school where all the arts would be under one roof and hopefully work together." She had brought the Jameses to Seattle from New York City. At this school Terry had not only directed plays but had begun writing them. She used a pseudonym rather than her real name because she felt that her education was not yet sufficient to reveal herself as a playwright, the profession that seemed to her to be the most civilized pinnacle one could attain. More importantly, she could not yet overcome traditional assumptions about women, despite her family tradition of strong women:

> For a long time I hid the fact that I wrote. I wrote in secret and wouldn't tell anybody. It was involved with this whole thing of "women shouldn't be able to do that"--not being able to face my own power or deal with these forces working within me.

Soon conflict occurred between Terry and other members of the School. By this time she had already developed ideas about theater different from those of her colleagues. They would not allow her to direct the plays that she chose, and even the local critics hated them. She resigned rather than given up the right of choice and

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11Quoted in Wagner, p. 10.
14Wagner, p. 12.
left for a community more hospitable to the direction she wanted to take in her theater work.

In New York, Terry met people who sympathized with her ideas. They finally decided to establish a new type of theater different from the conventional commercial kind. She joined Joseph Chaikin in founding the Open Theater in 1963. This was on her part "a conscious decision to recreate theater as I had dreamed of it, and read of it." 15

Central to her conception of a new kind of theater is the idea of communion, which modern theater has ceased to effect:

> It's possible for theatre, as an art form, to bring all sorts of people into a oneness of consciousness, so that they transcend their bodies for a time that they're witnessing the physical performance. Theatre is the only art form I know where the performer and viewer are alive and breathing, both alive, at the moment that the art experience is happening. 15

Theater as a communal art experience is basically a democratic idea, whereas in the recent past it has been treated as an upper-class form of entertainment. In the new theater "people" is the operative word, and that is why Terry prefers to call her theater popular:

> Ours is not an avant-garde theater. Ours is not an imitation of the wornout form of the English style of theater with that terrible upper-class dialect. Ours is a popular theater. 17

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16 Quoted in Wagner, p. 270.

17 Megan Terry, "Who Says Only Words Make Great Drama?," New York Times, 10 No. 1968, Sec. 2, p. 3.
Her idea of the role of the playwright is also community-oriented:

Now I see myself as a member of the community who has the writing skills, and I try to use my writing skills to give voice to community concerns... It's my job to do that for the community.¹⁸

This view dovetails with her belief in the political function of theater and playwright as "to help people not only to bear living in this world but experience that [which] will help build courage to change it."¹⁹ Terry's view of the role of the playwright and playwriting thus sharply contrasts with those of O'Neill and Williams, who found in writing self-expression and an escape from their unbearable realities.

Terry's conception of new theater is crystalized in the transformation plays. She formalized her ideas while working in the Open Theater. The significance of these plays as a non-realistic mode of theater lies in their anti-establishment quality. Her associate and the director of the Open Theater, Joseph Chaikin, elaborates on this aspect:

One of my reasons for rejecting naturalism is because it corresponds to social order, certain kinds of emphasis, and certain kinds of repression... the mode of behavior which a theatre chooses to emphasize is a political choice... Naturalism corresponds to... a life style which is in accord with the political gestalt of the time. To accept naturalism is to collaborate, to accept society's limits.²⁰

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¹⁸Telephone interview, 28 August 1983.

¹⁹Terry, p. 3.

The "transformation" involves, first, unpredictable changes in characters, place, time, and action and second, different actors replacing each other as characters. Similar to an improvisational acting technique, it emphasizes "ensemble" playing. Unlike conventional acting situations in which actors tend to compete with each other, transformation demands harmony among the group, and each actor must respond to a transformation of action or circumstances by changing his or her own identity.

The anti-establishment aspect of Terry's idea of theater was further intensified with the rise of the feminist movement. Although she had read at a very young age all of the early American and British feminists and had herself known prominent American suffragists, she had been awakened to the oppression of women:

I think we've been living in a homosexual society
... Males only look to each other for the laws
and for their hierarchy and for their status.
Women are extensions and appendages and reflec-
tions at best. I think that the women have got
to grow up and take their place and create a truly heterosexual environment to raise our children
in.21

With this awakening of feminist consciousness on her part, Terry could see the extent to which all women, including herself, had been oppressed. She recalls that it took her a long time to establish her authority as a director because actresses did not listen to her. She also realized that many talented women could not get jobs because of the "type casting syndrome," the insistence that one has to have a certain appearance in order to get a part.

They weren't getting cast because they didn't look like WASPs: White Anglo-Saxon Protestant, size six clothing, five feet six, blue eyes and blonde hair. That was the only kind of woman who was being cast. That made me angry. There are so many kinds of persons who have talent.22

The women's movement also made her see that she had been giving her energies to further male careers. Terry says that the women's movement freed her from that.23 Instead, she determined to concentrate on herself and other women. Her belief in the strength of women reinforced this awakening and although she had been always interested in writing about them, she clearly saw that "there is a necessity to write about very strong women so women can know that there have been strong women in the past."24.

So far feminism has been the main motivation for Terry in her writing:

One of my reasons in writing plays is number one, the resurrection of the figure of the Mother, which I think the Western male writers trashed and reduced ever since Freud . . . . Also to create a female hero or bring on earth a female hero such as Simone Weil. Also to write parts for women, for it does not matter what you look like.25

Here she is clearly voicing her political consciousness as a woman playwright writing for the cause of women. Her ultimate goal is also political: "To show women that they are strong and that they can

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22 Telephone interview, 18 August 1983.
23 Quoted in Leavitt, p. 287.
24 Quoted in Leavitt, p. 287.
25 Telephone interview, 28 August 1983.
do things.  

This remark meshes with her definition of feminist drama as "any drama that gives women confidence, shows themselves to themselves and helps them begin to analyze."  

Resurrecting the image of the Mother means redefining the images of women that have been stereotypically depicted and established by male writers. Terry's notion of the Mother is basically one of a strong woman. It is an extension of her belief that "the essential force of the universe is female." Thus she writes about strong women who contrast both with O'Neill's women characters, who are "mother, serving maid and a whore," and Williams', who are "his mother and sister over and over again." These latter characters more or less confirm culturally accepted ideas about women whereas Terry's women are "authentic" characters drawn from the life and the people around her. To Terry her own mother and Simone Weil, the French philosopher and the central figure in Approaching Simone, are good examples of strong women. 

Terry also authors plays in order to give parts to women. Calm Down Mother is a good example. She wrote this play while she was in the Open Theater because she felt there were no decent plays for a number of women in the group. These women were not getting cast because they did not look like conventional actresses. Terry's feminist endeavors

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26 Telephone interview, 28 August 1983.
28 Telephone interview, 28 August 1983.
29 Telephone interview, 18 August 1983.
30 Telephone interview, 28 August 1983.
did not stop here. In 1972, she and five other women playwrights--Julie Bovasso, Maria Irene Fornez, Rosalyn Drexler, Adrienne Kennedy, and Rochelle Owens--formed the Women's Theatre Council to provide women playwrights with opportunities to produce their works without making terrible compromises as in the commercial theater.

If Terry's plays document her belief that "women are strong," her life--public as well as private--so far has been a struggle and a search to actualize her independent and strong self. The particular life-style that she is living as a devoted member of the Omaha Magic Theater is a special manifestation of such a struggle and search. On her part, it is an act of conscious choice and personal preference for an alternative to the traditional way prescribed for women. Terry says that she is not the material for a traditional submissive wife:

I certainly am the kind of person who cannot take orders. ... Marriage with a husband and child never appealed to me. It's my temperament number one, and also because I saw on both sides of my family that the women ran the family. They were the strongest ones. 31

Furthermore she is a firm believer in American democratic values such as freedom and independence:

Also part of my idea about being an American and having freedom. That you should be able to design your own life. America allows that for a woman. In other cultures I visited, I never would have been able to get away with my life-style. ... Only in America could I live the way I live. 32


32 Telephone interview, 5 September 1983.
She finds that "the modern nuclear family with father, mother and two children is too boring and limiting." She finds that "the modern nuclear family with father, mother and two children is too boring and limiting." to her. Her idea of a wonderful family is a huge theater group, where "one can recreate the idea of the old-fashioned big family." The governing principle in the Omaha Magic Theater, for which she has been working as the playwright-in-residence since 1974 when the Open Theater was closed, is cooperation and not competition: "Everybody contributes ideas and everyone does everything. We all pitch in and help each other."  

Terry's belief is that women are incredibly strong. This belief has not been curtailed by the pressure of culturally prescribed roles for women. She obviously differs in this regard from O'Neill or Williams, who, despite some individual variations, more or less viewed women as bound by their sex. Whereas these male writers wrote plays for self-expression or an escape from hard difficulties, Terry as a woman writer feels a sense of obligation to other women and writes from a political consciousness. The ethos of caring for others and cooperation rather than competition is uniquely feminine and this makes Terry basically a feminist although her immediate interests by 1982 (when I interviewed her personally) have gone beyond the cause of women. Her plays *Calm Down Mother* and *Approaching Simone* are political manifestos.

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33 Telephone interview, 5 September 1983.

34 Telephone interview, 5 September 1983.

35 Telephone interview, 18 August 1983.
Calm Down Mother

This play is one of Terry's most popular one-act transformation plays. She wrote it to give parts for actresses and dedicated it, subtitled Transformation Play for Three Women, to the women in the Open Theater, who premiered it in 1965.

This play is not divided into acts like conventional plays. Instead it is comprised of action blocs or short scenes. No one action bloc is a logical development of the preceding one as in conventional dramatic plot structure. Three actresses portray eight different character relationships in eight separate action blocs. Each action bloc involves a different relationship among the women, and each actress transforms her identity and assumes a new role for each bloc. The transformation allows all actresses to show their talents on an equally individual basis in contrast to conventional plays in which action is built around the star. Terry based these action blocs on her experiences, as she always does, and she seeks "to show the world what women are like when men are not around." Moreover the play is a manifestation again of her belief in the strength of women.

In Bloc One, Terry establishes her theme that women are strong. As a recorded woman's voice describes the seeming evolution of human beings, Woman One comes forward and says:

I'm Margaret Fuller. I know I am because...
"From the time I could speak and go alone, my

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36 Telephone interview, 28 August 1983.

37 Telephone interview, 18 August 1983.
father addressed me not as a plaything, but as a living
mind." I am Margaret Fuller . . . and I accept the
universe! . . . I accept, not as a furry animal play­
thing, but as a mind, as a living loving blinding
mind.38

Terry connects the evolution of human beings with Margaret Fuller, a
woman intellectual who developed her mind to the fullest extent and
thereby transcended the stereotypical role of woman prescribed by
nineteenth century American society. Terry thus establishes her belief
that "the essential force of the universe is female."39 Furthermore she
makes her rhetorical statement about women through Margaret Fuller,
a role model of a strong woman, that woman is a human being with a living
mind.

Bloc Two deals with the commonality of women. This scene is taken
from Terry's own experience as a teen-age girl.40 As a girl enters a
store to buy beer, the store owner Sophie notices the beauty of the
girl's hair and skin. She observes that these are like her own before
she had major surgery and like her mother's when she was alive. Here
Sophie is identifying herself with the girl and her own mother on the
basis of the common qualities they have as women. Thus this scene
illustrates "what women are like when men are not around."

38 Megan Terry, Calm Down Mother, in Plays By and About Women: An
Anthology, ed. Victoria Sullivan and James Hatch (New York: Vintage
Books, 1973), pp. 279-280. Subsequent references to this play are
indicated by page numbers following citations in the text.

39 Telephone interview, 28 August 1983.

40 Telephone interview, 18 August 1983.
This scene also reveals the limitation of women in real life. Sophie is "selfish" and at one time always washed and combed her hair before going out with men. She is so acculturated to male-dominant values that she has not developed "a living mind" like Margaret Fuller. Her vision is limited, and all she talks about is her illness and fading physical beauty. Still what Terry says in this scene is that granted women's limitations as the result of age-old oppression, they can still identify with each other based on their common experience, physical as well as emotional, and develop sisterhood. Sophie identifies herself with her mother as a woman and becomes conscious of her own death through her mother's:

I had skin like her, too, till the blood pressure . . .
And then I'd wash her back . . . I did it for the last time. Her skin and her hair. I'll never forget the last time, before they put her in her silk. (281)

The scene ends with all three women joining the lament and stroking and combing each other's hair.

The lament turns into anger as the actresses transform themselves into different identities in Bloc Three. This bloc performs the function of consciousness-raising for the audience. Woman Two talks about negative social attitudes toward her as a woman: the "anger that people direct toward her, the "disapproval" that they show her and the "criticism" that they yell at her. She is angry with all this and wants "to hit." Woman Three makes a rhetorical statement about the necessity for women as half of the human race to assert themselves however limited their lives may be:

Talk . . . Talk . . . talk . . . lay bare every part of your limited life. Maybe you could force your life to grow into lives. Facts. Add up all the desperate facts,
What Woman Three is Calling for here sums up what Terry is doing through Bloc Two: she illustrates the "pitiful few facts" concerning women to be entered on the human record.

In Bloc Four the relationships of women enter into a heightened phase of mutual support. Nancy is a strong woman. Calling herself the "old bulwark of the family" and the "fight settler," she has settled Granddaddy's estate and sent Jorgenson into the State Assembly. Now she has supported Sally, a "soft" woman, through her divorce.

Nancy's mother is a strong woman, a "fighter." With no training but with great courage, she began "a whole new career when Dad retired to his bottle of booze." She is now dying and Dad fakes a heart attack. Paradoxically he is the one who is getting all the attention. Mother is the one person on whom Nancy relies for comfort and possibly for strength. Now Nancy is experiencing the dying process with regard to her mother: "I'll be dying for her everyday, every goddamed day from now till..." (285)

Set in a nursing home, Bloc Five portrays women's experience of being old. Mrs. Watermellon and Mrs. Tweed listlessly watch the days go by. They are tired of eating cream of wheat, which they call "the pail of worms."

These old women transform themselves into three call-girls in Bloc Six. This scene is an antithesis of the preceding scene in that women's biological function--sex--is portrayed with utter degradation.
Momo and Felicia sell sex for money, and their money and sex are controlled by a pimp Ricky. Momo has been stashing away her tips for a vacation. This is revealed by Inez, a mother-figure for the two prostitutes, and Momo begs Inez not to tell Ricky. These two prostitutes are portrayed as extremely infantile. They fight with each other all the time and depend on Inez for any kind of affection they can get. They even turn up their bottoms to be spanked. Terry shows in this scene women's sexual exploitation by a sexist society and the reduction of human beings to dependent, infantile sexual objects, the opposite of the role model represented by Margaret Fuller.

In Bloc Seven Terry deals with one of the most controversial contemporary social issues--contraception--and more importantly with her belief in a woman's right to control her own body. Sue, Terry's mouth-piece in this scene, has a firm belief in choosing her own life style and feels that coercion by others is absurd. This is particularly so when it concerns her own body and contraception:

Who the holy hell are all these priests and magazine writers to say it's wrong? Who the hell are all these guys on platforms to say you can't take pills, you can't use rubbers, down with vaseline, out with diaphragms, who the hell then are they? (290)

Sue firmly defends her belief and bitterly argues with Sak, who has a more traditional view of contraception. Because of this, Ma disowns her as a daughter and orders her to leave. Sue feels frustrated at finding that there is an age gap on this issue between her and her mother and Sak:

I been born out of my time. Or you never left yours . . . three hundred years old--that's what you are. You two escapees from Shangri-la. You wrinkle brains, you vegetables, you empty bottles of holy water. (292)
In the last bloc, the three women--Sue, Sak and Ma--transform themselves into Woman One, Two, and Three again. The scene ends as they say "Our bodies, Our bellies . . . Our funnies . . . The eggies in our beggies are enough" (293). Women's biological makeup can be a limitation. But in this scene as she does in the first scene with Margaret Fuller, Terry confirms her belief in the strength of women and the female force.

Through eight episodical action blocs, Terry shows the real experiences of women in several different phases. She thereby attempts to raise the consciousness of women concerning their oppression and degradation as sexual objects as well as their common female experience, physical as well as emotional. Ultimately she makes a political statement in this play that women can develop living minds, for there are examples of women with strong minds. This statement is revolutionary in that she offers a model of a strong-minded astereotypical woman as an alternative for American women in the sixties. Her statement truly reflects the anti-establishment ethos of this period. In Approaching Simone, she also depicts a model of a strong woman based on the biography of Simone Weil, a French Jewish woman philosopher.

Approaching Simone

For this play Terry won the Obie Award for the best Off-Broadway production of 1973. It has received the most positive reviews of all her plays. The play is "a creative interpretation of Simone Weil's life,"41 as Terry perceived and understood it, in her struggle to achieve

41Telephone interview, 28 June 1984.
complete truth. The reviews all focus on the excellent portrayal of Simone's rare character. Clive Barnes of the New York Times, for example, writes:

Miss Weil's mystic, apparently almost saintly, awareness of inhumanity and her insight into the uniqueness of every individual almost sets her apart from the rest of us. Miss Weil acted on the convictions that many of us believe—that alone would be enough to make a rare and contemporary saint. Sacrifice to her was action, and she was always her own woman. . . . The facts themselves tell of a soul's journey to completion, but Miss Terry's treatment of her story is masterly. 42

As in Calm Down Mother, Terry's ultimate aim in this play was to set forth a role model for women against people's belief that "there is no great woman."43 By so doing she attempted to create an identity that up to that time had been denied to women within the American literary tradition: "Women haven't . . . taken the power in their own hands to create a model outside of themselves . . . They've imitated masculine models."44 To Terry, Simone is truly a self-actualizing woman. The clear evidence of this is her fifteen books in which she "shows a portrait of her mind and her mind growing, and her mind in transcendence."45

Terry, however, meant Simone to be more than merely a role model of a great woman. She considers her to be the female counterpart of Christ. Because, says Terry, we have been living in a homosexual society where

43 Telephone interview, 18 August 1983.
44 Quoted in Wagner, p. 234.
45 Telephone interview, 18 August 1983.
men run everything and where there are only male models, "women have to
do a double trip to identify with a male God." This keen necessity
for creating a female God coincided with her finding many parallels
between the life of Christ and that of Simone:

She dies at the same age, but she had crucified herself.
She left all kinds of revelatory writings, she points
the way to the church, but didn't enter it. There are
millions of parallels. It is not what I say. All you
have to do is look at it.

Terry seems to have meant this play to be one of her masterpieces.
After some lines by Simone Weil had struck her, Terry consciously built
her technique for fifteen years so that she could write about Simone.
She had to study and do research to understand her subject. Despite all
her efforts Terry felt that she never fully achieved her aim. Thus she
calls the play "Approaching Simone." Her ultimate goal in this play
is sharing, "to make her known to others because she made me happy."
Terry did not inject her own experiences and self-image into the play
because of a feeling that she could never live up to Simone's life or her
purity.

Approaching Simone is composed of two acts, but its basic structural
unit is the action bloc. Through a series of these Terry attempts to

46 Telephone interview, 18 August 1983.
47 Telephone interview, 18 August 1983.
48 Telephone interview, 18 August 1983.
49 Telephone interview, 18 August 1983.
50 Telephone interview, 18 August 1983.
draw "a portrait of Simone's mind and her mind growing, and her mind in transcendence."\(^{51}\)

At the beginning of the play Terry introduces her rhetorical message through the chorus: "Anyone can know truth . . . only make the effort of attention."\(^{52}\) The following several action blocs show Simone in her childhood as a very independent and responsible person. When she is five years old, she wants to be allowed to carry her share of the family luggage as her brother does:

Simone: I can carry as much as Brother.
Father: My dear little girl. Father can carry you and the luggage too: climb on my back.
Simone: I want to carry my share. (361)

Even at this stage Simone has to fight societal assumptions about girls to assert her independence. Finally her brother transfers luggage that is on his back to hers. She wobbles but slowly trudges ahead.

In another scene, Simone's mother praises Simone's brother for having been "first in his class in everything since he started school" (363), a visitor agrees with her and says "He's the genius, and (pointing to Simone) she's the beauty," (363) representing societal stereotyping based on sex. Simone's burgeoning sense of self cannot bear this and she "turns away as if slapped by an invisible hand" (363). Thus

\(^{51}\) Telephone interview, 18 August 1983.

\(^{52}\) Megan Terry, Approaching Simone, in Women in Drama: An Anthology, ed. Harriet Kriegel (New York: New American Library, Inc., 1975), p. 360. Subsequent references to this play are indicated by page numbers following citations in the text.
Simone constantly faces pressures to socialize her in conventionally feminine ways. These later breed self-doubt, and in turn inner conflict as her desire to be independent of female social expectations grows.

Simone as a child shows great concern and love toward other human beings. She mails her sugar ration to the soldiers at the front during World War I because they have none. She also refuses to wear stockings because the workers' children have none.

At fourteen, Simone already experiences self-doubt and self-loathing, which is caused by the social pressure that imposes sex-typed roles on her which conflict with her yearning to find the way to truth. The voice of self-doubt overpowers her sense of self. It says: "You're nothing but a girl," "You'll never match your brother," and "You'll never know the truth" (364-365). Finally she is persuaded that she is "mediocre" and "Only the truly great can enter that transcendant kingdom where truth lives" (365). She attempts to take her own life. However, her self-doubt is counterbalanced by another voice that tells her that "anyone can know truth . . . only make the effort of attention . . . the simplest man may know truth if he reaches out every day" (365). Simone finally overcomes her self-doubt and regains the will to live.

Terry reveals Simone's agony and inner conflict as universal experiences among women in their struggle to realize themselves.

In the following blocks Simone is a grown-up. The scenes show her to have already formulated her humanitarian and hard-working activist philosophy. Her saintliness has already begun to emerge. She is against the colonization and exploitation of human beings. Concerning blacks in the French colonies in Africa, she insists:
They've been so exploited. We do the same in our colonies. How can you sit here drinking and grinning like apes when we are grinding down the blacks in Africa? (366)

This, however, draws only a timid response from her male friends: "We'll change all that tomorrow. Tonight we have fun" (366).

By this time Simone has formulated a clear concept of work. In response to her friend's assurance that technology will free man from manual labor, she warns against the possibility that man may work for the machines. She puts forth her idea that work is constant:

Colors, sounds, dimensions can change, while the law of work, which is to be endlessly indifferent to what has preceded and what will follow, never changes. Qualities, forms and distances change, but the law of work remains the constant factor to which qualities, forms and distances serve only as signs. The law of exterior relations defines space. To see space is to grasp that work's raw material is always passive, always outside one's self. (367)

Terry quotes this passage directly from Simone Weil to show how Simone's mind has developed since the time of her suicidal attempt. She is finally able to conceptualize "work," an immediate everyday reality, in a metaphysical way. This scene is a demonstration of Terry's rhetorical message that anyone can know the truth if one only makes the effort of attention.

In the next scene, Simone reaches an existential conclusion about her self and existence. She realizes her limitations: "I'm ignorant, I'm not well put together. What I am does not satisfy me. I have become me without my consent" (370). But based on this realization, she makes a voluntary decision to accept her existence limited as it may be: "What I am, I endure" (370). After this phase, Simone actively engages in actual work among people to test her beliefs in life.
The following action blocs show Simone as a teacher. She wants to make some innovations. To encourage the girls to take themselves seriously as writers Simone has procured a printing press so that they can print their philosophy compositions and learn how to run the press. She takes the girls hiking to teach them how to become physically strong. She wants to train them to be physically as well as intellectually vigorous. Simone's approach to education thus does not make any distinctions among students based on sex.

Simone teaches the students about love:

Love often means pledging one's own life and that of another human being forever. It always means that, unless one of the two treats the other as a plaything. In that case, a love is something odious. The essential point in love is this: one human being feels a vital need of another human being. The problem then arises of reconciling this need with freedom. A problem men have struggled with from time immemorial. (375)

Her concept of love is exclusive of sexism. It is a free will choice and a total involvement of two concerned beings on the basis of equality and human integrity. Because of the seriousness of love she has decided not to know it: "I didn't want to commit my life in a direction impossible to foresee until I was sufficiently mature to know what I wish from life and what I expect from it" (375). She also sees the inherent risk in love, the risk of "having absolute power over another human being" (375) and advises the girls not to seek it while they are young. This scene reveals Simone's successful efforts to be responsible for and in full control of her own life.

Simone, however, is fired by the school board for her "effrontery" in printing the work of "nobodies." She transfers to a new teaching post, where she continues her innovative teaching based on her belief
that "It's only through hard work that one understands one's intelligence" (377). Again she is fired by the school.

The following action blocs show Simone more and more involved in real life. In 1934, she works in a factory to test her theories on work. She witnesses the dehumanizing nature of life there, particularly the condition of women restricted to purely mechanical labor. In another scene, she joins a workers' demonstration for a wage-hike. She speaks to a political meeting of leftist coalition parties and tries to convince them not to support the dictatorship of Stalin. She barely escapes an attack from the audience, who call her a "Trotskyite." Then, she goes to Spain to fight in a "just" war against the Fascist forces. She joins the Anarchists, but she soon realizes that all wars are atrocious and men at war are "fools and pawns." In anger she hits a pot of hot oil and hurts her leg. Her parents bring her home.

In the following action bloc entitled "Visitation," Simone is in extreme anguish not only because of physical pain but because she cannot work: "I can't work and that makes me sicker. Not to be able to work. No work. Work beating in my head, but my hands refuse to close around a pencil . . . My God . . . I need to work" (392).

At this moment she experiences the visitation of Divine love and is converted to Christianity. She sings of Divine love:

GOD CREATED ME TO SEE THE SEA
AND TO LOVE HIM

. . .

"I"--"I"--"I" THIS FINITE BEING

. . .

"I" AND "I," THIS LITTLE "I"
I CAN'T LOVE GOD

. . .
UNTIL, THROUGH THE ACTION OF GRACE
THAT TAKES OVER THE EMPTY SPACE
OF MY TOTAL SOUL--
THE GRACE THAT FILLS MY SOUL
THE GRACE TO MAKE ME WHOLE WITH GOD.

AND AS THE LITTLE "I" DISAPPEARS
GOD LOVES HIMSELF

... 
BY MY GIVING UP MY "I"

... 
GOD LOVES ME AS I DISAPPEAR
I GIVE GOD TO GOD AND
AND GOD LOVES HIMSELF (394-395)

She implies that by transcending one's ego through God's Grace, one's finite ego disappears and the gracious person loving God becomes God loving God. Terry suggests that Simone, through her experience of the visitation of Divine love, already becomes a godly figure. Simone, however, does not want to commit herself to any denomination and prefers to "stand at the door of the church" (397). She wants to remain a free person in control of herself: "I don't want to belong to any groups. I want to be invisible, so that I can move among all groups" (398).

In the following action blocs, Simone has escaped Nazi-occupied France and comes to America. She attends a church service in Harlem. Terry here again suggests that Simone is the female counterpart of Christ. The chorus asks Terry's own question: "What sex is Jesus: what sex is God?" (399) It gives the answer:

Male Singer: Simone, Simone, Simone. Your body is woman and your head talks to God. (Brings Simone on stage.)

Chorus: JESUS HAD A PRICK
HE DIDN'T USE TO FUCK WITH
BUT PENETRATING THE WATERS
HE MADE ENOUGH FISHES TO
FEED THE MULTITUDE
Terry seems to indicate that just as Jesus transcended his sexuality to save the world, Simone transcended hers to be of service to humanity.

The following blocs show Simone's further involvement in the real world. She also constantly faces sexist social pressures. She is now in the French Headquarters in London. To be of service to France she proposes the creation of a special body of frontline nurses. She is passed from Orderly to Captain to Major to General before she receives any response, which is at best chauvinistic. A major finally says: "But we have never put our women in such danger. That's why we men leave for the front to defend our homes and families" (402). A general responds: "A very good idea. We will think about it. In the meantime we have some essential work for you to do" (403). Then Simone is given a typewriter and paper to type "four copies each as soon as possible" (403).

In the next blocs Simone gives a speech on the unreality of war to a crowd and she addresses the wounded soldiers in a hospital in order to comfort them. Simone speaks of the Grace of God:

... you only have the thinnest shell to break before emerging from the darkness inside the egg into the light of truth. It is a very ancient image. The egg is this world we see. The bird in it is Love, the Love which is God Himself and which lives in the depths of every man, though at first as an invisible seed. (405-406)

This statement reveals Simone's idea of God: God is Love and Truth, and by breaking the shell, which is self, one can transcend one's self and liberate the bird--Love inside oneself--and thereby achieve truth. Here
again, we can deduce from the picture drawn of Simone that Terry implies Simone is a female counterpart of God, if not exactly God in the Christian sense. Simone has transcended her finite ego as a woman and as a human being and has grown to a Godly stature through her love for humanity.

Toward the end of the play Terry pictures Simone in a way that reminds us of Jesus on his way to the crucifixion:

(Simone begins to move through them, climbing ever higher on the platforms.)
Man One: Eat, Simone.
(She shakes her head and moves up ramp.)
Man Two: Eat, Simone.
(She shakes her head and climbs to highest platform. She's weak and must hold onto the bars to stand up...) (407)

Simone dies by self-willed starvation at the age of thirty-four. She "gave as a reason the thought of her people in France starving" (407) Her death is not an end in itself but transcendence—a total liberation—from her human as well as sexual limitations achieved by the effort of her own will.

Through this play Terry clearly demonstrates her confidence in the strength of women. Simone fulfills her life through work and later love for humanity. She clearly differs from O'Neill's and Williams' women characters, who more or less define themselves with reference to men and attempt to fulfill themselves through them. Through the life of Simone, Terry presents a role model for contemporary women and seeks to reclaim women's lost history. These efforts can be regarded as a part of the contemporary women's movement. Terry's plays epitomize the ethos and sensibilities of the era concerning women.
Kim Cha-rim (1926- )

If Megan Terry embodies the revolutionary ethos of the sixties in her own way, a parallel can be drawn for the same period in Korea and the playwright Kim Cha-rim. The sixties was also a time of unrest and fermentation in Korea. That country experienced two historic political revolutions in the decade, which also marks the beginning of rapid modernization. In the midst of this flux, women's situation underwent change as well. Chastity, which had been stressed by society as the epitome of womanly virtue, began to lose its importance. Women raised their voices on matters regarding their rights and choices. Kim Cha-rim represents these particular sensibilities of women in post-war Korea.

Kim Cha-rim is the first truly "professional" Korean woman playwright although before her time some women writers had tried their hands at playwrighting. She made her debut in 1959 with Whirling Wind (Tolgae param). Since then she has been a prolific writer and so far has produced some twenty plays, five radio and TV dramas and one novel. Although she is versatile in her subjects, her strength as a playwright lies in the plays dealing with women's issues from a distinctively female perspective.

Like Terry's, Kim's nonconformist perspective on theater and women is rooted in her formative years. She remembers herself as "a girl inclined to resistance and rebellion."53 Her own mother played an important role in her development.

53 Personal interview with Cha-rim Kim (자임 김), 8 December 1982. Hereafter designated as Personal interview 8 December 1982.
Kim was born in Pyongyang in northern Korea the third daughter of nine children of Kim Chong-yun, a professor of pharmacy. Her father studied in Japan, had a Western-style education, was well versed in Western science and scholarship, and was, therefore, an "en-lightened" man for his time. Even so, his family belonged to the landed gentry and strictly observed such Confucian traditions as the ceremonial worship of ancestors. Having grown up as the eldest son within such a "feudalistic" family tradition, he was consequently a very conservative person.

In sharp contrast to her father, Kim's mother was like most women of the time only an elementary school graduate. However, she came from a Christian family and had grown up in a relatively liberal atmosphere. The fact that she was the only daughter may have contributed to this atmosphere because very often an only child is given a great deal of attention and treated leniently by parents. It is easy to see that there was a considerable difference between Kim's conservative and learned father and his uneducated but rather liberal-minded wife.

Kim's mother had a hard life, serving her husband, her parents-in-law and her nine children in a strictly Confucian and oppressive atmosphere. She had a literary flair and wanted to write, but Kim's father insisted that "women's duty is to marry and bear children." Hence she had no choice but to suppress her personal aspirations.

54 Personal interview, 8 December 1982.

55 Personal interview with Cha-rim Kim (자림 김), 7 January 1984. Hereafter designated as Personal interview, 7 January 1984.
The only way she found to express herself was through keeping a diary. Kim says that her mother, now in her eighties, reveals her unfulfilled desires through long letters. 56

Differences in culture between Kim's mother's family and her father's family affected her as well as her mother. Due to her mother's poor health, Kim was reared by her maternal grandmother in an enlightened and liberal environment. This free atmosphere and Kim's resulting open personality were just the opposite of what her paternal grandfather wanted her to be.

Kim suffered enormously, caught as she was between two different family cultures. Also she empathized with her mother and sometimes despaped of her destiny as a woman. Through her experiences in growing up, however, she came to rebel against the feudalistic view of women held by her father's family. She learned to see more clearly women's subordinate position, and based on this perception she resolved to live freely and remain single while devoting herself to a literary career. Not surprisingly she was attracted to the New Woman and aspired to lead such a life. 57

Another important factor that fueled Kim's sense of rebellion was the formal schooling she received under Japanese rule. She was taught that a virtuous woman is chaste, submissive and content with her lot in life. Kim could not accept these values and questioned their validity. She came to believe that submission is not a virtue.

56 Personal interview, 7 January 1984.

57 Personal interview, 7 January 1984.
Now she says: "A slavish life based on submission and docility to men is not women's virtue. To passively suppress all the talents and desires one has is not a virtue at all."58 She also emphasizes that women should live more "natural" lives, which means "giving full play to one's talents and aptitude"59 through a career.

Kim married the poet Yang Myong-mun in 1952 because she thought that her married life with him would be compatible with her literary career. Based on understanding and love rather than a traditional arrangement, it was in a sense an actualization of her rebellious belief in individuality. She was the first one of her nine siblings to have married for love despite strong opposition from her father, who even threatened to disown her. Thus she was a pioneer in terms of marriage for her time. Her belief in the individual right to choose one's partner in marriage is materialized in Whirling Wind (Tolgae param).

Kim chose drama as her career because she firmly believed in the social functions of art. Drama is socially the most powerful literary genre. According to her, it leads culture, purifies emotion, and reveals humanity.60 Hence playwrights should always precede the mass in terms of consciousness.61 Her original intention in establishing the Women's Theater (Yoin Kukchang) in 1965 was to awaken women through plays dealing with women's questions and thereby ultimately protect their rights and interests. Like Megan Terry's,

58 Personal interview, 8 December 1982.
59 Personal interview, 8 December 1982.
60 Personal interview, 7 January 1983.
61 Personal interview, 7 January 1983.
Kim's basically political view of the playwright's role reveals her concern for the community of women.

Kim's view of the playwright's role of social leadership is reflected in her creation of female characters. They are "the women who are not satisfied with the past nor with the present, and hence struggle to find a way out of both."62 Their discontent is rooted in a consciousness which precedes their own times. Kim's women characters, therefore, are pioneers like herself. She admits that "they are autobiographical for the most part, and based on her personal awakening in the course of her life."

The question, then, arises as to just what kind of pioneers Kim's female characters are. Kim's approach is based on a realistic assessment of the Korean social situation in relation to women's issues. She sees equality between the sexes in moderate terms. Women's potential and abilities must not be suppressed, and more opportunities should be made accessible to them. At the same time men must not be openly challenged as a reaction to the age-old subordination of the opposite sex. Women still should acknowledge sexual differences and recognize that competition beyond sex lines is not equality. Therefore Kim differs from Terry, who creates strong women not bound by sexual limitations. This particular point, in turn, illuminates important cultural differences between Korea and America with regard to women in the 1960s. American women could challenge the assumptions and roles based on sex because of a climate of opinion which emphasized human rights and questioned the established order of things. In a

62 Personal interview, 7 January 1983.
society where Confucian-based male supremacy still prevailed, Korean women could not even visualize themselves in such radical terms. For them demanding more opportunities outside the home was challenging enough. Thus equality had different meanings for women of the two countries. The characters in Whirling Wind (Tolgae param) and Flowery Pig (Hwadon) embody Kim's moderate views concerning equality between the sexes.

**Whirling Wind (Tolgae param)**

Written in 1958, this one-act play is set in post-Korean War Seoul. By this time the situation in Korea had stabilized with the establishment of self-government, and exposure to Western influence was becoming more direct. There are three women characters— all widows—in this play, and each represents the values of her own generation. The play focuses upon a seventy-one-year-old grandmother, fifty-two-year-old mother and twenty-nine-year-old daughter Ki-suk and their differing values concerning love and marriage. Kim says that at the time she was writing this play no one had dealt with the women's question in drama; so she wrote with "a sense of the mission of a pioneer." She further says that the three generations of women in this play are drawn from her experience thirty years ago. The grandmother's belief in men's precedence over women is juxtaposed against the rebelliousness of the daughter with the mother midway between the two in terms of her values.  

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63 Personal interview, 7 January 1983.

64 Personal interview, 7 January 1983.
Ki-suk is the central figure. Her husband was taken to North Korea during the Korean War, and his fate is unknown. She likes the widower Dr. Hyon-muk, who rents a room in her house, and she also dates a college student Chang-kyu.

The opening scene is symbolic and sets the tone of the whole play. Ki-suk is holding a piece of seared flower symbolizing her own self, which has so far been suppressed by the traditional emphasis upon chastity. Dr. Hyon-muk brings out a bird cage and frees the bird. At the end of the play, he figuratively frees Ki-suk by marrying her.

Ki-suk's grandmother Mrs. Kang epitomizes chastity. When her fiancé died, she attributed everything to her destiny, came to her fiancé's family as if married, observed the three year mourning period as a wife and has lived a life of sacrifice and self-effacement as a virgin widow. Later she adopted a girl, who is now Mrs. Pak. Mrs. Kang has accepted patriarchal Confucian values without question and believes that her happiness lies in faithfully preserving the family tradition of chastity. Chastity in the traditional Korean cultural context thus means a woman's fidelity--physical as well as mental--to one husband throughout her lifetime; hence it does not allow for remarriage even in the case of a husband's death.

Mrs. Pak, Mrs. Kang's adopted daughter, also adheres to the traditional code of chastity. For this reason she accepted her husband when he returned to her after having deserted her in favor of a concubine, and she served him at his deathbed.
Mrs. Kang senses that a romance might develop between Ki-suk and Dr. Hyon-muk after learning that he is a widower. To her this possibility, to say nothing of Ki-suk's remarriage, means her granddaughter's loss of chastity--the supreme womanly virtue. Even being seen by a doctor is a violation of chastity for her: "If I am sick, do you think I will put my body at a man's disposal? Even thinking of that makes me feel sick."  

Mrs. Kang demands that Hyon-muk vacate his room. She tells him about herself and the tradition of chastity in her family:

Mrs. Kang: If I had known that you were a widower, I would not have let you in. . . . You may not know well about the tradition of our family. There is nothing like "having two men" in our family tradition. My fiancé passed away during an epidemic . . . . I have become old keeping my chastity intact so far.

Hyon-muk: You are an exemplary woman of virtue.

Mrs. Kang: (pointing toward Mrs. Pak with a proud face) My daughter is the same. Ever since she became a widow when she was very young, she has so far kept . . . (396)

He refuses to accede to her demand on the grounds that their contract has not yet expired.

Mrs. Kang then attempts to move Ki-suk's room to the back side of the house. She tells her granddaughter that thinking of a man other than one's husband is a sin. Ki-suk has different values and answers: "(giggling) You treat men as if they are dirty things" (398). She further challenges the traditional mores of her grandmother and mother.

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65Cha-ri m Kim (차림 김), 돌개 바람 (Tolgae param), in 이 민선: 김 차림 화록집 (Iminson: Kim Cha-ri m huigokchip), (Seoul: Minjungsogwan, 1971), p. 398. Subsequent references to this play are indicated by page numbers following citations in the text.
Ki-suk: What's wrong with desiring a man? It is a natural and spontaneous desire. Why do you make a fuss over the talk of a man? You are concerned about me as if I am a sex maniac.

Mrs. Pak: Look at her!

Ki-suk: Shall I tell you frankly what's in your mind? Never a day has passed without thinking of men . . .

Mrs. Kang: That bitch is crazy . . .

Ki-suk: You have lived with the image of man deep within your heart as if it were an idol. If you could not cut out that desire boldly from your heart, why have you deceived yourselves? . . .

Mrs. Kang: Aren't you afraid of heaven? You have a husband.

Ki-suk: I am afraid of myself . . . Whatever efforts I make to suppress myself, it is not easy to control myself. (399-400)

To Ki-suk her own life and happiness take precedence over her family honor or tradition of chastity. She has a strong sense of self and is also honest about her sexual needs. Her rejection of the ways of her grandmother and mother is actually aimed at the patriarchal Confucian imposition of self-effacement on women. It is at the same time a stinging criticism of the hypocrisy inherent in the code of chastity that refuses to recognize the sexuality of women in the name of virtue.

Ki-suk's individualistic idea of happiness presupposes assertiveness and aggressiveness. Hence she considers her mother, who had her husband and love taken away by another woman, foolish indeed: "During that short period of time you let another bitch snatch Father away from you. (getting angry) Fool!" (400).

Mrs. Kang becomes more upset with Ki-suk than Mrs. Pak because Ki-suk's moral code more strongly threatens her own values and view
of life based on destiny. Mrs. Pak's position is in between those of her mother and daughter. She understands both. She believes in traditional values like Mrs. Kang, but she is also sympathetic with her daughter. She agrees with Mrs. Kang and urges Ki-suk to visit her missing husband's family to observe his birthday. Ki-suk refuses to go, and her mother exhorts her: "You are supposed to become a ghost in that family . . . . Everything is owning to your destiny" (402). Although Mrs. Pak from her own experience understands and sympathizes with her daughter, she does not have a strong enough sense of self to stand up to Mrs. Kang's traditional values and support Ki-suk.

Ki-suk finally declares her independence from the way of life that her mother and grandmother have lived: "I will not become rotten in this household . . . . I cannot be a living corpse in a place like a tomb" (400). She decides to accept Hyon-muk as her second husband. It is an individualistic decision to explore her own life and pursue happiness in her own way. She confesses her philosophy of life to him:

(holding his hands) . . . I could not just let the time fly. Time once sweet, once hot and once even salty. I could not just gulp it down as if it was some bitter medicine. I wanted to lick it, bite it and chew it. (413)

Mrs. Kang and Mrs. Pak are typically traditional Korean women, who are indoctrinated by the patriarchal Confucian culture to such an extent that they do not realize their own victimization. Self-sacrifice is justified to them in terms of family honor and a tradition of chastity. Ki-suk's independence in choosing her own
way of life typifies the changing values and morality of the post-war generation.

Still, she is not entirely freed from the cultural context in which she is defined by her gender. Her view of happiness presupposes a happy marriage in which she expects to fulfill herself emotionally and sexually through a husband. Actually she does not seek any alternative such as a career despite her young age. Thus she defines herself largely in terms of the traditional role of a woman, in this case a wife.

Through Ki-suk, a woman in rebellion against the repressive Confucian moral code, Kim questions the validity of such a code and calls for the recognition of women as individuals with human needs such as sexual gratification. Actually the question of women's sexuality and sexual needs is openly discussed by Kim for the first time in Korean drama. Above all, through this play Kim sets forth a role model for women of the new post-war generation. In this aspect she resembles Megan Terry.

The fact that Kim as a woman writer could do all this reflects to a certain extent the post-war Korean social situation. The changes in women's values and sexual morality resulting from Western influence were also being dealt with in other literary genres, especially fiction. Nevertheless, that Ki-suk must overcome strong opposition from her conservative grandmother and mother and that for so doing she is considered a New Woman for her time clearly indicate the still solidly conservative assumptions regarding women in the Korean culture of the late 1950s.
Flowery Pig (Hwadon)

Hwa (화) literally means a flower but connotes a prostitute when applied to a woman. Don (돈) literally means a pig but has a negative connotation of being dirty or defiled. So one can only guess at the figurative meaning of this word coined by the author. This play is a one-act play (1970) consisting of monologues by a single woman character. It is set in the early 1970s when such anti-establishment movements in the Western world as women's liberation and the counter-culture influenced Korean society. Kim recalls this as a time when "the waves of the Hippie mentally seeped through the mass media" into the society. At issue is the question of the double standard in sexual morality, but the implications of the play go far beyond this.

The play deals with the deepening gap between women's social reality and their wishful thinking concerning it. This is materialized in the heroine's life:

Although the central issue of the play is the question of sexual freedom, the play as a whole expresses the anxiety rooted in suppressed freedom of women as individuals. Korean women have attained freedom within the boundary of the home compared to their confined and slave-like state in the past, but we are still confined to the home and cannot leave it. Outside the home, in society, women's equality is still in question. The main reason for this is their lack of economic independence. But as women in the United States took time before they attained their present social and economic status, Korean women have a long way to go. . . . I wanted to express all this. Thus not being able to break through the confines of social reality, the woman protagonist only gives full play to her

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66Personal interview, 8 December 1982.
imaginative power. That is why the play ends with her saying that all her story was just "a plot for a novel."  

In addition the play is a veiled criticism of the technological civilization into which Korea was increasingly turning by 1970. This civilization, says Kim, manipulates the human mentality and causes a lack of genuineness in love relationships between men and women. This sentiment reveals not only the influence of the counter-cultural mentality on Kim but the interrelatedness Korea had developed with the Western world by 1970.

The central character in this mono-drama is a woman of the middle class in her mid-thirties. As if to symbolize women's invisibleness in Korean society, she is not even named. She is weighed down with boredom and loneliness from long years of monotonous though affluent married life. She does not have a career except as a housewife and is confined to a modern apartment all day long. Except for her modern setting, she is little different from women in traditional Korean society, who were restricted to their inner quarters, the women's place.

Rising from her afternoon nap, she finds herself lonely and bored. Her husband, a jurist, is away from home for days at a time. She constructs an idle fantasy that some men will call her:

I am lonely all by myself beside the phone . . .
unbearably lonely . . . (staring at the phone) It's alright if he doesn't have eyes, nose or lips . . . .

67 Personal interview, 8 December 1982.
68 Personal interview, 8 December 1982.
Save this bored woman confined in this room. Rich and thick voice. I am fully ready . . . . Why does nothing happen?69

From this point on, she acts out her fantasy. The phone rings, and she answers to find that it is a call from her sister. To dispose of her "surplus time and heat," she tells her sister about her extra-marital love affair:

I came to know a man. He told me that love does not have anything to do with ethics or morals or shame . . . . Why are you getting angry? You mean to say that sex in iron fetters is fragrant? This suffocating apartment, this closed door. All this is a swindler's place. Are you going to let that particular person practice his swindling skills? (447)

Using fantasy, this woman is actually giving voice to her repressed sexuality. Deep in her heart, she is aware that her repression is imposed upon her by her husband, a "swindler" who has confined her to the home as woman's place. She realizes that in her married life she has been swindled by him, for hers has been a life of endless waiting, boredom and repression of her natural desires. Now her consciousness rebels against such a life. At this stage she does not care about ethics or morals that only contribute to her repression.

Her feeling of repression is doubled because she lives in a highly technological civilization that offers everything:

I feel like vomiting in this too artificial living environment. This training ever since childhood on how to breathe, how to walk, how to eat and even how to make love. Sister, I want to escape from this too

69 Cha-rim Kim (자림 김).  화 독  (Hwadon), in 이 범선: 김 자림 화독집  (Iminson: Kim Cha-rim huigokchip), (Seoul: Minjungsgwann, 1971), p. 446. Subsequent references to this play are indicated by page numbers following citations in the text.
much specialized knowledge. This great denial is struggling within me . . . . I am telling you, let us break down all the established ideas and return to our primordial state and become refreshed. (450)

This woman can be regarded as Kim Cha-rim's mouthpiece. Like Kim she is aware of recent developments in the West and sympathizes with contemporary anti-establishment sentiments. On a conscious level she rebels against the repressive society that she is living in, but soon she realizes her limitations: "Even though I feel that I don't have freedom of action, I don't have the courage to say goodbye to everything" (450). This wavering between the ideal and the real sets the pattern for her behavior for the rest of the play. It is also what the play is about.

In her fantasy, she carries out the "great denial" by having a forbidden extra-marital relationship. Her rebellion starts with frankly admitting that she pines for an intense love affair to drive away her boredom:

To set fire to the central heating system, I had to find an intense thrill and have an ominous curiosity: a cruelly strong man, a man who nullifies my past and kills me for the moment. Then I burn sizzling and am reborn to my premordial self. (451)

Of interest here is the way she defines her relationship with her fantasy lover. She basically views herself as the receiver and the lover as the doer, which is after all the traditional man-and-woman relationship. Actually the source of her boredom and loneliness is her husband, who "utters habitual but empty words like My Love or Darling," but does not make love with her as he did when they were first married" (451). Thus she is basically traditional in that she wants to realize herself through a man and his love.
To carry out her great denial, however, she has to assert her untraditional self. After having admitted her natural instincts, she justifies her new moral code: "The sin of yesterday becomes the good deed of tomorrow. And this is the modern world" (452). Her autonomous self is lost again, however, when she comes to interact with her imagined lover.

She calls her bored and loveless marriage "a sickness," and identifies her relationship with her lover with that of "a patient and a doctor"--a hierarchical relationship. Moreover, she loves her subordinate role as is well illustrated by her description of a love scene:

... he held my shoulder violently and led me without any words. I was dragged along on the ground. When I came to a stumbling block, he jerked me violently as if harassed. My clothes were torn and my legs were bleeding. But when pain turned into pleasure, my faith in that man increased. I screamed behind his back, "Destroy me more painfully!" (453, 454)

Here she reveals herself as a passive, machochistic female gratifying male domination and violence to attain sexual ecstasy. Her relationship with her lover is only physical. It does not need words. In existential terms her dream of the annihilation of her self is in fact "an avid will to exist." It is only that she has been indoctrinated by a male supremacist culture to such an extent that she does not know how to exist except through a male.

That is why she is confused, not knowing where to go after achieving some sense of freedom and self-fulfillment in sexual ecstasy: "I felt

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in my little heart the excitement of being born again in this world . . . . I wanted to sing Halleluyah and the lawn was like that of Eden" (455-456). Her rebellion against the double moral standard lasts only a week. She is frightened by the freedom that she has longed for and chooses to return to the confines of emotional security. She has been thus far completely accustomed to her role in the house and to the comfortableness and security guaranteed by her dependent, subordinate position. She thus explains: "The reason that I returned to my cage pulling myself together . . . is because I can function within my given role again with renewed energy" (457).

She knows, however, that her "sickness" of boredom and loneliness will return again. Fulfillment through the consummation of repressed sexuality is an illusion:

Then slowly the screw will become loose and disintegrate again. This time the disintegration will be death. I will be too old by then and what's the use of setting fire to the heating system? The tank will be totally out of oil. (457)

Thus she is forever confused about her self and her "sickness." It never dawns upon her that her nameless sickness stems from her unfulfilled self. Being indoctrinated by a society that tells her to define herself as a wife, it is impossible for her to identify her problem as being unfulfilled as a person rather than as a female. Hence she never thinks about having a career. All this makes her a victim of the Korean version of the Feminine Mystique.

Suddenly the door bell rings and this woman receives a letter sent from her husband. It says: "I overheard all of your conversation . . . . I want to divorce you. Stamp your seal on the divorce paper
enclosed and send it back, you bitch!" (458). This letter ends her
fantasy and brings her back to reality. She says to herself: "It was
the plot for my next novel, a first person novel . . . . I wanted to
sound out the audience responses with my sister" (458).

This ending tells us a great deal about the cultural background of
this play and the author's perception of it. To sustain dramatic
tension, Kim does not reveal that the woman's love affair is a fantasy
until the last minute of the play. But there also seems to be a deeper
reason for the sudden reversal of the story line from the real to the
unreal. Kim Cha-rim is keenly aware of women's social situation in
Korea, where the established double standard does not tolerate women's
infidelity as it does men's. Hence she could not help ending the play
in such a way.

Kim Wu-chin's New Woman Chong-cha in Disillusionment of A Ragged
Poet and Yu Chi-jin's New Woman Chong-suk in Sisters I also feel con­
fused and trapped between traditional patriarchal values and modern
individualistic ones. They never identify the source of their oppres­
sion as the male-supremacist culture but rather attribute their hard­
ships to destiny, time or even money. Yu's Song-hi, despite her
modern education, is totally victimized by the code of chastity.
Compared to these women, Kim Cha-rim's women are much more advanced in
terms of their consciousness. They are clearly aware of their oppres­
sion and repression and identify the patriarchal system as the cause.
Thus Ki-suk in Whirling Wind challenges the traditional code of chastity,
and the woman in Flowery Pig calls her husband a swindler and asserts
her independence in an extra-marital love affair if only in fantasy.
Nevertheless, all of these women define themselves with reference to men and seek fulfillment in the age-old traditional women's roles either as a wife and helpmate or a lover.

Kim's Ki-suk and the woman in *Flowery Pig* contrast sharply with Terry's women. Both authors in their own way attempt to set forth role models for women. Although Kim created "women in revolt," their revolts are carried out within the boundary of traditional male/female role differentiation. On the other hand, Terry's women have totally untraditional assumptions about themselves unbounded by sex. This distinction between the two writers reflects well the differences between the two cultures--Korean and American. Kim has gone to the farthest limit that she could go with her "sense of mission of a pioneer" given the still conservative and patriarchal cultural context in which she lives and works.
CHAPTER VI
CONCLUDING SPECULATIONS

Coming to terms with identity is becoming a universal challenge for people living in the modern age. For women in contemporary American and Korean societies the pursuit of self-actualization is gaining importance and has expressed itself in many significant changes in their social position and roles.

This study assumes that literature reflects social reality and that the writer is a very sensitive antenna whose perceptions are faithful to what is going on in society. It has examined images of women in drama—the most social of all literary genres—in modern America and Korea with a focus on the problem of identity.

We have seen that Eugene O'Neill, as a rebel against repressive Puritan ethics, was sensitive to changes concerning women that occurred in the 1920s. These included the appearance of the New Woman and her pursuit of sexual freedom. Nina in Strange Interlude asserts herself in the pursuit of sexual fulfillment. O'Neill was even willing, for the first time in American drama, to allow a fallen woman, Anna in Anna Christie, to marry. He was, however, ambivalent about untraditional women. Despite her single-minded pursuit of happiness, Nina finds at the end of the play that her life has been a failure. Although she succeeds in marrying Mat, Anna's future happiness is also in question. Moreover, despite their strong self-consciousness, both define themselves in the sex-specific roles of lover, mother and wife and attempt to fulfill themselves in these terms.
Kim Wu-chin as an individualistic rebel in the 1920s portrays untraditional women of his time. Chong-cha in Disillusionment of A Ragged Poet is a New Woman with a career, who strongly asserts herself in refusing Won-yong's proposal. Yong-nyo, a prostitute in Yi Yong-nyo, has a strong will and refuses to give in to the oppressive patriarchal system. However, Kim, like O'Neill, could not visualize happiness for these women. Chong-cha, despite her achievements, feels trapped between her own self and the traditional value system, which defines her as female and compels her to find fulfillment in marriage. Yong-nyo, notwithstanding her strong will, views herself in the traditional role of a woman and attempts to fulfill herself vicariously through her son. She is finally victimized by male-supremacist culture. The price both women have to pay for asserting themselves is very high.

Tennessee Williams shows more sympathy and sensitivity toward women perhaps because as a homosexual he did not feel compelled to relate to them in terms of male superiority. By probing the complex-motivations of human psychology he gave his women characters a more human dimension and a greater vividness. Nevertheless, the lot of his women is not very different from O'Neill's or Kim's. Blanche's sexual promiscuity defies the traditional moral code, and she asserts herself against Stanley, the epitome of male supremacy. As a consequence she is finally destroyed. Only Stella, who compromises herself to conform to the male-dominant system and to find fulfillment within it, manages to survive. Maggie, despite her strong sense of self and will, has to accept the patriarchal system to accomplish her own ends. Also Blanche and Maggie basically define themselves with reference to men. The
former seeks protection from a male in marriage, and the latter seeks fulfillment as a wife and helpmate in a satisfactory sexual relationship with Brick.

Yu Chi-jin responded to social changes concerning women in his own way as a conservative nationalist. His New Woman characters are victimized by the times. Chong-suk in Sisters I is a New Woman. Her aspirations to pursue a career are frustrated by the patriarchal social situation, which defines women's place as the home. Furthermore, she views herself in traditional terms despite her modern education and aspirations and believes that a woman should marry. As a result she feels trapped and filled with conflict. Song-hi in Sisters II once aspired to become a singer, but the Korean War turns her life completely around. She is unable to overcome the loss of her virginity because of her traditional value system and so she finally commits suicide.

Women characters created by male playwrights—both American and Korean—all assert themselves in their own ways, but they do so within a traditional frame of reference. Thus these male writers reflect changes in women's roles and their value system by presenting strong-willed women, but they always see to it that these women pay a high price for asserting their independence. They are basically stereotypes in that they define themselves as "the other" with reference to men. These male writers create their characters in terms of culturally accepted ideas about men and women.

O'Neill's and Williams' women characters show more individuality than those of Kim Wu-chin and Yu Chi-jin. The American women are endowed with psychologically complex motivations. They articulate their
feelings and opinions clearly and pose a strong challenge to the male-dominated system. Anna exhibits hatred toward men for having ruined her, and Nina shows contempt for males at one point in her life after having seduced and manipulated them for her own happiness. Contrastingly, Kim Wu-chin and Yu Chi-jin focus more on the social selves of their characters, whose personal psychological sides are not fully explored. Never in their misery do these women directly challenge male dignity; neither are they cognizant of the source of their ordeals. To Young ny o the cause of her hardship is money, her "enemy," not the patriarchal social system. For Chong-suk in Sisters I it is her destiny to live in the wrong time. The same is true of Song-hi in Sisters II; she is victimized by the Korean War.

Korean male writers therefore depict women characters in terms of traditional stereotypical ideas about women more than do their American counterparts. The fact that modern Korean drama started as a nationalistic movement in part accounts for this tendency. These male playwrights could not imagine their women characters' challenging or questioning the male-dominated system. Their portrayals of unhappy New Women represent male wish-fulfillments. Thus their plays reflect to a certain extent the changing values of women, but ultimately portray them in such a way as to reinforce society's patriarchal values.

O'Neill explored the Freudian view of sex in some of his plays including Strange Interlude, and yet he did not find in it an ultimate solution to his tragic view of life. Nina's failure to fulfill herself through sexual gratification illustrates this. Contrastingly Williams in A Streetcar Named Desire and Cat on a Hot Tin Roof suggests his
acceptance of sexual adjustment as the key to the meaning of life through Stella and Maggie. These two women survive by practically accepting their sex-specific roles and fulfilling themselves in these terms. Blanche by contrast is punished for challenging the male order. Thus Williams' women struggle and suffer more than O'Neill's in a difficult male-dominated environment. This difference in the way the two playwrights view sex and treat women is a comment on the different moods of the periods in which they worked. Despite his sympathy for and understanding of women, Williams could not overlook the conservative temper of the post-war era, when sex-typed roles were strongly emphasized.

Kim Wu-chin portrayed women as untraditionally individualistic for his time because he himself was an individualistic rebel. Yong-nyo asserts her will strongly against the patriarchal system, and Chong-cha does so against a particular man even though both basically subscribe to the traditional view of themselves as women. Yu Chi-jin, as he himself avowed, was not an individualistic rebel but rather a conservative nationalist. Although he was not insensitive to social changes concerning women, his purpose in portraying a New Woman Chong-suk is to reveal how a woman, the weaker sex, is victimized by the times. Kim by contrast pays some attention to Chong-cha's personal inner conflict. Yu's group-oriented conservative view expresses itself again in Sisters II. It was written in the post-war period when women's value system had changed considerably owing to the large-scale influx of Western ideas. Yu does not reflect such changes in the portrayal of Song-hi, however. She still clings to the traditional code of chastity,
and to be faithful to this code she commits suicide. Also she is victimized by the Korean War. If Yu had wished, Song-hi could have been a more independent and modern woman, who overcomes her bad luck and explores her life rather than choosing death. All this reflects Yu's basically conservative view of women and the traditional code of chastity.

Women playwrights, American and Korean, write from a point of view different from that of their male counterparts. Both Megan Terry and Kim Cha-elim write from a woman's perspective and more importantly from a sense of responsibility to other women. They want to create role models for them. Terry consciously creates non-stereotypical women characters, who realize themselves through themselves and not through men. Margaret Fuller in Calm Down Mother is one such example, and Simone Weil in Approaching Simone is another. Simone even transcends her sexual limitations and actualizes her self through hard work and love for humanity. Kim's women characters also challenge male supremacy and male dignity. For the first time in Korean drama Kim discusses openly women's sexuality and sexual needs from a woman's perspective. Ki-suk in Whirling Wind wins her fight against the traditional repressive moral code of chastity and decides to remarry. The woman in Flowery Pig fantasizes an extra-marital affair in an effort to assert her independence against "swindling" male supremacy. Both of these women, however, assert themselves only within a traditional frame of reference: Ki-suk seeks fulfillment through marriage as a wife, and the woman in Flowery Pig returns to her wifely role. Moreover, the latter finds the pressure generated by the male-dominated
system too overwhelming for her to resist alone. Thus Kim Cha-rim
strongly expresses her dissatisfaction with women's oppression in a
patriarchal society, but she cannot create a woman who transcends sexual
limitations and achieves fulfillment in human terms as Terry does in
her plays. Kim explains that the reason she could not create a character
with a strong individuality was that her plays are after all a reflection of social reality for women.¹ There was no such model in real
life—at least at the time she was writing these particular plays.

This seems more or less true of all the Korean playwrights who are
examined in this study. The root cause for the absence of strong,
individualistic women characters is to be found in the particular social
climate of Korea rather than in the writers themselves. The climate encourages women to remain passive and dependent sexual beings rather
than mature, responsible and independent individuals.

This analysis therefore indicates the strongly individualistic
nature of American society, in which women are allowed a comparatively
greater freedom in expressing and cultivating their individuality. At
the same time they may not realize it because of the gap between the
reality of their lives and the strong social emphasis on equality and
individualism. Anna's passionate expression of hatred toward men,
Nina's sexual promiscuity, Blanche's challenging of Stanley, and Maggie's
sleeping with Skipper—all indicate American society's relative openness to women's challenging sex-related social controls. In the Korean
plays examined here there are no direct parallels.

¹Personal interview with Cha-rim Kim, 7 January 1982.
Because of the emphasis on equality and individualism, male authority operates in a more subtle way in American than in Korean society. In the latter, where a hierarchical order defines all human relationships, male authority is exercised with more assurance and even blatancy. Thus Kim Wu-chin's poet openly ridicules his wife in the presence of another woman. His authority is secure and is never challenged by his wife. Even the New Woman Chong-suk does not challenge it in a serious way. Similar situations do not exist in the American plays, but still women have to accept male authority in order to survive. To marry O'Neill's Anna has to accept Mat's demand to swear on the cross. Blanche is finally destroyed by Stanley for having challenged him. Nina returns to Charlie, a father figure. Maggie has to accept her role in a patriarchal social context.

None of these women actualizes herself through a career while successfully functioning as a traditional woman. The quest for self-fulfillment and traditional role expectations are presented as mutually exclusive alternatives. This assumption reflects the playwrights' skeptical view of women's successful pursuit of their own ends and their belief that these are incompatible with traditional roles. Thus unless a woman bases her aspirations on conventional sex role assumptions like Maggie or totally transcends sexual limitations like Simone, she is doomed to failure in the conflict between self and tradition.
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