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Grace Shin April 12, 2022

Family-Centrism in Korean TV Remakes and Adaptations of Anglophone Narratives

by

Grace Shin

Jenny Wang Medina
Adviser

Department of Russian and East Asian Languages and Cultures

Jenny Wang Medina

Adviser

Cheryl Crowley

Committee Member

Allison Tanine

Committee Member

2022

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Grace Shin

Jenny Wang Medina

Adviser

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Abstract

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Remakes are not a new phenomenon for South Korean television. Though South Korea began remaking shows with American and British TV game and competition shows, it has become more common for producers and broadcasting companies to remake Anglophone stories into Korean dramas. In the process of transculturally remaking or adapting Anglophone narratives, producers incorporate elements that are characteristic of Korean dramas to make the story more familiar and acceptable to Korean audiences. One such element is the inclusion of family-centric themes that show the values of Korean society, including familial sacrifice and filial piety among others. Korean dramas also change details of the original plots to better emulate the family-related struggles individuals face in Korean society, allowing the Korean audience to empathize with the characters and stories more easily. These specific qualities of Korean dramas caused me to ask the questions, "Why do Korean dramas highlight or add family-centric plots and themes when remaking Anglophone television dramas or movies? And what does the inclusion of these specific themes indicate about Korean society?" Through this study, I will be answering these questions and examining the different ways these family-centric changes and additions are expressed through a textual analysis of three Korean dramas of three different genres based on Anglophone movies or TV shows: *18 Again*, *Life on Mars*, and *The World of the Married*.

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Introduction

When discussing the media form of Korean dramas, some of the clichés that are brought up include love triangles, evil mothers, and dramatic storylines among many. In recent years, this definition has changed with the explosive popularity of some very diverse and different Korean dramas that break out of this frame. Another very important and oftentimes underlying theme in Korean dramas is the importance of family. In dramas that heavily spotlight romance, this theme about family can often be overshadowed even if it is incorporated into the plot. But this is a topic that never fails to make its way to many Korean dramas' stories, even if the focus is on something else, and it is included with a purpose.

I first took notice of the family-centric elements in Korean dramas after I watched *18 Again*, the Korean adaptation of the American film *17 Again*. This was one of the few Korean remakes in which I had already seen the original, so I was able to clearly see the additions and changes that were made. As I was watching this drama over the weeks it aired, I was making constant comparisons between the two, noticing several aspects that turned situations I simply thought were funny or entertaining into ones that I could actually relate to. However, I also noticed that I was feeling different emotions than when I watched the original because of these added familial values that were absent in the original, which made me curious about the correlation between my experience watching and the changes that were made. This drama has led me to ask the questions, "Why do Korean dramas highlight or add family-centric plots and themes when remaking Anglophone television dramas or films? And what does the inclusion of these specific themes indicate about Korean society?"

First, in the process of answering these questions, I will explain the development of Korean dramas throughout history in addition to the growth of its international popularity to provide background on the development of Korean dramas as an internationally-recognized form of visual media. Then, I will discuss the defining characteristics of Korean dramas and the reasons for their immense popularity (which can also be applied to the texts I am discussing) before describing the history of remakes in Korea to explain the country's experience with this type of transcultural adaptation. In chapter two, I will analyze the current familial values Korea holds by delving into trends in marriage, childbirth, gender roles, and intergenerational ties among many, the majority of which will aid in understanding my main arguments. In the third chapter, I will compare the three Anglophone texts *17 Again*, *Life on Mars* (BBC), and *Doctor Foster* to their Korean remakes (*18 Again*, *Life on Mars*, and *The World of the Married*) to examine the different ways in which Korean familial values are added to adapt the original stories to the Korean context and therefore better appeal to the local audience. I will also be analyzing the connection between the family-centric themes and the genres of the dramas to present how certain genres include certain ideas and messages about family. Finally, in the fourth chapter, I will summarize and compare my findings in the individual texts while also discussing the importance of this research.

Chapter One: Background of Korean Dramas

In this first chapter, I will be exploring and describing the development of South Korean dramas, both in and out of the country. Over the last few decades, Korean dramas have experienced an exponential amount of growth and change, becoming an internationally-recognized form of media. In order to understand the texts I will be analyzing, it

is important to first recognize how this type of storytelling started as well as the ways in which it has risen to become so well-received by international audiences in addition to domestic ones. Therefore, I will be explaining how remakes first entered Korea, the history of Korean dramas, the role of Korean dramas in *Hallyu*, and the unique qualities Korean dramas have that attracted such a wide and international audience. The latter sections will serve as a description for what Korean dramas are, which will then contribute to better understanding the main argument.

Remakes in Korea

The first remakes in Asia began in Japan, which depended on American program formats as they began producing shows in the early 1950's.[1] The TV format franchise that really introduced remakes to Asia, however, was *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire* (1998-), a TV game show that originates from Britain.[2] After a U.S. version was released in 1999, the format also entered Asia, as India, the Philippines, Singapore, and other countries began to produce local versions after 2000, therefore causing Asian countries to adopt formats of other Anglophone shows, such as *Survivor*, *America's Next Top Model*, *The Price is Right*, and more.[3]

Korea began to import formats in the mid-2000s, when many Korean cable channels were struggling with lack of ideas and staff compared to the larger broadcasting companies, like KBS, MBC, and SBS. As a result, Korea adopted several different formats from America and the U.K., including *SNL Korea* (tvN), *Challenge! Super Model Korea* (On Style), *Top Gear Korea* (XTM), *Korea's Got Talent* (tvN), and *The Voice Korea* (Mnet) among many.[4] Unlike other foreign shows that adopted these Anglophone formats, celebrities would regularly appear on Korean ones,

[1] Doobo Shim. "Hybridity, Korean Wave, and Asian Media" in *Routledge Handbook of East Asian Popular Culture*, edited by Koichi Iwabuchi et al. (Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), pp. 39.
[2] *Ibid.*.
[3] *Ibid.*.
[4] *Ibid.*.

gaining more attention from viewers both in and out of Korea, especially because *Hallyu* was gaining more international attention.

One of the first original formats that Korea exported was *I Am a Singer* (2012), a singing competition show that aired on MBC with successful ratings. China's Hunan Television bought the rights to the show and aired the first two seasons in 2013 and 2014. Following *I Am a Singer*, several more Korean "variety shows" were sold to Korea,[5] including *2 Days and 1 Night* (KBS), *We Got Married* (MBC), *Running Man* (SBS), *K-Pop Star* (SBS), *Real Men* (MBC), and *Daddy, Where Are We Going?* (MBC). Interestingly most Korean formats that were exported were from terrestrial broadcasting companies, indicating that cable channels were still dependent on foreign formats.

Today, there are many more Korean shows that have been exported to other Asian countries in addition to China as a result of their national and international popularity. Some examples include *Produce 101* (Mnet), *Grandpas Over Flowers* or *Sisters over Flowers* (tvN), *King of Mask Singer* (MBC), and *Show Me the Money* (Mnet) among many. Of these, *Grandpas Over Flowers* and *King of Masked Singer* were remade in America in 2018 and 2019 respectively. As *The Masked Singer* (the American name of *King of Masked Singer*) is now in its seventh season, Korean formats are receiving positive feedback. The most recent American adaptation of a Korean format is *I Can See Your Voice* (Mnet), another singing competition show that began airing in September of last year.

Though the above examples are all "formats," or a "formal, organized system of content adaptation" specific to television shows like infotainment programs, reality shows, and game shows,[6] remakes and adaptations are terms that are used to reference films and scripted TV

[5] Korean "variety shows" are essentially any shows that are not Korean dramas or documentaries, including game shows, reality shows, survival shows, and more.
[6] Melis Behlil, "Turkish Remakes of Korean TV Dramas," in *Creative Industries Journal* (*Crossref*, 2021), pp. 3.

shows. A remake is specifically used for something that is reproduced within the same media, like if a television show is remade in another country as another television show. However, an adaptation is the reproduction of a piece of content between different mediums. For example, the term adaptation is most commonly used to refer to a film that is based on a piece of literature, making the film a "film adaptation" of the writing.[7] Though there are many Korean dramas that are remakes, there are also many Korean dramas that are adaptations, many of which originate from webtoons.[8]

Specifically to remakes and adaptations, there are levels that have been established to differentiate how much a show is adapted and changed to adjust to the cultural and societal norms of the country it is entering. Local modification, or TV pastiche as it is commonly called, includes the most change: it is often regarded as a "blank cloning" from other media texts or formats to create a new program.[9] Though it's very difficult to tell the true source of these types of shows due to the amount of change within it, there is normally just enough familiarity for the viewers to find it comfortable and enjoyable.

On the opposite end of TV pastiche is bordercrossing (direct adaptation), which are shows that are changed so much they are mistaken to be originating from the country that is actually airing an adaptation. Bordercrossing includes a blatant implementation of foreign values compared to that of shows that undergo local modification.[10] In between local modification and bordercrossing is transnational content transfer, which includes both change and original content to better fit the local audience. Transnational transfer considers "the flow of cultural values;

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[7] Isaya Sinpongsporn. "Exploring Thai Cultural Identity through the Remakes of Korean Dramas : A Study of Transnational and Hybrid Culture on Thai Television," in *SOAS University of London*, (London: 2020), pp. 157.
[8] A webtoon is a combination of the words "web" and "cartoon." They are a form of online comics that originate from South Korea and are meant to be read on a computer or through one's phone.
[9] Anthony Fung. "Bordercrossing, Local Modification, and Transnational Transaction of TV Dramas in East Asia," in *Routledge Handbook of East Asian Popular Culture*, edited by Koichi Iwabuchi et al. (New York: Routledge, 2017), pp. 95.
[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 97.

practitioners and the programs; and the aesthetic of the shows" when producing the adaptations as it consists of a mix of the prototype as well as adjustments.[11]

There are several different reasons behind why formats and remakes are a popular option for broadcasting companies. One common motive for the use of TV formats is that it can benefit both the exporter and the importer. Exporters can avoid filling the TV program import quota systems, and importers can create new TV shows using ideas that have already been successful with another audience, therefore lowering the risk of succession and saving costs that would otherwise be used to create a new program.[12] Another reason that is more specific to Korea is the competition that lies between the large, terrestrial broadcasting companies (KBS, MBC, SBS) and cable channels. As was mentioned before, cable channels initially imported TV formats because they needed to compete with already-established terrestrial networks while working with a lack of ideas and personnel. By using formats that had already succeeded abroad, these remakes allowed Korean producers to gain fairly good ratings without as much effort as is needed in creating an entirely new show. Pre-made formats and stories also can accelerate the development process, allowing the production companies to save money and time that would otherwise go into producing an entirely new concept.[13]

However, there are also many ways in which using formats and creating remakes or adaptations can cause new challenges. For example, formats are sold to other countries under very strict conditions that detail many specific things, such as technical requirements, shooting schedules, software for the graphics, and even scripts.[14] European and Anglo-American formats are especially known to have inflexible directions, making it more difficult for producers to

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[11] *Ibid,*, pp. 95-96.
[12] Doobo Shim. "Hybridity, Korean Wave, and Asian Media" in *Routledge Handbook of East Asian Popular Culture*, edited by Koichi Iwabuchi et al. (Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), pp. 39.
[13] Melis Behlil, "Turkish Remakes of Korean TV Dramas," in *Creative Industries Journal* (*Crossref*, 2021), pp. 4.
[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 3.

recreate programs than it may actually seem. In addition, since culture cannot be directly translated, producers may find difficulty with mixing aspects of the original and elements of the country it is to be remade or adapted in. Though shows that are chosen for adaptation or remaking are selected based on their level of success and popularity in the original country, it is very likely that the remake will fail to garner the same level of attention due to poor execution of translation, whether that be in the story, the lesson, or the emotions in it.

One notable remake that received great attention and popularity across Asia was the *Boys Over Flowers* series. Originally a Japanese girls' comic (*shojo manga*) series, *Boys Over Flowers* (*Hana yori dango*) was adapted into a Taiwanese drama called *Meteor Garden* in 2001.[15] The drama became so popular that several more adaptations were created afterwards: a Korean version also titled *Boys Over Flowers* (2009), an unofficial, non-licensed Chinese version called *Let's Watch Meteor Shower* (2009), an Indian remake titled *Kaisi Yeh Yaariyan* (2014), and the most recent Chinese remake called *Meteor Garden* (2018), which was made officially this time and even streamed on Netflix. Though these are all transnational remakes of the same story, the *Boys Over Flowers* remakes are special in that they are all inter-Asian and they each highlight the "specificity and commonality" among the countries.[16]

Korean Drama Remakes

Aside from *Boys Over Flowers*, Korea has made several more TV remakes and adaptations based on formats and stories from countries all around the world. While Korea initially began remaking Anglophone programs with reality or survivor shows like ones mentioned above, Asian remakes began with dramas. Remakes of East Asian TV dramas and

[15] Koichi Iwabuchi. "East Asian Popular Culture and Inter-Asian Referencing," in *Routledge Handbook of East Asian Popular Culture*, edited by Koichi Iwabuchi et al. (Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2017), pp. 28.
[16] Iwabuchi 2017, 29.

films mostly come from Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Of these countries, however, Japanese media content is an especially popular choice for TV or film adaptation. Some notable examples of Japanese remakes are *Behind the White Tower* (2007), *Master of Study* (2010), and *Playful Kiss* (2010), all of which were based on Japanese dramas or mangas. Though there have been more remakes and adaptations of Japanese content since this time period, there was a surge during the late 2010's, when these popular examples were aired. Chinese dramas and stories have also been a popular choice for remaking in Korea. Some of the most popular examples include *Moon Lovers: Scarlet Heart Ryeo* (2016) and *Mr. Queen* (2020). *Moon Lovers* was especially incredibly well-liked by the Korean and international audience because the cast was filled with both actors and entertainers that were either already well-known or were rising stars, garnering attention for its diverse and exceptional cast.

In more recent years, after the success of American and British television formats in Korean variety and competition shows, Korean drama remakes of Anglophone stories have also been very popular. Unlike stories that originate from other East Asian countries, Anglophone remakes have to undergo much more change because there are bigger cultural differences between the countries of origin and Korea. Many Korean producers will also end up censoring certain scenes or storylines from the originals because Korean broadcasting companies often have more restrictions than that of the original's countries. However, Korean cable channels have fewer restrictions than bigger networks, allowing the remake to become more "similar in tone" with the original version.[17] Some notable Korean remakes of American or British TV formats include *Suits* (2018), *Criminal Minds* (2017), *The Good Wife* (2016), and *Entourage* (2016). Most, if not all, of the originals these remakes are based on were fairly popular in the original

[17] Daniela Mazur, et al. "The Rise of K-Dramas: Essays on Korean Television and Its Global Consumption," in *An Eastern Perspective on Western Dramas: A Korean Take on American Television Dramas*, edited by JaeYoon Park and Ann-Gee Lee (McFarland and Company, 2019), pp. 180.

country and aired for multiple seasons. The types of TV remakes are also similar in genre in that there are only a few comedies, like *Entourage*. Instead, most fall in the categories of crime, law, or drama, which tend to have a more serious and heavier tone.

In addition to Korea recreating Anglophone TV shows, demand for new genres and scripts has also increased in America due to the new attention U.S. networks are now giving scripted shows.[18] As a result, U.S. producers have begun looking for new ideas and stories in foreign TV shows, which would be easier and faster to develop. The first Korean remake that aired in America was *God's Gift-14 Days* (2014), which was renamed *Somewhere Between* (2017) and shortened to ten episodes.[19] Due to the consistent poor ratings, the show was eventually canceled, ending the first attempt at an American remake of a Korean drama. *My Love From Another Star* (2014) was another Korean drama that was announced to be remade. Because of its immense popularity in Korea and abroad, it garnered great attention and excitement, but failed to pass ABC's preseason screening, resulting in another failed effort.

In Sept. 2017, however, ABC aired *The Good Doctor*, a remake of the Korean medical drama *Good Doctor* (2013). Though ABC bought the format in 2014, it took almost three years for it to produce and air the show, indicating the amount of time and effort they put into recreating it.[20] The show proved to be a success as it ranked number one in the U.S. 's 2017 fall season, causing ABC to then add five more episodes for the first season. The show was then renewed for a second season due to the positive response it received and is set to start its fifth season this year. Unlike past remakes, the ABC version of *The Good Doctor* is said to be fairly

[18] Hyejung Ju. "Korean Television Formats," in *Transnational Korean Television: Cultural Storytelling and Digital Audiences (Transnational Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies)*, vol. 13 (*Crossref*, 2019), pp. 103.
[19] *Ibid.,* 104.
[20] *Ibid.*.

similar to the original Korean drama (at least in the first few seasons), especially with the main lead, an autistic doctor, and his development as a character.

Some more Korean drama remakes that are currently planned to be remade in the U.S. are *W: Two Worlds* (2016), *Trap* (2019), *Hotel Del Luna* (tvN), and most recently *Crash Landing on You* (tvN). The remake of *Trap*, which will be renamed as *The Club*, has Korean actor Don Lee (or Ma Dong-Seok) on the show as both a producer and as the main lead. The remake of *Hotel Del Luna* is also planned to involve producers from Korea as it was announced as a collaboration between Studio Dragon and SkyDance TV, which would then be made available on Apple TV. This is the first time a Korean studio is going to work with a U.S. production company on equal standing,[21] showing that Korean dramas are not only used as a source of new ideas and content, but that Korean production companies and producers are also being invited to join the production process, therefore increasing their role and influence in the globalization of Korean dramas.

History of Korean Dramas

The first South Korean drama was released in 1962, but there was not much development in terms of their entertainment or production quality until the 1980's when media liberalization and the commercialization of Korean television began. This was due to the fact that Korea was pressured by foreign countries to open up its markets for globalization.[22] At the beginning of the Korean TV commercialization in 1980, however, former president or military dictator Chun Doo Hwan (1980-1988) organized 29 broadcasters into two public broadcasters: Korea Broadcasting System (KBS) and Munhwa Broadcasting Company (MBC). Ten years later, the National

[21] Jang-Won Lim. "Remake of 'Hotel Del Luna' Coming to the US," in *The Korea Herald*, (2020).
[22] Doobo Shim. "Hybridity, Korean Wave, and Asian Media" in *Routledge Handbook of East Asian Popular Culture*, edited by Koichi Iwabuchi et al. (Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), pp. 15.

Assembly approved the Broadcasting Law, therefore allowing a license to Seoul Broadcasting System (SBS), a commercial broadcasting company, to begin operating from 1991. In the same year, Korea put the Broadcast Act Enforcement Ordinance into place, which was to issue annual notifications about the programming quota of "outsourced programs," or programs that were produced by independent production companies for terrestrial television.[23] Later in December of 1991, Korea then passed the Cable Television Act, officially entering Korea into the multi-channel television era.[24] Up until this point, Korean audiences thoroughly enjoyed television dramas, making them the shows with the highest ratings. As a result of these acts, the overall quality of Korean TV dramas improved greatly because broadcasters now had to compete with other channels that aired their own Korean dramas to get higher ratings.

In the 1990s, Korea began to export its dramas to foreign countries, marking the beginnings of *Hallyu*. Coined in China, *Hallyu* literally means "the Korean Wave" for its wave-like effect on East Asia and can be defined as the extensive popularity of South Korean culture, including films, music, fashion, and TV dramas. The origins of *Hallyu* have most commonly been attributed to the wild popularity Korean TV dramas gained from countries outside of South Korea. In 1992, MBC sold the romance period drama *Eyes of the Dawn* to a broadcasting company in Turkey called Türkiye Radyo Televizyon (TRT), making it the first Korean television drama to be exported to a non-East Asian country.[25] That same year, MBC also sold the family drama *What is Love All About* to Asia Television Ltd. (ATV) in Hong Kong, which many experts call the beginning of *Hallyu* in China.[26] Since then, more Korean television

[23] Dong-Hoo Lee, "From the Margins to the Middle Kingdom: Korean TV Drama's Role in Linking Local and Transnational Production," in *TV Drama in China*, edited by Ying Zhu et al. (Hong Kong University Press, 2008), pp. 190.
[24] Doobo Shim. "The Growth of Korean Cultural Industries and the Korean Wave," in *East Asian Pop Culture: Analysing the Korean Wave*, edited by Chua Beng Huat and Koichi Iwabuchi (Hong Kong University Press, 2008), pp. 23.
[25] *Ibid.*, pp. 24.
[26] *Ibid.*, pp. 25.

dramas have gained popularity from viewers in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Vietnam. There are several reasons why Korean dramas were so successful around Asia at this point. One of the main economic reasons was that the Japanese television dramas that were once preferred in Taiwan began to lose popularity, so Taiwanese producers imported Korean dramas instead.[27] These Taiwanese importers also helped Korean dramas enter the markets in Hong Kong and China, allowing *Hallyu* to expand all over East Asia. In addition, Korean dramas were a quarter of the price of Japanese dramas and a tenth of the price of Hong Kong dramas,[28] and the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis made them a preferable alternative. Finally, many other Asian countries began to open their markets at around the same time during the 1990s, and the economic development that followed this financial crisis allowed their citizens to have more leisure time and enjoy a wider variety of entertainment as governments loosened their media import policies.

After the 1990s, *Hallyu* and the foreign popularity of Korean dramas only grew. In April 2003, the melodramatic romance drama *Winter Sonata* aired in Japan for the first time. Due to the sensitive and caring character played by actor Bae Yong Joon, this drama became incredibly popular and aired an additional three times (on NHK, the national broadcasting network), marking a record for a foreign program broadcasting in Japan. Meanwhile, the historical drama *Dae Jang Geum* (*Jewel in the Palace*) aired in China during a period when the popularity of Korean dramas was gradually fading as it had been almost ten years after *What is Love All About?* was first broadcasted. Through this historical romance story, however, Korean TV dramas regained their popularity in China and *Dae Jang Geum* was re-aired in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Japan. In May 2005, the drama's last episode recorded 40% in viewership ratings in Hong Kong, making it the most-watched television show in Hong Kong history.[29]

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[27] *Ibid.*.
[28] *Ibid.*.
[29] *Ibid.*, pp. 26.

Effect of *Hallyu* and Korean Dramas

Since the early 2000s, *Hallyu* has developed and progressed in many more ways. One of the biggest outcomes of this growth is the expansion of Korean tourism. As a result of the explosive interest and attention in *Winter Sonata* and *Dae Jang Geum* from neighboring nations, tourists began to flood into Korea to visit the dramas' film locations. According to the Korea International Trade Association, Korea gained $1.86 billion in export and tourism revenues in 2004, the year after the two dramas aired abroad.[30] Korea also welcomed around 3.86 million tourists from China, Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and Thailand that year, making up 63% of the total 5.81 million inbound tourists. This number was a 31.81% increase from 2003, which was much higher than the average 8.7% growth increase other countries had in the same time.[31] Nami Island and the *Dae Jang Geum* Theme Park were particularly popular despite their considerable distance from the Seoul capital as they were the filming locations for *Winter Sonata* and *Dae Jang Geum* respectively, showing how many tourists engaged in "pilgrimage tourism" as they entered the country.[32]

In addition to its popularity across Asia, Korean cultural content slowly began to grow outside of this part of the world, beginning with the popular Korean and Asian immigrant communities. In America specifically, Korean dramas were initially only popular with first and second generation Asian Americans during the beginnings of *Hallyu*,[33] acting as a tool that brought the greater Korean and Asian bodies closer together.[34] Though most would watch Korean dramas through their own individual methods, some would watch Korean dramas that

[30] Sangkyun Kim, et al. "Small Screen, Big Tourism: The Role of Popular Korean Television Dramas in South Korean Tourism," in *Tourism Geographies*, vol. 11 (Routledge, 2009), pp. 317.
[31] *Ibid.*, pp. 323.
[32] *Ibid.*, pp. 324.
[33] Lisa M. Longenecker and Jooyoun Lee. "The Korean Wave in America: Assessing the Status of K-Pop and K-Drama between Global and Local," in *Situations: Neoliberalism and Its Discontents*, vol. 11 (2018), pp. 116.
[34] *Ibid.*, pp. 120.

aired on national broadcasts. Korean dramas entered the American market fairly late compared to other foreign TV shows such as British dramas or telenovelas, so they gained little attention from non-Asian populations.[35]

Though *Hallyu* began with the export of Korean dramas, *Hallyu* 2.0 is attributed to Korean music (K-Pop), *Hallyu* 3.0 to Korean culture, and *Hallyu* 4.0 to Korean fashion and style as seen in social media.[36] Throughout these different waves of *Hallyu*, Korean dramas decreased in popularity and also in number of exports. They were instead replaced by different forms of Korean cultural content, including Korean variety shows, which provided viewers with little confusion compared to the somewhat complex storylines in Korean dramas.[37] Because there was now an international audience in addition to the local audience, Korean drama producers considered Korean TV dramas as "cultural products with market value" and therefore began to evaluate the international marketing, investment, and co-production when creating new dramas.[38] Though the popularity of Korean dramas showed a general decrease compared to its beginnings, there have been several dramas were released in the 2010's that reignited the "K-Drama fever" both in Korea and abroad, such as *Secret Garden* (2010), *My Love from the Star* (2013), *Descendants of the Sun* (2016), *Guardian: The Lonely and Great God* (2016), and others.

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[35] *Ibid.*, pp. 83.
[36] Heeju Chae, et al. "The Effect of Attributes of Korean Trendy Drama on Consumer Attitude, National Image, and Consumer Acceptance Intention for Sustainable Hallyu Culture," in *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing*, vol. 11 (Routledge, 2019), pp. 20.
[37] Jin, Dal Yong. "Transnational Television Programs," in *New Korean Wave: Transnational Cultural Power in the Age of Social Media* (University of Illinois Press, 2016), pp. 50.
[38] Dong-Hoo Lee, "From the Margins to the Middle Kingdom: Korean TV Drama's Role in Linking Local and Transnational Production," in *TV Drama in China*, edited by Ying Zhu et al. (Hong Kong University Press, 2008), pp. 194.

The Spread of Korean Dramas Through Online Streaming

In more recent years, however, one of the defining factors of Korean dramas' international popularity is online streaming. Online streaming has served as a way of not only diversifying TV and film content, but also as a method of dispersing Korean cultural content. In the earlier days of *Hallyu*, Korean dramas were predominantly consumed by international audiences through YouTube and illegal streaming sites, much of which was run by fans.[39] This is especially true in English-speaking countries, like America, where it is more difficult to legally watch Korean content due to copyright restrictions as opposed to Asian countries, where Korean dramas are viewable through official TV broadcasting stations.[40]

These initial online streaming sites (Viki, DramaFever, mysoju.tv, DramaCrazy.net, Crunchyroll, etc.) were highly dependent on fans to voluntarily find drama episodes and write subtitles for them in a variety of languages so that other viewers all over the world could watch and enjoy these dramas.[41] These websites would also have comment sections for the dramas and each of the episodes so the fans could discuss and review what they watched, therefore creating an online Korean drama fan community. As more and more fans all over the world gathered on these online communities to watch and talk about their favorite Korean TV dramas (as well as other Asian TV shows on these platforms), some fan-based websites like DramaFever and Viki grew to become subsidies of U.S. media corporations.[42] Though these sites were still dependent

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[39] Hyejung Ju, "Korean TV Drama Viewership on Netflix: Transcultural Affection, Romance, and Identities," in *Transnational Korean Television: Cultural Storytelling and Digital Audiences (Transnational Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies)*, vol. 13 (London: Lexington Books, 2019), pp. 34.
[40] Hyejung Ju, "The Power of Streaming TV: Netflix, DramaFever, and American Viewers," in *Transnational Korean Television: Cultural Storytelling and Digital Audiences (Transnational Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies)*, (London: Lexington Books, 2019), pp. 84.
[41] *Ibid.*, pp. 33.
[42] *Ibid.*, pp.85.

on fans and their voluntary contributions for subtitles and more, they established licensing deals with Korean production companies to officially stream Korean dramas for fans abroad.

Online streaming has been the main method of consumption in countries outside of Korea, and streaming platforms are growing to even include exclusive content, causing viewers across the world to favor watching Korean dramas via streaming rather than television broadcast.[43] There are several reasons behind this preference; two format-related causes are the lack of advertisements interrupting the broadcast and the ability for viewers to binge-watch the shows instead of waiting weekly to watch the episodes. Though there are some that still watch dramas as they are broadcasted (especially since some streaming providers release episodes in accordance with the national television broadcasts), there are also other viewers that wait until the drama or TV show is over so they can binge-watch the entire series without having to wait in between.

Of the many streaming platforms, DramaFever was the first legitimate online streaming service to provide Korean TV shows. Launched in August 2009, it was the first provider to successfully make licensing deals with all three major Korean broadcasting companies: KBS, MBC, and SBS. As a result, DramaFever garnered 200,000 users a month after its launch, which then climbed to 4 million by April of 2013.[44] They made several partnerships throughout the years, including a collaboration with the U.S. streaming platform Hulu to supply the site with access to their licensed Korean dramas. DramaFever even produced and released its first original series *Heirs* (2013) with Hwa & Dam Pictures (a well-known production company in Korea), which became a hit in both Korea and abroad.[45] In 2016, WarnerBros bought DramaFever, but

[43] *Ibid.*, pp. 85.
[44] *Ibid.*, pp. 91.
[45] *Ibid.*, pp. 92.

shut the platform down in 2018 despite being one of the most sought out streaming services for Korean dramas and other Asian TV content.

While other online fan-run pages and communities are still active and have expanded to include a variety of new websites (allkpop.com, DramaBeans, soompi.com, etc.), many have been replaced by subscription-based video-on-demand streaming platforms such as Amazon Prime, Hulu, Disney+, Netflix, and more. Among these, Netflix has been especially successful in spreading Korean dramas to a wider audience. After its first 2007 launch in the U.S. as a streaming platform, Netflix began to offer Korean TV shows in 2012.[46] Although it was an American media platform, it has allowed audiences to watch and enjoy Korean dramas without the barrier of geography or language. According to Netflix's chief streaming and partnerships officer, the provider enjoys working directly with Korean broadcasting companies and producers,[47] which is most likely the reason why several production companies in Korea have held hands with Netflix to produce dramas that will be or are only available on Netflix. The first Korean drama production Netflix released was *Love Alarm* (2019), which was based on a Korean webtoon. Right after, followed *Kingdom* (2019), the first original Korean drama that was offered only on Netflix. In addition to these Netflix Originals, many Korean dramas that air on Korean TV are also uploaded onto Netflix with new episodes every week, allowing international viewers to watch along with the Korean audience.

The most successful example of the collaboration between Netflix and Korean dramas is the worldwide hit, *Squid Game* (2021). Directed by Hwang Dong-Hyuk and produced by Netflix, the Korean TV show was released as a Netflix original on Sept. 17 and remained at number one across the world for the next 47 days, breaking the previous record of 46 days held by *Queen's*

[46] *Ibid.*, pp. 87
[47] *Ibid.*, pp. 33.

Gambit (2020).[48] Within the first 28 days of its release, the show garnered 1.65 billion views, which was 2.6 times the 625 million hours the first season of *Bridgerton* (2021) gained in the same amount of time, making *Squid Game* the most viewed Netflix show of all time.[49] The show was also nominated for several awards, including ones at the Gotham Awards, the U.S. Screen Actors Guild Awards, the Critics Choice Awards, the Golden Globes, and more, further emphasizing its impact and the international recognition it was receiving.[50] Aside from these awards and nominations, the release of *Squid Game* also resulted in several parodies as well as online challenges in which fans would follow the games played in the show. The costumes worn in the show also became a very popular choice for the following Halloween as people dressed up as all different types of characters. These are all indications of the ways in which *Squid Game* not only entered the higher culture but also the daily culture that people engage in every day, making it the first Korean show to do so on such a large scale.

Image of Korea

Through the Korean Wave and its different cultural components, the world's view of Korea has changed immensely. Previously, different countries had different images of South Korea based on the history of their relationship with the country. For example, countries that were further developed technologically or industrially, like America, thought Korea was still the war-torn country it was after the Korean War (June 25, 1950-July 27, 1952) until the 1988 Seoul Olympics showed the world the economic and social progression the country had made. Though

[48] Bo-ram Kim, "'Squid Game' Becomes Netflix's Top Ranking Show for Record 47 Days." (Seoul: *Yonhap News Agency*, 2021).
[49] Todd Spangler, "'Squid Game' Is Decisively Netflix No. 1 Show of All Time With 1.65 Billion Hours Streamed in First Four Weeks, Company Says," (*Variety*, 2021).
[50] Of the nominations, *Squid Game* won Best Long-Form Series at the Gotham Awards and actor Oh Yeong-su won Best Performance by a Supporting Actor in a Series, Limited Series, or Television Movie, making him the first Korean to win a Golden Globe award.

the 1988 Olympics were what first indicated that Korea might be a "modern" country, it was *Hallyu* that distinguished Korea from other Asian countries and gave people a look into the cultural richness the country held.

Korean dramas particularly acted as a medium through which outsiders could experience Korean culture without actually visiting the country. In the previously mentioned online-based discussion forums for fans, a popular topic of conversation is the level of accuracy Korean dramas have in portraying reality. In researcher Grace MyHyun Kim's study on the opinions Americans have about Korea based on what they see in Korean dramas, her analysis of online discussions and the interviews she records with fans show that many see Korean dramas as somewhat reflective of Korean society.[51] As a result, many fans used Korean dramas as a way of learning about Korean culture (food, cultural norms, history, language. etc.) in addition to fan sites, where they can gain more information about Korea through discussion with other fans.[52]

One important element of Korean dramas that the international fans recognized was the "family-oriented culture" Korea has.[53] In a separate study, however, fans described this as an aspect they could not emotionally relate to. Despite this inability to personally to some of these family-centric ideas Grace MyHyun Kim's research proved that some fans try to embrace certain values or morals that are exhibited in the Korean dramas they watch, including familial ones. For example, many fans in this study also noted familism as one of the three constructs that make up Korean dramas in addition to affection and affinity.[54] The results of this study not only indicates that viewers saw how important Korea considers family to be, but also that some even looked at

[51] Grace MyHyun Kim, "'Do They Really Do That in Korea?': Multicultural Learning through Hallyu Media," in *Learning, Media and Technology*, vol. 44 (Taylor & Francis, 2019), pp. 484.
[52] *Ibid.*, pp. 374.
[53] Heeju Chae, et al. "The Effect of Attributes of Korean Trendy Drama on Consumer Attitude, National Image, and Consumer Acceptance Intention for Sustainable Hallyu Culture," in *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing*, vol. 11 (Routledge, 2019), pp. 31.
[54] *Ibid*..

certain practices positively, including "respecting obligations toward elders and family relations."[55] At the same time, however, there are a few Korean cultural norms that fans reject, such as lookism,[56] showing how Korean dramas introduce new cultural ideas to viewers while also strengthening some of the values they already have.

Defining elements of Korean dramas

Korean primetime television dramas are formatted as miniseries or TV programs comprising 16 to 24 episodes and run for 50 to 70 minutes.[57] This is very different from American or other TV programs, which are usually multi-seasonal and run for around 40 minutes. Because TV shows from these countries can run for years, the speed at which the storyline progresses and characters develop might be much slower compared to that of Korean dramas, therefore affecting the audience's rate of engagement. As a result, it is likely that audiences will quickly become engaged to the story and attached to the characters in Korean dramas, while those that watch seasonal TV shows will do so at a slower rate as they have a much longer period to establish that relationship with the show and its characters.

There are also another form of Korean dramas called "home dramas" or "family dramas," which are either broadcasted in prime-time morning or evening slots, three times a week, mainly targeting older women.[58] These dramas can air for over a year with an average of 50 episodes and are most often identified as Korean soap operas about extended families, secret births, and fights for inheritance and power. Though these TV shows also fit under the category of Korean

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[55] Hyunji Lee, "A 'Real' Fantasy: Hybridity, Korean Drama, and Pop Cosmopolitans," in *Media, Culture & Society*, vol. 40 (2017), pp. 374.
[56] *Ibid*., pp. 376.
[57] Jin, Dal Yong. "Transnational Television Programs," in *New Korean Wave: Transnational Cultural Power in the Age of Social Media* (University of Illinois Press, 2016), pp. 46.
[58] Myungkoo Kang and Sooah Kim, "Are Our Families Still Confucian? Representations of Family in East Asian Television Dramas," un *International Journal of Cultural Studies* (Sage Publications, 2011), pp. 309.

dramas, I will not be focusing on these shows because of the stark differences in format and composition.

Korean dramas are stereotypically heavily reliant on romance, which is also one of the defining characteristics that attract viewers. The type of romance that is portrayed, however, is very divergent from the passionate, sexually-driven romance that can be seen in Anglophone stories. Korean drama romance is viewed as more innocent, with an emphasis on the genuine love the characters grow to have for one another, instead of "blatant sexual chemistries, gestures, violence, or immoral behaviors" that many associate with shows from countries that generally have more liberal and accepting views on such depictions.[59] This pure and sincere love that is illustrated in these dramas is often regarded as unrealistic because the real world is much more complex and difficult than what is shown. These idealistic depictions of love, however, also act as features that attract viewers and take them away from their strenuous everyday lives to transport them to a romantic fantasy of their imagination. While it is true that most Korean dramas include the development of some sort of romantic relationship, this cannot be generalized to apply to all Korean dramas, especially crime, legal, or action dramas that remove these aspects to emphasize their more serious themes based on justice, truth, and more.

Reasons for the Popularity of Korean Dramas

Some of the attributes of miniseries Korean dramas that distinguish them from TV dramas of other countries are the high quality despite the low cost, the good story-telling, and the beauty of the actors and the aesthetics. However, the reasons behind their popularity can be attributed to different reasons based on the audience that is watching them. Cultural proximity is

[59] Hyejung Ju, "Korean TV Drama Narratives: Are Korean Dramas a Transcultural Story?," in *Transnational Korean Television: Cultural Storytelling and Digital Audiences (Transnational Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies)*, (London: Lexington Books, 2019), pp. 30.

the idea that audiences favor national or regional programs instead of imported ones and is the most common answer to the question about the popularity of Korean dramas in Asia.[60] It is easier for audiences to view and accept any sort of content that reflects values they can relate to rather than media that draws out stories they cannot make internal connections with, an idea that could also arguably be applied to anywhere else around the world. This is simply due to the fact that many people prefer what they are comfortable with, whether that be in the morals that are highlighted or even just the way the characters look. As a result of this, it is also common for Asian immigrants outside of Asian countries to watch TV shows from their origin country, such as Korean dramas, seeking out characters and culture they can relate to and empathize with.

Unlike those in Asian countries, audiences outside of Asia find completely different aspects of Korean dramas to be appealing. One feature is the unique structure that Korean dramas have in that they normally only run for one season. With the lack of commercial breaks and the smaller number of episodes (compared to that of American multi-seasonal TV shows), Korean dramas make it easier for viewers to binge-watch them, a practice that has gained popularity with the rise of online streaming, which also happens to be the main method in which Korean dramas are accessed in non-Asian countries.

An additional feature that non-Asian audiences find attractive is the fantastical and romantic element in Korean dramas that helps them feel as if they are being taken away from their reality into another ideological world, filled with "innocence, simplicity, and morality."[61] As mentioned before, the depiction of romance and love in Korean dramas is more innocent than that of Anglophone TV shows. This can be seen through the way the male characters are

[60] Sangkyun Kim, et al., "Small Screen, Big Tourism: The Role of Popular Korean Television Dramas in South Korean Tourism," in *Tourism Geographies*, vol. 11 (Routledge, 2009), pp. 317.
[61] Hyunji Lee, "A 'Real' Fantasy: Hybridity, Korean Drama, and Pop Cosmopolitans," in *Media, Culture & Society*, vol. 40 (2017), pp. 372.

presented as "sensitive, caring, and selfless" rather than "physically strong and confident."[62] Non-Asian viewers have also expressed their appreciation for the "safer, more conservative, and relationship-based" storylines that are different from the sexuality- and violence-filled Anglophone TV shows,[63] showing that this is a characteristic liked by audiences all over the world.

Chapter Two: Defining Family in Korea

Korea is stereotypically viewed as a very family-centric country, and though that is true to a certain extent, it is not always in the way people think it to be. Therefore, the purpose of this second chapter is to identify the cultural and social value family holds in Korea and the different ways this is established in several components of "family," including marriage, childbirth, gender roles, intergenerational ties, and divorce. Within these subsections, I will be examining the current situation of these different aspects of family, the ways they have changed across time, and people's attitudes towards them. Family most definitely cannot be defined within these few topics, but my explanation and discussion of these chosen topics will aid in better understanding my textual analysis in the following chapter.

Purpose and Value of Family

Familism is the belief that the family as a group is of higher importance than its individual members, causing the members to take actions that will not only sustain the family,

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[62] Hyejung Ju, "Korean TV Drama Viewership on Netflix: Transcultural Affection, Romance, and Identities," in *Transnational Korean Television: Cultural Storytelling and Digital Audiences (Transnational Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies)*, vol. 13 (London: Lexington Books, 2019), pp. 43.

[63] Hyunji Lee, "A 'Real' Fantasy: Hybridity, Korean Drama, and Pop Cosmopolitans," in *Media, Culture & Society*, vol. 40 (2017), pp. 370.

but also help it succeed.[64] Korean familism, however, is specifically rooted in ideas of Confucianism, but has largely grown and changed out of these origins as a result of the rapid economic and social development that has occurred in the country over the past few centuries. It is important to understand (for better comprehension of the following chapter) that because of these roots, Korean family-centrism places a great amount of importance on self-sacrifice, hierarchy, and filial piety.

Before someone is an individual, they are a member of a group, which in this case, is the family. Because of this idea, individuals are expected to sacrifice their personal desires and satisfactions for the success of the family. Hierarchy is also a very important element of Korean families, anda age and gender are two factors that heavily define the order within this structure. As a result of this emphasis on vertical relationships, individuals are also expected to treat the elders of the family, especially male elders, with the utmost respect. When an individual becomes an adult, they are expected to fulfill their filial duties and pay back what they received from their parents during their time of dependency by taking care of them in their old age and providing for them, just as their parents did for them. These ideas of self-sacrifice, hierarchy, and filial piety are highly dependent on one another and interact with other social aspects special to Korea to create a very specific type of family-centrism. Though these ideas are not the entirety of Korean familism, they are some of the most essential values that are still held today and therefore play a very important role in each of the different aspects of family that I will be discussing in this study.

[64] Gyesook Yoo, "Changing Views on Family Diversity in Urban Korea," in *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, (University of Toronto Press Journals, 2006), pp. 60.

Marriage

Marriage is one of the main indications of the beginning stages in creating a new family. Though this idea has been changing in more recent years, this generally remains true in Korea. The meaning and function of marriage, however, have experienced significant changes with recent social and economic advancement of South Korea. Marriage was once considered an institution that was simply used to legitimize and carry out collectivist goals of "reproduction and kin creation."[65] As a result, it became very common for arranged marriages (*jeongmae gyeolhon*) to occur. These arranged marriages would not just be between the individuals that are marrying, but would be between the two families that are coming together to continue the family line. This is why marriage is often called a "family event" in Korea.[66]

Over the years, however, marriage has changed to become less about the institution and more about the individual. While arranged marriages do still exist and are still practiced, it is definitely not as common as it once used to be. Instead, many people are now engaging in "love marriages" (*yeonae gyeolhon*) or even "half love/half arranged" (*jeongmae ban yeonae ban*) marriages in which two people are set up by a professional matchmaker and date for some time until they get married.[67] In both of these cases, however, the idea of intimacy and emotional fulfillment prevails over the collectivist goals that once dictated the purpose of marriage.

While arranged marriages have largely become unpopular in Korea's current society, the idea that marriage is between families still remains, leading family members to become heavily involved. In Bo-Hwa Kim, et al.'s (2016) study on the relationships marriage, independence, and

[65] Wen-Shan Yang, and Pei-Chih Yen, "A Comparative Study of Marital Dissolution in East Asian Societies: Gender Attitudes and Social Expectations towards Marriage in Taiwan, Korea and Japan," in *Asian Journal of Social Science*, vol. 39 (Brill Publishers, 2011), pp. 751.
[66] Bo-Hwa Kim, et al., "Marriage, Independence and Adulthood among Unmarried Women in South Korea," in *Asian Journal of Social Science*, vol. 44 (*Brill*, 2016), pp. 353.
[67] Bonnie Tilland, "Dreaming, Making, and Breaking Family and Kinship in Contemporary South Korea," in *Association for Asian Studies* (2020), pp. 1.

adulthood have with one another for Korean women, they found that parental influence in marriage is more common and accepted for young women, especially those with a higher economic status.[68] Some specific examples of "involvement" include the parents directly telling their daughter what they consider to be their ideal son-in-law, making contributions to help cover fees for the wedding, giving financial support after marriage, and more.[69] Though many children of wealthier backgrounds in non-Asian countries also experience more parental involvement in selecting marriage partners, many Korean parents become involved with their children's marriages because they believe they have to "ensure the best return on their investment," or because they are concerned about saving face.[70] It seems as though parental involvement has been decreasing though, indicating that a change is occurring in the relationships between Korean parents and children.

Another marriage-related aspect that is changing in Korea is the opinions people have about marriage. In more recent years, Korean people have been seeing marriage less as a necessity and more as an option. It was reported that 60.9% of Korean youths don't consider marriage to be necessary, which is an 11.9% increase from when the same survey was conducted in 2017.[71] In the same survey, 59.7% of parents or guardians said they thought marriage was necessary, showing that this opinion varies among the generations as older generations tend to have more traditional opinions about marriage.[72] Some reasons for the younger generation's

[68] *Ibid.*, pp. 355.
[69] *Ibid*., pp. 353-354.
[70] Yean-Ju Lee, "The Extended Family: Disharmony," in *Divorce in South Korea: Doing Gender and the Dynamics of Relationship Breakdown* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2020), pp. 354.
[71] Bo-ram Kim.,"Six out of 10 Korean Youths Think Marriage Unnecessary," (*Yonhap News Agency*, 2021).
[72] *Ibid*..

change in opinion include limited economic mobility, exposure to values that promote singlehood or the delaying of marriage, and fears about parenthood among many.[73]

These changes in opinion have also come hand in hand with an overall decrease in the Korean marriage rates. According to Statistics Korea, there was a 10.7% decrease in marriages from 2019 to 2020, going from 240,000 to 214,000 marriages, while the number of marriages decreased across all age groups for both men and women.[74] The statistics also showed that the mean age at first marriage for both men and women have increased: in 2000, the average age men had their first marriage was 29.3, which grew to 33.2 in 2020, and the average age women first got married increased from 26.5 to 30.8 years.[75] Though it may seem difficult to directly connect the changing opinions in marriage to the decreasing marriage rates, research has shown that most trends of decline can be accounted for by a decrease in "forces of attraction."[76] An additional reason for the decreased marriage rates includes marriage market mismatches; James M. Raymo and Hyunjoon Park's study supported previous research that said marriage market mismatches contributed to lower marriage rates in gender-inegalitarian societies.[77]

But when also examining the effect a country's economic state has on its people, it is clear that Korea's economic growth in the past few decades has also largely impacted the marriage rates and people's opinions on marriage. Compared to emerging adults in China and Vietnam ("developing countries"), emerging adults in Korea (a "developed country" with a

[73] Yoonjoo Lee, "Cohort Differences in Changing Attitudes toward Marriage in South Korea, 1998–2014: An Age-Period-Cohort-Detrended Model," in *Asian Population Studies*, vol. 15 (Routledge, 2019), pp. 269.
[74] "Marriage and Divorce," Statistics Korea, (2021).
[75] *Ibid*..
[76] James M. Raymo and Hyunjoon Park, "Marriage Decline in Korea: Changing Composition of the Domestic Marriage Market and Growth in International Marriage," in *Demography*, vol. 57 (2020), pp. 18.
[77] *Ibid*., pp. 16.

higher GDP) said they would expect themselves to marry at a later age.[78] This is because in order to succeed in life, many Korean millennials in their 20's feel as if they have to give up on dating, marriage, and childbirth in order to have a successful career, leading them to be called the "Sampo Generation."[79] While this is a result of the fast-paced and highly competitive environment that currently exists in Korea, there are other factors that are outcomes of the modernization and development that has been occurring in Korea. For example, the costs for marriage (including the wedding and housing) have increased significantly over the last few years, discouraging people from getting married at a young age or from getting married at all.

Childbirth

In addition to the decrease in South Korean marriage rates, Korea's fertility rates have also been on a consistent decline. In 2020, it was confirmed to have reached an all-time low of 0.92 children, which is not only much less than the recommended number of 2.1 children per woman for a stable population, but also is the lowest of all the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries.[80] It was even reported that South Korea's total population fell for the first time last year, in 2021. In 2020, the total population peaked at 51.84 million people, which then dropped to 51.75 million in 2021 and is estimated to drop to 37.7 million in 2070.[81] This is unexpected as the prediction made in 2018 was that the population decline would begin in 2029. The COVID-19 pandemic most likely affected the decrease in

[78] Gyesook Yoo and Soomi Lee, "The Associations of National Context and Subjective Well-Being with Marriage Expectations Among Korean, Chinese, and Vietnamese Emerging Adults," in *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, vol. 28 (Springer Science+Business Media, 2019), pp. 2003.

[79] "Sampo Generation" (三抛世代) literally means "three giving-up generation" and references the younger generation that gives up these three things because of the current social pressures and economic problems they face.

[80] OECD (2021), Fertility rates (indicator).

[81] Soo-yeon Kim, "(LEAD) S. Korea's Total Population to Fall for First Time This Year: Agency," (Seoul: *Yonhap News Agency*, 2021).

population greatly as the number of deaths outpaced the number of births in 2020 and the number of foreigners entering the country decreased.

The fertility rate is also estimated to reach 0.7 in 2024 before returning to one in 2031, meaning that the number of births is predicted to remain low for the next few years as well.[82] Though the pandemic has a great effect on these numbers, there are several additional reasons for this decrease, one of which includes changes in people's opinions on the necessity of having children. In 2021, 60.3% of Korean youths aged 13-24 said they thought it was not necessary to have children after marriage.[83] In 2017, this number stood at 46.1%, showing that more and more people are considering childbirth as an option rather than a necessity in marriage.

Another reason why the fertility rates in Korea have been so low is because the marriage rate is very closely related to the fertility rate. While it may be more common for couples to have children out of marriage in some progressive countries, most couples in Korea only have children after they are married. This is evident in the OECD's share of births outside of marriage: among the OECD countries, Korea placed last at 2-3% in 2018 whereas the OECD average stood at 41%.[84] Even if a couple becomes pregnant before they are married, they will often get married as a result of the pregnancy. This is why it is important to note that the data for Korea refers to "ex-nuptial/out-of-wedlock" births, which means the parents are not registered as married to one another when the child is born.[85] Since the marriage rates in Korea are so low, the fertility rate is directly affected as a result.

But in more recent years, it has become very common for even newlywed couples to refrain from having children: in 2020, 44.5% of Korea's 1.18 million couples that were legally

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[82] *Ibid*..
[83] Soo-yeon Kim, "Half of Younger Koreans See No Need to Have Kids after Marriage: Report," (Seoul: *Yonhap News Agency*, 2021).
[84] "Share of Births Outside of Marriage" (2018), pp. 1.
[85] *Ibid*., pp. 1.

married in the five years up to Nov. 2020 did not have children, which is a 2% increase from the previous year. [86] In addition, the number of children born to newlyweds also fell from 0.7 to 0.68 in the same time span. This trend is because many couples look for economic stability before deciding to raise children. Though only 28.7% of 212,000 first-time, newlywed couples that got married in 2014 and stayed married through 2019 had their own homes, 83% of that percentage had at least one child, making the average 1.16 children.[87] It was also reported that newlyweds who have their own homes have 0.76 newborns while those without homes have 0.62 newborns.[88] However, due to the recent housing crisis in Korea, especially in Seoul, it has become much more difficult for couples to achieve the economic stability they feel they need before having children, also contributing to the low fertility rate.

In addition, many couples, especially women, feel pressure or fear about the responsibilities and sacrifices that come with parenthood. In Kim, et al.'s (2016) study, they described how the unmarried women that participated in their research related parenthood to sacrifice and responsibility, instead of considering it a "natural life course event to becoming an adult."[89] Aside from these feelings of uncertainty and burden and the effect of marriage rates, the declining fertility rates can also be credited to several other reasons, such as costs of education and the influence raising a child would have on the woman's career.

[86] Suk-min Oh, "Nearly Half of Newlyweds in S. Korea Had No Kids: Data," (*Yonhap News Agency*, 2021).
[87] Soo-yeon Kim, "Homeowning Newlyweds Have More Children than Couples without Homes: Data," (*Yonhap News Agency*, 2021).
[88] Suk-min Oh, "Nearly Half of Newlyweds in S. Korea Had No Kids: Data," (*Yonhap News Agency*, 2021).
[89] Bo-Hwa Kim, et al., "Marriage, Independence and Adulthood among Unmarried Women in South Korea," in *Asian Journal of Social Science*, vol. 44 (*Brill*, 2016), pp. 351.

Gender Roles

Korean gender roles is one ideology that has been attributed to Confucianism, which says that males and females have very distinct and separate roles they are expected to uphold within the home and outside of it, and the departure from those morals signified the destruction of the family unit. Though it is true that there are some Confucian influences, these gender roles have changed greatly to create their own identity: essentially, Korean males became the male breadwinner of the family while Korean women were the homemakers that took care of the home.[90] This is directly related to the idea that two separate spheres of "inside" and "outside" exist in which the "inside" sphere includes a woman's duties with housework and childcare while the "outside" sphere involves non-domestic work such as socialization and politics, which is reserved to the male.[91] As these two "spheres" were considered disconnected and separate from one another, the roles that were assigned to men and women were also independent of each other. There was also a hierarchy that exists not only within the entire family, but also between the husband and the wife as the husband is considered the patriarch of the home and the wife is expected to be subservient to their husband. Therefore, it was normal for husbands to become involved in the "inside" sphere and personally make decisions because the wives were expected to follow their husbands, the patriarch and the head of the family unit.

Though there are still many families that follow these "traditions" in one way or another, there is a general trend that is slowly shifting away from these ideas and moving towards a more equal and egalitarian society that considers males and females to be equals. However, with the coexistence of both traditional and new ideologies, there is naturally a collision that creates

[90] Wen-Shan Yang, and Pei-Chih Yen. "A Comparative Study of Marital Dissolution in East Asian Societies: Gender Attitudes and Social Expectations towards Marriage in Taiwan, Korea and Japan." In *Asian Journal of Social Science* (2011), pp. 752.
[91] Sirin Sung, "Gender, Work and Care in Policy and Practice: Working Mothers' Experience of Intergenerational Exchange of Care in South Korea," in *Critical Social Policy*, vol. 38 (Sage Publications, 2017), pp. 593.

conflict and therefore struggles both in and out of the home. More specifically, males face an expectation to work and provide for their family due to the previously mentioned belief that males should be the sole breadwinners. In accordance with these traditional ideas, the provider roles of males also includes controlling their spouse and all of the family business.[92] While this is not supposed to extend to domestic work and childcare (as that is considered to be exclusively for the women), the extension of a male's control in the home can cause them to meddle in areas that are normally considered the woman's responsibilities.

In the younger generation, there are more husbands that are willing to lend a hand in raising children and doing housework. However, there are still several obstacles within general Korean society that prevent males from actively doing so. For example, Korean work culture acknowledges one's devotion to their company or job only through long, extensive hours of work.[93] They are also expected to continue their work outside of the normal hours (40-60 hours/week), whether that be through overtime, meeting with clients over dinner, or attending get-togethers with their coworkers.[94] If males failed to meet these additional expectations, it could possibly affect their future chances at promotions, therefore later affecting their income and as a result their role as the "provider" of the family. It is also natural that the more hours one works, they become more tired and fatigued, whether that be physically, mentally, or emotionally, becoming another reason behind the husbands' inability to share responsibilities in the home with their wives.[95]

Though there have been some efforts to change the general Korean work culture and make it "less traditional" and "more egalitarian" in gender ideology and workplace social

[92] Yean-Ju Lee, "Men's Provider Anxiety," in *Divorce in South Korea: Doing Gender and the Dynamics of Relationship Breakdown* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2020), pp. 42.
[93] Sue H. Moon and Jongtae Shin, "The Return of Superman? Individual and Organizational Predictors of Men's Housework in South Korea," in *Journal of Family Issues*, vol. 39 (Sage Publications, 2018), pp. 188.
[94] *Ibid.*, pp. 188-189.
[95] *Ibid.*, pp. 187.

support. A few examples are promotions for men to participate in child-rearing activities by the government, paid parental leave, and increased normality for women to also work and provide another source of income.[96] However, it is difficult to say that these changes will allow men to help their wives with their responsibilities in the home unless there are direct changes with the culture of "work devotion," the long hours people are expected to work, or even the role that men are expected to play in raising children.[97]

Women, on the other hand, face very different expectations in responsibilities from their male counterparts. Women were subjected to follow the three obediences, which say that a woman should "follow her father in childhood, her husband in maturity, and her son in old age."[98] In accordance with this belief is *hyeonmoyangcheo* (현모양처), which literally means "wise mother, good wife" and emphasizes the familial roles women were meant to play in their homes and therefore in society. Both of these ideas are based on the belief that a woman is meant to devote herself and her life to serving her family, especially her husband, who she is to obey unconditionally. Women were therefore also taught not to voice their opinions against their husbands, creating the phrase "*Amtalgi ulmyeon jibani manghanda*" (암탉이 울면 집안이 망한다), meaning "Homes perish when the hen crows."[99] There also exists the proverb that says, "*beongeori samnyeon, gwimeogeori samnyeon, jangnim samnyeon*" (벙어리 삼년, 귀머거리 삼년, 장님 삼년) or "Be mute for three years, be deaf for three years, and be blind for three years," which is another phrase that has been used to emphasize the obedience and submission a wife was called to have for her husband.[100]

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[96] *Ibid.*, pp. 185.
[97] *Ibid.*, pp. 181.
[98] Laurel Kendall, "Marriages and Families in East Asia: Something Old, Something New," in *Education About Asia*, vol. 13 (Association for Asian Studies, 2008), pp. 6.
[99] Insook Han Park and Lee-Jay Cho, "Confucianism and the Korean Family," in *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, vol. 26 (1995), pp. 124.
[100] Yean-Ju Lee, "The Extended Family: Disharmony," in *Divorce in South Korea: Doing Gender and the Dynamics of Relationship Breakdown* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2020), pp. 350.

These ideas about women's gender roles have been less and less popular as Korea experienced an extensive amount of economic advancement and social change in the last few decades. Though women are still generally expected to marry and have children (a belief that strongly remains in the older generation), young women in their 20's and 30's are making more individualistic decisions despite these pressures, choosing not to have children or even choosing not to marry at all. This commitment can also be attributed to the fact that it is now more common for women to achieve a higher-level education and devote themselves to their work for several years rather than trying to begin a family at a young age.

In addition to single women pushing off marriage and choosing their individual or professional life instead, it has been increasingly common for married women to both work and raise children. Despite the fact that childrearing is a difficult responsibility on its own, many women still choose to pursue professional success as well because of economic necessity or because of the liberalizing nature that can be found in work. Though this is most effectively experienced when women are unmarried or don't have children, there are still some women that continue to work for this experience.[101] However, there are still several barriers that prevent women from being able to effectively balance home and work as the wife is still expected to take care of the children in addition to their work (while males are not) or they are eventually faced with the decision of having to quit their job altogether.

While the woman's role has expanded to be more flexible and inclusive of their individual and domestic life, the role of men is still reserved to "breadwinner," which means they are not expected to help their wives in taking care of the children and aiding in domestic work even though women are expected to work *and* continue their domestic duties. As a result, women

[101] Yoonjoo Lee, "Transitions in Adulthood and Women's Attitudes toward The Gender Division of Labor in South Korea," in *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, vol. 28 (Springer Science+Business Media, 2019), pp. 1817.

end up having to take care of around 70% of the housework.[102] Granted, this varies among families and depends on a couple's personal ideas about gender roles, but it causes a strain on many wives and mothers as they may return home from a long day of work and have to take on their responsibilities within the home alone. And because Korean work culture emphasizes long and hard work hours, it becomes more and more difficult for married women to balance their roles in and out of the home, which may also eventually lead to decisions about quitting work to devote themselves to their family and their domestic position.

The Korean work environment is not one that supports women and their growth as discrimination in hiring, salary, and promotion is still a problem that has yet to be properly addressed. This is largely because in male-dominated workplaces, leaving is viewed as a sign of "family formation" for women,[103] which then causes others to see women as liabilities that will eventually quit once they are married or vacate their position for pregnancy leave. Though there definitely is a social practice of women quitting work once they are married or become pregnant, the discrimination they face within the workplace greatly contributes to their decision as well. As a result of this pressure, 2021 data from Statistics Korea shows that one in six Korean women quit their jobs after marriage. The most popular reason was childrearing (43.2%), which was then followed by getting married (27.4%) and pregnancy and childbirth (22.1%).[104] In terms of age, women between the ages of 30-39 composed 45.2% of the total of 1.45 million women that stopped working after marriage while women between 40-49 followed closely behind at 40%.[105]

One important result of women's growing participation in the labor force is their increased position in the family and therefore the effect it has on gender roles. Not only are the

[102] Robert Rudolf, "Adaptation under Traditional Gender Roles: Testing the Baseline Hypothesis in South Korea," in *Employment, Well-Being and Gender: Dynamics and Interactions in Emerging Asia* (Peter Lang AG, 2012), pp. 61.
[103] Li Ma, Gunnar Andersson, and Gerda Neyer. "New patterns in first marriage formation in South Korea." European Population Conference 2014 in Budapest, Hungary, Stockholm University (Budapest: 2014), pp. 5.
[104] Soo-yeon Kim, "1 in 6 S. Korean Women Quit Their Jobs after Marriage," (*Yonhap News Agency*, 2021).
[105] *Ibid.*.

traditional ideas about "inner" and "outer" spheres collapsing, but it is becoming more common for women to voice their opinions and take initiative in decision-making, especially if they are able to give economic resources to their family as the decision making power within a family is largely determined by the "amount of structural resources he or she contributes to the marriage."[106] Though many women are still mostly responsible for the domestic duties in addition to their work as was previously mentioned, it is true that gender roles for men and women within the family are slowly but surely changing.

Intergenerational Ties

The maintenance of intergenerational ties is an essential component of Korean familism. Children are expected to care for their parents and other elderly people in their society as "they are the ones who suffered to raise a new generation and who contributed to their family and society in past years" and therefore should be served by the ones they raised.[107] This can be contrasted with ideologies in non-Asian countries, which say that elderly care is the responsibility of the government and society, not of individuals.[108] But because Korean society is heavily based on the ideas of filial piety and respect for elders, the preservation of intergenerational ties acts as one of the cornerstones of family-centrism.

Filial piety is a significant element of Korean familism and can be defined as "the love and respect" children have towards their parents.[109] Though it may outwardly just seem like a

[106] Wen-Shan Yang, and Pei-Chih Yen, "A Comparative Study of Marital Dissolution in East Asian Societies: Gender Attitudes and Social Expectations towards Marriage in Taiwan, Korea and Japan," in *Asian Journal of Social Science*, vol. 39 (Brill Publishers, 2011), pp. 755.
[107] Sung, Kyu-taik, "A New Look at Filial Piety: Ideals and Practices of Family-Centered Parent Care in Korea," in *The Gerontologist* (Oxford Journals, 1990), pp. 610.
[108] Yan Zi and Song Chengcheng, "Gender Role Attitudes and Values toward Caring for Older Adults in Contemporary China, Japan, and South Korea: Evidence from a Cross-Sectional Survey," in *Journal of Asian Sociology* (Institute for Social Development and Policy Research (ISDPR), 2021), pp. 434.
[109] Sung, Kyu-taik, "A New Look at Filial Piety: Ideals and Practices of Family-Centered Parent Care in Korea," in *The Gerontologist* (Oxford Journals, 1990), pp. 611.

type of service, true filial piety is based on the deep connection between the parent and child infused with warmth and sincerity. The reason behind this ideology is because an important aspect of Korean culture is the general harmony among all members of society, not just within the family, which is why people are called to have respect for all elderly people in addition to those that are family members.[110] Filial piety for one's family members or parents can be characterized by things that are both tangible and intangible. Traditionally, a child could express this by "showing respect for parents; making physical and financial sacrifices for parents; fulfilling responsibility to parents; repayment of debts to parents; devotion to parent care; sympathy and affection for parents; deep concern for the well-being for parents; making parents happy and comfortable; and carrying out difficult or unusual tasks for parents."[111] As can be seen through these examples, filial piety is heavily reliant on the idea of sacrifice, whether that be through one's time, energy, or even finances.

Though this is an idea that has been heavily instilled in the members of Korean society, individuals that actually practice this have several different reasons for doing so. In a 1990 study conducted by Kyu-taik Sung, an expert in elderly care, he found that the most popular reason for filial piety was respect for one's parents. This was followed by filial responsibility, the desire to maintain family harmony, filial self-sacrifice, and other reasons, such as the desire to repay one's parents, family continuity, filial sympathy, and more.[112] Though this study was conducted over 20 years ago, general Korean ideas about filial piety have not changed drastically, especially since many people still consider respect for one's parents and other elderly people to be important though the expression of it may not be in the same way or to the same extent.

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[110] *Ibid*..
[111] *Ibid*..
[112] *Ibid*., pp. 613.

Some more recent and specific examples of acts that children would do for their parents in the name of filial piety includes giving parents allowance, taking care of them when they are ill or old, or even something as simple as contacting them and visiting them frequently. Contact is most likely the most common method of expressing one's respect and love for their parents because of how simple it is. Though contacting parents is not special to Korea, the motive for it comes from a place of duty and responsibility. Another slight difference is that women are much more likely to contact their parents or in-laws than men are. Financial support is another popular method for children to practice their filial duties towards their parents, which is not as frequently carried out in countries outside of Asia. In 2012, the OECD reported that 41% of older people in Korea received cash from their children while only 9% was recorded for other countries,[113] which is an indication that financial support is something that may almost be expected from parents in Korea.

A condition that comes with these acts of filial piety as well as all other examples is that it is more common for these to be expressed towards the patrilineal line than the matrilineal line. Unlike family-centrism in other countries, Korean familism emphasizes the husband's parents more than the wife's parents, and therefore heavily focuses on conveying acts of filial piety to the male's side more than the female's side. So if applied to the examples above, both the husband and the wife would contact the husband's parents more frequently than they would the wife's parents. They might also send more money to the husband's parents than the wife's parents or they might send money to the husband's parents more frequently. The reasoning behind this focus is because the wife is often seen as an outsider that is taken in by the husband's family. But in more recent years, it is very common for the husband's parents to financially contribute more to their child's wedding than it is for the wife's parents (which used to be

[113] "OECD Family Database - OECD," *OECD* (2012)

switched), creating the above examples of filial piety to be ways of paying them back for their sacrifices.

Not everyone is able to fulfill these filial expectations to the fullest, however, as there are several constraints that now prevent or disallow children from doing so. One very simple reason is that parents are the least likely to be alive in Korea due to the effects of World War II and the Korean War as well as differences in timing of mortality decline and of marriage and childbearing among many.[114] Another reason that can get in the way of children physically visiting their parents and the frequency of it is the time and cost that goes into traveling. Though it has been very common for children to live with their parents even after marriage, this practice is becoming less and less popular since the early 21st century, making it more and more difficult for children to see their parents. This is especially so with the COVID-19 pandemic, which not only prevented travel, but also prevented people from visiting their family members in nursing homes.

There are some people that choose to live very close to their parents so that they can practice their filial duties in a more convenient manner. However, due to the rapid social and economic change that Korea has experienced in the last several decades and the shift the economy has made from an agrarian society to a manufacturing one, it is now much more likely that parents live in rural areas while their children live in cities. As Korea transitioned from a society that used to rely on the production of agriculture in rural areas to a country that is heavily over-populated in the cities (especially Seoul), many of those that once grew up in rural areas have moved and settled into urban ones. In a survey conducted by Ronald R. Rindfuss, et al., they found that about one-half of the surveyed couples had grown up in rural areas but were now

[114] Ronald R. Rindfuss, "Intergenerational Relations," in *Marriage, Work, and Family Life in Comparative Perspective: Japan, South Korea, and the United States*, edited by Larry L. Bumpass and Noriko O. Tsuya (University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), pp. 58.

living in urban areas, further proving it is for people of the younger generation to migrate to the cities.[115]

An additional aspect that prevents children from frequently visiting their parents in a similar vein as this reason is the aforementioned long work hours that are currently an expectation of Korean work culture. As companies now expect long hours of dedication from their employees, it has become much more difficult for people to take off work and visit their parents. This is especially the case if their parents live in a rural area while they are working and residing in a city or if both the husband and wife are employed. So instead of physically visiting, they might have to resort to frequent contacting and sending them money to fulfill their filial duties.

Though both the husband and wife are expected to take care of their parents, they have distinctly different roles that are reflective of their position within their own families: while the men are the providers that give financial support, women are the caregivers that aid with domestic work or personal care.[116] However, what is interesting is that these roles are not assigned to married sons and married daughters, but to married sons and their spouses, or the daughter in-laws of the home. The reasoning behind this is because the first sons are expected to take in their parents after marriage and live together in one home. As the heads of the household (after the elders) and the eldest child in the family, the first sons are entirely responsible for taking care of their parents and are considered the "chief agents of filial obligation."[117] As a result, their companions are also expected to share in that responsibility and partake in serving their in-laws. If for some reason, the parents choose not to live with their eldest son but instead

[115] *Ibid.*, pp. 60.
[116] Sung, Kyu-taik, "A New Look at Filial Piety: Ideals and Practices of Family-Centered Parent Care in Korea," in *The Gerontologist* (Oxford Journals, 1990), pp. 593.
[117] Larry L. Bumpass and Minja Kim Choe, "Attitudes Relating to Marriage and Family Life," in *Marriage, Work, and Family Life in Comparative Perspective: Japan, South Korea, and the United States* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), pp. 37.

another son and his family, then that son's wife will also be required to take care of their husband's parents.

Patrilocal norms have decreased significantly as it is no longer as popular for parents to live with their married children nor their eldest sons. However, these eldest sons still experience pressure to take care of their elderly parents and daughters-in-laws are still also subjected to the same expectation as well. Due to these beliefs, an inherent gender preference was also formed and played a significant role in family dynamics. As sons were specifically called to support their parents at a later age, they were considered more valuable than daughters. In addition, sons were also favored because they were viewed as the ones that could preserve and continue the family bloodline. Conceiving a son was particularly important for women as doing so would elevate their status within the family and also allow them to maintain it. This sentiment was especially strong in the late 20th century when Korea's son preference was at its height, which can be seen in a nationwide survey that was conducted in 1971. In this survey, over 90% of Korean women said they preferred sons over daughters and that not having a son was a "source of severe emotional strain" for them.[118]

Parents did not only have a preference for sons over daughters, but also viewed their daughters as burdens that would eventually leave the family. This is because once a daughter is married, she is expected to become a part of her husband's family and not the one she was born into. This idea was also legally carried out as the daughter's *hojeok*, or legal family line, would be moved from the administrative unit that takes care of her parents' household to the unit that is in charge of her husband's parents' household.[119] Because daughters eventually leave their family

[118] Insook Han Park and Lee-Jay Cho, "Confucianism and the Korean Family," in *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, vol. 26 (1995), pp. 129.
[119] Ronald R. Rindfuss, "Intergenerational Relations," in *Marriage, Work, and Family Life in Comparative Perspective: Japan, South Korea, and the United States*, edited by Larry L. Bumpass and Noriko O. Tsuya (University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), pp. 57.

to join their husband's home and therefore care for their husband's parents, parents choose to raise and invest in sons who are going to later take care of them rather than children that wouldn't remain in their family.[120] In addition, parents were expected to give large dowries to the families they were marrying their daughters off to, making girls an expensive economic burden while males could economically contribute to the family through the work they did.[121]

As a result of these beliefs, parents would make active efforts to have daughters rather than sons through "sex selection." There were several different methods in which couples would try to have male children, but they would commonly practice pre-natal "sex selection" by carrying out sex-specific abortions. If the child a couple was carrying was not a son, they would carry out an abortion, especially if they already had one or more daughters.[122] Induced abortions were once illegal in Korea during the 1950's due to the conservative attitudes towards it, but because of the strong emphasis that Korean society had on family planning, they were not enforced, therefore allowing families to abort daughters and have sons. Families also practiced post-natal "sex selection" before sex-identifying technology was used. Examples of such treatment include infanticide and focusing medical care in response to illnesses on boys rather than girls.[123]

Due to these methods of ensuring the birth of males, Korea grew to have one of the highest boy to girl ratios in the world.[124] This ratio has changed in more recent years to become more equal: Statistics Korea reported that the 2020 gender ratio at birth was 104.9 boys for every

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[120] Heeran Chun and Monica das Gupta, "'Not a Bowl of Rice, but Tender Loving Care': From Aborting Girls to Preferring Daughters in South Korea," in *Asian Population Studies* (Routledge, 2021), pp. 4.
[121] Sam Hyun Yoo, et al., "Old Habits Die Hard? Lingering Son Preference in an Era of Normalizing Sex Ratios at Birth in South Korea," in *Population Research and Policy Review*, vol. 36 (Springer Science+Business Media, 2017), pp. 27.
[122] Laurel Kendall, "Marriages and Families in East Asia: Something Old, Something New," in *Education About Asia*, vol. 13 (Association for Asian Studies, 2008), pp. 8.
[123] Heeran Chun and Monica das Gupta, "'Not a Bowl of Rice, but Tender Loving Care': From Aborting Girls to Preferring Daughters in South Korea," in *Asian Population Studies* (Routledge, 2021), pp. 4.
[124] *Ibid.*, pp. 1.

100 girls, which is the lowest since this organization began gathering data in 1990.[125] In 1990, this ratio was 116.6 boys to 100 girls, which then grew to 209.7 boys to 100 girls in 1993, showing a significant decrease in the ratio over the past few decades. The 2020 ratio is lower than the worldwide ratio of 105 boys to girls, signifying the way in which Korea is slowly changing to become more egalitarian. In addition to a noticeable change in the actual gender ratios of Korea, there has also been a change in people's preferences. In 1976, 61% of married women said having a son was essential. This number then decreased to 40.5% in 1991, 16.2% in 2000, and 9.2% in 2012, indicating a gradual disappearance in people's inclination for males.[126]

Several reasons can be attributed to this decline; the initial declines in son preference are a result of the government's direct efforts to increase the fertility rate and reduce this sexist ideology. The government most notably enacted this change through the banning of sex-detection technology in 1987, which was called the Prohibition of Ascertaining the Sex of Fetus. This law not only completely banned medical personnel from informing the mother, her family, or other people of the fetus's sex, but also banned medical professionals from determining it altogether.[127] Eventually, the government reformed the law to allow determination of sex after 32 weeks of gestation, but only did so in 2009, much longer after son preference showed significant decrease.

Aside from the government's direct efforts to prevent sex selection, the decrease in son preference can also be attributed to Korea's rapid urbanization and modernization. As Korean society developed in the late 20th century, the Korean government instilled and expanded many guidelines, including ones in relation to national health insurance and expansion of pension,

[125] Woo-Hyun Shim, "Boys No Longer Preferred," (*The Korea Herald*, 2021).
[126] Andrea den Boer and Valerie Hudson, "Patrilineality, Son Preference, and Sex Selection in South Korea and Vietnam," in *Population and Development Review* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2017), pp. 131.
[127] Sam Hyun Yoo, et al., "Old Habits Die Hard? Lingering Son Preference in an Era of Normalizing Sex Ratios at Birth in South Korea," in *Population Research and Policy Review*, vol. 36 (Springer Science+Business Media, 2017), pp. 30.

giving the older generation more access to policies that would support them and their future.[128] Women also became more educated and were given more opportunities to work, elevating their social status and giving them more "worth" within the family, which therefore relieved sons of some of their responsibilities. Parents no longer needed to solely depend on their sons to be cared for in old age as their sons' previous responsibilities for provision (like finances) could be provided by other people or through other means. As a result, parents began to seek out different methods of support, such as emotional or physical aid, which is something that many believed their daughters were more skilled at giving.

Though it was once considered more expensive to raise girls than boys, it is now more costly to raise boys than girls as there is a higher societal expectation for sons to professionally and financially excel and succeed than there is for daughters, therefore pressuring parents to put more of their effort and money into their sons.[129] In addition to the previously mentioned marriage-related fees a son's parents are expected to pay, parents also invest a significant amount of money into their child's private education. Although parents had to pay a large dowry for their daughters in the past, it has now switched as the husband's parents are expected to pay a larger amount than the wife's parents.[130]

In tandem with the decrease for son preference, daughters were increasingly considered more valuable and helpful to the parents than their sons, causing an inherent increase in daughter preference. In a survey conducted in 2016, it was found that 64% said they would prefer daughters over sons.[131] This high rate of preference is because women's roles called them to take care of their parents' physical and emotional needs, causing parents to begin to rely on their

[128] Heeran Chun and Monica das Gupta, "'Not a Bowl of Rice, but Tender Loving Care': From Aborting Girls to Preferring Daughters in South Korea," in *Asian Population Studies* (Routledge, 2021), pp. 5.
[129] *Ibid.*, pp. 14.
[130] *Ibid.*, pp. 7.
[131] *Ibid.*.

daughters to look after them in their future years instead of their sons. Not only is this because it is no longer popular for parents to live with their eldest sons, but also because daughters are more likely to take care of their parents than their male siblings are. This has been proven in a study that showed that if there is a daughter in the family, the other siblings will be less likely to aid in caring for the parents as well as another study that demonstrated that daughters give their parents more financial transfers than sons do.[132] As a result of these behaviors, parents have begun to feel more fond of their daughters that emotionally and physically serve them, creating strong emotional bonds.

In the same 2016 survey that was previously mentioned, 62% of respondents answered the question of "Why do you prefer to have a daughter in the case of an only child," by saying that they thought daughters would become their "lifelong companions" and also take care of them when they grew older.[133] Following this answer was the response that daughters would be easier to raise than sons (48%), that daughters were more "sensitive, sympathetic, and easier to communicate with" (33%), that sons are a "financial burden" (11%), and that "traditional Confucian patrilineal values have weakened and women are becoming more powerful at home and in society" (8%).[134] Though there are quite a variety of reasons for daughter preference, the most popular one is the same reason that explained why parents once preferred sons. The other reasons touched on explanations for decrease in people's inclination for sons as well as the sensitive nature of daughters, but it is clear that parents have changed their desires for the type of support and care they want from their children, resulting in this switch in preference. Granted, the trend of daughter preference is not true for all age groups as people in their 20's-30's tend to

[132] *Ibid.*, pp. *6-7.*
[133] *Ibid.*, pp. 7.
[134] *Ibid.*, pp. *8.*

desire daughters while the older, more "male-centric" generation prefer sons.[135] However, it is clear that it is now much more common for people to say that they prefer to have daughters over sons.

Even though repaying one's parents through filial piety is such an important aspect of intergenerational relations, the parents don't stop giving and sacrificing to their children even after they become adults. As was mentioned above, it is still very common for parents to become very involved in their children's lives, whether that be with making decisions in relation to their child's marriage, finances, or work. However, because of this, relationships can become strained, especially for daughter-in-laws and mother-in-laws. Problems between the daughter-in-laws and mother-in-laws would arise out of their interactions in the multigenerational home, but despite the fact that many parents now live apart from their adult children, there are still many conflicts that come from the parents' over-involvement in their children's lives. This issue can largely be attributed to the different expectations people have and the different gender roles they think the husband and wife should fulfill. But there is also a natural practice of mistreatment that the daughter-in-law experiences, which originates from the mother-in-law's "training" for the new family member.[136] This can include, but is not limited to, education about the ways of the household and the domestic duties they are expected to take on. Unlike daughter-in-laws, son-in-laws face little to no conflict with their parents-in-law, but are actually considered to be an "eternal guest" or a "one-hundred-year guest,"[137] which suggests that they are to be treated with respect and politeness. This difference between the way the husband and wife are regarded by

[135] *Ibid.*, pp. 4.
[136] Yean-Ju Lee, "The Extended Family: Disharmony," in *Divorce in South Korea: Doing Gender and the Dynamics of Relationship Breakdown* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2020), pp. 350.
[137] *Ibid*., pp. 363.

their in-laws also indicates the difficult treatment that women experience in the home as a result of such gender norms and expectations.

Divorce (Remarriage & Cohabitation)

Divorce has a negative stigma in South Korea as it is considered a "dishonour to the family."[138] This is because divorce was viewed as a separation of the family. In the Chosun dynasty, when only men were allowed to petition for divorce, divorce was permitted if it fit into one of seven reasons, including theft and adultery among many. Aside from theft, all six other reasons were related to the "maintenance of family order and male authority,"[139] showing that the destruction of these two elements signified the destruction of the family. As a country that was founded on these ideas, the stigma against divorce remains especially strong for women because marriage was considered the main way women could serve their purpose in life, aside from giving birth to a son. Another reason why many couples refrained from divorcing from unhappy marriages was for the sake of their children because many believed that children would not be raised properly without both parents being present.[140]

In recent years, however, the stigma against divorce has started to disappear. Though it is plausible that the decreased stigma against divorce has impacted the current divorce rates, the first surge of divorce rates in Korea is more likely to have been caused by the 1997 IMF financial crisis. Because wealth can have a direct effect on one's mental and emotional stability, the instability and tension the 1997 recession brought upon many families caused the divorce rates to

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[138] Wen-Shan Yang, and Pei-Chih Yen, "A Comparative Study of Marital Dissolution in East Asian Societies: Gender Attitudes and Social Expectations towards Marriage in Taiwan, Korea and Japan," in *Asian Journal of Social Science*, vol. 39 (Brill Publishers, 2011), pp. 754.
[139] Insook Han Park and Lee-Jay Cho, "Confucianism and the Korean Family," in *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, vol. 26 (1995), pp. 128.
[140] Dommaraju, Premchand, and Gavin Jones, "Divorce Trends in Asia," in *Asian Journal of Social Science*, vol. 39 (Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore, 2011), pp. 726.

spike. Though they stabilized in 2004 thanks to the changes the Korean government made in divorce policies,[141] they never returned to the low percentages from before the financial crisis. In 2020, Statistics Korea recorded 107,000 divorces, which was a 3.9% decrease from 110,000 in 2019.[142] While the crude divorce rate also decreased from 2.2 in 2019 to 2.1 in 2020,[143] the average age of divorce has increased over the years. Last year, the highest rates of divorce for men (8.0 divorces of 1000 men) were for those between the ages of 45 and 49, while the highest rates of divorce for women (8.6 divorces of 1000 women) were for those between 40 and 44.[144] This increase in the average age of divorce can be attributed to the end of long-term marriages.

Aside from the economic recession, there are several other reasons that have affected the current divorce rate in Korea, including the new economic independence women have more accessibility to. But one of the biggest, most common reasons for divorce in Korea is the gap between the fixed gender roles that are expected of men and women in marriage and the gender roles that they actually identify with and fulfill in their marriage. This gap is much more applicable to women than men since female gender roles have undergone much more change in the past few decades than male gender roles have. Other academics have made arguments saying that the breakdown of marital relationships stems from spouses recognizing the identity gap they have and then making efforts to fill those gaps, which leads to violations in the "marital contract," such as infidelity, over-fulfillment of one's duties, and others.[145]

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[141] Young-Ju Chun and Tae-Hong Sohn, "Determinants of Consensual Divorce in Korea: Gender, Socio-Economic Status, and Life Course," in *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, vol. 40 (University of Toronto Press Journals, 2009), pp. 776.
[142] "Marriage and Divorce," Statistics Korea, (2021).
[143] *Ibid.*.
[144] *Ibid.*.
[145] Yean-Ju Lee, "The Extended Family: Disharmony," in *Divorce in South Korea: Doing Gender and the Dynamics of Relationship Breakdown* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2020), pp. 355.

What's interesting is that many of those who feel the need to compensate for their identity gaps are males. This is because the expected gender roles of the husband are more rigid than that of women, which has expanded greatly over time as I explained above. While women now have several options (to work, be a housewife or a stay-at-home mother, to do both, etc.), Korean men are still expected to bring home a stable paycheck and financially provide for their family. As a result of this expectation, the unconditional authority the male household head once used to have has now become dependent on their income.[146] There are still difficulties that women face with their gender roles, however, as they are still expected to do housework and take care of the children even if they have a full-time job. The responsibilities of the home have not been extended to be included in male gender roles, showing that female gender roles have expanded, but in addition to the roles they were formerly expected to fulfill.

Though both men and women can experience identity gaps in their roles as husbands and wives, it is more likely that men will feel the need to compensate for those gaps because they feel as though their identity is being threatened.[147] This then can lead to behavior that creates tension in the marriage, to which the wife might respond sensitively and eventually ask for a divorce. Not only are women now less tolerant of acts of infidelity than they used to be, but they also place more importance on the relationship itself.[148] For these reasons, the majority of divorces in Korea—as well as in other societies—are initiated by women.[149] Though most divorces are carried out by mutual consent, the initiator is most likely to be the wife. Their

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[146] Yean-Ju Lee, "Implications: Doing Gender," in *Divorce in South Korea: Doing Gender and the Dynamics of Relationship Breakdown* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2020), pp. 118.
[147] Yean-Ju Lee, "Why Do Marriages Break Down?," in *Divorce in South Korea: Doing Gender and the Dynamics of Relationship Breakdown* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2020), pp. 8.
[148] Dommaraju, Premchand, and Gavin Jones, "Divorce Trends in Asia," in *Asian Journal of Social Science*, vol. 39 (Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore, 2011), pp. 733; Young-Ju Chun and Tae-Hong Sohn, "Determinants of Consensual Divorce in Korea: Gender, Socio-Economic Status, and Life Course," in *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, vol. 40 (University of Toronto Press Journals, 2009), pp. 786.
[149] Yean-Ju Lee, "Implications: Doing Gender," in *Divorce in South Korea: Doing Gender and the Dynamics of Relationship Breakdown* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2020), pp. 123.

reasons for wanting a divorce have also been found to be more complicated than the husbands' reasons, as many divorced men say they don't actually know why they divorced.[150]

As a result of the increased divorce rates in Korea, the stigma against divorce has decreased as well. While many may attribute the higher divorce rates to the fading stigma, sociologist Yean-Ju Lee actually says that the changes in opinion on divorce are a result of the growing rates and that the changes in the environment are causing people to divorce, as was seen with the 1997 IMF crisis.[151] One example of such change is that couples are increasingly looking to divorce as a solution for exiting unhappy marriages. In 2018, 64.5% of single men said they considered divorce to be a better option if the couple couldn't resolve their issues, and 80.9% of single women agreed as well.[152] But this opinion changed once children became involved.

In the same survey, 58.2% of men said a couple can divorce if they have children and 77.4% of women said yes to the same question, showing a decrease in both genders.[153] This shows that while the stigma against divorce is dissolving, the idea that couples should remain together for the sake of their children still remains. Because single parenthood is still a stigmatized concept in Korea, it has negative effects on children of single parents. This is especially true for daughters since males are more likely to be seen in relation to their individual achievements while women are judged on their upbringing.[154] The stigma against single

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[150]Young-Ju Chun and Tae-Hong Sohn, "Determinants of Consensual Divorce in Korea: Gender, Socio-Economic Status, and Life Course," in *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, vol. 40 (University of Toronto Press Journals, 2009), pp. 778.
[151] Yean-Ju Lee, "Social Context," in *Divorce in South Korea: Doing Gender and the Dynamics of Relationship Breakdown* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2020), pp. 25.
[152] Dong-min Lee, "More Women Open to Living Together with Relationship Partner but on Condition," (Seoul: *Yonhap News Agency*, 2019).
[153] *Ibid*..
[154] Yean-Ju Lee and Larry Bumpass, "Socioeconomic Determinants of Divorce/Separation in South Korea: A Focus on Wife's Current and Desired Employment Characteristics," in *Development and Society*, vol. 37 (Institute for Social Development and Policy Research (ISDPR), 2008), pp. 135.

parenthood also shows signs of changing though as 61.2% of men and 75.3% of women said a single parent can raise a child alone.[155]

Opinions about single parenthood are not the only ones that are changing as a result of increased divorce rates. In addition, ideas about cohabitation and remarriage are evolving as well. As the divorce rates have increased, so have the number of divorcees, causing cohabitation and remarriage to also become more common. The meaning behind cohabitation is particularly changing as it is now seen as a "prelude or alternative to marriage," especially for middle-aged men that have already been married once.[156] The negative opinions about cohabitation before marriage are also decreasing as 77.2% of men and 70.5% of women said living together was acceptable in 2018.[157] They only agreed, however, under the condition that the couple was seriously considering marriage, meaning that there needs to be an end-goal and a purpose in cohabitation.

The public's opinions on remarriage are also changing as both singles and those that were once married are becoming more accepting. In a poll asking about people's perceptions on remarriage, roughly 96% of men and women answered positively: 45% said both remarriage and remaining single were fine, 40.6% said they think remarrying is necessary depending on the circumstance, and 10.8% said that remarrying is necessary.[158] These results show that Koreans hold the idea of marriage to be important, rather than focusing on the concept of remarriage. There are still some that are hesitant to marry someone that was once married in the past, however, as only 45% of singles said they would be willing to do so while 70.3% of those that

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[155] *Ibid.*.
[156] Yean-Ju Lee, "Social Context," in *Divorce in South Korea: Doing Gender and the Dynamics of Relationship Breakdown* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2020), pp. 28.
[157] Dong-min Lee, "More Women Open to Living Together with Relationship Partner but on Condition," (Seoul: *Yonhap News Agency*, 2019).
[158] Soo-hyang Choi, "96 Pct of S. Korean Young People Open to Remarriage: Poll," (Seoul: *Yonhap News Agency*, 2017).

were once married before said they would marry someone that has never been married.[159] In general though, it is more common for women to remarry than men are because they are expected to be able to provide for the family, decreasing the marriageability of divorced men than divorced women.[160] It is also more likely that women will want to remarry to seek economic stability as many divorced women are not financially stable.

Chapter Three: Textual Analysis

This third chapter enters an in-depth analysis of the family-centric scenes and values shown in the Korean dramas *Life on Mars*, *18 Again*, and *The World of the Married* as remakes of Anglophone TV shows, including many values mentioned in the previous chapter. Because each of these dramas are different genres, I will also be discussing how their respective genres play a role in defining the types of family-centric scenes they show as well as the different messages they relay to the viewers. This will be completed through the comparisons I make between the original texts and the Korean remakes in which I identify familial themes in the Korean dramas and the different ways they are expressed in the original or their overall lack of it.

Crime/Police Procedural: *Life on Mars* & *Life on Mars*

I have chosen this Korean remake as a part of my analysis because I believe it to be a representative example of the ways in which crime dramas include family-centrism into their stories. Although family-centrism is not the main theme of this drama, there are several very clear examples of these values in the cases that are shown and the individual characters' plots. The types of family values that are shown are also highly idealized, which serves to explain the

[159] *Ibid*..
[160] Yean-Ju Lee, "Social Context," in *Divorce in South Korea: Doing Gender and the Dynamics of Relationship Breakdown* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2020), pp. 26.

"perfect" family that is imagined or desired in society. In addition, *Life on Mars* is a period drama, so there are several visual changes and historical additions that were made from the original to better emulate Korea during the depicted time period.

Background

Directed by Lee Jung-Hyo and written by Lee Dae-Il, *Life on Mars* (2018) aired on OCN, another Korean cable channel, from June 9-Aug. 5 for 16 episodes.[161] The show it is based on is of the same title and aired for two seasons on BBC One and BBC Four (for two episodes) with a total of 16 episodes from Jan. 9, 2006 to April 10, 2007.[162] The original show was produced by Kudos Film and Television, BBC Wales, and Red Planet Pictures and was distributed by Endemol Shine UK. The main creators of the show were Matthew Graham, Tony Jordan, and Ashley Pharaoh while the Korean version was developed by Studio Dragon and produced by Production H.

The BBC *Life on Mars* was incredibly successful as it won International Emmy Awards for Best Drama Series in 2006 and 2008.[163] Following these wins, several countries bought the story and aired their own versions, including the U.S. (2008-2009), Spain (2009), Russia (2012), and Czechoslovakia (2017). Though China has also announced plans to create a rendition of the BBC hit 2019, the Korean version remains the most recent remake. BBC also released a sequel, titled *Ashes to Ashes* (2008-2010), which also aired on BBC One. A third and final season of the BBC *Life on Mars* was announced to be in development in 2020, but there has yet to be more news beyond that.[164]

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[161] "Life on Mars (TV Series 2018)," (*IMDb*, 2018).
[162] "Life on Mars (TV Series 2006–2007)," (*IMDb*, 2007).
[163] Jae-Yeon Woo, "Korean Version of 'Life on Mars' Depicts Dazed Cop's Quest for Identity," (*Yonhap News Agency*, 2018).
[164] Hannah Davies, "Life on Mars Creator Confirms Third and Final Series Is in the Works," (*The Guardian*, 2020).

The Korean version of *Life on Mars* closely follows the original's plot, which is about a leader of a crime investigation unit that experiences an accident, transporting him back in time. As he is forced to adjust to his new environment, he simultaneously tries to solve a series of cases that might help him return to his normal life in the present. Though it is clear that the main character has traveled to the past, the show intentionally makes the audience constantly question whether he actually time-traveled or whether he is in a coma.

Both the original and remake mix a variety of genres, but the most prominent ones are police procedural, science fiction, and crime. Because the story centers on a team that solves crime cases, the police procedural and crime genres are obvious. Police procedurals are a specific subgenre under the umbrella of detective fiction, which track the investigation process that police officers undergo when solving criminal cases. As a result of this, crime is another genre that naturally follows the police procedurals. Crime TV shows commonly depict several different cases that the main characters solve throughout the series, first showing a crime, the investigation process, and then the outcomes of the investigation, which includes the unveiling of the criminal and their motives. Unlike the other genres of *Life on Mars*, the science fiction elements are not as apparent because the story intentionally obscures the details about the main character's passage into the past. The show plays with this question in every episode, making this an important theme that contributes to maintaining the audience's attention. As a result of this ambiguity, I have categorized *Life on Mars* as a crime and police procedural and will analyze the way family-centric themes interact with these genres specifically.

In the original show, the main male lead's name is DI Sam Tyler, played by John Simm. The other main characters of the show are in Manchester and Salford Police's A-Division Criminal Investigation Department (CID), which is the team Tyler joins at the beginning of the

series. This team consists of Gene Hunt (Philip Glenister), the commander of the team, Annie Cartwright (Liz White), a Woman Police Constable that joins the team later on in the series, and two others named Ray Carling and Chris Skelton.[165] Though there are several other characters that appear throughout the series, those characters will often appear in just one episode, while these characters are the main cast that consistently appear in all of the episodes and are actively involved in the development of the plot.

In the Korean remake, DI Sam Tyler is renamed Han Tae-Joo and is played by Jung Kyung-Ho.[166] Similar to the original, there are many characters that come and go as a result of the many cases the show deals with, but it is much more common for a few of these characters to appear over the course of a couple drama episodes rather than just one because cases will not be solved in one episode as is done in the original.

Overall Changes

Though the Korean remake received fairly low ratings and attention in Korea, there were many positive reviews including feedback from the BBC foreign drama format producer, David Belshaw. Belshaw said, "The Korean 'Life on Mars' has the essence of the original while also having its own local flair. The setting is very Korean, and the time period is also interesting to watch," while also praising OCN and the quality of the products they are releasing.[167] There were several changes that were made to the original story in order to create the "Korean" setting Belshaw described. While the original transports the main character from the present to 1973 Britain, the remake takes Tae-Joo to 1988 South Korea, a very important year for Korea given that it was the first year Korea held the Olympics. Through the Olympics and the international

[165] "Life on Mars (TV Series 2006–2007)," (*IMDb*, 2007).
[166] "Life on Mars (TV Series 2018)," (*IMDb*, 2018).
[167] K. Lew, "BBC Producer Praises Korean Remake Of 'Life On Mars,'" (*Soompi*, 2018).

attention that came with this event, 1988 also became a year that played a part in transitioning Korea from a poor, underdeveloped country to the more modern, cosmopolitan country it is now, at least from the point of view of other foreign countries. This is a very important change between the original and the remake because there are several details that have been added to reference the time period, including some cases from the original that were revised using real cases from 1988 in Korea as motifs. These cases include the Kim Seon-Ja Serial Poisoning case in episode four,[168] the Ji Gang-Hyun *mujeonyujoe yujeonmujoe* (무전유죄 유전무죄) case in episode seven,[169] and the Busan Brothers Home Case in episode 12.[170]

There are also many references to real-life events that happened, whether that be in the characters' conversations or the political news that appears throughout the show. These references remain as details and are not put at the forefront of the show unless they are the cases above, including just enough that won't distract the viewers from the main storyline, but will also allow them to recognize the time period the story is told in. Some examples of such references are the Park Jong-Chul torture case shown on the TV in episode three;[171] Jeon Kyun-Hwan's seven-year sentencing in episode seven;[172] and the struggle the characters

[168] The Kim Seon-Ja Poisoning case was a serial murder case in which Kim Seon-Ja, the accused, poisoned six people with beverages laced with potassium cyanide. The victims were all people she had borrowed money or stolen goods from, including friends, creditors, and her own family members. This case gained attention for her cold-blooded crimes and her lack of guilt for committing these crimes.

[169] Ji Gang-Hyun escaped from prison with twelve others, all of whom were convicted of petty crimes but were unfairly convicted to extensive sentences. Ji and four others held a family hostage while on the run in Seoul, all of which was broadcasted across the country. Before he attempted suicide, Ji left the words, "If you have money, non-guilty. If you don't have money, guilty," (*mwucenyucoy yucenmwucoy*) a phrase that is now commonly used to criticize politicians and other powerful people who manage to escape charges for bribery or embezzlement.

[170] The Busan Brothers Home was a government-run internment camp that operated in the 1970s and 80s. It was labeled as a "welfare center" that gave homes to homeless people to hide the fact that the thousands of people that were gathered (only 10% of whom were actually homeless) were subjected to human right's abuse. It remains as one of the worst examples of human rights abuse in South Korea.

[171] Park Jong-Chul was a South Korean democracy movement activist that was 22 when he died of torture while being interrogated by the government. His unjust death set off the June Democracy Movement of 1987, a series of mass protests that advocated for democracy from June 10 to June 29 during the military regime under dictator Chun Doo-Hwan (1980-1988).

[172] Chun Kyung-Hwan is the younger brother of Chun Doo-Hwan and was found guilty for embezzlement and bribery. This case was controversial because he received a sentence of seven years despite having embezzled an

experience with receiving backup as a result of the Hwaseong serial murder case, which is shown in episode 15.[173] Aside from political news or cases that occurred during this time period, the producers also include the infamous "There's a wire-tapping device in my ear" broadcasting accident as well as the daylight savings time change Korea temporarily enacted for the 1988 Seoul Olympics.[174] The details of the plot have been revised to reference real-life events in Korean history, fitting the time period that the remake takes place in, which then increases the accessibility and relatability of the drama for the Korean audience.

The original TV show also includes several details and aspects that were emphasized to highlight the different time period Sam was sent to, such as Gene Hunt's investigation methods and the mistreatment Annie Cartwright faces as a woman in the station. These characteristics, however, were actually exaggerations made to fit the genre of *Life on Mars* as a "cop show" according to John Stalker, the Deputy Chief Constable of Greater Manchester in the 1980's.[175] There are also several historical anachronisms that gained more attention than the aspects that were historically accurate. Some examples that could be seen throughout the series include modern street furniture, satellite television dishes, CCTV cameras, and others.[176] There was also a large advertisement board that promoted the construction of the Mancunian Way, a new motorway that was actually completed in 1967. Matthew Graham explained in a following interview with the *Radio Times* that this inaccuracy was intentionally made to confuse the viewers about whether Sam had actually slipped back in time or whether he was in a coma.

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immense amount of money. This case is also closely related to the Ji Gang-Hyun case, which occurred around the same time period.

[173] The Hwaseong serial murder case involved ten murders of women and young girls, which spanned from 1986 to 1991.

[174] During the 9 PM MBC news broadcast, a man infiltrated the broadcasting company and yelled out, "There's a wire-tapping device in my ear! Everyone! There's a wire-tapping device in my ear!" on air. The man was escorted out and MBC later released an official apology for the disturbance.

[175] Manchester Evening News, "Life on Mars Writers on Another Planet - Top Cop," (*Manchester Evening News*, 2013).

[176] "BBC - Drama - Life On Mars - Your Questions: Clues or Bloopers?" (*BBC*, 2014).

Through Graham's interview, it can be assumed that the producers did not make as many efforts to fit the show with 1973 by choice, utilizing this as a way of accentuating the confusion Sam experiences throughout the series and allowing the audience to feel it as well.

The "outdated" investigation methods and the discriminationa against women is directly translated into the Korean remake, but there are some details within these examples that are changed to adjust to the Korean setting. For example, in episode two, Han Tae-Joo says they could identify the suspect using the DNA sample they found at the scene, but the coroner responds by saying that it could take months before they would get it back because they need to send the sample to the U.S. for it to be analyzed, which is an obstacle that was specific to Korea at the time. As for the discrimination that Ko Ah-Sung faces in the remake, this is mostly expressed through the way that the male team members tell her to make them coffee or the way they assign small errands to her. In the original, on the other hand, the male characters make outwardly sexual comments about Cartwright, especially about her body, something that is mostly absent in the remake. This may be because Korean audiences would most likely find these types of comments as uncomfortable and also because of the Korean broadcasting restrictions that limit use of vulgar language and explicit scenes.

An additional change in the remake is that it does not include all of the cases that were shown in the BBC original. In the original, different cases are covered in all sixteen episodes across two seasons, all of which begin and end within one episode, while the Korean version continues many many cases across several episodes, telling multiple storylines, or arcs, at the same time. Therefore, of the original sixteen cases, the remake includes roughly twelve, though the number of episodes in both the original and remake are the same. This change is commonly found in other criminal/justice Korean drama remakes as the Anglophone originals tend to be

several seasons long and have to be condensed into one season with sixteen to twenty-four episodes.

One case in particular, the "manicure murderer" case as it is called in the remake, is introduced in the first episode and is not actually solved until the very last episode. This case is the same one that is introduced in the first episode of the original, but it is solved in that same episode. As a result of this extension, many details are changed and become intertwined with other cases the characters face along the way. However, many viewers have noted that the series can be divided into two halves, the first half covering Tae-Joo's father's case from episodes one through eight and the second half focusing on solving the manicure murderer case from episodes nine to the end of the series.

In terms of the plot and storyline, there are a few differences in Han Tae-Joo's connection with the other characters that either dramatize the narrative or focus the story on the cases rather than the interpersonal relationships between the characters. For example, in the first episode of the original, Tae-Joo is disliked by his coworkers because he reported a fellow officer and was considered a whistleblower while Sam Tyler faced no such struggle with his colleagues. As a result of this difference, Tae-Joo is given another reason for wanting to return to the past at the end of the series, one that is not provided in the original. While the station he worked at during the present was much more developed in terms of investigation methods and technology—something that he misses as he adapts to the past's outdated methods—this connection he has with the team members in 1988 is what makes him want to leave his real life behind and choose the past once again.

In addition, Sam Tyler and Annie Cartwright have a simple friendship that grows to become a romantic relationship by the end of the second season, which is mostly absent in the

Korean remake. While Ko Ah-Sung does show that she has feelings for Tae-Joo, Tae-Joo does very little to show reciprocation in them. There is one scene in episode six when Na-Young offers him tickets to a baseball game out of gratitude. When Tae-Joo says he has no one to go to and tries to return them to her, she offers to go with him. Before he can answer her offer, she is called away, leaving their conversation unfinished. As can be seen in this example, certain aspects of the plot prevent Tae-Joo's relationship with Na-Young from developing in a romantic direction. Tae-Joo, however, also shows much hesitation in pursuing a romantic relationship with her and because of this, their relationship is left off as an unreciprocated love on Ah-Sung's end.

With the absence of romance, a definite characteristic of most Korean dramas, the majority of the show's focus is put on the cases that the team has to solve throughout the series and the development of their relationship as a team. Including romance in a drama like this would arguably take attention away from the cases the team solves. Therefore, taking out the romantic relationship that was included in the original turns the show into a more serious thriller drama that then uses the disputes between the characters for a comedic contrast, therefore relieving the audience from the tense moments they experience in the mystery of the cases.

Family-Centric Changes

In terms of changes relating to family, there are several adjustments that were made in order to accentuate Korean familial values, which can be found in either Tae-Joo's relationship with his father or the cases being solved. Overall, the family-related changes that were made show the obligation that fathers have to provide for their families as well as the sacrifice that parents make to protect their children. While these are both themes that are also included in the original show, they are accentuated and revised to fit the Korean context and elicit empathy from the Korean audience. In the original, the plot involving Sam and his father is reserved to episode

eight of season one, showing the audience how Sam comes to the understanding that his father is a criminal and that Vic was right to leave young Sam and his mother. However, the remake deals with the topic of the father's hidden efforts by adding scenes that show how different a father can be when he is in front of his child and family and when he is away from them. This distinction is made by granting the adult Tae-Joo one-on-one time with his father, something that was mostly absent in the original. In addition, the show also draws parallels with Tae-Joo's father's situation through one of the cases the team is called to solve, further showing the efforts that fathers make for their families as providers.

The original *Life on Mars* does not show any specific theme about fatherhood and is largely centered on Sam's personal character development through this episode. While this can most likely be attributed to the fact that the case involving Sam's father is limited to one episode, it can also serve as an indication about which themes and trends of development British TV considers to be most important. The original, however, does express Sam's individual desire for his father to stay with his family as the adult Sam tries to prevent Vic from leaving during a confrontation they have after discovering Vic's crimes. Through this scene, Sam begs his father to remain with the younger him and his mother because he thinks this is "the way it was supposed to be,"[177] making it clear that Sam personally wants this after having grown up without Vic. As Vic attempts to shoot Sam to escape, Sam realizes his father is not who he thought he was and gives up on this desire he has. Through this interaction, he finally understands that things actually did happen the way they were supposed to and that he was better off without his father. As a result, this episode becomes the point in which Sam surrenders the unconscious longing he had for a father figure, allowing him to then develop as an individual. Though there

[177] "Episode 8." *Life on Mars*, created by Matthew Graham, Tony Jordan, Ashley Pharaoh, season 1, episode 8, Kudos and BBC Wales, 2006.

are components about fatherhood within this episode, the plot mostly focuses on Sam and the internal struggle he experiences as he discovers his father's true colors.

The remake, on the other hand, shifts some of the focus onto Tae-Joo's father and the life he lived as a man trying to provide for his family, further accentuating the theme of fatherhood within the drama and reinforcing the role of fathers as an ideal for Korean society. This is mostly seen in episode six, after Tae-Joo's father is released from prison and Tae-Joo is assigned to escort him home. Along the way, the two stop by a bathhouse so his father can wash up before meeting his family. As Tae-Joo questionably stares at his father as he washes himself, his father suddenly offers to scrub his back, bringing back Tae-Joo's childhood memories of when he used to spend time with his father by going to bathhouses together. Once they leave the bathhouse, Tae-Joo's father stops by the Hawaii Room Salon,[178] where he worked, to collect leftover candy and fruit he could give to the young Tae-Joo and his family members, even though this candy and fruit were originally meant for customers of the room salon. Upon seeing this, a slightly disappointed Tae-Joo takes his father out of the room salon and buys him a nicer and newer fruit basket to take home. Once they arrive, Tae-Joo meets his younger self as well as his family and sees how happy his younger self is to see his father. Even though Tae-Joo's aunt automatically scolds his father for leaving their family in debt and for returning without any money, the adult Tae-Joo sees how oblivious his younger self is to this fact and how happy he simply is to be reunited with his father. Tae-Joo is about to leave when he is invited to stay for dinner, giving him a chance to witness the way his entire family, especially his father, dotes on his younger self throughout the meal. After dinner, Tae-Joo also gets to talk with his younger self away from the other family members. Younger Tae-Joo says the older Tae-Joo is cool for having handcuffs and

[178] Room salons are bars with private rooms that provide customers (more often male than female) with hostesses for entertainment. They are commonly associated with prostitution in Korea.

being a detective, but that his dad is "the coolest person in the world. [...] There's nothing he can't do. He's like Superman."[179] This statement reminds adult Tae-Joo of the pure and innocent way he used to see his father, which clashes with the pitiful appearance and circumstances he witnessed earlier.

Through this time that the adult Tae-Joo spends with his father and himself, he gets to witness both moments that he has never seen and moments that he experienced as a child but did not remember. As he accompanies his father in his preparations to return home after several years of working "out of the country," Tae-Joo sees his father's desire to return home as a successful man and a providing patriarch, which is shown through his efforts to clean himself up and bring home anything he can find. This is most likely because Tae-Joo's father considers himself to be the main provider and breadwinner of the family, and he believes that failing to fulfill this role means he is failing as a man and as a father. Therefore, he attempts to hide this truth by changing his appearance and bringing home fruit (which was very expensive during this time period). In addition, Tae-Joo recalls the relationship he had with his father as a young child through the interactions his younger self has with his father once they are reunited. As the adult Tae-Joo stays with his family for dinner and talks with his younger self, he is reminded of the way his father expressed his love for him and the way he used to view his father as a loving, dependent parent. While the latter situation allows Tae-Joo to recall the fondness he had for his father, or the few memories he had with his father before he passed away, the time they spend alone together while Tae-Joo is an adult reveals an unfamiliar side to him, affecting his experience when he sees his younger self with his father and looks back on his own memories of his childhood.

[179] "Episode 6." *Life on Mars*, episode 6, Production H, 2006.

This idea about the hidden sides that fathers have is made even clearer as Tae-Joo reflects on his time with his family over a drink with Na-young, and he shares the forgotten childhood memories he had. However, he also shares how his view of his father changed now that he saw the aspects he didn't know about when he was a child: "When I was young, I thought my father was my everything. He was so cool and seemed like Superman. I could always rely on him, since he always stood behind me. I thought I knew everything about my father. But that wasn't true."[180] To this, Na-Young responds with her own personal experience:

> *Na-Young: Have you seen your father's back? Fathers always want to seem stable and reliable to their families. My father was like that too. And I only realized when I got older that he also had a shabbier side to him and was suffering behind his confident façade. Fathers don't want to show that side of themselves to their children because they want to remain as confident and cool fathers in their children's memories.*
>
> *Life on Mars*, Episode 6

In these lines, the drama encapsulates the main theme of this episode: fathers want to show their children only the best version of themselves, hiding the struggles they undergo and the mistakes they make as they do whatever they can to provide for their family. This can come from a father's desire to carry their burdens by themselves or from a place of pride in which they feel like they have to be strong. The drama further highlights this theme for the audience through a murder case that Tae-Joo and Dong-Chul's team need to solve in the same episode. The victim of the case is a man who is a father to a son, an ex-convict, an alcoholic, and divorced from his

[180] "Episode 6." *Life on Mars*, episode 6, Production H, 2006.

wife as a result of these bad habits. When found, the team also discovers two baseball tickets for the biggest upcoming game on his body, tickets that are not even on sale yet. The team finds that the victim was actually a part of a group that illegally buys these tickets before they are released and resells them for a much higher price. After chasing down the other members of the group that buys and resells baseball tickets, Tae-Joo and Dong-Chul's team discover that the victim was killed because he was trying to leave the group in an effort to keep the promise he made with his son that he would no longer do "bad things."[181] Once the team solves the case, Tae-Joo gives the two baseball tickets they initially found on the victim to his son, assuring him that his father tried to keep the promise they made before he died. Tae-Joo then urges the son, "Don't hate your father too much. Dads don't want to show embarrassing parts of themselves to you, so they lie sometimes. But dads always want to be the best father to their sons," offering him the same words that he heard from Na-Young himself.[182] The victim's son then asks Tae-Joo, "Was your father the best to you too?" to which Tae-Joo only offers a soft smile and consoles the boy as he cries and grieves over his father.

As can be seen, the remake combines the plot of episodes five and eight of the first season in the original to form this single episode. The story about Sam's father, Vic, is only told in episode eight, so episode five covers the case about the murdered father. The remake also makes several changes to the case about the murdered father so that it better parallels Tae-Joo's personal story with his own father, allowing what was once in two episodes to be combined into one. One particular change is that in the original, the father is a well-liked man that had a good relationship with his wife and son as well as the others around him. The remake changes this detail by creating both family and personal issues for the father. An additional difference is that

[181] "Episode 6." *Life on Mars*, episode 6, Production H, 2006.
[182] *Ibid*..

the original episode's focus of this case is more evenly distributed between the mystery of finding who murdered the victim and the victim's relationship with his son. The story in the remake, however, is mostly about trying to find out the truth about who the victim was during his life (both as a man trying to provide for his family and as a father) and the depths of the mistakes he made while he was alive, whether that be legal or with his own son. In collaboration with the storyline about Tae-Joo's own father, this allows the Korean remake to delve into the topic about the façade fathers put on in front of their children to hide their struggles and mistakes. This theme is very specific, but it is also one that can be used to elicit empathy from the viewers, allowing them to think about their relationship with their own fathers and relate or reflect on the hidden sides their fathers might have. This is a result of the changes the remake makes in the details and general plots of the original story, which then sheds light on this theme about what it means to be a father. However, it is also very important to note that this is a very idealized image of fathers and the roles they have in the family. In reality, not all fathers are like the ones that are portrayed in this drama and there are many that simply fail in fulfilling their expected roles. But this idealization is also an aspect that is used to further engage the audience's emotions and relay a message about what fathers should be like according to the values of Korean society.

Life on Mars (JTBC) also discusses the topic of sacrifice that comes with parenthood, or motherhood more specifically, in episode four, which follows the plot of episode three in the original, called "The Stabbing." In the original, there is a murder that takes place at a textile mill in which the mill's union organizer Ted Bannister is suspected of having killed the victim, the loom operater Jimmy Saunders. Ted initially denies that he killed Saunders, but after finding a blood-stained boot print that fits Ted's size and a blood-covered shirt in his shed, he is arrested. At the station, Ted confesses to the murder, allowing most of the the team members to identify

him as the murderer. Sam, however, believes Ted is lying to cover for his son, Derek Bannister. It is eventually revealed that Saunders actually died of an accident in which the belt of the loom snapped. Ted was the first to discover the body and cleaned up the accident out of fear that the mill would close down (explaining the boot print and shirt that pointed to him as the culprit), which would throw him and the other workers out of their jobs.

When Ted is let go after he is revealed as innocent in the original show, he tells Sam and Gene he doesn't care that he misled their investigation because "Only [his] family matters."[183] This is the most direct mention of family in this episode as it shows that Ted falsely confessed to the murder to keep the mill and therefore maintain his family's source of financial income. Towards the end of the episode, he also shares this dialogue with his son, who tried to steal the wages from the mill and becomes injured as a result of it:

> *Derek: Dad. I was scared. I couldn't see a future for us.*
>
> *Ted: But you could've come to me.*
>
> *Derek: No. It's down to me. I had to fight.*
>
> *Ted: You stupid boy. You've got your workmates, your mum and dad, your family. (Kisses Derek's hand) You're not on your own. Nobody is. Not unless you want to be.*
>
> *Life on Mars* (BBC), Season 1 Episode 3

Through this dialogue, Ted encourages Derek about their future, mentioning the people he could have depended on and asked for help instead of making such a rash decision, including his

[183] "Episode 3." *Life on Mars*, created by Matthew Graham, Tony Jordan, Ashley Pharaoh, season 1, episode 3, Kudos and BBC Wales, 2006.

family. This is another part that touches on the theme of family, but not nearly as directly as the first example because it generally focuses on the people surrounding Derek rather than his immediate family.

The Korean remake closely follows the original in that the episode is also fundamentally about a parent that falsely confesses to a murder for their family, making sacrifice a core theme to both cases. What is different, however, is that the remake highlights parental sacrifice and clearly specifies it as the central theme while the original is about Ted's sacrifice for his whole community, consisting of the mill workers in addition to his family. This is mostly exhibited through several changes, including the fact that the parent-child relationship is modified from being between a father and son to a single mother, Yoo Soon-Yi, and her seven-year-old daughter, Young-Joo. This gender change allows motherly love and sacrifice to shine through this case, an ideal that has been highly emphasized in Korean society but is disappearing due to the increase in women that do not want to have children or even get married. The case itself is also different in that the victim is the village chief, who was poisoned by drinking *makgeolli* mixed with potassium cyanide.[184] When Soon-Yi confesses to murdering the chief, she claims she became angry after Lee demanded she return the 200,000 *won* (roughly $200) he loaned her, causing her to kill him as a result. On top of this confession, the team learns that Soon-Yi is mentally underdeveloped from an accident she experienced as a child, leading them to believe that she might have not been able to contain her emotions and killed the chief. In addition, Soon-Yi is said to use cyanide to hunt pheasants for a living, and the red scarf that Tae-Joo found at the crime scene is confirmed to be hers, solidifying her as the culprit.

Like the original, Tae-Joo is unsatisfied with the evidence and Soon-Yi's confession and continues to investigate. Eventually, they find that the village chief had been sexually abusing

[184] *Makgeolli* is an alcoholic Korean wine made out of rice.

Young-Joo, which is confirmed after she is professionally examined. As Soon-Yi is taken by the prosecution, Young-Joo finally confesses that she gave the chief the poisoned *makgeolli* under the order of his daughter Lee Seonn-Ja, who threatened that if Young-Joo told anyone, she would never get to see her mother again. After Soon-Yi returns to the station, she tells her side of the story: the chief apologized to Soon-Yi for sexually abusing Young-Joo by offering her 200,000 *won*, but when she went to return the money to him, she found that he was trying to assault Young-Joo yet again. Soon-Yi attacked the chief to protect her daughter and Young-Joo ran away, causing the chief to then chase after her until he collapsed and died where he was found. Thinking Young-Joo had killed the chief, Soon-Yi falsely confessed that she killed him while Young-Joo did not say anything for fear that Seon-Ja would do something to her mother.

The remake clearly shows the theme of family, or more specifically the importance of intergenerational relations, through Soon-Yi's willingness to sacrifice herself for her daughter as well as Young-Joo's desire to protect her mother. While Ted falsely confesses to the murder in order to save the mill and therefore maintain the wellbeing of his family, Soon-Yi's physical attempts to prevent her daughter from getting assualted and her false confession directly protects Young-Joo and her security. The reason for their actions may be somewhat similar, but Soon-Yi's intentions are solely to cover for her daughter while Ted's extends beyond his family to the larger community.

In addition, the remake even emphasizes what is "right" by making an indirect comparison between Soon-Yi's relationship with Young-Joo and the village chief's relationship with his daughter, a reference to the Kim Seon-Ja Poisoning case. While Soon-Yi and Young-Joo's choices are made for the safety and protection of the other person, the village chief's daughter is portrayed as an extremely selfish woman who seeks to satisfy her greed at the

expense of her family members. This is revealed as the team finds that Seon-Ja killed her father to receive his orchard property in an attempt to resolve her husband's debt. Her greed does not stop there when the team members also discover Seon-Ja fed her husband bleach over a long period of time to take advantage of the disability insurance and four life insurance policies he received until he died from breathing complications. Similarly, Seon-Ja's mother was also suffering from similar symptoms as Seon-Ja's husband, leading Tae-Joo and Dong-Chul to come to the conclusion that Seon-Ja was subjecting her mother to the same treatment as well.

While Soon-Yi and Young-Joo are two characters that are willing to sacrifice themselves for each other because of their familial bond, Seon-Ja seems to consider her husband and her parents as people she can use to fulfill her greed. This creates a distinct contrast between two families at the opposite end of the spectrum: one family that sacrifices everything for one another and another that not only tries to take from each other, but also goes to the extent of inhumane treatment and murder for their personal desires. By adding a case that actually occurred during this time period, the drama enhances the historical accuracy of the setting and therefore the tone that is associated with the time period. But it is especially interesting how the producers use this case to juxtapose one broken family that is based on a real, historical criminal case with another that is imagined and clearly idealized. Through the inclusion of the Kim Seon-Ja Poisoning case, the drama highlights Soon-Yi and Young-Joo as the ideal family that serves and loves one another through sacrifice, even at the cost of one's freedom, a slightly dramatic, yet essentially an important idea to Korean family-centrism. This mix of the original's plot and the detailed additions the Korean producers made to better fit the Korean context serves as an example of transcultural adaptation and the ways that Korean dramas include real-life events along with changes that are made to better fit the social context.

What's interesting is that this theme of self-sacrifice for family is not shown directly through the lines the characters say as is done in the original, but rather the plot and the characters' actions. Though Ted also acted in self-sacrifice, it was not clear that this was for his family until he spoke the words, "Only my family matters."[185] On the other hand, Soon-Yi and Young-Joo do not need to say that their family matters or that they made a sacrifice for one another because the drama makes it extremely clear that there are no other motives other than each other. Unlike the original, which has to verbally indicate that family is a theme in the show, the drama includes the theme of family so distinctly through the characters' actions and choices that there is no need for extra commentary or explanation about the message the producers are trying to relay. Though this is partly a result of the fact that these sacrifices are highly dramatized and exaggerated, the drama shows the audience the importance of family rather than telling them, as is done in the original, which allows the viewers to feel the emotions that are related to sacrifice and family values in a deeper and more effective manner.

Like the previous example about fatherhood in *Life on Mars*, this storyline about familial sacrifice is another highly idealized version of what can be seen in reality. But this example is special in that it is also highly amplified and applied to a very drastic situation. The comparison between Seon-Ja's and Soon-Yi's families also contributes to this embellishment; if the drama had only included the Kim Seon-Ja Poisoning case without Soon-Yi and Young-Joo's contrasting family dynamic, this episode might have only induced emotions of stress, anger, or concern, all of which are emotions that can already be experienced through the other cases. But through Soon-Yi and Young-Joo's emotional sacrifice for one another, the drama draws out feelings of

[185] "Episode 3." *Life on Mars*, created by Matthew Graham, Tony Jordan, Ashley Pharaoh, season 1, episode 3, Kudos and BBC Wales, 2006.

hope, nostalgia, and love, therefore creating a balance in the types of emotions the audience can experience while watching the drama.

As can be seen in these two examples of family-centric changes, the Korean *Life on Mars* implements the theme of family in a very obvious and undeniable way while the British *Life on Mars* includes themes about family in hand with another, more important idea or in a more subtle way. In the arc about Sam and Tae-Joo's father, the original concentrates on Sam's concealed desires for a father figure and the way he overcomes this through the case involving Vic while the remake combines what was two separate cases to relay the theme about a father's hidden sides and also alters the plot so that there is a greater focus on the role of a father rather than Tae-Joo as a character. The storyline about parental sacrifice, on the other hand, clearly defines the mother's and daughter's motivation for their actions to be one another, which is not as distinctly portrayed in the original's mentions about family. In addition, the remake also compares two families with one another to display "ideal" behavior that conveys love in Korea, again obviously indicating the significance of family.

Through these differences, the Korean remake focuses on aspects of family that either remind the audience about their own family members or the sacrifices their family members might have made for their sake, both of which are very sentimental ideas and are used to emotionally engage the audience. Of the three dramas I am discussing, *Life on Mars* may have the least amount of family-centric changes due to the fact that the general focus is on the development of Tae-Joo's relationship with the team. However, the themes that they include are arguably some of the most emotional and hard-hitting, which leads me to believe that these changes are included with the purpose of incorporating an aspect of the story that will touch the audience's hearts. Because this drama has many exciting and thrilling elements from the mystery

that comes with the crime and police procedural genres, it may be difficult for the audience to feel sentimental emotions unless the storylines are specifically created to evoke such feelings from the viewers. For example, most of the other cases evoke emotions such as excitement, anxiety, and concern, while the above examples cause viewers to feel touched and sentimental. By adding family-centric plots and backstories, viewers can therefore feel a variety of emotions as they watch the plot unfold, further advancing their personal engagement with the story and the characters.

The idealization and exaggeration of these themes also contributes to the development of family-centrism despite being examples that cannot be easily found in reality. Though some viewers may relate to the included themes, it is likely that many will not be able to simply because they are so idealistic. But even for the audience members that cannot personally relate to these scenes, the drama uses universal themes that are not just specific to Korean society to move the viewers' hearts. Essentially, these themes have been added to the storyline to better fit the Korean context, but they are also general enough to emotionally touch anyone, regardless of their cultural background and the values they personally hold. As a result, *Life on Mars* uses these family-centric storylines to relay very specific feelings that may be difficult to experience in other parts of the drama, creating an intricate and diverse web of emotions that can be found in the variety of cases and stories the drama tells.

Romantic Comedy: *17 Again* & *18 Again*

Many Korean drama remakes of Anglophone TV shows or films deal with intense and thrilling storylines about crime, mystery, and drama, like *Life on Mars*. But *18 Again* is very different from the other Korean remakes in that it is a romantic comedy and therefore tells a lighter, heartwarming story about love and reconciliation. As a result of its hopeful and

romanticized genre, the drama also includes many positive and emotional scenes that display the sacrificial love parents have for their children, an element the film excludes. The drama also adds several scenes and storylines about the recuperation of the main character's relationship with his children in addition to his wife, another aspect that is absent in the film. Through these changes, the drama not only describes how a husband and wife come back together, but also how a family that reconciles and reunites as a stronger unit than before, relaying a very hopeful message about family in Korean society.

Background

The Korean drama *18 Again* (2020), directed by Ha Byung-Hoon and written by Kim Do-Yeon, An Eun-Bin, and Choi Yi-Ryun,[186] was based on the American film *17 Again* (2009), which was directed by Burr Steers, written by Jason Filardi, and produced by Adam Shankman and Jennifer Gibgot.[187] *17 Again* was released in America on April 17, 2009 as a comedy fantasy film, which was then extended into a 16 episode drama that aired from Sept. 7 to Nov. 10 through the Korean cable channel JTBC.

The plot of the drama follows the film fairly closely. The film and drama are about a 37-year-old man that once had a bright future as a high-school basketball star 20 years earlier, when he was 17. When his girlfriend tells him she is pregnant with their child, the male lead chooses his girlfriend and their child over his desires for personal success, which affects his life and the regrets he has as an adult. In the present, he is now in the middle of a divorce with the wife he had chosen over his own life, his children view him as a failure, and his career is at a standstill despite having worked there for several years. He magically receives a second chance

[186] "18 Again (TV Series 2020)," (*IMDb*, 2020).
[187] "17 Again (2009)," (*IMDb,* 2009).

to change his life as he transforms back to his 17-year-old self and returns to high school to chase the dreams he once gave up on.

The main male lead in the original film is named Mike O'Donnell, played by Matthew Perry. Zac Efron plays the younger, 17-year-old Mike. When Mike returns to high school as his younger self, he goes by the name of Mike Gold, acting as his best friend Ned Gold's (Thomas Lennon) son to conceal his identity from his wife and kids. Mike's wife, Scarlet O'Donnell, is played by Leslie Mann, and his kids Margaret Sarah "Maggie" O'Donnell and Alex O'Donnell are played by Michelle Trachtenber and Sterling Knight.[188] Though there are several other characters that influence Mike and his experience, these are the main characters that are closest to him and play the biggest role in his life.

In the Korean rendition, the character of Mike is named Hong Dae-Young and is played by Yoon Sang-Hyun (37) and Lee Do-Hyun (17). The alias he goes by as a 17-year-old is Ko Woo-Young, who is also pretending to be his best friend Ko Deok-Jin's son. Dae-Young's wife on the other hand is named Jung Da-Jung and their kids are named Hong Shi-A and Hong Shi-Woo. A character that is not in the original film but plays an important role in the remake is Wi Ha-Joon (Ye Ji-Hoon), a famous baseball player that grows to have feelings for Da-Jung and acts somewhat like a foil for Dae-Young and his efforts to recuperate his relationship.[189] Like the character of Ha-Joon, there are several other characters that were added to the drama to adjust to the extended length, but the characters mentioned above are, again, the most important ones to the main plot and the development of Dae-Young.

17 Again and *18 Again* are both listed as fantasy romantic comedies that are targeted for the younger audience, though the Korean adaptation is changed to better fit the tastes of the

[188] "17 Again (2009)," (*IMDb,* 2009).
[189] "18 Again (TV Series 2020)," (*IMDb*, 2020).

Korean audience. The fantastical elements come from the physical transformation the main character experiences, but that is the only extent to which this genre is included, making romantic comedy the predominant genre. Romantic comedies are typically centered on lighthearted and humorous stories that depict how a couple overcomes different obstacles to eventually come together. Since both the film and adaptation are romantic comedies for younger audiences, the way the romance unfolds and the sense of humor included is geared to appeal to younger viewers.

Overall Changes

Out of the three dramas I will be discussing in this paper, *18 Again* is most likely the drama that underwent the most changes, simply due to the fact that the story had to be lengthened from a one hour forty minute film into a 16 episode drama series. As a result, nearly all of what was in the original was retained, and everything that was changed were additions made to adjust to the extended length. As was mentioned earlier, Wi Ha-Joon is one of the most important added characters as he brings in another potential romantic relationship with Da-Jung, therefore creating a love triangle, which can be considered a cliché that is characteristic of Korean dramas. Aside from Ha-Joon, however, there are several other characters that are new to the remake, including Choi Il-Kwon, Hong Si-Woo's basketball coach who is revealed to have been corrupt and accepting bribes from parents, and Seo Ji-Ho, Hong Si-A's childhood friend who she later ends up dating. Both Il-Kwon and Ji-Ho do not have a developed personal story within the show as their addition mainly creates subplots for different characters: Il-Kwon for Si-Woo and Da-Jung through the story that reveals his corruption within the school basketball team, and Ji-Ho through his relationship with Si-A. This is different from Wi Ha-Joon in that he

has his own individual backstory in addition to his romantic feelings for Da-Jung, making him more of a significant and individualized character than the others.

Though these new characters can be cited as a few examples of extended or added plotlines for existing characters, another method in which the Korean producers developed the drama was through the way in which they gave certain characters their own plotlines that were not in the original film. One significant example is Da-Jung's decision to chase after an old dream of becoming a news announcer, which is very similar to the way Dae-Young decides to try and become a basketball player again through his transformation. In the original film, Scarlet O'Donnell is seen taking up gardening as a new occupation, but this is not made clear to be a dream she gave up on because of her sudden pregnancy like basketball was for Mike. The Korean adaptation, on the other hand, makes it very clear that Da-Jung also had to give up on her own dreams through several flashbacks that reveal this while tracking the development of their relationship. The main difference with Da-Jung's individual journey towards her dream from Dae-Young's is that she faces many more obstacles involving societal prejudices in relation to her age, gender, and marital status. Because Dae-Young is physically a young, male high schooler, he has little to no limits in his path to becoming a basketball star, though he eventually does choose to recuperate his relationship with his family members over his dream again. Da-Jung, however, has to overcome many more barriers: first, because she is much older and much more inexperienced than the other young interns she works with, then because of her divorce, and finally, underlying both of these reasons, because she is a woman. In making Da-Jung's individual story about her journey to becoming an announcer along with the struggles she faces as a divorced, older woman in society, the remake sheds light on societal gender issues that can be found in Korea, especially in the workplace.

The drama also adapts the film' story to better fit Korean society by depicting common reasons for divorce in Korea. In episode 11, Da-jung's family members and Dae-Young watch the premiere of the new show about divorce that Da-Jung is hosting. The premise of the show is to mediate between a couple struggling with marital issues and determine whether they should divorce or not through an audience vote after experts weigh in on the situation. The wife of the first struggling couple explains that she wants a divorce because of the way her three sister-in-laws treat her, a problem that is very common to marriages in Korea. Her husband's response is simply that she should ignore them, which the wife says is impossible because of how often they see each other. A psychologist from the expert panel says the wife entered the marriage knowing her husband's familial situation and that she should just endure the responsibility she gave herself. Though the wife calls her husband to defend her, he simply says he didn't want to appear on the show, causing her to sarcastically yell that everything is her fault and storm off of the set. After this live broadcasting accident occurs, Da-Jung covers for the unexpected situation by calmly apologizing to the viewers and commenting on the reality that wives face one they enter marriage:

Da-Jung: They say a marriage is when two families come together as one. They say things have gotten better, but oftentimes women end up sacrificing themselves when they get married. A son-in-law is a guest for 100 years, so you can't be negligent towards them. However, a daughter-in-law is not a guest but a part of the family. And under the name of family, they demand service. Since this kind of mentality still exists, this is why these kinds of conflicts occur. If a daughter-in-law is respected like a guest, this sad situation wouldn't have

occurred.

18 Again, Episode 11

Though the main point of this scene is to highlight Da-Jung's professionalism and the way she smoothly handles the situation, the implementation of this specific example for divorce in Korea points out one type of difficulty married women face that must be addressed and changed. In addition, Da-Jung's personal statement about the unfortunate marital difficulties women have to endure and the different expectations they face serves as a short explanation for why this couple's wife was subjected to this type of treatment by her in-laws, educating the viewers about a very specific social issue that exists in Korean society.

After the show returns from a commercial break, the next couple are both full-time employees with children. The issue is that the husband does not help his wife with housework, causing the wife to carry all the burdens and responsibilities of working, maintaining the home, and taking care of the children. The husband claims that he still does chores and helps with childcare after work even though he is tired, to which the wife says he just comes home and immediately lies down. When the husband argues and says that he helps her with the responsibilities on a daily basis, she responds by saying, "No, you shouldn't be 'helping.' You should be doing them together, anyway!"[190] The wife tearfully reveals that she had a myoma of uterus removal surgery six months earlier due to the stress she received from having to balance all of these aspects in her life on her own. Unaware of this truth, the husband regretfully says she never told him this, and the distressed wife says, "How can I tell you when you're always in a bad mood after work?"[191] This statement shows the lack of communication between this couple,

[190] "Lost Love," *18 Again*, episode 11, JTBC Studios, 2020.
[191] *Ibid*..

another problem amongst many conflicting couples. But another core issue to marriages in Korean society that is depicted through this example is in relation to the different gender roles men and women are expected to fulfill and the many burdens that women have to carry as a result of these expectations.

This second couple is predominantly used as a way for Da-Jung to share about her own experience with miscommunication in her marriage and the regrets she has because of this problem. After the audience vote comes to a tie, Da-Jung is asked to be the deciding vote, through which she describes her thoughts on the couple's problems while the drama shows montages of the different instances in which Dae-Young and Da-Jung hid their problems from one another. As Dae-Young watches the broadcast, he also reflects on the moments when he and Da-Jung fought with one another instead of talking and resolving their problems together, showing how both characters reflect on their past mistakes.

In the film, there are no scenes that show such examples of marital conflict, much less the fundamental reason for Mike and Scarlet's divorce. Both of the couples on Da-Jung's show, on the other hand, present two different examples of reasons for divorce in Korea. However, these scenes are included predominantly to depict Da-Jung's professionalism and her reflections on her own divorce, not to raise awareness about the types of issues that exist in Korean society. While they do spotlight important marital issues and therefore educate viewers in addition to creating a point of relatability, the primary purpose of these two examples are for character development. As a result, I have excluded this example from the number of family-centric changes made to the Korean remake of *17 Again* and will be discussing other scenes that depict family reconciliation through the main characters and the events they experience.

Family-Centric Changes

One way *18 Again* highlights the theme of family, or Korean family-centrism more specifically, is through the addition of several plotlines and characters. Sacrifice is a particularly important family-specific theme within *18 Again*, especially in regards to the personal sacrifices that parents make for the betterment of their family. This is also embedded in the original through the first time Mike chooses Scarlet and their child. But this is the only scene that displays sacrifice because the remainder of the film describes the second chance Mike has to live the life he once gave up on. Though the drama includes so many more examples of sacrifice than the film, it is important to note that nearly all of them are ones that the parents make for their family. This is because the drama's target audience is a relatively younger age group (considering how it is categorized as a "teen" drama), so these displays of parental sacrifice show the viewers an aspect of family that they might not be aware of. These depictions of parental sacrifice are predominantly displayed utilizing flashbacks of Dae-Young and Da-Jung's past as young parents. There are also many stock flashbacks that remind viewers about certain plot points or details, or introduce new information, but the flashbacks that I will be discussing shows the couple's life as young parents and the many struggles they experienced (both individually and as a couple), which continuously remind the viewers of the sacrificial theme and also show them a touching side of parenting. These scenes about parental sacrifice not only display the importance of family in Korea, but they also show how sacrifice is an important way in which parents express love to their children.

In episode two, the drama opens up by taking the audience back to the 2002 World Cup championships, a time period when everyone in Korea was celebrating the country's near-miraculous advancement in the games. While everyone around Dae-Young and Da-Jung is

enjoying this historical moment, the couple is faced with the harsh reality of being young and new parents without college degrees: they live in a *banjiha*,[192] they are months late on their rent, and they are on the brink of eviction. Dae-Young is also shown to be working several menial jobs at bars to put food on the table while he is looked down on and scorned by his bosses for only being a high school graduate. Da-Jung, on the other hand, travels to the pharmacy for her acute indigestion with the twins despite her physical exhaustion. As these scenes flash by, the male and female leads are reminded of the dreams they gave up on: Dae-Young sees a basketball while he is working at a bar and Da-Jung sees an open recruitment ad for anchor positions at a broadcasting company. The drama then goes further back into the past and shows when the two characters were both in school and still working towards these dreams. As these scenes transition into one another and show us the difficult life the couple were living, the adult Dae-Young narrates:

> *Everyone's dream came true that summer. At the age of 20, we put a pause on our dreams. There was a girl who shone radiantly. She had a brightening voice and a dazzling dream. In times of hardships, I reminded myself with her favorite quote: "No matter how hard life gets, never regret anything that made you smile."*
>
> *18 Again*, Episode 2

This voice-over narration occurs as Dae-Young looks in on Da-Jung broadcasting their school news over the intercom. Though the descriptions of the radiant Da-Jung are in past tense because they reference the period before she faced the realities of parenthood, the first two

[192] A *banjiha* is a semi-basement apartment, which is a living space that is halfway underground. This is the underground apartment depicted in *Parasite* (2019), the Academy Award-winning film directed and written by Bong Joon-Ho.

sentences are about the both of them because they both had to "put pause" on their dreams for their children and the future of their family.[193] In collaboration with one another, these introductory scenes and this narration highlights the sacrifices Dae-Young and Da-Jung made at a young age to raise their two children, emphasizing the irrefutable and realistic responsibility they acquired once they became parents, therefore eliciting empathy from the viewers. The montages of their lives as young parents put the audience in the couples' shoes, displaying how their life's struggles continued to no end and how the constant reminders of the life they could have lived only made it more difficult. However, the narration also relays the idea that despite this sacrifice they made and the harsh obstacles they faced, Dae-Young and Da-Jung stuck through these times thanks to the things that "made [them] smile,"[194] which can be assumed to be their children. Through this contrast between the lives Dae-Young and Da-Jung once dreamed of living and their reality, the drama shows the audience the change that occurs once people become parents, a hidden side of parenthood that many non-parents might not be aware of. It also highlights the idea that the couple endured these struggles thanks to their children, indicating the immense love they have for them.

In another, lighter flashback that also shows the parental love Dae-Young specifically has for his kids, he is shown picking up the twins from kindergarten. It is raining, but he only has one umbrella for the three of them. The viewers are then shown several images of different people sharing umbrellas with the ones they love while the adult Da-Jung narrates above these scenes: "On rainy days, people can measure how big their love is. Even when they share umbrellas, everyone holds them at different angles. It's clearly visible how big their love is. So love and rain come hand in hand."[195] The drama then cuts to an image of Dae-Young holding the umbrella at

[193] "About the Things That Made You Smile," *18 Again*, episode 2, JTBC Studios, 2020.
[194] *Ibid*..
[195] "A Story About Rain and You," *18 Again*, episode 3, JTBC Studios, 2020.

an angle that only covers his children at the expense of him getting wet, therefore showing the audience how much he loves his children as the narration indicates. This extra-diegetic scene shows the small sacrifices Dae-Young and parents like him make for their children, tugging at the audience's heartstrings and showing the willing sacrifices parents make for their children out of love.

Both the previous scene and this umbrella scene are new additions that are absent in the original film. Though *17 Again* also makes use of flashbacks, it is not nearly as extensive as the drama, since the only flashback the film shows is when Scarlet tells Mike about the pregnancy and he chooses her over his basketball game and his future. Thus, *18 Again* uses these flashbacks of Dae-Young and Da-Jung's younger life to not only explain the relationships between the characters, but also further emphasize the theme of familial sacrifice within this story. These scenes are indicative of the kinds of family-related themes that can be used to garner empathy from the viewers. In *17 Again*, the one flashback that is shown has a clear purpose of relaying background information to the audience. The drama's flashbacks about parental sacrifice in *18 Again*, on the other hand, are not only informational, but also relay emotions of regret and love, which are universal themes. These flashbacks therefore remind the audience about the initial sacrifice Dae-Young and Da-Jung made for their children, turning their sacrifice from what was just a decision that the characters made into a central focus of the drama.

As a result, the adaptation's added revisionist narrative relays a heartwarming message about a parent's love for their children, and therefore emotionally engages the audience, allowing them to reflect on the sacrifices they personally made for their family and the sacrifices other family members (parents in particular) made for them. This is because the idea of familial sacrifice falls in line with Korean society's principle of forgoing one's personal desires, time, and

money among others for the good of the family unit. Parental sacrifice has also been determined as a popular motive for filial piety in Korean society.[196] As I mentioned in the previous chapter, many children in Korea feel called to fulfill their filial duties because of their parents' sacrifices. So in including these scenes that highlight the personal sacrifices Dae-Young and Da-Jung made for their children at a young age, the drama touches on a very emotional aspect that many Korean viewers might be able to personally relate to and empathize with. This therefore gives the viewers an opening to personally connect with the storyline and the characters that change and grow as they learn about their family members and the things they gave up for one another, increasing engagement and one's personal attachment to the drama as well.

It is likely, however, that there are some viewers who cannot actually relate to these ideas simply due to the fact that the importance of repaying one's parents and the definition of filial piety in Korea has changed over the past few years. This is especially likely for the younger generation, who is now living in a very different society than the one their parents lived in. Because the target audience is a younger age group, these examples of parental sacrifice are used to remind them of the many things their parents may have had to give up for their family. These scenes also remind the audience of their "duty" to pay their parent's back for all that they did, which may then rekindle their desire to serve their parents. Therefore, when considering the drama's intended audience in connection with the types of family-centric themes it is showing, these scenes can be interpreted as tools that allow the viewers to make emotional connections with the characters and also personally reflect on the things their parents have done for them.

Another additional family-centered change that is made to the adaptation is that the drama focuses more on the way Dae-Young recovers his relationship with his kids, Si-A and

[196] Sung, Kyu-taik, "A New Look at Filial Piety: Ideals and Practices of Family-Centered Parent Care in Korea," in *The Gerontologist* (Oxford Journals, 1990), pp. 611.

Si-Woo. Though the beginning of this restoration process follows the film, which how Mike tries to fix his relationship with Maggie and Alex, the drama eventually adds several new details that creates a genuine friendship between Dae-Young and his kids (with Dae-Young as Ko Woo-Young). Later on, Dae-Young uses this friendship to forge a stronger father-child bond with them as well. Just as in the film, Dae-Young first befriends Shi-Woo by standing up for him when he is being bullied by Ja-Sung. They then become even closer as Dae-Young encourages Shi-Woo to try out for the basketball team and they become teammates. The film similarly shows Mike helping his son with his crush, which also helps their friendship. However, there is nothing that shows how Mike's parental relationship with Alex is revived.

On the other hand, Shi-Woo makes it very clear that he misses his father towards the end of the drama. This is first seen through the way that Shi-Woo excitedly calls Dae-Young and invites him to an important basketball game. Before Dae-Young is about to say no, Shi-Woo remembers that Dae-Young has been "busy" and disappointedly hangs up. Afterwards, Dae-Young approaches Shi-Woo and talks to him as Ko Woo-Young about his father:

Dae-Young: You look really upset.

Shi-Woo: To be honest, I became interested in basketball because of my dad.

Dae-Young: Is that so?

Shi-Woo: Yes. My dad was Serim High School basketball team's ace, but after I was born, he quit playing. That's why I wanted to achieve my dad's dream for him. But I was afraid he'd be disappointed if I was bad, so I pretended not to care about basketball.

Dae-Young: I didn't know you had those thoughts.

Shi-Woo: I wanted to tell him when I was good enough. That's why when I got into the basketball team, my dad was the first person I called. I wanted him to see me play in the finals, so I practiced really hard. But he said he can't come.

18 Again, Episode 15

Through this honest conversation Dae-Young has with Shi-Woo as his friend and not his father, he understands his son's true motivations for picking up basketball and also realizes his son misses him. Because Dae-Young is talking to Shi-Woo as Ko Woo-Young, he is able to hear his son's honest reasons for his past actions and attitudes towards basketball, something that is also absent in the original. This conversation not only helps Dae-Young better understand his son, but it also acts as a source of motivation that further pushes him to want to return to his original self. Once he does return to his 38-year-old self, the drama shows that Dae-Young and Shi-Woo restore their relationship in the following episode as Dae-Young attends Shi-Woo's basketball game.

When Dae-Young enters the gym, Shi-Woo's team is losing by ten points. But after Shi-Woo sees his father, Dae-Young gives him a nod of encouragement, instilling a new sense of determination in Shi-Woo, who runs back to his team and tells them, "I started playing basketball because of my dad. My dad came to watch me play for the first time today, and I want to win."[197] This line not only indicates that the renewed resolve he gained came from his father, but also their reconciled relationship. This is then shown through a direct interaction they have as Shi-Woo makes the winning shot and runs up to Dae-Young with tears in his eyes. He begins to cry and hugs his father while Dae-Young pats him on the back both as his father and his friend,

[197] "Life Goes On," *18 Again*, episode 16, JTBC Studios, 2020.

Ko Woo-Young. Dae-Young then says, "Good job, my son,"[198] causing Shi-Woo to smile and sigh in relief.

In the original film, there is a slightly similar interaction when Mike hands the ball to his son before he leaves to chase after Scarlet, which can be interpreted as Mike passing on his dream to his son. However, Mike does this as Mike Gold, not his father, so this interpretation only applies to Mike, not Alex. This is also the extent of their interaction, and there is nothing more that shows Mike with Alex as his father. Even before this scene, the film does not show any conversations they have about Mike as a father or what Alex thinks of him as a father. As a result, Mike's relationship with his son ends as a friendship, not one between a father and son. The drama, however, makes it very clear that Dae-Young forges a friendship with Shi-Woo and that he also recuperates their broken parent-child relationship as well.

Like her brother, the drama shows how Shi-A grows to miss her father by the end of the series. However, the drama also exhibits the unknown sacrifices Dae-Young had been making for her, allowing her to feel more love and appreciation for him. This is mostly displayed in episode 13, when Dae-Young (as Woo-Young) gives Shi-A a bank deposit book, saying it's from her father. When Shi-A goes to the bank to transfer the money to her account, she sees that her parents made deposits of small amounts whenever she did something for the first time. Some examples of such events include the day she was born, when she took her first steps, and when she said "Daddy" for the first time. There are even some days that commemorate events that non-parents or younger viewers may not consider significant, such as the day Shi-A flipped over on her back, the day she successfully sat in a shopping cart, and the day she learned how to ride a bicycle. The detail of the deposits touch Shi-A and cause her to cry tears of longing for her father.

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[198] *Ibid*..

This longing Shi-A has is solidified and made even clearer in episode 15 when she is on a date with Ji-Ho and sees a daughter walking home with her father, who is returning from work. The daughter, who is linking arms with her father, tells him, "Dad, aren't you tired? I'll give you a massage at home," and the father says, "Thanks, my princess."[199] This sweet interaction causes Shi-A to reflect on her own relationship with her father:

> *Shi-A: They seem happy together. I was always mean to my dad. When he called, I didn't answer it because it was a hassle. When we were together, I was grumpy. When he bought me a meal the other day, I invited my friends because I didn't want him to nag me. Had I known it would be this hard to see my dad again, I would have been nicer to him.*
>
> *18 Again*, Episode 15

Through these lines, it is clear that Shi-A feels regret about her relationship with her father before they lived separately. It is also clear that she misses him very much and that she wants to see him again. While the first scene at the bank allows Shi-A to feel her father's love and touches the hearts of younger viewers, this second scene causes her to think back on her relationship with him and also informs the audience of how she feels about her father at this point in the drama. As a result, the drama uses these two scenes to show the change that occurs in her heart as well as the change in her and Dae-Young's relationship as father and daughter.

Like the scenes that depict the development of Dae-Young's relationship with Shi-Woo, the scenes that show Dae-Young's relationship with Shi-A are not in the film at all as Mike and Maggie are not even friends. After Maggie breaks up with her boyfriend, Mike offers her

[199] "Confession," *18 Again*, episode 15, JTBC Studios, 2020.

emotional comfort, but she accepts it as a romantic sign and expresses interest in him, much to his shock. She even tries to pursue him at one point until he rejects her, which signals the end of their interactions. This momentary attraction is implemented in the film as a comedic element and acts as a sign of the unconscious emotional connection that lies between the two family members. But there is no clear indication that Mike and Maggie recuperate their father-daughter relationship because, like Mike and Alex, they do not talk about Mike as a father and there are no scenes between the two characters after Mike returns to his normal self.

Mike's relationship with his daughter is very unique in that it could have gone in a very inappropriate direction, something that was absent in the adaptation. Instead, Dae-Young and Shi-A begin on rocky terms in which she keeps her guard up against him until she finally warms up to him and accepts him as her friend. Dae-Young utilizes this friendship he has with her when he gives her the checkbook as Woo-Young, something that he might not have been able to do had he been his 38-year-old self. But through this action, Shi-A realizes the love her father has for her and begins to miss him. The checkbook she receives from him also causes her to reflect on the way she treated him (as can be seen in the second scene) and regret her past actions.

It is likely that these additions are a result of the adjustments the Korean producers have had to make to adjust to the extended length, but the film, overall, has a much stronger focus on the recuperation of Mike's relationship with his wife than his relationship with his kids. This is because Mike becomes friends with Maggie and Alex as Mike Gold, but the film does not show how he improves his relationship with them as their father Mike O'Donnell. The last scene of the film (when Mike returns to his original self) depicts his reunification with Scarlet through a kiss, showing that he has recuperated his relationship with his wife. But there are no interactions between his returned self and his children. The lack of their interactions could be considered a

result of the fact that the film's length limits the number of scenes that are included. However, there is a clear focus on Mike's desire to return to Scarlet as her husband rather than his desire to return to his entire family through the examples above, highlighting the romance rather than the familial reconciliation. This is depicted at the end of the film, when Scarlet learns of Mike's identity as she watches him transform back into his normal self. Mike explains his regrets to her, but only confesses his realizations about how much he missed Scarlet without any mention of their children:

Scarlet: You didn't have to come after me again.

Mike: Yes, I did, because I love you. You're the best decision I ever made, I just forgot. [...] Look, I know I've been in a bad mood for the last 20 years. But if you let me, I swear, I will spend the rest of my life making it up to you. I thought I wanted a second chance at life, but now I know I just want a second chance with you..

17 Again

As can be seen in the lines above, every part of Mike's confession has to do with Scarlet, showing that she is his main motive for wanting to return to his old self. The drama, on the other hand, establishes that Dae-Young also recovers his relationship with his children in addition to his relationship with Da-Jung by the end of the series. After Da-Jung discovers that Ko Woo-Young is actually Dae-Young, he vocally expresses how he wants to return to his old life to be with his entire family as his true self, not just to return as Da-Jung's wife as in the film. This is shown through the conversation Da-Jung has with Dae-Young after she hears that he was scouted by Hankuk University:

Dae-Young: Da-Jung, I will do whatever it takes to find a way to go back.

Da-Jung: Then what about your dream?

Dae-young: To me, you and our children are more important than my dream.

Da-Jung: So will you give up your dream just like before?

Dae-Young: I'm not giving it up.

18 Again, Episode 15

In these lines, Dae-Young makes it clear that he wants to return to the life he had as Da-Jung's husband and Shi-A and Shi-Woo's father. He also says that he won't be giving up on his "dream," which is clarified in the following episode, when he meets Da-Jung instead of going to the last basketball game that would solidify his spot on the Hankuk University team:

Dae-Young: Just like you said, I'm not going to lose my chance. You think by giving up on basketball, I'm making another sacrifice. Back then, there was a time I had the same thought. After getting younger, at first, I was happy to be able to play basketball again. But…

[Flashes back to when Shi-A took her first steps]

Seeing our kids take their first steps made me happier than when I won a basketball game.

[Flashes back to when Shi-A said "Dad" for the first time]

Hearing our kids call me "Daddy" made me happier than when I was announced as an MVP. I didn't realize how precious those moments were, and every time

> *things got hard, I became a fool and regretted what happened 18 years ago. I asked myself, "Would I have been happy if I didn't give up on basketball?" I always dreamed of the life I never lived. However, I know now what kind of life I want. Da-Jung, you didn't ruin my life. You gave me a chance. And my decision back then was the best decision of my life. I won't miss out on that chance.*
>
> *18 Again*, Episode 16

Even though Da-Jung believes she ruined her husband's life by telling him she was pregnant, Dae-Young says his life is not her fault, but rather all thanks to her. In this heartfelt confession, Dae-Young reveals that he does not consider choosing Da-Jung and the kids to be a sacrifice anymore, indicating that he now truly values his family more than anything. Though his former sacrifices may have been out of responsibility, this last choice he makes is out of genuine love for his family and the relationship he has with them.

Just like Dae-Young says Da-Jung gave him a chance, Mike also calls this choice he made a second chance with Scarlet. However, this "chance" Dae-Young says Da-Jung gave him includes the opportunity to be a father, which is established through the reconciliation of his relationship with Shi-Woo and Shi-A and the memories he looks back on during his confession. Mike's speech, on the other hand, leans much closer to a recommitment to Scarlet as her husband rather than as a father in their family, which can be identified through the fact that she remains as the focus of his entire confession. Aside from this confession, however, many viewers could assume that Mike is just returning to his relationship with Scarlet as a result of the fact that there is little explanation and development on Mike's relationship recovery with his children. In addition, right before the final scene of the film, Mike even decides to continue pursuing a

basketball scholarship after he thinks his chance to mend his relationship with Scarlet is gone, which further confirms that his children are not clearly depicted to be a part of the reason behind why he gives up basketball again. The drama, on the other hand, makes it very clear that Dae-Young is choosing his entire family over basketball, as can be seen in the several scenes and conversations above, making family a central theme to his personal development.

Many of the changes and additions that are made to *18 Again* are done with the intention of extending an hour-and-a-half plot into a full, 16 episode drama. However, my analysis of these scenes make it clear that they do not just serve the purpose of extending the story. The added flashbacks continuously remind the audience of the sacrifice Dae-Young and Da-Jung initially made, carrying this theme throughout the entire drama and further emphasizing the idea of parental sacrifice to the young target audience. Through these shows of the characters' personal sacrifices, the audience can better understand the reasons behind the characters' actions and also emotionally engage with them on a deeper level by applying the drama's situations to their own lives. The drama actually also shifts the focus of the general plot from what was simply the main character's journey in recuperating his relationship with his wife to a story about a broken family coming back together, which is shown through the way Dae-Young resolves his personal relationship with his children as their father. As a result, the drama conveys a message about healing and love among family members through Dae-Young. This hopeful message about family is largely a result of the drama being a romantic comedy, an inherently lighthearted genre. Granted, the drama does not disregard the romantic love that is needed to make it a romantic comedy by showing how Dae-Young and Da-Jung's broken romantic relationship is mended. However, the drama broadens the scope of the main character's journey from what was originally between him and his wife to being about how his entire family reconnects with one

another as a unit, ultimately connecting the message to the genre and stirring the family-centric sentiment that touches the viewers' hearts.

Melodrama: *Doctor Foster* & *The World of the Married*

The World of the Married is one of the Korean melodrama remakes of an Anglophone story that distinctly shows Korean familial values through the story. This is not only because most remakes are about crime or justice, but also because this drama deals with the idea of divorce and depicts several different aspects of it, ones that can be specifically found in Korean society. From the reason for the husband's affair to the guilt the divorced couple's child feels towards his mother, the remake accentuates several ideas that were also in the original or it changes some of the characters' motivations for their actions to better fit the story to the Korean context. These changes and additions are made to adapt the British story to Korea and also to show the audience certain family-related issues that must be reformed.

Background

The 2020 hit *The World of the Married* was a Korean drama based on the BBC show called *Doctor Foster: A Woman Scorned*, which aired from Sept. 9, 2015-Oct. 3, 2017 for 10 episodes over two seasons on BBC One and BBC One HD.[200] The show was produced by Drama Republic and was produced by Mike Bartlett, Roanna Benn, Greg Brenman, Jude Liknaitzy, and Matthew Read. Mike Bartlett also wrote the script, Tom Vaughan directed season one, and Jeremy Loving directed season two. The Korean remake aired from March 27-May 16, 2020 for 16 episodes on cable channel JTBC. JTBC Studios acquired the rights for *Doctor Foster* in 2018,

[200] "Doctor Foster (TV Series 2015-2017)." *IMDb*, 9 Sept. 2015, www.imdb.com/title/tt4602768.

which then helped produce the remake in collaboration with BBC Studios.[201] Mike Bartlett, who helped create and produce the original BBC version, is also credited with creating and writing for the Korean version as well.[202]

Doctor Foster was very successful after its release and won several awards including Best New Drama and Best Drama Performance at the 2016 National Television Awards. It won those same awards in the 2018 National Television Awards, after the second season aired. Suranne Jones, who played the main female lead, also won Best Actress at the Broadcasting Press Guild Awards, Royal Television Society Awards, and the British Academy Television Awards.[203] Due to its success, the series was also aired in other countries, including Australia, New Zealand, France, Poland, Sweden, Finland, the U.S., and Spain. It also aired in Korea as well from Jan. 25, 2016-Jan. 9, 2018 on the national broadcast channel KBS 1TV, which was not long before the rights were bought for the remake.[204]

The World of the Married was also extremely successful in Korea; the last episode earned the highest viewership ratings ever for a Korean cable network.[205] While the previous record was from the 15th episode of the series (24.44%), the show overcame its own achievement with a nationwide rating of 27.37%. This rating is even considered difficult for dramas on national broadcasting companies to achieve, making it a very notable accomplishment for a show that aired on a cable network. The Korean version was also made available internationally, though this was mostly done through streaming platforms, like Viu, Iflix, and Netflix. The Philippines even released a dubbed version of the show, retitling it "The World of a Married Couple."

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[201] "Hit BBC Drama Doctor Foster Set for South Korea Remake." In *Media Centre* (2018), www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/bbcstudios/2018/Doctor-Foster-South-Korea-remake.
[202] *The World of the Married* was directed by Mo Wan-Il and Kim Sung-Jin, created by Kang Eun-Kyung, written by Joo Hyun, and produced by Park Joon-Seo, Kim Ji-Yeon, Kim Se-Ah, Kim Ye-Ji, and Park Woo-Ram.
[203]"Roll Call of Winners 1995–2021," *National Television Awards*.
[204] Ji-young Lee, "JTBC, '부부의 세계' 끝나면 원작 '닥터 포스터' 내보낸다," (*The JoongAng*, 2020).
[205] E. Cha, "'The World Of The Married' Ends By Smashing Its Own Record For Highest Drama Ratings In Cable TV History," (*Soompi*, 2020).

Dreamscape Entertainment of the Philippines later announced their own remake of *The World of the Married*, which is to be renamed *The Broken Marriage Vow*.[206]

The plot of the Korean remake is very similar to the original; while there are some additions and smaller adjustments, *The World of the Married* (*TWOM* from here on out) included all of the major scenes and plot points that were in the BBC version. Both shows trace the life of a successful and satisfied doctor who finds that her husband had been cheating on her with a much younger woman. The betrayal is made very clear in the beginning of both series, so the remainder of the episodes show the ways the main character's life falls apart and changes as a result of her discovering this truth.

In the preview press conference for *TWOM*, Mo Wan-Il cites that the main difference between the original and the remake is that *Doctor Foster* focused more on the main character while the Korean version portrayed "a whirlwind of emotions to rage around the main character and the people around her."[207] He says that in order to make it more Korean, he tried to "delve into stories of relationships, focusing on love, marriage, and married couples" and that the drama would "go deep into things related to married couples."[208] The script was said to be so different and so "Koreanized" that Kim Hee-Ae, the actress playing the role of the main female character, "could not think of the original version anymore."[209]

In *Doctor Foster*, the main female lead that Suranne Jones plays is named Gemma Foster. Her husband is Simon Foster and the child they share is named Simon Foster. The young woman that Simon cheats on Gemma with is named Kate Parks and Gemma's close friend at work is

[206] Mega Entertainment, "'The World Of The Married' Filipino Remake Has Unveiled Its Full Cast. Here's Who's Portraying Who," (*MEGA Entertainment*, 2021).
[207] Ji-Won Choi, "[Herald Review] How 'World of Married' Escaped Being Cliche Love Affair Story," (*The Korea Herald*, 2020).
[208] Bo-ram Park, "JTBC Drama Series 'The World of the Married' on Track to Become Rare Hit Remake," (*Yonhap News Agency,* 2020).
[209] *Ibid.*.

named Ros Mahendra.[210] Though Gemma, Simon, Tom, and Kate are the four characters that are at the center of the drama, Ros is also important in affecting Gemma and her state of mind as she navigates through this period in her life.

In TWOM, Gemma Foster is renamed Ji Sun-Woo, her husband is Lee Tae-Oh, and their son is Lee Joon-Young. Tae-Oh engages in an affair with Yeo Da-Kyung and Ji Sun-Woo's best friend and coworker is named Sul Myung-Sook.[211] There are many more characters that the Korean remake introduces due to its extended length, but these are also the characters that affect Sun-Woo the most. An additional character that acts as a potential love interest for Sun-Woo and also greatly affects her relationship with her son is the psychiatrist at the hospital she works at named Kim Yoon-Ki, played by Lee Moo-Saeng. Though Gemma also has a new possible love interest in the second season, named James Mohan, he does not have as big of an effect on her and her decisions as Yoon-Ki does on Sun-Woo nor does he appear for very many episodes.

As a melodrama, many of the scenes and storylines in *TWOM* are highly sensationalized and clearly distinguish the "good" and "bad" characters, evoking very strong emotions from the viewers. The genre also lends to the emphasis of themes about morality, love, as well as family. Though the plot is very dramatized and exaggerated, many of the scenes and events are ones that could occur in reality, which is one reason why many of the family-centric themes reflect real-life issues and circumstances of Korean society. Melodramas normally have stereotypical characters, and though that can somewhat be applied to TWOM too, these characters' situations are used to display certain truths about family in Korea, especially with regards to divorce. In highlighting these divorce-related issues that are relevant to Korea, the drama not only creates

[210] "Doctor Foster (TV Series 2015-2017)," (*IMDb*, 2015)..
[211] "The World of the Married (TV Series 2020)," (*IMDb*, 2020).

points for the audience to relate to, but also raises awareness about certain aspects of society that need to be changed.

Overall Changes

The Korean remake shows much more of the characters' backgrounds and their individual situations aside from that of just Ji Sun-Woo herself. This can be attributed to the fact that the original was 10 episodes across two seasons while the remake was one season, but extended the total number of episodes to 16 episodes. While the original focuses predominantly on Gemma Foster and the obstacles she faces within her life and her relationships, the Korean version also shows some of the struggles the side characters experience in their individual lives. For example, the show displays Seol Myung-Sook's efforts to become the associate director of the hospital she works at as well as the discrimination she faces as a woman from Kong Ji-Cheol, her superior. In episode 11, Ji-Cheol criticizes Myung-Sook for being too ambitious for someone that is unmarried and doesn't even have family members to provide for. When Myung-Sook brings up Yoon-Ki, another candidate for the position of associate director who is also unmarried, Ji-Cheol says he is different because he is a man, a clear statement of gender discrimination. In *Doctor Foster*, Ros does not face this type of treatment at her work place at all. She actually does not get very much of her own storyline and remains as a surface-level character as she goes back and forth between supporting Gemma and Simon Foster amidst their conflicts. Therefore, this added storyline to Myung-Sook is new and reflects an aspect of Korean society that is not shown in the British one.

Additionally, *TWOM*'s plot is dramatized in a manner that is different from *Doctor Foster* in that the flow of events is uninterrupted, certain parts of the original are revised and amplified, and additional dramatic plotlines are added. All of these changes are used so the viewers can feel

more drastic emotions towards the characters, especially the "antagonists," Tae-O and Da-Kyung. In the original, Gemma decides to look over Simon's affair after his mother passes away and he is left devastated by the sudden loss. She also believes Simon's relationship with Kate to be over after she hears that Kate chose to have an abortion, contributing to this decision. However, she eventually decides to continue to pursue a divorce with him despite his mother's death after she finds that Simon is still seeing Kate and that Kate has not aborted their child. This short moment, which happens in episodes four and five, pauses Gemma's efforts to reveal the truth and end her marriage with Simon. However, in *TWOM*, while Tae-O's mother also passes away, Sun-Woo does not show as much hesitation in ending her relationship with her husband unlike Gemma. This is mostly because during his mother's funeral in episode three, Tae-O leaves the funeral home and meets Da-Kyung in her car, a scene that Sun-Woo witnesses for herself as well. As soon as she approaches the car and recognizes the people in it to be her husband and Da-Kyung, the two begin to kiss while Sun-Woo looks on in horror and shock at Tae-O's audacity to engage with Da-Kyung even at his mother's funeral, a fairly public event. This scene specifically elicits very strong emotions from both Sun-Woo and the audience, allowing Sun-Woo to take no hesitation in ending her marriage and the viewers to actively hate Tae-O and Da-Kyung.

Another aspect of the remake that is different and more dramatic than the original is the ways in which Tae-O tries to pressure Sun-Woo into leaving the town. In episode one of season two in *Doctor Foster*, one way Simon terrorizes Gemma is by sending a bouquet of flowers to her workplace with a note saying, "Bitch." While this act succeeds in instilling fear into Gemma, this example cannot compare to what Sun-Woo experiences in the remake: in episode eight of *TWOM*, Sun-Woo is at home when a masked man suddenly hits the security camera outside of

her home with a metal pipe and breaks into her home, dragging Sun-Woo by her hair and violently choking her on the floor of her kitchen. Though Sun-Woo manages to survive from this incident, she clearly experiences a much more terrifying experience than Gemma does. Though it is not initially clear that this act of terror was ordered by her ex-husband, we later discover that the masked man was Park In-Kyu working at the request of Tae-O. If Simon's act was one that focused on mentally affecting Gemma, Tae-O's act causes Sun-Woo to fear for her physical safety as well as that of her son's.

An additional plot point that aids in dramatizing the remake is when In-Kyu dies in episode eight. This scene causes all of the characters to become swept up in the case, especially since Tae-O is suspected to be the one that murdered In-Kyu as he is the last person In-Kyu was thought to have been with. Seeing this as his opportunity to force Sun-Woo out of the town Tae-O attempts to frame her for the murder. Eventually, Tae-O manages to escape the charges (thanks to Da-Kyung's father and Sun-Woo, ironically), and it is also later revealed that In-Kyu actually committed suicide. This part in the show is very different from the original and almost diverges from the original plot in that the sudden mystery of what might have been a murder case and the suspicions many characters had about Tae-O as the suspect cause the story to take an unexpected, very dramatic turn. However, this plot point is also utilized as a way for the audience to feel even more hatred and negative feelings towards Tae-O as well as more positive feelings for Sun-Woo who helped her cheating, threatening ex-husband, creating a deeper dichotomy of "good" and "bad" characters within the show.

Family-Centric Changes

Aside from these changes I mentioned, there are several other revisions and additions that have been made throughout the Korean remake to not only extend the series, but also show the

different motives and background stories the individual characters have, which falls in line with the goals producer Mo Wan-Il had in mind for the show. However, within these extended stories lie family-centric themes that highlight the "Koreanized" elements actress Kim Hee-Ae claims she saw when she first read the script.[212] One main example of this is the way the show exhibits several different aspects of divorce in Korea: the underlying causes for divorce, the opposition women face with divorce, and the guilt that children specifically face as a result of their parents' divorce.

From the very beginning of the show, the viewers can understand that Sun-Woo has what seems like a perfect life: a loving husband, an obedient son, a stable job, respect from her friends and coworkers, and so much more. However, as we see Tae-O interact with his friends and possible investors, it is clear that things are not as perfect for him as they are for his wife. In the first episode, right before the couple enters a venue for a gallery exhibition, Tae-O expresses his guilt towards Sun-Woo for being unable to financially provide for the family due to his business:

Sun-Woo: Why are you frozen?

Tae-O: Why? It's because I always feel sorry to you. I feel bad for making you worry about my mother too. You gave me so much support when I founded the company but it's still unstable. I never got to pitch in and pay for our living expenses. I just feel sorry about everything.

Sun-Woo: Do you?

Tae-O: Anyway, I'll make this project a huge success so I can repay you for all the hard work you've done.

[212] Bo-ram Park, "JTBC Drama Series 'The World of the Married' on Track to Become Rare Hit Remake," (*Yonhap News Agency,* 2020).

Through this conversation, viewers can tell that Tae-O feels a burden of guilt towards Sun-Woo, who had to provide for her family with her salary alone because his business was still very unstable. He also feels like he has to repay her for the help she provided him, despite the fact that they are married and created a family together, indicating that Tae-O believes in the traditional gender roles that sets males as the providers and women as the homemakers, with little overlap in their familial responsibilities. Tae-O thinks that because of his shortcomings and his inability to create a successful company, Sun-Woo has to financially provide for their family.

Though it is possible that Tae-O inherently has these beliefs as a character, it is also likely that he formed them as a result of the treatment he receives from the other powerful people around him. Later on in the same episode, Tae-O approaches Chairman Lee Kyoung-Young, Da-Kyung's father and a rich businessman Tae-O is hoping to get an investment from. However, after he introduces himself to the Chairman and a group of promising investors, he receives all but a glance. Watching from afar, Sun-Woo sees the awkward situation her husband is in and steps in to help him herself. Once Sun-Woo approaches the Chairman, his wife, Uhm Hyo-Jung recognizes her and introduces her to the Chairman as someone she is "greatly indebted to."[213] Once Sun-Woo introduces Tae-O as her husband as well as the regional event company he is running, the Chairman takes more of an interest and begins asking questions about him and his business. This interaction makes it clear that Tae-O has had to depend on Sun-Woo in this way several times before as a result of the higher social standing she has. Tae-O is very limited in the people and resources he can reach because his company is still small, causing Sun-Woo to step

[213] "Episode 1," *The World of the Married*, episode 1, JTBC Studios, 2020.

forward and help her husband get the connections he needs. This is also most likely how Sun-Woo has come to overshadow Tae-O as a person, causing Tae-O to feel guilt towards her.

Aside from the potential investors and connections that are clearly out of Tae-O's reach, he also faces pressure from his friends as they jeer and comment on his social position in relation to his successful wife. At Tae-O's birthday celebration in the following episode, the drama shows a tense conversation he has with Je-Hyuk and a few other friends:

Je-Hyuk: You don't know what true anxiety is, jerk.

Tae-O: What's wrong with you?

Je-Hyuk: I'm right. You don't have to worry about being fired, and your wife never nags that you don't make money. You live in luxury thanks to a rich and successful wife. Why are you anxious?

Tae-O: What do you know?

Je-Hyuk: Fill us in. Why is that successful and perfect Dr. Ji Sun-Woo so devoted to someone like you? Teach us your secret. (to others) Don't you want to know too?

Others: You're drunk. Stop it. This is a happy occasion.

Je-Hyuk: (to Tae-O) Explain it to me. How does she embrace your anxiety? Does she do her best day and night?

The World of the Married, Episode 2

The last comment Je-Hyuk makes causes Tae-O to unleash his anger and punch him, leading to a physical altercation between the two. Je-Hyuk speaks his lines in a mocking way, obviously because he is deliberately trying to provoke Tae-O with these questions and

comments. But Tae-O's reaction shows that his financial dependence on Sun-Woo is not just a source of guilt for him but also an insecurity. This insecurity can therefore most likely explain his reason for his affair because it follows Yean-Ju Lee's father's provider anxiety theory. Because Tae-O is not fulfilling what he believes to be his role as the "provider" of the family, he searches for other ways to fill this gap between the ideal and reality, resulting in an affair that can qualify as a "compensatory manhood act."[214]

The original also shows that Simon has certain insecurities in relation to Gemma. These insecurities are not founded on differences between their financial income though. Gemma does discover Simon had been keeping his business's true financial dealings a secret from her, but there is little indication that shows there is a stark difference in their financial contributions like there is in the drama. As a result, the reason for Simon's affair with Kate is just described as a habit he always had. Jack, Gemma's ex-coworker, says that Simon used to sleep with a different girl every other week when he was younger, expressing how his affair did not surprise him. Jack also brings up how Simon's father also had an affair and left his mother as a result of it, saying that "Sons are their fathers."[215] When Gemma confronts Ros about this information (because she went to high school with him), Ros confesses that she was "surprised it took him so long" to cheat on Gemma.[216] Through this information other people provide Gemma, it is clear that Simon's affair is simply a result of his character, not because of any other external reasons like the drama exhibits. This also supports my claim that the remake includes these examples of Tae-O's provider anxiety as a reflection of a real phenomenon in Korean society.

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[214] Yean-Ju Lee, "Men's Provider Anxiety," in *Divorce in South Korea: Doing Gender and the Dynamics of Relationship Breakdown* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2020), pp. 42.
[215] "Episode 2," *Doctor Foster*, created by Mike Bartlett, season 1, episode 2, Drama Republic, 2015.
[216] *Ibid*..

In addition to the very gender-specific reasons for Tae-O's personal struggles, the drama also shows the contemplations Sun-Woo has about divorce and the opposition she faces from the surrounding characters. Unlike the original, which shows little to no opposition to Gemma's divorce, the remake includes a variety of opinions about divorce despite the fact that Sun-Woo is considering this decision because Tae-O was cheating on her, something that may automatically warrant divorce in other societies. However, this serves to show a glimpse of the realistic contemplations and resistance a woman in this position must face. One of the first instances in which Sun-Woo experiences a negative opinion about divorce is when Sun-Woo confronts her mother-in-law about Tae-O's affair. The following conversation shows the mother-in-law's clear bias towards her son:

Mother-in-law: What brings you here?

Sun-Woo: What should I do? [...] You had a hunch too, didn't you? You knew Tae-O had another woman.

Mother-in-law: Sun-Woo, I-

Sun-Woo: You knew everything, yet you want me to take care of Tae-O? How could you do that to me?

Mother-in-law: I told him to get things sorted out without telling you. Tae-O promised he would too. What else can I do?

Sun-Woo: It's too late to sort things out. That woman is pregnant.

Mother-in-law: He told me he would protect his family no matter what. He said he would never leave his child like his father did. It'll be fine as long as you can stay strong. Just forgive him for this single mistake. If you forgive him, it'll all pass.

Sun-Woo: A "single mistake"? You resented your husband all your life. How could you tell me to forgive him?

Mother-in-law: You're a mother too. If Joon-Young did the same thing, do you think you'd be any different? You have to forgive him if you care about the future of your child.

The World of the Married, Episode 3

As can be seen through this conversation, Tae-O's mother not only already knows about her son's affair and kept it a secret from Sun-Woo, but she also asks Sun-Woo to forgive Tae-O despite having suffered from a cheating husband herself. This is very different from *Doctor Foster* because in a parallel scene, Simon's mother reveals she is also aware of her son's affair, yet she first apologizes to Gemma *because* she has experienced the same thing.[217] Despite taking her son's side by keeping his secret, she still acknowledges that he betrayed Gemma and apologizes on his behalf, something that is completely absent in the Korean version. The absence of this apology shows Tae-O's mother's refusal to acknowledge that her son betrayed Sun-Woo, even though this is something he caused through his actions. The remainder of Gemma and her mother-in-law's conversation is also about Simon's right to know about his child Kate is carrying, not the matter of divorce or separation. This conversation indicates that this topic is not a matter of questioning or opposition like it is in the remake, which is entirely about Tae-O's mother trying to convince Sun-Woo to reconsider in an attempt to "protect" her son from being divorced and losing his family.

Tae-O's mother even goes as far as to blame Sun-Woo for the affair as she makes a final statement before Sun-Woo leaves: "My son lived a tiring life while living with someone so high

[217] "Episode 2," *Doctor Foster*, created by Mike Bartlett, season 1, episode 2, Drama Republic, 2015.

and mighty like you. You can't blame Tae-O. You didn't give him any space to breathe. He wouldn't have cheated on you if you allowed him."[218] Even though Tae-O's affair is a result of his male provider anxiety and the threat he felt to his gender role, this line shows how Tae-O's mother does not see her son's faults and thinks Sun-Woo shortcomings are entirely to blame for the break in their relationship.

Tae-O's mother's accusation towards Sun-Woo is an opinion that can commonly be found in Korea, though much more so several years ago when divorce was more stigmatized and its causes were always attributed to the wife, not the husband. However, just as can be seen through this scene, there are still many people that believe in this idea that women are always the cause of divorce. The viewers can tell through Tae-O's mother's lines that she has a more conservative outlook on marriage, especially seeing how she says Sun-Woo and Tae-O should not separate to "protect" the family and Joon-Young's future, another very popular idea that prevents couples from divorcing. The changes that were made in Sun-Woo and her mother-in-law's conversation are therefore made to show the bias mothers have towards their own children (even if they make mistakes that hurt others) and the difficult mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relationships that exist in Korea in addition to the resistance women experienced about divorce.

Another example in which Sun-Woo experiences an opposing opinion is during her conversation with Myung-Sook. When Sun-Woo asks her friend if she should get a divorce, Myung-Sook's first response is to ask, "Do you think you can live as a divorced woman?"[219] This single question indicates that there are many consequences Sun-Woo would suffer from as a woman, which Myung-Sook details in the following lines:

[218] "Episode 3." *The World of the Married*, episode 3, JTBC Studios, 2020.
[219] "Episode 3." *The World of the Married*, episode 3, JTBC Studios, 2020.

Myung-Sook: Sure, [divorce has] become a lot more common. But why do you think divorced women are reluctant to tell people that they're divorced? You don't know how much it sucks to live as a divorced woman, do you? Tae-O may be the one cheating while you did nothing wrong, but people will still badmouth you behind your back. People will wonder what your problem is and be suspicious of whom you meet every night. Even you were suspicious of Tae-O's secretary because she was a divorcee. My mom went through the same thing. After she got a divorce, she went through so much and got judged by everyone as she raised me on her own. But on the other hand, my dad got remarried and lived happily ever after with his young wife. Karma? Justice? They're all lies. The woman is the only one whose life is ruined after divorce. So, think hard before you make a decision. Okay?

The World of the Married, Episode 3

As Myung-Sook tries to warn Sun-Woo about the difficulties she will experience from getting divorced, the viewers get a glimpse of the treatment a divorced woman may experience in Korea, a conversation that is not included in the original. In the beginning of episode four, after Gemma decides to look over Simon's affair, Ros actually expresses her disbelief in Gemma's ability to change her mind so quickly, saying, "After everything, how can you simply take him back?" as if she couldn't imagine doing the same thing.[220] Ros even conveys her doubts about Simon having ended his relationship with Kate to which Gemma defends her husband and says she believes he did. Unlike Myung-Sook, who discourages Sun-Woo from choosing divorce, Ros continuously shows that she doesn't understand how Gemma could choose to keep their

[220] "Episode 4." *Doctor Foster*, created by Mike Bartlett, season 1, episode 4, Drama Republic, 2015.

marriage despite knowing the circumstances. Myung-Sook and Ros are both sharing their opinions and concerns from a point of trying to protect their friends from getting hurt. The only difference is that the setting and the social trends specific to each setting cause them to have different opinions: Myung-Sook is aware of the prejudices divorced women face and therefore is warning Sun-Woo of them while Ros is aware of Simon's habits and how untrustworthy he is, causing her to urge Gemma to reconsider her decision. Though it is true that divorce has become much more common in Korea as Myung-Sook said, it is also true that divorced women still face many prejudices because the country is transitioning between traditional, gender-defining ideas and newer, more egalitarian ones, which is why Myung-Sook's warnings are still justified.

Aside from depicting the specific causes for divorce as well as the opposing opinions about divorce in Korea, *TWOM* also exhibits the effects that divorce has on parent-child relationships, as can be seen through Joon-Young's internal guilt about his parents' divorce. This guilt, however, is geared more towards Sun-Woo than Tae-O as a result of Da-Kyung's provocation. In episode 12, Da-Kyung meets with Joon-Young to convince him to move in with his father, which would give Sun-Woo more of a reason to leave the town and the family Da-Kyung is trying to create for herself. In this conversation, Da-Kyung plants the idea that Sun-Woo actually wants to leave the town because of some malicious rumors that accuse her of making In-Kyu commit suicide:

> *Da-Kyung: If I were your mom, I'd want to leave this place. She probably says she's okay, but I'm sure it's hard to bear with those rumors. There's only one reason why she can't leave. It's you. She's enduring all this for your sake because she's a mom. It's because she's a mom.*

The World of the Married, Episode 12

Da-Kyung then proceeds to recommend that Joon-Young move in with her and his father to allow Sun-Woo to leave the town and start a better life in a new place. Joon-Young responds by asking, "Are you telling me to abandon my mom and live with my dad?", to which Da-Kyung says she is simply telling him to think about what is best for both him and his mom.[221] Da-Kyung's strategy proves to be successful as the drama later shows Joon-Young packing his things and moving out of his home with Sun-Woo. Viewers can also see that Joon-Young's guilt is the reason for this decision through the last conversation he has with his mother before he leaves:

> *Joon-Young: I thought it over, and I feel like you can't live a comfortable life because of me.*
>
> *Sun-Woo: How could you say that? I live for you.*
>
> *Joon-Young: Don't live for me. The more you do that, the harder it is for me. I can live with Dad. I think that would be best for both you and me.*

The World of the Married, Episode 12

As can be seen through this conversation, Joon-Young's motivation for leaving his mother and moving in with his father is solely the guilt he feels towards Sun-Woo. This guilt that Joon-Young has causes him to make a sacrifice for his mother, so she can live what he thinks would be a better life. This is very different from the reason behind why Tom moves in with Simon in *Doctor Foster*. In the original, Simon tells Tom about the postnatal depression Gemma

[221] "Episode 12." *The World of the Married*, episode 12, JTBC Studios, 2020.

suffered from after having him, which hurts Tom and causes him to leave his home with her. Unlike the original, which uses pain to move Tom from Gemma's home to Simon's, the remake uses guilt, therefore making Joon-Young's decision to leave Sun-Woo an act of "sacrifice" for his mother.

Joon-Young's actions in this scene arguably also fall in line with the idea of individual sacrifice in that he gives up his own desires to grant Sun-Woo "freedom" from the malicious rumors she is suffering from as well as her responsibilities as a mother. Joon-Young believes that doing so would give his mother freedom and independence to live the life that she wants, unaware that Sun-Woo only cares about him. This guilt Joon-Young has roots back to episode eight, however, as he believes his parents' divorce is because of him. Unlike the original, which shows that Gemma reveals Simon's affair to Tom herself, Joon-Young actually finds out about Tae-O's relationship with Da-Kyung at his father's birthday party when he accidentally records them kissing. Appalled at what he sees, Joon-Young throws the memory card away to hide the truth from his mother. Sun-Woo later gets the memory card from someone who found it, which Joon-Young finds in her room. This causes him to believe that Sun-Woo found out about Tae-O's divorce through the footage he took though she actually found out on her own terms. As a result, Da-Kyung's conversation with Joon-Young regenerates the initial guilt he had about his parents' divorce, so he acts out of obligation to mend his "mistake."

Joon-Young's feelings of guilt are ones that cannot be found in *Doctor Foster* and in Tom. This is most likely because the plot does not create any room for Tom to believe his parents divorced because of him and he therefore does not feel guilt. In addition, Tom's reason for moving in with Simon is completely different from Joon-Young's reason for moving in with Tae-O, which is entirely based on this personal responsibility he feels towards Sun-Woo's "lack"

of freedom. There is another difference, however, in Tom's reaction when Gemma says she works and lives for him and Joon-Young's reaction when Sun-Woo says she lives for him. In episode five of season one, Tom expresses his discontentment at the lack of time Gemma spends with their family, saying that this is why his father had an affair. Gemma explains she had to earn money for their family because Simon was not earning enough, but Tom still says he likes Simon more because he was physically there for him. The drama also shows that Joon-Young and Tae-O spend more time with each other as a father and son than Joon-Young does with Sun-Woo, but there is no indication that Joon-Young shares Tom's complaints. Unlike Tom, Joon-Young understands that his mother needs to work to provide for their family since his father cannot. Therefore, he does not express any complaints about Sun-Woo's absence like Tom does. After the divorce, however, Sun-Woo experiences many hardships, whether they have to do with Tae-O's return to the town, the anonymous threats she receives, or the rumors she suffers from. As Joon-Young witnesses this, it touches the unresolved guilt he has about his parents' divorce and grows it. Joon-Young feels this guilt because he thinks he not only needs to make up for his "mistake," but also because he thinks he needs to repay his mother for everything that she is doing for him as a single and divorced woman. Therefore, Joon-Young thinks that the solution is for him to live with his father and relieve Sun-Woo of her responsibilities as a mother, which he thinks is causing her stress. He personally sacrifices his own desire to live with his mother and decides to live with Tae-O and Da-Kyung despite the fact that he still feels uncomfortable with his father's new wife, just so Sun-Woo can live happily, showing how Joon-Young's decisions align with the Korean value of individual sacrifice for the family.

Through these examples, it is clear that the familial themes exhibited in *TWOM* are closely related to divorce and display what divorce in Korea really looks like. Though *18 Again*

also discusses divorce through Dae-Young and Da-Jung's experience, the plot focuses much more on the way in which Dae-Young restores his relationship with each of his family members than the real consequences of divorce. Instead, *TWOM* highlights several different aspects of the characters' divorce, including the reason behind Tae-O's affair, the opposition Sun-Woo faces with her decision to divorce her husband, and the choices Joon-Young makes as a result of the guilt he experiences as a child of divorced parents. Though some of these topics are also discussed in the original series, they are changed to better fit the Korean social context and therefore garner more empathy from the viewers.

As a result of these changes, viewers can find points within the drama that they can also spot in their personal lives or their surrounding situations. In fact, the topics about Tae-O's male provider anxiety and the negative opinions Sun-Woo receives from the surrounding characters about divorce address important social issues within Korea that need to be changed. Tae-O's personal storyline depicts a burden that many husbands feel in today's Korean society, showing how the pressure of set gender roles can harm a marriage, especially with the rapidly changing environment. Sun-Woo's experience with other people's objections for her divorce also spotlights the possible consequences divorced women face while additionally explaining why many women might feel hesitant about undergoing a legal separation. Through these changed details, the drama not only allows the Korean audience to better understand and relate to the story, but it also brings certain social issues to the viewers' attention by spotlighting aspects of Korean society that require reform. The message about Joon-Young's sacrifice, however, is not necessarily an "issue" like the other themes, but it does serve as a depiction of reality, more so than the types of sacrifice that are depicted in *Life on Mars* and *18 Again* because it is not as

dramatic or extreme. Instead, these scenes are applied to the story to show how the parents' separation can affect the child.

This realistic illustration of all of these themes is made possible through the melodramatic genre of the drama, which allows for more serious and authentic topics like the ones above to represent reality and raise awareness about important social issues. This is especially true because the drama delves deeply into a topic that is still fairly stigmatized in Korean society. Despite the fact that certain details of the drama are highly dramatized, these depictions of divorce and family are fairly authentic to Korean society, especially compared to the representations of family from the other texts I have analyzed. Rather than relaying a specific message about family, it seems as though these scenes are simply there to show the current family-related issues that exist as well as the values people have.

Chapter Four: Conclusion

When examining the aforementioned family-centric scenes within the three drama remakes *Life on Mars*, *18 Again*, and *The World of the Married*, there are several similarities with the types of scenes that are included and the purpose these scenes have. Across all the dramas, sacrifice is a very important idea that is emphasized and included in a variety of ways. *Life on Mars* displays sacrifice in the most extreme way through the false confession case. Although *18 Again* does not show sacrifice in as much of a drastic context and implements it in situations that are closer to reality, it is still very idealistic and emotionally-driven, like those in *Life on Mars*. *The World of the Married*'s depiction of sacrifice arguably lacks emotion the most out of the three dramas and portrays familial sacrifice in a more subtle way than the other

examples. Though sacrifice is included in each of these dramas, the general familial theme that they each focus on is different.

The familial scenes in *Life on Mars* are generally portrayed in a very positive light, but they especially emphasize the importance of parenthood. Tae-Joo's storyline about his relationship with his father and the case about the murdered father are used to show an alternative perspective to what children see of their fathers, demonstrating the unseen efforts that fathers make. The other case in which the mother makes a false confession to protect her daughter underscores motherhood in addition to familial sacrifice and shows the unrelenting and willing love they have for their children. These additions and changes can be interpreted as ones that serve the purpose of enhancing the audience's emotional engagement with the story and diversifying the range of emotions they feel throughout the series. This is because the ideas about parenthood are portrayed in a very idealistic and maybe even unrealistic way, especially considering how the second case is a very extreme one. The drama expresses family in this manner because these themes are specifically added to evoke certain emotions out of the viewers, ones that they may not be able to feel in other parts of the story that are closely tied to the crime/police procedural genre. These family-centric scenes and values are not normally a part of the genre, however, and are additions or changes that were made to better fit the story to Korea and to elicit specific emotions from the viewers. Therefore, these optimistic familial themes and ideas depicted in the remake are partly a result of the drama's genre itself.

The family-centric changes in *18 Again* are also very idealistic like the ones in *Life on Mars*, but they show different aspects of family. Though there are scenes that discuss parenthood and sacrifice, there is a greater concentration on the restoration of the father's relationship with his wife and children and the way they come back together as a family. Despite the fact that the

main couple undergoes a divorce, this is mostly used as a tool to depict how they overcome their problems and reunite with one another and their children. As a result, the general sentiment of the drama is one that remains positive and hopeful of the family's eventual reunion, therefore relaying an optimistic and idealistic message about family. The drama's scenes about sacrifice are all focused on the ones that parents make for their children, which is to remind the young target audience of the many things their parents gave up for them. Though all of the discussed scenes contribute to this idea, the flashbacks that show the sacrifices Dae-Young and Da-Jung made are also used to elicit empathy from the audience and increase their emotional experience, just as is done in *Life on Mars*. This is also because the scenes they depict are ones that touch a very sentimental chord in relation to parenthood for the Korean audience, though the ways this is expressed in *18 Again* is more realistic than is carried out in the crime drama. The drama's general ideas about family and the restoration of the main character's family are also very closely related to the fact that this drama is a lighthearted romantic comedy. Because the overall storyline is a very positive and idealistic one, the remake's themes about parental sacrifice and reunification as well as the message it conveys to the audience are just as optimistic.

Unlike the above two dramas, *The World of the Married* approaches family in a much more serious and arguably realistic manner. This is because this drama deals with the topic of divorce and focuses on the causes and consequences of familial separation. Unlike *18 Again*, which also examines a divorced family but concentrates on their reestablishment as a unit, *The World of the Married* dissects several different sides of divorce itself. This is done in a fairly demonstrative and objective way as none of the changes convey a certain message about family or what it should look like as the other dramas do through their idealistic portrayals. Because of this, *TWOM*'s changes about family are also not included to evoke the same emotions as the

other dramas, but rather to show situations that viewers might personally relate to and to spotlight certain aspects of divorce that are connected to larger social issues, such as the inflexibility of gender roles or the prejudices divorced women face. Though this is arguably also done in *18 Again* and the brief portrayal of different struggling couples, these matters about divorce are much more obvious in *TWOM*. This drama's genre affects its family-related scenes and themes in that the serious nature of the genre itself provides more space for heavy and stigmatized topics like divorce to be realistically represented.

The different messages and impressions of each of the dramas can also be closely tied to their differences in genre. *18 Again* and *Life on Mars* both depict family in a very hopeful and positive light with a strong theme about what an ideal family is. But family is not the main theme or focus of *Life on Mars*. Instead, the mystery and the cultivation of the team's unity is the predominant premise of the drama, so despite being an important theme, the scenes about family are included to diversify the range of emotions the audience can feel while watching the drama. *18 Again*, however, discusses the growth and development a family experiences and places it at the forefront of the story. This is because the drama's genre naturally calls for a lighter, more positive narrative that will uplift and encourage the viewers. *The World of the Married* on the other hand is largely focused on the conflicts and struggles that occur in Sun-Woo's life because the genre is "drama" itself. Therefore, the portrayals of family and divorce are slightly more realistic and sobering despite some of the dramatic elements that are added. It is clear, however, that the types of family-centric themes that are added or the messages these dramas convey about family are also dependent on the genre of each drama.

As can be seen in the current research that has been completed about family in Korea and the depiction of different families in Korean dramas, Korea is not just a "traditional" or

"conservative" family as many people may first believe. Though it may seem that way in comparison to countries that are more egalitarian or progressive, Korea is ever-changing and growing in a way that is unlike any other country. These changes are a result of the special and sudden economic growth the country experienced over the past few centuries, especially in the context of social changes related to family. These specific social changes and unique characteristics of Korean familial ideals have been incorporated into these adaptations of Anglophone stories, clearly showing how these values are different from the countries these narratives originated from. At the same time, however, it is clear that Korea still holds sacrifice to be an incredibly important aspect of family and society as can be seen through its prevalence in all three texts. This also shows which elements of family Korea are maintained and which elements are changing over time.

Though this study is an analysis of family-centric themes in three Korean remakes of three different genres, the reasons for including such themes and the intended messages behind them should not be limited to my conclusions above. Several conclusions that I have made may be applicable to other Korean dramas that are not remakes, or there also may be several other remakes that address family in different ways for purposes other than the ones I have recognized. But the main purpose of this research is to recognize the importance of family in Korean dramas and therefore its significance in Korean society as a whole, which I have completed through an in-depth comparison of stories that were originally made in English-speaking countries and their Korean recreations. This transcultural media analysis not only shows that Korean society considers family to be an important value, but it also conveys the current and specific ideals and issues that exist in the country during this time period. As a result, this gives us a better

understanding of Korea as a country and also allows us to hypothesize the direction that Korea's social matters will move in in the future.

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