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University of Southampton

Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Film Studies

The Representation of Breath in Contemporary South Korean Cinema

by

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Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

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The Representation of Breath in Contemporary South Korean Cinema

by Hee Young Chung

This thesis explores how 'breath' is represented in contemporary South Korean cinema and Korean art and culture more broadly, employing a theoretical framework that draws on phenomenological scholarship on embodied vision and sound. To this end, I expand on Davina Quinlivan's theorisation of the representation of breath in cinema in *The Place of Breath in Cinema* (2012). Quinlivan introduces three categories of the representation of breath in film: spatiality, inter-subjectivity and corporeality. While these three categories provide a significant foundation for and contribution to my study, my thesis proposes a fourth, sonic, dimension, which expands existing visual-centric terminologies. My thesis analyses six case studies from contemporary South Korean cinema to examine the representation of breath; these are *Jiseul* (2012), *Peppermint Candy* (1999), *Seopyeonje* (1993), *Festival* (1996), *Chunhyang* (2000) and *Intangible Asset No. 82* (2008). I argue that in terms of spatiality, inter-subjectivity and corporeality, the audio-visual representation of breath in contemporary South Korean cinema revolves around the protagonist, the film form and the spectator. In this respect, my thesis pays attention to culturally specific dimensions of contemporary South Korean cinema regarding the representation of breath, including the impact of historical trauma, the emotions of *han* and *sinmyeong*, as well as the principles of traditional art forms and cultural practices.

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Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

Print name: Hee Young Chung

Title of thesis: The Representation of Breath in Contemporary South Korean Cinema

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission

Signed:

Date:

Author's Note

In this thesis I use British English. I generally follow Revised Romanisation of Korean for translation or transliteration. However, titles and direct quotations follow the linguistic conventions of their source material. For instance, I do not edit the original book title *The 'Pusan' International Film Festival South Korean Cinema and 'Globalization'* while my own spelling of the two words 'Pusan' and 'Globalization' will be 'Busan' and 'Globalisation' (following the principle outlined above). To avoid confusion, I will also write Korean names (such as for academics, authors and directors) with Western name order—first name followed by family name. I also capitalise each syllable in first names, and separate each syllable with a hyphen: for instance, Kwon-Taek Im. In fictional cases, character names in a film, music, story and an art work are presented as in the source material. In these cases, some characters are only referred to by their first names, for instance, Song-Hwa. For another character Simchung, which is a combination of the family name Sim and the first name Chung, I do not use the Western name order or add a space between the family name and the first name. In references to the film *Chunhyang*, the main female protagonist's name is written as Chun-Hyang, while the film title is written as *Chunhyang*. This exception has been made due to the common usage of the character names in Korean, as well as to avoid confusion in recognising them. I use film titles in English while their original titles are noticed in footnote and filmography.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Context

Can the body be put at the centre of philosophical discourse? This question is posed to Western philosophy by the discipline of phenomenology. Our attention is consequently focussed on the significance of physicality and experience when it comes to discussing the reasons for our existence. My thesis adopts this focus, using phenomenological insights to analyse the textures of the embodiment of our senses. In particular, my thesis focuses on breath as a largely overlooked and complex phenomenon in and around cinema. I use the expression 'in and around cinema' throughout my thesis to refer to not only the diegetic world of the film, but also the nondiegetic time and space of the film, and the space between film and spectator.

Breath is one of the most essential elements of life. We cannot live without breathing and breathing allows us to maintain life. Breath can be viewed not only as a biological process, but also as evidence of life as it flows in and out of the body. Breathing connects the inside and outside of the body, regardless of its visibility and aurality. In other words, breath widens and connects the different spaces found within and around the body. Consequently, breath can be understood to encompass not only embodied audio-vision but also a transcendental dimension. This basic understanding of breath has affected my ideas of its aesthetic and phenomenological function in cinema. A phenomenological approach helps us to examine the embodied aspects of film images and sounds, as well as the spectator's experience of them. In this respect, breath is not static but dynamic: representations of breath enliven various bodies in and around cinema and therefore necessitate a more critical and comprehensive discourse of phenomenology in film studies.

Breath is also an indispensable feature of Korean art and culture. Whether it is revealed extrinsically or not, it is one of the most important elements of the Korean way of thinking, speaking and performing. Koreans tend to consider breath as an origin of the energy which generates physiological movement, formal aesthetics and the philosophical principles which govern the meaning and function of breath in our lives. Considering this, the way breath acts as a symbol of life and as a practical mode of expression in Korean art and culture is worthy of discussion.

Until now, phenomenological perspectives in film studies have rarely been applied to the Korean context. This thesis will consider both topics through discussion of the representation of breath in contemporary South Korean cinema. I will first present a general discussion of phenomenological

theory and cultural discourses in the Korean context, before moving on to more specific case studies. As a result of this, I will address questions of historical trauma and the emotions of *han* and *sinmyeong* in the Korean context. According to the American Psychological Association, 'trauma is an emotional response to a terrible event like an accident, rape or natural disaster.'¹ In addition, according to the Standard Korean dictionary, *han* is 'the very pressured emotional state of resentment, regret and grief,'² while *sinmyeong* is 'the exciting and pleasurable state.'³ While these definitions give a glimpse of how these words will be interpreted in this section, the concept of trauma will be elaborated in section 2.1 and I will explain the emotions of *han* and *sinmyeong* in more depth in section 1.2.4. I will also clarify my definition of the 'contemporary' period of South Korean cinema in section 1.2.5.

In this section I will argue that the concepts outlined above can be productively coupled with Quinlivan's phenomenological theory of three categories of breath in cinema: spatiality, inter-subjectivity and corporeality. In this thesis, I will argue that my case studies of historical trauma in contemporary South Korean cinema utilises the spatial construction of breath in diegesis. I will also argue there is a transcendental aspect to spatial representations of breath, since space has the power to evoke the memorialisation of traumatic events in a ritual manner. The second point of my argument pertains to the inter-subjective relations between various bodies of the protagonists, the film form and the spectator. This argument expands my interest in the emotion of *han*, which has a multi-layered meaning. Further, this argument will explore developments in the Korean context which require an inter-subjective lens to explain, for instance, a facet of the emotion of *han*: reconciliation. My last argument is that the content and form of film is recontextualised through representations of breath, as well as the principle of breath in the Korean context, in my case studies. Here, I foreground the emotion of *sinmyeong* as a driving force in the amplification of representations of breath evoking corporeality.

Of course, the representation of breath is not the main or exclusive focus of contemporary South Korean cinema. Nonetheless, it is a significant element which pays attention both to specific trauma and to the emotions of *han* and *sinmyeong* in the Korean context. My thesis will explore these themes in six representative South Korean films. Through my discussion of the representation of breath in contemporary South Korean cinema, I will provide an original

¹ "Trauma," American Psychological Association, accessed Aug 23, 2021, <https://www.apa.org/topics/trauma>.

² "Han" 한 [*Han*], Standard Korean Dictionary, accessed Aug 19, 2019, https://stdict.korean.go.kr/search/searchView.do?word_no=361886&searchKeywordTo=3.

³ "Sinmyeong" 신명 [*Sinmyeong*], Standard Korean Dictionary, accessed Aug 19, 2019, https://stdict.korean.go.kr/search/searchView.do?word_no=452217&searchKeywordTo=3.

contribution to both South Korean cinema studies and to phenomenological film studies. A phenomenological approach will facilitate my investigation into the use of representations of breath in contemporary South Korean cinema, as well as its relation to trauma and emotions in the Korean context. In addition to this, my discussion will be culturally grounded through an emphasis on the embodied and thematic usage of the principle and practice of breath in Korean arts and traditions.

1.2 Breath, Phenomenology, Cinema and Korean Context

1.2.1 Previous Research

Phenomenology is a philosophical movement that is commonly believed to have originated in the German philosopher Edmund Husserl's work in the early 20th century. Husserl considers experience to be a valuable tool for understanding our consciousness.⁴ This insight paved the way for a new understanding of philosophy that differed from the previous Cartesian tradition in Western philosophy which emphasised rational thinking as the methodology for understanding human consciousness. Subsequently, Martin Heidegger was influenced by Husserl's phenomenology and resultingly developed his own theory of ontology which focused on the nature of being.⁵ After these early developments in phenomenology in Germany, the movement then expanded to France via the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas.⁶ Levinas's introduction of phenomenology to France subsequently influenced many French philosophers. One such philosopher was Maurice Merleau-Ponty who went on to develop his theory of embodied vision,⁷ which had a significant impact on the phenomenological film scholarship that followed. Although this thesis will not engage directly with Merleau-Ponty's discourse of embodied vision, it is important to acknowledge that many subsequent phenomenological film theories were based on this scholarship, which opened up the discourse of a 'body' in and around film.

Even though it was not strictly part of the phenomenological tradition, French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari explore the concept of the 'haptic,' which provided another significant

⁴ Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, trans. John Niemeyer Findlay (1900; reis., London: Routledge. 2001).

⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (1927; reis., Albany: State University of New York Press. 2010).

⁶ Emmanuel Levinas, *The Theory of Intuition in Husserl's Phenomenology*, trans. André Orianne (1963; reis., Evanston: Northwestern University Press. 1995).

⁷ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (1964; reis., Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968).

foundation for the discourse of phenomenological film studies.⁸ According to the Oxford dictionary, the term 'haptic' means 'relating to the sense of touch, in particular relating to the perception and manipulation of objects using the senses of touch and proprioception.'⁹ Noël Burch considers the term 'haptic' to encompass the optical and spatial elements of film that 'touch' the spectator. He argues that a 'haptic' space is created through the development of depth of field 'with the movement of actors, camera placement and lighting.'¹⁰ However, Antonia Lant challenges Burch's conceptualisation of 'haptic', which confines its meaning to the 'spatial illusion'¹¹:

Within Burch's own frame haptic makes sense, but it has lost both the objective, self-contained, clearly bordered meaning of Riegl's (for an art that did not rely on deep shadow and illusion and that could frequently be almost as well-known through touch), and the visceral, crowding, physical, dislocating impact of Benjamin's as he adapts the concept to modernity.¹²

In other words, Lant expands the remit of 'haptic' beyond Burch's optical and spatial context, argument that sympathises with Deleuze and Guattari's usage of the term. Deleuze and Guattari address the concept of 'smooth space' and 'striated space': arguing that tactility and feeling are more important than optical vision in the former case and that this is reversed in the latter case.¹³ Deleuze and Guattari argue that the concept of 'smooth space' illuminates the idea of 'haptic' phenomenology, since 'smooth space' prioritised the proximal, while the optical sense prioritises the distant.¹⁴ Therefore, even though Deleuze and Guattari's theory will not be directly utilised in this project, theorisations of how the 'haptic' can be related to 'smooth space' and 'striated space' will form part of the conceptual foundation of this thesis.

Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's haptic theory and on the earlier phenomenological explorations of the body by Merleau-Ponty, Laura Marks developed a haptic theory in relation to embodied vision.¹⁵ Marks suggests that 'vision itself can be tactile, as though one were touching a

⁸ Gilles Deleuze, and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

⁹ "Haptic," Oxford Dictionary, accessed April 5, 2019, <https://www.lexico.com/definition/haptic>.

¹⁰ Noël Burch, *Life to Those Shadows*, trans. Ben Brewster (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 180.

¹¹ Antonia Lant, "Haptical Cinema," *October* 74 (1995): 71.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Gilles Deleuze, and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 474–500.

¹⁴ Davina Quinlivan, *The Place of Breath in Cinema*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 57.

¹⁵ Laura Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000).

film with one's eyes'—a notion she terms 'haptic visuality.'¹⁶ In her exploration, Marks emphasises the importance of the tactile and embodied aspects of images in 'smooth space' over the optical image in 'striated space.'¹⁷ Marks explains that 'in haptic visuality, the eyes themselves function like organs of touch.'¹⁸ Here, Marks does not entirely differentiate 'haptic visuality' and 'optical visuality', since she argues both share 'a dialectic movement from far to near.'¹⁹ However, she argues that 'haptic visuality' allows the viewer to immerse themselves into the moving image through their tactile vision, while 'optical visuality' stimulates the viewer's separation from the viewing object.²⁰ Her term, 'haptic visuality', elucidates an essential component of the tactile aspect of the visual component of film. This understanding will be instrumental to my own theoretical analysis of the corporeality of the representation of breath.

It is worth mentioning in this context that Laura Marks's contribution to phenomenological film studies extends beyond her haptic theory through her interest in various international contemporary arts and films. She investigates not only from a Western-cultural perspective but also applies an approach that involves multi-cultural contextualisation. She especially excavates how Islamic aesthetics influenced Western culture by analysing their classical and contemporary arts.²¹ Even though these two books are not directly utilised in this thesis, her inspirational exploration of international films and arts in her works should be highlighted as her multi-cultural perspective is discussed further in chapter 4.

In contrast to Marks's tactile theorisation of the filmic image in terms of 'haptic visuality,' Vivian Sobchack pays more attention to film's carnality as a lived body.²² Sobchack asserts that a film is an apparatus that resembles a human organ since the 'film body' presents not only the movements of images in the film but also lets the spectator perceive the metaphorical movements of the film as it develops.²³ Her interpretation of the film body as an organ provides further insight into the notion of breath, since the film body's functions as a living object implies that it might breathe. Sobchack compares the movement of image 'into and out of the film's material body to human respiration or circulation.'²⁴ By grasping film's corporeal characteristic as

¹⁶ Ibid., xi.

¹⁷ Ibid., xiv.

¹⁸ Ibid., 162.

¹⁹ Ibid., 163.

²⁰ Ibid., 162.

²¹ Laura Marks, *Enfoldment and Infinity: An Islamic Genealogy of New Media Art*, (London: MIT Press, 2010); Laura Marks, *Hanan al-Cinema: Affections for the Moving Image*, (London: MIT Press, 2015).

²² Vivian Sobchack, *The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

²³ Ibid., 206.

²⁴ Ibid., 207.

a living yet non-organic body, Sobchack's film theory argues that film takes on all the aspects of the rhythm and movement experienced by the human body. The tempo of a shot transition or duration of a shot, for instance, are examples of a film body breathing, and consequently creating rhythm. In other words, film reveal their breathing when their rhythms and movements are observed. Therefore, based on Sobchack's discourse of the film body, in this project, elements of a film's form, such as framing, camera movement and editing will be analysed as parts of the film's body that participate in the film's breath.

Just as the film body has been discussed above; the viewer's perceptive body is also another significant element in phenomenological film studies. Jennifer Barker, for instance, addresses the more specific tactility of the viewer's body in contrast to Sobchack's film body and Marks's 'haptic visuality'.²⁵ For Barker, the touch of an image on the body occurs not only on the skin but also on different regions such as the musculature and viscera. She argues that cinema is therefore experienced on different tactile levels which can be considered as different 'styles of being'.²⁶ Building on this point, Barker argues that the tactile effect of an image reaches beyond the surface of our body into the inner body as the spectator experiences 'haptic visuality.' Her elucidation of the viewer's tactile experience is useful because it foregrounds the possibility of a wider discussion of the proximal which accommodates the spectator's interaction with 'haptic visuality.'

The scholarship that I have briefly introduced above demonstrates the importance of considering the various bodies in and around film in phenomenological film studies. While the general conceptualisation of embodiment in and around film has been discussed already by these aforementioned researchers, Davina Quinlivan focuses specifically on the phenomenological analysis of breath in cinema,²⁷ and is therefore a key reference point for my own study. Quinlivan argues that 'the "bodies" that have come to represent the locus of breath in cinema have led [her] to question the extent to which breathing is involved in the representation of the human body in the film's content, form and the film experience as a whole.'²⁸ In other words, she sheds light on the movement of breath in and around various bodies of film, shedding light on not only the corporeality of breath in cinema, but also its spatiality and inter-subjectivity.

In addition to drawing on the scholarship mentioned above, Quinlivan adapts the French philosopher Luce Irigaray's philosophy of breath. In her research, Irigaray explores not only the

²⁵ Jennifer Barker, *The Tactile Eye: Touch and The Cinematic Experience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

²⁶ Barker, *The Tactile Eye: Touch and The Cinematic Experience*, 2.

²⁷ Davina Quinlivan, *The Place of Breath in Cinema*.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 168.

proximal and material aspects of the phenomenological approach to the embodiment, but also conveys a different sense of touch through the discussion of the invisible element. Irigaray delves into the 'tangible invisible', which can be seen as a challenge to Merleau-Ponty's *The Visible and The Invisible*.²⁹ While Merleau-Ponty focuses on the relationship between visibility and tangibility, Irigaray addresses 'the tangible invisible' via her theorisation of breath. Irigaray argues that 'touching upon requires breath, the safeguard of the presence of life and of its temporalization in a becoming of self non-destructive to the other.'³⁰ Quinlivan suggests that breath enables Irigaray's term 'caress', or 'the gesture of touch'³¹ (as phrased by Cathryn Vasseleu).³² Quinlivan develops her haptic theory by drawing on 'Irigaray's concept of the "caress" as a mode of tactile perception appropriate to breathing.'³³ In this respect, Irigaray's discourse on breath is different from Marks' 'haptic' theory because it encompasses the notion of the transcendental.³⁴ In my own research, while I do use the term 'haptic' when I examine the corporeality of the representation of breath, Irigaray's contemplation of breath will also be utilised in my explorations of other aspects of the representation of breath, such as spatiality and inter-subjectivity.

Overall, Quinlivan's phenomenological exploration and terminology pertaining to breath will be an important reference point in my thesis, since it contemplates the role of breath in cinema comprehensively considering both bodily perception and the transcendental aspect. Thus, I will now engage with some of Quinlivan's key theoretical terms in more detail.

The first concept that is important for developing an understanding of Quinlivan's theorisation of breath in cinema is the idea of 'elemental topographies', which Quinlivan defines as 'filmic spaces which are shaped precisely through their elemental depiction of air and breathing.'³⁵ In order to understand this term better, it is helpful to introduce another term, 'sensory refrain', which denotes 'an alternative logic of embodied space' which 'allows light and silence to pass through it.'³⁶ Quinlivan seems to use the word refrain in the context of 'a repeated line or number of lines in a poem or song, typically at the end of each verse'³⁷. Here, Quinlivan develops a sense of

²⁹ Luce Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, trans. Burke and Gillian C. Gill (1984; reis., New York: Cornell University Press, 1993), 151–84.

³⁰ Luce Irigaray, *I Love to You: Sketch for a Felicity within History*, trans. Alison Martin. (New York: Routledge, 1996), 125.

³¹ Cathryn Vasseleu, *Textures of Light: Vision and Touch in Irigaray, Levinas and Merleau-Ponty* (London: Routledge, 1998), 114.

³² Davina Quinlivan, *The Place of Breath in Cinema*, 28.

³³ *Ibid.*, 170.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 31.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 42.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 55.

³⁷ "Refrain," Oxford Dictionary, accessed June 4, 2021, <https://www.lexico.com/definition/refrain>.

breath as a logical action in the spatial sense, where air is seen to pass through an 'elemental topography.' Quinlivan specifies that the term 'refrain' suggests 'an interior consciousness or a contemplative "sigh".'³⁸ This latter description also indicates the possibility of a transcendental or spiritual aspect to breath in film, since 'sensory refrain' implies a spatial revelation of the representation of breath regarding life or divinity. This aspect of Quinlivan's argument differs from the phenomenological scholarship of Vivian Sobchack, Laura Marks and Jennifer Barker, who pay more attention to the bodily experience of breath—and therefore indicates Quinlivan's indebtedness to Irigaray. Regarding the spirituality of breath, Luce Irigaray argues: 'the teachings received from someone else can neither withdraw me from my breathing nor paralyse my breath, my soul, without separating me from my relation with the divine.'³⁹ In chapter 2, I will then develop Irigaray's view of breath as transcendental and Quinlivan's term 'elemental topography' (as well as its connection to notions of whiteness and silence in terms of 'sensory refrain') to further analyse the spatiality of the representation of breath.

As I have argued, Quinlivan's development of the terms 'elemental topography' and 'sensory refrain' as spatial representations of breath and air in film is indebted to Irigaray's theorisation of breath as spiritual, yielding insight into the internal workings of life. Quinlivan pays attention not only to the tactile aspect of breath, but also the spatial arousal of the characteristics of breath, such as interiority. While Quinlivan does not deny that breath can have a haptic dimension in cinema, she does also emphasise the interiority of breath. These ideas are useful to my project because they offer an insight into how the role of breath in cinema is not confined to tactile and sensual aspects but can be seen to expand into the transcendental dimension.

Another concept that will be crucial to my own argument is Quinlivan's term 'breathing visuality.' She explains that this term is 'a viewing experience that reacts and responds to the film's images,' and 'invites a sensual appreciation of the filmic foregrounding of breathing.'⁴⁰ While this explanation differs from Marks's term 'visuality of breath'—which denotes 'a way of looking which perceives through a breathing body'—'breathing visuality' emphasises the subjectivity of both the filmed body and the viewer.⁴¹ Further, while Barker's tactility focuses on 'embodied dimensions of cinematographic equipment,' Quinlivan pays attention to Irigaray's inter-subjectivity of breath between the film body and the viewer's body in cinema through use of the term 'breathing visuality.'⁴² Consequently, I will use Quinlivan's discourse of 'breathing visuality'

³⁸ Davina Quinlivan, *The Place of Breath in Cinema*, 55.

³⁹ Luce Irigaray, *Luce Irigaray: Key Writings*, (London: Continuum, 2004), 165.

⁴⁰ Davina Quinlivan, *The Place of Breath in Cinema*, 134.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 126.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 133–34.

in order to include and emphasise inter-subjectivity into my exploration of the representation of breath.

Before moving forward to the next section, I will highlight a significant characteristic of the phenomenological film studies discourse that will not be discussed further in this thesis. It must be acknowledged that the majority of phenomenological film studies scholars mentioned in this section are female, and that their discourse is therefore often at least partly, or even widely, influenced by gender studies and feminist approaches. In addition to the scholarship already mentioned above, Lucy Bolton's discourse on the filmic representation of female consciousness in dialogue with Irigaray's phenomenological thoughts needs to be acknowledged as an important feminist contribution to phenomenological film studies.⁴³ The suggestion of these gender perspectives enables phenomenological film studies to explore broader contexts than a unitary film theory. Hence, I will now introduce this issue briefly, before contextualising why I do not consider this matter further in my thesis.

Sobchack, for instance, points out that her work partially adopts a feminist perspective. She elaborates that her theory is not as 'an overtly feminist work', since it is open to other theoretic discourses beyond 'psychoanalytic or Marxist theory.'⁴⁴ Sobchack agrees with Jeffner Allen and Iris Marion Young, arguing that 'in regard to Merleau-Ponty's assumptions about the sexual subject, the assumption of the neutrality and universality of the subject devalues gender'⁴⁵ and also consent to Judith Butler, arguing that 'Merleau-Ponty's explicit avoidance of gender as a relevant concern in the description of lived experience, and his implicit universalisation of the male subject, are aided by a methodology that fails to acknowledge the historicity of sexuality and of bodies.'⁴⁶ Therefore, Sobchack argues 'it is not to Merleau-Ponty, but to a feminist philosopher that I [Sobchack] will turn for phenomenological descriptions of lived-body experience that is gender specific and historicized.'⁴⁷

Marks also 'prefers to see the haptic as a visual strategy that can be used to describe alternative visual traditions, including women's and feminist practices, rather than a feminine quality in particular.'⁴⁸ Quinlivan, also utilises feminist perspectives, but still includes Irigaray's discourse of

⁴³ Lucy Bolton, *Film and Female Consciousness: Irigaray, Cinema and Thinking Women*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

⁴⁴ Vivian Sobchack, *The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience*, xv.

⁴⁵ Jeffner Allen and Iris Marion Young, "Introduction," in *The Thinking Muse: Feminism and Modern French Philosophy*, ed. Jeffner Allen and Iris Marion Young (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989), 16.

⁴⁶ Judith Butler, "Sexual Ideology and Phenomenological Description: A Feminist Critique of Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*," in *The Thinking Muse: Feminism and Modern French philosophy*, ed. Jeffner Allen and Iris Marion Young (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989), 98.

⁴⁷ Vivian Sobchack, *The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience*, 151.

⁴⁸ Laura Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*, 170.

difference of 'the sexed body' to discuss her perspective on the representation of breath in cinema.⁴⁹ Quinlivan's analyses of Cronenberg's films *Spider*⁵⁰ and *Videodrome*⁵¹, for instance, show that she considers 'feminine identity' to be associated with the representation of breath.⁵²

As briefly addressed above, feminist interventions have been a significant strand of the discourse of phenomenological film studies, and especially those discourses pertaining to breath. Therefore, these feminists' contribution to the discourse of the representation of breath in cinema cannot be denied. However, there are several reasons I do not engage with the feminist perspectives in this thesis, even though I concur that the gendered body should be respected that gender may influence representations of breath.

First, my research deals not only with general theories of phenomenological film studies, but specifically with film in the South Korean cultural context. While the feminist perspective is relevant to discourse of the representation of breath, cultural specificity, which is my main interest, will receive commensurately more attention. This thesis is already diversely interwoven with discourses within phenomenology and South Korean culture, to include the strand of feminism would be too ambitious.

By the same token, the sexed body is also not the focus of this project. While conceptualisations of feminine identity may be a significant to my discussion of the representation of breath, I will focus predominantly on filmic rhythm and culturally specific aspects of breath as my justifications for the corporeality of breath in this project. I do not reject the importance of the feminist or feminine perspective but will nonetheless concentrate my energy in another direction. Hence, I will not discuss these aspects of gender in the thesis. However, in chapter 5, the conclusion will outline which of my case studies can be fruitfully analysed from the gendered perspective in future research.

To summarise, Quinlivan utilises three phases to describe the function of breath in cinema: 'elemental topography' to refer to spatiality, 'breathing visuality' to refer to inter-subjectivity and 'haptic visuality' to refer to corporeality. However, both in her work and in the other phenomenological sources I have discussed, there is a critical gap—a theorisation of how the sound of breath relates to these existing debates. In other words, this thesis will argue that it is necessary to expand beyond a simply visual-centric analysis. In the next section, building on the

⁴⁹ Davina Quinlivan, *The Place of Breath in Cinema*, 11.

⁵⁰ *Spider*, directed by David Cronenberg (2002; Canada: Odeon Films).

⁵¹ *Videodrome*, directed by David Cronenberg (1983; Canada: Filmplan International).

⁵² Davina Quinlivan, *The Place of Breath in Cinema*, 92.

terminology already outlined, I will suggest new sonic terms for describing representations of breath in cinema.

1.2.2 My theorisation of Breath in Cinema

As I argued in the last section, previous scholarship has focused predominantly on the visual aspects of cinema. This being said, Quinlivan pays more attention to the sound of breath than any of the other researchers. She states: 'my concern with the interstices between visibility and invisibility in a film can be seen to represent an interest in the way in which sound serves to stimulate our perception beyond what is visible on screen.'⁵³ In particular, she addresses the aspect of silence which awakens the viewer's awareness to the loss of life. Analysing the blind protagonist Selma in Lars von Trier's musical film *Dancer in The Dark*⁵⁴, she claims that 'the perception of breath suggests a model of breathing visuality advanced through the audition of breath and movement and their correlative mapping on screen.'⁵⁵ This theorisation of 'breathing visuality' is based primarily on the visual perception of a breathing body in the film, but it also acknowledges the sounds made by the protagonist. She states: '*Dancer in The Dark* shows how 'breathing visuality' works to elicit a response to breathing bodies predicated on their involvement and the textual properties of the voice when it is heard in song.'⁵⁶ Combined with the musical sound of the drumming beat, and the sound of machines, Selma's breathing sounds in her singing create the sense of life prevailing against the death of her vision ultimately her life. Selma's breathing sounds, therefore, alert the spectator to the film's breathing, and then finally their own breath.

While sound is not entirely absent from Quinlivan's analysis, her discussion of the representation of breath is primarily visual-centric. This necessitates my own exploration of how sound can be discussed—and integrated with and/or separated from the visual—in order to achieve a more comprehensively fleshed out theorisation of the phenomenological approach to the representation of breath in cinema.

In this section, accordingly, my terminology for the sonic representation of breath will be elucidated, building on the foundations of the previous theoretical construction elucidated in section 1.2.1, where I describe 'elemental topography' and 'breathing visuality.' 'Haptic visuality'

⁵³ Ibid., 1.

⁵⁴ *Dancer in the Dark*, directed by Lars Von Trier (2000; Denmark: Zentropa Entertainments).

⁵⁵ Davina Quinlivan, *The Place of Breath in Cinema*, 149.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 146.

will not be included here since its sonic counterpart 'haptic aurality' has already been suggested in previous scholarship.

In order to suggest and discuss my own theoretic terms for the representation of breath, it is first necessary to elaborate on previous research that has been conducted on film sound. Michel Chion, one of the best known scholars on film sound, elucidates how human voice in film could be analysed.⁵⁷ Chion also provides the framework of the place of sound in film.⁵⁸ Elisabeth Weis and John Belton's edited volume includes various scholars discussing different aspects of film sound which shed light on the history, technology, aesthetics, theory and practice of film sound.⁵⁹ Jay Beck and Tony Grajeda's subsequent edited book provides further updated discourses of film sound.⁶⁰ James Lastra pays attention to how the development of sound technology is one of key elements to understand film better regarding perception, representation and modernity.⁶¹ Rick Altman broadens the field of film studies from the previous text-centric perspectives to the wider production-text-reception flow regarding film sound.⁶²

Chion's framework of sound in cinema is especially significant to this thesis because Chion provides a classification of different spaces of sound which I will form the foundation of my analysis of sound of breath in cinema.⁶³ Since my analyses of the sound of breath in cinema will focus on its multi-layered place in cinema, his classification of the sound by sound source: on-screen diegetic sound, off-screen diegetic sound and nondiegetic sound; will enable me to consider placements of sonic breath in cinema.⁶⁴

Chion's on-screen diegetic sound can be understood as any and all sounds that originates inside the narrative world, that is to say, the sound of every element in the film, such as the sounds of dialogues between characters or of nature.⁶⁵ Since Quinlivan's term 'elemental topography' was formulated to consider the spatial representation of breath in cinema, I will divide this space into the visual space and the sonic space in the on-screen diegesis, as Chion suggests. Consequently,

⁵⁷ Michel Chion, *The Voice in Cinema*, trans. Claudia Gorbman (1982; reis., New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

⁵⁸ Michel Chion, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*, trans. Claudia Gorbman (1990; reis., New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

⁵⁹ Elisabeth Weis and John Belton, ed., *Film Sound: Theory and Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

⁶⁰ Jay Beck and Tony Grajeda, ed., *Lowering the Boom: Critical Studies in Film Sound* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008).

⁶¹ James Lastra, *Sound Technology and the American Cinema: Perception, Representation, Modernity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

⁶² Rick Altman, "General Introduction: Cinema as Event," in *Sound Theory, Sound Practice*, ed. Rick Altman (New York: Routledge, 1992), 3.

⁶³ Michel Chion, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 74.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*.

my term, elemental landscape, will be employed to explain visual aspects of the spatial representation of breath in cinema. Additionally, I will introduce the term elemental soundscape to explain sonic aspects of the spatial representation of breath in cinema. My suggested terms, elemental landscape and elemental soundscape, will allow me to analyse 'striated space.' Since 'striated space' places more of an emphasis on vision than on tactility and feeling, discussion of the perception of sound provides a sonic expansion of the previously visual-centric interpretation of the distant in 'striated space' (rather than of the proximal in 'smooth space').⁶⁶

I also propose to develop Quinlivan's definition of the 'sensory refrain.' My case studies in chapter 2 will enable me to expand the boundaries of this term, which Quinlivan defines as pertaining to light and silence in representations of spatial breath. While I will leave my full justification for this expansion to chapter 2, the brief reason for this is that I found that the opposite element of light functions as a positive spatial element of breath and air. I will also discuss how both silence and sound pertain to the spatial representation of breath. That is to say, in my analysis, the concept of the 'sensory refrain' is expanded to encompass not only light and silence, but also the audio-visual representation of breath, including darkness and the sound of breath. These arguments will be further elucidated in chapter 2, which will discuss the spatiality of the representation of breath.

I propose to extend Quinlivan's 'breathing visuality' in two ways. First of all, I will interpret the quality of 'inter-subjectivity' as existing not only between character and audience, and between film and audience, but also between characters and film. My modified definition of breathing visuality will therefore suggest inter-subjective reaction, response to and appreciation of images of the representation of breath between the protagonists, the film form and the spectator. Furthermore, I will separately suggest that an audio-centric term, breathing aurality, can be defined similarly to my redefinition of breathing visuality. The only difference between these two terms, I argue, is that breathing aurality focuses not on the film's image but on the film's sound. In addition, I propose the term breathing audio-visuality to encompass both the film image and the sound. These terms will significantly inform my explanations of the inter-subjectivity of the representation of breath in chapter 3. My proposed definitions will contribute usefully to my expansion of the discourse of inter-subjectivity, since breathing aurality focuses on the sound of the breathing body in and around the film. This focus on the breathing body emphasises connectivity: between the characters of the protagonists; and between the film form and the spectator sonically and visually.

⁶⁶ Gilles Deleuze, and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 474–500.

In relation to my introduction of the inter-subjectivity, I will highlight the use of music as off-screen diegetic sound and nondiegetic sound, as suggested by Chion above. Claudia Gorbman elucidates how film music functions in film in various ways, arguing: ‘if we must summarize music-image and music-narrative relationships in two words or less, mutual implication is more accurate, especially with respect to films of any narrative complexity.’⁶⁷ In other words, Gorbman emphasises that film music can reciprocally affect both the film narrative and image.⁶⁸ She argues that the relationship between music and image—and between music and narrative—in film, yields meanings beyond those found in the elements themselves respectively.⁶⁹ This theorisation provides a justification for my investigation of the relationship between breathing aurality and the use of film music. Gorbman’s theory of film music will serve as a useful foundation for the sonic analyses of my case studies for two reasons. First because film music interacts with the film narrative and rhythm in some scenes of my case studies, which affects the various breathing bodies in and around the film. Second because film music has a very close relationship with the principle of breath in the Korean context in my case studies.

My expanded phenomenological terms for describing the representation of breath in sound will be useful for my analysis of contemporary South Korean cinema’s on-screen diegetic, off-screen diegetic and nondiegetic representation of sonic breath between the protagonists, the film form and the spectator. Since this emphasis widens our perceptions of the representation of breath, the innovation of these phenomenological terms is a key contribution to knowledge made by this project.

To summarise, in order to discuss the representation of breath in contemporary South Korean cinema in relation to historical trauma—and to the emotions of *han* and *sinmyeong* in the Korean context—it is productive to consider diverse dimension of breath. Through widening the scope of my exploration to include the sonic and musical aspects of representations of breath, it will be possible to describe how trauma and emotions are expressed sonically in my case studies. It is therefore necessary to observe and analyse the sound of the breath as represented on-screen, as a way of movement of film form, as a touch of sense, as a principle in Korean music and culture and as an experience of the audience in the Korean context.

⁶⁷ Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies* (London: BFI Publishing, 1987), 15.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

1.2.3 Breath in Korean Art and Culture

The Korean word for breath is *sum*. *Sum* refers not only to the physical respiratory activities of the human body that facilitate life, but also infer metaphorical associations with breathing: life and death. Therefore, in order to interpret the meaning of breath in the Korean language, it is important to understand how the concept is related to the boundaries of life and death in Korean art and culture. The etymology of the Korean word *sum* was first recorded in *Seokbosangjeol* in 1447.⁷⁰ Since then, *sum* has been used in many variations in Korean language to refer to the meaning of life. A number of expressions illustrate this, including '*sum-eul geoduda*,' meaning 'to stop breathing'; '*sum-i kkeunh-eojida*,' translating as 'breath is cut'; and '*sum-eul neomgida*,' meaning 'to pass breath over.' All three of these phrases can be used to describe death.⁷¹ Conversely, the words '*sum-i but-eoissda*' can be translated as 'still alive.'⁷² Life and death can also be expressed in the Korean language through the phrase *mogsum*, which is a combination of two word, '*mog*: a neck' and '*sum*: breath.' This word was also first recorded in *Seokbosangjeol*.⁷³ The etymology of *sum* and *mogsum* illustrates linguistically how long Koreans have considered breath to refer to the boundaries between life and death.

This understanding of breath as the original source of life energy has strongly influenced the way breath is represented in Korean art and culture. For example, breath informs the aesthetic characteristics of traditional Korean dance. As Min-Seo Sim explains, Korean dance includes royal dance, folk dance, ritual dance and contemporary dance. In her research, Sim pays particular attention to Korean folk dance.⁷⁴ Sim sheds light on how breath plays a significant role in this art form in two ways: the 'aesthetic aspects of Korean folk dance's movement' and the 'empirical aspects of the conscious state of the dancer while dancing.'⁷⁵

... Most characteristics of the movement of Korean dance are related to breath. Breath in Korean dance is not only the origin of the integrated body-movement but also a motive of creating beauty through the curve which is revealed in the form of the

⁷⁰ "Sum" 숨 [Breath], Standard Korean Dictionary, accessed April 7, 2019, <https://ko.dict.naver.com/#/entry/koko/e20046e9360944ca9d2d8542b7031108>.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ "Mogsum" 목숨 [Life], Standard Korean Dictionary, accessed April 7, 2019, <https://ko.dict.naver.com/#/entry/koko/6495a417cb3e41018790836952092c37>.

⁷⁴ Min-Seo Sim, "Hangug minsogchum suhaeng-eseo hoheub-i gajneun jung-yoseong: dongbug-asiaui sasangjeog gwanjeom-eseo" 한국 민속춤 수행에서 호흡이 갖는 중요성: 동북아시아의 사상적 관점에서 [A study of the importance of respiration while performing Korean folk dance: Perspective on Northeast Asian], *The Korean Cultural Studies* 21 (2011): 270.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 293.

movement. Additionally, continuous and repeated circulation of breath builds the characteristic of Korean folk dance, which emphasises not the movement of formalised technique but the entire flow of the dance. [...] Breath is an instrument to go into a blissful state. The harmony between movement and breath helps the body to relax gently without too much pressure on the body. It is important to breathe deeply while being conscious of the lower abdomen, which brings down the breath to focus on the inner-body and to avoid being distracted by the outside world. [...] The simple and repeated movement along with this consciousness increase the possibility of entering a blissful state. Breath in Korean dance is the driving force of this movement.⁷⁶

As Sim states, in Korean folk dance, breath originates in the inner body of the dancer. Through their breath, the dancer makes their body into a curved line—attaining this sense of aesthetic and bodily poise then induces cathartic joy in the mind of the dancer. This example demonstrates how breath can affect the entire formal construction of rhythm in art, and by extension in film as well. In this sense, breath functions as a means for expressing and facilitating transcendental experience. In these respects, the philosophy of breath found in Korean folk-dance recalls Quinlivan's and Irigaray's phenomenological perspectives on the 'transcendental' aspect of breath that I discussed earlier.

Sim also argues that there are four major emphases of breath in Korean dance: low abdomen, negative and positive, *ki* translating as energy and being natural.⁷⁷ She suggests that 'The path of breathing is in the structure of the vertical circulation. [...] According to the speed and strength of breathing in and out, continuous movement of many body parts and joints happens. The final body-movement is revealed and perceived as the relationship-oriented syntagma, containing the aspect of time and space.'⁷⁸ This is a significant point, since it illustrates how breath connects the different parts of the body—it implies inter-subjectivity as it emphasises 'relationships.' Not only do different parts of the body have relationships with each other but also the different bodies breathing in any environment in which they must share air. These latter relationships are more complicated as they involve not the sharing of the physiological act of breathing but also the sharing of rhythm, as in the case between dancers (and also between dancers and musicians). It is by this mechanism that the musical principle of breath, especially the rhythm of breath, can be connected to the physiological process of breath.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 293–94.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 285.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 286.

Even though Sim orients her study of the principle and aesthetic of breath in Korean folk dance from the perspective of the individual dancer, dancers rarely dance unaccompanied. As dance is typically accompanied by music, musicians are significant to Korean folk dance. This will be explored in relation to the concepts of ‘inter-subjectivity’ and ‘corporeality’ with the emotion of *han* and *sinmyeong* in the coming sections and chapters.

In the same way that traditional Korean dance is typically not performed alone, one of the representative Korean types of music, *pansori*, is a composite art. *Pansori* is a combination of the Korean words *pan* (which translates as a place) and *sori* (which translates as sound). The word’s composite translation—sound of music and the space of performance—reveals how music resonates with space, through the interaction of performers and audience. In-Pyeong Jeon offers the following explanation for *pansori*:

Pansori does not solely consist of music. In its basis, there is a long story through narration. While a singer and a drummer perform together, there are various elements which make of *pansori*. In other words, the singer proceed with singing, verbal narration, and bodily gesture and the drummer not only makes rhythm but also adds exclamatory bravo such as *eo!ssigu* or *jota* to cheer up the singer. The audience can also make a responsive sound while the musicians perform. *Pansori* is a composite art containing literary, musical and theatrical aspects.⁷⁹

To become a master, *pansori* singers need to practise extensively to learn the art form’s distinctive sound. During this difficult training, the singers’ breath gives lives to the mastery of sound. *Pansori* singers also use their breaths to express emotions with implications for the breath, such as feelings about life and death, which have a close connection with the emotion of *han*. The rhythm created by the flow of breathing also affect the musical characteristic of *pansori* music, which allows it to be related to the emotion of *sinmyeong*.

Yong-Shik Lee claims that the frequent use of triple little metre is one of the characteristics of traditional Korean rhythm.⁸⁰ According to Chan-Wook Lee, ‘this unique rhythm comes from the rate of inhaling and exhaling while most of the Western musical rhythm comes from the heartbeat.’⁸¹ Three little metre is not the exclusive rhythm of traditional Korean, however, it is

⁷⁹ In-Pyeong Jeon, *Uliga jeongmal al-aya hal uli eum-ag* 우리가 정말 알아야 할 우리 음악 [Our music we really need to know] (2007; reis., Seoul: Hyeonamsa, 2011), 254.

⁸⁰ Yong-Shik Lee, “Hangug-eum-ag-ui ibag · sambag / obag · palbag” 한국음악의 2 박 · 3 박 / 5 박 · 8 박 [Meters in Korea: duple, triple, quintuple, octuple], *Asian Comparative Folklore* 44 (2011): 66.

⁸¹ Chan-Wook Lee, “Yulgyeog-ui sameumbowa eum-ag-ui sambunbag-e daehan nonjeung” 율격의 3 음보와 음악의 3 분박에 대한 논증 [A study on three feet of metre and triple little metre of music], *The Korean Essays on Sijo Literary Science* 47 (2017): 178.

significant that Korea developed a rhythm of breath as one of the major rhythms in their traditional music. Consequently, the use of three little metre in traditional Korean music will be critical to my analysis of music's relation to narrative and image—and the sound of breath—in cinema, since metre can affect the formal rhythm of the film body.

While traditional Korean art forms draw on breath's association with life in their aesthetic principles and practices, just as many cultural customs, rituals and practices, such as funeral ceremonies, draw on breath's association with death. Even though Korean funeral culture has changed over a long period of time, the Joseon dynasty's adoption of Confucianism from China, including the Confucian funeral ceremony, has had a sustained influence on Korean culture. During a Confucian funeral ceremony, the bereaved family wail—the Korean word for this wailing practice is *gog*. *Gog* involves mourners making the sound of crying, *aigo*, in conjunction with movements of their bodies such as hitting the ground with their hands. *Gog* can be considered, therefore, not only as a sincere expression of regret, but also a formal gesture of grief. In other words, Korean culture emphasises the boundaries of life and death by constructing the formal sound and gesture of *gog* which is based on deeply breathing in and out.

As I have argued above, traditional dance, music and funeral ceremonies provide examples of how interiority and corporeality are connected to breath in Korean culture. This connection can also be observed in more contemporary cultural expressions. As Quinlivan introduces,⁸² Soo-Ja Kim, one of South Korea's prestigious contemporary conceptual artists, has emphasised the theme of breath in Korean culture in her work. For instance, the site-specific work of art titled *To Breathe: Bottari* 'wrap[s] the division between nature and the interior space with a translucent film,' and 'presents the empty space of the Pavilion, inviting only the bodies of the audience to encounter the infinite reflections of light and sound.'⁸³ At the same time, 'the artist's amplified inhaling, exhaling and humming performance sounds fill the air, transforming the pavilion into a breathing bottari.'⁸⁴ Thus, the use of the Pavilion site as a place of breath in this art work functions as a spatial representation of breath, especially since Kim invites the visitor into the space of the sound of her breath and the visitor's breath as well. The Korean word *bottari* refers to wrappings used by street sellers to transport their products. In Kim's installation *bottari* become a metaphor for mobility and connecting people. The space of *To Breathe: Bottari* in Kim's work is one where life is aurally represented through the sound of the breath.

⁸² Davina Quinlivan, *The Place of Breath in Cinema*, 15.

⁸³ Soo-Ja Kim, *To Breathe: Bottari*, Solo Exhibition at The Korean Pavilion, Venice, 2013, accessed Apr 14, 2019, http://www.kimsooja.com/projects/Korean_Pavilion_Venice_2013.html.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

In this installation, Kim incorporates the Korean philosophy of breath into her aesthetic exploration. In other words, she explores how breath not only moves in and out of the body but also creates harmony between body and soul, and in doing so, engenders harmony between people. In the Korean context, this context is not unfamiliar since there is a dense togetherness in their cultural practice. Consequently, Kim's installation, which is based on Korean aesthetic principles, provides a hint of the inter-subjectivity that can be found between representations of breath in and around an artwork, including the spectator.



Figure 1.1 *To Breathe* by Soo-Ja Kim at Yorkshire Sculpture International 2019⁸⁵

In Korean art and culture, representations of breath arguably speak to both conscious and unconscious parts of people's psychologies in order to evoke consideration of the boundary between life and death. The space for the representation of breath is therefore not only the human body, or the space of art, but can also be found in the mind, in the transcendental dimension. In my thesis, this acknowledgment will be crucial to my thesis: that the principles of breath—as explored in aesthetic movements, representation and philosophical thoughts—explore the boundary between life and death and as a function of the formal and transcendental practice. Now I have elucidated the diverse uses and perceptions of breath in Korean art and

⁸⁵ Photograph taken by author

culture, I will focus on the two emotions of *han* and *sinmyeong* in the next section. I will then build on this discussion in chapters 3 and 4.

1.2.4 The Emotion of *Han* and *Sinmyeong*

When discussing a specific national art and culture, there is always a danger of definitions and boundaries becoming essentialised. While I reject any simple stereotyping to avoid such a tendency, it is necessary to address two emotional terms in the Korean context: the emotions of *han* and *sinmyeong*. In this section, I will survey different accounts of the varying meanings of these terms, in order to elucidate my perspective on their relations to the case studies on the representation of breath in Korean cinema which will follow.

The emotion of *Han*

As I briefly introduced in section 1.1, the dictionary definition of the emotion of *han* is ‘the very pressured emotional state of resentment, regret and grief.’⁸⁶ While I reject this essentialist conceptualisation of the emotion of *han* as resentment, this definition nonetheless gives a glimpse of what emotions *han* represents. The emotion of *han* is contentious, making the meaning of the term difficult to summarise. Hence, this subsection will explore various intellectual discourses revolving around the emotion of *han*.

First of all, the emotion of *han* is not only a Korean concept, and is also familiar to Chinese and Japanese cultural traditions. The original character, ‘恨,’ is a Chinese symbol which is still written in Chinese in China and Japan, while it is written as ‘한’ in Korean. In all three languages, *han* can be interpreted to mean hatred or resentment.⁸⁷ This definition of *han* across the three East Asian countries provides a starting point from which to understand the varying perspectives on the emotion of *han*.

The emotion of *Han* was allegedly first used in Korean in the old song *Hwangjoga*, which can be translated as Song of Orioles.⁸⁸ This song is believed to have been written in 17 BC (although the dating is contentious) by King Yuri of the Korean kingdom Goguryeo. It was first recorded in 1145

⁸⁶ “Han” 한 [*Han*].

⁸⁷ “Han” 恨 [*Han*], Chinese Dictionary, accessed May 12, 2020, <https://www.chinese-dictionary.org/>; “Han” 恨 [*Han*], Jisho, accessed May 12, 2020, <https://jisho.org/search/%E6%81%A8>.

⁸⁸ “Han” 한 [*Han*], The Academy of Korean Studies, accessed Aug 29, 2021, https://terms.naver.com/entry.naver?docId=532214&cid=46655&categoryId=46655#TABLE_OF_CONTENT 5.

in the book *Samguk Sagi*, which was a historical record of three Korean kingdoms.⁸⁹ Since then, the emotion of *han* has featured frequently on the stage of Korean culture and thought.

A vibrant academic discussion evolved around the emotion of *han* in the 20th century. This discourse was particularly prominent in the 1950s, with *chunghan-ron*, a term which translates as the argument that *han* is longing—this discussion emerged out of analysis of So-Wol Kim’s poetry, as well as his character.⁹⁰ In Korean studies, the poetry of So-Wol Kim (1902–1934) has been ‘enormously analysed even including a research to arrange the history of the research on his poem.’⁹¹ Dong-Li Kim, for instance, claims that ‘So-Wol Kim’s emotional state is rather longing than entertaining a lover.’⁹² In his discussion of So-Wol Kim, Jeong-Ju Seo also explains that *han* comes at the end of longing:⁹³ ‘the perspective on the emotion of *han* as a sentimental mood of longing is an extension of lamentation.’⁹⁴

According to Cheon, ‘this emotional state of longing is considered not only as the feminine sensitivity but also the trend of retrogression and the contraction towards the inner part of self.’⁹⁵ While it is arguable that this emotional sensitivity can be regarded as feminine, *chunghan-ron* emphasises that ‘*han*’s characteristic of friendliness to the others’ as ‘the one who is longing does not blame the others but focus on one’s own emotion in the aspect of sentimentality.’⁹⁶

Cheon argues that ‘while the emotion of *han* as this sentimental emotion of longing in *chunghan-ron* can lead the meaning of *han* towards retrogression, [...] the discourse of the emotion of *han* as want, reveals the active intentionality of the emotion of *han*.’⁹⁷ Dong-Ju Lee claims that ‘*han* is

⁸⁹ “Hwangjoga” 황조가 [Song of orioles], KDR, accessed Aug 19, 2020, <https://terms.naver.com/entry.nhn?docId=694524&ref=y&cid=60533&categoryId=60533>.

⁹⁰ I-Du Cheon, *Han-ui gujo yeongu* 한의 구조 연구 [Research on the structure of *han*] (Seoul: Moonji, 1993), 54.

⁹¹ Hyo-Jae Kim, “Gimsowol siui sasangjeog baegyeong yeongu: osanhaggyoui isyanghyang chuguleul jungsim-eulo” 김소월 시의 사상적 배경 연구: 오산학교의 이상향 추구를 중심으로 [A study on ideological background of Kim So-Wol: Focusing on Osan-school], (Master diss., Seoul National University, 2013), 1.

⁹² Dong-Li Kim, *Munhaggwa ingan* 문학과 인간 [Literature and human] (Seoul: Baekminmoonwha, 1948), quoted in I-Du Cheon, *Han-ui gujo yeongu* 한의 구조 연구 [Research on the structure of *han*] (Seoul: Moonji, 1993), 54.

⁹³ Jeong-Ju Seo, “Sowol sie iss-eoseoui jeonghan-ui cheoli” 소월 시에 있어서의 情恨의 처리 [The treatment of *chunghan* in So-Wol’s poem], *Contemporary Literature* 54 (1959), quoted in I-Du Cheon, *Han-ui gujo yeongu* 한의 구조 연구 [Research on the structure of *han*] (Seoul: Moonji, 1993), 55.

⁹⁴ I-Du Cheon, *Han-ui gujo yeongu* 한의 구조 연구 [Research on the structure of *han*], 66.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 68.

lamentation when a meagre one embraces rich and powerful will. In other words, *han* is an infinite dream or wish.⁹⁸ Further, O-Young Lee complies with this view in this argument:

People activate their resentment by others' harm even without a wish, but it doesn't become *han*. *Han* is one's eruptive feeling, not from others. Since there is a dream, or a capability in oneself, a certain discouragement eventually becomes *han*. That is an unfulfilled wish and an unrealised dream. ... Resentment is so hot that it is untied by revenge. However, *han* is so cold that it cannot be untied until the wish is accomplished.⁹⁹

According to Cheon, 'these scholars see the emotion of *han* not as resentment but want so that they focus on its positive and futuristic aspect while the champions of *chunghan-ron* can lean towards the aspect of retrogression.'¹⁰⁰

Cheon continues to argue that after these previous discussions, *wonhan-ron* was established as the main discourse on the emotion of *han*.¹⁰¹ This argument, as I mentioned earlier, represents *han* as resentment—its original common meaning in East Asia. Scholars like Yeol-Gyu Kim analyse the emotion of *han* as resentment, at argument which facilitates them to structure the emotion in terms of binary oppositions.¹⁰² This perspective considers that the emotion of *han* is both 'tied' and 'untied.'¹⁰³ This notion of tying and untying the emotion of *han* can be understood as the experience of resentment and its resolution.¹⁰⁴

Cheon summarises that the *wonhan-ron* provides a structure of binary opposition for the emotion of *han*—which enables Koreans to transition from resentment to reconciliation through the tying and untying of *han* as they move towards a positive resolution.¹⁰⁵ In addition, this perspective can also be connected other positive methods for untying state, such as the emotion of *sinmyeong*,¹⁰⁶

⁹⁸ Dong-Ju Lee, *Geu dulyeoun yeong-won-eseo* [From the fearful infinity] (Seoul: Taechangmoonwha, 1982), quoted in I-Du Cheon, *Han-ui gujo yeongu* 한의 구조 연구 [Research on the structure of *han*] (Seoul: Moonji, 1993), 69.

⁹⁹ O-Young Lee *Hangug-in-ui ma-eum* 한국인의 마음 [The mind of Korean] (Tokyo: Hagsaeng, 1985), quoted in I-Du Cheon, *Han-ui gujo yeongu* 한의 구조 연구 [Research on the structure of *han*] (Seoul: Moonji, 1993), 70.

¹⁰⁰ I-Du Cheon, *han-ui gujo yeongu* 한의 구조 연구 [Research on the structure of *han*], 72.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 81.

¹⁰² Yeol-Gyu Kim, *Hanmaeg-wonlyu: hangug-in ma-eum-ui eung-eoliwa maejhim* 한맥원류: 한국인, 마음의 응어리와 맺힘 [The pulse of *han* and the flow of *won*: Korean mind's bad feeling and being tied]. (Seoul: Juwoo, 1981), quoted in I-Du Cheon, *Han-ui gujo yeongu* 한의 구조 연구 [Research on the structure of *han*] (Seoul: Moonji, 1993), 81.

¹⁰³ I-Du Cheon, *han-ui gujo yeongu* 한의 구조 연구 [Research on the structure of *han*], 83.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 84.

¹⁰⁵ I-Du Cheon, *han-ui gujo yeongu* 한의 구조 연구 [Research on the structure of *han*], 85.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 88.

which is another important emotion in the Korean context, as will be explained later in this section. Following on from this, *wonhan-ron* can therefore be considered to be a perspective which not only dissects its structure into two parts, but also offers potential for widened interpretation in relation to other emotional states.

The arguments outlined above are critical to a conceptual understanding of the characteristics of *han*. However, parts of these conceptualisations are still problematic. I-Du Cheon's construction of the structure of *han* is helpful in this respect, as he draws on earlier scholarship in order to interpret *han* as multi-layered. To understand this conceptual leap, an essay on *han* by the Korean painter Kyeong-Ja Cheon's essay is useful:

The stories interwoven in Jeolla-do accent and mournful appeal or resentment might be the beauty of *chang* [a way of the traditional Korean singing] and the culmination of *han*. [...] As when I'm stuck with my painting and listening *chang*, I sometimes cry and exhaust the gas with which my mind is stained, and the effort of inserting the ideology or colours sadden at the end of beauty in my painting is *han*. That's because I want to sublimate not *han* of mediocre lament such as 'my life!' but *han* of poor, beautiful and sad bloody relationship whether it's past or present in my painting with the beautiful nature. Therefore, *chang*, novel, legend and all arts have the scent of art when the artist sublimate *han*, I believe.¹⁰⁷

Above, I-Du Cheon outlines Kyeong-Ja Cheon's five functions of *han*: aesthetic representation, wish, resentment or lamentation, longing, and as a subject matter for art.¹⁰⁸ He argues that 'this painter's emotions of *han* are tightly connected so that the meaning of *han* is multi-layered, wide-ranging and even contradicted within it.'¹⁰⁹ This argument therefore assimilates both positive and negative interpretations of the emotion of *han*.

I-Du Cheon's contribution to our understanding of *han* is his observation of its varied and dynamic structure. Connecting previous analyses thorough his contemplation, I-Du Cheon explains how each aspect of the emotion of *han* informs in his interpretation of the structure of *han* (Figure 1.2). He argues that in the Korean context, resentment and lamentation (negative meanings of *han*) move towards the positive meanings, such as want and longing.¹¹⁰ He also explains that resentment and longing correspond with each other as the former shows aggression to others

¹⁰⁷ Kyeong-Ja Cheon, *Han* 한 [Han] (Seoul: Samto, 1977), quoted in I-Du Cheon, *Han-ui gujo yeongu* 한의 구조 연구 [Research on the structure of han] (Seoul: Moonji, 1993), 46–47.

¹⁰⁸ I-Du Cheon, *Han-ui gujo yeongu* 한의 구조 연구 [Research on the structure of han], 47.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 48.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 49–52.

while the latter reveals friendliness to them.¹¹¹ Building on this argument, he claims that lamentation also corresponds with want, as the former represents retrogression and the latter represents progress towards the future.¹¹²

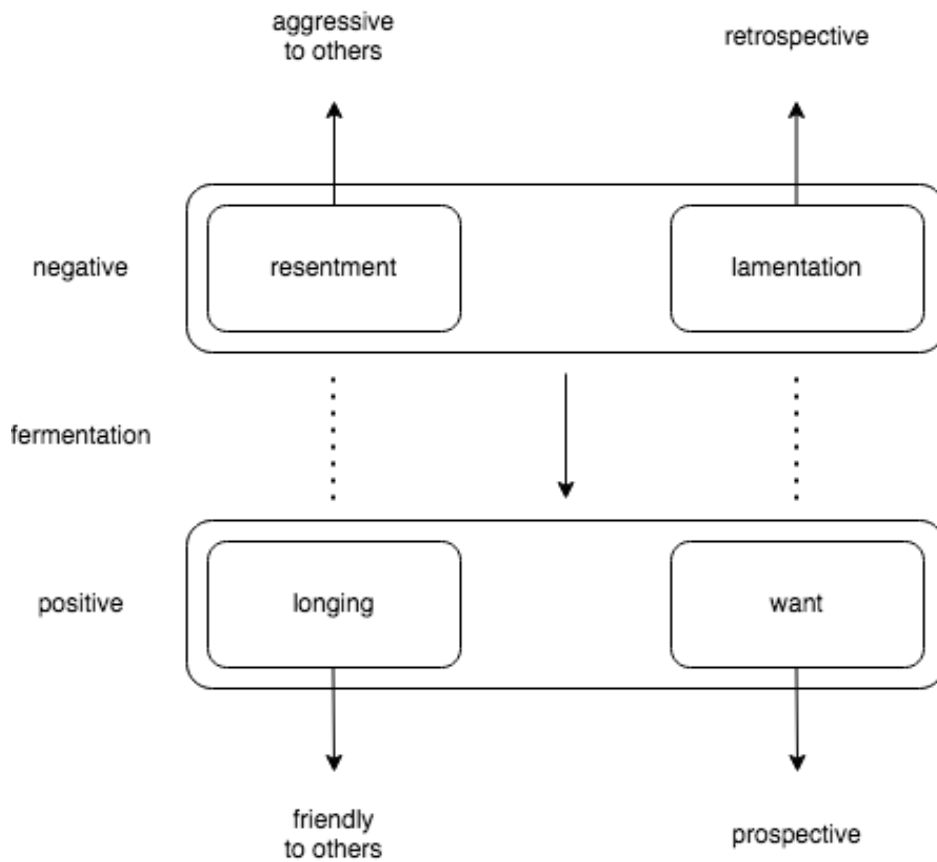


Figure 1.2 I-du Cheon's structure of *han*¹¹³

In addition to the previous scholarship outlined earlier in this section, Cheon's structure of *han* will be engaged at several points in my thesis—especially in chapter 3. However, in order to address the way Cheon's structure will contribute to my project, I will draw on Yeong-Pil Kim's phenomenological approach to the emotion of *han*, which will link Cheon's theory and my phenomenological approach to South Korean film studies.

Kim asserts that phenomenology is useful for analysing the emotion of *han*, since the emotion is a pre-linguistic experience.¹¹⁴ For him, this interpretation prioritises historical legacy over the personal experience in the Korean context.¹¹⁵ Kim also argues that 'it should be restored to the

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Diagram drawn by author

¹¹⁴ Yeong-Pil Kim, "Han-ui hyeonsanghageog bunseog." 한의 현상학적 분석 [The phenomenological analysis of *han*] In *Han-ui hagjejeog yeongu* 한의 학제적 연구 [The interdisciplinary studies on *han*], ed. Chaung-Hwan Ha et al., (Seoul: Philosophy and Actuality, 2004), 207.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 211.

emotion of *han* of subjectivity in actuality in a phenomenological approach, which is more subjective than a psychological approach'¹¹⁶ Kim claims that *han*'s significance to Korean culture results from its ability to describe the transition from negative to positive feeling—*han*'s so called 'structure of intentionality'.¹¹⁷ Kim elaborates the following on the matter:

Han as resentment is a raw material regarding sense. When this mass of raw material sustains as intrinsic contents in one's consciousness, [...] this becomes *han* as lamentation. However, this consciousness has an intentional instinct which constructs new, positive and hopeful *han* in a productive and active way.¹¹⁸

Kim claims that 'the intentionality of the emotion of *han* towards reconciliation means that the subject of the emotion of *han* does not look at others as the object of vengeance but construct them as one's intentional participator of reconciliation'¹¹⁹ He argues that 'Husserl's intersubjectivity implies this intentionality of reconciliation which let the subject construct others as his or her intentional affinity by an empathy to others.'¹²⁰

Drawing on previous scholarship, both Cheon's argument about the structure of *han* and Kim's phenomenological analysis of *han* claim that one of the most important characteristics of *han* is its ability to qualitatively shift from negative to the positive meaning through its intentionality of reconciliation. The various views on the emotion of *han* presented in this section will be drawn on in chapter 3, where I will use them to analyse the representation of breath in contemporary South Korean cinema.

The emotion of *Sinmyeong*

In Korean culture, the emotion of *sinmyeong* denotes positive excitement. However, it is more than just a simple emotional state and its culturally specific meaning has been developed alongside the emotion of *han*. In this section, I will scrutinise how the emotion of *sinmyeong* has been discussed and defined, as well as how it will be useful in my thesis.

According to Min Han, linguistically, *sinmyeong* has two different origins: a pure Korean word (a Korean word that does not borrow from other languages) '신명,' and a Sino-Korean word '神明' (神明).¹²¹ While the former word can be translated to mean 'delightful excitement and joy,' the

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 222.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 221–22.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 229.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 230.

¹²¹ Min Han, *Sinmyeong-ui simlihagjeog ihae* 신명의 심리학적 이해 [*The psychological understanding of sinmyeong*] (Paju: KSI, 2008), 25.

latter means 'divinity of sky and earth.'¹²² Han claims that these two words are used without distinction in many examples in Korean culture.¹²³ Han's observation provides a glimpse into how *sinmyeong* is understood in Korea—as an emotional state that is frequently and was originally associated with rituals. This interpretation presupposes the view that 'a god exists in the secular world and a human being can become a god.'¹²⁴

The ritual context of *sinmyeong* has a close relationship with the role of shamans, who enable divinity and secularity to coexist through their musical performances. Han elaborates that one of *sinmyeong*'s characteristics is 'ritual chaos'.¹²⁵ Over time, the nuance of the emotion of *sinmyeong*'s ritual context has been interpreted more widely. However, this original meaning helps to explain how and why the musical performance of the shaman invites people to the state of the emotion of *sinmyeong*, through participation in mutual dancing and singing.

Han points out that another feature of the emotion of *sinmyeong* in the Korean context is its contagiousness.¹²⁶ The concept of togetherness is important for understanding how and why *sinmyeong* can be contagious in the Korean cultural context. In this respect, Sang-Chin Choi's explanation of 'we-ness' in the Korean context is useful.¹²⁷ According to Choi, we-ness has two major characteristics.¹²⁸ First, that, as Choi argues, 'the concept of We brings out positive interpersonal feelings that can be felt when the person is socially accepted in the group.'¹²⁹ Second, that we-ness can be considered to be 'the fused state of individuality such as one-ness and whole-ness' instead of 'the Western concept of We-ness in which individual "I's" still remain autonomous even in the context of We-group.'¹³⁰ Choi's description of we-ness in the Korean context is useful here because it helps to explain how Korean art and culture can have inter-subjective characteristics. Further, I would argue that while one-ness does not deny each individual's subjective interaction with other people, it encourages we-ness, allowing people to connect to each other more intimately. Therefore, in the Korean context, 'we-ness' is a form of inter-subjectivity activated through collective interaction. Since inter-subjectivity is culturally emphasised in Korean culture, the emotion of *sinmyeong* can therefore easily be spread, since

¹²² "Sinmyeong."

¹²³ Min Han, *Sinmyeong-ui simlihagjeog ihae* 신명의 심리학적 이해 [*The psychological understanding of sinmyeong*], 25–26.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 26.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 40.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 38.

¹²⁷ Sang-Jin Choi, "The Nature of Korean Selfhood: A Cultural Psychological Perspective," *Korean Journal of Social Psychology* 7, no. 2 (1993): 24–33.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 26.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 26–27.

Korean people tend to feel we-ness as a collective feeling of one-ness. Togetherness also connects the emotions of *han* and *sinmyeong*, through its characteristic of inter-subjectivity.

I will now consider the relationship between the emotions of *han* and *sinmyeong*. Yeol-Gyu Kim's argument of tying and untying *han*; and Jae-Sun Lee's argument of the untying *han* in positive and negative ways, which I mentioned in the previous section; are also applicable to *sinmyeong*.¹³¹ I previously explained that *han* has positive, as well as negative implications, an argument which reconciles earlier scholarship on *han*. The emotion of *sinmyeong* can also be understood as an emotional state that unties resentment. When people share the chaotic yet contagious emotion of *sinmyeong*, reconciliation can be achieved. In this scenario, resentment is untied positively through experience of the emotion of *sinmyeong*. While Han argues that there are two distinct forms of *sinmyeong*: 'the direct removal of resentment and the indirect purification of *han* by pursuing reaffirmation or reinforcement of togetherness,'¹³² I will consider both forms of *sinmyeong* together in this thesis, rather than dividing them from each other.

Han also points out another aspect of the *sinmyeong*, the artistic integration of the emotion experienced by performers in the traditional Korean arts.¹³³ However, even in this case, the individual's experience of the emotion of *sinmyeong* does not limit its contagiousness, regardless of the performer's intention: the collaborator or audience are always open to the possibility of being immersed together. This inter-subjective immersive experience yields a varied range of experiences of *sinmyeong*, from the performer's individual artistic experience to the mutual experience of the performer, collaborators and the audience.

Gwang-Jin Choi presents another perspective on *sinmyeong*, which provides an indirect foundation for my discourse of the corporeality of breath. Choi claims that 'Korean cultural will is *jeobhwa* as the harmonious state between heterogeneous elements.'¹³⁴ He developed this view from the perspective that 'the idea of *cheonjiin* translated as heaven, earth and human, which perceive human being as the existence of the harmonious state between heaven's creative divinity (soul) and earth's hardened materiality (body).'¹³⁵ Here, he argues that the Korean aesthetic tendency pursues harmoniousness, as guided by experiences of *sinmyeong*.¹³⁶

¹³¹ I-Du Cheon, *Han-ui gujo yeongu* 한의 구조 연구 [Research on the structure of *han*], 83.

¹³² Min Han, *Sinmyeong-ui simlihagjeog ihae* 신명의 심리학적 이해 [*The psychological understanding of sinmyeong*], 62.

¹³³ Ibid., 63.

¹³⁴ Gwang-Jin Choi, *Misul-lo boneun hangug-ui miuisig* 미수로 보는 한국의 미의식 [Korean sense of beauty through art] (Goyang: Misulmunhwa, 2018), 7.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

I am interested in Choi's concept of 'the principle of and the function of *sinmyeong*', as it ties into my own arguments on the corporeality of breath.¹³⁷

Pain comes from the break of the harmonious state between heaven and earth, especially when the feature of materiality of earth is strengthened which means hardening. All the pain comes from hardening [...] In order to escape from pain, one should relax through the innate *sinmyeong* [...] Shamans are people who perform this process of relaxation by evoking *sinmyeong*. The Chinese character 'Mu 巫' in the word *Mudang* [translated as 'shaman'] is given shape to from where human being links between heaven and earth. The awakening of *sinmyeong* lets people to immerse to the situation [...] In order to immerse themselves people should feel the function of power which change continuously but in a subtle manner [...] The subject of this minute change is the wavelength and oscillation of sound [...] the positive and negative or the active and static function of sound is the way *sinmyeong* works. Music and dance are the culture for the recovery of this function, which relaxes the hardened body and mind.¹³⁸

Here, the *sinmyeong*'s close relationship with sound is taken as a key principle. Shamans' musical performances that seek to link heaven and earth are depicted as pivotal not only for the sonic stimulation they offer, but also owing to the relaxation they induce in the body. More importantly, Choi's argument links the principle of breath in traditional Korean music with *sinmyeong*'s sonic expression. Drawing on this argument, I will discuss how traditional Korean music and the emotion of *sinmyeong* contribute to the corporeal representation of breath in two Korean films in Chapter 4.

The close relationship between the emotions of *han* and *sinmyeong* resemble the breath of the body as air is drawn in and released. Representations of breath can also strengthen these emotions, since they metaphorically imply life and death—a key element of the expression of *han* and *sinmyeong*. While the emotion of *han* pertains to recovery from resentment to want, the emotion of *sinmyeong* engages with the positive release of the negative elements of *han*. I argue the emotion of *sinmyeong* can be related to Irigaray's and Quinlivan's positive and 'cathartic possibilities of breath.'¹³⁹ The representation of breath in contemporary South Korean cinema provides themes of both reconciliation and excitement. These filmic constructions are therefore deeply related to the emotion of *han* and *sinmyeong*.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 15.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 15–16.

¹³⁹ Davina Quinlivan, *The Place of Breath in Cinema*, 46.

1.2.5 South Korean Cinema Studies

Even though I will focus specifically on the six South Korean films that have been selected as case studies for this project, I will first describe the wider field of scholarship on South Korean cinema in order to situate my arguments in existing critical debates and foreground my original contributions to knowledge. This section, therefore, will give a brief overview of the state of South Korean cinema studies.

Since the release of ‘the first kino-drama’, *Fight for Justice*,¹⁴⁰ on 27 October 1919,¹⁴¹ South Korean cinema has been strongly influenced by the socio-political environment of the tumultuous preceding century. After the Japanese colonial period from 1910 to 1945 and the Korean War from 1950 to 1953, South Korea experienced a short period of democracy before a succession of dictatorships between the 1960s and the 1980s. Under these dictatorships, South Korea underwent periods of rapid technological expansion. Democracy was restored at the end of 1980s. Following this, South Korea experienced an economic crisis in the 1990s, which the country subsequently overcame in the 2000s. However, the restructurings of the socio-economic environment necessitated by the financial crash and recovery also accelerated the gap between the richest and poorest in society. While the relationship between North and South Korea has stagnated and a peace agreement has not yet been reached, South Korea’s cultural industry has prospered.

In recent decades, a great number of talented directors and seminal films emerged. This creative flourishing cannot be explained without the context of the social, political, cultural and economic changes that had recently occurred in South Korean society. While the previous cinematic era also had several important directors, such as Ki-Young Kim, Sang-Ok Shin and Gil-Jong Ha, the authoritarian regime’s impact on the socio-political situation was so strong that most of the film industry was limited by the government.

The South Korean New Wave emerged as a response to the historical context of both democratisation after the era of successive dictatorships in the 1960s and 1980s and the economic development and crisis between the 1970s and the 1990s. South Korean New Wave was not a unified movement or a single style, rather, as Darcy Paquet has suggested, it represented ‘the boom’ of the South Korean cinematic wave in the 1990s, when various forms of

¹⁴⁰ *Uirijeok Guto* 의리적 구토 [*Fight for Justice*], directed by Do-San Kim (1919; Korea: Danseongsa).

¹⁴¹ Mee-Hyun Kim, ed., *Korean Cinema: From Origins to Renaissance* (Seoul: CommBooks, 2007), 19.

artistic freedom and commercial development erupted.¹⁴² In the 1990s and the 2000s, many commercially successful blockbusters came out. Following this, a wave of directors who made either art-house cinema or commercial films also emerged. Directors like Sang-Soo Hong and Chang-Dong Lee became renowned as art-house cinema auteurs. Directors like Chan-Wook Park, Joon-Ho Bong and Jee-Woon Kim made commercially successful films, acquiring the status of star directors reputed for their distinctive personal styles. Various independent film directors like Ik-Joon Yang and Meul O also emerged, increasing the vitality and diversity of South Korean cinema. Paying mind to these developments, my usage of the word contemporary will refer to South Korean cinema produced between the late 1980s and the present day.

Academic attention duly followed the emergence of this new wave of films and directors. There is a wide range of texts analysing contemporary South Korean cinema, some of which I will outline here. First of all, the Korean Film Council has published various books, such as Korean cinema yearbooks since 2000 and Korean film industry yearbooks since 2013.¹⁴³ In addition, their publication, the Korean Film Director Series—which describes twenty-five South Korean directors including Hyun-Mok Yu, Man-Hee Lee and Kwon-Taek Im—is an important reference material for studies on South Korean cinema auteurs.

Since the 2000s the quantity of scholarship conducted on South Korean cinema has increased greatly. I will now outline some of the most notable studies produced during this period. Kyung-Hyun Kim discussed masculinity in contemporary South Korean cinema.¹⁴⁴ Exploring the shift from Confucian philosophy to modern South Korean society, he argued that the depiction of masculinity could be connected to the traditional Korean patriarchal system.¹⁴⁵ Frances Gateward et al. paid attention to the wide range of South Korean cinema's cultural, industrial, social, historical, political, aesthetic and generic contexts.¹⁴⁶ Meanwhile, Darcy Paquet analysed how South Korean cinema came to flourish in the 2000s as a result of the contemporary socio-political context.¹⁴⁷ Jin-Hee Choi concentrated on industrial and formal changes in contemporary South Korean cinema.¹⁴⁸ Soo-Jeong Ahn scrutinised aspects of the promotions of films in the Busan International Film Festival, as well as the wider context of the development of the festival itself.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴² Darcy Paquet, *New Korean Cinema: Breaking the Waves* (London: Wallflower, 2009), 61.

¹⁴³ "Books," KOFIC, accessed Aug 18, 2019, <https://www.koreanfilm.or.kr/eng/publications/books.jsp>.

¹⁴⁴ Kyung-Hyun Kim, *The Remasculinization of Korean Cinema*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Frances Gateward, ed., *Seoul Searching*. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007).

¹⁴⁷ Darcy Paquet, *New Korean Cinema: Breaking the Waves*.

¹⁴⁸ Jin-Hee Choi, *The South Korean Film Renaissance: Local Hitmakers, Global Provocateurs* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2010).

¹⁴⁹ Soo-Jeong Ahn, *The Pusan International Film Festival South Korean Cinema and Globalization* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012).

Hye-Seung Chung and David Scott Diffrient delved into the increasingly transnational relationship between South Korean cinema and other national cinemas such as Hollywood films.¹⁵⁰ Brian Yecies and Ae-Gyung Shim separated the socio-cultural changes that occurred in South Korean cinema into three categories: the golden age of the 1960s, the dark age of the 1970s and 1980s and the recent golden age of the post-censorship era.¹⁵¹ Jin-Soo An illuminated how depictions of the Japanese colonial period could be discussed through explorations of nationalism, cultural perceptions and the use of genres like gangster and horror.¹⁵² Lastly, Sang-Joon Lee summarised the diversity of thought in Korean cinema through an analysis of film from 1930 to 2010, where a different film was analysed in each chapter of the book.¹⁵³

While these prolific scholarly works have considered many aspects of South Korean cinema, South Korean Cinema studies has not paid attention to one of the important elements of Korean art and culture: breath. Further, while phenomenology has developed the discourse of embodied vision, this theoretical approach has rarely been employed in South Korean Cinema studies. Since, as I explained earlier, phenomenology provides a very effective theoretical approach for the analysis of the representation of breath, my phenomenological discourse on breath in South Korean cinema will provide a new interpretation of South Korean cinema. Additionally, since South Korean Cinema studies haven't fully explored the impact of sound in South Korean Cinema from a phenomenological perspective, this thesis will also contribute to South Korean cinema studies through my sonic analysis of the representation of breath.

I will now highlight an important boundary to the critical explorations of this thesis, arising from the fact my study deals with both universal and culturally specific perspectives. Jin-Hee Choi provides a useful account of this issue. She clarifies that '[her] approach should be distinguished from a symptomatic approach, which is a tendency still dominant in both critical and academic discourse on national cinema – a tendency to fixate upon a nation's history and culture as the sole source of the specificity of national cinema.'¹⁵⁴ She is particularly critical of Byung-Sup Ahn's discourse of *han* in South Korean cinema.

¹⁵⁰ Hye-Seung Chung, and David Scott Diffrient, *Movie Migrations: Transnational Genre Flow and South Korean Cinema* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2015).

¹⁵¹ Brian Yecies and Ae-Gyung Shim, *The Changing Face of Korean Cinema: 1960 to 2015* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

¹⁵² Jin-Soo An, *Parameters of Disavowal: Colonial Representation in South Korean Cinema* (California: University of California Press, 2018).

¹⁵³ Sang-Joon Lee, ed., *Rediscovering Korean Cinema* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2019).

¹⁵⁴ Jin-Hee Choi, *The South Korean Film Renaissance: Local Hitmakers, Global Provocateurs*, 9.

Han - sometimes translated as grudge, spite, or enmity - is perhaps best described as a frame of mind characterized by a sorrowful lament, gradually increasing, which comes from undue treatment or suffering from heavy persecution. [...] Korean *han* is passive. It does not lead to revenge. It is a feeling deeply rooted in the heart and reveals itself in resignation, reproaching heaven, and lamenting one's destiny. [...] When *han* reaches an extreme degree, it may appear as sentimentalism. The sentimentalism in Korean cinema and popular song is an extreme expression of *han*.¹⁵⁵

However, Choi's counterargument to Ahn's analysis of *han* in South Korean cinema is that 'the reflectionist approach, although insightful, are rather deterministic. [...] The relationship between national cinema and history is fluid, refraction rather than reflection.'¹⁵⁶ In other words, she insists that Ahn's concept of *han* should not be seen as a dominant factor in South Korean cinema, but can instead be understood as having limited significance.

Responding to the points raised by Ahn and Choi, I should clarify that, as I mentioned in the beginning of this section, my research does not seek to essentialise South Korean cinema. I therefore do not consider it essential to define the emotion of *han* to evaluate the quality of a South Korean film as national cinema. Rather, I discuss these elements in relation to my case studies in order to develop a phenomenological approach to the representation of breath and an understanding of its relation to the Korean emotional state. Rather than seeking to define *han*, my analysis of the representation of breath will explore multiple interpretations of *han*, as introduced in section 1.2.4, in order to provoke a nuanced discussion.

Choi's criticism of essentialism with regards to *han* highlights how exploration of this term can potentially lead to distortion of both the scope of Korean culture and our understanding *han* itself. I will therefore offer further clarification when I discuss the emotion of *han* in subsequent parts of the thesis. Other culturally specific discourses are not central to this thesis, which will also draw on a more universal perspective. The majority of formal analysis of films in the thesis will draw on terminologies provided by Western studies of film and phenomenology. Although there is a debate to be had on whether it is justifiable to approach South Korean screen culture from a Western-centric perspective, I take the stance that this is unavoidable, since theoretic discourses in film and phenomenological studies were developed by Western cultures. Approaches to film and phenomenology that originated in the Western culture are therefore universal tools for the analysis of film. However, my discussions of the emotion of *han* and *sinmyeong* in relation to the

¹⁵⁵ Byung-Sup Ahn, "Humor in Korean Cinema," *East-West Film Journal* 2, no. 2 (1987): 95.

¹⁵⁶ Jin-Hee Choi, *The South Korean Film Renaissance: Local Hitmakers, Global Provocateurs*, 10.

representation of breath, will provide cultural nuance to my analyses. In other words, I will explore universal physiological and biological experiences through the analysis of culturally specific practices and understandings. I will highlight this shift, between universality and cultural specificity, as necessary in certain sections of the thesis.

1.3 Structure

My thesis consists of two interconnected threads, the phenomenological interpretation of breath and trauma, and emotions of *han* and *sinmyeong* in the Korean context. As I explained earlier, I will explore three aspects of the representation of breath in cinema: spatiality, inter-subjectivity and corporeality—which will be theorised in chapters 2, 3 and 4 respectively. In addition to this, since the emotion of *han* has diverse interpretations and the emotion of *sinmyeong* can be associated with the release of *han*, I will explore these areas in more depth in chapters 3 and 4 respectively. I will also explore trauma in modern Korean history in chapter 2. While chapter 2 will explore spatiality and trauma, chapter 3 will delve into the relationship between inter-subjectivity and the emotion of *han*. Following on from this, chapter 4 will address corporeality and the emotion of *sinmyeong*. Through adoption of this structure, my explorations of trauma, *han* and *sinmyeong* will form a sub-thread within the thesis that emphasises Korean cultural contexts. Hence, in each chapter, I will conduct a phenomenological analysis of Korean trauma and emotions respectively. In each chapter I will also progress my argument on the three aspects of breath.

Meul O's film *Jiseul*¹⁵⁷ and Chang-Dong Lee's film *Peppermint Candy*¹⁵⁸ will be explored as case studies in Chapter 2. Both films chronicle traumatic experiences in modern South Korean history. *Jiseul* is a local independent film set on the Jeju island. It was directed by a local director and the actors were almost exclusively also local to the island. *Jiseul* was a huge success at both domestic and international film festivals, winning fourteen awards and four nominations, including the World Cinema Dramatic Grand Jury Prize at the 2013 Sundance Film Festival.¹⁵⁹ It was also commercially successful (for an independent film) at the domestic box office—there were 143,715 attendances in South Korea.¹⁶⁰ *Jiseul* tells the story of the Jeju April 3rd Uprising and

¹⁵⁷ *Jiseul* 지슬 [*Jiseul*], directed by Meul O (2012; South Korea: Japari Film).

¹⁵⁸ *Bakha Satang* 박하사탕 [*Peppermint Candy*], directed by Chang-Dong Lee (1999; South Korea: Dream Venture Capital).

¹⁵⁹ "Jiseul: Awards," IMDB, accessed Aug 24, 2021, https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2526138/awards/?ref_=tt_awd.

¹⁶⁰ "Yeogdae bagseuopiseu" 역대 박스오피스 [Box office of all time], KOBIS, accessed Jul 28, 2021, <https://www.kobis.or.kr/kobis/business/stat/offc/findFormerBoxOfficeList.do>.

subsequent massacres between 1948 and 1954. In this period, many innocent civilians in hiding from the military on Jeju were killed by the army, who accused them of being Communist sympathisers. In the film, the rural population takes refuge in local caves. My analysis of the film focuses on its depiction of the visual and sonic elements of the lives of local people via the spatial embodiment of breath. The film's spatial representations of breath will be explained through analysis of the elemental landscape and elemental soundscape. Such phenomenological analyses will focus on the cave, ritual filmic space, the wind and the film's final song, *leodosana*. Furthermore, I will discuss how the film emphasises the transcendental aspect of breath through the display of four ceremonial subheadings which are named after ceremonies associated with the death rites.

While *Jiseul* pays attention to the traumatic history of a local space in relation to breath and wind, *Peppermint Candy* focuses on an individual's traumatic memory of the May 18 Democratic Uprising in 1980 (and the subsequent democratisation process). *Peppermint Candy* attracted 290,352 viewers in South Korea.¹⁶¹ It was also highly lauded at domestic and international film festivals, where it garnered fourteen wins and four nominations, including the C.I.C.A.E Award at the 2000 Cannes Film Festival.¹⁶² As I mentioned in the previous section, Chang-Dong Lee is a prestigious art-house director in South Korea who has directed 6 films, from *Green Fish*¹⁶³ to *Burning*¹⁶⁴.¹⁶⁵ The main protagonist in the film suffers from the painful memories of their accidental killing of a girl while they acted as a soldier during the Uprising. This act victimises him throughout the film and is depicted as the most traumatic memory of his life. His traumatic symptoms are triggered through audio-visual experiences of trains, or by proximity to rail tracks, since this is where he killed the innocent girl. I analyse the sounds made by the traumatised protagonist, such as the suffocation of his victim and the protagonist's shouting, as a form of elemental soundscape. In this respect, the representation of trauma through breath in this film will be mainly analysed as a subcategory of Quinlivan's 'elemental topography.'

By concentrating on the elemental landscape and elemental soundscape in these films, I will argue that spatial delineations of the image and sound of breath emphasise trauma. I will argue that the representation of breath in these films acts to memorialise and cathartically heal trauma.

¹⁶¹ KOBIS, "Yeogdae bagseuopiseu" 역대 박스오피스 [Box office of all time].

¹⁶² "Peppermint Candy: Awards," IMDB, accessed Aug 24, 2021, https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0247613/awards/?ref_=tt_awd.

¹⁶³ *Chorok Mulkogi* 초록 물고기 [*Green Fish*], directed by Chang-Dong Lee (1997; South Korea: CJ Entertainment).

¹⁶⁴ *Beoning* 버닝 [*Burning*], directed by Chang-Dong Lee (2018; South Korea: Pine House Film).

¹⁶⁵ "Chang-Dong Lee," IMDB, accessed Aug 24, 2021, https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0496969/?ref_=tt_ov_dr.

Not only do the narratives of these films express trauma through their spatial representations of breath, but they also enable the spectators to contemplate historical trauma from a distance.

While Chapter 2 will commemorate traumatic losses of life in Korean history through visual and sonic spatial representations of breath, chapter 3 will conduct an enquiry into the inter-subjectivity of breath and the emotion of *han* shared between the protagonist, the film form and the spectator. This topic will be explored through analysis of Kwon-Taek Im's two films, *Seopyeonje*¹⁶⁶ and *Festival*¹⁶⁷, where I will comment on the use of traditional Korean music and funeral rites.

Seopyeonje was an unexpected hit. Not only was it well regarded as an art house film, but it was also the first South Korean film to sell more than 1 million tickets.¹⁶⁸ This film was a cultural phenomenon, stirring domestic interest in traditional Korean culture and emotion. The director Kwon-Taek Im, who directed *Seopyeonje*, *Festival* and *Chunhyang*¹⁶⁹, has directed 103 films since 1962.¹⁷⁰ He is one of the most influential auteurs of South Korean cinema, famous for his interest in traditional Korean music, funeral and painting. *Seopyeonje* is about a blind *pansori* singer, her stepfather and stepbrother. In the film, the *pansori* singer is blinded by her stepfather out of a desire to turn her into a master singer through the experience of the emotion of *han*. In the chapter, I argue that formal familiarity and inter-subjectivity in the film result from the formal construction of audio-visual proximity, the protagonist's loss of vision in the frame and the representation of breath. In other words, the shot size of the image, the blindness of the character, the volume of diegetic sound and the nonexistence of diegetic sound will be examined to elucidate the representation of breath. I also utilise the terms breathing visuality, breathing aurality and breathing audio-visuality to explain inter-subjectivity in the film. Furthermore, I argue that the inter-subjective representation of breath revolves around and links the *pansori* music's mastery of sound and the development of the emotion of *han*. In the absence of the protagonist's eyesight, her development of *han* when practising *pansori* singing acts as evidence of my notion of how the internal and inter-subjective aspects of breath are presented through visual and sonic means. The emotion of *han* is also independently inter-subjective, since its Korean meaning contains the concept of reconciliation, which necessitates inter-subjectivity.

¹⁶⁶ *Seopyeonje* 서편제 [*Seopyeonje*], directed by Kwon-Taek Im (1993; South Korea: Taehung Pictures).

¹⁶⁷ *Chugje* 축제 [*Festival*], directed by Kwon-Taek Im (1996; South Korea: Taehung Pictures).

¹⁶⁸ KOBIS, "Yeogdae bagseuopiseu" 역대 박스오피스 [Box office of all time].

¹⁶⁹ *Chunhyangdeon* 춘향전 [*Chunhyang*], directed by Kwon-Taek Im (2000; South Korea: CJ Entertainment).

¹⁷⁰ "Kwon-Taek Im," IMDB, accessed 24 Aug 2021.

https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0407990/?ref_=nv_sr_srg_0.

My interest in the film *Festival* relates to how traditional Korean funeral rites can be linked with representations of breath. While the film is less famous (and was less successful at the box office) than *Seopyeonje*, traditional Korean funeral culture is elaborately revealed in *Festival*. In the film, the complex ceremonial procedure of the traditional Korean funeral is depicted. Further, the emotions of the bereaved are expressed through breathing stress, which metaphorically encourages the audience to reflect on the boundaries of life and death. Even though *Seopyeonje* and *Festival* use different reference points to explore the inter-subjective representation of breath: *pansori* and funeral, they can both be related to the emotion of *han*. Especially in *Festival*, the performance of *gog* (a combination of mourning sounds and ground hitting gestures) by the bereaved reveals how breath can represent life. In other words, these exaggerated linguistic sounds and gestures of sorrow are based on breath and function as a farewell to the deceased. The funeral rites in the film also express *han*, as the protagonist reflects that they should have treated their mother better before her death.

Chapter 4 investigates how the representation of breath in South Korean films can be tactile, through use of the terms ‘haptic visuality,’ ‘haptic aurality’ and ‘haptic audio-visuality.’ Kwon-Taek Im’s film *Chunhyang* and Emma Franz’s documentary *Intangible Asset No. 82*¹⁷¹ will be analysed in this chapter. The former, a Korean musical film featuring *pansori*, is formally interesting since the sound of *pansori* dictates the flow of the narrative and the film’s formal rhythm. *Chunhyang*, which was nominated for the Palme d’Or at the 2000 Cannes Film Festival,¹⁷² portrays *pansori* singers and drummers’ performance in the second diegesis in order to present a narrative of love, farewell, hardship and reunion of two lovers where the heroes and villains are met with poetic justice. Even though the performance sequences are extradiegetic, the musical expression guides the flow of the entire film narrative as music is inserted into the narrative. Since *pansori* is not based on the heartbeat, but on the breath, the rhythmic representation of breath in the film’s form provides a direct and complex haptic experience of breath.

Intangible Asset No. 82 is a documentary film chronicling a journey made to South Korea by the Australian drummer Simon Barker, where he finds and meets the Korean shaman master-musician Seok-Chul Kim, who inspired Barker’s musical practice. Emma Franz, the director of the film, who is also a musician, demonstrates her musical knowledge through the cinematographic construction of Simon’s musical journey in South Korea. During his journey, Barker learns the core elements of traditional Korean music, including the relationship between breath and rhythm. The

¹⁷¹ *Intangible Asset No. 82.*, directed by Emma Franz (2008; Australia: In the Sprocket Productions).

¹⁷² “*Chunhyang: Awards*,” IMDB, accessed Aug 24, 2021, https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0245837/awards/?ref_=tt_awd.

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film depicts being both an insider and an outsider, as well as the corporeal tension and relaxation experienced by the Australian jazz drummer as they integrate traditional Korean musical rhythm into their own music. The rhythm of the film builds and releases tension throughout the film through its representation of the musical and emotional excitement felt between Barker and the Korean musicians. In my analysis of this film, I will draw on and redefine Marks's concept of 'intercultural cinema,'¹⁷³ which will be explained in section 4.3.

While breathing rhythm and the principle of breath is used in both films—and affects their formal and thematic construction—the emotion of *sinmyeong* will also be addressed in chapter 4. In my discussion of *sinmyeong*, I will explore how structural tension is constructed through breathing rhythm and the principle of breath in each film.

Finally, in Chapter 5, I will examine how representations of breath, trauma and the emotions of *han* and *sinmyeong* can be fruitfully combined in the Korean context. By comparing and combining these three main characteristics through phenomenological analysis, I will discuss how building a comprehensive discourse of breath advances phenomenological studies of South Korean cinema. As breath is not articulated but connected in a single flow, the discourse of the representation of breath in each chapter will be unified in this concluding chapter. This final chapter will also emphasise my original contribution to knowledge, and highlight possibilities for further research opened up by this thesis.

¹⁷³ Laura Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*.

Chapter 2 Where Breath Remembers

2.1 Context

This chapter analyses two South Korean films: *Jiseul*¹⁷⁴, based on the factual events of the April 3 Jeju Uprising and subsequent massacres between 1947 and 1954; and *Peppermint Candy*¹⁷⁵, based on a later tragedy, the May 18 Democratic Uprising in 1980. Both films utilise the spatial representation of breath as a means of constructing traumatic memories in modern Korean history. I argue that the concepts of the elemental landscape and elemental soundscape can describe the audio-visual representation of breath in terms of spatiality that accords with the traumatic history in both *Jiseul* and *Peppermint Candy*. I will draw on Quinlivan's term 'elemental topography' in order to examine both the image and sound of the spatiality of the representation of breath.

Before moving forward with my analysis of the spatial representation of breath in *Jiseul* and *Peppermint Candy*, I will briefly introduce relevant background information on the meanings of 'trauma' and 'history' intended in the context of my thesis. Etymologically, the term 'trauma' is derived from the medical Latin word meaning 'physical wound' and from the Greek word meaning 'a wound, a hurt; a defeat,' while the familiar modern meaning of 'trauma' as a 'psychic wound, unpleasant experience which causes abnormal stress' has emerged since 1894.¹⁷⁶ Although the latter meaning of 'trauma' is most appropriate to my usage, the etymological origin as a 'physical wound' implies that the aftermath of trauma can encompass both mind and body.

Regarding the psychological interpretation of 'trauma,' Sigmund Freud's discourse on trauma delivers a clear understanding of the terminology's modern usage. Freud defines 'traumatic neurosis' as 'a condition ... which occurs after severe mechanical concussions, railway disasters and other accidents involving a risk to life.'¹⁷⁷ He argues that the core elements of this term are 'surprise,' and 'fright,' which is 'the name we give to the state a person gets into when he has run into danger without being prepared for it; it emphasizes the factor of surprise.'¹⁷⁸ This explanation

¹⁷⁴ *Jiseul* 지슬 [*Jiseul*], directed by Meul O (2012; South Korea: Japari Film).

¹⁷⁵ *Bakha Satang* 박하사탕 [*Peppermint Candy*], directed by Chang-Dong Lee (1999; South Korea: Dream Venture Capital).

¹⁷⁶ "Trauma," Online Etymology Dictionary, accessed June 1, 2021, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/trauma>.

¹⁷⁷ Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans. James Strachey (1920; reis., New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1961), 6.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

allows a glimpse of how ‘trauma’ should be treated during the analyses of the two traumatic film case studies at hand. Drawing on Freud’s concept of trauma, I point out that the trauma of the historical event in a film should contain an element of surprise to the protagonists or to the spectator.

One of the differences between the representations of historical trauma in *Jiseul* and *Peppermint Candy* is the distinction between collective and individual traumas. In *Jiseul*, a community experiences a traumatic massacre; it comes to them as a surprise, and causes them to take refuge. However, as opposed to these collective victims, the perpetrators’ trauma stemming from their operation seems more explicit. While soldiers Private Sang-Duk and Private Dong-Soo, who do not know why they have been ordered to kill people, are traumatic victims, Private Jung-Gil’s killing of master sergeant Kim after the former’s observation of the burning of the village and the killing of innocent civilians showcases how the group of perpetrators suffer from their trauma. Private Jung-Gil attempts to stop this traumatic event by punishing one of the most brutal soldiers responsible for it.

While these protagonists are revealing their surprise on each side of the tragedy, Sergeant First Class Ko is a contrasting character, who may be diagnosed with a preformed trauma associated with ideological hatred. His words, spoken in a North Korean accent, imply that he may have had a traumatic experience with communists in the northern region of Korea, and escaped Southward from them before the political division of the Korean Peninsula into North and South Korea. It seems at first that there is no aspect of surprise to this character, but his personal surprise is hidden in his past experiences, probably those occurring while still in the northern region of Korea. The tragedy, then, is that the supposed victim becomes a perpetrator of violence in order to escape from his trauma, revealing his anger towards innocent civilians. These crimes committed during the military operation also cause additional trauma to Sergeant Ko, even though this is not explicitly revealed in the narrative of *Jiseul*.

While both perpetrators and victims experience trauma during the April 3 Jeju Uprising and subsequent massacres in *Jiseul*, *Peppermint Candy*’s trauma is focused on the Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder (PTSD) of an individual perpetrator. Judith Herman has suggested that PTSD is more common among ‘harmers’ than among ‘non-combatants.’¹⁷⁹ This is certainly the case for Young-Ho’s PTSD, as the main driving force of his failure to move forward with his life is evidently his killing of a girl as shown in the film.

¹⁷⁹ Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence – From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 252.

Da-Un Lee has argued that '*Peppermint Candy* extends the range of the historical trauma from the absolute victim to the incident which the 'camouflaged perpetrator' cannot even grieve for himself.'¹⁸⁰ Lee also claims that 'as he does not have a persecution complex, he decides to destroy himself ... since he cannot be forgiven for his killing.'¹⁸¹

Even though *Jiseul* deals with collective trauma, and *Peppermint Candy* with individual trauma, both films record how historical trauma can be represented in films on the topic of modern South Korean history. Regardless of whether or not trauma is the explicit driving force of the films' protagonists, both films revolve around the historical tragedy and its traumatic existence during or after the event.

Second, an understanding of the meaning of 'history' in a Korean context is helpful to understand the analyses of two films. The Korean understanding of 'history' is linguistically linked with the representation of breath, which is the main focus of this thesis. For instance, 'yeogsa-ui sumgyeol-eul neukkida' (feel the breath of history), is a common phrase in Korea. This expression is used when Koreans face and experience a historical site or remnant, regardless of whether the site/remnant is physical or spiritual. Previously I introduced the word *mogsum* (life) based on the combination of the extrinsic meanings of a neck and of breath; *sumgyeol* is also a blend of the words *sum* (breath) and *gyeol* (grain or texture), and thus this Korean expression understands history as a breathing texture. In other words, when feeling the breath of history, the embodied, living component of history is implied. This linkage of history with breath in the Korean context is coherent with the phenomenological viewpoint on breath. Phenomenology provides an understanding of embodied experience which allows us to consider even a non-organic body, such as the film body, as breathing via the formation of its rhythm.

Tragedy on Jeju Island and *Jiseul*

November 1948: American troops along with newly formed Korean troops declared martial law on Jeju island. They also declared that they would kill anyone NOT living within a 5km distance from the shore. This was the start of the so called 'burn to the ground' military operations.¹⁸²

This on-screen description of the April 3 Jeju Uprising and subsequent massacres in *Jiseul* provides a concise summary of how the events depicted in the film began, with the aim of locating and

¹⁸⁰ Da-Un Lee, "Yeogsajeog teulauma-e daehan yeonghwajeog gillog: <baghasatang>eul jungsim-eulo" 역사적 트라우마에 대한 영화적 기록: <박하사탕>을 중심으로 [A cinematic record of a historical trauma: Focusing on *Peppermint Candy*], *Journal of Korean Modern Literacy Criticism* 62 (2019): 336.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 341.

¹⁸² Caption from *Jiseul*.

killing communists. But in order to understand this event more clearly, I will give some further details on its origins. Korea had been under Japanese occupation from 1910 until 1945, when Japan surrendered at the end of the Second World War. Korea achieved independence from Japan but was soon divided into two regions, the South and the North, due to the region's geopolitical importance to world powers such as the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). According to the Jeju 4.3 Peace Foundation, the United States Army military government in Korea and the subsequent South Korean government aimed between 1947 and 1954 to identify and eradicate communists and their sympathisers in South Korea.¹⁸³ The 'burn to the ground' military operations on Jeju island, which included the destruction of towns and massacres of innocent civilians, was a part of this policy. The Jeju 4.3 Peace Foundation claims that almost no distinctions were made between innocent civilians and communist activists during these search operations, and that an estimated 25,000 to 30,000 people were killed between the first shootings by the police in 1947 and the opening of the 'no access area' in Hallasan (Mount Halla) of Jeju island in 1954.¹⁸⁴

Jiseul depicts this catastrophic period by detailing to the experience of a group of escaped villagers. The film claims that it is based on the true story of a group of around 120 villagers who lived for 50 to 60 days in a cave in the mountainous region of Jeju. Although they were eventually discovered, the group managed to escape once more, and were finally recaptured by soldiers. Most of the villagers were killed in Seo-gi-po, at the Jung Bang Waterfall, on December 24, 1948.

Democratisation in the 1980s of South Korea and *Peppermint Candy*

Like *Jiseul*, *Peppermint Candy* focuses on a traumatic moment in modern South Korean history, the May 18 Democratic Uprising, and its subsequent influence on the democratisation of South Korea. The May 18 Democratic Uprising occurred soon after the end of President Jung-Hee Park's authoritarian regime. Park had held a grip on governmental power since a military coup d'état on May 16, 1961. This coup occurred a year after the democratic April revolution caused by the revelation of electoral fraud by first president Seung-Man Lee and his resignation. Park continued to hold office until he was murdered by his subordinate Jae-Gyu Kim on October 26, 1979. Although many citizens wanted a shift towards democracy after this incident, there was another military coup d'état on December 12, 1979 by Doohwan Chun. In the spring of 1980 there was a burst of expression that the South Korean people no longer wanted to live under an autocratic government. In May of that year, there were protests against repression by the new military

¹⁸³ "Jeju 4·3" 제주 4·3 [The Jeju April 3rd uprising and subsequent massacres], Jeju 4.3 Peace Foundation, accessed Jul 28, 2021, https://www.jeju43peace.or.kr/kor/sub01_01_02.do.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

authorities across the country, requesting a cessation of special martial law and the resignation of the new military government.¹⁸⁵ As the nationwide people's democratic movement grew, the government declared nationwide martial law on May 17, 1980.¹⁸⁶

The May 18 Democratic Uprising began in this context of nationwide democratic demands. When the military force in Gwang-Ju assaulted protesters, the public became outraged.¹⁸⁷ On May 19, 1980, the military began shooting and killing civilians, causing the public to arm themselves with guns from the shot lockers of the reserve forces around Gwang-Ju.¹⁸⁸ The city was left isolated by the military force, and the citizens of Gwang-Ju largely supported the protesters. However, the last protesters left in the building of the Jeonnam Provincial Government were all either captured or killed on May 27, 1980.¹⁸⁹ People outside of Gwang-Ju were prevented from accurately hearing this news, as the government forced all press to depict the protests as an armed revolt.

Even though the May 18 Democratic Uprising ended in a tragedy, the desire of the public for democracy continued. The 1980s was a period of constant democratic uprisings, and in June 1987, the June Struggle for Democracy took place due to government repression which included the deaths of two students. Jong-Chul Park was a university student who had been captured and tortured by the police, and finally died on January 14, 1987.¹⁹⁰ A priest, Seung-Hun Kim, disclosed the concealment of the death of Jong-Chul Park on May 18, 1987, and the public became more exasperated, with democratic protests becoming more frequent.¹⁹¹ During a June 9 protest in the same year, another university student Han-Yeol Lee was hit by a police tear gas bomb from the police, dying July 7, 1987.¹⁹² Furthermore, President Doo-Hwan Chun did not accept a revision of the constitution which included the direct election of the president of South Korea.¹⁹³ From June 10 to June 29, 1987, protests flared nationwide against the news.¹⁹⁴ As a strong candidate for the next presidency, Tae-Woo Roh accepted the proposed direct election of the president, and so because of the June Struggle for Democracy, South Korea finally regained its democratic system.¹⁹⁵

¹⁸⁵ "5·18 yeolheulgan-ui hangjaeng" 5·18 열흘간의 항쟁 [The May 18 ten-day struggle], The May 18 Memorial Foundation, accessed Dec 2, 2019. <https://518.org/nsub.php?PID=0101>.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ "6·10 minjuhangjaeng" 6·10 민주항쟁 [The June struggle for democracy], Korea Democracy Foundation, accessed Dec 2, 2019, <https://www.610.or.kr/610/about>.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

The democratisation which took place during the 1980s, including the May 18 Democratic Uprising in 1980 and the June Struggle for Democracy in 1987, is a pivotal period of modern South Korean history which is essential to understanding the film *Peppermint Candy*, since the story of the main protagonist Young-Ho is strongly affected by these historical events. The film follows a reverse chronology, charting his life from the moment he commits suicide on a rail track bridge back to the first time in his life that he had visited the same place.

2.2 Elemental Landscape

As I addressed in section 1.2.1, Quinlivan's theory of 'elemental topography' provides a clear understanding of how the spatial dimension of breath may be represented. She expands the range of the discourse of phenomenological film studies from the focus of the embodied vision to a spiritual and transcendental level. In particular, Quinlivan utilises her term 'sensory refrain' to explain how light and silence can facilitate the spatial representation of breath in terms of immateriality. While I broadly draw on her development of 'elemental topography' along with 'sensory refrain,' I will introduce a novel antipodal element which contributes to the spatial representation of breath in the case studies of *Jiseul* and *Peppermint Candy*. I argue that the spatial representation of breath in *Jiseul* and *Peppermint Candy* allow the spectator to perceive the transcendental meaning of the elemental landscape, not only sensually, but also from a distance so that historical trauma may be recognised.

The Cave

The first and the most notable usage of the spatial representation of breath in *Jiseul* has its focus in the cave where the refugees rest temporarily while they flee from the soldiers. The space of the cave is visualised in the film from two perspectives: from the outside where light enters the cave, and from the inside where darkness envelops the refugees. Ironically, the film reverses the typical perception by the audience of light and dark as good and bad, respectively. Instead, light from outside the cave indicates a threat, while darkness signals comfort, protection, and safety. In other words, the cave allows the refugees to keep breathing while they survive in the darkness.

In examining light and dark, I note the quality of whiteness which is one possible way of expressing light as an image in a film. Irigaray's theorisation of whiteness with regards to breath is useful in this context. Quinlivan interprets Irigaray's whiteness as 'a welcoming colouring of the divine that is also earthbound: above all, white is the translucence of breath, the condition for

reflection and the positive space of silence.¹⁹⁶ Irigaray argues that 'indispensable for life, breath is also the means, the medium to accede to spiritual life as an irreducible dimension of human subjectivity.'¹⁹⁷ This view implies that whiteness is the visual way of showing the positive and transcendental characteristics of breath as relate to its implication of life, and offers the possibility of further adaptation to the various spatialisations of breath.

For Irigaray, breath can be visualised by using the colour white, which embodies the pass of light as the transcendental. Quinlivan adapts this notion of whiteness as a means of expressing 'elemental topography', a spatial terminology for the elements of breath and air in cinema.¹⁹⁸ When analysing Atom Egoyan's film *The Sweet Hereafter*¹⁹⁹, Quinlivan reveals how the whiteness of the snow and ice symbolise life via the representation of breath, placed in opposition to the tragic accidental death of a group of children when their school bus falls into a frozen river.²⁰⁰ She also draws attention to silence in the white space as a depiction of the children's' death, 'which returns us to an interior consciousness, a contemplative 'sigh' or, more precisely, refrain.'²⁰¹ Her theorisation suggests that a spatial construction of the representation of breath, and that 'elemental topographies' can provide an alternative logic via the transcendental, applying Irigaray's philosophy to the established scholarly discussion of embodiment in film studies.

Although the transcendental viewpoints on breath by Irigaray and Quinlivan have laid the framework for my own analysis, their positive view of whiteness needs to be discussed further questioned with regards to *Jiseul*. As I observed above, whiteness in this film is in fact linked to danger, exposure, and even death. Conversely, it is precisely the darkness of the cave that embraces and protects the villagers, and thus can be seen to embody the transcendental function that Irigaray and Quinlivan assign to whiteness. Therefore, while the positive connotations of whiteness make perfect sense in the analysis of the 'elemental topography' in *The Sweet Hereafter*, the whiteness is used in *Jiseul* as a more negative force, suggesting that whiteness can encompass the representations of both life and death.

The meaning of whiteness in a specifically Korean context is worthy of a brief mention. According to Jee-Young Ra, white is a traditional colour for mourning dress at Korean funerals, intended to

¹⁹⁶ Davina Quinlivan, *The Place of Breath in Cinema*, 52.

¹⁹⁷ Luce Irigaray, "Being Two: How Many Eyes Have We?" *Paragraph* 25, no. 3 (2002): 149.

¹⁹⁸ Davina Quinlivan, *The Place of Breath in Cinema*, 42.

¹⁹⁹ *The Sweet Hereafter*, directed by Atom Egoyan (1997; Canada: Alliance Communications Corporation).

²⁰⁰ Davina Quinlivan, *The Place of Breath in Cinema*, 52.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 55.

wish the dead an eternal life.²⁰² An example of white dress in a traditional Korean funeral context may be found in *Festival*²⁰³. In short, white indicates both life and death in the Korean view.²⁰⁴

As the darkness of the cave gives a visual depiction of shelter for the refugees, the shape of the cave is also significant in relation to the representation of breath. This dark shelter is characterised in the film as resembling at times both a lung and a throat, where breath enters and exits the body. If we imagine that we are inside the throat, our surroundings will be dark, with light shining inward from the mouth. Likewise, the contrast of light and dark in and out of the space of the cave not only allows the refugees to extend their lives through breathing, but also visually represents the breathing space of the cave. The role of the cave as a breathing organ for the refugees thus earns it the title of an elemental landscape.

One of the most notable instances of the spatialisation of breath in the cave occurs when the villagers gather to talk about their worries and news (Figure 2.1). During their conversation, the camera continually pans while changing its framing from a waist shot, to a close-up, to a bust shot, and finally back to a waist shot. The darkness of the cave allows for seamless transitions between these shots, and during its motion the camera enlarges and shrinks the sizes of the refugees in the frame. This smooth change of framing while maintaining the impression of a single shot is indicative of a lung's breathing in and out, emphasising the space of breathing life. This style of camera motion is also relevant to the discussion of corporeality in Chapter 4, where the film body itself is understood to breathe and to have a breathing rhythm.



Figure 2.1 The Cave 1 in *Jiseul*

²⁰² Jee-Young Ra, “Ulinala saegchaoui sangjingseong-gwa geu jeog-yongsalyee daehan yeongu” 우리나라 색채의 상징성과 그 적용사례에 대한 연구 [Colors in traditional Korea: symbolic aspects and application], *Korean Society of Basic Design & Art* 9, no. 2 (2008): 288.

²⁰³ *Chugje* 축제 [*Festival*], directed by Kwon-Taek Im (1996; South Korea: Taehung Pictures).

²⁰⁴ This is distinct from Western conceptions of whiteness, for example those discussed by Richard Dyer in *White*.

The interpretation of the cave as a breathing body includes not only the direct visualisation of it as breathing, but also its embrace of life, such as when a baby is seen to cry in the arms of its dead mother, who has been shot by the soldiers (Figure 2.2). The contrast between the dead mother and her crying baby in the silent cave after this attack shows the vulnerability of the cave, which ultimately failed to protect the mother. However, the surprising survival of the baby in the midst of this violence implies the continuance of life in the breathing space, even if it does not guarantee complete protection. Furthermore, after the baby's true mother has died, the cave holds the baby as a surrogate breathing incubator to protect it. The scene is even reminiscent of the birth of a living being from the fecund space which is a breathing body. However, this depiction of the elemental landscape is a spiritual one, as the baby is not actually being born, having already been in the mother's womb; rather, the breathing cave saves and protects the unborn baby symbolically. In doing so, it evokes the viewer's contemplation of the meaning of life and death in the context of an actual historical tragedy, and also of how the breathing space can maintain the life of the deceased in this transcendental depiction.



Figure 2.2 The Cave 2 in *Jiseul*

An additional dimension of elemental landscape and 'sensory refrain' is contributed to the cave by the appearance of smoke. Smoke is typically associated with contaminated air but takes on a different meaning in the sequence of the soldiers' attack on the refugees in the cave. Rather, I argue that the smoke in the dark space of the cave provides a 'sensory refrain' which enhances the cave's function as an elemental landscape, and which should be considered positive as it protects life.

After the soldiers have found the entrance of the cave and try to enter it, the residents in the cave act by burning dried chilli peppers. The resulting fumes cause both villagers and soldiers to experience coughing and difficulty in breathing. The soldiers cannot enter the cave until the smoke dissipates, providing time for the refugees to escape via a different passage. In terms of

image composition, one soldier moves forward from the left side of the frame while the smoke at the right side blocks his approach. He crawls towards the light, away from the camera and away from the darkness in the cave. However, his superior orders the soldiers back into the cave, and the soldiers have to move from the left to the right side of the frame again. They fire their weapons and the villagers fan the smoke towards the soldiers. At this point, the diegetic sound stops, and the image of the suffering caused by the smoke is accompanied by nondiegetic music.



Figure 2.3 Smoke in *Jiseul*

In both this sequence and in the other massacre sequences of the film, I argue that *Jiseul* uses smoke in two distinct ways. First of all, as I have argued above, smoke is usually thought of as ‘bad air.’ As Quinlivan pointed out,²⁰⁵ Steven Connor’s explanation of a smoky place is attuned to this negative aspect of smoke.²⁰⁶ Connor suggests that smoke in the form of noisome gases not only has the traditional connotation of ‘bad air,’ but also has become well-known in the modern period for its association with fatal weapons.²⁰⁷ According to Connor, the Western perception of bad air can be easily found in Western languages and myths, which show a belief that bad air emerged from nature more so than from human activity: ‘The word ‘influenza’ preserves the belief in the malign influence of the stars, transmitted in the form of mephitic fluid or vapour. [...] The basilisk, which could both immobilise its victims with its eye and destroy them with its mephitic breath, is the mythical embodiment of this belief. Hell, or the underworld is regarded in many cultural traditions as a stinking or smoky place’.²⁰⁸ Connor’s discussion of the negative characteristics of smoke fits quite well with many scenes in *Jiseul*. For example, when the soldiers capture and kill

²⁰⁵ Davina Quinlivan, *The Place of Breath in Cinema*, 103.

²⁰⁶ Steven Connor, “An Air that Kills: A Familiar History of Poison Gas,” accessed April 14, 2019. <http://stevenconnor.com/gas.html>.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

innocent villagers, and as they burn villages, the smoke surrounding the victims looks like a vision of hell.

The second way that smoke is used in *Jiseul* can be related to East Asian ideas about the afterlife. Buddhist thought, which has a profound influence on East Asian and Korean culture, includes the concept of hellfire which involves smoke. However, this perspective of smoke is only one of many in the East Asian context. Another vision of afterlife prior to the introduction of 'the Buddhist hell', especially in Korean culture, was as 'a continuation of the present', with 'a less negative view of hell or even no definition of hell at all.'²⁰⁹ Smoke in this context then represents a more neutral understanding of life's ephemerality.

In its symbolic meaning, the sequence of burning chilli peppers most closely fits the positive cultural connotations of smoke. Although in this instance smoke provides just a temporary defence and is painful, it is used in a positive manner which is pivotal to the villagers' survival. Therefore, in the same way that darkness is a more nurturing force than light in this film, the negative connotations of smoke are reversed when it plays a lifesaving role in the elemental landscape of the cave.

Ritual space

While the cave functions as a temporary shelter for the refugees, there is a wider spatial structure in *Jiseul*, which portrays breath as representing a margin separating life and death. The director O constructs this film in the style of a traditional Korean memorial service. The film has four subheadings between continuous sequences: *sinwi*, *sinmyo*, *embok* and *soji*. These terms have a ritual context, and the meaning of each must be analysed in order to understand the overall ritual structure of the film. Before I examine these ritual meanings, the first title sequence is also important since it implies the ritual aspect of this film. The initial title sequence of the film also implies the ritual structure to come: it begins with a depiction of the sky above the clouds looking down towards the sea and the land, which the viewer does not yet recognise as Jeju Island. As the title, a tribute to the deceased former local film maker's name, and the director's name appear in sequence, the bird's-eye view continues. This scene presents the film's intended transcendental and spiritual approach to this historical event, as in the Korean cultural context, the sky tends to symbolise the space where the spirit goes after the death of its physical body.

²⁰⁹ "Jeoseung-ui uimi" 저승의 의미 [The meaning of *jeoseung*], KOCCA, accessed May 10 2019, http://www.culturecontent.com/content/contentView.do?search_div=CP_THE&search_div_id=CP_THE012&cp_code=cp0526&index_id=cp05260002&content_id=cp052600020001&search_left_menu=1.

Although the spectator does not yet have a reason to interpret the title sequence as transcendental, the subsequent scene presents another clue of the film's ritual structure. As Master Sergeant Kim walks around in a house, a set of brass tableware is scattered on the floor (Figure 2.4). In the Korean tradition, brass tableware is not typically intended for daily use, but instead for ritual use. During the anniversary of an ancestor's death, a set of brass tableware is used for preparing food for a memorial service. A set of brassware should be placed on the ritual table if it is to be used during the rite, or in a cupboard if not, but a scattering of ritual bowls on the ground implies that something has gone terribly wrong. This scene of *Jiseul* thus has two meanings: it foreshadows the fate of the villagers, and also announces the ritual approach of the film. It visually emphasises the spiritual meaning of life and death. This implication becomes clearer soon after, as the film cuts to an image of victims and the intertitle of the traumatic event of the April 3 Jeju Uprising and massacres follows.



Figure 2.4 Scattered brass tableware in *Jiseul*

After sequences depicting the villagers' preparation for flight, the first subheading appears while a naked soldier is shown shivering against ferocious wind under a tree on the snow-covered ground: the punishment for Private Sang-Duk, who did not participate in catching or killing communists. The first subheading reads '*sinwi*: ancestral tablet which is a place where the soul is allowed to rest.' An ancestral tablet is a printed or written notice of the deceased, created by their descendants as a show of great devotion. Thus, using this term in a subheading suggests that the film is to invite the spectator to a rite for the victims of the depicted military operation and massacre. It marks the beginning of a ritual in which the film intends to awaken critical thoughts regarding the historical tragedy of the April 3 Jeju Uprising and massacres, and emphasises the role of the living in this ritual, who memorialise and remember the dead by leaving *sinwi*.

While *sinwi* opens and invites the viewer to the death rite, the second subheading '*sinmyo*: tomb which is where the soul remains' focuses on the spatiality of the deceased in the rite. This

subheading comes up just before a scene in which Sang-Duk aims his gun at Soon-Duk. The intercutting between the image and the subheading emphasises the extrinsic, visual cause and the intrinsic, linguistic effect. At first, the image threatens Soon-Duk's survival by freezing during the aiming of the gun. Even though Sang-Duk releases her by not firing the weapon, her final destination of death is not changed, as implied by the subheading *sinmyo*.

The spatialisation of the cave in *Jiseul*, which I discussed in the previous part of this chapter, matches the spatiality of the Korean death rite. The cave is the place where the villagers are temporarily protected before being eventually killed. This space is thus not only a temporary safe place for the villagers, but also the filmic ritual place where the souls of the victims rest and where the spectator plays the role of the memorialising descendant. The spectator contemplates the cave as the resting and ritual space for the victims, and the meaning of *sinmyo*'s spatial memorialisation for the deceased in this film is strengthened as a consequence.

While the second subheading emphasises the value of space for the soul, the following subheading gives a vastly different interpretation of the transcendental which is closely related to the main title *Jiseul*. This subheading reads '*embok*: eat the food that the souls (ghosts) have left behind.' As this term refers to eating and holds a close relation to the main title, I will first explain what *Jiseul* means and why it is connected to *embok* in this film. *Jiseul* is a word from the regional dialect of Jeju, which is difficult even for other Koreans to understand, and means 'potato.' The term is first mentioned in the film during a dialogue wherein Moo-Dong's old mother rejects her son's offer of evacuation due to her lack of mobility. She tells him not to worry about her and to bring *jiseul* to the bowl in front of her. As the potato is known as a hardy crop, it is a pivotal element of the villagers' survival.

Although the potato is not directly related to the representation of breath, its meaning of survival endows a close indirect relation. In other words, humans must eat in order to breathe and stay alive. The use of the ritual process of eating, *embok*, in the third subheading connects the function of the potato for the living with the ritual ceremony of eating what 'the souls have left behind.' The villagers do not survive in the end, so the potato they left behind in the film is eaten by the spectator via the rite of *embok*. Of course, this eating is not literal, but a perception of ritual participation which provides the spectator with the opportunity to contemplate the historical tragedy.

Embok makes other appearances later in the film. For instance, when Moo-Dong brings potatoes from his desolate and destroyed village to feed the refugees, *embok* has occurred, since his dead mother has left this sustenance for the survivors. While the villagers consume the potatoes without knowing of their own participation in the rite, Moo-Dong's refusal to eat confirms its

Chapter 2

ritual meaning and association with his sorrow at the loss of his mother. As the subheading *embok* explains, however, the characters eating the potatoes remember this ritual in the diegesis. The ritual structure of the film is strengthened via *embok*, which invites the spectator to participate both in the ritual and in the breathing space.

The previous three subheadings, *sinwi*, *sinmyo* and *embok*, address the spatial and material aspects of the ritual represented in *Jiseul*, while the final subheading, '*soji*: the desire to burn the ancestral tablet as an offering,' completes the ritual process (Figure 2.5). The soldiers enter the cave and kill Moo-Dong's wife while the rest of the refugees escape from the cave. The final intertitle explains, however, that the remaining escapees will meet a similar end. The sequence preceding this intertitle shows an unrealistic but ritualistic series of scenes, where papers of ancestral tablets burn and disappear in front of the deceased at a variety of sites.

After the paper tablets are burnt, the scene preceding the final intertitle returns the spectator to the image of the scattered brass tableware from the opening sequence of the film. The spirituality of this *soji* is defined by its transformation from paper to smoke. This transition from the material to the immaterial not only demonstrates the traditional Korean ritual practice of *soji*, but also implies the death of the breathing body of the victims, in another 'sensory refrain.' A significant culmination of the commemoration has been achieved in terms of spirituality by implying the historical tragedy in an image form of the spatial representation of breath. By burning the ancestral tablets, the film's ritual ceremony emphasises the remembrance of the deceased and their history, which reveals the historical trauma of the Jeju residents and of the Korean people.



Figure 2.5 *Soji* in *Jiseul*

Trains and rail tracks

While the image of the cave in *Jiseul* and the film's construction of the ritual together form a representation of breath through an elemental landscape, thereby memorialising a tragic history and its victims, *Peppermint Candy* foregrounds trains and rail tracks as significant spatial elements

to represent the individual's choice in the meaning of breath, life and death after their trauma. This section will therefore focus on the elemental landscape formed by images of trains and rail tracks and how it can reveal both the traumatised individual and the traumatic history of a nation.

First, I will address how *Peppermint Candy* deals with history, trauma and the individual. Todd McGowan's discussion clarifies how the depiction of trains and rail tracks emphasises that 'the film's rejection of forward-moving time and progress is at once a rejection of the nation as a historical entity – or at least as a historical entity that could provide the subject with respite from the constitutive trauma of subjectivity itself.'²¹⁰

Lee Chang-Dong creates a film about the historical development of the Korean nation that reveals the absence of development. [...] Instead of historical development, the film emphasizes the repetition of trauma, trauma that the nation attempts to escape and thereby exacerbates. Instead of images of progress, the film depicts a perpetual return to failure.²¹¹

McGowan continues to argue that 'though national identity includes actual women, it does not include female subjectivity – or its mode of enjoying. It rests on a masculinist foundation,' regarding the continual failed relationships with women on the part of the film's main protagonist Young-Ho, which is caused by his traumatic experience of killing a girl.²¹² The concept of a 'moving-forward unitary nation' has no place for Young-Ho's failed life, as 'there is no place for sexual difference'.²¹³ McGowan argues that 'both the cinema and the railroad work to install a mode of temporality focused on movement toward the future,' and that the film utilises the images of trains and rail tracks to formulate a disagreement with 'the forward movement.'²¹⁴

To understand McGowan's argument and to discuss further its connection with the film's representation of breath, it is necessary to analyse how trains and rail tracks are depicted in *Peppermint Candy*. This film's most notable visual is a collection of images shot from a running train that precedes each of seven episodes: 1. Picnic, Spring 1999; 2. Camera, three days earlier in Spring 1999; 3. Life is beautiful, summer 1994; 4. Confession, Spring 1987; 5. Prayer, Autumn 1984; 6. Meeting, May 1980; 7. Picnic, Autumn 1979 (Figure 2.6). At the beginning of each episode, the moving image of the landscape from the running train is accompanied by no diegetic

²¹⁰ Todd McGowan, "Affirmation of the Lost Object: *Peppermint Candy* and the End of Progress," *Symploke* 15, no.1–2 (2007): 172.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid., 177.

²¹³ Ibid., 172–77.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 182–84.

sound but features off-screen instrumental music. Significantly, these moving images are rewinding, as if time is moving in reverse. McGowan points out that 'the film defies the forward movement of the cinematic apparatus and of traditional cinematic narrative by moving backward in time, and it uses the reverse-projected shots from the train as its sole recurring motif in order to call into question the train's seemingly inevitable motion forward.'²¹⁵



Figure 2.6 One of the moving-backward shots from the train in *Peppermint Candy*

The reversed directionality of these shots of trains and rail tracks is not revealed to the viewer until the third episode, when cars may be seen moving in reverse on the road adjacent to the railroad, revealing that the scene has been rewound. The assumption by the viewer of forward-directed time both for the train and for the film, and the implied assumption that the history of a nation moves forward harmoniously, are called into question at this moment. The repetition of the reversed-time scenes between different episodes unfolds another reversed-time structure, that of the narrative, which proceeds from the present to the past. This is not to say that each episode also has its time reversed; indeed, every episode moves forwards as if there is no obstacle. The obstacle arises from the dual structure of the reversed-time among the episodes and the reversed-time train shots. Time appears to move forward, but the film does not permit a unilateral driving force as a true depiction of the history of a nation. The montage of opposing directions of movement gradually leads the spectator towards an explanation of the cause of the chain of failure in Young-Ho's life: his traumatic experience of killing, in a setting surrounded by the train and rail tracks.

As I briefly explained how *Peppermint Candy* form a way of declining the history moving forward together as a nation and of revealing the wound of the traumatic event and the individual's PTSD by presenting train and rail tracks, it is now important to explain how the visual of and from the

²¹⁵ Ibid., 184.

train is connected to the meaning of life and death in Young-Ho's memories of his experience which becomes his trauma at last to argue the linkage between the train and breath in terms of elemental landscape.

In the first episode, the most recent time told within the film narrative, Young-Ho experiences a strong traumatic pain which he wants to erase from his memory, revealed by crying, shouting, and emotional facial expression. The spectator is to learn what has led to this deep pain by moving backwards through his past via the film. However, it is not obvious until the fourth episode that his traumatic experience is as a perpetrator.

The sixth episode features his unforgettable trauma of killing an innocent girl during a repressive operation towards protesters and other innocent people during the May 18 Democratic Uprising in 1980. His accidental shooting of the girl, while sitting next to a train at the rail tracks, connects his experience with that of the girl's life and death. Because of this traumatic experience, Young-Ho eventually commits suicide in front of a running train, in order to face his past and the evasion of his trauma which has afflicted him throughout his life. For Young-Ho, the image of the train and the location of rail tracks constantly evoke his traumatic memory of the killing. As his breath ends (at the beginning of the film), a train is seen travelling backward in the following shot, although the viewer does not yet know its direction. The constant motion of the train on the rail track deceives the spectator into perceiving forward movement, a visual representation of the soon-to-die Young-Ho's desire to go back. Although death is not reversible in reality, this depiction is the only way for him to breathe again.

In the first insert-scene, the view from the train as it moves through a tunnel to the outside is reminiscent of breath emerging from the lungs and the respiratory tract. As the train exits the tunnel, a gradually expanding brightness from outside of tunnel fills the dark space, and this transformation functions as a spatial representation of breath. The direction of movement further defines this elemental landscape: if we reconstruct the movement of the train in relation to the tunnel in true chronological order, it is travelling into the tunnel from the outside. Here, it is significant that breath is spatially visualised in reversed-time, from inside to outside, and from darkness to light. Although moving backward from darkness to contrasting whiteness cannot save Young-Ho's breath in real life, this filmic representation of the respiratory exhaling movement emphasises his desire to breathe and to accept the traumatic past which the rail tracks carry through the tunnel both to him and to the spectator.

In addition, as this scene is constructed and repeated throughout this film, the spectator learns that the train and rail tracks not only represent the distress of an individual in response to a traumatic memory, but also construct a history of the traumatic past, indeed an anti-history of a

solidary nation moving towards the future. By the spatial representation of breath via the train and rail tracks, the spectator is able to observe a manipulated variant of time, which ironically acknowledges a tragic and repressed period of traumatic breathing in South Korean history. The visual aid of the train and rail tracks is subtly but strongly connected to the meaning of life and death. This elemental landscape's function is, therefore, more complicated than those seen in *Jiseul*. The cave and the ritual ceremony in *Jiseul* do not reject the forward direction of time even though it also disobeys the justification of massacre by providing these elemental landscapes' visual support. The image of train and the rail tracks in *Peppermint Candy* is, as I argued, a spatial antithesis of the solution of simple compromise in which the achievement of a nation in its history is used to mask its traumatic breath.

2.3 Elemental Soundscape

An elemental soundscape can be compatible with an elemental landscape; the two can occur together or separately. Instead of demarcating them as distinct, I at times emphasise one element above the other in order to analyse the spatial representation of breath more concretely. For instance, the example train and rail tracks discussed in the previous section are not only defined by their image, but also by their sound. I largely focused on their image up until this point, but now will introduce an element of 'elemental topography' which can be part elemental soundscape and part elemental landscape. I will concentrate on how the sonic spatial representation of breath is formed and how each element functions in both *Jiseul* and *Peppermint Candy*. Similar to my argument in the previous section, but now focusing on sonic characteristics, I argue that the spatial representation of breath in *Jiseul* and *Peppermint Candy* allows the spectator to recognise the elemental soundscape as a transcendental representation of the traumatic breath in modern South Korean history.

Wind

While the cave and the smoke function as elemental landscapes in *Jiseul*, another local element of breath and air can be found in this film: wind. Wind is aerial movement in the atmosphere which resembles and interacts with the breathing of human body. Wind is used as 'elemental topography' in *Jiseul*, but is represented not only visually but also sonically.

When the residents of Jeju island discuss their local characteristics, three entities are frequently mentioned: wind, rock, and women. The island is even referred to as *samda-do* (the island where there are a lot of these three entities). The people of Jeju island construct walls with rocks such as basalt, which is one of the most abundant local varieties. As basalt contains many pores, walls on Jeju island can persist by allowing wind to pass via air channels within and between the rocks to

prevent wind damage.²¹⁶ This utilisation of porous rock for the walls demonstrates the importance of wind to life on Jeju island, and such walls are commonly found in *Jiseul* as well. The permeability not only allows the rocks themselves to breathe with and against the wind, but also allow the local people to continue their breath without danger from wind.

When the residents who are usually protected by such walls are forced to leave their homes during the military operation, as revealed in *Jiseul*, they must face immediate worries regarding wind. In one scene, a woman in the cave looks up to the sky through the open hole above her, and says worriedly ‘Looks like it’s going to be windy?’ (Figure 2.7). This exemplifies the perception by the local people of wind as something from which they must protect themselves. Especially in winter, staying outdoors without the protection of the walls would present harsh conditions for their survival. However, while forming an obstacle to their survival, the wind at the same time maintains the flow of air which enables the people to breathe. When the villagers who were hiding in the cave venture out to enjoy the fresh air and wind despite the freezing cold, their familiarity with wind may be seen, not only as a threat from nature but also as an element of their breathing life on Jeju Island.



Figure 2.7 Wind in *Jiseul*

In many scenes throughout *Jiseul*, wind is foregrounded as a soundscape. When Sang-Duk aims his rifle at Soon-Duk, and when Man-Chul does the same to Sang-Pyo, the wind soundscape emphasises both the nearness of the wind and the harsh weather conditions of the winter. This soundscape more illustrates the challenging and negative aspects of wind for the escapees than its familiarity. However, at other times it also allows them to refresh themselves, breathing while

²¹⁶ Jong-Sung Kim, “Jeju doldam, geosen balam-e sseuleojiji anhneun bigyeol-eun” 제주 돌담, 거센 바람에 쓰러지지 않는 비결은 [Jeju stone wall, the secret to not toppling over in strong winds], *Ohmynews*, June 18, 2018, accessed Dec 7, 2021, http://www.ohmynews.com/NWS_Web/View/at_pg.aspx?CNTN_CD=A0002445720.

they take a break. Therefore, the elemental soundscape of wind cannot be regarded in either a purely positive or a purely negative manner. Whether the wind is facilitating or threatening the lives of the villagers, it draws the attention of the spectator to its depiction of the local spatiality of air and the residents' ability to breathe within it.

Wind has been observed to possess an ambivalence between positivity and negativity in its sound as it affects the challenges of the refugees. The walls built with porous rocks also functions as an elemental landscape which evokes the aerial space of Jeju Island. Wind provides another 'sensory refrain,' especially by emphasising its aspect of elemental soundscape.

leodosana

While wind is one of the most significant elemental soundscapes and elemental landscapes in *Jiseul*, the use of the regional language of Jeju Island in the film's title and in the dialogue of the refugees functions as another elemental soundscape. The locality of Jeju Island in *Jiseul* is widely used in order to express the trace of breath of Jeju people. This subsection will delve into the song lyrics of the ending sequence and how they enhance the spectator's contemplation on the locality of Jeju Island, as well as the representation of breath.

Previously, I have investigated the spatial representation of breath through the elemental landscape and elemental soundscape, as well as through spirituality via the ritualistic structure of *Jiseul*. These spatial and spiritual elements enable the spectator to contemplate the traumatic history during the April 3 Jeju Uprising, especially as regards life and death. I will strengthen this argument by analysing the ending sequence song *leodosana* and its meaning in the context of this film. I will argue that the song *leodosana* supports the presentation of the locality and spatiality of Jeju island in *Jiseul* via the representation of breath.

Before I give an in-depth song analysis, I will explain the context of this song within the locality of Jeju island, which is closely related to the overall spatiality of the film. The song *leodosana*, written and sung by Jung-Won Yang and overlaid with the film's ending credits, is based on a Korean folk song with the same name. This folk song is what *haenyeo* (female divers) from Jeju Island sing when they go out to sea to collect seafood. These *haenyeo* represent an intangible cultural heritage of humanity in South Korea through their endurance of such harsh work under the sea without an oxygen tank.²¹⁷ Furthermore, this heritage was locally representative of Jeju Island well before it gained any national or international recognition. As the folk song *leodosana*

²¹⁷ "Culture of Jeju *Haenyeo* (Women Divers)," UNESCO, accessed April 14, 2019, <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/culture-of-jeju-haenyeo-women-divers-01068>.

may appear in a variety of musical and lyrical forms, Yang's arrangement of the song can be considered a branch of the folk musical tradition of Jeju island. *Jiseul* director O's collaboration with local Jeju musician Yang strengthens this connection with the locality of the folk song *leodosana*.

My primary argument in this subsection is that the presence of the song *leodosana* within the representation of breath enhances the locality and spatiality of *Jiseul*. This Socotra Rock 'leodo: leo island' is a real rock island, but is further a historical emblematic for the people of Jeju Island due the harsh sea conditions hindering easy confirmation of its existence. leo Island can serve as a symbol of the ideal place for *haenyeo* to rest after their harsh work in the sea, according to the lyrics which will be analysed in this section.

I will now directly analyse the lyrics of the song *leodosana* in an investigation of its relation to the spatial representation of breath in *Jiseul*. First of all, the lyrics of Yang's song are written in Jeju dialect, strengthening the locality of their presence in the film. Second, the lyrical contents of the song make strong references which are local to Jeju Island, and which portray life and therefore breath. The following are a translation of the lyrics of the song *leodosana*, as played over the ending credits of *Jiseul*.

(humming of male)

(female)

Let's go hurriedly by launching and rowing a boat at the sea of Jeju island. Hey, wind, wind. Do not blow since the boat for diving is leaving.

(male)

Entering the sea in order to dive, putting life on calabash buoy, they collect abalones in the sea while leaving a baby back in order to live, to live.

(humming of male)

Moving back and forth between the way to this world and the afterlife, *sumbisori* is cutting breath. As *haenyeo*'s tears become seawater, did my mother also drink seawater and give birth to me and my older brother.

leodosana (repeat)

Father's father's fathers, mother's mother's mothers hope to live in order to go to *leodo*. Jeju people either alive or dead hope to go to *leodo*.

leodosana (repeat)

As the lyrics illustrate, the song does not directly describe the narrative of the film *Jiseul* or the historical trauma of the April 3 Jeju Uprising. Rather, its focus is the traditional life of the *haenyeo* on Jeju island, revealing its role in the local elemental soundscape. The lyrics in the female singing part beg the wind not to come to them so that the launch and rowing of the divers' boat are eased, implying the frequent invasion of wind into their everyday life. In addition, the *haenyeo*'s work in the sea is portrayed with emphasis on the difficulty of breathing via the Jeju dialect term *sumbisori*. While *sori* translates from Korean as sound, *sumbi* is a word specific to the Jeju dialect, which comes from the verb *sumbida* translating as 'hold breath and dive.'²¹⁸ Drawing on this meaning, *sumbisori* connotes the especially deep breathing sound heard when *haenyeo* emerge to the surface from the deep water.²¹⁹ The depiction of the *haenyeo*'s work environment and lifestyle in the song emphasises the Jeju Island locality and the spatiality of breath and air above the surrounding sea which provides a place for life. This property of *the song* is well-suited to the film's representation of breath and air aiding in contemplation of the historical tragedy on Jeju island by representing locality and spatiality. In other words, *leodosana* sings about the particular meaning given to breathing by the waters of Jeju Island, and in doing so deepens the loss of life by local victims of the focal historical tragedy.

Mouth

While *Jiseul* achieves sonic and spatial representations of breath by its presentation of wind and of the song *leodosana*, placing emphasis on the local environment of Jeju island, *Peppermint Candy* utilises a concrete human organ of breath and speech, the mouth, to aurally stimulate the representation of breath in terms of an elemental soundscape. Michel Chion's discourse on the category of sound in film is relevant to this discussion. Chion argues:

"Internal sound" is sound which, although situated in the present action, corresponds to the physical and mental interior of a character. These include physiological sounds of breathing, moans or heartbeats, all of which could be named "objective-internal" sounds.²²⁰

²¹⁸ "Sumbida" 숨비다 [Hold breath and dive], Urimalsaem, accessed Jul 28, 2021, https://opendic.korean.go.kr/dictionary/view?sense_no=971809&viewType=confirm.

²¹⁹ "Sumbisori" 숨비소리 [breathing sound when *haenyeo* emerge back from deep water to the surface], Urimalsaem, accessed Jul 28, 2021, https://opendic.korean.go.kr/dictionary/view?sense_no=1573006&viewType=suggest.

²²⁰ Michel Chion, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*, 76.

It is significant that breath, moans, and voices all arise as internal sounds from the human mouth. The mouth is the place where air flows in and out to become breath, where emotional and physical sounds are produced and announced to their surroundings, and where verbal communication including language takes form. By analysing several sequences from *Peppermint Candy* for their representation of breath directly involving a human mouth, I will scrutinise how an elemental soundscape is formed via the human mouth in this film, stimulating a meaning of breath as life and death during and after the South Korean democratic movement of the 1980s.

The first scene in the film which features a representation of breath involving a mouth is a depiction of water torture, which conveys the experience of suffocation both visually and aurally (Figure 2.8). The use of water torture in *Peppermint Candy* constructs an elemental soundscape and elemental landscape which together represent the traumatic perception of breath by the victim. In the fourth episode, policeman Young-Ho tortures a student for demonstrating against the authoritarian government in 1987. This year witnessed one major step towards democratisation, South Korea returning to a system of direct presidential election. However, repression of this democratic movement was also fierce. The fourth episode illustrates this repression via scenes of Young-Ho catching a student Myung-Sik and torturing him with water, creating a threatening and breathless space for both the victim and the spectator.



Figure 2.8 Suffocation in *Peppermint Candy*

The first place these characters meet is a public bathhouse, where Young-Ho shadows and then captures Myung-Sik, bringing him to a torture room. In this room, Young-Ho and police colleagues torture the student by holding his head in a bathtub full of water. While the sound of a radio programme about the peaceful everyday life of the people is heard in the room, the handcuffed and naked student is forced to put his head into the water. As the camera tracks Myung-Sik and dives into the water, it shows his suffocation. At first there is not much sound in this scene, not even the sound of breath, for around five seconds until air bubbles emerge from Myung-Sik's

mouth. The student is forced to tell the police the whereabouts of his colleague, and only then is released from his traumatic experience of water torture.

This images and sounds of water suffocation in this scene show how the aggression of Young-Ho has bearing on breath's association with of life and death. Myung-Sik cannot breathe due to Young-Ho's water torture, and Young-Ho's actions as a perpetrator who threatens the breath of his victims traumatise himself further. Therefore, the images of suffocation and desperate air bubbles in the space of the water serve as an elemental landscape and the silence of the unbreathing mouth in this scene serve as an elemental soundscape, together evoking for the spectator the experience of this traumatic historical period.

Furthermore, the underwater space where the victim's breath is threatened implies the known tragic history of Jong-Chul Park's death by water and electrical torture during the June struggle for democracy. Even a spectator without a deep understanding of the South Korean historical context, however, would still experience the breathlessness of Myung-Sik's physical body and the oppression inherent in this authoritarian society.

While Myung-Sik's suffocation in the water during this water torture presents itself as an elemental soundscape and landscape for the victim's breathlessness and its traumatic relation to the torturer, also notable is the meaning conveyed by the mouth of Young-Ho, which screams and yells 'I want to go back' in the first episode of the film. In this sequence, a reunion of former factory workers is held by a riverside. Young-Ho suddenly appears to this party without notice and without invitation and sings a song in a pathetic manner which ruins the exciting mood of the party. The other partygoers remove the mic from Young-Ho and return to their dance music; at this point, Young-Ho frantically dances, bumping into the group and then rushing into the river while yelling. He moves towards the nearby rail track bridge and breathes very roughly, looking down at the reflected image of the bridge on the surface of the river. The contrast between the still-partying group and Young-Ho becomes fiercer as he climbs up onto the rail bridge. Only one of the group runs to him to encourage him to come down, while the others ignore his suffering and resume dancing. One of the most dramatic and famous scenes of the film, which also provided the image for the film's poster, now takes place. Young-Ho faces the advancing train and yells 'I want to go back' with his arms stretched open. The camera then tracks towards him, implying the train crashing into him.

McGowan has described this scene as follows:

The members of this club have gathered together to commemorate the past, but they engage in an active disregard for the trauma embodied in that past. The fact of the

reunion itself indicates an inability to remember any experiences of trauma on the part of the Honeycomb Club. [...] By turning the spectator away from this group and toward the traumatic past at the end of the opening scene, the film indicates its attitude toward time. Time does not lead from a past wholeness to a future wholeness but installs the subject in an unending repetition of failure. The film's narrative structure moves in reverse in order to underline the idea that time is going nowhere. [...] Yong-Ho's desire to go back is at once the film's desire to reject the idea of progress essential to the development of the nation.²²¹

The moment of Young-Ho's shouting 'I want to go back' warrants further discussion due to the mix of varied elements in its soundscape. In the background, the music of the group continues to play, while at a closer distance, the only member of the group who seems to care about Young-Ho's distress calls out his name in a shaky voice. Standing on the rail bridge, Young-Ho yells, and the whistle of the train warns Young-Ho to move away. The contrast between the amusing dance music and Young-Ho's desperate yelling is a harsh one, while the other man empathises with Young-Ho not because he understands Young-Ho's traumatic past, but simply because he anticipates the train accident that is about to happen in front of his eyes. The warning of the train whistle in this scene, on the other hand, is sonically consonant with the trauma from Young-Ho's personal history. Many episodes of the film, including his coping with killing a girl, capturing a student, and failed relationships with Soon-Im and Hong-Ja are accompanied by the landscape and/or soundscape of train and rail tracks as I mentioned in section 2.2. Especially at the end of the first episode, his death is accentuated by his final breathy shouting and by the train whistle, tied to his personal trauma in his history. The sound from his mouth, expressing his desire to go back to the past to erase his trauma, is rapidly overlapped and swallowed by the sound from the train.

The use of a still image at the moment of this overlap also amplifies the elemental soundscape above the elemental landscape (Figure 2.9). The image of this spatial representation of breath is minimised to transfer focus to his opened, yelling and to the surrounding train whistle. A rhyming couplet is formed by the placement of another still image from a nearby location at the end of the last episode, which is the beginning of Young-Ho's traumatic story.

²²¹ Todd McGowan, "Affirmation of the Lost Object: *Peppermint Candy* and the End of Progress," 185–87.



Figure 2.9 Still image at the end of the first sequence in *Peppermint Candy*

As this film reaches the end of the final episode, which is the first in chronological order and takes place in 1979, the factory worker Young-Ho visits the bank of a river for some fresh air with his colleagues before joining the mandatory military service. This place is, however, the same place which he will revisit in the first episode. At this time, Young-Ho is an innocent person not knowing his desperate future, who meets Soon-Im and experiences mutual romantic interest for the first time. While the workers gather to sing the same song Young-Ho sings in the first episode, he escapes the crowd and walks to the grassland under the railway bridge. He lies on the grass watching nearby flowers and soon looks up in the direction of the bridge, which is off-screen. A fade-out of the sound of singing and fade-in of the sound of the train follow, while the camera tracks in towards Young-Ho's face again, and his eyes well up with tears as if he foresees his future at the same location. As the sound of the train overwhelms him, the moving images stop while the sound of the train fades out and the theme song of the train sequences fades in; Young-Ho's still image also fades out a few seconds later (Figure 2.10). His reaction to the surrounding elemental soundscape is captured in this still image, which shows the intertwined memories of Young-Ho's past and present. The repeated conflict between his still image and the sound of the train in this sequence and in the former sequence reveals his emotional response to his traumatic fate, which ruins not only others' lives, but also his own. The emphasis and the irony of the elemental soundscape are significantly stronger than when the sound of train appears without this still image.



Figure 2.10 Still Image at the end of the last sequence in *Peppermint Candy*

However, the greatest distinction of the first still image sequence from the last is the presence of Young-Ho's yelling and loud breathing. With the reversal of time in the overall narrative, the breathing-in-shouting of Young-Ho at the beginning of the film and its absence at the end of the film together imply his fate of breathlessness as revealed in the first episode. The contrast between these breathing spaces only exists in the filmic representation as a consequence of the elemental soundscape and elemental landscape.

As Young-Ho's image fades to the intermediate reversed-train scene at the end of the first episode, the sounds of his breathing and yelling create a pathway for the spectator to travel into the breathing space of his traumatic history, inviting them into the darkened rail tunnel as air is invited into the throat. Overall, the sound from his mouth with the image of it not only implies the boundaries of his life and death with his wish to erase his trauma but also thematically amplifies the historical awareness through the individual's breathing experience. The spectator posits in the audio-visual space of Young-Ho's breath and the sound from his mouth is one of the pivotal elemental soundscapes.

In this chapter, I investigated how the spatiality of audio-visual representation of breath can be configured in film to present the implications of historical trauma. *Jiseul* and *Peppermint Candy* create representations of unique historical events, the April 3 Jeju Uprising and subsequent massacres and the May 18 Democratic Uprising respectively, using differing approaches to the construction of the spatial representation of traumatic breath. On one hand, *Jiseul's* utilisation of spaces such as the cave, the wind, and Ieo Island serves to emphasise local characteristics which reveal the victims' experience of breath and to share this traumatic history with the spectator in a filmic ritual space. On the other hand, *Peppermint Candy* focuses on the traumatic experience of the wrongdoer, as represented by the image and sound of traumatic spaces such as the train, the rail tracks, and the mouth as a breathing organ. However, I argued that both films make use of

strong elemental landscapes and elemental soundscapes to construct their spatial representations of breath. These structures evoke the spectator's awareness of historical trauma by presenting the characteristics of breath, air, and locality in juxtaposition to their traumatic implications.

While I focused on the spatiality of the representation of breath in this chapter, the next chapter will explore the interactions between various bodies in and around film in terms of the inter-subjective representation of breath by analysing Kwon-Taek Im's two films: *Seopyeonje*²²² and *Festival*²²³. I will further discuss these two films by means of the Korean contextual emotion of *han*, which is closely related to the inter-subjectivity of the representation of breath.

²²² *Seopyeonje* 서편제 [*Seopyeonje*], directed by Kwon-Taek Im (1993; South Korea: Taehung Pictures).

²²³ *Chugje* 축제 [*Festival*], directed by Kwon-Taek Im (1996; South Korea: Taehung Pictures).

Chapter 3 Breathing Together

3.1 Context

In this chapter, I will focus on the inter-subjectivity of the representation of breath in two South Korean films: *Seopyeonje*²²⁴ and *Festival*²²⁵. I argue that the characteristic joining of breathing-in-singing and breathing-in-sound in these films causes the inter-subjective representation of breath to revolve around the protagonists, the form of the film, and the spectator. As I mentioned in section 1.2.2, this inter-subjectivity is multidirectional, not only between these three elements but also between characters. I will also claim that this inter-subjective representation of breath is closely related to the emotion of *han* in Korean art and culture. *Han* is placed centrally in these two films by representing breath through traditional Korean *pansori* music and funeral culture respectively.

In order to support my argument, I will briefly introduce the narrative structures of *Seopyeonje* and *Festival* and analyse the inter-subjectivity of breath presented in the diegesis of both films. While this analysis will aid in understanding the communal relationship of breath between different characters, I will also discuss the inter-subjective breathing relationship between the character and the viewer. I will utilise the term ‘breathing visibility’ coined by Quinlivan in an in-depth contemplation of the phenomenological discourse of the inter-subjectivity of breathing. I will extend ‘breathing visibility’ with my own term breathing aurality to jointly address the image and sound of the breathing body and their relation to the breath of the spectator. While Quinlivan’s ‘breathing visibility’ does include the sonic content of inter-subjective breathing, I choose to specify the sound of breathing by its own term to demonstrate the shortcomings of a visual-centric terminology. The sounds of breathing in these two Korean films as well as their relationship with *han* will be better understood by means of this sonic-focused explanation. After I discuss breathing visibility and breathing aurality, I will perform an in-depth analysis of several sequences from the two films to examine the combined breathing audio-visibility of the breathing body.

In the following section I will describe how *han* is expressed both implicitly and explicitly in *Seopyeonje* and *Festival*. While I will focus on the musical principles of breath in the *pansori* practice when analysing *Seopyeonje*, the study of *Festival* will concentrate on the representation

²²⁴ *Seopyeonje* 서편제 [*Seopyeonje*], directed by Kwon-Taek Im (1993; South Korea: Taehung Pictures).

²²⁵ *Chugje* 축제 [*Festival*], directed by Kwon-Taek Im (1996; South Korea: Taehung Pictures).

of breath in traditional Korean funerals. Both will not only provide us with insights into significance of breath in Korean art and culture, but will also amplify the inter-subjectivity of breath expressed by these films.

The discussion of the inter-subjective representation of breath and its relation to the emotion of *han* in the case studies considered will lead to reciprocal understanding. First, the phenomenological framework applied will allow for the interpretation of the meaning and the usage of the representation of breath in contemporary South Korean cinema study which has not been performed previously and will improve our understanding of the cultural specificity of the representation of breath. Second, an understanding of the Korean artistic and cultural context regarding breath and the emotion of *han* illuminates how the universal discourse on breathing within a film expands the interactions of the inter-subjective breathing body in and around the film, which is perhaps one of the important discussions in phenomenological cinema studies.

Before I move on to the next section, I should outline that the discussion will be divided into one from a universal perspective in sections 3.2 to 3.4 and from a culture-specific perspective in section 3.5. Thus, when I engage with Quinlivan's theory of breath by analysing its formal characteristics such as close-ups or long shots alongside their Korean contextual implications, I will actively interact with her arguments as universal to films irrespective of cultural specificity. However, in section 3.5, my argument regarding the emotion of *han* will be conveyed in terms of cultural specificity, although the preceding concepts of breathing visuality, breathing aurality, and breathing audio-visuality will remain in universal terms. The aim of this structure is to question if Quinlivan's 'universal' claims are in fact specific to Western culture.

Pansori and Seopyeonje

Seopyeonje is a road movie, whose three main protagonists You-Bong, his stepdaughter Song-Hwa, and his stepson Dong-Ho travel around as *pansori* musicians. The title *Seopyeonje* refers to one of the *pansori* schools, among other examples such as *Dongpyeonje* and *Jungoje*. As *Seo* and *Dong* translate as the west and the east, *Seopyeonje* comes from west of Seomjin river in Jeolla-do, in the southwest of South Korea, and *Dongpyeonje* comes from east of the same river, while *Jungoje* is from the Gyeonggi-do and Chungcheong-do regions, in the northwest of South Korea.²²⁶ The tone of the *Seopyeonje* school is sorrowful in comparison to the vigour of the *Dongpyeonje* school, while that of the *Jungoje* school lies in the middle.²²⁷

²²⁶ "Dongpyeongje-seopyeonje" [*Dongpyeongje-seopyeonje*], Pansori Academy, accessed Aug 30, 2021, <http://www.pansori.or.kr/html/sub03-12.asp#%3E>.

²²⁷ Ibid.

The film's main narrative, set in the past, is contrasted with a subplot in the present in the early 1960s in which Dong-Ho searches for Song-Hwa and travels around Jeolla-do province.²²⁸ In earlier times, You-Bong is a *pansori* musician who hopes to train Song-Hwa as a singer and Dong-Ho as a drummer. After Dong-Ho leaves because he cannot see a commercial future for himself, Song-Hwa becomes aggrieved and stops singing. You-Bong blinds Song-Hwa with medicine with the aim of making her a master by forcing her to develop the emotion of *han*. Dong-Ho finally meets Song-Hwa after You-Bong's death, and they play *pansori* together. After he leaves, Song-Hwa also leaves the place she used to inhabit; indeed, throughout the film, the characters continue to wander regardless of whether they are together. While their meeting and parting affect their complex emotions of sorrow and longing, *pansori* music plays a more pivotal role in the inter-subjective representation of breath in this film.

As I explained earlier in section 1.2.3, *pansori* requires two performers: a singer and a drummer. Their musical relationship is critical if a mastery of *pansori* is to be attained. In *Seopyeonje*, You-Bong admonishes Dong-Ho after witnessing his poor drumming accompaniment to Song-Hwa's singing. He tells Dong-Ho that 'the drum should accord with the sound of the singer in keeping with fitting negative-positive (or dark-bright) relationship between them. [...] In order for a car to drive well, the road should be paved well. In similar fashion, the drumming beat should pave the way with its own backchannel sound for singing. As a year has four seasons, the drumming has the road which push, pull, fasten and untie.'²²⁹ This dialogue shows both the importance of the drummer's role in the *pansori* performance and the manner in which the drummer should interact with the singer by influencing the rhythm and energy of their performance. This idea of rhythmic influence may at first seem universal to any world music; however, *pansori*'s rhythm and its style of producing good sound hold a close relationship with principles of breathing. Many *pansori* rhythms are based on a three-beat fundamental unit associated with breathing, and proper singing of *pansori* also emphasises breathing technique as a core principle. To better understand the principles of breath in *pansori* music, a detailed explanation of the relevant musical emphasis on breathing will be given in the next chapter.

One of *Pansori*'s significant characteristics is its traditional method of training, which aims for the masterful singer to make *sak-khin sori* (fermented sound). The fermented sound, which will be explained further in conjunction with the emotion of *han* later in this chapter, is one way of reaching mastery in singing. The 'fermented' sound is a hoarse voice which requires constant

²²⁸ "Seopyeonje" 서편제 [Seopyeonje], Daum Movie, accessed May 24, 2020, <https://movie.daum.net/moviedb/main?movieId=402>.

²²⁹ You-Bong's dialogue from *Seopyeonje*.

training by repeatedly hurting and then healing the vocal cords. The air vibrating in the narrower vocal cords eventually formed by this severe training process creates a grainy and thick sound when necessary during the *pansori* performance. As a result of this painful procedure, *pansori* can express often-emotional hardships of life. You-Bong's training of Song-Hwa seems especially stringent, as he pushes her to attain mastery over sound even while they suffer from hunger. The training consists of oral transmission both by observation of performances and explanation of the principles of sound. Song-Hwa's desire might appear strange to some audiences, since she does not actively blame You-Bong for blinding her, and instead strives to reach his high standard for good *pansori* singing, which will be discussed in more detail in the section on the emotion of *han*. However, Dong-Ho's relationship with You-Bong is strikingly different, as he refuses to continue participating in training and leaves both his companions behind to avoid the hunger they have been suffering from. While he hates You-Bong, he also misses him and in particular misses Song-Hwa, as they have grown accustomed to staying together as a family. At any rate, it is the *pansori* music that strongly holds these three characters together. Before Dong-Ho leaves, he would accompany on the drums Song-Hwa sings, and is linked to her only by the tradition of *pansori* music transmitted to them both by You-Bong.

Traditional Korean Funeral and Festival

While *Seopyeonje* constructs the sharing breath among its three principal characters by means of *pansori* music, the content of *Festival* is focused on the dead and the bereaved at a traditional funeral. The film depicts the death and funeral of the mother of Joon-Seop, a novelist, who recently wrote a children's picture book about ageing and dying based on his memories of his mother. By oscillating between representations of the funeral and of the picture book, the film contemplates the meanings of the life and death of a family member to the bereaved they leave behind. Traditional Korean funerals mourn the dead by means of a complex and ordered procedure based on several formulated forms of breathing. The film also features a character, Yong-Soon, who is hated by the other family members for taking money from her cousin without consequence in the distant past. The funeral brings a variety of people together to one place, and the disorder between family members as well as drunken visitors become a part of the event. The funeral is a sad event for the bereaved, but it also takes the form of a festival, as the formal procedure allows attendees to sing and dance.

The conflict between Yong-Soon and the rest of her family is resolved after she reads Joon-Seop's picture book and is invited by Joon-Seop to the memorial family photo-shoot at the end of the film. While everyone in the frame of the photopapers stiff after the burial of the dead, an unidentified voice at the front of the group shouts 'Joon-Seop, smile while everyone can't.' As

Joon-Seop smiles slightly, the voice says 'Is there a funeral?' and everyone in the photoshoot frame laughs, captured in a still image at the end of the film as the title of the film implies.

The traditional funeral procedure depicted in this film is based on Confucianism, which emphasises respect to one's elders. This affects the cultural form of the traditional funeral, which treats the bereaved as descendants who did not fulfil their filial duty before their parents passed away. This setup is not in response to any explicit unfilial behaviour, but instead giving the bereaved an opportunity to express sorrow for not having been able to do more for their deceased parents.

As one visitor who is seen fishing on a boat while waiting for the burial explains, 'Confucianism is a worldly religion. No, it is rather discipline and study. The only god this Confucian world admits is the dead ancestor. The discipline of filial duty while living becomes religious after dying. [...] The complex ceremony of the traditional funeral is very Confucian. The ceremony is a way of the religious filial duty and the funeral is the most serious form of the filial duty.'²³⁰ This worldly religious ceremony that is the funeral deals with the unfilial awareness of the bereaved, in an explicit formal expression of an implicit inner feeling in Korean culture which arises from the influence of Confucianism. This religion is based on the worldly relationship between the dead and the bereaved, identifying a natural continuation of life and death rather than a separation between the worldly and unworldly realms, which is also represented by the formal cultural treatment of breathing.

The concept of a worldly religion even strengthens the bodily sense of breathing, which is one of the pivotal characteristics in any discussion of the inter-subjectivity of breathing. However, Confucianism is not the only factor which contributes to the Korean perception of filial duty; the Korean cultural structure of oneness between parents and children plays another significant role, especially as relates to the emotion of *han*. The impacts of both will be discussed further in Section 3.5. The focus of my analysis of this film is the expression of choreographed and formulated breathing in this traditional funeral and its effect on the spectator. The meanings of life and death will be seen to be amplified by this expression of breathing and by its inter-subjectivity among characters, including even the spectator.

²³⁰ Dialogue from *Festival*.

3.2 Breathing Visuality

As introduced in Section 1.2.1, Quinlivan's 'breathing visibility' is 'a viewing experience that reacts and responds to the film's images and which invites a sensual appreciation of the filmic foregrounding of breathing.'²³¹ However, I redefined it in Section 1.2.2 as an inter-subjective reaction, response to and appreciation of the film's image of the representation of breath between the protagonists, the form of the film, and the spectator. These terms will enable me to emphasise the inter-subjectivity of the visual representation of breath in this film.

Although the restriction to sensual reception of the image implicit in Quinlivan's term 'breathing visibility' leads me to also consider the marginalised sonic inter-subjectivity of the representation of breath in my discussion in Section 3.3, the main discourse of this section will focus on the visual aspects of inter-subjective breathing. As I delve into the analysis of one sequence from *Seopyeonje*, of the reunion of Song-Hwa and Dong-Ho, and of several sequences from *Festival*, I will actively engage where appropriate with Quinlivan's case studies of the Golden Heart trilogy by Lars von Trier. Analogies between my case studies and those of Quinlivan will prove useful in following sections, as universal features common to the films despite the more diverse contexts of the formal and aesthetic representation of breath in each will help me to better contemplate the visual and sonic qualities of Im's films: *Seopyeonje* and *Festival*.

Breathing-in-singing in Close-Ups

The reunion sequence between Song-Hwa and Dong-Ho is one of the most crucial points of the narrative. After a long journey spent searching for Song-Hwa, Dong-Ho finally reaches an inn where Song-Hwa is known to stay. Seeing the blinded Song-Hwa entering a side room and pretending not to know that he saw her, Dong-Ho asks the landlord if a *pansori* singer is in residence and if he can request her performance. He finally meets Song-Hwa, and after a long silence between them, he requests her singing and pulls the drum and stick towards himself, mentioning that he has not played for a long time. Accompanied by his drumming beat, Song-Hwa sings a *pansori Simcheong-ga*, which carries significant implications for this sequence and even for the relation with the emotion of *han*. I will discuss this song in detail later in this chapter since it relates most closely to the loss of vision and the emotion of *han*.

At some point during their performance, its sounds and images are joined by nondiegetic instrumental music. With the image of sweat and tears on the faces of both performers, their musical sounds begin to fade while the image of their performance continues to be accompanied

²³¹ Davina Quinlivan, *The Place of Breath in Cinema*, 134.

by the nondiegetic music (Figure 3.1). The sonic environment is not one of silence, which is liable to ambient sound, but an erasure of all diegetic sound until the end of their performance. Most of the shots after the erasure of the diegetic sound are close-ups of Song-Hwa's and Dong-Ho's faces, cross-cutting between them with the exception of an inserted close-up of Dong-Ho's drumming hand and drum. This sequence is therefore essential not only for the narrative and the emotional conveyance of the protagonists, but also for the formal manner in which director Im erases all diegetic sound.



Figure 3.1 Removed real singing voice of the reunion sequence in *Seopyeonje*

In order to determine how this deletion is executed, Quinlivan's analysis of the musical sequence 'My Favourite Thing' in Lars von Trier's film *Dancer in the Dark*²³² is relevant due to a common pivotal element with the sequence of familial reunion and performance in *Seopyeonje*: a loss of the protagonist's vision and resultant struggle as a blind person.

In the sequence 'My Favourite Things', protagonist Selma waits for her execution in a silent prison cell, accused of a murder, and proceeds to jump, move, and hit her surroundings all while singing, throughout which Von Trier makes use of many close-ups of objects in the space. Quinlivan's viewpoint on these close-ups, introduced in counterargument to claims by David Trotter, holds visual implications for my discussion. Trotter claims that 'familiarity is life lived in extreme close-up, by means of a racking of focus which never allows one plane to settle into coherent relation with another. Familiarity is all texture.'²³³ According to Quinlivan, however, the close-ups of objects in 'My Favourite Thing' draw the viewer away from Selma, a stark opposite to the familiarity proposed by Trotter.²³⁴ In other words, the 'micro-montage' of objects here functions

²³² *Dancer in the Dark*, directed by Lars Von Trier (2000; Denmark: Zentropa Entertainments).

²³³ David Trotter, "Lynne Ramsay's *Ratcatcher*: Towards a Theory of Haptic Narrative," *Paragraph* 31, no. 2 (2008): 139.

²³⁴ Davina Quinlivan, *The Place of Breath in Cinema*, 156.

as a means of reinforcing the optical image in the 'striated space' of Deleuze and Guattari rather than through a haptic sense of visibility.²³⁵ Therefore, the shift from the singing and moving body of Selma to these objects interrupts the viewer's haptic connection with the protagonist's breathing body.²³⁶

Quinlivan's counter-argument to Trotter's 'familiarity' by analysis of the sequence 'My Favourite Things' predicates my discussion of visual proximity in the reunion sequence of *Seopyeonje* and its relation to breathing visibility. The distinctive factor of this sequence compared to 'My favourite Thing' is its eventual removal of all diegetic sound. Without any diegetic sound, the viewer's perception includes only two elements: the nondiegetic sound and the image. While the nondiegetic music assists in accentuating the emotional peaks of Song-Hwa and Dong-Ho, I also note the visual use of close-ups of the protagonists. Quinlivan argues that the close-up in the 'My Favourite Things' sequence interrupts 'haptic visibility' and that 'viewing relations here are more threatening than cathartic.'²³⁷ In other words, the close-ups of objects hinder 'breathing visibility' between Selma and the viewer. However, the close-ups of Selma construct a visual representation of breathing and of her singing body. The empathy of the viewer towards Selma is built not only on tactile perception of the breathing body destined to be put to death, but also on their perception of their own breathing as Selma's desperate situation connects the viewer with the meanings of life and death. Therefore, I assert that a viewer may be brought closer to a character through close-ups of their breathing body, assisting breathing visibility shared between them.

The close-ups of Song-Hwa and Dong-Ho also familiarise the viewer with their closeness; the images of breathing conveyed by the musical performance reach the viewer, and activate the viewer's own breathing. Even the close-up of Dong-Ho's drumming performance promotes the closeness between the protagonists and the viewer, as it visualises Dong-Ho's performance in keeping with his breathing body. This visual closeness is facilitated by the erasure of the sound of breathing-in-singing. I refer to this removal of sound as aural flatness, illustrating its impact on distance between the source of breathing sound and the spectator. At the same time, this aural flatness strengthens the visual proximity between the breathing bodies of the protagonists and the viewer since the lack of one sense makes the other more sensitive. The transition from a sequence with full diegetic audio-visibility of breathing to one without any diegetic sounds of breathing, therefore, enables a deepening of visual closeness. The choice of aural flatness and close-ups in this sequence strengthen breathing visibility in the absence of the breathing sound,

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid.

and the familiarity of close-ups connected with breathing-in-singing creates space for the viewer's awareness of their own breathing.

Before I proceed to my discussion of *Festival*, I will point out the differing approaches to familiarity I have mentioned here. As I engaged with Trotter and Quinlivan to discuss close-ups and familiarity, this term of familiarity is used in a universal and formal manner rather than making use of a specific cultural context.

Perception of Breathing from The Image of the Dead

While the reunion sequence of Song-Hwa and Dong-Ho in *Seopyeonje* focuses on the visual nearness of the body of breathing-in-singing to the viewer, breathing visuality in *Festival* maintains a close relationship with the image of the dead. Three among the complex funeral procedures shown in this film, *soggoeng*, *susi*, and *banham*, will be discussed in this section as visual illustrations of the confirmation of a person's death and for their broad relations to breathing visuality.

Soggoeng is putting a piece of cotton on the philtrum and seeing the movement of it to check if the person is dead. Also, it is checking of the body such as the pupils of the eyes to see if they are dilated and the hands and feet to see if they are hardened. People put their hands under the back of the body and if the hands do not enter, the person is considered dead. After the confirmation of the death of the body, the bereaved change into white clothes. They take off all accessories from their body, wear their hair down and wail.²³⁸

In *susi*, after the confirmation of death, people close the eyes of the dead, fill up holes on the face such as the mouth, ears and nose with pieces of cotton, and put the dead's head on a pillow. [...] They put the body on a sleeping mat, cover the whole body, and hide it behind a folding screen.²³⁹

Banham is putting beads and rice in the dead's mouth. It is not only a process of showing the filial piety of not leaving the mouth empty, but also a wish for the dead to come back to life.²⁴⁰

²³⁸ "Soggoeng" 속 췌 [Soggoeng], KOCCA, accessed Aug 29, 2021, <https://terms.naver.com/entry.naver?docId=2020358&cid=50826&categoryId=50826>.

²³⁹ "Susi" 수시 [Susi], KOCCA, accessed Aug 29, 2021, <https://terms.naver.com/entry.naver?docId=2020553&cid=50826&categoryId=50826>.

²⁴⁰ "Banham" 반함 [Banham], KOCCA, accessed Aug 29, 2021, <https://terms.naver.com/entry.naver?docId=2017824&cid=50826&categoryId=50826>.

In *Festival*, Jun-Seop is sitting on the side of his mother's deathbed when he realises that his mother has died. Family members gather around her and perform *soggoeng* to check if she is truly dead (Figure 3.2). In this sequence, after a piece of cotton is placed on her philtrum and no movement is observed, she is considered dead in the narrative. Checking and confirming whether breath is still passing into and out of the body is the event which marks the end of her life.



Figure 3.2 *Soggoeng* in *Festival*

This image of *soggoeng* differs from the visuals of the breathing-in-singing sequences in *Seopyeonje* in the breathing subject of the diegetic body. While the reunion of Song-Hwa and Dong-Ho is a visual demonstration of breathing and living bodies, *soggoeng* is a visualisation of a body which is no longer breathing. Here, I argue that watching a dead body without breath also evokes breathing visibility, as it stirs the perception by the viewer of the relation between breathing and the meanings of life and death. In particular, as *soggoeng* includes a checking of whether the body breathes, the viewer's perception of life and death can turn into an awareness of their own breathing and living body. This fact that a viewer's own breathing can be activated by watching a body without breath reveals a wide range of possible breathing visualities.

In this context, *susi* and *banham* have a similar impact on the viewer. In the sequence of *susi*, the nose of the deceased is sealed with two pieces of cotton. In the *banham* sequence, three spoons of uncooked rice are placed in the dead's mouth while speaking the phrase 'one hundred and forty-four kilograms, one thousand and four hundred and forty kilograms and fourteen thousand and four hundred kilograms' to wish that the deceased has enough food in their mouth, and then the mouth is closed. While *soggoeng* is centred around the checking of breath from the dead body, *susi* and *banham* focus on the closure of orifices including those where breath enters and exits the body, which rules out the possibility of the body breathing again. Even though their functions in the traditional funeral process differ, these three procedures share their focus on the cessation of breathing of the deceased, which defines the boundary between life and death. The

image of the dead body during the closure of breathing holes in *susi* and *banham* enlightens the viewer's awareness of breathing as a means of confirming life and death, and may even evoke the viewer's own breathing. Therefore, breathing visibility can come about as the viewer watches not only the image of a breathing body but also the image of a deceased body without breath.

It is important to note the actually seen breathing of the dead in the described sequences of *soggoeng* and *banham*. In the former sequence, when the cotton is placed on the philtrum of Jun-Seop's mother, slight motion is perceptible due to the breathing of the actor. In the latter sequence, as the mouth of the deceased is closed, the actor takes a breath and the viewer may observe her chest move slightly up and down while lying on the mat. Since the actor is an old person, and since the movement is very subtle, these two small flaws do not distract from the representation of the funeral. However, they do show another aspect of breathing visibility. Since the actor visibly breathes even though her role is one the dead, the viewer's awareness of breathing in relation to life and death is affected. The breathing body of the dead, though not acknowledged in the narrative and mistakenly shown to the viewer, therefore enables breathing visibility between the viewer and the actor. Furthermore, these possibly unintentional visual presentations of a breathing body can even imply the revival of the dead, as meant by the term *banham*. Revival of the dead is neither achieved in the diegetic world nor in the real world, but I claim that these two scenes of the real breathing of the actor in the role of the dead show another phase of nondiegetic breathing visibility, regardless of this as the narrative perception of the dead body as being without breath.

Irrespective of whether the viewer perceives a dead body without breath or an actor with accidental breath, director Im makes use of close-ups in these three sequences just as he did in the reunion sequence in *Seopyeonje*. Via these close-ups, a formal familiarity through the visual closeness of the image of the dead or the actor is conveyed to the viewer. In addition, while aural flatness is included in the reunion sequence in *Seopyeonje*, the three sequences in *Festival* continue to transmit the narrative breathing-in-sound throughout, the including mourning of the bereaved. However, no sound of breathing by the dead or even by the actor is heard, so that these three sequences more strongly emphasise the visual perception of breath.

In this section, by analysing the factors which affect breathing visibility in *Seopyeonje* and *Festival*, I claim that the image of breath can be perceived by the viewer inter-subjectively, which is breathing visibility, regardless of whether the representation of breath incorporates visual closeness and/or aural flatness, and a breathing or unbreathing body. In the next section, I will focus on the sonic phase of inter-subjective breathing.

3.3 Breathing Aurality

As I addressed earlier, Quinlivan's 'breathing visuality' emphasises the haptic sound of breathing while it assists the viewer in feeling the breath of diegetic body and of their own breathing body. As the image of the breathing body stirs the viewer's subjective awareness of breathing, the associated sound leads to inter-subjective breathing in its own right, and therefore deserves its own term. In section 1.2.2 I thus proposed the term breathing aurality for the inter-subjective reaction, response to and appreciation of the sound in the film's representation of breath between the protagonists, the form of the film, and the spectator. I chose this term with the aim of viewing the sonic aspect of inter-subjective breathing more rigorously, in a manner distinct from but not subordinate to my use of breathing visuality. Therefore, theoretic specification with a sonic terminology will help me to analyse how the sounds of breath in traditional Korean music and funerals are related to inter-subjective breathing with the spectator's own breathing body.

Before I analyse breathing aurality in *Seopyeonje* and *Festival*, I will review how the sound of breathing has been categorised previously in the literature and how I will accept or alter these theories in my research. Michel Chion's discourse on sound provides the foundation for my analysis of the sounds of breathing in film. As I mentioned earlier in section 2.3, Chion defines that internal sound is the sound of a character's interior, whether physical or mental, and that 'physiological sounds of breathing, moans or heartbeats ... could be named objective-internal sounds.'²⁴¹ Chion's theorisation categorises the sounds of breath into objective internal sounds, based on the thoughts that breath communicates physiologically, and subjective internal sounds, defined as psychological or intellectual expressions of a subjective being.²⁴²

However, Quinlivan points out the necessary modification that breath can also be made subjective by expanding its boundaries to include 'subjective-internal sounds' in his analysis of Lars von Trier's film *Breaking the Waves*²⁴³.²⁴⁴ Quinlivan discusses the breathing of the main character Bess in the sequence which depicts her desperately boarding a boat to her death, by analysing its sound in support of 'subjective-internal sounds.'²⁴⁵

[...] von Trier's inclusion of breath on his soundtrack introduces a dual layer of meaning in relation to both the symbolic narrative of the film's diegesis and its role as an affective device. Breath signifies another kind of vocalisation of Bess's suffering within the

²⁴¹ Michel Chion, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*, 76.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ *Breaking the Waves*, directed by Lars Von Trier (1996; Denmark: ARTE).

²⁴⁴ Davina Quinlivan, *The Place of Breath in Cinema*, 136.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

diegesis which also has implications for the viewer who hears the sound of breathing. [...] Although Bess's breathing is not the same as a mental voice or memory that Chion offers as examples of subjective-internal sounds, its containment of vocal and bodily nuances presents us with an immediate sense of Bess's state of mind as well as her physical being that constitutes a subjective perspective. We could term Bess's breathing, then, an active, non-verbal, internal-subjective sound, but this would liken it to other bodily sounds such as coughing or even screaming. More appropriately, Bess' breathing creates an intermediary internal sound between conscious expression and involuntary, unintentional corporeality: authentic life in the flow of being.²⁴⁶

While Quinlivan's proposal that the sounds of breathing may be subjective, and even intermediary internal sounds, which contain both unconscious and conscious expressions of breathing, is relevant to my discussion of breathing aurality, I step further by introducing a communal category of breathing sounds. Following the previous development of the territory of the sound of breathing, I suggest a wider class which enables me to explore the meanings of breathing aurality while focusing on the inter-subjectivity of the sonic representation of breath. This methodology regarding the sounds of breath does not reject Chion's objective-internal sounds or Quinlivan's subjective and intermediary internal sounds. It is rather an expansion of how breathing may be perceived and utilised with respect to its significant potential for inter-subjectivity. This will be further demonstrated in the following case studies on *Seopyeonje* and *Festival*, where different examples of inter-subjective sounds of breathing will be identified.

In *Seopyeonje*, I claim that Song-Hwa's loss of sight becomes a significant contributing factor to a different aspect of breathing aurality. Throughout the film, after You-Bong blinds her, the absence of her visual perception in the diegesis repeatedly affects the spectator's awareness of their subjective breathing. First, I will consider not only the spectator's perception of Song-Hwa's breathing body, but also Song-Hwa's perception of her own body as relates to her loss of vision. One key example is a sequence in which You-Bong's singing is accompanied by another musician with a traditional Korean string instrument. You-Bong's singing in this sequence includes no lyrics but prolongs his breathing-in-singing by the expression of sounds such as 'neo, neo, neo, tteontteo, eue, na, eue, na.' Song-Hwa, sitting on the floor in the next room, listens to his singing (Figure 3.3), after having realised that her vision is lost. This is also the final moment before she speaks to You-Bong about her interest in singing again, which had stopped after her shock at Dong-Ho's leaving. Her refusal of singing transforms in this moment into a will to sing again. This sequence also spurs her sense of haptic sound, as she cannot see the *pansori* performance but

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

senses the touch of the music's vocal sound. As the sound of this singing is extended by a mixture of breathing with a melody produced from the deep abdomen, the sound of breathing-in-singing reaches Song-Hwa and inspires her motivation to sing again.



Figure 3.3 Blind Song-Hwa's listening to You-Bong's singing in *Seopyeonje*

The following sequence reveals that Song-Hwa wants to learn *Simcheong-ga*, a piece of *pansori* music that tells the story of a blind father Sim and his daughter Simchung who wants to sacrifice herself to recover her father's vision. The loss of vision in the narrative of the song is the opposite situation to that of the blind Song-Hwa and her *pansori* trainer and stepfather You-Bong. The singing about the loss of vision performed by the now-blind singer Song-Hwa not only constructs deep emotions but also places emphasis on the sound of breathing-in-singing. Her singing about the daughter Simchung's self-sacrifice in and rescue from the sea altogether creates a sensation of breathing sound. The drowning of Simchung implies the impossibility of breathing, which should lead to death, yet she survives and breathes again. This story based on the sacrifice of breath by a daughter to restore her father's vision inspires Song-Hwa's haptic sound as she hears the story through her ears while learning and singing, experiencing the effects of sound physiologically and phenomenologically. The sequence of reunion between Song-Hwa and Dong-Ho is also in accordance with her experience of feeling sound, not only Dong-Ho's voice and drumming, but also her inter-subjective sound of breathing with the story of *Simcheong-ga*.

The film's final sequence, depicting Song-Hwa wandering on the road with a guide, gives another example of Song-Hwa's lack of eyesight. However, this scene also includes a novel way of addressing breathing aurality. The slow motion of Song-Hwa's image is accompanied by nondiegetic *pansori* music, once again with no lyrics, but with the breathing and melodic sound of a singer and drumbeat. The tracking shot of Song-Hwa cuts to the still image of an extreme long shot, which shows her walking away from the camera and from the viewer. Here, this music does not reach Song-Hwa in diegesis, but regardless a breathing aurality is formed. The ending song seems to only reach the spectator as a nondiegetic sound, but it connects the music and the still

image via breathing. As Song-Hwa does not have her vision and her image only combines with *pansori* music via breathing-in-singing outside the diegesis, the inter-subjective immersion between Song-Hwa, the music, and the spectator activates the spectator's awareness of breathing. In other words, while Song-Hwa's loss of vision and her position as a *pansori* singer connects her own music to the nondiegetic *pansori* music via breathing-in-sound, three subjective breathing bodies, Song-Hwa, the singer outside diegesis, and the spectator, interact through breathing-in-singing and its implication of the continuation of singing in Song-Hwa's life. As her own breathing is linked to the nondiegetic breathing-in-singing, implying a continuation of her life without vision and in particular a continuation of her breathing-in-singing, both sounds reach the spectator to vibrate their own breathing body. Thus, the complex breathing aurality becomes available through multiple layers of breathing-in-singing in the ending sequence in *Seopyeonje*, which are made up of inter-subjective sounds rather than simply objective or subjective internal sounds of the representation of breath.

While the breathing aurality in *Seopyeonje* is mainly concerned with the protagonist's loss of vision, breathing aurality in *Festival* is largely preoccupied with the sonic reactions of the bereaved to the loss of life. In the latter film, throughout the funeral, a specific and frequent expression of mourning is notable, *aigo*, which I explained as *gog* in section 1.2.3. When some family members of the deceased arrive at the house of mourning and when they greet the callers with their condolences, the spectator can hear the sound of *aigo*. *Aigo* is an onomatopoeic word and the sound of an exclamation, which expresses emotion on a variety of occasions. It is used primarily in four categories: when one is '1. painful, difficult, surprise, vexatious or breath-taking 2. Joyful or good 3. Desperate, collapsed or sighing 4. mourning, especially during the funeral'.²⁴⁷ While the fourth meaning is the most relevant in this context, the first and third meanings also relate to these sequences depicting mourning. In other words, this sound, at the same time a word, can represent several emotions relating to lament. The sound figures repeatedly throughout the funeral, sometimes even evoking a quality of hauntedness.

Aigo is expressed in two distinct ways. First, as *aigo* serves as a mourning sound in *Festival*, it is expected to appear in combination with a person's emotion such as sadness or despair, to be discussed alongside the emotion of *han* in section 3.5. Second, *aigo* may be expressed during mourning without such explicit emotions. The latter variation on *aigo*, seemingly perfunctory, is in fact critical for our understanding of its presentation of breathing aurality (Figure 3.4).

²⁴⁷ "Aigo" 아고 고 [Aigo], Standard Korean Dictionary, accessed Mar 14, 2020, <https://ko.dict.naver.com/seonhn?id=24825100>.



Figure 3.4 *Aigo* sound without emotions in *Festival*

While the breathing sounds of Bess in *Breaking the Wave* or the breathing-in-singing in *Seopyeonje* each has more to do with the individual protagonist's breathing body than with their explicit subjectivity and inter-subjectivity, the breathing sound of the *aigo* presents itself as a collective subjectivity. This sound is a formality, which the bereaved perform not solely but communally. By sharing the breathing-in-sound of *aigo*, especially during such a formality, the meanings of life and death between the dead and the bereaved become clearer whether or not they are visually communicated. I even argue that these breathing sounds also imply the wish of the bereaved for the revival of the dead, a formal rather than realistic wish which stems from the Confucian context of this funeral, since it manifests as an awakening or alarming sound of life for the silent dead body of one parent.

Both the silence of the dead and the sounds of *aigo* from the bereaved are associated with the meanings of life and death through the breathing-in-sound of *aigo*. Upon hearing this sound, some viewers who are familiar with the cultural notion of *aigo* may experience a sensation of breathing while sharing the meaning of the breathing-in-sound. It is important to note that the sound of *aigo* without emotional eruption expresses the communality of the bereaveds' wish for resurrection of the dead again and emphasises the contrast between life and death, by means of which they let go of the dead. The sound of *aigo* provides the shared breathing-in-sound and its implied meaning of breath as part of a formal way of sending off the dead even without emotional expression. Thus, the breathing-in-sound of *aigo* can serve as the inter-subjective sound of the representation of breath in both a communal and formal manner and can evoke breathing aurality for the audience.

3.4 Breathing Audio-Visuality

This section focuses on the combined audio-visual representation of breathing bodies in *Seopyeonje* and *Festival* by application of the novel term breathing audio-visuality. Similar to my understanding of breathing visuality and breathing aurality explained in the previous sections, breathing audio-visuality is also a perception of the representation of breathing in film conveyed through both image and sound. I define breathing audio-visuality as the inter-subjective reaction to and perception of breathing between the protagonists, the form of the film, and the spectator via the audio-visual representation of breathing. Although this idea is similar to that intended by Quinlivan's term 'breathing visuality,' it is not as visual-centric, as sound plays a significant role alongside image. By analysing the image and sound of breathing-in-singing and breathing-in-sound in both films, I argue that the audio-visual representation of communal breathing enables these films to exhibit the inter-subjectivity of breath surrounding the protagonists, the form of the film, and the spectator.

I will first investigate the audio-visual representation of breathing-in-singing in the sequence of joint performance between You-Bong, Song-Hwa, and Dong-Ho while they travel around in *Seopyeonje*. The sequence begins with an extremely long shot of these three characters on a road. Moving from the background into the foreground, they walk and sing *arirang*. Before I proceed with my analysis of this scene, it is necessary to carefully define *arirang*, since it is closely related not only to the breathing-in-song present in this sequence but also to my discussion of the emotion of *han* in the following section. *Arirang* is one of *minyo*, a group of traditional Korean songs by unknown authors, and despite almost thirty etymological assumptions its origin remains uncertain.²⁴⁸ *Ari* is an old word, possibly meaning 'beautiful,' and *rang* can mean either 'you' or 'young couple,' while *arario* is translated as 'devastate.'²⁴⁹ Across the Korean peninsula including both the North and the South, there are around 60 categories and 3600 songs of *arirang*, but *Jeongseon arirang*, *Jindo arirang*, and *Miryang arirang* are considered the three main traditional folk *arirangs*.²⁵⁰ These names all arose from different place names, Jeongseon, Jindo, and Miryang respectively, which shows *arirang*'s flexibility and adaptability in the Korean cultural context.

During the extremely long shot in the *arirang* sequence of *Seopyeonje*, the three protagonists perform *Jindo arirang*. While the song in this sequence follows a typical structure of melody and

²⁴⁸ "Tto hanaui aegugga: alilang" 또 하나의 애국가: 아리랑 [Another Korean national anthem: Arirang], Korean National Archives, accessed Mar 26, 2020, <https://theme.archives.go.kr/next/koreaOfRecord/arirang.do>.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

lingering sound, the performers adapt it with their own stories and life wishes. The repetitive and lingering sound part also contains a variation from its usual form: '*ari arirang sseuri sseurirang arariga natne hehehe arirang heung heung heung arariga natne.*' Here, *sseuri* can mean 'painful,' and therefore, *sseurirang* is taken to mean 'longing you with sorrowful mind' while 'arariga natne' can be translated as 'the devastation happened'.²⁵¹ As *Jindo arirang* features a structure of either exchanged singing or a division of the main part and the lingering part between two performers,²⁵² the three protagonists' performance also manifests as an exchange of singing between You-Bong and Song-Hwa while Dong-Ho drums.

Whereas the ethnographic characteristics of this song in relation to the emotion of *han* will be thoroughly discussed in the next section, my focus on this sequence in this section is its relation to the previous discussion of close-ups by Trotter and Quinlivan. I discussed how the visual proximity of close-up with aural flatness in the sequence depicting the reunion of Song-Hwa and Dong-Ho enables the viewer to experience an inter-subjective relationship with the image of breathing in the film. In contrast to this breathing visuality, the sequence of singing *Jindo arirang* constructs breathing audio-visuality.

In this singing performance sequence, no aural flatness occurs as the diegetic sound is not removed and accords with the images of the scene. By means of its audio-visual representation of breathing-in-performance, the extremely long shot with long take constructs a distinct impression of formal familiarity. At the beginning, the distance of the protagonists from the spectator is considerable, but they move forward as they perform (Figure 3.5). In this structure, according to the previous discussion the formal familiarity which comes from close-ups should not occur. However, the characters' approach towards the spectator during the performance narrows the distance separating them, and visual closeness is achieved. The closest-distance frame, which depicts their size visually via a knee shot before they disappear to the right side of the frame, can be argued to be weaker in formal familiarity than a close-up. The protagonists' gradual movement and reduction of their distance from the spectator, however, immerses the spectator in their performance, creating a gradual visual proximity. Formal familiarity arises with the visual movement along with sounds of singing and drumming.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid.



Figure 3.5 *Arirang* sequence in *Seopyeonje*

While formal familiarity is achieved through the protagonists' advancement towards the spectator, the sound of their performance remains near to the audience throughout the scene. The consistent volume of the sound does not accord with the distance between the protagonists and the audience but provides the proximal sound space necessary for the audience to concentrate on their performance while the advancement of their image gradually reinforces the formal familiarity. The combination of the image and sound of breathing-in-singing in this sequence allows the long shot, which can often create an effect of formal unfamiliarity, to activate inter-subjective breathing between the protagonists and the spectator, which I refer to as breathing audio-visuality.

While the singing sequence in this extremely long shot and long take in *Seopyeonje* deals with only the three protagonists, the formal procedure of the traditional Korean funeral in *Festival* broaches the mingling between persons in a larger group. In particular, the two sequences which show the collective singing and dancing of guests in the middle of the night present a diegetic inter-subjective breathing-in-singing.

These two participatory performances take place at *Ilgyeong* and *Samgyeong* (the first and third watch of the night). In the traditional funeral shown in this film, the night is divided into five sectors between 7 PM and 5 AM each with a duration of two hours.²⁵³ As the lead performer sings first, and issues a command for a bell to be rung, another guest joins him by revolving around him and singing after him. Meanwhile, the group becomes drunk and excited (Figure 3.6). This seemingly eccentric scene of singing and dancing in the traditional Korean funeral reinforces the meaning of breathing, in comparison with the ritual for the dead. The singing and dancing

²⁵³ “Ilgyeong” 일경 [*Ilgyeong*], Standard Korean Dictionary, accessed Jul 9, 2020, <https://ko.dict.naver.com/#/entry/koko/d872247201b549a490b096f7b6f0de3a>.

performance in each of the two sequences increases the ironic contrast between the sadness of losing the dead and the excitement of living. These emotions as well as the contrast between the silence of the dead and the crowdedness of the performed sound reveals how breathing-in-singing is addressed in the funeral context.



Figure 3.6 Singing and dancing of the living people at the funeral service in *Festival*

The exaggerated celebration of the living in the images and sounds of these collective singing and dancing performances encourages the audio-visual perception of meaning of life via the representation of breath. The previously discussed performative sequence by the three protagonists in *Seopyeonje* creates a similar effect, as the audio-visual breathing-in-singing is presented via a representation of breathing. In other words, collective breathing-in-singing forms a commonality between the two scenes.

I would like to emphasise that my discussions of breathing visuality, breathing aurality, and breathing audio-visuality are not inherently culturally specific. For instance, it is true that a degree of familiarity with *aigo* is necessary for an audience to recognise the expressions of breathing-in-sound by the bereaved in the depicted traditional funeral. However, it remains possible to broach the subject of breathing aurality without such cultural specificity if the film expresses its breathing-in-sound irrespective of the cultural familiarity to particular sonic factors, and if the breathing bodies in and around the films are inter-subjectively connected even without any cultural connotations of the sonic factors. In other words, the comparisons between the sounds of breathing in Im's films and Lars von Trier's films need not be entirely based on differences between the depicted cultures. Cultural specificity supports my discussion of phenomenological terms, not because my viewpoint contradicts Quinlivan's analysis of the sound of breathing in a Western film, but because it is necessary to understand the meanings of specific representations of breathing-in-sound which can broaden the possible directions of a universal phenomenological discourse. The comparisons considered lie within a universal phase throughout sections 3.2 to 3.4,

while my discussion of cultural specificity will be expanded further in section 3.5 to engage with my phenomenological analysis and with the emotion of *han* in the Korean context.

Before I proceed to the next section, I will point out that the spectator's sensory awareness of their perceptions from each inter-subjective breathing may vary. Breathing visibility arises from the image of breathing body and its effects on the viewer, but the viewer's sensory awareness linked primarily to their own physiological sense of breathing rather than to the visual. The specifics of the viewer's response to the image of a breathing body depend on their individual conditions and sensitivity. Breathing aurality and breathing audio-visibility are therefore not confined to their own restrictive areas of the sensory awareness within the film. Thus, although I divided Quinlivan's 'breathing visibility' into three subcategories, the awareness of the spectator and their sensory reception are not necessarily confined to these categories. I consider this phenomenon to be either a physiological reaction or a sensory imagination. For example, the former as in feelings of suffocation or panting by the spectator, while the latter can be visual, sonic, or synesthetic constructions of breathing within the mind. My intention in presenting these details is to avoid confusion regarding the mixture of each term's influence on the sensory awareness of the spectator.

Drawing on the phenomenological analysis of these two films, it will now be beneficial to explore in detail the traditional Korean cultural context of the emotion of *han* in both *Seopyeonje* and *Festival* to understand the inter-subjective characteristics which link *han* to the representation of breath in these case studies. Consequently, the next section will discuss *han* and its relation to musical and funeral practices in a traditional Korean context in light of my phenomenological explanations of breathing image and sound in both films.

3.5 Breath and the Emotion of *Han*

In the previous sections of this chapter, I discussed the inter-subjective representation of breath in *Seopyeonje* and *Festival*. I also introduced how the emotion of *han* can be interpreted from the perspective of phenomenology in section 1.2.4. This section will combine these two parts of analysis. I will argue that my phenomenological terms, breathing visibility, breathing aurality and breathing audio-visibility can be intersubjectively connected to the emotion of *han*. I will also analyse the emotion of *han* with *pansori* and with parents and children relationship in the Korean context—since both aspects are significant to *Seopyeonje* and the latter is to *Festival*.

In the previous sections, I explored how the breathing-in-song of *pansori* is represented between the various breathing bodies in and around *Seopyeonje*. As I explained in section 1.2.4, though its

corporeality and encouragement of reconciliation, *han* takes on an inter-subjective quality.²⁵⁴ In order to explain the link between *han* and the representation of breath in *Seopyeonje*, I will explore how *pansori* expresses breathing-in-singing, and in doing so, evokes *han*.

Cheon's discussion of the relationship between *han* and various features of *pansori* provides a useful starting point for this analysis. Cheon explains how qualitative shifts in *han* are facilitated through the intrinsic characteristic of *sakhim* (translated as 'being fermented').²⁵⁵ A point I made in section 3.1 is pertinent in this regard—*pansori* pursues *sak-khin sori* (translated as fermented sound). Cheon explores how *han* and *pansori* affect each other in the Korean cultural context. Cheon's analysis of the traditional Korean music term, *sigimsae*, is also interesting and important in this respect.

Sigimsae can be defined in various ways. Firstly, The Academy of Korean Studies defines *sigimsae* as 'grace or techniques in traditional Korean musical performance, which usually ornament in front of or behind the major note.'²⁵⁶ Based on the definitions above, Cheon's understanding of *sigimsae* with regards to the vocalisation of traditional Korean music expands this meaning into 'the essence of *pansori*, which seems to be rigidly related to the characteristic of the emotion of *han* in time.'²⁵⁷ He argues that while *sae* is a suffix, *sigim* possibly came from the *sakhim*'s archaic root, *seogim* (translated as malt or alcohol), which can be related to the process of fermentation.²⁵⁸ In other words, he explains, 'when *pansori*'s *sigimsae* is said to be good, the sound of it is aesthetically excellent, [...] implying that it could be achieved through harsh training, the process of fermentation.'²⁵⁹

Sakhim, according to Cheon, can be divided into three aspects: sense of 'taste', 'aesthetics' and 'ethics.'²⁶⁰ Cheon explains that 'the ethical aspect focuses on resentment being submerged: *seulgi*, the aesthetic phase implies the artistic accomplishment: *mut* and the sense of taste indicates the taste of fermented food: *mat*.'²⁶¹ He also explains that, just as a Korean food, *kimchi*, improves in taste after fermentation, the sound of *pansori* also achieve *mut* through fermentation.²⁶²

²⁵⁴ Yeong-Pil Kim, "Han-ui hyeonsanghageog bunseog." [The phenomenological analysis of *han*], 230.

²⁵⁵ I-Du Cheon, *Han-ui gujo yeongu* 한의 구조 연구 [Research on the structure of *han*], 99.

²⁵⁶ "Sigimsae" 시김새 [Sigimsae], The Academy of Korean Studies, accessed Jul 28 2021. <http://encykorea.aks.ac.kr/Contents/SearchNavi?keyword=%EC%8B%9C%EA%B9%80%EC%83%88&ridx=0&tot=10>.

²⁵⁷ I-Du Cheon, *Han-ui gujo yeongu* 한의 구조 연구 [Research on the structure of *han*], 103.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 103–105.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 106.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid.

For Cheon, fermentation is an apt analogy for *pansori* because it has a ‘passive motivation.’²⁶³ He points out that ‘the act of fermentation is based on the performer’s subjective intentionality.’²⁶⁴ Cheon insists that in *pansori*, good *sigimsae* infers vocalisation with a hoarse voice, since this kind of voice would be considered to possess a well-fermented sound.²⁶⁵ This does not mean that hoarse vocalisation is a requirement for good *pansori* sound—rather, that hoarse vocalisation can, when combined with the principle of breathing in traditional Korean music, signify mastery of sound. This mastery can be seen as reflective of a process of Korean cultural fermentation. Since hoarse vocalisation is achieved through repeated injury to and healing of the vocal nodes, in order to create a ‘bruised sound,’—Cheon sees *pansori* which pursues this process as an example of *han* in art.²⁶⁶ This is because he sees fermentation as a fundamental structuring element of *han*, in addition to seeing it as a means for musical improvement in *pansori*.²⁶⁷ In other words, from Cheon’s perspective, *pansori* is an art of *han* since it entails achieving mastery through training. Further, *han* can also be linked to fermentation in the Korean cultural context, which is closely related to the vocal training undertaken by *pansori* musicians.²⁶⁸

However, even when *han* is disassociated from fermentation, it does not necessarily mean that it is not the emotion of *han*. Figuratively speaking, the emotion of *han* without fermentation is like *kimchi* before fermentation, which is still *kimchi* but has less of a depth of flavour. In order to make well fermented *kimchi*, the raw ingredients must be pickled, marinated and preserved. Interestingly, Koreans sometimes describe the process of pickling as ‘killing the breath of cabbage.’ After the ‘breath of the cabbage’ has been killed, the marinated *kimchi* is preserved, which prolongs its life, or ‘breath’. Even though fermentation occurs without oxygen, this expression shows how fermentation is metaphorically related to breathing as a form of revitalisation in the Korean cultural context. Without fermentation, *han* can still be experienced and expressed. However, in Cheon’s view, through the harsh training of breathing-in-singing *pansori* is fermented. This fermentation of *han* deeply impacts the singer, and in doing so, their musical sounds is improved.²⁶⁹

The implications of the emotion of *han* in *Seopyeonje* may be similarly understood, and indeed are directly revealed during the sequences of direct speech between You-Bong and Song-Hwa. You-Bong trained Song-Hwa for years to develop her mastery of sound, even going so far as to

²⁶³ Ibid., 109.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 119.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 120.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

blind her for this goal. She continued her training under his instruction even after he took away her eyesight. While providing porridge to the blinded Song-Hwa, You-Bong says,

The sound of *seopyeon* should have *han* piercing it as if slicing the breast with a knife, but your singing is only pretty without *han*. *Han* of a person is piled up and is smouldered with in the heart through one's entire life. Living is a piling of *han* and vice versa. Since you lost your parents early in life and your eyesight, you should have had *han* ten or twenty times more than others. Why does such a sound of *han* not come out of you?²⁷⁰

During the confession sequence, the elderly You-Bong also speaks about *han* to Song-Hwa,

Now you can put your *han* on your singing. Song-Hwa, I made your eyesight like this. Did you know it? [Song-Hwa nods to him.] Did you forgive me? [There is no answer.] If you had held a grudge against me, deep-rooted rancour would have penetrated your singing. However, there have been no such traces. From now on, try and do not plunge in the ill feeling of *han*, and sing beyond *han*. While *dongpyeonje* is heavy and finishes the sound clearly, *seopyeonje* is said to be sad and to have much *han* as longing. But, if you go beyond *han*, there is not either *dongpyeonje* or *seopyeonje* but the state of reaching the mastery of sound.²⁷¹

Through these two sequences, it is obvious that You-Bong's aim is not Song-Hwa's simple development of musical techniques but a level of artistic achievement which will result in her becoming a master. For this purpose, he requires her to have *han*, and supposedly his training is based on the *Seopyeonje* school, which tends to have sorrowful tone according with one meaning of *han*. In the former dialogue, his intended meaning of *han* is vague, and may be understood only as resentment or lamentation. However, this meaning is less persuasive since it implies that he intends to foster Song-Hwa's resentment towards himself.

You-Bong's vague meaning of the emotion of *han* becomes clearer in the latter dialogue above. After the harshest period of blind Song-Hwa's training, he admits that she has finally developed the emotion of *han* in her singing. However, he clearly explains that resentment is not present in her singing and that he wants her to sing beyond this emotion of *han*. This dialogue demonstrates how fermentation is considered to be necessary both in *pansori* training and in the qualitative deepening of *han* throughout this film. Through the fermentation of the emotion of *han*, from

²⁷⁰ You-Bong's dialogue From *Seopyeonje*.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

resentment to lamentation to longing to want, and through the fermentation of vocal training, You-Bong finally acknowledges Song-Hwa's achievement of mastery over sound. Her vocal training focuses centrally on the principle of breathing-in-singing, and this fact enables the representation of breathing-in-singing in *Seopyeonje* to connect *pansori* with the emotion of *han*. It also matches a South Korean painter Kyeong-Ja Cheon's one of five phases of the emotion of *han*, an artistic achievement I mentioned in section 1.2.4.

This is also shown in the sequence depicting Song-Hwa's meeting with Nak-San, a painter who had been a friend of You-Bong before his death. While Nak-San stays at an inn, he hears the live performance of a *pansori* singer and realises that she is Song-Hwa. After she finishes her performance, they meet and have a conversation:

Nak-San: Your singing has become ripe.

Song-Hwa: It's still a long way from making the sound which You-Bong wanted.

Nak-San: What did he want?

Song-Hwa: He encouraged me not to be overwhelmed by *han*, but to make sound beyond it.

[...]

Song-Hwa: Please draw one picture for me.

Nak-San: What's the use of it if you cannot see it?

Song-Hwa: I can see it through my heart.²⁷²

Here, Nak-San's expression 'become ripe' is another way of expressing the state of fermentation. Song-Hwa's reply also implies how difficult it has been for her to ferment the sound of her *pansori* singing. Their discussion is based on the artistic quality of fermentation in *pansori*. However, as Song-Hwa explains, You-Bong's instructions regarding *han* in *pansori* were meant to encourage her to make good sound beyond *han*. In my view, the emotion of *han* in this sentence should be interpreted as resentment or lamentation. I argue that the expression 'beyond *han*' implies an emotion similar to *han* which has been deepened through fermentation. In other words, Song-Hwa still believes that she must continue to train if she is to produce *pansori* music with a good vocalisation, containing the fermented emotion of *han*.

²⁷² Song-Hwa and Nak-San's dialogue from *Seopyeonje*.

Meanwhile, the musical connection to *han* in Korean culture is not limited to harsh musical training. Just as I introduced the eclectic relation with the emotion of *han* in the Korean context, other musical characteristics such as lyrics can also reveal a thematic importance of *han* in their contents. In *Seopyeonje*, two songs are good examples: *Jindo arirang* and *Simchung-ga*.

Even though *Jindo arirang* is *minyo* rather than *pansori*, its thematic expression of the emotion of *han* revolves around the song and its performers. As I described in section 3.4, the lyrical contents of the repeated part of this song have implications for *han* as longing: ‘*ari arirang sseuri sseurirang arariga natne hehehe arirang heung heung heung arariga natne.*’ However, the singing of *Jindo arirang* in *Seopyeonje* takes place in a positive and joyful mood among You-Bong, Song-Hwa, and Dong-Ho even though their lifelong journeys as *pansori* musicians, trainer and trainees, is austere. Their hardship is implied and expressed by the singing of *Jindo arirang*, and their performance allows them to sublimate lamentation onto the positive qualities of the emotion of *han*. Their further wish to achieve a mastery over sound in the lyrics amplifies the shift of their emotional state as relates to *han*.

(singing)

You-Bong: Can people live for hundreds of years? Let’s live harmoniously even though this is an unpleasant world.

Song-Hwa: What a mountain pass of *Mungyeong Saejae* [the place name of the mountain pass in *Mungyeong* city]! The twisting and turning of it make me cry.

You-Bong: In the life of a wanderer following *sori*, let’s untie the accumulated *han*.

Song-Hwa: There are a lot of small stars in the clear sky, and there are a lot of sorrows in my heart.

[...]

You-Bong: Precious like gold or gems, my daughter, learn *pansori* diligently and then become a master.

Song-Hwa: I’d like to follow the long way of *pansori* by heightening the interest on my brother’s drumbeat.²⁷³

Here, the performers sing about the hardships of life and about their lamenting emotions, which they hope to sublimate to ‘untie the accumulated emotion of *han*’ by attaining a mastery over the

²⁷³ Lyrics of singing in arirang sequence in *Seopyeonje*.

pansori sound, which requires hard training of breathing-in-singing. Untying the emotion of *han* can mean the fermenting or shifting of it towards the joy of attaining mastery of *pansori*, rather than removing or releasing it. The will of all three protagonists to achieve this mastery corresponds well to *arirang*, which innately expresses the emotion of *han* in its lyrics.

In addition to the multifaceted strengthening of *han* by the lyrics of *arirang*, the lyrical content of *Simchung-ga*, which is performed by Song-Hwa, has a close relationship with the emotion of *han* and with the inter-subjective representation of breathing. I discussed in section 3.3 how Song-Hwa's loss of eyesight enables and reinforces breathing aurality. This reinforcement becomes more rigid since the song Song-Hwa wants to learn and master, *Simchung-ga*, includes themes of vision loss, of the emotion of *han*, and of life and death. I introduced the narrative of this song briefly in the same section: the position of blindness is opposite between the depicted father and daughter, as Simchung's father is blind in *Simchung-ga* while Song-Hwa's father blinds her in *Seopyeonje*. The blindness of Simchung's father has a close relationship with Simchung's emotion of *han*. The motivation of her self-sacrifice by drowning, which stems from a sailor's need to calm the ferocious sea, is to receive rewards of consecrated rice and use it to restore her father's eyesight by offering it to a Buddhist temple. The drowning and revival of Simchung in this *pansori* narrative refer to life and death through an end to breathing. According to I-Du Cheon, 'drowning implies purification and revival, and therefore, water signifies death and revival as it not only associates its abyss with the world of death but also becomes a driving force of formation of all creation.'²⁷⁴

Simchung's father could not achieve restoration of his eyesight, which remains his emotion of *han* after her sacrifice until she is revived, becomes empress, and meets her father again. However, the loss of vision by her father explains not only his emotion of *han* but also hers.²⁷⁵ Her motivation to drown herself can be explained by her lamentation of her father's *han*. This *han* is not fermented or inter-subjective, as it remains closely associated with his emotions of resentment and lamentation. However, Simchung's *han* can be considered a fermented emotion. She empathises with her father's blindness and wishes for the restoration of his eyesight. Her emotion of *han* for her father's blindness becomes interwoven with her will to drown herself, which is aimed towards a breathless state of death. After she is revived, Simchung meets her still-blind father again and allows him to open his eyes through this meeting, achieving the strong wish that drives them both. This progression can be linked to 'the emotion of *han* from lamentation which came from absence of his eyesight to achieving their want and moving towards

²⁷⁴ I-Du Cheon, *Han-ui gujo yeongu* 한의 구조 연구 [Research on the structure of *han*], 147.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 150.

reconciliation and friendliness.²⁷⁶ The structure of this kind of happy ending also includes the resolution of the main problem, both characteristic of many *pansori* narratives.

The communal wish for the restoration of Sim's eyesight between his daughter and himself requires further explanation, since it may seem odd that Simchung need sacrifice her life to achieve this wish. In other words, this flavour of the emotion of *han* may be formed according to 'the Korean context of closeness between parents and children'.²⁷⁷ Sang-Chin Choi claims that 'Korean children tend to feel sorry unconsciously or habitually, which implies apologising to and compassion for their parents.'²⁷⁸ He continues to argue that 'it is predicated on the oneness between parents and children, which means parents' happiness and affliction tend to become their children's happiness and affliction and vice versa in the Korean context.'²⁷⁹ Based on his theory, the Korean sense of filial duty can be related to the oneness between parents and children such that their emotion of *han* can also be, not always but in many situations, formed as one even if this situation does not seem of equal interest to both parties.

This perspective on the Korean relationship between parents and children suggests to me that Simchung's perception of filial duty enabled her to construct a communal *han* for their family. A crossover relationship is found between Song-Hwa and You-Bong in *Seopyeonje*, as Song-Hwa is the character who lost her vision. However, her unstoppable pursuit of the mastery of sound in *pansori* singing may also be explained in this context. The commencement of her wish takes place due to You-Bong's failure in his own musical attainment. He hopes to raise and train his stepdaughter as a master singer, which is his own deficiency in his life. She, in turn, sees his passion and anxiety for the mastery of sound. As Song-Hwa says 'it's still a long way to make sound which You-Bong wanted' above in her conversation with Nak-San, the oneness between her and You-Bong, even though she is not related to him by blood, conjures up the emotion of *han* she has been fermenting. The absence of her blood parents and the loss of her eyesight form other key causes for her emotion of *han*. However, You-Bong's immoral and even criminal, action of blinding Song-Hwa does not become an object of her anger or resentment; instead she understands his wish and takes it as her own through the oneness which draws on a typical relationship between Korean parents and children.

Song-Hwa's constant travelling and *pansori* training enables her to attain not only mastery over her sound, but also to make a reconciliation with the obstacles she has suffered through. In other

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 152.

²⁷⁷ Sang-Jin Choi, *Hangugin simliha* 한국인 심리학 [Korean psychology] (Seoul: Chung-Ang University Press, 2000), 275.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 276.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 276.

words, she achieves a mastery of sound through *pansori*'s process of fermentation, overcomes and heals from her painful experiences, and even understands and reconciles with her father, which all form distinct but related phases of the emotion of *han*. *Simchung-ga*'s themes of *han* and filial duty significantly strengthen the role of the emotion of *han* in reconciliation in *Seopyeonje*.

The representation of breath can be seen to connect closely with the emotional state of *han* in this respect. The theme of drowning in *Simchung-ga* intensifies the sensation of breathing as a boundary between life and death. While Simchung's *han* motivates her decision to drown herself, Song-Hwa's breathing aurality after her blinding and while singing the story of the blindness of Simchung's father correlates with the fermentation of her *han*. She needs to practice breathing-in-singing through breathing aurality, which allows her to move closer to a fermented emotion of *han*. The meanings of life and death in relation to breathing and their musical adaptations to the story and to the practice of singing help her to achieve a mastery over sound by fermenting her sound in breathing-in-singing. In so doing she finds a way to breathe while singing and to reconcile with her surroundings.

Meanwhile, the Confucian aspect of the emotion of *han* is a crucial element of our discussion of the film *Festival*'s breathing aurality. Although the effect of Confucianism on Korean culture is wide-ranging and its relation to the emotion of *han* is also complex, I will primarily focus on aspects of filial duty, an important shared element between *Seopyeonje* and *Festival*.

Chang-Hwan Ha focuses on neo-Confucianism, which 'had been formed by Xi Zhu during Song dynasty in China from 960 to 1279, and which was pivotally influential during five hundred years of Josun dynasty in Korea from 1392 to 1897 and even inscribed in modern Korean culture.'²⁸⁰ According to Ha, 'the previous Confucianism claims that a saint is the stage of the impossible as it is the perfect form of human.'²⁸¹ However, 'Neo-Confucianism insists that anyone can be a saint by removing their desire.'²⁸² It points out that 'all desire comes from their own, ... which enables them to take all responsibility of their lives.'²⁸³ Ha correspondingly claims that 'self-reflection to reach a saint in Neo-Confucianism has a close relationship with the emotion of *han* in the Korean context.'²⁸⁴ He gives as an example the Korean funeral culture, reasoning that

²⁸⁰ Chang-Hwan Ha, "Han-ui yugyojeog uimiwa jihyangseong," 한의 유교적 의미와 지향성 [*Han's* Confucian meaning and intentionality] in *Han-ui hagjejeog yeongu* 한의 학제적 연구 [The interdisciplinary studies on *han*], ed. Chaung-Hwan Ha et al., (Seoul: Philosophy and Actuality, 2004), 88.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Ibid., 89.

²⁸³ Ibid., 90–91.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 91.

'children of the dead lament in the Korean funeral because there is not only sadness due to the loss of their parent's lives, but also self-reproach, implying they haven't done their filial duty enough.'²⁸⁵

The representation of breathing-in-sound, *aigo*, can be discussed in terms of filial duty. In section 3.3, I explained that two phases of this sound occur, with and without the emotions of lamentation. While I argued that the sound of emotionless *aigo* looms around the film and that its function is in the construction of breathing aurality, the emotional phase of *aigo* also emphasises the meanings of life and death via breathing aurality. Furthermore, as Ha points out, the sadness in this breathing-in-sound comes from the loss of one's parents, and more importantly, self-reflective regret about unfilial duty, which can also include the emotion of *han*.²⁸⁶ Jun-Seop and the other bereaved in *Festival* feel the emotion of *han* as a result of the loss of their parents and their unfilial duty, which is an expression of their self-reproach.

Festival and *Seopyeonje* each show a basis for the emotion of *han* which can be discussed in terms of Confucian aspects of filial duty in the Korean context with focus on oneness between parents and their children. In other words, the representations of breathing-in-singing and breathing-in-sound in *Seopyeonje* and *Festival* are inter-subjectively perceived, predicated on cultural concepts such as oneness between parents and their children and the Korean interpretation of Confucian filial duty. The tendency towards self-reflection with regards to filial duty is strongly linked to the emotion of *han* in the Korean context, as it proceeds not with vengeance but with an acceptance of the situation as a chance to look back on one's self, which is representative of the fermented phase of the emotion of *han*.

In addition, as Cheon's structure of *han* in the Korean cultural context goes further in the direction of reconciliation with others, it stands out as a common principle between *Seopyeonje* and *Festival*. In *Seopyeonje*, there are two relationships with *han*, one between Song-Hwa and You-Bong, and the other between Song-Hwa and Dong-Ho. As implied by You-Bong's singing of 'Let's live harmoniously even though in this world like shit' in the sequence of singing *Jindo arirang*, he considers harmoniousness to be an important aim in life. His passion for his daughter's achievement of mastery over sound, to the degree of blinding her just to inspire the emotion of *han* from the absence of her vision, however, can serve as obstacles to this aim. Before he dies, he asks her if she ever forgave him, which shows his dilemma. Resolution is found through Song-

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 91–92.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

Hwa's pursuit of reconciliation rather than resentful anger towards You-Bong by untying her lamentation via the attainment of mastery over sound.

Song-Hwa's manner of fermenting the emotion of *han* reaches its peak during the sequence of her reunion with Dong-Ho. Dong-Ho, unlike Song-Hwa, escaped from You-Bong. However, he misses both Song-Hwa and You-Bong and searches for them during his journey. His *han* is related to his unresolved and missing relationship which he longs for and regrets the loss of. It is not obvious if he also feels unfilial duty towards You-Bong but it is clear that he desires to resolve his emotion of *han* which stems from separation from his old family. The moment of reunion between Song-Hwa and Dong-Ho seems somewhat strange, as they pretend not to recognise each other. However, it is soon revealed that they acknowledge each other's existence, and they perform together all night long without mentioning it directly. Even the song *Simchung-ga* implies Song-Hwa's emotion of *han*, which she has deepened due to her loss of sight and intense musical training. This song reminds Dong-Ho of their long-past days spent training and evokes his sympathy to Song-Hwa's loss of vision as she performs the story of *Simchung-ga*. This story of sacrifice and revival, and in particular achievement of eyesight, relates to their emotions of *han*, also facilitating Dong-Ho to feel Song-Hwa's *han* as reconciliation since she has pursued her father's and her wish for achievement of mastery over sound. The reunion itself untethers his emotion of *han* from his separation from his family, but other layers of complexity in their performance serve to deepen his *han* ranging from his resentment and anger towards You-Bong to his reconciliation through the performance with Song-Hwa. The absence of his stepfather may even lead to his developing the emotion of *han* as a son with unfilial feelings.

Irrespective of whether it is viewed from the musical or the filial approach, the emotion of *han* serving as a form of reconciliation in the Korean context is deeply implanted in both *Seopyeonje* and *Festival*. In *Seopyeonje*, the conversation between Song-Hwa and the host, while Dong-Ho leaves the inn and waits for the bus, also shows how *han* may be untied and allows them to reconcile through their reunion.

The host: Is he your brother for whom you have waited?

Song-Hwa: Yes, when I met his drumbeat, I recognised him promptly. It was as same as my father's artistry.

The host: I knew it was not ordinary. Then, why were you parted from him pretending not to know each other even though you were waiting for him?

Song-Hwa: I didn't want to hurt my *han*.

The host: How come were you parted from him without untying *han* formed so deeply?

Song-Hwa: We untied our *han* overnight.

The host: How?

Song-Hwa: Through my singing and his drumbeat.

The host: So that is why your singing was different from your previous performance. I heard your performance during the whole night. I assumed you and he are sharing feeling between siblings by hugging without touching each other.²⁸⁷

The mixture of feelings the reunited pair experience, which are not described in this conversation but flow through the narrative, are complex layers of emotions, as I have discussed. However, the reunion and joint performance are not only emotional peaks for the protagonists, whose faces appear wet with tears and sweat. These also create an environment for a melting of complex emotions such as resentment, lamentation, and longing into the time spent together in musical performance, which reconciled these emotions without any direct or rational solution but alternatively through a deepening of the emotion of *han*. With the aid to reconciliation provided by the emotion of *han*, Song-Hwa and Dong-Ho do not need to show their awareness of each other as siblings. In fact, this seemingly pitiful decision to not greet one another as siblings even deepens their emotion of *han*, which is necessary for them to untie long-held resentment and lamentation.

The final dialogue of the host above implies a strong connection between their emotions of *han* regarding reconciliation and the representation of breath. The reunion sequence does not show any physical contact between two characters, but through their performance they embrace each other without any need for physical touch. The host's saying 'hugging without touching each other' is a valuable key to understanding their connection through breathing. I argue that this sequence demonstrates how the pair can touch each other with invisible but tangible breathing-in-singing. Through breathing together during their musical performance, they are able to communicate inter-subjectively, implying that the transcendental breathing embraces Song-Hwa and Dong-Ho without physical contact. Song-Hwa's blindness, along with their performance of *Simchung-ga* which communicates some of the sensation of loss of vision, strengthens the 'tangible invisible.' However, the emotion of *han* does not only reconcile them through breathing aurality. The image of the musical performance created through the blind Song-Hwa and Dong-Ho breathing together also represents breathing visuality in this sequence by means of the sound of

²⁸⁷ Dialogue between Song-Hwa and the host from *Seopyeonje*.

breathing-in-singing. In addition, aural flatness follows and strengthens breathing visuality without a sonic element, with all sound muted except for the nondiegetic music. Therefore, regardless of whether it comes about from a visual or an aural source, the representation of breath expresses the peak of the deepened emotion of *han* in this sequence.

The link between breathing-in-sound and the emotion of *han* as reconciliation in *Festival* is not as strong as in *Seopyeonje*, but they still engage with one another at the end of the film. When almost all the procedures of the funeral are finished, one of the female bereaved moans on the ground while the others bow down upon their knees: '*aigo*, my mum! I didn't know my mum would go away like this. I cannot live as it's regrettable and deplorable.' Here, the breathing-in-sound of *aigo* implies not only the boundaries between life and death, but also her emotion of *han*. Her saying 'regrettable and deplorable' is written '*wontong-hago jeoltong-haeseo*' in Korean, where *won* of *wontong* is best translated as 'resentment'. This emotion of *han* regarding unfilial duty is expressively connected to the exclamation of *aigo* here. However, the meaning of *han* as reconciliation also follows soon after this scene. While the sound of her wailing continues in the background, repeating '*aigo*, my mum,' the frame captures an image of Yong-Soon stood behind a tree on a small hill, looking at Jun-Seop working in the house. This image occurs directly after she finishes reading Jun-Seop's picture book, which is told from the viewpoint of his daughter Eun-Ji, and focuses on the life and death of his mother who is also Yong-Soon's grandmother.

Narrator: Grandmother seems to share all of her age, father said. Eun-Ji's sad and regretful emotion erupted as she sees her grandmother's white and small figure, as if her grandmother undress and fold her clothes while her soul is leaving Eun-Ji and riding the calm texture of breath. Grandmother's soul looks like carried away on a butterfly flying flutteringly. Eun-Ji just prays for her grandmother's soul to rebirth as the prettiest and kind baby. Thanks, grandmother. Leave us without worries. I will take care of the ages you shared with me. So later, I will share my ages with new-born babies instead of grandmother. Eun-Ji pledges rigidly in her mind.²⁸⁸

The expression of 'texture of breath' is used to describe the grandmother's death, which supports the meaning of tactile breath as contributing to that of the boundary between life and death. More importantly, as Yong-Soon finishes reading this book, she wipes her tears, which cleanses her of her hatred towards Jun-Seop due to the fact that, In the past, Jun-Seop refused to lend his writing prize money to her. The writing of Jun-Seop's picture book with such sincerity about the death of his mother facilitates a significant turning point for Yong-Soon to release her anger. Jun-

²⁸⁸ Narration from *Festival*.

Seop, a representative of the rest of the bereaved, also sends her his message of inviting her into the family. In the last scene, as I described earlier in section 3.1, the family accepts Yong-Soon and gathers to take a photo together. As Yong-Soon runs to the family, Jun-Seop makes a gesture to allow her to join. She sits on the left side, apart from the family, but one of the family members brings her into the middle of the group. Surrounded by the laughter of all in the frame, which becomes the ending still image, the reconciliation between Yong-Soon and the rest of the family is firmly revealed.

The piling-up sequence of breathing-in-sound of *aigo* near to the end of the funeral and the following sequence of reconciliation between Yong-Soon and the rest of the bereaved show how the representation of breath, implying the boundaries between life and death, is connected to the reach of reconciliation, a fermented emotion of *han*. The relationship between *aigo* and their reconciliation is not as rigidly and explicitly linked as is *Seopyeonje*'s representation of breathing-in-singing and reconciliation. However, this film also connotes the ultimate event with the breathing-in-sound of *aigo* affecting their reconciliation. Furthermore, the harmony of the descendants is related to their filial duty to let their parents not worry about their descendants after their cessation of breath, as depicted earlier in *Festival*.

In this section, I discussed how the inter-subjective representation of breath is related to the emotion of *han* by examining the characteristics of the fermented mastery over *pansori* sound, the relationship of oneness between parents and their children, and the sense of filial duty influenced by Confucianism in the Korean context. Breathing visuality, breathing aurality, and breathing audio-visuality were constructed with the emotion of *han* as reconciliation in *Seopyeonje* and *Festival* in mind. While I scrutinised how the representation of breath is inter-subjectively presented in both films, mostly as developed between the protagonists and the spectator, the form of the film has not been discussed much in this chapter. It is, however, significant to see how the corporeal quality of the representation of breath can facilitate more rhythmic and thematic influences via two case studies of contemporary South Korean Cinema: *Chunhyang*²⁸⁹ and *Intangible Asset No. 82*²⁹⁰. The next chapter will focus on the effects of such embodied vision and sound on the relationship between the protagonists, the form of the film, and the spectator.

²⁸⁹ *Chunhyangdeon* 춘향전 [*Chunhyang*], directed by Kwon-Taek Im (2000; South Korea: CJ Entertainment).

²⁹⁰ *Intangible Asset No. 82.*, directed by Emma Franz (2008; Australia: In the Sprocket Productions).

Chapter 4 Tactile Breathing

4.1 Context

This chapter investigates how a phenomenological exploration of the representation of breath expands our understanding of the haptic dimensions of cinema including bodies of the protagonists, the film and the spectator. I argue that even though watching a film does not involve physical or physiological touch in the diegetic and nondiegetic environments in and around film, through the phenomenological perceptive concept of tactile quality of breathing, three categories of bodies are facilitated to touch and be touched by each other. The tactility of the representation of breath, therefore, evokes not only its spatiality and its inter-subjectivity—as discussed in chapters 2 and 3—but also its corporeality, which I will focus on in this chapter.

This chapter expands this concept of perceptive tactile breath through analysis of two films: *Chunhyang*²⁹¹ and *Intangible Asset No. 82*²⁹². Even though these two films have different forms: fiction and documentary, they possess similarities that make them suitable for the main argument of this chapter. In *Chunhyang*, I will focus on the formal analysis of the musical rhythm of breath in *pansori*, as well as its filmic representation, to explore how they relate to the corporeal sense. Through analysis of *Intangible Asset No. 82* I will explore how the principles of breath in traditional Korean music relates to encounters between different cultures. Hence, I will conduct formal and cultural analysis of traditional Korean music's relation to breath in both of films. I will subsequently discuss both film's relation to the emotion of *sinmyeong* at the end of the chapter. Before I move on to the next section, however, I will introduce both films, as well as give synopses of their narratives and main characteristics.

Like *Seopyeonje*²⁹³, Kwon-Taek Im's *Chunhyang* is a film about *pansori*. However, even though both are fictional music films *about* *pansori*, they differ substantially. *Chunhyang*'s form is unique in the way it combines multiple diegetic worlds in one film. First, the film features the traditional Korean *pansori* story of *Chunhyangjeon*, a love story between the young nobleman Mong-Ryong and the young female commoner Chun-Hyang. They fall in love but then have to separate for a time, until Mong-Ryong comes back from finding a position at the central government. While he is away, Chun-Hyang is sentenced to death for refusing to become the new governor's mistress. The film has a happy ending, however, since Mong-Ryong comes back as a secret royal inspector and

²⁹¹ *Chunhyangdyeon* 춘향전 [*Chunhyang*], directed by Kwon-Taek Im (2000; South Korea: CJ Entertainment).

²⁹² *Intangible Asset No. 82.*, directed by Emma Franz (2008; Australia: In the Sprocket Productions).

²⁹³ *Seopyeonje* 서편제 [*Seopyeonje*], directed by Kwon-Taek Im (1993; South Korea: Taehung Pictures).

saves her. This encouragement of good and punishing of evil is typical of the Joseon era, when the moral standards of Confucianism were instrumental to constructions of morality.

The audio-visual representation of the story is paralleled (and at times overlapped) by a *pansori* performance by the celebrated singer Sang-Hyun Cho. This second diegetic space of the music performance sometimes functions as a nondiegetic sound for the story-within-a-story; however, Im emphasises the significance of the nondiegetic sound since he intends to retain the beauty of traditional Korean culture. The film represents both the story of *Chunhyangjeon* and the second diegesis of the *pansori* performance of *Chunhyangjeon*. In other words, the second diegesis functions not only to preserve traditional Korean culture, but also as a heterogeneous representation of the story, which in other films would be typically hidden in a nondiegetic and off-screen space. While a desire to maintain the aesthetics of traditional Korean culture also informs *Seopyeonje*, *Seopyeonje*'s form is less progressive than *Chunhyang*'s—since the latter film combines two different diegetic spaces in one film which are innately correlated. The relationship between traditional music and the audio-visual form of the films will form the basis of my analysis of the rhythm of breath in the film body in this chapter.

Intangible Asset No. 82 is the only documentary film that I analyse in this thesis. Therefore, I will provide a brief definition of what documentary is before moving forward. The term 'documentary' is problematic to define. John Grierson gave the first definition of the documentary as a 'creative treatment of actuality.'²⁹⁴ This original and inspiring definition seems vague and could productively be expanded. I will now analyse how *Intangible Asset No. 82* is constructed differently to the fictional films in this thesis. I will also explore whether the film is an example of Grierson's definition of documentary, which emphasises the construction of a creative filmic work using footage of reality that is not staged in a fictional environment.

I will also elucidate the different types of documentary. Bill Nichols's discussion of the documentary is useful in this respect.²⁹⁵ Nichols categorises the documentary form into six modes: poetic, expository, observational, participatory, reflexive and performative.²⁹⁶

Poetic mode: emphasizes visual associations, tonal or rhythmic qualities, descriptive passages, and formal organization. [...] This mode bears a close proximity to experimental, personal, or avant-garde filmmaking.

²⁹⁴ John Grierson, "The Documentary Producer," *Cinema Quarterly* 2, no. 1. (1933): 8.

²⁹⁵ Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001).

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 33–34.

Expository mode: emphasizes verbal commentary and an argumentative logic. [...] This is the mode that most people identify with documentary in general.

Observational mode: emphasizes a direct engagement with the everyday life of subjects as observed by an unobtrusive camera.

Participatory mode: emphasizes the interaction between filmmaker and subject. Filming takes place by means of interviews or other forms of even more direct involvement. Often coupled with archival footage to examine historical issues.

Reflexive mode: calls attention to the assumptions and conventions that govern documentary filmmaking. Increases our awareness of the constructedness of the film's representation of reality.

Performative mode: emphasizes the subjective or expressive aspect of the filmmaker's own engagement with the subject and an audience's responsiveness to this engagement. Rejects notions of objectivity in favor of evocation and affect. [...] The films in this mode all share qualities with the experimental, personal, and avant-garde, but with a strong emphasis on their emotional and social impact on an audience.²⁹⁷

Stella Bruzzi, however, criticises that Nichols' modes 'suggest a progression towards introspection and personalisation. [...] The fundamental problem with his survival-of-the-fittest 'family tree' is that it imposes a false chronological development onto what is essentially a theoretical paradigm.'²⁹⁸ In other words, each mode has not evolved in a unilateral direction, but the model is nonetheless useful for elucidating types of documentary. Further, the modes are not always exclusive to each other. Drawing on Nichols's six modes and Bruzzi's subsequent criticism, I would suggest that *Intangible Asset No. 82* is an observational documentary. However, it also conforms to the expository mode, as several characters' narrations are presented throughout the film.

The brief storyline of *Intangible Asset No. 82* is as follows: an Australian musician admires Kim's music but cannot find a way to learn his rhythm and wants to seek inspiration by meeting him. As Kim is ill and is therefore difficult to meet, another traditional Korean musician, Dong-Won Kim, helps Simon Barker find a way to meet Kim. As the two travel together, Barker is introduced to Korean musical principles through meetings with other traditional Korean musicians while he waits for his meeting with Kim to be approved by master Kim's family. The two finally have a chance to meet at an exorcism ceremony performed by Kim's family shaman. Three days after the

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ Stella Bruzzi, *New Documentary: A Critical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2000), 2.

performance, and the meeting of Barker and Kim, Kim passes away. The film then depicts his funeral.

Before I discuss the corporeal representation of breath in the next section, I will expand on why I chose to include this film in the thesis. As my thesis title confirms, I scrutinise the representation of breath in contemporary South Korean cinema. Even though *Intangible Asset No. 82* is about a western musician's encounter with Korean culture, it is still an Australian film. Further, neither the main protagonist Barker nor the director are Korean. However, Barker's investigation of Korean cultural elements is illuminating. While this Australian film depicts the journey of an Australian musician and is directed by an Australian, its focus is on Korean music culture and principles as well as on the theme of encounters between different cultures. For this reason, I include it in my discussion of 'South Korean films,' utilising Marks's discourse on 'intercultural cinema,' which will be explained in section 4.3. I do not insist it is a South Korean film but rather, seek to expand the boundaries of South Korean cinema criticism through the analysis of 'intercultural cinema.'

4.2 Breathing through *Pansori: Chunhyang*

4.2.1 Triple Little Metre

To analyse the corporeal representation of breath in the *pansori* sequences in *Chunhyang*, it is necessary to understand the basic musical elements of traditional Korean rhythms that pertain to breath. According to Yong-Shik Lee, 'traditional Korean rhythms are based on 'additive rhythms,' which means the gathering of long and short rhythms.'²⁹⁹ These additive rhythms facilitate the construction of more complex rhythms. For instance, a traditional Korean rhythm, sixteen metre is an additive combination of duple and triple little metres (3+2+3+3+2+3).³⁰⁰

In addition, traditional Korean rhythms have either symmetric and asymmetric metres.³⁰¹ I will further explain asymmetric metre later with regards to *Intangible Asset No. 82*. Symmetric metre usually has duple or triple little metres, which means one metre can be subdivided into two or three little metres.³⁰² For instance, if one metre (\downarrow) is a unit metre and if it consists of two little metres, one metre is divided into $1/2(\uparrow) + 1/2(\uparrow)$.³⁰³ In this way, according to Chan-Wook Lee, if

²⁹⁹ Yong-Shik Lee, "Hangug-eum-ag-ui ibag · sambag / obag · palbag" 한국음악의 2 박 · 3 박 / 5 박 · 8 박 [Meters in Korea: duple, triple, quintuple, octuple], 67.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 68.

³⁰¹ Ibid., 72.

³⁰² Ibid., 69-70.

³⁰³ Ibid.

one metre (ㅓ) consists of three little metres, one metre is divided into $1/3 + 1/3 + 1/3$.³⁰⁴

However, the rhythmic formation of triple little metre is rarely evenly divided when performed—it tends to be either $2/3 + 1/3$ or $1/3 + 2/3$, meaning the ratio of one standard rhythm is 2:1 or 1:2.³⁰⁵ According to Lee, 2:1 ratio provides an active and jumping feeling while 1:2 ratio results in a stable feeling.³⁰⁶

Triple little metre is not the only traditional Korean musical rhythm, but it is one of the most characteristic and frequently employed. According to Chan-Wook Lee, ‘moderato in Western music is close to the number of heart beats per minute, 88–96 times, and the moderate tempo in traditional Korean music is close to the number of breathing per minute, 16–20 times.’³⁰⁷ He argues that traditional Korean music considers a breath of inhaling and exhaling to corresponds to the 2:1 or 1:2 ratio, making the breath a triple rhythmic unit.³⁰⁸ He therefore supposes that triple little metre is related to this triple rhythmic unit of breathing.³⁰⁹ Breathing rhythm does not come into play in all rhythms, but is relevant to rhythms that possess triple little metre, while *pansori* music uses various traditional Korean rhythms whether or not they have triple little metre. I will therefore introduce the specific main rhythms that employ triple little metre in order to analyse their use in *pansori* sequences in *Chunhyang*.

There are seven *pansori* rhythms: *jinyang*, *jungmori*, *jungjungmori*, *jajinmori*, *hwimori*, *eosmori*, and *eosjungmori*.³¹⁰ In this chapter, I will discuss *jinyang*, *jungjungmori*, and *jajinmori* since they are used in the film *Chunhyang* and can be related to the triple little metre. *Jinyang* is the slowest among *pansori* rhythms and is used to express ‘relaxed or lyrical situation[s]’.³¹¹ Faster than *jinyang*, *jungjungmori* is ‘the standard rhythm in *pansori*’ and is usually ‘used in the sequences like a dancing, striding or wailing situation.’³¹² The faster rhythm, *Jajinmori* is ‘used when the tension is high or addressing matters quickly.’³¹³

³⁰⁴ Chan-Wook Lee, “Yulgyeog-ui sameumbowa eum-ag-ui sambunbag-e daehan nonjeung” 율격의 3 음보와 음악의 3 분박에 대한 논증 [A Study on three feet of metre and triple little metre of music], *The Korean Essays on Sijo Literary Science* 47 (2017): 165–66.

³⁰⁵ Yong-Shik Lee, “Hangug-eum-ag-ui ibag · sambag / obag · palbag” 한국음악의 2 박 · 3 박 / 5 박 · 8 박 [Meters in Korea: duple, triple, quintuple, octuple], 70.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 71–72.

³⁰⁷ Chan-Wook Lee, “Yulgyeog-ui sameumbowa eum-ag-ui sambunbag-e daehan nonjeung” 율격의 3 음보와 음악의 3 분박에 대한 논증 [A Study on three feet of metre and triple little metre of music], 170.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 170–71.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 170.

³¹⁰ “Pansori” 판소리 [*Pansori*], The Academy of Korean Studies, accessed Jul 28, 2021, <http://encykorea.aks.ac.kr/Contents/SearchNavi?keyword=%ED%8C%90%EC%86%8C%EB%A6%AC%20%EC%9E%A5%EB%8B%A8&ridx=0&tot=167>.

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ Ibid.

This brief explanation demonstrates how the rhythms based on breathing can evoke different various situations at different speed through the use of characteristics of triple little metre. Other rhythms, such as *jungmori* or *hwimori*, are not analysed here as these are based on the duple little metre. However, rhythms in some sequences come together or continuously regardless of whether they possess triple or duple little metre. Before proceeding I will also clarify that I am not a musician or musicologist and am therefore limited in my ability to identify and verify musical rhythms by my own musical analysis. I will therefore conduct identification through previous scholarly works on musical rhythm. Drawing on the basic understanding of the rhythms of the triple little metre in *pansori*, as outline here, the next section will analyse sequences in the film *Chunhyang*.

4.2.2 Breathing Rhythm in Film Body

Bangja sequence with *jajin-jajinmori* rhythm in *Chunhyang*

Film is not static but depicts the dynamic relationships between moving bodies. Various layers of movement in film are intertwined between the protagonists, the film and the spectator. However, this section focuses on the film body rather than on this wider range of dynamic movements in film, which will later be discussed further in relation to corporeality. Through analysis of the film body's movement I will explore how corporeality is related to the tactile representation of breath.

The film *Chunhyang*'s musical rhythm is key to exploration of this topic, as I already introduced in the previous section. Drawing on the basic knowledge of *pansori* rhythms that employ the triple little metre, I will first analyse *Bangja* sequence. Woo-Sung Park's analysis of *Bangja* sequence places the sequence in the context of transformation from *pansori* music to *pansori* film.³¹⁴

According to Park, the musical sequence uses *jajin-jajinmori*, which is the faster *jajinmori* rhythm.³¹⁵ Before delving further into discussion of the rhythm of breathing, I will introduce what this sequence is about.

The sequence follows Mong-Ryong's attendance of a picnic with his servant *Bangja*, where the two chance upon Chun-Hyang at *Gwanghallu*, 'a pavilion of the Joseon dynasty's exemplary

³¹⁴ Woo-Sung Park, "Pansori saseol-eseo yeonghwaloui maechebyeonyong yangsang yeongu - <chunhyangdyeon> (imgwontaeg, 2000) ui 'bangja-sikwonseu' bunseog" 판소리 사설에서 영화로의 매체변용 양상 연구 - <춘향전>(임권택, 2000)의 '방자-시퀀스' 분석 [The study on media transformation aspects of the language of film as *pansori* – *Bangja*-sequence analysis of the *Chunhyang* (2000)], *The Review of Korean Cultural Studies* 54 (2016).

³¹⁵ Ibid., 403.

structures where poets in those days frequently visited and left poetry and prose.’³¹⁶ From *Gwanghallu*, Mong-Ryong observes Chun-Hyang getting onto a swing and asks Bang-Ja to bring her to him. The scene consists of twelve shots which harmonise with Sang-Hyun Cho’s off-screen musical performance of *jajin-jajinmori*—Bang-Ja’s figure and movement are the focus of the frame.

Director Im’s comments about his intentions for the film at interview are helpful for understanding the sequence. Regarding the film Im argues that ‘there shouldn’t be artificiality. Artificiality is inharmoniousness between sound, filmic rhythm and the movement of an actor.’³¹⁷ Im’s concern with the trinity of these elements in his film-making, corroborates the importance of the *pansori* accompaniment to the film. The off-screen *pansori* music in *Chunhyang* is particularly significant because its lyrics and rhythms affect not only the narrative quality of sequences but also informs the structure of the film and its diegesis.

In Bangja sequence particularly, the light-hearted and speedy development of Bang-Ja’s and the film body’s movement are indebted to the *pansori* music’s *jajin-jajinmori* rhythm. While this rhythm is comparatively faster than the rhythms used in other sequences I examine, *jajin-jajinmori* distinctively employs triple little metre.

There are two points in the sequence that are particularly significant to my analysis. Most scenes in the sequence consist of Bang-Ja’s fast running or hurried steps, however, the fifth scene of Bangja sequence (Figure 4.1) depicts the actor moving slowly while the fast pace is maintained by the *jajin-jajinmori* rhythm. This scene illustrates Bang-Ja in a full-shot with additional space above his head and below his feet. There is empty space to the right of the frame which he moves into as the camera pans slightly to follow him. Bangja then crosses some to the accompanying lyrics of ‘*choong, choong*, [Bangja] crosses over with *choong-choong* sound.’ Here, *choong* is an onomatopoeic word, and the actor’s slow step corresponds with this rhythmic expression. According to Im, the music was played while the scene was shot to encourage the actor to move in time with its rhythm.³¹⁸ The critical point about this scene is that it is led by the rhythm of the

³¹⁶ Won-Ho Lee, “Gwanghanluwon-ui gyeong-gwanbyeonhwayangsang-e gwanhan gochal” 광한루원의 경관변화양상에 관한 고찰 [A Study on the aspect of landscape change for gwanghalluwon garden], *Journal of the Korean Institute of Traditional Landscape Architecture* 32, no. 2 (2014): 83.

³¹⁷ Sung-Il Jung, *Imgwontae-g-i imgwontae-g-eul malhada 2* 임권택이 임권택을 말하다 2 [Im Kwon-Taek speaks of Im Kwon-Taek 2] (Seoul: Hyunsillbook, 2003), 417, quoted in Park, Woo-Sung. “Pansoli saseol-eseo yeonghwaloui maecheyonyong yangsang yeongu - <chunhyangdyeon> (imgwontae-g, 2000) ui ‘bangja-sikwonseu’ bunseog” 판소리 사설에서 영화로의 매체변용 양상 연구 - <춘향전>(임권택, 2000)의 ‘방자-시퀀스’ 분석 [The study on media transformation aspects of the language of film as *pansori* – Bangja-sequence analysis of the *Chunhyang* (2000)], *The Review of Korean Cultural Studies* 54 (2016): 403.

³¹⁸ Sung-Il Jung, *Imgwontae-g-i imgwontae-g-eul malhada 2* 임권택이 임권택을 말하다 2 [Kwon-Taek Im speaks of Kwon-Taek Im 2], 415, quoted in Park, Woo-Sung. “Pansoli saseol-eseo yeonghwaloui

accompanying music. While the speed of the actor and the camera varies, the music maintains pacing. In this manner, continuous harmoniousness and control over the pace of the scene are maintained through the combination of vocal sounds and the actor's movements. Further, this pacing is dictated by the breathing tempo of the pansori singer, which is based on the triple little metre.



Figure 4.1 Fifth scene of Bangja sequence in *Chunhyang*

Secondly, the penultimate scene and its previous scene present an even more interesting example of the use of the breathing rhythm of *pansori* music in this sequence. Apart from the first and the last scene of this sequence, most shots follow the movements of Bang-Ja. As Park points, the camera tracks in or alongside or pans, keeping Bang-Ja in the frame except during insert close-ups—such as the seventh scene of a breaking branch and the ninth scene of pebble being grabbed.³¹⁹ However, the tenth and eleventh shot are distinctly stable among these moving shots. The tenth shot illustrates Bang-Ja throwing the pebble to the sky in a full shot (Figure 4.2). The following shot expands into an extreme-long-shot, revealing the pebble as it reaches the long drooping branches of a willow tree, causing birds to fly away from the tree (Figure 4.3). The latter shot is a static frame, while the former moves slightly to follow Bang-Ja's action. However, in this tenth, the camera does not move abruptly but instead progresses calmly. Park indicates that this part of the shot also corresponds with the deepest and highest notes of Sang-Hyun Cho's singing

maechebyeonyong yangsang yeongu - <chunhyangdyeon> (imgwontaeg, 2000) ui 'bangja-sikwonseu' bunseog" 판소리 사설에서 영화로의 매체변용 양상 연구 - <춘향뎌>(임권택, 2000)의 '방자-시퀀스' 분석 [The study on media transformation aspects of the language of film as *pansori* – Bangja-sequence analysis of the *Chunhyang* (2000)], 405.

³¹⁹ Woo-Sung Park, "Pansori saseol-eseo yeonghwaloui maechebyeonyong yangsang yeongu - <chunhyangdyeon> (imgwontaeg, 2000) ui 'bangja-sikwonseu' bunseog" 판소리 사설에서 영화로의 매체변용 양상 연구 - <춘향뎌>(임권택, 2000)의 '방자-시퀀스' 분석 [The study on media transformation aspects of the language of film as *pansori* – Bangja-sequence analysis of the *Chunhyang* (2000)], 406.

in Bangja sequence.³²⁰ He argues that the extreme-long-shot, including the natural environment around Bang-Ja, enables 'the auality of the high pitch to be converted into the visuality in film' by 'securing the emotional space of the two-dimensional image' while 'the sound goes and comes over the space in three dimensions.'³²¹



Figure 4.2 Tenth scene of Bangja sequence in *Chunhyang*



Figure 4.3 Eleventh scene of Bangja sequence in *Chunhyang*

It is pertinent that this critical transformation from the musical expression to filmic expression is facilitated by breathing rhythms—as demonstrated by the ratio of the duration of both shots. The tenth shot last about three seconds, while the eleventh lasts six seconds. This 1:2 ratio in triple little metre, as I explained earlier, lends a stable feeling to the music. The dialectic relationship between these two shots assimilates the principle of the breathing rhythm of the triple little metre into the formal structure of the film. Therefore, it is also not the 2:1, but the 1:2 ratio, which corresponds with the slow pace of *Bang-Ja's* movement and the accompanying

³²⁰ Ibid., 409.

³²¹ Ibid., 410.

predominantly static camera work. The structure of the film's rhythmic corporeality therefore enables the haptic quality of audio-vision through the representation of breath.

The sequences with *jinyang* rhythm in *Chunhyang*

While the filmic corporeality of Bangja sequence utilises a fast rhythm of breathing, the other sequences I will scrutinise in this section have a much slower pace, employing the triple little metre *jinyang*. In addition, the key points in this section will be different from the dialectic in the previous section. There is a more complex dialectic between the diegetic and nondiegetic sound in this section than the proportionate duration of time between consecutive shots in Bangja sequence. Here, I will analyse three sequences that are accompanied by *pansori*: Love, Separation and Torture sequences.

All of these sequences revolve around the main protagonist, Chun-Hyang. Her pivotal role in Love sequence not only reveals her erotic relationship with Mong-Ryong but also dominates the diegetic sonic space. Love sequence is split in two, due to the inserted sequence of Mong-Ryong's conversation with his mother—where she reveals that she and his father have learned of his unauthorised love for Chun-Hyang. Therefore, I will consider these two sequences separately, calling them Love sequence one and two.

The first Love sequence comprises of a long-take and long-shot without a cut, with a duration of 130 seconds (Figure 4.4). Two young lovers touch and then move out of reach of each other as a form of intimate play. They crawl around from their main bedroom to a background space attached to it. Chun-Hyang goes through the door, but Mong-Ryong holds her ankle and so they come back to the main bedroom.

However, there is another compartment behind a folding screen, which creates the hidden space in diegesis working like off-screen space from the viewer (Figure 4.5). Soon, they appear to the right side of the folding screen, undress while standing and then make love. The diegetic sound space is filled with Chun-Hyang's laughing while the off-screen sound of *pansori* by singer Cho becomes Mong-Ryong's questions and Chun-Hyang's brief answers: 'Come here and let me carry you on my back play. [...] Love, love, love, my love. [...] What would you like to eat? [...] Would you like watermelon? (No, I don't want it) [...] Would you like grape? (No, I don't want it) Would you like a candy? (No, I don't want it) [...] What would you like to eat? The small Mong-Ryong is raising, so would you like to eat this?'³²² In this portion of Mong-Ryong's conversation, a *jinyang*

³²² Lyrics of *sarang-ga* in love sequence one from *Chunhyang*.

rhythm with the triple little metre is evoked, which Chun-Hyang rebalances with her breathing sounds of laughter.



Figure 4.4 Love sequence One - 1 in *Chunhyang*



Figure 4.5 Love sequence One - 2 in *Chunhyang*

The movement of the camera is also interesting in the love scene. The slow following shot does maintain visual engagement with the scene, seeming to directly engage with the two characters and the music. The camera moves smoothly in different directions without cutting in order to seamlessly depict the lovers' scene. Through various acts of tilting, tracking and panning, the camera engages not only with the visual movements of the two characters but also with the *pansori* music, with its triple little metre. The long shot, for instance, does not form a rhythm through articulation, but rather harmonises with the slow pace of music, enabling the breathing of two diegetic bodies to combine with the breathing rhythm of the *pansori* music.

The film body's movement in this sequence, however, is not subordinate to the visual and aural moving elements. Its choreography is formed through the equality of the various bodily

movement that construct the scene. Noël Burch's argument on 'ballet' in his analysis of *Chronicle of a Love*³²³ is useful in this regard:³²⁴

What is particularly important to emphasise at this point, however, is that in *Cronaca di un amore* [*Chronicle of a Love*] the camera movement neither humbly flows the 'natural' movements of the actors, as in academically transparent cinema, nor weaves the arbitrary and frenetic arabesques around the actors' movements characteristic of the films of Max Ophuls or an Alexandre Astruc. Rather, the manner in which both the camera and the actors move is equally stylised, with each of these two sets of movements determining the possibilities of the other. Thus, the similarity to a ballet: The camera at every moment executes something equivalent to a dance step, with not only the actors as partners in the choreography but the shadows they cast as well.³²⁵

Burch's structural analysis of the camera movement as 'ballet' provides a useful reference point for Love sequence one in *Chunhyang*. The dialectics between the camera and the actors in Burch's argument specifies that they possess an active and inter-subjective relationship. This point can be related to my argument about the haptic quality of film body, since, as Burch argues, the camera movements in the scene are not a subordinate to the actors but taken on an equal significance. Through the independent but structurally interwoven movements of the camera, the film body constructs its own rhythm to complement the diegetic movement and emotion.

My interpretation of Burch's discourse on 'ballet,' however, concentrates on the relationship between the *pansori* music's rhythm and the movement of the camera. I would contend that there is inter-subjective accordance between the sound of the music and the film body. In other words, the camera dances with the diegetic elements of the film, following the breathing rhythm of *jinyang*. It is worth noting that movement between the rhythms of *jajinmori* and *jinyang* feed into the camera movements chosen for Bangja sequence and Love sequence, which are filmed in different modes. Bangja sequence corresponds with a fast-breathing rhythm and therefore uses a variety of different shot sizes (close-up, full-shot and extreme-long-shot) and movements (as tracking, panning and tilting) in order to 'dance' with the *pansori* music and Bang-Ja's movement. Love sequence one, however, uses a seamless long take shot to 'dance' with the slow-paced *pansori* music and its visual representation in the frame. Instead of 'ballet,' the choreography of the camera's dance with the audio-visual elements of the lovers' scene follows a slow-Korean-traditional-breathing rhythm. The movement of the camera, therefore, does not hurry to follow

³²³ *Cronaca di un Amore* [*Chronicle of a Love*], directed by Michelangelo Antonioni (1950; Italy: Villani Film).

³²⁴ Noël Burch, *Theory of Film Practice*, trans. Helen Lane (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969).

³²⁵ Burch, *Theory of Film Practice*, 77.

every movement of the actors, but rather tracks them with a consistent following shot until the end of the scene. For instance, when Mong-Ryong and Chun-Hyang disappear behind the folding screen and reappear on the right side of it, the camera does not follow them, but instead tracks alongside patiently to meet them again when they move beyond the screen.

In Love sequence one, the erotic depiction of the two lovers is facilitated through subjectively choreographed camera movements informed by the sound of the breathing rhythm. A rhythmic dialogue is created in the scene, between the rhythm of the film's imagery and of the aural off-screen representations of breathing rhythm. The erotic relations in the diegesis are also represented in the choreographed camera movements, whose accordance to breathing rhythms heighten the erotic and tactile nature of the scene. The eroticism of the scene is amplified by the director's combination of a versatile range of film elements including the diegesis, the camera movements, and the *pansori* sound. Further, breathing is particularly significant to this moment due to its metaphorical associations, as Jennifer Barker argues: 'contact is what gets us breathing and ushers us into the human world.'³²⁶ Therefore, the camera movement and the eroticism of the breathing rhythm depicted in Love sequence one are an example of my concept of 'haptic audio-visibility.'

In two Separation and Torture sequences, the repetitive expression of dialogue is represented in both diegetic and nondiegetic space. Commonly performed by Chun-Hyang in diegesis, and the *pansori* singer in the off-screen second diegesis, Chun-Hyang's dialogue is redundant. The two dialogues double each other, sometimes with variation, as parts of lines are skipped or unintelligible. This aesthetic and structural choice emphasises Chun-Hyang's emotion through the breathing rhythms in her own voice and the voice of the singer.

In Separation sequence, Mong-Ryong visits Chun-Hyang to inform her their parting cannot be avoided, since his parents wouldn't accept their union before he has passed his exam and achieved an excellent position in the government. The sequence with the off-screen *pansori* music presents Chun-Hyang's frustration and sadness as it is revealed to Mong-Ryong (Figure 4.6). In my own analysis, I will focus on a moment where the dialogue of both Chun-Hyang and the singer are presented together. At this point the singer's words are 'Aigo, darling. Is what you just said a joke, mistake, or indecent talk? Would you like to see the sights of a person dying?' At the same time, Chun-Hyang in diegesis yells the same words at Mong-Ryong. However, she does not say 'the sights of a person dying', instead, she breaks down into tears. After she cries while the singer

³²⁶ Barker, *The Tactile Eye: Touch and The Cinematic Experience*, 34.

sings, she speaks the words 'Would you like to see [...]' as the singer speaks them (since the lyrics in Korean have the opposite order to my English translation above).



Figure 4.6 Separation sequence in *Chunhyang*

This vocal combination of singer's lyrics and actor's lines evokes Burch's discussion of sonic dialectic in *A Simple Story*.³²⁷

As it endlessly repeats what has already been said, the commentary alternates between a direct and an indirect style of narration, either quoting words already spoken on screen with the quotation marks understood or simply summarizing what has previously been said. Whenever there is an actual quotation, it is at times perfectly accurate and at other times inaccurate, whether because of inversions, substitutions of one word for another, or omissions of certain words, or a mixture of these. [...] The voice-over can completely precede the phrase spoken on screen or completely follow it (and at relatively longer or shorter intervals as well, naturally), these two possibilities constituting the outer limit of a vast range of overlapping between narration and dialogue, going so far as to include their exact congruence, when a phrase of dialogue and a phrase of the narration are precisely equal in length, although not necessarily identical in wording.³²⁸

Burch's discussion implies the simultaneous presentation of spoken words and narration are rarely exactly congruent, due to variation in words choice and shifts of timing. Burch argues that this incongruence is not as an error or sign of immaturity, but rather can be seen as a dialectic form of structural beauty.

³²⁷ *Un Simple Histoire* [*A Simple Story*], 1959, directed by Marcel Hanoun (1959; France: French National Television).

³²⁸ Burch, *Theory of Film Practice*, 82–83.

Drawing on Burch's argument with regards to Separation sequence in *Chunhyang*, I would argue that the sonic dialectic is also not an incomplete expression, and that it achieves its intended structural effect. This sequence puts music at the foreground of the sonic space and the spoken words by Chun-Hyang at the background—the effect of this is to emphasise the slow musical rhythm of breathing. Instead of the omitting Chun-Hyang's utterance of 'the sights of a person dying' in the first on-screen diegesis, the director deliberately substitutes these words with her sobbing in order to reveal her devastation. The combination of her sobbing and the singer's words then further emphasises her emotional state. 'Haptic aurality' happens in this differently layered combination of sound. Both Chun-Hyang's breathing expression of words and the long-take and track-in shot camera movements are consonant with the pace of the breathing rhythm. The spectator hears the breathing rhythm of the triple little metre in both the inner-diegetic on-screen words and the outer-diegetic off-screen words.

The slow breathing rhythm of the film body, created by *jinyang* rhythm, touches the protagonist's emotion and its sonic representation in Separation sequence. Torture sequence presents a further layer of touch between the bodies of film and spectator (Figure 4.7). The torturer hits Chun-Hyang's shin while she is tied to a wooden chair, this action is followed by a close-up of her profile while she emits a short moan. The *pansori* singer illustrates the shot with *aniri*, translated as 'in-between talk,' creating another sonic dialectic. The singer sings the words 'I state shortly', which is synchronised with Chun-Hyang's voice. The next long-take and track-in shot corresponds with the slow breathing rhythm of *jinyang* while the simultaneous expression of the singer and Chun-Hyang continues. Starting from this extreme-long shot, the camera then moves towards a scene where we see Chun-Hyang from behind as the governor faces her while looking down on her from a higher position. The camera slowly approaches the governor's angry face as he listens to Chun-Hyang's words against him. An important transition then occurs and is highlighted by the *pansori* performance. As the singer performs in sync with the drummer's *jinyang* rhythm the audience responds to the performance with exclamations and tears.



Figure 4.7 Torture sequence in *Chunhyang*

Soo-Jin Lee analyses Torture sequence in relation to the visualisation of *pansori* music in film.³²⁹

Lee claims that the foregrounding of *pansori* music and de-emphasis of Chun-Hyang's voice creates a spatial quality.³³⁰ Lee also points out:

'Torture sequence presents Chun-Hyang's most painful time, however the spectator cannot see her front. The usual tragic sequence tends to utilise a close up for the audience's emotional immersion to the situation. [...] However, this scene uses a tracking instead of a close up. This is when the slow and long torturing scene make the spectator more painful. Combination of *jinyang* rhythm and camera rhythm constructs this emotion.'

³³¹

Lee's analysis of Torture sequence demonstrates how the combination of the singer's lyrics and Chun-Hyang's words—and consequent synthesis of musical rhythm and filmic rhythm—makes this scene a prime representation of 'haptic aurality.' Like Separation sequence, the sequence presents two parallel words of different diegetic sound on-and-off screen, which in combination construct a sonic dialectic. However, Torture sequence's incorporation of the second diegetic space into the frame increases the emotion experienced by the audience.

In this sequence, the triple little metre breathing rhythm of *jinyang* overlays all of the audio-visual elements. Therefore, the different sounds in the scene—and the combination of sonic and visual breathing rhythms—are harmonised with the painful emotions experienced by the protagonist,

³²⁹ Soo-Jin Lee, "Pyohyeon hyeongsig-ui johwaleul tonghan pansoliui sigaghwa: imgwontaeg yeonghwa <chunhyangdyeon>ui mihagjeog gochal" 표현 형식의 조화를 통한 판소리의 시각화: 임권택 영화 <춘향전>의 미학적 고찰 [Visualisation of the *pansori*: Study of the film *Chunhyang* of Im Kwon-Taek], *Semiotic Inquiry* 29 (2011): 315–18.

³³⁰ Ibid., 316.

³³¹ Ibid., 317–18.

and empathically, by the audience. The director chooses to visualise the audience's emotional engagement with *pansori* music to foreground the importance of preserving traditional art in film. The *pansori* is also fundamental to the creation of breathing rhythm dialectic in the sequence. The relationship between emotion and representations of breath will be contemplated further in my discussion of *sinmyeong* in section 4.4.

4.3 Breathing in an Intercultural Cinema

This section will scrutinise how the principle of breath in the traditional Korean music is represented by an encounter between two different musical cultures—that of South Korea and Australia—in the documentary film *Intangible Asset No. 82*. I argue that the representation of breath in *Intangible Asset No. 82* makes it an example of 'intercultural cinema', where the principle of breath and breathing rhythm in the Korean context corporeally informs the representation of the protagonists, the construction of the film's form and the experiences of spectators. Before elucidating my argument further, I will expound further on the intercultural and documentary film.

I contemplate *Intangible Asset No. 82* in the context of South Korean cinema because its subject is that of Korean musical culture—I argue it expands the boundaries of the traditional concept of national cinema into an 'intercultural cinema.' Therefore, my phenomenological discourse will centre around the film's intercultural context. In order to elucidate this argument, I will draw predominantly on Marks' discussion of 'intercultural cinema.'³³² Marks' 'intercultural cinema' is 'characterised by experimental styles that attempt to represent the experience of living between two or more cultural regimes of knowledge, or living as a minority in the still majority white, Euro-American West.'³³³ Even though Marks' discussion of 'intercultural cinema' in the perspective of phenomenology is useful in this section, there are several caveats that must be addressed in order to employ her theory. A controversial element in her definition is her delineations between the 'majority white, Euro-American West' and the rest of the minority people in their society.³³⁴ Marks' use of this framing stems from her interest in experimental film and video works that 'come from the new cultural formations of Western metropolitan centres, which in turn have resulted from global flows of immigration, exile, and diaspora.'³³⁵ While this is valid criteria by which she might limit the scope of her discussion, it is necessary to consider that cultural

³³² Laura Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*.

³³³ *Ibid.*, 1.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*

³³⁵ *Ibid.*

exchange is not one way. Culture is not only transmitted from Western cultures to the rest other cultures, but also from and to those other cultures. Marks' interest in cultural exchange sheds light on the marginalisation of non-Western cultures, but her definition problematically contributes further to this marginalisation through her depiction of a Western-centric relationship. I will slightly redefine the term intercultural cinema as 'filmic representation of the encounter between different cultural experiences.' Moreover, Marks' discourse of 'intercultural cinema' is too invaluable not to include non-experimental films such as the documentary film *Intangible Asset No. 82*. Hence, when I employ Marks' theorisation of 'intercultural cinema,' I will set my definition forth as a premise so as not to confuse the boundaries of the term.

This film is the only intercultural and documentary film among six case studies analysed in this thesis. In other words, while the other films in this thesis construct the film body through manipulations of audio-visual representation of reality, *Intangible Asset No. 82*'s film body is through the curation of components of audio-visual reality. This point does, however, provoke further questions on the definition of the term 'documentary', since some documentaries also include manipulation. However, I will focus on how the documentary approach informs the representation of, and principle of, breath in traditional Korean music. I will argue that representations of breath are tactile in documentary constructions of reality in intercultural cinema, in addition to the staged and fictional audio-visual frameworks discussed in previous chapters.

Intangible Asset No. 82 features eight subheadings which reflect its focus on traditional Korean music: 1. *ki* (translated as the flow of energy), 2. bridge, 3. the principle of *um* and *yang* (translated as the negative and the positive), 4. relaxed power, 5. breath, 6. *Jolbagmi* (translated as 'beauty at the margin of innocence after overcoming complexity'³³⁶), 7. truth and 8. the emotion of *sinmyeong*. On his journey to meet the Korean shaman musician Suk-Chul Kim, the Australian jazz drummer Simon Barker is accompanied by the Australian documentary director and cinematographer Emma Franz. The accompaniment of the director creates an additional layer of intercultural bodily encounter in and around the film. Simon's meeting with various Korean musicians is observed by Franz. Franz's audio-visual meta-corporeality then delivers Simon's corporeal experience of South Korea to the film's audience. The documentary therefore reflects the intercultural experience of not only Simon, but also of Franz, as she experiences South Korea

³³⁶ Byeong-Gi Kim, "Gim byeong-giui seoye·hanmun iyagi 5: chusa gimjeonghuiui geulssi 2" 김병기의 서예·한문 이야기 5: 추사 김정희의 글씨 2 [Kim Byung-Gi's calligraphy and Chinese characters 5: Chusa Kim Jeong-Hee's handwriting 2], *Jeonbuk Ilbo*, March 2, 2011, accessed June 22, 2021, <https://www.jjan.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=387643>.

with Simon. However, I will concentrate on Simon's experience as a musician in my analysis since the flow of the documentary is predicated by Simon's experience of his journey.

During the Australians' exploration of traditional Korean music, Simon finds inspiration in unique South Korean approaches to musical principles. My primary interest, breath, is one of eight elements highlighted as significant by the director in their documentary subheadings. Other elements of the intercultural experience also revolve around breath. In order to conduct deeper analysis on Simon's encounter with the principle of breath in traditional Korean music, Marks' phenomenological discourse on 'intercultural cinema' is helpful.

Marks' discourse of 'intercultural cinema' draws on Finkel's scientific discourse:

Our perception of the world, from a somatosensory viewpoint, depends on an individual's ability to 'refer' a particular touch sensation to the correct location on its body. Tactile localization seems to follow in a straightforward manner from the organisation of the cortex into body maps. Yet these maps turn out to be dynamic in that they reflect the interaction of the individual with its tactile environment.³³⁷

Marks claims that 'our sensorium is formed by culture' and 'creates the world "subjectively" for us.'³³⁸ She goes on to argue that 'a given culture will teach us to specialise our sensorium in particular ways by paying more attention to some types of perception than others.'³³⁹ This argument can be linked to 'intercultural cinema', which 'explores different sensory organizations, and the different orders of knowledge they evoke. [...] It tends to present sense experience not in freeze-dried form, but in the productive conflict between different ways of knowing.'³⁴⁰ For Marks, a 'sense envy' is 'the desire of one culture for the sensory knowledge of another.'³⁴¹ In other words, confusion around and exposure to other cultures deepens the spectator's experience of them. The spectator's ignorance of the sensory experiences of a different culture in 'intercultural cinema' evokes the spectator's 'sense envy.'³⁴² In conclusion, Marks argues: 'intercultural cinema is performing this recombination of sensory experiences.'³⁴³

Marks's 'intercultural cinema', which associates the scarcity of sensory experience and knowledge with a 'sense envy'—and with the recombination of different cultural senses—is relevant to my

³³⁷ Leif Finkel, "The Construction of Perception," in *Incorporations*, ed. Jonathan Crary and Sanford Kwinter, (New York: Zone, 1992), 399.

³³⁸ Laura Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*, 203.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, 206.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 239.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*

³⁴² *Ibid.*

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 241.

analysis of *Intangible Asset No. 82*. Simon's discussion with Dong-Won Kim also evokes these themes:

When I was young, I could play fast and articulate, but there was something missing in my playing. This was not what I get you with my jazz playing. Then, I was becoming quite popular. I have come tour around, and I came here, and I learnt the movement, and when I went back to Australia, my sound increased. It changed my life, you know. I could play less notes more feeling or something. But it's only through passing through here I have been able to find myself.³⁴⁴

In the above description, Simon describes that there is 'something missing' from his jazz-drumming which he hoped to find in traditional Korean music. While this missing element was not familiar to him, his 'sound increased' when he incorporated the Korean techniques into his jazz music. The concept of 'sense envy' is illustrated by this anecdote. Simon wants to learn and absorb new knowledge about traditional Korean music and its relation to the principle of breath. Several key elements of this relationship—between traditional Korean music and the principle of breath—are revealed by the subheadings in the documentary. As Il-Dong explains, 'Ki is important in Korea. *Um* is a valley and *yang* is a mountain. Waterfall is where both meet. [While I trained,] I attracted this energy.'³⁴⁵ In order to adapt this kind of energy flow into the practice of arts such as music and dance, it is necessary to exert 'relaxed power'. Dong-Won's explanation of the traditional Korean arts to Simon also exemplifies this point:

You pretend "My mother is dead" and we try to pretend crying, the real crying "*aigo aigo aigo aigo* mother *aigo* mother *aigo* mother." But this movement is pure gravity. It's not full relaxation like a dead body. (In) your underbelly, you really have to hold this energy. [...] We are always feeling we are pulling into our centre.³⁴⁶

Here, Dong-Won explains that breath is needed to achieve 'relaxed power' in traditional Korean music, since it is the only bridge between the inside and outside of the body. Without respiratory action, the body cannot move or store energy in the abdomen. The fifth subheading in *Intangible Asset No. 82*, '*Hoheub*' (translated as breath), is positioned at the centre of the film—supporting the notion that breath is a central source of 'relaxed power.' In other words, flows between negative and positive energy are represented in the body's 'relaxed power', which is facilitated through the breath. Simon's 'sense envy' of traditional Korean music pertains to all eight of the

³⁴⁴ Simon's dialogue from *Intangible Asset No. 82*.

³⁴⁵ Il-Dong's dialogue from *Intangible Asset No. 82*.

³⁴⁶ Dong-Won's dialogue from *Intangible Asset No. 82*.

elements represented by the documentary subheadings, but breath is the most significant factor since it enables human body to create relaxed power through the connectivity of negative and positive *ki*.

I will now elucidate another component of Simon's 'sense envy' of the principle of breath. Yu-Lim Jin, a traditional Korean drummer in 'hoheub' section of the documentary, provides an explanation that is useful in this regard (Figure 4.8): '*Hoheub* is very important (when playing a drum). The rhythm in traditional Korean music is not just hitting, but with one accord with the player's body's rhythm through breathing. The rhythm and breathing are both important, and in a certain aspect, they are the same.'³⁴⁷ In the Korean context, breathing can be related to harmony. For instance, the saying *hoheub-el matchuda* can be translated as 'matching breath'—or the act of harmonisation between collaborators. Hence, breath not only connects the inside and the outside of the body, or the music player and their instrument, but also connects traditional Korean musicians.



Figure 4.8 Breath in *Intangible Asset No. 82*

Simon's 'sense envy' in the documentary, therefore, can be related to his exposure to the various layers of the principle of breathing, which he goes on to adapt into his music and his collaborations with the Korean musicians. Consequently, Simon becomes equipped to breathe with his drums in several scenes of both his solo drum-play and in conjunction with his co-performers, such as Dong-Won and Il-Dong.

Another aspect of Simon's 'sense envy' relates to how the principle of breath informs the rhythms of traditional Korean music. Simon is fascinated by Suk-Chul Kim's drumming sound, which prompts him to learn more about the structure of rhythm. However, he encounters difficulties

³⁴⁷ Yu-Lim's dialogue from *Intangible Asset No. 82*.

when seeking more information on Korean rhythms. Simon also describes to Dong-Won that it was only through repeatedly listening to a recording of Kim's music that he was able to begin to grasp the complexity of master Kim's drumming. Dong-Won corroborates this perspective in his reply: 'when they do the ritual ceremony during the entire night, the rhythmic structure and singing keeps changing. Then, they use another very complicated and complex technique. And a full improvisation. So, it's really hard to figure it out.'³⁴⁸

Even though I cannot analyse the rhythm of Suk-Chul Kim's music that even professional musicians such as Don-Won and Simon struggle to comprehend, I would argue that the structural complexity of the rhythm of Kim's music has a close relationship with the principle of breath. While Simon and Dong-Won are visiting another shaman musician, Byung-Cheon Park, Park says that '[t]here is no rhythm. When the singer sings more with a long breath, the drummer waits till the end of breath and hits it.'³⁴⁹ Here, Park emphasises that breath can be related to musical complexity. Yong-Shik Lee explains that 'asymmetric metre, the combination of duple little metre and triple little metre, is frequently used in various traditional Korean shaman music, especially in the shaman ritual to call gods such as *chung-bae* rhythm in Seoul shaman ritual, *mansebaji* rhythm in Hwanghae-do shaman ritual, *daewangnori* rhythm in Jeolla-do shaman ritual.'³⁵⁰ Even though I cannot analyse and verify this point musically, I would argue this notion of asymmetric metre can be applied to Kim's rhythm, in a similar manner to how it is applied in the examples above. If this is the case, then both Park's explanation of the correspondence between drumming rhythm and the singer's breath, and the principle of breath in triple little metre (even in asymmetric metre) demonstrates the importance of breath to Kim's musicality. I would therefore surmise that it is this principle of breath—and its relationship with traditional Korean music—that Simon's 'sense envy' motivates him to learn, in order to improve his jazz drumming.

4.4 Breath and the Emotion of *Sinmyeong*

In previous sections, I have scrutinised how breathing rhythms in *pansori* provide formal structure in *Chunhyang*, and how intercultural cinema is fostered by the principle of breathing in traditional Korean music in *Intangible Asset No. 82*. Apart from the fact both sections consider the principle of breath in traditional Korean music, sections 4.2 and 4.3 would seem disconnected from each other. However, my exploration of the emotion of *sinmyeong* in both case studies will elucidate

³⁴⁸ Dong-Won's dialogue from *Intangible Asset No. 82*.

³⁴⁹ Byung-Cheon's dialogue from *Intangible Asset No. 82*.

³⁵⁰ Yong-Shik Lee, "Hangug-eum-ag-ui ibag · sambag / obag · palbag" 한국음악의 2 박 · 3 박 / 5 박 · 8 박 [Meters in Korea: duple, triple, quintuple, octuple], 72.

further connections between them. I will claim that the emotion of *sinmyeong* is crucial to the tension in each film, and that this tension can be further related to representations of breath.

As I introduced in section 1.2.4, the emotion of *sinmyeong* has a close relationship with ritual acts. *Sinmyeong* is an excited and active emotional state caused during the ritual ceremonies conducted by shamen. It can therefore be seen as a bridge between the spirit of the dead and the secular. *Sinmyeong* impacts both the performer's individual experience and the communal experience of the audience. The emotion of *sinmyeong* is, therefore, highly pertinent to the themes of *Intangible Asset No. 82*: Simon's journey to learn more of traditional Korean music and the life and death of the shaman-musician Suk-Chul Kim.

The relationship between *sinmyeong* and shaman ritual ceremonies are also implied in elements of the form and structure of *Intangible Asset No. 82*. While the eight documentary subheadings revolve around the theme of 'breath,' the final heading, '*sinmyeong*,' occupies the most running time—taking up a quarter of the film. This section depicts Simon's first and last opportunity to meet master Kim, the master Kim's funeral and finally, before the ending credits, a concert between the Western music team, Simon and Il-Dong.

The '*sinmyeong*' section illustrates Simon's encounter with an exorcism, which is performed to aid the recovery of the sick master Kim (Figure 4.9). During the ceremony, the shamans, including master Kim, sometimes sob with tears as he connects with his dead sister. However, crucially, the scene is not depicted as dark or lethargic. Rather, through the various instrumental music and singing, this ritual bridging of life and death is portrayed as rhythmic and active. This rhythmically complex and fast music, which employs asymmetric metre (having both duple and triple little metres), crucially informs the mood of the ceremony. The use of the music evokes delight as the various bursting emotions of the immersive shamanistic performance is coupled with the soundscape. As I note at several points through this chapter, triple little metre resembles the rhythm of breathing. The complex combination of the triple and duple little metre in the music of the exorcism informs the atmosphere of the ceremony, provoking an excited state among both the performers and the audience. In other words, the rhythm of breathing in the music helps to enhance the emotion of *sinmyeong*.



Figure 4.9 *Sinmyeong* in *Intangible Asset No. 82*

A transition from sorrow to excitement—facilitated by the coupling of *sinmyeong* and the rhythms of breath—also occurs when master Kim passes away three days after Simon is finally able to meet him. Master Kim’s funeral exposes both Simon and the spectators to a dramatic explosion of various emotions. At the beginning of the funeral, the bereaved cry, but this expression of sorrow is soon followed with a performance of dance and music (Figure 4.10). People seem delighted to attend the funeral as they laugh, play fool and dance together in joy. Therefore, the *sinmyeong* expressed by the musicians and performers proves to be contagious, spreading to the spectators in the scene, who communally share in the emotion.



Figure 4.10 Exciting scene at the Master Kim's funeral in *Intangible Asset No. 82*

This expression of the extremes of human emotion at the funeral is described in an anonymous interview that is narrated during the performance: ‘In order to change the continuous feeling of drooping, people are let cry and made laugh. Likewise, if the living people feel good, the spirit of the dead will feel great.’³⁵¹ This statement implies that the emotion of *sinmyeong* can help the

³⁵¹ Unknown person’s comment from *Intangible Asset No. 82*.

bereaved to recover from sombre moods. As I explored in Chapter 3 regarding *Festival*³⁵², traditional Korean funerals are not only concerned with the act of letting go of the dead, but also with their remembrance. As I also pointed out earlier, the notion of the death of breath evokes the idea of the continuous life of breath found between all living people. This traditional Korean cultural concept connects god to the secular world. The emotion of *sinmyeong*—which is evoked by the rhythms of breath—therefore acts to connect the living and the dead, both through its role in bidding the dead farewell and in commemorating their spirits affirming a sense of life in the bereaved.

I would therefore argue that spiritual principles of breath bridge not only the soul and the body but also the dead and the living. These experiences of corporeality are musically expressed and emotionally shared through the combination of breathing rhythm and *sinmyeong*. In this manner, excited emotion is evoked at traditional Korean funerals as the spirituality of performers and musicians is evoked through their employment of breathing rhythms. Through these means, the tension of master Kim's death is relieved through the evocation of *sinmyeong*. The expression and creation of *sinmyeong* through the principle of breath in traditional Korean music connects the dead and the bereaved by blurring the boundaries between life and death and through emphasising purification as the mourners' sorrow is released.

Simon's response to the funeral is observably different to the communal response of the Korean mourners. Simon does not laugh or dance, he instead observes the scene in an Australian matter—as a passive mourner. His 'sense envy' is therefore expressed as he is implicitly positioned as an outside to the audio-visual musical event and sharing of *sinmyeong* at the funeral. He is alienated from the communal process of sorrow being released through the activation of breathing rhythm and breathing performances in front of the dead. Nonetheless, he cherishes master Kim in accordance with his own cultural background.

However, Simon is not completely excluded from the communal experience of *sinmyeong*. His performance in a jazz ensemble with the South Korean musicians facilitates him to express *sinmyeong* by fusing his music with the principle of breath in traditional Korean music (Figure 4.11). While Simon has previously combined these new elements of philosophy and musicianship, it is in his performances that he is able to activate his 'sense envy' in order to both improve his musical performance and to more fully embrace the principle of breathing in traditional Korean music inter-subjectively. Communal breathing is achieved at this moment, provoking a sense of inspiration in both the Australian and South Korean musicians. In other words, Simon does not

³⁵² *Chugje* 축제 [*Festival*], directed by Kwon-Taek Im (1996; South Korea: Taehung Pictures).

remain an outsider but is able to embrace the communal breathing of the traditional Korean music through the inter-subjective and intercultural collaboration. The contagious emotion of *sinmyeong* is emphasised and empathised in the documentary, therefore not only through structural elements such as the subheading and the duration of this section, but also through Simon's bodily experience of *sinmyeong* when he applies the traditional Korean principle of breathing to his music.



Figure 4.11 Simon's ensemble with a South Korean musician in *Intangible Asset No. 82*

The ritual and intercultural aspect of *sinmyeong* is emphasised through the principle of breathing-in-music in *Intangible Asset No. 82*. By contrast, in *Chunhyang*, *sinmyeong* is evoked through musical dialogue and narrative tension. Bangja sequence is worthy of mention here, since it depicts *sinmyeong* both aurally and visually through the representation of breathing rhythm. Even though this sequence precedes the tension of Chun-Hyang's separation from Mong-Ryong, and the suffering she experiences when she refuses to become the mistress of the new governor, Bangja sequence is the first example of tension between Chun-Hyang and Mong-Ryong. As I already highlighted, *Jajin-jajinmori* rhythm with triple little metre (which draws on the rhythms of breath) dominates Bangja sequence in section 4.2.2. Here, breath is crucial to the sequence since its rhythms stimulate and evoke *sinmyeong*.

The narrative does not explain why Bangja becomes excited in this sequence; he may be interested in Chun-Hyang's maid, Hyang-Dan, or he may just be happy to be a messenger of love. Whatever the reason, however, his smiling face and excited movements demonstrate his happiness. The musical rhythms of the scene further express his emotional excitement. I would argue that the dominant *Jajin-jajinmori* rhythm foregrounds Bang-Ja's excited emotion even though it is not yet a significant feature of the communality. As I discussed earlier in section 1.2.4, *sinmyeong* can be experienced individually, as well as communally. Bang-Ja's experience of *sinmyeong* is strongly linked with the *Jajin-jajinmori* rhythm with triple little metre that is

employed in the sequence. In other words, the tension evoked through the use of breathing rhythm in the sequence is an appropriate accompaniment to the excited emotions Bangja expresses on his lively journey to deliver Chun-Hyang the message. His movements take on a choreographic quality due to their synchronisation with breathing rhythm and expressions of *sinmyeong*.

Bangja sequence shows how an individual character's experience of *sinmyeong* might be expressed and elevated through breathing rhythm. By contrast, in the sequence where Mong-Ryong reappears as a secret royal agent at the local governor's birthday party, breathing rhythms are employed to depict a communal experience of *sinmyeong*. In the scene, the singer narrates proceedings as they occur. Additionally, the images in the sequence progress more rapidly in this section than in other parts of the film. The various changes in direction of people as they stampede and chase in different directions are synchronised with the off-screen music of Cho (Figure 4.12 and 4.13). This tense, dynamic and even cathartic scene where good is encouraged, and evil punished, is therefore represented by the dialectic between image and sound. More importantly, however, the evocation of this tension is strongly related to the use of *Jajinmori* rhythm. The fast rhythm of Cho's music coincides with the building of narrative tension, contributing aurally to the mood of the sequence.



Figure 4.12 Mong-Ryong's reappearance sequence 1 in *Chunhyang*



Figure 4.13 Mong-Ryong's reappearance sequence 2 in *Chunhyang*

The tension of the sequence, which is created both through the narrative and through the musical presentation of a fast rhythm of breath, is released by *sinmyeong* when Mong-Ryong reveals his status to the onlookers, including Chun-Hyang and her mother Ppaeng-Deog. After Mong-Ryong and Chun-Hyang are reunited, there is a singing sequence with Ppaeng-Deog. While Chun-Hyang is saved and the governor is jailed, the smiling Ppaeng-Deog sings and dances. She is surrounded by the crowd as she celebrates the resolution of the crisis of her daughter's death sentence and expresses pride at Chun-Hyang's sincerity (Figure 4.14). In this sequence, the music has *Jungjungmori* rhythm.³⁵³ As I previously explained, *Jungjungmori* rhythm is also based on the triple little metre. The use of *Jungjungmori* rhythm in this sequence demonstrates its connection to *sinmyeong*, especially its communality. When Ppaeng-Deog is singing, the surrounding people are drawn into the joyful mood and soon join in with their own singing and dancing. Further, this song occurs after Chun-Hyang has been saved, implying a continuation of breathing. The celebration of life through the rhythm of breathing, further emphasises how *sinmyeong* can be closely related to the rhythm of breath in *Jungjungmori* rhythm.

³⁵³ The Academy of Korean Studies, "Pansori" 판소리 [*Pansori*].



Figure 4.14 Ppaeng-Deog's singing sequence in *Chunhyang*

In addition to these scenes, in the following sequence—which consists of a conversation between Mong-Ryong and the governor—there is another example of the communal sharing of *sinmyeong* in the second diegesis of Cho's performance (Figure 4.15). The audience claps their hands and calls bravo to express their empathy (which can be seen as an example of *sinmyeong*) as breathing rhythms facilitate the easing of tension. *Chunhyang*'s narrative finally reaches a positive resolution as the breathing rhythm in the traditional Korean music expresses *sinmyeong*. This performance by master Cho therefore illustrates the film director's understanding of how *sinmyeong* is transmitted between story, performer and audience. Considering the director's desire to preserve traditional Korean culture in his film, I would argue the director would also wish to evoke *sinmyeong* in the film's audience.



Figure 4.15 The audience's emotion of *sinmyeong* in *Chunhyang*

The rhythm of breathing is pertinent not only to the film's diegesis, but also to the protagonists' movement and feeling, to the film's bodily rhythm and to the audience's experience of breathing. Therefore, the characteristics of communality and inter-subjectivity of *sinmyeong* within the film are able to reach off-screen and impact the audience through the representation of breath. This

can be seen as a demonstration of the important role *sinmyeong* plays in creating the narrative tension of *Chunhyang*, as catharsis is induced to elevate or ease the tension.

Nonetheless, it is necessary to be cautious when considering *sinmyeong*'s role in meditating narrative tension. *Sinmyeong* is usually linked to the expression of excited, cathartic or happy situations in the diegesis. In my analysis of Mong-Ryong's reappearance sequence, the rhythm of breathing evokes *sinmyeong* in order to facilitate the escalation of tension and the resolution of problems. Ppaeng-Deog's singing sequence, when her breathing-in-singing creates *sinmyeong*, contributes to the easing of tension after Chun-Hyang has been saved by Mong-Ryong. When the rhythm of breathing evokes emotion of *sinmyeong*, the result can be frantic or relaxed. Therefore, in all cases, *sinmyeong* ultimately evokes a joyful or soothing mood, constituting a positive escalation or resolution of diegetic tension.

While I have already discussed the emotion of *sinmyeong* in relation to rituals involving breath, and in relation to breathing-in-music, I have not yet discussed the relationship between *sinmyeong* and *han*. In section 1.2.4, I scrutinised how the emotion of *han* has been discussed and understood in the context of the Korean art and culture. I also argued that in some circumstances the experience and expression of *han* can lead to reconciliation. In corroboration of this point, I relate *han* to inter-subjective representations of breathing in *Seopyeonje*³⁵⁴ and *Festival*³⁵⁵ in section 3.5. Since *sinmyeong* can also be associated with the release of tension, I will now explore the relationship between both emotions.

I previously explained that *han* can be understood through the binary concept of tying and untying. In this case, the concept of tying and untying *han* relates it, conceptually, to *sinmyeong*. As I previously explored in this section, the emotion of *sinmyeong* constitutes either escalation or resolution of tension. *Sinmyeong* can therefore be considered as functioning at the margins of tension, dynamically elevating or easing it. In this regard, parallels can be drawn with the tying and untying of *han* through both formal and corporeal means.

However, there is more that can be said on the relationship between *han* and *sinmyeong*. I have already described how *han* shifts anger and sadness into reconciliation and reflection, I would further claim that *sinmyeong* sometimes also facilitates reconciliation—an aspect of *han*. Ppaeng-Deog's singing sequence for instance, illustrates the pursuit of reconciliation as *sinmyeong* is evoked with the rhythm of breath. Even though the governor is depicted as a villain, her singing eases tension in the scene without excluding the governor. She sings: 'Do not despise the

³⁵⁴ *Seopyeonje* 서편제 [*Seopyeonje*], directed by Kwon-Taek Im. (1993; South Korea: Taehung Pictures).

³⁵⁵ *Chugje* 축제 [*Festival*], directed by Kwon-Taek Im (1996; South Korea: Taehung Pictures).

governor. Without him, where can a virtuous woman come?’³⁵⁶ Here, in addition to the relief of tension, reconciliation is also facilitated. In this manner, the emotion of *sinmyeong* meets the emotion of *han*. Therefore, the emotion of *sinmyeong* not only relates to the tying and untying *han*, but also to the concept of *han*-as-reconciliation.

The function of the emotions of *han* and *sinmyeong* in Korean art and culture, and more specifically in Korean film, facilitates our understanding of the representation of breath from a phenomenological perspective. The emotion of *han* has developed to reconciliation in the Korean cultural context, foregrounding the inter-subjectivity of the representation of breath in film. The emotion of *sinmyeong* evokes the bodily experience of excitement through the corporeality of representations of breath. Further, both emotions work inter-subjectively and through embodied experience, metaphorically resembling the duality of breathing in and out. Breathing is a flow of energy, signifying more than the physical act of bringing oxygen into the body and releasing carbon dioxide into the environment. As I consistently emphasise in this thesis, on a metaphorical level, breathing is a circular interaction which unites opposites. For this reason, I discuss *han* and *sinmyeong* together in this thesis in order to fully represent the duality inherent to the representation of breath.

In this chapter, I discussed the corporeality of audio-visual representations of breath in relation to *sinmyeong* in Korean culture. I chiefly focused on the importance of musical rhythms of breath in *Chunhyang* and on intercultural encounters with the principle of breath in traditional Korean music in *Intangible Asset No. 82*. I also discussed how the emotion of *sinmyeong* has both affected and has been affected by the representation of breath. I argued that in both films the audience is impacted by the representation of breath—as they experience cinema that has been formally influenced by the breathing rhythm and principle, as well as when representations of breath in music evoke the release of tension through *sinmyeong* through the bodily experience of rituals around life and death. The next and final chapter will sum up my entire thesis. I will both elucidate what has been discussed in my arguments and highlight areas of interest that were beyond the scope of my research. I will analyse how these unexplored areas might be productively addressed in future scholarship while signposting my original contributions to research in both phenomenological film studies and in South Korean film studies.

³⁵⁶ From *Chunhyang*.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

The representation of breath in cinema is evocative of the discourse of bodies in and around film. As I argued at the beginning of the thesis, breathing is a fundamental part of being human. Even though breath is immaterial and invisible, it provides evidence of the dynamic and circular movement of energy in and out of the body. This movement encourages us to consider how a trace of breath leaves a footprint. While breath is neither seen or heard it is embodied in visible/invisible and audible/inaudible elements. Bodies are the locus of this activity, and breath leaves its traces in and around them.

It is not a coincidence, therefore, that film expresses activity through representations of breath. The mere existence of the film body necessitates that it will express breath—that it will breathe. However, this metaphorical conceptualisation is not the only lens through which film can be understood. Breath also encourages us to reflect on how filmed bodies are embodied. In addition, in diegesis, a breathing body creates audio-visual representations of breath in the body of the film, enabling the breathing body of the spectator to react to it/them. Until phenomenological film studies started paying attention to breath its significance had not received due consideration. Despite this, breath is fundamental to many aspects of cinema, to the bodies of characters in the narrative, to the bodies of the audience watching the film and to the material and aesthetic construction of the images and sounds found in film—all of these elements simultaneously present images and sounds of breath.

Drawing on my phenomenological interest in the representation of breath in film, I refined the scope of my research to case studies in contemporary South Korean cinema. In this final chapter, I will evaluate and summarise my thesis findings. Furthermore, I will explicate my original contribution to scholarship: a discussion of the representation of breath in contemporary South Korean cinema. Lastly, I will explore what avenues for further study of the representation of breath in cinema are presented by this thesis.

Chapter 2 was about how spatial representations of breath and air are constructed in *Jiseul*³⁵⁷ and *Peppermint Candy*,³⁵⁸ and how these representations relate to historical trauma in South Korea. My understanding of the spatial representation of breath was not confined to images, but also explored the sonic plane through my use of the phrases elemental landscape for image and

³⁵⁷ *Jiseul* 지슬 [*Jiseul*], directed by Meul O (2012; South Korea: Japari Film).

³⁵⁸ *Bakha Satang* 박하사탕 [*Peppermint Candy*], directed by Chang-Dong Lee (1999; South Korea: Dream Venture Capital).

elemental soundscape for sound. The use of these spatial terms for the representation of breath facilitated my analysis of the historical trauma from the perspective of both the victim and the perpetrator. This interpretation was informed by both the transcendental and symbolic aspects of breath. I argue that since breath implies the boundary between life and death, it juxtaposes the material and the immaterial—in other words, the body and soul of the victim and perpetrator.

Chapter 3 paid attention to how the protagonists, the film's form and its spectators can be linked to each other through representations of breath in *Seopyeonje*³⁵⁹ and *Festival*.³⁶⁰ By utilising the terms breathing visuality, breathing aurality and breathing audio-visuality, I claimed that inter-subjectivity between the protagonists, the film's form and the spectator could be further illuminated through analysis of the representation of breath. It is also significant to note that inter-subjectivity was an outcome of the distance of 'striated space' rather than the proximity of 'smooth space.'

Inter-subjectivity is also a critical link between the representation of breath in cinema and the emotion of *han*. As the emotion of *han* is a contentious concept, I collated various perspectives on it. However, regardless of the debate on how *han* is defined, it was still possible to investigate the emotion's inter-subjectivity. I justified this point by demonstrating that *han* constitutes not an isolated emotion caused by one's own independent issues, but an emotion that occurs between one person and another.

Chapter 4 dealt with how representations of breath were embodied in *Chunhyang*³⁶¹ and *Intangible Asset No. 82*.³⁶² I argued that the formal and thematic use of the breathing rhythm and principle of breath in traditional Korean music affected each film's forms and themes. I used the terms 'haptic visuality,' 'haptic aurality' and 'haptic audio-visuality' to clarify some points regarding these analyses. The terms also foregrounded my delineation of the notion of corporeality from the term 'haptic.' This topic was approached with caution, because since 'haptic' means tactile, readers might be confused by the term, imagining it to signify that breath is literally tactile. By contrast, through the emphasis of these terms, my intention was to explore perceptual embodiment. For this reason, I used the terms to explore the formal and thematic usage of the breathing rhythm and the principle of breath in traditional Korean music.

This thesis's original contribution to knowledge has two components: a contribution to film theory and the suggestion of a new film studies methodology. Foregrounding sonic terms for the

³⁵⁹ *Seopyeonje* 서편제 [*Seopyeonje*], directed by Kwon-Taek Im (1993; South Korea: Taehung Pictures).

³⁶⁰ *Chugje* 축제 [*Festival*], directed by Kwon-Taek Im (1996; South Korea: Taehung Pictures).

³⁶¹ *Chunhyangdeon* 춘향뎐 [*Chunhyang*], directed by Kwon-Taek Im (2000; South Korea: CJ Entertainment).

³⁶² *Intangible Asset No. 82.*, directed by Emma Franz (2008; Australia: In the Sprocket Productions).

discussion of the representation of breath was also critical to my study since this taxonomic frame can be employed to deepen phenomenological and filmic discourses on the representation of breath.

Both Irigaray and Quinlivan concentrated on how breath can be seen as transcendental from a phenomenological perspective—a substantial contribution to previous phenomenological film studies which paid more attention to corporeality. These studies, therefore, formed the foundation of my own discussion of the spatiality and inter-subjectivity of representations of breath in chapters 2 and 3 respectively. In my thesis, however, I also analysed sound, which is a core element of most of films. While sound may not be as essential as image in film composition, it is still highly integral to the discourse of the invisible in phenomenological film studies.

In this respect, I suggested sonic-centric terms to be used in addition to previous established visual-centric terms, as well as my own modified versions of visual terms. For instance, my term elemental soundscape draws on Quinlivan's spatial term 'elemental topography' for the representation of breath. In section 2.3, I investigated how this new sonic term could be used to analyse not only the space of breath and air, but also the local spatiality of breath in relation to the display of historical trauma. I paid my attention to how the soundscape can represent breath in many contexts, including the body of the protagonist, the aerial environment and other local specificities. It was worth discussing how sound is related to spatial representations of breath in its own subsection, since sound is usually an 'invisible' (but not insignificant) element of film that has not received enough attention.

In addition to addressing and emphasising the spatiality of the sonic representation of breath in diegesis of a film, I also explored a further off-screen space for the discourse of the spatial representation of breath. In section 2.3, I analysed the ending song, *leodosana*, in *Jiseul* with the term elemental soundscape, as an example of an off-screen and nondiegetic soundscape.

I also suggest another sonic space for a future research: the sonic space of the spectator's experience of cinema. Two further elements pertain to this part: the spatial sonic presentation of breath and the sound of the spectator's own breathing body. The former can be related to more technical analyses, including the spatial experience of sound, through the systematisation of the space of sound in film theatres. This is an interesting avenue for exploring the representation of breath, since the spectator's experience of the space of breath and air in the theatre varies according to local environmental conditions. The latter is also an unexplored topic. The spectator's breathing body is a similarly significant factor for the spatial representation of breath. The spectator's body is a parallel space of breathing that can be considered as they interact with representations of breath on the screen and through the surrounding sound system of the film

theatre. Further, the spectator is also surrounded by other spectators in this dark space. Therefore, in addition to experiencing spatial representations of breath in film, spectators also receive and perceive spatial presentations of breath in the film theatre.

The spectator's experience of hearing both their own and other's breathing bodies in the film theatre, and the spatiality of the cinematic presentation of breathing sounds, can also be connected to my other discourse on the representation of breath: inter-subjectivity. When I proposed and used the sonic term breathing aurality for the analysis of inter-subjective representations of breath in section 3.3, I mainly focused on diegetic construction in film. Even though the term itself included the spectator, the spectator's experiences of breathing aurality was not discussed further. However, this would be an intriguing point to consider in further research, since interactions occur not only between the film and the spectator, but also between spectators. Considering the sonic implications of neighbouring spectators breathing audibly in the same space, the spectator's experience of the breathing sound in the film theatre is another valuable avenue for future scholarship.

There is also space for debate on the discourse of spatial and inter-subjective representations of breath. In addition to the traditional space of the film theatre and the spectator's experiences in it, spectatorial experience has been substantially influenced by the development of mobile devices and domestic viewing. The sonic space for the representation of breath in these environments varies drastically from that of the film theatre. Living environments have also become smaller as families have shrunk and single-person households have become more common in some countries. In other words, the experience of spectating a film has become more personalised, which means the importance of sonic interactions between random spectators has lessened. Along with the future of the survival of the film theatre and the traditional cinematic experience, the spatial and inter-subjective representation of breath have also been altered by this changing and challenging situation.

My research methodology was to explore the entire flow of each concept which arose from the discourse of cultural specificity. Throughout the thesis, I engaged not only with phenomenological frameworks (drawing on Quinlivan's three aspects of the representation of breath: spatiality, inter-subjectivity and corporeality) but also with the theme of trauma and the emotions of *han* and *sinmyeong*.

I needed to be careful in my discussion of this pair of emotions and their phenomenological characteristics. Each coupling of trauma and spatiality, of the emotions of *han* and inter-subjectivity, and of the emotion of *sinmyeong* and corporeality, did not denote them as exclusive

pairs. My decision to structure my analysis in this fashion was instead stemmed from how my case studies represented breath.

Historical trauma is spatially memorialised in both *Jiseul* and *Peppermint Candy*, which can be discussed either in terms of inter-subjectivity or corporeality. The emotion of *han* and its relation with the representation of breath can also be discussed in relation to corporeality. This same principle can also be applied to the emotion of *sinmyeong*. By limiting my discussion of these emotions, the theme of trauma and the representation of breath by pairing different concepts in each chapter, I was able to break down the complex subject matter of my thesis into more manageable threads. Following on from this, I therefore argue throughout the thesis that trauma and the emotions of *han* and *sinmyeong* enhances the phenomenological meaning of breath, and vice versa. The conceptual demarcations between chapters represent a practical solution to the need to elucidate the relationships between many complex and varied elements across the thesis.

In her installation *To Breathe: Bottari*, Soo-Ja Kim suggests that both her and the audience's breath can be used to conceptually weave the space of *bottari*. Similarly, the representation of breath in this thesis interconnects not only my six case studies but also six themes. I scrutinised the relationship between spatiality and the memorial of historical trauma; between inter-subjectivity and the emotion of *han* as reconciliation; and between corporeality and the emotion of *sinmyeong* as contagious excitedness.

The thesis also emphasises the flow from trauma to the emotion of *han* to the emotion of *sinmyeong*. As I explain in section 1.2, these three themes are linked not only by the representation of breath but also through culture. The mass traumas stemming from tragic events in modern South Korean history evoke several facets of *han*, including resentment, lamentation, longing, want and reconciliation. I argue that in the Korean context, the emotion of *han* as reconciliation, for instance, might be achieved through the spread of the emotion of *sinmyeong* during an event or ceremony. The idea that *han* has multiple emotional facets connects it both to trauma and to the emotion of *sinmyeong*. This linked flow of trauma and emotions also usefully provides a structure through which I was able to explore these themes alongside each other in the thesis.

Moreover, this phenomenon of thematic shifting, from trauma to the emotion of *han* to the emotion of *sinmyeong*, suggests movement from a negative to positive state of mind. While decolonising and decentralising film studies are now widespread, there is still a danger of cultural ignorance and friction. The journey from trauma to *han* to *sinmyeong* provides a glimpse of how conflicting societies can reach reconciliation. This metaphorical journey is applicable not only to

the Korean context, but to the wider global situation. This thesis, however, has primarily explored these themes in relation to representations of breath in contemporary South Korean cinema.

Some areas illuminated by this thesis would benefit from further research. For instance, the temporality of the representation of breath could be fruitfully investigated further. Film moves forwards in time, as well as space. Therefore, temporality has as much relevance to film studies as spatiality. Given that I analysed the emphasis of breathing rhythms on film's form, more discussion of temporality would be valuable for widening phenomenological film studies of breath.

The relationship between gender and the representation of breath could also be further analysed in some of my case studies. In section 1.2.1, I briefly explain how feminism has impacted the development of phenomenological film studies and the theme of the representation of breath. However, while I appreciate feminism's impact on phenomenological film studies, my study is not predominantly focussed on this topic. Consequently, I will now outline avenues of my research that can be further explored in the context of gender politics.

Exploration of the representation of breath can be extended through further consideration of victimised or marginalised female protagonists in some case studies of this thesis. For instance, there is the scene of the rape of a local girl Sun-Duk, who is later killed in *Jiseul*. Another female victim is Moo-Dong's old mother, who is killed by a troop after she refuses to evacuate. Further, the last depicted victim in the cave is a pregnant woman, who is killed while the other refugees escape. Of course, these women are not the only victims in the film and all victims are eventually killed, as explained by the sentences at the end of the narrative. There are also other scenes where we observe male victims. However, it is undeniable that the victimisation of female protagonists is dramatically emphasised. For instance, the upper half of Sun-Duk's body is exposed as shaking and breathing and Moo-Dong's mother's face is depicted as covered with blood. The image of the dead pregnant mother in the cave is also represented as the climax of the breathing life and death of the victim. Discussion of the intent of foregrounding these female victims in the scenes above would therefore be a valuable extension to the research conducted in this thesis.

The feminist perspective would also illuminate the characterisation of the female soldier in *Jiseul*. Except for one private soldier, Jung-Gil, all the soldiers in *Jiseul* are male. According to the director, 'the female actor played for the female role of Jung-Gil, [...] who had no other choice but

joining the army following a friend of hers.³⁶³ According to Ji-Hye Kim, ‘Jung-Gil performs as the director’s view and the eye of the spectator. Every character becomes a perpetrator or a victim by engaging with the situation. However, Jung-Gil rationally judges the situation even though she wears the mask of a perpetrator.’³⁶⁴ This lone female soldier is not a simple perpetrator like other male soldiers, but also punishes one of them, the master sergeant Kim, which can denote a further research in the perspective of feminism.

Peppermint Candy could also be further explored from a gendered perspective. Apart from the fact that a girl is killed by a male soldier at one point, the film revolves around a male protagonist’s individual trauma. In other words, other female protagonists are marginalised and do not have a substantial role in the film. This point is mentioned briefly in section 2.2, where I outline Todd McGowan’s view on the male-oriented construction on *Peppermint Candy*.³⁶⁵ While my analysis of the film fruitfully explores the spatiality of the audio-visual representation of breath—individual trauma and female protagonists’ traumatic experiences, as represented by breath, could also be examined further.

Song-Hwa’s blinding by her stepfather in *Seopyeonje* could also be discussed from a feminist perspective. In my analysis, I suggest that this scene’s representation of breathing aurality can be related to the emotion of *han* as reconciliation, focusing on its impact on the inter-subjective representation of breath. Subsequent research on *Seopyeonje*, however, could explore how the representation of breath can be re-examined to discuss the vulnerable female character’s unfair loss of sight because of her stepfather’s desire for mastery.

In addition, as I introduced in section 1.2.4, the emotion of *han* is a controversial concept. One of the various views on the emotion of *han* was that it could be seen as a form of longing that possesses a feminine sensitivity.³⁶⁶ As I mentioned, this view can be criticised from the feminist perspective: is longing really a feminine sensitivity? If so, why and how? Consequently, a re-examination of the victimised Song-Hwa’s breathing aurality and its relation to the emotion of *han* would make a valuable contribution to feminist film studies.

My analyses of *Chunhyang* concentrate on breathing rhythms and are less evocative of gender politics. However, the virtue of the female protagonist’s behaviour and attitude to life and death

³⁶³ Ji-Hye Kim, “Kim, Ji-Hye-ui nonpigsyeon: Jiseul-ui majimag yangsim, jeong-gil-eun wae yeoja ilkka?” 김지혜의 논픽션: ‘지슬’의 마지막 양심, 정길은 왜 ‘여자’일까? [Kim, Ji-Hye’s non-fiction: The last conscience of *Jiseul*, why is Jung-Gil female?], *SBS News*, April 5 2013, accessed Jul 5, 2021, https://news.sbs.co.kr/news/endPage.do?news_id=N1001720421.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

³⁶⁵ Todd McGowan, “Affirmation of the Lost Object: *Peppermint Candy* and the End of Progress,” 177.

³⁶⁶ I-Du Cheon, *Han-ui gujo yeongu* 한의 구조 연구 [Research on the structure of *han*], 66.

could be further explored. Her pursuit of chastity, in contravention of the new governor's order for her to be his mistress, is defended by Mong-Ryong. In other words, Chun-Hyang's potential fate of victimisation by the male governor is averted by a male protagonist. When it comes to her life and death, Chun-Hyang is passive and given less agency than Mong-Ryong.

In addition to further exploration of the feminist perspective, the idea of breathing as a feminine quality, as outlined by Irigaray, might also be addressed in future research. Even though people breathe regardless of their gender, when it comes to breath's association with new life, women, as mothers, have a closer relationship with the breath of the embryo in the womb. Women are physically connected to their foetuses, whose breathing life is dependent on their mother's breathing. This notion is intriguing considering the transcendental aspect of the representation of breath. In section 2.2, I analyse how a mother's death and a baby's cries are presented through a spatial representation of breath: the cave. In this argument, I mention that the cave acts as a fecund space that protects the baby symbolically. The space of breath and of the foetus is transcendently connected in the cave. Therefore, my analysis of the space of breath in *Jiseul* opens further potential research directions for the exploration of feminine qualities of breath.

Finally, I will address how this thesis can be useful to explorations of universality and cultural specificity. The conclusions I draw about the six case studies I discuss in my thesis, in my view, cannot be widened to argue that the representation of breath is a core characteristic of the South Korean national cinema. I make this point particularly clear with regard to my discussions of other South Korean films, including an Australian film about traditional Korean music, *Intangible Asset No. 82*, as well as through the perspective of phenomenological film studies and through the context of Korean art and culture. Nonetheless, my discourse on the representation of breath in contemporary South Korean cinema could be explored further in the context of Korean art and culture as national cinema.

As film studies and the philosophies of phenomenology originate from Western discourses, the analysis of films' forms and phenomenological perspectives on various bodies in and around film were developed from Western intellectual discourse. This study therefore adopts a perspective of universality to some degree. However, Irigaray's phenomenological discourse of breath—which became a significant base for Quinlivan's filmic investigation of the invisible and immaterial breath as a transcendental and inter-subjective element—has been affected not only by the Western tradition of philosophy, but also by Buddhist philosophy.³⁶⁷ While this influence does not

³⁶⁷ Luce Irigaray, "Being Two: How Many Eyes Have We?" 149.

alter the origin of phenomenology, it demonstrates that representations of breath in cinema are in part being explored in the context of non-Western understandings of breath.

Besides, as different cultures have moved closer by contacting each other through both on- and off-line communications, the unilateral assumption that there is one sole and stable intellectual discourse has been destabilised. In terms of cultural specificity, this point is widely accepted in academia. Therefore, I argue that it is important that representations of breath are contextualised in national cinema, rather than essentialised.

In this respect, Julian Stringer's discussion of *Seopyeonje* is worthy of emphasis here.³⁶⁸ Stringer's research question originates from an anecdote. In a screening of a film at Indiana University in 1996, the audience, who were mostly non-Koreans, 'felt cheated' by the removal of the diegetic singing sound from the reunion scene at the climax of the film.³⁶⁹ To uncover why this reaction was different to that of the Korean spectators, Stringer examined what the director Im was attempting to preserve in *Seopyeonje*:

When the reunion scene between Song-Hwa and Tong-ho chooses to deny the listening subject the thrill of 'really' hearing the *pansori*, Im seems to be constructing an 'inner domain' of 'essential' Korean culture. Significantly, as *pansori* is an oral, acoustic form of cultural expression, there is the implication that it cannot properly be caught by technological means of reproduction.³⁷⁰

Im doesn't want it to be reduced to the status of a simple commodity. He wants to preserve its 'inner meaning,' its spiritual core and life. I now consider that this scene seeks to avoid the cultural objectification of *pansori* music by opening up an inner domain of national culture for viewers and listeners.³⁷¹

Pansori's unheard implications were considered by Stringer to be part of a culturally specific phase of film, with which national spectators were more equipped to empathise than international viewers. Examples such as this open possibilities for the exploration of how national cinematic strategies, such as putting a symbolic Korean element in films' forms, can be achieved without cultural objectification. Reception studies from domestic and international spectators, as

³⁶⁸ Julian Stringer, "Seopyeonje and The Inner Domain of National Culture," in *Im Kwon-Taek: the making of a Korean national cinema*, ed. David James and Kyung-Hyun Kim (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002), 157–81.

³⁶⁹ Ibid., 161.

³⁷⁰ Ibid., 168.

³⁷¹ Ibid., 177.

Chapter 5

Stringer evokes above, can be further explicated in relation to the perception of the representation of breath in South Korean cinema, as well as in other culture's cinemas.

This thesis's contribution to previous and prospective scholarship is not limited to my utilisation of terms and analyses in my six case studies. Rather, through these analyses, I seek to open contextual possibilities that strive towards a universal understanding of phenomenological film studies. I hope this project can be used not to solidify the boundaries of South Korean cinema but rather to expand various cultures' inter-subjective interpretations of the representation of breath in cinema, through adaptation of my terminologies and case studies.

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