THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

B A H Ç E Ş E H İ R UNIVERSITY

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

MAGIC REAL EXPRESSION IN THE FILMS OF PARK CHAN-WOOK
AND BONG JOON-HO

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
IN
FILM AND TELEVISION STUDIES

Poyraz Eser EVLEK

İSTANBUL, FEBRUARY, 2011

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ABSTRACT

MAGIC REAL EXPRESSION IN THE FILMS OF PARK CHAN-WOOK AND BONG
JOON-HO

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This study suggests a stylistic analysis for the narratives of Park Chan-wook and Bong Joon-ho, and argues that the occurrence of the magic real elements leads to suspense in narrative progress due to its relation to ambiguous and uncanny recalling of nostalgia and to mentally unstable characters. The arguments resolve in the reference to the magic real emerges in relation to traumas and repression of grim occurrences of the past.

Key Words: Uncanny, fantastic, marvelous, suspense, ambiguity, nostalgia

ÖZET

PARK CHAN-WOOK VE BONG JOON-HO FİLMLERİNDE BÜYÜLÜ GERÇEKÇİ İFADE

Poyraz Eser Evlek

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Sinema & TV Bölümü

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Bu çalışmada, Park Chan-wook ve Bong Joon-ho filmlerindeki anlatı yapılarının oluşumu tarz bakımından Büyülü Gerçeklik ile ilişkili olarak incelenmektedir. Çalışmada, bu iki yönetmenin analize tabi tutulan filmlerinde büyülü gerçekliğin bir tür olmaktan çok, bir anlatı aracı ve ifade tarzına odaklı olduğu saptanmıştır. Çalışma, büyülü gerçek içeriğin kullanımının hikaye anlatısını duraksamaya uğrattığını önermekte, bunun sebebi olarak da nostalji ve geçmişin öznel olarak, anlatıya hakim olan, ruhsal bakımdan dengesiz karakterler tarafından yorumlanmasını göstermektedir. Büyülü gerçekçi ifade tarzı içinde temsil bulan olayların ve gerçekliğin, belirsiz ve kusurlu oluşunun çözümlemesinde, nostaljik bakışın bastırılmış travma ve kötü hatıraları dışlamasından kaynaklandığını vurgulamaktadır. Sonuç olarak, konu edilen filmlerde büyülü gerçekliğin, doğruluğu kanıtlanamayan bir geçmiş-gerçeklik algısını temsil ettiği önerilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Fantastik, ertelenme, büyülü, nostalji, tekinsiz, olağanüstü, bulanık

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. SCOPE AND FRAMEWORK

It is required to be mentioned first that the extensions of this study are designated by the limitation that the study being issued is to support the creative, aesthetic and theoretical process of the screenplay submitted in the appendix part. Henceforth, the limitations of the theoretical study are interralated with and depended on the reach of the artistic text.

In accordance with the themes and style applied in the narrative form of the screenplay, the usage of magic realism as a **narrative device** or a **narration style** flourishes as a distinguishing trait. Consequently, the use of magic realism as a way of expression in the artistic text has become the central point of the theoretical study.

At this point, the films of two South Korean directors, Park Chan-wook and Bong Joon-ho, pose an eminent place in the study, since the use of the magic real expression as well as with this peculiar expression's emanation in the themes like *nostalgia*, *violence* and *delusion*, highly resemble and correspond with its usage in the screenplay project given. So, other than the examples of the works those possess the patterns of magic realism as a narrative style or expression, the cinema of Park and Bong is placed in the core of this study, along with this particular expression's readings in the geographical and cultural subtexts.

1.2. METHODOLOGY: SUBJECT AND AIM

First of all there is a huge history and various fields of study behind Magic Realist Criticism in almost every area of Cultural Criticism, with regards to definitions and theoretical interpretations. Some fundamental arguments about the definition are, in brief:

Literary Aesthetics & Theory: As a flourishing point, Franz Roh defines magic realism as the demise of Expressionism and indicates it as the appraisal of the genre as 'calm admiration of the magic of being, of the discovery that things already have their own faces' (Hart, 2005, p.114).

Postcolonial Studies: Homi Bhaba names magic realism as 'the literary language of the emergent postcolonial world' within frame of anti-imperialism (Hart, 2005, p.2).

Postmodern Studies/ Media Studies: According to Fredric Jameson, Magic Realism is, and works of which includes: 'semiautonomous subsystems', remarking their constant mutation with regards to multiplicity of realities and its reaction against the 'reification of realisim', however, contradictorily denoting it as 'now transferred to the realm of film) a possible alternative of the narrative logic of 'contemporary postmodernism' in reference to late capitalism (Jameson, 1992, p.177).

However, the studies handling magic realism done before are addressed mainly to the literary works of magic realism that belong to either European or Latin American context. Whereas, the works scrutinized in this study eminently differ and are distinguishable, since they are the works of two South Korean directors who places their themes and subjects in their own cultural context.

Hereto, the study locates the use of magic realist expression in the films of Park and Bong; analyzes the occurrence of the magic real within stylistic approach, and subdivides the emergence in two subdivisions as *uncanny* and *marvelous*, which is supported by the theories and arguments by the cultural critic and art theorist Tzevetan Todorov.

Subsequently, the study detects the use of uncanny and marvelous through the narrative devices applied in the given films; then, argues that almost every motif, pattern and event represented in emanation of the magic real possesses associations with the past embodied in the form of a certain nostalgic look. Within their cultural history and context in frame of the narrative worlds of the given films, the argues that the authority of the past represented by means of magic real expression is in vanishing since they are not able to present a solid account on the background for the occurrences. At this point, the study aims to clarify the stance of the magic real in the films of Park and Bong, as the themes represented in magic real expression do not place the irrational primal to the rational, or celebrate the supernatural unlike most of the European and Latin American magic realist works, which have tendency for being anti-rationalist, anti-realist, and ultimately anti-imperial. The study suggests that, as well as with the present, the occurrences those are presented through nostalgia expressed in magic real are also irrelevant, decomposed and decadent; so, the agenda of the magic real resolves in blurry, elusive occurrences those belong to neither past nor present, but only to temporal notions lacking of being factual.

1.3. OUTLINE AND SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTERS

As mentioned before, this thesis is produced along with a screenplay-project, so the scope of this work is dependent on the themes and style that is referred in the project. Therefore, it can be said that what is mentioned in this thesis is applicable to the project that is given in the appendix part.

In order to clarify the use of magic real as a style of expression, first the general generic issues will be dealt with, at which point a stylistic reading of this peculiar literary genre will be suggested, since the medium of film is eventually distinct from the literature. So, the study commences with the argument whether the magic realism could be a genre in the territory of the film medium, and resolves in *the improbability of a meta-text* that presents an account for magic realism as a genre in cinema. Henceforth, the magic realism will be handled as a style or narrative device of the medium that is to be issued. Due to the inconsistent and inconstant genre theories, the study will be summed up with a via media which discloses magic realism as a style or stylistic approach sustained by the arguments from Sarah Berry-Flint, Steve Neale and Robert Stam, stressing the interdependent relationship between industry, audience, and text (film), and marking only one of which is taken into account in most of the genre studies.

Subsequently, the agenda of magic realism from an aesthetic perspective summarizing the art theories of three art critic, V. Shklovsky, F. Roh and R. Scholes will be put into treatise. Covering these, mainly and most importantly a closer approach to what Todorov suggests will be followed with respect to distinguishing traits of magical realism from fantastic and other anti-realist narratives within frame of medium of film. As he ponders upon the literary fantastic occurs in the hesitation between deciding whether a series of apparently miraculous, supernatural events narrated in fiction are indeed supernatural or rationally explicable, and within the rules of natural law—whether it transcends the laws of Nature as we know them (Todorov, 1975, p.28). Then, the arguments will concentrate on the definition of the magic real as a style of expression sustained by the arguments of T. Todorov. It will come up with two phase of magic real occurrence, uncanny and marvelous as Todorov sees them as the result of the fantastic.

Advancing towards the medium of film, the filmic devices in creating the magic real expression will be examined. Afterwards, a stylistic reading of the magic real occurrences

will be suggested in the selected narratives of Bong Joon-ho and Park Chan-wook, and by which devices Park and Bong combine magic real within the directorial style in establishing the audio-visual medium will be highlighted with specific examples. Moving on, a reading of magic real elements with regards to theme of nostalgia in the narratives of these directors will be suggested. Framing the definition of the magic real into uncanny and marvelous, the use of this peculiar expression is explicated, as the magic real occurs under certain circumstances, which are interrelated to the past under the theme of nostalgia. Further, the ambiguity of the accounts of the filmic characters will be argued, the reason of which stems from the past traumas and violent acts occurred afore; and consequently, the study will try to distinguish and suggest a reading of the agenda of the magic real expression with regards to its relation to the cultural and historical context.

2. MAGIC REALISM: A FILMIC GENRE?

In her article *Genre*, Sarah Berry Flint's first quotation is from *Aesthetic* by Benedetto Croce, which is about the arrangement of the books in a library with regards to the arbitrariness of this arrangement, as well as to the practical utility of the act (Stam, 2000, p.25). It is unquestionable for cinema as well, regarding us as cavemen in postmodern condition; no matter how the owner of the text issued rejects any label within any context, now, the text is out of his/her hands, so, inevitably, the text reads the reader, as a consequence of the mere disposition of history that has been stowing a heap of 'broken images'. Nevertheless, no matter how far the images are splattered around, deconstructed and diffused in their nature, and insulated from confines; still, to some extent a structural approach is needed in order to classify them for the sake of practical utility whomever the act concerns.

In practical terms with respect to genre, as Berry-Flint suggests, "genres are vehicles for the circulation of films in industrial, critical, and popular discourses. As the culture industries rapidly expand their global reach, questions of the cross-cultural circulation of genres become increasingly central to an understanding of how cinematic meaning is constructed and 'translated' "(Miller, 2004, p.27). This is a pragmatic use of genre along with a deficiency with regards to the methodological aspects towards a concrete definition in the discourse of any given film, since this particular use is regardless of the extended phases of encoding process in terms of meaning.

Once the meaning is the case, the problem of a substantial definition for genre becomes subtler than ever stemming from the wisp of its existence; as Robert Stam argues the recurrent dubiousness of a solid genre theory,

> Are genres 'out there' in the world, or are they merely the constructions of analysts? Is there a finite taxonomy of genres or are they in principle infinite? Are genres timeless Platonic essences or ephemeral, time-bound entities? Are genres culture-bound or transcultural? Does the term 'melodrama' have the same meaning in Britain, France, Egypt, and Mexico? Should genre analysis be descriptive or prescriptive? (Stam, 2000, p.14)

Sarah Berry-Flint notices the same problematic also, stressing the interdependent relationship between industry, audience, and text (film), and marking only one of which is taken into account in most of the genre studies. Furthermore, she denotes that the generic meaning cannot be attained within a study of a single film; instead, the analysis is to be done intertextually, "Genre studies set out to define and codify such intertextual fields, and thereby create their own objects rather than simply discovering them. Certain formal or narrative patterns are seen as paradigmatic and thus serve, as Derrida suggests, to demarcate sameness and difference" (Miller, 2004, p.27).

One step further, leaving aside the problematic of a comprehensive method applicable for a consistent classification of genres, a text based approach of classification has to be moved on. Still, any treatise that would be applied solely on the texts themselves lacks a profound grasp on the issue of genre classification; namely, detached from one of its fundamental dynamics will induce this study in prosaicness, as Steve Neale points out that genres are not only self-existing notions, but, as an offset of reception, they co-exist with receivers, are integrated with,

> specific systems of expectation and hypothesis that spectators bring with them to the cinema and that interact with films themselves during the course of the viewing process. These systems provide spectators with a means of recognition and understanding. They help render films, and the elements within them, intelligible therefore explicable. They offer a way of working out the significance of what is happening on the screen… (Miller, 2004, p.158)

Instantly, the statement drags us to the notion 'verisimilitude' which Neale refers as plausibility, motivation, justification, and belief; or simply, 'probable' or 'likely'. Genres contain regimes of verisimilitude that are peculiar or distinctive to each, due to rules, norms, and laws they embody. Besides, according to Tzevetan Todorov, there are two main types of verisimilitude cumulated under the titles of 'rules of genre', which refers to generic verisimilitude, and 'public opinion' referring to a social or cultural verisimilitude. With regards to the former one, he states, "it designates the work's relation to literary discourse: more exactly, to certain of the latter's subdivisions, which form a genre," and for the latter he remarks its bonds with reality in accordance with Aristotle's ideas who, "perceived that the verisimilar is not a relation between discourse and its referent (the relation of truth), but between discourse and what readers believe is true… The latter is of

course not 'reality' but merely a further discourse, independent of the work." (Todorov, 1975, p.58)

At this point, regarding the films presented for treatise, another problem seems apparent; in accordance with the process of classification of the given texts, the structure in frame of generic form is incompatible with classic genres even though it carries some traits belonging drama and adventure, which are also knotty in themselves; since, contrary to formalism, the structuralist approach refuses to set the concrete against the abstract and to ascribe greater significance to the latter. While form is defined by opposition to content, an entity in its own right, but structure has no distinct content: "it is content itself, and the logical organization in which it is arrested is conceived as property of the real"(Propp, 1984, p.167). Thus the generic verisimilitude emerges as boundless, yet to be represented by former examples. Hence, in order for relegation, initially an intertextual assortment is needed. But, in terms of genre there is no mold of verisimilitude the texts (films) to be analyzed ultimately suits in.

Consequently, the application of a genre classification in great extent is useless when assuming identification any affiliation of existing models. A horror film might be set on two lovers conflicts, use conflicts those are peculiar to melodramas. How should we define the hybrid *Old Boy* by Chan-Wook Park? Is it an ancient Greek tragedy resembling *Oedipus The King*, *Antigone*, *Medea*? Or is it a heist-road movie like *Jason and the Argonauts* in which the hero discovers the reality about himself while aiming for an irrelevant truth? Or a thriller in which an ordinary guy confronts extraordinary events? However, the fact that all these generic aspects are laid on the audience's appreciation and reception of the film, which are contiguous and discernable, whichever any given film involves in generic information as it is mentioned beforehand.

As a result, there are too many ways to define a given text in frame of a genre, which are usually discrepant to each other and temporal. In terms of magic realism it is even harder to go for an assortment, since there is no clear definition in between fields of art comprising a whole understanding but only the general considerations those refer this peculiar narrative in limitation of its usage as a medium. We might see many examples of magic realism in classified genres as an aesthetic style or narrative medium but not as a

solid genre. It has no clear boundaries, which are specific to dynamics of genre. Whether the text is character or plot driven, especially, film requires a coherent unity of its narrative devices. This is the reason why genre theories posses a tendency towards hybridization; if any given audience goes for a film in knowledge of the limitations of the genre, the expectation of the audience is to be towards plot twists or progress those are nurtured with the elements or traits of other genres, that, in a way, means breaking the molds of generic process that is peculiar to that particular genre, otherwise, the result is carried by the label, being a typical example of the genre inducing the text to be cliché. Genres are supposed to be developing in order to attain filmic authenticity.

3. MAGIC REALISM: A STYLE OF EXPRESSION IN FILM

"The modern spectator has been too long accustomed to interpreting the visual sign, and to working out why each image is there, to be able to appreciate the simple reality of those images."

Eric Rohmer

3.1 DEFAMILIARIZATION AND RE-FAMILIARIZATION

Is there any way to comprehend anything in a work of art delimited in the simple reality of its patterns without regarding its relation to encoding and decoding process? Besides the importance of the role of the audience, the form and devices used in creation of the artistic text is of significance, but not the content comprised in that much, in which case the usage of style is regardless of the domination of any specific genre since it doesn't deal with the content involved, but with the expression imposed on the content. Here I want to draw a circle concerning the ideas of three art critics, V.Shlovsky, F. Roh and R. Scholes with regards to magic realist **attitude** towards expression.

For Shklovsky, a phase of *defamiliarization* is needed in a work of art, since perception of the text becomes habitual and automatic. According to him, one of the most important functions of art is to shock us, so to speak, so that we no longer are victims of habit. Works of art help us to recover excitement about life and to see familiar things in new ways.

> Art exists to help us recover the sensation of life; it exists to make us feel things, to make the stone *stony*. The end of art is to give a sensation of the object as seen, not as recognized. The technique of art is to make things 'unfamiliar', to make forms obscure, so as to increase the difficulty and the duration of perception. The act of perception in art is an end in itself and must be prolonged. *In art, it is our experience of the process of construction that counts, not the final product.* (Berger, 1995, p.34)

This approach is very close to what F. Roh ponders upon the definition of magic realism as opposed to expressionism. Objects that had been lost to abstraction were now being recuperated by the magic realists; the world was being made newly available to the senses of the beholder, a formulation that, echoing Shklovsky. For Roh, then, the essence of magical realism was to be found in its objects. Magic realism,

> offers us the miracle of existence in its imperturbable duration: the unending miracle of eternally mobile and vibrating molecules. Out of that flux, the constant appearance and disappearance of material, permanent objects somehow

appear: in short, the marvel by which a variable commotion crystallizes into a clear set of constants. This miracle of an apparent persistence and duration in the midst of a demoniacal flux, this enigma of total quietude in the midst of general becoming, of universal dissolution… (Hart, 2005, p.32)

This is what magic realism admires and highlights.

And for Scholes, the techniques of defamiliarization themselves have become nothing but conventions. Whether they are applied on the means of narrative devices such as point of view, tone, plot and montage, apparently, they become conventions, although they were initially the tools for creating defamiliarization (Berger, 1995, p.35). This is a circle, a vicious circle magic realist expression revolves around within frame of aesthetics: around *familiarization*, *defamiliarization*, and, *re-familiarization*. In general, it can be said that by magic real a *rediscovery* of the essence or the origins of the things or causes of the occurrences is tried to be achieved, significantly from an ontological perspective.

3.2 REFRAMING THE MAGIC REAL: UNCANNY AND MARVELOUS

Before moving on to films, I suggest a Todorovian reading of what is referred as magic real in a perspective that is to be established on the medium of film. In order to achieve a clear definition of the term, we need to clarify what is conceived as *fantastic* for, of which Todorov sees magic realism as its subgenre or a stylistic approach that carries the traits stemming from this literary genre.

According to Todorov, *fantastic* is the "occurrence of an event that cannot be explained by the laws of the world which we are familiar" (Hart, 2005, p.206). He goes further on the definition, nominating the term *fantastic-étrange(fantastic-uncanny)* for the events that the reader (in our case, the audience) of the text, at first, regards them as the expression of the supernatural, yet, eventually they turn out to possess a rational explanation. And subsequently he suggests the term, *fantastic marveilleux(fantastic-marvellous)* for the events or situations that are left not clarified, and consequently, the occurrences are presented to the apprehension of the audience for assuming them as they are not governed by the laws of nature (Todorov, 1975, pp.46-62).

At this point, the fantastic is to be evaluated as the *process*, and either the uncanny or marvelous as the *product* or the *result* of the occurrences in the given texts. Initially, the boundary line of the fantastic is drawn by the experience of uncertainty and hesitation of the receiver. It is the duration of the hesitation that forms the fantastic. When the reader of the text distinguishes the nature of the process in frame of fantastic, it leaves its place for the uncanny or marvelous, which is to be regarded as magic real. Henceforth, as S. Hart points out, it requires a decision to be made by the character(s) of the text exposed to such occurrences or by the audience, or both, which leads them to conceive the events as either *marvelous* (referring to aspects of supernatural), or *uncanny* (referring to delusion, can be 'merely a trick of the mind or of perception' (Hart, 2005, p.229).

In extend, we will see with the examples how, with regards to uncanny and marvelous, the magic real expression is substantiated through a constant state of transformation resulting from hesitation and suspension of possibilities by means of unstable notions visualized in films of Park Chan-wook and Bong Joon-ho. But before, some filmic devices that

construct the narrative are to be explained in order to highlight how these two directors employ them giving way to magic realist expression.

3.3 IDENTIFYING THE DEVICES

Film is not often considered as magic(al) realist in criticism and neither magic realism nor magical realism are recognized categories of film. However, it is possible to recognize features of both magic realism and magical realism in many films (Bowers, 2004, p.104).

To theorists of culture, the term and the phenomenon it denotes have proven vexingly impossible to pin down, whether in its politics or aesthetics. Magic can mean anything that defies empiricism, including religious beliefs, superstitions, myths, legends, voodoo, or simply what Todorov terms the 'uncanny' and 'marvelous' fantastic (Hart, 2005, p.14). And in the territory of film meaning audio-visual text, the uncanny is identified through the usage of devices of representations and filmic medium.

So, there are many approaches asserting magic realism as a style of expression in film, ranging from the look of the shots to editing style. Close-ups on objects, which might indicate a magic realist interest in the qualities of the object (the increased objectivity), might simply

be a part of a montage of shots combined to create the story. In order to clarify the effects of the usage of the magic realist expression on film, it is better to highlight some particular terms

Picture 3.1. Still image from *Pleasantville* **(1998), TV series directed by G. Ross.**
Source: IMDB

related to audio-visual structure of the subject, which I will touch on how they become means of the emergence of the uncanny in the addressed films later.

3.3.1 Diegesis

Diegesis(narrative world) plays an important role at this point, which helps audience distinguish between the world a text has created and any additional non-diegetic features.

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In order to separate diegetic from non-diegetic, we should take into consideration what the characters in the narrative are able to conceive with regards to seeing or hearing in audio-visual text as well as with what the audience perceives. Generally, diegetic patterns of a given text can only be understood by characters, but not the non-diegetic materials, which are offered only to perception of the audience. "The diegetic world will be created by the particular conventions of a form, medium or genre. Diegetic coherency is important because if there are discontinuities within the text, audience may not 'believe' in the world that is being offered" (Lacey, 2000, p.20). Yet, in the territory of the magic realist style, the transgression between diegetic and non-diegetic is open to play on the perception of the text by the audience. More than stimulating a point of incredibility, it induces suspense both in the narrative tone and the plot progress. It creates gaps in distinguishing what the characters are able see or hear on the perception of the audience. By making this, it deliberately refers to an inquiry on the narrative form of the text, which is now self presuming, and able to distort dynamics of verisimilitude through the emergence of uncanny.

Diegesis is also related to the narrator of the text using voice over, which can be a dramatised, first person or point of view narrator third person reflector; or an undramatised, observer narrator.

3.3.2 Temporality

Other than diegesis, the usage of temporal order, duration and frequency is important in identifying the style. Bordwell and Thompson denote that "in constructing the [text's] story out of its plot, the [audience] tries to put events in chronological *order* and to assign them some *duration* and *frequency*" (Lacey, 2000, p.20).

Temporal order refers to the chronological order of the events in a given text within frame of the plot. It is directly related to plot progress.

Temporal duration is related to three types of duration, which are plot, story and screen duration, described by Bordwell and Thompson. Plot duration is recognized as the time covered by the plot. Story duration refers to the amount of time covered by the story which

may not be referred in the plot. And finally, the screen duration refers to the amount of time the film is displayed at once.

Accordingly, **temporal frequency** encounters with the sequences of time passage during plot progress (Lacey, 2000, p.22).

In the addressed texts we will see how they're arranged in a manner of consolidating magic realist aspects to be affectively disclosed, specifically with regards to temporal order and frequency. Other than these patterns constructing the filmic narrative, *editing¸ use of color (color grading), tone,* and devices comprising the *shot* will be put into inquiry through their magic real aspects and expression, as well as with the themes like representation of body, violence that are gathered under the title and consolidating an apprehension of *nostalgia*.

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4. TRACES OF UNCANNY AND MARVELOUS IN THE FILMS OF PARK CHAN-WOOK & BONG JOON-HO

Mother, directed by Bong, commences with a lady coming of old age, appearing in the middle of an isolated rye field. After a while she starts dancing along with a non-diegetic music, yet her figures come out as unbalanced and baffling as if she were dancing for the first time in her life. There is this hysterical posture in her figures, indecisiveness in her mood that it exerts difficulty in figuring out the tone of the mise en scéne. In this first scene being as the audience we know nothing more than her conventional look; the motivation for her dance is left unclear. The only thing depicted explicitly is the unstable and novice dance of the lady, who addresses to the camera directly. This is the first step of the initiation of the magic real element in the film. Now, the narrative of the film is dominated by the woman, occurrence of which indicates that the identification is to come along with this peculiar character, the mother whose name is not given throughout the film; and the *marvelous* is to be carried out in the matter-of-fact *narrative tone* of the film.

Another film by Bong, *Shaking Tokyo*, starts with the short shots that stress a strong sense of symmetry. The first thing we see is the wall which is decorated with the small checkered tiles, and a roll that is left over from the used toilet paper. The strong symmetry signs us a character motivation and narration, which are based on order and simplicity. A man's hand extends to the roll of the toilet paper, presses its relatively sharp edge to his other palm, and questions in voice-over narration, how long it will take the mark the roll created to disappear; which will be revealed towards the ends of the film that it will not through completing a *marvelous* expression. After this point the narrative progress of the film is dominated by this man, and almost the whole story will be told by him in voice-over narration.

I'm a Cyborg But That's Ok, directed by Park Chan-wook, begins in an electronic assembly factory that is apparently quite sterile. The female workers are so adapted to their works that they act synchronically resembling the workers in F. Lang's *Metropolis*, and do not even listen to the mounting commands being announced on the factory speakers. Yet, there is only one girl who listens to these commands. Quite rigorously, she applies all the things what the speakers say, but on herself; she performs all the installation on her own,

and once she plugs the radio that she inserted in her body in the outlet, she finds herself in asylum. So, the narrative style of the film is strictly tied on the girl's apprehension of the reality from then on, which leads to an uncertainty in distinguishing between real and uncanny or marvelous since the narrative progress integrated with a representation of a peculiar reality that stems from a mentally unbalanced character.

Another film by Park that has received the title of cult, *Old Boy*, starts with the furious voice-over narration of the protagonist Oh Dae-su, who had been imprisoned for fifteen years in an unknown place… In most of the films by Park and Bong, it is noticeable in the narratives that there are specific aspects which create magic real expression by means of the filmic devices used. But first, in the narratives of these directors, in order to determine what the magic real elements **serve** in the texts thoroughly, and to be able to read the subtexts of the uncanny or marvelous occurrences along with themes that come forward, it is necessary to explicate the audio-visual devices that give way to magic real expression; and in this way, an analysis is suggested from micro to macro comprising magic real components imposed such as in story, character, plot, symbols and themes. Hence, as the first phase of the analysis, the filmic devices used by Bong and Park exposing magic real expression are put into inquiry, as well as with the usage of diegesis and temporality.

Picture 4.1: Opening sequence of *Mother*
Source: *Mother* (2009), DVD

Picture 4.2: *Shaking Tokyo*, hikikomori pressing the roll on his palm Source: *Tokyo!* (2008), DVD

Picture 4.3: Beginning of *I'm a Cyborg But That's Ok* Source: *I'm a Cyborg But That's Ok* (2006),

4.1. DEVICES OF THE MAGIC REAL EXPRESSION

Initially, the narrative worlds created in the films of Bong and Park appear to be covered by laws of nature that we are accustomed to as the audience. However, it is disclosed to be not that simple once we begin to identify with the characters and explore them in depth. Because, most of the time the films are dominated by the subjective narratives of the main characters, and significantly by the voice-over narration from a dramatized narrator that is shifty and split, expanded over the whole text. By meaning the narration style throughout diegesis, it is the one of the important points that induces in the emanation of the magic real expression. The narration style, which, from time to time, narrows down to subjective representations of the characters, actually becomes prominent in characterizations that we are accustomed to; that, it drags the two fundamental elements, curiosity and concern to another phase that maintain the identification of the audience with the characters. At this very point the magic real expression arises as uncanny or marvelous, in two layers, because, the films given play with the interrelation between diegetic and non-diegetic in a manner of magic realist approach. Like what Salman Rushdie presumes for magic realist works, the magic realist style in these particular films leads to, "the commingling of the improbable and the mundane"(Bowers, 2004, p.9), and obscures the place of the mise en scéne in the plot progress of the films.

 Still, this ambiguity, instead of impeding the audience to identify with the characters in a manner of Brechtian alienation and compelling the credibility of the text, tries to show something else by hiding and palpitating behind the represented reality and laws of nature like what Todorov assumes as given beforehand. Like it appears as such in the first scene of *Mother*; in the middle of a deserted field, the hysterical, or maybe, trance like dance of the woman addressing to the camera indicates such a thing. Along with a non-diegetic music, the descending and rising camera movements support to exalt this magic real expression in this particular mise en scéne. In addition, considering the film entirely, this peculiar scene involving solely the dance of the woman has no important place either in the plot, or in the back story. The scene's meaning is suspended until the end of the film, and it remains ambiguous when it ends; because, we see an alternative scene that replaces this particular scene, which suits best in with regards to a logical plot progress. At this point the

important thing is that, the realities of the two incompatible worlds (the represented reality of the film in accordance with the laws of nature, and the protagonist's perception of reality) integrates with each other without dissociating, but with contrasts. In Todorov's terms, this is a typical occurrence of the marvelous; a magic real occurrence that has no place in the plot progress and no explanation given until the end of the film.

4.1.1 Narration Technique

Narrating the story by means of a dramatized-first person narrator along with voice-over is another factor in the emergence of the magic real expression that Bong and Park apply to their films. Generally, the filmic narrative is imposed on the narrators, and the represented reality is delimited to the perception of their worldview. In *Shaking Tokyo*, the narrator is a recluse, in Japanese culture called as 'hikikomori' who has never get out of his house for eleven years. The boundaries of the film's plot are directly related to the physical limits of the space he lives in. In *Old Boy*, the narrator is a man who had been imprisoned and now, vows for revenge. In *Sympathy for Lady Vengeance*, the story begins with a non-dramatized-observer narrator who subsequently turns out a dramatized narrator. Usually, Bong and Park prefer character driven narratives. Yet, in these films which are led primarily by the voice-over narration, the non-diegetic elements are observable to find correspondence by the diegetic elements. In this case, this peculiar narration leads to the statement of the uncanny in the particular mise en scéne. Because, these narrators, from time to time, confuse the boundaries of the probable with the improbable. The **unreliability** of the narrators creates the magic real expression and provokes questioning of the reality represented by them, because, the dramatized narrator brings a constrained point of view that refers to represented world of film. For example, we follow the narration of the Oh Dae-su in *Old Boy* until the second plot point of the film where the narration is taken by the antagonist revealing another truth about the protagonist's past. Once the narration manages to possess identification over the audience, it also encloses the audience in the narrator's perception of the diegesis. For this reason, questioning the credibility of an occurrence going back and forth in between the reality and improbable (like the physically aging portrait of a man in Oh Dae-su's cell) is of secondary importance; however plot progress at this stage comes into prominence. Specifically at the beginning of the film, Oh Dae-su's voice-over narration receives diegetic correspondences. At this point, the

narrative voice and the ambiguous diegesis constitute a significant place in forming the magic real expression.

As mentioned beforehand, Park and Bong, if not narration goes through voice-over narrators, intend a subjective narrative that is concentrated on certain characters. Herein, it is noticeable in these characters that have the weight in narration and are presented for the identification, that they are flawed in terms of detecting the nature of reality. The protagonist of *Mother* is a kind of person, who is a herbalist, an illegitimate acupuncturer, and deeply obsessed with her son. And her son, Do-joon is a mentally disabled adolescent having short-term memory loss, over who the focus of the narrative transferred at some stages of the plot. In *Shaking Tokyo*, the protagonist's only link to the outer world is an old round-dial telephone, which he solely uses for giving meal orders. For eleven years, he hasn't even got an eye contact with anyone. The relationship of this man to the world who doesn't even watch TV, is limited to the physical space he lives in and the stacked old books he reads. Similarly in *Old Boy*, Oh Dae-su had been imprisoned for fifteen years, and become addicted to TV from which he followed what was going on in the world. For this reason, the mere device that have him perceive the reality is the TV in his cell which everything he sees on he regards as true and real. In *I'm a Cyborg But That's Ok,* the representation of the real is filtered and projected through the perception of the mentally ill characters. Henceforth, it is subjected to inquiry whether the characters are actually mentally ill or not; since, the means of identification are presented over these characters' perception of reality or laws of nature. In all these narratives, magic real expression containing uncanny and marvelous leads to vagueness, so to suspense in the evaluation of reality in transposition of the represented world, that the represented reality is subjected to question; and that comes along with unreliable narrator and characters.

4.1.2. Temporality: Editing & Frequency of the flashbacks

Another factor that magic real expression comes into being is the usage of temporality in these narratives. Although Park and Bong follow linear temporal order, both directors employ sudden use of flashbacks and brief irrelevant shots splitting the plot progress in the parts of character revelations with regards to temporal frequency. Since these dissociations

don't have an eminent place in plot progress and they refer to the back story, they lead to suspense in the narrative of the given film and constitute magic real occurrence.

Besides its first scene, in *Mother*, we see short and dream like reminiscences all of a sudden, which is left unclear to whom they belong. It is ambiguous whether they are the hallucinations that any character sees, a factual moment occurred in the past, or a dream sawn in a sleep. However, they are the revelations, which sign the course or direction of the plot can change within a short while. The ambiguity of these short plans is reflected on the mother's confrontation of the reality of her past while she toils for the acquittal of her son who is convicted as the murderer. While the mother is in the pursuit of the real criminal who is responsible for the murder, Bong uses magic real expression by changing the direction of the subjectivity. With regards to temporal frequency, for a short while we follow the narration of the physical space where the crime is committed as a summary of a long time including the moment of the murder, instead of following the mother's perspective that the narration is dependent on most of the time. We don't always see what the woman see, but we see, demonstrated in marvelous occurrence, what she is not able to, by means of the gaze of the space. Bong shows us the stalking and seeking woman at the outside from the inside of the space. We see her from the blurry window of the ruined house deceptively seeming like forsaken. This shot ceases the narration of the woman along with the reality she represents and suspends her credibility for a short term. In which point, the narration slides over the eye of the crime space departing from the perception of the woman, and questions what the space gazes through. This is one of the marvelous occurrences in the film; towards the end, the reality hits the surface. It's her son who committed the crime, although he is discharged from his guilt.

It is also observable in Park's narratives that he uses magic real expression where the temporal frequency shows alterations. In *Old Boy*, throughout the plot progress, characters like Mi-do and Woo-jin find voice in flashbacks and dreams regarding drive and motivation of the characters. While Oh Dae-su tries to remember his past, he and his youth appears in the same shot, as both searching for the same thing but from different perspectives. In *I'm a Cyborg But That's Ok*, the hallucinations and dreams of the protagonist Young-goon are commixed with facts of the past, and drag the represented reality to the perception of the uncanny.

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Picture 4.4: Aging picture in Oh Dae-su's cell, *Oldboy*
Source: *Oldboy* **(2003), DVD**
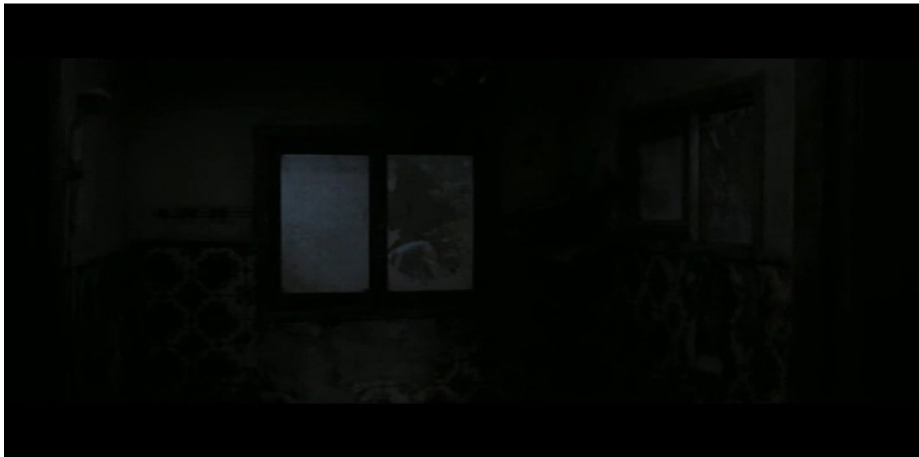
Picture 4.5: *Mother***, crime space and the mother searching outside.**
Source: *Mother* **(2009), DVD**

Picture 4.6: Contrast usage in *Shaking Tokyo*
Source: *Tokyo!* **(2008), DVD**

4.1.3. Tonal Separation & Use of Color

Besides these, there are other devices that sustain expression of magic real within diegesis and temporality. In *Lady Vengeance*, the usage of color becomes significant. Initially, the film is loyal to the representation of the real color use, however, towards the end when the conflicts of the film commence to resolve, the contrast increases and the tonal separation becomes distinct, the color grades towards desaturation , and tint in colors decreases to a point in which even blood is seen as a black fluid. In *Shaking Tokyo*, there is a vast amount of contrast and tonal separation between daylight and shades. The space where the daylight hits is too bright that it doesn't even allow a single thing to be seen in it. It is also given through the protagonist's voice-over narration as well as through visuals; he follows the movement of the light over shades. In *Thirst*, after Sang-hyun and Tae-ju murder Kang-woo, the marvelous becomes the language of the nightmares; these two characters carry the wetness of drowned Kang-woo on their bodies. And also, now Kang-woo is in physical contact with them in anywhere; he tortures them until the climax where Tae-ju repents for her crime blaming Sang-hyun. However, it is not clearly given whether appearance of Kang-woo is a nightmare jumped out of their subconscious as a Freudian reading of the return of the repressed, or he is a real ghost seeking for revenge; under the reign of the magic real expression the occurrence is merely ambiguous.

Picture 4.7: *Lady Vengeance***, colors & tonal seperation, in the beginning and end of the film**
Source: *Lady Vengeance* **(2005), DVD**

4.1.4. Visual Effects

Both of the directors, instead of long and extremely close-up shots of the subjects, give weight to the use of visual effects in creating magic real patterns or expression. Specifically, the exhibition of the shots accompanied by visual effects delivers the relationship between the representation of the laws of nature and the characters' delusional perception of the reality in juxtaposition of the two worlds, which embodies oxymoron. Particularly, there are numerous examples of magic real expression that are constituted by means of visual effects. In *I'm a Cyborg but That's Ok*, diagnosed as being anti-social, Park-Il-soon shrinks to a little body, every time he feels inferiority complex and if he doesn't brush his teeth; Young-goon who assumes herself as a cyborg, has a battery indicator on her toes, which shows the state of charge in colors, who also has vowed to take revenge of her grandmother from the hospital doctors since she thinks they abducted her, so when she gathers her power, she tries to kill them by transforming into a cyborg which is armored from top to bottom… all these imagery emerges in between the discrepancy of the two realities depicted. These are the indications of the uncanny occurrences in the film. Even though the characters are driven by these delusions and presume their abilities or flaws as such, still, in the progressing shots it is revealed that the occurrences are merely the trick of the patients' mind, then everything goes back to normal to the point where the narration is suspended by these uncanny occurrences.

If we scrutinize closely, we see that Bong's narrative embodies the marvelous occurrences most of the time in the expression of the magic real, whereas in Park's, it is usually the uncanny occurrences expressed thoroughly. By uncanny, Park remarks the hallucinations and the fantasies of the characters. Geum-Ja in *Sympathy for Lady Vengeance* contemplates on the revenge she will take from the real murderer, Mr. Baek; she imagines the climax of her pay-back, depicting Baek in the form of a half human-half dog. In *Old Boy*, Mi-do and Oh Dae-su are haunted by the appearances of the ants in different forms. During his imprisonment in a hysteria crisis, ants start to flow out of the vein in his arm and spread all over his body. Mi-do explains this occurrence with the things she saw when she felt lonely; she too saw ants which were anthropomorphized in the size of human body. Whereas, in Bong's films, the boundaries of the magic real transcend beyond what the filmic narrative is able to explain. Whether the pizza girl is operated by the buttons she has

drawn her body, or there are robots working in the outside now recruited in the place of the humans, are some of the marvelous elements that are left unclear in *Shaking Tokyo*.

In brief, we have seen the filmic devices that give way to the magic real expression in films of Park and Bong within the distinctions between uncanny and marvelous occurrences. In the next chapter, I will analyze the subtexts referred in the occurrences of the marvelous and uncanny under the theme of nostalgia.

Picture 4.8: *I'm a Cyborg But That's Ok***, Young-goon seeking revenge, and her battery indicator**
Source: *I'm a Cyborg But That's Ok* **(2006), DVD**

Picture 4.9: Oh Dae-su and Mi-do seeing ants when they feel lonely
Source: *Oldboy* **(2003), DVD**

4.2. OCCURRENCE OF THE MAGIC REAL WITH RESPECT TO NOSTALGIA

Until this part, we have seen the clues in which cases magic real expression comes into being in films of Park and Bong. Further, it is suggestible that the occurrences of magic real patterns created in the given films resemble the narratives of anti-real. However, unlike surrealism or other anti-realist narratives, the expression or style consisting patterns of magic real does not place real as opposed to its own narration; more, it represents real and anti-real as a mixture of the two, and juxtaposes them in the manner of oxymoron by conjoining two contradictory occurrences, which constructs and fosters a narrative ambiguity where this peculiar expression appears. So, it is noticeable to say that the ambiguity emerges as a result of the integration of two worlds, of the mixture of a rational and an irrational perspective. In the case of Park and Bong's narratives this conjunction is comprised by physical appearances and represented bodily traits of the characters. Magic real is expressed in the desire of the characters for change, but particularly a physical alteration referring a desire for the past; they stride in the fields of nostalgia. In these directors' films, the characters are given as they have already changed, or they are confronted to change who will long for their previous emanation soon in plot progress. This is consolidated by marvelous and uncanny in order to disrupt and suspend the fixated apprehension of truth, reality and history.

Remarkably, in films of Park and Bong, the arousal of magic real refers back to history, to the backgrounds or back stories of the characters that the filmic plot is based on. Where the blend of the rational and uncanny or marvelous together, the magic real expression allows the representation of a past occurrence emerging in ambiguity, instability of the truth. That is directly related to what Salman Rushdie puts forward in his essay *Imaginary Homelands*, "History is always ambiguous. Facts are hard to establish, capable of being given many meanings. Reality is built on prejudices, misconception and ignorance as well as on our perspective and knowledge" (Bowers, 2005, p.78). That is the same for the narratives of Park and Bong in frame of at which point magic real occurs in terms of drive of the characters. There is always this search for an essence, a simple understanding for the real and the truth, which, in nature, is not capable of seeing panoptically, and proving the past to be accurate and factual. In these directors' narratives, the magic real occurrences originate from the beliefs of the characters' own cultural context. Both offer a deliberately

disturbing and distorted view of what is real, which is operated through the involvement of nostalgia.

Like it happens in *Mother* as such; the marvelous reminiscences of the past, which being as the audience we don't know who they belong to, but only hinted through the use of the subjective camera angles. They are embodied as the remains of past traumas, and as a desire for returning back to the actual moment when they occur, in order rectify or ultimately forget the mistakes done. Like the mother; from the very short flashbacks, we learn that she tried to kill her son due to lack of subsistence by having made him drink insect poison, which she couldn't manage, thus, her son Do-joon has become mentally ill and incapable. So at the end, since she is not able to make him forget her sin, she decides to forget this trauma and forgive herself by pinning her leg with an acupuncture needle.

Within a nostalgic perspective, Do-Joon represents the interstitial generation between the past and the present generations. He is condemned to forget and barely remember the past, also he doesn't belong to the present, agitates as a misfit in the present. That is the reason why he is demented. Hence, he is discontinuous and inconsistent in prevailing over the values of both past and present. And that's why the ruin of the old conventional Korean house has witnessed the murder committed by him. By this occurrence, it is suggested that history may refer to facts, but it has lost its power to reign over justice; it may just make us some observation but not make the facts become as a solid reality or truth, thus, it is mystified and only carries a mystifactory value through a nostalgic point of view as F. Jameson puts forward in terms of magic realist tendency (Jameson, 1992, p.180). Consequently, Do-joon is neither innocent nor guilty. He is replaced by another mentally demented youngster for the conviction of the crime, who accepted the guilt although he didn't commit it.

 In this respect, the dance of the woman in the first scene attains meaning. Accordingly, the woman yields to the flow of time along with the loss of merits, cultural and national values, thus she determines to forget the past by means of conjugating two contradictory perspectives, of past and present. In the last scene, with a use of traditional motif, she pins down an acupuncture needle to a point on her leg which she believes that will make her forget about grim reminiscences of the past while she is leaving the town in a tour bus full

of old people. Eventually, she starts to dance gleefully among other passengers. This, preparing herself in a traditional way to forgetfulness and indifference is made possible by the integration of two realities, by the nature of magic real expression; and henceforth, we don't actually know whether she manages to forget or not.

The girl killed by Do-Joon represents a generation in contrast to the mother, who is doomed to become an object of desire among her generation. In toil for keeping touch with the contemporary, she is dragged to depression, one of the main reasons of which is her cell phone. Both literally and figuratively, she has encapsulated the bodies of the men she had intercourse with. She took the images of them, subjected them to reification, and made the time she passed with them as her possession. Yet, sleeping with almost all of the young men in the town, she saw no end to this and found herself in desire of getting rid all of her possession including her own body. She conceived the impossibility of being innocent again once she was.

Further, in the context of the theme, loss of innocence, the desaturation of colors throughout *Sympathy for Lady Vengeance* symbolizes that there is no compensation to be paid for the price of innocence, even though the real convict is revealed; there is no way for the repentance of Geum-ja. The film turns out as colorless because the truth presented is not stable enough to carry out justice along with the ambiguous facts of the past. That's why in the end she digs her head in the 'tofu' that is extended by her daughter as a symbol of innocence despite the fact that she has expiated, paid the price for her crime. In the very last scene, along with a marvelous expression, the ghost of the boy she participated in murder appears as an adolescent; that signifies and refers to the impossibility of getting along with the past in callousness. There is no ultimate acquittal, she has to carry this burden in her all life. Yet, within this nostalgic perspective, it is not clear if she settled with the grim occurrences of her past. Along with the magic real occurrences like the appearance of the ghost of the murdered child, the authority of Geum-ja's narration is suspended by the expression of the unpresentable.

With regards to unreliable narrator or characters, in the narratives of these directors, many time magic real emerges with references to irrational or supernatural occurrences; the marvelous or uncanny elements are encompassed through the plot-driven story line along

with the everyday realities seen by the perspective of the round and shifty characters; that in which case the retrospective narrator plays an important role.

In *OldBoy*, the voice-over narration of Oh Dae-su concentrates on the context of his early imprisonment and his youth in the plot progress. He accepts a narrow version of truth, sees no reason for his captivity in a self righteous manner. He so longs for a revenge to be taken by who captured him that he accepts no version of truth other than his own. Yet, this is overturned by the revelations from his enemy Woo-jin, which results in catastrophe. Significantly, as the audience we follow a version of truth that is distorted by the traumas of the past.

Whether in voice-over narration or in the plot that is driven by and dependent on the perspective of the characters, magic real elements originate from the distortion of the truth through the consequences of traumas and violent acts of the past. Accordingly, the rejection of an absolute truth is substantiated through the use of marvelous or uncanny occurrences by the perspective of unreliable narrators and unreliable characters. It is for the audience to determine whether or not to trust the narration and to judge the credibility of their perspectives, since they give their own account of the past by ignoring the gloomy events, which also acts in narration as historical mystificatory value. In the end, Oh Dae-su splits into two physically in a session of hypnosis, but which one is the monster that embodies the grim occurrences of the past is not revealed.

Another unreliable narrator appears in *Shaking Tokyo*, the recluse never explains the reason why he has become an hikokomori and why he cannot get in his father's room in his limited space. The room smells like his father, so he cannot get in. Symbolically, the father's room signifies a nostaligc motif of authority and power which is lost but still keeps its ghostly existence. So the ambiguous earthquakes in meaning symbolize a shattering point on this deprivation along with the appearance of the buttoned pizza girl who he has his first eye contact with for eleven years.

The pizza girl delivers a desire for bodily perfection, because, within a marvelous representation, other than the rest of the people she operates through the buttons she has drawn on her body, which refer to the desire for simplicity in social order. So, she represents a type of woman who is solely dependent on the buttons of commands placed on

her body. That also signifies a simpler regime which the recluse wants to cover his life. The reign of the father's elusive existence is now replaced by the penetration of this peculiar girl, and then physical contact is made possible in between. Accordingly, the earthquakes come into being, they coincide in the moments when he confronts with the girl as well as with physical contacts; yet, it is left unclear whether the result will be disastrous or a well ending. The only thing we know is that he can make her love him by pressing on the 'love button' on her arm.

Similar to Oh Dae-su, Sang-hyun and Tae-ju desire for a memory which is adapted in simplicity to the ignorance of bodily sins in *Thirst*. The ethical dilemmas presented in the characterization of a priest, Sang-hyun, who is initially the symbol of humanism, and subsequently turns out an exploiter by drinking the blood of others. So there are many motifs given in the film emphasizing the relation between the sin and redemption along with magic real expression occurring in theme of nostalgia.

Picture 4. 10: *Thirst*, **murdered Kang-woo in bed between Sang-hyun and Tae-ju**
Source: *Thirst* **(2009), DVD**

If we pay attention to the spatial context of *Thirst*, we will see a mixture of the simple and compound elements used either in spatial design or on the dress of the characters, which stresses on theme of physical and psychological incarnation. They are culturally contradictory elements entangled within each such as Korean traditional dresses, herbal medicines, vodka, symbols of Christianity, the scores of western classical music and old Korean pop music. These disharmonious and incompatible objects in space lead to the arousal of Tae-ju's anger and her escape with Sang-hyun, since the object and space has become irrelevant in terms of any national trait, they are decomposed and decadent. However, the space and objects transform into a marvelous appearance when Sang-hyun delivers his own power to Tae-ju.

In accordance with the production notes of *Thirst*, there are two eminent type of music used in the film consolidating theme of nostalgia in ambiguity along with the use of magic real expression. The one which Sagn-hyun plays on his recorder Bach's Cantata BWV 82, emphasizes the view of the western rationality in its lyrics. Whereas, the nostalgic song played before the murder of Kang-woo, which also symbolizes the conflicts of Tae-ju with her past, is an old Koeran pop song which represents the embracement of Korean cultural tradition and moral values; a theme that, Tae-ju is about to forsake.

5. CONCLUSION

Accordingly, by the occurrence of magic real elements in the theme of nostalgia is stressed, which is comprised by the suspension and ambiguity in the given films of Park and Bong. Fundamentally, nostalgia is represented through the accounts of the characters who disclosed memory bias on remembering of their past. Also the theme of nostalgia is substantiated by the filmic devices explained beforehand in creating uncanny and marvelous expression that are ambiguous in meaning. In these narratives, the theme of nostalgia covertly refers and addresses to a simpler perception of realty that ignores the traumas and grim occurrences of the past by blurring the distinction between the facts and imaginary. It stands as a compromise between past and present, within magic real expression as a combination of the rational and irrational. To some extent, with a look through nostalgia, the characters seek a regeneration, a contact with cultural origins, however, it turns into a nightmare since the look from nostalgia narrows down to a sick perspective and is not capable of confronting the facts of the past.

It is observable in the given films that the uncanny and marvelous require an attachment to past in order to be expressed; yet, it lacks in giving a full account of what has happened before, as previously mentioned with examples. Therefore, the perception of the real along with past is strictly tied on what the characters choose and to see as real. The nostalgia carries its meaning in the desire for past from which point the characters are far away. Yet, the impossibility of the reoccurrence and rectification is hinted through it. So, the uncanny refers to an occurrence that looks back to past, and the marvelous refers to the impossibility of a compromise between past and present. That is one of the main reasons why all the films given are open-ended except for *Thirst*, in which Sang-hyun realizes that there is no return back, so he resolves into decease with Tae-ju.

In summary, it can be said that magic real expression in films of these directors represents a rejection of an ultimate understanding of reality since the represented reality is related to the occurrences of the past, which are presented as unstable and elusive.

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APPENDIX