



## **Collaboration, Coproduction, and Code-Switching: Colonial Cinema and Postcolonial Archaeology**

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### **Abstract**

This article reassesses the issue of colonial collaboration in the Japanese empire by examining the rise of cinematic coproductions between Japanese and Korean filmmakers. By the late 1930s, colonial Korea's filmmaking industry had been fully subsumed into the Japanese film industry, and regulations were established that required all films to assimilate imperial policies. The colonial government's active promotion of colonial "collaboration" and "coproduction" between the colonizers and the colonized ideologically worked to obfuscate these increasing restrictions in colonial film productions while producing complex and contentious desires across the colonial divide. The very concepts of "collaboration" and "coproduction" need to be redefined in light of increasingly complex imperial hierarchies and entanglements. Taking the concept of "code-switching" beyond its linguistic origins, this article argues that we must reassess texts of colonial collaboration and coproduction produced at a time when Korean film had to "code-switch" into Japanese—to linguistically, culturally, and politically align itself with the wartime empire. The article argues that recently excavated films from colonial and Cold War archives, such as *Spring in the Korean Peninsula*, offer a rare glimpse into repressed and contested histories and raise the broader conundrum of accessing and assessing uneasily commingled colonial pasts of Asian-Pacific nations in the ruins of postcolonial aftermath.

This article is an inquiry into the controversial issue of colonial collaboration between Korea and Japan, and the concomitant postcolonial conundrum of accessing and assessing colonial pasts in the Asian-Pacific region. Within structural continuities from the colonial to the postcolonial eras, the region is still haunted by political impasses more than half a century after the abrupt dissolution of the Japanese empire in 1945.<sup>1</sup> The case of recently discovered transcolonial films from the former Japanese empire offers us a productive site of entry from which to consider these still hotly contested issues. Long lost in the dusty vaults of colonial and Cold War archives

(collectively referred to as “imperial archives” hereafter),<sup>2</sup> across various national and ideological divides, these films were inaccessible for decades, and film scholars had to rely primarily on available secondary sources.

By the late 1930s, filmmaking in colonial Korea was deeply subsumed into the Japanese film industry, and all films made in the colony had to pass strict regulations of assimilating imperial policies. The rise in the colonial government’s active promotion of collaboration and coproduction between colonizers and colonized during this time ideologically worked to obfuscate growing restrictions in colonial film productions while producing various and contradictory transcolonial desires. In light of increasingly complex imperial hierarchies and entanglements, the very concepts of collaboration and coproduction need to be reexamined. Taking the issue of “code-switching” beyond its linguistic origins, this article asks how to embark on the necessary and long-overdue postcolonial task of reevaluating the texts of colonial collaboration and coproduction from a time when Korean film had to code-switch into Japanese—to become linguistically, culturally, and politically in tune with the wartime empire.

### **The Possibilities and Limitations of Postcolonial Archeology**

Since 2004, the Korean Film Archive (KOFA) has released four volumes of DVDs through a series entitled “The Past Unearthed”; since then, several other films have become viewable at the archive or online.<sup>3</sup> Many of the films in these collections were produced (and consumed) in the contact zones between colonial Korea and metropolitan Japan,<sup>4</sup> and some were commissioned as literal coproductions by Japanese and Korean production companies and filmmakers. After the collapse of the Japanese empire, these films were cast aside to the margins of divided national film histories, largely absent(ed) in Japan or condemned as “pro-Japanese films” (*ch’inil yŏnghwa* 親日映画) of colonial collaboration in Korea.<sup>5</sup>

The issue of colonial collaboration in the partitioned postcolonial Koreas has become synonymous with the stigma of being “pro-Japanese” (*ch’inil* 親日). “Pro-Japanese” is a slippery term whose categorical boundaries are anything but clear, although it is often used to name and shame a traitorous stance vis-à-vis both the colonized state and, in anachronistic hindsight, the postcolonial nation. From politics and academia to popular culture, the question of reckoning with past colonial collaboration continues to surge up periodically in contemporary society.

However, contentious present politics often obscure past histories more than they illuminate them. For example, a think tank established under the Roh Moo-hyun presidency to address the issue of colonial collaboration was disbanded during the following administration. Such ongoing vicissitudes show that the postcolonial society remains divided politically regarding such contested issues.

Japan's historical reckoning with its imperial past and with its former colonial subjects (now uneasy neighbors) has long been mired in a historical amnesia exacerbated by the legacies of Cold War geopolitical entanglements.<sup>6</sup> Ironically, it is the shared experience and legacy of U.S. military occupation in postcolonial South Korea and Japan that continue to blind the two nations to their colonial pasts.<sup>7</sup> The question lingers of how to deal with the incomplete nature of postcoloniality in both societies and its triangulated challenges given such controversially shared pasts across the postcolonial divide.

### **Contested Pasts**

After invading the northern part of China in the so-called Manchurian Incident (J. *Manshū jihen*, K. *Manju sabyŏn*, 滿州事變) of 1931, Japan established the puppet state of Manchukuo in 1932; five years later, in 1937, Japan invaded China proper in an all-out war.<sup>8</sup> Colonial Korea, as a geopolitically strategic veteran colony of Japan, was being restructured as a behind-the-lines military matériel and supply base to meet the growing needs of these imperial expansions into China and beyond. An ideology of “making into imperial subjects” (*kōminka*, *hwangminhwa*, 皇民化) of Koreans actively called for the loyalty, sacrifices, and services of the colonized under the guise of cooperation for what was couched as a common goal of a shared and mutually prosperous future.

Proclaiming itself a leader among willing “fellow Asian brothers,” Japan justified its expansion into contiguous lands by citing the call to duty of all Asians to unite against Western imperialism.<sup>9</sup> For Japan's colonized subjects, caught among multiple contending empires, the rhetoric and practice of “voluntary” alignment with their colonial masters was the ironic condition under which many colonial elites in particular were lured by ideals of harmonious collaboration in supporting Japan's imperial policies against the bigger threat of the West. Japan's slogans soliciting cooperation from its colonies, such as “Harmony of Five Ethnicities”

(*gozoku kyōwa*, *ojok hyōphwa* 五族協和) and “Japan-Korea One-Body” (*Naisen ittai*, *naesŏn ilch’e* 內鮮一体), touted euphemistic images of mutuality while veiling the real violence of inequalities undergirding such imperial wartime mobilization.

However, we need to keep in mind that such slogans were not merely tools of brute coercion, nor were their ideologies followed blindly by the colonizers and the colonized alike. They may have signified very different meanings and desires for colonized subjects struggling to attain equality and self-determinacy than for imperial subjects with objectives of their own. Many colonizers and colonized either strategically or genuinely invested themselves in these imperial objectives toward fashioning new (and presumably better) futures.

The variegated shades of colonial collaborations that must have occurred in such shifting geopolitical terrains in the Asian-Pacific region can be glimpsed, albeit only in fragments, through the remnants of transcolonial films recently made available for postcolonial viewing. While this article (and this special issue of *Cross-Currents*) is indebted to postcolonial archaeology’s discovery of valuable resources hitherto missing from postcolonial historical narratives, I focus here not on the sights and sounds that can finally be seen and heard, but on those that remain unseen and unheard in the postcolonial impasse.

### **Redefining Collaboration through Transcolonial Coproductions**

The challenges inherent in the postcolonial “task of measuring silences” (Spivak 1988, 286) of colonial pasts are multiple, particularly in the context of the Asia-Pacific, where Cold War and postwar bifurcations further erased colonial histories in the postcolonial era. At a time when decolonial movements and worldwide debates on national sovereignty and self-determination were appropriated by the colonized to challenge the legitimacy of even long-established empires, latecomers to the imperial banquet, such as Japan, faced the added burden of having to garner the support of their own colonies for their imperial ambitions.<sup>10</sup> Japan, like its rival empire the United States, was aware that brute territorial aggrandizement was becoming globally passé, and that more “inclusive” forms of imperial co-optation were becoming essential in this new global tide (Fujitani 2011).<sup>11</sup>

Japan increasingly turned to colonial Korea, a veteran colony and its most proximate neighbor, to curate the semblance of autonomy and sovereignty in the colonies. As the very

concept of “colony” (*shokuminchi*; *shiminji* 植民地) became more taboo, euphemistic emphasis was placed instead on interpellating “volunteer” and “cooperative” imperial subjects (*shinmin*, *sinmin* 臣民) (Komagome 1996; Mizuno 1997). Because the cooperation of colonized subjects was essential to sustaining Japan’s imperial project, the violence and coercion undergirding colonialism had to be rendered invisible through slogans of equality and harmony. The question of whether these slogans were followed genuinely or merely strategically, in bad faith, by the Japanese and Koreans, evades easy answers.

By the late 1930s, colonial Korea’s filmmaking industry had been fully subsumed into the Japanese film industry, and regulations were established that required all films to assimilate imperial policies. The Korean Motion Picture Ordinance, passed in 1940 and implemented widely by 1941, was essentially a replica of the Japanese Motion Picture Law passed the previous year (with the significant omission of one clause permitting the formation of a committee of film producers). The ordinance established the infrastructure for the complete subsumption of colonial Korean film into the imperial system. The new film law paved the way for the consolidation of film production under one production company, which was a de facto imperial organ.<sup>12</sup> The newly established “Korean Motion Picture Production Corporation” (*Chōsen eiga seisaku kabushiki kaisha* 朝鮮映画製作株式会社) was in fact a Japanese film production company, following metropolitan studios such as Nikkatsu (日活), Shōchiku (松竹), and Daiei (大映), symbolizing colonial film’s subordination.<sup>13</sup>

### Postcolonial Challenges

What are the challenges facing the postcolonial encounter with these recently discovered filmic texts? The necessary task of adjudicating the past must include a reevaluation and reassessment, foremost of our own assumptions, methodologies, and the very language of analysis, which have been inherited through subsequently divided nationalist perspectives of present politics. We must reevaluate the methodologies of our reading strategies and rethink the very terms that have delimited our discursive parameters. In the face of debris from the wrought imperial archive, which is a product of contact zones rather than the exclusive property of one nation, code-switching from a divisive binary national perspective toward a transnational one is long overdue.

How do we begin to untangle a situation that emphasized mutuality, coproduction, and cooperation at a time when precisely the opposite was occurring—when inequality and coercion were rampant and on the rise? What does it mean that dependency on imperial capital, technology, and law further increased while emphasis was put squarely on the specter or spectacle of equality? Taking into account such entanglements, I extend my discussion of “transcolonial coproduction” beyond films that were officially made or labeled in the name of coproduction to include all films that emerged out of such contexts of structurally embedded and forcibly imposed hierarchies. We must remember that during this time, intensifying imperial regulations determined the terms of production without self-determination in the colony. Fundamentally, my concern is not with attempting to define what was or was not a bona fide coproduction, but with the more fundamental need to rethink and reassess what coproduction *fails* to mean in the hierarchical, coercive, and violent context of empire.

In this context—in which all filmmaking had to pass through the hands of imperial intervention, and in which colonized subjects had to collaborate with the imperial system, to some degree, in order to have their voices heard—we might now say that all films produced in the colony at this time were transcolonial coproductions. On the other hand, we might also say that there were no real coproductions from the colony, if by this term we mean mutual creations by equal partners. The making of these films lacked the sense of mutuality, cooperation, or equal and harmonious interactions between colonizers and colonized connoted by the word *coproduction*.

Furthermore, these coproductions were commissioned in anticipation of, or as a direct result of the process of, the merger of colonial film into the imperial film industry. In other words, the purpose of transcolonial coproduction was to manifest within the film industry the broader aforementioned trend of “making imperial subjects” of Koreans, with the ultimate goal of Korean film “becoming Japanese” (Iwamoto and Makino 1994). This new imperative (of making into Japanese) for colonial cultural productions was not unique to the film industry, but imperialist ideologues rigorously targeted this new media, with its ability to reach mass audiences, in order to help propagate the ideology of making imperial subjects and making Korea one with Japan.<sup>14</sup> These perplexing films raise challenging questions about the myriad and sometimes even self-contradictory positions taken by colonized cultural producers during a time of transition for filmmaking as well as for colonial Korea at large. In the postcolonial encounter,

the difficult task remains of how to understand and adjudicate the choices of colonial subjects who tried to negotiate imperial policies in these uncertain climes. What I am concerned with is the challenge of reading films made in the late colonial period, when the degrees of cooperation and coercion involved became more difficult to decipher. This difficulty arises because the insistence on the spectacle of equality would be proportional to the actual lack thereof. The paradox for postcolonial spectators is that the veneer of equal partnership flaunted by these transcolonial coproductions increased precisely as they became mired in more aggressive state-imposed propaganda.

It seems useful here to remind ourselves of Gayatri Spivak's seminal 1988 essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Bracketing off the controversies the essay has triggered since its publication more than three decades ago, my concern here follows what is still a relevant task before us today: the task—perhaps ultimately impossible to fulfill but ethically and historically necessary to embark upon—of "measuring silences" from the ruins of empire in the postcolonial debris. This political and theoretical imperative is further challenged by the need to wrest away methods and tools intended for other purposes.

Our postcolonial labor of reading against the grain of imperial archives is in fact at cross-purposes with past institutions to which we are uncomfortably but necessarily indebted.<sup>15</sup> The deafening silence we encounter in these archives has been multiply imposed, embodying the layered violence of colonialism and its legacies of postcoloniality emerging as Cold War and postwar occupations and dependencies of client-statisms in the Asia-Pacific. Such challenges are the paradigmatic predicaments inherited by the work of postcolonial archaeology in the Asia-Pacific today.

For Spivak, writing from a different yet relevant context, this task must begin with and then go beyond wresting the tools of analysis themselves away from imperial claims of universalism. She begins her essay with a declaration that, regardless of poststructuralist Pierre Machery's likely protestations, she will deploy his method of reading the "literariness of the literature of European provenance ... against the grain of his own argument" to reconsider the "social text of imperialism," which thus far has been marginalized in Eurocentric concerns (Spivak 1988, 286). Spivak continues:

Machery's ideas can be developed in directions he would be unlikely to follow. Even as he writes, ostensibly, of the literariness of the literature of European provenance, he articulates a method applicable to the social text of imperialism, somewhat against the grain of his own argument. Although the notion "what it refuses to say" might be careless for a literary work, something like *a collective ideological refusal* can be diagnosed for the codifying legal practice of imperialism. This would open the field for a political-economic and multidisciplinary ideological *reinscription of the terrain*.... The archival, historiographic, disciplinary-critical and, inevitably, interventionist work involved here is indeed a task of "*measuring silences*" (Spivak 1988, 286; my emphasis).<sup>16</sup>

This article, like this special issue, relies on and is deeply indebted to the tools of imperial violence, such as the imperial archive itself, as it considers fragments from archival debris that for decades have been scattered across (post)colonial and Cold War divides. For us to embark on the task of a *reinscription of the terrain* à la Spivak, we need to rethink inherited terminologies and methodologies to create the possibility of a new epistemology (defined here as the metascience of knowledge) of the imperial archive that goes against the very grain of assumptions inherited through the "colonial knowledge" captured therein. In fact, what is often called "colonial knowledge" is itself a misnomer that typically privileges imperial knowledge productions inscribed in these archives that were erected by imperialists to document and destroy colonial pasts for the purposes of present and future domination.

After the initial excitement of encountering sights and sounds in these films that had previously only been mediated through secondary sources, what becomes quickly apparent and disconcerting to the postcolonial spectator is the shocking hypervisibility of propaganda sequences along with the stark invisibility of sequences silenced or missing as a result of censorship or ruin. Such seemingly incompatible yet coexisting realities are exemplified by the well-known (and curious) case of *Homeless Angels* (*Ie naki tenshi, chip ōmnūn ch'ōnsa*, 家なき天使) (discussed in this issue by Watanabe), which became the only film from colonial Korea (among other films from Japan) to be nominated for honorable recognition by the imperial authorities, only to have a lengthy sequence literally cut out by the censors, with no explanation given (Iwamoto and Makino 1994, 92–94). In stark contrast to the long-silenced sequences, which are invisible to us, stands the spectacle of the film's last scene, which appears to have been awkwardly spliced on as an afterthought, of blatant propaganda in which colonized children recite the pledge of imperial allegiance before the imperial flag. Such scenes may appear

pornographically over-the-top and even comically crass for postcolonial sensibilities; however, considering that our first viewings of these films are always already marked by such traces of censorship and propaganda, it would be both facile and irresponsible to take them at face value, along the grain of the imperial archive (Stoler 2009). Furthermore, the question remains of how to make sense of the denial, silence, and amnesia shared by postcolonial Korea and Japan on the one hand, contending with the sights and sounds of nationalist tropes and outcries for ethical reckoning on the other. How indeed do we even begin to understand these texts beyond simple national binaries and facile dismissal and condemnation beyond the impasse of present politics?

I do not naively assume that these newly excavated texts will afford us transparent access to what has long been buried in the vicissitudes of the region's colonial and postcolonial histories. However, it seems only fitting to focus our attention on the fissures, disruptions, and erasures embodied in these film fragments in the enormous task that these findings urge us to embark on: the seemingly impossible, yet ethically and politically necessary, task of measuring the silences of the imperial archive. I hope to draw attention to the gaping epistemological limits of the imperial archive as symptomatic of the impossibility of a full postcolonial archaeology or reckoning after the fact of irreversible colonial violence and its subsequent erasures. In other words, my purpose here is not to make sense of sights and sounds now made visible and audible in these texts with utopian hopes of recuperating a whole picture for the future, but to urge us to focus our attention on the ruins of a contested past, on the inordinate amount of loss that can be merely glimpsed in the wreckages of the imperial archives of histories, lives, and desires that must forever remain lost and forever impossible to recover.

### ***Spring in the Korean Peninsula***

An examination of the newly excavated film *Spring in the Korean Peninsula* (*Hantō no haru*; *Pando ūi pom* 半島の春, dir. Yi Pyōng-il, 1941, hereafter *Spring*) can help us think through some of the challenges facing us today. *Spring* offers an important segue into examining the transitions toward transcolonial coproductions systematically imposed on the film industry at this time. *Spring* itself is technically not a coproduction between Japanese and Korean filmmakers since it was produced by the Myōngbo Film Production Company in Korea and directed by Yi Pyōng-il, from Korea. However, as a self-referential film about filmmaking in

colonial Korea at the time of its own production, and as the last film produced by a Korean film production company before it was absorbed into the Japanese studio system, *Spring* perfectly illustrates—both textually and metatextually—the paradoxes facing filmmakers in the colony.

Textually, *Spring* tells the backstory to the contemporaneous phenomenon of colonial film's incorporation into Japan. This larger story is told through a melodramatic narrative of struggling filmmakers in Korea who, in the end, eagerly and voluntarily choose to cooperate with Japanese capital and technology for the sake of the future of the colony's film industry.

It is important to point out that many films of this time, like *Spring*, visibly flaunted the ways Koreans became “enlightened” to voluntarily and eagerly choose the path toward collaboration with Japan. According to Governor-General Minami himself, in an interview in a popular magazine, *Modan Nihon*,<sup>17</sup> Koreans eagerly volunteered for the military and for the greater goals of empire at this time as well.<sup>18</sup>

Numerous transcolonial coproductions, such as *You and I*, *Suicide Squad at the Watchtower*, *Long Distance to Happiness*, and *Military Train*, highlighted the active cooperation of the colonized with the colonizers. Such transcolonial cooperation was highlighted textually, through film narratives of harmonious interactions throughout the expanding frontiers of the empire, as well as metatextually, by utilizing the labor of the colonizers and colonized in various roles (albeit unequally) in the making of the films themselves. If we read these films at face value, this all appears to have happened quite voluntarily, with full cooperation from the colonized and no traces of coercion or violence. However, official records of the time make clear that, increasingly, the main purpose of films from the colonies (Korea and Taiwan) was the indoctrination and creation of “imperial subjects” (Tanaka 1942). In this context, the image of colonized filmmakers eagerly submitting themselves to the Japanese film industry by and within an “independent” film like *Spring*, which in essence is calling for its own self-dissolution, powerfully illustrates the broader message being promulgated throughout the wartime empire of the colony's incorporation into Japan and its harmonious cooperation in the fight against Western imperialism.

### **Production of Colonial Desire**

These coproductions in turn produced the spectacle of mutuality and cooperation across colonial divides. They also produced multiple and sometimes contradictory desires throughout

the empire: on one hand, the desire on the part of the colonizers to consume products of exotic “local color” from the colonies, which I characterize below as “colonial kitsch,” and on the other hand, the desire among the colonized to believe in (sincerely) or buy into (strategically) the promise of equality with the colonizers as self-determining agents. Furthermore, while colonial and transnational filmmaking in all contexts of unevenness embodies the burden of unequal hierarchies, it is important to point out the increasing imperial desire to deny these systemic inequalities in the guise of equality and collaboration with disadvantaged “partners.”

As Chonghwa Chung meticulously demonstrates in this issue, in a departure from standard postcolonial film history, colonial Koreans intimately worked with and negotiated with the Japanese film industry and Japanese filmmakers from early on. The corporatization of film production was in fact also a long-held desire of the Koreans themselves (see Chung, this volume). However, as more coproductions were commissioned and encouraged, and as the Korean film industry finally seemed to have attained the long-sought dream of corporatization, films were becoming increasingly restricted and subsumed into Japan, rather than moving toward any sense of the hoped-for equal cooperation. The boundary between autonomy and coercion in wartime coproductions became difficult to decipher and more complex than meets the eye.

If there was some room to negotiate early on, coproduction by the late-colonial era came to basically signify the fulfillment of full subsumption under Japan. These films unwittingly expose the ironies of the situation in which they emerged while strict imperial regulations pressed colonial film into relations of deeper dependency and inequality with the Japanese system. However, their very existence worked to cover up such inequalities by highlighting active imperial support for coproductions between Koreans and Japanese. The irony was that the loud and visible emphasis on these harmonious transcolonial interactions worked in actuality to make invisible the coercive and unequal nature of that very relationship.

### **Complex POVs—Code-Switching as Sites of Postcolonial Indeterminacy**

Commissioned to address multiple audiences in an increasingly mixed linguistic landscape, cinematic texts coproduced via transcolonial collaboration were inscribed both textually and metatextually with a polyphony of imperial demands and colonial desires. Cinematic productions that emerged from the unsavory and shifting borderlines of the empire

triggered deep anxieties at the sites of production and consumption, from the colonial period to the postcolonial aftermath. They emerging from a liminal space between the colony and the metropole, between the languages of the colonizers and the colonized, and between repressive as well as productive regimes of censorship and propaganda, and through opportunities ironically enabled by colonial subjection. The films from these uncertain times reveal symptomatically multiple, schizoid, and self-conscious points of view that leave many provocative questions for past and present spectators across (post)colonial divides.

Postcolonial hindsight has its own blind spots, but it is no longer possible to deny such violent inequalities and the underlying coercive nature of colonial cultural productions. It is now clear that “coproduction” is in fact a misnomer, akin to those ubiquitous imperial slogans, such as “Korea-Japan One-Body” and “Harmony of Five Ethnicities,” that euphemistically veiled the fundamentally violent and coercive nature of the colonial system itself.<sup>19</sup>

The rest of the article will be devoted to the close reading of one film *Spring* as a case study of the challenges facing the task of postcolonial archaeology. I will argue that these films ultimately defy the postcolonial task of close reading because they embody multiple and contradictory perspectives that are impossible to delineate neatly of producers and consumers across the colonial line.<sup>20</sup> The question of spectatorship of these films, for example, became more difficult to decipher as the boundary between the colony and the metropole became increasingly blurred.. In the case of *Spring*, according to newspapers, it first opened at Shōchiku’s Meiji Theater, a hybrid space in the colonial capital of Seoul (See figure 1).

The Meiji Theater was originally frequented by Japanese residents in colonial Seoul. Eventually, as the ethnic segregation that had characterized theatergoing practices gradually changed to linguistic segregation, more and more educated and assimilated Koreans visited the Japanese side of town (Yi Hwa-jin 2010). As we shall soon see, such linguistic complexities in the colonial city are embodied in the film text of *Spring* itself, evading simple answers about intended and actual spectatorship at the time.

The advertisement is a composite of several elements:

- Top Section:** Promotes the film *Spring in the Korean Peninsula* (半島の春) with a cast including Kim Suk-gon (金白), Lee Guk-jong (李鶴宗), and others. It lists the director as Ming (明寶映畫) and the supervisor as Lee Guk-jong (李鶴宗監督).
- Middle Section:** Contains advertisements for shoes, including '紳士靴' (Men's Dress Shoes) and '靴上編' (Shoe Top Series), with an image of a shoe and a logo.
- Bottom Section:** Features a film program for the Meiji Theater (明治座) with showtimes for various films like '短編映畫' (Short Film) and '半島の春' (Spring in the Korean Peninsula). It also includes a public notice (法人登記公告) and a notice for a public auction (公取引).

Figure 1: Review and advertisement for the opening of *Spring in the Korean Peninsula* at the Meiji Theater in colonial Seoul. Source: *Maeil sinbo*, November 9, 1941.

Furthermore, the question of production also raises challenging questions. For example, scholars have argued that the subsumption of colonial film deeper into Japan was necessitated by the film industry's reliance on capital and technology, especially in the turn toward talkies. This reliance caused an exponential rise in production costs, which then required the industry to tap into markets beyond Korea. While this particular turn in filmmaking was certainly an important factor, what was occurring in the film industry was not isolated nor limited to the particularities of filmmaking itself, but mirrored broader conditions of the active mobilization for war in the empire. This was exemplified in the military "volunteer" system that was established to highlight the enthusiastic participation of the colonized in the imperial war as a prelude to the subsequent conscription system (Miyata 1985; Fujitani 2011).

In fact, similar arguments were echoed even in the literary field: a decline in Korean-language readership became the tautological reason why Korean writers should choose to write

in the Japanese language while conveniently overlooking the fact that the Korean language was being banned, and more and more Koreans were being educated in the colonial system and studying abroad in Japan. This all occurred, of course, against the backdrop of the overall coercive normalization of the Japanese language, which was valued as the now-universal national language (*kokugo*), while the Korean language was devalued and actively suppressed.

While the active desire of the colonized (for equality, recognition, assimilation, and imperial language) was certainly at work, we must remember that the broader context in which such desires were triggered was the violent context of empire and its valuation and devaluation of cultures.

Thus interpellated to address multiple audiences in an increasingly mixed linguistic imperial landscape, cinematic texts (coproduced via transcolonial collaboration) were inscribed both textually and metatextually with a polyphony of imperial demands as well as with traces of multiple colonial responses. The simultaneous coexistence of the perspectives of the colonizers and the colonized in these films makes it impossible to delineate a neat separation at a highly advanced stage of imperial assimilation. To the confoundment of postcolonial spectators, the colonized are often seen exhibiting the same interests and perspectives as the colonizers themselves (seemingly in contradistinction with their own or their countrymen's welfare), both within and outside these films. Moreover, in some of these films, it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine whether some characters are Korean or Japanese.<sup>21</sup>

The multiplicity of perspectives inscribed in these films leaves many provocative and open-ended questions for past and present spectators. The complexities exhibited by these films (textually and metatextually) demand a postcolonial rereading beyond binaries of colonizer/colonized and resistance/collaboration. This kind of reading must pay close attention to the multiple perspectives and binds under which such transcolonial coproductions were produced and consumed (see figure 2).

Under the conditions of harsh censorship and propaganda, these films were produced, marketed, and consumed to propagate the ideology of assimilation and harmonious cooperation of colonized subjects in the empire.<sup>22</sup> In the wartime empire, there was little room for cultural producers to work outside of strict regulations or to make films that opposed the imperial line. The sublimation of Korean film under the Japanese system was presumably intended to “help”



colonial Korean cinema “develop” from its backward status with the benevolent guidance of Japan’s capital and technology. However, the conditions that enabled the production of colonial films and transcolonial coproductions also held a tight rein on the types of films that were permitted. The restrictions of imperial ideologies, censorship, and propaganda both enabled the final product and controlled access to resources (Abel 2012).

### **Code-Switching in the Imperial Archives**

The cacophonous points of view that coexist in such coproductions can be detected in the fissures and silences within these films, and in their failure to achieve smooth suturing of perspective. While it can be said that all films are coproductions and that no films—even those made under the influence of a strong auteur—achieve perfect suturing of perspectives, the focus here is on the differences that erupt to the surface when we take into account the colonial context. What beyond so-called universal claims might we begin to see when the form of film itself is refracted through the lens of the social text of imperialism? The fragmented and disjointed nature of transcolonial coproductions gestures beyond insights about filmic formalism in general toward exposing symptoms of multiple and often contradictory perspectives arising from the imperial contest.

Furthermore, the contradictions facing these films do not simply end with the end of empire. They accumulate yet more contentious perspectives through tumultuous transitions from the colonial to the postcolonial eras, gathering marks of politically and ideologically motivated censorship and propaganda from multiple sides.

To consider such challenges facing postcolonial readings, I focus on moments of what I call “transcolonial code-switching,” or notable breaks detectable within the filmic texts specifically arising from the colonial context.. I argue that such moments can be read against the grain of both the imperial archive and the film’s own narrative to expose moments of friction and fractures in the imperial ideologies of harmonious collaboration for which the films themselves were commissioned and produced.

The term *code-switching*, as conventionally used in social linguistics, assumes the coexistence and transition between two or more languages in conversation, discourse, or utterance. Here, I use it to designate moments of movement between the Japanese and Korean languages that are evident in many transcolonial films, but I also use it more broadly, relying on

a semiotics of codes as a metaphor. Code-switching will be used as a tool to capture some of the complexities of multiple enunciations and enunciating subjects coexisting in the empire at a time when the colony was called to “code-switch” into “becoming Japanese.”<sup>23</sup>

I focus on three types of transcolonial code-switchings that recur in these films, in which an abrupt shift or break in the narrative prompt reconsideration. First, I consider the significance of linguistic code-switching. Many of these films feature colonial elites who seem to move fluidly between the Korean and the Japanese languages. In other words, code-switching proper occurs frequently. While the exchanges of these bilingual colonial subjects seem to suggest a veneer of cosmopolitan fluidity between the two languages, as well as a sense of harmonious coexistence of the two languages in the empire, the films, in fact, expose a strict hierarchy in the two linguistic spheres and in the use of those two languages.

Second, I consider code-switching between the narrative of the fictional story and moments of propaganda. These films were commissioned, produced, marketed, and consumed to engender imperial ideologies of assimilation and the harmonious cooperation of colony and metropole. Many of these films have a melodramatic plotline in which the propaganda is embedded within the narrative itself. But there are moments in the films when the fictional narrative is suddenly interrupted by the insertion of a propaganda message unrelated to the narrative itself. These are moments of code-switching when the melodramatic narrative abruptly pauses for a prolonged sequence of unmistakable propaganda. The propaganda message is quite blatant, often shot with the purveyor of the message embarking on a long-winded speech, parroting familiar talking points from imperial ideologies. The messengers often directly face the camera, breaking the fourth wall—the conceptual barrier between audience and viewer—much to the confoundment of past and present audiences, who are being interpellated together.<sup>24</sup> I raise questions about the significance of these moments of abrupt code-switching that these films embody in terms of the role of propaganda/ideology expressed in the filmic text.

Third, I focus on moments in the films when the film narrative abruptly code-switches from the fictional narrative to moments of spectacle in which colonial difference, what I call “colonial kitsch,” is performed. I use this term to refer to the devaluation and exoticization of elements of the colony’s culture, which become mass-produced objects for indiscriminate imperial consumption. This type of sentimental desire, which Renato Rosaldo describes as “a particular kind of nostalgia often found under imperialism in which people mourn the passing of

what they themselves have transformed” which he compares to the paradox of a killer mourning the death of his or her victim (Rosaldo 1989, 108), is common in colonial encounters. Such imperialist nostalgia can be seen in different empires, and appears in this particular context as the simultaneous desire for colonial difference and “local color” and the demand for assimilation and sameness (Kwon 2007). These spectacle inserts, which do not advance the narrative, are prolonged, disruptive sequences in which the gaze of the characters in the film and the gaze of the filmic audience converge as spectators to the performance of colonial exoticism. Such prominent moments of colonial kitsch unwittingly disrupt the imperial ideological narrative of oneness and sameness, revealing instead the demand to showcase colonial difference even within the imperial premise of transcolonial assimilation and coproduction.

*Spring in the Korean Peninsula* is an apt example for discussing the multiple layers of code-switching in the colonial film industry, both metatextually and textually, not least because the film itself is “self-referential”; it is about the backstory of the shifting conditions of filmmaking in the colony. *Spring* is a film about the making of a film in the late-colonial era.

In the film, Yǒng-il a Korean youth, is a screenwriter for a Korean film production company that is adapting the Korean folktale *Tale of Ch’un-hyang* (Ch’un-hyang chǒn 春香伝). The company struggles financially when Anna, a modern girl with an ambiguous ethnic identity, decides to drop out of the role of the eponymous female lead due to a soured romance with the film’s producer. Meanwhile, Yǒng-il’s friend’s younger sister, Chǒng-hŭi, a timid and beautiful ingénue from the countryside, arrives in Seoul, and Yǒng-il takes charge of helping her to get her bearings in the newly burgeoning entertainment industry of the colonial city.

A love square of sorts, involving Yǒng-il, Chǒng-hŭi, Anna, and the producer, provides the narrative tension in the film, coexisting with the parallel story of the struggles of the filmmakers trying to keep the film *Ch’un-hyang* afloat in the face of financial and personnel problems. With Anna dropping out of the picture, Chǒng-hŭi takes over the role of Ch’un-hyang, but the production company continues to struggle financially. In desperate straits, Yǒng-il attempts to embezzle money and ends up in jail and then, having fallen ill, is hospitalized. Anna bails him out and nurses him back to health, while Chǒng-hŭi and the rest of the film crew worry about his fate.

In the meantime, in a parallel narrative climax, we glimpse over Yǒng-il's shoulders a newspaper insert announcing that the film company itself will be bailed out just in the nick of time by the formation of the "Peninsular Film Production Company" (*Hantō eiga seisaku kabushiki kaisha*, 半島映画製作株式会社; hereafter, the PFP). Everyone is thrilled about the last-minute rescue, and the film concludes with a successful opening night. Chǒng-hŭi performs for multiple audiences (those within the film as well as those watching the film *Spring*) a quaint Korean song about bluebirds; Yǒng-il leaves Anna and returns to Chǒng-hŭi; and a tamed Anna this time more graciously removes herself from the picture. In the final sequence, Yǒng-il and Chǒng-hŭi wave farewell to everyone from a train station platform as they head toward Tokyo to be educated, with the ultimate goal of returning to build the Korean film industry.

*Spring* is clearly self-referential, commenting on the actual conditions of filmmaking at the moment of its own making. The formation of the PFP is an obvious reference to the condition of Korean film at the time, in which film production and distribution within the colony was being subsumed into one company under the imperial government. However, I would argue that it is not a "self-reflexive" film, in the sense that it does not seem to be critically aware that the support for Korean film is predicated on the logic of assimilation and its ultimate dissolution.<sup>25</sup> The moments of rupture, or "code-switching," that I focus on expose such contradictions unwittingly, in fact, not because the films are embedded with a subversive message.

### **Code-Switching and Colonial Language**

Although many films produced during this era appear to toe the imperial line, as noted in postcolonial national film histories,<sup>26</sup> when we read them against the grain of the conditions of their production, the films reveal many moments of abrupt code-switching and ruptures to imperial ideologies.

The opening sequence of *Spring* (clip 1) begins with the melodic sounds of a traditional Korean string instrument. The camera focuses on a man and his servant, both dressed in the attire of the Chosŏn dynasty. They are peeking into a room in a traditional courtyard-style home where a woman is partially veiled behind a see-through screen, playing the zither. The man and servant gaze at the woman in close-up, whisper to each other, and the man calls out the girl's name, Ch'un-hyang. The girl then quietly puts away her zither and invites the man inside. Once in the

room, the camera pans out, up, and above the room to an overhead shot of the rendezvous, eventually zooming out to a long shot to reveal a film crew in the act of filming the aforementioned scene. For the first time, the filmic audience, whose gaze has thus far been conflated with the gaze of the camera within the film itself, is abruptly switched over to another camera, and we recognize that the scene that we have been watching turns out to be a scene of *mise en abîme*, a film within the film: *The Tale of Ch'un-hyang* is being filmed by the filmmakers within the film *Spring*.

*Spring* thus begins with a scene of misrecognition, which anticipates multiple levels of code-switching to follow throughout the film. For example, the sleight-of-hand switching of the cameras in the opening can also be read as a moment of code-switching from the fictional narrative to a moment of colonial kitsch. I will examine this below, but first I will consider the significance of the languagescape introduced.

This opening scene anticipates several important factors about the linguistic conditions within this film and in the broader context of colonial Korea. While the film within the film (*Ch'un-hyang*) is being shot entirely in the Korean language, once the camera zooms out and the director yells out “OK, cut!” the language of filmmaking shifts to Japanese. The director calls out his instructions in clear Japanese to the actors who were speaking in Korean until then. This and subsequent scenes establish Japanese as the language of filmmaking, authority, officialdom, power, cosmopolitanism, masculinity, and modernity vis-à-vis the Korean language, and this hierarchy is sustained throughout the film from this point forward.

Each character in the film can be mapped on a scale of different degrees of proximity to Japan/Japanese/modernity/the West. For example, the male speakers are most comfortable and fluent in Japanese, code-switching easily between the two, either within the same sentence or from one speaker to another. In contrast, the young ingénue, Chŏng-hŭi, the provincial girl, rarely speaks Japanese. She is a transitional figure who must be guided into her transition to the new modern city of colonial Seoul, and ultimately, toward the end of the film, to Japan. She is clad to represent this transition, in modernized Korean traditional dress (shorter skirts and longer-cut blouse, accessorized with a modern handbag, ankle socks, and leather shoes), and she spends most of her time in the film prettily smiling with downcast eyes while the men, and the film spectators who identify with them, gaze at her subdued beauty. If the men in the film are coded as cosmopolitans fluidly shifting from Korean to Japanese and back, Chŏng-hŭi is marked

as relatively more “Korean” than her male counterparts by her traditional attire, speech, and demeanor, on a different, lower rung on the transition to “Japaneseness” and, in turn, to modernity.

Chōng-hŭi’s foil is Anna, the only woman in the film who fluently speaks Japanese. She is more westernized in dress and attitude, and even her name defies easy recognition of ethnic identity. It is interesting that Anna, as the bold and independent westernized modern girl, is chastised throughout the film for her assertiveness. She is actually slapped by the director when she boldly threatens to quit the title role, and she suffers an ultimately sacrificial end, with the narrative conclusion reining in her gender transgression and taming her behavior.

The film as a whole seems to flaunt a veneer of cosmopolitan fluidity of subjects in the colonial city, but it unwittingly exposes the unevenness accorded to the colonial and imperial languages. Such privileging of the imperial language is also evident on the metatextual level of subtitling. When the dialogue is in Korean, Japanese subtitles appear to translate the dialogue. However, when the dialogue is in Japanese, the same courtesy is not offered for Korean-speaking audiences. The Japanese-speaking audience (both bilinguals and monolinguals) is clearly privileged, and monolingual Korean speakers are left in the dark. The use of subtitling to translate the Korean language, in effect, marks Korean as foreign and exotic. It is Japanese speakers and cosmopolitan bilinguals who have access to the linguistic complexity of the film. However, the full-extent of such complexities, in effect, ultimately remains untranslatable, again exposing the falsity of the veneer of cosmopolitan fluidity accessible to all.

### **Code-Switching and Colonial Kitsch**

In *Spring* (as in other contemporaneous films), there are several sequences where the film narrative code-switches to what I call “colonial kitsch,” in which the exoticism of *colonial difference* is highlighted. These moments stand out in the films as they are not sutured seamlessly into the narrative, and they often break down the fourth wall as objects placed directly in the line of view of the audience (actors) within the film, which is also conflated with the gaze of the filmic audience.

In the case of *Spring*, this device feels less abrupt than in some of the other films, because the filmmakers were able to creatively play on the device of the film within a film (mise en abîme). The film within the film itself breaks down the wall between actor and viewer.

Nonetheless, scenes curating exotic colonial difference are displayed as spectacles that interrupt the melodramatic narrative in progress. These sequences generally begin abruptly with no master shots to establish their context. The film audience is not prepared to anticipate the film's next sequence, which does not logically follow the melodramatic narrative. A disruption in audience expectation occurs as the spectator is suddenly transported to a moment of visual and audible spectacle for a performance of colonial kitsch. Often these moments involve performances of Korean dancing, singing in Korean, or instrumental recitals using traditional Korean instruments. *Spring* displays several other moments of colonial kitsch when the device of the film within the film is exhausted. In the penultimate sequence, on the opening night of the film *Ch'un-hyang* (presumably after the screening), Chŏng-hŭi ascends shyly onstage, clad in a long traditional Korean gown, to face a full theater. She breaks out into a full-out rendition of a sweet and sorrowful Korean song about bluebirds. The filmic audiences across the Japanese empire may have appreciated this extra entertainment, especially since the actress playing the role of Chŏng-hŭi was a famous transcolonial celebrity by then. But for postcolonial audiences, it is difficult to justify the purpose of this seemingly extraneous scene in the broader narrative scheme. These scenes of colonial kitsch serve as ethnographic pornography, a visual and auditory spectacle, gratuitous and completely irrelevant to the storyline (clip 2).<sup>27</sup>

Scenes of code-switching into colonial kitsch, I argue, are not the moments of rapture the Japanese producers intended them to be, but rather moments of rupture, not only in the narrative sequence, but within the very imperial ideology of "Korea-Japan One Body" (*Naisen ittai*). While imperial ideologies seemingly propagate harmonious assimilation of colonial subjects, and difference, in the empire, the ruptures of colonial kitsch spectacle appear as instrumental objectification of the very colonial differences that are being assimilated. These ruptures become visible when we read the film against the grain of its commissioned purpose to promote the merger of colonial and imperial filmmaking. These moments erupt to the surface while the larger film narrative advances the storyline of colonial cultural producers paying homage to the benevolent Japanese empire for permitting them to become cultural producers, agents, or subjects. There are schizoid switching between self-conscious objectifications and flaunting of colonial difference. Such moments expose the complexities of multiple binds and mixed identifications and disavowals of cultural producers coproducing films in the unequal exchange of empire.

### Code-Switching and Imperial Propaganda

To the discomfort of many postcolonial spectators, colonial cultural producers appeared in many contemporaneous roundtable discussions (*zadankai*, *chwadamhoe* 座談會) to declare their eager intention of toeing the imperial line.<sup>28</sup> While the films themselves were couched in elaborate melodramatic narratives and followed a filmic grammar that was sophisticated for its time, many of these coproductions include requisite sequences of rather sudden code-switching that might appear to postcolonial audiences to hark back to an earlier, less technologically advanced era. The standards of global cinema and the conventions of cinematic narrative realism in these films are occasionally interrupted by blatant propaganda messages. Here, I would like to consider the significance of these moments in which the propaganda disrupts the narrative and draws self/other-conscious attention to itself.

Rewinding to the narrative sequence in *Spring* when Anna bails Yöng-il out from the police station, a benevolent police officer lectures Yöng-il (in Japanese), in a kindly and accommodating voice, about how he will be forgiven for his transgressions this time if he repents and mends his ways. By this point in the narrative, the film leans heavily toward the Japanese language, with fewer and fewer moments of cosmopolitan code-switching between Japanese and Korean. The policeman's speech also warrants notice. He speaks slowly and condescendingly to Yöng-il, whom he refers to as "young man" (*seinen* 青年), which seems out of place, given that the two actors appear to be similar in age. With a soft, smiling expression, the policeman apparently is trying to simultaneously embody imperial authority and benevolence. But despite himself, the linguistic hierarchy is emphasized in the informal level of speech he uses (which is usually used in addressing those in intimate or inferior positions in the Japanese-language hierarchy), as well as the exaggerated slow pace in which he lectures Yöng-il, who is reduced to a childish foreigner. This scene unwittingly draws attention to Yöng-il's colonial alterity and inferiority, despite the fact that audiences know Yöng-il is fluent in Japanese. His assimilation is relative, and he is always in danger of being outed as an other.<sup>29</sup>

Immediately following this scene, Yöng-il is taken to a hospital, where he is nursed back to health by Anna. He has presumably caught an illness from walking in the rain while mulling over the dire financial situation of the film production company, which we saw in a previous sequence, accompanied by a nondiegetic blues soundtrack. At the hospital, he happens to read a

newspaper article announcing the establishment of the PFP. While Yōng-il rejoices dreamily (in Japanese) at this turn of events, gazing off into the distance from his hospital bed, the shot dissolves to black; the next scene opens abruptly into a boardroom full of people. An authoritative man stands at the head of the table and, with no establishing shot to contextualize this scene, begins a speech, facing the camera, toward both the audience (actors) seated around the table and the filmic audience (clip 3).

From this speech, it is clear that this man is the Korean businessman who has just established the PFP. The propagandistic message of his lecture is unequivocal. The Korean film industry is grateful for the new opportunity it has just received to be enlightened and for the chance to finally become one (*Naisen ittai*) with Japan. Calling for cooperation among Koreans and Japanese, the speech (which lasts for almost three minutes) ends with everyone around the table applauding.

What is the significance of these moments when propaganda is no longer subtle but flaunts itself readily? Through these blatant “inserts,” the ideology at work in imperially coproduced films seems to play out in a different manner than the classical Marxian understanding of ideology. The old adage about ideology and “false consciousness,” in which “they know not what they are doing,” no longer seems to apply. Perhaps this situation is similar to what Peter Sloterdijk calls cynical reason. I quote from Slavoj Žižek on Sloterdijk:

Sloterdijk puts forward the thesis that ideology’s dominant mode of functioning is cynical, which renders impossible—or, more precisely, vain—the classic critical-ideological procedures. The cynical subject is quite aware of the distance between the ideological mask and the social reality, but he none the less [*sic*] still insists on the mask. The formula, as proposed by Sloterdijk, would then be “they know very well what they are doing, but still, they are doing it.” (Žižek 1989, 29)

Likewise, transcolonial coproductions that embody multiple levels of ideology—ranging from that which appears to be sutured seamlessly into the narrative storyline to abrupt code-switching to a more distinct interruption of that very narrative—render the ideological message to be “decoded” by spectators from the colonial era to the present, presumably with differing or multiple desires, complex at best. One cannot help but wonder about the efficacy of such a blatant sequence of propaganda message inserted abruptly as a non sequitur to the storyline being

followed by the audience until that point. This jarring effect raises more questions than answers about the multiple levels of propaganda at work in these films.

In the *Spring* sequence, there is no attempt to veil the ideology. Rather, it is paraded, on display, offering us an opening to question what its effect might have been at the time. Were audiences moved by these abrupt moments of blatant propaganda? Or did they cringe and tolerate it as a necessary evil in the state of reality at the time? To quote once again from Zizek:

Cynical reason is no longer naïve, but is a paradox of an enlightened false consciousness: one knows the falsehood very well, one is aware of a particular interest hidden behind an ideological universality, but still one does not renounce it. (Zizek 1989, 29)

Here, in the context of transcolonial filmic productions that emerged out of the condition of harsh censorship and propaganda policies, in which “freedom of expression” and “coproduction” take on oxymoronic tones for cultural producers whose productions were “permitted” by the very authorities limiting and dictating the types of productions that were permissible, the imagination of an “enlightened false consciousness” takes on layered significance.

What might it mean for colonized cultural producers to not only renounce such particular interests behind the ideological universality but, in fact, to flaunt them vigorously, even spotlighting them? Is it possible that such ideological message (wittingly or not) is, in effect, undermined by the very fact that attention is drawn to the ideology being espoused? When audiences are no longer allowed the luxury of being “blind” to the ideology (because it is too glaringly obvious), they can no longer hide behind the claim to “know not what they are doing.” Whether intended or not, these films draw attention to the repressive conditions that enabled their production or coproduction. What is ironic is that the very conditions that enabled or gave such films the opportunity, venue, technologies, and other resources also paved the way for these films to announce their own vanishing. The ultimate result of assimilation, coproduction, cooperation, and harmony between colonized and colonizer would actually have meant the complete erasure of differences—in essence, the seamless suturing of colonial culture into imperial culture. However, in the transitional period in which colonial film was still “in transit,” when the cooperation of the colonized was still needed in the process of code-switching into Japan, it is perhaps not surprising that the contradictory conditions of transcolonial coproduction and of empire at large inevitably erupt to the surface of the filmic text *despite* itself.

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## Notes

1. For some important recent transnational interventions in this area in English, see Fujitani (2001), Jager and Mitter (2007), and the on-line journal, *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, available at <http://www.japanfocus.org/home>.
2. For a deconstruction of the politics of the archive and the need to wrest away its authority in law and historiography, see Derrida (1995).
3. In 2004, the Korea Film Archive (KOFA) found *Military Train* (Sō Kwang-je, 1938), *Fisherman's Fire* (An Ch'ōl-yong, 1939), *Volunteer* (An Sō-gyōng, 1941), and *Homeless Angels* (Ch'oe In-gyu, 1941) in the Chinese Film Archives. A year later, in 2005, they discovered *Labyrinth Dream* (Yang Chu-nam, 1936), *Spring in the Korean Peninsula* (Yi Pyōng-il, 1941), and *Straits of Korea* (Pak Ki-ch'ae, 1943) in the same archive. Before that, there were only three narrative films available from the colonial era: *Figure of Youth* (Toyoda Shiro, 1943), *Suicide Squad at the Watchtower* (Imai Tadashi, 1943), and *Love and Commitment* (Ch'oe In-gyu, 1945), which were discovered in 1989 in Japan's Toho archives. In 2006, several documentary films including some from the office of the Office of the Governor-General of Korea were discovered in the Gosfilmofond Archive in Russia. In 2006, *Dear Soldier* (1944) was found in the Chinese Film Archive. In 2007, the silent film *Crossroads of Youth* (An Chong-hwa, 1934) was found in a private collection in Korea. In 2009, parts of *You and I* (Hō Yōng/Hinatsu Eitarō, 1941) were discovered in the National Film Archives of Japan (NFC). See Chung, 2009.
4. It was Mary Louise Pratt who, in her compendium on European travel writing, coined this now widely used term borrowed from linguistics (1992:4). Pratt defines "contact zones" as "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetric relations of domination and subordination—like colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today." Her book considers and critiques the formation of a Eurocentric global consciousness.
5. See Yi Yōng-il, *The Complete History of Korean Film*. New scholarship with nuanced perspectives on these films has been coming out in recent years. See, for example, Yi Hwa-jin (2005), Kim (2006); O (2007); Yi Yōng-jae (2008).
6. See Narusawa (2012), for example, about the denial and "double-speak" of official government responsibility about the "comfort women" by Prime Minister Abe Shinzō. Yoshihisa Komori, the executive editor of one of Japan's major newspapers, Sankei

- Shinbun, repeated such denials on CNN. Available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PORJQoVRqhk>.
7. See Fujitani (2001), Jager (2007), and the on-line journal, *Asia-Pacific Focus* for examples of important interventions in English in bringing these divided histories together.
  8. Korea's location, situated between Japan and the Asian continent, made it optimal for mobilization in subsequent imperial policies of expansion and war. By the late-1930s, the peninsula was being used as a military supply base.
  9. See Hotta (2007) and Koschmann and Saaler (2007).
  10. As Sookyeong Hong discusses in this issue, the new manifestation of empire in the guise of national sovereignty as in the case of the puppet state Manchukuo was an example of what Duara diagnosed as a new twentieth century form of empire.
  11. See Fujitani (2011) regarding the uncanny similarities between rival empires Japan and the United States.
  12. Tanaka (1942, 7-1 to 7-4). Also see Katō (2003).
  13. For the history of the consolidation of film production companies from the colony into one, see Kim (2006).
  14. Elsewhere Kwon (2007), I discuss other examples of colonial coproductions in theater and roundtable discussions among Koreans and Japanese, which were staged to perform the harmonious interactions across the colonial divide. For the use of film for propaganda purposes in the Japanese empire, see High (2003 [1995]).
  15. Perhaps it is no coincidence that Spivak's own postcolonial intervention was inaugurated through the translation of poststructuralism, literally as the translator of Jacques Derrida's *Of Grammatology*. See also Stoler (2009).
  16. Here, Spivak is reading Machery against the grain of his text that says, "What is important in a work is what it does not say. This is not the same as the careless negotiation 'what it refuses to say,' although that would in itself be interesting: a method might be built on it, with the task of measuring silences, whether acknowledged or unacknowledged. But rather this, what the work cannot say is important, because there the elaboration of the utterance is carried out, in a sort of journey to silence" (quoted in Spivak 1988, 81-82).
  17. Minami actually appears in one of the films, *Volunteer*, as discussed by Jaekil Seo in this issue.
  18. See *Modan Nihon, Chōsen ban* (1940, 36-42). How eager the colonized actually were to volunteer to go to war for Japan is arguable. Miyata Setsuko's research points to the resistance at the time. See Miyata (1985).
  19. I would add that accessing the elusive liminal space between coercion and agency is the challenge facing postcolonial encounters with such texts and histories. The examination of the applicability for other types of coproductions in other contexts, particularly in the face of Hollywood's global hegemony must be deferred here.
  20. For some recent readings of the film in English, see Kim (2011) and Hughes (2012).
  21. This is particularly notable in the Japanese empire when the colonizers and the colonized are not distinguishable by appearance as in most other empires. Furthermore, the distinctions become blurry with assimilation policies such as Colonial Name Change Ordinance (*Sōshi kaimei, ch'angssi kaemyōng, 創氏改名*), which pressured the colonized to take on Japanese-style names. In the case of Spring, the ethnic identities of several ambivalent characters, such as Anna with her Westernized name and appearance, and the

- policeman who is not named, are left indeterminable. The anxiety regarding the inability to distinguish differences between the colonizer and the colonized is particularly salient in the Japanese empire where proximate neighbors in terms of ethnicity, race, and culture were colonized. Such anxieties were further complicated when the imperial government encouraged inter-marriages between the colonizers and the colonized unlike other empires. See Fujitani (2011).
22. For important new scholarship on how censorship worked at this time, see Yi Sun-jin, et al. (2009) and Kōmyōl Yōnguhoe (2011).
  23. In semiotics, codes are understood to be culturally specific and shared conventions for communication. They are a part of a broader signifying system that provides an interpretive framework to help people “encode” and “decode” messages to interpret their realities. See Deely (2005), Hall (1980). Miriam Silverberg appropriates Tzvetan Todorov’s concept of “transcoding” in which “culture is constituted by a constant effort of translation” to think about code-switching metaphorically beyond linguistics. My own “translation” of code-switching is informed by Silverberg’s analysis although it departs from her focuses on agency, movement, and “cultural strategizing” as implied by the act of code-switching. See Silverberg (2007, 32-35).
  24. Some audiences of the time actually complained of the contrived nature of such propaganda sequences.
  25. In classic filmic terminology, self-reflexive films are those that are self-referential about the making of the film itself. Here, I am recoding this technical definition with the postcolonial concept of self-reflexivity, which signifies a conscientious sense of self-awareness in relation to one’s place in the world.
  26. See Yi Yōng-il (2004 [1966]) and Kang (2007).
  27. This phenomenon can be observed in many other contexts of cultural encounters. See Hansen (1991).
  28. Many writers and filmmakers in the postcolonial aftermath defended themselves by insisting they did try to resist subversively. However, under the heavily censored condition of cultural production during the colonial era, and the harsh critique of anyone attempting to work within the imperial system in the postcolonial aftermath, it is difficult to winnow out anyone’s true “intentions” or actual statements from this era. Elsewhere, I write about redactions involved in such roundtable discussions among colonized and colonizers which were prevalent in the late-colonial era (Kwon 2007).
  29. It is important to point out that the ethnic identity of the policeman is anything but clear here, and this indeterminacy raises fascinating/important questions about gradients of assimilation and identifications in the colony.

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