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Postmemory DMZ in South Korean Cinema, 1999–2003

Youngmin Choe

This article argues that the symbolic resonance of the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) has changed over the years and looks specifically at the way in which it is represented in South Korean cinema in the later 1990s and early 2000s. This period is characterized by three overlapping phenomena: (1) the increase of political contact between North and South Korea instantiated by the “Sunshine Policy”; (2) the emergence of an Asianization discourse that downplayed South Korea’s relationship to the West in favor of a concern for inter-Asian relations; and (3) the rise of popular South Korean cinema, particularly in the form of blockbusters. A reading of the DMZ in the films Joint Security Area (JSA, Kongdong kyŏngbi kuyŏk chei esŭ ei, 2000), Yesterday (Yesŭt’ŏdei, 2002), and 2009: Lost Memories (2009: Rosŭt’ŭ memoriŭ, 2002), suggests that the history of the Korean War comes to inform South Korea’s emerging partnership with China and Japan in the newly emergent discourse of Asianization, and the DMZ becomes a way to think about the new figurative borders that define these new relationships. The DMZ, in other words, ceases to function strictly as a historical site, with a specific material past, but rather as a figurative lens through which South Korea can imagine other relationships.

Since it was established in 1953, the DMZ has remained suspended in a kind of tense stasis, which both testifies to the past violence and bloodshed that made it necessary, and hopefully anticipates the possibility of future reconciliation. Nowhere are these functions better captured than in the 1965 semi-documentary *The DMZ* (*Pimujang chidae*) by Pak Sangho, which was filmed under the auspices of the Eighth US Army Commission and the Neutral Nations Supervisory

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Commission (NNSC) in the demilitarized zone just twelve years after the truce. Presumed lost until it was recovered in 2005, *The DMZ* captures the dormant state of the truce line and Pak's own sense of obligation to do something to re-instill the public's interest in this deserted zone by fusing documentary footage allegorically with the story of two orphans who scavenge the DMZ's rusting war remains to still their hunger and sense of loss: "I try to film life and society with a victorious future . . . I dare to appeal in pain to the nation and the world with this one film. Bless the free and unified future of my nation," Pak would later write.¹

Standing in between its bloody past and hopeful future, the DMZ as a symbol—despite the numerous incursions, infiltrations, and breaches over the years—has morphed into a kind of timeless figure of waiting, ossifying into the spatial coordinates it inhabits, which is more or less the thirty-eighth parallel on the Korean Peninsula. It has thus become increasingly removed from the history for which it serves as an interstitial figure of pause, that is, of war held in abeyance. It has even become a tourist site, an outcome that Pak thought would render it a site "full of thrills and suspense" and had specifically hoped to avoid by making his film.² Implicit in Pak's worry is the fear that the DMZ would become an object of curiosity instead of a real boundary between opposing factions. This is the worry that a material historical site of military and political significance might be reduced to, for example, a metaphor or trope. I will argue that contemporary representations of the DMZ demonstrate that Pak's fears were justified, and that the symbolic resonance of the DMZ has changed over the years. I look specifically at the way in which the DMZ is represented in South Korean cinema in the later 1990s and early 2000s, a period characterized by three overlapping phenomena: (1) the increase of political contact between North and South Korea that was most clearly instantiated by the Sunshine Policy; (2) the gradual emergence of an Asianization discourse that downplayed South Korea's relationship to the West in favor of a focus on inter-Asian relations; (3) and the rise of popular South Korean cinema, particularly in the form of blockbusters. In this context, it is no surprise that so many South Korean films in the period dealt with North/South Korean relations and with the DMZ in particular.

An important theoretical notion that underwrites my argument is the idea of *postmemory* that Marianne Hirsch explores, which, in its most basic formulation, describes "the relationship of the second generation to powerful, often traumatic, experiences that preceded their births but that were nevertheless transmitted to them so deeply as to seem to constitute memories in their own right."³ In short, postmemory is memory of something that was never personally experienced, but was nonetheless transmitted through a national or cultural tradition. Undeniably, the trauma caused by the war in Korea is still felt today, roughly sixty years after the fact. But Hirsch's notion, which she uses to think about the legacy of the Holocaust, helps us consider how the forms of this trauma have changed over the years, especially in the context of Asianization, in which the past must be settled in order for formerly antagonistic nations to move toward new relationships of

cooperation and mutually beneficial enterprise. It is my contention that the DMZ, as a highly symbolic site that marks not only the border between nations but also between temporalities, serves as a particularly fertile ground for investigation because the representations of it, which themselves must be read historically, help demonstrate how postmemory works in generations increasingly removed from the original event.

In 1999, following the release of Kang Je-gyu's (Kang Chegyu) blockbuster *Shiri* (*Swiri*), films about national division found a secure foothold in the South Korean film industry by appealing to popular memory and imagination.⁴ Bolstered by the success of *Shiri* and aggravated by US demands to abolish the screen quota system,⁵ the then-struggling South Korean film industry resisted the strength of Hollywood, which had dominated the South Korean market since the 1940s, by focusing on issues of national division and reunification in order to appeal to a national market that already had such issues on its mind.

Filmmakers like Kang Je-gyu considered the standoff on the peninsula and the nation's history of struggle for reunification as something uniquely Korean, and hence came to regard the "Korean blockbuster" as a particularly appropriate vehicle for simultaneously treating the complexities of the struggle against Hollywood hegemony, anti-Americanism, national division, and reunification.⁶ Thus, the emergence of the South Korean blockbuster coincided with a "memory boom," a new fascination with the subject of memory—be it the settling of memory, the purging of memory, or the imagination of lost memories.⁷

The association of the blockbuster genre with "popular culture" and entertainment allowed it distance from the more politicized "mass culture," with which the underground, avant-garde South Korean cinema and video of the 1980s (that critiqued postcolonial nationalist master narratives), were associated.⁸ Packaged in a relatively depoliticized form of entertainment with the potential to garner high box-office numbers and recognition from the international film community, the North/South narrative was able to elide censorship to a certain degree on a politically sensitive topic and push for new ways of engaging with it while reflecting social moods on the matter. The stories, usually in the form of murder mysteries and criminal investigations, transform real political circumstances into fictive reverie. However, the cinematic narrative of North/South Korean relations, as told through the depositions of suspects and investigators' reports against the background of believable historical circumstances, can also be said to constitute a history of how popular culture imagines these political relations. Given this environment, in which popular art is bestowed with the serious task of transmitting historical material, one can see how conditions become ripe for transformations, distortions, and realignments in the work of postmemory.

The films, *Spy Li Ch'öl-chin* (*Kanch'öp Yi Ch'ölchin*, 1999), *Joint Security Area* (*Kongdong kyöngbi kuyök*, 2000), *2009: Lost Memories* (2009: *Rosutü memorijü*, 2002), *Yesterday* (*Yesütödei*, 2002), and *Comrade, a.k.a. The Double Agent* (*Ichung kanch'öp*, 2003), comprise the major blockbuster films released

immediately after *Shiri* that addressed, explicitly or implicitly, North/South Korean relations. With each successive film, restrictions on engaging with the subject of North Korea and North Koreans eased under new political climates—such as the depiction of the North Korean leader or the integration of superimposed North Korean stock film footage. Thus, these films can be seen as occupying a continuum in the popular South Korean filmic imagination of national division and reunification at the time. That the actors who first appeared together in *Shiri* holding together the North/South narrative—Han Sökkyu, Song Kangho, and Kim Yunjin—would go on to each carry another blockbuster about Korean division and reunification, further supports this sense of continuum.⁹

Blockbusters about North and South Korea reflect, then, an ideological development encompassing generational changes as well as changes in Korea's national identity and historical subjectivity. The divided Korea in *Joint Security Area*, for example, locates itself in a global world order with the United States and the West in general playing a central role. The reunified Korea as imagined in *Yesterday* and *2009: Lost Memories*, in contrast, is more concerned with its place in an Asian world order. While the former, addressing discourses of globalization, imagines relations in geospatial terms and acknowledges a dominating American military and cultural presence, the latter two, which were intended for the Asian movie industry in a scheme of re-centered globalization,¹⁰ privilege time over space and fantasize about relations in the future based on a serious reworking of the past, in which America becomes less relevant. South Korean blockbusters imagined within the scope of globalization will invoke popular memory and appeal to nostalgia for the politicized “mass culture” struggles of the 1980s, while those fantasized in the context of Asianization will seek to define themselves as “popular culture.”

In light of the cinematic development of Korean North/South narratives of the desire for reunification over the span of less than five years (1999–2003), my main concern is to engage this filmic shift from globalization to Asianization with changing patterns in narrative time and memory. Temporality in the discourse of globalization associated with the United States stressed linearity as it moved toward an unknown future. Films like *JSA*, for example, were primarily concerned with the procedural recovery and reconstruction of past events to prevent events that could have political ramifications leading to change. In contrast, temporality in the discourse of Asianization associated with China and Japan reengaged with the region's reemerging problematic past in the early twentieth century as part of an effort of looking toward the future, thus accounting for its cyclical and synchronic structure and preference for films set in the future, such as *2009: Lost Memories* and *Yesterday*. I suggest that in the historiological shift from a US-centered globalization to Asianization and from national division to reunification, we see a shift from an emphasis on history to an emphasis on memory, as the two become distinct from one another and no longer synonymous in this particular context. In this context, this article looks at the development of

North Korean tropes and representations of the DMZ, which transforms in this progression from a global world order to an Asian world order. It is my intention to show how what Alain Delissen terms a “memory-nation,” located materially in time and space, is produced differently depending on whether the film on North/South division and reunification issues is informed by discourses of globalization or of Asianization.¹¹

NEUTRAL TIME: THE DMZ IN THE UNSPECIFIED PRESENT

The film *JSA* takes place at P'anmunjŏm on October 28 in an unspecified year. After hostilities break out in the DMZ following unexplained murders and North and South Korean joint efforts at investigation fail, suspicions of a North Korean nuclear program heighten and US Navy vessels start advancing into the East Sea. Faced with US military threat, both North and South agree to allow an NNSC investigation, led by Swiss-Korean Sophie Jean (Yi Yŏngae). The trope of the detached, impartial detective is here rendered in near-literal terms as the entrance of a neutral nation in this tense political environment. But the ideological neutrality enforced by the Swiss and Swedes, who constitute the NNSC, is contradicted by the insistence of the impossibility of neutrality asserted by the South Korean General stationed there. This neutrality is presumably defined and determined by the NNSC's investigative ability to chronicle in minute detail the circumstances and events leading up to the murders at the border in precise order of actual occurrence. The considerable documentary apparatus that surrounds the investigations doubles this precision: detailed legal documents, video cameras, cross-examinations, etc. In addition to an insistence on chronological order and continuous progression, *JSA* reinforces the singularity of truth and the existence of only one version of what really happened, which Sophie insists on discovering even after she is relieved of her duties. It is painstaking work that depends on a persistence aimed at reconstructing past events as they happened, an attitude that is enforced in the film by the many extra-diegetic time signatures on the screen that chronicle and organize for the filmic audience when everything was supposed to have happened.

Time, thus, ironically becomes intimately bound to the notion of neutrality in such a way that, within the space of the DMZ where time has virtually stood still with concerted global efforts since the Armistice in 1953, time must be recorded as progressing with events, as if central to the very act of investigation was the act of bearing witness to time itself. Insofar as history is defined as being marked by events, the historicity of the DMZ is ironically defined by the impossibility of events; it is a place, after all, of standstill. *JSA* reasserts historicity onto the DMZ by rendering it a site of an event and thereby imposing time back on it, thereby allowing it to occupy a dimension where time can proceed forward. Interestingly, the structure of time that is imposed upon the DMZ derives from

the narrativization of criminal investigation. As Sophie's superior tells her, what is most important in this investigation is not outcome, but *procedure*.

JSA chronicles the unlikely friendship between North and South Korean soldiers stationed at the DMZ and the bloody outcome when the fraternizing is discovered. The focus is on events that have changed or had potential to change history and must be prevented from doing so. The logic of P'anmunjŏm, according to Sophie's commanding officer, is predicated on "hiding the truth": what both sides want "is that this investigation proves nothing at all."¹² Rather than resolution, the process itself is imagined to have ameliorating effects. The criminal investigation thus progresses in an allochronistic manner—that is, stating difference in terms of difference in time, where tradition belonged in a past before modernity—which produces alternate versions of the past, during which witnesses are interrogated regarding their accounts of events, and then organized into a narrative of truth that approximates the past. History, according to Pierre Nora, is how modern society, forgetful through so much change, organizes the past in reconstructions that are always problematic and incomplete. Aware of its own potential shortcomings, history thus "binds itself strictly to temporal continuities, to progressions and to relations between things."¹³ In *JSA*, the "thing" to which history binds, through which it gains its authority, is the DMZ itself. Furthermore, the Korean soldiers in the film (on both sides) have desires and natural inclinations that seem to oppose this historical authority, eventually leading the characters into what is regarded by their superiors as criminal behavior or betrayal. While the soldiers transgress literal borders and injunctions of conduct by befriending would-be enemies, the DMZ, as a manifestation of historical authority, is reconstituted by the processes of criminal deposition and narrative reconstruction—which are used to impose temporal continuities on events that exist only fully in characters' memories. From the point of view of the higher-up authorities in the film, the investigation intends not to gain an accurate historical picture of the events as they transpired, but to reaffirm the force of the DMZ itself, further reifying its authority and rescuing it from any sense of ambiguity or arbitrariness.

Against this attempt at reaffirmation, the DMZ in *JSA* becomes a crime scene. Both in the film and in modern Korean history, the DMZ acts as "third zone" (*che-sam chidae*) to the first and second zone of North and South Korea. Turning it into a crime scene thus becomes a way to probe this already interstitial condition. Furthermore, the DMZ in *JSA* is of course not the actual one but a cultural reconstruction, since there is no possibility that the scenes set there could have been shot on location. One of the most expensive sets in Korean cinematic history at the time, the authentic 90 percent scale model of the P'anmunjŏm border village cost \$1 million, nearly a third of the total \$2.7 million budget it cost to make the film.¹⁴ The film set as a representation of the real, however, simply doubles the function that the actual DMZ serves in the Korean national imaginary as a manifestation of the historical past—which is

further echoed in the film itself in the form of the small table-top model that the officials construct for investigative purposes of the North Korean guardhouse where the shootings occurred. A clear parallel is drawn between the characters and the cardboard figures in the model throughout the duration of the film. Just as the spectators who are equipped with the cinematic reconstruction of the DMZ as crime scene are privileged to visuals of witnesses' and suspects' accounts, the investigators in the film rely on the model reconstruction of the DMZ in order to visualize the crime scene and deduce what happened. Viewed in this light, we sense the layers of artifice through which we view history, not the least of which is the original DMZ itself. Like the model in the film and the off-site film set constructed for filming, the DMZ itself is a kind of construct. It is as if, in fact, the DMZ itself were inseparable from such artifice, as if there were no thing itself under all these layers of discourse and representation. Significantly, while we finally do learn the truth at the end of the film about what happened in the North Korean guardhouse, it is a truth that exists only in the character Yi Suhyōk's (actor Yi Pyōnghōn) memory, which is represented on the screen just before he commits suicide. At this point of the film, Sophie has long been relieved of her investigative duties, and her efforts are unofficial, off the record. So while the film does insist on completing the investigation and on providing the truth about the past, it does so in such a way as to make this truth exist independently of the investigation that aspired to bring it to light, demonstrating ultimately a gap between official history (what is recorded for posterity) and memory (which dies with Yi).

The real object of historical labor in the film is not the crime itself, but the transformation of its location. Turned into a crime scene, the DMZ, no longer a relic of history, becomes markable space in which can be inscribed new stories, like that of the soldiers on opposing sides who become friends. In the film, the DMZ as a crime scene includes the barley fields, where Yi Suhyōk first steps on a land mine and seeks the help of two North Korean soldiers, breaking the prohibition of communication. The Bridge of No Return also becomes a crime scene when Yi crosses it, following a joking invite received via illicit correspondences thrown back and forth over the border. In a cross-examination scene, both North and South Korean suspects are seated at a table at P'anmunjōm on the line between the two sides. The investigator is seated at the middle between the two places, with her model of the watch house where the murders occurred in front of her on the table, and begins to explain what she assumes to have been the proper order of past events. She also has a video of the other suspect's suicide attempt, which Yi happens to witness during his interview with Sophie—Yi sees his friend falling past the window of the room in which he is being interrogated. As the crime scenes proliferate within the larger umbrella of the DMZ as the overarching site, we begin to see the DMZ not as static, but as a place that exists within time and indeed within history—however murky, opaque, and unknowable that history might be.

The investigation on the South Korean side takes place in what is regarded as neutral spaces under the sole supervision of Sophie and the NNSC, but the very idea of neutrality is eroded in the film. We the viewers are first shown the depositions briefly in written form bound into a thick report, and then in the form of video recordings. A video camera is set up in each interrogation, and viewers see the interrogation two times simultaneously, through the movie camera and through the video camera. A series of witnesses are brought in for formation of the main character. The depositions of the South Korean suspect and the North Korean suspect differ, and Sophie accuses them of having written and signed false depositions. When Sophie brings Nam in for questioning and threatens him with a polygraph test, he attempts suicide by jumping out the window. Despite or in fact because of her presumed neutrality, Sophie takes on a more significant role as the film progresses—not merely in the investigation, but also in the actual resolution of the events that began before her arrival. As a supposed nonparticipant observer, she is allowed to determine what constitutes the truth and how to represent that truth to the powers that be. More importantly, however, her own story and its intersections with Korean history become more prominent in the course of the story. We learn that her father was a North Korean general; this is the information that compromises her neutrality, leading to her dismissal from the case. But we also learn more details about her father that give greater texture to what seems to be otherwise a subplot in the film—namely, that her father was a prisoner of war during the Korean War and imprisoned on Kōje Island by the South Korean army. Furthermore, we discover that he was one of seventy-six prisoners who refused the opportunity to return to North Korea or go to South Korea and instead chose to leave the Korean peninsula altogether, in his case going to Argentina where he met and married a Swiss woman. Sophie's neutrality thus has a history, indeed a global one, and its genealogy is decidedly not neutral.

In some ways, Sophie embodies the DMZ itself. She is ostensibly a figure of neutrality, of a space in between antagonistic factions, whose very presence is meant to maintain the tenuous balance between interests that are in conflict. Echoing the formality that characterizes the behavior of the participants at P'anmunjōm, her neutrality manifests itself in the imposition of procedure, which is meant to make sense of memories—or to make history out of them in Pierre Nora's sense—that are otherwise either imperfect, incomplete, or outright withheld. It turns out that Sophie, however, is anything but neutral; or rather, that her history is merely the effect of her globalized genealogy. I do not mean that she favors one side over the other, but rather, insofar as neutrality is often opposed to history—that the neutral imperative to stay out of the conflict seems incompatible with history's dirty hands—Sophie's supposed neutrality gives way to a history that is deeply immersed in the very conflict that she was recruited to arbitrate because of her distance from the interests of its participants. By transforming a figure of neutrality into one of complicity, *JSA* questions, by implication, the sense of timelessness that is often attributed to the DMZ. As we see in

the film, the DMZ is a real place occupied by human beings with idiosyncratic desires, commitments, and conflicts. By insistently imagining the DMZ not as a non-place, but one locatable in time, the film attempts to imagine it not as an interruption of history, but as its site.

THE DMZ IN *YESTERDAY*

In *Yesterday*, which is set in the year 2020, Korea has been reunified. A “Korea Border Zone,” populated by Chinese, Vietnamese, Japanese, Filipinos, and Koreans who live in an area known as the “Ghetto,” has emerged up north at the Korea-China border. The film is a crime story that narrates the investigation of a serial killer who leaves the bodies in this border region. Although the DMZ is represented as well in the film, it is no longer a national border but rather a national park, and the anxieties associated with the DMZ are displaced in the film onto the northern border with China and into an imagined future where it is now a place of outlaws such as illegal immigrants and criminals. Redevelopment plans face opposition from the residents who strike and protest, and the investigation team’s search for subjects in the region during these tensions draw attention to the Ghetto as a contested site. The DMZ no longer functions as the tense politicized site that it does in *JSA*, and serves instead in the capacity of a memorial that haunts the new northern border that is established following reconciliation between North and South Korea.

Like the other film of science fiction to emerge around this time positing a reunified Korea, *2009: Lost Memories*, the dichotomy posited between a relatively Westernized South Korea vis-à-vis a more backward North Korea in *JSA* is discarded as issues of the regional past come to the fore, such as the return of Japan and the rise of China. The common representation of North Korea as stuck in a premodern past, which Johannes Fabian characterizes as “the denial of coevalness,”¹⁵ ceases to be relevant under the rubric of reunification and Asianization. In the shift to Asianization discourses in blockbusters, South Korea not only feels inclined to grant coevalness with North Korea, but also feels pressure to achieve coevalness with former colonizer Japan vis-à-vis its renewed central position in the new Asia.¹⁶ If the DMZ’s geospatiality under the primacy of post-Cold War global concerns in films such as *JSA* made it a key site for the staging of the troubled relationship between North and South Korea, what does the memorialization of the DMZ under an imagined reunification signify about the function of the DMZ in discourses of Asianization?

To answer, we must first remember that the blockbusters about Korean division were a Pan-Asian phenomenon, with *Shiri* setting records in Japan, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. After the initial success, the South Korean film industry in response began to target a broad Asian audience by collaborating with local industries in China, Japan, and Hong Kong on films with similar political subject matter. This

Asian outlook coincided with a reemerging interest in an Asia discourse. By the time president-elect Roh Moo-hyun (No Muhyŏn) started campaigning on a pro-Asia, anti-America platform in 2002, the discourse had appealed sufficiently enough to the South Korean public to garner their majority vote. Asia was considered a viable alternative to South Korean Marxism and discourses of globalization; Asia was an intermediary between South Korea and the World. Through the notion of Asia, South Korea could move beyond a narrow-minded nationalism and creatively refashion its place in an Asian order. The Asia discourse also helped reframe the discussion about reunification, providing an alternative justification that would shift the terms away from its Cold War origins. In engaging with the Asia discourse, blockbusters were less concerned with the position of South Korea as an American Cold War subject and increasingly interested in its position with respect to this emergent vision of Asia.¹⁷

The cinematic project of refashioning South Korea's place in Asia required a reconstruction of Korean history in the Asian world order, separate from the history associated with the West. This search for an alternative history manifests itself in the unconventional, non-linear time structures that carry the plots of the blockbusters featuring a non-divided Korea, such as *Yesterday* and *2009: Lost Memories*. Set in the future, the films *Yesterday* and *2009: Lost Memories* project a cinematic "imagined history" (*kasang yŏksa*) into the future containing "alternative/substitute histories" (*taech'e yŏksa*) extending back into various points in the past, setting a time frame where the past is reflected in the future, and suggesting that unless problems of the past and present are resolved, a better future cannot exist.

As the film opens, the barrenness of the border, a displaced figuration of the DMZ, is disturbed by the memory of the violent resolution brought to a hostage crisis, which leaves several dead, including the investigator Yun Sŏk's young son, Hanbyŏl. The story of *Yesterday* then proceeds from this origin, revolving around five middle-aged, male bodies that are uncovered in the border region. When another male with similar characteristics is kidnapped, Yun Sŏk and forensic analyst Kim Hŭisu attempt to find out the motives behind the crimes. The entire zone is what Takashi Fujitani calls a "mnemonic site"—a site of commemoration that connects the present to possible futures—but one that seems to allow for multiple meanings.¹⁸ The killer adorns the corpses with pendants that look like DNA strands to lead the investigators to the two Koreas' past experiments with genetic engineering and cloning, and to the US serial killers Richard Trenton Chase and Edmund Kemper, whose genetic makeup the forensic analyst has been mapping for years. Perhaps it is not coincidental that the killers the suspect is mimicking should have been born around the time of the Korean War, suggesting that he, too, is a product born of the events of that period. We also learn that both the investigator and analyst are plagued by migraines and memory loss, and in the climax of the film the investigators and criminals must return to the scene of the real crime—a ship laboratory called *Luca* where a joint North and South

Korean team had run genetic engineering experiments in the late 1990s on kidnapped children to create a superior generation for the post-reunification period. We learn ultimately that the killer was one of the subjects of these experiments, a boy engineered to be a militarily superior human named Goliath (Ch'oe Minsu), whose escape from the facility eventually caused the experiment to be aborted. The remaining children were then genetically mutated to erase their memories; among them were the investigator (Yun Sök) and the analyst (Kim Hüisu).

The historian Pierre Nora writes that memory differs from history in that it is “by nature multiple and yet specific; collective, plural, and yet individual. . . . Memory takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images, and objects.”¹⁹ As such, the concept of mnemonic sites allows us to deconstruct national histories by reconstructing alternative histories at a representational level as Alain Delissen has suggested, and forces the authoritarian and state-centered national histories “to yield . . . to the kaleidoscopic outlooks of the memory-nation.”²⁰ Whereas the authorities and investigators in *JSA* employ methods of criminal investigation in order to preserve these state histories—remember both sides want only procedure, not results—*Yesterday* discards this historical model of investigation and instead foregrounds the various investigators’ personal involvement and desire to remember, which is what triggers their memories and helps reconstruct their own pasts. Criminal investigation gives way to memory reconstruction, an inquiry that is located in the recesses of the mind and hidden in a prominent display of mnemonic sites, which in the film are crime scenes.

In the ghostly scene at the ship graveyard aboard *Luca*, the killer Goliath’s voice-over recounts what proceeded during the experiments as David, the name given to Yun Sök when he was cloned from Goliath at the laboratory, walks through the corridors. We see in flashbacks the children being dragged away from their cells in the 1990s, while we simultaneously see the remnants of the laboratory through David’s eyes. The ghostly figures of the children appear and disappear. When Kim Hüisu boards the ship, her memory is also visualized. She sees herself as a child chasing a ball down a hole, where she sees Goliath as a child. The incarceration of the children in the 1990s simulates the repression of their memory. It is only after she and Yun Sök have killed Goliath and begin their escape from the bomb-rigged ship that their memories, along with the ghostly children, are set free. We see the children running down the hallway after them. Yun Sök momentarily shakes his wrist as if pulling someone off. Goliath’s voice-over continues at this point, as if still in conversation with Yun Sök. The child Goliath inside the ship pulls the crank on the door shut, yet it is his adult voice asking if Yun Sök wants to live. When Goliath pulls the trigger on the bomb, the children reappear to push the door open, helping Yun Sök escape the explosion. These scenes employ what Joseph Jonghyun Jeon has called “embodied memories,” in which a character is represented as interacting in the physical presence of a past version of himself.²¹ *Yesterday* uses embodied memory as a way to create the effect of synchronous time: the ghosts of one’s former self interact with

the present self in order to create a tangible outcome. Solving the problems of the past solves the problems of the present as well. The site of the investigation is one's own memories, to which one has only limited access.

The synchronous structure enables the investigators to solve both crimes at once, because they are understood as part and parcel of one another. This is possible because the crimes being investigated at the present diegetic time take place on mnemonic sites, which evoke memories of the past. The Korean-Chinese border echoes the DMZ, which also later becomes a crime scene in the film when Goliath assassinates the remorseful doctor-turned-priest who oversaw the genetic experiments. The synchronic structure also allows the investigation of present affairs to have a double effect, where the solution gives closure to memories of past injustices caused by ambitions for a better place in the Asian world order. The past in these films has not yet occurred in the viewers' real time. The audience is forced to see diegetic history (which is in the viewers' future) as separate from their own sense of history (in the past). This removal prioritizes the role of memory in the investigation and constructs continuity between diegetic time and our time that has been forgotten by those in the future, but can be remembered by seeking out the mnemonic sites that contain the history.

The fundamental issue of what constitutes the "reunified" subject is staged through the theme of cloning, an issue that would have been on the South Korean public's mind around the time of the film's release.²² The investigator Yun Sök turns out to be David, the clone of the killer Goliath. This makes Hanbyöl, the son that David accidentally kills and attempts to preserve through cryogenics, also a blood relation of Goliath. It is also suggested that the forensic analyst, who was raised by Goliath's final victim, was in fact the daughter of the priest and mastermind behind the experiment. This also turns out to be false, and it is suggested that she herself was one of the kidnapped children when we see her former child-self aiding Yun Sök in his escape as an adult. In *Yesterday*, even more radically self-incriminating than in *JSA*—which deploys the trope of brotherhood to describe the relationship between adversaries²³—the outcome in which David turns out to be Goliath's clone implies that to kill one's opponent in *Yesterday* is to kill yourself. The synchronous nature of time in the film thus ensures a future that is inseparable from the past. The DMZ as the site of multiple crimes in multiple temporalities figures this circularity. It is both a crime scene and a memorial; and in this logic of the film, these are the same thing.

THE ERASURE AND POSTCOLONIAL REINSCRIPTION OF "DMZ MOMENTS" IN 2009: *LOST MEMORIES*

The DMZ does not literally appear in the movie *2009: Lost Memories*, and for this reason, it is the most difficult film to fit into the trajectory that I have been building in this article. What becomes clear, however, is the way in which the

relationship between Korea and Japan is mapped onto a template that is unmistakably borrowed from South Korean representations of its civil war with North Korea, most prominently in the overlapping tropes of brotherhood and fraternity that come into conflict with national and political formations. It is standard practice in South Korean War films, and civil war narratives in general, to represent the tragedy of brothers (or men who are as close as brothers) who must face each other on the battlefield, where their familial bond inevitably comes into conflict with their national/political allegiances—a trope that *JSA* explored to such great effect, and *Shiri* tweaked by turning the bond between a man and a woman into love. Accompanying this trope is inevitably a scene of standoff in which personally intimate figures (whether the bond is fraternal or romantic) must weigh their emotional bonds against their political affiliations. Accordingly, *2009: Lost Memories* is full of guns-drawn, shot-reverse-shot standoffs, in which Sakamoto Masayuki (Chang Tonggŏn), an ethnic Korean Japanese Bureau of Investigation agent, stares intensely at a person whom he feels close to, either by virtue of personal or ethnic connections, and thus feels conflicted about shooting. It should be noted that Sakamoto's family history contains an oblique reference, the only one in the film, to the Korean War: his father, a disgraced policeman, had been involved in a case associated with the Russian city "Vladivostok," which was the headquarters of the Soviet Union's Pacific Fleet during the war. A dominant trope in the film, numerous standoffs appear repeatedly, with opposing figures pointing guns at each other in highly tense moments of pause before violent actions. They are moments of suspension, in which pressure and anxiety mount, before they are resolved either by action or by withdrawal. In contemporary South Korean culture, the most visible example of this kind of tense standoff, of pause between moments of violence, is the DMZ—perhaps even more specifically, P'anmunjŏm, where soldiers of opposing nations but shared ethnicity stare at each other across a line drawn in the ground. In *2009: Lost Memories*, the affective/political tensions and contradictions associated with the DMZ are disassociated from a specific locale (the DMZ), literally deterritorialized, and dispersed and recoded instead into the complex representations of conflicts between individuals in the film.

Based on an alternative history novel (*taech'e yŏksa sosŏl*) by Pok Kŏil, the film posits an imaginary history and the movement to "set straight the history" (*yŏksa paroseugl*) of Korea in a contestation over memory.²⁴ The premise of *2009: Lost Memories* is that a powerful Japanese businessman has used an ancient relic discovered in 1985 to travel back in time and alter the course of history, and that the diegetic time represented for most of the film, in which Japan still rules over Korea, is the wrong course of history. The various historical trajectories of the film pivot around two historical junctures presumed to have led to very different outcomes for Korea and Japan. For Korea, independence fighter An Chunggŏn's assassination of Resident-General Itō Hirobumi in Harbin, Manchuria, in 1909 was a victory, which if reversed would have signaled doom for Korean liberation.

For Japan, the bombing of Hiroshima brought devastating defeat for the nation in WWII. Armed with historical pre-knowledge, Japan at the onset of the film has changed the events leading up to the bombing of Hiroshima, ensuring Japan's victory and supremacy in the region over Chosŏn and larger East Asia. When a band of Korean independence fighters attempt to seize the relic from an exhibition and restore their "stolen history" in a violent terrorist attack in the year 2009, Sakamoto must uncover their motivations, verify their allegations of a refracted history, and in the process grapple with his own conflicts regarding his emerging Korean subjectivity.

2009: Lost Memories is a film about Korea's colonial relationship with Japan in which the two main characters love one another as if they were brothers despite the fact that one is ethnically Korean while the other is full-blooded Japanese. Both work as partners for the Japanese Bureau of Investigation in this counterfactual world in which Korean independence never happened. Saigō (Toru Nakamura), the ethnic Japanese officer, is particularly fond of Sakamoto, the ethnically Korean one, because of Sakamoto's heart-felt intervention years ago when Saigō's relationship with the woman who would become his wife was faltering. Sakamoto writes a letter on Saigō's behalf to the woman, convincing her that Saigō would be a worthy husband. This backstory of course serves as buildup to the climactic standoff in the film, which restages the classic Korean War trope of brothers fighting one another into the context of Japanese colonialism. What is unique about this particular representation is the fraternal bond between antagonists, a characteristic that is usually absent from representations of colonial Japan-Korea relations, in which the Japanese figure is nearly always unproblematically defined as enemy.

This final standoff returns full circle to the opening scene of the film, the assassination attempt on Itō Hirobumi at Harbin Station. The presence of Saigō and Sakamoto, who have jumped through the time portal and into the past, at the scene of the assassination attempt imposes the future into the past, a past we are seeing modified or corrected if we buy into the conceits of the film. The standoff occurs between Saigō and Sakamoto as Sakamoto aims for Inoue, who was previously sent back in time to kill An Chunggŭn and prevent him from assassinating Itō Hirobumi.²⁵ What is startling about this ending is the way in which the logic of the DMZ and of North/South Korea relations comes to inform the film's representation of Korea's colonial relationship to Japan. The key figure here is Saigō, Sakamoto's friend who is torn between his affection for Sakamoto and his duty to Japan. Saigō owes Sakamoto a great deal because of Sakamoto's letter to his wife, which she has never in fact shown to Saigō. But if Saigō supplants the Song Kangho character in *JSA*, the North Korean would-be brother rendered distant by real or imagined lines of political demarcation, then what has been accomplished is a tremendous shift in the implicit relationship between Korea and Japan. No longer sworn enemies whose entreaties must be regarded with careful suspicion, Saigō takes on the role of a long-lost brother with whom

one must reconcile. By mapping the experience of Japanese colonialism onto the story of the DMZ, the film demonstrates the complex mental labor involved in the construction of a contemporary Asianization discourse, which requires the construction of friendships out of historically antipathetic relationships. No longer a discrete historical phenomenon, the DMZ becomes a trope through which Korea can think about repaired relationships in general.

In addition to the many standoff scenes, another metonymic invocation of the DMZ is the Yongsan War Memorial of Korea as Itō Hall, which, befitting the previous examples I have discussed so far, becomes a crime scene in the film. It is also the site of the first standoff in the film, between the JBI forces and the ethnic Korean independence fighters in general, and between Sakamoto and the leader of the group, who taunts Sakamoto in his native language. Standing in stark contrast to the hypermodern city of now-still-colonial Seoul, Itō Hall originally appears in the film initially as a quiet oasis of cultural preservation where Asian artifacts, seized through three generations of the Inoue family, are on display. Within the space of the museum, although under Japanese control, the artifacts are relegated to a place and culture of a precolonial past, and the exhibition acts as a guardian of cultural treasures valued for their place in a time past. One element of the past, however, that does not exist in the temporality represented in the film is ironically the occasion for the Yongsan Memorial, that is, the Korean War. If Japanese colonialism never ended, then there would have been no civil war, but of course, if we extend this logic then there would be no Yongsan War Memorial either. What then does it mean to choose as a central location for a film that imagines that the Korean War never happened precisely the location that commemorates this war? Built in the early 1990s, the Yongsan Memorial was a complex that did not exist at all in any shape or form during the Japanese colonial period, and one whose very architecture was designed to speak very specifically to the history of the war. Emphasizing a theme of “embrace,” the wings of the buildings that surround the Central Plaza, both of which are displayed prominently in the film and doubled by the literal embrace of the Statue of Brothers positioned just to the side of the Central Plaza, signify a hope for future reconciliation. So although the memorial serves a distinctively patriotic function, it does so in a way that accommodates the North Korean brother, which the South Korean brother wishes to hold once again in his arms.²⁶

Against this ahistorical vision that invokes the Korean War while denying that it ever happened, the Korean liberation group suddenly intrudes into the exhibition hall through the skylight that opens and focuses like a camera aperture. The Korean liberation group shatters the museal space and the museal gaze authorized by the Japanese, and brings back the specter of the Korean War by forcing Sakamoto to confront his own feelings of ethnic fidelity. Entering through the cinematic eye, the intruders violently recode the very same museum space into a violent site of remembering and of recollecting a different past denied outside the museum—namely, a different past of a liberated Korea by asserting their

presence and resistance. However, for viewers who are familiar with the Yongsan Memorial, the eruption of violence at this site is difficult to observe without thinking about the Korean civil war. The Koreans' violent recoding of the museal space prior to Sakamoto's arrival enables him to reflect on his repressed Korean subjectivity, identity, and alterity, rather than on his modern subjectivity. Ironically, this odd transference of affective material associated with the Korean War onto the context of Korea-Japan relations is already accomplished somewhat by the Yongsan Memorial itself, which displays a pair of relief sculptures in the central plaza that represents Korean military opposition to Japanese aggression from the sixteenth century to the colonial period.²⁷ Even more ironically, we see these sculptures in the background early on in the film when the police first arrive in response to the attack at the complex.

The odd historical cross-hatching that we witness in this film stands in direct contrast to the recent movement in Korea to demolish all architectural traces of Japanese colonialism, a controversial practice subsumed under the discourse of "settling the past" for the symbolic eradication of potential sources of historical distortion. The movement to "settle history" through a search for historical truth is not limited to Japanese colonialism, but is closely related to broader associations between Japanese colonialism, Korean modernity, and the search for traces of a refracted Korean modernity. According to historian Ahn Byung-ook, the task has taken on three concrete forms—namely, the purge of negative elements remnant from Japanese imperial rule, the investigation of Korean War crimes and related ideological persecution, and the prosecution of authoritarian suppression of the democracy movement.²⁸ The "settling the past" discourse argues that the US hiring of Japanese collaborators for the Rhee Syngman government posts resulted in a negative perpetuation of Japanese imperial legacies. Subsequent coups and military governments furthered these suppressive injustices, blocking the "sound development" of a modern democratic Korea and resulting in a refracted modernity.

However, as historian Chung Youn-tae points out, the stakes are forward-looking: "the debates over the issue of 'settling the past' can be interpreted as a struggle over how to reform Korean society, manifested in a contestation over memory."²⁹ A critical review and elimination of past wrongdoings so that they no longer impart a negative influence or hinder the democratic development of Korean society is an important part of the "settling the past" discourse. As a joint production, the literal struggle to settle the past in Korea-Japan relations tackle the anxieties in a time of transition in East Asia, as both nations seek to reestablish friendlier ties. The question of how best to remove "remnants of the Japanese colonial past" (*Ilche singmin chanje ch'öngsan*) or "set history straight" (*yöksa paro ssügi*) is a major issue, and generally envisioned as occurring through attempts "to correct and purge the wrongs of the past," and "to uncover the truths hidden or distorted in the records of the past, to disclose past injustices in history, to remember them on a societal level, and

to record them in history.”³⁰ Behind the movement is the conviction and hope that “settling the past” will bring about apology, forgiveness, and reconciliation. In contrast, *2009: Lost Memories* re-conjures this past: its opening shows the reinscription of signs of Japanese colonial rule from signs of Korean resistance to signs of Japanese victory scattered throughout the urban space which occurs in a vision of Seoul as a colonial metropolis. For example, the statue in downtown of Chosŏn Dynasty naval hero Admiral Yi Sunsin, who led the Koreans against Japanese invaders in the sixteenth century, is replaced by a statue of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who led Japan’s first invasions into Korea against Admiral Yi, and behind it stands the large, gray dome of the Japanese governor-general’s headquarters, a building which had been demolished in 1995. The introductory revisionist montage of *2009: Lost Memories* questions which memory it is that ultimately gets lost in the resurrection of alternative histories. The history of Korean national independence is lost, as is the history of any US-Korea relations. Korea-US relations become subsumed under Japanese colonialism as the revisionist history has the United States fighting alongside the Japanese as allies in WWII, and ending the war by dropping atomic bombs on Berlin, not Japan. In the process of Korea’s disengagement from the historical trajectory aligned with the United States and the Cold War, the Korean War as represented by the DMZ becomes emptied out of specific historical content, and it gets recoded and repurposed as traces of that history. History becomes a set of tropes that get mobilized in future relations.

As in *Yesterday*, the reengagement with the painful past in *2009: Lost Memories* allows for the construction of synchronous temporality in the name of historical redress, but one that ultimately allows for the reframing of history. In both cases, the history of the Korean War comes to inform Korea’s emerging partnership with China and Japan, respectively, in the newly emergent discourse of Asianization. Also, the DMZ, deterritorialized and transformed into a set of related tropes, becomes a way to think about the new figurative borders that define these new relationships. The notion of DMZ, in other words, ceases to function strictly as a historical site with a specific material past, but rather increasingly as a comparative, figurative lens through which Korea can imagine other relationships, other borders.

It is no coincidence that both films also foreground museum/memorial spaces, most prominently the DMZ National Park in *Yesterday* and the Yong-san War Memorial of Korea (reimagined as the Ito Hall Cultural Center) in *2009: Lost Memories*, which function as what has been termed “theaters of memory.”³¹ These museum spaces, however, function less as sites of preservation than as sites of violence, and often of crimes in which open acts of violence involving weapons and bloodshed only make literal the more metaphoric acts of violence that museums accomplish in their efforts to reframe history. In slightly less skeptical terms, Andreas Huyssen in *Twilight Memories* has suggested that the function of museums at a time of generational waning of

memory “enables the moderns to negotiate and to articulate a relation to the past that is always also a relationship to the transitory and to death,” seeing the museum thus “as a site and testing ground for reflections on temporality and subjectivity, identity, and alterity.” While providing “a sense of bliss outside time, a sense of transcendence,” it also opens up “a space for memory and recollection denied outside the museum’s walls.”³² Huyssen’s account foregrounds acts of memory in an environment in which the object of memory fades, which was earlier termed postmemory. There is a decided ambivalence to the material history of the objects in the museum, and instead the space functions as a sort of ontological echo chamber in which experiences of the past help confirm the subject’s existence. Through museums, these moderns can only articulate and test their relations to the past in order to recover a mere *sense* of something greater and transcendent, and indeed a sense of themselves. Similarly, *Yesterday* and *2009: Lost Memories* use musealized spaces in a complementary relationship with the narrative of the alternative history to open up synchronous spaces for testing reflections on history and subjectivity. The DMZ in these films, in its various forms, functions as a kind of museum space, one that functions less in the geospatial terms sketched out in *JSA*, as a border between nations with a specific history, and more in onto-spatial terms as a trope that helps one probe and negotiate the changing coordinates of the relationship between self and other.

NOTES

1. Pak Sangho, “Kamdok such’op: hangukchök sanghwangül kobalhandha. *Pimujang chidae* rül chejak yŏnch’ul hamhyō,” 91.

2. Pak Sangho wrote:

I visited Japan for a film festival and walked around Tokyo with other foreign tourists. Most of them were Europeans and they asked me to guide them around the place. I said that I was not Japanese, I was Korean. They asked me whether I was from the South or the North, and where P’anmunjŏm was and whether it was a place worth visiting. I had no answers. Honestly, I had never been to P’anmunjŏm. Anyhow, those foreigners seemed more interested in P’anmunjŏm than in Korea itself. More likely, they thought of P’anmunjŏm as a tourist site full of thrills and suspense. I was shocked, and I felt the obligation to do something; make a film of it, as a member of the nation. Pak Sangho, “Kamdok such’op: hangukchök sanghwangül kobalhandha. *Pimujang chidae* rül chejak yŏnch’ul hamhyō,” 91–93.

3. Marianne Hirsch, “The Generation of Postmemory,” 103.

4. As Shohat and Stam have noted, “narrative models in films are not simply reflective microcosms of historical processes; they are also experiential grids or templates

through which history can be written and national identity created.” See Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, “From the Imperial Family to the Transnational Imaginary,” 154.

5. In 2002, the South Korean screen quota system still required local theaters to screen 146 days a year. The South Korean film industry accounted for an unprecedented 46.7 percent of the local box-office share in 2001, causing critics of the protectionist policy to argue that it was no longer necessary. In 2006, the number of days was reduced from 146 days per year to seventy-three days per year.

6. The term “blockbuster” from here on refers to the South Korean blockbuster, to be distinguished from the Hollywood blockbuster unless indicated otherwise, although it is still debated among film critics and scholars whether the South Korean blockbuster exhibits transformative traits or is merely imitative. Pak Kwangch’un’s (Park Kwang-Chun) *The Soul Guardians* (*T’oemarok*, 1998) was the first film to be marketed and promoted as a Korean blockbuster. The characteristics of the “Korean blockbuster” as defined by the *Kungmin ilbo* on July 17, 1998, are: (1) huge capital investment in computer graphics and production, (2) a hybrid genre accounting for a tight narrative structure, and (3) a star-studded cast. Critics generally recognized the similarities with the Hollywood blockbuster, but point out that in comparison to other South Korean film genres, it is undeniable that the blockbuster distinguishes itself in terms of the higher production costs, larger scale, and scope. On the South Korean blockbuster, see Chris Berry, “What’s Big about the Big Film?” 217–29. See also Kim Soyŏng, *Han’gungyŏng pŭllokpŏsūt’ŏ: At’ŭllant’isŭ hogŭn Amerik’a*.

7. See Jay Winter, *Remembering War*.

8. The difference between these forms of culture is important in Korean, as the term *taejung munhwa* can be used interchangeably to mean “popular culture” and “mass culture,” but its usage to connote culture for the masses is also associated with the *minjung* movement (people’s movement) to popularize politically oriented mass culture in the 1980s. In spite of the distance and distinction from the extremely nationalistic mass culture, anti-American sentiment and nationalist narratives of reunification were still disseminated through popular culture including films, escalating around the time of South Korea’s 2002 presidential elections.

9. The South Korean agent played by actor Song Kangho goes on to appear in *JSA* as a North Korean soldier. Actor Han Sŏkkyu also becomes a North Korean in *Comrade* (Double Agent), playing a double agent who defects to the South. The double agent in *Shiri* played by Kim Yunjin later plays the forensic analyst for the Joint Asian Police in *Yesterday*.

10. See Koichi Iwabuchi, *Recentering Globalization*.

11. Alain Delissen, “The Aesthetic Past of Space,” 243–60.

12. *Kongdong kyŏngbi kuyŏk chei esŭ ei* [*Joint Security Area (JSA)*], directed by Pak Ch’anuk, South Korea, 2000.

13. Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*,” 7–24.

14. Sangwon Suh and Laxmi Nakarmi, “Korea: North and South: The Movie: Historic Talks?”

15. Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*.

16. See Koichi Iwabuchi, *Recentering Globalization*; Yoichi Funabashi. “The Asianization of Asia,” 75–85; Akio Igarashi, “From Americanization to ‘Japanization’ in East Asia,” 3–19; and Karen Wigen, “Culture, Power, and Place,” 1183–201.

17. Some key works on the Korean Asia discourse published around this time include: *Ch'angjak kwa pip'yŏng* 79 [Creation and Criticism] Special Issue (Spring 1993); Chŏng Mun'gil, Ch'oe Wŏnsik, Paek Yŏngsŏ, and Chŏn Hyŏngjun, eds., *Tongasia, munjewa sigak*; and Chŏng Mun'gil, Ch'oe Wŏnsik, Paek Yŏngsŏ, Chŏn Hyŏngjun, eds., *Palgyŏn urosŏ ŭi Tongasia*.

18. Takashi Fujitani, "Inventing, Forgetting, Remembering," 77–106.

19. Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*," 9.

20. Alain Delissen, "The Aesthetic Pasts of Space (1960–1990)," 249.

21. Joseph Jonghyun Jeon, "Residual Selves," 728.

22. In 1999, South Korean scientist Hwang Woo Suk (Hwang Usŏk) came to the public's attention by cloning dairy cows. The questionable validity of his cloning processes and fabricated successes came to light starting in 2004 when he claimed to have successfully cloned human embryonic stem cells. He was disgraced in 2005.

23. For a reading of this brotherhood and fraternization as same-sex eroticism, see Kyung Hyun Kim, *The Remasculinization of Korean Cinema*.

24. President Park Chung Hee, a former military officer in the Japanese imperial army, stands accused of having "reentered" Japan into Korea, and enabling and extending its oppressive structure. Presidents Chun Doo-hwan (Chŏn Tuhwan) and Roh Tae-woo (No Taeu), who inherited the negative legacy, were tried in court for their military coups and massacres under the cause of "settling the past" in 1997. See Byung-ook Ahn, "The Significance of Settling the Past in Modern Korean History," 8.

25. In this elaborate configuration of aimed guns and distracted gazes between people originating from three different time frames, killing only occurs between the people from each time zone. The original confrontation between Itō Hirobumi and An Chunggŭn is preserved, and Inoue, Sakamoto, and Saigō, all from the same projected future, kill each other. Thus, within the circular return of the film to the beginning, the protracted standoff between Saigō and Sakamoto actually occurs at the same time with the An Chunggŭn assassination attempt but without encroaching upon the event. The future exists within the frame of the past, and the standoff is as if superimposed into the past historical event distinct to the outcome of the colonial past.

26. See Sheila Miyoshi Jager, "Monumental Histories," 405.

27. *Ibid.*, 394.

28. See Byung-ook Ahn, "The Significance of Settling the Past in Modern Korean History," 9.

29. Youn-tae Chung, "Refracted Modernity and the Issue of Pro-Japanese Collaborators in Korea," 19.

30. Byung-ook Ahn, "The Significance of Settling the Past in Modern Korean History," 8.

31. See Jay Winter, *Remembering War*.

32. Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories*, 27.

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