

Post-Traumatic Reconstruction in and through *Anarchist from Colony*

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I. Introduction

After years of war, intimidation, and political machinations, Korea was annexed by the Empire of Japan in 1910 (Blakemore). The colonial trauma of Koreans is based first and foremost on the direct violence and exploitation of the colonizers such as the Japanese Military Sexual Slavery (also known as ‘comfort women’), forced conscription, and land plundering. This paper, however, wishes to focus on the national trauma that stems from the broader and more abstract concept of the failure of nation-building. As it became a colony, Korea lost the ‘nation [국가]’ as a concrete object, and the realistic condition changed from ‘nation = people [민족]¹⁾’ to ‘nation ≠ people’ (Ryu

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39). Colonization not only frustrated the Koreans' collective libido towards building a modern state during the colonial period itself, but was also a direct cause of the division of Korea into South and North which were occupied by the United States and the Soviet Union respectively (JG Kim 103, 106).²⁾ Therefore, it is evident that the colonial trauma on the Korean peninsula has had a long-lasting effect which continues to this day where Korea remains unable to form a single unified nation.³⁾

The deprivation of national sovereignty and the violence with which the Japanese managed colonial Korea gave rise to a huge rupture in the collective spirit of Koreans. From the perspective of Koreans, Japan was “neither my father, nor a father as my mother’s object of desire”; it was someone else’s father who violently expelled my father and abused my mother (JG Kim 103). As a result, Koreans placed the concept of ‘the people [민족]’ in direct opposition to the colonial state and regressively transferred their desires to this concept in order to give vent to feelings of shame and humiliation and to effectively oppose the Japanese occupation (JG Kim 103). In other words, the concept of ‘the people’ has become a condensate of the collective desire to restore the lost state and allow the frustrated libido to flow again (JG Kim 103 - 104). The concept of ‘the people’ as an overdetermined term is useful

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- 1) ‘민족’ is a term commonly used to refer to Koreans—both North and South—as one ethnic group.
 - 2) It was because Korea had been considered a part of Japan which lost the war to the Allies that the Soviet Union and the United States had the political legitimacy to occupy North and South Korea respectively.
 - 3) Jong-Gon Kim also brings forth the colonial trauma of the Korean diasporic communities in Japan, China, and Russia which is undoubtedly a crucial issue on its own. This paper, however, chooses to limit the scope to the national trauma as is sustained and felt by the Koreans living on the peninsula—who were generally more affected by the Korean War and the state violence under the military government in the post-war era—to narrow down its focus on the effect of the continuing failure of nation-building.

in thinking about Korean cultural texts that deal with the colonial period. Many texts are devoted to depicting Korea as a nation-in-making; whose people were stripped of their national sovereignty and identity and have long been subjected to colonial oppression but did not yield to the imperial aspiration of turning Koreans into the Japanese Emperor's loyal subjects. Film is a particularly interesting type of text, as its relatively complex production procedure and popular consumption as compared to works of fiction or painting ensure that the film is a product of reconciliation between many different interests and worldviews. Moreover, the audiovisual techniques of representation that are unique to films allow for far more realistic and visceral experience of the characters' lives. This allows film to be a very appropriate cultural means to express diverse interests that we cannot easily fathom otherwise.

This paper examines Lee Joon-ik's *Anarchist from Colony* [박열] (2017) to argue that the detailed depiction of Japanese persons who were sympathetic to the Koreans' anti-colonial cause extends the boundaries of 'the people [민족]' from referring to just the Korean ethnic group to whomever opposed Japanese imperialism. The fact that Park Yeol was an anarchist aids such depiction by slightly distancing him away from his colonized status and allowing him to be more easily grouped with the likeminded Japanese people as ones who can see the truth for what it is, attempts to make that truth be known, and are hence on the 'right' side of the law. The film as a legal drama effectively exposes the Japanese authorities as being self-contradictory in wishing to keep up a façade of a modern nation that follows the modern legal system but which in fact instigated the Kantō Massacre, a genocide that the Japanese military and vigilantes committed against the Korean residents of the Kantō region in the immediate aftermath of the 1923 Great Kantō earthquake

and killed approximately 6,000 Koreans.

II. Trauma, Anarchism, and Romance

Korean films about the Japanese occupation were not made in large numbers until the 2000s. Early post-war films that were set in the colonial era such as *Hurrah! For Freedom* [자유만세] (1946), *The Night before Independence Day* [독립전야] (1948), *The History of Ahn Jung Keun* [안중근 사기] (1946), *Yu Kwan Sun* [유관순] (1947) dealt with the thrill of liberation, the expectation of building a new homeland, and patriotism (HS Kim 31). In the late 1950s, state-sponsored films served to amplify Syngman Rhee's contribution to the independence movement to secure the legitimacy of his administration (HS Kim 31). After Korea was hit hard by the Asian financial crisis in the 1990s, the national film industry saw a rise in the production and popularity of historical films such as *Scandal* [스캔들] (2003), *Once Upon a Time In a Battlefield* [황산벌] (2003), and *King and the Clown* [왕의 남자] (2005) (HS Kim 34). The eagerness with which Koreans produced and consumed historical films during this period can be seen as an effort to overcome the anxiety of the unstable present by returning to the past (YJ Cho 17). The commercial success of these films allowed the directors who gained prominence through them to make films about the Japanese occupation, a topic that had never been popular in the industry. The concept of 'the Korean people' [한민족] as an ethnic group is central to most if not all films set in the colonial era, as it was what remained to unite the Koreans against the colonizers who had overtaken their nation. The films that these directors produced in the 2010s were diverse in genres but were similar in their

depiction of the protagonists as independence fighters or unrelenting victims of colonial oppression. *Anarchist from Colony* differs from this group of historical films in that it does not portray its protagonist as a dignified, solemn, and righteous patriot. Instead, it depicts him as a whimsical character and highlights his anarchism (as is also evident from its English title) which, I will argue below, proves effective in uncovering the vices of colonialism.

Anarchist from Colony is a biographical film that depicts the life of Park Yeol [박열] (1902 - 1974), a Korean anarchist and an independence activist who was convicted by the Japanese court of high treason for conspiring to assassinate members of the Japanese imperial family in 1923 and served twenty-two years in prison before he was released in 1945 with Japan's surrender. Another point of difference that the film has from other Korean films about colonization is that it is a legal drama that contains mainly the interrogation and courtroom scenes that culminate in Park's conviction. The film is notable for its portrayal of the only two Japanese persons to have received the Order of Merit for National Foundation from the South Korean government—Fumiko Kaneko and Fuse Tatsuji, Park's wife and lawyer respectively. The film's plot revolves around the romantic relationship between Park and Kaneko, a Japanese woman who was also an anarchist convicted of the same crime as Park and subsequently married him in prison.

In the film, Park and Kaneko are depicted as avid anarchists who reject all forms of government. Park's anarchism, as opposed to outright anti-colonialism, gives the impression that he is not the typical independence activist engrossed in patriotism, but one who tries to remain objective and neutral while at the same time being passionate for what he believes to be the truth. Park departs, albeit to a limited extent, from the normative, skewed power relation between the colonized and the colonizer and turns his fight into

an ideological one of anarchism against imperialism. As a result, his character avoids becoming a stereotypical independence fighter and turns into a multi-dimensional, unpredictable hero of a legal drama. In other words, his anarchist ideology allows for his fight to be read not only as an anti-colonial protest but also as a larger fight for freedom and truth. The universality of these values ensures that his fight is difficult to find fault with, which in turn aids the film's original purpose of depicting him as an important national figure who committed his life to the cause of national independence. Moreover, anarchism provides a middle ground on which Park and Kaneko can meet, share their thoughts, and strive towards anti-imperialism together. It becomes the “space of liberation for the proletariat [무산층의 해방공간]” (Baek 260), and this bond between the two nullifies the difference in their nationalities. By placing Kaneko, a Japanese, as a central character alongside Park and refraining from depicting Park as a lofty independence fighter, the film experiments with a new way of anti-colonial filmmaking. Instead of drawing on the all-too-familiar dichotomy of ‘the colonized vs. the colonizer,’ it leads the audience to naturally question the authority that victimized these free-thinking individuals (Lee and Chung 163).

Park's disavowal of interest and association with any kind of authority is understandable considering that his country ceased to exist since Japanese annexation, but Kaneko's acceptance of anarchism is more powerful in that she is a citizen of a colonizing power and seemingly has more to lose than gain by rejecting her national authority. So, what brings Park and Kaneko together as lovers despite their opposing nationalities? Cathy Caruth writes about the two lovers in *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959), a French New Wave romantic drama film directed by Alain Resnais, as follows:

In *Hiroshima mon amour* it is at the heart of the encounter between the woman and the man, between the French woman who has watched her German lover die in the war and the Japanese man whose family has been decimated by the bomb at Hiroshima and who turns out, profoundly and significantly, to be the only one able to hear and to receive, across the distance of their cultures and through the impact of their very different traumas, the woman's address. (9)

Caruth points to the importance of one's own traumatic experience in gaining the right type of sensitivity that enables one to empathize with the trauma of another. Kaneko, because of the trauma of abandonment she received from her parents, becomes the one woman who is able to share Park's ideology and accept and love him for who he is. When the prosecutor asks during an interrogation why she first went to Joseon, Kaneko replies, after an awkward pause and with slightly shaking lips which she tries to conceal with a mischievous smile, that she was abandoned by her parents at the age of nine and was made to move in with her grandmother who lived in Korea to work as her 'kitchen maid [식모].' She was only twenty years old in 1923 when she was arrested, and the way she hesitates to tell her story when she is in all other parts of the film depicted as a lively, witty, and spontaneous character implies that this is a memory that is still fresh and painful to her—it is a trauma. The seven years she spent in Korea may have allowed her to observe the mistreatment of native Koreans by her relatives and other Japanese occupiers (Raddeker 215), but the sympathy with which she processed these observations stemmed from having experienced the pain of being betrayed by her own parents.

Kaneko's parents never provided her with the parental care and affection that a child deserves. As a woman who has never experienced the protection

from parents who should have been her first authority, she has come to reject all kinds of authority that might restrain her life decisions. One other mention of her lack of ties with her parents is when Park insists that they get married in prison while they wait for their verdict, as he expects them to receive a death sentence and only if they are married can both their bodies be picked up by his family and buried in Korea. In effect, he is inviting her into his family as his wife and as his parents' daughter-in-law, and his family serves as a substitute for her parents who deserted her. As quoted above, for Koreans, Japan was "neither my father, nor a father as my mother's object of desire"; it was someone else's father who violently expelled my father and abused my mother (JG Kim 103). As Kaneko is welcomed into a Korean family, Park's parents fill the void left by her own parents and substitute them symbolically. As a result, Japan becomes for her too, the nation which "violently expelled [her] father and abused [her] mother." In short, Kaneko has come to identify herself with Koreans through her romantic relationship with Park.

But even before their marriage, Kaneko's identification with the repressed through her own trauma is evident beginning from her first encounter with Park. The film begins by showing Park pull a rickshaw that carries a Japanese man who refuses to pay him the full fare upon arrival. When Park—not yet fluent in Japanese—grabs onto the man's leg in demand for money and swears in Korean, "son of a bitch [가시씨끼]," the man beats him up, saying: "This is Japan. If you have a problem, go back to Joseon!" With no passerby to take his side, Park has no choice but to let the man go, and we see him sitting on the ground, helplessly covered in dirt. Just in that moment, an extradiegetic narration begins in Kaneko's voice reading a published poem written by Park, titled "Son of a Bitch." The poem is a work of sarcasm, of which narrator

calls himself “son of a bitch” to refer to the reality of his low social status. Kaneko is greatly moved by the poem, and when introduced to Park by their mutual friend, proposes immediately that they move in together as comrades. The poem seems to have had a big impact on her; it is likely that she immediately identified with the poem’s narrator because she also thinks of herself as lowly and has a similar sense of humor in evaluating her situation. Although she is Japanese, her social status as a woman who has no family is not much greater than Park’s, and she was fully aware of her place at the bottom of the society (W Kim 151 – 152). Her strong willingness to form a relationship with Park, coupled with the ability to suggest a living plan without consulting anyone despite her young age implies that she is without a proper family. Park, who is uninterested at first, thinking that she is one of apparently numerous women who has come to find him about the poem, is struck by her forwardness and becomes intrigued. The reason why she stood out to him is because she has not come looking for him out of curiosity but with a clear purpose—to be his comrade. After meeting Kaneko, Park tells his friend: “I am opposed to Japan’s authority but am partial to its people.” The relationship with Kaneko strengthens Park’s standing as an anarchist as well as his “cosmopolitanism” (H Cho 97), as it proves that his interest lies solely in criticizing the political system and does not stem from an outright hatred against a colonizer country. Hence, the beginnings of Park and Kaneko’s mutual understanding and love for each other are based on their personal experiences and interests. This adds another layer to their romance which is a possible ground for reconciliation between Korea and Japan in the present day.

The composition of an actual photograph that features Park and Kaneko and its reenactment in the film (Figure 1) encapsulates the many different

elements that the film wishes to highlight. First, Kaneko is seen to be reading a book which represents intellectualism and knowledge. The use of a book as a prop extends her character from just being a loving wife to being an avid activist and thinker herself. Park sits Kaneko on his lap and has his left hand over her breast as if to prove their intimacy and his control over his woman. Their unorthodox—and highly scandalous, considering that the photo was taken while they were in prison waiting for a trial—posture as a couple hints at the potentiality of the colonized to command knowledge as well as the people on the side of the colonizer. It is indeed an image that would have been deeply disturbing to the colonial authorities.



Figure 1. The photo on the left shows a filmic reproduction of the photo on the right, an actual photograph taken of Park Yeol and Fumiko Kaneko before a trial

Lee's film takes special care to avoid portraying Park as an opportunist who sought control over a foreigner woman who was emotionally damaged by

her parents—this is how the Japanese would interpret their story. Instead, the film depicts Kaneko as an independent, rebellious, free-willed, and free-thinking woman who is prone to outbursts of emotion and passion. We even see her slapping Park in the face when she finds out that he has been planning a bomb attack without telling her, demanding him to treat her like a real comrade. Park is stunned by the attack at first, but soon breaks into a smile at her daringness. Like the two lovers in *Hiroshima mon amour*, Park and Kaneko immediately identify with each other because they share the same strategy to overcome their harsh reality as the oppressed: they choose to be anarchists who defy all hierarchical authority and strive for an equal standing of all members of the society. They both have the trauma of having lost their roots (nation/parents) but refuse to be relegated to the status of helpless victims. Together, they make the choice to live their whole lives as active, self-reflective subjects. In many ways, their special bond that transcends nationality makes the film's anti-colonial message ever more persuasive.

III. The Commemoration of Independence Fighters as Repetition Compulsion

The March 1st Independence Movement [3·1 운동], despite its failure to overturn the Korea-Japan Annexation Treaty of 1910, is an extremely significant moment in Korean history for having proven the Koreans' unrelentless will to gain independence. The protestors were brutally suppressed by the colonial authorities, and while the Japanese atrocities toward not only the activists but also the Korean population in general during this period constituted another national trauma, it was also a noble attempt to overcome

the already engrained national trauma of colonization. It is also an event that fueled anti-imperialistic sentiments in Park Yeol and drove him to leave for Japan in search of ways to materialize his anarchistic ideologies (ID Kim 170). The film shows that it was also a notable occasion for Kaneko who was living in Joseon at the time. Indeed, the last courtroom speech she gives before the day of the final ruling makes clear that her unique experiences resulted in her identification with the oppressed Koreans:

Among the ideologies of Koreans, it will be difficult to get rid of the sentiment of rebellion against Japan. [points to her writings] What made me like this? In 1919, when I witnessed the March 1st Independence Movement, a spirit of rebellion against power began to arise in myself as well, and an overwhelming sense of victory that I could not call someone else's welled up in my heart. (1:38:55 - 1:39:37)

This paper takes its cue from Caruth's following argument about repetition after a traumatic experience: "Repetition, in other words, is not simply the attempt to grasp that one has almost died but, more fundamentally and enigmatically, the very attempt to claim one's own survival. If history is to be understood as the history of a trauma, it is a history that is experienced as the endless attempt to assume one's survival as one's own" (66). Would it be possible to extend this argument from the level of an individual to that of a collective (national) and use it to explain the Koreans' production and consumption of cultural texts about independence movements against the Japanese colonizers? For Korea, independence from Japan occurred abruptly and with the aid of foreign powers. They rejoiced at the survival of their nation but at the same time could not fathom exactly why they were able to survive. Like a veteran who suffers from PTSD that is rooted in the

incomprehensibility of his own survival,⁴⁾ Korea as a nation has been trying to grapple with its own “enigma of survival” (Caruth 60).

March 1st is celebrated as a national holiday in South Korea to this day, and while remembering those who fought for the nation’s independence especially when such a prospect seemed bleak is undoubtedly imperative, the commemoration may also be interpreted as a repetition compulsion of Koreans who are all-too-aware of the fact that their nation’s independence was not actually achieved by these virtuous activists but by the sheer luck that the Allies defeated Japan in the Second World War. Like the Freudian fort-da game which offers the child an active role in the sending-away of his mother and in so doing fulfills his desire to take control of the situation that he in fact has no control over, cultural texts about independence fighters and national holidays that commemorate them reassure Koreans that independence from Japan and recovery of their national sovereignty was a product of their own effort.

In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud writes about a dream that he was told by a woman, of which original source is unknown:

A father had been watching beside his child’s sick-bed for days and nights on end. After the child had died, he went into the next room to lie down, but left the door open so that he could see from his bedroom into the room in which the child’s body was laid out, with tall candles standing round it. An old man had been engaged to keep watch over it, and sat beside the body murmuring prayers. After a few hours’ sleep, the father had a dream that his child was standing beside his bed, caught him by the

4) Caruth argues for the need to recognize the “traumatic experience as a paradoxical relation between destructiveness and survival,” which will lead to the understanding of “the legacy of incomprehensibility at the heart of catastrophic experience” (60). She argues that PTSD is “not simply an effect of destruction but also, fundamentally, an enigma of survival” (60).

arm and whispered reproachfully: ‘Father, don’t you see I’m burning?’ He woke up, noticed a bright glare of light from the next room, hurried into it and found that the old watchman had dropped off to sleep and that the wrappings and one of the arms of his beloved child’s dead body had been burned by a lighted candle that had fallen on them. (509 - 510)

Noting that the father probably went to sleep anxious that the aged watcher may not be equal to his task, Freud contends that the father’s dream has an element of wish-fulfillment in that the dream was given precedence over waking-up because it was able to show the child still living (510). Once the father is awake, however, the witnessing of his dead child’s burnt body forms another trauma in him. Drawing from this text, Caruth argues that for Freud, the shock of the mind’s relation to the threat of death is not the direct experience of the threat, but the missing of this experience, and it is this lack of direct experience that paradoxically becomes the basis of the repetition of the nightmare (64). In other words, the father’s trauma would not have become a trauma if he had taken up the job of the aged watcher himself and witnessed the candle falling onto his child’s arm. It is the guilt and the shock that arise from having missed this experience that leaves a scar on his psyche.

The father’s dream is comparable to what the current generation of Koreans must face regarding their national history. Most Koreans who produce and consume texts on colonial history are not of the generation that experienced colonization first-hand. They have only heard or read about the atrocities Koreans had to face during the period, in a way similar to how the father dreams about his child whispering to him: “Father, don’t you see I’m burning?” Learning about the painful memories of one’s own people is traumatizing in itself, but what is more scarring is the fact that they were not there to prevent it or in the least experience it with them. They missed the

experience, and to draw from Caruth's argument, this lack of direct experience is precisely what leads them to repeatedly produce and consume cultural texts that materialize it, not unlike how dreams work to reenact the dreamer's anxieties. Moreover, facing history is troubling because unlike the father who exists in the same temporality as the child and hence can wake up from the dream and take actions to mitigate the damage done to the child, it is impossible for the current generation of Koreans to alter the past. The best they can do is to fulfil the responsibility for and ethics of witnessing what they missed but inherited. They can only imagine what it would have been like to have had their national identity taken away for good—hence the production of SF films such as *2009: Lost Memories* (2009)—but also must find ways to appreciate having overcome the threat of death on both the national, abstract level and the individual, visceral level which they have never directly experienced.

The fear that Koreans must live with is that, since they do not know why they were able to survive, they find themselves unable to prepare for another threat to their national sovereignty. This, added to another more recent traumatizing memory of the Korean War, the subsequent division of the peninsula, and the ongoing antagonism between the two states that are supported by different superpowers, can be said to have resulted in an increase in the desire for Koreans to immerse themselves in films that act as recurrence of their trauma—film being an effective medium for this purpose as it is far more audio-visually captivating than written texts in ways that are analogous to how dreams operate. To extend Caruth's argument, the threat of a nation's death is traumatizing not because it is not dead but because it is still alive only by chance. It is the helplessness one feels in realizing how little control one has over one's own life that leads to the trauma. Just as consciousness

is the repeated confrontation with the necessity and impossibility of grasping the threat to one's own life (Caruth 64), learning about national history is, for Koreans, a painful and necessary process of forming collective consciousness. While many would interpret celebrating national holidays to commemorate independence movements as part of the process of building collective consciousness, it could also be read as a collective denial of this consciousness for the span of that day. Together as a nation, Koreans engage in the Freudian fort-da game to reassure themselves that their ancestors' patriotism had paid off, and that there is a way to transcend the impossibility of fully comprehending death, both on the national and individual level. Such act of collective commemoration provides relief and respite to Koreans' psyche which is heavily loaded with guilt, sense of duty, and powerlessness in dealing with the preceding generations' pain.

Moreover, similar to the way the fort-da game provides pleasure to the child by satisfying his desire to take revenge on his mother for leaving him, patriotic works of art help Korean viewers vent the unresolved tension and hatred they feel toward their past colonizers by depicting them as villains and punishing them. However, *Anarchist from Colony* very consciously avoids depicting all Japanese characters as evil. By portraying some characters (Kaneko and Fuse Tatsuji, Park's lawyer) as already sympathetic to Koreans while others as slowly accepting the rationality of Park and Kaneko's ideology—for example, the prison guard who acts viciously towards Kaneko at first ends up approving her stance and even proofreads her writings—the film enlists Japanese citizens who are unassociated with the colonial authorities as not only witnesses but participants of Korea's anti-colonial movement. Also, the genre of legal drama helps to expose the unlawfulness and inhumaneness of the ways in which the Japanese authorities dealt with the Kantō Massacre.

As an easy solution that diverts the earthquake victims' anger from the emperor to a scapegoat, the Former Minister of Affairs Mizuno comes up with the idea of spreading a false rumor that Koreans are poisoning water wells and setting the city on fire that has been wrecked by the earthquake. In addition to letting the vigilantes run rampant and dispatching soldiers to participate in the genocide, he places tight censorship on the press to prevent the news about the massacre from leaking out to the public. However, the cabinet does not entirely consist of immoral characters like him; the Minister of Justice resigns from his post after confronting Mizuno about the massacre. His last words include that the truth is bound to come out and that Japan is not a barbaric society but a modern one with a legal system in place (and hence should live up to that standard). Although his resignation does not directly alleviate the pain of the Korean victims, it makes the film's message clear that the law is on the side of the Koreans and that what Japan did is clearly wrong. Even Mizuno is later shown to be conscious of the unlawfulness of his interrogation process and repeatedly asks his subordinate a question that already presumes an answer: "There has been no torture, right?"

Hence, the concept of 'the people [민족]' onto which Koreans have regressively transferred their desires to have their nation be recognized internationally as a modern nation-in-making loosens its boundaries to include those who may not be ethnically homogeneous but ideologically similar. In doing so, the film gathers more legitimacy and support for the Korean anti-colonial movement by showcasing a successful recruit of Japanese civilians who are sympathetic to their cause. Anarchism plays a key role in laying down a common ground on which people of different nationalities and backgrounds can come to identify with one another through shared ideologies rather than any fixed ethnic or national marker. The film makes clever use of

historical facts to garner the support and agreement of the audience for Park's cause, as racism, ultranationalism, and totalitarianism are widely seen today as detrimental to free, democratic society.

IV. Conclusion

This paper has examined the cinematic text of *Anarchist from Colony* to conclude that the film successfully extends the concept of 'the people [민족]' to encompass not just the Korean race but those who share their anti-imperial sentiments. Also, the film makes clear that the Koreans are on the right side of the law and implies that most members of the Japanese cabinet are guilty by the simple fact that they did not object to the plan of spreading false rumors about Koreans. Kaneko's anarchistic resistance as well as her tendency to relate more strongly to the perspective of the colonized stems from her trauma of abandonment by her parents who were supposed to provide the first positive experience of authority in life. She has come to identify herself more with Koreans than with Japanese, and the flexibility of her ideas and beliefs serves as proof that simple equations such as 'the colonized = good' and 'the colonizer = bad' are no more viable than the false rumor about Joseon people that led to the Kantō Massacre. Park's anarchism is a crucial factor that aids his connection to the righteous Japanese people such as Kaneko, as it provides a shared ground on which people from both the colonizing and the colonized countries can form bonds based on their ideologies rather than identities. Such approach strikes a sympathetic chord with today's audience who is used to the idea of racism as being unethical and unlawful.

This paper has also questioned the nature of cultural texts such as

Anarchist from Colony that depict national independence fighters. It reads the production and consumption of such works as repetition compulsion of a nation whose current generation has missed the traumatic moments of colonization as well as liberation. As a nation that does not know why it managed to survive, Korea will continue to commemorate the independence fighters in ways that bear uncanny resemblance to a fitful child that plays the fort-da game. Just as the fort-da game is an attempt to overcome a trauma and is a healing process, the production and consumption of such cultural texts is not something that should be viewed negatively. If anything, using the popular and accessible medium of film to propagate knowledge about important historical figures is laudable. But if the consumption of such films is not to stop as repetition compulsion on a national level, Koreans must have the courage to face the ultimate question of why they were made to survive and actively search for ways to maintain their survival.

[주제어] 〈박열〉, 독립운동, 아나키즘, 반복 강박, 트라우마

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[국문초록]

캐시 카루스(Cathy Caruth)의 트라우마적 각성과 생존 개념에서 영감을 받은 이 논문은 이준익 감독의 영화 <박열>(2017)을 문화 재건과 민족적 독립 및 자주권 재현이라는 민족적 상상의 일부로 역사화한다. 또한 더 넓은 의미에서 박열과 같은 독립투사에 대한 문화적 텍스트의 생산과 소비를 국가적 규모의 반복적 강박(repetition compulsion)으로 읽는다. 갑작스레 맞은 해방이 불러온 생존의 수수께끼(enigma of survival)에 대한 대응으로 한국인은 일본으로부터의 독립과 국권 회복이 스스로의 노력의 산물임을 자신에게 반복해서 인지시켜야 할 필요성을 느낀다. 식민지 생활을 직접 겪지 못한 세대의 한국인들은 마치 프로이트의 ‘불타는 아들 꿈’을 꾸는 아버지처럼 전 세대의 고통을 간접 체험할 수밖에 없고, 과거를 바꿀 수 없다는 사실은 죄책감을 통해 일종의 트라우마로 남아 반복적 강박을 강화한다. 매년 삼일절을 기념하고 <박열>과 같은 영화를 만들어내는 것 모두 이러한 반복적 강박의 산물로 읽을 수 있다. <박열>은 ‘민족’의 개념을 한국인 뿐 아니라 반제국주의 감정을 공유하는 모든 사람들을 포괄하도록 확장시킨다. 박열의 아나키즘은 그를 식민 지배를 받는 조선인이란 신분에서 일부 벗어나 같은 생각을 가진 그 어떤 배경의 사람과도 함께할 수 있는 기반을 만들어준다. 또한 영화가 속한 법조 드라마 장르는 박열의 투쟁을 전형적인 반식민지적 투쟁이 아니라 자유와 진실을 위한 더 거대하고 현대적인 투쟁으로 묘사하는 데 효과적이다. 이러한 민주주의적 가치들의 보편성은 현대 관객으로부터 즉각적인 동조를 얻는데 성공적이고, 결국 그를 대한독립이라는 대의에 일생을 바친 중요한 국가적 인물로 묘사하려는 영화의 목적을 달성하는 데 일조한다.

[Abstract]

Post-Traumatic Reconstruction in and through *Anarchist from Colony*

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Inspired by Cathy Caruth's concept of traumatic awakening and survival, this paper examines Lee Joon-ik's *Anarchist from Colony* [박열] (2017) and historicizes the film as part of the national imagination of cultural reconstruction and recreation of national independence and sovereignty in postcolonial Korea. It reads the production and consumption of cultural texts about the independence fighters such as Park Yeol as repetition compulsion on a national scale. As a response to the enigma of survival that resulted from abrupt liberation, there is a desire in Koreans to reassure themselves that independence from Japan and the recovery of their national sovereignty were a product of their own efforts. The current generation of Koreans, who have not experienced colonialism firsthand, must indirectly suffer the pain of the previous generation, just like the father in Freud's dream of the burning child. The unchangeability of the past results in collective trauma through guilt and strengthens the repetition compulsion that is manifested in the nation's commemoration of independence movements. The paper also argues that the film successfully extends the concept of "the people" [민족] to encompass not only the Korean race but also anyone who shares their anti-imperial sentiments. Park's anarchism aids this depiction by slightly distancing him from his colonized status and allowing him to be more easily grouped with like-minded Japanese people. The film's genre as a legal drama is effective in depicting Park's fight not just as a typical anti-colonial protest but as a larger fight for freedom and truth. The universality of these values ensures that his fight is difficult to find fault with, which in turn aids the film's original purpose of depicting him as an important national figure who committed his life to the cause of national independence.

[Keywords] *Anarchist from Colony*, independence movement, anarchism, repetition compulsion, trauma

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