

Intimate Empire

[COLLABORATION & COLONIAL MODERNITY IN KOREA & JAPAN]

NAYOUNG AIMEE KWON

INTIMATE EMPIRE

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Collaboration and Colonial Modernity in Korea and Japan

NAYOUNG AIMEE KWON

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*For my parents,
Myung Hae Jun and Yong Sam Kwon*

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ON NAMING, ROMANIZATION, AND TRANSLATIONS

Naming is a complex matter in colonial and postcolonial contexts. Many proper names can be read or rendered in multiple ways in Korean, Japanese, and variant hybrid forms. When we take into account pseudonyms, pen names, colonial name changes, and so forth, each name holds yet more multiplicities. For example, the author Chang Hyökchu is also known as Chō Kakuchū, Noguchi Kakuchū, Noguchi Minoru, and so on. Following one convention with consistency for all names would have been impossible in this book, and while variants are introduced at times, I have often chosen one rendering per author to reduce confusion.

Romanization of words from Korean, Japanese, and Chinese follow the McCune Reischauer, Hepburn, and Pinyin systems respectively. Exceptions were made when more commonly known conventions are available (e.g., Seoul or Tokyo), or in cases when authors have expressed alternative preferences. Japanese and Korean terms are sometimes given together with corresponding initials J and K respectively. Proper names for authors who publish primarily in Asian languages follow cultural conventions of given names following surnames. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.

COLONIAL MODERNITY AND THE
CONUNDRUM OF REPRESENTATION

In embarking on an examination of the contentious and divided modern histories of Korea and Japan, we might do worse than begin with the following: a small story just seven short pages, long forgotten but significant, of their once shared literary past. The Japanese-language short story “Aika” (Love?) appears with a byline of a colonial Korean author, Yi Pogyŏng, who is labeled as a “Korean exchange student” (Kankoku ryūgakusei). We now know that this story was penned on the eve of Japan’s colonization of Korea by none other than Yi Kwangsu (1892–1950?)—the father of modern Korean literature. In the following decades, as Korea was becoming more deeply subsumed into Japan after being demoted to colonial status, Yi Kwangsu (Pogyŏng was his given name) would soon become one of the most prominent and contested colonial writers in the Japanese empire. Yi wrote “Aika” in Japanese as a student studying abroad in the imperial metropolitan center of Tokyo. His travels paralleled the journey toward “enlightenment,” what Edward Said elsewhere calls the “voyage-in,”¹ of so many of his colonial counterparts from around the world into the heart of empire. Yi affectionately called “Aika” his “maiden work” (*ch’ŏnyŏjak*), a melancholy story about the unrequited homoerotic desire of a Korean schoolboy Bunkichi/Mungil for his Japanese classmate Misao.² The story was penned nervously in the formative years by the young boy who would quickly rise to

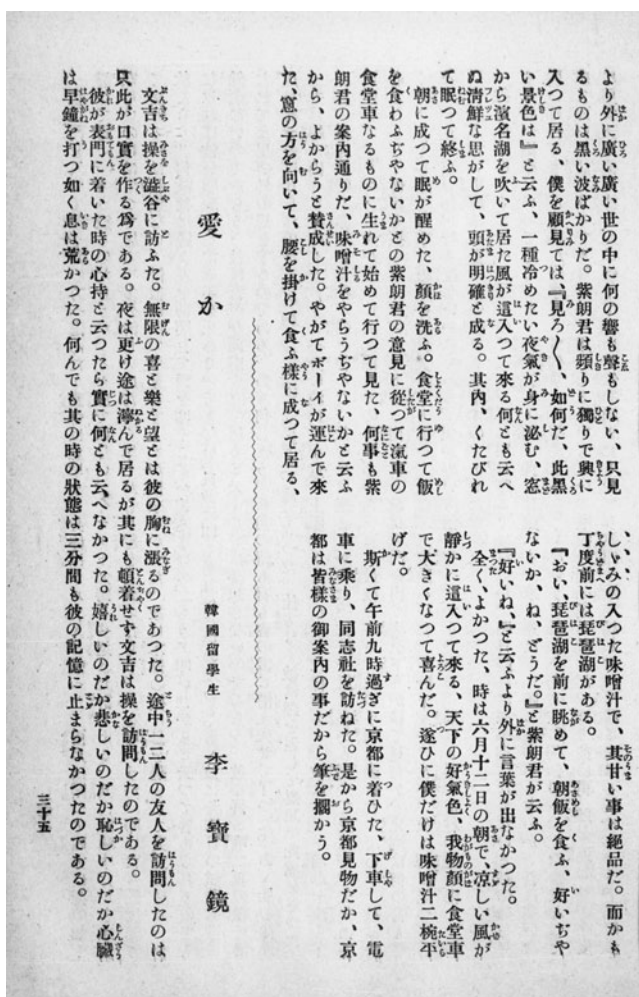


FIG. 1.1 Yi Kwangsu's "Aika" from *Shirogane gakuhō*. Reprinted from Meiji Gakuin Archives of History.

fame as the “father of modern Korean literature” and then seemingly just as quickly fall infamously as a traitorous colonial collaborator (even changing his name to the Japanese Kayama Mitsurō). This rise and fall of Yi Kwangsu or his journey toward becoming Kayama Mitsurō is still contested and little understood, and the story “Aika” takes us back to a primal scene of scandalous confluences in Korea and Japan’s contested colonial encounter at the turn of the twentieth century.

After wavering impotently in the dark, hovering at the threshold of the

| 白金學報第十九號目次 | |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| 放たれたる征矢 | 馬場久成 二 |
| 津頼の記 | 大迫孤聲 一三 |
| ○論 説 | |
| 小督局 | 光島護三郎 一九 |
| 故郷の夏 | 石原野の人 二六 |
| 夜涼車 | 韓 肇 二九 |
| 愛 々 | 李 實 鏡 三五 |
| 星狂人 | 後 夫 四一 |
| 苦 痛 | 緒 田 生 四四 |
| 散文詩三篇 | G. O. 生 四七 |
| 客中雜歌 | 高 砂 遊 子 五一 |
| こすしす | 尾 崎 義 兵 五二 |
| この男 | 神 田 秋 朗 五四 |
| 俳 句 | 伊 東 狩 将 郎 五五 |
| 俳 句 | 中 井 竹 歩 五七 |
| 今は夢よりさめぬ | 渡 邊 重 石 衛 門 五七 |
| ○雜 録 | |
| 求安日誌 | 四 條 美 穂 六〇 |
| 生 怪 者 | 在 米 都 留 六六 |
| 伊豆より箱根へ | 尾 崎 義 兵 七二 |
| 修學旅行概況 | ちんぶん 八五 |
| 隨感隨筆 | 香 山 吉 助 九一 |
| 熱海まで | 井 上 卯 花 九四 |
| 小田原の濱邊で | 夢 の 人 九五 |
| 寸言獨語 | 春 曉 夢 想 九七 |
| 吉田信乃三郎君逝く | 三 谷 隆 正 九九 |
| 中山長平君を弔す | 思 堂 百三 |
| 美術展覽會評 | G. O. 生 百七 |
| ○通 信 | |
| 仙臺同窓會、早稲田、二三會、溫交會、秋の丁未會 | 百九 |
| スケッチ會及其展覽會の摘評 | 百二 |
| 鐵血黨創立に付て | 百七 |
| 祝福一氏外諸氏の消息 | 百三 |
| 幼年黨便り | 百六 |
| ○記 事 | |
| 學院記事、庭球部、端艇部、野球部記事 | 百六 |
| 編輯餘言、廣告其他 | 百九 |

FIG. 1.2 Table of Contents for *Shirogane gakuhō* lists Yi as a “Korean Exchange Student.” Reprinted with permission from Meiji Gakuin Archives of History.

guesthouse where Misao lodges, Bunkichi/Mungil wonders anxiously to himself whether Misao would reciprocate his affections:

Bunkichi/Mungil went to visit Misao in Shibuya. Joy and pleasure and boundless hope filled his breast. Stopping along the way to visit one or two other friends had only been a pretext. Night was falling, and the street was becoming hard to see. But Bunkichi/Mungil was determined to make



FIG. 1.3 Students and teachers at Meiji Gakuin. Yi Kwangsu is standing in the last row to the far left. Reprinted with permission from the Meiji Gakuin Archives of History. Courtesy of Professor Hatano Setsuko.



FIG. 1.4 Students and teachers at Meiji Gakuin. Yi Kwangsu is the third from the right in the second row from the top. Reprinted with permission from the Meiji Gakuin Archives of History. Courtesy of Professor Hatano Setsuko.

his way to Misao. . . . He passed through the gate and walked toward the entrance. His heart was beating even faster and his body was shaking. The storm door was shut and everything was deathly quiet. Maybe he's asleep already. No, that can't be. It's only a little past nine. It's the middle of exams, there's no way he'd be in bed already. It must be that out here they lock up early. Should I knock? Someone's sure to come to the door if I do. . . . But Bunkichi/Mungil was unable to stir. He held his breath and just stood like a wooden statue. Why? Why did he come all this way only to find himself unable to make a move? It wasn't that he thought he'd get into trouble if he knocked, or that he stopped his raised fist at the last second; he simply did not have the courage. Right now Misao must be hitting the books hard for his exams. He would never dream that I am standing here now. There are only two thin walls between us, but our thoughts are a million miles apart. What should I do? All that expectation and joy melted like spring snow. Do I give up and just leave like this? Despair and pain tightened Bunkichi/Mungil's chest. He turned around and began to tiptoe away.³

The conflicted emotions contending within Bunkichi/Mungil's solitary soliloquy is noteworthy. After much agonizing, he remains stiff and "unable to stir," in an impasse to decide one way or another and "make a move." The thin wall renders his love so close, yet so far away (seemingly "a million miles away"), and exacerbates his impossible longing. Powerless to endure the silence from the absent object of his desire, Bunkichi/Mungil finally turns back, alone and dejected. The story ends with him laying himself down on train tracks, tearfully awaiting the train to speed by and put an end to his lonesome misery.

Despite its long absence from their literary histories, this story is remarkable for both modern Korean and Japanese literatures, in form and content, textually and meta-textually.⁴ Loosely based on snippets of the writer's own life, it was written in the imperial language of Japanese in the metropolitan form of the "I-novel," a fictionalized, self-conscious, confessional narrative that would become *the* canonical form in modern Japanese literature.⁵ It also prefigures important themes in the rise of modern Korean literature, not the least with Bunkichi/Mungil's final lament, "stars are heartless" (*hoshi wa mujō da*) which anticipates Yi's later masterpiece, *Mujōng* (The heartless), which would inaugurate a national canon and be considered the first modern novel of Korea.⁶

Such confluences of cultures between Korea and Japan (especially but not limited to their literatures) have long been evaded in both *postcolonial* nation-states.⁷ Although Yi would subsequently grow up to become one of the most

prominent figures (not only in colonial Korea, but in the Japanese empire at large), this work—like other Japanese-language writings by former colonized subjects—was long forgotten after the abrupt collapse of the empire in 1945, in both Japan and Korea. Only in 1981 would it become available in Korean translation.⁸ In Japan, it would not be published in an anthology on post-colonial literature until 1996, almost a century after it was first written.⁹

Intimate Empire examines the broader significance of such intimately shared but disavowed colonial pasts in the modern histories of Korea and Japan and their contested legacies in the Asia-Pacific. “Disavowal” here means the ambivalent and unstable play of recognition and denial.¹⁰ While I begin with Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalytic senses of the concept, I am more interested in how it translates to the social context of imperialism. The secret desire for the colonial Other in this story hints at the unspeakable nature of such colonial intimacies that have yet to be fully recognized or reckoned with in the postcolonial aftermath. The imperial encounter as a discomforting scene of desire (coexisting, yet with repulsion) has become familiar from other globally translated and documented colonial contexts, for instance, from Europe’s empires. The works of those who have become luminaries of the postcolonial canon, such as Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, Albert Memmi, Ashis Nandy, Marguerite Duras, Jacques Derrida, Abdelkebir Khatibi, Salman Rushdie, and many others, are wrought with famous scenes of colonial miscegenation and the resulting anxieties. Although ubiquitous in narratives of Europe’s encounters with its colonial Others, these contact zones of transcolonial misogyny still remain some of the most troubling and conceptually difficult aspects of colonization to address in postcolonial reckonings (I will return to this ubiquitous challenge in chapter 10).

The homoerotic tension in “Aika” further alludes to the particular complexity of the imperial history of Japan and the rigorous policies of assimilation (in language, culture, and political affiliation) of intimate Asian neighbors like Korea, with centuries of proximate and shared cultures and histories. Japan’s ultimate goal was the formation of imperial subjects for wartime and imperial expansions into the “Rest” of Asia in what was couched as a mutual struggle against Western imperialism. In Korea (and to a different degree, in Taiwan), the goal was said to become one with Japan, as exemplified in the slogan *Naisen ittai* (内鮮一体, Japan and Korea, One Body).

However, such a Pan-Asianist impulse was always self-divided and self-contradictory. It involved the simultaneous production and consumption of the colonized as same and yet different. This contradiction undergirds all

colonizing endeavors but took on a particular valence in the experience of colonizing proximate neighbors who were already closely affiliated—geographically, culturally, historically, and ethnically—long before the fact of colonial penetration. In such a case, the always already unstable divide between the colonizers and the colonized had to be managed closely. The production and consumption of colonial identification on the one hand and differentiation on the other wavered throughout the colonial period, depending on the empire's shifting needs and policies within constantly changing degrees of regional and global liaisons of affiliations.

In this context, many prominent colonial intellectuals, like Yi Kwangsu, were actively and rigorously mobilized for imperial agendas, and many even internalized the desire to “become Japanese” in order to overcome racial discrimination in the imperial hierarchy.¹¹ The story “Aika” anticipates the challenges raised by the life and works of Yi Kwangsu and many other prominent figures within modern Korean history and culture. It is difficult for Koreans to reconcile Yi's prominence as both a patriotic nationalist leader *and* a traitorous pro-Japanese collaborator. How does a postcolonial nation come to terms with the paradox of these seemingly incompatible and mutually exclusive, and yet intimately coexisting characteristics in someone who played such an influential role in the construction of modern Korean art and society? Yi went from penning *The Heartless*, the aforementioned first “modern Korean novel” about patriotic national reconstruction, and a draft of the declaration of independence demanding freedom from Japanese rule, to actively leading the way in espousing the assimilation of Korea into Japan (*Naisen ittai*) by the era's end. However, in postcolonial Japan, the artistic endeavors of colonized subjects like Yi, who had been pressured to stand before the public at the forefront of imperial policies, were completely erased from its history.¹² The story “Aika” and Yi's own life, along with the lives of countless other significant colonial-era figures from Korea, inscribed conflicting desires of the colonized in their collusion (voluntary or coerced) with the colonizers that neither side wanted to remember in the postcolonial aftermath.

At the height of the Japanese empire (1895–1945) and especially after the so-called Manchurian Incident of 1931,¹³ colonial Koreans were rigorously assimilated and mobilized to cooperate with Japan's imperial expansions. The Korean language was increasingly censored and a rising number of colonial Korean intellectuals were educated in Japan, wrote in Japanese, and collaborated with the Japanese in order to produce cultural works and have their voices heard. Japanese-language writings and translations by colonized Koreans were

at the forefront of cultural debates in both Japan and Korea. However, immediately following the empire's collapse in 1945, the writers and their works were put on trial (literally and figuratively) and their very existence was repressed in divided national discourses for over half a century.

This book examines the rise and repression of this controversial body of writings by colonized subjects at the contact zones of empire, and the ways in which these writings have reverberated since. The objects of inquiry are the writings of those who were on the front lines of cultural debates during one of the most contested and least understood moments of the colonial encounter between Korea and Japan, as well as the colonial and postcolonial debates surrounding them. Many of the works considered here have been defined within the rhetoric of colonial assimilation (*Naisen ittai*, Japan and Korea, One Body) during the colonial period and then in the postcolonial aftermath, as a literature of collaboration (*ch'inil munhak*, 親日文学), where *ch'inil* literally means “intimacy” or “collusion” with Japan. Rather than relying on such binary notions of assimilation versus differentiation (during the colonial period), or collaboration versus resistance (in later postcolonial assessments), this book proposes that we need to reframe the scandalous confluence of cultures under imperialism, as embodied by these texts, within a more historical term of intimacy. In this reformulation, the term “intimacy” is historically derived and translated from both the colonial-era rhetoric of *Naisen ittai* and the postcolonial rhetoric of *ch'inil*. This critical move allows us to cut across the impasses of imperial and nationalist binary rhetoric to redefine intimacy as an unstable play of affects informed by desire, longing, and affection—all of which coexisted with the better-known violence and coercion undergirding empire. This unstable play of affects was violently elided post-1945, when the rigid colonizer/colonized binary came to the fore as the organizing framework of re-membering colonial history on the Korean peninsula in Korea and Japan. Furthermore, redefining colonial collaboration as the uncanny coexistence of desire (or intimacy) along with coercion (and violence) at the scene of the colonial encounter also signifies broader impasses of the ambivalent experiences of colonial modernity.

In recent decades, pioneering scholars have begun an earnest examination of colonial modernity. In the case of East Asian studies, for example, Tani Barlow and a team of collaborators inaugurated one of today's most influential Anglophone journals on East Asian cultural productions by way of thinking through this problematic (*positions*, issue 1). This and other contributions, both coeval and subsequent, such as the later anthology *Formations of Colo-*

nial Modernity in East Asia, as well as *Colonial Modernity in Korea* (coedited by Gi-Wook Shin and Michael Robinson), stand at the forefront of a broad transnational outgrowth of scholarship wrestling with precisely what is meant by this suggestive but elusive term. For example, Shin and Robinson expressly declined to define colonial modernity at this early stage, leaving it open so as to encourage further transnational dialogue. Joining the ongoing conversation of many scholars who subsequently have been inspired by and have been building upon these important contributions, *Intimate Empire* proposes to reconsider this problem of colonial modernity as a “shared but disavowed” *conundrum* of modernity experienced in colonial subjection.

“Colonial modernity” is a paradoxical concept that is difficult to pin down. Komagome Takeshi points to the “ambiguity” of colonial modernity, its exact meaning often depending on the individual writer evoking the term.¹⁴ This difficulty is further compounded because of its ironic resemblance to the imperial apologist rhetoric of colonial modernization (Ch’ŏn Ch’ŏnghwa, Yonetani Masafumi, Yun Haedong, and others).¹⁵ This book does not conceive that the condition of modernity in the non-West is a priori different from or alternative to that of the West in its empirical conditions. Instead, it takes as self-evident with many others (Fredric Jameson, Walter Mignolo, Arjun Appadurai, Gayatri Spivak, Leo Ching, Rey Chow, Yun Haedong) that modernity is a globally shared condition, coeval and ushered in by worldwide shifts wrought by the *uneven* global dispersion of capitalism.¹⁶ It is, however, important to note that this unevenly shared predicament of modernity resulted in significant differences in the ways modernity was experienced by those who were defined *as if* they were in development and in need of catching up by external standards. Walter Mignolo has diagnosed the problem of coloniality as the constitutive “darker side of modernity,” as its unacknowledged but intimate counterpart. Likewise, this book argues that the paradox of colonial modernity emerges not because there exists an internal contradiction between coloniality and modernity, but from the fact that such a contradiction was produced and imposed discursively and continues to undermine our understanding of the true intimacy between coloniality and modernity. What are actually constitutive and coeval (coloniality and modernity) have been discursively and hege-monically severed and forced into a contradictory relationship (psychically and politically) *as if* they were incompatible and not coeval. This rhetorical move had dire consequences for those lives most burdened by it; those experiences of the colonized that were relegated into a forever distant place and time in the hierarchy of the modern world order (see Fabian, *Time and the Other*).

In this book, I redefine colonial modernity as the experience of modernity in colonial subjection, whether through actual colonial domination or the hegemonic power and occupation of the West, both real and imagined (psychic, political, economic, militaristic, territorial, etc.). Colonial modernity is defined as a disavowed conundrum shared between the colonizer and the colonized in Korea and Japan, and more broadly shared throughout the non-West, with troubling implications for postcolonial legacies into the present. Reframing our understanding of colonial modernity thus further allows us to think through intimate yet unexamined connections between the paradox of colonial modernity and the paradox of postcoloniality, as will be further examined in chapter 10.

This book considers the devastating implications of such disavowed yet intimate histories for the lived experience of the colonial modern subject and their legacies. The refusal to recognize the modernity of his or her experience violently imposed impasses and antinomies deep into the fabric of that life. The fundamental contradiction or impasse that the colonial modern subject was forced to negotiate on various levels, bodily, psychically, linguistically, and politically, is characterized in this book as a “conundrum of representation.” This conundrum of representation of the colonial modern subject will be examined using the case study of a body of imperial-language texts by colonized cultural producers. These texts reflect the condition of modernity lived in the shadows of both direct colonial rule (by Japan in the case of Korea) as well as the omnipresent threat of Western imperialism (for both Korea and Japan). These are in essence (both literally and metaphorically) translated or self-divided representations emerging out of the social context of colonial unevenness, in which colonial cultural producers—artists and writers, for example—necessarily and strategically were compelled to borrow the language of the hegemonic imperial Other in an attempt to voice themselves and to have the Self heard at the imperial discursive table in the language of that imperial Other.

The conundrum of representation via the imperial language of the colonial modern experience translates, mimics, and illuminates anew what has become a truism to characterize the modern experience at large as a “crisis of representation.” This so-called universal crisis was said to arise from “the challenge of representing new content, the historical experiences of the modern world, in the context of changing social norms about the status of art and literature themselves.” In practice, this is said to have produced works of art and literature that displayed formal characteristics such as fragmentation, stream of consciousness, anxiety, and atomization, and thus revealing a lack of faith in lan-

guage to represent “reality as is.”¹⁷ However, such a characterization was never meant to recognize the experiences of the colonial modern subject who is often relegated to the status of a mere object in canonical texts. In response, there have been numerous important interventions to document the coevalness in the modernist forms produced by non-Western artists. For example, Seiji Lippit’s *Topographies of Japanese Modernism* and the anthology *Modanizumu* (edited by William J. Tyler) have examined the case of Japanese modernism; Leo Ou-Fan Lee’s *Shanghai Modern* and *Lure of the Modern* by Shu-mei Shih examine the Chinese case; and more recently Theodore Hughes’s *Literature and Film in Cold War South Korea* and Christopher Hanscom’s *The Real Modern* consider the case of Korea. Following such important endeavors, this book asks: how would characterizations of artistic content and form translate across the imperial divide when we put the politics of the imperial language and translation at the center of the colonial modern impasse?

In other words, what is meant by the conundrum of representation here is both inspired by and translates beyond this oft-cited truism in modernity studies at large which, because of their myopic tendency toward a Western-centric view of modernism, elaborate a universal “crisis of representation” that is more about the psycholinguistic reaction to representing the fractured existence of modern life than to the geopolitical circumstances that might have grounded such a fracture in the first place. There have been numerous deconstructive critiques from within studies of European modernisms and their inherent blind spots, following such pioneering contributions as Jean Rhys’s *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Said’s *Culture and Imperialism*, and Jameson’s *Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature*. This book joins these discussions to consider the intersection of modernity studies with postcolonial studies toward another path for understanding representations arising out of the modern experience of the colonized, which are to be sure just as fragmented, atomized, and rife with anxious stream of consciousness as are the works of Western colonizers, but which necessarily take on specific and salient forms (form and content) for the colonial modern subject such as Korean writers and their Japanese counterparts at the colonial contact zones in the shadows of Western standards of value.

For the “Rest” who were modern but were denied full recognition *as such* in the hegemonic but all-too provincial logic that equated modernity with the West, modernity was a self-contradictory experience.¹⁸ In this Eurocentric discourse, modernity itself was colonized and accepted as the purview of the West, and then “exported” to colonial Korea and semi-imperial Japan,¹⁹

and elsewhere in the non-West. An instilled sense of the self as “belated” and “lacking” vis-à-vis a standard or value system set elsewhere—the self perceived and experienced as Other—is central to the colonial modern experience of the global majority, though never acknowledged as *authentically* modern in hegemonic discourses. This happens in degrees, infecting in concentric circles outward from imperial centers into the “non-West”; likewise, the “West” is not one. Dipesh Chakrabarty, in *Provincializing Europe*, for example, argues for the need to deconstruct Europe from within and without. Naoki Sakai’s ongoing interventions interrogating essentialism in multiple languages have been important (*Translation and Subjectivity* and *Traces*). Roberto Dainotto in *Europe in Theory* has critiqued the internal dynamics behind the formations of Others within Europe. In the Japanese empire, this sense of belatedness or Otherness is shared by both the colonized (Korea) and the colonizer (Japan), aligning and complicating the colonial binary relationship, in ways dissimilar to dynamics more common in the dominant European empires.

The conundrum of representation for the colonial modern subject is manifold:

1. Conundrum of (modern) subjectivity: The subjectivity and agency of the colonized become paradoxical as the requisite membership to the bounded nation-state (with its privileges) is stripped away from the colonized subject. The conundrum consists foremost in being modern yet being denied, not only discursively but institutionally and systemically, the most fundamental “rights” of modern subjecthood. Since the modern subject is invariably linked to the nation-state form, for those living under the threat or actuality of colonization, or the related predicaments of occupation, exile, and so forth, the lack or the constant fear of losing this requisite nation-state status through colonial subjection causes tremendous anxiety, collectively and individually.
2. Conundrum of language: In addition to the universal inability to represent *reality* as is through language, the colonial modern experience is further burdened by the coercive lure of the normative universality of the imperial language. For the colonial modern subject, the mother tongue is always an Other. In *Monolingualism of the Other*, Jacques Derrida begins a powerfully personal indictment starting at the scene of coloniality from the position of a postcolonial subject; however, he regrettably ends his musings by subsuming the predicament of the m(other) tongue into an amorphously broad “Universal” condition. I would like to keep in mind

the earlier parts of his critique and extend its relevance to the colonial modern subject's constant need to translate the self as well as broader concepts into and from imperial cultures. Furthermore, the question of language is intimately connected to the question(s) of subjectivity and history.

3. Conundrum of history: For those relegated to the "waiting room of history" (those without history, according to Hegel), the question of who speaks for and passes down these histories has been wrought in controversy from the colonial to the postcolonial eras (Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*). As unbelievable as it may seem, the modernity and the "timeliness" of the colonized and the formerly colonized, once deemed belated and lacking, are *still* being contested today.²⁰
4. Conundrum of aesthetic representation of form and content: Violent metaphors of deracination, transplantation, and devouring inundate the anxiety of influence experienced by the colonized in their encounter with mighty empires. The pressure to translate native content into Western forms is tremendous and has continued long after the end of formal colonial rule. The tension between viewing art as an expression of the self or viewing it as a collective representative continues to haunt the artistic productions of the colonized and the formerly colonized. It is worth pointing out that such anxieties rarely plague those self-situated in civilizational centers. For example, the modernist artists and writers centering themselves within the West blithely *borrowed* "primitive" forms and content not only without anxiety but also without any qualms about whether to give credit where due. In the colonial modern experience, the questions of translating form and content become even more complex since the self is often perceived as Other. There is a deeply self-conscious sense of alienation that emerges from the problem of translating the self as Other for an imperial or world audience in the hegemonic language of the Other.
5. Conundrum of recognition: Philosophical, civilizational, ethical, and political questions are implicated in the failure to accord recognition to the colonial modern experience as representations of human effort on multiple levels. The history of the global failure to account for these experiences persists from the colonial to the postcolonial, although involving different degrees of disavowal.

In his essay "Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors," Edward Said critiques prior claims to universality and links the declining

legitimacy of Eurocentric perspectives to what he in turn calls the “crisis of modernism.”²¹ He locates the origins of this crisis not in universal artistic formalism, but in the ethical, political, and historical failures of hegemonic Eurocentric narratives. Said argues that these narratives that have claimed to represent universal modern experiences have utterly failed to take into account the humanity of [Europe’s] various Others. This glaring neglect, he charges, occurred over and over again, despite the fact that the “alterity and difference [which] are systematically associated with strangers, who, whether women, natives, or sexual eccentrics, erupt into vision . . . to challenge and resist settled metropolitan histories, forms, modes of thought.”²² Said critiques willful blindness of such metropolitan narratives as “paralyzed gestures of aestheticized powerlessness,” which assume a “self-conscious contemplative passivity” and demonstrate the “formal irony of a culture unable to either say yes, we should give up control, or no, we shall hold on regardless.”²³ The prevailing reluctance of imperial powers to let go of their empires, territorially and psychically, and the postcolonial implications will be examined in chapter 10.

Unlike many metropolitan canonical texts, in their self-assured (although misguided) certainty of their centrality, identity, and self-sameness, the imperial-language “representations of the colonized” never had the luxury of evading their constitutive imperial landscape, either on the textual or meta-textual levels. The writings of colonized writers who aspired to address the imperial discursive space are painfully marked by the paradoxes and contradictions of empire on every level—from the context of being produced under imperial rule and being consumed across a colonial divide; it is this conundrum of representation that emerged in the barred or disavowed condition of the colonial modern encounter. It is an experience shared across the colonial divide between Japan and Korea as well as by the majority of the world’s population but which has paradoxically been relegated to the devalued status of the particularity of the “minor,” or the minority, that this book proposes to engage. It is a conundrum fully embedded in the violent history of imperial encounters, but one which has been historically marginalized (from local, regional, and global markets, as well as discursive spaces) and only seldom taken seriously as a model or representation of “human effort”—to borrow Said’s phrasing—in the global modern experience.

Taking seriously Said’s critique of collective failures of understanding global modern experiences thus far, this book asks: how then might the modern experience translate differently when refracted through the prism of the perspective

of those who had to live through it in colonial subjection? In other words, how might our collectively inherited myopia be illumined otherwise when we actually take into account those Others who have long been absented in prior narratives of modernity, according to Said's critique? Also, how might familiar key terms from imperial encounters such as "collaboration" and "translation" take on new meanings when they are refracted through the parallax lens of the colonial modern encounter shared between the colonizer and the colonized and whose experiences were both deemed as translations of a *Western originary modernity*?

Deliberately translating and defamiliarizing universalist claims to modern experience at large, this book argues that the conundrum of representation in imperial-language writings penned by the colonized writer for imperial or metropolitan audiences necessarily arises from a different sort of "self-consciousness" or "aestheticized powerlessness"—one which includes and extends far beyond the issues of literary formalism noted by Said.

Furthermore, this book examines an altogether different type of failure and blindness of insight in the colonial encounter: the inordinate labor of translation of colonial writers, embodied in the unacknowledged efforts of the colonized to translate themselves into the imperial language in an attempt to participate in the imperial discursive space. The (naïve?) hopes of the colonized to be heard at the imperial discussion table face-to-face with their subjugators, where their fates were determined, without self-determination, were ultimately crushed in the hierarchical structures undergirding empire.

The book chapters are organized around select "translated encounters" of transcolonial collaborations between the colonizers and the colonized. The question of "collaboration" is taken away from the binary rhetoric of the empire and nation (*Naisen ittai* and *ch'inil*) to reexamine mutual implications at the various scenes of the colonial encounter: the production, consumption, and repression of the so-called literature of collaboration written by colonial Korean writers predominantly in the Japanese-language for imperial audiences; the negotiations of colonial writers in their roles as translators, native informants, or (self-)ethnographers; the examination of such transcolonial coproductions as theatrical performances and roundtable discussions (*zadankai*, Japanese [hereafter J]; *chwadamhoe*, Korean [hereafter K]) between the colonizers and the colonized; and the mass media curation and reproduction of translated colonial literature and culture as kitsch objects of colonial collections, or assimilated as sites of imperial "locality" (*chihō*) in the expanding empire. These