Who has betrayed the Nation?
A Cinematographic Perspective of the Collaboration

Abstract:
Collaboration is still one of the most controversial historical issues of Korean twentieth century. The end of the Japanese domination over Korea did not entail a rectification of the past. During the postliberation, the discourse of collaboration has always reflected ambivalences. Syngman Rhee, the anti-Japanese first president of the Korean Republic, presided over a bureaucracy and a military that was almost entirely trained by Japanese. Even though, many Koreans who served the Japanese government were reinstated in key positions during his presidency, Rhee manipulated anti-Japanese sentiments as a way of mobilizing the populace for his own political interest, especially because memories of the colonization were fresh. Thus, while in the political, economical and ideological structure, the colonial influence remains, official and academic discourses mainly neglect aspects of Japanese colonialism by focusing exclusively on economic domination and political oppression.

Nevertheless, the end of the Korean War frustrated any attempt of looking over the past. The country was economically devastated and ideologically divided; therefore the political agenda threw into reconstructing the nation and reconciling the society under the myth of “resistance.” By 1965 with the Treaty of Normalization of relations between South Korea and Japan, the problem of collaboration became an official taboo.

Recently, groups of memories (movies, newspapers, magazines, academic research, etc) have started to challenge the master narratives. Thus, we can observe a complex scenario of contradictories memories that inquire into the problem of the Koreans that participated, in different ways, in the Japanese government during the colonial period. Films such Fighter in the Wind (바람의파이터, 2004) and Blue Swallow (청연, 2005) go into the problem of Koreans that has worked in Japan under the colonization. On the other hand, movies like 2009 Lost Memories (2009 로스트 메모리스, 2002) and Hanbando (한반도, 2006) portray the ethical problems involved in resistance and forgiveness.

In this ambiguous context in which converge extreme perspectives, we attempt to contribute to the development of empirical and theoretical studies on historical memories on cinema. Likewise, we endeavor to contribute with a better understanding of the dynamics of historical reminiscences in contemporary Korean society.
First of all, we will briefly discuss the theoretical issues of history on cinema. Secondly, we will introduce to the main legal and historical debates on collaboration. Finally, we will analyze the continuities and changes around this issue in the selected movies.

The films will be considered as a core of historical narratives, as a symbolic force, a tool of interpreting the past. Through the deep analysis of movies’ aesthetic, the main goal of our research is to sketch certain features that define the contemporary cinematographic pattern of collaboration.
Introduction

“A memory preserved in filmed images does not vanish, but the sheer mass of historical images transmitted by today’s media weakens the link between public memory and personal experience. The past is in danger of becoming a rapidly expanding collection of images, easily retrievable but isolated from time and space, available in an eternal present by pushing a button on the remote control. History thus returns forever-as film.”

Anton Kaes, “From Hitler to Heimat”

It is unquestionable, that films, like texts, have become essential resources of historical knowledge. History presented as documentary or fiction has opened a window onto different ways of representing the past. Movies become important tools for creating, shaping and perpetuating historical memories. Following the theoretical debate of history on cinema, in this paper, we examine the new forms that comprise the current pattern of collaboration’s cinematographic memories.

Collaboration is still one of the most controversial issues of Korean twentieth century history, and the end of Japanese domination over Korea¹ did not entail a rectification of the past. In the postliberation period, the discourse of collaboration has always reflected ambivalences. Syngman Rhee, the anti-Japanese first president of the Korean Republic, presided over a bureaucracy and a military that was almost entirely trained by the Japanese. Many Koreans who served the Japanese government were reinstated in key positions during his presidency, however, Rhee manipulated anti-Japanese sentiment as a way of mobilizing the populace for his own political interest, especially because memories of the colonization were fresh. Thus, while in the political, economic and ideological structure, the colonial influence remains, official and academic discourses neglect many aspects of Japanese colonialism, by focusing exclusively on economic domination and political oppression.

Moreover, the end of the Korean War frustrated any attempt at analysing the past. The country was economically devastated and ideologically divided; therefore the political agenda was one of reconstructing the nation and reconciling the society under the myth of “resistance.” By 1965 with the Treaty of Normalization of relations between South Korea and Japan, the problem of collaboration became an official taboo.

Recently, groups of memories (movies, newspapers, magazines, academic research, etc) have started to challenge the master narratives. Thus, we can observe a complex

¹ Hereafter, Korea refers to South Korea
scenario of contradictory memories that inquire into the problem of the Koreans that participated, in different ways, in the Japanese government during the colonial period. Films such as *Fighter in the Wind* (바람의파이터, 2004) and *Blue Swallow* (청연, 2005) deal with Koreans that became professionally successful in Japan. On the other hand, movies like *2009 Lost Memories* (2009 로스트 메모리스, 2002) and *Hanbando* (한반도, 2006) portray the ethical problems involved in resistance and forgiveness.

In this ambiguous context in which converge extreme perspectives, we attempt to contribute to the development of empirical and theoretical studies on historical memories in cinema. Likewise, we endeavor to contribute with a better understanding of the dynamics of historical reminiscences of the collaboration in contemporary Korean society.

First of all, we will briefly introduce the theoretical debate on historical memories and history on films. Secondly, we will discuss the historiography and legal issues related to the collaboration. Finally, we will analyze the symbols and elements that give sense to the narratives selected.

To guide our research some questions have been raised:

a. How do these films define collaboration?

b. Whose viewpoints do their narratives privilege or suppress?

The movies selected will be considered as a core of historical narratives, as a symbolic force, a tool of interpreting the past. Through a detailed analysis of the movies’ aesthetics, the main goal of our research is to sketch certain features that define the contemporary cinematographic pattern of collaboration.

Our main argument is that the current cinematographic memories of the collaboration display a hybrid pattern, in which converge dissimilar redefinitions of traitors and collaborators. These two sides of the same coin are unified through the idea of freeing the cinematographic narratives from historical facts, which may minimize or capitalize them.

1. **Theoretical Framework**

“There is not and there has never been a community without stories”

Barthes

1.1 Historical Memories

Since the 1960s, the academic studies on memory have acquired an importance without precedent. Influenced by Halbwach, Bergson and Durkheim, the debate on memory has been reshaped in the search of an alternative historiography. The process of
decolonization and the end of World War II raised, little by little, the voices of oppressed and subjugated others. Led by victims of Nazism, those movements created a new paradigm in the study of historical memories in which the Holocaust became the prism through which to perceive other genocides.²

By the 1980s, the obsession for the past and the culture of remembering had assumed political characteristics, especially in countries like South Korea. In this sense, public and private memory has been dissolved in the pursuit of redefining the apparently unquestionable national identity. It is historical trauma - the colonization, the war, the division, the dictatorships – followed by attempts to supercede it by the creation of a Koreaness. These attempts can be seen in the bastions that define the official policy of memory, captured in monuments, television programs, documentaries, museums and publications. This active state policy has been undergoing subtle changes as diverse viewpoints reach a significant place in the public sphere.

In Les Liex de Memoire, Pierre Nora distinguishes history – a problematic and incomplete reconstruction of the past – and memory – a perpetual actual phenomenon - like opposed events of the same process: the construction of identity. “(memory) remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived.”³ If history is a secular and intellectual production, memory comes to give it life.

Therefore, collective reminiscences can be more than selective constructions in the case of distant memories (as in those of the colonization). In other words, the acceptance of dissimilar viewpoints and levels of representation constructs and reshapes the past, in the framework of recalled culture that has been visually transmitted from one generation to another through images. There is neither transcendent nor pure memory. The past is always contingent. This problematic is what cinema attempts to interpret and represent.

1.2. History on cinema

In the last decades, the importance of fiction as historical representation and as an essential historical source has constituted a burning debate among historians.⁴ Without

attempting to answer Rosenstone’s questions on that issue: “historical films trouble and disturb (most) professional historians. Why?,”\(^5\) in this section I will briefly theorize some matters that help us to understand the scope and limit of media-memory.

Identity –memory’s counter-face- is, as Ricoeur pointed out, inseparable from its narration. It is necessarily fictional: “that dimension of narratives, symbolic, of an identity, the fact that it is constructed in the discourse and never outside, in some universe of given properties, puts the question of inter-subjective social issues in the first place.”\(^6\) It means that filmic texts take part in the construction of memory like a never-ending production of historical apprehension. The past on cinema is always an incomplete representation, dynamized through deconstruction as an eternal past-present.

This dynamic relation that molds the cinematographic pattern of memory\(^7\) has its boundaries in the logic of capitalism. Cinema as industry is the main obstacle in the dissemination of reminiscences that, beyond the dichotomy between independent versus commercial cinema, demarcates the space in which multiple narratives interact. As a result, the past’s entropy is reshaped in a political arc, where traumas, once again, return as a nationalistic prism through which hybrid memories are recorded.

2. Traitors and Collaborators

2.1 Crash of Paradigms

At a hundred years from the annexation of Korea to Japan, and sixty-five from its liberation, to remember the colonial period is still a painful exercise. The reconstructive state policy based on an anti-Japanese formal education has successfully impregnated Korean society with hatred and resentment. “nationalistic paradigms have so dominated intellectual life in Korea that have obstructed, subsumed, or obliterated virtually all other possible modes of historical interpretation. Whatever the topic – social groups and classes, political or cultural movements, governments or other institutions, individual figures, novels, poems, films, scholarship, even ideas themselves – all have been screened through a myopic nationalist lens that is as judgmental as it is pervasive.”\(^8\) Although the traumatic role of Japanese oppression is undeniable, to

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\(^7\) The cinematographic pattern is the place of stories in dispute (official memory versus counter-memories) where imagined reminiscences try to apprehend experienced memories in pursuit of a distant past

unravel the complexity of a dynamic process of colonization that involved, in varied ways, different groups of Korean society, was truncated by past’s historical distortions. From this perspective, one falls into the myth that every Korean resisted or collaborated. In other words, it is not only deny the possibility of a non-political space in which some Koreans lived beyond the logic of nationalism, but also it is considered that “Koreans who were successful in the colonial politics, economy, or society collaborated and became non-Koreans.”

The fact that this perspective has silenced the subject of collaboration, especially from the postwar period, has been intimately related to the political process of economic reconstruction. Thus, to deepen that debate could be an attack against social cohesion and national identity (based on the cultural homogeneity that goes back to the mythical foundation of the Korean state -Tangun’s legend-).

In the last decades, counter-discourse has arisen from studies framed by the theory of modernization. This paradigm generates a rediscussion of those social, political and economic issues that have been silenced, because they did not correspond with the dominant nationalistic viewpoints. In Colonial Modernity in Korea, Gi Wook Shin and Michael Robinson put in jeopardy the meta-narrative that has reduced the subject of collaboration to a few national traitors. As Koen De Ceuster has suggested “collaboration is understood as an aberration that is hardly more than a footnote in the history of the nation. The distinction between the core tradition of the resisting Korean nation and the decadent minority of collaborators is not only made obvious by stressing the latter’s small number, but also drawing a sharp line between nationalists and collaborators, who are demonized in the most vivid terms.”

Modernization studies tend to ignore the significance of traumas, in favour of the perpetuation of – in Gramsci’s terms - a common sense, through which memories are created and transmitted. However, they fulfill a vital task in cracking and satirizing the nationalistic dogma.

Far from being unique historical debates, it is true that both paradigms have played key roles in shaping and redefining popular historical recollections. Through different social institutions - fundamentally the school - and mass media, these outlooks have idealized and demystified the past.

11 Ibid : 230
2.2. Who are the Traitors?

These paradoxes have been reflected in the difficulties to sanction pertinent laws to judge pro-Japanese Koreans. One of the most controversial issues is to find a suitable definition of collaboration, because the spectrum of Koreans related to the Japanese authorities is too broad. For example: at the beginning of the colonial era, 70 Koreans out of 76 accepted titles of nobility offered to them by the colonial authorities. Also, from 1945 to 1980, several South Korean officers were trained in the military schools located in Manchuria and Japan. Moreover, during the American occupation (USAMGIK) many Korean members of the colonial staff, were reintegrated in the bureaucratic structure. Agencies such as the Oriental Development Company have simply changed their names – in this case to the New Korean Company -.

The first attempts at judging the collaborators go back to the American occupation. On January 9th of 1947 the Committee for drafting laws dealing with collaboration, traitors, war criminals and profiteers was created. The draft law defined traitors as “those who opposed independence or otherwise caused harm to the people or the nation through collusion with Japan or other foreign powers” and collaborators as “those who during the Japanese occupation period had ingratiated themselves with the Japanese authorities or those who inflicted injury upon their compatriots through evil deeds.”

The punishment for traitors went from capital punishment to a minimum sentence of ten years and for collaborators the maximum sentence was five years of imprisonment and the loss of their civil rights for ten years. In both cases, their properties could be confiscated. The law was ultimately rejected and the subject was pending until the arrival of Syngman Rhee to power.

Under Rhee’s presidency, in May of 1948, the Constitutional Assembly was created with the support of the UN to draft an Anti-Traitor Law. The law was approved and in September of the same year a Special Investigation Committee started work. After a year of investigations, 682 cases were opened, 559 were passed to prosecution and only 38 were taken to court. Finally, just 12 were imprisoned, 5 were suspended and 1 condemned to death (the sentence was never carried out).

With the outbreak of the War, the collaboration issues would disappear from the political agenda. The meta-narrative turned it into a taboo.

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Since 2004 - with the approval of the *Special Law on the Inspection of Collaboration for the Japanese Imperialism*, this issue has acquired a new impulse. In August 2005, the *Institute Research for Collaborationist Activities* published a list of 3094 collaborators. On the 9th of December, the Special Law to Redeem Pro-Japanese Collaborators’ property was sanctioned. In 2006, the Assembly created the Committee for the Inspection of Property of Japanese Collaborators. In August of 2007, the Committee decided to confiscate about one million square meters of land valued at 25.7 billion won owned by descendants of some pro-Japanese collaborators.¹⁴ That year a list of collaborators was also published that included personalities such as the assassins of Emperor Myeongseong (1895) and the novelist Yi In Jik.

Punishment of those who directly or indirectly became rich under the colonial rule has brought with it contradictory opinions and feelings. On the 18th November of 2009 two private organisms – National Affaire Research Institute and the Committee for the Compilation of Who’s Who of Pro-Japanese Koreans – published the *Who’s Who of Pro-Japan Collaborators*. Conservative newspapers, such as Dong-a Ilbo, condemned the report while progressive ones, such as The Hankoreh, agreed with it.

One of the most pressing concerns goes deep into the implications of the *act of collaborating* in order to find a more accurate definition. What is the scope of collaboration? How should we deal with indirect-collaborators? Answering these questions involves a major part of Korean society and puts in jeopardy the myth of resistance. Artists, aviators, sportsmen who, pursuing a personal dream served the Japanese government as the only option, are they also collaborators/traitors?

Another matter is related to the political cost of some hot issues such as the *comfort women* -official policies based on silence and distortion.¹⁵ This prostitution network would not have been possible without the aid of Koreans that took active role in the recruitment. Still more serious, or perhaps more ironic, should we condemn the official policy of forgetfulness? Is that also an indirect act of collaboration?

Even though the implemented laws have shown great political will, the limits to the investigations and redefinitions of betraying are imposed by the same intricate logic of external domination. In this sense, the political myopia has reinforced, to a great extent, the minimized history that is loyal and functional to the nationalistic paradigm.


3. Image and Imaginary

The objective of the preceding brief outline on collaboration is to think about it when we analyze the selected movies. To what extent has the nationalistic dogma impacted on the construction of narratives? Has it been the last stage (mobilization to the war’s policy) of the colonization as traumatic to avoid the ideologically juxtaposition of representations? How have movies defined collaboration?

In an attempt to respond to these questions and to think about them within the theoretical debate on historical memory, we will analyze in the following sections the four selected films: Fighter in the Wind (바람의파이터, 2004), Blue Swallow (청연, 2005), 2009 Lost Memories (2009 로스드 메모리스, 2002) and Hanbando (한반도, 2006); through the study of subtopics that are key variables in this debate: political versus non-political participation, reconciliation and regret.

3.1 Courage, Sacrifice, Heroism and Betrayal

Yang Yun-ho’s Fighter in the Wind portrays the life of Choi Bae-dal or Oyama Matsutatsu, who was a famous martial artist who lived in Japan from the early 1940s, where he founded the “Kykushin-Ryu Dojo,” a new and unique style of Karate-Do. As a poor Korean immigrant, he intended to volunteer for the air force just before the end of the Second World War. After failing in his mission, he became a martial artist – as a way to confront the systematic humiliation from the Japanese mafia– and a kind of Korean patriot that vindicated Korean pride through his fighting skills: I am afraid of fighting. I am afraid of being beaten and losing. But I am more afraid of surviving as a cripple than dying while I am fighting!

On the other hand, Yun Jong-Chan’s Blue Swallow mystifies the life of Park

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17 Fighter in the Wind portrays the last years under the “Assimilation Policy” and the post-World War II period. From 1931, Japan implemented the so-called “Assimilation policy” in order to turn Japan and her colonies into an organic body, the “Asian community.” (See Hyun Ok Park, “Korean Manchuria: The Racial Politics of Territorial Osmosis” in The South Atlantic Quarterly, (Winter 2000): 194). Through different new coercive laws, mobilization for the war was the main object of this imaginary body constructed under the slogans “Japan and Korea one body” and “harmony between Korea and Japan.” It is considered the most repressive period of the colonization, that strongly impacted on the construction of Korea’s colonial legacy.

18 He was born in 1963 in South Korea. He is a young director who has made only two films: Sorum (2001) and Blue Swallow (2005). He won the International Fantasy Film Award and the International
Kyung-won, a woman who fought to achieve a personal dream: becoming the best female pilot. Nevertheless, the plot does not associate the character’s personal success with nationalistic considerations. It suggests that under Japanese oppression some Koreans undertook glorious personal initiatives without adopting the role of either freedom fighter or traitor.

Unlike Baedal, her life in Japan seemed to be economically more successful than her childhood in a poor Korean town, growing up in a traditional family, with an authoritarian father who did not allow her to receive a formal education.

Choi and Park have lived under different political, economic and cultural pressures. These disparities can be observed in their respective lives in Korea as well as in Japan. Based on antagonisms between their experiences in both countries, each film reinvents the synthesis of collective frustrations versus individual goals. While *Fighter in the Wind* reinforces the myth of resistance, *Blue Swallow* undermines the ethnic discrimination issues to discuss the controversial idea that some Koreans lived beyond the political troubles of being a colony.

By reinventing history, Lee Si-Muong’s *2009 Lost Memories* and Kang Woo-Suk’s *Hanbando* suggest that the consequences of having been colonized are inherited through generations by portraying it as a “trauma.” These consequences are represented on multiple and contradictory ideological levels. Each narrative reproduces a unique constellation of historical reinterpretations of nation, identity, and oppression that can be complementary and divergent at the same time.

Traumas are mainly illustrated through “flashbacks.” Personal and historical traumas are combined in the movies. At the historical level, *2009 Lost Memories* and *Hanbando* refer to the “loss of the nation” during the latter days of the Joseon period. The national

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*Fantasy Jury Award as Best Director for Sorum in 2001. Even though his first movie was successful in term of box office revenue, the second one disappeared from the screen after collecting only 600,000 tickets.*

19 He is a South Korean young director. He won the Grand Bell Award as best new director in 2002 for his first movie: *2009 Lost Memories.*

20 Kang was born in November 10, 1960 in Gyongsan in South Korea. He is a very famous film producer and director. He started his career as a director with a successful comedy film before directing *Two Corps* in 1993. Recently he has directed three Korean blockbusters: Public *Enemy* (2002), *Silmido* (2003) and *Another Public Enemy* (2005). He won the Blue Dragon Award as Best Director for Silmido in 2004 and also he won for the same movie the Grand Bell Award and the Jury Award as Best Production. Besides which, he has his own film production and distribution company called Cinema Service which has since become the biggest homegrown studio in Korean film industry along with *CJ Entertainment.*

21 There are different theoretical approaches of trauma from a psychological as well as cultural perspective. Without going into the theoretical debate of how to define and analyze traumas, this research will consider “trauma” in terms of Rauch’s argument. He emphasizes the way that cultural works narrate trauma in terms not only of the event but also to the conditions of the work’s production and reception. It means that the ideological conditions determine why the films tend to deny or repeat some traumas. See Hirch, *Afterimage: Film, Trauma, and the Holocaust.* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004) 10-11.
idea of the dynasty’s sudden decline and subsequent colonization has opened numerous perspectives that attempt to explain the interaction and characteristics of that moment.22 *Hanbando* illustrates the night in which Ito Hirobumi entered Kojong’s palace escorted by the Japanese and forced King Gojong to sing the Treaty of Protectorate in November 1905. This is portrayed as the most traumatic and humiliating event of modern Korean history. Mixing fantasy and reality, there is a juxtaposition of characters between King Gojong and the South Korean president that attempts to prove how external powers still exercise a decisive influence over Korea’s independence.

This film recreates a parallel between the impossibility of retaining sovereignty in 1905, and the current ineffectual negotiations to reunify the country. This analogy invokes the perpetuation of external domination in the contemporary world. According to Habando’s narrative, if during the age of imperialism colonialism was the legitimate way to strengthen power, in the era of democracy domination is reshaped under the form of economic dependency. The prominent idea of a pluralist and democratic international community seems to shadow, in the eyes of *Hanbando*, new forms of colonial domination.

On the other hand, *2009 Lost Memories* returns to the assassination of Hirobumi as the defining moment of Japanese-Korean history. Ito Hirobumi was assassinated by An Chung-gun at Harbin station on October 26, 1909. Due to Hirobumi’s leading role in the design of the colonization project over Korea, it is not casual that the director gave such significance to his death. The plot suggests that if he had not been killed, Korea would still have been a Japanese possession.

Unlike *Hanbando*, *2009 Lost Memories’* does not necessarily aim to change modern Korean history, but it intends, through highlighting the role of Korean liberation fighters, to consolidate the concepts of national pride and sacrifice as key issues in overcoming the trauma of colonization. Sakamoto, *2009 Lost Memories’* time traveler, and Choi Min-Jae, Hanbando’s historian, both live pathetic lives, with no family or significant others. They are caught in a cycle of frustration, humiliation and suffering. The impossibility of solving historical problems affects their private achievements. Their self-denigration is constructed in contraposition to a stronger and apparently more successful enemy.

*Fighter in the Wind* and *2009 Lost Memories* have a common tendency to victimize Koreans that lived under Japanese domination, through melodramatic scenes of suffering and humiliation. Even though both movies show friendships that transcend

race and nation, as far as national pride or the nation itself is endangered, those emotional links are systematically erased. One of the most evident examples is, in 2009 Lost Memories, when Saigo helps Sakamoto to escape from the JBI after his arrest, but when both meet again, with the purpose of saving their respective countries they become enemies. In Fighter in the Wind, Choi loses his beloved Japanese geisha after defending himself against Japanese assassins who tried to kill him as well as his loved ones. While he promised Youko never to fight again, constant attack from Japanese adversaries make it impossible for him to keep his promise. Above all, it’s a question of self and national pride.

One of the key scenes in which this pain is traumatically reflected, product of the impossibility to escape injustice whilst living from oppression, is when in 2009 Lost Memories a parallel is created between Saigo enjoying a beautiful family moment, while the JBI penetrates the headquarters of the nationalist terrorist group and eliminates its members. Saigo is happily holding his daughter, whilst at the same time, Koreans are being brutally murdered by Japanese law enforcement agents. Finally, pain and anguish reach their peak when the boy, Min-Jae, dies in Sakamoto’s arms, while Saigo joyfully holds his daughter. Once again, the obvious contradictions of enemies versus victims and colonization versus nationalism, reinforce the traditional values upon which the Korean nation has been reconstructed.

Hanbando reinterprets the issue of collaborators creating characters that clearly represent heroes (anti-Japanese) against traitors (pro-Japanese). Contrary to Fighter in the Wind and 2009 Lost Memories, in Hanbando the main dilemma is created around Koreans that betrayed the nation to defend economic interest from other countries. The Korean Prime Minister decides to betray the homeland with a hidden agenda to defend the welfare of the Korean people (according to the last scene); thus, defending Korean sovereignty takes over as the most important goal. Apparently, maintaining Korean identity and avoiding any possibility of political or economic oppression is the government’s main duty.

Blue Swallow breaks completely with the official nationalistic vision of colonial times, demonstrating that during said period a space was created for the changing role of women, and the possibility of achieving individualistic dreams that go beyond the nation-state logic. The narrative does not deny the discrimination within a time of domination, but it tries to highlight the complexity and intrinsic contradiction that are implied by the notion of collaboration. Without reproducing the system of bipolarization, this film reflects that friendship between Japanese and Koreans is possible, beyond this situation of conflict to which both nations are subject to. For example, Kyung-won
saves Gimbo from an aerial accident, and then, Gimbo helps her to achieve her dream of flying to Korea, which transpires to be fatal. But the director shows all the efforts carried out by fellow pilots and air controllers (Japanese) in order to try and save her during the deadly storm. In all these scenes, the conflict between Korea and Japan does not compromise the previously established friendships.

One of the films greatest challenges is to show Park’s key motives for flying with the Japanese Army in Manchuria. Although she organized several meetings with important Koreans that lived in Japan, in order to obtain economic support for her flight, nobody wanted to help her. For this reason, she decided to accept the Japanese condition of flying under the Japanese flag (as proven by documentary photographs shown at the end of the movie). In this way, the film shows that obtaining an individual goal can be more important than the struggle between states, as it is illustrated in the last conversation between Kyung-won and her boyfriend Ji-hyuk while in jail: (Ji-hyuk said to Kyung-won) “Worried about people calling you traitor? ….but Koreans have not done anything for you…Go…There is no other way.

Some Final Thoughts

There is no a unique form to define the collaboration. As we can observe in the selected movies, this issue takes assorted features. Choi Bae Dal and Park Kyung Won are represented as heroes in non-political terms. Nevertheless, in the case of Blue Swallow, the exaggerated efforts to avoid any relation between her professional career and political activities, in the light of woman’s modernization - suggests, to me, the most intricate redefinition of collaboration.

2009 Lost Memories and Hanbando discuss issues of collaboration taking into account the ethical limits to national loyalty. In this sense, Sakamoto must resist - breaking strong bonds of friendship- and fight to release Koreans from Japanese oppression. The fraternity between both nations cracks after the national liberation. Following this position, but from a less challenging viewpoint, Hanbando’s narrative does not create a space for reading this matter between the lines.

Therefore, the current cinematographic memories of the collaboration show a hybrid pattern in which converge dissimilar redefinitions of traitors and collaborators - two sides of the same coin. This contingency, inherent to the studied memory pattern, is part of wider phenomenon of a remembered culture in which various social players have indirectly experienced historical trauma.
If in P. Nora’s words a distance-memory entails to a dissemination of reminiscences, in our case of study we can suggest that the diversification of interpretations has been unified through the minimization and/or capitalization of historical facts.
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