

UC Berkeley

Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review

Title

Reconstituting the Social: Transforming Institutions and Emerging Forms of Knowledge-Making in Korea, Late Nineteenth Century to 1945

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4402756r>

Journal

Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review, 1(20)

Author

DiMoia, John P.

Publication Date

2016-09-01

CROSS-CURRENTS



EAST ASIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE REVIEW

REVIEW ESSAY

Reconstituting the Social: Transforming Institutions and Emerging Forms of Knowledge-Making in Korea, Late Nineteenth Century to 1945

John P. DiMoia, National University of Singapore

Kyung Moon Hwang. *Rationalizing Korea: The Rise of the Modern State, 1894–1945*. University of California Press, 2015. 416 pp. \$75 (cloth); \$35 (paper/e-book).

Theodore Jun Yoo. *It's Madness: The Politics of Mental Health in Colonial Korea*. University of California Press, 2016. 248 pp. \$65 (cloth/e-book).

Challenging Temporal and Historiographical Boundaries

In recent Korean studies scholarship, the period falling under the label of the “Taehan” (1897–1910)—or, alternatively, the “Taehan Empire”—has generated a great deal of commentary. This brief slice of time, immediately preceding the onset of Japanese colonialism (1910–1945), has drawn interest due to its temporal proximity to the dramatic events associated with the end of the Joseon, as well as for the rich, dynamic interplay of various reforms, practices, and new ideas that characterized the period, suggesting the possibility of counterfactual, or alternate, readings (Kim, Duncan, and Kim 2006). In a span of less than three decades, Korea underwent a forced opening, similar to that experienced by Qing China and Meiji Japan, and rapidly sought an appropriate response to the challenges of empire, surrounded as it was by imperial China, Japan, and Russia (Lankov 2007; Son 2008). The enormous ferment associated with the period has attracted scholars, who see the origins of emerging forms of economic activity, cultural reform, and technological developments as already present within it, thereby providing a contrast to an earlier body of scholarship according to which the Japanese triumphed with little difficulty.

When this conflux of issues encompassing nascent categories of bureaucratic, economic, and technological activity is treated as a priority dispute—“Which country accomplished X first?”—it proves far less interesting as an analytic, and that is certainly not the case with the two works under review here. Although the two titles offer very different perspectives on their respective subjects within the late Joseon and succeeding colonial period, they share a common desire to reframe the period and to examine the rise of new forms of bureaucratic practice and knowledge-making. Regardless of whether the state is characterized as a Korean kingdom in its reform phase or an intrusive colonizer seeking to strengthen its presence, nominally a modernizing force, Korea was undergoing dramatic social and political change. In both cases, emerging forms of knowledge allowed a claim to know the human subject in new ways—whether demographically, as a social fact, or in terms of nascent public and mental health categories. New types of actors were also emerging—doctors, census workers, demographers, and police officials—whether working for themselves or on behalf of a larger body. In turn, individuals could now be measured as statistics and, potentially, in Theodore Jun Yoo’s terms, as patients to be managed, policed, and carefully watched over (Kwon 1977; Lam 2011; Ghosh 2012).

Given the possible intersections among these emerging forms of practice, and the corresponding changes taking place in the East Asian region, it is not surprising that the two works under review here draw a great deal on the legacy of Meiji Japan and its placement within a comparable (though far more celebratory) modernization narrative for Japan. Certainly, scholars have long acknowledged the appeal of Japan as a cultural and intellectual model for Asians beginning in the late nineteenth century, and Andre Schmid’s *Korea between Empires* (2002) makes the case specifically for Joseon, recognizing the power of Japan’s ideals, even with the incoming force of colonial rule. However, as is the case here with Kyung Moon Hwang’s book, the recent turn challenges accounts in which colonialism takes place without sufficient complication, and the new body of work attempts to historicize the series of dialogues taking place between Joseon Korea and Meiji Japan. For Hwang, the state apparatus provides a means of tracking a Korean (state) presence, with many new forms of practice appearing in the late nineteenth century, allowing him to focus on a subset of five related themes: economy, religion, education, population, and public health.

These topics form the basis of Hwang's discussion in part 1, comprising three chapters that constitute a theorization of the state and the accompanying structures by which it seeks to enact its authority. The key point lies in the historian's willingness to transgress temporal boundaries, and, as Hwang points out, scholars sometimes recognize this act of challenging boundaries for the period following August 1945, but seldom for the transition prior to colonialism. As he aptly puts it, "The historiography of this era... often treats changes before the Japanese takeover as either inadequate or even retrogressive, and hence predictably overwhelmed by the rampaging rationality, efficiency, and coerciveness of Japanese rule" (11). In contrast, Hwang examines what he labels "extended transitions" (11), with the trajectory of these activities crossing the boundary from Korean to Japanese rule, and perhaps holding implications for the postcolonial South Korean state (1948–). This is a project linking back to his previous work, *Beyond Birth: Social Status in the Emergence of Modern Korea* (2005), which looked at the fracturing of the previous order and the arrival of new forms of social mobility.

Constructing a "Genealogy of Madness"

In keeping with the theme of "extended transitions," Yoo's *It's Madness* focuses on colonial psychiatry and its role as a form of policing, with the broad category of "deviant behavior" informing much of the discussion. Although the work is centrally positioned in the colonial period, it extends its considerable reach to include implications across lines of periodization, especially with respect to an earlier shamanism derived from Joseon, as well as more widespread applications of "mental health" as a rubric after 1945. In fact, Yoo frames his narrative by opening with the recent social problems of South Korea, citing the 2008 arson incident at Namdaemun, in which the individual responsible for starting the fire suffered from *hwabyeong* ("fire disease"), along with the increasing prominence of suicide as a phenomenon.¹ The second of these, in particular, has generated a good deal of commentary, as it contrasts sharply with the popular image of South Korea as a developmental success story, and touches on more recent debates about the need for greater provisions for social welfare. The developmental story of economic success no longer proves sufficient, and quality-of-life issues have moved to the foreground.²

For Yoo, the use of the present allows for a critique of the coordination of government policy, as well as the opportunity to raise one of his central themes: the relative lack of

enthusiasm for Western psychotherapy and psychiatry among Korean patients, an attitude deeply “entwined with the legacy of Japanese colonialism and Korea’s dramatic encounter with modernity” (6). This lack of interest holds true until recently for source materials and the secondary literature as well, with Yoo noting the lack of archival holdings at a number of Korean hospitals. As a means of addressing these problems of documentation, he offers the analogy of a palimpsest, whereby older models or understandings of “madness” remain as a trace, even as they are replaced by more modern practices taking over, with these characterized by “medicalized language, systems, and ideologies” (11). In this respect, Yoo’s work embraces a diversity of forms of practice in constructing its genealogy, drawing on (Korean) folk culture, traditional Chinese medicine, and a Westernized approximation of psychiatry (Yum 2014).

In approaching this eclectic set of practices, Yoo invokes a consciously broad “genealogy of madness” as his narrative trope, acknowledging that the paucity of sources in some cases makes the task challenging. Still, this approach allows him to argue across the colonial period and reach much closer to the present, accounting for what the most recent Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) refers to as a “cultural syndrome,” a disease or syndrome associated with a specific demographic, typically situated within a larger population. In the Korean case, one such cultural syndrome is *hwabyeong*, serving as a locus for the discussion of various ideas about health and mental fitness. Moreover, this appeal to culturally-bound explanations matches an increasing trend within the human sciences, as well as the history of medicine, to recognize the role of a significant cultural component to disease and illness, which is often inseparable from the somatic component, or at least difficult to distinguish. Although Yoo is not claiming a radical incommensurability between the two, he holds out for a heavily mediated relationship between health and the practice of medicine—in this case, the psychiatric profession and its relationship to one’s mental health—as specific to populations of Koreans and Korean Americans (Hart 1999).

Moreover, Yoo’s aims fit within a set of trends for the literature of the East Asian region, where histories of medicine, the body, and the mind are the focus of increasing attention. Not surprisingly, China has been dominant to date, with major accounts such as Sean Lei’s *Neither Donkey Nor Horse: Medicine in the Struggle over China’s Modernity* (2014) and Bridie Andrews’s *The Making of Modern Chinese Medicine, 1850–1960* (2015a) serving as just two recent examples (see also Andrews 2015b). In addition, several recent dissertations, such as

those by Nicole Barnes (2012), Wayne Soon (2014), and Mary Brazelton (2015), will further enrich this growing body of literature, especially on the question of the contributing role of biomedicine in East Asia. New topics encompass the role of medicine and drugs within the Japanese Empire (Kingsberg 2013), moving to include Republican China as it met Japan in conflict (1931–1945), and, finally, the subsequent transition to the PRC in the late 1940s (Gross 2016). In brief, medicine serves as a useful lens for historians, both because it holds interest in itself, and also because of its wider cultural implications for the contested formation of East Asian polities.

The same observation holds true for the psychological sciences, with Akihito Suzuki of Keio University having offered up a number of case studies from the extensive archives of his Japanese doctors and their patients. Karen Nakamura has also sought to document present-day Japan in this respect, and Janice Matsumara has further contributed in this regard. More recently, China and its vast overseas population(s) have received scholarly attention, with Harry Yi-Jui Wu and Wen-Ji Wang organizing a special issue of *EASTS (East Asian Science, Technology, and Society)* devoted to transnational Sinophone cultures, titled “Transnational Psy Sciences in East and Southeast Asia” (2016), and Emily Baum’s 2013 dissertation covering the Republican period up until 1938 in mainland China. This wider regional attention is important as background context, even as Yoo’s work remains the first English-language effort to tackle the phenomenon for Korea specifically (Yum 2014). In general, a growing recognition of, and grappling with, problems of the body and the mind and conceptions of social deviancy or criminality were issues central to these early twentieth-century East Asian societies, especially in terms of selecting from the diverse toolkit provided by Western psychology and psychiatry.

To bring the discussion back to Hwang, and to place his volume alongside Yoo’s, these remain distinct works, with different trajectories, but they touch on a set of common themes concerning the advent and ambivalent experience of a Korean modernity that preceded the arrival of colonialism. With Hwang, we see the Taehan state reaching out tentatively and beginning to categorize its citizens, starting to adopt many of the features of a formative bureaucracy informed by a nascent, quantitative social science: this includes features such as registration, demography, and public schooling. More importantly, as Hwang emphasizes, the 1910 periodization becomes far less important as a corresponding marker. If it represents the onset of colonialism, it connotes neither a complete rupture nor a remarkable change, thereby

avoiding what the author categorizes as the danger of “playing an absolutist game” (11). In turn, Yoo marks the transition to the modern not through the state, but in the move from the shaman to the psychiatric clinic, even as this transition is deeply unsettling and clearly shaped by the exigencies of the colonial experience. In both cases, the changes taking place are of a lengthy span, incremental, and marked by the large-scale political transitions associated with the Korean Peninsula.

Reframing the State

Who are Hwang’s interlocutors, and which bodies of literature does he address in constructing his argument? As noted previously, the work emerges in part from his first book, concerning family, birth, and social mobility, a set of concerns he shares with other Koreanists, such as Eugene Park in his *A Family of No Prominence: The Descendants of Pak Tōkhwa and the Birth of Modern Korea* (2014). Hwang is also among a generation of scholars interested in complicating early modern Korea, focusing on its relationship to the modern, especially leading into colonization. In noting that the formation of a modern national identity preceded colonization, moreover, he engages with the language of figures such as Max Weber and Michel Foucault, but one suspects he might also sympathize with JaHyun Kim Haboush’s *The Great East Asian War and the Birth of the Korean Nation* (2016). In her hugely ambitious book, Haboush argues for the placement of a Korean nation beginning in the late sixteenth century, even while recognizing the degree of controversy this may cause.

Although Hwang does not hold precisely the same set of ambitions as Haboush, his interest lies in similar territory—that is, in complicating any notion of the “modern” that limits its application to Western models, or to that of Meiji Japan. With this start point, he hopes to show the mechanisms of the state in carrying out its modernizing impulses over the long term, a collective body that he characterizes as “an increasingly assertive, yet tempered regulatory state” (xii). In some sense, this gesture is familiar, especially when Hwang speaks of common forms of mobilization such as “taxation and appropriation” (xii), the types of policies typically emerging from early modern states. However, when he makes a claim for a dynamic state, one with a “leading role in forging momentous change” (xii), he enters new territory, especially in the later chapters. This move presents the Joseon state as active—not simply imposing its order, but also

intervening, and ultimately driving, the forces of change in the direction of a modernizing impulse.

*Theorizing the Early Modern in East Asia*³

Given the centrality of the state to Hwang's argument, it should not be surprising that he spends more than a third of his content laying out its terms, beginning with the introduction and continuing through the entire first section, which consists of three chapters. His focus concerns the mechanisms by which the state managed to persuade individuals to "do things," thereby gaining an active role for itself and strengthening its legitimacy. In locating the terms of this debate in the (Korean) early modern, the author engages with a historiography that has neglected to consider the "modern" as a long-term development, often rejecting Joseon as a fit for these terms, and equally, opposing "outright any association of colonial rule to modern" (11). In other words, the "modern" derived from Japan and came only with an abrupt and recent form of intervention. In this respect, economic historians come in for scathing criticism, as they rely on colonial statistics and accounts, tending to highlight the contrasts before and after 1910. Throughout, Hwang articulates a more nuanced conception of the modern, one in which the Confucian state already contains within itself many of the bureaucratic routines and practices needed to establish and perform its legitimacy, especially through those more often attributed to the colonizer.

The crux of Hwang's initial setup takes place in chapter 3, "Constructing Legitimacy" (86–115), where the art of Confucian statecraft, especially the means by which the apparatus reached out to the population, is presented. In part, the chapter is about the emerging language of address between state and population, and the terms used to create and nurture this formative relationship. The chapter really takes off, however, when it addresses the campaigns and large-scale rituals that took place under the Taehan. With a detailed consideration of the late nineteenth century, Hwang argues that there are numerous parallels between this mobilization activity and the subsequent efforts put forth by the colonial state. This account proves fascinating in its comparative dimension, especially for the period of "cultural rule" (1919–1931), with its relatively free approach, and the embrace of Korean "tradition," constructed or otherwise. As the author points out, the parallels between these types of gestures, with colonial Japan frequently

echoing the practice of late Joseon Korea, make for “an extension of the legitimating rationalities of the preceding dynasty” (115).

The nuances of the argument take on a sharper focus with the shift to part 2 of the volume, “Rationalizing Society,” which contains five chapters that each take on a particular feature of the turn to modernity. For chapter 4, on economy, Hwang identifies his targets specifically, singling out historian Carter Eckert’s efforts to prioritize “the industrialization of the 1930s, and especially... the intensive mobilization for Japan’s war effort from 1938 to 1945” (120–121) as the main driving forces. Hwang’s argument here is subtle, first acknowledging that the figures support the notion of a relatively weak Taehan economy, one that ultimately could not fend off the voracious predations of imperialism. Instead, he opts to look at state efforts to promote developmentalism, here placing an emphasis on the “construction of... transportation and other infrastructure” (132) as essential to survival.⁴ The weight here lies less on the criterion of success or failure, and more on the performative gesture of the various plans and schemes sketched out as part of an overall strategy of promoting national well-being.

In other words, Hwang is not trying to make an argument for the ultimate success of the Taehan state—essentially, a counterfactual reading of affairs; instead, he shifts the grounds from “success” to the level of ideas. Here, the notion of “the growing mobilization and administrative powers of the state” (119) coincides roughly with the beginnings of the broader notion of an economy, certainly in terms of an identifiable measure, something quantifiable in which the state might intervene, and, in turn, by which its effectiveness might be evaluated or judged (Levy 2012). In positing the Joseon state as active, aware, and dynamic, Hwang is careful not to draw “a straight line between the end of the colonial period, much less the end of the nineteenth century, to the end of the twentieth” (122). Rather, he seeks to understand how using this analytic frame served to reshape the modern state and perceptions of the economy (Bouk 2015; see also Porter 1996). In this sense, there are ties between the dates just mentioned, although they have to be carefully qualified, and Hwang points on numerous occasions to the parallels between the 1890s and the 1960s, both moments of national crisis, and, in response, to corresponding forms of state mobilization.

This comparison proves fascinating, as it invites recognition of two distinct, yet similar, moments of national renewal, while taking care not to suggest the larger trajectory of a teleology. Hwang’s argument straddles a fine line here, and it works in large part through the careful sifting

of evidence, first noting the impulse toward exploring a new practice or type of reform, and then teasing out the implications of that new practice through subsequent iterations. Again, this identification of possible parallels is motivated not by the establishment of priority for Koreans, but by looking at how successive regimes have each tried to diminish or limit the impact of what came before. In this sense, the larger project of the book becomes a Joseon reclamation effort, an ambitious attempt to sketch out a much longer, and presumably still ongoing, Korean project of modernity, one dating to at least the mid-nineteenth century, if not earlier. Although Hwang's focus rests largely on the domestic, as well as on the Korea-Japan dynamic, this argument noting the "early" roots of certain practices works well with other scholarship for the region, recognizing the emergence of "modern" questions as early as the seventeenth century for specific areas of inquiry.

Questions concerning the management of people and their moral cultivation and education are taken up in the remainder of the book (chapters 5–8), which covers these subjects along with public health, in the closing chapter. If Hwang does not necessarily push the timeline as ambitiously as just stated, the thrust of these chapters clearly lies in the late Joseon state setting its mandate, one that in turn gets picked up by the colonial state. These are some of the most fascinating chapters for a modernist, as they assiduously document the emergence of bureaucratic practice, as well as the underlying epistemological assumptions of newer forms of management and social control. The volume's stated goal of situating and presenting an earlier Korean modernity is more than satisfied in its second half, and, if anything, the result is a focus anticipating a colonial period offering a dense hybridization of Showa ambitions with Korean innovation.

Registering, Molding, and Managing Bodies and Minds

Hwang's comparison of late Joseon with the mid- to late 1960s feels appropriate in the context of his discussion of education, population management, and public health, especially in terms of acute moments of national crisis and corresponding efforts to consolidate national institutions as part of a survival strategy. For that matter, even the late 1940s might figure here as well, as the emerging South Korean state certainly had its initial burst of enthusiasm prior to the Korean War. In any case, Hwang documents the Taehan efforts in these respective areas and, in each case, moves to the corresponding colonial mobilization to offer its form of legitimating

practice. Collectively, the force of these efforts proves to be one of appropriation, as the Japanese borrowed, adapted, and continued by building on the reforms and practices of the late nineteenth century. If Hwang makes this case convincingly, he also carves out a case for a much-needed look at Korean modernity, even as there are likely distinct forms of practice, and multiple “Koreas,” contained within such a project.

Tracking and Policing: Bodies and Minds

These chapters intersect nicely with our discussion of Yoo’s work, as Hwang ends with biopolitics and bodies. Hwang’s material on public health draws from comparable work in the region, including that of Ruth Rogaski on late imperial China (2004), Sabine Fruhstuck on Taisho and Showa Japan (2003), and, for Korea, Shin Dong-won (2004) on the role of hygiene and biomedicine, particularly through the German influence of major figures such as Robert Koch and Rudolf Virchow. Hwang emphasizes the echoes of colonial practice once again, and here, we also pass through Taiwan quickly in the person of Gotō Shinpei, famous for his stint as governor-general, and also trained as a medical doctor in Germany (Liu 2008). The details of cholera and efforts to curb the transmission of sexually transmitted disease (STD) are interesting, but what proves more substantial are the links forged between the 1890s and the second decade of the twentieth century, and shortly thereafter.

These repeated references solidify Hwang’s claims to parallels between late sovereignty and early colonialism, if we may use this vocabulary, and provide a convenient means of bridging to Yoo’s work, which is occupied primarily with the colonial and postcolonial. If Yoo proves less concerned with the state per se, and focuses more on the establishment of a discipline and its associated institutions, the Japanese presence nonetheless looms large in *It’s Madness*, especially in the later chapters. As with many comparable histories of psychiatry, the cultural component figures prominently, and the author invests considerable time in structuring a dialogue between a variety of emotional states (or an “emotional regime”) deemed unique to Korea and the rough counterparts to those states in the nascent, fluid, psychiatric lexicon. In this respect, chapters 3 and 4, covering these states and emerging forms of social pathology, offer the core of the work, investigating Japanese efforts to police Koreans and clearly anticipating postcolonial efforts as well.

In outlining this position, Yoo cites Arthur Kleinman, well known for his work on China and the mental health profession, who points to the problems inherent in the DSM, as indeed there is a rich literature on the subject with reference specific to the West.⁵ However, for Kleinman and medical anthropologists, the issue becomes even more acute in the context of non-Western societies, where the DSM categories tend to be imposed from without, underscoring a conspicuous power difference. A “more reflexive cross-cultural psychiatry that is multidisciplinary in its approach” (10), on the other hand, would allow for a dynamic interaction among factors such as the body, the mind, and the cultural context. Yoo leans toward this second model, as it allows for a wider take on the role of Korean culture as Western psychiatry began to make its presence known, whether through missionaries, colonialism, or in other forms. In other words, the transition process includes ample room for shamanism and other forms of practice, recognizing their significance within the dialogue.

In keeping with this strategy, the content bridging the transition to the colonial occupies an estimated third to half of Yoo’s work, building the case for an incremental move to understand and incorporate newer models of practice. This material proves enormously rich, not just for the history of psychiatry, but also for the accompanying political structures in which it is embedded, including the Western missionary model, the late period of Joseon rule, and the soon-to-arrive colonial authority. A Korean psychiatric practice, whatever it is to become, emerges from a conversation taking place amid this nexus of forces, with Korean practitioners included in the mix as well. For the external parties, the sources provide a case study in close reading, as a good portion of this material was originally gathered under the umbrella of ethnographic study, and also under colonialism, where this often meant documenting from a top-down perspective.

In this respect, Yoo’s work negotiates the precarious dynamic between study and constraint—or, as he puts it in chapter 1, a continuum determining the extent to which a site would become primarily a “therapeutic or [a] custodial institution” (71). For much of the first decade of colonial rule, psychiatric medicine strived to become the first of these, especially as missionary hospitals continued to operate, and as bureaucratic takeover by the Japanese involved a lengthy process. In the aftermath of the March 1st movement, an independence campaign involving mass arrests, Korean patients with mental health issues interacted with hospitals on an outpatient basis, partly due to financial concerns. As Yoo notes, this was in contrast to the treatment for chronic diseases such as leprosy, where confinement in a physical space provided a

convenient policing solution, resulting in the famous colony at Sorok-do. The difficulty of defining psychiatric categories, along with the challenge of raising funds for institutions, kept colonial psychiatry at the level of a loose constellation of institutions as late as the mid-1920s.

Spanning “cultural rule” (1919–1931) in the standard periodization, and intersecting with the transition from Taisho (1912–1926) to Showa (1926–1989) in Japan, this period is the focus of the book’s first core section. Colonial authorities had to decide how to police the subject population and, in particular, how rigidly to define and maintain newer categories pertaining to perceived forms of social deviance. Jin-kyung Park of Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (HUFS) has also written of the intersections between criminality and Korean subjects, especially in terms of women who committed acts of violence. For Yoo, this type of behavior represents one problem among many, and his primary interest lies less in the Foucauldian project of policing, and more in how this emerging world of policing and constraint was expressed and felt by Koreans in the encounter with new actors and forms of discipline, whether in the form of their behaviors, or even in terms of their cultural expression (for example, through literature). By chapter 3, with its focus on emotions, Yoo has begun to flesh out this intricate cultural history as a taxonomy, recognizing that some saw these new emotions as liberating, while others saw them as potentially debilitating.

This embrace of the nuanced continuum of emotional expression comprises the substance of chapter 3 and provides a bridge to chapter 4, in which the expressions of inner anguish take a more publicly visible form, as Yoo focuses on crime, suicide, and a comparable range of behaviors. In keeping with the argument, his concern here lies with understanding suicide as a public phenomenon, especially as depicted and disseminated in the popular press. In this sense, the chapter also references a project of translation, offering a means of comparing an older vocabulary—one borrowing heavily from a largely indigenous, folk tradition—and a much more recent medicalized set of categories. The recognition that these two sets of terms might be very different runs throughout, and the chapter closes by noting a resistance by some Koreans to the medicalized language, or at least certainly a desire to pose their own alternative understandings.

As a whole, the project of the volume proves eclectic, with Yoo documenting the broad range of discursive responses as the colonial period took hold, and as the types of behaviors previously unnoticed or generally tolerated came within the medical purview of the colonizer. Still, the process by which this transformation took place is presented as a dialogue, and the brief

concluding section (142–153) summarizes a famous 1933 case of a “headless infant,” one involving an attempt to resolve the matter as a criminal procedure. This narrative fits well within the larger themes, as we see the newer language of medicine and criminality offered as frames, but, as Yoo points out, the solution to the murder—ultimately resulting in the arrest of a local shaman—came only when police attended to the culture of popular rumors as a vital clue (Lim 2015; see also Asen 2016). The dynamic interaction between the forces of popular rumor and a more rigid notion of biomedicine points ahead to the postcolonial and, in a sense, the period after 1945 constitutes a major preoccupation for the author, even as he never fully engages with it. At least suggestively, the volume indicates that the present-day lack of engagement in South Korea with Western psychiatry has much to do with the colonial legacy and its unsettling effects.

Knowledge-Making: The Colonial and the Comparative (1931–)

This last observation suggests an incisive critique of present-day South Korean policies regarding mental health and social welfare and, equally, one based on a sharp rebuke to the colonial legacy of such practices, with its roots embedded in various forms of policing. If both works take this style of temporal reframing as a major priority, the effect is thoroughly convincing, removing any notion of a model in which Japan stands as the arbiter of knowledge practices and simply imposes its ideas. For Hwang, the Japanese state is an appropriator, consistently echoing and conducting “new” campaigns during the 1920s, while replete with the language and themes of the late nineteenth century (Henry 2014). For Yoo, colonial psychiatry frequently found itself at a loss, uncertain of the Korean population and perhaps even a bit wary, especially following the events of 1919. While the tendency toward policing had risen by the late 1920s, the style of treatment was still more hands-off than draconian, even as use of a newly medicalized language became more widespread.

Both Yoo and Hwang break new ground in tackling these subjects. While there is a small body of work in English concerning medicine, the body, and psychiatry—including dissertations by Sonja Kim on fertility and reproduction (2008), by Jin-kyung Park on colonial medicine and women (2008), by Soyung Suh on traditional Korean medicine (2008), by Jane Kim on cholera (2012), and by Jennifer Yum on post-1945 psychiatry (2014)—it is just beginning to appear in published form, meaning that this represents a space with enormous growth potential. As noted throughout this review, although the two authors are preoccupied with the colonial, raising post-

colonial questions figures prominently in their thoughts, especially for Yoo. Even when it is not discussed explicitly, the post-1945 liberation period hints to practices tested and established much earlier, and, again, Hwang returns frequently to his analogy between the late 1920s and the early 1960s. The possibility of generating post-colonial issues holds great potential for developing the field for East Asia, framed here primarily as a dyad between Korea and Japan, with China perhaps implicit as a regional presence.

This East Asian story holds the potential to begin pushing Korean studies beyond its comfortable frame as a nation-centered story, and, indeed, many in the field have been calling for a global Korean studies, or at least one that is more transnational in its focus and in terms of the types of question with which it engages. In keeping with such an impulse, I want to suggest that comparative (especially colonial) cases in Southeast Asia might make a productive basis to compare with the Korean example for medicine and psychiatric practice. For example, Vietnamese medicine sometimes appears alongside the Korean and Chinese examples, in part because of the shared Sinocentric heritage, and related arguments about the incremental process of indigenization of *materia medica* (Monnais, Thompson, and Wahlberg 2012). Along with Vietnam, I would also nominate as objects of study other locations in Southeast Asia, potentially including the Philippines and Indonesia, especially for colonial history and the complicated relationship with biomedicine.

To be clear, this suggestion goes potentially well beyond the projects undertaken by Hwang and Yoo, and I do not want to engage in the exercise of evaluating a book on terms other than those through which it frames itself. Instead, I am suggesting that the collective project undermines the 1910 periodization line and, at least potentially, hints at the prospects for doing something similar after 1945. If that second project becomes part of the agenda, then it is fair to place South Korea (and the north) in this context, creating a dynamic tension between a longer history and the mid-twentieth postcolonial story of emergence, itself a narrative with many problems. By looking at the two Koreas in the context of their Southeast Asian neighbors, there are many insights to be found in a comparative context, even as the national story remains rich and worthy by itself. This is also to recognize that the two Koreas have taken numerous forms of knowledge practice from prior Korean history and mobilized them in their own respective bids for legitimacy, a story still being worked out in the historiography (Hong 2015; Young 2015).

As periodization represents a fundamental intervention on the part of these two works, the other major contribution comes in the form of the cultural component of knowledge production, not just for Yoo's investigation of psychiatry, but also for many of the emerging bureaucratic practices addressed by Hwang. Although these are works clearly framed as Korean studies, they have much to say to East Asianists, and even more so to anthropologists, STS (Science, Technology, and Society) scholars, and history of science scholars, all for whom knowledge production in the non-West has become a topic of increasing interest (Frumer 2012; Marcon 2015; Drixler 2013). For too long, modernity has been the domain of a Europe-centered narrative, and while this is changing, the challenges deriving from sites including South Asia and East Asian studies remain at a remove for much of the academy because of their positioning primarily within existing area studies departments. In crafting this vision of a Korean narrative where modernity begins possibly in the sixteenth century, and where colonialism involved a dynamic engagement between Japan and Korea, Hwang and Yoo have offered readers an ambitious challenge: one directed to Korean studies, but also one also carrying its implications far beyond.

John P. DiMoia is associate professor of History at the National University of Singapore (NUS). He thanks the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science (MPIWG) and its generous support for the project "Demographic Regimes" through Department III, under which this review was written.

Notes

- 1 This refers to an incident in which arsonist Chae Jong-gi set fire to Seoul's Namdaemun Gate on February 10, 2008.
- 2 See recent work in Korean studies, such as that of sociologists Paul Chang (Harvard) and Andrea Kim Cavicchi (UCLA) on marriage and family (in progress) and Hyunjoon Park (University of Pennsylvania) on Korean families and education (2008). See also the work of Jaeun Kim (2016). In terms of establishing connections to the present, a great deal of new work in the sociology of Korea nicely complements the historical work for earlier periods (see, for example, <http://i.umich.edu/ncks/news-events/events/conferences---symposia/perspectives-on-contemporary-korea/perspectives-on-contemporary-korea-2016---korean-families-in-eco.html>, accessed October 8, 2016).
- 3 The term "early modern East Asia" has begun to appear with increasing frequency at major conferences, like that of the Association for Asian Studies (AAS).
- 4 Koreanists might want to look more closely at the history of technology, especially the dense technopolitics of infrastructure and large-scale technologies (see Winner 1980).

- 5 There is now a Chinese Classification of Mental Disorders (CCMD), a Chinese-language equivalent to the DSM, with its own attempt to develop a taxonomy specific to Sinocentric culture.

References

- Andrews, Bridie. 2015a. *The Making of Modern Chinese Medicine, 1850–1960*. Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press.
- , ed. 2015b. “The History of Chinese Medicine.” Special issue, *EASTM (East Asian Science Technology Medicine)* 41.
- Asen, Dan. 2016. *Death in Beijing: Murder and Forensic Science in Republican China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Barnes, Nicole. 2012. “Protecting the National Body: Gender and Public Health in Southwest China during the War with Japan, 1937–1945.” PhD diss., University of California, Irvine.
- Baum, Emily. 2013. “Spits, Chains, and Hospital Beds: A History of Madness in Republican Beijing, 1912–1938.” PhD diss., University of California, San Diego.
- Bouk, Dan. 2015. *How Our Days Became Numbered: Risk and the Rise of the Statistical Individual*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Brazelton, Mary. 2015. “Vaccinating the Nation: Public Health and Mass Immunization in Modern China, 1900–60.” PhD diss., Yale University.
- Chang, Paul Y., and Andrea Kim Cavicchi. In progress. “Claiming Rights: Organizational and Discursive Strategies of the Adoptee and Unwed Mothers’ Rights Movement.”
- Cohen, Lawrence. 1998. *No Aging in India: Alzheimer’s, the Bad Family, and Other Modern Things*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Drixler, Fabian. 2013. *Mabiki: Infanticide and Population Growth in Eastern Japan, 1660–1950*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Fruhstuck, Sabine. 2003. *Colonizing Sex: Sexology and Social Control in Modern Japan*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Frumer, Yulia. 2012. “Clocks and Time in Edo Japan.” PhD diss., Princeton University.
- Ghosh, Arunabh. 2012. “Making It Count: Statistics and State-Society Relations in the Early People’s Republic of China, 1949–1959.” PhD diss., Columbia University.
- Gross, Miriam. 2016. *Farewell to the God of Plague: Chairman Mao’s Campaign to Deworm China*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Haboush, JaHyun Kim. 2016. *The Great East Asian War and the Birth of the Korean Nation*. Edited by William J. Haboush and Jisoo M. Kim. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Hart, Roger. 1999. “Translating the Untranslatable: From Copula to Incommensurable Worlds.” In *Tokens of Exchange: The Problem of Translation in Global Circulations*, edited by Lydia H. Liu, 45–73. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Henry, Todd. 2014. *Assimilating Seoul: Japanese and the Politics of Public Space in Colonial Korea*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hong, Young-Sun. 2015. *Cold War Germany: The Third World and the Global Humanitarian Regime*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hwang, Kyung Moon. 2005. *Beyond Birth: Social Status in the Emergence of Modern Korea*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Kim, Dong-no, John Duncan, and Do-hyung Kim, eds. 2006. *Reform and Modernity in the Taehan Empire*. Seoul: Jimoodang.
- Kim, Jaeun. 2016. *Transborder Membership Politics in Twentieth Century Korea*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Kim, Jane Sung Hae. 2012. "Leprosy in Korea: A Global History." PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles.
- Kim, Sonja Myung. 2008. "Contesting Bodies: Managing Population, Birthing, and Medicine in Korea, 1876–1945." PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles.
- Kingsberg, Miriam. 2013. *Moral Nation: Modern Japan and Narcotics in Global History*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Kwon, T'ae Hwan. 1977. *Demography of Korea: Population Change and Its Components, 1925–66*. Seoul: Seoul National University Press.
- Lam, Tong. 2011. *A Passion for Facts: Social Surveys and the Construction of the Chinese Nation-State, 1900–1949*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Lankov, Andrei. 2007. *The Dawn of Modern Korea: Transformation in Life and Cityscape*. Seoul: Eunhaeng Namu.
- Lei, Sean. 2014. *Neither Donkey Nor Horse: Medicine in the Struggle over China's Modernity*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Levy, Jonathan. 2012. *Freaks of Fortune: The Emerging World of Capitalism and Risk in America*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Lim, Sansom. 2015. *Siam's New Detectives: Visualizing Crime and Conspiracy in Modern Thailand*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Liu, Michael Shiyung. 2008. *Prescribing Colonization: The Role of Medical Practices and Policies in Japan-Ruled Taiwan, 1895–1945*. Ann Arbor, MI: Association of Asian Studies.
- Marcon, Federico. 2015. *The Knowledge of Nature and the Nature of Knowledge in Early Modern Japan*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Matsumara, Janice. 2016. "The Politics of Manic Depression in the Japanese Empire." In *Science, Technology, and Medicine in the Modern Japanese Empire*, edited by David G. Wittner and Philip C. Brown, 98–116. New York: Routledge.
- Monnais, Laurence, C. Michelle Thompson, and Ayo Wahlberg, eds. 2012. *Southern Medicine for Southern People: Vietnamese Medicine in the Making*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Nakamura, Karen. 2013. *A Disability of the Soul: An Ethnography of Schizophrenia and Mental Illness in Contemporary Japan*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Park, Eugene. 2014. *A Family of No Prominence: The Descendants of Pak Tokhwa and the Birth of Modern Korea*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Park, Hyunjoon. 2008. "Home Literacy Environments and Children's Reading Performance: A Comparative Study of 25 Countries." *Educational Research and Evaluation* 14 (6): 489–505.
- Park, Jin-kyung. 2008. "Corporeal Colonialism: Medicine, Reproduction, and Race in Colonial Korea." PhD diss., University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign.
- Porter, Ted. 1996. *Trust in Numbers: The Pursuit of Objectivity in Science and Public Life*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Rogaski, Ruth. 2004. *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Schmid, Andre. 2002. *Korea between Empires, 1895–1919*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Shin, Dong-won. 2004. “Western Medicine, Korean Government, and Imperialism in Late Nineteenth-Century Korea: The Cases of the Choson Government Hospital and Smallpox Vaccination.” *Historia Scientiarum: International Journal of the History of Science Society of Japan* 13 (3): 164–175.
- Son, Min Suh. 2008. “Electrifying Seoul and the Culture of Technology in Nineteenth-Century Korea.” PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles.
- Soon, Wayne. 2014. “Coming from Afar: Overseas Chinese and the Institutionalization of Western Medicine and Science in China, 1910–1970.” PhD diss., Princeton University.
- Suh, Soyoung. 2008. “Korean Medicine between the Local and the Universal, 1600–1945.” PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles.
- Suzuki, Akihito. 2011. “Between Two Psychiatric Regimes: Migration and Psychiatry in Early Twentieth-Century Japan.” In *Migration, Ethnicity and Mental Health: International Perspectives, 1840–2010*, edited by Catharine Coleborne and Angela McCarthy, 140–156. New York: Routledge.
- Winner, Langdon. 1980. “Do Artifacts Have Politics?” *Daedalus* 109 (1): 121–136.
- Wu, Harry Yi-Jui, and Wen-Ji Wang, eds. 2016. “Transnational Psy Sciences in East and Southeast Asia.” Special issue, *East Asian Science, Technology and Society (EASTS)* 10 (2).
- Young, Benjamin. 2015. “The Struggle for Legitimacy: North Korea’s Relations with Africa, 1965–1992.” *BAKS Papers* 16. British Association for Korean Studies.
- Yum, Jennifer. 2014. “In Sickness and in Health: Americans and Psychiatry in Korea, 1950–1962.” PhD diss., Harvard University.