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“North Korean collapse increases in direct proportion to the promotion of dialogue and face-to-face encounters” (p. 97) just as “*Ostpolitik* was a key factor behind the collapse of East Germany” (p. 90). After the North’s demise, “the antagonistic identity constructs that emerged with the division of the peninsula will undoubtedly survive and pose problems” (p. 99). Bleiker therefore advocates an “ethics of difference” that “would go beyond tolerance, for tolerance assumes a basic standard [whereas] [a]ccepting alterity . . . requires abandoning this privileged standpoint” (p. 100). Historians should challenge dominant narratives, protect minority accounts, and “forget” or overlook prior identities. This is neither essentialism (because recognizing differences never justifies a static apartheid) nor relativism (since saying that historical “representation is always incomplete” is the opposite of claiming “all is true”) (p. 112).

Bleiker offers no concrete policy recommendations, nor does he comment on the effect of China’s rise and of the unprecedented “Korean Wave” on Korean identity. But even his theory is limited. That an enemy is needed to define the self echoes down famously from Homer, Heraclitus, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, William James on war, Durkheim on deviance, Freud, structuralism, and so many others. Bleiker’s citations, however, are strictly *au courant*. But this is a pioneering work of synthesis in which theory and data are necessarily pared down. Hardheaded, it offers no easy solutions (in fact, it illuminates paradox and complexities). It is essential reading in the field.

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*Rethinking Historical Injustice and Reconciliation in Northeast Asia: The Korean Experience*, edited by Gi-Wook Shin, Soon-Won Park, and Daqing Yang. London: Routledge, 2007. 266 pp. \$160.00 cloth; \$40.00 paper.

Truth and reconciliation processes to settle and overcome colonial pasts, Cold War dictatorships, and civil war atrocities have recently proliferated in many different countries around the world, including South Africa, Australia, Argentina, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala, Sierra Leone, and Rwanda. The Nigerian writer and Nobel literature laureate Wole Soyinka has called this recent phenomenon a “*fin de millenaire* fever of atonement,” as if humanity wanted to enter the new millennium by leaving behind the bloody legacy of what the British historian Eric Hobsbawm has dubbed “the age of extremes” or the “short 20th century” (1914–1991) without having too much bad consciousness. For Europe, the end of

the Cold War was both symbolically and in practice the final end of the Second World War, and accordingly the continent is today dealing with different investigations regarding Nazi crimes and collaborators, financial compensation for slave laborers during Fascist regimes, and restitution issues for former anticommunists in Eastern Europe, while academics and activists alike are in the process of rethinking the full meaning and scope of the Holocaust. Furthermore, problems related to Europe's former colonial empires also continue to haunt the continent, resulting in, for example, an apology by former British Prime Minister Tony Blair for the 1919 Amritsar massacre in India, and a belated economic compensation to the Second World War veterans from the French colonies, while my own country, Sweden, has apologized both to the Saami indigenous minority for centuries of colonial oppression, as well as finally admitting its complicit role in the Holocaust and the Nazi plundering of Europe.

In Northeast Asia, however, neither the consequences of the Second World War and the subsequent Cold War nor the legacies of the Japanese colonial empire have been sufficiently reconciled and rectified, and this was the reason why the Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center at Stanford University convened a conference on the problem in 2004, whose papers have now been collected in the anthology *Rethinking Historical Injustice and Reconciliation in Northeast Asia: The Korean Experience*, published by Routledge in 2007, and edited by Gi-Wook Shin, Soon-Won Park, and Daqing Yang, who together have also written the introduction and an epilogue. In relation to and in comparison with the ongoing reconciliation and justice processes in other parts of the world, the fourteen contributors to this timely, updated, and well-informed and balanced publication try to understand why reconciliation has not been achieved in Northeast Asia in the same manner as in Europe by looking at the specific Korean experience and perspective and by making use of the American philosopher David Crocker's distinction between thick and thin reconciliation processes, with the Northeast Asian case definitely falling into the latter category. Within the framework of the contemporary Northeast Asian setting, including rapid industrialization and economic growth, political democratization and the rise of a civil society, and regional integration concomitantly with the rebirth of ethnic nationalism, the first part of the book takes up previously censored and subjugated domestic events in modern Korean history such as the "comfort women" issue (Chunghee Sarah Soh and Hideko Mitsui), the Korean forced laborers of imperial Japan (Soon-Won Park), the massacres and atrocities committed against alleged "communists" before and during the Korean War (Dong-Choon Kim and Tae-Ung Baik), and the South Korean involvement in the Viet-

nam War (Kyung-Yoong Bay), several of which are hotly debated and still considered to be highly controversial in today's Korea. While the "comfort women" issue has been heavily exploited by patriarchal ethnic nationalists, as Chunghee Sarah Soh so convincingly shows, and thus is a well-known problem today in spite of the covering-up of Korean complicity, new uncomfortable facts regarding the massacres committed by the Syngman Rhee government with the guidance and perhaps even the approval of the U.S. army, are continuing to be published both by Korean social movements media and in international magazines such as *Time*, and the Korean engagement in Vietnam and the resulting mixed-race problem is like a grim reprisal of the mixed-race issue in postwar Korea, which in its turn signaled the birth of another domestic Korean national trauma which has not yet been reconciled, and which I myself have studied, namely, the Korean adoption issue.

The articles of the second part of the book use a transnational and comparative approach, looking at the similarities between war museums in Korea and Japan (Hong Kal), the relationship between Japan and North Korea (Gavan McCormack), the different responses to war crimes in Germany, Turkey, and Japan (John Torpey), the role of popular culture with regard to contemporary Korean-Japanese relations (Chiho Sawada), the post-Cold War settings of Europe and Japan (Andrew Horvat), and the importance of economic integration within the region (Wonhyuk Lim). The rigid ethnic nationalism of both Korea and Japan, the legacy of authoritarian state structures, and the lack of a strong civil society and vigorous social movements are some of the reasons proposed and analyzed by the contributors to be able to understand the limited and thin reconciliation processes in Northeast Asia and to be able to predict the future of reconciliation in the region. The mixture of both Western and Asian scholars coming from both the humanities and the social sciences, and from such diverse disciplines as anthropology, history, visual arts, sociology, and international relations, constitutes the strength of this anthology, shedding light on the complex and multilayered reconciliation issue of Northeast Asia. What is sometimes missing, however, is the role of China as well as the role of the United States in postponing reconciliation within the region, or alternatively, in potentially invigorating the very same process. On the whole, the book is a refreshing contribution to the growing body of transnational studies, breaking out from the all too often compartmentalized and territorialized field of Korean studies.

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