

BOOK REVIEWS

Score One for the Dancing Girl, and Other Selections from the Kimun ch'onghwa: A Story Collection from Nineteenth-century Korea. Translated by James Scarth Gale; Edited by Ross King and Si Nae Park; Annotations by Donguk Kim. Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press, 2016. 630pp. (ISBN: 9781442647336)

For anyone who is interested in pre-twentieth-century Korean culture, *Score One for the Dancing Girl, and Other Selections From the Kimun Ch'onghwa: A Story Collection From Nineteenth-Century Korea* (hereafter *Score One for the Dancing Girl*) is an excellent source. This publication has a total of 117 stories based on James Scarth Gale's (1863–1937) original translation of *Kimun ch'onghwa* (Compendium of records of hearsay), with an introduction of the historical context and stylistic features of James Scarth Gale's translation and Gale's attachment to the *hanmun* (Sino-Korean/Literary Sinitic) text as well as late Chosŏn *yadam* 野談 (usually translated as unofficial stories/unofficial talks). *Score One for the Dancing Girl* provides introductions by two editors, Gale's translation with annotations, and a nine-page explanation of the English equivalents for the names of government offices and official titles. By providing various versions of translations of the titles, including the versions given by James B. Palais and Edward Willet Wagner (1924–2001), the table of translation equivalents helps readers in English-speaking countries who may have been puzzled by different translations of Korean terminologies. This table was also helpful to Korean readers who wonder how terms of pre-modern Korean studies are translated in English scholarship.

The annotations in this volume are based on Kim Tong'uk's annotations in his *Kugyŏk Kimun ch'onghwa* (*Kimun ch'onghwa* translated in *han'gŭl*) published in 1996. Kim's translation in the vernacular Korean, as used by the editors of *Score One for the Dancing Girl*, was based on the four-volume manuscript edition held by Yonsei University. Several publications of pre-modern Korean literature have been made

by scholars worldwide, and the audience of readers has become wider recently. Still, the translations in *hanmun* are small in number, and insufficient for those who would like to read translations in comparison with the original texts. With its inclusion of original texts in *hanmun*, the publication of *Score One for the Dancing Girl* provides abundant examples of the characteristics of *yadam* and premodern Korean culture appropriate for university courses.

The collections of *yadam* are indispensable sources in pre-modern Korean culture, because they tell readers about diverse characters, events, and cultural aspects that official history may have omitted or ignored. The representative *yadam* collections include *Kyesŏ yadam* 溪西野談 (Miscellaneous records by Sŏgye [Yi Hüip'yŏng]), *Ch'ŏnggu yadam* 青邱野談 (Stories from the Green Hills), and *Tongya hwijip* 東野彙集 (An anthology of popular stories from Korea). Considering that *Kimun ch'onghwa* contains the most numerous *yadam* among the *yadam* collections, *Score One for the Dancing Girl* takes its place as an indispensable introductory volume of pre-modern Korean literature in English-speaking countries. Considering the importance of *yadam* genres in late Chosŏn, more detailed information on the *yadam* can be helpful. Though the 'Fluid Textuality of Late-Chosŏn Yadam' contains brief information on the editors and transmission of *yadam*, it does not fully reflect the accumulated studies on *yadam*'s features and traditions in Korea. Stories in *Kimun ch'onghwa* lack editors' comments that enabled readers to judge the characters and events in the stories. The later *yadam* editors strengthened their narratives by adding fictional elements and editors' comments, which earned the collections literary refinement in *Ch'ŏnggu yadam* and *Tongya hwijip*.¹ The editors of late Chosŏn *yadam* collections are mostly scholar-officials who are interested in orally transmitted stories. These collections evince that some scholar-officials accepted the culture of lower-class people and edited the works that fit their sense of values with their own interpretations and judgements.

The stories in the original version of *Kimun ch'onghwa* do not have titles. The Kim Tonguk translation gave titles to each story based on the main characters' names and events.² The stories in *Score One for the Dancing Girl* have titles that are often different from Kim Tonguk's version. For example, the title "Score One for the Dancing Girl" (pp. 222–228) in *Score One for the Dancing Girl* was "The Lady Sim, jealous Wife of Cho T'aeŏk" (pp. 192–197) in Kim Tonguk's version. The central figure in Kim Tonguk's title was the wife of Cho, and the central figure in

¹ Kim Hyŏnmi's study shows that more than ninety percent of the stories in *Kimun ch'onghwa* are from the existing *yadam* collections. Kim Hyŏnmi, *Kimun ch'onghwa ūi munhakchŏk tŭkching* [Literary features of *Kimun ch'onghwa*]. Ulsan University, Master's thesis. 2004.

² Kim Tong'uk, *Kukyŏk Kimun ch'onghwa* (*Kimun ch'onghwa* translated in *han'gŭl*). Seoul: Asea munhwasa, 1996, p.8.

the *Score One for the Dancing Girl* was a dancing girl (*keisaeng*). Kim Tonguk's "Defiance to Spirit" was "Yi Hangbok, Who Saved His Friend in a Sickbed" in *Score One for the Dancing Girl*. Also, the title "The Death of Prince Kwanghae's Deposed Son" in Kim Tonguk's version becomes "Queen Han of Injo (1623 AD)" in *Score One for the Dancing Girl*. Because some titles followed Kim Tonguk's versions and some did not, readers may wonder about Gale's principles for making titles.

The editors expressed hopes that "the *hanmun* originals might serve as pedagogical materials for advanced students of Korean wishing to acquaint themselves with Literary Sinitic (*hanmun*) through Korean, to which end we have included the Sino-Korean pronunciations for each sinograph as superscript glosses in as unobtrusive a format as possible" (lii). To fulfill educational purposes, the use of commas and colons in the original script will be helpful to readers who want to study *hanmun* texts. Examples can be found in the original text at the *Han'guk kojön chonghap* DB (<http://db.itkc.or.kr>). In addition, it would be useful to have an explanation of Gale's usage of the term 'ke' 妓 because Gale's translations of the term are varied; he uses dancing girl, singing girl, and even beautiful woman 美人 in "Wölsa in Peking" (pp. 112–114). Also, Gale's translation often refines violent expressions. For example, in the "Score One for the Dancing Girl," the wife of Cho T'aeök would like to hit her to death. The part was translated as "she would make an end of this unspeakable dancing girl" (p. 222).

Regardless of these minor issues, there is no doubt that this publication is indispensable for understanding not only *Kimun ch'onghwa*, but also the overall culture of Korea before the twentieth century. Though the introduction may be strengthened by providing rich information on the *yadam* genre, this is a worthwhile collection that can highlight the side of Korean culture that was largely overshadowed by the popularity of contemporary Korean culture.

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Broken Voices: Postcolonial Entanglements and the Preservation of Korea's Central Folksong Traditions. By Roald Maliangkay. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017. 304 pp. (ISBN: 9780824866655)

This monograph is the first from Roald Maliangkay, a prolific author of articles and book chapters addressing Korean expressive cultures. Maliangkay has been

conducting research on Korean folksongs for over twenty-five years, and has deep and long-standing connections with the important characters in this field, making this book a rare longitudinal study. Although I have read his previous works, I found that this book touches but does not borrow from his other publications on the topic, making the introduction, four chapters, and translation of *Paebaengi kut* in the volume worth every penny. To this reader, the essential take-away message of the book is that changes in the arts were inevitable if the arts were to be preserved at all.

The introduction starts with Maliangkay discussing how traditional culture is the secret ingredient in the international success of Korea's Hallyu products—surprising only if you have never read his detailed research on colonial era popular music, American camp stages, and K-pop luminaries from Seo Taiji to contemporary girl groups. Yet here Maliangkay is focusing on not the evolution of popular song, but how policies even in the early Colonial Era have had a long standing impact on Korean folksong. What Maliangkay does in the introduction is to establish the entire context of cultural heritage preservation in Korea. All of this is so that in the rest of the book he can clarify how “Korean folksong traditions have evolved and what factors have caused them to change” (p. 15). He sketches the different change-causing pressures, then clarifies that in this book he will focus on the most important impetus for change: the cultural preservation system itself, a point that he returns to in later chapters to support with original research.

Chapter 1 starts with the ways that Korean cultural policy is rooted in the policies Japan promulgated during the colonial era. Maliangkay outlines the various regulations and the important players, both Japanese and Korean, in the preservation of folklore, and chronologically moves on to the Republic of Korea's Cultural Property Protection Law (1962), the emergence of UNESCO intangible heritage listing and even the Law for Safeguarding and Promotion of Intangible Cultural Heritage, promulgated in 2016. Although the first chapter is a necessary part of this monograph, those familiar with cultural policy in Korea will find it a well written overview of an already familiar story.

Broken Voices comes into its own as a research monograph as the focus on folksongs begins in Chapter 2. Maliangkay's knowledge of colonial popular music shines through as he explains the impact of new forms of music from or via Japan. He details how, despite advocates for the preservation of traditional sounds, the exciting new music—and its delivery in new ways such as records and the radio—was seductive. Professional female singers dramatically increased, as well, bringing another change to the soundscape. The chapter outlines the characteristics of Korean folksongs, the difficulties in notation, the terminology used to discuss

folksong, and then explains how popular music is actually one form of the transformed traditional songs.

Chapter 3 takes up the theme of the increase in female performers to discuss the post-colonial era changes to *Sǒnsori Santaryōng*, the first folksong genre to be listed for state protection. The increase in female performers has meant a “change in the look, performance, and sound of the genre” (p. 73). Unlike other folksong genres the transition has been more extreme as in the 1960s it was still primarily sung by men, who were the first master performers designated. The chapter includes a detailed history of the performers of the genre and their activities from the late Chosŏn Dynasty to the present day, and features two detailed personal stories based on two important performers, Chǒng Tūngman (d. 1992) and Hwang Yongju. Maliangkay details how the performance is changing before he moves on to discuss *Kyōnggi minyo*. This singing form has been sung primarily by women since the 1940s and 1950s, before heritage designation. After a historical overview Maliangkay highlights three noted performers, An Pich’wi (d. 1997), Muk Kyewōl (d. 2014), and Yi Ŭnju. The detailed interviews and long-standing relationship he has with the famous singers brings the struggles with and changes to the genre alive.

In the next chapter Maliangkay turns his attention to *Sōdo sori*, the folksong style from the region north of Seoul, now part of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. Maliangkay has a very fascinating point about the song form—that even though soon there will be no living performers once from the north, the form will continue because of its “ability to invoke nostalgia” (p. 117). In this chapter Maliangkay brings the stories of O Pongnyō (d. 2011) and Yi Ŭn’gwan (d. 2014). It is through these two, especially Yi, that the reader is introduced to the operetta *Paebaengi kut* (which is not a shamanic *kut* – a translation appears in the appendix in addition to the excerpts of the song in the chapter). The operetta, similar to *p’ansori*, is sung by a single singer with a drummer on the barrel drum, and as a key part of the canon various versions and analyses exist. This chapter discusses the issue of reputation of singers versus authenticity of cultural preservation using Maliangkay’s many years of observation and interviews to illustrate the ways that the government’s efforts can intervene in processes of transmission in controversial ways. One of the most important points brought to the foreground here, although it is a theme throughout the book, is how much smoother preservation processes are if an art has already gone through a “process of restructuring for the contemporary stage” (p. 143) before it is designated heritage. If it has, bureaucrats and performers agree about the form, if it has not, interpersonal politics, charisma, fame, and other factors can create

versions and lineages that in effect are competing for the legitimization of the state.

“Mimicry and Adaptation” is the theme of the eight-page and extremely thought-provoking conclusion. Here Maliangkay clearly explains that to understand the heritage-scape of Korean folksong we must see how changes that happened in the late Joseon continued to have impact on the arts when they were designated heritage—a connection that the meticulously collected interviews and profiles of important performers, most now deceased, foregrounds. He has presented the types of changes we have seen, and the dangers in pressing for greater authenticity. The final paragraph explains that traditions captivate now due to tourism, nostalgia, and community pride—meanings greater than their traditional role as entertainment and release.

Broken Voices’ ethnographic backbone sets it apart from existing publications on Korean folksong, especially for those who do not read Korean as it is (so far) the only academic book on folksong (not shamanic song or *p’ansori* which has always attracted the most academic attention). Like Maliangkay’s other work, is written in clear and accessible prose. As a collection of his most important points based on research begun in 1991, it is impressive in its scope, but focused in such a way that the reader is not lost in the details.

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Sunset: A Ch’ae Manshik Reader. Edited and translated by Bruce Fulton and Ju-Chan Fulton. New York: Columbia University Press, 2017. 224pp. (ISBN:9780231181013)

Ch’ae Mansik is an author best known, both in Korea and elsewhere, for “representative” works such as “A Ready-Made Life” (1934), which cemented his reputation as a satirist, as well as *Turbid Rivers* (1937–38), “My Innocent Uncle” (1938), and *Peace Under Heaven* (1938). *Sunset: A Ch’ae Manshik Reader*, brings together a much broader spectrum of his work, ranging from vignettes and experimental fiction to plays and non-fiction works.

The collection takes its name from the 1948 short story “Sunset,” which tells of the trials of families fallen on hard times after liberation from Japanese colonial rule. These were, of course, families who had prospered under Japanese rule and now found that they had no place in the new social order. The narrator is the idealistic son of one such family, but despite his idealism he is almost entirely a passive observer and chronicler of the events that take place around him. He is

ashamed of his lack of accomplishments when he compares himself to Chaech'un, a remote cousin and ardent supporter of the Japanese; he is ashamed of his lack of spirit and action when he compares himself to Ch'oe, a former student and independence activist. Indeed, the only time he takes decisive action is when he rejects the advances of Ch'unja, Chaech'un's sister, ultimately (so he fears) driving her into the arms of the occupying American soldiers.

For all his passivity, our narrator possesses a keen insight, and he understands that it is only human nature for people to bemoan the consequences of their actions while giving no thought to the actions themselves—and whatever responsibility they might bear for them. And he is all too aware of his own mediocrity, almost to the point of paralysis. Ch'ae offers incisive social criticism through this narrator and his tale, and this criticism comes to a sharp point when the narrator sees Ch'unja in her fallen state, pregnant with the child of an American soldier. He cannot hide his loathing of what she has become, but her stinging reply leaves him speechless: she may have sold her body, but at least she never prostituted her soul. This title work paints a vivid picture of the social upheaval in that brief period between liberation and the Korean War.

“Sunset” is not the only work in this collection that deals with families suffering from the “vicissitudes and uncertainties of life,” as the narrator of “Ungrateful Wretch” (1925) puts it. In this short work, we are introduced to a young man who has taken to thieving to support his drug habit (Ch'ae's graphic depiction of his opium addiction is vivid and disturbing), and his mother, who loves her son but is too weak to do what is necessary to save him. Once again we witness characters who are beaten down by an overwhelming reality, but they never stop to think about the choices and actions (or inaction) that might have led them to where they are.

The short story “Mister Pang” (1946), written directly after liberation, contrasts the falling fortunes of Squire Paek and the rising fortunes of Mister Pang. Squire Paek's son, a constable under the Japanese, had accumulated great wealth for his father's household at the expense of their neighbors, but with liberation father and son were beaten and driven from their home. Mister Pang, on the other hand, had little to boast of, but when the Americans moved in he seized the opportunity to become an interpreter for an American officer, and he took to himself the modern title of “Mister” to go along with his new-found prosperity. In the end, though, Mister Pang's status and wealth are shown to be nothing more than vanity. He may have risen while Squire Paek fell, but in the greater schemes of things he is still just—in the words of the American officer—a “low-class son of a bitch.”

With a life that spanned the fall of the nation, the Japanese colonial period, liberation, and the founding of the Republic of Korea (he died two weeks before

the outbreak of the Korean War), it is no surprise that Ch'ae had a keen interest in the tumultuous changes in Korean society. In addition to the rise and fall of families, he was also fascinated by elements of modernity and how they confronted and clashed with traditional Korean values. One such element is the "modern girl," who appears in Ch'ae's works as an object of fascination and desire. His debut work, the short story "In Three Directions" (1924), takes place on a comfortable train—itsself a symbol of modernity—and introduces an unnamed "lady student." Just the term itself, opines the narrator, "makes you feel you're looking at the world, you're hearing it, in a different way." This lady student is not exceptionally beautiful, but there is a "sensuality" about her, and every male gaze in the car is directed her way. The 1930 vignette "Egg on My Face" also features a "modern girl" who is characterized almost entirely by her fashion choices, judged from the perspective of a humble print shop worker. She is unattainable—a rice cake in a picture, if you will—and when fate (and the laws of physics) bring her and the narrator together, he rues not having taken the opportunity to steal a smooch.

Another aspect of modernity in these works is the relatively new religion of Christianity, which takes on an important role in the 1937 play *Whatever Possessed Me?* and the 1939 short story "A Man Called Hŭngbo." The former revolves around a clash between traditional Korean values and the new Christian values, and the reader cannot help but smile at the characters' misunderstanding and misinterpretation of Christian doctrine. When a newly converted wife hears that it is as difficult for a rich man to go to heaven as it is for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, she is dismayed, but her husband has a solution: they'll just have a really big needle made and show it to Saint Peter when he tries to keep them out of the pearly gates. The wife is also told to love her enemy, and she naturally tries to apply this teaching to her relationship with her husband's concubine. When she realizes that loving the concubine means that she is no longer her enemy, she gets stuck in an endless feedback loop of hating and loving, beating and forgiving. Beneath the surface layer of humor and gentle mockery, though, lie cogent criticisms of the new faith and its contradictions with the reality known by most Koreans.

"A Man Called Hŭngbo" introduces another Christian wife and another skeptical husband; the latter sees Christianity as no different from shamanism and takes a critical attitude toward redemption theology. The narrator notes that it is only natural for the husband, with his "limited wisdom," to be unable to distinguish between religion and superstition (that is, shamanism), but this is false modesty, and once again the criticism hits its mark. That being said, it is an undeniable truth that his wife's refusal to let him drink has been better for the

family, revealing a nuanced attitude toward the new religion and the enlightened modernity it represents. However it is viewed, though, Christianity in Ch'ae's works here is clearly seen as being associated with women. Even "Egg on My Face," which nominally has nothing to do with religion, uses the image of a "Jesus freak meeting her savior" to describe the girl slipping and falling into the arms of the narrator—thus reinforcing the connection not only between Christianity and women but Christianity and modernity.

As a product of liminal times, though, Ch'ae also looks back even as he looks forward. A number of the works here draw on Korean tradition and oral narratives, some in the more subtle sense of borrowing literary techniques from oral tradition, and some taking traditional subject matter and themes and giving the stories a modern twist. Both "A Man Called Hŭngbo" and the 1947 play *Blind Man Shim* draw on popular works in the genre known as *p'ansori*, narratives related through both spoken and sung word by a single vocalist, who is accompanied by a drummer. Readers unfamiliar with the original *p'ansori* may be somewhat confused by the title of the first work, as no man called Hŭngbo appears in the story. Instead, the protagonist, good old Hyŏn, is the modern equivalent of the traditional Hŭngbo. The original story is a fable of sorts, telling the tale of the poor but kindhearted Hŭngbo, who is rewarded for his compassion. He mends the broken leg of a swallow, which flies away and returns with a gourd seed; Hŭngbo plants this seed, and when the gourd grows to full size, it splits open to reveal all sorts of treasures. Hŭngbo's rich but mean-spirited elder brother, Nolbu, tries to recreate the situation by breaking a swallow's leg and then mending it again, but when his gourd splits open he is set upon by monsters pouring out from within. Ch'ae's modern version drops the fabular elements for a more realistic story, but the central motif of a swallow in distress is maintained. Good ol' Hyŏn, though, unfortunately does not live in a world where kindness and good deeds are automatically rewarded, and the story ends with his family in discord and Hyŏn sleeping outside.

Blind Man Shim is a modern retelling of *The Song of Shim Chŏng*, a classic of Korean oral literature that praises and rewards the filial piety of Chŏng. Ch'ae's retelling hews more closely to the original tale than does "A Man Called Hŭngbo," but it is set in the same harsh, realistic world. As in the original, Blind Man Shim foolishly commits to a temple donation of three hundred sacks of rice when he is promised that doing so will restore his sight. Chŏng sells herself to a group of sailors who intend to sacrifice her to the raging sea, and in return the sailors provide her the rice needed for the temple donation. In this modern retelling, though, there is no heaven to be moved by Chŏng's devotion, no dragon king to bring her to his palace and then return her to land in a lotus flower, and thus no

emperor waiting to make her his wife. In an unexpected twist, the scales do fall from Blind Man Shim's eyes, but he immediately gouges them out again when he realizes that Chŏng is gone forever. Through these two works, Ch'ae shows that blindly clinging to tradition and traditional values will not be rewarded in modern society—yet his very use of these traditional themes and narratives are an important example of how Korean traditions can play a role in the new society, even in re-imagined form.

The 1941 fable “The Grasshopper, the Kingfisher, and the Ant” is another example of how Ch'ae draws on tradition and traditional forms. It has elements of a fable (it teaches a moral lesson) and elements of a legend (it explains why certain animals look the way they do), and it draws on a number of themes and motifs from folk tales, such as the feasting of animals, failed imitation, and the rule of three. This is just a sampling of what may be gleaned about Ch'ae's oeuvre from this collection. In addition to the works discussed above, there are vignettes rich in symbolism, non-fiction pieces that provide a glimpse into Ch'ae's thinking on the art of writing, and experimental fiction such as the short story “Juvesenility.” There is, unfortunately, not enough space in this review to give all of these pieces their due.

In the introduction, the editors/translators express the hope that Ch'ae's greater body of works—outside of the few “representative” works for which he is generally known—will receive more attention. This volume, with its selections spanning a variety of forms and genres, presented in colorful and accessible prose by two accomplished veteran translators, will no doubt contribute to that end.

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Curative Violence: Rehabilitating Disability, Gender, and Sexuality in Modern Korea. By Eunjung Kim, Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 2017, 312pp. \$25.95 (paperback). (ISBN: 9780822362883)

Eunjung Kim's monograph is a welcome addition to recent works in the field of disability studies. With a focus on contemporary Korean society, Kim problematizes the rationale of cure, along with the manifestations of cure, in her discussions of disability as a medical problem and a distinct social construct that was founded on the premise of a normative body, despite the elasticity of such a concept as normalcy. Cures were productive insofar as the results were aligned with the presumptive goals of the prescribing authorities. Yet, for the person with

disabilities, the process of cure not only detracted from his/her innate identity and feelings of self-worth, but also did violence to his/her subjectivity. As Kim argues, “Curative violence occurs when cure is what actually frames the presence of disability as a problem and ends up destroying the subject in the process (p. 14).” Taking the lead from Nirmala Erevelles’s transnational approach, Kim continues the recent trend of destabilizing the boundaries of “Western disability studies” (in reference to the traditional Anglo-American and European orientations) and ventures to nuance our understandings “by employing both colonial and nonwhite feminist perspectives (p. 18).” All things considered, modern Korea lends itself well to Kim’s analytical goals: a modern Asian nation today with deep roots in Confucian ideology, which has cast a long shadow on the interpretations and experiences of gender roles, Korean society has struggled to reconcile fully with the turbulent colonial past as a formal colony (1910–1945) of the Japanese empire.

With provocative chapter titles that call to mind the injustices inflicted upon people with disabilities, Kim provides thematic snapshots of the checkered history of Korean society through a disability-centered analysis—no doubt an analysis that assails the sense of complacency born of modern sensibilities and presents much-needed alternative views of mainstream Korean society by interrogating implied understandings of what normal is or means. Chapter 1 (“Unmothering Disability”) opens with a discussion of the image of femininity from *Tonga ilbo* (published in 1937) from the colonial period. It argues that marriage was informed by discourses of eugenics in colonial Korea, transmitted by Japanese eugenicists and later adapted locally by apparatuses like the Chosŏn Eugenics Association and the Public Health Office, to ensure the propagation of state-conceived notions of eugenic modernity, which thrust the burden of heredity error on women. “With eugenic thinking, the health of the entire family was contingent on spousal choice—gendered as the selection of the right wife (p. 46).” The rhetorical power of eugenics had an unrelenting grip on the literary imaginations of Korean writers. Plots were structured around “the contradiction between new ideas of voluntary marriage based on love and the emerging paradigm of rational choice in modern marriage based on eugenic principles (p. 51)”; or what Kim would call a heredity drama. In the post-colonial era, the heredity drama, given credibility by the legal language of the National Eugenics Bill and the Mother and Child Health Act of 1973, did not go away but instead assumed different expressions in documentaries like *Thumbelina Wants to Be a Mother* and *Pansy and Ivy* which cast the spotlight on real-life persons with disabilities. In the latter documentary about the love lives of two sisters with disabilities, the awkward silences that disrupt the streams of conversations act as

substitutes for answers to vexing problems of rejection and disappointment: “Two women’s opportunities to reproduce are preempted and positioned outside of marriage that is reserved as a reproductive institution for mothering nondisability (p. 78).”

Chapter 2 is centered on the trope of proxies of disability in film. Though marked by self-sacrifice and the ideal of selflessness, proxyhood is complicated by the complicity of persons with and without disabilities. As Kim highlights, the twofold nature of cure here cannot be overlooked: “the cure of a disabled person through the actions of a nondisabled proxy and, second, the imposition of cure on a disabled proxy to serve the ends of a nondisabled family member” so that “a collective moral goal” is achieved (p. 85). Chapter 3 reviews contemporary attitudes toward gender roles and the specific acts of violence involved in the victimization of women with disabilities. Denied of their sexuality and barred from discourses that would confer the status of agency, women with disabilities are subject to humiliating assaults—almost as if according to predetermined practices—that proclaim the inviolability of cure. Kim reminds us of this aspect of curative violence throughout the chapter, stating for example that “complicated social scripts of violence assume the undesirability of disabled women (p. 124).” Violence, oscillating between personal and collective scales (p. 143), is made all the more necessary and even normalized in unequal power relations, simply because “the idea that vulnerability causes violence deprives disabled bodies of power and naturalizes violence (p. 165).”

In chapter 4, Kim focuses her analysis on the cultural history of Hansen’s disease (leprosy) and the stigmas surrounding it in Korean society. It is a known fact that Hansen’s disease has historically (and even universally) been stigmatized in global cultures because of the visible deformities and scars the disease causes for its victims. While the history of stigmatization is itself not surprising, Kim’s discussion suggests that the issue of cultural specificity in the representations of Hansen’s disease and the body of idioms that deal with the identities of disease victims (*Hansenin*; or *Hansen boebokcha* in reference to victims who have been cured) is one that is deserving of further attention. It is a complex discourse that is fused with constructs of morals and morality, sexuality, marriage and family, much as it is about the history of science and medicine. In chapter 5, Kim revisits the topic of sexuality through her discussion of prevalent expectations of people with disabilities to be negated as the Other of sexuality—whose gender, sex drive, and needs for intimacy are of little significance insofar as they are confined in delimited spaces. As Kim points out, “the logic of the sex drive is applied selectively to morally justify inventive exceptional provisions, which solidifies normative sexuality as inaccessible for disabled people (p. 202).” To claim

otherwise, that is to say, to ascribe agency in sexual choices to people with disabilities and also allude to their instincts for pleasure would be to go against the dominant cultural script of asexuality and genderlessness of this minority group.

If I could indulge a (minor) reflective moment to make a suggestion, I would add that the discussions of some parts could be pared down—the plot lines of films, for example, come to mind in this regard—so that more space would be given to a deeper consideration of questions about the problematics of disability, particularly in positioning disability as a cause for cure: Is/was curative violence mitigated or enabled by the multivalences and heterogeneity of disability itself? Might there be a parallel interpretive structure that maps disability more typologically onto cures—more general statements that perhaps hint at categorical relationships between disability and the matching types of cure? These questions and comments notwithstanding, Kim's work shines in the brilliance of its analysis.

I would highly recommend it to scholars working at the intersections of disability studies, modern Korean cultural history, and gender studies.

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