

ethnocentric nationalism (pp. 46–47). These women proudly served as both “imperial ambassadors” and “imperial gatekeepers.” Senior wives played matchmaker for the men under their husbands’ command, but they blocked marriages, too. Commanding officers’ wives (“K.O.W.s” because “the literal abbreviation would not do”) issued orders, adjudicated disputes, and commanded forts in their husbands’ names (p. 79). McInnis’s scholarship elucidates the influence and authority exerted by these army women, as women, in producing their nations’ empires.

A key question is, why *this* gendered formation. As Durba Ghosh, Anne Hyde, and others have shown, marriages sometimes tied British and American men into indigenous societies in both India and Indian Country. By contrast, McInnis’s wives fulfilled their duty by functioning as barriers to assimilation. One woman wore Victorian dress at the outset of a march, shifted to a poncho for the duration, only to shift back to her dress for the approach to the garrison in order to uphold her symbolic role (p. 145). This was not always a choice. When some women attempted to adopt weather-suitable fashion like *camisas* or *saris*, not only did other women shun their efforts, the “attempts to ‘go native’ often resulted in strong male responses of contempt” (p. 133). Fashion and home décor both figured as imperial sites. To do their duty, McInnis’s women store to uphold these symbols of home and empire.

The juxtaposition of the British and American empires adds a particular richness. While much of *Women of Empire* focuses on similarities, the book contrasts Britain’s model of “benevolent imperialism” with removal in American Indian policy. The former created greater incentives for assimilation, evident in military uniforms, linguistic crossings, and ceremonies, but more for husbands than wives. If it is challenging to appreciate the specific contingencies of time and region in the two empires, McInnis’s achievement is to illuminate a different kind of complexity: the personal workings and anxieties of empire at the cross-section of gender, empire, and the military cultures contouring both.

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*An Asian Frontier: American Anthropology and Korea, 1882–1945.* By Robert Oppenheim. (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2016. xx + 423 pp.)

Since 1945, Korea has attracted the attention of many anthropologists. Village studies, kinship patterns, ancestral rituals, marriage customs, religions,

and even corporate culture have been covered in recent monographs, with more on the way.

Before 1945, when Korea was a kingdom and then a colony of Japan, Western studies of Korea were a hit-or-miss business. Much scholarship came from Japan, apparently meant to support Japanese imperial goals in Korea. American scholars had no such purposes. Their work used Korea as proof of broader human patterns. They were curious about “Korean characteristics” that might fit current disciplinary theories.

Robert Oppenheim first became interested in Frederick Starr, a University of Chicago anthropologist whose papers he found during his Ph.D. studies. Starr had spent enough time in Korea to develop collegial friendships with several top Korean intellectuals. He had even written a book on Korean Buddhism. Beginning with Starr, Oppenheim introduces us to a half-dozen American anthropologists who focused, if only briefly, on Korea. Their work was related to the new interest in Asia that followed the closing of the American frontier and the rise of American imperialism. To them, Korea was an item to compare with China and Japan in terms of sameness and difference.

An example of anthropology’s “discovery” of Korea is the Korean exhibit at the 1893 Chicago World’s Columbian Exposition. Koreans at the Expo were playing *yut*, a game where sticks are thrown high in the air, and how they land determines how a player may move his piece on a board. The American anthropologist Stewart Culin made *yut* a central focus of his book entitled *Korean Games*. Might not the *yut* sticks be derived from ancient Asian divination practices? Might this game be proof of a common thread among Asian and also Native American cultures?

A constant theme of this book is the anthropological take on racism, colonialism, and the kind of racial theorizing engaged in not only by Germans and Japanese but the Western world in general. Starr was an anti-imperialist in the context of American politics, but he rationalized Japanese rule in Korea. We might see this as a contradiction today but it was typical of Starr’s time.

Oppenheim’s final chapter is about the Smithsonian anthropologist Aleš Hrdlička. The Bohemian-born Hrdlička was sympathetic to nations that were victims of imperialism. However, as a physical anthropologist, he studied racial types in terms of hierarchy. A short visit to Japan and Korea just after World War I led him to generalize about differences between Japanese and Koreans. As scholars like Hrdlička hazarded to make scientific

statements about unfamiliar civilizations, the reader is left to marvel at the primitive nature of anthropology at the time—and to reflect on how far we've come since then.

Oppenheim's book is about Korea but it is mainly useful as a study of the worldviews of America's earliest anthropologists as they struggled to develop disciplinary approaches in times that were fraught with ignorance about non-Western civilizations.

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