failures and in some cases successes. Professor Wong’s work connects with, and makes a substantial contribution to that literature in four significant ways. First, he stresses that the essence of his book “examines the biotech bets that have been made by decision-makers in Korea, Taiwan and Singapore, and how these bets have been strategically rationalized” (167). Second, his work confirms “what Richard Doner and his colleagues have identified as a major gap in the innovation studies literature: some sense of the ‘institutional origins’ of industrial technology development systems, the choices made and their political rationale” (167). Third, he also confirms the validity of “Dani Rodrik’s notion that innovation systems cannot simply be copied from abroad and replicated elsewhere, and that the institutional origins of any such system are shaped by local adaptations and continued experimentations” (167). Fourth, Wong emphatically acknowledges the relevance of “Dan Breznit’s assertion that ‘states and societies still have real choices with regard to developing their own rapid innovation-based industries’” (166-167). Future bets or choices will be less risky if they are undertaken by decision makers who understand the contributions of Wong (as well as Doner, Rodrik and Breznit).

It’s an interesting, useful, very readable and highly recommended book that will suit readers from a general audience as well as one composed of science and technology policy makers and practitioners, including actual and potential innovators and entrepreneurs. The volume will be a valuable addition to the libraries of academic and research institutions and scholars throughout the applied health and life science fields.

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Ever since the first controversy over Japanese history textbooks in 1982, national education has been a thorny issue in East Asia. Countless conferences, papers and books have addressed this topic. The edited volume by Gi-Wook Shin and Daniel Schneider is yet another addition to this expanding literature. What are its contributions?

In the first section, the reader is presented with 70 pages of translated excerpts from fourteen major history textbooks currently used in the high school curriculum in China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and the United States. The excerpts are organized around eight themes that are particularly controversial: 1. the Nanjing Massacre; 2. atomic bombing; 3. origins of the Korean War; 4. Pearl Harbor; 5. forced labour; 6. the Manchurian Incident;
7. economic development under Japanese rule; and 8. the Tokyo war crimes tribunal. Thus, for the first time in English, one can sample how high school students are being educated on these issues in the five countries. The direct juxtaposition of the content immediately reveals major differences both in style and in the national narratives that each state tries to promote. This is not surprising to those who study the region, but the comparison offers a good first-hand account of the lingering problems in interpreting World War Two events in East Asia. As such it could be a useful springboard for classroom discussion for courses on this area. It would have helped, however, if a more detailed introduction to the textbooks had been included (24). Knowing what market shares they occupy, at what stage in the high school curriculum are they employed, and what topics they cover (including the total page count) would provide for a better understanding of their role in national education. It would also make it easier to follow the subsequent essays, of which six directly analyze and compare their content.

The volume’s main thesis is based on the notion that every nation-state subscribes to its own master narrative and that efforts to produce a joint transnational history in East Asia are not politically feasible and have not been very successful. In this regard this volume differs from the previous literature, which dedicated much time to pondering how to harmonize the contentious memories in the region and what lessons could be drawn from the European experience for this purpose. The editors of this book, by contrast, argue that to bridge the divides among various national narratives, one has to acknowledge their parallel existence and try to understand how and why they were formed. This is expected to lead to greater self-awareness and an increase in mutual understanding. Some of the essays in the volume attempt to do exactly this. For example, Michael Hsiao’s examination of Taiwanese and South Korean textbooks convincingly shows that the more positive portrayals of Japanese colonial legacies in Taiwan stems from objectively different experiences during the colonial as well as pre-colonial period (the latter is not commonly stressed in the literature). Furthermore, to explain the more palatable nationalist bias in the Korean coverage, Hsiao points out the institutional constraints in South Korea’s textbook production, which is subject to much greater official scrutiny.

Several authors in this volume describe the content of Japanese history textbooks as a bland assortment of facts and charts that avoids moral judgments and lacks a strong overarching narrative. Hiroshi Mitani also attributes this outcome to the institutional environment of textbook production. In order to succeed, textbook writers need to follow the conservative guidelines set by the Ministry of Education. Additionally, they must meet the needs of school teachers who demand books that will prepare their students for university entrance examinations based on dry fact testing. Other authors, such as Peter Duus and Haruo Tohmatsu, situate this issue in a broader historical context. They suggest that the content of Japanese schoolbooks
reflects Japan’s position as an aggressor and loser in the war, as well as the continuing divisions among the Japanese public over how to interpret the past. Moreover, both authors point out that history education in East Asia continues to be used for building and enhancing of nation-state identities. This is particularly evident in present-day China, Korea and Taiwan, where the content of national education is found to be more politicized and patriotic.

Of the remaining essays in the volume, the most interesting is Daniel Chirot’s concluding chapter, which brings the whole debate into a direct comparison with Europe. Chirot shows that sincere reflection on the Holocaust has not been a smooth process and that denials of complicity on the part of European countries other than Germany endured long after the war. The implication for East Asia is that there is nothing exceptional about Japan’s difficulties to fully face up to its past, nor should Chinese or Korean reluctance to investigate their own collaboration be surprising.

The above-mentioned essays do a fine job of comparing and analyzing the current predicaments in history education in East Asia. Unfortunately, the authors rarely engage each other’s arguments. This is a common problem in edited volumes. But in this case, where the authors reach varying conclusions despite often using the same source material, greater dialogue among the contributors would have significantly improved the analytical power and overall consistency of the book. Moreover, a greater exchange with the existing research would have sharpened the theses as some of the topics are discussed at length in the literature. Despite these criticisms, the volume has considerable merits. It is rare to find a book that tackles the problems of history education in East Asia in such a comprehensive manner. Moreover, the editors manage to assemble a team of pundits who represent each of the discussed nations, and several of them play a critical role in textbook production there. As such, the volume is important for scholars who are interested in this field. It should be received as a welcome addition to the existing scholarship.

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As a topic of critical inquiry, race remains an enigma despite the existence of a substantial and constantly growing literature on the topic. The problem, as scholars have repeatedly noted, is that while ideologies of race frequently posit their categories as timeless and unchanging, the actual contents of those categories vary greatly across different times and places. Race, in other words, is highly context-dependent, yet its logic also possesses a degree of