Historicizing Mid-Century American Anthropology of Korea:

Vincent S.R. Brandt, Stereoscopically

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My own belief is that by and by anthropology will have the choice between being history and being nothing.

(Frederic William Maitland 1911: 295)

Appearing originally in a turn-of-the-century lecture (cf. Whiteley 2004: 487), the prescription that Maitland, a legal historian, offered for an adjacent discipline became considerably more famous after it was taken up decades later by one of that discipline's leading figures. First in his 1950 Marett Lecture at Oxford, "Social Anthropology: Past and Present," and subsequently in a 1961 address at the University of Manchester, "Anthropology and History," E.E. Evans-Pritchard (1950: 123; 1961: 20) invoked Maitland in service of an argument that "social anthropology is a kind of historiography" and would best own up to that status. In the face of a certain amount of opposition from both camps, Evans-Pritchard further contended that anthropological self-identification with the humanities rather than with the more positivist natural sciences might in turn

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enable a mutually fruitful dialogue in which historians, or at least those not singularly enamored with event-driven description for its own sake, might themselves feel more license to draw upon anthropological insights about pattern and social process. While gallons of ink have continued to be spilled about this would-be interdisciplinary endeavor, there is some justification for arguing that Evans-Pritchard's basic point won out. Speaking just for anthropologists, few today would presume to write with the blithe disregard or even contempt for historical knowledge that some of his predecessors evinced. Yet the "opportunity" to be "really empirical" that Evans-Pritchard (1950: 123) saw in his rethinking has not been exhausted, not least when it comes to the historicization of past anthropologies themselves.

This article is intended as a prologue to a broader historical evaluation of the American social or cultural anthropology of Korea in the mid-20th century. In terms of dates, I am referring to research conducted between 1945 and the late 1960s, albeit with some blurriness at the latter end. In terms of research orientation, I mean to index scholarship that sought, at least in part, to provide basic ethnographic information on South Korean villages, scholarship that was rooted in long(ish)-term fieldwork and increasingly in dialogue, in a way previously impossible, with a professionalized academic Korean anthropology that had roughly similar goals. This is to set aside some anthropology that took place in the context of the Korean War itself, which was both more instrumental in its purposes and considerably more rushed (see Oppenheim 2008, 2019). In terms of the affordances of biography, there was a certain amount of foundational common experience of Korea among the American anthropologists of this era, accumulated during the war and the U.S. occupation in the southern zone that

preceded it, as arguably there had been generational aspects to the American anthropology of Korea before 1945 (Oppenheim 2016: 9-10), and as the Peace Corps would launch several anthropological careers among the following cohort of scholars(Kim and Robinson 2020). In terms of names, finally, leading representative figures include Cornelius Osgood, Eugene I. Knez, and Vincent S.R. Brandt. Osgood's summer 1947 research on Kanghwa-do, conducted under the auspices of the U.S. military occupation government, formed the basis of the initial ethnographic portion of his *The Koreans and their Culture* (Osgood 1951; see Biernatzki 1985). Knez got his start in Korea as an officer in the occupation government in 1945 and did his first fieldwork in the Kimhae area in 1951, which became the basis of his dissertation (Knez 1959). His initial research would not enjoy full publication, however, until decades later, supplemented by several follow-up studies (Knez 1997). Brandt (2014: 1) dodged bullets as a U.S. diplomat in South Korea in 1952-53 and returned in 1966 for research as a graduate student in anthropology.

In some respects, this mid-century American anthropology of Korea was not the most obvious candidate for Evans-Pritchard's roughly contemporaneous critique. Korea, of course, has a long, hyperliterate past and an indigenous historiography that foreign scholars have not failed to notice; Koreans had rarely been reckoned as among the "people without history," to invoke the phrase that Eric Wolf (1982) would use sarcastically to characterize a central assumption of the European historical gaze. Indeed, the academic discipline of history was (and is) much more central to the study of Korea in the United States than anthropology (cf. Lie 2016), to the extent that some anthropological scholars, such as Osgood (1951: 157-274), essentially reproduced long

historical sections in their writings. Yet it was nonetheless the case that village studies of Korea, no less than the social anthropology of Africa or Polynesia, often drew from the legacy of structural functionalism a bias toward the theorization of social homeostasis. And when it did occur, conceptualization of ongoing economic, social, and cultural change in these anthropological works was often "mid-century modern," American-style, which is to say that it was significantly constrained by modernization theory, with its model of and for social development that was just as streamlined and simplifying as 19th-century unilinear social evolutionism had been (see Pletsch 1981).

At any rate, one of the powers of the history of anthropology is to render the opportunity that Evans-Pritchard sensed ever-present, available through a process of re-reading past anthropological works against the contexts of their making, the means and relations of their production, and their inclusions and exclusions, thus bringing about the further turn of the empiricist screw that he imagined possible. An examination of the mid-century American anthropology of Korea and its leading figures through this lens reveals transnational histories of U.S. involvement that conditioned and enabled its making yet exist beyond or in the margins of ethnographic texts framed in terms of the interiority of Korean "society" or "culture" (cf. Lee in this issue). Preliminarily, I would like to suggest that such a re-reading would be fruitful in the case of all three of the central figures I have noted, for Osgood, Knez, and Brandt alike. For reasons of time (my own) and space (this essay), however, but also because of the limited feasibility of the sort of archival work that would be necessary fully to open up the work and careers of the first two during the Covid-19 fall of 2020 in which I write, I am going to focus here, by way of example, on Brandt. His ethnography of the mid-century era, a classic in the

field that, notwithstanding its brevity, has been the most conceptually portable and influential of works from the period, has now been joined by a memoir published forty years later, offering the expediency of reconsidering the pair together.

An Ethnographic Classic

Brandt's *A Korean Village: Between Farm and Sea* is the most overtly theoretical ethnography of Korea to emerge from mid-century American anthropology. Originally published in 1971 by Harvard University Press, the book is based on Brandt's 1968 dissertation in the Harvard anthropology department. He appears to have worked most closely with a roster of faculty that included John Pelzel, Douglas Oliver, David Maybury-Lewis, Ezra Vogel, and the historian of Korea Edward Wagner (Brandt 1990: v). *A Korean Village* closely engages with social anthropological questions concerning village organization, lineage structure and predominance, formal and informal authority, and ethos that had become central to the Korean-language anthropology of the 1960s, but it also gestures in the direction of conceptualizations of structural dualism prevalent in the "cosmopolitan theory" of the era. Overlaying these two touchstones is a layer of modernization theory, sometimes disregarded in subsequent appraisals and appropriations of the work.

The focus of Brandt's research was a coastal village in the Sŏsan area of South Ch'ungch'ŏng province, pseudonymously called Sŏkp'o. As the subtitle of Brandt's ethnography suggests, in the 1966 of his research, the residents of Sŏkp'o pursued a mix of farming and fishing activities within an overall subsistence economy. Brandt recounts

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hiking along the coast of the region, visiting a succession of villages in his search for one in which deep-sea fishing in particular was an element of the economic mix. His arrival in Sŏkp'o, however, was also something that Brandt experienced as "ethnographic love at first sight": in contrast to some of the other potential sites, he was "impressed by the calm self-assurance and air of constant propriety," although he would later discover the "tensions" that lay beneath this surface tranquility (Brandt 1990: 7). This personal impression coincided with a more theoretical assessment of Sŏkp'o's potential importance as a location in which, at the time of research, the changes that would accompany South Korea's development and industrialization still lay mostly in the future. Sŏkp'o, in Brandt's (1990: 5) assessment, was sufficiently "off the beaten track" that "traditional forms of social organization and ideology would still be relatively intact." *A Korean Village* thus presents readers with a setting that, if only for the moment, remains amenable to social anthropological analysis in terms of the mechanisms of social equilibrium, and which beyond the scope of the book itself might serve as a "sociological reference point from which subsequent change could be observed and gauged" (Brandt 1990: 5).

Brandt's argument pursues this central question of equilibrium, first in relation to village studies that emerged from South Korean anthropology and sociology in the 1950s and 1960s, with works by Kim Taik Kyoo (1964), Lee Man Gap (1960), and Ki Hyuk Pak and Seung Yun Lee (1963) most central to its analysis. The Korean scholarship centrally problematized the question of how village leadership is exercised, and notwithstanding the abrogation of legal distinctions between *yangban* (scholar-aristocrats) and commoner hereditary status groups at the end of the nineteenth century, it

found its chief answer in the relative number and strength of ancestrally aristocratic and ancestrally commoner lineages present in different villages. While there was considerable variation in the villages considered, those in which a single aristocratic lineage dominated tended also to be under the political sway of that lineage, with lineage interests prioritized over those of the community as a whole and hierarchical distinctions of status strongly expressed. Those villages with multiple strong *yangban* lineages or sublineages sometimes exhibited competition for status and resources among these groups as a basic element of local political life. In contrast to both of these scenarios were villages in which commoner lineages were predominant or existed in balance with aristocratic groupings, where a greater ethic of community cooperation and egalitarianism tended to prevail (Brandt 1990: 8-11).

Brandt's conceptual move in relation to this existing body of scholarship was consistent with what might be termed the ideolization of the social anthropological tradition in the mid-20th century, which was accompanied by a particular attention to terms such as "model" and "structure." The latter category, he explained, had seen a multiplication in its meanings from the early days of social anthropology, when it was simply regarded as a mapping of empirically-existing social relationships. Under the influence of such scholars as Claude Lévi-Strauss and Edmund Leach, Brandt explained, "structure" had also come to indicate anthropologists' *post facto* "explanatory construct[s]" for observed phenomena (Brandt 1990: 24), abstractions akin to Weberian ideal types. Others had taken it a step further, arguing for attention to cultural grammar[s]," "cognitive cultural codes," or "shared 'designs for living' existing in the heads of members of any given society," orienting or even generating social action

(Brandt 1990: 24). Brandt explicitly embraced the first new sense of structure as a heuristic model and, although hesitating due to the complexity of actual behavior, ultimately adopted the more generative sense as well in positing "two distinct ethical systems" guiding actual social behavior (Brandt 1990: 25).

The result of this move was to sublimate both Brandt's own data on Sŏkp'o and potentially those of other village anthropologies into a more encompassing cultural dualism, a model which might account for the patterned diversity of authority and prestige systems in different Korean villages. Brandt noted two sets of correlations. Members of high-prestige lineages tended to emphasize kinship relations; embrace hierarchical authority structures, formal interaction patterns, and Confucian ritual; and valorize farming as an economic activity. Those from lower-prestige lineages, in contrast, tended toward egalitarianism, orientation toward personal charisma, and informal interactions; participation in shamanistic and animistic forms of religious expression; and an economic emphasis on fishing (Brandt 1990: 22-23). From these parallelisms, Brandt hypothesized that, in Sŏkp'o, a "clearly structured hierarchical system of rank and authority...closely linked with Korean aristocratic traditions" was counterposed with a more informal "egalitarian community ethic" (Brandt 1990: 25). In proposing conceptual touchstones for this dualism, Brandt drew connections to broadly-read anthropological works of the 1960s. While also citing George Foster and Max Gluckman, Brandt (1990: 29-36) found the closest analogies for his framework in scholarship by Victor Turner, Robert Redfield, and Leach. Brandt identified points of comparison and difference with Turner's (1969) dualism of structure and *communitas*, as well as Redfield's (1960) consideration of coexisting "great" and "little traditions," but Leach's hypothesis of

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contrasting, co-present "esteem systems" and "ideal forms of political organization," *gumlao* and *shan*, in *Political Systems of Highland Burma* offered perhaps the closest echo of Brandt's own findings (Leach 1954: 9, 10, cited in Brandt 1990: 36). It is, in any case, this mapping of ethico-political dualism in Sŏkp'o that has been the most influential element of Brandt's work, with application in and beyond subsequent Korean village ethnographies. Roger Janelli, for instance, not only found resonance with Brandt's work in his and Dawnhee Yim Janelli's discussion of the perceived appropriateness of different aesthetics of political organization in kin meetings versus local governance in their study of the village of Twisŏngdwi (Janelli and Janelli 1982: 21-22; Janelli 1993: 38), but also cited Brandt's egalitarian (counter)ethic to contest "cultural determinist perspectives" that claimed that the hierarchical organization of Korean corporations in the 1980s was an automatic outgrowth of Korean rural tradition (Janelli 1993: 52).

Overall, Brandt's hypothesis of dual ethical systems served to argue how the pull of kinship loyalties did not preclude "a considerable measure of social harmony" (Brandt 1990: 236). The "interacting patterns" of hierarchical and egalitarian orientations and the dynamic relationship between them (Brandt 1990: 235), in particular the tempering effect of the egalitarian-communitarian ethic on the exclusive and monopolizing tendencies of elite kinship lineages, both helped to explain how a degree of social equilibrium had been achieved in Sŏkp'o and authorized similar sorts of explanations, with some variation in patterns of interaction, for many other Korean villages already represented in the anthropological literature. Many, however, did not mean all, for when, after several intervening ethnographic chapters, Brandt placed his social anthropological model of integrative balance into dialogue with larger historical developments in the concluding

section of *A Korean Village*, he hypothesized two important limitations. In certain villages with a highly dominant clan group or groups, he noted, the hierarchical lineage ethic might be amplified to such a degree that the egalitarian counter-ethic was subordinated to the point of vanishing. Brandt presented this possibility, glimpsed in microcosm, as an anthropological contribution to an explanation of the "endemic pervasive factionalism" that some historians had identified as a basic aspect of Korean history, one detrimental to the fate of the country as a whole (Brandt 1990: 239). The low "social prestige" of the communitarian ethic led to the ever-present possibility of its suppression at the village level, while at higher levels of social organization, Brandt surmised, this possibility became rather the norm, as "the accompanying spirit of accommodation and tolerance [was] eliminated or submerged as a basic unifying factor of social organization" in the context of "factional" Chosŏn dynasty power struggles among literati groups.[1]

With a view to the future, meanwhile, Brandt also forecast the basic fragility of his entire ethical dynamic when confronted with the overwhelming process of "modernization" that was ostensibly imminent in 1966. Both the lineage-focused hierarchical ethical system and its egalitarian communitarian counterpart "require subordination of the individual to group interests," he noted, resulting in a stifling of those "acquisitive and competitive achievement drives that are a necessary condition for success in modern industrial society" (Brandt 1990: 236-7). Whereas some of the Korean anthropologists who were Brandt's scholarly interlocutors had imagined that village cohesion and cooperation, where sufficiently developed vis-à-vis lineage loyalties, might enable positive village engagement with socioeconomic change, Brandt's pessimism was

more in tune with the more violent presumptions of high-Rostowian, American-style modernization theory, according to which the process would, of necessity, entail the breaking of most or all "traditional" collective, redistributive obligations that stood in the way of individual ambition and entrepreneurial accumulation.[2] Thus, seen through a wider lens, the harmony achieved in the dynamic balance of ethical systems realized in villages like Sŏkp'o had already been attenuated at higher social levels in the course of Korean history, to the detriment of national ambitions, but it was the brighter potential future of "modernization" that was wont to shatter it.

A Second Look at South Korea in the 1960s

Published in 2014, Brandt's *An Affair with Korea* promises in its subtitle his "memories of South Korea in the 1960s." The book represents a genre that itself is well represented in the history of anthropology: a more narrative, more personal, and more event-driven retrospective companion piece to the ethnography and theoretical argument of *A Korean Village*. *An Affair with Korea* gives a more rounded and more detailed description of Sŏkp'o's entanglements, as something more than a type case, in a South Korea in the midst of rapid change. At the same time, the book does contain in its final chapter a record of Brandt's 1992 follow-up study of Sŏkp'o, the promise implied in the original characterization of his 1966 fieldwork as offering a baseline for observing subsequent developments.

The memoir is partially chronological, with early and late chapters devoted to Brandt's arrival at and departure from Sŏkp'o, and partially thematic, with other sections

focusing on such topics as fishing, village religion, and father-son relationships. Brandt's encounters, conversations, and relationships are presented in more detail—there are names or, at least, pseudonyms—and without the constraint of realized ethnographic synthesis. It would certainly be possible to read *An Affair with Korea* as an account of the making of *A Korean Village*, as a palimpsest or commentary. But the later book also offers accounts of previously unpublished events that symptomatically escaped the earlier work entirely, yet suggest additional dimensions to some of its central theoretical claims.

For instance, *An Affair with Korea* offers recollections that contribute to an alternative anthropological archive of U.S. presence, particularly military presence, in the South Korea of the mid-1960s—material that one suspects was rather rigorously excluded from *A Korean Village,* given its description of Sŏkp'o as an isolated village with relatively intact traditional social forms. To some degree, Brandt's own military background and his own actions are irrelevant to his interpellation: as a white male foreigner in the Korean countryside, he cannot avoid certain kinds of attention, and as an American, he is confronted, even after months of residence in Sŏkp'o, with rumors that he is either a CIA plant or is prospecting for Korean riches to exploit.[3] But it also turns out that, off the beaten path though it may have been, Sŏkp'o was within hiking distance, albeit six long hours' hiking distance, of a small U.S. missile base.[4] Weary of the meager Korean diet of the village, Brandt one day sets out to make the journey, in search of bread and instructions on how to bake it. At the end of the hike, he emerges before the barbed-wire perimeter of the compound. After explaining himself to the surprised sentry, he is ushered inside and introduced to the officers and NCOs (Brandt 2014: 47-48).

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Later that evening, Brandt's new companions take him just outside the gate for a night of entertainment in the camptown or, in military slang, "ville," located across the road from the base entrance: a set of "ramshackle buildings…garishly decorated with such signs as 'Honeysuckle Rose,' 'New York Saloon,' 'Cafe Dancing,' and 'American Bar'" (Brandt 2014: 47). What follows is Brandt's introduction to the geography and sexual economy that surrounded U.S. bases throughout the South Korean landscape at the time of his research and for decades afterwards. In her review of Brandt's memoir, Liora Sarfati (2015: 469) notes that he offers a soldiers'-eye view of their relationships with the Korean women of the camptown who serve and partner with them, one which is thus inherently less attuned to exploitation and the "abusive and cruel" character of semi-organized sex work than that found in much social science scholarship (e.g. Moon 1997). Certainly Brandt sees both multiple vectors of exploitation and the fear of it—a soldier's casualness about how "the girls are inspected regularly" for stolen property and sexually-transmitted diseases, Brandt's note that the women became "non-persons in South Korean society," and his depiction of officers who describe their main goal as preventing marriages all speak volumes (Brandt 2014: 51, 52, 53)—but he also argues that "most of the women played a hard, shrewd game in this economic arena and made out extremely well" (Brandt 2014: 51).

At the same time, however, in a way somewhat reminiscent of the idealist shift of *A Korean Village*, Brandt's account reveals much about the underlying epistemology that enabled this system. It is suggestive of how the soldiers might "choose to ignore the women's suffering" (Sarfati 2015: 469), and not just that they did, of stories that American military personnel told themselves about Korean women, and of a mutual

détente of incomprehension and contempt defining American-South Korean relations in this period that was larger than the camptown encounter. The soldiers and the women shared a public discourse of "constant denunciation of South Korea and everything Korean" (Brandt 53), but it took only a moment of Brandt (2014: 55) conversing with the women alone and in Korean to hear their resentment—"why don't they respect anything in Korea?" The officer who was Brandt's main interlocutor, meanwhile, was unsparing in his torrent of insult and condescension, even over Brandt's objections.

> Look at the way they live. There's no culture or civilization. You know how filthy the toilets are. Nobody takes a bath…They're all lazy and dishonest; everybody's begging or stealing or trying to con us out of anything worth having…Why don't they clean themselves up and get to work and make something out of this place? (Brandt 2014: 54)

The sole exception that was spared the soldiers' criticism was the population of Korean civilian employees with whom they worked on the base, whom they regarded as excellent and hard-working, "the cream of the crop." Brandt (2014: 54), to his credit, writes that he found this contradictory attitude "puzzling," and pushed back. But the Manichean quality of the base officers' division of Koreans into bad and good, lazy and industrious, reinforced in their interactions in the camptown, mirrored in microcosm not only pervasive military perceptions but also U.S. policy assumptions about South Korea's potential for self-improvement; in 1966, official and semi-official U.S. attitudes toward South Korea had only just begun to shift away from viewing it as a hopeless sinkhole for aid and toward a celebration of its economic dynamism, the two poles that exhausted the field of possibilities. This black-and-white division, in short, reflected the Manichean

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cultural mythology of modernization theory itself. And although Brandt was unusual in his embrace of "traditional" Korean village life, the same gap reappears in *A Korean Village* in its conclusion about the incommensurability of group-oriented ethics, whether to lineage or to community, and individualistic, achievement-oriented modern drives.

Yet *An Affair with Korea* also provides a new context for Brandt's pessimism concerning Sŏkp'o's compatibility with economic development in its recounting of his own minor, failed attempt to help bring it about.[5] Brandt (2014: 190) had initially been "interested in…examining and analyzing the village just as it was, not in trying to change it for the better," which also reflected (he implies) a Harvard consensus on the proper scope of fieldwork against an alternative view advocating "urgent action on behalf of the deprived and exploited."[6] Eventually, however, his aims began to shift, in view of the villagers' own "longing for a better life." Through a chance encounter with an American development professional and old friend, Brandt gains access to a sum of capital. His initial plan is to work through Sŏkp'o's informal village council of influential residents to make loans to five fishermen so that they might purchase engines for their boats and thereby increase their fishing range; as these loans are to be repaid with interest, the money could be lent again to help finance other projects. The scheme appeals intellectually as an opportunity to put "community development ideology" to the test (Brandt 2014: 194). In the end, however, it falls apart due, in Brandt's telling, to several interlocking reasons: the influential citizens of the council are all from elite lineages and fundamentally look down on fishing, the fishermen chosen are selected on the basis of nepotism rather than merit, and the projects they pursue are "grandiose" rather than pragmatic (Brandt 2014: 200). One of those selected presses beyond his limits in a new,

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leaky boat and perishes in a storm with his crew, and even beyond this incident, Brandt (2014: 205) judges the project to have done "more economic harm than good"—although in the years immediately after, some fishermen begin to upgrade their boats as he originally anticipated. Certainly Brandt's self-critical account offers ample new opportunities to reflect both on the hubris of development and on the ethics of anthropological research (cf. Sarfati 2015: 469). Maybe, just maybe, one is tempted to mutter, Harvard had a point. But the recounting also suggests that the incompatibility of group-oriented (including communitarian) ethics and individual aspirations hypothesized by *A Korean Village* was not simply a rehearsal of modernization theory's *a priori* economistic cultural assumptions, but reflected what was, in Brandt's perspective, an actual failed attempt to harness community spirit and entrepreneurial ambition to mutual ends.

Brandt's return to Sŏkp'o in his 1992 restudy, the subject of the final chapter of *An Affair with Korea*, comes to rest on ambivalence. Relative prosperity has come to the village, as it has to South Korea as a whole, but not through the old economic means: both conventional fishing and especially farming have declined, replaced by such new occupations as oyster and octopus harvesting, as well as the simple sale of land that has greatly appreciated in value. People now work "separately to make money," with consumerist ends; collective labor has basically disappeared, and the "human heartedness" (*insim*) that long ago drew Brandt to Sŏkp'o, and for which it had been renowned even to those who also thought it backward, has faded away, apparently little missed (Brandt 2014: 21, 223). A simple conclusion is that modernization had simply played out according to the theoretical blueprint, with individualism shattering traditional

group-centered orientations, whether to lineage or to community. Brandt the author appears unsatisfied with this reading. It seems too easy, precisely because it seems to have been too easy for Sŏkp'o's residents to adapt, without the stresses and strains entailed in the breaking of traditional harmony that he would have predicted in 1966.

> What preoccupies me more than all the changes that have taken place in Sŏkp'o is the problem of making sense out of my own reactions to them. Twenty-five years ago I was dazzled by the strong sense of community, and I identified emotionally with a fragile, vulnerable, and doomed way of life. Now, for me, some things have changed too fast. I seem to be the one who is suffering from culture shock, not the Sŏkp'o peasants who have abruptly and happily entered the modern world (Brandt 2014: 242-243).

Brandt himself allows that perhaps, all along, it had just been him: his own nostalgias and his own dualism circumscribing what he thought possible for Sŏkp'o's future. But then, as the end of his return trip approaches, Brandt has a final meal with one of the more reflective of his interlocutors, Yi Pyŏngun. Prosperity has arrived, Yi explains, but "Sŏkp'o is just a place where people own land and houses…There is nothing secure and permanent in our lives the way there used to be" (Brandt 2014: 246). Perhaps the transition had not been so smooth for everyone after all.

Conclusion

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This article has sought to offer a re-reading, itself quite partial, of Vincent S.R. Brandt's *A Korean Village* against his fieldwork memoir of over forty years later in order to suggest by means of example broader possibilities for re-evaluating the mid-century American anthropology of Korea. Reinserting anthropology into history adds layers of context, detail, and contingency to ethnographic texts that were originally more narrowly disciplined by modernist theoretical preoccupations. Following through on the second half of Evans-Pritchard's proposition, however, by simultaneously considering history anthropologically potentially allows old ethnographies, brushed across the grain (cf. Stoler 2010), to speak of historical processes that transcend their authors' epistemologies, in common with other contributions to this issue (see contributions by Lee, Steffen, and Ryang). A bonus effect worth mentioning in the pages of *Transnational Asia* is that the processes thus revealed include transnational dynamics frequently excluded by habit or design from the frames of village studies that aimed to describe "traditional" Korea.

Perhaps most obvious among these dynamics is American involvement in South Korea from the 1940s to the 1960s in its variety of aspects, with the American military presence the most glaring. In *An Affair with Korea*, Brandt (2014: 51) recalls dreaming of the possibility of an "ethnographic study of the financial and personal arrangements" at his local missile base camptown; such an endeavor may not have been in the offing for a Harvard graduate student in 1966, and, in any case, Brandt soon returned to Sŏkp'o's balanced dualism. Yet the memoir also reveals ways in which the *other* dualism of Brandt's theoretical apparatus—that of modernization theory, of the supposed incompatibility between group and individualistic ethics, and thus of the yawning gap between old and new Koreans—was also an element of American military folklore in

Korea, finding apparent confirmation in Brandt's own futile effort to encourage economic development in Sŏkp'o. Together, these moments point, perhaps more broadly for mid-century anthropology, to the possibility of something like a historical ethnography of anthropological theory, one that would call attention to instances in which theory found its own recognition in an already-extended transnational demesne.

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[1] "Factionalism" had been ascribed to a Korean national personality by Japanese colonial historiography, as part of a legitimating historical and anthropological portrait of a people supposedly unready to rule itself. It had, meanwhile, also been a trope of Korean nationalist cultural self-critique, seen as one of the deleterious effects of the Confucian tradition to which many of Korea's ills and failures (culminating in the failure to remain independent) could be ascribed (Robinson 1991). Brandt's location of the roots of "factionalism" within Korean cultural dynamics did little to contest the essentialism of either of these formulations. Left unaddressed by Brandt were emerging critiques of the very notion by such historians as Yi Ki-baek (1961), who regarded the virulence of Chosŏn factional disputes as a more contingent effect of particular patterns of political centralization in the era.

[2] Cf. Rostow (1960).

[3] Lest these village rumors seem laughable, it is worth remembering that the latter is a fairly reasonable description of the secondary activities of certain Americans of the late 19th century, such as J.B. Bernadou and Horace Allen, who were officially in Korea for other purposes (see for instance Oppenheim 2016: 31-32), and that getting to know villagers on an intimate level was part and parcel of the new American imaginary of counterinsurgency, most famously fictionalized in *The Ugly American* (Lederer and Burdick 1958), which was seeing its early application in Southeast Asia even as Brandt was in the field.

[4] "Missile base" leaves the nature of the installation somewhat vague, but given the array of nuclear-capable surface-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles that began to be deployed in South Korea beginning in 1958, with the number of U.S. nuclear warheads in the country peaking in 1967, it was quite possibly a *nuclear* missile base (Kristensen and Norris 2017). Whatever their other relations to writing (see Song in this issue), North Korea's own missiles, in their public display, inscribe histories of silence concerning these past objects.

[5] I should note here that the sections of Brandt's memoir that I am highlighting follow the same arc as those emphasized by Liora Sarfati (2015) in her review of the book. My self-defense, I suppose, is that we are both interested in those moments where Brandt provided truly new information concerning his original fieldwork!

[6] This may refer to the "action anthropology" associated with Sol Tax of the University of Chicago; see Tax 1975, Rubinstein 1986.