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Eurocentric thinking has attempted to define modernity in terms of historical events taken place, or socio-economic structures and cultural traits developed in Europe and diffused to the rest of the world. It is both powerful and alluring in Europe and North America and continues to influence popular thinking about world history. Eurocentrism, belief, or ideology has justified the European creation of modernity and its diffusion to the rest of the world. It has had a great impact on peoples' ideas, various disciplines, and institutions, making people unconsciously accept the European contemporary way of life as superior and a standard of civilized life. This kind of Eurocentric thinking, however, has been largely discredited over the past fifty years. Serious scholars today almost universally regard it as wishful ideology rather than respectable history or social science. Then, in Korean world history education how has modernity been defined and how has modern transformation been explained in school world history? This article attempts to answer this question focusing on how the idea of "European inherited modernity" and the theory of modernization have been adopted in the middle school world history curriculum since the 1950s.

Keywords: Korean history education, teaching and learning history, world history, school curriculum, modernity, modern history, modernization, Eurocentrism, inherited modernity

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Introduction

In the 1990s, a new perspective on Europe's nineteenth century emerged and American scholars presented strong arguments that European political, economic, and social characteristics were not significantly different from those of the other core regions in Eurasia. They suggested that European history be treated as of one of the core regions, and not as a general phenomenon of world history. Furthermore there are a large number of works that highlight the contingency of European modern development in a global historical context.¹ They emphasized viewing China and the Islamic world as active participants in the trans-regional circulation of ideas, products, practices, and peoples. They attempted to transcend Eurocentrism by reducing the historic significance of European domination of the world in the nineteenth century and by explaining “the rise of Europe (the West)” with a contingency theory, or inter-regional

¹ Kenneth Pomeranz. (2011). *The Great Divergence, China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World*. Princeton University Press; Robert B. Marks. (2006). *The Origins of the Modern World: A Global and Ecological Narrative*, 2nd Ed. Lanham, MD.

interactions.

Multipolization and globalization justified American scholars' and educators' aggressive position on Eurocentrism in historiography and history education. They attempted to decentralize Europe while restoring non-European peoples' identities and their roles in world civilization. Reconstructing an alternative approach to world history transcending Eurocentrism in the 1990s, called "new world history" or "global history," began to influence middle school world history.

As post-modern and post-colonial discourses intensified, postmodernists and postcolonialists have increasingly asserted that history construction is narrow, limiting, arrogant, and discriminatory. They contend that the approach to world history and global history that emerged in the 1990s is no different from previous approaches in that it propagates Eurocentrism, which has legitimated capital, power, and modernity.² Without reflection on and reconceptualization of modernity, transcending Eurocentrism does not seem feasible. Three distinct and sometimes overlapping and conflicting intellectual projects, area studies, postmodern and postcolonial scholarship, and global (world) history, have sought an alternative construction of history.

From the 1960s to the 1980s South Korean historians enthusiastically accumulated extensive knowledge of Korean history and expanded it to include other national and regional histories from the United States and Japan. European history was considered as the norm and its modern development was viewed as the final stage that other regions need to attain. South Korean historians attempted to prove that Koreans would have achieved modernity on their own terms if imperialist disruptions had not occurred in the nineteenth century. With this academic agenda, they researched the socio-economic and cultural features and develop-

² Arif Dirlik, Is There History after Eurocentrism? Globalism Postcolonialism, and the Disavowal of History. *Cultural Critique*, 42 (Spring, 1999).

mental stages in Korean history that were similar to those in European history.

However, in the early 2000s, South Korean historians also began reflecting on how a Eurocentric view had become intractably diffused in Korean history scholarship. Influenced by global history, postmodernism and postcolonialism, they have increasingly problematized history construction. Currently many Korean scholars are concerned with how to reconstruct alternative modern history transcending a Eurocentric conception of modernity. Kim Seong-bo argues that historical “generality” and “modernity” conceptualized from a Eurocentric view have been seriously challenged.³ Yim Sang-u states that “a Eurocentric view in history regards European history, which mainly refers to the Roman and German tradition, as the general direction of historical progress.”⁴ He continues to point out that “modernization” and “a leaner path of progress” have been central Eurocentric conceptions that the East Asian scholars adopted.

This South Korean historiography is perplexing. From the beginning of teaching world history with the first national curriculum (1954), history educators have criticized the Eurocentrism of school world history.⁵ For several decades, they cried out for transcending Eurocentrism. However, in South Korean historiography, Eurocentrism became problematized in the 2000s. What, then, was the Eurocentrism that history educators have made great efforts to transcend since the 1950s and what was the modernity that school world history explained?

For several decades since the 1950s, history educators criticized middle school world history because it neglected Asian history, in particular Chinese history, which has been viewed as the cultural root of Kore-

³ Kim Seong-bo. (2007). *Tal-Jungsim ui segyesa insik gwa Hanguk geun-hyeondaesa seongchal. Yeoksa bipyong*, 80, 239.

⁴ Yim Sang-u. (2008). *Dong Asia eseo Yureop jungsimjeok yeoksagwan ui geukbok. Seogang immun nonchong*, 24, 32.

⁵ Yi Dong-yun. (1957). *Segyesa gyoyuk ui dangmyeon gwaje. Yeoksa gyoyuk*, 2, 12.

an history. Increasing the number of curricular units and textbook pages assigned to East Asian history, they attempted to make world history relevant to Korean peoples' experiences.⁶ They believed that by reducing European history and increasing East Asian history, they could solve the problem Eurocentrism. However, in my view, school world history has never escaped the influence of Eurocentrism due to the way it conceptualizes modernity and narrates the modern transformation of the world.

How has modernity been defined and how has the modern transformation been explained in school world history? This article attempts to answer this question focusing on how the idea of "European inherited modernity" and the theory of modernization have been adopted in the middle school world history curriculum since the 1950s.

Theories of European Inherited Modernity and Modernization

In the idea of European inherited modernity, compared to other civilizations, European civilization is regarded as "unusual and even unique."⁷ According to Kagan, all early civilizations shared the following common experiences: "cultural uniformity and stability," "the lack of reason in intellectual and political ideas and practices," "monarchy as the standard form of government," and "a mutually supportive unified structure" of religious and political institutions and beliefs.⁸ Kagan perceived that while other cultures carried those characteristics, standing "still" in "a stable form" throughout their historical development,

⁶ Kang Sun Joo. (2003). Asia versus Europe: Conceptual Framework of the High School World History in South Korea. *The Social Studies*, 95(4); Kang Sun Joo. (2012). Transcending Eurocentric and Sino-centric Perspectives in the Middle School World history Curriculum in the Republic of Korea since 1945. *Yearbook of International Society for History Didactics*.

⁷ D. Kagan, S. Ozment & F. M. Turner. (1980). *The Western Heritage*. New York: Macmillan.

⁸ D. Kagan. (1994). From Ancient Greece to Modern America. *Current*, 371, 37-9.

“Western civilization (western Europe and North America)” discovered the ideas of “liberty” and later “science” or “reason.”⁹ As a result, Western civilization did not share common experiences. From the Greek city-states to the present, Western civilization perpetuated and nourished its liberal and rational traditions and, as a result, it established unique and independent cultures.

The Eurocentric perspective states that Europe created modernity, which was defined as “scientific knowledge,” “industrialism,” “nationalism,” “capitalism,” “democracy,” and “Europeanization.” Europe had a genealogy according to which ancient Greece begat Rome, Rome begat Christian Europe, Christian Europe begat the Renaissance, the Renaissance the Enlightenment, political democracy, and the industrial revolution.¹⁰ In other words, without any influence from outside Europe or any interaction with other parts of the world, Europe inherited modernity from its ancient and medieval traditions. Non-European societies developed cultural traits taking different historical paths until about the sixteenth century but they stayed static satisfied with a rudimentary level of civilization right before European states knocked on their doors. European civilization was the only exemplar that made progress, and Europeanization was the best path for modern development in non-European nations. Non-Europeans were able to transform their traditional societies into modern states adopting European ways of living and thinking. Europe was the central force to stimulate the industrial transformation and the rationalization of political and social institutions in non-European countries. Non-Europeans ultimately had no option but to accept European culture and political and economic system in order to progress and develop.

⁹ D. Kagan. (1991). The Role of the West. *Commentary* (January 1991), 182-5.

¹⁰ Eric R. Wolf. (1982). *Europe and the People without History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 5.

Modernity Explained by the Theory of European Inherited Modernity, the 1950s to the 1970s

In the first curriculum, issued in 1954, world history was organized with stories of the Orient, China, India, the Islamic world, the Tang and Song dynasties, Mongols, Japan and the Ming and Qing dynasties, and European modern history. Regions such as “the Orient” and “India” were featured as not progressive, low-grade civilizations (Table 1). Only Europe and China were depicted as the places of active change in ancient times.

Although the Islamic world, the Tang and Song dynasties, the Mongols, Japan, and exchange between the East and the West were treated in pre-modern times, the main story was European history, to which were assigned more minor units than any other regional histories. European history boasted its continuing development from Ancient Greece to modern transformation as an intact story and its modern transformation gained prominence. Narrating topics such as the medieval culture of Europe, the Renaissance, the religious revolution, the development of the nation-state, democracy, industrialization, and the nineteenth century in a successive structure, the European creation of modernity was explained as a logical realization of peculiar European ancient and medieval cultural traits. The idea of the inherited modernity of Europe was perpetuated.

Meanwhile, modern transformations in other regions gained little attention. In Unit 5, the developments of China and Southwest Asia in early modern times were addressed first. After the unit on the western powers’ invasions there were no independent units that explored other Asian countries’ responses to western invasions except one minor unit dealing with Japan’s change. The modernization approach, which was based on the assumption that “less developed countries” could adopt similar policies and follow Western nations to modernity, was not enunciated in the first curriculum.

Table 1. Unit Structure in the First Middle School Curriculum (1954)

East and West Units

1. Concept of Culture

2 Ancient East and West:

China

India

The Orient

Greece

Rome

Change in the ancient West

Change in ancient China

3. The Expansion of Asian Powers and Formation of Europe :

How was the Islamic world formed?

What was the Tang-Song period like?

How did Mongols and Japan develop?

How was Europe formed?

What was medieval culture of Europe like?

How was the relationship between Eastern and Western culture?

West Unit

4.The Development of Western Power and Early Modern Civilization:

– How did early modern civilization emerge?

– How did modern nation-states develop?

– How did modern political revolutions happen and democracy develop?

– How did the industrial revolution happen and spread to the world?

– What was the early modern (before the 19th century) Civilization like?

East Unit

5. What Was Early Modern East Like?

– Ming and Qing China

– What changed in Southwest Asia?

– How did western power invade?

– What changed in Japan?

– How were relations among Eastern countries?

6. The Contemporary World

What is imperialism?

Two world wars

How did democracy and internationalism develop?

Contemporary civilization

From the third amended curriculum (1973), the Asian modernization movement was treated separately in a major unit following the unit that dealt with the early modern period and the modern transformation of Europe. The modernization approach began to surface in the third curriculum. However, only China and Japan's modernization movements were identified. In the 1970s, the growth of the third world was the main social force stimulating Korean educators to call for an expansion of non-European histories in middle school world history. However, lack of information on Asian regions, other than China and Japan, inhibited middle school world history from including the modernization movement in other regions.

After World War II, as area studies in the United States began to generate a large amount of empirical information, reliable knowledge about the world beyond Europe was constructed. Although the knowledge propagated the Orientalist perspective, it allowed history scholarship and history education in the United States to visualize the world with several cultural dimensions. Until the early 1980s, few South Korean historians had access to historical scholarship in other countries other than Japan, and few history teaching materials were available for teachers to use. Yi Min-ho observed:

The present world history curriculum demands that (middle) school world history should go beyond a Western-centered orientation and expand histories of so-called peripheries, the Third World. However, there have not been enough teaching materials or resources about those areas for teachers to employ with their students and there has been a lack of teacher training to teach those histories. In this situation, expanding world history to include histories of the Third World can lead to a superficial understanding of world history.¹¹

¹¹ Yi Min-ho. (1986). *Segyesa gyoyuk gwa gyogwa gwajeong ui munjejeom. Yeoksa gyoyuk*, 40,141.

In sum, by the early 1980s, Korean world history teaching suffered from the limited amount of reliable knowledge and teaching materials of non-European regional histories.

Modernity Conceptualized with the Theories of European Inherited Modernity and Modernization, the 1980 to the 1990s

At the end of the 1970s and in the early 1980s new discussions on world civilizations in the United States were introduced to South Korean history education scholarship.¹² Yun, introducing an American scholar's idea of world civilization, pointed out, "Unlike Western civilization, Asian civilization cannot be characterized by common cultural traits or a linear path of development. Therefore, the concept of Asian civilization as a counterpart of Western civilization cannot be valid... Asian civilization is composed of several civilizations that are equivalent to Western civilization."¹³ Yun (1982) urged that the scope of world history be expanded to include other major civilizations in Asia, such as those of India and Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and West Asia. He also demanded that the particular traits of those civilizations that differed from European civilization be emphasized sufficiently to transcend a Eurocentric perspective.

Influenced by Yun's claim, the fourth amended curriculum (1981) adopted a regional approach to expand non-European regions' histories.¹⁴ It presented world history with histories of several cultural regions such

¹² Yun Se-cheol. (1979). *Segyesa gyoyuk gwa gukje ihae. Sadae nonchong*, 20; Yun Se-cheol. (1982). *Segyesa wa Asiasa. Yeoksa gyoyuk*, 32.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.14.

¹⁴ Kang Sun Joo. (2002). Asia versus Europe: Conceptual Framework of the High School World History Curriculum in South Korea, Proceedings of the 2002 Seoul International Conference for History, Korea and the World in History, August 15-18, 2002, Seoul National University, Seoul, Korea, 489.

Table 2. Unit Structure in the Fourth Middle School World History Curriculum (1981)

Asian Units	European Units
<p>Ancient Civilization Life in Pre-historic Times Chinese Ancient Culture Formation of unified Empires Ancient Indian Culture</p> <p>2. The Development of Chinese Society Wei, Qin, the Age of Division Sui and Tang, Song and Yuan Ming and Qing</p> <p>3. Activities of Peoples in Asia North Asia Southeast Asia and India The Islamic World and Its Culture East-West Cultural Exchange</p> <p>7. The Modernization of Asia The West Entering in Asia Modernization of China Modernization of Japan Modernization of Other Countries</p>	<p>4. The Formation of Western Culture Oriental World Ancient Greece Rome</p> <p>5. Medieval Europe Formation of Medieval Europe Life in Medieval Europe Christianity and Culture: Transformation of Medieval Europe</p> <p>6. Progress in Modern Western Society Renaissance and Reformation: Expansion of European Power and Absolutism Civil Revolution Industrial Revolution Development of Nineteenth century Europe</p>
<p>8. The Contemporary World Imperialism and World War I World War II Today's World</p>	

as East Asia, West Asia, Southeast Asia, and Europe. Curriculum developers in the 1980s and the 1990s thought that problems of Eurocentrism could be solved by just expanding the treatment of other major civilizations and cultural traditions rather than expanding on the Europeans ones. However, a deeper and more complex form of Eurocentric history came into shape as the fourth curriculum developers amended the unit structure of the world history curriculum.

The fourth curriculum developers began to frame Asian history and European history as a dichotomy (Table 2). Structuring European history

from ancient times through medieval and modern times in three major consecutive units reinforced a theory of European inherited modernity. The theory of European inherited modernity determined the structure, organizational themes and periodization of the world history curriculum by the 1990s.

Unit 7, “The Modernization of Asia,” followed by the unit on the European modern transformation, was intended to describe the unparalleled dynamism of European civilization as it made its own way of life a global trend. From the fourth curriculum, modernization of countries other than China and Japan also began to be taught. Modern world history became the story of European diffusion to the rest of the world. From the fourth curriculum, distinct European ideas and systems—democracy, nationalism, industrialization, and science—were manifested as the norms to measure the progress of a nation or a society.

The fourth curriculum presented world history as a complete form of persuasive narrative framed with the theories of European inherited modernity and modernization. A more sophisticated view of Eurocentrism began to dominate world history. It rested on a foundation of knowledge about the world beyond Europe. Many history educators believed that Europe deserved its central place in world history because European civilization created “modernity” and made it a world phenomenon. Making sense of the modern world, they argued, required understanding the logical development of European civilization.¹⁵

Modernity as Explained from an Interregional Approach in the 2000s

New scholarship in world history that emerged in the United States

¹⁵ No Myeong-sik. (1971). Seoyangsa gyoyuk ui munje wa banghyang. *Yeoksa gyoyuk*, 14, 171; Yun Se-cheol. (1979). Segyesa gyoyuk ui gukje ihae. *Sadae nonchong* 20, 24; Kim Yeong-sik. (1983). Seoyangsa gyoyuk wisang. *Deahak gyoyuk*, 6, 103.

during the 1990s emphasized that no state or civilization developed in isolation and that trans-cultural and inter-regional encounter has been one of the significant forces that brought historical change in most parts of the world. New world history has made it clear that the creation of modernity must be understood as an outcome of cross-cultural interactions in hemispheric and global contexts. This new scholarship seemed to envision sophisticated and reliable alternatives to the Eurocentric theory of “inherited modernity.”

New world history suggested that “as a whole, Asian civilization developed earlier, was more advanced and varied than that of Europe, which was attracted to “the riches of the Orient.”¹⁶ Many parts of Asia, such as West Asia and Southeast Asia, India, Central Asia, and East Asia, had developed with continuing contact with each other from pre-historic times. Since the development of the Silk Road, Central and East Asia subsequently maintained extensive trade with West Asia and India, which also had unbroken contact with Europe and even with some parts of Africa. Ideas also influenced Afro-Eurasia peoples sometimes through commercial trades and mass migration and sometimes during large-scale military campaigns.¹⁷

In the early 2000s, while introducing the new world history, South

¹⁶ Rhoads Murphy. *The Shape of the World: Eurasia*. In Ainslie T. Embree & Carol Gluck (Eds.) (1997), *Asia in Western and World History*, 9.

¹⁷ Dunn emphasized the Islamic world played a critical role in hemispheric economic and cultural exchanges. Ross E. Dunn. (1985). *The Challenge of Hemispheric History*. *The History Teacher*, 18(3); McNeill highlighted that in the 1000s-1100s, Chinese region was far most advanced place in terms of economic growth. William McNeill. (1982). *The Pursuit of Power: Technology, Armed Force, and Society since A. D. 1000*. Chicago; Pacey also pointed out that economically and technologically China was much more advanced than any other places at that time. He argued that it was not until the seventeenth century that Europe became more prominent than China. Arnold Pacey. (1990). *Technology in World Civilization*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press; Frank elaborated the argument of McNeill with more empirical data and suggested that several empires in Eurasia such as the Mughal, the Ottoman, and the Ming and Qing empires maintained and sustained development even after Europeans penetration until about the mid- eighteenth century. Andre Gunder Frank. (1998). *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Korean historians and educators called for a reconstruction of world history transcending a Eurocentric view.¹⁸ Serious flaws in the Korean middle school world history curricula that gave sole credit to European civilization in creating modernity were pointed out.¹⁹ World history structured only with a regional approach in the Asia and Europe framework inflated a Eurocentric perspective of inherited modernity by blinding students to the dynamic interaction of the Afro-Eurasian peoples which drove European historical change. Many history educators also supported the view that students also need to study how those civilizations and cultural traditions were interconnected. Middle school world history should adopt at that time “interconnected” as one of the important themes acknowledging the participation of diverse peoples as important historical agents in creating various forms of living in the world today.²⁰ With “interconnectedness” as an organizing theme, modernity could be constructed as a result of the cross-cultural interactions of many peoples in the world. In this way, not only Europeans but also other people would share the credit in creating modernity.

The 2007 amended curriculum continued to direct attention to autonomous, self-perpetuating developments within each regional history. However, it also paid much more attention to those movements

¹⁸ Yi Min-ho. (2002). Segyesa reul eotteoke ilgeul geosinga – Yureop jungsimjuui sagwan ui geukbok eul wihayeo. *Yeoksa bipyeong*, 59; Kang Sun Joo. (2002). Asia versus Europe: Conceptual Framework of the High School World History Curriculum in South Korea. Proceedings of the 2002 Seoul International Conference for History, Korea and the World in History, August 15-18, 2002, Seoul National University, Seoul, Korea; Gang Seon-ju. (2002). Segyehwa sidae ui segyesa gyoyuk. *Yeoksa gyoyuk*, 82; Jo Ji-hyeong. (2002). Segyesa, Jigusa, Postmodeonijeum. *Yeoksa hakbo* 173; Yu Jae-geon. (2003). Segyesa dasi ilkki wa Yureop jungsimjuui. *Changjak gwa bipyeong*, 122.

¹⁹ Gang Seon-ju. (2003). Segyesa gyoyuk ui “wigi” wa “munje” – Yeoksa-jeok jomang. *Sahoegwa gyoyuk*, 42(1).

²⁰ Gang Seon-ju. (2004). Chamyeo wa sanghojakyong ui segyesa. *Yeoksa gyoyuk*, 92; Gang Seon-ju. (2006). “Munhwa-jeok jeopchok gwa gyoryu ui yeoksa” ui naeyong seonjeong bangan. *Yeoksa gyoyuk yeongu*, 3.

and trends transcending civilizations. Wherever possible, the growth of cross-regional trade and travel were to be explored, including the formation and development of the Silk Road and the Indian Ocean trade, and the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean trade. In particular, in the 2007 curriculum, the modern period began in the late eighteenth century with industrialization narrowing the conception of modernity to the economic and political features that originated in Europe. In explaining European creation of modernity, a Eurocentric theory of inherited modernity was partly replaced with an inter-regional approach that emphasizes the influence of East and West Asian technological development and economic growth on European economic transformation in modern times.

The 2007 curriculum reflected some historical work that constructed a new historical context for global economy.²¹ It expanded economic history between the tenth and the eighteenth centuries. Prior to the 2007 curriculum, historical topics in those periods had been mostly about political systems and cultural changes with little attention to economic history. However, in the 2007 history curriculum, Unit 3 focused mainly on the economic development of Asian states including Song China, the Mongol Empire, the Ottoman Empire, the Mughal Empire, Ming and Qing China, Europe in the period of Absolutism, and expanding Afro-Eurasian trade and the silver trade on a global scale. This unit was supposed to present students with the idea that the economic development of Asian societies from about the tenth century increasingly stimulated inter-regional economic and cultural exchanges in Afro-Eurasia. In particular, the economic growth in the Song period was to be depicted as unprecedented and as having stimulated economic development of Eurasia as a whole through the Indian Ocean and the Silk Road trade. It also highlighted the critical role of the Mongol Empire in

²¹ Frank's *ReOrient* was one of the works that influenced on the revision of the 2007 curriculum.

bringing direct, economic, and ecological contacts across Afro-Eurasia. The European discovery of a new sea route at the end of the fifteenth century, which had been attributed to European enterprise prior to the 2007 curriculum, was viewed in the context of the Eurasian people's continuing interest and effort in expanding economic and cultural exchange through trade networks.²² The development of capitalism and industrialization in Europe were also supposed to be explained in a closer relationship with the expanding economic trade on a global level in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Table 4. Unit Structure of World History in the 2007 Curriculum

Major Units	Sub-Units	Treatment of Regions
The Formation of Civilization and Ancient Joseon	Mesopotamian Civilization, Egyptian Civilization, Indian Civilization, Chinese Civilization Ancient Joseon	Korean History
2-6	Korean History	Korean history
The Emergence of Unified Empires and World Religions	South Asia, Persia India to Mauryan and the Qusan State East Asia to the Chin and Han Dynasties Greek Polis, Hellenism, Roman Empire Diffusion of Catholicism, Buddhism, Confucianism	East Asia South Asia and India Europe Interregional Interaction (Silk Road)
The Formation of Diverse Cultural Regions	Formation of the Islamic World and Cultural commonalities of Islamic Cultural Regions Formation of the European World Feudal Societies in Western Europe and the Byzantine World Transformation of Medieval European Societies and Renaissance Political Changes of Gupta and Southeast Asia Sui and Tang China Cultural Unification of East Asia and Japan's Ancient State	East Asia South Asia and India Europe Inter-regional Trade (Indian Ocean Trade)

²² Kang Sun Joo. (2012). Transcending Eurocentric and Sino-centric Perspectives in the Middle School World History Curriculum in the Republic of Korea since 1945. *Yearbook of International Society for History Didactics*, 167.

Major Units	Sub-Units	Treatment of Regions
Expansion of Trade and Development of Traditional Society	Economic Development of the Song Dynasty and the Maritime Trade Networks Mongol Empire Development of the Traditional Society in West Asia Mughal Empire and Southeast Asia New Maritime Routes and Absolutism in Europe Ming-Qing China and Trade with Other Regions	East Asia South Asia and India Europe Interregional Trade (Indian Ocean Trade, Atlantic Ocean Trade)
- 11.	Korean History	
Industrialization and Nation-states	Industrial Revolution Political Revolution, Development of Civil Society, and Culture in the Nineteenth Century Independence of America from European Countries Civil War in North America and Industrialization Emergence of Imperialism and Colonization of the World	Europe America Africa
The Modern Nation Building Movement in Asia and Africa	Imperialist Aggression in Asia and Africa Modern Nation Building Movements in South Asia and Africa Modern Nation Building Movements in India and Southeast Asia Modern Growth of East Asian Countries Japanese Imperialist Aggression and Joseon and Qing China's Response	Asia Africa America
The Contemporary World	World War I Russian Revolution Anti-Imperialism Movement in Asia and Africa after World War I World War II Independence of Colonies and the Cold War Collapse of Socialism	Europe Asia Africa

Adhering to the standards set out in the 2007 curriculum, middle school history textbooks attempted to give greater attention to the economic growth of Song, Ming, and Qing China than they had previously. However, they failed to construct a sophisticated story of how the inter-regional economic growth of Eurasia had impacted the European transformation to a modern civilization. Furthermore, many history teachers did not understand why the theme “interconnectedness” was

important to transcend Eurocentrism or why economic topics were added to the conventional view of world history. Some history educators also expressed skepticism about the argument that by adopting the theme “interconnectedness” Eurocentrism can be transcended.²³ In fact, it seems that the thematic construction of interconnectedness can reduce the influence of the Eurocentric view rather than transcend Eurocentrism. Without rethinking the conception of modernity or modernities, or rewriting modern history, middle school world history is still far from transcending Eurocentrism.

Finally, when the 2009 world history curriculum developers were asked to reduce the quantity of topics that students were required to study, they did not hesitate to exclude topics with the theme “interconnectedness” and return to the world view that cultural regions were isolated. Thus once again the 2009 world history curriculum adopted the theory of European inherited modernity, attributing the creation and spread of modernity to Europe.

Conclusion

Eurocentric thinking has attempted to define modernity in terms of historical events or through socio-economic structures and cultural traits developed in Europe and diffused to the rest of the world. This is both powerful and alluring in Europe and North America, and continues to influence popular thinking about world history. Eurocentric belief or ideology has justified the European creation of modernity and its diffusion to the rest of the world. It has had a great impact on peoples’ ideas, various disciplines, and institutions making people unconsciously accept the European contemporary way of life as superior and a standard

²³ Yang Ho-hwan. (2011). Yeoksa gyogwaseo ui seosul gwa Yureop jungsimjuui. *Yeoksa gyoyuk*, 117, 235.

of civilized life. This kind of Eurocentric thinking, however, has been largely discredited over the past fifty years. Serious scholars today almost universally regard it as a wishful ideology rather than a respectable history or social science. Yet, in constructing school world history in South Korea, a Eurocentric view of modernity and modernization has not been replaced with alternative approaches. In fact, no detailed narrative of modern history has been developed. However, in the near future, we can expect to have alternative narratives because scholars are discussing possible ways of constructing modern history with the conception of plural modernities or hybridity to reduce Eurocentrism.

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