

SAME  같은

침대 BED

DIFFERENT

다른

DREAMS

A NOVEL

ED PARK

BOOK CLUB KIT

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The novel uses a variety of perspectives to tell the story. Which did you engage with the most? Did you have a favorite character? If so, which one?
2. Aside from Soon Sheen, who do you consider the next major character of the book?
3. What is the significance of the title, “*Same Bed Different Dreams*”? What role do dreams and the concept of dreaming play throughout the novel?
4. The book includes a lot of wordplay. What are some examples you noticed? Is the author just having fun, or is there often a deeper function?
5. Part of “Diagnosis,” an unusual, famous poem by the Korean writer Yi Sang, appears in Dream One—a grid of numbers, printed backward—and is returned to over the course of the book. How is this a “poem”?
6. What did you think of GLOAT? How does the book engage with technology and its impact on our day-to-day lives? What real-life company or companies would you compare GLOAT to?
7. How does Park explore the impact of different mediums—from science fiction novels to video games to poetry to movies and TV—on storytelling and meaning? In what ways does the book reject traditional narrative structure? Why do you think Park chose to tell the story this way?
8. How does each of the three main narrative threads—“The Sins,” “2333,” and the “Dreams”—use time? What effect does that have on the reading experience? What year does the “Sins” storyline take place in?
9. Sadako, Echo, and many other characters in *Same Bed Different Dreams* adopt disguises or change themselves in pursuit of different goals. What is the book saying about identity? What factors play a role in identity for the characters, and to what extent is identity malleable? What role do names play in the story?
10. How does the book play around with the concept of genre? What genre tropes do you recognize within *Same Bed Different Dreams*?
11. At the beginning of the novel, a scholar asks: “What is history?” How does the book engage with this question?
12. How are fact and fiction employed in the storytelling, and to what end?
13. Did you learn anything new or surprising about Korea or the Korean Provisional Government? What other historical events stood out to you?
14. The characters in the first big party scene reappear throughout the course of the novel, sometimes at earlier stages in their lives—for example, Monk Zingapan in the 1970s, and Mercy Pang as a young girl. What is the purpose of putting them all together at the start? How does this non-linear technique affect our sense of story and time?
15. What did you think of Soon’s character? What do you imagine happens to him after the book ends?



FURTHER READING FROM ED PARK

SAMGUK YUSA BY ILYON, TRANSLATED BY HA TAE-HUNG AND GRAFTON K. MINTZ (1281/1972)

In 1994, I saw this at Koryo Books on 32nd Street, where I had gone to purchase another book (the court memoirs known as the *Han Joong Nok*). The following year, I bought this mysterious tome for myself as a birthday present. Ilyon was a 13th-century Buddhist monk who spent years compiling the myths and legends of the “Three Kingdoms” period (c. 57 BCE–668 CE), creating a “wild history” of stories that didn’t fit into more proper accounts. The bite-sized chapters are fun to read, teeming with surreal origin stories and martial derring-do, cryptic prophecies and devilish plots, mythological beings and floating temples—a kind of fever dream of the origins of Korean civilization.

SELECTED WORKS BY YI SANG, TRANSLATED BY JACK JUNG AND OTHERS (VARIOUS/2021)

A treasure trove of work by the architect-poet, written in both Korean and Japanese in the ‘20s and ‘30s, at times using numbers and shapes to express what language alone cannot. Totally weird and great. Not included but worth seeking out is his most famous story, “Wings,” a Poe-like dose of psychological horror. In SBDD, Yi Sang—his pen name sounds like the word for “strange”—makes an appearance as an operative for the Korean Provisional Government.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF KUBO THE NOVELIST BY PAK TAEWON, TRANSLATED BY SUNYOUNG PARK (1934/2015)

A winningly dissolute daylong Joycean wander in which Seoul stands in for Dublin, and the aforementioned poet Yi Sang—a real-life friend of Pak’s—makes a cameo.

THE GRASS ROOF AND EAST GOES WEST BY YOUNGHILL KANG (1931 AND 1937)

History looms above Kang’s landmark American novels (written in English), which follow indefatigable Chungpa Han from his colorful youth as an inquisitive prodigy in Japan-clouded Korea to his misadventures in New York, Boston, and elsewhere. The latter novel is especially witty and moving. It can feel like a Kerouacian ramble (he goes hitchhiking toward the end), populated with colorful characters and full of perceptive takes on race and class in his new country.

CRY KOREA BY REGINALD THOMPSON (1951)

A powerful firsthand account by a British journalist who went to report on the outbreak of the Korean War, expecting the conflict to wrap up shortly. But this is no easy conflict, and what Thompson (a seasoned WWII correspondent) witnesses shakes him to his core: the mechanized death, the slaughter of civilians. “In these days I lost my illusions about war,” he writes. “I had called myself a ‘war reporter.’ It would be more accurate to call myself a reporter of death.”

EVERLASTING FLOWER: A HISTORY OF KOREA BY KEITH PRATT (2006)

A well-written overview. *Brothers at War: The Unending Conflict in Korea* by Sheila Miyoshi Jaeger (2013) shows how the Korean War never ended, even after 1953—a period also well covered in Don Oberdorfer’s *The Two Koreas* (1997).



FURTHER READING FROM ED PARK

SYNGMAN RHEE: THE MAN BEHIND THE MYTH, BY ROBERT T. OLIVER (1954)

Though this book by the American Oliver, an adviser to Rhee, the first president of South Korea, amounts to hagiography, it's filled with colorful anecdotes from this patriot's life in exile. *The Writings of Henry Cu Kim*, edited by Dae-sook Suh, provides a barbed counterpoint, loaded with accusations of bad behavior.

KIM IL SUNG: THE NORTH KOREAN LEADER BY DAE-SOOK SUH (1988)

A deeply researched biography of the man who went from guerrilla fighter against the Japanese to long-lived dictator of North Korea. Bradley K. Martin's *Under the Loving Care of the Fatherly Leader* devotes ample space to Kim's son as well: Kim Jong Il, who became the country's second leader of the de facto dynasty upon his father's death in 1994.

DICTEE BY THERESA HAK KYUNG CHA (1982)

A postmodern prose-poetic monument. The martyred independence fighter Yu Guan Soon, Syngman Rhee, first president of the Korean Provisional Government, and Cha's own mother appear, alongside black-and white images, anatomical diagrams, and typewritten letters.

APPOINTMENT WITH MY BROTHER BY YI MUN-YOL, TRANSLATED BY SUH JI-MOON (1994/2002)

A novella in which a South Korean meets his stepbrother for the first time—son of his father, who fled to the North. The scenario could be heavy-handed, but it plays out almost like comedy.

Other recommended contemporary fiction: Lee Ki-ho's *At Least We Can Apologize*, translated by Christopher J. Dykas (2009/2013) and Han Kang's Man Booker International-winning *The Vegetarian*, translated by Deborah Smith (2007/2015).

MINOR FEELINGS BY CATHY PARK HONG (2020)

Rewrites one's sense of what "Asian American" (and if you're me, Korean American) might mean.

ON THE KOREAN PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT

By Ed Park

The Korean Provisional Government—in Korean, *Taehan Minguk Imsi Jeongbu*—actually existed: a government in exile formed to alert the world about the Japanese occupation of Korea. No foreign government recognized the KPG, and it was riven with rivalries, and its first president lived thousands of miles away. In short, it was essentially symbolic. But symbols open up a space for imagination. The notion of a group of far-flung patriots has stayed with me since I first read about it, about thirty years ago. In early drafts of *Same Bed Different Dreams*, there was no KPG; but when I realized this unique entity belonged in the book, it became an inexhaustible launchpad. It allowed me to enlist all manner of historical figures, both famous and obscure, in order to create an alternate history of Korea and Korean Americans.

Some background: At the turn of the twentieth century, a modernized Japan, which had failed to conquer Korea in the 1590s, subdued its neighbor and acquired a foothold on the Asian continent. It made Korea a protectorate in 1905, annexing it outright five years later. In 1919, Korea's Emperor Kojong died. A mass protest was secretly planned, and a passionate declaration of independence was read in public spaces throughout the peninsula. (Fictional accounts of this appear in N.H. Osa's *Hansu's Journey* [1922] and Younghill Kang's *The Grass Roof* [1931].) Months later, the Korean Provisional Government was founded.

The estimable Syngman Rhee (1875–1965) was chosen to be their first president, even though he was far from the scene. Rhee had left Korea for the U.S. in his twenties, studying at George Washington, Princeton, and Harvard, then settling mainly in Hawaii. In 1933, he married Francesca Donner, an Austrian woman he had

met at a conference in Geneva. (He was booted from the KPG in 1925, but in SBDD he retains his seat, operating mostly from abroad.)

After Japan's defeat in World War II, the KPG ceased to have a reason to exist. Korea was no longer a colony; but what sort of government would replace it? Though Korea had ruled itself for many centuries before Japan's intrusion, the world had changed, and opposing spheres of influence wanted to prevent the peninsula from falling to the other side: same bed, different dreams. America sought to contain the Stalin-supported communist factions within the newly liberated Korea and saw Syngman Rhee as their man. Though he was already 70, he was “fluent in English and untainted by association with the colonial regime,” as Sheila Miyoshi Jaeger writes in *Brothers at War*. “He was also difficult, stubborn, and fiercely patriotic.”

In 1948, parallel elections were held in the north and the south. The former guerrilla fighter and communist firebrand Kim Il Sung won the former, and the American-educated Rhee won the latter. (Contrary to SBDD, Kim was never a member of the KPG.) War erupted between the two regimes in June 1950, and the country has remained split at the 38th parallel ever since the 1953 armistice—which did not, technically, end the war.

In 1960, students led demonstrations in Seoul to demand that Syngman Rhee step down. This time, unlike in 1919, protests worked; Rhee took a hike, settling in Hawaii one last time, where he died in 1965. A generation younger, Kim Il Sung ruled North Korea until 1994, beginning a family dynasty—like the one that ruled Korea before Japan's intrusion—which continues to this day under his grandson, Kim Jong Un.



RECIPE: Bulgogi (Korean BBQ Beef)

Source: koreanbapsang.com/bulgogi-korean-bbq-beef/

INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds thinly-sliced beef (rib eye or top sirloin)—see note
- 3 scallions, cut into 2-inch pieces
- 1 small onion, thinly sliced
- 1 small carrot, thinly sliced—optional

TO SERVE BULGOGI SEOUL-STYLE

- 3 ounces potato starch noodles (soaked in hot water for 20 minutes and drained)
- 3 scallions
- 1 pack enoki mushrooms (stems removed)
- 2 cups water, dashima broth, or beef broth
- 1 teaspoon soy sauce

BULGOGI MARINADE

- 6 tbsp. soy sauce
- 3 tbsp. water
- 4 tbsp. sugar (or you can use 2 tbsp. sugar 2 tbsp. honey)
Use more if not using Korean pear or apple
- 2 tbsp. rice wine or mirin
- 2 tbsp. minced garlic
- 2 tbsp. sesame oil
- 2 tsp. sesame seeds
- 4 tbsp. grated Korean/Asian pear
- ½ tsp. pepper

DIRECTIONS

- If using packaged pre-sliced meat, separate the slices. Remove any excess blood from the pre-sliced meat using paper towels.
- Mix all the marinade ingredients in a bowl.
- Place the meat and vegetables in a large bowl. Add the marinade and toss gently to combine everything well. Marinate the meat for 30 minutes to an hour, up to overnight.
- Grilling: Grill the meat on a charcoal or gas grill or pan fry in a skillet over high heat until slightly caramelized. If pan searing, preheat the pan nice and hot and cook the meat until slightly caramelized. Do not crowd the skillet.
- OR Stir-frying: Preheat the pan, and add the meat over high heat. You can crowd the pan to generate some liquid and let the meat cook in its own juice. Cook until the meat is no longer pink. Use all the marinade if you want some sauce at the end.

TO SERVE BULGOGI SEOUL-STYLE

- Thinly slice the scallions. Season 2 cups of water or broth with 1 teaspoon of soy sauce.
- Heat the pan, and add the bulgogi and top it with the scallions and mushrooms. Add about half of the broth around the edges of the pan along with the noodles. Add more liquid when the liquid level goes down as you cook.

NOTES

- *Pre-sliced bulgogi meat is sold at any Korean market. Pay a little more to get good quality meat. If cutting the beef at home, partially freeze for about an hour to firm it up for easier slicing. Cut across the grain into about ¼ - inch thick slices.



RECIPE: Persimmon Punch from The Admiral Yi

Source: maangchi.com/recipe/sujeonggwa

INGREDIENTS

- 4–5 dried persimmons
- 5 cinnamon sticks
- ½ cup of ginger, sliced
- 1 cup of sugar
- Pine nuts
- 7½ to 8 cups of water

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Wash, peel, and slice ½ cup's worth of ginger. Put it into a pot or kettle.
2. Rinse 5 cinnamon sticks and put them into the pot.
3. Add 7½ to 8 cups of water and boil for 20 minutes over high heat.
4. Lower the heat to medium and boil for another 25 minutes. If it boils over, take off the lid.
5. Add 1 cup of sugar. Stir and cool it down.
6. Remove the stem of the dried persimmons and wash thoroughly.
7. Strain cinnamon sticks and sliced ginger in a colander.
8. Pour it into a glass jar or glass bowl and add the persimmons.
9. Put the lid on and keep it in the refrigerator for at least 12 hours. It will keep in the fridge for more than 1 week.
10. Serve cold with ice cubes. Use a ladle to give each person a small bowl of punch. Each serving should have one persimmon in it with a few pine nuts sprinkled on top.

THE JURY

Cut out, fold, and tape die together to play with friends! Take turns rolling and follow the instructions on the side facing up. Play as a drinking game or just for fun!

Drink
up and
laugh
aloud

Anyone
may
touch
your
nose

You
may ask
anyone
to sing

Sing by
yourself,
then drink
by yourself

Look at
the moon,
and sing
a tune

Reveal
a secret

Dance
a tune
without

Drink
two
glasses
at once

Sing alone,
then make a
loud noise

Link arms
with someone
and drink

Others
may tickle
your face,
you are to
keep still

No matter what
transgression
others commit,
you are
to endure

Come up
with an
impromptu
poem

Gulp down
three
glasses
of wine

PLAYLIST

1999—Prince (1982)

Even before starting this novel properly in 2014, I had the title in mind; you might say the novel grew toward the title. An early attempt at something called SBDD happened ca. 2010. I remember sitting in a coffeeshop, writing about a fictional elusive Korean movie director, when “1999” started playing. It was background music for everyone else, but for me that opening salvo—sung by The Revolution’s Lisa Coleman, not Prince—floored me, as if I were hearing it for the first time. “I was dreaming when I wrote this/Forgive me if it goes astray.” Suddenly, anything was possible. I ditched the story, kept the title, kept those lines in my head.

SABRE DANCE—Aram Khatchatourian (1942)

The Buffalo Sabres have used this frantic tune as their hype song since time immemorial—that is, 1970, the year of my and their birth. I like to think of Taro Tsujimoto, the phantom player drafted from the Tokyo Katanas, stepping onto the ice at fog-filled Memorial Auditorium as the organist goes wild. According to Wikipedia, the passage (Suite No. 3 in Khatchatourian’s ballet *Gayaneh*) is inspired by Armenian sword-fighting music. I always like when form follows function.

I AM THE BEST—2NE1 (2011)

There are traces of K-pop in SBDD, but there used to be more. An earlier draft contained a chapter in which Soon takes up Monk on his offer to teach a writing class at Rue University (Extension Campus) in New York. The seats in his seminar room are entirely filled with a single sprawling K-pop ensemble, a co-ed group called AYUY. It’s hard to write about fictional music without things getting too abstract or corny, and I wound up scrubbing the chapter, but not before

gorging myself on the K-pop videos of that pre-BTS era. This song by 2NE1 has a dizzying number of tightly composed parts that click together with no loss of energy. The video still feels like the best science-fiction movie never made, and I like the way singer CL boasts (in one of the few English phrases) that she looks like a “Billion Dollar Baby.”

WHITE HOUSE BLUES—Charlie Poole & the North Carolina Ramblers (1926)

I first came across this song in a book of sheet music when I was living in Korea, circa 1993. I can barely read music but the topic—the 1901 assassination of President William McKinley in my hometown of Buffalo—compelled me to try to pick out the melody on my cousin’s guitar. (Perhaps I was homesick.) The lyrics begin with the president falling to Leon Czolgosz’s bullet: “McKinley hollered, McKinley squalled/Doc said, ‘McKinley I can’t find that ball’/From Buffalo to Washington.” Years passed. It wasn’t until writing this book that I thought to search for the song online. Happily, I had gotten the melody more or less right. But I had been playing it at adirge-like tempo, whereas Charlie Poole and his crew (in the first recorded version, 1926) make lines like “Roosevelt in the White House, he’s doing his best/McKinley in the graveyard, he’s taking his rest” almost sound like an occasion for dancing.

RUNNING HOT WITH FATE—Hallelujah The Hills (2019)

A great song that makes me think of SBDD’s Parker Jotter, my fellow Buffalonian, who saw something in the skies while flying his F-86 in the Korean War. “Alice wasn’t kidding when she said she saw a UFO/Elliot was ripping up his letters out in the snow/Well I’m fine, but I’m not OK.”

PLAYLIST

AEGUKGA

I had known that the lyrics to the Korean national anthem, penned in the 1890s, were originally set to the tune of “Auld Lang Syne,” but I never understood how that could work. A year ago, I flipped on TCM and stumbled into a Korean War movie, Sam Fuller’s *The Steel Helmet* (1951), which was made and released while the war still raged. A multiracial American infantry unit is hunkered down in a Buddhist temple, along with their Korean go-between, a boy named Short Round (the inspiration for the Spielberg/Ke Huy Quan character in *Temple of Doom*). One of the soldiers plays the traditional New Year’s tune on his portable organ, and Short Round (William Chun) sings “Aegukga,” by then the official anthem for South Korea. Voice and music meld perfectly, to the amazement of the Americans. It’s a fragile minute of peace in a tough film about a grinding conflict. The movie closes with these words: “There is no end to this story.”

HEAT OF THE MOMENT—Asia (1982)

Am I really putting this on the playlist? Maybe I’ll decide to scrap it by the end of this paragraph. A character in *Dream Five* listens to it as a lad in the early ’80s, so I could argue I’m just going by the book. But the fact is, Asia’s debut was one of the first tapes I bought. I was drawn not only to the sound but to the name—so cut off was I from anything approximating contemporary Asian (let alone Korean) pop culture that the band’s moniker seemed significant. (Never mind that this “supergroup” comprised members of King Crimson, Yes, and ELP.) Back then, the lyrics seemed at once relatable (“I never meant to be so bad to you”), grandiose (“A look from you and I would fall from grace”), vaguely D&D adjacent (“You catch a

pearl and ride the dragon’s wings”), and self-referential (“And now you find yourself in ’82”). Now I hear these lines, though, and get choked up: “What were the things you wanted for yourself/Teenage ambitions you remember well.” OK, it stays.

TWO DAYS IN FEBRUARY—Goo Goo Dolls (1990)—b/w—TO SEE THE NEXT PART OF THE DREAM—Parannoul (2021)

Many years ago I scribbled a private joke that now looks like an unconscious challenge: imagine a future Earth split between two massive empires, Buffalonian and Korean. (I put a camouflaged version of this in Parker Jotter’s science fiction saga 2333.) The sound of ambient traffic out the window deepens this early song by Buffalo’s Goo Goo Dolls (then still on Metal Blade Records), which has a gloriously tossed-off feel. I like to think of the snippet of conversation at the end feeding into the delicate opening of the Parannoul song, with its faintly audible spoken Korean, before it turns into a bright smear of sound. Is the title hopeful, or describing an impossibility? The conclusion of the dream, the part where it all will make sense, always stays just out of reach.

SECRET REVENGE—Drinking Boys and Girls Choir (2021) b/w LOST KEYS—Nicole Yun (2023)

Korean vs. Korean American power pop—who would win? (All of us.)

PLAYLIST

IF YOU'RE A LIFER—Cataldo (2022)
b/w **GREEN SHIRT**—Elvis Costello and the Attractions (1979)

“Why hide from history if you’re a lifer?” wonders Eric Anderson in his recent banger. He’s been comparing the pop culture of his youth to more iconic forebears. What do we take from the past? Is everything a weak copy? Is greatness possible? (“You’re Led Zeppelin III, I’m Holy Diver.”) He namechecks and gives us something great. The sinister “Green Shirt” is far from my favorite Elvis—it’s not even my favorite off *Armed Forces*—but it has a line I’ve thought about hundreds of times as a writer, rising from the fascist imagery strewn throughout the verses: “Who put these fingerprints on my imagination?”

ASSORTED HITS 11—Tod Lippy (2022)

I was sitting in the car and this song came on the radio—a song of songs, with lyrics that reference hits from the ‘80s. Before I knew the title, I sensed the conceit: the singer was using the track listing on a mix tape to tell a story of missed opportunities and the mundane, crushing passage of time: “‘One Thing Leads to Another’ and then it’s ‘1999.’” The chorus is lifted from The Police.

THE SOUND OF MUSIC—Kiwi Jr. (2022)

Another song that jumped out of the radio and burrowed itself into my brain. The lines “When they pulled you out of the harbour you were holding onto a book/Then you shoved your screenplay into my chest and said, ‘Won’t you at least take a look?’” made me laugh—and brought to mind SBDD’s Daisy in the summer of 2010: a copyeditor at Gazebo, with friends who keep asking her to proofread their spec scripts.

Haenim [The Sun]—Kim Jung Mi (1973)

Let’s end with this serenely trippy loop. Kim’s monotonous, soothing vocals somehow achieve liftoff again and again. She’s the Korean Nico. (Let’s not Google that for a bit—let me imagine I made it up.) The lyrics and arrangements, spacey yet grounding, are the work of Korean psychedelic pioneer Shin Joong-hyun. Someone needs to make this into one of those YouTube videos that just repeats a single song for an hour.



DIFFERENT DREAMS PLAYLIST BY HUA HSU

1999

Prince

**FALLING IN LOVE WITH A
DREAM**

Magnetic Touch

DREAMING

Blondie

DREAMING

Orchestral Manoeuvres
in the Dark

DREAMING ABOUT YOU

The Blackbyrds

**DREAMING MY DREAMS
WITH YOU**

Waylon Jennings

DREAMING CASUALLY

Thee Midnitters

DREAMIN'

Johnny Burnette

**DREAMS NEVER END—2015
REMASTER**

New Order

DREAMS

Buddy Miles

DREAMS TONITE

Alvvays

DREAMS

TV on the Radio

I'LL BE YOUR MIRROR

The Velvet Underground, Nico

TWINS

Pure Bathing Culture

THE TWINS / ROMANTICA

Duster