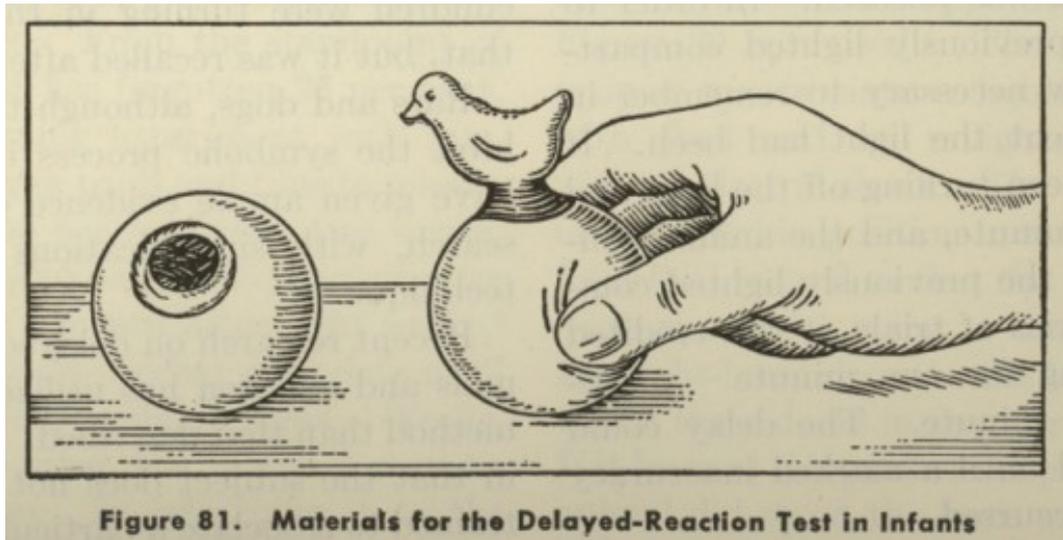


<http://somatosphere.net/2013/12/top-of-the-heap-junko-kitanaka.html>

Top of the heap: Junko Kitanaka

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By Maria Cecilia Dedios and Ekaterina Anderson



For the latest installment of “Top of the heap,” Junko Kitanaka, who teaches anthropology at Keio University in Tokyo, told us about a new book she’s been reading and some key older texts she’s returned to recently.

Junko Kitanaka

As I’ve been thinking about the psychiatrization of childhood this past year, one book has stood out among those that I’ve read: [Downs: The history of a disability](#) by **David Wright** (Oxford UP 2011), which won this year’s Dingle Prize from the British Society for the History of Science. Wright beautifully weaves together personal accounts and intellectual history as he traces philosophical currents through the rise of the Enlightenment, Darwinism, and geneticism. He illuminates the symbolic place those with Down’s have come to occupy in relation to medical science, showing how scientific progress and novel medical technologies have often resulted in new forms of exclusion, even as they are countered by social movements towards inclusion. He shows just how to do a history of an illness with underlying compassion, making the book a must read for anyone interested in disability and the history of science.

With my continued interest in the science of work and social engineering, I find I keep going back to classics in the field such as **Anson Rabinbach**

's [The human motor. Energy, fatigue, and the origins of modernity](#) (Univ. of California Press 1990), which shows how to make social thought an integral part of the history of science by tackling questions like how theological ideas about idleness came to be replaced by scientific notions of and technologies surrounding "fatigue." In tracing further developments in social engineering in the 20th century, **Rebecca Lemov's** [World as Laboratory: Experiments with mice, mazes, and men](#) (Hill and Wang 2005) tells us how behaviorism –and its belief in human engineering—came to yield such power over 20th-century American thought. Her writing is a good reminder for me that science is something that's full of fun and wonder, just like **Shigehisa Kuriyama's** [The expressiveness of the body and the divergence of Greek and Chinese medicine](#) (Zone Books 1999) has done for me with regard to earlier forms of science and medicine.

[Junko Kitanaka](#) teaches anthropology at Keio University in Tokyo. She is the author of [Depression in Japan: Psychiatric Cures for a Society in Distress](#) (Princeton UP, 2012), which received the American Anthropological Association's Francis Hsu Prize for Best Book in East Asian Anthropology this year.

Image: From [Psychology: – The Fundamentals of Human Adjustment](#), Norman L. Munn, (Houghton Mifflin: 1946).

AMA citation

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