

**Korean film: Years of radical change**  
SOAS, University of London on 10 May 2012  
Book of Abstracts and Biographies

**Dr Colette Balmain (Coventry University)**  
Female Voices in South Korean Horror Cinema

Abstract

In this presentation, I will explore female voices in contemporary South Korean horror cinema, both inside and outside the frame. Specifically I will look at films by 3 female directors, *Princess Aurora* (Bang Eun-Ji, 2005), *Shadows in the Palace* (Kim Mee-jeung: 2007), and *Yoga Institute* (Jae-yeon Yun's follow up to *Wishing Stairs*, the third in the Whispering Corridors Series of films). I am interested in exploring how these three directors utilise the conventions of the horror genre to articulate the female experience through the female voice, rather than as an adjunct to male fears and desires around female empowerment and shifting gender roles.

Bio

Dr Colette Balmain is an independent scholar, writer and film critic. She is an associate lecturer at Kingston University and Brighton University, teaching film and media and cultural studies. Her first book, *Introduction to Japanese Horror Film*, was published by Edinburgh University Press in 2008. She is currently working on her second book on Korean Horror Cinema and a book on East Asian Gothic. She is also the editor for Intellect's *Directory of World Cinema: South Korea* which will be published this year, having contributed to both the *Directory of World Cinema: Japan* and *Directory of World Cinema: American Independent*.

**Dr Jinhee Choi (King's College, University of London)**

Kim Seung-ho, the National Father: The South Korean Home Drama and Postwar Modernity

Abstract

In this presentation, I examine Korean actor Kim Seung-ho, whose star persona epitomizes the father figure to be found in the postwar South Korean home drama. Kim earned the nickname of "National Father" after his award winning performance in Mr. Park at the 8th Asia Film Festival in 1961. Characters performed by Kim range across social classes – from the head of a company (The Sunflower Family) to a salary man (Romance Papa, A Petty Middle Manager), to an educator (Romance Gray, The Apron), to a managerial worker (Mr. Park, A Coachman) – but it was his award-winning performances in Romance Papa and Mr. Park at the Asia Film Festival that helped to establish him as a key representative of the father of a lower-middle class family.

The home drama cycle emerged both at the height of the golden age of South Korean cinema and during the political transitions from South Korea's First (1948-1960) through its Third (1962-1972) Republic. I will discuss Kim's performance as a father by focusing on Shin Sang-ok's Romance Papa (1960) and Lee Bong-rae's A Petty Middle Manager (1961), which ignited and solidified the home drama boom in the early 1960s. Further explored is how the

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South Korean postwar home drama portrays the middle class family as an idealized site, one where democracy and egalitarianism can rule.

### Bio

Jinhee Choi is lecturer in film studies at King's College London. She is the author of *The South Korean Film Renaissance: Local Hitmakers Global Provocateurs* and the co-editor of *Horror to the Extreme: Changing Boundaries in Asian Cinema* with Mitsuyo Wada-Marciano, and of *Philosophy of Film and Motion Pictures* with Noel Carroll.

## **Dr Mark Morris (Cambridge University)**

Yellow Seas, Frozen Rivers: the Joseonjok and Jang Ryul/Zhang Lu

### Abstract

While South Korean cinema has a long tradition of representing North Koreans in a variety of (usually predictable) guises, the ethnic community of the Chinese-resident 'joseonjok' have only more recently found an uneasy place on southern screens. The big-budget crime thriller Hwanghae/'Yellow Sea' (2010) presents an outsider's view of the poor cousins north of North Korea. In contrast is the work of Jang Ryul/Zhang Lu. By far the best known of joseonjok film-makers, Jang/Zhang has been exploring his society through a series of films shaped by social history but also by indie genre conventions. The most recent, Dumangang/'Duman River' (2010), is his best. I will talk about the wider questions involved in representing northerners on southern screens, while introducing Jang/Zhang's main films.

### Bio

Mark Morris is Lecturer in East Asian Cultural History at the Department of East Asian Studies, University of Cambridge, and a Fellow of Trinity College. He teaches mainly Japanese and Korean film and Japanese literature. He is also an associate of online journal *The Asian-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*. Recent publications focus on the connections between earlier Korean films and the New Korean Cinema, representations of Japan within Korean cinema, Korean War films and the imaginary of the North in contemporary South Korean film-making. Some of this material is available at the website of *The Asian-Pacific Journal* in updated versions. His most recent essay is 'War-Horror and Anti-Communism', in Daniel Martin and Alice Pierson, eds., *Korean Horror Cinema* (Univ. of Edinburgh, forthcoming).

## **Dr Chi-yun Shin (Sheffield Hallam University)**

Cosmopolitanism in the Films of E J-Yong

### Abstract

E J-Yong's films are diverse, ranging from melodrama (*An Affair*, 1998) to musical comedy (*Dasepo Naughty Girls*, 2006); from historical drama (*Untold Scandal*, 2003) to mocumentary-style drama (*Actresses*, 2009), as well as a Korean-Japanese co-produced art-house film (*Asako in Ruby Shoes*, 2001), but what they share in common are cosmopolitanism and criticism of parochial nationalism. This paper explores palimpsestic

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characteristics that inscribe cosmopolitanism in E's films, addressing the intertextual dynamics with the source material, narrative structures, and the characters who travel abroad or aspire to go abroad.

### Bio

Chi-Yun Shin is a Senior Lecturer in Film Studies at Sheffield Hallam University. She is co-editor of *New Korean Cinema* (2005), and has contributed to *Seoul Searching: Identity and Culture in Korean Cinema* (2007), *Horror to the Extreme: Changing Boundaries in Asian Cinema* (2009), *Postcolonial Media Culture in Britain* (2010), *The Encyclopedia of Global Human Migration* (Wiley-Blackwell, forthcoming), *Korean Horror Cinema* (Edinburgh UP, forthcoming) and journals such as *Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media*, *Paragraph: A Journal of Modern Critical Theory and Transnational Cinemas* (forthcoming). She is a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of Japanese and Korean Cinema*.

### **Dr Julian Stringer (University of Nottingham)**

Exploring Contemporary Korean Cinema Soundscapes.

### Abstract

South Korea's commercial film industry has transformed itself over recent years into an internationally competitive market leader. This transformation has entailed the upgrading of technologies of both production and consumption, an increased professionalisation of film-making practices, the penetration of new markets for Korean film and a concomitant building of confidence and ambition among creative personnel. This paper considers just one component of contemporary South Korean cinema's changing professional environments and aesthetic characteristics - namely, sound. It does this by providing an in-depth analysis, based on original interviews, of the work of one of South Korea's leading post-production studios.

### Bio

Julian Stringer is Associate Professor in Film and Television Studies at the University of Nottingham, UK. He has published widely on East Asian cinema and is co-editor of *New Korean Cinema* (Edinburgh University Press, 2005) and *The Korean Cinema Book* (British Film Institute/Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming 2013). He recently organised academic conferences at Shanghai Expo (October 2010) and the China National Film Museum, Beijing (January 2011).