



Film and History: The Korean Example

5 & 6 November 2015
at SOAS, University of London and KCCUK

This interdisciplinary conference will examine the relationship between film and history and the links between historical research and filmic presentations of history with special reference to Korean cinema.

Programme and Abstracts

International conference
Organised by the Centre of Korean Studies &
Centre for Film Studies SOAS, University of London

www.soas.ac.uk/koreanstudies/events/

Contact: Academic Organiser Dr. Hyunseon Lee, Email hs53@soas.ac.uk



Thursday, 5 November 2015		Djam Lecture Theatre , SOAS, University of London Russell Square, Thornhaugh Street, London WC1H 0XG	
9.15	Registration & Coffee		
9.45	Opening Conference/ Words of Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Hyunseon Lee (Conference Organiser, SOAS, University of London)Grace Koh (SOAS, University of London)Lindiwe Dovey (SOAS, University of London)	
10.00 - 11.30	Panel 1 Cold War and Films: Korean War - Vietnam War Chair: Owen Miller (SOAS, University of London)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">Theodore Hughes (Columbia University, New York) History and Intimacy in Early Korean War FilmsHyunseon Lee (SOAS, University of London) Cold War Cinema: Nation, Brotherhood, and RemembranceJong Chol An (University of Tübingen, Germany) From Existential Agony to Ideological Division: Korean Film Understanding of the Vietnam War (1964-1975) during the Post-Cold War Era	
11.30 - 11.45	Break		
11.45 - 13.15	Panel 2 Recent Historical Films Chair: Griseldis Kirsch (SOAS, University of London)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">Kyung Jo Min (King's College London) Rewriting the Premodern History of Roaring Currents and the Whirling Self of Contemporary South KoreaHyung-Sook Lee (Ewha Womans Univ., Seoul/University of Southern California) Rewriting History and Hybrid Genres in Contemporary Korean CinemaSofia Murell (University of Amsterdam) A Blurred Renaissance: Aesthetics of Socio-political Representation in Contemporary South Korean Films	
13.15 - 14.30	Break		
14.30-16.00	Panel 3 Cinematic Discourses of Gender, Body and Modern History Chair: Grace Koh (SOAS, University of London)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">Jinhee Choi (King's College London) Girls that Remember; Girls that Disappear: Korean Modern History and GirlhoodTeréz Vincze (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest) Embodied History: Symbolic Use of Bodies in the Cinematic Representation of Korean HistoryAndrew Sanggyu Lee (Columbia University, New York) Screening the Image of Women in Late Colonial-Period Korean Films: Melodramatic Excess, Place of Innocence, and Ambiguous Imperial Subjects	
16.00-16.30	Break		
16.30-18.00	Panel 4 Auteur Cinema and the Art of Memory Chair: Shane O'Sullivan (Kingston University)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">Jennifer O'Meara (Maynooth University, Ireland) Park Chan-wook's Vengeance Trilogy: An Allegorical or Exploitative Take on Korea's Violent Past?Hee-seung Irene Lee (The University of Auckland, New Zealand) Melancholic Screen for Korea's Lost Memory: Lee Chang-dong's Secret Sunshine (2007) and Poetry (2010)Wikanda Promkhuntong (Aberystwyth University, Wales UK) Home Video Distribution History and the Making of a South Korean Cult Auteur	
18.00 - 18.15	Break		
18.15 - 19.15	Keynote Lecture Chair: Hyunseon Lee (SOAS, University of London)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Hong-Joon Kim (Korea National University of Arts, Seoul): Witnesses Witnessed: Reflections on the Lives and Times of Three Korean Master Filmmakers	
19.30	Conference Dinner	Speakers and panelists	

Friday, 6 November 2015		Korean Cultural Centre UK Grand Buildings, 1-3 Strand London WC2N 5BW	
9.30	Registration & Coffee		
9.55	Words of Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Kabsoo Kim (Director, KCCUK)	
10.00 - 11.30	Panel 5 Japan in Postcolonial Korea: Cinema, Historicity, and the Politics of Memory Chair: Jinhee Choi (King's College London)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">Hwajin Lee (Inha University, S-Korea) Postcolonial Love Story in Hyeonhaetan: Melodramatic Version of Commemoration on Colonial History in the 1960sHyekyong Sim (Soonchunhyang University, S-Korea) A Girl-Martyr YU Gwansun as "Jeanne d'Arc of Korea": Between Making National Biopics and Embracing Hollywood Biopics in Liberation KoreaWoohyung Chon (Konkuk University, Seoul) Outside of the History and the Classic: Costume Drama The Wedding DayHieyoon Kim (UCLA, USA) Making Cinema Historical: Genres of Historical Writing and Their Archives in the 1960s	
11.30 - 11. 45	Break		
11.45 - 13.15	Panel 6 Symbolic Spaces of Modernity Chair: Teréz Vincze (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">Park, Mi Sook (The University of Sheffield, UK) Rebuilding South Korea's National Image Through Memory and Everyday LifeYoungmin Choe (University of Southern California) Money and Interiority in Korean CinemaMin Jeong Ko (University of Gothenburg, Sweden) Re-telling Recent History through Film	
13.15 - 14.00	Break		
14.00 - 15.30	Panel 7 Processing Memory in the Transcultural Chair: Colette Balmain (Kingston University)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">Joseph Jonghyun Jeon (Pomona College, USA) Wire AestheticsUlf C. Lepelmeier (University of Bayreuth, Germany) The Need of Reprocessing South Korea's Radical Changes: How the Korean Cinema Deals with the Pressures of Globalisation, Hypercapitalism and the Anxiety of Losing Cultural IdentityLee, Seung-Ah (UCLA) The Lightness of the Present: Representation of the Colonial Period in Assassination	
15.30 - 16.00	Tea		
16.00 - 17.30	Panel 8 Historical Reviews of Film Festival Chair : Kate Taylor (BFI London Film Festival programmer)	<p>Presentation Story of Korean Cinema's Success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Yoo Jaehyuck (The Korea Economic Daily) <p>Panel Discussion The Crossover between Independent Film-making and International film festival</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Jang Kun-jae (Director of A Midsummer's Fantasia & Sleepless Night)Nam Dong-chul (BIFF Programmer)	
17.30	Closing Remarks		

Panel 1: Cold War and Films: Korean War - Vietnam War

Chair: Owen Miller (SOAS, University of London)

**Theodore Hughes (Columbia University, New York):
History and Intimacy in Early Korean War Films**

In this paper, I first look at the ways in which U.S. and South Korean combat films from the 1950s and early 1960s negotiate the violence frequently invoked to anchor histories of the Korean War, particularly scenes of massacre, dying, and death. The combat film, as a genre, stages death in a way that summons the spectator as survivor and witness: the film ends and the spectator remains, alive and possessing a memory of the images he/she has just viewed. Combat films thus involve a visual touching, one that often takes the form of memory and trauma, the repetition of the image. Combat films implicate the audience in this trauma even as they often work to seal violence up safely as elsewhere, away from the spectator. One is "touched" by violence insofar as one can re-imagine the image one has seen. My discussion of violence and touching (in its two senses, emotive and corporeal) then moves on to other forms of intimacy, particularly the ways in which adoption and accompanying notions of the family locate the Korean War in history in all three films I will examine, *The Marines Who Do Not Return* (Yi Man-hŭi, 1963), *Steel Helmet* (Samuel Fuller, 1951), and *War Hunt* (Denis Sanders, 1962). In Yi Man-hŭi's film, the voice-over narration of the adoptee intersects with the portrayal of the Korean War as fratricidal, associated at once with the natural and the unnatural. In U.S. films, the birth of an international family is accompanied by a "touching," affective Cold War masculinity. In both cases, the reconfiguring of the family as historical agent stands at the center of the unstable regime of life and death that makes up the early Korean War combat film.

**Hyunseon Lee (SOAS, University of London):
Cold War Cinema: Nation, Brotherhood, and Remembrance**

In this presentation I will discuss re-enactments of the Korean War in South Korean cinematic discourses. It is my contention that Korean War cinema enables a discussion of the cultural imagination of the war in a broader Korean context.

Of particular concern here is the depiction, largely unique to filmic performances of the Korean War, of ideologically divided brothers, who have become a cinematic emblem of the nation. I would argue that 1990s South Korean War films celebrate the cinematic comeback of the notion of ideologically opposed brothers, whose presence had vanished from history and cinema alike. The depiction of these communist partisan figures (빨치산 or *bbalchisan*) draws attention to a forgotten and displaced element of national history that remains largely unseen elsewhere. The theme of brothers at war will be discussed in relation to the family values presented in Korean War films as well as to the idea of the gendered or gendering nation, as the interlinking of masculinity and war has played an important role in building nationalist sentiments. More generally, films dealing with North Korean soldiers, both male and female, show not only the atmosphere of anti-communist Cold War culture but also the changing modes of the enactments of historical events.

What differences can be found between re-enactments in the 1950s and 1990s and thereafter? Focusing on the shift from the performance of living history to its melodramatic remembrance, I seek to explore not only changing but also continuing methods of dealing with Korean War, referring to the filmic performances of *Piagol* (1955, Lee Kang-Cheon), *Taebaek sanmaek* (1994, Im Kwon-taek) and *Nambugun* (1990, Jeong Ji-yeong). Other early war cinema (namely films by Yu Hyun-mok and Lee Man-hee) as well as recent blockbusters (such as *Taegukki*, *J.S.A.*, *Welcome to Dongmakgol*, *The Front Line*) will also be discussed.

**Jong Chol An (University of Tübingen, Germany):
From Existential Agony to Ideological Division: Korean Film Understanding of the Vietnam War (1964-1975) during the Post-Cold War Era**

This paper examines the changes of Korean film perception of the Vietnam War which escalated from 1964 through the Tongking Bay Incident in 1964 and ended in April 30, 2015. The films do belong to a public sphere where collective memory represents a certain topic or makes people's collective memory. It also delimit a society's imagination of a certain issue. In Korean society, due to an issue whether the Vietnam War is a similar to the Korean War in the Cold War context, how to evaluate the War was related to how to understand the Korean society. Regarding the Vietnam War, when the War was waging over, the films' perspective was geared to the mobilization of the Korean public (*Wŏlnam chŏnsŏn isang ōpda* [All quiet on the Vietnam front], 1966) and the positive legacy of the war, if not the war itself, on the Korean youth group (*Wŏlnam esŏ toraon kimsangsa* [Sargent Kim from Vietnam], 1971). It was thus natural that the critique of the war started only after Korean democratization in 1987. However, the critique was not about the war itself or historical understanding of the war, but rather about the war's impact upon the individual participants, by bringing an existential agony of the War, particularly the postwar syndrome to the public. (*Hayan chŏnjaeng* [White Badge], 1992). The sincere question about the war itself only started in the 2000s. The themes cover a question about the state crime (*Al p'oint* [RPoint], 2004) and about female as an independent agency (*Nimŭn mŏnkot e* [You so far away], 2008) etc. However, as the film, *kukche sijang* [International market] (2014) shows, the Vietnam War is depicted as a Korean backyard for making a living. Thus, the film is still a battle ground for Korean memory of the Vietnam War. The film history of the Vietnam War is rich as a modern Korea memory matches the international perception of the war in the 21st century.

Panel 2: Recent Historical Films

Chair: Griseldis Kirsch (SOAS, University of London)

Kyung Jo Min (King's College London):

Rewriting the Premodern History of Roaring Currents and the Whirling Self of Contemporary South Korea

The aim of this project is to establish *Roaring Currents*' singularity of dealing with premodern history of Korea and investigate how the film implies social consensus and discourse of contemporary South Korea. In 2014, the film *Roaring Currents*¹ broke the all-time box office record in South Korea. The film is about Joseon Dynasty's (1392-1910) admiral, Soon-shin Lee, who is remembered as one of the most heroic figures in Korean history. The admiral's victories against a Japanese invasion (1592) have been adapted into novels, films and TV series which could invoke Korean's patriotism and antipathy to Japan.

Basically, this work is a process of reading 'the political unconscious' of *Roaring Currents*. The political unconscious, invented by Fredric Jameson, is a political and historical perspective or desire which is revealed in cultural products. Regarding the fact that the film deals with a historical event which involves Korea and Japan (the former occupied and occupier) this project especially focuses on the film's political unconscious which reforms the postcolonial identity of Korea in the film.

Although the film's spectacular representation of the historical event achieved positive repute and commercial success, its excessive visualisation and distorted narration of history reveals the ambivalent desire to overcome or to mimic the colonial discourse. Moreover, even though there is a diversity in character configuration of this film, it is one of the strategy which emphasises the heroism of the Admiral, the ideal figure of the national identity. The expedient and contradictory representation of premodern history in *Roaring Currents* is attributed to the political unconscious which is still oscillating between colonial and postcolonial Self recognition. The political unconscious of *Roaring Currents* which has not yet freed from the desire of inventing the singular and ideal national identity fails to resolve the historical narrative's inner contradiction and only explodes the antipathy against the former enemies.

Filmography

A War Diary (IL-ho Jang, 1977)

Roaring Current (Han-min Kim, 2014)

Hyung-Sook Lee (Ewha Womans University, Seoul/University of Southern California):

Rewriting History and Hybrid Genres in Contemporary Korean Cinema

The Western is "always and already" an American film genre. American cinema is usually considered to be transnational, global, and "universal" nature. Nevertheless, if we need to pick a genre that represents American film culture, no one argues that it is, or it should be the Western. Then what would be the meaning if the same genre convention is applied to make a Korea film, which eventually became a big success both commercially and critically? This paper discusses the specific effects generated when such a nationally-specific film genre as the Western traverses its geographical and cultural boundary and is reappropriated in another context. What kind of cultural, social, or historical values does it engender? The film to be discussed is *The Good, the Bad, and the Weird* (directed by Kim Ji-Woon, 2008), a Korean remake of different Western films, Italian and Korean ones.

The Good, the Bad, and the Weird is a film set in Manchuria in the late 1930s, the period of Japanese occupation of Korea. Three notorious Korean thieves and bounty hunters are chasing after a mysterious map that is supposed to lead to secret treasure. In the process, they sometimes try to kill or help one another to become the first one to grab the map. In this chasing adventure story, the film adds a certain dose of nationalism. This is not a surprise considering that one of the original models of this film, *Break Up the Chain* (directed by Lee Man-Hee, 1971), which is often called a Manchurian Western in Korea, contained heavy patriotic messages. *Break Up the Chain*, on the other hand, is even more interesting in the fact that it imitates one of the Italian Westerns that is popularly called the "Spaghetti Westerns," not an American one. The Spaghetti Western is a spin-off genre of the Hollywood Western, and was globally popularized especially with Sergio Leone's *Dollar Trilogy*. It eventually shared the of global western film market with the American genre in the mid 20th century.

As the modifiers associated with this film, the Western, spaghetti, Korea, and Manchu suggest, *The Good, the Bad, and the Weird* is located at the intersection of diverse and hybrid geo-cultural and historical memories. All these memories are intertwined in this film due to the specific production mode of remaking of the peculiar genre and content. In this paper, therefore, I look at the film focusing especially on these two critical points, the popular genre and the historical messages in filmmaking, and try to investigate the cultural meanings that such a hybrid film can generate at this specific moment in the age of Hallyu.

Sofia Murell (University of Amsterdam):

A Blurred Renaissance: Aesthetics of Socio-political Representation in Contemporary South Korean Films

In this paper, the aesthetics of socio-political representation in contemporary Korean blockbuster and sageuk films, historical dramas, are analysed. These films not only entertain, but also address and reflect on socio-political circumstances of Korea, remarking that these issues are still not forgotten.

The main films discussed include *Snowpiercer* (director Bong Joon-ho, 2013) and *Masquerade* (director Choo Chang-min, 2012), which are considered blockbusters. This is an important characteristic because blockbusters revived the Korean cinema à la Hollywood in terms of aesthetics, and became a production and marketing strategy for consumer nationalism within Korea (Choi, 2010, p. 31-59).

The analysis shows that contemporary *sageuk* films use Hollywood aesthetic conventions such as blockbusters. Moreover, these films portray socio-political issues through a different fashion, indicating that an actual hybridity has taken place, creating a "third space" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 55). This third space represents a space where the global and the local cultures interact. Therefore, hybridity calls for a transformation; a reflective

¹ Also known as *Myeong-ryang*. Directed by Han-min Kim, CJ E&M co.

form wherein national identity is examined (Bhabha, 1994, p. 53). Consequently, when analysing contemporary Korean films, hybridity is applied as an interpretive strategy. This paper can contribute to the debate of cultural globalisation, as hybridisation in Korean cinema is a clear example of this.

The Korean film industry gives its own re-production of events, still dealing with the Korean post-colonial history and current relations with neighbouring countries. By comparing different genres (sci-fi and historical dramas) to themselves rather than to their own genre and historical facts, it can be argued that fiction (the imaginary, i.e. aesthetics) opens up the possibility of a third space. Therefore, sageuk films could be seen as an intermediate in the third space, where the past is re-imagined and the present is transitory, leading to a reflection on the future.

Panel 3: Cinematic Discourses of Gender, Body and Modern History

Chair: Grace Koh (SOAS, University of London)

Jinhee Choi (King's College London):

Girls that Remember; Girls that Disappear. Korean Modern History and Girlhood

Girls in contemporary Korean cinema have frequently been portrayed as victims of historical trauma. In *A Petal* (Kkotnib, Jang Sun-woo, 1996), "she," a victim of the Kwangju Uprising, is mentally distraught, unable to communicate the cause of her trauma to the male protagonist Jang who abuses her, with her fragmented memories emitted intermittently via flashback throughout the film. In *Peppermint Candy* (Bakha satang, Lee Chang-dong, 1999) Sun-im, who works at a factory, is the object of the male protagonist Yeong-ho's longing for the innocent past – a past that marks a period untainted by his experience of historical, political, and economic turmoil that span over two decades. Girls or young female protagonists have rarely been presented as films' subject that remembers the modern history of Korea.

In contrast, in recent films such as *Sunny* (Sseoni, 2011), *A Werewolf Boy* (Neudae sonyeon, 2012) and *The Silenced* (Kyeongseong Hakgyu: Sarajin sonyeodeul, 2015), girls are increasingly presented as the subject who remembers and asserts one's personal story against the backdrop of the country's historical past. In this presentation, girls will be examined as the "writing" subject, whose personal experience registers tangentially colonial Korea and Korean War. Personal writing such as dairy and letter has been a practice integral to girls' culture since the 1920s and 30s, and has become a persistent trope in girls' fiction and cinema. I will examine *A Werewolf Boy* and *The Silenced* as case studies, focusing on the writing trope that provides the subject that has often been considered as the marginal agent of historical development and transformation, with a perspective that allows the communication between girls and the sharing of personal experience of a history.

Teréz Vincze (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest):

Embodied History – Symbolic Use of Bodies in the Cinematic Representation of Korean History

"Our hatred for other nations is less than our hatred for ourselves and of course this has come out of the division"

(Pak Kwang-su)

During the late 1990s and beginning of the 2000s when at various international film festivals South Korean films started to appear in significant numbers, I was quite amazed by the fresh narrative ideas and also by the surprisingly violent images that had been created by not only commercial but also by art cinema directors. One of the significant – and for me the most intriguing – characteristics of many of these Korean films were the frequency that characters tortured themselves or even mutilated their own bodies. This phenomenon made me wonder what kind of role the act of mutilation of the body plays in Korean consciousness. Why and how this motif is used in filmic representations? Is it simply a type of shocking events that is part of an exploitative praxis in Korean cinema, or does it have a deeper meaning in connection to Koreanness and Korean history? In my presentation I examine a series of South Korean films made during the last six decades that exemplify the parallel between the traumatic history of Korea in the 20th century and the cinematic representation of bodies in pain. I intend to show how systematically Korean cinema have been using the body as a site for the representation of national history; how these – otherwise very different – films all depict physical illness as a metaphor of social trauma; and how the mutilation of the (own) body becomes the symptom of the impossibility to define the Self and the Other, a problem that is deeply rooted in the traumatic history of the divided Korea.

Andrew Sanggyu Lee (Columbia University, New York):

Screening the Image of New Women in Late Colonial-Period Korean Films: Melodramatic Excess, Place of Innocence, and Ambiguous Imperial Subjects

Four films made in the late colonial period of Korea were rediscovered from other countries; the titles of these four films are *Homeless Angels* (1941), *Springtime in the Korean Peninsula* (1941), *The Volunteer* (1941), and *Straits of Chosŏn* (1943). While many Korean historians have devolved into these four films as "collaboration films" or "pro-Japanese films" for obvious reasons, many scholars overlook the gender relations that went into the production of each films. This paper explores gender representations and the ambiguous position of women within these wartime mobilization films. I am interested in the question of women as what I would describe as "ambiguous imperial subjects," whose gendered marginalizations provide a dialectic space to resist becoming complete imperial subjects. I believe that exploring the four films is a good starting point in order to understand the gender performance of new women (*shinyŏsŏng*) and old women (*gooyŏsŏng*) in not just wartime mobilization films (of Japanese and Korean) but also a broader Korean society during the colonial period as well.

Panel 4: Auteur Cinema and the Art of Memory

Chair: Shane O'Sullivan (Kingston University)

Jennifer O'Meara (Maynooth University, Ireland):

Park Chan-wook's Vengeance Trilogy: An Allegorical or Exploitative Take on Korea's Violent Past?

Of the film-makers associated with the so-called 'New Korean Cinema' of the late 20th and early 21st century, the work of Park Chan-wook has received some of the most acclaim and analysis. While Park's depiction of extreme acts of violence have been criticised as sadistic by critics such as *Manohla Dargis* (2005) and *Tony Rayns* (2006), the film-maker has suggested that his vengeance trilogy – *Sympathy for Mr. Vengeance* (2002), *Oldboy* (2003) and *Sympathy for Lady Vengeance* (2005) – aims to explore the philosophical richness of the theme of revenge (see Choe 2009). In this paper I contend that, by foregrounding characters whose failure to let go of the past disrupts their lives in the present, Park not only creates a detailed mediation on the futility of revenge, but he explores the ways in which South Korea's ability to move forward can be impeded by a natural tendency to look back. I thus situate *Sympathy for Mr. Vengeance*, *Oldboy* and *Sympathy for Lady Vengeance* as complements to *Joint Security Area* (2000); Park's earlier and more overt treatment of war-time Korea, which focuses on a tragic friendship between soldiers from the North and the South. In doing so, I demonstrate that films need not chart historic events explicitly in order for them to reflect cultural memory. It will also be argued that the extreme violence in Park's films can simultaneously speak to Korea's violent history and entertain international viewers with less knowledge of the Korean situation.

Hee-seung Irene Lee (The University of Auckland, New Zealand):

Melancholic Screen for Korea's Lost Memory: Lee Chang-dong's *Secret Sunshine* (2007) and *Poetry* (2010)

Since its birth cinema has offered a screen on which the past is revisited, revived, and re-enacted with the full strength of the medium's immediate demand for emotional and intellectual engagement with history as a relatable story. In the same vein, Korea's notoriously painful path to modernity has been engraved on the screen of Korean films not only to recall the bitter memory of its past but also to attempt a new approach which was not possible at the time of chaotic experience of history in the present tense. In addition, the cinematic recollection of the shared past prompts Korean audience to examine the historical events and their consequences in relation to the contemporary world they are living. On one hand, the national past functions as a clearly recognisable material for a film's representation of history and numerous films on the Korean War such as *The Brotherhood of War* (*Taegukgi*, 2004) and *The Front Line* (*Gojijeon*, 2011) illustrate the direct rapport between history and film. On the other hand, the national past is carefully fabricated into a film's narrative as a remote context of characters' lives, yet such backdrop silently works as an irreversible march of the fate under which the choices of those characters are predetermined and by which their desires are thwarted. The paper will focus on the latter treatment of history with a close reference to the two films directed by Lee Chang-dong – *Secret Sunshine* (2007) and *Poetry* (2010). In this discussion, I will attempt to read the director's meditative interrogation of the nation's speedy progress towards materialistic values of the modern world and how he caringly portrays the two female protagonists who are constantly marginalized by their own hope for better future and unavoidably sink into the seat of melancholia.

Wikanda Promkhuntong (Aberystwyth University, Wales UK):

Home Video Distribution History and the Making of a South Korean Cult Auteur

This paper explores different relationships between film and history through the subject of film authorship and pan-Atlantic home video distribution of films by the polemical South Korean director, Kim Ki-duk. Prior to the boom of South Korean arthouse cinema at international film festivals and the commercial success of cultish genre films of numerous South Korean directors in the early 2000s, early films of Kim Ki-duk were marketed as Cantonese-dubbed adult movies on VHS and VCD and distributed to diasporic Chinese audiences. As South Korean cinema has collectively become well-known internationally, on the one hand, Kim was canonised as one of the innovative art/cult film auteurs in the commercial context of DVD distribution in the US and the UK. On the other hand, the critical and theatrical receptions of the majority of Kim's films in South Korea and among critics of East Asian cinema have continued to struggle. This is partly due to the representations of South Korean history in Kim's works couple with the fact that his personal background of the director does not fit in with the tradition of film authorship in the South Korean film culture.

The paper traces paratextual materials associated with the distribution of Kim's films in the influential markets of the US and the UK, including VHS and DVD packages and associated content such as film trailers over the course of Kim's career to date. The findings reveal how the reputation of a national film director as an auteur is shaped not only by film texts (particularly how the director represents a national history), but also by the director's personal history and broader contextual histories of national and transnational cinemas and changing technological developments of home video distribution.

Keynote Lecture

Hong-Joon Kim (Korea National University of Arts, Seoul)

Witnesses Witnessed: Reflections on the Lives and Times of Three Korean Master Filmmakers

Chair: Hyunseon Lee (SOAS, University of London)

This presentation will recount some key episodes from my 'close encounters' with three Korean masters: Shin Sang-ok, Kim Ki-young and Yu Hyun-mok. Though my testimonial and confessional recollections inevitably prove to be fragmentary and episodic, it is clear that each of these strived to establish their own ways of representing the major historical events they witnessed which deeply affected their artistic, political and historical consciousness. I hope that this presentation will contribute to the collective memory of Korean cinema by recounting how these masters explored different levels of history: personal, cinematic and national.

Panel 5: Japan in Postcolonial Korea: Cinema, Historicity, and the Politics of Memory

Chair: Jinhee Choi (King's College London)

This panel problematizes the subject of Japan as the Other in postcolonial Korean cinema, by examining how the South Korean cinema handled the colonial experience and memories in filmmaking and film historiography. In the postcolonial time-space period from 1945 to 1960s in South Korea, there were some historical issues closely linked to the formation of national cinema in the cultural cold war: how the filmmakers could make the narratives, including delight of the national independence of 1945 as well as resistances and sufferings of the Korean people during the colonial era, how they could represent the national hero(ine) who had devoted his/her life to the independence of Korea, and how they could historicize their own activities of filmmaking as hardships and adversities under the Japanese colonial rule, etc. Previous studies regarded the historical practices of the South Korean cinema as the commemoration of de-colonization and the performance of elimination of the remnants of Japanese colonialism. However, postcolonial Korean cinema often encountered the conundrum of failing to completely externalize Japan and revealing the inescapable influences of Japanese colonialism whenever it tried to access its own past, even in the costume dramas set in Joseon dynasty. Moreover, Japan had been the complex Other, depending on the social, political, economic and diplomatic contexts at the time. It was an enemy and a neighbor, colonial past and postcolonial present, model of postwar reconstruction of nation and partner for "Free Asia" in cold war. The authors of this panel pay attention to this conundrum and ask various questions about Japan in postcolonial Korean cinema. They deal with cinematic representation, generic convention, and historicity of colonial memories and Japan as the Other.

Hwajin Lee (Inha University, S-Korea):

Postcolonial Love Story in Hyeonhaetan: Melodramatic Version of Commemoration on Colonial History in the 1960s

The April 19th revolution in 1960 opened a space for the South Korean people to express their complex emotions about Japan and Japanese culture, which had been forbidden since their national founding in 1948. Some films, which portrayed the international romance between the Korean man and the Japanese woman in the colonial era, were associated with the desire for the imaginary reconstruction of Korea-Japan relations through the gendered reversal of former colonial dominant-subordinate relationship. They not only mesh with the values of South Korea's younger generation, but also conveyed the South Korean filmmakers' ambitions toward the wider market of "Free Asia" in the Cold War regime. However, the Korean government tightened film censorship over the representation of Japan because of its efforts to preserve national culture and identities after the normalization of the diplomatic relations between South Korea and Japan (1965). I examine how the ironical situation of the normalization of the diplomatic relations destabilized the representation of Japan as "abnormal and dangerous." I also analyze how the distorted visualizations of colonial memories in popular films deal with the subject matter of international romance (so-called "Hyeonhaetan" story) within the melodramatic convention, focusing on *The Sea Knows* (Kim Ki-young, 1961) and *Chorus of Trees* (Kang Dae-jin, 1968). In doing so, I argue that the diverse imaginations of spaces "in-between" Korea and Japan were oriented for the specific vanishing point in the process of negotiation with the government's censorship of film, and that the intentional blur of colonial memories could unintentionally lead South Korean spectators to pay attention to their own complex to be not yet overcome even after the normalization of the diplomatic relations.

Hyekyong Sim (Soonchunhyang University, S-Korea):

A Girl-Martyr YU Gwansun as "Jeanne d'Arc of Korea": Between Making National Biopics and Embracing Hollywood Biopics in Liberation Korea

Right after liberation, a series of "Liberation Film" such as *Viva Freedom* (1946) were made to commemorate the independence and to contemplate on Korea's future. Most Liberation Films before the foundation of the Republic of Korea were biopics of the patriotic martyrs who fought against the Japanese colonial rule: *The Chronicles of AHN Jungguen* (1947), *Immortal Secret Emissary* (1947), *YUN Bonggil the Martyr* (1947). At that time, U.S. Military Government and CMPE-Korea (Central Motion Picture Exchange in South Korea Office) exclusively imported and exhibited Hollywood films. While Hollywood films were often criticized for the spread of American decadent culture, some exhibition practices aimed to show the superiority of American liberal democracy, America as a free land embracing multi-race/culture and individuality of democratic citizens: *Abe Lincoln in Illinois* (1940), *Rhapsody in Blue* (1945), *Madame Curie* (1943). The exhibition of Hollywood biopics played a big part in the unprecedented boom of South Korean biopic filmmaking. In this presentation, I focus on *A Girl-Martyr YU Gwansun* (1948) directed by YUN Bongchun, one of representative directors of biopics. YU Gwansun, a 16 year-old girl who joined the 1919 independence movement, was discovered as new national "heroine" in the name of "Jeanne d'Arc of Korea". It is worth noting that she was not overseas, but a domestic martyr who died in the process of establishing a new nation-state. I examine the relationship between the boom of national biopics, such as *A Girl-Martyr YU Gwansun* and the Hollywood biopics that were screened in South Korea according to US cultural cold war strategy, the correlation between the translation of foreign biographical literature in early modern Korea and the biographical literature of Martyr published after liberation, and the analogy between *Jeanne d'Arc* and *A Girl-Martyr YU Gwansun* in the process of remediation from literature to film. Finally, I problematize how YU Gwansun functions as a national icon in establishing the ROK in the early cold war.

Woohyung Chon (Konkuk University, S-Korea):

Outside of the History and the Classic: Costume Drama *The Wedding Day*

Yi Byungil's *The Wedding Day* (1956) is a costume drama presumed to be set in the Joseon dynasty. This film is well known for being the first Korean film to be awarded in international film festival and for the various remediation between theatre and film. Though it is clearly one of the most famous Korean films, it has quite unfamiliar scenes and stories. *The Wedding Day* was not based on the classic or historical events that other films had dealt with. We have to pay attention to forms that indicate a classic, such as a dramatic conflict while a traditional wedding ceremony was occurring, and its moral solution. It is well known that, *The Wedding Day* is based on Oh Yongjin's script *A Happy Day of Jinsa Maeng* (1943) written in Japanese. Oh himself dramatized it and Yi directed the film. After production, continuous remediation made this story a classic, but it turns out to be a 'pseudo-national narrative' created in the late colonial Korea. *The Wedding Day* tends to represent postcolonial narrative by choosing the costume drama genre, but in fact, the vestiges of colonialism is inscribed within this process. In the complex contexts, this film could simply meet the unique genre of costume drama, neither historical events nor the classics, I focus on the special meeting of Oh and Yi as students of film in the Japanese empire's capital Tokyo in the colonial era, and the colonial cultural politics that forced them to invent the ethnical narrative. The ethnic theme permitted to them was something that existed outside the realm of real history or classic film. I will argue that *The Wedding Day* is a special film, which has continuity with Yi's desire to represent the classic *The Story of Chunhyang* in the film *Spring of the Peninsula* (1941) as well as conveying the impossible realm of representation in film.

Hieyoon Kim (UCLA, USA):

Making Cinema Historical: Genres of Historical Writing and Their Archives in the 1960s

What might be learned by looking at archiving in a society where "primary" sources of film history – film prints, scripts, production records, etc. – have long been lost or unavailable for historical writing projects? Recent scholarship raises a few questions on the role of film archive in relation to national cinema, yet little progress has been made to address the long absence of archives and its ramifications on historiography. This essay asks how a set of historical work that appeared in 1960s Korea enables us to think beyond the existing sense of archive and history of cinema. I push our understanding of history further to its limits by focusing on archives, and on historical practices conducted by people who were not professional historians or archivists, but rather, ordinary people who inscribed the past and the present in their own ways. In their banality and creativity, their conformity to and confrontation with hegemonic global and national historical narratives and practices, their constant acts of documentation constitutes unexpectedly generative sites from which to study the cultural politics of archives and historical production. Specifically, I look at three historical works as part of a larger historiographical turn in the 1960s, when members of the film industry strived to make Korean cinema historical: An Chonghwa's book *The Bypaths and Hidden History of Korean Cinema* (1962), Choe Muryŏng's film *Arirang: A Life of Na Unkyu* (1966), and Lee Yŏng-il's book *A General History of Korean Cinema* (1969). While acknowledging the loss of old films, these cases created their particular methods of writing history as part of a larger remembrance of the past of Korean cinema. In analyzing these three historical works, I argue that these new renditions of the past are an essential part of building a postcolonial cinema and its historiography, as well as of imagining the relation between historiography and archive.

Panel 6: Symbolic Spaces of Modernity

Chair: Teréz Vincze (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest)

Park, Mi Sook (The University of Sheffield, UK):

Rebuilding South Korea's National Image Through Memory and Everyday Life

This study investigates how memory of South Korea's past (formally Korea) is represented in its film and history. The articulation of Korean film and history is interesting because the context present in recent films are based on the past. This study shall critically examine the recent popular Korean films, which are based on past memory between the 1960s and the early 1990s. During this period, Korean society struggled not only with having to overcome poverty, but also its unstable political development.

This study relates to history and film, as it recognises "history" in two intertwined ways. First, it is understood to be important as a historical memory such as Korean war, Saemaeul movement and secondly, history is based on everyday life. The focus is on how recent Korean films emphasis everyday life memory which visibly represents Korean modernisation.

Highlighting films based on everyday life shall provide a better understanding of the reasons why film has become an important medium for interpreting history and popular culture. In particular, most recent films are based on personal memory projected through the 1960s-1990s. In the Korean context, the popularity of these films can be regarded as "nostalgic", but these films have contributed to South Korean modernisation both home and abroad, by re-inventing social memory.

Therefore, the distinction of this study emphasises the link from nostalgia to invented memory. It shall argue that the recent trends of Korean films, in particular described as individual memory, goes further than selling nostalgia. Instead, these films remake certain parts of Korean modernisation. It concludes that how the media in particular films that are based on individual memory can be contributed towards rebuilding Korean modernity whether these are intended or not.

Youngmin Choe (University of Southern California):
Money and Interiority in Korean Cinema

This paper examines the history of representations of money, class, and social status in Korean cinema, with a focus on the affective relationship between currency and human interiority. Focusing on films like Kim So-dong's postwar film *Money* (1958, *Don*), Jang Sun-woo's *Age of Success* (1988, *Seonggong shidae*; alternative title *Taste of Heaven*), and Kim Hong-sun's *The Con Artists* (2014, *Gisuljadeul*), this paper will trace a genealogy of the relationship depicted in these films from the postwar period to the present between how money is conceived in Korea and how subjectivity is imagined.

Turning then to Im Sang-soo's *Taste of Money* (2012), a sequel that followed on his remake of Kim Ki-young's *The Housemaid* (1960, *Hanyeo*), the paper will draw on feminist critiques of Bourdieu's model of capital to argue that Im's recent films critique wealth under neoliberalism by recuperating and drawing our attention to what Helga Nowotny has called "emotional capital," a variant of social capital that, according to Nowotny, women have more of than men, and is developed in adverse circumstances. In Korean cinema, this form of emotional capital, in contrast to cultural, social or economic capital, has been prevalent since Kim Kiyoung's 1960 film, *The Housemaid*. Though emotional capital is generally regarded as lacking the direct convertibility of other capital, Im's films *The Housemaid* and *Taste of Money* explicitly focus on the domestic setting to complicate these distinctions, and thus reimagines emotional capital as integrally related to other forms of capital. In short, this paper argues that Im's framework attempts to give value to emotions and affects in convertible terms, and in the process, complicates questions of motherhood and matriarchal desire, which have previously been defined against familial notions of fatherhood and patriarchy as opposed to economic terms.

Min Jeong Ko (University of Gothenburg, Sweden):
Re-telling Recent History through Film

This paper aims to discuss notions of 'Self' and 'the Other' and community-based filmmaking in contemporary South Korea from a post-structuralist perspective.

In recent critical cultural studies, much focus has been placed on the notion of 'the Other', about marginalised people in cultural, historical constructions. The process of constructing 'the Other' is rooted in a critique of Western colonial hegemony, which may not be applicable to non-Western societies. However, it could be used in order to theorise recent developments of community-based filmmaking, in South Korea.

Since the end of the Korean War (1950-53), which has left the country divided and under a political deadlock, the process of 'Otherizing' has been used to strengthen the identity of 'the Self', and is frequently being manipulated to sustain existing political power. North and South Korea seem to share the belief that they belong to the same ethnic group, but are enemies fighting each other.

Narratives setting 'the Self' as protagonist and 'the Other' as enemy, is actively used in contemporary Korean film, although some producers have tried to overcome this simplistic dichotomy. The film *Jiseul* (2012), made by a local Jeju director and local actors, is about the massacre of indigenous villagers, as a result of brutal suppression by the Korean army, after an uprising in 1948 on the Jeju island. The film *Jeju Prayer* (2012) also deals with this incident, with a mix of oral historical materials and artistic juxtapositions. These films bring forth new interpretations on a downplayed and forgotten conflict in the recent history of South Korea. In addition, both films suggest a potentially alternative 'the Other', of those who have not had power to represent themselves, situated in the periphery, designated by the powerful Self, whose rights and lives were lost, may re-write their own narratives.

Panel 7: Processing Memory in the Transcultural

Chair: Colette Balmain (Kingston University)

Joseph Jonghyun Jeon (Pomona College, USA):
Wire Aesthetics

Diverging from the conference's emphasis on the war film in genre but not in spirit, this paper considers what Paul Virilio describes as the overlap of hegemonic strategies in the 1990s between those that seek market conquest and those that aspire to military supremacy. According to Virilio, U.S. empire increasingly turns to "weapons of communication" in what amounts to a "purely technical imperialism." In this context, this paper will examine a pair of highly derivative South Korean films, *Natural City* (2003) and *Resurrection of the Little Match Girl* (2002). These films both aspire, mostly unsuccessfully, toward cinematic achievement, by adapting formulas from classic Hollywood sci-fi films, namely *Blade Runner* (1982) and *The Matrix* (1999) respectively. But rather than dwelling on artistic merits, this paper will instead focus on a specific filmic trope, what we shall call the wire shot, which these South Korean films borrows from American cinema. Commonplace in the age of digital film production, this is a shot in which the camera rushes as if inside a digital cable, and so imagines the machinic site of connectivity as inhabitable by human actors as part of a broader effort to make sense of the high-speed digital networks that drive contemporary finance, particularly after the Asian Financial Crisis of the late 1990s, a moment of accelerated financialization in the economic history of South Korea. This shot, insofar as it functions as a representation of connectivity per se, allows us to visualize the overlapping apparatuses of late American empire and contemporary finance capital, reminding us not only of the elaborate global network of subterranean and undersea cables that constitute the material infrastructure of the new economy, but also of the powerful compulsion in this milieu to fashion human desire according to hegemonic demands.

Ulf C. Lepelmeier (University of Bayreuth, Germany):

The Need of Reprocessing South Korea's Radical Changes – How the Korean Cinema Deals with the Pressures of Globalisation, Hypercapitalism and the Anxiety of Losing Cultural Identity

South Korea was in the 1960s one of poorest countries in the world, without significant industrial production. The fast industrialisation from the late 1960s, the democratization from the end of the 1980s, and the modernisation and globalization during the 1990s transformed South Korea in no time to a prosperous and organized country, which became one of the world's leading industrialised nations. Moreover, the country was able to evolve from a military dictatorship to a democratic system.

Such fast economical and political changes have strongly affected the South Korean national cinema. Many films of the "New Korean Cinema" address the recent history of South Korea, exploring in an entertaining, nostalgic or socio-critical way the deep changes recently experienced by the country. Many of these films create starting points for discussions and offer new perspectives on historical events. Some examples are the processing of the military dictatorship in Bong Joon-Ho's *Memories of Murder*, the response of the Korean division-trauma in Park Chan-Wook's *Joint Security Area*, or the addressing of hyper capitalism and the rapid social changes in the early years of South Korean democracy in Bong Joon-Ho's *The Host*, in Park Chan-Wook's revenge trilogy, and in Kim Ki-Duks *Pieta*.

On the basis of selected film examples, the relationship of the Korean cinema with the recent history of Korea's society will be illustrated. The role played by the "New Korean Cinema" as a preserver and an ambassador of the Korean culture identity will also be discussed.

Lee, Seung-Ah (UCLA):

The Lightness of the Present: Representation of the Colonial Period in Assassination

In recent Korean film industry, we witness great success of films that deal with the past. For instance, *The Admiral: Roaring Currents* (Myōngnyang, 2014 hereafter *The Admiral*) broke box office records in South Korean film history attracting 17 million audiences last year alone. It was the biggest box office return. The summer of 2014 was swept by a Yi Sun-sin (1545-1598) fever in Korea. *The Admiral* is about one of the major naval battles during the Imjin War (1592-1599) at Myōngnyang where the Admiral Yi Sun-sin defeated the Japanese. *Ode to My Father* (Kukche sijang, 2014) which delineated Korean modern history from Korean War to the present through life of a displaced man, Tōksu also earned great popularity. In our times of consumer capitalism, it is no surprise that history/past is commodified. Furthermore, 'collective memory' that people share on these particular historical events might be considered as a strong back up of success of historical films, thus, many of films that deal with the past events were relatively successful in Korea as well. However, for some reason, films presenting the colonial period did not do well in terms of box office.

The historical events set in the colonial period were adapted in films and TV dramas in many occasions. TV dramas dealt with the colonial period were pretty successful, but most of the colonial period films failed in box office until recent release of *Assassination*. The movie was released in July 22, 2015 and attracted 6 million audiences within 10 days. The film industry and media are expecting over 10 million attendance. Then, what does this film make so exceptional? The colonial period is known as dark era in Korean modern history. In Korean people's memory, it remains as great burden to them due to the unfinished task of the past liquidation. Most of Koreans believe that colonial past was never been settled politically. Perhaps, that is the part of the reason that the colonial period became burden to Korean people, thus they do not want to experience such burden and heaviness via films. In relationship between history and film, majority of debates were on the issues of 'reality', to determine whether film represented 'correctly.' However, in recent scholarship, Ian Jarvie and Robert Rosenstone emphasize the importance of 'editing' rather than 'reality' saying, "film simplifies the past, changing it into an uncomplicated and usually sensationalist narratives." Using this concept, in this paper, I propose the success *Assassination* can be seen as focusing on 'editing.' I argue that this 'editing' attenuates the effects of burden/heaviness into acceptable lightness.

Panel 8: The Crossover between Independent Film-making and International Film Festivals

The Perspectives of Director Jang Gunjae (A Midsummer's Fantasia) and BIFF Programmer Nam Dong-chul.
Historical Review of Film Festivals



Thornhaugh Street
Russell Square
London WC1H 0XG

Tel: +44 (0)20 7637 2388

www.soas.ac.uk