

The First Annual Mason Undergraduate Student Conference in Korean Studies

Hangul Day on Friday, October 9, 2020

Registration: https://gmu.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Of5aRo8zS2G2yhCRYiSyIw

Conference Program

10:00-10:30 am Welcoming Remark by Prof. Ro, Director of the Korean Studies Center

Morning Presentations:

10:30-11:00 am Jay Lee, *Hallyu in North Korea: Its cultural significance and the Jangmadang Generation*
Session Chair: Young A Jung

11:00-11:30 am Kevin Omans, *Korean perceptions of Korean American diaspora*
Session Chair: Young A Jung

11:30 am-Noon Shaneen Briscoe, *Analyzing the success of South Korean film: Parasite*
Session Chair: Jihye Moon

Lunch Break

Afternoon Presentations:

1:00-1:30 pm Alexys Ewing & Michael Le, *Exploring a cultural shift in Korean dining culture through K-dramas*
Session Chair: Jihye Moon

1:30-2:00 pm Caroline Buchholz, *Symbolism and motifs in Korean folklore: The tiger*
Session Chair: Dae Yong Kim

2:00-2:30 pm Nadia Salvi, *Parasite: Breaking the 1-inch barrier*
Session Chair: Dae Yong Kim

2:30-3:00 pm Grace McGiffin, *Family conflict: Generational divide among Korean households*
Session Chair: So Young Yi

3:00-3:30 pm Jenaye Parker, *Success factors in relation to South Korean webtoons*
Session Chair: Hei Yoo

3:30-4:00 pm Closing Remark & Award Ceremony

Abstracts

Hallyu in North Korea: Its Cultural Significance and the Jangmadang Generation

Jay Lee

In the global age of the 21st century, the world is becoming increasingly smaller and closer than ever before. For my research, I intend to focus on the influence of South Korean pop culture in North Korea. Specifically, my research explores how, why and to what extent the South Korean pop culture, 'hallyu' has influence on North Korean people's life and their culture. The reason that I explore this topic is because there is such limited information about North Korean society. Because of North Korean society's closed nature, the country has been poorly represented on South Korean media. The media has generated stereotypes and poorly constructed assumptions about North Korean people and culture. On the other hand, many accounts of North Korean defectors tell that South Korean popular media and culture is having a massive influence on shaping minds of younger North Koreans and perception about their own country through comparison of the North and South. This shows the main issue that while South Korean media portrays limited information about North Korea to South Korean people, its influence on North Korean people is extraordinary. Therefore, it is important to understand why such social phenomena is happening and explore possible solutions to the current challenges. My research also focuses on hallyu's influence on forming North Korean millennials', the Jangmadang generation's perception of their self, culture, nation and the North Korean government. I intend to highlight 'soft' media culture's tangible impact on people's daily lives by studying K-drama, fashion and linguistics. Although there is not much information about North Korea, I believe this is the exact reason why there needs to be more scholarly studies and researches on North Korean people and culture.

Korean Perceptions of Korean American Diaspora

Kevin Omans

The following paper is based in the field of sociolinguistics and attempts to find out how native Korean speakers who are born and raised in the Republic of Korea (South Korea) perceive the dialect spoken by Korean American diaspora Koreans as a heritage language. It endeavors to do so through inviting participants to first complete a modified survey and then engage in a matched guise test. This is done as a replica of Gabriela G. Alfaraz's work with the Cuban American community in Miami and their opinions regarding contemporary Cuban and Cuban exile varieties of Spanish. In accordance with Alfaraz's experiment, this survey asks its participants to rate different varieties of Korean in South Korea, in addition to a general North Korean and Korean American variety, according to their level of correctness and pleasantness to account for competing ideals of solidarity and language purity. Meanwhile, the matched guise test is comprised of controlled, short audio files of both a Korean and Korean American speaker talking about the same topic to see if Koreans are able to discern between mainland South Korean and Korean American varieties. After collecting data from a sufficient number of participants, the researcher will look at the results to see how Korean perceptions of Korean American diaspora reflect various ideologies and biases that Koreans have about this population. Conversely, some of the preliminary conclusions triggered by the findings can also be used to offer suggestions or predictions about how the expected use of language by Korean Americans could potentially influence native Koreans' opinions about them.

Analyzing the Success of South Korean Film: *Parasite*

Shaneen J. Briscoe

To properly analyze the growth or success of the South Korean film: *Parasite*, we must go back through time and break down other South Korean films that have either been nominated or recognized on a larger scale similar to the Oscars or other overseas award shows. What makes a movie or film popular among the masses? Why has this specific movie acquired so many awards as it has. Is it the societal issues that appear that makes it relatable or the simple fame of the actors that appeared that held people's attention. We will be digging into the aspects of the film that impacted me and made this movie a masterpiece for me. We will be using data archives, scholarly research, YouTube analysis, and opinions from my friends or my own deductions of *Parasite*.

Exploring a Cultural Shift in Korean Dining Culture through K-Dramas

Alexys Ewing & Michael Le

Eating and drinking have always been an integral part of Korean society and culture, as it provides an opportunity to bond with others in many settings. One major factor in Korean eating culture are company dinners, known as hweshiks. Hweshiks are held for the purpose of coworkers and bosses getting to know each other better and bond more. However, there is much more to it than that. There is a certain atmosphere, traditions, and expectations that are usually maintained throughout the dinner. Some things that are usually present are respect and attention to the elders or superiors, expectation to drink, and an expectation to stay late. For a long time, hweshiks used to be mandatory, but a recent law was enacted for a 52-hour work week in Korea, meaning that hweshiks could now be optional for workers if they do not wish to attend. While these hweshiks are not mandatory now, there are still effects and repercussions for one's absence. In lieu of hweshiks, some people are now opting for a loner culture where they eat and drink alone, known as honbap and honsul respectively. These people are referred to as "loners" or "honjok". Whether they participate in this new phenomenon because of convenience or a desire to stray from a stressful collective culture full of traditions, honjok culture is on the rise. This paper will delve into the transition from hweshiks to honjok culture as depicted in Korean dramas. Some of these dramas include, but are not limited to, *Drinking Solo*, *Let's Eat 3*, *The Queen of the Office*, and *Incomplete Life*.

Symbolism and Motifs in Korean Folklore: The Tiger

Caroline Buchholz

Symbolism and Motifs in Korean Folklore: The Tiger, is a case study of the tiger's role within Korean folklore. As Korean folklore is a large and rich collection of stories this study has narrowed its purview. The focus is contained to stories that highlight human-tiger interactions and relationships. Specifically, interactions in which the tiger is written as a character rather than a predator. By observing how the tiger is characterized within these stories, Korean perceptions and attitudes towards the tiger can be isolated and evaluated. Korean cultural ties to the tiger date back to 2333 B.C.E. with its appearance in the founding myth of Korea. The founding myth details the birth of

Dangun, the founder of Korea, who is also characterized as a god. The gods Dangun and Sansin, a mountain god, use the image of a tiger as their physical form in various folktales. As a result, the tiger can be representative of a divine presence. In the late 1900s, the tiger once again became a symbol of Dangun, but the intention had changed. At this time, Dangun was reaffirmed as the National Founder of Korea. By establishing a founder, the aim was to unify the Korean people under one name. The tiger became one of the symbols of this resurgence in Korean national identity. The motif of filial piety frequently aligns with the appearance of a tiger. Within many folktales, the tiger appears to aid or bless those practicing filial piety. Through the use of this motif, the tiger's presence is used to compel the audience to adhere to Confucius practices. The tiger's role within Korean folklore evokes various meanings but each with its own power and intention.

Parasite: Different Words, Same Story

Nadia Salvi

This paper seeks to inform how interlingual subtitling can act as a gateway to overcoming the international barriers when provided a strong platform, such as cinema. This is especially evident in the South Korean socioeconomic thriller and comedy *Parasite* directed by Bong Joon-Ho and subtitled by American movie critic and Busan Film School Professor Darcey Paquet (Rithdee, 2020). This paper aims to dissect the factors which contributed the success of *Parasite* as a film treated as an equal in America's cinematic universe as it received awards recognized not only in the foreign film categories but also surpassing English-spoken films at the Oscars. These factors will be further analyzed to impart the difficulties and setbacks typically experienced throughout the subtitling process, as well as the criticisms toward the subtitler's creative decisions as he accommodated the cultures of his target language. The paper will conclude with a prediction of how the precedent set by *Parasite* and its impactful use of subtitles will affect the American perspective on foreign films in the long run.

Family conflict: Generational Divide among Korean Households

Grace McGigiffin

This paper attempts to understand the complex tensions that underlie generations in Korea, drawing on a variety of sources, including dramas and news articles, to support its findings. Specifically, Korean dramas *At Eighteen* and *SKY Castle* serve as primary sources in the investigation, as both deal with the generational conflict particularly within families. Taken together, the sources suggest that such social struggles stem from the older generation's unique approach to life, which sources hypothesize to be a result of socio-economic occurrences like war or ideology like Confucianism. Furthermore, it appears that in generational conflict between parent and child, ultimately either the destruction of the child's mental/physical health or the disintegration of the family relationship is inevitable. In this manner, South Korea is currently experiencing its own civil war. Although this conflict is not being publicized and is not apparent to the rest of the world, it affects a shocking amount of families in Korea. For instance, the Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs' "Family Conflicts on Family Changes and Policy Tasks" reported that, in 2015, roughly one-third of the population surveyed claimed to have been part of some sort of family conflict within the year prior, and that around 28% of the clashes happened between parent and child (M. Kim, 2018). Such conflicts can range anywhere from daily trivial quibbles to utter disownment of a family member.

Obviously, household fights are a universal occasion, spanning both space and time, affecting every nation at any point in history. However, the intensity and frequency of family tensions have become quite astounding in Korea's case; interestingly, only recently has this issue arisen at such a steep incline. This paper seeks to explore family conflict as portrayed through K-dramas and identify why family conflict has become so prevalent in South Korea today.

Success Factors in relation to South Korean Webtoons

Jenaye Parker

Webtoons are a popular media format that is consumed by a wide audience. Webtoons are comics presented in a digital format, but they differ from typical scanned comics we may find on the internet. Webtoons are digitally produced and formatted to be consumed by an online audience. These comics are updated more frequently than manwhas or mangas of the same genre, with webtoons being updated weekly. While the inspiration from webtoons and Korean manwha stems from Japanese comics known as manga, webtoons are a Korean phenomenon. The model of providing and circulating Korean webtoons originated from Korea and its distribution platforms such as Naver and Daum have experienced so much success that they have expanded their reach internationally. With webtoons being a form of transmedia content, it isn't difficult for the digital comics to be adapted into one of the most popular forms of Hallyu media being consumed, dramas. The detailed and descriptive narrative that webtoons use create a simple foundation that can be built in the form of film. Along with this, there is a considerable less risk of losing money and time when the source material is already provided. Dramas such as *My I.D. is Gangnam Beauty* not only work closely with the author to ensure the source material and the drama are similar and to a standard, but they also enlist the help of popular actors and K-POP idols to promote the drama. Above all else, webtoons are easily accessible, even as an international reader. Naver hosts the app *Webtoon* where many popular Korean webtoons are provided for free in English and other languages. It is also easy to find unofficial translations, made by fans to provide others with the opportunity to read. Due to these factors, Korean webtoons are proving to be a very profitable and growing market of Korean culture consumption.