



Center for Korean Studies
University of California, Berkeley

Seminar: Kyung-sook Shin and Korean Literature

Friday, October 24, 2014

Sponsor: UC Berkeley Center for Korean Studies

Location: UC Berkeley Alumni House (Toll Room)

Program

2:00-2:10 Opening Remarks

Laura Nelson, Chair, Center for Korean Studies

Youngmin Kwon, Visiting Professor, East Asian Languages and Cultures

2:10-3:00 "On Modern and Contemporary Korean Fiction"

Speaker: **Christopher P. Hanscom**, Professor of Korean Literature, UCLA

3:00-4:45 Panel on Korean Literature, Translation, and Publication

Chair: **Daniel O'Neill**, Assistant Professor of Japanese Literature, UC Berkeley

Bruce Fulton, Young-Bin Min Chair in Korean Literature, University of British Columbia

Title: "Publication of Korean Literature in Translation in the Post-PLEASE LOOK AFTER MOM Era"

Jiwon Shin, Professor of Korean Literature, Arizona State University

Title: "Food for Memory"

Ha-yun Jung, Graduate School of Translation and Interpretation, Ewha Womans Univ.

Title: "A Quiet Voice Striving to Be Heard"

Marcella Marini, Acquisitions Editor, Sellerio Editore

Title: "The Familiar in the Unfamiliar"

4:45 Coffee Break

5:00-6:00 A Dialogue with Kyung-sook Shin

Shin Kyung-sook, Writer

Laura Nelson, Chair, Center for Korean Studies

Interpretation: Professor Jiwon Shin, Arizona State University

6:00-7:30 Reception and Book Signing in Alumni House

Abstracts and Bios

Shin Kyung-sook (Novelist, South Korea)



Bio

Kyung-sook Shin is one of South Korea's most widely read and acclaimed novelists. She graduated from Seoul Institute of the Arts, and won the Munye Joongang New Author Prize for her first novella, *Winter Fables*, starting her career as a writer at the age of 22.

Since then Shin has published seven novels including *Deep Sorrow*, *A Lone Room*, *The Train Departs at 7*, *Violet*, *Lee Jin*, *Please Look After Mom* and *I'll Be Right There*, nine short story collections, and three essay collections as well.

Her writing is characterized by a profound point of view focusing on the human mind, a resonating and colorful style utilizing symbolism and metaphor, and an expressive and heartfelt narrative style. Setting social changes and political situations as the backdrops of her works, Shin mainly looks inwards at humans' psychological wounds and difficulty in reconciling themselves to their present and future.

Please Look After Mom has been translated into more than thirty languages. It is Shin's first book to appear in English and it has been met with critical acclaim; since its publication, it has sold over 2 million copies worldwide. Shin became the first Korean and first woman to receive the Man Asian Literary Prize for the English translation of *Please Look After Mom* in 2011.

I'll Be Right There has been published in a number of countries, including the US, Spain, China, Poland, Italy, and Norway, and the English edition was published in June 2014. It has been received rave reviews by media outlets including the Los Angeles Times, the New

York Times, the Guardian, Kirkus Reviews, and Publishers Weekly and put on must-read lists in many countries. It was included in the list of “30 Books You Need To Read in 2014” by the Huffington Post. It was also named as “the best foreign literature in the 21st Century” in China and “the best book of the winter 2012” in Poland.

Shin has been honored with the Man Asian Literary Prize, the Manhae Prize, the Dong-in Literary Award, the Yi Sang Literary Prize, and France’s Prix de l’Inaperçu in 2009 for the French translation of her work, *A Lone Room (La Chambre Solitaire)*, as well as the Ho-Am Prize in the Arts, awarded for her body of work for general achievement in Korean culture and the arts. She was a visiting scholar at Columbia University in 2011 and has been serving as goodwill ambassador for UNICEF. Since her international success with *Please Look After Mom*, Shin has been participating in many international events for writers as a speaker.

Laura Nelson (Chair, Center for Korean Studies, UC Berkeley)

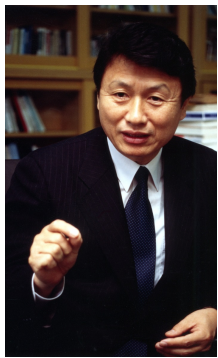


Bio

Laura C. Nelson is Associate Professor of Gender and Women’s Studies at UC Berkeley. She received her PhD in Anthropology at Stanford, and holds a Master’s in City and Regional Planning from UC Berkeley with a focus on housing and community economic development. Her current research project is a study of breast cancer as a medical, cultural, personal, environmental, political and transnational phenomenon in South Korea. She is also in the early stages of a project looking at policies pertaining to the children of immigrant brides in South Korea. Her first book, *Measured Excess: Status, Gender, and Consumer Nationalism in South Korea* (Columbia University Press, 2000) utilized ethnographic and media materials to examine ways how institutions shaped consumer culture in pursuit of national goals during the period 1960-1997. The text examines the response of South Koreans, particularly women, in various social positions as political conditions and consumer oriented messages evolved. She has also done work in South

Korea that investigates the lives and social-presentation strategies of older women without children. Before joining the GWS faculty in 2013, Laura taught for eleven years in the Anthropology Department at California State University, East Bay, where she served as chair from 2008-2013. In addition to her academic positions, Laura's career includes work in applied anthropology in the US: public policy evaluation, microenterprise development, and building employment linkages to poorly-connected communities.

Youngmin Kwon (Visiting Professor of Korean Literature, UC Berkeley)



Bio

Youngmin Kwon is currently Visiting Professor of Korean Literature in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures at UC Berkeley. He is an Emeritus Professor of Seoul National University and Chair Professor of Korean Literature at Dankook University. Kwon has published numerous works of modern Korean Literature, including *History of Modern Korean Literature* (in Korean, 2002) and *The Encyclopedia of Modern Korean Literature* (in Korean, 2004). He is co-editor, with Bruce Fulton, of *Modern Korean Fiction* (Columbia University Press, 2005), and has been the recipient of numerous awards, including the Culture and Art Critics Award of Seoul (1988), Modern Korean Literary Critics Award (1990), Manhae Academic Prize (2006) and Academic Research Award of Seoul National University (2009).

Christopher P. Hanscom (Professor of Korean Literature, UCLA)

Title: "On Modern and Contemporary Korean Fiction"



Talk Description

This talk will set the stage for a discussion of Shin Kyung-sook's fiction in the context of Korean literary history. Prof. Hanscom will introduce some of the major authors, genres, and works of modern Korean literature, and will trace trends in the development of fiction writing across the 20th and 21st centuries.

Bio

Christopher P. Hanscom is an associate professor in the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures at UCLA, and teaches courses on Korean literature and film. He is the author of "Matters of Fact: Language, Science, and the Status of Truth in Late Colonial Korea" (*Cross-Currents* 3.1 [May 2014]); *The Real Modern: Literary Modernism and the Crisis of Representation in Colonial Korea* (Harvard, 2013), a study of theories of language and modernist fiction in 1930s colonial Korea; and co-editor of *Imperatives of Culture: Selected Essays on Korean History, Literature, and Society from the Japanese Colonial Era* (Hawai'i, 2013), a collection of translations of major literary critical and historical essays from the Korean colonial period. His current research interests include the relationship between social and aesthetic forms, comparative colonialism, and concepts of race and culture under Japanese empire.

Daniel O'Neill (Professor of Japanese Literature, UC Berkeley)



Bio

Associate Professor D. Cuong O'Neill completed his Ph. D. from Yale University in Japanese Literature in 2002. He teaches courses in Meiji print culture and literature, Taishô aesthetics, and postwar intellectual history and popular culture. His research interests include the novel in comparative perspective, global modernisms, and critical theory (particularly in relation to affect and aesthetics). Recent and forthcoming publications include a study of Mori Ôgai and the bildungsroman (Japan Forum, 2006), an analysis of Natsume Sôseki's theory of tragic pleasure (Discourse, 2008), and a book chapter on the memories of moving bodies in Tsai Ming-liang's Goodbye Dragon Inn (I. B. Tauris, 2009). He is currently completing a book titled Ghostly Remains: Affect and the Afterlife of Reading in Modern Japan.

Bruce Fulton, Young-Bin Min Chair in Korean Literature, University of British Columbia

Title: "Publication of Korean Literature in Translation in the Post-PLEASE LOOK AFTER MOM Era"



Talk Description

In spite of the success of PLEASE LOOK AFTER MOM, Korean literature remains a difficult sell in English translation, especially among commercial publishers, who seem every more concerned with sales volumes and authors with name value. In the rush to replicate the success of Ms. Shin's prize-winning novel, the Korean foundations, the literary agents, and the translators beholden to them are neglecting a crucial genre--short fiction. Also suffering neglect from the power structure of Korean-to-English literary translation are the small presses and academic publishers who collectively deserve the most credit for the limited exposure that Korean literature enjoys in the Anglophone world to date.

Bio

Bruce Fulton is the inaugural holder of the Young-Bin Min Chair in Korean Literature and Literary Translation, Department of Asian Studies, University of British Columbia. He is the co-translator, with Ju-Chan Fulton, of numerous works of modern Korean fiction; co-editor, with Kwon Youngmin, of *Modern Korean Fiction* (Columbia University Press, 2005), editor of the Korea section of the *Columbia Companion to Modern East Asian Literature* (2003); and general editor of the Modern Korean Fiction series published by the University of Hawai'i Press. He is the co-recipient of several translation awards and grants, including the first National Endowment for the Arts Translation Fellowship for a Korean literary work, and the first residency awarded by the Banff International Literary Translation Centre for the translation of a work from any Asian Language. His most recent translations, with Ju-Chan Fulton, are *River of Fire and Other Stories* by O Chŏnghŭi (Columbia University Press, 2012), Cho Chŏngnae's *How in Heaven's Name: A Novel of World War Two* (MerwinAsia, 2012), and bilingual editions of Chŏng I-hyŏn's "In the Trunk" and Yi Hye-gyŏng's "And Then the Festival" (ASIA Publishers, 2013, 2014).

Jiwon Shin, Professor Korean Literature, Arizona State University



Title: “Food for Memory”

Talk Description

Chongup, the provincial town often featured in Shin Kyung-sook’s works, though modeled for Shin’s birthplace where she lived for several years in her childhood, is a literary construct. A site of eternal loss and memory where her writing longs to return, Chongup serves to tell womanhood as it registers Korea’s social transition from rural to urban and the attendant injuries and desires. This presentation will focus on how this site of memory is enlivened by the sumptuous and evocative descriptions of food and food preparation in Shin’s writing.

Bio

Jiwon Shin is an assistant professor in the School of International Letters and Cultures at Arizona State University. She teaches courses on Korean literature, popular culture, and literary and cultural theory. Her research covers various topics on media and memory in premodern and modern Korean literature and cultural history. She is completing a book manuscript, *Cultural Memory and Urban Elite Culture in Late Chosŏn Korea* (under contract with Harvard Asian Center). She also translates modern and contemporary Korean poetry and the writings in literary Chinese from premodern Korea.

Marcella Marini (Acquisitions Editor, Sellerio Editore)



Title: “The Familiar in the Unfamiliar”

Talk description

Sellerio Editore: the presentation of an independent healthy publishing house founded in 1969 with 2500 titles in catalogue and a great number of International bestseller authors, distinguished by a unique sense of curiosity, and renown for its serious scouting job in discovering & rediscovering literary authors from around the world.

An overview on the foreign literature business in Italy and a deeper look on what is the European/Italian perception of the ability of a very sensitive writer such as Shin Kyung-sook to turn her distinct soul and traditional background into universal themes and the reasons behind the fascination of European/Italian readers with Korean and East Asian literature.

Bio

Marcella Marini is an acquisitions editor at Sellerio Editore for foreign fiction since 2011 after eleven years as foreign fiction editor and rights manager at Neri Pozza Editore in Milano. She previously worked for four years at the literary agency Grandi&Associati in Milano and as a Scout in London UK at *Van Lear Associates, literary scouting agency* after an internship at Maria Campbell in NY Maria B. Campbell, literary scouting agency New York.

Ha-yun Jung (Professor, Graduate School of Translation and Interpretation, Ewha Womans University)



Title: "A Quiet Voice Striving to Be Heard"

Talk Description

The authorial voice of novelist Shin Kyung-sook is one of interiority and aloneness, one that is deeply private and fragile, yet at the same time, utterly distinct and stubbornly firm. Transferring this voice into another language is a task that demands an attentive and attuned ear, as well as a bold lyrical approach, which poses immense challenges especially

when translating between two languages that are as distant and different from each other as Korean and English.

Bio

Ha-yun Jung is a writer and translator whose work has appeared in *The Threepenny Review*, *The New York Times*, *Best New American Voices 2001* and other publications. She is the recipient of a PEN Translation Fund Grant and writing fellowships from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Harvard University's Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study. Her translations include novels and stories by Korean writers Oh Jung-hee, Kim Hoon, Shin Kyung-sook and others. She is on the faculty of Ewha Womans University's Graduate School of Translation and Interpretation in Seoul, Korea.