



UNSW SCREEN STUDIES UNDERGRADUATE SYMPOSIUM

Date: Tuesday, 18 June 2019

Time: 4:30pm

Location: Room 327, Robert Webster Building, UNSW

Join us for our first-ever undergraduate symposium featuring papers by Film Studies students at UNSW. In recognising the new and emerging voices of undergrad film students, this symposium will explore the diverse approaches to screen studies across two sessions.

PROGRAM

4:30pm Welcome

Session 1: Sexuality and hyperreality in the comedy

4:45pm Phoebe Chan

Monroe v Tomlin: Is female comedy always about sexuality?

5:00pm Amanda Cataldo

Mad World: Hyperreality and the Neurotic Comic

5:15pm Discussion

Chairs: Debbie Zhou and Katherine Zheng

5:30pm

Break

Session 2: The other-worldly possibilities of film

5:45pm Alex Malcolm

Transnational and transcultural border crossing of the 'onryo' in the horror films of Takashi Shimizu.

6:00pm Melvin Kwong

Hearing Chris Marker's World

6:15pm Surabhi Naik

'Tales of little people': Subalternity and postcolonial power in Djibril Diop Mambéty's *'La petite vendeuse de Soleil'* (1999)

6:30pm Discussion

Chairs: Debbie Zhou and Katherine Zheng

PRESENTERS' ABSTRACTS AND BIOGRAPHIES

Session 1: Sexuality and hyperreality in the comedy

Phoebe Chan

Monroe v Tomlin: Is female comedy always about sexuality?

There has been an idea in comedy that females cannot be funny. The roles of comedians are often given to men, and it was seen that women cannot "engage in and appreciate humour". Female comedians were cast as the butt of the joke and targeted for their sexuality. However, it can also be argued that "in many ways, comedy is an ideal genre for women to push boundaries and challenge traditional gender roles," mainly because comedy explores and highlights what is wrong with society and cultural thinking. These female comedians can adopt a wide range of characters to showcase the roles women adopt, rather than just being ridiculed to their sexuality for comedy. However, this is not to say comedians who do target feminine sexuality are humourless. It can be said that there are two types of female comedians: those who use their sexuality as a form of comedy who constrain the female spectator as they show one representation of women; and those who play multiple comedic characters that critique social thinking thereby liberating the female spectator. Female comedians such as Marilyn Monroe and Lily Tomlin are perfect examples to show the two different spectrums of female comedy.

Phoebe Chan is currently a student at UNSW currently studying Bachelor of Media (Screen & Sound Production). She has been studying film for the past 5 years. One of her biggest passions in film theory is gender representation and how that has evolved with the rise of feminism and post-feminism.

Amanda Cataldo

Mad World: Hyperreality and the Neurotic Comic

To understand the comic hero as conventionally childish, neurotic, psychotic, or otherwise emasculated, it raises the question; what is the basis for this appeal? My essay explores comedian comedy as a conventionally male-dominated genre that seeks to subvert the conventional characteristics of the male hero by reinforcing the comic hero's dysfunctionality in a hyperreality. The rendering of a hyperreality within the fictional world of the comedian comedy genre situates an established comic performer within a fictional world that is so abstracted from reality that it allows the counter-cultural drives to be played out through the neurotic comic persona; with the comedy arising from the film's acknowledgment of its own artificiality. To understand the appeal of the neurotic comic persona, I examine the genre's function to self-reflexively enunciate the film's artificiality through its extrafictional and fictional features, and the comic hero's caricatured existence within the hyperreal world of the film's own artificiality.

As someone who's found a greater connection with movies than she has with reality, **Amanda Cataldo** is interested in both making and studying films for the emotions they evoke, and the enduring cultural significance they have. Her special interests lie in understanding the truth within cinema, and how films can blur the distinctions between truth and reality.

Session 2: The other-worldly possibilities of film

Alex Malcolm

Transnational and transcultural border crossing of the onryo in the horror films of Takashi Shimizu

This paper explores the evolution of the horror subgenre, *onryo*, the avenging ghost woman deriving from Japanese folklore that has been represented through specific visual codes and thematic conventions. The cinematic history of this horror icon includes its re-emergence as a prominent convention in Japanese horror cinema as well as international popularity in the mid 1990s. Through textual analysis of Takashi Shimizu's two films, Japanese horror film *Ju-On: The Grudge* (2002) and its American remake *The Grudge* (2004), this paper locates the hybridization and border crossing of the *onryo* imagined by Shimizu. Although this horror-subgenre appears at first to be culturally and historically specific to Japan and its national cinema, this paper rejects the idea of the *onryo* as a nationally and culturally pure subgenre. Through identifying the transnational flows between Korean and Japanese horror cinemas, the *onryo*'s specifically female and maternal characteristics can be traced across national cinematic borders. This paper also considers the dynamic relationship between the American remake and its Japanese original that demonstrates a reciprocal flow of influences between the Japanese, Korean and American horror cinemas.

Alex Malcolm has studied Art Theory, Film Theory as well as East Asian history. Through engaging with this variety of disciplines she is focused on curating creative projects that are multidisciplinary and explore cross-cultural collaboration. Alex is also continuing her research into Japanese and Korean cinema through her current Film Honours thesis titled '*Affective memory in post 2000s Zainichi Cinema*'.

Melvin Kwong

Hearing Chris Marker's World

Melvin's paper will consider the manipulation of sound in Chris Marker's film, *San soleil* (1983), and its ability to shape the audience's perception of the film world. Marker not only use sound as a way to transform the diegetic world of the film but also to shape how the audience experiences this world. Situated between the realms of non-fiction and fiction, Marker's films take the film spectator to distant lands and forge new realities but yet at the same time uses these new realities to speak of emotions that are human, emotions that are close to us.

Melvin Kwong is studying a Bachelor of Arts Degree, Majoring in Film Studies. His interests include documentary photography and writing/recording music.

Surabhi Naik

'Tales of little people': Subalternity and postcolonial power in Djibril Diop Mambéty's *La petite vendeuse de Soleil* (1999)

The post-independence African cinemas of the 1960s and 70s were significantly represented by Senegalese cinema, led by the politically-charged social realist films of Ousmane Sembène, the "father of African cinema" (*Black Camera* 2016, 8(1), 5). Within this moment of Francophone African cinema, Djibril Diop Mambéty came to prominence in the 70s, demonstrating a remarkably hybrid, idiosyncratic and often non-linear style of filmmaking. His final two films, part of the planned trilogy 'Tales of little people', directly address new iterations of postcolonial power in the post-independence period, visible in the symbol of the CFA franc. Its devaluation by the French in 1994 by 50% triggered intense economic hardship in West Africa. This seminar will focus on Mambéty's final film, *La Petite vendeuse de Soleil* (1999, Senegal | Switzerland | France), and how it uses the audiovisual medium to negotiate structures of postcolonial power—gender, class, economics and language—through the subaltern subject. Mambéty's film is politically concerned with questions around: voice and self-representation, and the politics of who can speak and who can hear; the gaze, as it mediates gender stereotypes and power; economic and geographic mobility; and the role of language in cultures of orality and literacy.

Surabhi Naik is a PhD candidate in the School of Chemistry, but try not to hold it against her. She recently graduated from a dual BA/BSc(Adv) program in 2018, specialising in English, Film Studies and Chemistry.
