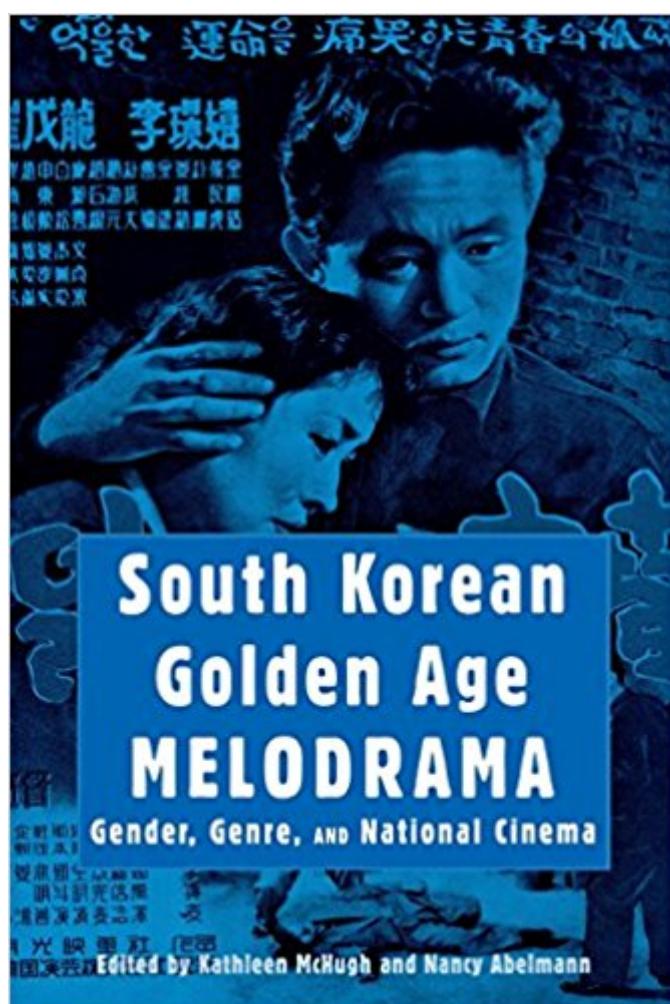


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# South Korean Golden Age Melodrama: Gender, Genre, And National Cinema (Contemporary Approaches To Film And Media Series)





## **Synopsis**

Immediately following the Korean War, South Korea's film industry flourished with vibrant local production of high-quality films. Characterized by its stunning melodramas, this "Golden Age" of South Korean cinema produced a body of work as historically, aesthetically, and politically significant as that of other well-known national film movements such as Italian Neorealism, French New Wave, and New German Cinema. Conditions that fostered South Korea's cinematic Golden Age were short lived; a brief period of intense poverty and struggle-but also creative freedom-was ended by the dictatorship of Park Chung Hee in the late 1960s. Strong international interest in South Korea's current film renaissance make an analysis of this enormously underappreciated cinematic tradition long overdue. South Korean Golden Age Melodrama is the first English-language book to examine this era of remarkable activity, covering the specifics of the Golden Age as well as the influences it has had on contemporary South Korean film and television. Given the compressed, ambiguous, and fundamentally transnational social and political dramas of South Korea's history, South Korean Golden Age Melodrama addresses the widespread appeal of particular film modes and aesthetics, especially that of the melodrama. These essays also examine genre in relation to articulations of nation and constructions of gender in Golden Age films and how the nation manifests itself in persistent gender and genre trouble. Combining textual analysis, reception, and historical/cultural detail, South Korean Golden Age Melodrama skillfully renders the complexity of the Golden Age. Contributors cite both domestic and foreign films to demonstrate the generic and transnational impact of Golden Age cinema, sometimes calling into question the very integrity of "national cinema" in light of the workings of a transcultural cinema sphere during that era. With nine chapters, sustained treatments of nine canonical Golden Age films, together with extended consideration of contemporary film and television, this volume offers a rich contribution to the theorization of film genre and national cinema and their relationship to gender.

## **Book Information**

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## Customer Reviews

Examining the theoretical, historical, and contemporary impact of South Korea's Golden Age of cinema.

Immediately following the Korean War, South Korea's film industry flourished with vibrant local production of high-quality films. Characterized by its stunning melodramas, this "Golden Age" of South Korean cinema produced a body of work as historically, aesthetically, and politically significant as that of other well-known national film movements such as Italian Neorealism, French New Wave, and New German Cinema. Conditions that fostered South Korea's cinematic Golden Age were short lived; a brief period of intense poverty and struggle; but also creative freedom; was ended by the dictatorship of Park Chung Hee in the late 1960s. Strong international interest in South Korea's current film renaissance make an analysis of this enormously underappreciated cinematic tradition long overdue. South Korean Golden Age Melodrama is the first English-language book to examine this era of remarkable activity, covering the specifics of the Golden Age as well as the influences it has had on contemporary South Korean film and television. Given the compressed, ambiguous, and fundamentally transnational social and political dramas of South Korea's history, South Korean Golden Age Melodrama addresses the widespread appeal of particular film modes and aesthetics, especially that of the melodrama. These essays also examine genre in relation to articulations of nation and constructions of gender in Golden Age films and how the nation manifests itself in persistent gender and genre trouble. Combining textual analysis, reception, and historical/cultural detail, South Korean Golden Age Melodrama skillfully renders the complexity of the Golden Age. Contributors cite both domestic and foreign films to demonstrate the generic and transnational impact of Golden Age cinema, sometimes calling into question the very integrity of "national cinema" in light of the workings of a transcultural cinema sphere during that era. With nine chapters, sustained treatments of nine canonical Golden Age films, together with extended consideration of contemporary film and television, this volume offers a rich contribution to the theorization of film genre and national cinema and their relationship

to gender.

Collecting a series of essays on gender and nationalism as presented in the golden age of Korean melodrama, this book offers unique insights into this formative period of South Korean film. The contributors are experts in their subjects. Though at times critical, they are never belittling. The tone overall is one of respect and love for the genre, despite its flaws. The authors offer useful observations about the nature of gender as presented in these early works. South Korean melodramas during the 1950s and 1960s were targeted at a predominately middle-aged, married female audience, as noted in an essay by film scholar Soyoung Kim: 'The melodramatic genre was considered an outlet for women to release their han (pent-up grief) over their experiences relating to repressive neo-Confucian patriarchy.' (p. 190) Kim's essay focuses on the intense emotive quality of Kim Ki-young's *The Housemaid*, which was designed specifically to appeal to these viewers. It is interesting to note that these same themes continue to appeal to modern audiences--Im Sang-soo's remake of *The Housemaid* was well-received at the 2010 Cannes Film Festival. The insights offered in this book remain relevant.D. Bannon is a professional translator. He has subtitled many popular Korean dramas, most recently *Dong Yi*,<sup>À</sup> *The Great Queen Seondeok* Vol. 1<sup>À</sup> and<sup>À</sup> *Time Between Dog and Wolf*. He discusses subtitle translation in<sup>À</sup> *The Elements of Subtitles*, Revised and Expanded Edition: A Practical Guide to the Art of Dialogue, Character, Context, Tone and Style in Subtitling

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