

# The Profit of Queerness: Tabloid Journalism and the Precarious Bonds of Female Homoeroticism in Authoritarian South Korea

## Todd Henry

Associate Professor

Department of History

University of California, San Diego

Monday, December 7, 2015

11:15 am—12:15 pm

168 Dulles Hall

230 W. 17th Avenue

**Abstract:** This presentation examines the important, if overlooked, role that tabloid journalism (as well as medical science and legal regulations) played in imagining “problematic” bodies in authoritarian South Korea (1953-93). In particular, I argue that representations of queerness were central to the construction and maintenance of a patriarchal and capitalist society, a key point neglected by a Korean Studies that, in my view, remains nation-centered and hetero-normative. In addition to relating queer representations to authoritarian development, my work thus spotlights the interpretive value of a focus on non-normative sexuality and gender variance. The presentation will offer just one example of the broad range of queer practices that I discovered during a year of archival research: same-sex marriage, a subcultural tradition with surprisingly deep roots in Korean history, and one that became a recurring object of media scrutiny.

**Bio:** Todd A. Henry is Associate Professor of History at UC-San Diego. He is a specialist of modern Korea with a focus on the period of Japanese rule, and is the author of *Assimilating Seoul: Japanese Rule and the Politics of Public Space in Colonial Korea, 1910-45* (2014). He is also interested in social and cultural formations linking post-Asia-Pacific War South Korea, North Korea, and Japan within the geopolitical contexts of American militarism and the Cold War. He is currently working on a transnational study of authoritarian development in South Korea that examines the ideological functions and subcultural dynamics of queerness, especially as they relate to tabloid journalism and medical science, Hot War modes of kinship and citizenship, and globalized discourses and practices of the “sexual revolution.” Dr. Henry has received two Fulbright grants (Kyoto University, 2004-5; Hanyang and Ewha Women's Universities, 2013) and two fellowships from the Korea Foundation (Seoul National University, 2003-4; Harvard University, 2008-9). At UCSD, he is an affiliate faculty member of the Program in Critical Gender Studies and the director of the Program in Transnational Korean Studies.



**Co-Sponsors:** Department of History, East Asian Studies Center.

This event is sponsored in part by a U.S. Department of Education Title VI grant.

**Free and open to the public**

Contact: Dr. Mitchell Lerner | **Institute for Korean Studies** | [lerner.26@osu.edu](mailto:lerner.26@osu.edu) | 614-247-6839 | [easc.osu.edu](http://easc.osu.edu)