EBERHARD KARLS UNIVERSITÄT TÜBINGEN

Tübingen Korean Studies Lecture Series

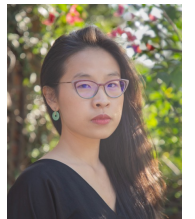# Frontlines of Social Science Research on Korea

How Can I Be Fully Human Inside Your Brain?:
Anti-Asian Racism from a Neuropolitical Perspective

Liya Yu (National Taiwan University, National Chengchi University, LMU München)

Wednesday January 18, 2023, 18:00 c.t.,

Wilhelmstraße 133, Room 30

Abstract

What are the neurocognitive mechanisms of racism, dehumanization and polarization? Why should we understand what is happening in the brain of a racist? I argue that current Left and liberal persuasive strategies of anti-racism might fail to reach those who dehumanize us the most, in part because they are not based on an accurate understanding of how and why our social brains dehumanize, as well as how our brains can actually learn to re-humanize and include others. I outline a new neuropolitical language and rhetoric to address our polarized societies, with a special focus on anti-Asian racism that Asian diaspora communities face in Europe and beyond – trying to describe a novel vision for humanization from the brain cell up. The talk offers both a theoretical neuropolitical model of dehumanization, as well as concrete strategies for re-humanization for educators, activists, and people in Asian diaspora communities.

Bio

Dr. Liya Yu is a German Chinese political philosopher, novelist and performance artist. She is the author of *Vulnerable Minds: The Neuropolitics of Divided Societies* (ColumbiaUP, 2022) and co-editor of the *Routledge Handbook on Neuropolitics* (2024). She was trained as a political scientist at University of Cambridge (B.A.) and Columbia University (M.Phil, Ph.D.). During the Covid pandemic, Dr. Yu was a frequent contributor to debates about anti-Asian racism in Germany. From 2021-2022 she was an artist-in-residence at Taipei's Treasure Hill Artist Village. She is currently a visiting research fellow at National Taiwan University's Political Science Department, National Chengchi University's International College of Innovation, and Ludwig-Maximilians Universität Münchens Institute of Medical Psychology.

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