



Tübingen Korean Studies Lecture Series

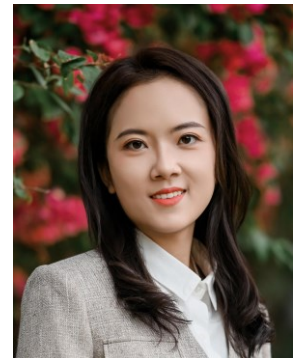
Winter Semester 2024/25, Wednesdays 18:00 c.t., Wilhelmstraße 133, R. 30

Contesting Chrononormativity: Vicarious Kinship and Unofficial Historiography in Anna Kim's Novel *Die große Heimkehr (The Great Homecoming, 2017)*

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Qingyang Freya Zhou is a PhD candidate in German and Film Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, and a research fellow at the Freie Universität Berlin. Her dissertation examines literary and cinematic exchanges between Germany and East Asia, particularly socialist internationalism and migration studies. Her recent journal articles won prizes from the Coalition of Women in German and the German Studies Association. Her co-edited volume (with Qinna Shen and Zach Ramon Fitzpatrick), titled *Charting Asian German Film History: Imagination, Collaboration, and Diasporic Representation*, is forthcoming with Camden House in 2025.



Since the early 1990s, a burgeoning corpus of literature and film in Germany and South Korea has grappled with questions of national division and (re)unification. This talk examines this shared historical legacy of East/West Germany and North/South Korea by focusing on Korean diasporic writer Anna Kim's German-language historical fiction, *Die große Heimkehr (The Great Homecoming, 2017)*. The novel explores Cold War ideological divisions through three protagonists: a South Korean narrator, his Americanized childhood friend, and a love interest suspected of being a North Korean spy. It portrays the protagonists' political refuge from South Korea to Japan and their encounters with the Japanese Korean (Zainichi) community's "Great Homecoming" to North Korea in 1959–1960. This talk examines the themes of imaginary kinship, temporal disjuncture, and unofficial memory-making in Kim's novel. Part one of the talk analyzes the novel's narrative strategy using Walter Benjamin's concept of historical continuity in traditional storytelling. Part two then explores the novel's intermedial references to photographic media through the queer femininity of the *femme fatale*. I argue that by constructing imaginary kinship beyond bloodlines and subjectivizing history through the fragile memory of an individual, Kim's novel advances a feminist critique of ethnocentric notions of genealogical progression through monumental time.