



## Korean Literature and Culture

Nov 27, 2019 (Wednesday) 6-8pm, Wilhelmstraße 133, Room 30

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Family objects and objects for my SELF. Narratives of collective and individual memories in contemporary South Korea

### Abstract:

Objects are paramount symbols of the display of memory. They are the means through which people can share their family memories or rebuild a common history. They sometimes symbolically, affectively, or socially disclose the place where everyone stands in relation to their own family history. Past lives exist in the objects of our daily life and in our emotions, which act as mnemonic support. They also meet the need of transmitting the past and family history to younger generations, which is one of the important functions of memory. Objects maintain a strong evocative power not only in relation to cultural events but also in the small social context of everyday life. We know that objects of material culture mediate human relations and our senses of self, providing us with opportunities for self-expression, self-development, and even for challenging our sense of who we are.

This lecture will look at the objects from a theoretical point of view, and then analyze the possible interpretations and symbols that they have developed in Korean individuals. It will be discussed the meanings of objects and offer possible interpretations to the following questions: whether Koreans place an identity value on family objects; if they are marked with the meaning of handing down the family past; and what kind of representations they perform.

**Giuseppina De Nicola** graduated from the University of Naples *L'Orientale* and she has got her PhD in Anthropology of History at *Seoul National University* in South Korea. Currently she is teaching History of Korean Civilization at Sapienza University of Rome.

Her field of interest is mainly in Korean Social history, Contemporary Korean society issues, Korean family study and Anthropology of memory. She is vice-president of AKSE (Association of Korean Studies in Europe).

Some of her publications include *North Korea, the Neverland Empire: reality, imagination and representations* (book 2006); *Symbolism and domestic use of space in Korean housing* (2012), *Quaderni Asiatici Journal*, vol 100, Milan; "*Kohyang*": *Remembering where I am from: The concept of place of origin in the elaboration of collective and individual memory in South Korea*, *CEESOK Journal* 2016 Moscow; *The Korean society and its family system from old times until today* (2018 book).