

Penn State Institute for Korean Studies
Queer Temporalities, Virtual Trees, and Post-Trauma in Han Kang's
"We Do Not Part "(2021)
January 22nd, 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. (online)

[Register here](#)

Moderator: Dr. Inkyu Kang



Kyung Hyun Kim is currently professor and chair in the Department of East Asian Studies, UC Irvine. He has worked with internationally renowned film directors such as Hong Sang-soo, Lee Chang-dong and Marty Scorsese. Prof. Kim is author of *Virtual Hallyu: Korean Cinema of the Global Era*, *The Remasculinization of Korean Cinema*, and *Hegemonic Mimicry: Korean Popular Culture of 21st Century*, all of them published by Duke University Press, and a Korean-language novel entitled *In Search of Lost G* (Ireo beorin G-reul chajaso, 2014) about a Korean mother combing through the US in search of her missing son from his Massachusetts prep school. He has coproduced and co-scripted two award-winning feature films *Never Forever* (2007) and *The Housemaid* (2010, remake of Kim Ki-young's classic from 1960). He has also written *The Mask Debate*, his first theatre screenplay,

which premiered in February 2021 through UCI's Illuminations: Chancellor's Initiative in Arts and Drama YouTube channel. He volunteers as the theater director for Being Built Together (BBT), a non-profit organization that supports Korean American parents with children on spectrum.

Han Kang's most recent novel *We Do Not Part* (*Chakpyol haji annunda*) begins when the writer Kyungha visits her friend Inseon, who is a patient at a hospital in Seoul that specializes in surgical wound closures. Inseon, a documentary filmmaker, suffered a traumatic injury when she accidentally sliced the tips of two of her fingers with an electric saw while preparing trees to be planted in memory of the victims of the Jeju Massacre of 1948.

Using same-sex friendship and plant and animal care to engage in a discussion of historical violence and trauma is a novel approach within the context of Korean literature. The intimate relationship formed in Han's novel not only distinguishes them from the prevailing culture of heteronormative companionship but also represents, through a multi-temporal and spectral mode, a possible affirmation of what Elizabeth Freeman describes as 'chrononormativity.' This talk will explore how Han imagines the virtual pastoralism and how it aligns with Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari concept of the 'rhizomatic'—a structure not bound by a linear order of time and historical continuity.

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