

A Reading by Actress **Ute Kaiser** of Anna Seghers's ***Das Argonautenschiff***

Based on the myth of Jason and the Argonauts, Seghers's story "Das Argonautenschiff" refers to its end: Having forfeited the favor of the gods, Jason wanders homeless from city to city until he returns to Corinth; remembering his past glories, and grieving for the disasters that had overwhelmed him, he sits down in the shadow of the *Argo* which then topples forward and kills him. (Thus Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths*.)

Written in 1948/49, Seghers's allegory suggests the tragic consequences of National Socialism as well as Stalinism, and the largely vanquished hopes of those who, like Seghers herself, returned to their homelands after twelve or more years of political exile. In this sense the story can also be read as an early commentary on the problematic of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*.



October 7, 2014
4:00 p.m.
Max Kade German House
141 W. 11th
main campus