

Japan: Pre-Modern, Modern, Contemporary

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Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Center for Japanese Studies

Book of Abstracts

DAY 1

Keynote lecture: Associate Professor Dr. Roxana VOICU-DOROBANȚU (Bucharest University of Economic Studies)

Ways of Seeing Value in an Uncertain World

This article argues that the humanities, and aesthetic practice in particular, function as pre-quantitative instruments for recognizing economic value in an era of fragility, anxiety, nonlinearity, and incomprehensibility. While economics excels at valuing measurable risk once categories are stable and probabilities can be estimated, much value is created before the market has a vocabulary for it. Drawing on a cross-disciplinary dialogue between risk management in international business, Japanese studies, and comparative aesthetics, the paper proposes that art and literature may shape the conditions for coping with uncertainty.

The argument unfolds in three parts: Seeing, Moving, and Choosing, each anchored in a dialogue between aesthetic form and entrepreneurial risk. The first part mobilizes Frank Knight's distinction between risk and uncertainty, along with Jorge Luis Borges's "The Garden of Forking Paths," to frame decision-making under uncertainty as a problem of real optionality, in which multiple futures remain economically real before commitment. With examples from the works of Piet Mondrian, Jackson Pollock, Ion Țuculescu, and Lee Ufan, it builds towards a potential taxonomy of risk ontologies: classification, systemic interconnection, and reflexive observation. The second part, on Moving, examines three areas: the way value circulates without centralized coordination (the NET Manifesto), the processes through which moral interdependence generates resilience together with synchronized fragility (Yoshino, starlings' murmuration), and the manner in which Japanese political economy (from keiretsu to just-in-time supply chains) embodies these risks. The third part, on Choosing, contrasts Glenn Gould's exit from the economics of the performing arts with Yukio Mishima's radically incomplete personal contract in *Life for Sale*, using Jun'ichirō Tanizaki's "In Praise of Shadows" to question the epistemic costs of managerial measurement.

The article concludes by posing four *ab initio* questions for involved parties and defends the humanities as a form of public risk management: the capacity to imagine possible worlds before they become balance sheet crises.

LINGUISTICS AND IDEOLOGY

Emma Tămăianu-Morita, Kindai University *Cultural Evocations in Translation: A Text-Linguistic View on Le Petit Prince/ The Little Prince in Japanese*

This contribution starts from a linguistic comparison of five of the most prestigious Japanese translations of A. de Saint-Exupéry's "Le Petit Prince" ("The Little Prince", "Hoshi no ōjisama"), published between

1953 and 2011. Carried out in the conceptual framework of Eugenio Coseriu's (1977, 1981) "text linguistics as a hermeneutics of sense", the analysis highlights the role played by language-specific units and devices in the construal of the textual world, focusing on the ways in which intertextual and cultural evocations are dealt with in the five Japanese versions, especially when these evocations are crucial for the process of sense-construction. A case in point is the biblical evocation of the sequence "Celui qui je touche, je le rends à la terre dont il est sorti" ["Whomever I touch, I send back to the earth from whence he came"] (Ch. XVII), which will be discussed in detail. Also, by examining how lexical choices in translation either reflect or, on the contrary, obscure pertinent lexical distinctions from the original which serve as textual anchors for the evocation of the universes of discourse of science vs. literature (e.g. the series 'planet' / 'asteroid' / 'star'), we will demonstrate that Coseriu's model of evocative relations can support the translator's endeavor by objectively (or, more accurately, inter-subjectively) validating the sense effects thus generated. In the course of the discussion, translation options put forward in other languages, such as Italian, Spanish, Romanian and German, will also be taken into account for purposes of cross-linguistic comparison.

Patrícia Szántai, Eötvös Loránd University *Words That Know No Bounds - A Corpus-Based Analysis by Age, Gender and Word Class*

The study aims to look into the roles and functions of loanwords in Japanese popular media, specifically in reality TV. While the Japanese language is often perceived as homogeneous, it is actually the opposite, containing at least 10% loanwords in its entire lexicon, with more than 90% being of English origin. With the development and changes of Japanese society, loanword adaptation grows rapidly, their frequency of use varies according to age and gender, a pattern that can also be observed through the popular media content aimed at these groups. Hence, the integration of these words and expressions into the Japanese lexicon represents an active linguistic phenomenon and process. The data is acquired from dialogues in 14 episodes of a Japanese reality show, Terrace House Tokyo 2019~2020, and includes 585 lexemes. The methods used are lexeme corpus compilation based on observation and quantitative methods, such as measuring word frequency density and statistical analysis by age, gender, and word class. The theoretical background used in the study includes - but is not limited to - the chronological classification of loanword adaptation by Irwin (2011) and the works by Stanlaw (2004), Seargeant (2009) and Miller (1998). The findings of this study demonstrate that the vast majority of loanwords are nouns – though the frequency of other parts of speech differs – and of English origins, primarily used by young speakers in their 20s and that the most frequently used words often undergo semantic changes, which all align with previous studies in the field. However, the study also demonstrates that gender-based usage differs depending on the observed group and gender alone is not necessarily a strong enough indicator of usage frequency, as the results are inconclusive. As a result, a more complex, multifactorial analysis is required to assess sociolinguistic tendencies in corpus studies based on reality TV.

Keita Ikarashi, Nagaoka University of Technology *How Multiple Suspensions Interact and Contribute to the Construction of Sense in Capsule Toy Names: An Integral Text Linguistic Perspective*

In Japan, capsule toys—small figures packed in plastic capsules and sold through special vending machines—are popular not only among children but also adults, with about 300 new products appearing every month (Onoo 2023). These include, for example, famous anime characters, realistic everyday objects like cars and insects, and imaginative unrealistic figures. This presentation examines some highly creative names given to these products, which can illuminate the creative process behind what Coseriu calls “sense”. Specifically, multiple “suspensions” are sometimes interwoven, serving as crucial “building blocks” (Coseriu 2007[1980]) in the construction of the toys’ sense (cf. Ikarashi and Maher 2025). For example, consider “Nihon-wo sasaeru doubutsutachi” (by Stand Stones), in which “doubutsutachi” (animals) is modified by the relative clause “nihon-wo (Japan-acc) sasaeru”. The verb “sasaeru” has two major meanings: ‘hold up’ and ‘support’. At first sight, this name is likely to be interpreted metaphorically as referring to animals that ‘support Japan’, for instance as a labor force, because the literal interpretation, i.e., animals physically ‘hold up’ Japan’s land, is counterintuitive. However, this readily accessible metaphorical interpretation, or “metaphorical suspension”, is effectively reframed by another interpretation when one sees the imaginative figures: animals do physically ‘hold up’ parts of Japan’s land (e.g., a bear holds up Hokkaido). In other words, the initial metaphorical suspension remains available, but is reframed through the acceptance of an absurd, extravagant scenario, an instance of “extravagant suspension”. This interaction between these suspensions contributes to the emergence of a sense characterized by a humorous interpretative reversal. Similar interactions are found in other capsule toys, though their configurations vary. This presentation analyzes several examples to show how such interactions contribute to sense construction.

William Vinter, Freie Universität Berlin *Linguistic Purism in Japan: An Ideological Genealogy*

This paper examines the historical development of linguistic purism in Japan from the early-modern period to the present. Through an analysis of scholarly writings and public debates on language, script, and national identity, it argues that purism in Japan was not confined solely to the rejection of foreign loanwords, but instead took multiple forms across different periods, each shaped by particular ideological assumptions and directed at different perceived threats to the integrity of the language. Three distinct configurations of Japanese linguistic purism are identified. The first is an early-modern articulation associated with kokugaku scholars such as Motoori Norinaga and Hirata Atsutane, which took the form of a nativist linguistic essentialism aimed at recovering a supposedly pure Japanese essence, which was believed to have been obscured by Chinese philosophical and orthographic influences. The second is a Meiji-era expression of purism in which the primary threat to the Japanese language had come to be perceived as lying within Western models of linguistics and phonetic script reform. In this context, Chinese characters, which under the preceding purist logic had been treated as harmful foreign elements, were now defended by conservative intellectuals as repositories of cultural authority and historical continuity. The third configuration emerged during the Pacific War and assumed an anti-loanword focus. During the war, English-origin loanwords were stigmatized by ultra-nationalists as the ‘enemy language’

and a threat to the ‘national spirit’, and were targeted for replacement with kanji-based terms considered more authentically Japanese. This anti-loanword form of linguistic purism persists in contemporary Japan, but is now justified in pragmatic rather than spiritual or nationalist terms. By tracing these intellectual shifts, the paper broadens the study of linguistic purism in Japan beyond a narrow focus on loanwords and shows how purist thought was ideologically reconfigured in response to changing intellectual and historical conditions.

MODERN LITERATURE

Makiko KITANI, Institute of Science Tokyo *Yukio Mishima and European literature-through Marquis de Sade*

The theatre criticism journal Theatre Arts conducted a survey in its special issue commemorating its launch, “Fifty Years of Postwar Drama” (January 1994), targeting all members of the Japan Center of the International Association of Theatre Critics. Each respondent was asked to list twenty works they considered representative of postwar drama. As a result, the work *Madame de Sade* by Yukio Mishima (Bungei, November 1965) ranked first among postwar dramas. *Modern Noh Plays* (Shinchosha, April 1956) and “*Rokumeikan*” (Bungakukai, December 1956) also ranked within the top 30, and Mishima was the playwright who received the highest number of votes. Not only these three works, but also many of his plays have continued to be frequently revived, and in 2025—the year marking the 100th anniversary of Yukio Mishima’s birth—numerous productions of his plays were staged.

Madame de Sade features six female characters only. The Marquis de Sade (Alphonse) himself never appears on stage throughout the play. Although the setting is the salon of Madame de Montreuil’s residence in Paris, the play has the qualities of the play for the long span of time it portrays: Act I takes place in the autumn of 1772, Act II six years later in September 1778, and Act III a further twelve years later in April 1790.

In this presentation, I will first review Mishima’s references to *Sade* and outline the process that led to the writing of *Madame de Sade*. I will also analyze Mishima’s remarks on *The Life of the Marquis de Sade* by Tatsuhiko Shibusawa, which provided the inspiration for the play, as well as *The Prosperity of Vice*, which is mentioned within *Madame de Sade*, including his comments on the trial and subsequent legal proceedings concerning the latter work. Finally, through an examination of *Madame de Sade*, I aim to clarify what it meant for Mishima to depict *Sade*.

Yao Xiao, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies *Picture Books and Fantasy in Haruki Murakami’s Literature: Focusing on The Tale of Kaho*

This presentation examines the relationship between the novel and the picture book in Murakami Haruki’s literature.

As a translator, Murakami has been engaged in the translation of American picture books since the mid-1980s. Significantly, during the same period in which he began translating picture books, he also started collaborating with illustrators to publish his own illustrated works. Murakami’s original picture books—including “*Fuwa fuwa*” (“softness”; Japanese title as 『ふわふわ』) and “*The Strange Library*” (『不思議な図書館』), both of which appear at first glance to be intended for children—were in fact written primarily for adult readers. His engagement with picture books therefore cannot be understood simply

within the framework of children's literature. Rather, this paper suggests that fantastical elements and storytelling techniques closely associated with children's literature constitute an essential aspect of all of Murakami's literature.

In my presentation I will first look back at Murakami's engagement with translating and creating picture books, and then focus particularly on the forthcoming novel "The Tale of KAHŌ" (『夏帆—The Tale of KAHŌ—』), scheduled for publication in July 2026, portions of which have been serialized in *Shinchō* magazine since 2024. Paying attention to the motif of the picture book that the protagonist of the narrative is creating, as well as to the relationship between the genre of picture book and the novel itself, this paper explores how Murakami represents picture-book production not merely as part of the protagonist's characterization, but as a narrative mechanism that destabilizes the boundaries between text and image, fiction and reality, and storytelling and memory.

Masaho Kumazawa, JSPS Research Fellow 川端康成の短編「招魂祭一景」の曲馬娘——人馬一体と性的搾取

川端康成（一八九九～一九七二年）の短編小説「招魂祭一景」（『新思潮』一九二一年四月号初出）は文壇的出世作と位置付けられる。その主人公は、東京の九段下にある現在の靖国神社境内の祭事で、馬の背に立ち軽業を披露する「曲馬娘」の「お光」である。「お光」の知覚を通じて、お祭りの賑わいや観衆の視線、他の演芸従事者との関係性が印象的に浮かび上がる。本発表では、「お光」が「馬」の背に立ち観客の前に出る演技前後の羞恥心と、演技に集中し「馬」と呼吸を合わせて身体性が拡張する場面を比較する。すでに曲馬団を脱退した先輩「お留」の「馬臭くなる」という発言を気にかける「お光」は、演技中に「馬」との一体感を失う。「お光」の失敗が引き金となって曲馬団の花形「桜子」が落馬するところで小説は閉じる。女性演芸従事者たちは落馬による怪我・絶命の可能性と常に隣り合わせの命がけの演技を求められた。さらに自らの身体を危険のなかへ曝け出して対価を得る女性演芸従事者は、観客のみならず周囲の男性運営者によって、「性」が搾取される閉じた場に囲われていた。短編「招魂祭一景」の女性演芸従事者たちを取り囲む搾取の構造を本発表は論じ、本格的な近代演芸産業成立の前史を辿り直す。

Miruna-Gabriela Fătu, University of Bucharest *Between Shadow and History: Liminality and Historical Consciousness in Postwar Japanese Literature*

This paper examines postwar Japanese literature as a liminal space situated between tradition and modernity, focusing on the relationship between aesthetics, historical rupture, and literary representation. The theoretical point of departure is Jun'ichirō Tanizaki's essay **In Praise of Shadows** (1933), in which the author articulates a critique of Western modernity through the symbolic opposition between shadow and light. For Tanizaki, shadow embodies the aesthetic sensibility of traditional Japanese culture, privileging ambiguity, obscurity, and suggestion over the transparency and rationalism associated with Western modernity. However, rather than interpreting Tanizaki's position as a simple rejection of modernity, this paper argues that his reflections reveal a deeper tension concerning the possibility of negotiating cultural identity within processes of modernization.

This tension becomes particularly significant in the aftermath of the Second World War, when the collapse of imperial ideology, the American occupation, and the trauma of Hiroshima and Nagasaki generated a profound crisis of identity in Japanese society. In this context, literature emerges not merely as a reflection of historical events, but as a privileged artistic space in which historical consciousness is transformed into aesthetic form. Drawing on the concept of liminality, the paper explores how postwar Japanese literature represents individuals suspended between incompatible cultural paradigms, unable to fully belong either to tradition or to modern modernity.

The discussion is further developed through the concept of *ego-histoire* proposed by Pierre Nora and applied to the works of Osamu Dazai. Dazai's fiction, characterized by fragmented subjectivity and autobiographical diffusion, is interpreted as a form of fictionalized self-history in which personal experience becomes inseparable from collective historical trauma. Ultimately, the paper argues that postwar Japanese literature functions as a liminal aesthetic space where identity, memory, and history intersect, transforming literary representation into a mode of negotiating cultural rupture and historical discontinuity.

HISTORY AND STORYTELLING

Filz Patrick Dureza, University of the Philippines Diliman Asian Center *Six Coins to the Shōgun: Cultural Depictions of Sanada Nobushige (Yukimura) as an Anti-Tokugawa Symbol in Edo Period Entertainment*

Sanada Nobushige, who also goes by the name of Yukimura, was a widely celebrated samurai of the late Sengoku Period famous for his resistance against the Tokugawa Shogunate during the Siege of Osaka Castle (1614-1615). Though he met his end in battle, his legacy endured, which soon evolved into a powerful cultural symbol in Edo Period entertainment. This paper examines how depictions of Sanada Nobushige in literature, theater, and popular art (such as in the ukiyo-e subgenre of musha-e) framed him as an anti-Tokugawa figure, despite the rigid censorship policies of the Shogunate. By analyzing Edo Period texts, including military chronicles (gunki monogatari), historical fiction, and kabuki and bunraku plays, this study explores how storytellers and playwrights navigated Tokugawa Censorship while presenting Nobushige as a romanticized legendary hero. This study will contextualize Nobushige's portrayal within the broader tradition of "hidden resistance" in Tokugawa period art and literature, where discontent with the ruling regime was often expressed through cryptic narratives. These include the shifting portrayals of Nobushige from a valiant but doomed warrior to a semi-mythical figure imbued with legendary prowess, mirroring the socio-political undercurrents of the Edo Period. Throughout this examination, the paper argues that Sanada Nobushige's cultural afterlife exemplifies how historical figures could be reused as symbols of resistance, even within a society under strict political control. His continued popularity in Edo Period entertainment laid the groundwork for his modern-day status as an enduring icon of defiance and martial honor in Japan.

Saida Khalmirzaeva, Okayama University *Tracing the Homecoming Husband in East Asia: Japanese and Korean Storytelling Traditions*

The story of a husband who returns home in disguise after a long absence, strings his distinctive bow, punishes his wife's suitors, and reunites with his family is a tale-type widely represented in folk and literary traditions worldwide. This tale-type is best known through its earliest recorded version, the *Odyssey*, an epic poem that is attributed to the ancient Greek poet Homer. Comparative analysis of the stories about the homecoming husband and research on the historical and cultural background of these stories suggests that an original tale, the so-called prototype, could have been transmitted from its place of origin to other parts of the world, giving birth to many regional versions, such as Central Asia's *Alpomish*, The Epic of King Gesar found in Tibet, Mongolia, and other parts of Inner Asia, Japan's *Yuriwaka Daijin*, and many other stories.

The study presented in this paper is part of the broader research on the above-mentioned tale-type known in folklore studies as *The Homecoming Husband*. This paper examines the development and evolution of Japanese and Korean variants of the *Homecoming Husband* across time, space, and media, with particular attention to the relationship between the Japanese tale *Yuriwaka Daijin* and several Korean narratives that have been regarded as preserving similar motifs and narrative structures. Special focus is placed on *The Song of Chunhyang*, one of Korea's best-known love stories, mostly known today as a song of the *pansori* repertory, alongside other Korean versions associated with the returning husband motif. By comparing these narratives, the paper explores patterns of cultural transmission, adaptation, and transformation within the storytelling traditions of Japan and Korea and reconsider their place within the wider East Asian context of the *Homecoming Husband* narrative tradition."

COMMUNITIES AND FANDOMS

Irina-Ana Drobot, University of Civil Engineering Bucharest, Romania *Online Haiku Writing Communities: The Case of the Romanian Kukai*

The haiku poem, originating in sixteenth-seventeenth century Japan, is still practiced nowadays, in different cultures. We can witness the activities of online communities across the world, which are visible in magazine publishing, contests, as well as in online social media discussions about the haiku poem. A particular case is that of the Romanian haiku writing community led by master Corneliu Traian Atanasiu, Romanian *Kukai*. Their activity started in 2007 and includes a development of the understanding of the haiku poem, as well as practising a specific type of Romanian haiku which continues and develops the haiku poem as established by Shiki, with *kireji* (or cutting line) and inner tension, due to the clear separation between the two parts of the poem. For Atanasiu, the genuine haiku poem starts with Shiki, not with Basho. Atanasiu constantly reminds members in his community that the haiku poem means more than just the descriptive level, and that it may not even be a poem about nature. He argues in favour of the lack of difference between haiku and *senryu*. *Senryu* is a poem about the human world, yet we find frequent examples of poems which blend elements of the natural and human worlds. Atanasiu focuses on the power of allusions which makes a genuine haiku poem. The paper will rely on some examples of haiku poems to illustrate these theories. The methodological frameworks is made up of reader response criticism, cultural studies, and psychology.

Mirel-Valentin Coca, University of Bucharest *Exploring Anime Preferences and Personality through LPA: The Case of Romanian Anime Community*

This study investigates the relationship between anime genre preferences and personality traits within the Romanian anime community, using Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) and Elastic Net regression. Drawing on a sample of 747 participants, we identified distinct latent profiles based on genre preferences and examined their associations with the Big Five personality traits using the Bolck-Croon-Hagenaars (BCH) method. Results revealed systematic differences in trait expression across profiles, with Agreeableness and Open-Mindedness showing the strongest associations. Additionally, Elastic Net regression highlighted genre-specific predictors of personality traits, confirming the psychological relevance of media preferences. The findings contribute to narrative psychology and media studies by demonstrating how anime consumption reflects and reinforces individual personality configurations.

DAY 2

MODERN LITERATURE (ONLINE)

Yiqun Yin, Tokyo University of Foreign Studie *Still Relevant? A Different Perspective Reading Dazai Osamu*

Since their publication more than half a century ago, Dazai Osamu's writings have been read and loved by people from all over the world. The current trend of understanding Dazai's writing is more or less centered on Dazai's life. In particular, many researches focus on Dazai's lifelong complex with his own origin: he was born to a wealthy local landlord family as their sixth son, and he struggled all his life feeling both proud and inferior to his root. This complex then would be situated into the "tide of history": his involvement with the communist movement and Japan's defeat in WW2 are both important turning point in Dazai's life and his literary career. A typical reading of Dazai's writing involves combining his personal life with social changes in different proportion, and produce a reading from there. However, I believe that such line of reading of Dazai could not adequately explain his worldwide popularity in contemporary time, and a broader framework is needed for the task. Let us step back and ask: when we read Dazai what are we really attracted to? I think there are two important features worth noticing in Dazai's writings: the lack of a personal theme and the doubt about fixed meaning. It is particularly apparent in his talkative writing style (自意識過剰の饒舌体): his narrators are famous for putting on masks and talking back and forth in contradiction. These two features have been noticed by past researches and they are in fact part of Dazai's "decadency", but how should we understand them, particular in this day and age? For my future research plan, I would like to build a framework using existential philosophy and postmodern theory, in order to better understand Dazai in our present time.

Zhanpeng He, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies *Civilization Suspended: Thinking about Crisis in Yoko Tawada's Animal Babel*

Contemporary anthropocentric civilization has exposed its structural vulnerability in the last 10 years, under the impacts of the 3.11 triple disaster and the COVID-19 pandemic. During such times, it is not only humanity that confronts an existential crisis; animals, as the ultimate "others" entangled with

human society, are also systematically marginalized. Marked as ""irradiated/ infected/ tainted"", they are subjected to biopolitical management and exclusionary violence, or deployed to restore the fractures in the human order. This disregard of animal life has turned into a driving force for many writers who support animal rights.

Yoko Tawada's playscript, *Animal Babel* (2013), masterfully intervenes in this biopolitical crisis. Through linguistic subversion and a deconstructive reading of the Babel myth, Tawada shifts the narrative agency to animals, mounting a rigorous critique against anthropocentric dominance.

The three-act play describes a dystopian place where the boundaries of species, sexuality, and social systems are radically blurred. The axis of this narrative, the ""Babel Project""—an attempt at reconstruction from the ruins in the post-disaster era—is represented as a permanently incomplete gesture. My presentation aims to analyze this incomplete, liminal space, focusing on its relationship with the dominant ""recovery"" discourse in post-3.11 Japan and the modern ideology of linear historical progress. By examining Tawada's poetics of an undecided landscape and heteroglossic interspecies communication, this presentation argues that the text does not merely suspend the logic of anthropocentrism or ecological ruin. Rather, by operating within a linguistic and ontological ""threshold"", it re-imagines a radical, non-linear, inconclusive discourse in a present where crisis is a constant, and paves the way for a future where multiple species, languages and ideologies coexist.

Francesco Firth, Sapienza University of Rome *Rubī Glosses as tools of Intertextuality: Visualizing Translation in Mariya Marie and Morimoto Megumi's Retranslation of Arthur Waley's the Tale of Genji*

This presentation examines the role of interlinear glosses (Rubī, Furigana) in Mariya Marie and Morimoto Megumi's 2017 Japanese translation of Arthur Waley's *The Tale of Genji*, “源氏物語 ウェイリー版”. While furigana glosses are typically used as reading aids, in Mariya and Morimoto's text they function as deliberate visual devices that allow for “competing” versions of a given text to coexist on the same page, visualising the intertextual relationship between three temporally distant texts: Murasaki Shikibu's original *Genji monogatari*, Waley's English translation, and the translators' modern Japanese rendering of Waley's version.

First published in 1925, Waley's translation introduced *The Genji Monogatari* to a wide Anglophone readership and became one of the most influential modern interpretations of the classic. The text was appreciated by anglophone and Japanese audiences alike; the latter group deeming Waley's text as a valuable, accessible alternative version of Murasaki's classic. In recent years, several Japanese translators have undertaken the counterintuitive task of translating Waley's text into modern Japanese. Such an act of not-quite circular translation cannot take place without confronting the intertextual relationship between the import of Murasaki's original text and the literary distinctiveness of Waley's prose.

In *Genji Monogatari Waley-ban*, Mariya and Morimoto do not attempt to sidestep or “resolve” these tensions but instead foreground them visually through unconventional uses of rubī, using interlinear space as a channel to place Waley and Murasaki's words side by side. The non-sequentiality (i.e. atemporality) of interlinear glosses thus functions as a facilitating factor where asynchronous texts intersect, revealing the temporal entanglements embedded in the act of translation.

Throughout this presentation I intend to show how rubī glosses in Mariya and Morimoto's translation operate as tools of intertextual expression. In doing so, I will highlight how the two-dimensional spatiality

of the written page can actively shape the production of literary meaning and the reader's perception of translation.

POLITICS AND RELIGION (ONLINE)

Hirohito Tsuji, University of East Anglia *The Evolution of Fushimi-no-Miya and the Imperial Family of Japan: Continuity of Institution and Lineage across the Early Modern, Modern, and Contemporary Periods* / 皇室制度の変遷と伏見宮家: 近世・近代・現代の連続性とその系譜

Miyake are branch families of the Imperial House of Japan. When the emperor lacked a son, they were expected to provide successors, thereby preventing a rupture in the imperial line. Today, the number of princes eligible for accession has declined, making the maintenance of a stable line of succession increasingly difficult. Consequently, the Diet is currently engaged in discussions concerning measures such as allowing princesses to retain their imperial status after marriage and permitting adoptions between existing miyake and former miyake that lost imperial status in 1947.

It is noteworthy that all these former miyake trace their lineage to Fushimi-no-Miya, established during the Muromachi period. Yet within conventional historical frameworks—particularly those shaped by Marxian periodisation, which sharply separates the premodern from the modern and contemporary—scholars have struggled to explain why princes from the Fushimi-no-Miya lineage established new miyake during the late Edo and Meiji periods despite the gradual attenuation of blood ties to successive emperors. Equally difficult to explain is why these princes assumed highly visible political roles, and why, after becoming commoners following WWII, their descendants are once again regarded as potential candidates for reintegration into the Imperial Family.

This presentation addresses these questions through a combination of historiographical analysis and anthropological approaches. Drawing on primary resources, it examines the inheritance practices of the hereditary shinnōke during the Edo period and traces how these practices evolved through the transitions from the early modern to the modern period, extending into the postwar and contemporary eras. It further considers how these transformations shaped legal frameworks surrounding the Imperial Family. The analytical focus lies in the differences among the imperial systems of the premodern, modern, and contemporary periods, together with the complex dual structure of the traditional Japanese family concept, constituted through the interplay between uji (clan) and ie (household).

[Japanese]

宮家は皇室の分家とでもいうべき存在である。天皇に皇子がない場合、皇位継承者を輩出し皇統断絶を防ぐ役割が期待された。歴代天皇の内 3 方が宮家出身である。現在、皇位継承権を有する男性皇族が減少し、安定的な皇位継承の維持が困難となりつつあることから、国会では、女性皇族が婚姻後も皇籍に留まること、既存の宮家が昭和 22 年に皇籍離脱した旧宮家より養子を迎えること等が議論されている。特筆すべきは、旧宮家は全て中世に成立した伏見宮の血統である点である。一方、マルクシズム史観的な近世史と近現代史を区切る従来の研究手法では、何故世代を経る毎に当今天皇との血縁が遠くなるにも関わらず、何故幕末維新期に伏見宮出身の皇族方が次々に新宮家を創設して政治の表舞台に立ち、何故戦後民間人となりながらも現在再び皇室への復帰が現実味を帯びつつあるのかという問いに答えることは難しい。本発表では、文献史料と人類学的手法を用い、くずし字の一次史料より明らかになった江戸時代の四親王家相続の慣習が、近世近代移行期を経て終戦後、現代に至る迄どの様な変遷を遂げ、法制度にどの様な影響を与えたか考察する。鍵は、近世・近代・現代の皇室制度の相違点、日本の伝統的家族概念の氏(ウジ)と家(イエ)からなる二重構造である。

Soumya Ranjan Gahir, Ravenshaw University *Reimagining Asia after Empire: Takeuchi Yoshimi and the Moral Problem of Postwar Japan*

This paper examines how Takeuchi Yoshimi's early postwar writings transformed Japan's defeat in 1945 into a problem of moral and intellectual reconstruction rather than merely political collapse. Its central question is: how did Takeuchi rethink Japan's relationship to Asia after the empire, and why does this matter for understanding the intellectual history of postwar Japan? While scholarship on postwar Japan has extensively examined democratisation, pacifism, and constitutional change, the deeper problem of how Japanese intellectuals confronted the crisis of legitimacy produced by imperial defeat remains less fully explored. Takeuchi is especially important here because his postwar reflections linked Japan's future not only to domestic renewal but also to an unresolved reckoning with Asia. Situating Takeuchi within debates on modernity, empire, Asia, and war responsibility in the late 1940s and 1950s, the paper adopts an intellectual-historical approach and relies on qualitative textual analysis of selected essays alongside engagement with secondary scholarship on postwar Japanese thought and recent reassessments of Takeuchi's significance for postcolonial and decolonial inquiry. Recent scholarship has highlighted Takeuchi as a major thinker of resistance and Asian critique, which makes him a strong but still underused figure for re-reading early postwar Japan. The paper argues that Takeuchi did not simply criticise wartime nationalism. Rather, he developed a form of post-imperial self-critique that challenged both imperial nostalgia and the easy moral rehabilitation of the Japanese nation. In doing so, he turned defeat from a closed historical event into an enduring intellectual problem. By foregrounding Takeuchi as a thinker of post-imperial moral reconstruction, the paper contributes to broader debates on defeat, responsibility, and regional imagination in modern Japanese thought.

Aljaž Mesner, University of Ljubljana *Engaging the Principal Object of Worship: Relationships with Japanese Buddhist Icons*

Based on ethnographic observations carried out in two parts for a total of 5 months in 2025, this paper explores the role that Japanese Buddhist Deities play in contemporary religious life in Japan. The author first provides a brief history and classification of Buddhas in Japan before presenting examples of religious and ritual practices aimed at them. They are most often represented iconographically using sculpture, and although each temple hosts many Buddhist statues, some are seen as having both exceptional value and spiritual power. While a state-recognised classification of their artistic and cultural value exists – quite a few having the status of National Treasures, it is the believers who ultimately determine the importance of a given statue, with some even receiving donations and prayers in a museum setting. The central statue on the main altar of a respective temple is called Gohonzon, i.e. the principal object of worship, and it presents a nexus of the Sacred with which a karmic relationship can be established – effectively enabling the individual worshipper to create a link with the Buddha, which is sometimes even reinforced using physical objects, such as ropes and talismans. While some statues may hold great importance for their local community, many have gained such a reputation as to warrant visits from other prefectures. The author highlights three deities, which are especially revered in a vernacular context – Kannon Bosatsu,

Jizō Bosatsu and Fudō Myō-ō. Each of them serves a specific purpose and commands a different approach during worship, yet shares certain ritual practices towards Buddhist Icons, which are typical across Japan regardless of sect and affiliation. Through these site-specific explorations across the country, the author identifies some core dimensions of engagement with non-human entities, their ontological reality of aliveness and their perceived agency in Japan.

MEDIA STUDIES (ONLINE)

Bawuk Respati, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies *Early Transmedia Comedy in Japan: Rediscovering Enoken Between the Stage and the Screen*

Since the early twentieth century, Japanese comedy has been evolving alongside the modernization of media. One of the indicators of this phenomenon was the rise of comedy-based transmedia practices. To illustrate this point further, this paper highlights an early form of transmedia comedy in Japan through the examination of the films of Enomoto Ken'ichi (1904–1970), widely known as Enoken. As one of Japan's popular comedians in the twentieth century, Enoken first gained popularity as a stage performer through his Asakusa revue shows in the early 1930s. By the mid-1930s, Enoken began expanding his career to the cinema and starred in several films that were, in many ways, related to his stage performance and persona. By developing an original analytical framework that views comedy performance as a transportable cultural object, this paper analyzes three selected films of Enoken: *Enoken no seishun suikoden* (1934), *Enoken no Kondo Isami* (1935), and *Songoku* (1940). The analysis seeks to trace each film's transmedia connection to Enoken's stage performance and persona and to question how they are positioned within the logic of comedy-based transmedia practice. The analysis on Enoken's transmedia comedy reflects how the film medium became a dominant mode of media in the early to mid-twentieth century, which then influenced how the comedian figure is perceived, from being associated only with the stage to becoming a multimedia presence.

Mario Valori, University of Pisa *Empty SEKAI and the Managed Edge of Kawaii in Project Sekai*

As a major contemporary music-game franchise, Project Sekai offers a telling place from which to ask how Japanese popular media gathers and arranges negative feeling while still relying on the cute, collectible forms that sustain it.

This paper turns to 25-jī, Nightcord de. as the point at which Project Sekai presses against the seam of its own affective fabric. Rather than casting Nightcord as the dark room behind an otherwise radiant rhythm game, I argue that the unit performs a structural labour for the franchise. Its world, Empty SEKAI, gives form to feelings the brighter units keep folded away or held in tension: isolation, the loss of self, emotional depletion, and the frailty of speech between people. Nightcord is therefore not beyond the game's cute, collectible order, but one of the devices by which that order is secured. A sanctioned space for breakdown helps make the optimism of the other units appear natural rather than carefully staged.

The paper reads Empty SEKAI beside Stage SEKAI and Wonderland SEKAI, attending to unit storylines, visual atmospheres, and the distinct Miku variants who mediate each world. Through this contrast, Project

Sekai emerges not simply as a machine for representing emotion, but as one that houses it: affect is given rooms, horizons, costume, and voice. Empty SEKAI matters because it renders negative feeling bounded, translatable, and legible within the product's own visual and commercial grammar.

I also examine the Virtual Singers, especially Miku, as affective intermediaries. In Nightcord, Miku does not dispel darkness but helps convert it into forms that can be narrated, visualized, and circulated. The paper therefore argues that Project Sekai absorbs psychic crisis not as a rupture in kawaii culture, but as its managed edge: the limit its cute commercial world must name in order to keep glowing.

JAPAN AND THE WORLD (ONLINE)

Dang-Thanh Nguyen, Hanoi Law University *Japan from Strangers' Eyes: Reconsidering Lafcadio Hearn*

Today Lafcadio Hearn (1850-1904) was one of the most influential foreign writers in Japan during its transformative years of modernization under the reign of Emperor Meiji, helping readers outside Japan better understand Japan. Lafcadio Hearn came to Japan in 1890 as a newspaper writer and later became a professor of English literature at Tokyo Imperial University and Waseda University. At the same time, he wrote English-language books about Japan, focusing on its complex, intertwining aspects, including folklore, religion, architecture, everyday life, etc. His approach, in fact, challenged the common stereotype of Western observers at the time, who tended to view Japan and, more generally, non-European territories through a colonialist gaze rather than with respect for their cultural differences. Hearn, in fact, did not propose a hierarchical valuation between Japan and the Western civilization in which he was born and raised, but instead attempted to identify the underlying principles that explain the differences. Such differences, if Hearn might say so, from his position in literature teaching might be regarded as a grammar of Japan that shaped Japanese ways of life. In *Kokoro: Hints and Echoes of Japanese Inner Life*, first published in 1896, he sought to interpret Japan as a coherent world grounded in impermanence, social sensitivity, and emotional discipline through seemingly miscellaneous manifestations. From there, Hearn suggested a method and an ethics of learning not only in Japan but also across different cultures: the need to mentally distinguish the principles underlying them from our own, rather than collecting fragmented knowledge. One of these differences, as Hearn claimed, is the attitude toward the world of the Western (searching for absolute) and that of the Japanese (accepting impermanence). Such a difference then manifests itself in different ways in Japan that might surprise people outside this culture. In short, Lafcadio Hearn might teach readers today a valuable way to approach not only Japan, but other cultures, with patience, methodological rigor, and empathy.

Mateja Matic, Aoyama Gakuin University *Customs of the World and Ambitions of the Empire: Globalism and Imperial Ideology in Matsumura Takeo's Sekai no Fūzoku*

Matsumura Takeo (1883–1969), primarily recognized as a mythologist, also exerted a significant influence on Japanese folkloristics and literature. This paper examines Matsumura's 1917 work, *Sekai no Fūzoku* (Customs of the World), an adapted and partial translation of anthropological texts edited by

Walter Hutchinson (1887–1950). By borrowing the global perspective of anthropological literature in English – a viewpoint facilitated by the reach of the British Empire – Matsumura was able to write about regions largely unfamiliar to contemporary Japanese scholarship. Notably, he writes about the customs of nations such as Serbia, Romania, and Turkey, which he places under the umbrella of “the Balkans,” making him one of the earliest Japanese intellectuals to do so. However, within this globalism, Matsumura also nestles Japanese imperial ideologies. He frames folkloristics so as to serve goals of imperial expansion and domination and disparages Ainu and Korean customs. Sand (2014) observes that “like the European empires, Japan’s empire had its poets and its critics”; similarly, it had its own ethnographers, mythologists, and translators. This paper explores how, by slightly modifying the English imperial perspective, Matsumura enables the Japanese imperial perspective to have a global context and meaning, consciously or not. It also explores how *Sekai no Fūzoku* (Customs of the World) stands as an antecedent to Matsumura’s later writings and translations with global, all-encompassing ambitions, such as those in *Sekai Dōwa Taikai* (Compendium of World Fairy Tales, 1924–1928) and *Shinwa Densetsu Taikai* (Compendium of Myths and Legends, 1927–1929).

Chenyang Sun, Free University of Berlin *Historical and Spatial Effects of Korean Migration on Postwar Japanese Politic*

This study examines the long-term and spatial consequences of Korean migration to Japan and its indirect influence on postwar electoral politics, focusing on House of Representatives elections from 1958 to 2015. The analysis is situated within the broader historical context of Japan’s colonial rule over Korea (1910–1945), during which large numbers of Koreans—often through forced or semi-coerced migration—were brought to Japan. Many of their descendants, known as Zainichi Koreans, remained after WWII under ambiguous legal status and persistent social discrimination. Their settlement patterns—shaped by colonial labor mobilization and postwar constraints on mobility—have continued to influence the political behavior of surrounding Japanese communities.

The study assembles a prefecture-level panel dataset that integrates electoral results, demographic indicators, and detailed birthplace records of Korean residents. A fixed-effects model is employed to estimate how regional origins on the Korean Peninsula shape local voting outcomes. To address concerns about endogenous migrant settlement, the analysis also exploits exogenous variation from WWII industrial structure of 1940, which determined the colonial-era allocation of Korean labor and predicts the postwar birthplace composition of Korean communities while remaining plausibly unrelated to contemporary electoral competition.

The findings show that birthplace composition is an important channel through which Korea-to-Japan migration has shaped contemporary politics. Historical birthplace characteristics—reflecting persistent regional cleavages in Korea—produce long-lasting and spatially heterogeneous effects on voting patterns across Japan’s 47 prefectures. These effects operate mainly through neighborhood-level social interactions and localized diffusion. By linking colonial-era industrial labor demand, migrant origins, and modern political behavior, the study demonstrates how imperial and demographic legacies continue to structure democratic politics in postcolonial Japan.

HISTORY AND POLITICS

Arina Sydorkina, Jan Kochanowski University of Kielce *The Harmony That Excludes: Wa as a Discursive Mechanism of Homogenisation in Contemporary Japanese Politics*

This paper is part of a doctoral project examining how national identity is constructed in the media discourse of Japan, Russia, and the United States. Drawing on the Discourse-Historical Approach (Wodak, 2001, 2021) and the functional-pragmatic theory of mythologeme (Leszczak & Stefański, 2024; Losev, 1990), it investigates how the concept of wa (harmony) functions as a discursive mechanism for producing and maintaining a homogeneous national space in contemporary Japanese politics.

The paper argues that wa operates as a mythologeme and a hegemonic discursive device (Mouffe, 2005) that naturalises national homogeneity as an ontological given rather than a political construction. When unity is framed as Japan's natural condition, difference (cultural, ethnic, or political) is no longer simply ""other"" but becomes a problem to be managed, as seen in Takaichi's framing of immigration as a threat to social harmony. This constitutive exclusion (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985) transforms a contingent political vision into an apparent necessity.

The paper examines this mechanism across two registers: elite political discourse – with particular attention to the contrasting deployments of wa by Shinzō Abe and Sanae Takaichi – and grassroots responses on X (Twitter). Whereas Abe mobilised wa as a soft cultural resource projecting unity and prestige, Takaichi has redeployed it as an instrument of exclusion, framing immigration as a threat to ""social harmony."" This shift illuminates how a single mythologeme can sustain ideological flexibility while preserving its homogenising function.

Drawing on a corpus of political speeches and X data, the paper examines how wa is rhetorically invoked by political actors, how it constructs Us/Them boundaries (Van Dijk, 1998), and how social media discourse reproduces its homogenising logic. By treating wa as a site of discursive struggle rather than a stable cultural value, the paper contributes to CDA frameworks for analysing mythologemes as instruments of identity politics.

Angela Dragan, Bucharest University of Economic Studies *The Japan-Romania Friendship Association: Its Establishment and Role in Postwar Communist Romanian Politics*

Romania and Japan established diplomatic relations in August 1917 with the opening of a Romanian diplomatic mission in Tokyo. Later, following Romania's withdrawal from collaboration with the Axis powers on 23 August 1944, the diplomatic ties between Japan and Romania were severed in October 1944. After the Second World War, the communists gradually took over power in Romania. They restored diplomatic ties in September 1959, and in June 1964, the two countries elevated their diplomatic representation to the level of embassies.

At a cultural level, in 1947, the Institute of Universal Culture was established under the patronage of leading cultural, artistic, and scientific figures. Its purpose was to foster cultural exchange by introducing the culture of other countries to Romanian audiences and promoting Romanian communist culture overseas. Following the proclamation of the People's Republic of Romania (P.R.R.) and the consolidation of the new state created the conditions for restructuring the institution's activities. In 1948, it was subsequently transformed into the Romanian Institute for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (IRRCS) to better fulfill its mission of promoting Romanian culture abroad on a reciprocal basis. In line with this policy, several friendship associations were established to foster cultural and educational ties through exchanges, lectures, exhibitions, and other collaborative activities. The Japanese-Romanian Association was one of them, and it started its activity in 1955. Using documents from the National Romanian Archives, in the first part of my presentation, I will give an account of its establishment and its activity. Furthermore, I will seek to examine its role as reflected in the archival documents.

RELIGION AND SOCIETY

Aleksa Stamenic, University of Belgrade *Official Ideology vs. Popular Practice: Reinterpreting the Motivations for Pilgrimage to the Grand Shrine of Ise in Premodern Japan*

The Grand Shrine of Ise, as the most sacred site of Shinto in Japan, has attracted millions of pilgrims from various social strata throughout history. Its significance derives from the belief that it is the dwelling place of the great sun goddess Amaterasu, the divine ancestress of the Japanese imperial line, which grants it exceptional religious and symbolic relevance. In modern interpretations, particularly in the context of State Shinto following the Meiji Restoration, pilgrimage to Ise is most often understood as an expression of loyalty to the emperor and an affirmation of his divine legitimacy to rule over Japan. Such interpretations emphasize the political and religious dimensions of this phenomenon and connect it mainly to the imperial solar cult. This paper problematizes this view by examining the extent to which it can be applied to the premodern period of Japanese history. Based on an analysis of various historical sources, including pilgrimage records, religious texts, and different social practices of the day, the paper demonstrates that the motivations of pilgrims were not primarily ideological nor directed toward the imperial cult. Rather, pilgrimage to Ise functioned as a multi-layered social practice encompassing a wide range of meanings and functions. For many participants, traveling to Ise represented an opportunity to obtain personal protection, health, and prosperity, as well as to take part in a collective experience of travel to a destination surrounded by stories of numerous miracles. Moreover, pilgrimage was often associated with economic activities, as well as elements of entertainment and social interaction. This calls into question the dominant interpretation of pilgrimage as solely an expression of political and religious loyalty to the imperial cult and highlights the need to understand the Grand Shrine as a dynamic religious space whose meaning evolved in accordance with broader social and historical circumstances.

Istrate Costin Andrei, Independent researcher *The Influence of Buddhism on the Japanese Economy*

Buddhism, one of Japan's major religions, has played a significant role in shaping the country's economic system from ancient times to the present. Its influence extended beyond religion into various economic sectors, including trade, business ethics, agriculture, finance, and tourism. Buddhist temples functioned not only as spiritual and philosophical centers but also as important social and economic institutions that supported both local and national development.

Buddhist philosophical principles contributed to the formation of Japanese work culture and business management practices, encouraging discipline, social harmony, moderation, and ethical responsibility. These values helped establish the foundations of what is often described as Japan's model of ethical capitalism.

The establishment of Buddhist temples as cultural and religious centers stimulated commerce and tourism through festivals, pilgrimages, and local markets. These activities encouraged the development of trade networks and contributed to the growth of Japan's cultural economy, which remains strongly connected to global tourism and cultural exports today.

In modern Japan, Buddhism continues to play an active socio-economic role through social services, cultural preservation, and community support. However, modernization has also created important challenges for Japanese Buddhism. Population aging and rural depopulation have reduced the financial support available to many temples. At the same time, the accumulation of excessive financial resources and the commercialization of religious activities have sometimes weakened the spiritual essence of Buddhist philosophy.

Nevertheless, Japan's global economic success is also associated with the Buddhist concept of the "Middle Way," which promotes a balance between material achievement and spiritual and social well-being. This principle remains one of Japan's most sustainable and valuable cultural contributions to the world economy.

MEDIA STUDIES

Irina Holca, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, *From Ki to Physics: Quantifying Energy, Body and Cosmology in Dragon Ball*

The Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905) mobilised a total of 1,200,000 soldiers on the Japanese side. To meet the demand for information among their families on the home front, newspaper circulation increased and new magazines were launched, often carrying numerous photographs, paintings, and sketches depicting the realities of war both on and behind the front lines. One medium that became extremely popular during this period was the image-heavy graphic magazines (gahō-shi), examples of which include ""Nichiro Sensō Shashin Gahō,"" ""Gunkoku Gahō,"" ""Gunji Gahō,"" and ""Senji Gahō,"" among others. These publications combined textual reports from the battlefield with a rich array of visual material in various formats, supplied by war correspondents but also by soldiers themselves.

I have previously examined how the minutiae of life behind the lines were represented in such textual-visual reports, with particular attention to the relationships between the human and non-human beings involved in international conflict. This presentation explores the ways in which those who made the war known—amateur and professional painters, photographers, and reporters—were themselves described in graphic magazines, focusing specifically on ""Senji Gahō"" (The Japanese Graphic, Kinji Gahō-sha), the most widely circulated publication of its kind, which issued 68 volumes between February 1904 and October 1905.

In this paper, I am particularly interested in shedding light on the use of meta-discourses, including painting-within-painting and self-portraiture, and I discuss the ways in which creator-cum-soldiers perceived and fashioned themselves—their everyday lives, as well as their professional identities and the role their representational skills played on the battlefield.

Oana Navodaru, Babes-Bolyai University *Visual Rebellion: Are-Bure-Boke as the Radical Aesthetic of Japan's Postwar Avant-Garde Photography*

This presentation explores the Japanese photographic language known as are-bure-boke (荒れ・ブレ・ボケ)—literally “grainy, blurry, out of focus”—and examines how it redefined photography. Emerging

from Japan's postwar avant-garde, this style functioned as both an aesthetic and a sociopolitical response to the rapid economic growth and cultural dislocation of the 1950s and 1960s. Closely linked to the Provoke movement, are-bure-boke was theorized as a radical break from documentary conventions, positioning the camera as a tool for subjective expression rather than neutral observation. Rejecting the polished precision of Western modernist photography, it embraced imperfection as a way to convey urgency, immediacy, transience, flux, and emotional truth. Its practitioners deliberately used visual "flaws," creating raw, fragmented images that reflected the instability of identity and the chaos of rapidly urbanizing environments. In doing so, they challenged conventional visual norms and expanded the expressive potential of photography. Ultimately, this approach transformed the medium by prioritizing perception and experience over clarity and permanence. Though it began as a radical, underground aesthetic, are-bure-boke came to have a significant global influence and remains a powerful and provocative visual language in photography today.

Eduardo López-Pintor Madrid, University of València *From Ki to Physics: Quantifying Energy, Body and Cosmology in Dragon Ball*

This paper proposes an interdisciplinary approach to Japanese visual culture through the quantitative analysis of physical phenomena represented in Dragon Ball (Akira Toriyama). While previous studies have primarily addressed anime and manga from symbolic, narrative or philosophical perspectives, this research explores the possibility of translating fictional elements into measurable scientific magnitudes.

Focusing on key aspects such as the concept of ki as energy, the resistance and transformation of the body, extreme speeds of movement and large-scale destruction, the study applies basic principles of physics and biomechanics to approximate the forces, energies and conditions implied in the series. These calculations are not intended to validate the empirical plausibility of the narrative, but to reveal how Dragon Ball constructs a coherent system of "fictional physics" that operates as a visual and cultural language.

The paper argues that this process transforms abstract scientific concepts—energy, mass, velocity or gravitational force—into accessible and emotionally charged representations. In doing so, Dragon Ball functions as a conceptual laboratory where scientific imagination, narrative structure and visual aesthetics converge.

By bridging the gap between science and the humanities, this contribution offers a new methodological perspective for the study of Japanese popular culture. It demonstrates how anime can serve not only as an object of cultural analysis, but also as a tool for rethinking the ways in which contemporary societies visualize, interpret and appropriate scientific knowledge.