

17th Annual Generative Anthropology Summer Conference
Tokyo, Japan
June 13-15, 2024

Rapprochements East & West:
Culture, Philosophy, Religion

Presentation Abstracts

Thursday, June 13

Shared Session A (9:45-11:15) Perspectives from the Novel

Power as Departure: Generative Anthropology and Non-Violence in *Never Let Me Go*

Wang Xin

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Never Let Me Go by Kazuo Ishiguro presents a dystopian narrative situated in an alternate England where clones are bred solely for the purpose of organ donation and ultimately are let die, to use a “Foucauldian parlance,” after the extraction of vital organs. The story follows Kathy, Ruth, and Tommy, who grow up in a concentration camp like facility called Hailsham. The novel not only prompts reflection on the ethical implications of clone technology but also invites examination of contemporary political movements. The teachers in Hailsham represent a currently prevalent form of political activism for the deferral of violence characterized by what I would call “power as departure,” where a conscious or unconscious act of disavowal grants individuals a false moral high ground, allowing them to critique societal norms despite being implicated in perpetuating those very norms. On the other hand, the students themselves try to defer violence in a way that is more implicitly informed by Generative Anthropology. Being users of a fully developed and mature language, the cloned students (as if being “addressed” unconsciously by the originary scene) attempt to recreate, in reverse order, the evolution of human language. In short, I plan to argue that the students (unlike the teachers) move away from the ethics of deferral indicative of the first declarative sign *back* to the originary ostensive proper. Thus, they flirt with the possibility of “sparagmos”; indeed, their linguistic gambit ultimately fails. Arguably, both approaches, one represented by the teachers and the other by the cloned students, have failed. This paper therefore seeks to explore an alternative perspective within Ishiguro's text, contending that the failure of these approaches stems from the neglect of nonviolence, or their presupposition of violence. In her 2020 book, *The Force of Non-violence*, Judith Butler poses the question: within the justificatory scheme of violence, is violence not determined in advance? And within the current context, *mutatis mutandis*, does the deferral of violence not presuppose violence, perpetual violence in its spectral forms which risks transforming overt violence into other socially sanctioned and sanitized forms, such as systemic oppression or other forms of “slow violence” (Nixon, 2011)? In what ways can we effectively discern violence so that we know when and how to defer it? Throughout the novel, violence never erupts and seems, at times, to be deferred effectively and indefinitely. However, as Rob Nixon reminds us, violence is never actually gone but only morphs into its more insidious form—slow violence, a kind of violence whose rhythm is identical to that of daily existence.

Moreover, Butler's theorizing in *The Force of Non-violence* offers a powerful alternative that only a form of aggressive pacifism can open up a social imaginary that might lead us out of the social quagmire wherein, from a GA perspective, the violence-deferring functions of language seem exhausted. In line with both Butler and Nixon, and using *Never Let Me Go* as an illustrative example, I hope to show that the force of non-violence can refashion the originary scene in a way that radically changes how we view the origin of language, not merely as an act of deferring violence but also as the recognition of our shared vulnerability. Hopefully, this perspective may foster a social imaginary conducive to transformative political action.

Keywords: *Never Let Me Go*, Generative Anthropology, non-violence, slow violence.

Symmetrical Desires: West, East, *Wuthering Heights*, "Red Rose, White Rose."

This will be a joint presentation by Professor Lihua Lin of Gannan Normal University and Professor Ian Dennis of the University of Ottawa. Our paper will use the heuristics of mimetic theory (MT) and generative anthropology (GA) to probe the tension, as articulated by a major Western and a major Eastern author, between mediated, "social" desire and the ever-alluring possibility of "authentic" or self-originating desire or love. Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) contains one of Western literature's most memorable imaginings of a transcendent and ostensibly unmediated romantic passion, and yet this powerful Victorian novel shares with Eileen Chang's caustic modernist novella "Red Rose, White Rose" (1947) a complex pattern of symmetries and repetitions, indeed doublings, of the kind that René Girard associated with the "metaphysical" phase of mimetic desire. Both narratives also feature the strikingly intense emotional and at times physical violence that MT and GA in their different ways seek to understand.

Brontë's heroine Catherine attempts to balance, indeed retain the love of two rivals, the socially approved Linton and the savagely naturalistic Heathcliff, to find a way to accommodate, in the novel's famous metaphor, the granite substrate, the "eternal rocks beneath" of the latter, while experiencing the "changing foliage" of the former. For Chang's protagonist Zhenbao, the choice is similarly between "a passionate mistress" and a "spotless wife," a red and a white rose, and he, too, wants both. Outcomes in some respects differ, but in others converge, and the ways they do, we suggest, can shed light on Eastern and Western experiences of sexual and romantic desire as they have been evolving, and perhaps indeed also converging, over the past two centuries.

Shared Session B (14:00-15:30) Anthropology, Language and Cognition

GA's Ceremony: The Potlatch Ritual in Scenic *Rapprochements*

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The enduringly fascinating subject of human rituals in primitive societies, already discovered by early anthropologists, can gain new understanding through the reapplication of Eric Gans' heuristic theory of GA. I would argue that phenomenon known as potlatch, parallelly to Malinowski's Kula Ring ritual is another kind of gift-giving ceremony practiced by tribes living on the Northwest Coast of North America and might be interpreted as a multivariate scene capturing the sense of *originary thinking* in an image of human ritual actions.

Let us than consider potlatch in the contexts of scenic hypothesis and a search for main scenic components in the selected ritual scenarios, where the concept of ritual is related to an idea of regulation of social behavior focused on function of deferral or prevention of intra-human violence. The potlatch ritual in the Kwakiutl tribe, as given by one of America's most famous anthropologists, Ruth Benedict, in her flagship work *Patterns of Culture*, is understood as an obsessive status hunger of the Kwakiutl chiefs and conceived as an unabashed megalomania. However, a closer anthropological, let's say *originary analysis* of the custom, reveals that it might have its own, different logic which refers to at least several parts of the GA's scene. First of all, we assume, that it is an *originary scene*, in the form of ostentatious partitioning event (also related to Sparagmos) which applies human gestural acts of destruction of material objects as preventative behavior, in order to establish final tribal reconciliation. Since the potlatch accompanies all ceremonies held in public in the community and is primarily a ritual demonstration of the presence of objects in the group, these objects can be considered its center. The objects, as central, reveal their inseparable relationship to all ceremonies regardless of the scenario they take. Moreover, this scenario involves basically a continuous presentation and demonstration of objects but together with renunciation of attachment to as many objects as possible. In this way, it represents a reverse act of accumulation, the act of competing for the degree of freedom from the central object, from its possession through a kind of renunciation that comprises the way of abandoning it or annihilating it in the fire. The gesture of annihilating a central object, especially in the form of absorbing it by fire, is a drastic sign indicating the danger the object carries. Of course, this danger is not due to the annihilation power inherent in fire. The danger comes from the constant possession or act of appropriating the object which brings the threat of a possible intra-human rivalry that eliminates the ability to defer potential violence. The gesture of annihilation in the potlatch becomes cognitively, socially and linguistically regulative of public resentments.

The Origin of Language from the Perspective of Language Functions in Aphasic Patients

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This study investigates the origins of human language through several examples of the characteristic communication styles of aphasic patients and critically examines the widely held theory of the origin of language such as complex cognitive blueprints that, once fulfilled, would allow language to "emerge" (Gans, 2019, p. 20).

As a premise for our discussion, firstly, I will review Eric Gans' theory of the origin of language. For instance, he says "Intrinsically ludicrous assertion that language 'emerges naturally' when our cognitive level reaches such and such a threshold. The absurdity of treating language as a biological-cognitive function whose communicative setting is simply irrelevant reflects the reduction of causality to a web of correlations none of which 'means' any more than another, whatever the naive participants in the activity may think about it" (Gans, 2019, p. 9). To the contrary, Gans asserts that the origin of language was an event language (via a non-verbal gesture) that arose to resolve a potential mimetic crisis within a community and was shared within the group as having more than just a gesture. Gans called this moment the "Little Bang" of the human. In other words, it is necessary to consider the function of language and communication within an interaction when thinking about primordial language.

Secondly, this study focuses on four aphasia cases introduced by Yamadori Atsushi (山鳥重), who is a Japanese neuropsychologist and brain scientist, and examines the origin of language and how brain function has developed throughout human evolution. The brain has acquired various functions through evolution, and additional functions are added to the surface of the brain. So, when the brain is damaged, it loses functions that were acquired later in evolution. From this perspective, I believe that analyzing the characteristics of the language functions of aphasic patients will help us understand the brain functions seen in the early stages of human development. It also provides important evidence to support Gans' hypothesis for the origin of the language. For example, A's case. A has severe aphasia and can only say "te-te" herself. However, when spoken to, she can parrot back the same words. As can be seen from A's case, who lost various language functions, the primitive language function seems to be parroting. She also does not respond at all when called out to her from behind. In other words, the function of talking face-to-face with the other person is also a primordial language function. Linguistics by nature must begin the research at the level of analysis of such utterances. These language functions seen in A are basic functions before the complex workings of consciousness, such as human beings' understanding of the world through language. Nowadays, the purpose of language has become to communicate through words. But what is important is "structure." The structure in language is the "speech function." In other words, it is what Ferdinand de Saussure calls a parole against langue.

To reiterate, the purpose of this study is to reexamine Eric Gans' model of language origins through the development of human speech functions as seen by aphasic patients.

Shared Session C (15:45-17:15) Interfaith Perspectives

Working Title:

Apocalypse of the Cross and Field of Emptiness: René Girard and Nishitani Keiji

Tobias Bartneck

Ph.D. Candidate, Kyoto University

In this paper, I explore the religious philosophy of Nishitani Keiji 西谷啓治 (1900-1990) and his interpretation of the Christian cross, in an attempt to bring the Japanese thinker into dialogue with René Girard and his anthropological reading of the Christian “apocalypse of the cross.”

First, my paper shows how Nishitani throughout his works employs a consistent strategy in the interpretation of Christianity. This strategy of “Japanese Kenoticism” (Steve Odin) focuses especially on re-interpreting the Christian cross and the related theological notion of God’s “kenōsis” or “self-emptying.” I will examine how Nishitani through this “kenoticism” offers a way for translating the discourse of Christian theology into Buddhist discourse, i.e., examine how this strategic interpretation aims at transforming Christian theology from a Mahāyāna Buddhist standpoint of “emptiness” (skt. *śūnyatā*, jp. *kū* 空).

Second, elaborating on one of his earliest texts, I further try to show how, according to Nishitani, only the negation of Christ as a sacred object of worship allows for a true imitation of the kenotic Christ, founded on a radical experience of Buddhist emptiness. Based on this, I argue that the significance of Nishitani’s kenoticism must be seen in its effectiveness as an “expedient means” (jp. *hōben* 方便, skt. *upāya*), as a remedy for the historical reality of Christianity, taken as “the Christian church kingdom and the colossal architecture of its theological system,” which, again in the words of Nishitani, stand on a “distorted foundation” by clinging to the reified negativity of Christ’s cross as an object of worship.

Third, following Nishitani’s reflections on what he perceives as a problematic tension within Christianity between the moments of imitation and worship in relation to Christ, my paper will try to bring Nishitani into dialogue with the mimetic theory of René Girard and his anthropological reading of the Christian cross. Focusing on the problem of the imitation of Christ, I will draw out the similarities and differences between both thinkers and demonstrate how their juxtaposition can serve to mutually bring to light what is at stake for each thinker in their confrontation with the Christian cross.

Fourth, my paper will explore the historical significance and theoretical consequences of this confrontation between the overtly Christian and apologetic anthropology of Girard and the Buddhist philosophy of Nishitani. Does the “apocalypse of the cross” remain bound to the concrete historicity of Christ, or can the Christian experience be opened up from within towards a transhistorical and universal “field of emptiness”? Might the encounter between Nishitani and Girard serve to find a common ground of experience between the different religious traditions, Buddhism and Christianity, which inform each thinker? And, lastly, my paper will raise the question of what the consequences of these different approaches to the Christian cross might be for the Church as institutionalized form of Christianity and ask for their politico-theological implications.

SHINTŌ AND ISLAM CROSSROADS:
CASE STUDY OF TANAKA IPPEI'S CONCEPT OF DEITY
(THROUGH THE LENS OF GENERATIVE ANTHROPOLOGY)

Oleksandra Bibik

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Tanaka Ippei (田中逸平, 1882-1934) stands out as one of the pioneers of Islam in Japan. Tanaka was raised in the rituals of the Shintō school of Misogi-kyō during his formative years and studied Chinese language and Confucianism at Taiwan Association School (Takushoku University). The pivotal moment of Tanaka's conversion occurred in 1924 when he embraced Islam after engaging with the local Muslim community in Jinan who was following the Hanafi school (Hanafi fiqh) of Sunni Islam with a specific understanding of Maturidi schools of Islamic theology developed by Liu Zhi (劉智, 1660-1739).

Taking lenses of generative anthropology, we conclude that the moment of Tanaka's conversion to Islam in the Blue Mosque in Jinan where he saw Shinto's purification ritual "misogi" in the Muslim ablution ceremony "al-wuḍū" – became the first moment of contact between Japanese and Arabic religiosities that is Tanaka's thought is seen as cultures that could align. That experience became the "original event" of Tanaka's religious life that he reenacted in his further practices.

Tanaka's pilgrimage to Mecca marked a milestone in his spiritual journey. The diary written during pilgrimage ("Islamic Pilgrimage: The Diary of the Wondering White Cloud") is considered to be the main source for our research.

Tanaka's elucidation of Islam primarily focuses on historical narratives and descriptions of societies in Muslim-majority countries. Tanaka does not elaborate on the immanent aspect of God's nature. That vision of Allah allowed Tanaka to make the parallel between the God in Islam and the first Shintō's kami who first appeared in the Universe according to the ancient chronicles – Ame-no-minaka-nushi-no-kami (天之御中主神). The consistent usage of "Kami" in the analyzed texts aligns with the tendency to blur the philosophical disparities between polytheistic and monotheistic conceptions of divinity.

Analysing the terminology of the diary we witness Tanaka reinforce the "original event" of cross-cultural dialogue of sacrality by establishing a new concept of deity that could be applied to both religions. With the same purpose, Tanaka is engaging in discussions on the history of Islam in China and Manchuria (considering that in Tanaka certain territories of China and Manchuria were parts of the Japanese Empire).

The central theme of Islamic spirituality is the relationship between a believer and Allah. In Tanaka's view on Islam, the focus is changed from the spiritual aspect of Islam to its social role as the fundament of shared identity for Muslim-majority countries. The identity, given by the syncretism of Islam and Shinto, focused on providing a sense of Asian unity for Japanese people by proclamation the affinity of religious concepts of deity in Islam and Shinto.

From the perspective of the given methodology, we see the version of Japanese Islam invented by Tanaka as a creation of a new shared identity. The presentation will focus on a detailed analysis of Tanaka Ippei's concept of deity taking the optic of generative anthropology as a starting point.

Friday, June 14

Shared Session D (9:30-11:00) Mind, Meditation, and Orinary Thinking

Is There a Space for Silence in the Orinary Event?

Andrew Bartlett
Vancouver, Canada

This presentation will offer a preliminary exploration of the topic of silence in relation to the orinary hypothesis. Although touching briefly on the pain caused by imposed, involuntary silence or oppressive prohibitions of free speech, the exploration will focus mostly on the aspirational practices of people who voluntarily meditate in religious traditions, both Eastern and Western, and who take silence to be one ingredient in their discipline of spiritual self-emptying. The orinary hypothesis seeks to describe the origin of self-conscious linguistic exchange or to provide a minimal model of human symbolic exchange, or both. One might say that GA is all about words. But what thoughts do orinary thinkers have to share with those who may place a value on mental states that aim to cleanse human interaction of word-activity, to those who believe there is virtue in the disciplines of silence, individual and communal? How might silence "fit into" (if at all) our fussing about orinary abortive gestures of appropriation, minimal speech acts, mimetic panic in the context of appetitive strife and the deferral of violence? How might students of Eric Gans enter into dialogue with those who value experiences of silence, especially experiences of willfully pursued silence, and the mystical states sometimes engendered by such experiences? Is the formulation of a "GA Mysticism" possible, credible, or desirable? The presentation will take an inventory of and provide an analysis of passages relevant to these questions in the founding texts of generative anthropology by Eric Gans. It will also engage with "Saying the Unsayable: Where Silence Happens," chapter 6 of Rowan Williams' volume *The Edge of Words: God and the Habits of Language* (Bloomsbury 2014), as a starting-point. Williams' whole book could be brought into fruitful dialogue with generative anthropology, but this 20-minute presentation will zero in on that one chapter.

Original Prosthesis: Generative Anthropology and Distributed Intelligence

Chris Fleming
Western Sydney University

2023 represented the twenty fifth anniversary of the publication of Andy Clark and David Chalmer's pathbreaking paper 'The Extended Mind', the basic thesis of which held that mind cannot be reduced to internal psychological states, but extends into the external world, and includes the material objects and social relations that assist in acts of memory and cognition. Clark and Chalmers' paper, as suggestive and influential as it was, is limited in a number of ways, not limited to the the anthropological presuppositions on which it is predicated. A favourite example of Chalmers is the cell phone, and the way it invites us to consider the mind as extending beyond the individual's nervous system. But if this is the case – and in one sense it's unarguable – then we might be given to ask, first, what it is about human minds (as opposed to animal minds) that allow them to be so extended, and second, whether this prosthetic reaching out had an orinary moment. Drawing on the work of Eric Gans as well as the philosophy of Jacques Derrida and the linguistic and anthropological work of Lera Boroditsky and Joseph Henrich, this paper will argue that the first extension of mind was the birth of language. The last section of the paper will float two hypotheses about the links between the notion of a "distributed mind" conceived along the axes outlined and Buddhist ideas of anattā (no-self).

Shared Session E (13:30-15:00) The Scenic and Aesthetic Imagination

Tool-making on the Originary Scene: Li Zehou and the Origin of Language

Amir Khan

Hunan Normal University, People's Republic of China

In a short 1999 essay entitled “An Outline of the Origin of Humankind,” Li Zehou posits that the origin of humankind stems mostly from advances from our tool-making capacity. A brief sketch of his brief account of human origin would flow from the “gradual evolution of the forelimb of the apes” (20) to primitive tool-making, to increased motor-sensory skills and finally to primitive language. However, language itself is given a subordinate role in Li's anthropology. Indeed, language is simply a medium expressing the content of the willed actions of human beings who already exist. Li's anthropology thus mirrors in some sense Raymond Tallis's version of human origin (as articulated at GASC 2014), which banks on man's upright stance and subsequent gaze outward, and his opposable thumb as the first tool—which then allows him to create many more. Man's separation from nature (or ability to manipulate it) through tool-making creates (an albeit primitive) consciousness and possible separation from the natural world that constitutes the human. Such a “pre-lapsarian” account of human origin need not contradict GA in any controversial way, however. In fact, if the productive tool-making capacities initiates the very primitive stirrings of a subject-object dualism and proto-consciousness, and such consciousness can effectively be located with respect to Gans's originary scene, then Generative Anthropology, in my view, has potential to take a “Marxist” turn. Li Zehou, in fact, uses Marxist thought to articulate not the political reality of class division in society but the nature of aesthetics and the human as derived from Marx's idea of “species being,” which banks on the specific sense relations of human beings vis-a-vis the outside world as constitutive of the human. Conversely, then, Marx's idea of “species being” may be supplemented by GA to more forcefully understand the role of language amongst the senses.

Anthropoetic Diction:

Owen Barfield, Representation, and Participation

Matthew Taylor

Kinjo Gakuin University, Nagoya, Japan

Anthropoetics, the name of the journal of generative anthropology, expresses an intuition about poetry, namely, that there is an essence in experiencing it which, however striking with verse, also points to something fundamental to language in general, and by extension, to “the human.” The life work of Owen Barfield (1898-1997) followed a very similar intuition, ultimately becoming a theory of language, of the origin of language (in a qualified sense), and of the evolution of consciousness. I hope to connect Barfield's thought to generative anthropology (GA), and to connect GA to a cultural movement in which Barfield's thought is becoming increasingly important.

Unusually sensitive to the “soul” of words and adept at tracking their history and origin, Barfield described them in his early book *History in English Words* as “fossils of consciousness.” In *Poetic Diction: A Study in Meaning*, Barfield then went on to posit an earlier stage of consciousness, inferred from such fossilized meanings. In that stage, which he called “original participation” (in *Saving the Appearances: A Study in Idolatry*), everyday language had the evocative effect that we now experience sometimes in fleeting moments, as when reading great poetry. In that world of pure meaning, everyone was a poet, but

importantly, not a self-conscious poet; there was little distinction between the word, the word user, and the world named. Barfield's thinking on "original participation" parallels what GA identifies as the originary scene of representation and the "ostensive" stage of language.

After original participation, language took on a more metaphorical character. In consciousness, what was lost in original participation was gained in self-awareness, particularly strong with Jewish monotheism where God is revealed as "I am." Christian civilization, reaching its apex in the Medieval world, was a working *détente* between a consciousness that combined elements of original participation, a metaphorical mode of perception, and a sense of self introduced particularly by the Judeo-Christian revelation. Modernity and the scientific revolution were the final breach between the representation and the represented, between the self and the world. Barfield provocatively called the "appearances" or collective representations of modernity "idolatry," meaning that the representations ("models of the world" might be a useful paraphrase) are both emptied of meaning and also mistaken for "the real thing."

Yet the loss of "original participation" was both inevitable and necessary for a movement toward "final participation" where the self-aware consciousness can re-engage original participation. This return is not simply an anachronistic longing because the sense of self that has been gained in the interim is both real and new. A good example, again, is innovation in the best poetry, the way it recovers older, encased meanings in words, yet at the same time, brings them to life in novel ways. A generative potency, a novelty that plays off an original "density" in language, accords well, in my view, with the perspective of GA. For Barfield, the re-engagement of the imagination, which in GA might be equivalent to an awakening awareness of the originary sign, is crucial for "final participation."

Shared Session F (15:15-16:45) Language, Religion and Philosophy

Language generation from the perspective of esoteric Buddhist philosophy and *ba* linguistics

Kiyoshi Kawahara

Professor, Takushoku University, Tokyo, Japan

There are various aspects of language generation. Eric Gans has elucidated its mechanisms in the process of human evolution. This is the aspect in human phylogeny. However, the aspect in the process of language acquisition in human ontogeny can also be elucidated. This presentation will examine how people generate language in each and every act of communication, focusing on the view of language of Kukai (774-835), a leading religious figure in ancient Japan, based on the Buddhist philosophy of Yogācāra, and the view of Kukai's philosophy of language by Toshihiko Izutsu (1914-93), a leading philosopher in modern Japan.

Recently, a theory has been proposed as “*ba* linguistics” in which the generation of meaning in dialogue is developed in the deep “primary *ba*” of the mind, which is not recognized by the surface consciousness (the visible surface level is called the “secondary *ba*”). Conventional linguistics has dealt with the surface level of language. Even Chomsky's deep structure deals with the aspect of symbolic codes, or social conventions of language, and has not dealt with vertical approaches that delve into the depths of human linguistic consciousness. Looking at the trend of “*ba* linguistics,” this presentation will discuss how people try to express in words the primordial energy, which is the accumulation of chaotic and blurred thoughts, feelings, and memories that cannot be put into words, and how this energy is transformed through dialogue.

In Buddhism various theories have been taught on the ground of the wisdom of practice with Three Seals, known as Three Universal Truths. 1. All phenomena are impermanent. 2. All Dharma are not-self. 3. Eternity is Nirvāṇa. In this sense, it should be pointed out that Buddhism is different from what is held in Western philosophy. The philosophy of Yogācāra, or consciousness-only theory, is the theory that all objects are manifested by consciousness, and that nothing exists outside of consciousness. Kukai's view of language is that “existence is speech.” This proposition implies that every being, every “thing” is a word, that is, existence itself is fundamentally literal. This view is based on Kukai's esoteric Buddhist philosophy, which deepened Buddhism. This view of language assumes the existence of the realm of the unspoken and unverballed depths beyond words in esoteric Buddhism, the realm of the ultimate absolutes of consciousness and existence, the realm of the Buddha's enlightenment. When we look at the world again from the perspective of this enlightened world, we see human language as a process of self-verbalization of the enlightened world itself. The view of language in this ultimate realm differs from the theory of language generation in that it is the world of the single-minded dharma realm that transcends time and space. On this basis the theory of the generation of ordinary human language is expounded.

Having clarified this, Izutsu proposed the theory of semantic segmentation as a contemporary Japanese philosophy of language. This is the assertion that “reality,” which we usually accept as a primary given experience, is in fact created by our consciousness through the secondary operation of linguistic semantic segmentation. This view is consistent with the Buddhist and Kukai's views of language, and Izutsu integrates other Eastern philosophy when viewing Kukai's philosophy of language.

Surge of Experience as Origin of Language

Junichi Ono

Jichi Medical University

Generative anthropology has shown that the primordial event of language is the sacred and ritual in the form of utterances or gestures around the sacred; in 2019 Eric Gans has re-articulated this argument in *The Origin of Language*. My presentation aims to complement Gans' theory of the origin of language. He reduced the emergence of the sacred to a deferral of violence. I reduce violence to the speaker's interest in appearing on the ground of consciousness, and further to its emotional emphasis. Here I find the origin of language, i.e. a level of pre-intentionality. The sacred is surging as the primordial undifferentiated stage of experiences in consciousness, and as a linguistic phenomenon, it has, primordially, three aspects: the ostensive, the imperative and the declarative, as Gans puts it. I propose a stage in which oaths, commands and wishes are undifferentiated, which develops into the ostensive, the imperative and the declarative. I rely on the work in English by the Japanese philosopher Toshihiko Izutsu, *Language and Magic*, to independently support my argument, using the case of Noh theater as a sacred ritual for evidence.

Izutsu analyzed ritual and poetic descriptions written in Akkadian, Coptic, Hebrew, Arabic, Sanskrit, ancient Chinese, and ancient Japanese and focused on heightened experience in consciousness as a more primordial stage than intentionality, the state before meaning functions as symbols. This stage is verbalized as different kinds of grammatical and rhetorical expressions. His analysis of the experience of surge and his idea of surge allows for a unified and fundamental picture of the genesis of concepts. Namely, the primordial surge of language develops into religious phenomena, science, social reality, mass agitation, lies, manipulation of the individual mind and art; Gans sees the infinity of desire at the level of objectivity and sees negative representation as the limit of desire. Although the concept of negation refers to a lack of substance, the substantiation of the concept is surged in the experience of consciousness. Noh utilized linguistic emphasis to amplify concepts or mental images, creating a world of mental relief and play in the world of images established therein. I explore this in 'bell cricket', a story of death and friendship of warriors. This play is about the negation of life, death, which is the consciousness of absence and about the eternal friendship that transcends death or life, which is described as the contemplation of the beyond of presence and absence.

Noh plays were first and foremost performed not for human beings, but to determine the sacred, that is, as sacred ritual. Importantly, in Noh, the point at which life and death are included together, subject and object are not separated, and the correspondence between the universe and human beings is represented through various linguistic emphases. At its origin, linguistic emphasis marks the correspondence between subject and object, and determines the transition from physical reality to spiritual reality. Noh drama shows that this is the starting point of language and its essence.

Saturday, June 15

Shared Session G (9:30-11:00) Spiritual Practice, Wisdom, and Representation

Jeopardy in Jeopardy: Zen Koans and Generative Anthropology

Ken Mayers

This paper is an extensively revised version of a paper presented in May 1987 for Eric Gans' Generative Anthropology seminar at UCLA. It is interesting to revisit this topic, not only in light of the development of Gans' ideas since 1987, but also in the context of the 2024 GASC conference in Tokyo. Although I lack credentials as a scholar of Zen Buddhism, I did bring a modest background of experience as a practitioner in 1987, and my practice and interest have continued since then.

The paper takes into account fundamental concepts of both generative anthropology and mimetic theory; in fact, I think Zen koans provide an especially useful set of examples to examine both the contributions of these related theories and their relationship. The paper revolves around situating (and re-situating) questions (as linguistic forms, as instances of performance and linguistic pragmatics) within the theory of Generative Anthropology. This entails revisiting applications of the Girardian mimetic triangle and its permutations in different contexts informed both by anthropology and linguistics as interpreted by Eric Gans.

The paper focuses on a series of examples of Zen koans within the textual context of the Mumonkan and the broader social context of the Rinzai tradition of Zen Buddhism. These koans raise many interesting questions, including questions about "questions" themselves. They can also be analyzed and interpreted as a minimum form of literature.

I think this paper touches on a number of the proposed areas of focus for the conference, such as Philosophical traditions East and West, Mindfulness, mysticism and cognitive science, Religion, myth and folklore in Asian and Western traditions, Language, consciousness and symbolic representation, etc.

Ritual, Realism, and Representation: Embodied Wisdom in Ancient Israel

Andrew J. McKenna, Professor Emeritus, Loyola University Chicago

Yom Kippur's Atonement rituals in Leviticus exhibit a proto-modern, holistic understanding of the human person. In the no-man's land of the desert between their emancipation and the Promised land, ancient Israel ponders at length and in depth its adherence to the Law prescribed by its unseen, all but nameless creator. The yearly ritual prescriptions for Yom Kippur, its most important religious feast, display an acute sense of embodiment; it is a unique and fundamental category of its discovery procedure in human self-understanding, as is its sense of ambient, non-conscious valences that account for "unintentional" violations of its Law. The forty years of desert wandering anticipate the forty days of Lenten observance in the Christian churches, predicated on the mystery of the Incarnation that reprises Genesis 1.

Shared Session H (13:30-15:00) Music, Gesture and Human Origins

Paradoxical Music that Defines Humanity Beyond East and West: The Influences of Shakespeare and Mozart on Charles Darwin

Izumi Dryden

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The current presentation examines music in pragmatic ways, arguing that music is not simply the mass of collective sounds observed by such nineteenth-century scientists as Charles Darwin and Florence Nightingale. Music also involves emotions and intentional meanings in the composing process, as Darwin himself anticipated in his studies of animal music and evolutionary survival. Michael Spitzer, a contemporary British musicologist, agrees with Darwin that emotion is “a fundamental aspect” of musical experience that is shared by humans and animals. For René Girard, “Strong emotion is a gateway to bipolarity.” In music, emotion can be tempered by contemplation—the paradoxical balance achieved in such profound musical works as Mozart’s *The Magic Flute* which soars between the polarities of comedy and tragedy, the sacred and the profane.

Both Darwin and Nightingale were deeply influenced by Shakespeare and Mozart. Shakespeare’s technique of applying “paradox” to bear double meanings in his poems and plays formed much of his artistic legacy. Eric Gans observes that “as Shakespeare’s poem reformulates the originary paradox, the single center to which the artist reduces the world can be conceived in the imagination only as a plurality, so that a multiplicity of words, images, or sounds are necessary to express this unity.” Such a paradox—that plurality is needed to represent unity—informs the artistic influences on Darwin’s thinking.

The current presentation examines the covert influences of Shakespeare and Mozart on Darwin’s views of music. The ontological dichotomy of Shakespeare can be found in *The Origin of Species* (1859), *The Descent of Man*, and Darwin’s correspondence. So, too, are echoes of Mozart’s cryptographic Masonic meanings in the musical notes of *The Magic Flute*. The hidden codes in Shakespeare’s words and Mozart’s music can be detected working subtly in Darwin’s writings.

The influences of Shakespeare and Mozart in the works of Darwin transcend conventional “Western” limits. *The Magic Flute* can be interpreted as a symbolic fusion of East and West. The name of the young protagonist Tamino is plausibly Japanese and translates as “for the people” [*Tamino*: 民の]. Just as Shakespeare’s interest in what it means to be human guides his works, a similar human drama plays out in the divine comedy of *The Magic Flute*. Tamino risks his life to free himself and his beloved Pamina, succeeding through virtuous self-discipline. In a heroic journey set to music, Tamino rises above the baser human instincts which remain, to varying degrees, in the opera’s other characters.

Tamino becomes an exemplary model “for the people,” i.e., for humanity. Of such transformations, Girard says, “There is a great deal of emotion involved in risking one’s life, and he who takes such a risk is divinized.” Notably, “for the people’s free will” drove Darwin’s thinking and writings. Coming from a family grounded in science and then tempered by artistic influences, Darwin unified East and West in a common goal—for all of humanity to seek its self-liberation from enslaving ignorance.

Homo Symbolicus: Some Reflections on Human Pointing

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Chimpanzees do not participate in scenes of joint attention. They do not create collective intentionality and do not point. Why not? This paper discusses what the philosopher Raymond Tallis calls the “everyday transcendence” of human pointing. I will argue that the use of the index finger in the scene of pointing transcends the more basic iconic and indexical reference strategies that humans share with the rest of the animal kingdom, including our closest living relative the chimpanzee. Unlike abortive grasping, which some researchers call “imperative pointing,” pointing for another’s benefit requires a higher order cognitive and interpretive strategy in which more elementary sensorimotor and perceptual biases are, so to speak, “put on hold.” Only by putting these more basic iconic and indexical reference strategies on hold can one produce what we may call the *originary scene* of human pointing. Among children, pointing comes naturally. But this ontogenetic evidence does not explain what motivated the first members of *Homo symbolicus* to point. The paper ends by discussing a few recent attempts to explain the anthropological origin of human pointing.