

30. Gender-Workshop im Rahmen der Jahrestagung der Vereinigung für sozialwissenschaftliche Japanforschung e.V. (14.–15. November 2024)

30th Gender Workshop in conjunction with the Annual Conference of the Association for Social Science Research on Japan (14–15 November 2024)

Organisiert von/organised by
Andrea Germer, Ami Kobayashi, Kerstin Fooker

Veranstaltungsort/Venue:

Japanisch-Deutsches Zentrum Berlin, Saargemünder Str. 2, 14195 Berlin

Die Teilnahme ist kostenfrei, formlose Anmeldung ist erwünscht /

Participation is free of charge, registration is appreciated (mail to: a.kobayashi[at]rptu.de)

Programm/Programme

Donnerstag/Thursday 14/Nov/2024

14:00 h **Begrüßung/Welcome**
Andrea Germer (Düsseldorf), Ami Kobayashi (Landau), Kerstin Fooker (Hamburg)

Panel 1: Frauen, Geschichte und Literatur / Women, History and Literature

14:30 h **The Postcolonial Justice Movement for the “Comfort Women” in Korea and Japan: An Intersectional Analysis**
Ilse Lenz, Ruhr Universität Bochum (Germany)

15:10 h **A Feminist Posthuman World: Murata Sayaka's Radical Confrontation with Difference**
Michiko Mae, Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf (Germany)

15:50–16:20 h **Pause/Break**

Panel 2: Queere Repräsentationen / Queer Representation

16:20 h **From *Mizu Shōbai* to Visual Novels: Queer Carnival in Japanese Entertainment and Media**
June Drechsel, Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf (Germany)

17:00 h **Diamonds on the Limen: Abjection, Liminality, and Identity in a Kyoto Drag Show**
Marco Del Din, Heidelberg University (Germany) / Ca' Foscari University of Venice (Italy)

17:40 h **Representations of Masculinity in the Japanese Dub of the Film *Call Me by Your Name* (2017): Language Ideology and Gender Stereotypes**
Francesco Vitucci, University of Bologna (Italy)

19:00 h **Abendessen/Dinner (SELBSTZAHLER:IN/SELF-PAID)**
Luise Dahlem, Königin-Luise-Str. 40 -42. 14195 Berlin
Homepage: <https://www.luise-dahlem.de>
U-Bahnhof: Dahlem Dorf

Freitag/Friday **15/Nov/2024**

Panel 3: Widerstand in den 1970er Jahren / 1970s Resistances

09:00 h **Practices of Resistance: Photography by Japanese Women since the 1970s**
Federica Cavazzuti, University of Turin (Italy)

09:40 h **SOSHIREN - Exploring a Reproductive Politics that is Fundamentally Anti-Eugenic and Intersectional in its Critique**
Anna Vittinghoff, University of Sheffield (UK)

10:20–10:50 h **Pause/Break**

Panel 4: Sexuelle Gewalt und Demographischer Wandel / Sexual Violence and Demographic Change

10:50 h **Flowers against Sexual Violence**
Chiara Fusari, University of Zurich (Switzerland)

11:30 h **Japan's 'Unprecedented Measures' to Tackle its Population Crisis**
Annette Schad-Seifert, Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf (Germany)

12:10 h **Abschlussdiskussion / Closing Discussion**

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Abstracts

Donnerstag/Thursday, 14/Nov/2024

Panel 1: Frauen, Geschichte und Literatur / Women, History and Literature

The Postcolonial Justice Movement for the “Comfort Women” in Korea and Japan: An Intersectional Analysis

Ilse Lenz, Ruhr Universität Bochum (Germany)

During the Asia Pacific War (1937-1945), the Japanese Imperial Army forced women in Japanese East Asian colonies to work as so-called “comfort women” (sex workers). The justice movement for these women is an international intersectional alliance of feminists from Japanese ex-colonies in East Asia, the former colonial power Japan, and other societies, such as Australia, Germany, and the USA. This long-term feminist justice movement has campaigned for an apology and compensation from the Japanese government as well as for recognition of “comfort women’s” suffering and of sexual violence in war in cultural memory.

Through researching this justice movement from a processual intersectionality perspective, this paper shows that the movement gained power and legitimacy through reflecting and working on its internal intersectional inequalities. This included reflecting on the class hierarchies between many former “comfort women”, who had power of definition, and intellectual feminist activists, as well as on the postcolonial divide between former Japanese colonies and the former colonial power Japan, leading this movement to develop horizontal cooperation and practices. Following an overview, this paper outlines the movements in South Korea, Japan, and Germany and highlights the different postcolonial constellation between East Asia and Germany, the main actors, and their aims. While the Japanese government rejected the justice movement’s demands and the right wing mobilised against it, the movement has been able to influence cultural memory to widely recognise sexual violence in war and the dignity of the “comfort women” (cf. <https://budrich-journals.de/index.php/peripherie/article/view/42599>).

A Feminist Posthuman World: Murata Sayaka's Radical Confrontation with Difference

Michiko Mae, Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf (Germany)

In recent years, the writer Murata Sayaka (*1979) has established herself in the Japanese literary world as one of the most important representatives of contemporary literature; her novel *Konbini ningen* (*Convenience Store Woman*, 2016) has been translated into more than 30 languages and enjoys a high level of international recognition. This is surprising in that she is not a popular author who deals with topics that are generally easy to understand and consume. Rather, there is hardly any author in contemporary Japanese literature who deals so radically with various social and cultural differences, especially gender differences. In her works, Murata creates new dystopian-utopian "upside-down" worlds in which femininity, sexuality, pregnancy and childbirth are decoupled from marriage and family and turned on its head when men can also become pregnant.

In all of Murata’s works, there is a deep scepticism, and existential "ontological" unease about a social life in which the "normal" and the "abnormal" are clearly separated, and ways of thinking and behaving that deviate from this "normality" are rejected and marginalised. Murata consistently questions such social norms and normalcies, presenting an "upside-down" world in which such rules

no longer apply or are even reversed. In doing so, she makes clear how much we are shackled by such conventions and rules, which are in fact constantly changing and therefore deceptive illusions. However, Murata does not stop at the depiction of 'queer', non-conforming existences in her works but also transcends the boundaries between humans and animals, humans and aliens. Does her world point to a feminist posthuman world as imagined by philosophers like Rosi Braidotti and others?

In my talk, I will analyse Murata's new worlds in relation to corporeality, difference, and the utopia/dystopia of a "gender-free" world, and consider the new implications and perspectives her work brings to gender studies.

Panel 2: Queere Repräsentationen / Queer Representation

From *Mizu Shōbai* to Visual Novels: Queer Carnival in Japanese Entertainment and Media

June Drechsel, Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf (Germany)

My presentation explores the concept of queer carnival, characterised by the inversion of societal norms and traditional gender roles, in Japanese entertainment and media, specifically focusing on visual novel video games. It investigates the historical and cultural contexts that have shaped transgender representation in these areas, tracing its roots back to Japan's post-war nightlife entertainment sector, known as *mizu shōbai*. By employing an interdisciplinary approach that integrates queer studies, game studies, and Japanese studies, this paper examines how queer carnival is realised in Japanese visual novels. Key theoretical frameworks include Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of carnival, Stuart Hall's representation theory and contemporary queer theory by Judith Butler and others. Utilising methodological approaches from within game studies, the analysis spans several visual novels from 2004 to 2016, including popular titles such as *D.C.P.C. ~Da Capo~ Plus Communication*, *Steins;Gate*, and *Danganronpa: Trigger Happy Havoc*. The findings reveal that these games often employ transgender characters and themes to entertain the player and less to critique and reflect upon societal norms or break with traditional gender roles, illustrating a glaring contrast between the possibility of queer liberation and the reaffirmation of the status quo through media representation. The research concludes that while visual novels have the potential to subvert societal norms and traditional gender roles, more often than not they reaffirm them through queer carnival. This discussion contributes to a deeper understanding of the cultural significance and implications of transgender representation in Japanese entertainment and media.

Diamonds on the Limen: Abjection, Liminality, and Identity in a Kyoto Drag Show

Marco Del Din, Heidelberg University (Germany) / Ca' Foscari University of Venice (Italy)

In the popular imagination, a drag queen is a man dressing up and performing so as to resemble a woman. However, as interviews and conversations conducted by the author with the queens of a club in Kyoto revealed, the picture is far more complicated. The performers of the club list a variety of figures as the inspiration behind their persona, and many of these lie outside of the realm of the feminine, as well as that of the human. As monsters, aliens, animals, and freaks inspire the queens in their transformation, the figure of the drag queen concurrently shifts from that of a female impersonator to that of an undefinable, ambiguous entity residing beyond categories and the ordinary. The drag queen then dwells in a liminal space that influences not only the club she performs in, but also her own identity.

Through an ethnographic approach consisting of participant observation and interviews with the performers, this paper aims to elucidate the connections between drag, the non-human, and the liminal through an analysis of the longest-running drag show in Japan, monthly held at a club in Kyoto. In particular, this study will investigate not only how the grotesque and the monstrous, defining features of the drag of the club, are deployed during the performances, but also the role they play in the identity formation and self-labelling processes of the drag queens. By employing concepts such as that of the abject (Kristeva 1982) and of liminality (Turner 1970), this work will therefore investigate how these identities are constructed, and whether drag impacts the daily life of the performers in relation to gender norms and gender identity. Concurrently, it will show the deeply transcultural interactions the show is embedded in, and how this affects the practice and understanding of the drag queens.

Representations of Masculinity in the Japanese Dub of the Film *Call Me by Your Name* (2017): Language Ideology and Gender Stereotypes

Francesco Vitucci, University of Bologna (Italy)

My presentation analyses adult male language in the Japanese-language version of the feature film *Call me by your name* (2017) directed by Luca Guadagnino. Building upon audiovisual translation and recent Japanese sociolinguistic and anthropolinguistic studies, this paper highlights the growing gap between the non-native actors' language and the Japanese dubbing of adult male speakers, as well as the hypermasculinisation of fictional speech aimed at indexing a hierarchical and sexist adult male model, through the so-called strategy of transduction (also known as inter-indexical relation), the exploitation of so-called bodies of otherness (Inoue, 2003) and the process of adequation (Nakamura, 2016).

In particular, this paper will examine the characteristics of Japanese male speech (MS) by analysing the polarisation between the two main characters in the film - Oliver and Elio - trying to highlight how Japanese dubbing has contributed - thanks to the mediation of foreign bodies - to converge towards an adaptation strategy, with the aim of consolidating gender discrimination which in contemporary Japanese society is still difficult to eradicate. In fact, by comparing the original dataset with the Japanese dubbing, it is insightful to note an ideological positioning that contrasts an original equal relationship in terms of language identity with a Japanese active-passive relationship (*seme-uke*) that both proposes hard masculinity as the desirable homonormative imagery, and conflates with the figure of the heterosexual male. The main research questions which I intend to answer are: (1) What are the reasons that induce translators to mark speech style with certain diagenetic markers? and (2) what kind of repercussions can there be nowadays for soft masculinities in the Japanese audiovisual realm?

Freitag/Friday, 15/Nov/2024

Panel 3: Widerstand in den 1970er Jahren / 1970s Resistances

Practices of Resistance: Photography by Japanese Women since the 1970s

Federica Cavazzuti, University of Turin (Italy)

With an approach that considers feminist historiographies, I am examining the photographic productions by Japanese women in recent decades. In particular, I am looking at how female

authorship in the field developed in the past 50 years despite the relative historical inaccessibility of photography to women. The starting point of this research is the decade of the 1970s, a time of social and economic transformation, when the public actions of protest groups and student collectives intensified; the formation of alternative movements, such as Ūman Ribu (“women’s lib”), contributed to creating an awareness of the oppression experienced by women in Japanese society. These transformations also helped raising attention towards female artists and exposing the limits of preexisting artistic canons, where the male artists’ predominant positions excluded other subjectivities. Similarly, since its introduction to Japan, photography has mainly been mastered in an elitist circle of male photographers. The career possibilities for female professionals were generally sidelined by gender preconceptions that hold women to be unsuitable for using a camera. In the last decades of the 20th century, however, an increasing number of women started making their appearance in different areas of the photographic system – exhibitions, print media, competitions – and, despite the lasting imbalance that is still noticeable nowadays, began affirming their existence as professional photographers. This research, conducted in archives in Japan, Europe, and the US, inspects two main areas: firstly, the sociopolitical historical context of Japan from the 1970s onwards and the writings by feminist activists and gender theorists; secondly, the practices of several female photographers who have opposed patriarchal views on art and photography.

SOSHIREN — Exploring a Reproductive Politics that is Fundamentally Anti-Eugenic and Intersectional in its Critique

Anna Vittinghoff, University of Sheffield (UK)

The successful campaign against the attempt to revise the Eugenics Protection Law (short: EPL; *Yūsei hogohō*) in the early 1970s, which would have severely restricted women's control over their reproductive capacity and increased state intervention into bodies in Japan, became the most tangible victory of the radical feminist movement Ūman Ribu (“women’s lib”). However, this was not the only attempt by the government to limit women's bodily autonomy through the reform of the EPL. In 1982, amendment of the law was once again placed on the political agenda. Yet, without the leadership of Ūman Ribu, which disbanded in 1977, new groups were needed to mobilise protest. One such group was SOSHIREN – From My Body, from Women’s Bodies (*Onna (watashi) no karada kara*), which since its establishment in 1982, has been in the vanguard of those challenging the intersections of reproductive politics and eugenics in Japan. The group's diverse membership, comprising individuals from a range of backgrounds, including former Ūman Ribu activists from the 1970s, disability activists and young female students, reflects its commitment to an intersectional critique of reproductive rights and bodily autonomy. In this paper, I will examine how SOSHIREN applied feminist critiques that were developed in the 1970s to the context of the 1980s. In so doing they challenged the gendered reproductive discourse in Japan with a strong focus not only on maintaining access to abortion but also on formulating a reproductive politics that is inclusive, intersectional, and anti-eugenic. Additionally, this analysis serves as a case study to understand how different generations of activists and their interests are negotiated and managed in the context of the tension ridden field of reproductive justice.

Panel 4: Sexuelle Gewalt und Demographischer Wandel / Sexual Violence and Demographic Change

Flowers against Sexual Violence

Chiara Fusari, University of Zurich (Switzerland)

This paper examines the development of the *Flower Demo*, a movement started by a group of women in Japan in April 2019 to express their outrage following four consecutive non-guilty verdicts in cases of sexual assault. Over 400 people attended the first gathering in front of Tokyo station. In the following months, the movement spread across the country and there are now branches in all 47 prefectures. Many of the local *Flower Demos* are modest in scale, with just a handful of people meeting once a month, usually on the 11th, in front of their local station. Nevertheless, the movement demonstrated remarkable resilience, persisting through the years of COVID-19 measures and continuing for over five years. The *Flower Demo* embodies Tarana Burke's idea of "me too" as exchange of empathy and as a tool for empowerment and healing. Thus it can be seen as a spin-off of the #MeToo movement, which is contributing to breaking the silence on sexual violence in Japan.

Through interviews with organisers of several *Flower Demos*, this paper aims to better understand what led people to start the demonstrations in their local communities; who are the people behind the movement; and what are the factors contributing to their resilience and the movement's longevity. The flexibility and loose structure of the movement have allowed organisers to adapt the demonstrations' style to local contexts while maintaining a shared core value of believing, listening to, and supporting victims. The *Flower Demo* has attracted considerable media attention and it contributed to the passing of the 2023 reform of the Penal Code in which rape was newly defined as "non-consensual sexual intercourse". In the landscape of Japanese feminism, it is a rather successful movement despite its small-scale presence, therefore its longevity and ability to mobilise and connect people across Japan are worth investigating.

Japan's 'Unprecedented Measures' to Tackle its Population Crisis

Annette Schad-Seifert, Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf (Germany)

At the beginning of the year 2023, Japan's government released an alarming projection about the country's shrinking population, maintaining that, due to the falling birthrate, Japan is "on the brink of not being able to function as a society". Demographic research estimates that Japan's population will be diminished to 86.7 million and its proportion of the aging population (65 years of age and over) will reach 34.8% by 2040. As one of the fastest shrinking countries in the world, Japan has entered the phase of so-called post-demographic transition, resulting in a population structure that is far below replacement level. As Japan's population development is about to turn into an exponential decline, the above-mentioned projections postulate fears about the increasing socio-economic costs of a hugely growing dependent population. Therefore, former Prime Minister Kishida has proposed to lawmakers a plan that engages with the challenge to take up "unprecedented measures against the falling birthrate (*ijigen no shōshika taisaku*)".

Obviously, the number of births has been declining faster than expected and the proportion of childless persons among the productive population has increased to the highest level ever recorded. Analysts maintain that the trend to childlessness has slowed in those Western European countries that have successfully implemented work-life balance policies. To consider the effectiveness of past measures and to analyse how successful or unsuccessful they were, is an important strategy that should accompany the current campaigns and policies. By applying a gender-sensitive and reproductive bargain approach, this paper will critically evaluate the current proposals that aim to recover social fertility. After years of promoting work-life balance measures and gender equality at the workplace, the question remains why Japan's labour market reforms in the past obviously failed to be progressive enough to overcome the traditional gender segregation in the workplace and at home.