

# Introduction to the 2016 Conference Issue

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We are pleased to serve as guest editors for the Fall 2016 conference issue of *Anthropoetics*. We would like to thank Eric Gans for this opportunity even as we acknowledge his very extensive assistance in preparing the issue.

The 10<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the Generative Anthropology Society and Conference was held at Kinjo Gakuin University in Nagoya, Japan in June, 2016 under the theme “Cultural Universals, Cultural Specifics, and Globalization: On the Applicability of General Anthropology.” It was a very significant event for participants, a cross-cultural exchange truly worthy of the name. There was consistent excellence not only in the guest lectures, panel, symposium, and regular presentations, but also in the discussion periods and in the dialogue that continued into breaks and lunchtimes.

We hope some of that spirit is captured in this issue. All papers herein were submitted by conference presenters. In fact, the number of papers submitted by participants was too large for a single issue, so several will be appearing in the Spring 2017 issue. Please note also that the text of Eric Gans’s brilliant plenary lecture, “Nagarjuna and Zeno: Paradox East and West” has already been published in two parts as Chronicles [515](#) and [516](#) in *Chronicles of Love and Resentment*.

This issue puts the spotlight on papers with cross-cultural topics close to the conference theme. We are especially pleased in this issue to present submissions (the first bilingual contributions to the journal) from three participants who are professors in our own Department of Japanese Language and Literature. They represent the “Kinjo Occult Research Group,” an interdisciplinary association that pursues unconventional topics and regularly presents and discusses them in an informal setting on campus. Their participation in our conference, with insightful explorations into the mimetic dimensions of their research, was one of its highpoints—certainly the most impressive visually. Their studies are very welcome contributions to *Anthropoetics*.

Aya Ryusawa examines the heroic narratives of scroll paintings from the Edo period, a mythology of the monstrous by which a local branch of the ruling Tokugawa clan sought to

further legitimize their rule. Kenshin Kiriwara presents an analysis of sacrificial dimensions in the foundation of modern Imperial Japan in the Meiji period, wherein state Shintoism was born. Military victims in this “peaceful” transition to modernity were selectively enshrined in what is now known as Yasukuni Shrine, which is now a continual point of contention in East Asian politics. Shoko Komatsu extends the mimetic analysis to folklore and modern urban legend as she examines the link between ghostly apparitions and victimization in the “Okiku” legends; behind many a ghost story, it seems, lies a tale of persecution.

Our other three contributors are rooted in generative anthropology, nicely balancing the issue and reflecting the reality of the conference, which had a nearly equal focus on generative anthropology and mimetic theory. (*René Girard’s* memory was honored in a series of lectures generously supported by Kinjo Gakuin University’s Institute for the Study of Christian Culture.)

Magdalena Złocka-Dąbrowska covers a vast range of myth and history (East and West) as she draws out points of contact between the anthropological vision of Georges Dumézil and Eric Gans. The prolific and equally wide-ranging Edmond Wright offers playfully serious reflections on language and religion before focusing on the luminous religious poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins and Issa Kobayashi. Ian Dennis, one of generative anthropology’s leading lights, weaves together profound ruminations on Buddhism, romanticism, and the problematic of desire. His paper, focused as was Eric Gans’s lecture on the philosophy of Nagarjuna (via the study by Musashi Tachikawa, one of our featured lecturers), should perhaps be considered its equal in scope and insight.

We hope that readers can enjoy and profit from these highly original papers, each in its own way extending mimetic theory or generative anthropology in new directions. We also remind readers to follow up this issue with the complimentary “sister” issue to appear in spring, which will feature several more papers from our Nagoya conference.