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Emancipation in postmodernity : political thought in Japanese science fiction animation

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Mari Nakamura is Lecturer in Japanese Language and Culture at the University of Central Lancashire in the UK, since 2016. Mari was born in Fukuoka Prefecture, Japan, on 15 September 1975, where she attended Meizen High School in Kurume. From 1994 to 1998, she was an undergraduate student at Fukuoka University, and received her Bachelor of Arts in English in 1998. Between 1996 and 1997 she was an exchange student studying linguistics at the University of Leeds in the UK. From 1998 to 2000, Mari studied Mandarin Chinese at the National Taiwan Normal University Mandarin Training Center in Taiwan. From 2000 to 2003, she was a postgraduate student at the Institute of Linguistics at National Tsing Hua University (NTHU) in Taiwan. During her postgraduate study, she worked as a Japanese instructor at the NTHU Language Center, and as a research assistant at the NTHU Graduate Institute of Philosophy. After receiving her Master of Arts in Linguistics, she lived in Cardiff and Tokyo, and worked in the private sector for three years. Between 2009 and 2010, she worked as a translator at Booking.com in Amsterdam and the Modern East Asia Research Centre at Leiden University. In 2010 she began her PhD at the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies at Leiden University. Mari's doctoral research on science fiction anime and political thought is a part of the VICI-funded 5-year Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) project *Beyond Utopia: New Politics, the Politics of Knowledge, and the Science Fictional Field of Japan*, headed by Prof. dr. Christopher Goto-Jones. During her doctoral study, Mari taught at Leiden University College The Hague and Erasmus University Rotterdam. In 2016, she received the Taiwan fellowship and worked as visiting scholar at the Department of Political Science at National Taiwan University in Taiwan. Mari's research interests include animation, political thought, visual culture in East Asia.

PROPOSITIONS

1. Non-European ideas and thoughts do matter as part of “the common ideological heritage of mankind.”
2. Analyzing everyday cultural practices such as anime is a way of doing philosophy, and it should be a valid intellectual, social and political intervention.
3. The work of Antonio Gramsci and Tosaka Jun remains valuable in studying everyday life and its social, political and philosophical implications today. In this vein, anime is an intellectual product and the experts in anime industry are intellectuals.
4. Anime constitutes a visual narrative, and studying anime’s political thought should therefore involve analysis of the ways in which images and sounds work together in anime’s storytelling.
5. Science fiction and film can generate estrangement and criticism by disclosing the unfamiliarity of the familiar to us, and invite us to see our familiar reality critically.
6. Science fiction anime engages in two kinds of philosophical exercises: *illustration* and *innovation*. That is, anime illustrates existing philosophical ideas in tangible ways; and creates original, novel arguments through thought experiments.
7. Imagination, in particular utopian and science fiction imagination, matters to political thinking and political thought.
8. Emancipation is a contested concept, and should not be limited by the definitions of the past.
9. Anime constitutes a visual narrative, and studying the political thought of an animated film such as *Appleseed* as a thought experiment can therefore involve the reassessment of philosophical arguments proposed by philosophers such as Nicholas Ager.