

## Professor Piccolo's Seminar

The students in our 2022 fourth-year Seminar wrote graduation essays on a wide-ranging choice of topics, from Disney animation, LGBTQ issues, and Japan's Takarazuka Revue to Salvador Dali, Esports, and pop music.

In her essay, "Changing Gender Roles and Disney Princess Movies", Hana Sakaguchi wrote about the popular sub-genre of Disney animation: Disney Princess movies. She focused on how the characteristics of the female protagonists have changed considerably from the past to the present, just as the roles expected of women in society have changed. By looking at three "generations" of Disney films, Hana was able to conclude that the most important change is that the process leading up to the ending of the movies has changed to one in which the princess herself takes hold of her happiness instead of waiting for a prince to rescue her.

Saki Sakakibara, in "A Comparison of Same-sex Marriage Status in Japan and Canada", focuses on the history of same-sex marriage in Japan and Canada, the current situation and challenges of Canada and Japan regarding legalizing same-sex marriage, and the possibility of legalizing same-sex marriage in Japan. Although Japan is the only G7 country that does not recognize same-sex marriage, Saki concludes by noting that groups such as #Equality Act Japan suggest a more positive future by working to enact laws banning discrimination against

LGBTQ people.

Yuka Esaki chose to write about Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet in her graduation thesis, but with a unique focus: the current musical production of the play by the Takarazuka Revue. In her essay, "The Effect of the Characters of 'Love' and 'Death' in the Takarazuka Revue Production of Romeo and Juliet", Yuka focuses on the effect of the Revue's inclusion of two additional characters in the play: personifications of the concepts of Love and Death. In the essay, Yuka carefully works through the Takarazuka's production of the play to show how this unconventional approach manages to remain true to the original while also providing a new and interesting way for audiences to view the play.

In her essay, "The Impact of Dali's Trauma", Arisu Terasaki considers Salvador Dali's art in relation to biographical elements and events in his life, especially particular "traumas" that influenced content and method of his artistic production. In addition, Arisu considers the most important relationships in Dali's life (his older brother; his mother; and his wife, Gala. By looking at particular paintings produced by Dali, she show how these events and relations in Dali's life were very influential in his work and were not a negative thing, but rather a factor in the creation of Dali's great works.

Inspired by his own experience with esports (electronic sports), Yuta Okamoto chose this as the topic for his graduation essay: "Why is Japan Behind in Esports?" He begins by giving an overview of the history of esports in Japan, compares esports

in Japan with esports in South Korea, critiques why Japan is behind in esports competition compared with other countries. In particular, Yuta discusses why improved English ability of Japanese players is necessary if Japan is to compete successfully in esports at the international level.

In "The Difference between Western Pop Music and Japanese Pop Music" Ayana Higashida looks at the relationship and influences between Western and Japanese pop music. She discusses the differences between Japanese and Western pop music by focusing on four points: melody, tempo, rhythm, and chord progression. In conclusion, Ayana sees Western and Japanese influencing each other even more than now.

Finally, this year it was particularly difficult to choose a best essay from among some very well-written essays. However, due to its in-depth research and well-argued thesis Hana Sakaguchi's graduation thesis has been chosen as the best essay in our ourth-year Seminar for 2022.