

Title of the Paper: Understanding Anime – visual iconography as a mirror of Japanese culture

Abstract: *Anime* is commonly known as a Japanese animation style pervaded with a particular visual language and iconography that is frequently used to convey emotions, thoughts, feelings, moods or needs – in short, subtext. In order to get a full understanding of *anime*, it is imperative to become familiar with this non-verbal language. This visual language was born from various elements that shaped Japanese culture, as well as etiquette and how one should express one's emotions or innermost thoughts. We will attempt to understand the cultural aspects behind the emergence of this iconography as well as how the Japanese position themselves when it comes to expression of emotions or feelings, and how these beliefs transfer to the non-verbal language of *anime*, through the analysis of examples of where this iconography is used. We also aim to explore the meaning behind the most common stylized expressions found in *anime* characters, analyzing a broad range of examples from *anime* of different genres and three different decades, exploring the way how they have evolved over the years while trying to understand why they are still relevant nowadays.

Keywords: anime, manga, Japan, iconography, animation