

博士論文審査及び最終試験の結果

審査委員（主査） イリス・ハウカンブ 印

学位申請者 Olga Przybylska オルガ・プシビルスカ

論文名 Fan Visits to Shintō Spaces Motivated by Pop Cultural Narratives

1) 本論文の概要

This dissertation investigates the interplay between Shintō sacred spaces and Japanese popular culture in the context of international fan tourism. It examines Japan-specific examples of “contents tourism” (following the definitions of the research group led by Philip Seaton and Takayoshi Yamamura) with a view to explaining both the motivations of the fans and their on-site ritualized behaviours. Using an interdisciplinary approach drawing on the literature from fan studies, media studies, tourism studies and religious studies, it introduces the concept of “pop Shintō content” to refer to any mediatized narrative representations of Shintō religious tradition. These representations are not necessarily “Japanese” as the producers of popular culture works may be foreign companies using Japanese imagery in their products. Nevertheless, the resulting travel behaviours are seen primarily in Japan at Shintō shrines. For the purposes of the thesis title, however, these are described as Shintō *spaces* because the areas immediately outside shrine precincts may also be visited by fans, as may festivals with parade routes around the town in which the shrine is located.

Przybylska categorizes her contribution to the field in terms of three main achievements. The first is the Typology of Representation in Popular Culture (TRiP) analysis, which categorizes depictions of Shintō spaces in four ways: “degree of realism” (subdivided into “realistic”, “semi-realistic”, “generic” and “fantastic” portrayals), “on-screen presence” (subdivided into “partial” and “full” versions of “major”, “moderate” and “minor” presence), “narrative importance” (subdivided in “major”, “moderate” and “minor”), and finally “narrative context” (subdivided into “realistic”, “fantastic” and “mix”). This framework, based on the author’s obviously extensive knowledge of depictions of Shintō in pop culture, is an extremely useful contribution to the discussion of popular culture representations of Japan. The author claims that this framework has applicability beyond the confines of Shintō-related representations, and while this claim has yet to be empirically tested, it is a reasonable and plausible claim.

The second main contribution is the development and expansion of MacCannell’s work into the process of site sacralisation. MacCannell’s seminal 1976 book *The Tourist* has been a mainstay of the tourism studies literature for five decades, and Przybylska follows in the footsteps of others like Clothilde Sabre who have sought to bring the text more up to date and more explicitly into the realm of tourism induced by popular culture. Przybylska’s innovation is to move away from MacCannell’s form of sacralisation, which is more top-down, and towards “pop sacralisation” as fundamentally a bottom-up process initiated by fans. Again, this is a useful and pertinent contribution to the theoretical literature.

The third main contribution is a large-scale survey of foreign fans visiting Japan to ascertain their motivations, behaviours and reactions. While the number of responses (n=106) was less than the author hoped for, nevertheless this represents a substantial amount of original data and a platform for future research. Key findings from the survey include the educational effects of pop culture consumption. Many fans perceived that they had acquired significant extra knowledge about Shintō via their consumption of pop culture works. While “perceived” knowledge is not necessarily equivalent to “actual” knowledge, Przybylska’s extensive interviews with the priests and staff at shrines provides corroborating evidence that many fans are indeed highly knowledgeable about Shintō and its rituals as a result of consuming works of popular culture. These findings need to be substantiated with follow-up surveys, but the data collected certainly opens up fertile avenues for future research.

In addition to the three main achievements listed above, the thesis was replete with detailed case studies of both works and sites that put flesh onto the bones of her arguments. Przybylska’s extremely broad knowledge of Japanese popular culture shone through on multiple occasions in the thesis. She is an example of a recent trend in research into Japanese pop culture, namely the “fan-scholar” who has encyclopedic knowledge about a particular work/genre and utilizes it in the service of academic scholarship. On all these fronts, therefore, the thesis constitutes an original and pertinent contribution to the literature.

The structure of the thesis was as follows. The Introduction established the main research questions: “Why

and how do foreign fans of Japanese popular culture travel to Shintō shrines in Japan, and in what ways does popular culture shape their perceptions and practices within these spaces” (p. 21). Chapter 1, “Tourism, Shintō and Popular Culture in Japan – Literature Review”, provided a comprehensive overview of existing debates in cultural theory, religious studies, fan studies, and (contents) tourism studies. The subsequent chapters then followed a structure that drew upon Breen and Teeuwen’s “shrine-myth-ritual” structure in their 2020 book *A New History of Shintō*, albeit changed to myths-shrines-rituals to reflect the starting point of fans’ engagement with popular culture, and how it then triggers their travels to Shintō spaces and their behaviours in those spaces (p. 24).

Chapter 2, “Myths I: Shintō Spaces in Pop Cultural Narratives”, introduced and defined the TRiP analysis framework. Each of the possible site types was elucidated with examples of shrine representations from anime, manga and games. Chapter 3, “Myths II: Shintō Spaces as Vessels for Narratives”, outlined how and why Shintō spaces matter within the stories being told. The connections between character, place and narrative were outlined, once again with detailed reference to examples from actual anime, manga and games. Essentially, these two chapters were built around typographies of the many works depicting Shintō spaces that the author has engaged both as fan and as researcher.

Chapter 4, “Shrines: Shintō Sites and the Management of Mediatized Environments”, shifted attention to the management of sites rather than their depiction. Based on fieldwork at shrines and using interviews with priests and other shrine staff, Przybylska painted a detailed picture of the various responses of shrines after discovering that they have become a “sacred site” (*seichi*) not only for their parishioners but also for pop culture fans. This chapter introduced the aforementioned concept of “pop sacralisation” and Przybylska’s reworking of MacCannell’s framework. Then Chapter 5, “Rituals: Fan Visits and Performances at Shintō Sites”, presented the results of the survey. Using the data from 106 international fans, their motivations and behaviours were discussed in depth (the full questionnaire, raw data, and methodological commentary appeared in a lengthy appendix).

Finally, the conclusions restated the main findings of each chapter, discussed some of the limitations of the research, and presented avenues for future research.

2) 本論文の評価と問題点

The examiners were very impressed with a number of aspects of the thesis. The thesis explores a vast body of literature covering religious anthropology, tourism studies and media studies. From classic tourism theories to recent discussion of sacred site pilgrimage (聖地巡礼), the theoretical background is strongly constructed. The structure of the argument is logical, with a consistent flow from the introduction to conclusion. The explanation of how narrative consumption is transformed into the sacralisation of space was excellent. The most original aspect of the thesis is how it develops current research into anime pilgrimage to explore how fans re-interpret 聖性 or the “sacredness” of shrines, and to connect it with their own identities from an insider’s perspective. As such, this paper makes an extremely important academic contribution to understanding the transformation of religion in modern times. The international perspective provided by the multilingual survey is a major contribution not found in domestic Japanese research.

While acknowledging these major accomplishments, the examiners also noted areas for strengthening and improvement before this research is published as a monograph or in internationally-refereed journals. The examiners felt that key concepts were not always defined or distinguished consistently. For example, words like “sacred” and “sacralisation” are used across various fields, cultures and religions, and sometimes their meanings felt slightly different. There were also a number of instances in which points were made, but not followed up adequately. For example, the difference in shrine responses to becoming a pop culture *seichi* was well made, but the processes by which shrines come to their respective decisions could have been explained in more detail. There were also various issues relating to the data presentation from the various surveys. While the online survey methodology was clearly explained, the methods by which shrine staff were contacted and interviewed could be unclear (perhaps moved from the appendix to the main body of the thesis). Concerns were also raised about the sampling method for the online survey based on the pattern of responses collected (clusters of Polish and French respondents pointed to the author’s network rather than a genuinely representative sample of international fans). There could also have been more discussion of some big issues such as nation/nationalism and gender.

The examiners also picked up on a number of technical issues with the writing in English. There were quite a lot of English typos throughout the thesis, which was a result of writing going right down to the submission deadline. Not all parts of the thesis could receive a final proofread before submission. Furthermore, there was inconsistency in the formatting of the bibliography, which is again a symptom of a lack of time just pre-submission. As these technical issues impinge neither on the scholarly contribution of the thesis (they are typos, not problems in the argument), nor on research ethics (they are an issue of bibliography formatting rather than ethical lacunas in citation practice), the panel agreed to overlook these mistakes at the examination stage providing they are resolved by the time the final thesis is submitted to the university library repository.

Looking forward, however, to the conversion of this research into a published monograph and journal articles, the panel agreed that Przybylska still has work to do on the *synthesis* of her arguments. The same idea tends

to be repeated, the prose can be over-elaborate on occasions, and there can be jumping around from topic to topic. Przybylska has worked very hard over the course of her PhD program to iron out such issues, although some still remain. As such, she has received the advice that “letting the dust settle” on her thesis, and then returning to it at a later stage with fresh, critical eyes will be an important means of ensuring the synthesis and coherence of future publications will be stronger.

3) 最終試験の審査と結論（日程と概要、可否）

The first draft of the thesis was submitted to the supervising committee on 1 October 2025. At this point the draft was overlong (about 90,000 words) and significant cuts were requested. The requested changes/cuts were made in November, and the thesis was submitted on time in December. Following the establishment of the thesis examination committee (Professors Haukamp, Arakawa, Trifu and Seaton from TUFS, and Professor Akiko Sugawa-Shimada from Yokohama National University), the thesis defense was conducted on TUFS campus (middle-sized meeting room in the administrative building) on 20 February 2026 between 14:30 and 16:45. The external examiner attended online, and there was one other observer from TUFS.

Przybylska responded well to all the questions asked of her, although as in her writing she still needs to learn the merits of “brief and to the point” over “long and detailed”. Questions were wide-ranging. They included general topics such as whether the TRiP analysis framework would be applicable to sites in other religious traditions (e.g. Christian churches or Buddhist temples), and questions about more specific statements in the thesis, such as whether the claim that the thesis investigated the “interplay” between Shintō spaces and popular culture was really the best wording. All questions were answered satisfactorily in the eyes of the examiners.

In conclusion, therefore, based on the content of a thesis that clearly demonstrates deep and broad knowledge of the topic, and that also makes a number of significant theoretical contributions to contents tourism studies and empirically-based conclusions about foreign tourist behaviours in Japan, the committee is unanimous in recommending that Olga Przybylska be awarded a PhD degree.