

**18th ASIA PACIFIC CONFERENCE  
PROCEEDINGS**

**PANEL SESSIONS  
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## **Humanities**

Chair: **PROGLER, Joseph**, Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, Japan

1. **HAPUGODA, Mahesh**, Sabaragamuwa University, Sri Lanka; **ANANDAWANSA, Krishanthi**, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Sri Lanka

Title: Is Yukio Mishima a fadical idealist of our times?

Abstract:

The movie “Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters” (1985) articulates the cinematic actualization of the tragic death drive of the renowned Japanese author Yukio Mishima (1925-1970). It portrays Mishima’s psychological dilemma, as one who suffers because of his inability to resolve the anxiety between beauty of nature and the incapacity of words in articulating that beauty. This paper argues that, following his Samurai idealism that the sense of beauty is always connected with death, Mishima chooses to die to resolve the mismatch between elegance and brutality. He does so in a melancholic psychological attempt of narcissistic self-sublimation in youthful beauty. Mishima becomes helpless both before the immaculate beauty of the Golden Pavilion and the passionately inviting nipples of a young Japanese girl. This is where he understands that, as a man, he is stuck in fundamental deadlock in reaching out for the Real, the natural decadence of beauty, even though he is fascinated by the beauty itself. This leads him to opt for a glorious youthful death without de-sublimating his Samurai idealism. Hence, this paper concludes that Mishima suffered from a deadlock of fantasy, which sustained a fatalistic ideal that led to a radical death but that death was the only possible political resistance against contemporary materialism in Japan.