

SYMPOSIUM

# Beyond Japanese Studies

*Challenges, Opportunities and COVID-19*

Supporting Japan-interested early career researchers, in and beyond Japanese Studies, and across the Asia-Pacific.

February 18-19, 2021 (AEDT)

Online (via Zoom)

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## PROGRAM

Presented by

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**JAPAN FOUNDATION**  
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**NEW VOICES**  
IN JAPANESE STUDIES

## CONTENTS

3	<b>About this Symposium</b>
5	<b>Program, Day One (February 18, AEDT)</b>
6	<b>Program, Day Two (February 19, AEDT)</b>
7	<b>Keynote Abstract &amp; Biography</b>
8	<b>Presenter Abstracts &amp; Biographies</b>

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# Beyond Japanese Studies

*Challenges, Opportunities and COVID-19*

## ABOUT THIS SYMPOSIUM

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### Overview

This symposium is designed to respond to challenges, opportunities and needs in the academic landscape which have resulted from, or been intensified by, the effects of COVID-19.

Japan-interested scholars must today consider how their work intersects with 'Global Studies', Asian Studies, trans-national and trans-cultural aspects of the human, natural, economic and physical world. They must also seek to broaden the regional and global relevance of their work by better connecting with colleagues across borders. Taking "Beyond Japanese Studies" as its theme, this symposium aims to bring early career scholars together to share their research with a wider audience and to consider strategies that Japan scholars can use to thrive.

The two-day program includes panel presentations by ECRs which address the conference theme, a collaborative discussion session touching on topics such as publishing, funding and social media, and meet and greet sessions. The symposium will begin with a presentation by keynote speaker Professor Gracia Liu-Farrer (Waseda University) in line with the 'Beyond Japanese Studies' theme.

*Beyond Japanese Studies* is presented by The Japan Foundation, Sydney (Eora nation, Gadigal land) and the Japanese Studies Department at the University of New England (UNE; Anaiwan country, shared with Gumbaynggirr, Kamilaroi and Dhunghutti nations). It is convened by Dr Gwyn McClelland (Japanese Studies Department, UNE) and Elicia O'Reilly (Japanese Studies Department, The Japan Foundation, Sydney).

Presentation is open to all early career scholars, from postgraduates to recent PhD graduates (up to seven years post-PhD; non-tenured) in Australia, New Zealand and the broader Asia-Pacific region (including the US) whose research is related to Japan. Attendance is welcome from anyone in the Asia-Pacific region with an interest in Japan-related scholarship.

Following the symposium, selected presenters will be invited to write a paper for inclusion in a related Special Issue of *New Voices in Japanese Studies (NVJS)*. *NVJS* is an open-access peer-reviewed journal which specialises in providing a platform for emerging researchers, and is published by The Japan Foundation, Sydney.

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### Background

*Beyond Japanese Studies* seeks to consider how Japan-interested ECRs may develop their careers. It builds on a recent online roundtable discussion titled "The Rebirth of Japanese Studies", held in mid-2020 in conjunction with the US Association of Asian Studies (AAS).

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# Beyond Japanese Studies

*Challenges, Opportunities and COVID-19*

## ABOUT THIS SYMPOSIUM

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“The Rebirth of Japanese Studies” roundtable identified some critical areas for the revitalisation of the field, including:

- *Actionable solutions / future directions*
- *Importance of fostering communication, collaboration, and accessibility to productively move forward as a community “linked by the fluid canopy of Japanese Studies”*
- *Importance of Japan specialists pursuing positions beyond Japanese Studies*
- *Importance of preparing young scholars to be able to do the above*
- *Importance of including/acknowledging a broader range of voices in Japan-related scholarship*

Responding to the background outlined above, the symposium will contribute to an urgent and ongoing global conversation about prospects and avenues for thinking ‘Beyond Japanese Studies’ from an Australian/Asia-Pacific perspective.

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### About the Call for Abstracts

Early-career scholars were invited to submit an abstract for a 20-minute presentation from their own research, touching upon the theme of the symposium, Beyond Japanese Studies, and considering one or more of the following questions:

- *How does my research intersect with/contribute beyond Japanese Studies to other disciplines, regions, cultural traditions or philosophies?*
- *How will or has my research develop(ed)/broaden(ed)/change(d) due to the multiple impacts of COVID-19 and/or other future challenges such as Climate Change/the Anthropocene?*
- *How does my research assist in considering the future after 2020?*
- *How does my research broaden our understanding of Japanese Studies?*
- *How do/can I advocate for/articulate the value of my research to society beyond the Japanese Studies academy?*
- *What are some broad or specific applications/implications of my research for society in Australia, New Zealand, and the wider Asia-Pacific?*

Contributions were welcomed from a broad range of disciplines, including anthropology, art history, economics, history, linguistics, literature, media studies, musicology, and from a range of locations.

Eligibility criteria for presenters were as follows:

- *Non-tenured early-career scholar (up to seven years post-PhD)*
- *Based in, or from, Australia, New Zealand and the broader Asia-Pacific region (including the US)*
- *Research is related to Japan*

An honorarium of AU\$100, kindly sponsored by the University of New England and the Japan Foundation, Sydney, is offered to presenters in post-graduate or non-ongoing positions.

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## SYMPOSIUM

# Beyond Japanese Studies

Challenges, Opportunities and COVID-19

## PROGRAM | DAY ONE (FEB 18)

Dates and times in AEDT (Sydney time)  
All sessions public unless otherwise indicated

9:30am **Welcome**

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10:00am **Keynote Session**

- *Making Japanese Studies More Central to Academic Discussion*

11:30am Professor Gracia Liu-Farrer

Graduate School of Asia Pacific Studies, Waseda University

Discussant: Dr Gwyn McClelland, University of New England

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11:45am **Agenda Setting**

- *Why This Symposium, and Why Now?*

12:30pm *Using Twitter for Academic Purposes*

Gwyn McClelland (University of New England) & Elicia O'Reilly (The

Japan Foundation, Sydney)

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1:15pm **Panel 1: Decolonising Identity**

- *Interdisciplinary LGBTQA+ Research Collaborations Between Japan and Australia*

2:30pm (Adam Hill, LaTrobe University)

*Defining Human: Living Objects in Japanese Popular Culture Beyond*

'Anthropomorphism' (Estelle Rust, Keio University)

*Doing Transgender Studies in Japanese Studies* (Shu Min Yuen, National University of Singapore)

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2:45pm **Panel 2: Southeast Asian Transborder Studies**

- *What can Japanese Popular Culture Teach Us About Queer Sexuality in Southeast*

4:00pm *Asia?* (Thomas Baudinette, Macquarie University)

*Japanese Law in the Mekong Region: Needs and Necessities of Assessing the Influence of Japanese Private Law in Southeast Asian Economies Emerging from the Chaos of the COVID-19 Era* (Nobumichi Teramura, University of Brunei Darussalam)

*Toward an Interconnected Asia Pacific: Conversing Beyond Japanese Studies* (Maria Cynthia Barriga, Waseda University)

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4:00pm **Meet & Greet** closed session

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4:30pm

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# Beyond Japanese Studies

Challenges, Opportunities and COVID-19

## PROGRAM | DAY TWO (FEB 19)

Dates and times in AEDT (Sydney time)  
All sessions public unless otherwise indicated

10:00am **Welcome**

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10:15am **Panel 3: The Public Realm**

- *Can You Question Science Without Being an Anti-Vaxxer? Doing the History of Health in Japan After COVID* (Joshua Schlachet, University of Arizona)

11:30am

*Rethinking Environmental Mobilisation: Civil Society Engagement in the Energy Decision-making Process in Post Fukushima Japan* (Pinar Temocin, Hiroshima University)

*Taking Stock of the Australia-Japan Relationship* (Benjamin Ascione, Australian National University)

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11:45am **Panel 4a: The State of Play During COVID-19** concurrent panel

- *Pivoting to Digital Ethnography: How Animal Crossing Presented me with "New Horizons" for Researching Japanese Popular Culture* (Megan Rose, UNSW Sydney)

1:00pm

*Data-Driven Perspectives on Cultural Movement: The Sacred and the Secular of the Spaces between the 88 Temples of Shikoku* (Jesse Rouse, University of North Carolina)

*A Disadvantage or a Blessing in Disguise? Experience and Lessons Driven from being on Field Research during COVID-19* (Swati Arora, Jawaharlal Nehru University)

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11:45am **Panel 4b: Transnational, Translocal** concurrent panel

- *Exploring Race and Identity Beyond Japanese Studies*  
(Aoife Wilkinson, University of Queensland)

1:00pm

*Japanese Migration History as Public History in South Minneapolis*  
(Andre Kobayashi Deckrow, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities)

*Superdiversity and Translocal Brutality in Japanese Extreme Metal*  
(Wes Robertson, Macquarie University)

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2:00pm **Collaborative Seminar** closed session

- *Collaborative feedback framework overview*  
4:15pm *Discussion groups & feedback*

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4:30pm **Meet & Greet (Drinks)** closed session

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5:00pm

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# Beyond Japanese Studies

Challenges, Opportunities and COVID-19

## KEYNOTE ABSTRACT & BIOGRAPHY

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### Professor Gracia Liu Farrer

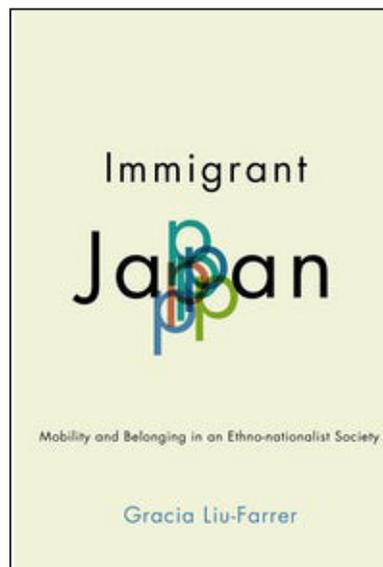
Graduate School of Asia Pacific Studies, Waseda University

Gracia Liu-Farrer (Ph.D. Sociology, University of Chicago), is Professor at the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies, and Director of Institute of Asian Migration at Waseda University, Japan. Her research examines immigrants' economic, social and political practices in Japan, and the global mobility of students and professional migrants. She is the author of books *Labor Migration from China to Japan: International Students, Transnational Migrants* (Routledge, 2011), *Handbook of Asian Migrations* (co-edited with Brenda Yeoh, Routledge, 2018), and *Immigrant Japan: Mobility and Belonging in an Ethno-nationalist Society* (Cornell University Press, 2020). She has also published over 50 book chapters and journal articles in leading migration and area studies journals.

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### Making Japanese Studies More Central to Academic Discussion

Because of the Western orientation of historic academic disciplines, research about Japan, a non-Western society, tends to be labeled as area studies. Scholars who research about Japanese culture and society consequently find their audience narrowly limited to fellow anthropologists, political scientists, or historians who specialize in Japan. This is sometimes frustrating because our work about Japan is not only about Japan, and not only relevant to Japan, but also is intended to make empirical and theoretical contributions to the disciplines and the subject fields in which we work. It is therefore important to consider how we can make our Japan-centered research relevant to the broader academic fields. This presentation discusses possible strategies to make Japan not only a relevant empirical case, but also central to conceptual and theoretical development in our respective subject fields and disciplines.



### ABSTRACTS & PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES (in alphabetical order)

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#### Swati Arora

*Jawaharlal Nehru University (India) | Waseda University (Japan)*

Swati Arora is a PhD candidate at Jawaharlal Nehru University, India. Her prime interests pertain to Japan's foreign policy and environmental conservation, and her PhD dissertation is about "Japan's Environmental Aid Effectiveness: A Study of Select Asian Countries, 1997-2017." Swati is a Japan Foundation Japanese Studies Research Fellow (2019-2020) at Waseda University. She has also been a recipient of the Mitsubishi Cooperation International Scholarship (2014-2015) and Yasuda Foundation Scholarship (2015) in recognition of her Japanese language excellence. She developed her current research thesis while on a study trip to Japan organised by Okita Memorial Scholarship (2016-17), awarded for academic excellence.

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#### **A Disadvantage or a Blessing in Disguise? Experience and Lessons Driven from being on Field Research during COVID-19**

Area Studies is an interpretive research field developed on a theoretical foundation that is based on the concept of globalisation. To realise the potential of a research project, field research is sometimes a key enabler. However, field research in itself also constitutes fundamental challenges. Hence, there is an immense amount of literature available by scholars from different fields on how to conduct useful field research. The current presentation aims to engage the audience by reflecting upon various instances of being on field research in Japan during the global Covid-19 pandemic. The presentation aims to share my experiences of travel across the field, unexpected challenges, support from the Japan Foundation, attempts to access academic texts, among others. The presentation is an attempt to give a concrete picture for other research scholars who are yet to experience their research endeavors post-COVID-19. The presentation aims to map out a route and trajectory that articulates how it is currently on the field, why it is so, and future implications. The presentation aims at expanding the effective utilisation of funds and strategic integration of factors that can lead to effective research outcomes across different fields. Situating the presentation amid the existing scenario of COVID-19, the study primarily tries to decode field research challenges and offer achievable solutions.

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### ABSTRACTS & PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES (in alphabetical order)

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#### Dr Benjamin Ascione

*Australia-Japan Research Centre, Australian National University (Australia)*

I am an associate researcher at the Australia-Japan Research Centre at the Australian National University, a member of the editorial board of *East Asia Forum* and a research associate at the Japan Center for International Exchange.

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#### Taking Stock of the Australia-Japan Relationship

The Australia-Japan relationship is one of growing importance in regional and global affairs. Political and security cooperation are deepening on the back of deep and broad economic and people-to-people ties. The forthcoming *Australia-Japan Relations Stocktake Report* (Australia-Japan Research Centre, Australian National University) provides a stocktake of the health of the bilateral relationship. This includes a sketch of its historical background followed by an analysis of the economic relationship, people-to-people relations, security cooperation, and blind spots. Section one analyses the economic relationship, giving a benchmark of the health of the trade and investment relationship between Japan and Australia. Section two analyses Australia-Japan people-to-people relations, including the state of sister-city relationships, educational exchanges, tourism and working holidays between the two countries. Section three provides an overview of the deepening institutionalisation of Australia-Japan security cooperation throughout the post-Cold War era, including the establishment of a special strategic partnership in 2014. Section four analyses blind spots in the relationship, such whaling and Japan's failed attempt to sell Australia its Soryu-class submarines in 2016.

This research assists in deepening our understanding of the future beyond 2020. It makes publicly available a set of benchmarks against which the health of the Australia-Japan relationship can be assessed. It also provides a starting point for analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on the state of the relationship.

The research is of practical application for Australian and Japanese society and the Asia-Pacific region. Understanding the health of various aspects of the bilateral relationship helps to identify the breadth and depth, as well as weaknesses in the bilateral relationship. Cataloguing the various aspects of the bilateral relationship and links to the data sources will be an asset to researchers, policymakers and practitioners dealing between Australia and Japan. The research also provides a model for other small and middle-power countries in the region that seek to contribute to regional order-building at a time of increasing uncertainty due to intensifying great power competition by providing a case study of challenges and successes of the Australia-Japan relationship.

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# Beyond Japanese Studies

*Challenges, Opportunities and COVID-19*

## ABSTRACTS & PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES (in alphabetical order)

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### **Dr Maria Cynthia Barriga**

*Global Education Centre, Waseda University (Japan)*

I am a recent PhD graduate of Waseda University's Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies. My interest is on Pacific War history, Japanese diaspora, and postcolonial histories of the Philippines and the Marianas. At present, I work as a Research Associate at Waseda University's Academic Writing Program, Global Education Center.

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### **Toward an Interconnected Asia Pacific: Conversing beyond Japanese Studies**

As a Philippine historian studying the Japanese locals in the Philippines and in Guam, I see the "rebirth" of Japanese Studies as the way toward an interconnected Asia Pacific. The idea that Japanese Studies is close to death and needs rebirth was initially surprising. My primary sources are in Japanese and the experts in my field are Japanese. Colleagues in the Philippines and in Guam similarly find Japanese Studies relevant in their research on diaspora, colonialism, and war. Conducting research in Japan, however, I had to contend with not only the foreign language but also the dominant perspective. The over-reliance on archival materials, most of which are in Japanese, silences those who did not write and veers the analysis to Japan-oriented conclusions. The unquestioned presupposition that people of Japanese ancestry are Japanese or want-to-be Japanese ignores the hybridity of the region and the individuals in it. The questions deemed relevant are those of relevance to Japanese Studies scholars. Fortunately, I found peers, professors, and funders who are open and interested in differing perspectives. Conversing with them is difficult but always fruitful. Our contestations reveal our equally limited perspectives and give birth to ideas which can enrich our own fields of research.

Such cross-area conversations increased during the pandemic. The rise of online conferences allowed scholars across the globe to convene and discuss, overcoming expensive and time-consuming travel costs. With the difficulties of going to libraries and archives, scholars came to habitually share information about digital collections. The more generous send their research notes to trusted peers and translate materials for fellows on the other side of the language barrier. While the pandemic has been prohibitive in many ways, it has triggered innovative approaches, as well as increased conversations and collegiality. As with my pre-pandemic experience, this cross-regional, cross-disciplinary collaboration entails a series of misunderstandings and adjustments, made more difficult by hierarchies of power within the academe. However, doing so is one way to locate Japanese Studies (and Philippine and Guam histories) within the Asia Pacific and expand its relevance beyond its own geographical area.

# Beyond Japanese Studies

*Challenges, Opportunities and COVID-19*

## ABSTRACTS & PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES (in alphabetical order)

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### **Dr Thomas Baudinette**

*Department of Media, Communications, Creative Arts, Language and Literature, Macquarie University (Australia)*

Thomas Baudinette is Lecturer in the Department of Media, Communications, Creative Arts, Language and Literature at Macquarie University. Thomas is a cultural anthropologist whose work has explored consumption of popular culture among queer communities in Japan, Mainland China, Thailand and the Philippines. He has a particular interest in the transnational spread of Japanese queer popular culture and its impacts on conceptualisations of gender and sexuality. Thomas's work is united by a commitment to digital research methods, ethnographic practice and the study of the lived experiences of media use in everyday life. Recently, he has begun exploring the nexus of East and Southeast Asian popular culture, especially the development of pan-Asian "idol" celebrity and related fan cultures.

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### **What Can Japanese Popular Culture Teach Us about Queer Sexuality in Southeast Asia?**

Within this presentation, I reflect on how my training in Japanese Cultural Studies has provided me with the knowledge and skills necessary to conduct research into the evolution of queer sexuality in Southeast Asia, with a particular focus on Thailand and the Philippines. Over the past several years, a genre of Japanese popular culture known as Boys Love, which depicts romance between beautiful men, has become highly popular across the Asia-Pacific, transforming the media landscape of Thailand. Thai media are now awash with local adaptations of Japanese Boys Love, leading novel understandings of sexuality and gender to emerge in the kingdom which represent a "glocalisation" of Japanese cultural knowledge. More so than representing a "borrowing" of Japanese popular culture, however, the genre which has come to be known as "Thai BL" has produced its own innovations that provide broader insights into an emerging Southeast Asian consumer culture. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Philippines, where Thai BL became immensely popular throughout the final half of the 2010s. Importantly, for Philippine consumers whom I have interviewed during ethnographic research conducted between 2018 and 2020, Boys Love is no longer conceptually tied to Japan and is instead consumed as a new form of Pan-Asian media that possesses important queer emancipatory potentials. In reflecting on the historical development of Thai BL and its emerging Philippine fandom, I conclude this presentation by exploring the theoretical potentials of researching Japanese transnational media as "dislocated" from Japan. I demonstrate that while sophisticated knowledge of Japanese popular media is required to chart these complicated transnational flows, "de-centering" Japan analytically to re-focus attention on the politics of reception in Southeast Asia is particularly generative of new theory that will propel Japanese Studies in innovative directions.

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# Beyond Japanese Studies

*Challenges, Opportunities and COVID-19*

## ABSTRACTS & PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES (in alphabetical order)

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### **Dr Andre Kobayashi Deckrow**

*Department of History, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities (USA)*

Andre Kobayashi Deckrow is a Post-Doctoral Associate in the Heritage Studies and Public History program and the Department of History at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. He received his PhD in the History-East Asia program at Columbia University in May 2019. A historian of global migration, his current book project examines Japanese state-sponsored migration to Brazil in the early twentieth century. He is interested in questions of colonialism, national identity, and citizenship. He has also contributed to public history projects on Japanese American history in Southern California and worked with secondary school teachers to develop curricula for teaching world history.

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### **Japanese Migration History as Public History in South Minneapolis**

On June 9, 2020, George Floyd was killed by police in Minneapolis, Minnesota. His death ignited a global conversation about race and police brutality, and in Minneapolis, saw months of social unrest and protest aimed at reforming the police department and changing the community. Specifically, the corridor along Lake Street, where the Minneapolis Police Department's Third Precinct Building (burned as part of the protests) was located, served as a focus for the protests. Long a destination for new residents to the Twin Cities (both international and domestic), Lake Street has historically been an axis of gentrification and change within the larger community. Immigrant communities played an important role in organising and responding to protests during this summer's uprising, and today, they continue to lead conversations about the future of Lake Street and the Twin Cities more broadly.

As a historian whose academic research has primarily focused on Japanese-Brazilian migration, I am now teaching a graduate-level public history course that examines these long histories of immigration along Lake Street in the wake of this summer's protests. My paper argues that Japanese migration history can inform public histories of migration, even in places without large Japanese communities. I argue that by incorporating a global lens and reading broadly to understand the motivations and experiences of immigrants, public historians can draw connections between various complex and contested histories.

Looking at Japanese history, I seek to use examples of how Japanese immigration projects have often promoted economic and political development at the expense of local and indigenous political power (e.g. in Brazil and Hawai'i) while also highlighting how Japanese have often been the targets of anti-immigrant, nativist regimes. My hope is that Japanese migration history can shed light on the complexities of immigrant experiences in South Minneapolis in ways that break down mythologies of American exceptionalism, and instead show how the experiences of migration are similar across time and place; at once, emphasising the uniqueness of local history and the larger, global contexts in which these immigration histories exist.

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### ABSTRACTS & PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES (in alphabetical order)

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#### **Dr Adam Hill**

*La Trobe University (Australia)*

I studied comparative literature specialising in Japanese literary translation at Brown University and two years of MEXT at Tokyo University. When I then decided to pursue sociology in Okinawa at the University of the Ryukyus to research social capital among gay and bisexual men, it was in order to answer a simple question as to whether having a gay or bisexual identity enabled Okinawan men access to resources on American military bases that their heterosexual counterparts could not. While I did this research, I discovered that 1) a large proportion of men who have sex with men (MSM) in Okinawa didn't identify as 'gay' or 'bisexual', and those who did often considered 'gay' a gender, and 2) there was a concentrated epidemic of HIV among this population, with very little knowledge of STIs or protective behaviours. I then examined the impacts of racial hierarchies and social capital on sexual risk-taking behaviours in Okinawa among MSM and graduated with a degree in Sociology. I continued this research at the University of Melbourne and received a PhD in Sociology and Epidemiology on social capital, sexual risk-taking and suicide among MSM in Japan. I now work with Australian researchers on the largest study looking at the health and wellbeing of LGBTQA+ young people in Australia and Asia. I work largely in Public Health but continue to work and collaborate with my colleagues in Literary Translation and Sociology.

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#### **Interdisciplinary LGBTQA+ Research Collaborations between Japan and Australia**

While research of over 6,400 LGBTQA+ young people in Australia has shown that there are 19 distinct gender identity categories and nine sexual identity categories that are comprehensive to young LGBTQA+ young people, preliminary qualitative research in Japan through LGBT NGOs implies a situation that is entirely different. Previous research found that a large proportion of Japanese men who have sex with men (MSM) do not identify as 'gay' or 'bisexual', and those who did often considered 'gay' a gender, problematising the utilisation of Western categories of sexual identity in a country where sexual behaviors and sexual identities are often separate. Similarly, young people are changing dramatically in this current climate in which categories of gender and sexuality emerge as products of globalisation. Some Japanese LGBTQA+ young people actively embrace Western gay identities while some reject them as products of Western cultural imperialism and others take Western concepts of sexuality and gender and use them to create uniquely Japanese hybrid forms. This is not a one-way flow of information and influence, but a dynamic exchange and flow between Japan, Southeast Asia, and the West.

This paper is based on a current project preparing a large-scale public health survey in Japan, replicating the aforementioned study which is the largest study of LGBTQA+ young people in Australia. This research collaboration has implications for understanding the concepts of sexuality and gender that emerge as complicated products of globalisation and may produce research outputs

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# Beyond Japanese Studies

*Challenges, Opportunities and COVID-19*

## ABSTRACTS & PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES (in alphabetical order)

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in Japan that often reflect upcoming trends in Southeast Asia, or even among Asia-born people in Australia.

While the West is often starved of research regarding Japan in the field of Public Health, much of this, if not in Japanese, is not accessed locally. In this paper I draw on my own experiences in of academic research and collaborations in the fields of sociology, comparative literature and public health with Japanese researchers and government bodies. I propose for a greater call to publish outside of Japanese Studies and Area Studies internationally for the benefit of many other increasingly permeable academic disciplines, as well as greater permeability of Japanese Studies to accept broader disciplinary works.

# Beyond Japanese Studies

*Challenges, Opportunities and COVID-19*

## ABSTRACTS & PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES (in alphabetical order)

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### Dr Wes Robertson

*Department of Media, Communications, Creative Arts, Language, and Literature, Macquarie University (Australia)*

Wes Robertson is Lecturer in the Department of Media, Communications, Creative Arts, Language, and Literature at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia. His research looks at how writing-restricted forms of variation become sites for stance taking, identity formation, and the negotiation of language ideologies – especially in Japanese. His first monograph, *Scripting Japan*, was published by Routledge in 2020.

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### Superdiversity and Translocal Brutality in Japanese Extreme Metal

Studies of Japanese linguistics have often been limited in assuming that their findings are of importance only to the Japanese context. In line with the themes of this symposium, this current paper explicitly challenges this view, and attempts to show the value of research on Japanese language contexts that more explicitly engages with global discussions of language and language use. To do so, the current paper specifically investigates the lyrics and lyrical practices of the Japanese extreme metal band Gotsu Totsu Kotsu (GTK), a death metal group which differs from many artists in the international rock and metal scenes in expressly avoiding the use of English. While less studied, extreme metal is similar to hip hop in being a long-running translocal subculture with active and dedicated members. Most importantly for the current paper's interest in linguistic phenomena though, it is a subculture known for particular linguistic practices without specific roots in a dialect, region, or even group of native speakers, all centred around the desire to produce a "metal" affect known as "brutality".

Through both analysis of GTK's lyrics and an interview with their singer, the current study draws upon the sociolinguistic concepts of indexicality and chronotopic frame theory to examine how the singer attempts to (re)produce "brutality" via entirely local linguistic forms. That is, how the artist reimagines items with their own pre-existing local referents into markers of "brutality" or "metalness". In doing so, the paper finds that while GTK avoids English entirely, they are engaging with the language of the English scene by borrowing, negotiating, and rejecting its established practices. Their reimagining of Japanese terms as "brutal" draws on both their pre-existing links to Japanese social identities, and transnational understandings of what styles of language use are "brutal". Ultimately, the paper therefore argues that GTK's practices question broader understandings of the barriers between languages, and show how the study of the Japanese context can have global relevance – here by questioning the presumed necessity of borrowed language forms for participating within translocal scenes.

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### ABSTRACTS & PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES (in alphabetical order)

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#### Dr Megan Rose

*Vitalities Lab, UNSW Sydney (Australia)*

Megan is an associate researcher at the Vitalities Lab, UNSW Sydney, and a researcher at the Australian National Research Organisation for Women's Safety. She explores how alternative communities and fans live, think and feel through kawaii objects to enhance their everyday lives.

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#### **Pivoting to Digital Ethnography: How *Animal Crossing* Presented Me with “New Horizons” for Researching Japanese Popular Culture**

While travel bans during COVID-19 present challenges for researching Japanese popular culture fandoms, it also invites us to adopt creative and innovative ways to engage with fans' experiences of the texts and contribute to broader research into experiences of the pandemic. Taking a digital sociological approach, I explore how ethnography can be used to visit and experience digital worlds in real time with fans of Japanese popular culture, in order to better understand how they relate to the objects of their fandom. Drawing on my experiences of pivoting to a digital ethnographic study of *Animal Crossing: New Horizons*, I consider how my research into the game has broadened due to the global impacts of the pandemic, and how Japanese Studies can contribute to methodological innovation and sociological understandings of the pandemic more broadly. While prior to the pandemic I had intended to conduct traditional qualitative interviews with fans, travel restrictions necessitated innovation and in turn resulted in my conducting interviews in-game where I visit and meet with fans' avatars and game worlds, which we then explore together and discuss via VoIP. In addition to this methodological pivot, the cultural value of the game worldwide far exceeded my expectations. It became the second best-selling game for the Switch, and its popularity is largely attributed to the “wholesome” and “cute” gameplay it offers during the precarity and uncertainty of COVID-19. This offered a clear link to Japanese Studies' kawaii theory and study of the “healing boom” in Japan, providing a way in which the discipline could contribute to sociological studies of COVID-19. With 18 in-game interviews conducted so far and more underway, this example provides a way in which research into Japanese popular culture can adapt to the changing research landscape and also contribute to conversations beyond Japanese Studies.

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## ABSTRACTS & PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES (in alphabetical order)

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### Dr Jesse Rouse

*Department of Geography, University of North Carolina, Pembroke (USA)*

Jesse Rouse is an Assistant Professor of Geography at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. His work focuses on the interplay between cultural geography and geospatial technologies.

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### **Data-Driven Perspectives on Cultural Movement: The Sacred and the Secular of the Spaces between the 88 Temples of Shikoku**

In the late spring of 2019, I began fieldwork in Japan within a larger project focused on creating a virtual representation on the Shikoku pilgrimage. The plan was that my work would focus on the cultural geography aspects of the temples themselves, however, as we traveled between temples, I found that the movement between temples and within the temple grounds were equally important from a pilgrim's perspective. In fact, the distances traveled to get to the next temple meant that more time was spent in the residential areas, fields, and forests between the temples than at the temples themselves.

While only a little over a week was spent on Shikoku in 2019, additional fieldwork was planned for 2020 until travel was stopped due to the pandemic. However, even though direct observation and experience of the pilgrimage is not currently possible due to travel restrictions, Japan does make available a significant amount of geospatial data. This data is the basis of on-going research to model landscape experience and visibility, largely tied to Tadahiko Higuchi's suggestion of extending the idea of viewsheds to better capture the cultural experience of landscape. My goal is to generate representations of the experience of landscape utilising Higuchi's viewshed indices along the traditional paths taken by pilgrims so that these representations can be ground-truthed in the field when I can next visit the island, or possibly even work with local researchers and students in Japan to have them compare their experience to the modeled experience.

This presentation will focus on the context of the *henro* pilgrimage, the acquisition and use of Japanese geospatial data, and the implementation of Higuchi's viewshed indices along the route of the pilgrimage. While the work itself is on-going, it provides an example of how geospatial data and geospatial technologies can be used to better understand cultural landscapes from a distance. It also, provides another example of how Higuchi's approach to the visual and spatial structure of landscape can be used to model the cultural and experiential nature of landscape.

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### ABSTRACTS & PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES (in alphabetical order)

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#### **Estelle Rust**

*Graduate School of Media and Governance, Keio University (Japan)*

I am a current PhD student at Keio University, researching the influence of popular culture on heritage management and regional tourism in Japan. After graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology and History from the University of Sydney, I travelled to Japan under the MEXT Scholarship to undertake postgraduate studies at Keio University. I graduated from Keio University in 2020 with a Master's from the Graduate School of Media and Governance, with a thesis that examined the dynamics of governments, local communities, and grassroots activists at threatened sites of cultural heritage in Japan and Australia through an Anthropological lens. My current research builds upon this approach, examining the consumption of historical fiction and its fanbases, as well as the management of exhibitions and cultural sites in regional Japan.

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#### **Defining Human: Living Objects in Japanese Popular Culture Beyond 'Anthropomorphism'**

The concept of the 'Human' is a common concern across disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. Determining what defines being human is of particular importance when studying diverse social and cultural landscapes. With this in mind, it is imperative that the researcher seeks not only to understand their target culture, but to do so with an understanding of their own cognitive construction of the 'human'. Failure to do so may hinder interpretation and analysis. My research investigates the human in the Japanese context. In doing so, it draws upon and contributes to existing cultural analysis. In addition, my research introduces Japanese interpretations and constructions of the human to a wider realm of Humanities-based disciplines.

My research follows the fans of 'Touken Ranbu', a multimedia franchise that represents Japanese swords as human-shaped warriors. This concept may appear on the surface as a classic example of anthropomorphic transformation, with the object of the sword being literally turned human. However, the ways in which fans articulate this 'transformation' indicates a fluid approach to the human, where both sword and person are considered the same. This approach is repeated amongst heritage workers and government officials interacting with the fanbase. Approaching this (pop) cultural phenomenon as anthro-centred transformation, therefore, overlooks the potential that humanness is inherent within non-human vessels.

With this research, I seek to question the use of terms such as Anthropomorphism in framing our understanding of the human. I draw upon the renewed discussion of Animism to argue that researchers, particularly in fields heavily influenced by Western philosophy, could benefit from considering the human from the perspective of 'animate', rather than 'anthropomorphised'. I further argue for the relevance of Animism in analysing the non-Spiritual. Shinto has been used as a classic example of Animism; however, in my research, the articulation of non-human as being living is acted

SYMPOSIUM

# Beyond Japanese Studies

*Challenges, Opportunities and COVID-19*

## ABSTRACTS & PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES (in alphabetical order)

---

outside of direct Shinto belief. In this way, I hope to utilise research of Japan to contribute not only to discourse in Japanese Studies, but in all disciplines concerned with the question of what makes something 'human'.

# Beyond Japanese Studies

*Challenges, Opportunities and COVID-19*

## ABSTRACTS & PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES (in alphabetical order)

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### Dr Joshua Schlachet

*Department of East Asian Studies, University of Arizona (USA)*

Joshua Schlachet is a historian of early modern and modern Japan, specialising in the cultural history of food and nourishment in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He is an Assistant Professor of Japanese History in the Department of East Asian Studies at University of Arizona. His current book project, "Nourishing Life: Cultures of Diet and Health in Early Modern Japan," examines the emergence of a dietary common knowledge, as new practical guidebooks circulating among ordinary readers expanded the concept of a well-nourished body to encompass economic productivity, status hierarchy, and moral cultivation.

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### Can You Question Science Without Being an Anti-Vaxxer? Doing the History of Health in Japan After COVID

Now is a bad time to question science. As the COVID-19 pandemic rages unabated, vaccine denialism and failure to comply with public health rules stem, in part, from a politicised skepticism over the validity of scientific findings. Similar concerns drive the repudiation of climate change, which has gripped a distrustful public and conservative political coalition in the face of overwhelming scientific consensus. This crisis of trust in expertise reveals the fragility of public belief in science—particularly health science—and the complex social structures by which it is formed, maintained, and increasingly undermined.

Should the need to safeguard popular faith in public health today stop scholars from scrutinising scientific hegemony as a historical problem? My paper for the *Beyond Japanese Studies* symposium explores this question through my research into the transformation of Japanese dietary and nutritional practices from the Edo to the Meiji periods. For historians of health in Japan, the nineteenth-century introduction, and subsequent embrace, of modern hygiene regimes amounted to a semi-colonial imposition of Western knowledge as much as a self-apparent set of scientific principles.

Despite government interventions into public health meant to combat epidemic disease, ordinary people in Meiji Japan continued to gravitate towards early modern styles of conceptualising and conveying information on nourishment, bundled in popular guidebooks on nourishing life (*yōjō*). Beyond simply informing people how to eat right, such guidance expanded the concept of a well-nourished body to include economic productivity, status hierarchy, and moral cultivation. As such, to historicise nutrition in Japan is also to draw attention to the ideological, hegemonic, and non-physiological aspects of health science that have become so counterproductive in contemporary public discourse.

As this symposium seeks an interdisciplinary, border-crossing future for Japanese Studies, this paper argues that studies of Japan's past have much to say about the pressing concerns of our

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SYMPOSIUM

# Beyond Japanese Studies

*Challenges, Opportunities and COVID-19*

## ABSTRACTS & PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES (in alphabetical order)

---

global present, if we are willing to ask tough questions. From a health history perspective, the COVID-19 pandemic forces us to rethink not only our future research methods but our research questions, balancing rich and specific studies of Japanese society with tensions that extend beyond national borders.

### ABSTRACTS & PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES (in alphabetical order)

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#### **Pinar Temocin**

*Hiroshima University (Japan)*

Pinar Temocin is currently a doctoral student at Hiroshima University, Japan, majoring in Peace Studies and Development Science. Her research interests lie in the intersection of green politics, energy debate, and Japanese civil society. Additionally, much of her research examines the public as a non-state actor in environmental and energy policy debates, and investigates public preferences and public actions taken in response to environmental issues and policy decisions.

She was trained in Philosophy in Turkey and Germany and Comparative Politics and Public Policy in France. She was also a visiting research student at Seoul National University and fellow on non-nuclear proliferation at the Korean Advanced Institute of Science and Technology, South Korea. She interned and carried out projects on international politics in several research institutes across Europe and researched on anti-nuclear civil society related issues at several universities including the University of Montpellier, France and University of Auckland, New Zealand.

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#### **Rethinking Environmental Mobilisation: Civil Society Engagement in the Energy Decision-Making Process in Post-Fukushima Japan**

This research focuses on environmental civil society organisations (ECSOs) and the Japanese state to find out how these actors have framed, articulated, and interpreted their goals for a nuclear policy and sustainable energy realities in the post-Fukushima (3/11) era. It examines the extent to which environmental civil society actors (e.g. Greenpeace Japan, Friends of Earth, The Institute of Sustainable Energy Policy, and Renewable Energy Institute) have been influential in the energy decision-making process since 3/11. It highlights the socio-political dimensions of nuclear energy issues, including the efficacy level of ECSOs, the degree of functionality of governance, the interaction between vertical and horizontal dimensions of state-civil society partnership, and the dynamics of energy policy formation, implementation and development in contemporary Japan. The findings shed light on why some ECSOs successfully create linkage and achieve their desired outcomes while others fail to do so.

Furthermore, this research lies in establishing a socio-political linkage between civil society (*shimin shakai*) and the Japanese state, and exploring the interactions between them. It distinctively stimulates comprehensive debate from different perspectives and highlights the intersection of the Sociology of Science, Technology and Society; Japanese Studies; Critical Political Studies; and Public Policy. It also aims to play a reflective role on the nexus of environmental politics and collective behavior.

### ABSTRACTS & PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES (in alphabetical order)

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#### **Dr Nobumichi Teramura**

*Institute of Asian Studies, University of Brunei Darussalam (Brunei) | Centre for Asian and Pacific Law, University of Sydney (Australia)*

Nobumichi (Nobu) Teramura is Assistant Professor of ASEAN and Asia-Wide Regionalisation at the Institute of Asian Studies, University of Brunei Darussalam (UBD) and Associate at the University of Sydney Law School Centre for Asian and Pacific Law (CAPLUS), specialising in business law, with a particular interest in arbitration, private international law, contract law and Asian law. He has published and presented his research in various journals and academic conferences in different jurisdictions in English and Japanese. He has received scholarships and fellowships from leading research institutions and foundations and from the Japanese Government. As an early-career academic, he is passionate about teaching international business law, international dispute resolution, and contract law. He has taught private international law and commercial law as a Lecturer at the Adelaide Law School (2019). He has lectured at the College of Law of De La Salle University in the Philippines in 2016, 2017 and 2019 on international arbitration and trade law. He has also lectured and researched in other Asia-Pacific jurisdictions including Taiwan, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Cambodia and Japan. His goal is to contribute to promoting legal dialogue among countries in the Asia-Pacific to enhance the economic integration of the region. He is active in developing institutional academic links among these countries, not only for himself, but also for his colleagues and students.

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#### **Japanese Law in the Mekong Region: Needs and Necessities of Assessing the Influence of Japanese Private Law in South East Asian Economies Emerging from the Chaos of the COVID-19 Era**

Japanese law has been the subject of research by non-Japanese scholars for various reasons including, but not limited to, its important status in Comparative Legal Studies, uniqueness of Japanese culture and society and, most importantly, economic reasons. However, those points may no longer be able to provide strong incentives for foreign legal experts to undertake new research on Japanese law. For instance, the Japanese legal system alone is not the most significant area for comparative legal study. Other legal systems are essential too. Japanese culture and society are unique, but so are those of other countries. Moreover, while Japan is still a strong economic powerhouse, the country is different from how it used to be in the late 20th century. It is time for Japan legal scholars to find new value in Japanese Legal Studies.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 (and the US-China trade war), many multinational enterprises have been relocating their factories from China to relatively COVID-free countries along the Mekong such as Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. As a result, global attention will focus on their legislative and judicial systems. This is an opportunity for Japan legal scholars. Since the 1990s, the Japan

# Beyond Japanese Studies

*Challenges, Opportunities and COVID-19*

## ABSTRACTS & PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES (in alphabetical order)

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International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has played a vital role in the modernisation of law in the region through its Legal Technical Assistance project. In particular, the private law of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos is under the strong influence of Japanese law. It can therefore be argued that knowledge of Japanese law is crucial to understanding the legal systems of those countries. The Mekong region is a new frontier for Japanese Legal Studies to explore in the age of pandemic and a place where Japan legal scholars may demonstrate their value beyond Japanese Studies.

## ABSTRACTS & PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES (in alphabetical order)

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### **Aoife Wilkinson**

*The University of Queensland (Australia)*

I graduated from Macquarie University in 2018 with a degree in International Studies, and recently graduated from The University of Queensland with a Bachelor of Arts in Japanese Studies (Honours I). I am currently a PhD candidate at The University of Queensland, where I am investigating how mixed Japanese youth living in Australia and Japan interpret and experience discourses of multiculturalism. My research is grounded in Cultural Studies and Anthropology and is guided by the work of Professor Amanda Wise and colleagues in their work on everyday multiculturalism. I am also interested in texts that critically engage Australian and Asian-Australian identities.

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### **Exploring Race and Identity Beyond Japanese Studies**

Global media and emerging research have begun to draw our attention to the ways in which topics of 'race' and 'identity' transcend borders and speak to wider audiences. One example of this is tennis player Naomi Osaka's role in pioneering international awareness of mixed-race issues and the Black Lives Matter movement in and outside of Japan. Her efforts continue to inspire fervent discussions on mixed Japanese race, citizenship and identity. As a result, it has become increasingly important for Japanese Studies scholars to consider how topics regarding mixed Japanese identity contribute towards broader research on race and identity.

In this presentation, I will address how my research contributes to disciplines outside of Japanese Studies and geographical regions beyond Japan. I use a poststructuralist and postmodernist framework to investigate how mixed Japanese youth in Australia and Japan interpret discourses of multiculturalism. Firstly, I discuss how my project intersects with various disciplines such as Sociolinguistics, Migration Studies and Anthropology. Importantly, I will note how the events of the COVID-19 pandemic have led me to reflect on scholarship closer to home in Asian-Australian Studies. Secondly, I will explore how my research compares with similar projects conducted in regions outside of Japan, including North America and South-East Asia. In doing so, I argue that comparing my findings with these other studies has highlighted the broader relevance of my project across different historical and social contexts outside of Japan.

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# Beyond Japanese Studies

*Challenges, Opportunities and COVID-19*

## ABSTRACTS & PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES (in alphabetical order)

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### Dr Shu Min Yuen

*Department of Japanese Studies, National University of Singapore (Singapore)*

I am a postdoctoral fellow at the Department of Japanese Studies, National University of Singapore. My research interests include gender and sexuality, popular culture, and mobilities and migration. I completed my PhD at the University of Melbourne in 2016, and am in the process of converting my PhD dissertation on FTM trans men and their community in Japan into a monograph. My recent works appears in *Asian Anthropology* (2020), and *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* (forthcoming).

### Doing Transgender Studies in Japanese Studies

The recent “LGBT boom” in Japan has sparked new interest in the Japanese LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) scene in western media. One can now easily find online articles and news reports written in the English language on the latest developments concerning Japan's gender and sexual minorities, such as marriage equality and the depathologisation of transgender. However, there is often a strong tendency for these articles (or public comments on these articles) to be written from a western perspective, hinting at the backwardness of the Japanese state and a need for Japan to catch up to “global” norms. This, I argue, is problematic, and stems from both a blanket application of a western teleological framework of LGBT rights and recognition onto a non-western society, as well as a lack of understanding of the socio-political and cultural context in which Japanese LGBT people and their communities are situated.

In this presentation, I draw on my research on the transgender community in Japan—a severely understudied topic—to highlight how a nuanced understanding of trans lives in Japan can contribute to a decolonisation and de-westernisation of transgender knowledge production. I show how a theorisation of an alternative transgender modernity in Japan, which runs counter to the western rights-and-recognition model of queer liberation, challenges us to rethink the ways in the which we think and speak about trans lives and social justice. No doubt, in this era of global convergence and unprecedented movement of people, goods and capital across borders, we can no longer speak about “areas” as enclosed geographical locations. Yet, as scholars such as Andrew Gordon (1998) and Peter Jackson (2018) argue, local formations will not disappear with globalisation, and space-based difference continues to be produced and have relevance to our understanding of our contemporary world. Echoing these scholars, I argue for the importance of empirical research and contextual knowledge, and hence the continued relevance of Area/Japanese Studies, in challenging the hegemony of Western-derived theories and concepts that have come to be taken as universal, and that dominate both academic and general writing.