

Mark McLelland and *Intersections*

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Anne-Marie Medcalf and I first came across Mark McLelland when he submitted papers for consideration in Issues 3 and 4 of the electronic journal *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context*, that we had inaugurated in 1998.^[1] The journal was then hosted by Murdoch University in Western Australia. These papers were outside the 'gender' theme which we had designated for the journal, but we thought that they fitted well enough into the other two themes—history and culture. Their scholarship was meticulous. The referees gave them excellent reviews and they were published. McLelland's articles, 'Male homosexuality and popular culture in modern Japan'^[2] and 'Interview with Samshasha, Hong Kong's first gay rights activist and author'^[3] were to herald a new focus for the journal that we had never anticipated.

At that time, Anne-Marie and I were both writing our PhD theses. Our joint focus was firmly on gender issues and the difficulty in getting mainstream journals to take gender seriously—particularly at the conjunction of Gender Studies and Asia-Pacific Studies. Even after we had published McLelland's two articles, we did not consider adding sexuality to the main focus of the journal. Indeed, we never gave it a thought.

Mark McLelland and Peter A. Jackson, however, convinced us that getting sexuality papers published was equally as difficult as publishing on gender. They requested that we broaden the journal's focus. The first AsiaPacifiQueer (APQ) Conference was to be held on 16 February 2001 at the University of Technology, Sydney.^[4] There were three panels featuring presentations on a wide range of topics that focused on 'Genders and Transgenders in the Pacific,' 'Genders and Transgenders in Asia' and 'Queering Theorisations.' McLelland and Jackson were looking for somewhere to publish some of the conference proceedings and to that end they offered to guest edit a special issue of *Intersections* including a selection of papers from that first AsiaPacifiQueer conference.^[5] So, here we had two new branches to the journal—a focus on topics associated with sexuality and the practice of working with guest editors, both of which have enhanced the journal's reach and readership.

Anxious to see whether the journal was indeed reaching an international audience, Anne-Marie and I added an extreme tracking device to the journal's front page and were fascinated to watch the number of readers who visited the site each day and where that readership was located. To our amusement, the US Military followed the journal closely in those early years. The publication of the AsiaPacifiQueer issue boosted our readership enormously and confirmed McLelland and Jackson's suggestion that there was a real need for scholars to have access to scholarship on sexuality as well as gender.

Mark then approached us with a new suggestion—a more tightly focused issue on 'Queer Japan,' which he offered to guest edit.^[6] Along with James Welker, Katsuhiko Suganuma

and others, Mark translated many of the articles from Japanese, and the issue was published in January 2006.^[7] It continues to be the issue that attracts the highest number of readers, and McLelland's paper, 'A short history of *hentai*,' is the most read paper we have ever published.^[8]



Figure 1. Mark McLelland (ed.), 'Japanese Transnational Fandoms and Female Consumers,' special issue of *Intersections* 20 (April 2009).



Figure 2. Mark McLelland and Peter Jackson (eds), 'Papers from the first AsiaPacifiQueer Conference,' special issue of *Intersections* 6 (August 2001).

Around this time Anne-Marie resigned from the journal to focus on other things and I moved to the Gender Relations Centre in the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies at The Australian National University. The journal was relocated to a new website at the ANU. Given the success of the two previously published guest edited issues focusing on sexuality, the title of the journal was changed to *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific*.

Mark, not content to rest on his laurels, approached me with another suggestion—'Japanese Transnational Fandoms and Female Consumers.'^[9] This theme, he said, would blow the readership numbers out of the water and reach an audience that would not normally be interested in academic papers. Published as issue 20, in April 2009, it delivered as promised.

Anne-Marie and I feel honoured to have known Mark, with his determined intellect and quiet wit. I am most grateful to have been associated with his enduring legacy and his influence on the focus of the electronic journal, *Intersections, Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific*.

Notes

^[1] *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific* (previously *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context*), URL: intersections.anu.edu.au/, accessed 15 September 2021.

[2] Mark McLelland, 'Male homosexuality and popular culture in modern Japan,' *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context* 3 (January 1999), URL: intersections.anu.edu.au/issue3/mclelland2.html, accessed 15 Sep. 2021.

[3] Mark McLelland, 'Interview with Samshasha, Hong Kong's first gay rights activist and author,' *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context* 4 (September 2000), URL: intersections.anu.edu.au/issue4/interview_mclelland.html, accessed 15 Sep. 2021.

[4] See [Peter A. Jackson](#)'s reflections on the AsiaPacifiQueer project in this issue.

[5] Mark McLelland and Peter Jackson (eds), 'Featuring Papers from the first AsiaPacifiQueer Conference,' special issue of *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context* 6 (August 2001), URL: intersections.anu.edu.au/issue6_contents.html, accessed 15 Sep. 2021. See also Fran Martin, Peter A Jackson, Mark McLelland and Audrey Yue (eds), *AsiaPacifiQueer: Rethinking Genders and Sexualities*, Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2008.

[6] Mark McLelland (ed.), 'Queer Japan,' special issue of *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context* 12 (January 2006), URL: intersections.anu.edu.au/issue12_contents.html, accessed 17 May 2021.

[7] On Mark McLelland's influence as an editor, translator and convenor of workshops, see [Vera Mackie](#)'s essay in this issue.

[8] Mark McLelland, 'A short history of *hentai*,' in 'Queer Japan,' special issue of *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context* 12 (January 2006), URL: intersections.anu.edu.au/issue12/mclelland.html, accessed 17 May 2021.

[9] Mark McLelland (ed.), 'Japanese Transnational Fandoms and Female Consumers,' special issue of *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific* 20 (April 2009), URL: intersections.anu.edu.au/issue20_contents.htm, accessed 17 May 2021.

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