

## Queering the Page: Mark McLelland and the Shadow Work of Editing and Translating

Vera Mackie

I first met Mark McLelland at the Inaugural AsiaPacifiQueer Conference at the University of Technology Sydney in 2001.<sup>[1]</sup> Mark had recently moved to Australia from Hong Kong to take up a Postdoctoral Fellowship in the Centre for Critical and Cultural Studies (CCCS) at the University of Queensland.<sup>[2]</sup> He immediately signed me up to contribute a chapter to a book he was co-editing.<sup>[3]</sup> Over the next two decades we collaborated on conference panels, workshops, journal issues and edited collections. We regularly contributed articles or chapters to each other's collections, and eventually co-edited the *Routledge Handbook of Sexuality Studies in East Asia*.<sup>[4]</sup> When I moved from the University of Melbourne to the University of Wollongong in 2010, we became colleagues. Mark tended to work in his university office rather than at home, so he was usually around. I could wander down the corridor and knock on his door for a discussion, a debrief, a chat, a gossip, a whinge or a rant.



Mark McLelland was trained in Theology at the University of Cambridge and completed a PhD at the University of Hong Kong.<sup>[5]</sup> His appointment to the University of Wollongong in 2006 was initially as a Lecturer in Sociology. Eventually he was promoted to Professor of Gender and Sexuality Studies. Over the course of his three monographs, we can see him developing as a cultural and social historian of sexuality.

**Figure 1.** Cover of Mark McLelland and Vera Mackie (eds), *Routledge Handbook of Sexuality Studies in East Asia*, Routledge, 2015, cover credit Tessu.

McLelland's first monograph, drawing from his doctoral dissertation, focused on male homosexuality and the media in Japan.<sup>[6]</sup> His next monograph, developing from his postdoctoral research at the university of Queensland, was a cultural and social history of male homosexuality in Japan from the Pacific War to the internet age.<sup>[7]</sup> His third monograph could also be situated in the field of the cultural and social history of sexuality. Queer Studies, as we well know, is not just about studies of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and other (LGBTQI+) non-normative sexual orientations, practices and gender identities. Rather, Queer Studies can also bring a deconstructive approach to the construction of what are seen by some as more normative identities and practices. In *Love, Sex and Democracy in Japan during the American Occupation*, McLelland focused on the promotion of particular forms of heterosexual, companionate marriage during the period of the Allied Occupation of Japan and its immediate aftermath.<sup>[8]</sup> I would like to think that he brought a 'queer eye' to the 'straight GI'.

Other contributors to this special issue have more to say about Mark's contributions to several fields of

academic inquiry, including Japanese Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Cultural Studies and Internet Studies. I would like to focus, however, on his contributions as a facilitator of others' work through his assiduous work as a translator, editor and convener of conference panels, workshops and conferences.

Translation is necessary so that the work of researchers and activists can be made available to wider international audiences across language boundaries and across national borders. Translation is not well-regarded in the Anglophone academy, though, unlike Japan.<sup>[9]</sup> In Australia, at least, in the evaluation of an academic career, most weight is given to research articles, book chapters and monographs. Mark was committed to making the experiences of members of LGBTQI+ communities in Japan available to readers outside Japanese-language circles. A special issue of the journal *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific* on 'Queer Japan' included translations from Japanese to English of academic articles, personal narratives, poetry and interviews, alongside some specially commissioned English-language articles. This was followed by the book *Queer Voices from Japan*.<sup>[10]</sup> Selecting the texts to translate, commissioning translators, checking translations, checking referencing styles and copy-editing the translations for publication is a time-consuming process. There are few incentives—indeed there are disincentives—for engaging in such work, so that many academics necessarily focus on more conventional routes of publication.

Editing is another activity which is not well-rewarded in the Anglophone academy. One is always encouraged to publish one's own articles, book chapters and monographs, rather than providing leadership in editing the work of others and nurturing their careers. Mark, however, was committed to making available the work of early career researchers (ECRs) and researchers and activists from non-Anglophone backgrounds. Editing is always hard work. Even if this did not always involve translation as such, huge effort was required in editing, copy-editing, checking referencing styles and proofreading in order to make the work readable for English-language readers. When we co-edited the *Routledge Handbook of Sexuality Studies in East Asia*, Mark was committed to making sure that the Editorial Advisory Board and the list of contributors included those from outside the Anglophone centres. We did not commission translations for this particular volume, but we put a lot of work into rendering into accessible English the work by authors for whom English is a second or additional language.<sup>[11]</sup>

From the time of his two Postdoctoral Fellowships at the University of Queensland Centre for Critical and Cultural Studies, he regularly convened workshops and seminars.<sup>[12]</sup> These provided a venue for early career researchers and more senior scholars to exchange ideas and receive feedback on their work. Most workshops culminated in an edited collection or special journal issue. It was at CCCS that his longstanding collaboration with Gerard Goggin on Internet Studies and Internet Histories was established.<sup>[13]</sup>

Mark was also a founding member of the AsiaPacifiQueer Network which was responsible for convening conference panels, workshops and the 'Sexualities, genders and rights in Asia: 1st international Conference of Asian Queer Studies,' held in Bangkok.<sup>[14]</sup>

Mark's success in gaining Australian Research Council (ARC) grant funding meant that he was able to nurture younger scholars in various ways—by including scholarships for higher degree by research (HDR) students or a postdoctoral fellow; and by providing opportunities for employment as research assistants or administrative assistants for conferences or workshops. In this way, his doctoral students were also inducted into wider academic networks as they interacted with leading local and international speakers in the field. A notable example was the Manga Futures Conference, held at the University of Wollongong in 2014, in collaboration with Kyoto Seika University.<sup>[15]</sup> In addition to academic presentations, Manga Futures included the participation of manga artists and costume play (*kosupure*/cosplay) practitioners. A workshop for high school students provided them with an opportunity to practise drawing manga.

We also enjoyed finding suitable illustrations for book covers. Mark McLelland and Romit Dasgupta used my photograph of an installation by artist Morimura Yasumasa for the edited collection on *Genders, Transgenders and Sexualities in Japan*. For the *Routledge Handbook of Sexuality Studies in East Asia*, we approached Emerald King, who introduced us to some cosplayers who provided the cover photograph. For *The End of Cool Japan*, then PhD candidate Kristine Santos designed and staged the cover illustration.<sup>[16]</sup>



Mark was regularly called on to speak at professional development workshops for HDRs and ECRs, often associated with the annual or biennial conferences of professional associations. Within the University of Wollongong, too, he provided professional advice to colleagues, particularly drawing on his own experiences as the holder of several successful Australian Research Council grants. He was also a valued member of the Australian Research Council-funded Cultural Research Network, led by Graeme Turner and including other contributors to this special issue such as Gerard Goggin and me.<sup>[17]</sup> The ARC Cultural Research Network funded a workshop on 'Transnational Fandoms,' which resulted in another special issue of *Intersections*.<sup>[18]</sup>

In the last few years, Mark had purchased a beautiful Art Deco style house in a Wollongong suburb, which he carefully renovated. The house was filled with Buddhist sculptures, mandalas and sutra scrolls, some of which he bequeathed to his friends. He also transformed the garden and would sit out in the sun with his cats playing or snoozing nearby. My last memory of Mark is of a peaceful afternoon, sipping green tea in the garden with Mark and the cats.

**Figure 2.** Shadows and Reflections in Mark McLelland's garden, photograph by Vera Mackie.

## Notes

[1] I am indebted to Christine Yano for the title 'Queering the Page.' Professor Yano, who was President of the Association for Asian Studies at the time, initiated the Roundtable in honour of Mark McLelland, where most of the reflections in this special issue were first presented. See Association for Asian Studies, *Queering Our Worlds: A Tribute to Mark McLelland*, 25 February 2021, URL: <https://www.asianstudies.org/jobs-professional-resources/aas-digital-dialogues/queering-our-worlds-a-tribute-to-mark-mclelland/>, accessed 17 May 2021.

[2] On AsiaPacifiQueer, see contributions by [Peter A. Jackson](#) and [James Welker](#) in this issue. The AsiaPacifiQueer collaboration resulted in some of the following publications: Peter Jackson, Fran Martin, Mark McLelland and Audrey Yue (eds),

*AsiaPacifiQueer: Rethinking Sex and Gender*, Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2008; James Welker and Lucetta Kam (eds), 'Of queer import(s): Sexualities, genders and rights in Asia,' special issue of *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context* 14 (November 2006), URL: [http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue14\\_contents.htm](http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue14_contents.htm), accessed 8 Dec. 2021; 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: [http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue6\\_contents.html](http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue6_contents.html), accessed 8 Dec. 2021.

[3] Vera Mackie, 'Creating publics and counterpublics on the Internet,' in *Japanese Cybercultures*, edited by Nanette Gottlieb and Mark McLelland, 174–90, Oxford: Routledge, 2003.

[4] Mark McLelland and Vera Mackie (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Sexuality Studies in East Asia*, Oxford: Routledge, 2015, doi: [10.4324/9781315774879](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315774879).

[5] Mark McLelland, 'Homosexuality and the Japanese media,' doctoral dissertation, Japanese Studies, University of Hong Kong, 2000.

[6] Mark J. McLelland, *Male Homosexuality in Modern Japan: Cultural Myths and Social Realities*, London: Curzon, 2002.

[7] Mark McLelland, *Queer Japan from the Pacific War to the Internet Age*, Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005.

[8] Mark McLelland, *Love, Sex and Democracy in Japan during the American Occupation*, New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, doi: [10.1057/9781137014962](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137014962). See also Mark McLelland, "'Kissing is a symbol of democracy!' Dating, democracy and romance in occupied Japan 1945&\$8211;52," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 19(3) (2010): 508–35, doi: [10.1353/sex.2010.0007](https://doi.org/10.1353/sex.2010.0007).

[9] In Japanese universities, more recognition is given to the practice of scholarly translation as an appropriate academic activity. As Yoshio Sugimoto has pointed out repeatedly, there is also an imbalance between the numbers of works translated *into Japanese* and works translated *from Japanese* into other languages: Yoshio Sugimoto, 'Turning towards a cosmopolitan Japanese Studies,' in *Rethinking Japanese Studies: Eurocentrism and the Asia-Pacific Region*, edited by Kaori Okano and Yoshio Sugimoto, 167–83, Oxford: Routledge 2018, doi: [10.4324/9781315157894-10](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315157894-10). Sugimoto established Trans Pacific Press in order to redress this imbalance. See: Trans Pacific Press, URL: <https://transpacificpress.com>, accessed 17 June 2021.

[10] Mark McLelland (ed.), 'Queer Japan,' special issue of *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context* 12 (2006) (January), URL: [http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue12\\_contents.html](http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue12_contents.html), accessed 17 June 2021; Mark McLelland, Katsuhiko Sukanuma and James Welker (eds), *Queer Voices from Japan: First-Person Narratives from Japan's Sexual Minorities*, Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007.

[11] McLelland and Mackie, *Routledge Handbook of Sexuality Studies in East Asia*.

[12] On Mark's contributions to CCCS, see [Graeme Turner](#)'s reflections in this issue.

[13] See [Gerard Goggin](#)'s contribution to this special issue. Mark McLelland and Gerard Goggin's collaborations resulted in the following edited collections, as well as articles, book chapters and contributions to reference works: Gerard Goggin and Mark McLelland (eds), *The Routledge Companion to Global Internet Histories*, Oxford: Routledge, 2017, doi: [10.4324/9781315748962](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315748962); Gerard Goggin and Mark McLelland (eds), *Internationalizing Internet Studies: Beyond Anglophone Paradigms*, Oxford: Routledge, 2009, doi: [10.4324/9780203891421](https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203891421).

[14] The background of the conference is discussed in James Welker and Lucetta Kam, 'Introduction: Of queer import(s): Sexualities, genders and rights in Asia,' *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian context*, 14 (2006), URL: <http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue14/introduction.htm>, accessed 8 Dec. 2021.

[15] Manga Futures intersected with other projects, resulting in two edited collections: Mark McLelland (ed.), *The End of Cool Japan: Ethical, Legal and Cultural Challenges to Japanese Popular Culture*, Oxford: Routledge, 2017, doi: [10.4324/9781315637884](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315637884); Mark McLelland, Kazumi Nagaike, Katsuhiko Sukanuma and James Welker (eds), *Boys Love Manga and Beyond: History, Culture and Community in Japan*, Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2015, doi: [10.14325/mississippi/9781628461190.001.0001](https://doi.org/10.14325/mississippi/9781628461190.001.0001).

[16] Romit Dasgupta and Mark McLelland (eds), *Genders, Transgenders and Sexualities in Japan*, Oxford: Routledge, 2005, doi: [10.4324/9780203346839](https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203346839); McLelland and Mackie (eds), *Routledge Handbook of Sexuality Studies in East Asia*; McLelland (ed.), *The End of Cool Japan*. See also [Kristine Santos](#)'s contribution to this special issue.

[17] Cultural Research Network, URL: <http://www.uq.edu.au/crn/index.html>, accessed 17 June 2021.

[18] 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: [http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue20\\_contents.htm](http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue20_contents.htm), accessed 18 June 2021.

MAIN

---

Published with the support of Gender and Cultural Studies, School of Culture, History and Language, College of Asia and the Pacific, The Australian National University.

URL: <http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue46/mackie.html>

© Copyright

Page constructed by [Carolyn Brewer](#)

Last modified: 14 Dec. 2021 0822