

Unsettling and reproducing heteronormativity

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More than twenty years have passed since Connell (1998) called for investigating into masculinities globally. Research on masculinities has significantly diversified. Asian masculinities have attracted vibrant research (e.g., Roberson and Suzuki 2002, Jung 2011, Louie 2015).

This panel contributes to the understanding of diversifying Asian masculinities by examining language used by and about Japanese and Asian men. Presentations explore alternative representations of Japanese/Asian men and complicate the established narratives of masculinities.

Furukawa considers the construction of gay Japanese on YouTube. His analysis shows how the videos discursively resist heteronormativity and construct an image of masculine interculturality, contrasted against feminine stereotypes.

Fukuda examines a manga featuring a househusband who is also a gangster. She observes that though the manga seems to provide a counter-narrative to the hegemonic masculinity, the humor actually reproduces gendered divisions of labor.

Miyazaki compares linguistic practices of hybrid masculinities by young Japanese and concludes that seemingly gender-blurring projects do not always challenge the existing gender regimes, but reproduce heteronormativity.

Nakamura investigates the mediatized usage of a speech style of young men in commercials and observes that the meaning of the style has been transformed and that the usage destabilizes Japanese traditional heroic masculinities.

Suzuki demonstrates how print media in Japan depict Chinese and Korean men as “manly” and (hetero)sexual, offering a counter-narrative to the pervasive stereotype of desexualized and feminized Asian men.

We hope to provide a glimpse into the complex qualities of masculinities and elicit thought-provoking conversations.

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Keywords: Masculinities, Japan, media, representation, Asian masculinities

1. The widening road

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This presentation examines the discourses found in Japanese gay vlog entries to see how such streaming content is used as sites of contact between gays and straights in Japan. Using a collection of coming out, Q & A, and daily life videos this presentation examines the use of vlogging discourse for social change in Japan. Early internet sites created safe public spaces for sexual minority members to meet and socialize where straights previously seldom had access or were expressly unwelcome (McLelland, 2003).

More recently, sites like YouTube have created new contact spaces where straights are welcomed and can interact with gay content creators more directly. This presentation analyzes the ways in which Japanese gay men construct themselves as well as other gay and straight people around them in these videos. Utilizing membership categorization (Hester & Eglin, 1997) and indexicality the analysis will show how notions of family and gayness along with associated bound predicates are used to discursively resist heteronormativity. The discourse also shows how these videos focus on the purposes of informing and educating over phatic communication. The presentation will also show how tactics of distinction are used in encouraging viewers to ally themselves as well as how the concept of internationalization has become semiotically relevant to the gay Japanese male category, constructing an image of masculine interculturality, contrasted against overly feminine mass-mediated stereotypes. Possibilities for further change and social justice in Japan through such sites of contact will also be discussed.

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Keywords: *LGBT, Japan, social media, Asian masculinity, MCA*

2. Destabilizing hegemonic masculinity?

Dr. Chie Fukuda

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This study explores the representation of a househusband in a manga titled Gokushufudoo 'The pursuit of being the ultimate househusband' and readers' responses as strands of construction of gender discourses.

In Japan, salaryman masculinity (Dasgupta, 2017) based on the gendered division of labor – a salaryman husband (male) as a breadwinner supporting a full-time housewife (female) and children – holds a hegemonic position. A househusband engaging in house/care work without financial capability is the antithesis to this masculinity. The protagonist of the manga is both a househusband and a former member of the yakuza, a social category representing another kind of Japanese masculinity. Because of this categorial gap, the manga is popular. This study explores the gap, examining the verbal languages (e.g., yakuza speech) and other semiotic resources through Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA).

Furthermore, the study also analyzes readers' responses to this work in online book reviews. Most of them refer to the humor generated by the contrast between househusband and yakuza. The protagonist seems to challenge the traditional gendered division of labor at a glance.

However, underlying this humor is a deviation formulation (Deppermann, 2005). By laughing at the deviation from the 'traditional' categorial pair of working husband and full-time housewife, the readers legitimate it, thereby reproducing and reinforcing the gendered division of labor. On the other hand, some readers express a reconsideration of traditional gender discourses. Thus, this study reveals the reproduction of and negotiation of salaryman masculinity, through the representation of the househusband in this manga and readers' various opinions.

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Keywords: *Salaryman masculinity, gendered division of labor, househusband, manga*

3. Hybrid masculinities?

Dr. Ayumi Miyazaki

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In the field of gender and sexuality studies, recent diversifications and changes in masculinities have garnered much attention. In particular, the concept of “hybrid masculinities” - which can be defined as “men’s selective incorporation of performances and identity elements associated with marginalized and subordinated masculinities and femininities (Bridges and Pascoe 2014)” - is considered to be a useful tool to understand the complexity of masculinity construction. This paper examines how Japanese youth at a university *josou* (men dressed as a woman) contest negotiate different kinds of masculinities and femininities through different gendered speeches, perceptions and ideologies. By analyzing reflexive accounts of four contestants with various interpretations of *josou* and with different relationships with masculinities and femininities, this paper examines how these young people at times strategically borrow hybrid performative styles and create complex indexicality (e.g. Silverstein 1976) of masculinities and femininities, and at other times internalize both femininities and masculinities and use *josou* as an important apparatus for identity operation. This presentation concludes that the meaning of *josou* performances cannot be reduced to a binary and decontextualized framework of masculinities and femininities, which the notion of hybrid masculinities tends to assume. *Josou* practitioners are engaged in the complex negotiations of gender and sexual normativities, through using their cultural and linguistic knowledge of gender, which simultaneously blurs and reinforces gender hegemony.

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Keywords: *hybrid masculinities, femininities, first-person pronoun, heteronormativity, indexicality*

4. Easygoing Heroes

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This paper seeks to contribute to the recent interest of sociolinguistics in the shifting indexical meaning of a speech style, by examining the mediatized usage of a polite style of young men in TV commercials (Bucholtz 2009). The case in point is a speech style called the *su* style, that involves the shortened form *su* of the polite sentence copula *desu*, which some young men use as a more casual polite style than the *desu* style. Drawing on the order of indexicality (Silverstein 1976), this paper explores how the polite meaning of the style is changed in TV commercials and whether the usage destabilizes Japanese traditional heroic masculinities. Data are two CMs in which a fierce demon of Japanese folktales and Western brave knights speak the style, who represent two of the traditionally heroic masculine figures. The analysis shows that the CMs delineate the demon and knights as easygoing and nonchalant figures, totally different from their dominant images characterized by fierceness and bravery. Their speech lacks politeness thereby presenting their disregard for the roles in the hierarchical structures of the communities. The finding suggests that the use of the *su* style for the speech of those easygoing figures who are antitheses of the traditional heroic masculinities simultaneously destabilizes and stabilizes the hegemonic status of these masculinities. The usage also assigns the new indexical meaning of an easygoing stance to the style, reducing the original polite meaning of the style.

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Keywords: *heroic masculinities, style, politeness, order of indexicality, mediatizatio*

5. Asian Males as Sexual Beings

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Media in the West have represented Asian men as de-sexualized and/or feminized. Attempts to reject this stereotype have often reflected the desire for approval from the West. However, Louie (2012) notes the most exciting transformations in Chinese masculinity/sexuality come from intra-Asian interactions and that these interactions need urgent attention. This study takes up Louie's call for exploring Asian masculinities from intra-Asian perspectives. It will show how print media in Japan depict Chinese and Korean men as "manly" and "(hetero)sexual."

First, numerous Japanese books feature Chinese and Korean men in a romantic or sexual light. Japanese publishers have been producing numerous non-fiction books written by Japanese women on how they fell in love with Korean men. Some writers observe that Korean celebrities evoke heterosexual desires among Japanese women. Several fiction books also depict a Japanese woman and a Chinese man engaging in a sexual or romantic relationship.

Second, novelists often assign so-called masculine expressions to male Chinese and Korean characters in Japanese novels. These characters refer to themselves with a hyper-masculine pronoun, use direct imperatives, and end their sentences with assertive particles. These hyper-masculine forms highlight heterosexuality and can indicate sexual desirability. Novelists clearly distinguish Asians from whites, whom they linguistically emasculate by hardly assigning masculine forms ("emasculated discourse" (Park 2015)).

These observations remind us that we need to look at cultural phenomena such as the intersection of gender, sexuality, and race from diverse perspectives.

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Keywords: *Masculinities, Asian masculinities, sexuality, stereotypes, print media*