



Centre 日本学センター
for Japanese Studies



INTERDISCIPLINARY
INSTITUTE FOR THE
HUMANITIES

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e-newsletter
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CJS Director: Professor Simon Kaner
Header photo by editor

Welcome Message

CJS ニュースレターへようこそ！

Welcome to the second April edition of the CJS e-Newsletter. We hope to bring the latest updates from Japan in these uncertain times straight to you in bite-size pieces, as well as recommend Japan-related activities you can enjoy from the comfort of your home. In this issue, we will provide updates on how Japan is responding to the COVID19 virus, success stories from our research colleagues and recommendations of Japan-related activities you can enjoy from the safety of your home in our new 'A Piece of Japan' section. You can find a message from CJS Director Professor Simon Kaner on the [Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures website](#) and hear more from our SISJAC colleagues on their monthly [e-bulletin](#).

Eye on Japan – state of emergency without the urgency

日本の更新

As reported last week, the Japanese government has been reluctant to impose tough restrictions seen in nations around the world in response to COVID19. This week a state of emergency is finally set to be declared yet its impact is underwhelming; Prime Minister Shinzō Abe has stated it will last a month and only be implemented in the seven prefectures of Tokyo, Ōsaka, Kanagawa, Saitama, Chiba, Fukuoka and Hyogo. Furthermore, the state of emergency will empower governors to close businesses and schools, but not to order citizens to stay at home. This is contrasted by other governors who are in fact reopening schools, exposing the incoherent response in Japan against the pandemic. In an ambiguous defence measure, Abe asserted that “we will not close cities [as] experts have told us that there is no need for such a step.” This is in spite of the devastating impact the virus would have on Japan’s aging and declining population, with [officials in the health ministry fearing an “overshoot” in cases](#) that would break the healthcare system. With local medical experts in Tokyo claiming that the virus has already spread beyond reasonable control in the capital, it is sincerely hoped that sterner measures will be implemented with



haste. It is, however, reassuring to see people and institutions acting independently to limit the spread of the virus, including [44 Japanese universities which have committed to online learning](#). Business Breakthrough University in Tokyo has taken this to the next level by [using robots to stand in for students at their graduation ceremony](#). We hope to see more of such innovative strategies being developed to bring people together during social isolation.

Written by the editor

Source material can be found in the 'News from Japan' section

News from our colleagues

研究員のニュース

Manga exhibit triumphs at British Museum



Last year's Manga exhibit, curated by Sainsbury Institute Research Director Nicole Coolidge Rousmaniere, was last week proven to be the most popular exhibit of the British Museum in 2019, trumping special exhibits on Captain Cook, Rembrandt and Assyrian king Ashurbanipal. Nicole curated the show as IFAC Handa Curator for Japanese Art at the Japanese Section of the British Museum, and her efforts saw the world's largest collection of manga material put on display for 1,920 paying visitors each day according to an internal survey. Such pieces featured a towering figure of Astro Boy, one of the founding characters of manga soon to make an appearance in the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts at UEA. Nicole attributed the success of the exhibit to the wide appeal of manga, "a multi-billion-pound industry, super-fueled by its readers ... with hundreds of genres, from sports to love, and from horror to sexual identity, there is a manga for everyone."



Sources:

Manga beats Rembrandt in the battle of British Museum visitors, Craig Simpson, The Telegraph
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/04/04/manga-beats-rembrandt-battle-museum-visitors/>

British galleries are the world's masters in the art of social media, David Sanderson, The Times
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/tate-saatchi-national-museum-victoria-albert-british-galleries-are-world-s-masters-in-the-art-of-social-media-lkm6hzvdh>

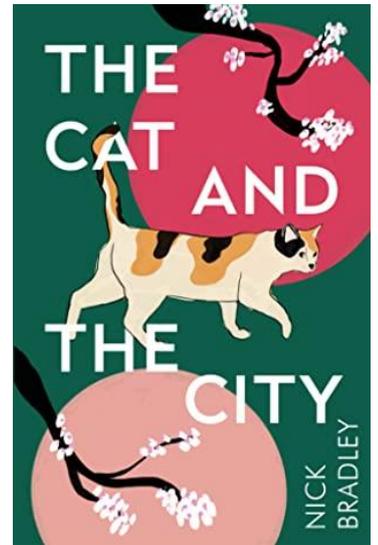
Nick Bradley's new book *The Cat and the City* on Radio 2's Spring Reading List

Creative and Critical Writing PhD student Nick Bradley has had his novel 'The Cat and the City', the cumulative work of his PhD, selected for Jo Whiley's Book Club on BBC Radio 2. Tune in on **Monday 1 June 7-9pm** to hear Nick in interview with Jo Whiley discussing his book. The blurb reads:

In Tokyo – one of the world's largest megacities – a stray cat is wending her way through the back alleys. And, with each detour, she brushes up against the seemingly disparate lives of the city-dwellers, connecting them in unexpected ways.

But the city is changing. As it does, it pushes her to the margins where she chances upon a series of apparent strangers – from a homeless man squatting in an abandoned hotel, to a shut-in hermit afraid to leave his house, to a convenience store worker searching for love. The cat orbits Tokyo's denizens, drawing them ever closer.

In a series of spellbinding, interlocking narratives – with styles ranging from manga to footnotes – Nick Bradley has hewn a novel of interplay and estrangement; of survival and self-destruction; of the desire to belong and the need to escape.



For more information: <https://readinggroups.org/news/spring-2020-season-of-the-jo-whiley-radio-2-book-club>

Written by the editor

A Piece of Japan

日本のかげら

Each week, we will bring to you some fresh recommendations from CJS members to help bring a piece of Japan to you at home through film, books, anime, manga and more. This week's theme for recommendations is **survival**. If you have any suggestions for themes or recommendations, send us an email at cjs@uea.ac.uk.

Books

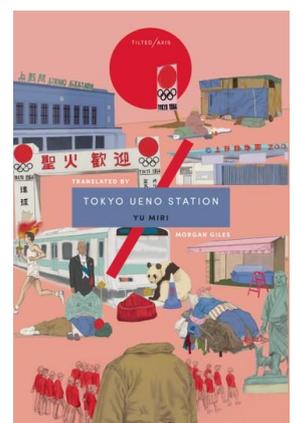
JR Ueno eki kōenguchi by Yū Miri

JR 上野駅公園口、 柳美里

Available in English and Japanese in hard copy

Recommended by Hannah Osborne, Lecturer of Japanese Literature at UEA

Yū Miri's *JR Ueno eki kōenguchi* (2014) – a title which literally translates as *The Park Exit at JR Ueno Station*, (the location in Tokyo notorious for its community of homeless people) is a narrative that interweaves the memories of that community, including their remembrances of war, loss, and destitution. It addresses the theme of survival on multiple levels: discussing whether families and individuals can survive in the face of extreme financial hardship and personal loss; describing instances of catastrophic loss during Tokyo's firebombing and the 3/11 disaster; and marking the lack of proper



memorialisation for such struggles and tragedies through the novel's own writing. It can be found [in Japanese on Kindle](#) and is available in paperback in English as [Tokyo Ueno Station \(2019\)](#). Its translation earned Morgan Giles, the translator, the TA First Translation Prize this year.

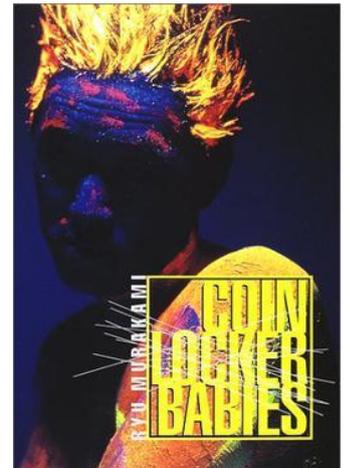
***Coin Locker Babies* by Ryū Murakami**

コインロッカー・ベイビーズ、村上龍

Available in English and Japanese

Recommended by Hannah Osborne

While we are in lockdown mode, however, even past dystopic visions might seem like an escape into nostalgia. In Ryū Murakami's 1980 novel, *Coin Locker Babies*, the two male protagonists, Hashi and Kiku, share the fate of having been found abandoned as babies in coin lockers at Tokyo Station. Such extreme acts of rejection, and the physical discomfort such acts entailed, define their entire lives as they both struggle to forge viable identities for themselves. The novel asks what the implications are for societies in which such acts are possible.



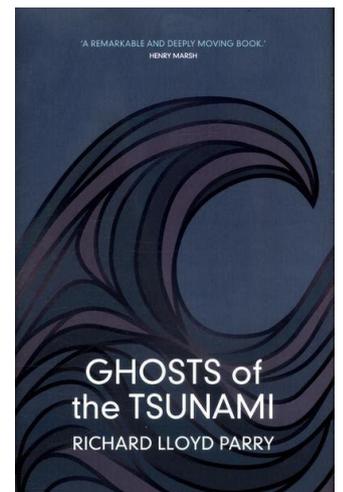
Coin Locker Babies is available to read on Kindle in both [Japanese](#) and [English](#) (1995, trans Stephen Snyder).

***Ghosts of the Tsunami* by Richard Lloyd Parry**

Available in English

Recommended by CJS Director Professor Simon Kaner

Ghosts of the Tsunami is an exceptionally readable (if heartbreaking) and incisive analysis of what happened and what went wrong on 3/11 in one small community on the Tohoku coast. It covers the six years Lloyd Parry spent reporting from the disaster zone, in particular determining the final moments of a village at the heart of the disaster, where he encountered stories of ghosts, exorcisms and mystery. The tale tells the story of how a nation faced a catastrophe, and the bleak struggle to find consolation in the ruins. I suggest reading it in conjunction with *March was Made of Yarn*, edited by Elmer Luke and David Karashima.



Ghosts of the Tsunami is [available on Amazon](#) as both e-book and audiobook.

Film

Recommended by the editor

***Madadayo* by Akira Kurosawa**

まあだだよ、黒澤明

This wonderful celebration of life by the titan of Japanese cinema Akira Kurosawa follows the true story of Professor Hyakken Uchida from his retirement through old age. The tale is told through the eyes of his faithful students who fondly remember the professor's warmth and wit and so pitch in together time and again to see him through the hardships visited upon him big and small, from the loss of his home to air raids in the



Second World War to the loss of his beloved cat. Through it all the students put together a grand *nomikai* for their teacher named 'the Maahda Kai', where the students yell out *mada kai*, "are you still here?", to which Uchida responds *madadayo*, "you'd better believe it!" A poignant reminder in these times of the cyclical nature of trials and triumphs and the people around us who carry us through.

You can watch the introduction [here on YouTube](#) and [order the DVD on Amazon](#).

News from Japan

日本に関する記事

For a running number of reported COVID19 infections, victims and recoveries in Japan, see the Asahi Shimbun homepage (Japanese only): <https://www.asahi.com/>



For the BBC summary of Japan's state of emergency:

[Coronavirus: Japan to declare emergency as Tokyo cases soar](#)

The Asahi Shimbun provide more detail on the ramifications of the state of emergency (Japanese only):

[7日に緊急事態宣言、1都6府県に約1カ月 首相表明](#)

For information on government measures to financially support households:

[Japan to give ¥300,000 to struggling households as COVID-19 cases rise](#)

For a regional overview of the impact of the virus:

[Local officials and residents fear influx from Japan's virus hot spots](#)

For Japanese speakers, here's an article in English laying out vocabulary coming out of the crisis:

[The Japanese words used to encourage self-restraint](#)

Click here for a comprehensive online document on [Japanese universities adopting distance learning](#).

For more information on Japanese universities see this [twitter thread by Rochelle Kopp](#), professor at Kitakyushu University, for resources.

General Links

一般的な情報

Embassy of Japan: <http://www.uk.emb-japan.go.jp/>

Japan Foundation: <http://www.jpff.org.uk/>

JSPS: <http://www.jsps.go.jp/english/>

British Association for Japanese Studies: <http://www.bajjs.org.uk/>

Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation: <http://www.dajf.org.uk/>

Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation: <http://www.gbsf.org.uk/>

Japan Society: <http://www.japansociety.org.uk/>

EU-Japan Centre: <http://www.eu-japan.eu/>

Canon Foundation: www.canonfoundation.org

Applications for JET Programme: <http://www.jetprogramme.org/>

Japanese Language Proficiency Exam: <http://www.jlpt.jp/e/index.html>

UEA Japan Society: ueajapansociety@gmail.com

Taiko Centre East: <http://www.taikocentre.org.uk/>

Career Forums: <http://www.careerforum.net/event/?lang=E>

Contact Us

連絡情報

If you have any contributions for the next issue of the e-newsletter, please send them to us by **Wednesday** to make the next issue.



The CJS office is located in the Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts (the mezzanine floor), although the office is temporarily closed as per university guidelines. You can always email us at cjs@uea.ac.uk.

To keep up with goings-on at CJS, follow us on social media:

 www.facebook.com/CJSUea/

 www.twitter.com/CJS_Uea

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