



SCHOOL OF MODERN LANGUAGES  
NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY  
**JAPANESE@NEWCASTLE**

EDITED BY HARUMI CAVANAGH

SUMMER 2018

# Eyes on Murakami

International event series at Newcastle University

2018 marks the fortieth year since internationally acclaimed Japanese author Murakami Haruki first decided to write a novel while watching a game of baseball at the Meiji Jingu Stadium in Tokyo (or so the story goes). Coinciding with this anniversary Dr Gitte Marianne Hansen was awarded the prestigious AHRC Fellowship for her research project 'Gendering Murakami Haruki: Characters, Transmedial Productions and Contemporary Japan'.



Gitte Marianne Hansen

As part of the project she and her Research Associate Dr Michael Tsang organised the event series 'Eyes on Murakami' in March 2018: <https://research.ncl.ac.uk/murakami/>. The four event days were packed with highly diverse activities, including a translation workshop and public translation symposium, an art exhibition with works produced by Japan and Newcastle based artists, a film screening at the Tyneside Cinema and the academic conference '40 years with Murakami Haruki'.

Invited speakers included some of the most well-known researchers and translators of Japanese literature and culture for instance Professor Katō Norihiro (Waseda University), Professor Shibata Motoyuki (Tokyo University) and Professor Jay Rubin (Harvard University), among many others. (Full event and speaker details: <https://research.ncl.ac.uk/murakami/events/>)



Jay Rubin (Harvard University), Anna Zielinska-Elliott (Boston University)



Translation Symposium 'Murakami, Contemporary Japanese Writing and the English reading Marketplace' Gitte, Michael Emmerich (UCLA), Shibata Motoyuki (Tokyo University), Jay Rubin, Anna Zielinska-Elliott, Elmer Luke (Translation Editor and Publishing Consultant)

The event series was a great success, welcoming approximately 100 participants, many of whom had travelled to Newcastle from as far as Asia, Australia, Mexico, the US (including Hawaii and Puerto Rico) as well as from all over Europe.



Art exhibition opening 'Beyond words: Transmediating Murakami Haruki'

# My JET Programme Experience in Ibaraki

**Caitlin Rolison, Graduated 2017, Combined Honours BA  
(Japanese and Geography)**

It's been nearly a year since I graduated and began work as a Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) on the JET Programme. I was placed in a small fishing town in Ibaraki Prefecture so aside from work I have spent the year attempting



(unsuccessfully) to get to grips with the local dialect, wondering how everyone in town knows who I am, searching for anyone under the age of 60 to speak to and generally getting used to everything else that life in rural Japan entails.

The CIR job promises valuable translation and interpreting experience, the chance to share your culture and to play a key role in internationalisation at the local government level. While I have undoubtedly done some of this, it has been less welcoming foreign dignitaries and sharing British culture than translating guides on how to sort your recycling and teaching elderly people how to count in English. Most of my days are spent in the town hall working on translation and the town's English-language tourist information website. I also



teach English and attend local after-school clubs several times a month. I have had some interesting experiences along the way, from appearing on Japanese TV to fishing for clams to holding an Easter egg hunt in the pouring rain. Working in a Japanese office has also been a steep learning curve after taking busi-

ness Japanese in 4th year and having got the N2 on my year abroad I felt confident about my Japanese ability but between the thick local dialect, business Japanese and the surprising number discussions about the fishing industry among other specialist subjects, I have realised that I still have a long way to go. I have also experienced my fair share of cultural misunderstandings any clothes are fine during 'cool biz' season does not mean you don't have to wear tights, on time means 15 minutes early and optional work party means you have to pay whether you're attending or not.



Despite the misunderstandings, the CIR position offers a unique chance to experience everything from translation to teaching and event planning, all while working in a Japanese office environment and improving your Japanese. Having renewed my JET contract, I am looking forward to another year as a CIR and to all the unexpected experiences that will bring.



# My JET Programme Experience in Fukushima

Victoria Coppard, Graduated 2016, Modern Languages BA (Spanish and Japanese)

I moved to Koriyama City, Fukushima Prefecture on the JET Programme two weeks after graduating in 2016. When applying for JET, most people expect to be placed in a high school or a junior high school with a few elementary school visits, but because I could speak Japanese, I became a full-time elementary school ALT.

I was a bit worried at first about what that would entail, but it has been a fantastic two years. As the only English speaker in any of my five schools, I get full control over my lessons rather than being an 'assistant' like people in junior high or high school.

My schools vary in size from 700 students to only 30, so every day is a different atmosphere! Larger schools make doing conversation-based games easier, but smaller schools give you the opportunity to do special events such as Christmas cake decorating with all



snowboarding, wakeboarding, learning Korean with local old ladies, and volunteer work helping to promote local produce.

As well as being a bit nervous about elementary school, I can't ignore the fact that I was placed in Fukushima Prefecture. Koriyama was



Dancing in the Koriyama Uneme Matsuri

largely unaffected by the 2011 disaster. As the 'E' in JET stands for 'exchange', our job is to be not only an ambassador for our own countries, but also an ambassador for Fukushima. We were given the opportunity to go to Fukushima Daiichi Power Plant earlier this year, visit the difficult-to-return zones, and learn more about the situation. We also have twice-yearly 'study tours' to visit different parts of the prefecture and experience new onsen, ski resorts and other great places for free!

I'm very happy I got placed here and could experience it for myself - the people are so friendly and happy that we all came. I wouldn't change my placement for anything!



Christmas cake making party with my students!

the students together. If you're lucky, in your free time you can join club activities with the kids, or special events like sumo lessons with pro wrestlers! As Board of Education employees, we also take part in events outside of school, such as teaching special university lectures, city hall Eikaiwa lessons, and even dancing in the local festival. In my free time, I get spend time



Wakeboarding/Lake party at Lake Inawashiro

# First Job after Newcastle

Maya Kalcheva, Graduated 2016, BA in Japanese Studies

My main motivation when deciding to study Japanese at Newcastle University was simply my long-standing interest in the language and culture, rather than any potential career prospects, and this led to a pretty rough final year when I was once again confronted with important choices to make about my future. The only things I knew as my graduation was approaching were that I wanted to make use of my Japanese language skills, but also that I did not want to go into teaching or sales, which appeared to be fairly common for graduates with language degrees. Since I lacked proper working experience and vocational skills other than languages, unsurprisingly those whims of mine additionally narrowed my employment opportunities. At some point I even ended up going back to my home country, but there I happened to find exactly what I did not know I was looking for.



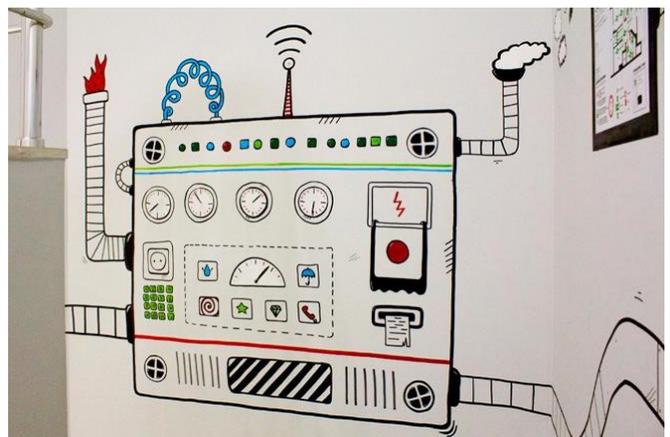
any pertinent information. Currently, I am responsible for all Japanese requests that come our way, but I have also had significant exposure to researching corporate crimes in other predominately English-speaking countries, which can be quite fascinating when it is about major corporations or politically influential figures.



I feel really lucky for managing to find a job that has both allowed me to continue working upon my business and legal reading skills in Japanese and has introduced me to sides of Japan and many other countries, which I knew next to nothing about. Admittedly, I am still as confused as ever about my future, but I feel that I have a much clearer idea of my abilities now and if nothing else, I have found one viable career path that I would enjoy pursuing. Studying Japanese can truly open doors to fields you did not even know there were.



For the past year and half, I have been working as a research analyst at the Risk and Compliance division of a Bulgarian information services company. Most of the time my work involves screening companies and individuals regarding whether they have been involved in any corruption or fraud controversies, regulatory investigations, lawsuits, environmental or labor-related disputes, and then compiling due diligence reports with



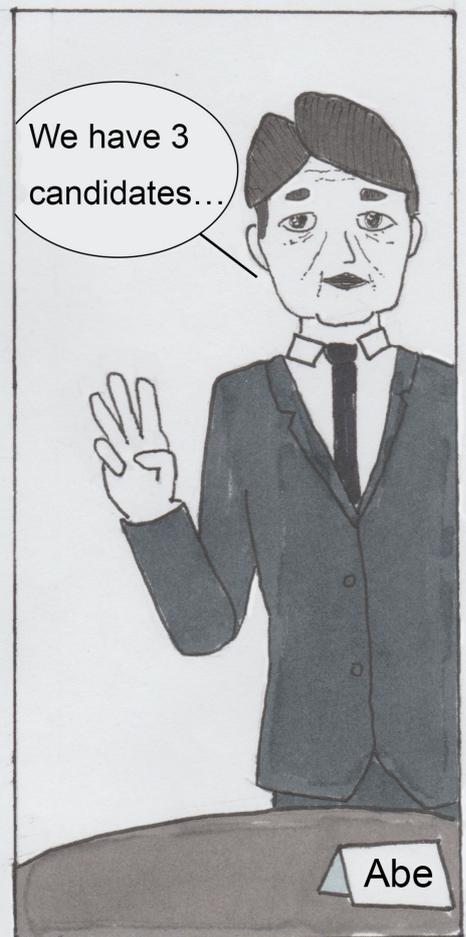
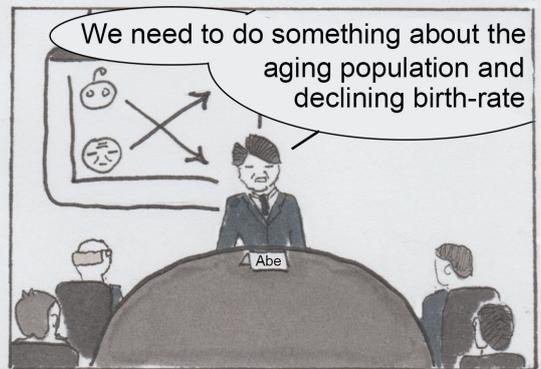
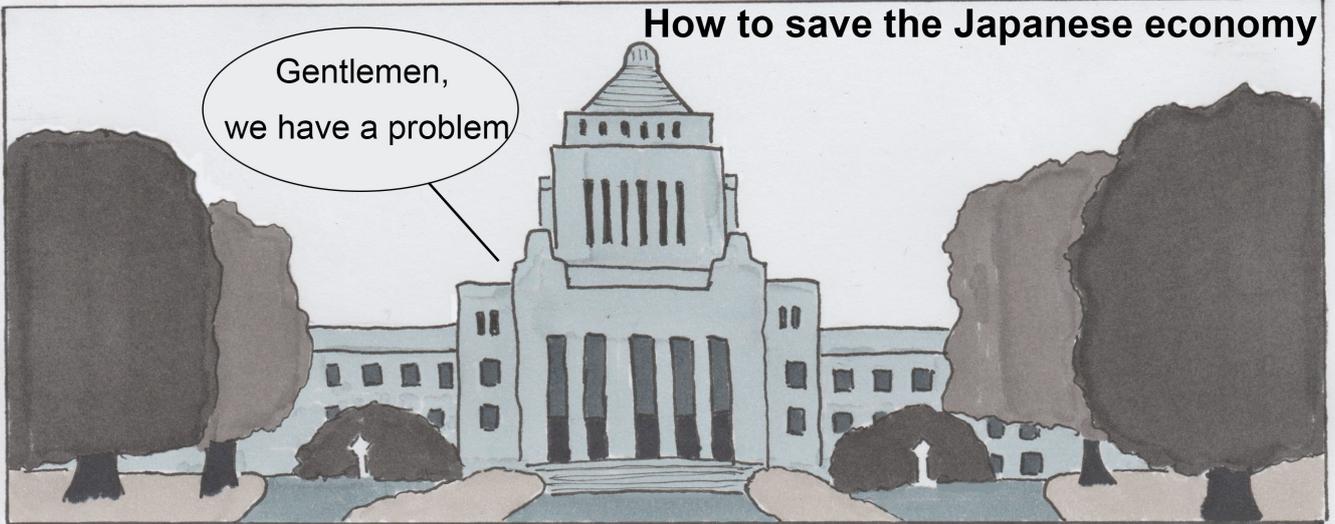
# 日本経済を助け方



Thomas Summers, Graduated 2018, Modern Languages BA (German and Japanese)



# How to save the Japanese economy



# My life at Newcastle University 1

**Elizabeth Vipond, Modern Languages BA (Japanese)**

I'm not going to lie like some kind of tone-deaf advertisement, making it to the end of my second year has been a lot harder than I thought it would be. Do I regret my choices though? Not at all. Where's the fun in doing something if you don't feel accomplished when you've finished? The Japanese language has always been something that people would love to know but are too scared to try to learn, and there's nothing I love more than a challenge, even if it means writing verb conjugations on every wall and piece of furniture I own. True story.



The unending support of my tutors can be rivalled only by the fantastic class I have been lucky enough to be a part of, with Japanese themed cooking nights and karaoke becoming a staple of my time at Newcastle. While I may not and may never be the best student, I can make some great festival food thanks to the guidance of Japanese friends who have shown me that a love of good food can surpass any language barrier.



If anything, I have found that it really is more rewarding to push yourself and see the results first-hand, even if that's just being able to watch an anime or read manga before subtitles are released for it. Small victories, but victories nonetheless. Japanese websites don't usually have an English translation available so it's also good if you want to buy something niche, such as snacks or collectables. Discovering that a Japanese friend that I met through Anglo-Japanese society had the other half of a 2-part character figurine set that I wanted still makes me laugh even now.

I'm sure that it's obvious by now that I'm food motivated, and is there really anywhere else that loves good food as much as Japan? Doing an entire degree just to eat Japanese food sounds ridiculous I know, but the chance to eat some of the freshest seafood in the world in the name of study based cultural enrichment and is just too good to pass up.



# My life at Newcastle University 2

Shannon Anderson-Scott, Combined Honours BA (Linguistics and Japanese)

Soon I'll have finished my second year and I'll be flying off to Japan for the first time! It has been a journey; sometimes an uphill struggle, other times it was easy sailing. I have to say that despite this, studying Japanese has been very rewarding and fulfilling. I wouldn't trade this amazing experience for the world.

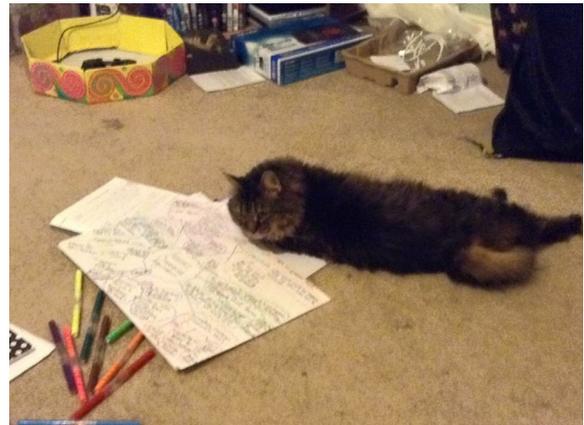


I think I might've been the one who enjoyed the rigorous testing. It's such a great way to evaluate your progress, and sometimes you may surprise yourself on grammar test with what you know. Other times, you realise that you need to revise. They really do help you to come up with a personalised study plan. Sure, I was envious of the European language students (especially during exam season!), but that feeling of improving week upon week, or being able to accurately identify weaknesses, is unparalleled.



It wasn't just down to my own hard work that I'm now able to say more than my name, and much more at that. The teachers are so genuine, friendly, approachable... they're there if you have any queries at all. I feel so supported in this course, and all of us are

important. If your sentence is wrong, or strangely phrased, they don't judge you for it; rather, they encourage you to find the right answer. They always help you when you're struggling!



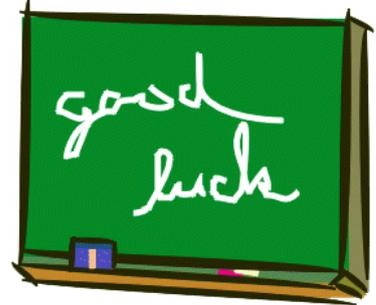
Even the homework is a plus! Even though I despise homework with a passion, I can't deny how much it helps me improve. Not only this, but the teachers are always uploading extra resources on Blackboard for us to do. If you ever want extra work, the teachers will provide it, or they will direct you to really helpful websites.

Although, the best bit for me is being able to understand anime without subtitles and manga in the original format. I love reading little comics in Japanese, as most of the games I play are in Japanese, and it makes me so happy when I can understand something. I don't think I would be at this stage as quickly as I am if it wasn't for the amazing teachers and overall course. Plus, doing a Japanese course means that watching anime, reading Japanese manga and playing games in Japanese counts as revision, right? Who wouldn't want to do a course where revision is actually fun?



# Graduate Meal Out Photos

## June 2018



# 漫画 Manga



Elizabeth Vipond,  
Modern Languages  
BA (Japanese)



These drawings are from Elizabeth's homework.

## Contact us

For information about admissions  
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<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/sml/research/subjects/eastasian/>

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