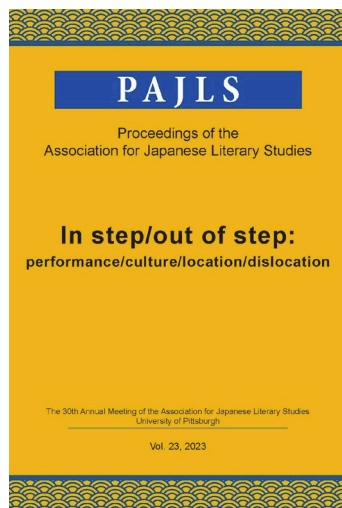


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Editors: Charles Exley, Christopher Lowy, Elizabeth Oyler,  
Yoshihiro Yasuhara

Managing Editor: Matthew Fraleigh

# PAJLS

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for Japanese Literary Studies

## **In step/out of step: performance/culture/location/dislocation**

VOL. 23, 2023

CHARLES EXLEY, CHRISTOPHER LOWY, ELIZABETH OYLER,  
YOSHIHIRO YASUHARA, EDITORS  
MATTHEW FRALEIGH, MANAGING EDITOR

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## EDITORS' FOREWORD

The 30th Meeting of the Association for Japanese Literary Studies, **“In step/out of step: performance/culture/location/dislocation,”** was held on May 12–14, 2023 at the University of Pittsburgh. Hosted by Charles Exley and Elizabeth Oyler of the Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures in cooperation with Christopher Lowy and Yoshihiro Yasuhara of the Department of Modern Languages at Carnegie Mellon University, the meeting focused on the ways technologies past and present both connect and fragment our worlds. Being in step or out of step (in time or out of time) calls attention to the contextual and historical dimensions of the creative arts—their performativity—across a variety of genres and disciplines. The presentations reflected a diversity of topics and perspectives: the meeting brought together 35 presenters and 20 additional participants to explore the performative aspects of genres ranging from *noh* and *renga* through film, visual art, contemporary poetry, and popular magazines. The historical scope reached back to the Heian period and forward to post-3/11.

Our choice in theme stems from our shared interest in performativity and performance genres and honors the University of Pittsburgh's history of faculty expertise in Japanese performing arts. Former Pitt professor J. Thomas Rimer gave opening video remarks, where he noted the contributions in related fields by the late Keiko McDonald (film) and Mae Smethurst (*noh* drama). The AJLS 30th meeting celebrated that history while also pointing to new directions in performance studies in today's lively community of Japanese studies scholars.

Two keynote events emphasizing performance highlighted the program. The first was a performative reading and a formal address. Itō Hiromi and her English translator, Jeffrey Angles, gave a lively reading from her 2011 novel, *The Thorn Puller* (tr. 2022) followed by discussion to cap the first day. On the second day, Waseda University Professor of Literature Hideto Tsuboi examined the evolution of representing the body in postwar Japan, focusing on how Yukio Mishima's fascination with Saint Sebastian reflects a broader shift towards “queer” representations of the body that challenge traditional mind-body dualism and heteronormativity.

We wish to express our thanks to all the people who helped make this meeting a success. We are grateful Matthew Fraleigh for his leadership at AJLS and his guidance through the process of hosting the meeting and publishing the *Proceedings*. We also thank our partners at Carnegie Mellon University, Christopher Lowy and Yoshihiro Yasuhara, for their contributions to framing and hosting the event, as well as editing the

*Proceedings.* We benefitted from the financial support of the Japan Iron and Steel Federation's endowment to the University of Pittsburgh as well as a Japan Studies grant from the Northeast Asia Council of the Association for Asian Studies. And we greatly appreciate the help of Asian Studies Center staff members Linda Lieu, Kirsten Strayer, and Stephen Wludarski for their logistical support, as well as graduate students Hayley Gerlach and Zane Zaloga for their on-site assistance.

Charles Exley and Elizabeth Oyler  
September 2024