

Interviewee: Yoichi Watanabe

UoS Dates: 1988

Role(s): Visiting Researcher, Dept of Film and Media Studies.  
Professor at Waseda University, Tokyo.



## Interview summary:

**Start 00:00** – Visiting Researcher at Stirling University in 1988. Staff exchange agreement between Stirling University and Waseda University in Tokyo. Recommended by a colleague at Waseda who had gone to Stirling on this scheme. Stirling was the only university in the UK at that time to have a Film and Media Studies department. Decided to go for half a year to learn about popular culture in Britain. Went on to Berkeley, University of California to learn about popular culture in USA.

**02:45** – First impressions: beautiful campus. Arrived by car at the University, around Easter. Airthrey Castle and loch and lawns – nice to live and study, quiet environment. Film and Media provided an office with my name plate, which was very pleasing, felt like a member of the Department. Library did not have so many books about popular culture. Prefer not to be secluded in Library, prefer to be at the pub or coffee house and read book over beer or coffee. Used cafeteria and pub just outside campus, half indoor and half outdoors.

**06:45** – Invited to attend one or two classes, nice small class about TV soap operas. Was asked to talk about American soap operas, but was not so good at this topic, bit embarrassed, was introduced as an authority! Relationship between staff and students was very informal and friendly. Expected students to respect teachers formally, calling by title and surname, but was surprised that students used first names for staff. In Japan to be called by first name would be uncomfortable, but staff at Stirling did not seem to be uncomfortable with this.


**10:49** – Lived off campus, apartment in Bridge of Allan, close to where interviewer lives. Rented a car.

**12:13** – Remembers John Izod, Peter Meech, Richard Kilborn. Richard was the first person YW met and took care of him. John Izod was on sabbatical, writing a book. Richard was coordinator of the Department. Secretary of Film and Media Studies was very helpful and kind. Spoke with Scottish accent. When YW spoke of interest in accents it was suggested he study the Geordie accent, and suggested popular novels with that flavour.

**15:39** – Stirling was a bit too quiet, as used to Tokyo. For a six month study period, would prefer more urban university. Stirling University is a beautiful quiet place, with historical places around the university.

**18:12** – YW has continued with interest in Scottish accents, especially Glaswegian, as seen in popular culture. YW's research interest in popular culture in general is fading a bit and going into social linguistics and prejudice reflected in language, such as sexist language. Also will do research into country and western songs in USA and Enka in Japan, comparison of lyrics and sentiments. Young people in Japan now are more interested in Japanese popular songs. There is less interest in overseas, compared with older generations.

[Ends 24.34]

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Interviewed by:	Jim Valentine		

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