Cosplay - short for costume play - is the practice of dressing up as manga/anime characters and meeting in public spaces to take photographs, engage in role play, buy/sell fan art, and socialize. It is said to have originated in Japan in the 1980s, but is widely acknowledged by its fans today to be a global practice.

This lecture draws upon ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Singapore to evaluate the ways in which cosplay creates senses of community and cultural identity among its practitioners.

This research focuses on the centrality of "Japanese-ness" as an index of quality and authenticity that places Singapore-as-Asia in the middle of a global hierarchy that defines Japan as best. The ways in which this discovery of regional orientation among youth identity under girds existing State discourses is an issue this lecture will address.


Come in your favourite ‘Cos’ for a chance to win an IPOD!

This lecture is part of the 2008 Humanities Lecture Series, co-sponsored by the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and the Institute of Advanced Studies at The University of Western Australia.