Throughout my educational, social and cultural development, a profound connection with the nation and tradition of Japan has consistently manifested itself. My literary studies and further reading have cultivated a belief that what I view as the greatest moments in the modern western literary canon are overtly and strongly affected by Japanese tradition and art. Spanning from the influence of Ukiyo-e on aestheticism through to my more recent exploration of how the ideal of a Japanese city has informed postmodernism, I have naturally developed an interest in the art and literature of Japan or Japanese authors, and, more specifically, the interaction between Japanese and English works. This has led to a desire to widen my understanding of literary thought in Japan, particularly the relationship between cultures and identity as explored by great Japanese authors such as Tanizaki, as well as modern authors such as Furui, whose reflections on urban existence feel internationally applicable. This is something I would love to understand more fully and a complete immersion in Japanese society through the JET programme would be a great stride towards this.

However, my recognition and interest in positive Japanese influence on British culture extends beyond the literary field, as I have often noticed a tendency to incorporate the instruments and sound pallets of traditional Japanese court music and scales into the music I feel an affinity with from the UK. In response to this, taking advantage of the connective benefits of the internet in the modern age, this has led many young Japanese musicians, often from the Tokyo area to engage with these styles. If given the chance whilst in Japan, I would look to further this cultural exchange by building connections using the international industry contacts I have gained through my experience in events management and music radio broadcasting, an arrangement that I would see as mutually beneficial for modern music in Japan and the UK alike. In fact, the opportunity to make connections and promote cultural exchange is what drew me specifically to the JET programme, as being in a unique position to build bridges between two rich and complementary cultures is something I would be immensely proud of.

I understand that attempting to immerse myself in another community having had little or no language experience would come with some difficulty, but I see myself as a charismatic individual, who is committed to education and furthering JET's aims of internationalisation both whilst in Japan and in the UK, and willing to show versatility to cope with the massive range of situations I would encounter as part of the programme. I am by no means lacking in international and intercultural experience, having spent a period living in a school in Namibia whilst teaching and working in the local area, a complete cultural immersion which required me to be adaptable and respectful, but perhaps more significantly to be personable and friendly, in order to effectively embed myself in the local community and represent and transmit the values of my home country as well as I possibly can. I grew up in a comprehensively international environment, as I was born and live in London, truly one of the most multicultural cities in the world. I also spent my first year of University living alongside a number of international students, including one from Japan. More recently, extra-curricular activities like the University's Japanese society and classes in Shorinji Kempo have presented me with a window into authentic national pastimes, and I would love to provide the same opportunities for students in Japan through a wide range of sports, music and media.

I have been lucky enough to gain some teaching experience both through working as a teaching assistant in a primary school, and tutoring as part of the Student Action for Refugees programme. Both these roles required immense flexibility due to the range of ability and background of the students. Having done this, it is now clear that teaching is the ideal path for me, as my passion for education was affirmed, and I am excited by the opportunity to change the lives and views of younger generations. I have learnt that teaching requires you to treat every student differently and encourage pupils to work collaboratively in order to solve problems and emphasise their strengths. More significantly, I have come to recognise that, no matter how well you know your material, it depends upon you as an individual to be charismatic, engaging and approachable to ensure that every student achieves to the best of their ability. This is even more essential as a language teacher, as open communication is absolutely central to progress, and I am currently endeavouring to improve my skills around foreign learners through an extensive TEFL course which is comprised of units in the classroom and online. Teaching in the UK would afford me an influential position to transmit the cultural knowledge I would learn on the JET Programme, both in applying effective Japanese teaching practices encountered as an ALT and by encouraging internationalisation at a grass roots level, where it has the best results. I could most effectively achieve this by starting clubs which encourage engagement with Japanese traditions and activities, and through linking the school or university with students I had taught as an ALT, for purposes of development, exchange, or language learning for either party, which would create firm and long-standing academic and personal connections.

**Word Count:** 898