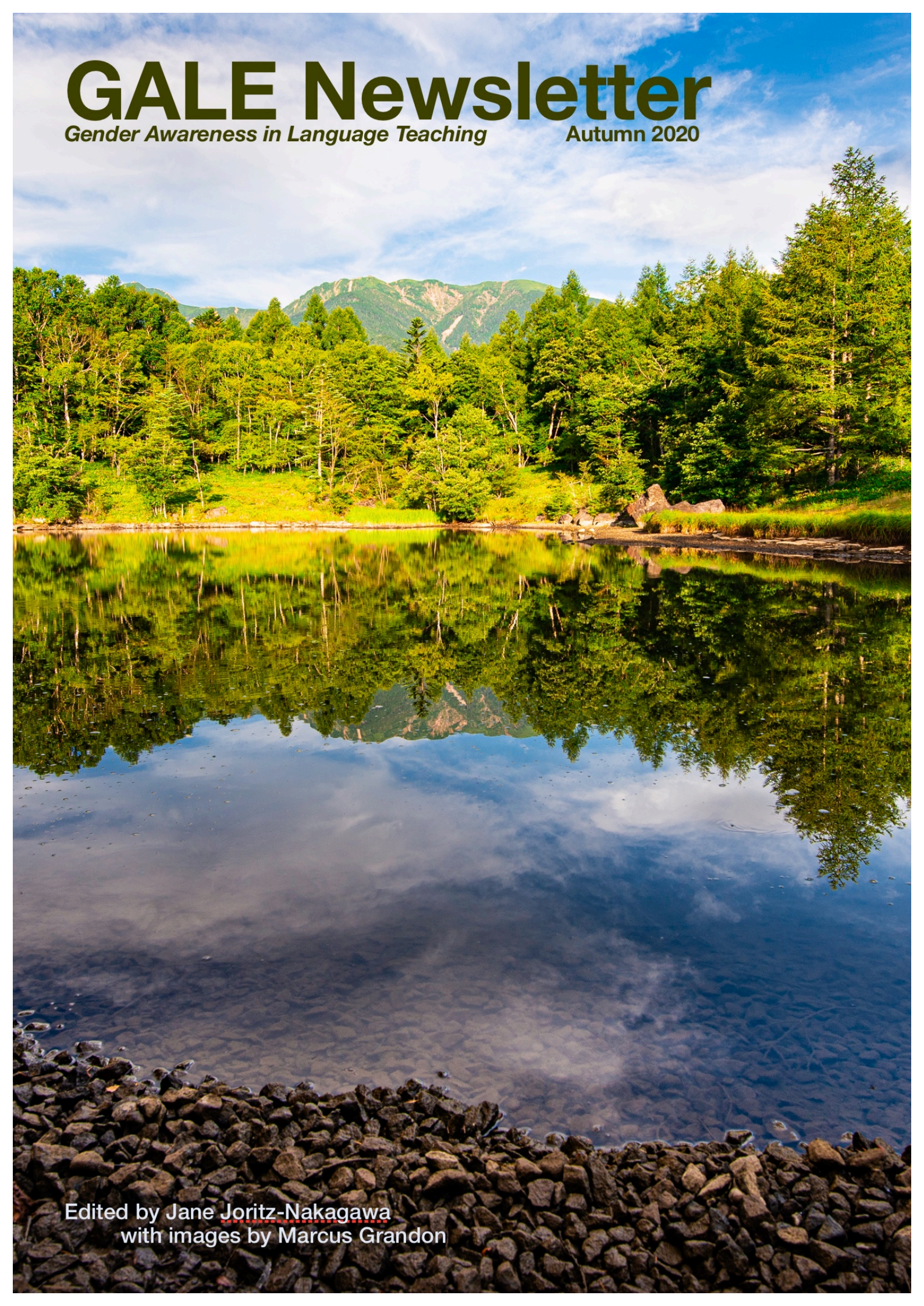


GALE Newsletter

Gender Awareness in Language Teaching

Autumn 2020



Edited by Jane Joritz-Nakagawa
with images by Marcus Grandon

GALE NEWSLETTER

Fall, 2020

Edited by Jane Joritz-Nakagawa

**All nature photography and cover design by Marcus
Grandon**

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FROM THE EDITOR: AN INTRODUCTION TO THIS ISSUE

Hello everyone. I am pleased to be the guest editor for this 2020 Japanese autumn issue of The GALE Newsletter. I would like to thank all the contributors who this time include both teachers and students and photographer, artist, musician, and language teacher Marcus Grandon. Marcus' photographs are from the area near my home (I divide my time between Nagano and Shizuoka) in Minami maki mura, Nagano, a pristine unspoiled part of the country where one meets far more birds squirrels deers rabbits ten foxes and tanuki during an average walk outside than one does people. Our home is situated just over the border from Yamanashi prefecture, home to many macrobiotic (in Greek "great life") bakeries and grocers, including vegan eateries (I myself became vegan about 15 years ago). I mention the environment because a number of our contributors do so, in connection with gender as women are more (in greater numbers) directly affected by climate crises than men are. My idea of "the great life" includes a world where people lead physically and psychologically healthy lives: clean food, clean water, clean air, living lightly on the earth and with prosperity and equality of every kind. I chose myself veganism for health reasons as well as aesthetic reasons and considering what is best for the planet and co-existing creatures.

I think if there is an overarching theme to this newsletter it is both "diversity" and "interrelationships" - how do climate change and gender interact? How is gender inequality similar to or different from other types of inequality such as racism and ableism?

There is great variety here in these pages in terms of style, form and content. I hope the reader will enjoy this issue as much as I did putting it together. May I suggest teachers try using any of the student works published here as stimuli for class discussions with your own students? I culled from three different universities in the Chubu Tokai area; I had far more wonderful writings by students than I could reasonably use this time but let this be a sampling and please note that some students chose to use pen names or their first name only and others their full real name for the purposes of this newsletter.

Most or all GALE readers are familiar with Dr. Kimberle Crenshaw's term "intersectionality" which notes that social problems such as gender inequality, racism, ableism, economic disparity and others are interrelated and overlapping. Ecofeminism goes further to include problems that also directly affect (in a multidirectional way) the non-human world. For example, the introduction to a book edited by Carol J. Adams and Lori Gruen (2014) begins by explaining:

Ecofeminism addresses the various ways that sexism, heteronormativity, racism, colonialism, and ableism are informed by and support speciesism and how analyzing the ways these forces intersect can product less violent, more just practices. In the 1990s, ecofeminists worked to remedy a perceived problem in feminist theory, animal advocacy, and environmentalism, namely, a lack of attention to the intersecting structures of power that reinforce the "othering" of women and animals, and contribute to the

increasing destruction of the environment" (n.p. [Kindle edition]).

Student work that I did not find the space to include this time covered a variety of themes of interest to those students. I asked students to consider topics, groups, people, and materials such as Black Lives Matter and George Floyd, Claude McKay's poem "The Lynching," King Adora's song "Big Isn't Beautiful", Tracy Chapman's song "Across the Lines," Everclear's song "Father of Mine," "Meat is Murder" by The Smiths, Emily Dickinson's poem "They Shut Me Up in Prose," poems by Japanese in English translation, and the like plus the writings and comments of their classmates. Some students wrote in homework writings that they were pansexual but concerned about LGBTQAI plus discrimination or they were not sure of their sexuality; one female student said she had an eating disorder; another student wrote that fat shaming was prevalent in Japan and she herself suffered from it; another student wrote that she was bullied for being a Filipina non-native Japanese user; another student wrote about witnessing abuse of disabled people in Japan; a male student wrote about discrimination in Japan based on educational background and a student who chooses to be identified as Kazuki (see Student Voices section below) wrote: "If I were animal or plant I would want human beings to die"!!

A 2nd year undergrad who wishes to be identified only as "Anna" wrote:

I think prejudice and discrimination will never disappear in the future because everyone has different thoughts. I felt strong hope from American poems and songs in

[American culture] class. Americans often cause protests to be against something. They scream their voice. On the other hand, Japanese are rarely against something in public. Japanese should have their opinion for problem. Prejudice and discrimination are also problems in Japan. We're no longer to escape from these problems.

At the end of the newsletter you will find information about upcoming (in late 2020) events related to our SIG.

Thanks to the wonderful group of officers and members of this great GALE SIG and all contributors.

--Jane Joritz-Nakagawa (guest editor)

Reference: Adams, C. J. and Gruen, L. (Eds). (2014) *Ecofeminism: feminist intersections with other animals and the earth*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic.



Interview with *Tokyo Closet Ball's* "Tatianna Lee" by Antonija Cavcic (Teikyo University of Science)

In a still heavily closeted LGBT community, it's hard to find a space to express yourself, let alone be yourself, but

there are always pioneers who push boundaries and create a space for inclusivity, diversity and well, just fabulously feisty fun. One of these pioneers is Taylor Wanstall (or best known as Tatianna Lee)—the founder of perhaps Tokyo's most renowned (if not only) regular drag event, Tokyo Closet Ball. In a brief interview, we discussed about how Tokyo Closet Ball got started, performing in general, and what it's like to organize events in the midst of a pandemic.

Before we drag ourselves (pun intended) into some drag-related questions, can you tell us a little bit about yourself and how you found yourself in Japan?

My name is Tatianna Lee. I grew up in a medium sized town called Eugene, Oregon. I started getting interested in drag in 2007. I moved to Japan to become an English teacher in 2011. Today I run the Tokyo Closet Ball—one of Tokyo's leading providers of intersectional gender subversive entertainment.

Ok, so, in your own words, what IS drag?

Speaking in general, "drag" is an umbrella term for a type of art where gender expression, gender signifiers and or gender norms are used to express aesthetic pleasure and political statements.

How did you get into drag back in Oregon? Also, what inspired you to start Tokyo Closet Ball? (Tokyo's most renowned and regular drag show run by foreigners)

From freshman year of high school until halfway through my college degree I was big into Tae Kwon Do, the traditional Korean

martial art. I was drawn in by the community. I was trained to believe that positive thinking, talking and acting would give positive results. These six years gave me confidence and power to set my goals and see them accomplished.

After my time in the martial arts community ended I found the local queer community. They and I had our "disagreements" about how the group should be run...An unfortunate byproduct of my rigid military-like martial arts training. Be that as it may, I appreciated learning the fundamentals of what a drag show could be. When I moved to Tokyo I never planned on making my own show. "Me? I'm just one foreigner in the big city. I'm not a leader." My goal was to become a part of someone else's community. After years I didn't see anything like what we had in Oregon, so I decided to make my own show! Now after many tough years we've grown and thrived.

Can you describe your first performance in Japan and how you've transitioned (pun intended) from then?

(Laughs). Transition is not an inappropriate word! When I first took the stage, there were so few members of our group. To fill the time, I would have to do three costume changes and perform four different numbers. I might start with a Broadway song, then a dance pop song, then a comedy song, and then a raunchy sexual song. I was still finding my identity by trying on different personas.

Can you tell us about your drag name and persona? Are you flashy, sassy, witty or trashy (or all of the above and more)?

Tatianna Lee? There's not much to it! My boyfriend at the time said I needed a powerful name. In America we associate Russian names with Olympic athletes—so I got the name Tatianna. Lee was the name of the Master of the Tae Kwon Do school, so my last name is in honor of the strength he gave me.

Today I've become more comfortable in the persona of the crass, dominant, pun-ridden, social justice spewing figure head to my little corner of the queer community.

Someone once asked RuPaul how well he'd hypothetically do as a contestant on RuPaul's Drag Race. His answer, "not very well." I feel much the same way. I don't have the best makeup or costumes. I'm not the best singer or dancer. But I have the business skills to keep this community together. I take pride in my ability to communicate my needs and set goals for the best of the Closet Ball members as a whole. Who is Tatianna on stage? She's sassy, crass, kind of dumb but smarter than you might think. She can turn on a dime. One moment throwing shady quips and follow it up with a sincere moment. She's always keeping people on their toes.

How do your performances differ in Japan (as opposed to the US or anywhere else)?

In Oregon drag was very gender solid. We had male characters and female characters. Drag communities were dominated by white cis men. Back then we didn't even know the prefix cis! We were still saying "real man" and "real woman." Growing up in a straight world damaged each of us. As we fought against the dogma of the straight world, we unfortunately made a harmful dogma of our own. There was little sensitivity to diversity. Racial jokes, sexist jokes, sexual harassment,

belittling cis women, deadnaming trans people, these were amongst our more pernicious behaviors. We were pretty hostile to the outside world because the world was not kind to us.

The Tokyo Closet Ball is truly an international community. We have about an equal number of men and women. We have trans, cis, and non-binary people. Most members are from North America and Europe but we are reaching out for more diverse people to tell their queer stories. My long-term goal is to see the dogma of the old drag world drift away and become more welcoming to all.

Aside from the obvious physical aspects of the performances, does the humor of your performances translate well in Japan (or are they Lost in Translation, per se)? How have you adapted your style and scripting for audiences in Japan?

Reference points can be difficult in an international community. Maybe I make a joke about an American idiom or one of my childhood TV shows. The audience won't get these references. Sometimes teaching new slang words can be a part of the performance. One of our members, a pianist named Indigo Soho, wrote a song centering the British practice of "dogging." As the audience slowly figured out the meaning, the humor was able to shine through.

How have you (and other frequent performers) been received by audiences in Japan? Have you had any hurdles you've had to overcome?

The biggest hurdle has got to be "building" an audience. Not "finding." I know exactly where they are. I say building in the fact

that we start small and by word of mouth people tell their friends, they join us and we build something together. I call our audience "The Closet Ballers" because they are as much a part of the community as the performers. Without them paying entry, cheering, taking pictures, we'd just be performing for ourselves. The validation we get from an excited crowd can help us forget our troubles and feel like a star for one night.

For you, what is the most difficult part about organizing Tokyo Closet Ball and, of course, performing?

[In regards to performing], when I make a new Tatianna performance it usually starts with a song. I hear something that speaks to me and then I imagine what it could look like on stage. I like to use jokes and humor to challenge gender expectations and to bring to light current issues in my life or in society. For example, I've recently been more open about my mental health and started seeing a counselor. I've expressed my experience with mental health in my recent performance of King George from Hamilton (I named her Queen Whorege). As the character starts to lose her mind, I incorporate my own mental tic disorders. I shake my hands and bite my fingers. These tics used to be a source of fear and shame for me. But drag gives me a place to make fun of myself and take power away from the things that scare me.

[As for organizing], there isn't so much ONE difficult thing. It's just a bunch of little things that add up. For example, person A can't come to the venue until 7pm, person B needs a piano set up, person C requests no photos, person D is okay with photos but doesn't want to be tagged in them. It's a lot for one person to remember. Each show has about 2 hours of music and 5 pages of

stage notes. Putting on a Closet Ball takes me about 10 hours of labor. But I do it because I enjoy the work and I like to see my members succeed.

Obviously, a large proportion of the entertainment industry has suffered due to Covid-19, so how have you dealt with this situation and what does a Corona-era drag show entail?

Honestly, I don't know! We need to get creative. Video and live streaming is a good start. I've also seen quiz nights, spelling bees, drag queen story time, animation, the only limit is our own imagination. For me community is the number one priority. In a world that is still hostile to queer people, the isolation can be extra painful. Doubly so if quarantined with queerphobic family. Being in touch with your community is an essential part of our mental health, so we have to safely maintain these connections as much as possible.

Finally, do you think attitudes towards the LGBT community and drag in Japan are changing? Also, what words of advice (aside from "You go, girl" or "Man up") do you have for aspiring drag performers in Japan's scene?

Advice? DON'T DO DRAG! (laughs). Kidding. One piece of advice for drag babies: don't be perfect. We've grown up with drag on TV, professional makeup artists, designer costumes, photoshopped pictures...nobody looks like that when they start out! Don't feel down because you can't reach that unrealistic expectation. The only reason I was able to start drag was by looking at my local queens and saying, "Well, if they can do it then so can

!" In tough times, I don't look to my drag past. I look to the Korean proverbs from my martial arts days. Forgive my spelling, "Jung sin il do ha da bul sung." Translation: Once you set your mind with enthusiasm and persistence nothing is impossible.



Stay Woke: Gender-Neutrality Awareness through the Influence of Social Media

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Introduction

In the age of social networking, communication and access to information is easier than before. As a result, different SNS users from around the world have taken the opportunity to voice their thoughts and feelings about social issues and politics via social media platforms. Due to this inevitable progress in the use of technology, the use of languages has also evolved in social media. New terminologies have been coined, and grammar has been liberalized in the online community. For example, the ability to stay *woke* pertains to an expectation of being aware of social, political, and racial issues in our world today (“Woke” , 2020). This is usually through the raw information presented on social media platforms mostly by netizens who are part of specific communities. This word originated from the African American Vernacular English (AAVE) where *awake* is rendered as *woke*.

With the phrase *stay woke* being used more often, how the English language represents a person's identity can be more specific than before. As new information is disseminated on various social media platforms, the LGBT community has taken the opportunity to address gender inequality and heteronormativity. One specific issue that has been raised online is the lack of gender neutrality in the English language particularly with pronouns or honorifics and terms that are gender exclusive.

I would like to discuss how social media has become a powerful tool to address social issues including gender neutrality. The influence of social media on discussions has become more widespread as words are expected to be socially and politically acceptable while considering the limitations of the characters or words used in a single post. Although internet slang has been changing depending on how popular it becomes online, users have also been sensitive to political correctness. I will discuss how pronouns play a vital role in self-introductions on social media, gender neutrality, my personal experience as a teacher who identifies as nonbinary, and what we can do as EFL teachers in Japan to create a gender-inclusive classroom vis-a-vis current trends on social media.

“What are your pronouns?” : a new way of self-introduction

Before the nonbinary pronouns *they* and *them* became widely used as singular pronouns on social media, the pronouns I learned in English classes were he and she, dividing what is masculine from what is feminine. With the stay woke culture being explicitly manifested on social media, a new way of self-introduction among internet users, or *netizens*, have been practiced in recent years. For example, Merriam-Webster has explicitly promoted gender neutrality to the point that they considered *they* as the word of the year in 2019 (“They” , 2020). Furthermore, Merriam-Webster introduced *Mx* as a non-heteronormative honorific to honor a person whose gender is nonbinary (“Mx.” , 2020).

Social media has played a vital role in giving voices to gender nonconformists. Before the rise of social media, the LGBT community faced harsher challenges in front of the public eye. In a

world where the acceptance of the LGBT community is progressive yet far from normalized, social media platforms have given voice to the community. As voices are easily heard around the globe due to easier access, this has influenced the English language in terms of what is acceptable.

Since social media began to disseminate information easily, pronouns of choice began to appear on netizens' profiles. Also, this creates lesser conflict on possible misgendering online. Although pronouns may have never affected a cisgender's life as an individual, being able to be addressed with the right pronoun or pronoun of their choice may be a form of validation and respect to a nonbinary and queer person (Wynne, 2019). This is why it has become a common trend to ask online, "What are your pronouns?"

Even though this is a good starting point to validate every gender identity, there are still issues of misgendering and language misuse on social media. In the next section, I will be discussing specific issues on misgendering and language misuse concerning pronouns and terminologies.

Deadnaming: Issues on Misgendering and Language Misuse on SNS

Misgendering has been an issue on SNS. Twitter, for example, has specified their hateful conduct policy specifically as regards the LGBT community (Robertson, 2018). Twitter policy specifies that deadnaming or misgendering on purpose will be banned on their website. With the policy restricting possible gender discrimination on Twitter, users become more conscious of using the correct pronouns when talking to another netizen on this social media platform. This is one of the reasons why a lot of Twitter users also

began to put their pronouns on their profile to avoid further conflicts regarding misgendering. Aside from Twitter, a lot of applications on various websites include a third or fourth option when gender is being asked to cater to those who identify differently from the binary.

Given this change in policy that caters to the needs of the LGBT community, it is indeed a challenge for netizens who speak a language other than English. This is a challenge because of the possibility that one of the first languages of the Twitter user is gender-neutral, and they accidentally misuse a pronoun. One example is the Filipino language.

As a Filipino, I have learned both English and Filipino in the classroom before the implementation of the Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) policy where regional languages have been included as the medium of instruction in Philippine schools. Since English and Filipino are the official languages of the Philippines, it is inevitable to use these languages not only in schools but also for other official purposes. Filipino is a language originating from Tagalog and influenced by the languages of the colonizers in the Philippines. Filipino is primarily based on the Tagalog language, which is an Austronesian language. Filipino pronouns are gender-neutral. For example, the singular pronoun *siya* can refer to a man, woman, or a nonbinary person. This is the same with the plural pronoun *silá* which directly translates to *they*.

Although English is one of the official languages, directly translating from Filipino to English or vice-versa has been a challenge among Filipinos, especially in consideration of gender due to the gender-inclusive nature of Filipino pronouns. For example, saying *Mahal ko siya* or *I love _____* may refer to a man, a woman, or someone outside the gender binary. Given the nature of the

Filipino language, it made me more conscious about the use of pronouns on social media when I was new on SNS platforms. It made me think that deadnaming a person by accident may often occur if I switch from Filipino to English. I have spoken to Filipino netizens who usually misgender a public figure by accident. I always thought that it is because of the nature of the Filipino language and its pronouns.

Even though the Filipino language has been mostly gender-neutral due to its Tagalog roots, a new movement of LGBT Filipino immigrants from the US created the term *Filipinx* in 2017 to cater to nonbinary Filipinos (Madarang, 2020). This idea came from the Hispanic community who has recently used *Latinx* instead of Latino or Latina to honor gender nonconformists in their culture. However, Filipino netizens who were born and raised in the Philippines have disagreed on the use of the term, saying that Filipino is a term used not only in the official language, but also with the citizens themselves, making *Filipino* gender-neutral to begin with.

The debate among Filipino immigrants versus Filipinos who were born and raised in the Philippines demonstrates how important it is not only to use gender-neutral terms, but also to know if a certain culture considers their language gender-neutral or not. Being able to stay woke is helpful to give voice to those who need it. However, its downside is relying on raw information alone may cause pragmatic failure in the language. This pragmatic failure may even lead to conflicts and arguments on social media; for example, a conflict between those who are born and raised in the Filipino culture and those who are included in the Filipino diaspora.

These are examples of gender issues occurring online due to language misuse. Regardless of whether the discussion is online or

offline, being able to inform oneself based on facts is vital before using specific terminologies on the internet. As teachers, I believe that familiarizing ourselves with these issues of language misuse on the internet would be beneficial for our teaching. We have come from different backgrounds and life experiences. We can open our minds to these issues that happen on social media, especially since the younger generation is exposed to different social media platforms. In the next section, I will discuss neutrality of names based on my experiences online and in real life involving Japanese and non-Japanese culture.

‘Please call me Will. Yes, I am a nonbinary woman.’

Although my full first name is Wilma, I have always preferred to be called *Will*. This has caused a lot of mixed reactions from people whom I meet whether online or in real life, depending on which culture they are coming from. When I introduce myself whether in a Filipino setting or a foreign, non-Japanese setting, the first question that I would be asked is, "Will is short for...?" which is an awkward feeling for me. Coming from experiences where this question is asked, the next thing they would imply is that my name is masculine. Filipino may be a gender-neutral language, but the western influence due to colonization is inevitably present when it comes to names. Hence, I receive this kind of question from Filipinos.

Probably, the worst experience that I had involving my name was when I was an exchange student in Japan. There was an American man whose name was *Will*. When I introduced myself as *Will*, I became a laughingstock, “You are a girl. You shouldn’t be called Will” . Ever since I was a child, it has been clear to me that I never wanted to exclusively conform to femininity or masculinity.

With that experience, there was one thing that I had in my mind: I wish that names were non-conforming and gender-neutral.

Two years later, I began my master's program in Tokyo and introduced myself as Will since our program is English-medium and we were on a first name basis. Although my classmates continue to call me Will without further questions, my professors coming from the western culture ask why I prefer to be called as such. Although I explained that Will is short for Wilma, they still called me the latter until graduation. Only two professors of mine continue to call me Will to this day, which makes me feel, in some ways, validated. At first, it might be due to formality as to why my professors continue to call me Wilma. However, I notice how my other classmates were called by their preferred nickname. It made me think that, assuming that I am a woman, I should be called with a feminine name which is my full first name. It was not offensive, but it was more in a realistic sense that my name is perceived as masculine to this day.

When it comes to the use of social media, I have indicated that my name is Will. When I meet people on Twitter, I indicate that my name is Will and my pronouns can be she/her or they/them. I consider myself as nonbinary, yet I have socially accepted my body as a woman at the same time. Most of the Twitter users that I have talked to respect my name preference, and use the pronouns that I have chosen to be identified with. This is different from the experiences that I have had in real life. In terms of being explicit regarding your pronouns on your profile, nobody would question why your name is masculine or feminine. Via your pronouns on your Twitter profile, your identity is normalized.

Comparing the experiences that I had online and in the real world with non-Japanese citizens, it makes me wonder if being vocal towards the pronouns that a person uses even in the real world

would someday be normalized. As the stay woke culture begins to influence real-life issues to the point that social issues involving race and gender are being openly discussed online and offline, nonconformists will surely be heard more compared to before.

The Japanese environment, on the other hand, is somehow similar to what I experience on social media. The only difference is that I never mention my pronouns. When I introduce myself as Will, my Japanese students accept it without questions. Even when I hang out with my Japanese friends, they have never thought about Will being a masculine name as perceived by non-Japanese people.

The first thing that I thought with these encounters is the fact that both my Japanese students and Japanese friends are not aware of non-Japanese names being masculine or feminine. Rather than confirming if my name is masculine or feminine, they only confirm the correct pronunciation of my name. This is when I realized that names in Japanese are not gender exclusive in the eyes of a foreigner like me. Despite having a conversational level of Japanese, I am unaware of the gender of my students whenever I receive my class list at the start of the school year. The name *Hikaru*, for example, may refer to a male or female student. When I teach communication class, I usually am on a first name basis with my students for them to grasp a conversational English environment. Yet, I have to make sure that my students are being called with the names or nicknames they prefer, regardless of gender and sexuality. Coming from an experience where being called Will without question makes me feel empowered and validated, I believe that it is important that students should be called the names they prefer to show respect to their chosen gender identities.

Aside from how to address students, there are other strategies in Japanese EFL classrooms that we can use as EFL teachers to create awareness of gender neutrality. As technology continues to become an important part of our lives, teachers may take the opportunity to be familiar with how language is used on social media especially when it comes to gender issues.

Suggested Gender-Inclusive Strategies in Japanese EFL Classrooms

Teachers may start to create a gender-neutral classroom via how language is used. In this section, I would like to suggest three activities to focus on to improve student awareness of gender neutrality via language used on social media.

Vocabulary. According to McKibben (2018), the way students are greeted or referred to such as *ladies and gentlemen* or *boys and girls* is binary. In other words, teachers can break the binary by using the most neutrally possible language such as referring to the class as *students* or *everyone*. Modeling the use of neutral language may help students adapt to how the language is being used not only inside the classroom but also in real-life situations.

Gendered title	Gender-neutral title
businessman/businesswoman	businessperson
chairman/chairwoman	chairperson
steward/stewardess	flight attendant
fireman/firewoman	firefighter
salesman/saleswoman	salesperson

During situational role-plays, I often encourage the use of gender-neutral titles with my students.

E-mail Writing. In terms of situational e-mail writing, I often give fictional names to my Japanese students, and check their critical thinking as to what should be the right honorific to use. As mentioned earlier, some Japanese names are gender inclusive. Below is an example of e-mail writing scenario that I used in my class:

Your history teacher, Hikaru Yamada, is asking for a confirmation of your attendance at the seminar on Saturday. Please create a short confirmation e-mail to your teacher.

The students are given choices on how to address the teacher in the e-mail. They can choose Mr., Ms., or Mx., and create an e-mail that fits the situation. I believe that this gives a chance for the students to critically think about the honorifics that they can use if the gender is not known or hinted at by the situations presented in class. If the pronoun is given in a situation, the students may choose the appropriate honorific for the person. E-mail writing has been an effective communicative writing activity because it enables students to use appropriate phrases in the e-mail. This will be a good practice for them not only for using appropriate phrases but also proper honorifics considering the gender identity of the recipient.

Social Media Exposure. E-mail may be a formal way of using the internet as an effective tool of communication. However, social media gives a chance for the students to use conversational English

online. Social media exposure will be helpful for the students to apply their awareness of gender neutrality. Although there are EFL materials that were created to teach internet slang such as LOL or laughing out loud and TBH or to be honest, using politically correct words on social media should be taken into account. Creating awareness of internet slang or terminology is part of learner vocabulary development. However, properly using these terminologies in specific contexts should be practiced as well.

On Twitter, for example, a conversation may begin with:

A: What is your name?

B: My name is Jun.

A: Nice to meet you! What are your pronouns?

B: Thank you for asking. My pronouns are they/them.

Although the language of Twitter and other social media platforms are outside of conservative EFL teaching, I believe that creating awareness among students as to how the language is used would enable them to expand their knowledge of how English is spoken in consideration of all genders and identities. As teachers, we can have learners practice situational role-plays including how to address another person based on their chosen honorifics or pronouns.

A: Good afternoon. What is your name?

B: My name is Jun.

A: Nice to meet you, how may I address you?

B: You may call me Teacher Jun.

“What are your pronouns?” may sound unnatural in speech. However, it is useful depending on the situation. Moreover, this can

be taught in a sense of how it is used on social media. Depending on the teacher's creativity, I believe that students should be exposed to these kinds of phrases for the learners to adapt to the phrases used on social media and be more sensitive to people outside their environment. Given the fact that the younger generation often uses social media, this is a chance for them not only to become aware of how languages evolve on social media but also to critically think about gender issues that would make them stay woke.

Conclusion

Through social media, minorities in terms of race and gender are able to take the opportunity to voice their concerns as the stay woke culture became more rampant. Social media has become a powerful tool in addressing social issues that enable oppressed groups to acquire equality online. Progress in normalizing gender-neutral terms and honorifics has been evident not only on social media but also in the outside world. Due to the continuous updates concerning how language is used on social media, I believe that teachers should also become aware of how language is used pragmatically on SNS.

As a teacher who identifies outside the binary genders, I have experienced questions about the name I prefer to be called. My experiences have developed my belief in creating a safe space where students can be aware of gender identities. Idealistic as it may sound, I hope that we could create a safe environment for students who identify outside the gender binary. For now, we should create awareness among students or guide them to stay woke on respecting chosen gender identities of various people that they may encounter whether online or in real life.

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First time, part time, no time, COVID-time

By Mary Suzuki

Years ago, as a university student, a popular faculty member's office décor branded itself in my memory. A handwritten note to

self on permanent display for all to see, reading, “What? So what? What now?” He may have paraphrased it from the original source (Rolfe, Freshwater & Jasper, 2001) and used it as his own problem-solving tool kit, but it floated beyond that time and space and eventually travelled from Australia all the way to regional Japan, 2020.

What? Summer 2019 saw me pregnant with my second baby. Both excited and overwhelmed, I took an opportunity to teach part-time at a university the semester after my baby was born. Although just one class a week, I began to fear I had bitten off more than I could chew, even before getting started. You see, this would be my first-time teaching at a university and on paper the math was looking complicated. New born, plus a toddler at home, plus the lion’s share of the domestic duties, plus pet care, plus other paid employment, plus social commitments, plus this brand-new job.

Now subtract sleep and personal care. On top of this, a husband working 80 hours a week and my mother had suddenly been diagnosed with breast cancer. Treatment would prevent her from coming to Japan for a few months to help out. It certainly looked like more than the “double shift”.

So what? I got obsessively organized in order to at least feel in control of my life. I bugged my future supervisor and university professor friends for information and resources months in advance and even packed my course textbooks in my hospital bag ready to take advantage of every spare moment. After the birth, I continued, preparing, reading, planning, mostly while breastfeeding my infant and often after two a.m., which was the only window in twenty-four hours when both toddler, baby and the rest of the world was asleep long enough to let me focus. I had a bit of a pity party to celebrate that I was doing all this without coffee, as I didn't want it in my

breastmilk, and felt ashamed that I couldn't seem to take my mother's seasoned advice and appreciate this precious time to "enjoy my baby and children". Then, just before the first semester started, another "What?" happened. COVID19 evolved into a pandemic and suddenly universities were taking their courses online. Yet I'd never stepped into my employer's classrooms even once. I watched as friends in fulltime university positions attended online meetings, were informed by their institutions about learning platforms, and given general instruction on what to do. While I waited at my inbox holding my prepared syllabus and my PowerPoint lectures for the classroom with little-to-last-minute information from mine. Understandably, these are big organizations and unprecedented circumstances but I wondered, as a part-timer, was I being forgotten? If everything was changing, and a new learning platform introduced last minute, could I do what was

expected of me? It's not like I could just "bang out" something over the weekend. I'm a mother of two very young children. I just don't have weekends to "bang something out" by Monday. All the faculty members I had met were male and my supervisor wasn't a parent. Would they understand if I needed extra time to prepare? Were all my months of careful course preparations now wasted time? Time that would have been spent with my young children. Or getting proper sleep?

So what? Inevitably the semester was pushed back twice and all the necessary information trickled through at the last minute. There was a horrendously stressful few days of intense email and phone tag trying to just get connected to the university server, and, hilariously, a university parking permit arrived via snail mail before I even had a university email address.

Blessedly, my husband's overtime work schedule decreased due to the COVID19 state of emergency, and I enlisted his help when the office communications and the technology set up got too difficult for me in another language.

I tossed and turned and eventually rejected the university's offer of their pre-made, online, self-study English courses to replace my syllabus for the semester. It certainly would have been the easier teaching option, but information on the course had been slow in coming and piecemeal. With classes starting soon it was faster to rework my planned syllabus, and use Google Classroom as the lesson delivery platform, which was an option allowed by the university.

What now? After a crash course using the online learning platform, mostly by trial and error, a routine set in and I relaxed. I could cross things off my list, see ahead in the semester and when

my toddler's kindergarten reopened after the official COVID19 break, I could keep up with marking, household chores and parenting. The feelings of being overwhelmed melted and remolded into ones more familiar and malleable. I doubt than anyone, woman or man, parent or not, was prepared for the workplace changes this modern-day plague forced upon us. My immediate and maternal instinct "to just get on with it" may have helped me to put one foot in front of the other but isn't entirely hopeful or a wider solution to systemic gender differences. At the very least, this experience has ignited a new awareness of these differences and, frankly, pangs of anger rather than the typical resentment I feel, for example, at the unequal domestic division of labor. As I look forward to the next semester, perhaps these pangs have birthed an extra degree of assertiveness and a better sense of my needs. Prompting me to request a schedule change that I imagined part-timers would not

get. As the virus continues to spread, I do not yet know what form classes will take, but should they be online again, this time I will be a slightly different woman. More experienced, prepared and blessedly not in a first-time situation.

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Gender and Climate Change by Brent Simmonds, Jennie Roloff

Rothman, Catriona Takeuchi and Mark Brierley

The 2020 Pan Sig Gale forum, focussed on the interconnectivity between gender and climate change. The presenters established JALT's Environmental Committee in 2013 and have gained a deeper understanding of the surrounding issues through the development of the committee.

The solutions to the climate emergency require input from a diverse mix of people as not fully utilizing talents will lead to further problems. Women will be affected more severely as a result of climate change with UN figures indicating that up to 80% of displaced people will be women. The forum examined issues related to gender and the environment both within Japan and globally.

Brent Simmonds discussed the role of female, youth climate activists including Greta Thunberg and Eva Tolage and demonstrated a classroom research project in which students discussed what they could do to solve problems connected to the present climate emergency. Learning is a lifelong process and during his research he had noticed that he had concentrated on white european campaigners or those linked to the UK such as Malala Yousafzai. During a forum at the 2020 World Economic forum hosted by GretaThunberg, he had been inspired by an

indigenous leader Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim from Chad who had asked world leaders to listen to people who perhaps already knew the answers.

Jennie Roloff Rothman focused on using the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to promote equality and sustainability. She introduced an essay writing assignment in which students individually researched SDGs and then produced argumentative papers stating the importance of the issue and the consequences of inaction. Another key aspect of the assignment involved studying the interconnected nature of the SDGs, specifically the relationship between gender and environmental issues. Students researching interrelated SDGs were responsible for providing peer feedback on each other's papers so that they were constantly reminded of the connections and encouraged to reflect on how to incorporate the larger picture into their argument.

Catriona Takeuchi talked about bringing global issues narratives into the classroom with a series of graded readers that raise awareness of global issues through strong, original narratives. Each volume contains three independent stories, fleshing out the issue through three different perspectives. Issues facing the globe today come back to core issues such as gender, poverty and education. These stories are a way of approaching the topics and generating discussion.

Finally, Mark Brierley shared his introduction to the issues of gender, environmental degradation, and food supply in a class on European and American near-future science fiction movies. The class aimed to show how the future has been portrayed in movies, investigating a different title with a different theme each week. The 1973 dystopia, *Soylent Green*, portrays a world where population has exploded, environment degraded, food sources depleted and

human life cheapened. Most alarming is the treatment of women within the movie. A focus on gender and an introduction to the Bechdel test highlighted the lack of female directors, lead actors and screenwriters among other movies introduced in the class, and within the film-making industry.

Useful links

The Bechdel Test Fest <http://bechdeltestfest.com/about/>

Malala Fund <https://malala.org/>

The World's Largest Lesson

<https://worldslargestlesson.globalgoals.org/>

UN SDG advocates

<https://www.unsdgadvocates.org/hindou-ibrahim>



STUDENT VOICES

Genderless danshi by Morisaki Atsuto

Hello everyone. Have you heard the word of ‘genderless danshi?’ That means ‘gender neutral boys.’ They are in neutral style clothes, put on makeup, and love to eat pancakes. Someone say that they are like girls. What is the definition of being like girls? I like pancakes, too, so am I like a girl? We have been taught behaviors as men or women since we were little children. We taught men must work outside, and women must do housework. Boys must not cry, and girls must not sit with their legs opened. However, it is strange. Each person is good at each different task and have each different personality. In Japan, there are some people who hide their true personality because of prejudices against gender. If these prejudices

were taken away, we will take more options. I believe that we have to remove genders to make our society more comfortable.

The way to get rid of racism by Morisaki Atsuto

I heard a news that a demonstration against racism in the U.S. It is because of an incident that a black man was killed by a white police officer. Similar incidents happen over and over in the U.S. However, racism is found all over the world. Why isn't racism gone? Today, I want to tell you about the way to get rid of racism. When I was a small child, an American man lived next to my house. I was afraid of him at first because I didn't know about American people. However, I was getting to understand him gradually. He liked to play juggling and showed me his technique. He liked dragon ball, a Japanese comic book, and named his cat goku. After knowing him, I became close to him. We are afraid of unknown people. On the other side, we can become close to people we know very much. I think that racism comes into being because of ignorance of other races or cultures. Let's learn other races and their cultures. It is a one of the ways to get rid of racism.

Stand up for your rights by Ryumei Yamada

Have you ever experienced discrimination? I'm going to talk about my experiences in the United Kingdom and what I learned from them. I studied at primary school in the United Kingdom until I was seven. There were some students from different countries with different skin color and hair color. One day, a student called me "yellow monkey". Since I didn't understand what it meant, I

went back home and told my parents about it. I learned that the word “yellow monkey” was the language which discriminated against Asian people. Although this happened when I was young, even now, I clearly remember that I got hurt. At that time, my parents complained strongly to the head teacher about this racial discrimination. After that, nobody called me “yellow monkey” . I learned that I should speak up what I think is right, because any discrimination should not be overlooked.

On the other hand, there was a warm welcome as well in the United Kingdom. For example, despite being Japanese and having a different appearance, many people came over to talk with me and listened to me, which made me happy. Let me tell you about another interesting experience. Late one evening, my friend came to visit my house with his grandfather. He said he couldn’ t understand his English homework, and he asked me to help him. English is not my native language; however, I think he recognized that I was a trustworthy friend. It made me so happy. After leaving the United Kingdom I continue to exchange Christmas cards with my friends.

I learned three important things through the experience of living abroad. First the importance of recognizing that there are various kinds of cultural back grounds. We must accept everyone. Second the importance of respecting diversity and cultural identity. Tolerance and patience are perhaps the two qualities most needed to maintain happy human relationships. Third, the importance of speaking up for something which you think is right. In conclusion, although there is the proverb "SPEECH IS SILVER, SILENCE IS GOLDEN", I believe that we should express our opinion.

Now is the time for our generation to open our hearts to the people of the world. Let us embrace racial and cultural diversity and stand up for our rights.

Why gender determines the way of life? by Maho

This is my mother's story. She is a doctor. She exams many patients everyday. Several decades ago, she worked at a hospital in Tokyo, as a doctor-in-training. There were few female doctors at that time. Also, there were many patients who said to her face that I don't want to be seen by a female doctor!

One day, some female doctors-in-training including her were called by the doctor who trained them. He told them "You can work as a doctor because people pay tax. Your salary is paid out of taxes. So, never stop working! You have to keep working until you die."

What he was saying was right, except for one thing. Certainly, doctors can work because people pay taxes. But, why did he tell them so? Only female doctors? I guess he thought that female doctors would quit their job after marriage or childbirth. Then why did he think so? That's because it was considered common for women to work at home after marriage or childbirth. Is it correct? Why gender determines the way of life? Shouldn't women work?

Women have been oppressed since ancient times in every country. Especially, Japan tends to humble women. Only sex is different between man and woman. There is no difference in ability. I don't want to live in the society where men and women are not treated equally. But it is none other than us who create that society.

Should we die? by Kazuki

Who has a right to deprive animals of their lives ? I have heard that many animals, elephants and fox and so on were killed for accessories and clothes. Also, I heard forest fire has happened and many koaras died lately. These bad events don't look similar, but I think they has common problem. It is responsible for people's behavior. First, surely, clothes that made from real animal materials are fashionable, warm and fluffy, so I can understand why people love real fur, but they must notice many animals fell victim for just fashion, however I should think that food is an exception.

Second, today, when we think about environment, I firstly come up with temperature increasing in the world. What can we do? Is it possible to stop this phenomenon ? It is maybe too late to stop it. The temperature increasing brins forest fire, melting glacier and disappearing plants. We, human beings are perpetrator. Many creatures including human are victim.

If I were animal or plant I would want human beings to die. This is just an hypothetical situation, but it may be true. Then, is action what we should take to die ? No, I want to live.

It would be presumptuous of us to cooperate with environment, but it is just one way to live longer. Then, what is cooperation ? It may be we don't hurt as much as possible. To protect nature perfectly is impossible, so we should do things we can do.

I won't use petroleum products as much as possible.

Poem by Yukari

Forever they shall be alone
Forever they shall be drowning
surrounded by darkness
suffocating, they're suffocating
unable to breathe in the deep blue ocean of their own tears

the thunderstorm is coming and I can hear the lightning strike
the rain fall down on our skin and it doesn't choose
whether it's black, brown, yellow or white
It will pour on us like the teardrops running down my cheeks
when I opened my phone and see what's really going on

“we are all equal” that's the American dream
but that's all it ever will be: just a dream
because the water is going through the stream
and the river is overflowing now
and you are the only ones with the ships that go to sail
so don't tell me anything else is fair

the colour of our skin doesn't define us
Yes, that's true
but what lies underneath it all?
would you even try to look?
would you say you tried to seek deeper?
would you say you saw the truth?

it shows where we grew from, the roots
but we are all from the same tree

just went on different branches
Why can't see?
if you know it all, then why are you trying
so hard to cut it down?
now, there's no more trees to suck up the
water from the wet soil
now, we have nothing to eat
the tree doesn't have leaves nor fruits anymore

then, the water rises
and you just went on to sail
so, they try to climb up the ship
that only carries the number of your skin
and you ask "why is it sinking?"
now we all drown in the ocean they cried on

forever shall we be alone
forever shall we be drowning
surrounded by darkness
suffocating, we're suffocating
unable to breathe in the deep blue ocean of our own tears

Poem by Maple

Suffering from atopic dermatitis

I hate my skin

However she said

"It's okay.

I love your heart.”

I feel relieved a little bit with her words

I realized What I need is beauty personality.



Member News and Events

Kathleen A. Brown, Melodie Cook, and Diane Nagatomo announce the publication of their book, "Foreign Female English Teachers in Japanese Higher Education: Narratives from Our Quarter," an edited volume comprised of 22 narratives written by foreign female academics in Japan at various stages of their careers in Japan. They

are appreciative to the contributors (many of whom are GALE members).

Suzanne Kamata's nonfiction book, *Squeaky Wheels: Travels with My Daughter by Train, Plane, Metro, Tuk-tuk and Wheelchair* (Wyatt-Mackenzie Publishing, 2019), which touches upon disability, creativity, and female empowerment in various cultures, won a Silver Nautilus Book Award. The award is intended to "celebrate and honor books that support conscious living & green values, high-level wellness, positive social change & social justice, and spiritual growth." *The Spy* (Gemma Open Door, 2020), a graded reader featuring a strong, female main character, was also published.

Jane Joritz-Nakagawa's tenth poetry book, *Plan B Audio*, featuring photographs by GALE member Susan Laura Sullivan, described as "a feminine epic" by poet Nancy Gaffield, was published by Isobar Press in May, 2020. A review of this book was published in a leading literary journal in the UK (*Tears in the Fence*) and can be read online:

<https://tearsinthefence.com/2020/06/15/plan-audio-b-by-jane-joritz-nakagawa-isobar-press> and a 2nd review appeared in

Wordgathering

(<https://wordgathering.com/vol14/issue3/reviews/joritz-nakagawa/>). The book is on sale at Amazon Japan, USA, UK, and other outlets.

Jane led a workshop in February 2020 for the Shizuoka JALT chapter under the title "Global Issues Through Poetry and Music: Cultural Identities." Identities included gendered identities,

disability, age-related, race, and others. Thanks to GALE member Sue Sullivan for organizing the event!

Jane was interviewed by Diane Wiener in the disability literature journal Wordgathering about feminist disability poetics:
<https://wordgathering.com/vol14/issue2/interviews/joritz-nakagawa/>

Jane's short story, "Daisy," described by editor James Crocker as "a powerful story of the tribulations of being a foreign female teacher in Japan" was published in The Font in April 2020:
<http://thefontjournal.com/daisy/>.

Jane's speech, "Mother nature v. idealized machines: gender, fluidity and contemporary ecopoetry by American women" was given via Facetime in March for a North American literary symposium held at Nagoya University. A slightly revised version of the speech was published by Australian literary journal Otoliths in April 2020:
<https://the-otolith.blogspot.com/2020/04/jane-joritz-nakagawa.html>.

Jane reviewed five books of poetry by women in early 2020, for the journals Plumwood Mountain, Wordgathering, and min-a-rets:
<https://plumwoodmountain.com/jane-joritz-nakagawa-reviews-between-wind-and-water-by-berni-m-janssen-ada-unseen-by-frances-presley-and-fate-news-by-norma-cole/>;
<https://wordgathering.com/vol14/issue1/reviews/eden/>;
<https://minarets.info/apocrypha-emigre-geneve-chao/>

Jane will participate in two group poetry readings, online, at the October 2020 Japan Writers Conference, for Isobar Press on Oct.10th and with Yoko Danno and Goro Takano on Oct.11th. GALE member Suzanne Kamata will present on Oct.11th (<http://japanwritersconference.org/>). Jane will present her paper on Japanese ecopoetry for the ASLE Japan conference which has been rescheduled from autumn 2020 to autumn 2021 (due to COVID 19) in Kobe, also featuring poet Ito Hiromi.

National JALT Conference, November 2020: Avril Haye Matsui will be GALE's featured speaker at JALT this year. Avril will do a presentation and a workshop. Here is more info:

Blending cultural awareness & social activism Sunday, Nov 22, 12:50 PM – 1:50 PM

The movement of people across borders means that Japanese communities are changing. However, if attitudes towards gender and cultural diversity do not also change communities may become breeding grounds for intolerance and discrimination. This workshop will explore how teachers can help foster attitudes of openness and acceptance of cultural difference, and be agents of social change through blending social activism and cultural awareness in our pedagogy. Participants will leave with practical ideas for classroom use.

The changing face of ELT: Black Women in ELT Saturday, Nov 21, 5:55 PM – 6:20 PM

This presentation focuses on the experiences of female English language teachers (ELT) from the African continent and of the African Diaspora (Black women) who currently reside in Japan.

Using the narrative inquiry methodology (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) to explore her participants' stories, along with auto-ethnography, the researcher will discuss how and if perceptions of gender, race and racial stereotyping impact upon their participation in professional Communities of Practice as described by Wenger 2002.

About Avril:

Avril Haye Matsui's research is focused on the interconnected areas of gendered and racial discrimination, and increasing awareness of social justice. Her Ph.D. research explores the professional identity development and experiences of women of the African Diaspora who work and reside in Japan. Ms. Matsui is dedicated to raising students' awareness of social justice, especially in the areas of gender and racial discrimination. Her work in this area includes creating practical lessons to help students identify the prejudices and negative stereotypes they may have towards those that are different from them. She provides a safe and supportive environment for students to discuss taboo subjects of racism and gender and encourages students to see different perspectives. The creation of supportive communities of women is both an integral part of Ms. Matsui's research and long-term goal for the development of stronger communities. In 2014, she co-founded the Black Women in Japan Friendship and Support Group (BWIJ) which now has almost 3,000 members. She also chairs the committee to organize the Black Women in Japan annual conventions. In 2018 she founded the Nagoya Women's Empowerment Circle, a group that empowers women to realize their goals in all areas of their lives and holds regular workshops for around 20 people. She also participates in workshops in the

community which work to bridge the gap between the Japanese and foreign communities. In addition, she is an active member of the following groups: Creating Connections, a group that supports diversity and multiculturalism in Japan and the Association of Foreign Wives of Japanese (AFWJ) which provides support for women who are married in Japan.

The GALE Forum at JALT

Title: Gender, Language and Community

Misako Tajima will examine how Filipina tutors are constructed as gendered entities in Japan's Skype English conversation industry. Sachi Komai will explore the works of novelist Natsuo Kirino, who describes the influence of neoliberalism in Japan and its impact on women. Antonia Cavcic will discuss Koike and Abe's use of gairaigo during the Covid-19 pandemic in relation to gender, inclusivity, and clarity. Sara Schipper will report on discrimination, isolation, and satisfaction amongst female students attending a male-dominated Japanese university.

The Forum will be on Tuesday 17 November from 17:30 to 19:00, followed by the AGM from 19:15 to 20:00.

GALE Kyoto JALT event, December 5, 2020

This one-day online workshop aims to bring people together to talk about ideas and share experiences of harassment in their daily lives. The workshop will be divided into three parts the first part will be a general talk discussion about harassment awareness, topics will include, sexual harassment, academic harassment, power harassment, and mobbing. The 2nd part of the workshop will be

breakout sessions according to non-binary, men, and women and the third part of the workshop will be a final coming together session where everyone will have the opportunity to come together and share ideas about harassment awareness. For further information contact GALE's program chair or visit GALE's website or Facebook page.

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