

ISSUES OF TRANSLATION IN
MIZUMURA'S *THE FALL OF JAPANESE IN THE AGE*
OF ENGLISH: A LINGUISTIC AND THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

by

SAMUEL REED ORME

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Student: Samuel Reed Orme

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This thesis has been accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in the Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures by:

Glynne Walley	Chair
Kaori Idemaru	Member
Karen Emmerich	Member

and

Kimberly Andrews Espy	Vice President for Research & Innovation/Dean of the Graduate School
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Original approval signatures are on file with the University of Oregon Graduate School.

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THESIS ABSTRACT

Samuel Reed Orme

Master of Arts

Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures

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When translating between any two languages, both linguistic and theoretical considerations must be made in order to create a successful translation. These choices are not made separately, however, but are inextricably linked; linguistic choices inform theoretical choices, and vice versa. A full understanding of both fields is crucial to the translator. The relationship between these two disciplines is considered in outlining a strategy for translating a selection from *The Fall of Japanese in the Age of English*, a novel by Mizumura Minae. Linguistic issues unique to the Japanese languages are considered along with theoretical issues, which are joined to create a unified translation strategy.

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME OF AUTHOR: Samuel Reed Orme

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

University of Oregon, Eugene
Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah

DEGREES AWARDED:

Master of Arts, East Asian Languages and Literatures, 2013, University of Oregon
Bachelor of Arts, History Teaching, 2007, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah

AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

Japanese Translation
Japanese Language Structure

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Translator, Technical Language Services, Inc., Provo, Utah, 2008-2011

Teaching assistant, Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures,
University of Oregon, Eugene, 2011-2013

GRANTS, AWARDS, AND HONORS:

Graduate Teaching Fellowship, East Asian Languages and Literatures, 2007 to present

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Translation is often seen as simply taking a text in one language and rendering it in another. Little thought is given to the process of translation; for many, as long as the finished translation is easily digestible and a reasonable approximation of the source text, it is sufficient. The discipline of translation theory has directed more attention at this process, questioning whether an “easily digestible” translation is ideal and what it even means to be an “ideal” translation. The rise of the field of translation studies has changed the way we think about translation and translating over the last few decades, but one issue the field has left largely unaddressed is the role an understanding of linguistics plays in translation. Clearly, in order to translate, a translator must have a strong understanding of both the source and target languages, not only the way each language is structured, but also how those structures differ from each other. Only then can the translator understand the challenges in rendering one structure into another, as well as the best ways to overcome those challenges.

In this paper, I hope to convey to the reader that rather than being two unrelated disciplines, the fields of translation theory and linguistics are inextricably linked. A translator’s theoretic conclusions and philosophies will necessarily guide his or her linguistic choices made while translating the source text. If the translator wants to create a sense of foreignness in his or her translation, he or she will make different linguistic choices than he or she would in trying to produce a domesticating translation. A full understanding of both fields is vital to producing the translator’s intended effect. It may be that the translator wants to privilege the target culture over the source culture, for

example, but if he or she makes use of the wrong linguistic features of the target language, the translation could have the opposite effect.

The translator's understanding of the linguistic structure of both the source and target languages can also have an impact on his or her theoretical approach to the translation. With two languages that are structurally similar, it may be more difficult to create a foreignizing effect, for example, which may cause the translator to abandon that particular theoretical goal and search for a new approach. It may also, on the other hand, inspire the translator to redouble his or her efforts and work even harder to produce that effect. In either case, the translator's understanding of linguistics helps to shape his or her theoretical approach by informing him or her which linguistic tools and techniques are available to meet those ends.

I will address this issue as I work through my translation of a selection from *The Fall of Japanese in the Age of English*, a 2008 book by Japanese author Mizumura Minae. I will first discuss the argument Mizumura lays out in her book. An understanding of her text and argument, my personal reaction to that argument, and any stated or unstated biases I hold is crucial to developing a theoretical approach that will help me to achieve my goals for my translation. I will then consider linguistic features of the Japanese language (the source language), as well as how they differ from those of English (the target language) in order to understand the effects the tools at my disposal will have on my readers. Finally, I will lay out my goals for my translation, as well as the linguistic and theoretical choices I will make in order to reach those goals. I will also include my translation of Mizumura's text (Chapter 6 of her book) to allow the reader to see the effects my choices have in an actual translation rather than in a purely hypothetical state.

I hope this discussion will help readers to see how the fields of translation theory and linguistics can not only make meaningful contributions to each other, but how choices in one field cannot help but be affected by choices in the other. The two fields have much to learn from each other, and keeping the two of them separate does no favors to either. By addressing translation from both viewpoints, I hope to show the overlap between the two disciplines and inspire future translators to consider aspects of both when embarking on translations of their own.

CHAPTER II

TREATMENT OF MIZUMURA'S TEXT

In order to translate any text, one must first understand the argument behind the text, as well as the author responsible for it. To that end, I will summarize the argument Mizumura lays out in *The Fall of Japanese in the Age of English*. I will also provide my own reaction to the text; since a translation is necessarily the product of two writers' thoughts and opinions, any biases I hold as a translator must be laid bare in order to provide the reader with a fair understanding of the text.

Mizumura's central argument, as can be understood from her title, is that the world has entered what she calls "the age of English." She expresses concern that the nations and peoples of the world are moving away from using their indigenous languages (which she refers to as "their own languages," [自分たちの言葉, *jibuntachi no kotoba*]) and increasingly toward English as a universal language. Her argument applies to any non-English language, but is aimed particularly at the Japanese language. She fears not that the Japanese language will disappear entirely, but rather that it will be replaced in culturally significant areas such as literature, diplomacy, and scholarship. If this happens, she says the Japanese language will perish; in essence, while the body of the language will endure, its soul will have died, leaving it impotent and helpless (Mizumura, 2008, p. 254).

2.1. Key terms

Mizumura uses several key terms throughout her text that bear some explanation here. Each of these terms has a specialized use in her text, and to distinguish them as such,

she sets them off with angle brackets.¹ The terms appear frequently throughout the text and their specialized meanings are critical to her argument.

2.1.1. Universal language and vernacular

First, she uses the term “universal language” (普遍語, *fuhengo*) to refer to the language of a great culture that can cross national boundaries, and particularly one in which scholarship is conducted (Mizumura, 2008, p. 128). Historically, these languages were used to share written texts; since one could reasonably expect an educated person to be able to read the great texts of the canon, one could also expect an educated person to be able to read other texts in those same languages. By contrast, one would not expect someone outside of their own community, no matter how educated, to be able to read a text written in the local language, which Mizumura refers to as the “vernacular” (現地語, *genchigo*). She defines a vernacular as a spoken language used by a single culture. Historically, cultures would use the vernacular for day-to-day business and activities, while universal languages were used for written texts of some importance (Mizumura, 2008, p. 254).

2.1.2. National language

Over time, the vernacular would be elevated to what Mizumura calls a “national language” (国語, *kokugo*). A vernacular and a national language are alike in that they are both used by a single culture, but while a vernacular is only used in speech, a national language develops when great texts written in universal languages are translated into the vernacular (Mizumura, 2008, p. 109). She describes the process of great writers like

¹ Angle brackets (<>) stand in contrast to square brackets (「」), which are used in much the same way as quotation marks in English. Angle brackets will be discussed more fully in sections 2.4.3 and 4.2.5.

Dante translating texts into Italian (at that time a language she would describe as a vernacular) and writing great works like *The Divine Comedy* in Italian, which would then be translated into other languages. According to Mizumura, “It is through this active two-way translation that, over centuries, and starting with the languages of western Europe, vernaculars were changed into national languages.” (Mizumura, 2008, p. 135) One crucial consequence of a vernacular becoming a national language is that the language becomes standardized. While a vernacular often has many local variations, a national language nominally has the same rules of grammar, spelling, and pronunciation no matter which of its speakers uses it.² In fact, Mizumura goes so far as to say that a national language is “a language that the citizens of a nation think of as their own language.” (Mizumura, 2008, p. 132)

2.1.3. “*Their own language*”

The notion of “their own language” is one that Mizumura revisits constantly throughout her text. She uses the phrase not only to imply that the language in question is one that a nation feels is its own and no one else’s, but that it is a language that people are consciously using *instead* of any of the universal languages available to them (Mizumura, 2008, p. 44). Often, Mizumura will refer to universal languages not as *fuhengo*, but instead as *soto no kotoba* (外の言葉), or “outside languages,” heightening this distinction between a people’s national language and a universal language.

2.2. *Universal languages*

A recurring theme in Mizumura’s text is the relationship between universal languages and national languages, and particularly the fact that universal languages

² Of course, dialects and other regional variants of a language can account for some nonstandard usage.

(especially English) are crowding out national languages and damaging their ability to communicate great ideas. She spends much of her text tracing the history of universal languages, evaluating their effects and influence over time, and speculating what they will do in the future.

2.2.1. Historical universal languages

In Chapter 3 of *The Fall of Japanese in the Age of English*, Mizumura explores the history of universal languages leading to the present status of English as the dominant language on Earth. She begins with languages like Greek, Latin, and Sanskrit, all of which served as universal languages in the ancient world. Greek and Roman were spoken by two of the great civilizations of the day, while Sanskrit was not (at least, not by a great civilization of the Western tradition), but each gained its greatest influence as it was used to represent sacred texts. Greek was used in the writings of Socrates, Aristotle, and Plato, which, while not scripture per se, enjoyed a privileged place in the canon, giving the language significant currency throughout the Western world. Latin was used by the Roman Empire, which became synonymous with the West in the ancient world, but gained its most lasting influence through its use in translations of the Bible. By the Middle Ages, Latin was the written language of nearly all of Europe. Sanskrit, while not as politically powerful as either Greek or Latin, was used in the thousands of sutras of the Buddhist tradition, and as Buddhism spread throughout Asia, so too did knowledge of Sanskrit.

As those universal languages were translated into various vernaculars, creating national languages, their hegemony decreased in the modern age, giving rise to a new universal language: French. During the Age of Exploration and thereafter, France came to

be not only a major mercantile power on the global stage, but also was seen as the center of culture in Europe. Rather than exporting sacred texts to the rest of the world, France exported high culture, and in order for the world to consume that culture, it needed to be conversant in French. This is not to say that the French language did not enjoy any political prestige; in fact, during this era, French became the language of diplomacy. In fact, a common term today for the universal languages Mizumura describes is *lingua franca*, a phrase not only referring to a bygone universal language, but one even written in an old universal language.

2.2.2. *English as the twentieth-century universal language*

As the world entered the twentieth century, French began to give way to the rising power of the United States, and with it, the French language ceded its universal authority to English. The end of World War II and the start of the Cold War marked a shift of the seat of global political power from Europe to the United States; now, business was done through America and with Americans. The spread of the internet over the last three decades has only reinforced this status.

Mizumura argues that today English is a universal language like none before it. While previous universal languages were able to spread across national boundaries, the increasingly globalized nature of the world today, together with technology like the internet that allows for rapid sharing of information, has allowed English to reach further than perhaps any language in history (Mizumura, 2008, p. 240).

2.2.3. *The end of literature in the age of English*

While the spread of English throughout the world is welcome news for monolingual English speakers, Mizumura worries that its advance could have a

devastating impact on national languages, and particularly on their literature. In her text, she identifies three threats to literature as we know it. First, she cites the rapid advance of science as a major problem. Historically, literature has played the role in cultures of explaining how the world works, whether through philosophy, creation myths, or anything else. However, as scientific knowledge has expanded, so too has science's ability to explain how the world works, often in a more concrete way than can literature. This advance, Mizumura fears, could lead readers to reject literature in favor of science. Yet she lays her own fears to rest, saying that "even as science explains how man came to be born, it cannot provide an answer to the question of how mankind should live. Literature is what makes this question possible in the first place." (Mizumura, 2008, p. 238) Science has been able to provide order to our understanding of the world, but has been less successful at providing meaning. This reassures her that despite the advance of science, literature will not come to an end at its hands.

A second threat is the proliferation of commercialism. Historically, literature, along with high art, was a chief source of culture for people to consume. However, in recent years, a wave of popular culture has risen that simply sells better than does literature or art. People have shown that they are more willing to read popular fiction (Mizumura cites the *Harry Potter* series as an example [Mizumura, 2008, p. 237]) than great literature, and in order to compete, great literature must be marketed and turned into a commodity rather than a vessel of culture. Here, she identifies technology that has allowed for the rapid sharing of information as both a blessing and a curse; it gives people wider access to knowledge, but also allows cheaper media (such as television and radio) the chance to replace books as the primary medium of information exchange.

Yet this too does not worry Mizumura. She concedes that people are showing more willingness to purchase and consume popular culture than great culture, but expresses confidence that there will never be a time when mankind does not have a desire to read “great works” — in other words, the canon of great literature. What worries her, and what she sees as the primary factor threatening to end literature as we know it, is the fact that the world has entered what she calls the Age of English (Mizumura, 2008, p. 239).

2.2.4. Universal libraries

As mentioned previously, she identifies the current era as the Age of English because it is currently the dominant universal language, but unlike the universal languages before it, she feels that English will continue to be dominant through “not only in this century, but in the next, and the next, and possibly ever on.” (Mizumura, 2008, p. 240) She cites the internet as a particularly troublesome example, arguing that English enjoys a privileged status online, as much of the content on the internet is written in English and intended for an English-speaking audience. She feels the internet serves as a modern Library of Alexandria, giving anyone in the world access to an immense store of knowledge, but worries that as more and more of that information is written in English, there will be less and less of a desire for people to contribute to that library in other languages.

As proof of this, she brings up the example of the Google Book Search Library Project. In 2006, Google spearheaded an effort to digitize the books and other print media of five major libraries in an effort to create a truly universal library. They promoted this as an opportunity to aggregate all of the world’s knowledge into a single collection that

would be made freely available for anyone to use and search. Quoting an article on the subject from the New York Times Magazine, she says that people as varied as “students in Mali, scientists in Kazakhstan, [and] elderly people in Peru” (Mizumura, 2008, p. 244, from Kelly, 2006) would be able to share information and collaborate with each other through this library.

The opportunity sounds wonderful, Mizumura concedes, but leads to a crucial question: In what language are these three people collaborating? While it is possible that Malian students know Kazakh or Spanish and can read the contributions of the scientists or the elderly people in their respective national languages, she says it is far more likely that the exchange will be carried out in English. “People can only patronize a library whose language they can read,” remarks Mizumura (2008, p. 246). In order for the Malian students to be able to access documents in the library that are not in their native language, they must either translate them or learn to read a new language. Since most of the contents of this universal library are in English — understandable, as Google is an American corporation — absent a translator or translation program, these three potential patrons of the universal library are most likely to use it in the universal language of English.

As patrons of this library come to realize that they must do their reading not in their own language, but in English, Mizumura fears that they will grow less willing to write in their own language, and instead contribute to the library in that universal language. By way of illustration, she provides the example of Aristotle. He wrote his texts in ancient Greek, and specialists studying his works read them in their original Greek. However, if the scholarship on his works became increasingly centered around

English, Mizumura speculates that scholars hoping to add to our understanding of Aristotle would write not in their own language, but rather in English, the language of the supporting commentary. She further speculates that these scholars would “begin to use not quotes from Aristotle translated into their own languages, but those translated into English.” (Mizumura, 2008, p. 251) As the supporting commentary on Aristotle’s works begins to be primarily written in English, future scholars are more and more likely to write their own commentary in English as well, creating a vicious cycle in which commentary in other national languages is phased out. Those writing in other languages will find themselves marginalized and their ideas unread or forgotten. As an example of this, she mentions Polish economist Michal Kalecki, who wrote about what came to be known as Keynesian economics years before Keynes did, yet was not widely read because he wrote in Polish, not English. (Mizumura, 2008, p. 145) As the universal library grows, its patrons and contributors will want to write in English to avoid a similar fate.

2.2.5. If Japan had been a colony of the West

Her concern about the effect of English on national languages here causes Mizumura to dabble in a bit of alternate history: What would Japan look like today had it become a colony of the West (likely an American colony after the arrival of Commodore Perry)? Although the chances of Japan continuing as a colony into the twenty-first century are slim, the nation would certainly look very different than it does today. She speculates that Japanese would have remained an official language, but would have nowhere near the status that it possesses today. Instead, she imagines that while Japanese would be the language used for everyday activities, English would be the language of

serious scholarship, and by extension, serious literature. Japanese would be used in public schools, but universities would likely be taught in English, and in fact, Mizumura (2008, p. 198) suggests that any Japanese person hoping to obtain a serious education would not attend a Japanese university, but would instead travel to America and study there.

The prospect of the loss of Japanese as a language of scholarship is particularly painful for Mizumura. She feels that when a national language is used to teach serious scholarship, it gains credibility not only on a global level, but also in the minds of its speakers. In fact, she identifies the appointment of Natsume Sōseki as a professor teaching Western literature at a Japanese university in Japanese as the moment when the Japanese language rose to the level of a scholarly language. In Mizumura's alternate history, however, Japanese is not used for scholarship. She feels that if this were the case, the Japanese people would come to think of Japanese as nothing more than a translation of English, even going to far as to suggest that they would think in English rather than in Japanese. (Mizumura (2008, p. 198) here admits the irony of this situation; when Japan colonized the Pacific before and during World War II, they built Japanese-language universities in Taiwan and Korea with much the same effect in mind.)

Mizumura continues her alternate history by speculating on the impact of the demise of Japanese as a scholarly language on the very man who helped to elevate it to that status, Natsume Sōseki. She wonders whether Sōseki would have been able to have a similar impact on the language (of even if he would have had such a desire) had he been born today, in the age of English. She speculates that Sōseki likely would still have pursued literature, but, assuming he was born into a wealthy family, would have studied overseas, likely in an American university. Mizumura (2008, p. 259) believes he would

still be a great author and have a desire to “join the chain of the world’s great works” by writing novels in English. However, he would not feel lasting satisfaction at writing in English, and would spend his life fighting against the English language and its increasing hegemony, a viewpoint and life goal unsurprisingly shared by Mizumura herself.

The idea of Sōseki writing in English rather than in Japanese is worrisome for Mizumura, but even more so to her is the idea of Sōseki reading only in English. Mizumura feels that the demise of a language starts not when scholars and other knowledge seekers stop writing in their national language, but when they stop reading it. She suggests that these people stop making an effort to read texts in their national language because they no longer feel those texts have anything interesting to offer. When this happens, they focus their efforts on reading texts written in universal languages, leading them to write in those languages as well (Mizumura, 2008, p. 255). They are no longer concerned with the development of their national language corpus, but in much the same way as her example of Aristotle cited above, join a universal language community and cause all of its text and commentary to be written in that universal language. This slowly diminishes the chances for readers of those national languages to read texts in “their own words,” perhaps sending them in search of universal language texts to read, promoting a vicious cycle.

2.3. Education reform

Given that the problem facing Japanese national literature is the encroachment of English, what does Mizumura propose as a solution? She suggests that the best way to shore up Japan’s defenses against English is by reforming the Japanese education system, and particularly the way it teaches students English and Japanese. She identifies three

possible courses the Japanese government could take to teach English: first, make English the national language; second, make all Japanese people bilingual speakers; and third, make only some Japanese people bilingual speakers (Mizumura, 2008, p. 267). She concedes that the first is untenable, but argues that the ministry of education is pursuing the second path. By mandating that all students study English in school, Japan seems to intend to make all of them into bilinguals, but in actuality, almost no students emerge from Japanese public education with any degree of proficiency in English. Mizumura worries that this gives Japan a negative image on the global stage, citing examples of public officials meeting in diplomatic settings and being entirely unable to carry on a conversation with their English-speaking counterparts.

She argues that instead, the Japanese government ought to pursue the third course and focus on making only a few select students into bilinguals. This way, rather than spreading their resources thin across every student, they can devote more attention to those who do study the language, helping them to achieve a high degree of proficiency. Not only will this allow them to master the English language, but it will also allow them to become good representatives of Japan in international settings. These bilinguals will also have access to texts written in English and, like other translators before them, be able to translate those texts back into Japanese and add to the corpus of national language literature. This way, Japan will be able to present a good face to the world and also be able to retain the Japanese language as a language of scholarship (Mizumura, 2008, p. 278).

A final concern for Mizumura is that the Japanese education system does not seem to have a goal other than making as many people as possible able to speak English.

She argues that rather than simply churning out English speakers (and poor ones at that), the focus of Japanese education ought to be preserving the status of Japanese as a national language. She suggests that this could be done by allocating more time during the school day to the study of Japanese. If the primary focus of public education is the teaching of English, then the time required to teach that has to come at the expense of another subject, and too often, the subject sacrificed is Japanese. She says that more time could be spent each week teaching Japanese to students without overtaxing them, as Japanese is a low-intensity study for Japanese students, similar to gym or music. She recommends at least five hours per week (i.e., at least an hour every day) be dedicated to studying Japanese.

Mizumura feels that doing this could strengthen the position of Japanese as a national language, but worries that an even deeper problem is that not only do many Japanese not recognize that their language needs to be preserved, few Japanese even feel that such should be the case. She offers no solutions to this problem, but admits it is a serious situation and must be addressed in order to prevent the language from perishing. One wonders, however, if this feeling amongst the Japanese raises the question of whether or not efforts should even be made to stem the tide of English. If the Japanese themselves do not feel a particular concern that their language be bolstered as a national language, then perhaps nothing should be done. In either case, she concedes that any efforts to strengthen national Japanese literature will be of limited impact at best unless this attitude changes.

2.4. Personal opinions on text

Mizumura's argument is interesting, but to me, it is ultimately unfulfilling. Her argument has flaws that make it difficult for me to take seriously. First, I feel that Mizumura strays too far from fact and evidence into the realm of the hypothetical. She spends much of her text speculating on what Japan would look like if history had unfolded differently, offering no concrete evidence as to why it would turn out they way she thinks it would. Alternate histories are notoriously problematic; since they did not actually happen, basing an argument on what is ultimately a faulty premise sets such an argument on a shaky footing.

2.4.1. Lack of evidence

Compounding this problem is the fact that she makes a wide variety of claims in her text without citing references or data to support her points. Admittedly, this text is not scholarly in nature and does not appear to claim to be, but as her argument is based primarily on her own opinions and views of the world, it only carries the weight that the reader assigns to those opinions. Presumably any reader who cares enough to purchase a copy of her text is likely to have a somewhat favorable opinion of Mizumura, helping them to take her argument more seriously, but setting her text on such an unstable foundation does her no favors. In fact, many points she brings up can be readily disproved through simple research. For example, she points to the Google Book Search Project as an example of the growing hegemony of English, yet Google Books is available in many languages, including Japanese; in fact, Google announced a partnership with Keio University on the Keio website to digitize their collection in July 2007 and before the publication of Mizumura's book in October 2008.

2.4.2. Emotional foundation of argument

Perhaps most problematic, however, is the fact her personal background is so difficult to separate from her argument. Mizumura is a native Japanese who moved to the United States as a child when her father was transferred there. She describes her life in the United States in the text as traumatic and miserable, and in an essay she wrote while at the International Writing Program in Iowa, a residency for international writers sponsored by the University of Iowa and the setting for Chapter 1 of *The Fall of Japanese in the Age of English*, she wrote, “I turned my back to [sic] America and spent my entire girlhood reading old Japanese novels my parents brought for my sister and I to read. I read and read and dreamed of the day when I would finally go back to Japan and start living a full life—not a shadow of life as I did in the United States.” (Mizumura, 2003) At one point in her book, she mentions that she was placed in what she calls the “dumb class” (お馬鹿さんのクラス, *o-baka-san no kurasu*) for high school English, not because she was an incapable student (by all accounts, Mizumura is a brilliant author and literary thinker), but simply because her English proficiency was not high enough for her to keep up in the regular class, let alone an advanced class (Mizumura, 2008, p. 316).

This background makes her argument seem to be less about bolstering the status of Japanese as a national language and more about getting her own personal revenge on English. Her arguments are cogent, and if the Japanese government followed her recommendations, the Japanese language would certainly gain a stronger footing on the global stage, but the text has a certain sense of being a way to vent about an unhappy childhood and to find some way to punish the English language as a result.

2.4.3. *Nihonjinron*

At times, her argument comes close to entering the realm of *nihonjinron*, a field in which the Japanese culture and identity is studied primarily by the Japanese themselves. The word *nihonjinron* (日本人論) literally means “theories about the Japanese people,” and centers around the notion that the Japanese are a particularly unique culture, owing to Japan’s isolated development (being an island nation), its language, which has little relation to almost any other language in the world, and its race, which proponents of *nihonjinron* suggest has different physiological characteristics from any other race in the world. (Tsunoda, 1985) As a result of being particularly unique (an odd claim, as literally every nation is unique in some way) *nihonjinron* scholars believe that Japan, its language, and its culture are incomprehensible to any except native Japanese. Further, these scholars set up Japanese culture as indecipherable except through the Japanese language. One such scholar summarized this by saying that “Western words... are not appropriate for describing non-Western reality.” (Ono, 1976) This creates an “us versus them” mentality in which Japan is set up as being diametrically opposed to Western societies and thought, and by so doing, implies that Japanese concepts are “right” and Western concepts are “wrong.” (Dale, 1986)

While some *nihonjinron* scholarship does its best to be objective and informative, the wide variety of writing assembled under that heading, as well as the varying degrees of accuracy of their content, gives the discipline the label of pseudoscience. Dale describes the genre as containing “any work of scholarship, occasional essay or newspaper article which attempts to define the unique specificity of things Japanese. It gathers within its ample embrace writings of high seriousness, imbued with a deep, often

specious, erudition, and the facile *dicta* of interpretative journalism.” (Dale, 1986) The fact that less-serious scholarship is included under the banner of *nihonjinron* — such as, for example, the claim that Japanese digestive tracts are not built to digest foreign rice, and thus they can only consume rice grown in-country (Lowry 2009) — can damage the credibility of serious Japanese scholarship

It is this very fact that makes it so difficult to take Mizumura’s argument seriously. Her book stops short of implying that Japanese is inherently better than English or other languages, but does give the impression at times that Japanese is a unique and delicate flower that is being trampled by English. She also argues that the Japanese language is a core part of the identity of the Japanese people, a common refrain among *nihonjinron* scholars. In a composition manual comparing Japanese prose with that of the West, famed Japanese author Tanizaki Jun’ichirō said, “Our nation’s language (*kokugo*) bears an unalienable relationship with our national character (*kokuminsei*).” (Tanizaki, 1934) The fact that Japanese people speak the Japanese language itself is what makes them Japanese; if they stopped speaking Japanese, they would cease to *be* Japanese, or at least become less Japanese. Furthermore, Tanizaki draws a comparison here with the West, implying that while other nations may not have this strong of a relationship between their national character and language, Japan does, making it unique in the world. These echoes of nationalism, another common characteristic of *nihonjinron*, pervade Mizumura’s text.

This is not to say that Mizumura intended for her text to have this effect, of course. She may have intended an even-handed approach to the subject, but as mentioned above, in the absence of data and citations, her argument rests solely on her personal opinions, and if the reader believes those opinions are colored by her background, the argument

suffers as a result. Establishing her argument primarily on her own opinion and then spending much of the text compromising the credibility of that opinion sets up the text for failure.

2.5. Summary

In short, Mizumura's text is concerned primarily with addressing the problem of the threat posed to the Japanese language by the spreading influence of English. She proposes some potential solutions to the problem, but spends the bulk of the text simply identifying the problems. Being written in Japanese, it is clear that the text is aimed at a Japanese-speaking audience and intended to stir up a desire to protect that language from losing its influence. However, it is centered around Mizumura's personal beliefs on the matter, and the credibility of the text ultimately rests on whether or not the reader decides to take her word on the matter. As a translator, it is my responsibility to render that argument to a non Japanese-speaking audience, a process not without its own particular challenges. In the sections that follow, I will identify these challenges, citing general issues with translation (and Japanese-to-English translation in particular), as well as issues particular to this text. I will first consider linguistic issues, following which I will consider problems relating to translation theory. Once I have identified these problems, I will address potential solutions to these problems, enabling me to proceed with my translation of the text.

CHAPTER III

LINGUISTIC CONSIDERATIONS

In this chapter, I will consider the challenges faced by a translator working from Japanese into English. The two languages are very different in terms of typology, orthography, and constructions particular to the language. Here, I will describe the problems faced by a translator working in Japanese in general, as well as the problems specific to Mizumura's text.

3.1. Typological differences

Typology refers to the structural features of a language; when two languages are typologically different, they have features that either differ from each other or do not have an equivalent in the other language. These are typically syntactic differences, and in fact, the differences between English and Japanese covered below will be primarily syntactic.

3.1.1. Word order

Perhaps the clearest difference between English and Japanese is the word order of each language. English is a subject-verb-object (SVO) language, producing typical transitive sentences as those below.

(1) The boy read the book.

(2) John ate the apple.

This is the word order to which most English speakers are accustomed; in fact, if an American English speaker has studied a foreign language, it will often be one of the Romance languages, which are also SVO languages. However, Japanese is a subject-

object-verb (SOV) language. The above two examples would be rendered in Japanese as follows:

(1') *otoko no ko-ga hon-o yonda*
boy-NOM book-OBJ read-PAST

(2') *jon-ga ringo-o tabeta*
Jon-NOM apple-OBJ eat-PAST

The SOV word order is made clear by case-marking particles, which are also not present in English. Verbs are canonically found at the end of Japanese sentences (Kuno, 1973), and have a sense of driving the meaning of those sentences. Rendering this structure into English can be problematic. Japanese sentences, being head-final, can concern themselves primarily with actors and patients and only “reveal” the action in its final word, leaving the hearer in the dark until the last moment, English sentences, being head-initial, make mention of their predicates early in the sentence. Isozaki (2010) provides the following example of this effect:

(3) John went to the police because Mary lost his wallet.

(3') *jon-wa meari-ga kare-no saifu-o nakushita node keisatsu-ni itta*
Jon-TOP Mary-NOM him-GEN wallet-OBJ lose-PAST because police-DAT go-PAST

In the English example (3), the verb is stated at the beginning of the sentence, cuing the reader immediately to John’s action and only afterward explaining the reason. In contrast, Japanese example (3’) provides the explanation and background for the action first, and only after all of that has been explained provides the reader with John’s action.

3.1.2. Subject prominence and topic prominence

Another difference between the two languages is the fact that English is a subject-prominent language, while Japanese is a topic-prominent language.¹ Simply put, in a subject-prominent language like English, the subject-predicate relationship plays a major role, while in a topic-prominent language like Japanese, the relationship between topic and comment is emphasized (Li and Thompson, 1976). The following examples from Mizumura's book will make this distinction clear:

(3) There are words that people themselves can read.

(3') *hito-wa jibun-ga yomeru kotoba*
people-TOP self-NOM read-can-NONPAST word

“As for people, [there are] words [that they] themselves can read.” (Mizumura, 2008, p. 246)

(4) In Japan, *Sōseki* is such an example.

(4') *nihon-dewa souseki-ga sou dearu*
Japan-LOC/TOP *Sōseki*-NOM so is

“As for in Japan, *Sōseki* is such [an example].” (Mizumura, 2008, p. 199)

The examples in English describe properties of a subject (a person likes something, a nose is long), while those in Japanese offer commentary on a topic, which can be seen from the translated construction “as for X.” The translations also make clear an additional difference between the two languages: English requires each sentence to have a subject; Japanese does not.² In fact, Japanese sentences will often leave arguments

¹ Li and Thompson (1976) correctly claim that Japanese is properly described as displaying both subject and topic-prominence; since this chapter aims to highlight differences rather than similarities between English and Japanese, only the topic-prominent aspect of Japanese will be discussed here.

² The nominative particle *ga* present in sentences (3) and (4) is commonly used as a subject marker in Japanese; however, in both of these sentences, *ga* serves as an object marker as described by Sugamoto (1982).

unstated if they are easily recoverable from context (Fry, 2003). In sentences (3') and (4'), the unstated subjects are indicated in brackets.

The challenge here for a translator is deciding how to emphasize topic in a way that sounds natural in a subject-prominent language. Constructions such as the above-mentioned “as for X” may best represent the literal meaning and structure of the source text, but come at the cost of potentially sounding stilted and unnatural. On the other hand, simply choosing to rearrange the translation into a subject-prominent order has the reverse effect: it sounds natural to the English-speaking reader, but loses its relationship with the original topic-prominent structure.

3.1.3. *Ellipsis*

The fact that English nearly always requires each sentence to include a subject can complicate translation (Bloom, 1993). Japanese, on the other hand, allows for subject ellipsis when it is easily recoverable from context, as mentioned in the above section.

Consider the following examples:

(5) I/∅ * am driving a car.

(6) *watashi-wa/∅ kuruma-o hashitte iru*
I-TOP car-OBJ drive-PROG
“I[∅] am driving a car.”

Deleting the subject from English example (5) causes it to become ungrammatical; doing the same for Japanese example (6), however, does not. This is often done in order to provide a sense of distance and humility by avoiding directly mentioning the subject (Pihlaja, 2009), although it can also be used as a discourse strategy; referents within the same discourse tend to receive zero marking (or, less commonly, a pronoun), and this same strategy can also be used to mark focus (Fox, 1996).

This is a thorny problem for a translator; since subjects are ubiquitous in English, the choice the translator makes in rendering them in English will resonate throughout the translated text. Pihlaja suggests two possible solutions; the translator can either add personal pronouns as necessary in order to clarify the subject in each sentence, or can reword the translation by using the passive voice in order to avoid the need personal pronouns. In either case, the translator is forced to make serious changes to the text, either through adding words not present in the source text or by altering the grammar (particularly problematic, as Pihlaja admits, since the passive voice can carry a specialized meaning that is a “key part of Japanese aesthetics”).

A third option exists, although it is equally problematic. The translator could make the choice to make explicit subjects that are left implied in Japanese, but to mark them as such by placing them in brackets in the translation. This would hew more closely to the form of the source text, although it comes at the cost of feeling quite unnatural in the translation. In any case, this difference in typology requires the translator to make at least some change to the source text; whether that change results in the translation hewing more closely to the structure of the source language or that of the target language is ultimately up to the translator.

3.2. Other characteristics of Japanese

It is instructive to consider that not only is the structure of Japanese different from that of English, but the content it represents is also different. One might use different constructions in each language in order to communicate the same message. Below, some characteristics particular to Japanese that do not have close equivalents in English will be considered.

3.2.1. *Mono, koto, and other nominalizers*

While English tends to place emphasis on the agent in an utterance, Japanese instead places emphasis on the scene as a whole, which Ikegami Yoshihiko describes as the difference between *mono* (物) and *koto* (事) (Ikegami, 1991). Both *mono* and *koto* can be said to mean “thing,” but *mono* refers to a tangible object, while *koto* refers to a concept or an action. Ikegami distinguishes the two as object (*mono*) and proposition (*koto*), as concerning linguistic issues. He characterizes English as a *mono* language, preferring to focus on objects, while Japanese is a *koto* language, giving more focus to propositions. To make this difference clear, he provides the following example in English:

(7) Instead of a pointing finger, the image of an arrow has been adopted.

Ikegami identifies the “pointing finger” as the *mono* in this sentence; the finger itself, being a physical object, is emphasized rather than the action of pointing. He suggests (although he does not provide a translation) that in Japanese, while the sentence could be phrased in the *mono* format seen in English, it would be more likely rendered as *koto*, sounding something like “[the] pointing with a finger.” The *mono* style of the English sentence highlights the agent, the doer of the action (the finger), while the *koto* style of the Ikegami’s proposed Japanese sentence suppresses the agent, relegating it to the status of simply one element in a scene. The Japanese sentence is less about cause and effect and agentivity than about the relationship between the whole scene as an event (*koto*) and how it relates to the speaker and hearer. (Anzai, 1983)

This desire to suppress agents in Japanese can be seen in the *-te aru* construction that allows transitive verbs to be used without requiring the agent as an argument.

Makino and Tsutsui (1986) provide the following example:

(8) 窓が開けてある。
mado-ga akete aru
window-NOM open-RES
“The window has been open/is open.”

Makino and Tsutsui define this construction as indicating that “something has been done to something and the resultant state of that action remains.” This is a typical *koto* way to describe an action; only the resulting state is described as part of a scene, and in fact, not only is the agent not mentioned, but there is not even a slot for the agent’s inclusion in this construction at all. It is clear that an agent caused the window to be open, but the identity of this agent is either unknown or unimportant (either due to indifference or previous knowledge through context) to the speaker. In either case, the agent is suppressed and fades to the background, allowing the scene as a whole to occupy the foreground.

One consequence of the *mono-koto* distinction is that English, being a *mono* language, tends to focus on what its objects *have*, while Japanese, as a *koto* language, focuses on what its events *are*. Ikegami characterizes these as the difference between “HAVE-languages” and “BE-languages.” “HAVE-languages” like English have a verb specifically meaning “to have,” while “BE-languages” like Japanese do not, instead using a form of the word “to be.” The following examples will make this distinction clear:

(9) Tom has three pencils.

(9’) トムは鉛筆が三つある。
tomu-wa enpitsu-ga mittsu aru
Tom-TOP pencil-NOM three things exist-NONPAST

“Tom has three pencils.” (Lit. “As for Tom, three pencils exist.”)

The English sentence centers on Tom and describes what he has, while the Japanese sentence focuses on the existence of the pencils.³ The Japanese sentence uses the word *aru* (literally, “to exist”) in place of the English *have*. Both of the objects that could be considered the *mono* of the sentence (Tom and the pencils) are subsumed in the larger event of the sentence, the existence of the pencils.

One common example of a nominalizer is *no da*, which serves to convert a sentence into a noun phrase in order to provide or ask for an explanation or reason (Kuno, 1976). However, this construction can have a secondary effect; it can be used to “objectivize and stativize [events]” (Maynard, 1992). By changing a predicate into a nominative, it changes the center of discourse from actions and agents into states and comments (Maynard, 1997). This brings the scene to the foreground, emphasizing the topic-comment nature of discourse.

Rendering *koto* sentences into a *mono* language is a challenge for a translator, since *koto* phrasing can sound unnatural in a *mono* language. The translator must be familiar with the aspects of the *koto* language that give it its distinctive flavor and character and know how best to convert them into *mono* constructions. However, simply changing the original phrasing into *mono* constructions could obscure the original *koto* phrasing, causing the reader to miss some distinctive qualities of the source text.

3.2.2. Adverb-rich versus verb-rich language

While both languages have a rich vocabulary for describing actions, English often chooses to describe those actions by using verbs, while Japanese tends to use adverbs to

³ Compare with section 3.1.2 on subject and topic-prominence.

modify verbs. This is due to a typological difference between the two languages; English has been characterized as a satellite-framed language (S-language) in which motion is encoded in satellites (particles and other “immediate constituents” of the verb [Talmy, 1985]) but manner of motion is encoded directly in the verb, while Japanese is a verb-framed language (V-language) in which motion is encoded into the verb itself while manner of motion is either expressed in adverbial phrases or simply left to be inferred. (Noguchi, 2011). This is observed in sentences that denote actions that are not motion events. Often, these adverbs expressing manner of motion (or action) take the form of mimetics, a category of words similar to onomatopoeia in that they phonetically express a state, although unlike onomatopoeia, they do not represent audible sounds, but rather emotions, movement, or some other state. (Inose, 2007). This can be seen in example (9):

(10) あの人はブツブツと言う。

ano hito-wa butsubutsu-to iu

that person-TOP grumble-MANNER speak-NONPAST

“That person grumbles.” (Lit. “That person speaks in a grumbling manner.”)

While English uses the verb “to grumble,” which has manner encoded into it, Japanese uses the verb *iu* (“to say”) and couples it with the adverbial phrase *butsubutsu to* in order to express the manner of the action.

This is not to say, of course, that Japanese is incapable of producing specialized verbs such as “to grumble” like English does, but simply that such verbs are constructed in a different way in Japanese. For example, in order to create an equivalent of the verb “to beam” (in the sense of a wide smile), one could take the mimetic *nikoniko* and append the verb *suru* (“to do”) to create the verb *nikoniko suru*, “to beam” (lit. “to do a wide smile”). In this way, a wide variety of mimetic adverbs can be converted into verbs, although the same cannot be done with onomatopoeia.

This is, in part, due to the information encoded into verbs in both English and Japanese. English encodes both motion and manner into verbs of motion. (Slobin, 2005) He provides the example of the verb “to run,” which indicates to the hearer not only that the agent is moving (motion), but also that he or she is moving quickly on foot (manner). Compare the manner described in the verb “to run” with the manner described in the verb “to shuffle;” while both verbs indicate motion, each indicates a different manner.

This can create a particular challenge for the translator, as these mimetics can appear as several different parts of speech. Should a translator render *nikoniko suru* (a verb) differently than *nikoniko-to suru* (an adverb modifying a verb)? While Japanese verbs generally do not have manner encoded into them⁴, English allows for manner to be expressed either in the verb or through adverbial phrases. The verb phrase *nikoniko suru* could be translated either as “to beam” (i.e., as a verb with manner encoded) or as “to smile widely” (i.e., as a verb coupled with an adverb expressing manner). If the two have effectively the same meaning, does the translator still have the responsibility of indicating to the reader that the underlying structure is different? Further complicating the problem is that mimetics can also appear as adjectives, as in example (14).

(11) あの指輪はキラキラと輝く。
ano yubiwa-wa kirakira-to kagayaku
 that ring-TOP glitter-MANNER shine-NONPAST
 “That ring glitters.” (Lit. “That ring shines in a glittering manner.”)

(11’) あれはキラキラした指輪だ。
are-wa kirakira shita yubiwa da
 that-TOP glitter do-PAST ring-COP
 “That is a glittery ring.” (Lit. “That is a ring that glitters.”)

⁴ Japanese does contain a verb for “to run” (走る, *hashiru*) distinct from verbs such as “to go” (行く, *iku*) and “to walk” (歩く, *aruku*), making Slobin’s example less than idea for Japanese, but the point holds in general.

Since mimetics can appear as verbs, adverbs, and adjectives, it is crucial that the translator be aware of this fact and exercise caution accordingly. English tends to render these concepts in verbs, but other parts of speech can be used as well, so the translator must often choose between informing the reader of the underlying structure in the source language or aiding in ease of understanding in the target language.

3.3. Orthography

While English orthography uses the Latin alphabet, Japanese takes three forms: *kanji* (漢字), ideograms adopted from the Chinese, *hiragana* (ひらがな), a syllabary used to phonetically represent Japanese-origin words, and *katakana* (カタカナ), a syllabary used primarily in representing words of foreign origin. Each carries a distinct connotation when used, and the interplay between them can also create new meanings that are challenging to render into a single orthography in English.

3.3.1. Kanji

While many who are unfamiliar with Japan think of *kanji* first when thinking of its language, in actuality *kanji* has a Chinese, not Japanese, heritage. *Kanji* were originally borrowed from China during the Nara Period (710-794) through contact with China, since Japanese did not have a writing system, as Leo Loveday describes (1996). Along with borrowing the Chinese writing system, the Japanese also borrowed the Chinese language to a degree; texts written in *kanji* were often read in Chinese as well. Even after Japan entered a period of seclusion and cut off contact with China, *kanji* continued to be used by the privileged classes because of their “symbolic association with political power and with the religious and scientific spheres” (Loveday, 1996).

Further complicating matters for readers of *kanji* is the fact that through much of Japanese history, the written language was a separate entity from the spoken language. Similar to the days when texts were written in Chinese, only the privileged classes would have sufficient education to be able to read written Japanese. This persisted even as written Japanese began to include the *hiragana* syllabary. In an effort to simplify the written language and make written texts more accessible for Japanese readers (as well as Western translators; who spoke Western languages whose written and spoken forms were in harmony), the Japanese government took steps to bring the written language in line with the spoken language as part of a process called *genbun'icchi* (言文一致, “agreement of speech and writing”). Between the start of the Meiji Restoration and the years following the end of World War II, written Japanese underwent reforms that made it more and more similar to spoken Japanese, resulting in the version that we have today.

As such, using *kanji* for words ordinarily written in *kana* is reminiscent of Japan’s past, not only when the language was read in Chinese, but also of the prewar periods in which the written language was undergoing changes to become more similar to spoken Japanese. In short, when such words are written in *kanji*, it hearkens back to a time before *genbun'icchi* when Western influence was much less than it is at present. (Levy, 2006) This is especially true when the text uses *kanji* to represent a word of native Japanese origin, such as in the examples below.

(12) 本がここにある。

hon-ga koko-ni aru

book-NOM here-LOC exist-NONPAST

“There is a book here.”

(12') 本が此処に有る。

“There is a book here.”

The two examples have identical readings and meanings, but the use of *kanji* to represent *koko* and *aru*, words normally written in *hiragana*, can serve to age the text; pre-modern texts often use *kanji* in this way, while modern texts do not, so seeing *kanji* used to represent native Japanese words can forge a link in the reader's mind with pre-modern and prewar literature. We will return to this feature later in this chapter.

Furthermore, since *kanji* are ideograms that carry meaning as well as pronunciation, it is generally the case that *kanji* are used to express content words in Japanese (Yamaguchi, 2007). By marking function words like *koko* and *aru* with *kanji*, words whose primary function is to create a grammatical structure for the sentence rather than to add content, the reader can be given the impression that these words do not have a grammatical function, but rather an important lexical meaning indicated by the *kanji*.

3.3.2. Hiragana

As discussed above, *hiragana* is used primarily to represent words of native Japanese origin. Rather than carrying a meaning embedded within it as do *kanji*, *hiragana* is purely phonetic, only representing sound. Japanese children generally learn *hiragana* before learning either of the other two orthographic systems. As this is the case, if a text is written only in *hiragana* and does not use any *kanji*, it can give the text a childish feeling (Yamaguchi, 2007). Consider examples (13) and (13'):

(13) 毎日六時に晩ご飯を食べる。

mainichi rokuji-ni bangohan-o taberu
every day six o'clock-DAT dinner-OBJ eat-NONPAST

“I eat dinner every day at six o'clock.”

(13') まいにちろくじにばんごはんを食べる。

“I eat dinner every day at six o'clock.”

As with examples (12) and (12'), both of these examples have identical meanings and readings, but to a native speaker, example (13') would feel as though it was written either by or for a child. It would also feel relatively more difficult to read, as the inclusion of *kanji* provides a cue to the reader for breaks between words (since written Japanese does not place a space between words).

3.3.3. *Katakana*

As mentioned previously, *katakana* is used to represent foreign-origin words in Japanese. It is also generally used to represent foreign place names, even when native Japanese names for these places exist, which are often written in *kanji*. Consider examples (14) and (14') for an illustration of this point:

(14) あの人は米国人だ。
ano hito-wa beikokujin da
that person-TOP american-COP
“That person is an American.”

(14') あの人はアメリカ人だ。
ano hito-wa amerikajin da
that person-TOP american-COP
“That person is an American.”

Notice that while (14) and (14') have the same meaning, the word used to represent American is different. *Beikokujin*, being written in *kanji*, feels older and more traditional (the term is derived from 亜米利加, or *amerika*, a word made from assigned *kanji* during the Meiji period), while *amerikajin* feels modern as well as foreign (as the pronunciation is intended to mimic the English word *America*). In addition to providing a sense of foreignness, *katakana* can also be used the same way that italics can be used in English to emphasize a word or to indicate the writer's innermost feelings (Yamaguchi,

2007). Example (12) could be rewritten as “本がココにある”, giving it a meaning of “there is a book *right here*.”

3.3.4. Interplay between orthographic systems

Since each writing system has a different feel in Japanese, an author can create interesting meanings by using them in unexpected ways. Toward the end of her text, Mizumura explores these possibilities. She compares using a different orthographic system in Japanese to using a different font in English, saying that “a difference in meaning is born by expressing the same words and the same sounds with different characters.” (Mizumura, 2008, p. 307) She cites a poem by Hagiwara Sakutarō (later used by Japan Rail in an ad campaign) and changes the characters used for one word, providing subtle changes in meaning she says someone “unfamiliar with Japanese cannot understand.” The first two lines of the poem, along with Mizumura’s changes, are found in example (15).

(15) ふらんすへ行きたしと思へども ふらんすはあまりに遠し
furansu-e ikitashi-to omoedomo furansu-wa amari-ni tooshi
France-LOC go want-QUOT think but France-TOP very-ADV far
“I think I want to go to France, but France is very far away.”

(15’) 仏蘭西へ行きたしと思へども 仏蘭西はあまりに遠し
“I think I want to go to France, but France is very far away.”

(15’’) フランスへ行きたしと思へども フランスはあまりに遠し
“I think I want to go to France, but France is very far away.”

With the word for France written in *hiragana*, Mizumura argues the poem communicates “a delicate hopelessness” that is lost when the word is written in *kanji*. Although she does not say why she feels this, it may be because the word is no longer written in a native Japanese script, causing it to lose its connection with the Japanese aesthetic of fragility and beauty. Her opinion on the feeling of the poem when the word is

changed to *katakana* seems to reinforce this idea; she says the poem in (15'') “only usually evokes common emotions.”

While the feelings evoked from each writing system may vary from person to person, the fact remains that each system does create different reactions. It is incumbent on the translator to bear this in mind when translating into a language with only a single orthography. The translator must decide how best to convey these different connotations into a single writing system. There is a temptation to think that the differences are so subtle that, as Mizumura suggests, someone unfamiliar with Japanese could not possibly understand them, but the differences are there, and it is the translator's responsibility to either communicate those differences to the reader or to provide a suitable rationale for not communicating them.

3.4. Problems specific to Mizumura's text

All of the above issues relate to translating Japanese into English in general, but Mizumura presents some linguistic challenges specific to her text. These are challenges that involve the issues of Japanese translation discussed above, but that also involve more general linguistic issues and problems.

3.4.1. Translating phrases already in the target language

Mizumura is a proficient English speaker, and parts of her book are retellings of her time in the United States. By and large, her book is written in Japanese, but from time to time, she will include dialogue spoken in English, either by herself or a native English speaker. One such exchange is given below:

「What do you major in?」
専攻は何ですか？
「I major in French Literature!」
フランス文学です!⁵ (Mizumura, 2008, p. 63)

Here, Mizumura is retelling a common conversation she would have with people when they learned that she was a college student. The Japanese is essentially provided as a translation for the Japanese reader. An English-speaking reader would have access to the conversation in English and would therefore not need the translation; should it therefore be omitted in the English version of the text? While the text is not necessary (and indeed, would be superfluous) for understanding, removing words from the source text inherently changes it, possibly into something that the author did not intend for it to be.⁶

Not all appearances of the English language are provided with in-line translations, however. At the beginning of the book, Mizumura recounts a conversation she had with her bus driver on her way to the International Writing Program at the University of Iowa:

私は身体をもとに戻すとクリスに向かい、「A beautiful day!」と、アメリカ人ならこんな場合に言うべき言葉を発した。イギリス人だったら「Bloody chilly, this morning」と不平から挨拶を始めたかもしれない。(Mizumura, 2008, p. 5)

(Translation: Once I had returned to myself, I turned to Chris and spat out what an American would say in this sort of situation, “A beautiful day!” If I were British, I might have greeted him with a complaint like “Bloody chilly, this morning.”)

⁵ Each Japanese sentence is a translation of the English quote directly preceding it, so no additional translation will be given.

⁶ Of course, this may actually be a desirable result; authorial intent will be considered in Chapter IV.

Here, not only are the Japanese and English not translations of each other, but no translation for the English is provided at all. It is possible that Mizumura expects her readership to be sufficiently familiar with English to understand these sorts of greetings, but to me, it seems more likely that her intended effect is to have the Japanese-speaking reader not understand the conversation, giving them a sense of what it is to be in a foreign country and deal with people they cannot fully understand. Assuming this is the case, and assuming further that the translator wants the reader in the target language to experience the same feeling, what should be done with this text in the translation?

Writing the English dialogue in a language incomprehensible to the reader accomplishes the end of alienating them from the conversation, but is an inaccurate representation of the conversation, which was held in English. The translator could simply leave the dialogue as is, although in that case, the reader loses the sense that the conversation is taking place in a language other than the author's native language. It is possible for the translator to add the words "in English" to the dialogue, denoting the conversation not only as taking place in English, but also in a language other than the rest of the text, highlighting to the reader that the text they are interacting with is a translation rather than an original, although this raises the additional problem of adding words to the text not written by the author.

3.4.2. Translating key words in text

In any work, there are certain key words and phrases that appear frequently throughout the text and are critical to its meaning; Mizumura makes these key words easy to identify by placing them in angle brackets every time they appear in the text. She does this to signify that she is using these terms in a way such that they have particular

meaning to her text and argument rather than the way in which they might otherwise be commonly used. When translating these keywords, it is crucial that the translator take care to ensure that these specialized meanings come through in the target language.

Mizumura complicates this somewhat, however, by choosing not to explicitly provide the specialized definitions of her key terms. One such term that appears frequently in her text is *jibuntachi no kotoba*, which I rendered in Chapter II as “their own language.” The first time it appears in the text, however, is in the following context:

All over the world, various authors are writing in various languages -- or, rather, various authors are writing *<in their own languages.>* It is the same for these authors no matter whether the language has hundreds of millions of potential readers or only tens of thousands, whether the language has had a written form for thousands of years or only for a few decades. Authors write *<in their own languages>* with the same passion, the same seriousness, and as though it were the most natural task in the world. (Mizumura, 2008, p. 44, brackets added for emphasis)

Mizumura does not tell the reader explicitly what she means by the phrase “in their own language,” nor does she at any point in the text. The meaning must be gathered from context, and Mizumura does an able job of providing that context for her readers. However, since the meaning of these key terms is largely inferred by readers, who are selecting one meaning out of potentially many (*jibuntachi no kotoba* could also mean “their words,” “their dialect,” “their phrasing,” or still other meanings), the problem facing the translator is being forced to choose a single one of those meanings to present to the reader (Malone, 1979). Mizumura uses *kotoba* in this situation, which carries many meanings but is generally translated as “words;” if the translator chooses to render *kotoba* as “languages,” does the key term lose its polysemy and deprive the reader of the opportunity to make his or her own choice as to what it means? Of course, the opposite approach can be equally problematic; if the translator chooses to render *kotoba* simply as

“words,” it is possible that the reader may not understand the specialized meaning Mizumura is placing on the term.

3.4.3. Brackets and “scare quotes”

Further stigmatizing the key words Mizumura uses in her text is the fact that she places them in angle brackets every time they appear. Square brackets are commonly used in Japanese in place of quotation marks, which Mizumura uses (even sometimes on important terms, but never on key terms central to her argument), but angle brackets do not seem to be used on direct quotations. In any case, she uses angle brackets to set key terms apart from the rest of the text and emphasize their importance.

However, angle brackets do not have a clear analogue in English. Their closest equivalent, quotation marks, can actually take on a sarcastic meaning when used on words and short phrases, and are often called “scare quotes” when used in this way. Rendering Mizumura’s earlier statement as “various authors are writing ‘in their own language’” has a condescending feel to it, implying that these authors’ respective languages are not up to the same level that, say, English would be.

This is certainly not the point Mizumura is making (quite the opposite, actually); what devices, then, should the translator use to represent these angle brackets in English? Absent any other punctuation solutions, the translator could choose to render key terms in bold or in italics to provide emphasis. This would certainly set those terms apart from the rest of the text, although it may come at the cost of the text looking like a high school textbook with key terms written in bold for ease of studying.

One possibility would be for the translator to leave the key terms untranslated but italicized. Since the terms carry a specialized meaning, it may be profitable to use the

words from the source text and allow the reader to attach specialized meanings to those words rather than using potentially loaded words in target language. This can be a successful option for terms that are a single word (e.g., rendering “universal language” simply as *fuhengo*), but could be problematic for longer phrases. Returning to the aforementioned quote from Mizumura, phrasing the sentences as “various authors are writing in *jibuntachi no kotoba*” may feel awkward and cumbersome for native readers of English.

A final option, of course, would be for the translator to do nothing, simply translating the key words and phrases into their English equivalents and leaving them free of italics, bolding, and quotation marks. Doing so minimizes the possibility of creating connotations in English that were not present in Japanese, but comes at the cost of failing to provide the connotations provided by the angle brackets in Japanese.

3.4.4. *Translating Sōseki passages*

The Japanese language has evolved over time, and Mizumura makes note of this fact by quoting Natsume Sōseki in Meiji-era Japanese rather than in modern Japanese, most frequently quoting his novel *Sanshirō*, written in 1908. In Meiji-era Japanese, words often written in *hiragana* appear in *kanji* giving it an older look and feel, even if the meaning is identical to a text written in modern Japanese. Phrasing and word choice can be changed, and even the *hiragana* used to represent some sounds are different. An example of Meiji-era Japanese quoted from Sōseki is found below in example (15), as well as its equivalent in contemporary Japanese:

(16) 彼処に行われて居る言葉、書いてある文字は、
asoko-ni okonawareteiru kotoba, kaite aru moji-wa,
over there-LOC perform-PASS-RES-NONPAST words write-PASS letters-TOP
英語か仏語に相違いない。
eigo ka futsugo-ni aichigainai.
English or French-DAT for certain
“As for the words written there, the characters they are written in are definitely English or French.”

(16') あそこに行われている言葉、書いてある文字は、英語かフランス語にあい違いない。⁷

Even though the meanings of (16) and (16') are identical, two words (*asoko* and *iru*) are written differently, and the word for “French” is spelled differently⁸. A native speaker of Japanese would instantly recognize (16) as Meiji-era Japanese and (16') as modern Japanese. Does the translator then have a responsibility to render the text differently in English; if so, how should it be done?

If the goal is simply to produce a text that seems older, then the translator could choose to use archaic phrasing to achieve that end. Example (16) could be rendered as, for example, “As for the words that were written therein, their characters wert of a certainty English or Gallic.” The phrasing and word choice of this sentence immediately evokes in the reader an archaic, dated feel. However, the feeling this sentence produces in a native speaker of English is likely different than that produced in a native speaker of Japanese by (16), owing to the different eras in which the respective written languages were standardized. The translator could potentially find writing samples in English from

⁷ The transliterations of (16) and (16') are identical except for the word for “French,” which is *futsugo* in (15) and *furansugo* in (16'). The translations of the two sentences are identical and thus will be omitted.

⁸ The words *asoko ni okonawareteiru* and *aichigainai* are both archaic and serve to age this passage as well.

sense of distance in a Japanese reader, but since the written English language in 1908 was not appreciably different from today's written English, this may not create the same feeling in a native English speaker. Another possible solution could be to change the appearance of the words, in order to mimic the differences in orthography found in the Japanese. The text could be written in a Gothic typeface in order to give it an aged look; however, the risk here is the same as with changing the phrasing, in that it is difficult to find an exact match to produce a similar sense of age in both cultures.

As was the case with the problem of angle brackets, a third solution would be to ignore the differences in orthography, spelling, and phrasing, and simply render the translation the same as the modern Japanese in the target language. Again, this avoids providing any unwanted connotations to the reader not present in the source text, but is likely unsuitable here, as a key part of Mizumura's work is presenting the difference in pre-modern and modern Japanese written text.

3.5. Summary

This chapter does not purport to be an exhaustive listing of linguistic challenges a translator working from Japanese to English faces, nor is it intended as a full treatment of potential pitfalls in translating Mizumura's text. Rather, by discussing some of the more salient and commonly encountered differences between the two languages, the translator will not only have a clearer sense of the difficulty of the task of translation, but also be attuned to other potential challenges faced while translating.

It is also not the purpose of this chapter to propose solutions to these problems, whether universal or specific. An approach specific to Mizumura's text will be discussed in Chapter V, but a solution to these problems that fits in all cases simply does not exist.

What works in one situation and with one author and translator may not work in another. It is crucial that the translator not only be sufficiently familiar with the structure of the Japanese language, but also that he or she be sufficiently familiar with the source text and author in order to provide a skillful translation.

CHAPTER IV

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

While it is important that a translator be as familiar as possible with the linguistic structure and characteristics of the source language he or she works with, this is only half of the battle. The theoretical approach the translator takes has just as great an impact on the translation as can the linguistic approach; in fact, the two cannot be separated. A translator's theoretical views on the text to be translated will necessarily inform the decisions he or she makes on linguistic issues in the text. An effective translation will be the product of a translator having a clear understanding of those theoretical concerns and using that understanding to make consistent linguistic choices in rendering the text in order to achieve his or her goal in the translation, whatever that goal may be.

As with the previous chapter, this chapter does not intend to provide an exhaustive listing of the theoretical challenges faced by a translator of Japanese into English, whether in a general sense or specific to the text at hand. A selection of the more pressing issues will be considered here, and while potential solutions will be explored, a specific course of action will not be recommended in this chapter. While some theorists recommend a universal approach for translating any and all texts, I feel that the approach taken for any text must be tailored to that particular text and its respective authors and translators, as well as the goals the translator wishes to achieve through that translation. The issues discussed in this chapter and their possible solutions will be considered, along with the linguistic issues from the previous chapter, in order to create a specific course of action aimed at achieving my personal goals for translating Mizumura's text, which will be presented in chapter V.

4.1. The role of the translator

I have just stated that a translation is necessarily a collaboration between the authors of the source text and the translated text, which should be self-evident; the author creates the text, representing his or her ideas in the source language, after which the translator renders the text into the target language. What is less clear is the role the translator ought to play in this collaboration. Does the collaboration between the author and the translator (which only rarely involves any real interaction between the two parties) elevate the latter to a co-equal status with the former? Can the translator's opinion on the subject matter have an equal -- or greater? -- value as the author's? Or is it instead the translator's responsibility to defer to the author's ideas and simply act, even when he or she may disagree with what the author has to say?

4.1.1. A domesticating translator

Those who believe that the translator's responsibility is to stay out of the author's way and allow him or her to communicate as directly with the reader as possible could be said to prefer an "invisible" translator, a term popularized by Lawrence Venuti in *The Translator's Invisibility* (1995). He claims that such a translator's role is to do nothing more than to introduce the reader to the author and allow them to understand one another.¹ While Venuti argues that this is because of external pressures (an author who does not want to see a translator meddle with the text or readers who do not want to be bothered with thinking about the text's origin, for example), here we will consider the

¹ To be clear, he argues *against* this style of translation, not for it.

translator's own intent. The translator will offer no commentary of his or her own, believing that the author's opinion on the matter is of the highest importance. This can be compared to a domesticating translation, in which the translated text is geared toward fluency and ease of reading. Text translated by a domesticating translator will sound as though it were originally written in the target language. It will be free of any unnatural, foreign-sounding constructions and phrasings, avoiding anything that would distract the reader from the author's argument or story.

In short, a domesticating translator privileges content over form; that is to say, such a translator is more concerned that the message of the text be communicated to the reader than the mode of its delivery. Such a translator is not concerned with ensuring that the reader knows what it would feel like to be a reader of the source text in its original language so much as ensuring that the author's message, whether this is a story or moral in fiction or an argument in nonfiction, comes through unmolested.² A domesticating translator will try to avoid interfering with the understanding of this message, whether this takes the form of adding foreignizing constructions in the target language to reinforce to the reader the sense that the text has been translated from its source language or translating the text in such a way that it supports new ideas more in line with the translator's own thinking. The text's original content is paramount, and nothing the translator does should change or detract from it.

Domesticating translations not only privilege content over form, they also inherently privilege the target culture over the source culture. Since such a translator is

² Of course, in some cases, the form of a text *itself* can be the message, in which case this strategy would need to be rethought. The poetry of ee cummings is an excellent example of form being closely tied to content.

making an effort to avoid reminding the reader that the text is originally of foreign origin, the translator is also deciding for the reader that he or she is incapable of understanding the text in that foreign state without difficulty, choosing to replace it with something more familiar. At best, this is dismissive of both the value of the source culture and the reader's abilities; at worse, it is ethnocentrism and prejudice against any culture other than one's own. Warren Weaver inadvertently described the mindset of invisible translation when he wrote, "When I look at an article in Russian, I say, 'This is really written in English, but it has been coded in some strange symbols. I will now proceed to decode.'" (Weaver, 1955) This approach illuminates how a domesticating translation can privilege the target culture to the point of completely dismissing any value that the source culture may have; Weaver viewed texts originally written in Russian as though they were simply English texts that had been translated into Russian. The challenge for him was not to render a Russian text into English; it was to rescue an English text from Russian. Whether consciously or unconsciously, a domesticating translator views the text through the lens of his or her own culture, not the text's source culture.

4.1.2. A foreignizing translator

By contrast, a foreignizing translator (or a "visible" translator, as Venuti describes it) will seek to alert the reader to his or her role in creating the text being read. The goal is not for the reader's experience to be as smooth and easy as it would be if they reading a text written in their native language, but rather for the reader to have a clear sense that the text has a foreign origin, and that the translator is playing a role in aiding in his or her understanding. Venuti describes this as a foreignizing approach that "signifies the difference of the foreign text, yet only by disrupting the cultural codes that prevail in the

target language.” (Venuti, 1995) Rather than looking for phrasings that flow naturally in the target language, a translator striving for visibility will intentionally insert phrases that sound foreign and potentially difficult.

This difficulty is the goal of a foreignizing translator. A text written by a domesticating translator can read so smoothly that the reader will forget that a translator was involved at all, imagining instead that he or she is simply reading the author’s original words. A foreignizing translator will attempt to slow down the reader’s understanding, providing ample opportunities to remember that a second person was involved in the creation of the text being read.³ Nabokov, in translating *Eugene Onegin*, bemoaned the ubiquity of “readable” and “smooth” translations, saying that “the clumsiest literal translation is a thousand times more useful than the prettiest paraphrase” (Nabokov, 1955). To Nabokov, fidelity to the “spirit” of the source text was a betrayal of the author. He felt a translator should instead render the “textual sense” of the text in order to be faithful to the author.

Though a foreignizing translator privileges the “textual sense” of the source text, as Nabokov puts it, this is not to say that form is valued at the cost of content. Rather, visibility means demonstrating to the reader that a second person is involved in the process of communicating the message, through whatever means. As Venuti argues, this can take the form of disrupting the cultural codes of the target language, but I feel it can also be done through paratextual means. Extratextual apparatus such as footnotes can allow a reader to hear the voice of the translator in the text as something separate from the

³ Of course, it is ultimately up to the reader to notice and consider the role played by the translator in the text; no amount of leading the reader to water can cause him or her to take a drink of realization.

author, increasing his or her visibility in order to foreignize the text. Nabokov described this in saying:

I want translations with copious footnotes, footnotes reaching up like skyscrapers to the top of this or that page so as to leave only the gleam of one textual line between commentary and eternity. I want such footnotes and the absolutely literal sense, with no emasculation and no padding — I want such sense and such notes for all the poetry in other tongues that still languishes in “poetical” versions, begrimed and beslimed by rhyme. (Nabokov, 1955)

Nabokov felt that footnotes allowed him not only to maintain strict fidelity to the textual sense of the source text, but also to avoid fidelity to spirit that he felt ruined domesticating translations.

It is worth considering why Venuti feels it is so important that a translator be visible. Certainly, as a translator, he has a vested self-interest in making himself and his craft visible, but above that, he is concerned with ensuring that the source culture is not buried beneath the target culture. When a translator seeks to remain invisible, not only does he or she remove any trace that a translator was involved in producing the text, he or she also removes any evidence that any culture other than the target culture was involved, an approach that to Venuti, smacks of ethnocentrism. Here, his argument hearkens back to Friedrich Schleiermacher’s, who advocated that translators bring their readers to the author rather than bringing the author to the reader (Schleiermacher, 1813).

Schleiermacher believed that former would “impart to the reader the same image, the same impression that [the author] received thanks to his knowledge of the original language of the work as it was written, thus moving the reader to his own position, one in fact quite foreign to him.” The latter, by contrast, would “thrust [the author] directly into the world of the... readers and turn him into one of them.” Venuti takes this a step further, arguing that repackaging the author’s ideas and beliefs into a form that the target

audience can easily digest is tantamount to stating that the source culture is inferior to the target culture. He condemns invisible translation for its “concealment of heterogeneity and hybridity which can complicate existing stereotypes, canons, and standards applied in translation.” (Venuti, 2000) He believes that only a visible approach can cue the reader to the fact that the text is foreign in origin as well as avoid falling into the trap of pigeonholing the source culture into a stereotypical projection.

4.1.3. Comparing foreignizing and domesticating approaches

Each approach has its merits; however, I will not make a universal recommendation for either. It may be instructive to see how both approaches could be used to translate a sample from Mizumura’s text. Consider the following sentence:

(1) 彼女は赤くなった顔で言った。
kanojo-wa akaku nat-ta kao de it-ta
she-TOP red-ADV become-PAST face by say-PAST
“She said [it] with a red face.” (Mizumura, 2008, p. 57)

The sentence is admittedly very short, but contains enough uniquely Japanese elements to provide an interesting comparison. A domesticating translation might focus on making the translation sound as natural as possible in English in order to remain faithful to sense, potentially even adding words not present in the source language (such as the dummy object “it”) to aid in readability. A reasonable domesticating translation might be rendered as, “She blushed as she spoke.” The phrasing is entirely natural in English and is easily understood. However, the gain in readability is offset by in transparency; the invisible translation is no longer plainly foreign in origin.

A visible translation with giving the reader a sense of foreignness as its goal could do so, as Venuti suggests, by violating cultural codes in the language; such a translation might read, “As for her, she spoke with a face that had turned red.” While the meaning of

the sentence is readily understandable to any native speaker of English, the phrasing is much less natural than the domesticating translation. The phrase “as for her” clearly indicates the topic-prominent nature of Japanese, and while “blushed” and “turned red” mean more or less the same thing, the underlying structure of Japanese is much more apparent in the second option. Of course, the gain in transparency of form comes at the cost of a loss in readability and flow. While readers will recognize that the text is foreign in origin, they may have to work harder to understand it, discouraging some from continuing.

Both approaches have their merits as well as their drawbacks, and ultimately, each strategy will be able to be profitably applied to Mizumura’s text. My goals for the translation will be discussed in section 5.1 in more detail, but for now it will suffice to say that my aim for the text is to distance myself from Mizumura’s argument (in order to avoid giving the reader the sense that I agree with her point of view), but also to prevent the wording of the translation from getting in the way of the reader’s understanding of the central argument of the text. In order to reach these two goals, I will need to use a foreignizing approach at times and a domesticating approach at others. Following one of these approaches universally might allow me to achieve one end but not another. However, this may not be the case for another translation; depending on the goals its translator sets out him or herself, it may be best to adopt one of these strategies universally. In the end, a translator must consider his or her own goal for the translation and choose an approach, whether universal or adopting several ideas piecemeal, that allows him or her to best achieve it.

4.2. Disagreement between translator and author

Revealing the underlying structure of the source language and alerting the reader to the foreignness of the text are not the only potential advantages to be gained by a visible translation, however. One issue in which the visibility of the translator can make a significant impact is when there is a difference of opinion between the author and the translator. If the author makes an argument with which the translator does not agree, he or she is faced with two seemingly irreconcilable duties. The translator must reproduce the author's argument faithfully and correctly, but also will likely want to avoid giving the reader the impression that he or she shares the author's belief on the matter. The translator's choice on whether to be a visible or invisible translator can be influenced by which desire he or she identifies most strongly with.

4.2.1. Faithfully reproducing the argument

It may be that the translator feels his or her responsibility to faithfully translate the author's argument outweighs his or her own opinion on the matter; if this is the case, the translator will almost certainly choose to be less visible. An invisible translator will view him or herself as being in a collaboration with the author, but as a junior partner. The author is involved in the task of creation, while the translator engages in nothing more than a technical task, acting more or less as an artisan. Venuti describes this as the translator feeling that they must "repress their own personality." (Venuti, 1995) The translator may have his or her own idea as to how the text ought to have been created or what it should say, but in the end feels that he or she must defer to the author, the ultimate authority on the matter.⁴

⁴ The root *author* found in the word *authority* would certainly seem to support this view.

Often, such translators will view themselves as something similar to a spirit medium; rather than expressing their own personality, they feel that the author is speaking through them. While a select few translators may believe this to be literally true, Douglas Robinson (2001) argues that more often, the translator is actually submitting to “an *abstraction* called ‘the author’ or ‘the text’.” Such translators simply try to write as though the author would based on an understanding gained from biographical and literary research. In this way, these translators can often feel as though the author is speaking to them. This could be compared to Schleiermacher’s description of domesticating translation as one in which, speaking of translation from Latin to German, the text appears “the way that [the author] as a German would have written originally in German” (Schleiermacher, 1813). Short of literal spirit-channeling, it is impossible to truly understand exactly how the author thought or know exactly what he or she would write if able in the target language, but in any case, the translator feels a necessity to subsume his or her own personality in the author’s. Such translators strive to be invisible in order to allow readers to feel that they are communicating directly with the author. There is no middleman; the dividing lines between the translator and the author become blurred in the mind of the reader, to the point where one is virtually the same as the other.

4.2.2. Provide distance from the author

On the other hand, the translator may feel strongly that while the argument must be faithfully reproduced, the reader must not confuse the author’s opinion on the subject with the translator’s. In order to strike this balance, a highly visible translation may be preferred. While an invisible translation causes the author’s voice to blur with the translator’s, potentially making the reader think the two are one and the same, a visible

translation gives the reader the opportunity to hear the translator as a second voice in the text distinct from the author. This may not necessarily indicate to the reader the disconnect between the translator's ideas and the author's, but it can have the effect of distancing the two, so that it is at least clear to the reader that they are separate entities.

Making the translator's voice audible in the text is a comparatively easy task; making it clear to the reader exactly how the translator feels about the subject, however, is not. The translator has little room to change the argument⁵ made by the reader while still being able to call the finished product a translation rather than an adaptation, or even a separate work inspired by the original. Yet this is not the only forum available to the translator for communicating his or her view on the text. The introduction to the text, in which he or she will set out the guidelines followed in the translation of the text, can serve as a venue for the translator to express not only the differences in opinion between him or herself and the author, but also what methods were used to overcome that challenge. Sadly, readers will often skip over these introductions in an effort to get to the "actual" content of the book, but if nothing else, the translator can use the introduction as an opportunity to show the reader exactly where he or she stands in relation to the author.

4.2.3. Death of the author

Of course, these two approaches assume that the translator is beholden to the author at all. It is entirely conceivable that not only should the translator not take into account the author's intent, but that he or she should completely discount anything the author has to say regarding the text. Roland Barthes, in "The Death of the Author,"

⁵ In the case of a nonfiction work like Mizumura's, the argument would be the focus; in the case of a work of fiction, poetry, or other genres, this could take the form of an ideology or anything else that forms the core of the work.

argued this point, saying, “We know now that a text is not a line of words resulting in a single ‘theological’ meaning (the ‘message’ of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash.” (Barthes, 1977) Barthes asserts that while the author may have had a particular idea in mind when writing the text, that interpretation is not necessarily privileged. Readers have a variety of interpretations available to them, and they should be free to choose any of them without consideration for the author. In fact, language has many pre-existing connections and connotations that the author cannot control, and so while the author may have intended one meaning, the reader may not be able to help but think of another.

Here, he draws from Bakhtin’s notion of heteroglossia, which Bakhtin describes as “another’s speech in another’s language” (Bakhtin, 1934). To Bakhtin, the power of the novel lay in the “social diversity of speech types [*разноязыкие*, usually translated as “heteroglossia”] and by the differing individual voices that flourish under such conditions.” While all of the dialogue is written by the same author (or authors), the differing styles, registers, idioms, and so on used for each character can cause the same voice to be heard in different ways. Readers cannot help but make certain associations with various styles of writing, which the author can use to guide the reader into understanding the text in certain ways. However, the danger here is that the reader may leap to other conclusions or associations than the author intends. Barthes takes this a step further and argues that since none of the styles, registers, idioms or anything else the author is using are original, all the author is able to do is to “mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest on any of them”. Once this is

understood, he argued, the notion of imposing an author (and thus authorial intent) on a text “becomes quite futile.” (Barthes, 1977)

Barthes’ argument was aimed at literary criticism, but his points can certainly be applied to translation as well. A translator can, without regard for the author’s original intent, radically reimagine the text into something that more closely falls into line with his or her own beliefs. According to Barthes, giving the author the final say on a text “is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing.” (Barthes, 1977) The same could be said of giving the author the final say over the translator. The author’s opinion on the matter is the final word, rendering any retranlations or reinterpretation of the text useless. This can be seen as an outgrowth of Schleiermacher’s view on translation; while he believed that the reader should be brought toward the author rather than the reverse, Barthes believes that the reader should be brought toward the text rather than the text (or at least an “official” interpretation of the text) being brought to the reader.

Removing the author from the text gives enormous freedom to the translator, as well as to the text; it can grow and change, evolving with each new translation. It also serves as a useful tool for a translator whose beliefs do not fall in line with the author’s. The translator can simply divorce the author from the text and repurpose it for his or her own ends, allowing him or her to translate the text in such a way that it is unlikely that the reader will assume that the translator is agreeing with the author. Of course, this is a radical approach to translation, and one that takes more liberties with the text than the other two approaches detailed in this section. This is not to say that it is without merit,

though. Radical approaches can allow the translator to break out of existing paradigms and move toward a new understanding of the text he or she is working with.

4.3. More radical approaches

Thus far, I have described domesticating and foreignizing approaches that have been relatively moderate in scope. A translator may, however, feel so strongly about their visibility (or invisibility) that they choose to take a more radical approach to translation. One may move beyond a translation that makes the translator visible and into the realm of abusive and experimental translation; on the other hand, one may wish to be so invisible as to effectively rewrite the source text in an effort to increase readability, taking an approach of dynamic equivalence.

4.3.1. Abusive translation

A foreignizing strategy suggests that a translator strive for visibility by violating the cultural norms of the target language in order to give the reader a sense of the text's foreignness; an abusive translation uses that as its starting point, but carries it still further. Abé Mark Nornes, in writing about subtitling, defines an abusive translator as one who "uses textual... abuse -- that is, experimentation with language and its grammatical, morphological, and visual qualities -- to bring the fact of translation from its position of obscurity." (Nornes, 1999) If a visible translation is intended to remind the reader that the translation was originally a foreign text, then an abusive translation intends to slap the reader in the face with that fact.

Often, a visible translation will strive to render the source text into target language sense-for-sense; the idea of a phrase or sentence will remain the same in the translation, even if there are changes on the word level. Nornes argues that an abusive translation

tends to be closer to the word-for-word part of the spectrum, however. While a literal one-for-one translation would likely result in a meaningless string of words, a word-for-word translation would allow the reader to see much more of the underlying structure and form of the source language than the average visible translation would. He suggests that abusive translations have “a willingness to confront [foreign texts’] otherness without domination or erasure;” nothing is deleted, omitted, or changed from the source text, so the reader gains as full an experience as possible of the structure of the source language. In fact, an abusive translation has as one of its goals the highlighting of the differences between the source and target languages. Philip Lewis (1985) describes the problem of translation as not “how to avoid the failures that disparity among natural languages assures; the problem is rather how to compensate for losses and to justify (in a graphological sense) the differences”. The goal is not to find equivalents between the two languages, since they are plainly neither identical nor equivalent; rather, the goal is to be aware that they two languages are not equivalent and look for ways to make accommodations for those differences.

4.3.2. Dynamic equivalence

On the other end of the spectrum lies an approach in which the translator does just the opposite and searches for equivalents across the two languages. Here, the focus is, as was the case with domesticating translations, fidelity to the sense and spirit of the text, although in cases, this involves a complete restructuring of the textual sense of the source text in order to allow the “meaning” of the text to come through to the reader. Such an approach is called dynamic equivalence, a term coined by Eugene Nida, a translator specializing in Bible translation. To Nida (1964), exactness in translation is a futile

pursuit, since, as he points out, “no two languages are identical, either in the meanings given to corresponding symbols or in the ways in which such symbols are arranged in phrases and sentences.” Since no translation can be an exact match to the source text, one must instead settle for creating a text that has the same impact as did the original. Nida describes dynamic equivalence as being concerned with presenting not an intelligible message so much as a meaningful one.

In considering Nida’s approach, it is important to remember that his focus was translation of the Bible, a work whose principal value, he believed, was not derived from the beauty of its form, but rather from its message and its ability to make people change their behavior. It is not surprising, then, that Nida would focus on an approach that willingly sacrifices form in favor of content. One example that illustrates this technique is Nida’s treatment of the word “mountain” in a translation of the Bible into the Maya language. He argues that the Mayan language does not have a word for “mountain” that would correspond to the height of a mountain in Palestine due to the flatness of the area (just over one hundred feet high at its highest, according to Nida), and that any attempts to explain the height of Palestinian mountains to the Maya “would scarcely be believed” (Nida, 1947). Therefore, he believed it would be “necessary to employ some indigenous word or expression” to get the core meaning of the passage (presumably a teaching of Jesus) across to Mayan readers. Nida’s goal in translation is to “represent insofar as is possible both the form and the function” of the source text, but if it is impossible (or merely difficult) to achieve both ends, his approach dictates that the function of the text takes precedence over the form.

4.3.3. Comparative examples of radical approaches

Both of these more radical approaches have their benefits (as well as their drawbacks), and though each is diametrically opposed to the other, they could each be used in various situations and be said to be a correct translation. A translator must consider the goal for the text to be translated in order to determine whether either of these approaches would be appropriate. Mizumura's text offers an interesting look into this problem; as a text whose focus is to inspire Japanese people to take pride in their language and literature, there is considerable emphasis placed on both the message of the book as well as the form of its source language. What would an excerpt from her text sound like when translated according to these two strategies? Consider the following example:

(2) 実際、礎石の研究者でもない限り、今、ふつうの日本の読者が読むのは、『吾輩は猫である』をのぞけば、『坊ちゃん』『それから』『門』『こゝろ』『道草』『明暗』など、いわゆる小説じたての作品である。

jissai soseki-no kenkyuusha demo nai kagiri ima futsuu-no nihon-no
actually Sōseki-GEN researcher even not limit now regular-GEN Japan-GEN
dokusha-ga yomu no-wa wagahai-wa neko dearu-o nozokeba bocchan sorekara
mon
reader-NOM read thing-TOP i-TOP cat-COP-OBJ remove-IF child and then
gate
kokoro michikusa meian nado iwayuru shousetsu jiteta no sakuhin dearu
heart road grass light darkness etc as it were novels made-GEN works-COP

“Unless he or she is actually a researcher of Sōseki, today, a regular Japanese reader reads his most novel-like works: *Botchan, And Then, The Gate, Kokoro, Grass on the Wayside, Light and Darkness*, setting aside *I Am a Cat*.”

The presence of Sōseki, who is relatively obscure in America despite being perhaps Japan's most celebrated author, and titles of his novels makes for a promising passage to see the differences between these radical approaches. An abusive translation would try to make as clear as possible the underlying Japanese structure by violating

cultural norms in English, perhaps by leaving the novel titles untranslated choosing not to include in the translation any words not found in the original, and accentuating Japanese grammar patterns in an unnatural way in English. Such a translation might sound like, “To the limit that [one] is not [a] researcher of Sōseki, [a] regular Japanese reader reads, even if *Wagahai wa neko dearu* is removed, *Bocchan*, *Sore kara*, *Mon*, *Kokoro*, *Michi kusa*, *Meian*, [and] so on, as it were [the] works made into novels.” The resulting translation would be difficult, but not impossible, for a native speaker of English to comprehend, and it would certainly be impossible to think that the text was originally written in anything other than Japanese. However, the clarity gained with respect to the form of the source text may come at the cost of the reader’s understanding of the argument. An abusive translation like this may demand so much of the reader’s attention in understanding the form that the impact of the argument is lost, and since Mizumura’s text is intended as a call to action, this may not be the best approach.

A dynamically equivalent approach may be just as problematic, however. Since the average English-speaking reader will likely not be familiar with Sōseki, the translator may choose to dispense with him altogether, choosing instead to substitute an author that will provide an equal effect for the reader. Such a translation could take the form of, “Unless he or she is a researcher of Mark Twain, the average American reader reads his most novel-like works: *The Prince and the Pauper*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, setting aside *Roughing It*.” American literature does not quite have a figure equivalent to Sōseki who was a celebrated author and also responsible for helping to standardize the language, but Mark Twain seems to be as close an analogue as any. Certainly an American reader would understand Twain’s celebrated place in the

literary canon just as a Japanese reader would understand Sōseki's. However, while the impact may be the same, a major aspect of Mizumura's text -- its Japaneseness -- is completely missing from the translation. Since the text is aimed at Japanese readers and is intended to stir up feeling of pride for the Japanese national language and literature and a desire to protect them both, a dynamically equivalent approach that removes that aspect from the text would be inappropriate.

4.4. Summary

There are numerous approaches one can take to translation — indeed, as many as there are translators — but ultimately, in choosing an approach to translation a translator must first understand what he or she wants the translated text to be. The translator must decide whether to prioritize content or form — or as Nabokov would put it, fidelity to spirit or textual sense — and to what degree. The translator must also consider the audience for the translated text. While the translator may personally prefer a more radical approach that emphasizes the original form, such an abusive translation may not be appropriate if the text is intended for an audience with little understanding of that form. Once the translator has a vision for the completed text (and his or her role in its translation), he or she can determine the most appropriate theoretical approach and make linguistic choices accordingly. It may be that the translator chooses to adopt one theoretical strategy universally in order to reach his or her goals for the translation; it may also be that he or she chooses to adopt one translation strategy for one part of the translation and another for another part. In either case, it is crucial that the translator make consistent linguistic choices in order to most effectively achieve those goals.

In considering how I will translate Mizumura's text, I too must first consider what my goal for the translation is, as well as what role I would like to play in that text. The previous chapters have been written with the intent to introduce problems that I not only feel are relevant to translations in general and those of Japanese in particular, but issues I will encounter in my translation specifically. In the next chapter, I will set out the approach I intend to take in translating Mizumura's text and describe how I will approach the challenges presented in the previous two chapters. Doing so will not only provide me with a strong framework to direct my translation, but I hope will also enable the reader to understand the choices I have made and understand why I have made them and not others. Even if the reader does not agree with the choices I have made, I hope that he or she will at least be able to understand my rationale in making them and see what aspects of the source text I aim to emphasize, as well as those I aim to deemphasize.

CHAPTER V

PROPOSED STRATEGY FOR TRANSLATION

Having discussed the difficulties inherent in translating Japanese into English, both in general and specific to Mizumura's text, I now turn to the problem at hand. In this chapter, I will lay out the approach I will take in translating Mizumura's text, addressing the key issues laid out in the previous three chapters. In so doing, I hope not only to provide a framework to guide me as I translate her text, but also to provide the reader with a sense of the rationale directing my choices so that he or she can not only understand why I would make those choices, even if his or her own choices would be different, but also to better be able to hear my voice in the text as distinct from Mizumura's.

In order to illustrate the choices I will make in the translation, I will provide examples from my translation, which will follow this chapter in full, much as I have done in previous chapters.

5.1. Vision for translated text

As mentioned in Chapter IV, a rationale governing the choices made in a translation is most effective when it helps the translator to achieve a goal in the text. This goal could be highlighting a theme observed in the text, it could be subverting the author's original intent in the text in favor of a different idea the translator has in mind, it could be bringing out a sense of foreignness in the text, or any of a number of other things. To that end, I have considered what my goals for the text are, as well as the impressions and thoughts I want to leave with the reader. Once I have a clear idea of what I want the reader to gain from reading my translation, I will be able to make consistent

choices that help me to emphasize those aspects of the text. In addition, telling the reader my goals for the text cues him or her to those goals, causing them to be highlighted and be more readily digestible when they appear in the text.

5.1.1. Providing distance from Mizumura's argument

I find Mizumura's argument fascinating, although I personally disagree with it. As a translator, this places me in a difficult situation. As discussed in section 4.2, in this scenario the translator is torn between the desires to reproduce the argument faithfully and to avoid associating one's own name with the argument. I do not believe, however, that my only options are to choose one of those desires and sacrifice the other. In my translation, I hope to take a third path, splitting the difference between the two. Ideally, readers of my translation will come away with a clear understanding of Mizumura's argument as I reproduce it faithfully, but also realize that the argument is hers alone, allowing me to avoid associating my own name with her argument. My role as a translator is to present that argument fairly and honestly, even though I personally disagree with it.

As part of this goal, I hope to present my translation in such a way that the reader understands that it is the product of two people, not just one. If the reader can hear my voice in addition to Mizumura's — not my explicit take on the subject matter, but my phrasing and contributions to the text—then he or she may be better able to recognize that my personal opinions on the subject matter are not necessarily the same as Mizumura's. Of course, it will be incumbent on me to make my voice recognizably different from Mizumura's in order to allow readers to distinguish what I am saying from

what she is. Once our voices have been distinguished from each other, our differences of opinion will become clear.

By making my own voice readily identifiable to the reader, I hope not only to distance myself from Mizumura's argument, but also to establish some credibility with the reader by still rendering her argument faithfully. I want the reader to notice that my thoughts on the matter are different from Mizumura's, but I also want him or her to notice that my different take on the subject is not affecting my respect for the author, and that I am not placing myself above her simply because, as a translator, I have the last word. Of course, without access to the source text, the reader will be unable to know for certain exactly how faithful my translation is to Mizumura's text, but I hope that the tone of my translation, as well as my admissions of my intentions and potential shortcomings¹, will generate enough credibility in the minds of my readers that they will be willing to trust that I am being fair to Mizumura's argument in my translation.

5.1.2. Helping the reader understand why the work is important to Japan

While I do not personally agree with the point Mizumura makes in her text, that does not mean that the text was not carefully chosen. I chose a text about a problem facing Japan—the nation's dwindling influence on the global stage as well as the changes the language is undergoing—hoping to make English-speaking readers aware of an issue they would not otherwise encounter. I hope the reader will be able to have a sense of what it means to a Japanese person that their language is changing in the face of the English language.

¹ See chapter 1 for a discussion of my personal feelings on the subject matter and disagreements with Mizumura's take.

In order for a non-Japanese reader to fully understand the effect this problem would have on a Japanese reader, as well as the effects Mizumura's argument would have, he or she must be able to experience the text as a Japanese reader would. My aim for my translation is to render the text into English in such a way that the non-Japanese-speaking reader can experience the text as closely as possible to how a Japanese-speaking reader would. My aim is to avoid phrasing the English text in a familiar, convenient, easily digested form, and instead to phrase it in a way that closely mirrors the structure and feel of the Japanese source text. This will give the English-speaking reader the opportunity to remember that the text was not originally written in English, but in Japanese, and by a Japanese author. I hope that doing so will allow the reader to more fully appreciate the problem posed in the text, as well as to become more like Mizumura's intended audience. Mizumura presumably wrote her book for native Japanese speakers living in Japan; while her argument would certainly be understandable by any reader, it would be most meaningful for her target audience. By helping the reader to be able to experience the text in the same way (or at least in as similar a way as possible) as her intended audience, I aim to make my translation of Mizumura's text as meaningful as possible for my readers.

5.1.3. Seeing English from a new perspective

Rendering Mizumura's text in such a way that a non-Japanese-speaking reader can still experience the text as a native Japanese reader would not only allows the reader to gain empathy with the target audience, but also allows him or her to step outside the vantage point of English. For a text railing against the English language as strongly as Mizumura's does, this may be necessary in order to ensure that the reader fully understands the argument. The full impact of a text arguing that the near-universal status

of English is destroying other national languages may be lost when the text is written in English rather than its original national language.²

A translation that helps the reader to feel the foreignness of the text will help the English-speaking reader to step outside the bounds of his or her own language and be able to see from the outside the effects that English is having on other languages. While I am not totally convinced that the English language is having the effect that Mizumura claims it is on the world, I hope that by translating her text in a way that allows the reader to step outside the experience of being a native English speaker that I can help the reader come closer to understanding Mizumura's ideas and, as mentioned in the previous section, come closer to being a member of Mizumura's target audience.

5.1.4. Foreignizing, but still relatable

The previous sections have made it clear that a foreignizing approach, namely, an approach that brings the reader toward the author rather than the reverse, will be preferable when translating Mizumura's text.³ However, while I feel that the translation should feel foreign, I do not feel that it should feel so foreign that it becomes incomprehensible to the reader. Abusive translations, such as those described in section 4.3.1, would give the reader a clearer sense of the underlying structure of the Japanese language, though it would likely come at the cost of the reader's ability to understand Mizumura's argument, as well as possibly causing them to feel less invested in the text.

² In fact, after spending time speaking with other international writers in English at the IWP in Iowa, Mizumura returned to Japan determined to write a book in her national language. The irony of translating her text back into English has not been lost here.

³ See section 4.1.2 on visible translation for a more complete treatment of foreignizing translation.

While Mizumura writes primarily about the Japanese language in her text, the focus is not the language itself or its structure, but rather how it is to be used and the status it should enjoy in Japan and in the world. As such, I feel it would be inappropriate for my translation to privilege the structure of the language over her argument.

Admittedly, her text raises structural issues at times (such as how to handle different orthographic styles), but the majority of the book is intended as a didactic look at how Japanese people should view their language, and how they should use it. By focusing my translation on her argument, I hope to respect the spirit of her text.

5.2. Addressing linguistic problems

Translation between any pair of languages poses linguistic difficulties; a pair as divergent as English and Japanese poses even more. A text such as Mizumura's, however, which focuses on the Japanese language itself and was written by an author familiar with both languages, frequently switching between them, is particularly challenging. In this section I will consider the challenges described in Chapter III and propose my approach. This is not to say that my strategy is the best one, or even that it would be applicable to every Japanese text, but rather that it helps me to accomplish my goals for this translation.

5.2.1. Typological issues

As discussed in section 3.1, Japanese is a typologically different language than English. My challenge is to find a way to render these typological differences into English in such a way that I help the reader to feel a sense of foreignness, but not to make the text feel incomprehensibly alien. The three typological issues discussed in section 3.1 were word order, topic prominence and ellipsis. Word order is perhaps impossible to alter

in such a way that the resulting translation is still comprehensible. Consider an excerpt from Mizumura's text with the SOV word order rendered literally into English:

(1) そのような制度がいかなる結果を生む。
sono youna seido-ga ikanaru kekka-o umu
that sort system-NOM what kind of result-OBJ produce
“That sort of system what kind of results produces.*” (Mizumura, 2008, p. 168)

Forcing the SOV word order of Japanese on English causes the resulting translation to sound stilted and unnatural. While a sense of foreignness is the goal, this sort of phrasing in English is likely to create unintended associations in the reader's mind that detract from the argument. A more appropriate translation might read, “What sort of results does that sort of system produce?” Fidelity to the underlying structure has been sacrificed, with respect to the SOV word order, but readability and ease of understanding have been greatly improved. As such, I will not literally render SOV word order into English, but rather simply translate into the SVO order of English.

Topic prominence can also be difficult to render into a subject-prominent language, although unlike word order, it is not impossible to translate without sacrificing readability. This makes topic-prominence an excellent candidate for a foreignizing construction that will remind the reader of the foreignness of the source text without sacrificing the reader's ability to understand the text's argument. Consider the following two translations of an excerpt from Mizumura's text:

(2) 「文学の終わり」とは誰もが聞き飽きた表現である。
bungaku-no owari-towa daremo-ga kiki akita hyougen dearu
literature-GEN end-TOP everyone-NOM hear tired of expression is
“Everyone is tired of hearing the expression ‘the end of literature’.”
“As for the phrase ‘the end of literature,’ it is an expression everyone is tired of hearing.”
(Mizumura, 2008, p. 233)

Both translations are readily comprehensible to a native speaker of English; however, the topic-prominent structure of the second translation is more faithful to the underlying structure of the source language, particularly as the particle *towa* is a strong marker of topicality (Maynard, 1998), and since it is different from the target language's structure, helps to add a sense of foreignness to the translation, if only a small one. When coupled with other foreignizing constructions, however, the sense of the foreignness of the source text increases, giving the reader a chance to more closely understand what it may have been like to experience this text as a Japanese reader, as well as the opportunity to experience English from the outside, both stated goals of this translation.

Subject ellipsis seems to be a simpler problem to address, since subjects and other noun phrases cannot be deleted in English the same way that Japanese arguments can. One could reflect subject deletion in an abusive translation by placing deleted arguments in brackets, although the gain in fidelity to the form of the language is easily offset by the loss in ease of reading. Consider the following:

(3) ここで取り上げたいのは言葉の問題である。
koko-de toriagetai no-wa kotoba-no mondai dearu
here-LOC take up want thing-TOP language-GEN problem is
“Here the thing [I] want to take up is the problem of language.” (Mizumura, 2008, p. 244)

The aim of the translation, as stated earlier, is to allow the reader to understand Mizumura's argument while still keeping its format relatable. Intentionally rendering the text in a way that is not naturally readable for the reader would make it impossible to achieve this goal, so I have rejected it as a strategy for this translation.

5.2.2. *Nominalizers, mono, and koto*

In Chapter III, I discussed the difference between the Japanese tendency to focus on abstract concepts and ideas in discourse, while English focuses on concrete objects.

This is reflected in the difference between the Japanese concepts of *koto* and *mono*. While this is true, this is not the only way in which these concepts are used in Japanese. Both function as nominalizers, turning arguments into nouns and shifting the focus of discourse from actors and actions to the scene as a whole. Nominalizers are present in English, but their use is less widespread than it is in Japanese (Maynard, 1997). Their relatively low degree of use in English, however, provides a singular opportunity to heighten the foreign feeling of the translation through their inclusion.

The challenge then becomes finding ways to translate Japanese nominalizers into English, allowing the reader to feel the emphasis on the scene as a whole rather than on individual actors, without causing the resulting translation to feel incomprehensible. One such common nominalizer is *no da*, as discussed in section 3.2.1, which converts a sentence into a noun phrase in order to provide or ask for an explanation or reason. How could this be rendered in English? Consider the following:

(4) そこへ、インターネットという技術が生まれたのである。
soko-e intaanetto-to iu gijutsu-ga umareta no dearu
to there internet-QUOT call technology-NOM born-PASS-PAST thing is
“Then, because of that, the internet was born.”

(4’) “Then, it was that the internet was born.” (Mizumura, 2008, p. 250)

English nominalizers are less common than those in Japanese, so translating the sentence with the English word “because” prevents the reader from seeing how the Japanese language and text work, even if the sense that something is being explained still comes through in the translation. I feel that the construction “it is that” is unusual enough in English that it provides a sense of foreignness to the reader while still being sufficiently understandable. Furthermore, the phrasing “it is that” draws the focus away from the

action (in this case, the birth of the internet) and toward the entirety of the scene, as *no da* does in Japanese.

As with other techniques in my translation, the key here is to split the difference between two difficult extremes and come up with a workable third option in the middle. I want to avoid going so far as to translate Mizumura’s text in a way that non-Japanese readers cannot understand or relate to it, but also to avoid rendering the text in a way that it becomes stripped of any evidence of its Japanese origins, particularly since they are so closely tied to the identity of the text itself, as well as the author.

5.2.3. Adverbs and verbs

The Japanese language often creates *suru*-type verbs rather than using adverbs; the English language does not have a similar construction, instead preferring adverbs. This would seem to be an ideal opportunity to create a sense of foreignness in the translation by using a construction that sounds unnatural in the target language. But does this construction sound unnatural in English, or does it sound completely unacceptable?

Consider the following translations of a sample of Mizumura’s text:

(5) もとはゲルマン系の言葉にフランス語がまざり、ごちゃごちゃしている上に、文法も単純ではないし、そもそも単語の数が実に多い。

moto-wa gerumankei-no kotoba-ni furansugo-ga mazari gochagocha shiteiru

origin-TOP German family-GEN word-LOC French-NOM mix-AND mixed do-RES
ue ni bunpou mo tanjun dewanai shi somosomo tango-no kazu-ga
above-LOC grammar also simple is not and in the first place word-GEN number-NOM
jitsu-ni ooi
actual-DAT many

“Originally, Germanic words are mixed with French and do a jumbling up, and above that, the grammar is not simple, and the overall, or to begin with, number of words is actually very high.”

(5’) “Originally, Germanic words were mixed with French and all jumbled up, and above that, the grammar is not simple, and the original number of words is actually very high.” (Mizumura, 2008, p. 49)

While the first option does come closer to revealing the source phrasing, it sounds stilted and awkward. Rather than enhancing the foreign feel of the translation, it instead feels as though the text has simply been badly translated. In this case, not only would my reputation as a translator be harmed, but potentially also Mizumura's reputation as an author, as the translation would now be interfering with the reader's ability to understand her argument. As the aim of this translation is to provide a sense of foreignness while still trying to avoid affecting the reader's understanding of Mizumura's argument, this would seem to be an unusable strategy. I will phrase these constructions in a natural way in English (i.e., as adverbial phrases) and instead focus on other potential areas in which to foreignize the translation.

5.2.4. Orthography

As mentioned in Chapter III, a major challenge facing a translator of Japanese into English is that of rendering three distinct orthographies into one. On the one hand, the solution seems as simple as in the previously-mentioned case of subject deletion. Since English only has one orthography available, the translator simply does not have any other option but to collapse all three writing systems into one. On the other hand, there is a difference in meaning and connotation between all three writing systems in Japanese, so some accommodations must be made if these differences are to be reflected in the translation.

Here, my proposed solution will not only allow me to show the reader the underlying structure of the Japanese language, allowing him or her to come closer to experiencing the text as a native reader of Japanese would and also allowing him or her to experience English from the outside, but it will also allow me to interject my voice as one

quite separate from Mizumura's. On the occasions where a change in orthography creates a meaning crucial to the argument that cannot be rendered adequately with a single orthography, I will add an explanatory footnote. Thankfully, these situations are relatively uncommon in the text, preventing me from having to pepper the text with footnotes and distracting the reader from Mizumura's argument, but they are frequent enough that they will allow the reader to hear my voice in the text. I feel it would be inappropriate for me to make any direct commentary on Mizumura's thoughts in these footnotes, as they are intended only as explanatory notes on the orthography of the source text, and particularly as my translation is intended as a translation and not a critique, but their mere inclusion should serve as a reminder to the reader that the text is a product of two minds, not only of one.

5.2.5. Other issues

Phrases in the source text already written in the target language pose an interesting dilemma to the translator. On the one hand, it would seem that the author has already done the translator's work, allowing him or her to simply place the phrase as is into the translation. On the other hand, the author chose to write the phrase in a language other than the source language; by simply using the source phrasing, the translator deprives the reader of the opportunity of seeing that the source text contains multiple languages. Further complicating the matter is the fact that although the source text may contain phrases in the target language, those phrases may not sound natural to a native speaker of the target language, and thus may require retranslation.

In general, however, the approach taken in this translation allows for a relatively simple solution. Since this translation will make use of footnotes in order to allow the

reader to hear the translator's voice as well as the author's, phrases written in the target language in the source text can be left as is in the translation with a footnote indicating as much. Furthermore, Mizumura generally only uses English in her text when quoting others, minimizing the risk of unnatural phrasing in the translation.

Mizumura places angle brackets around key words in her text, setting them apart and emphasizing their importance to her argument. As stated in section 3.4.3, the closest analogue to the angle bracket in English is the quotation mark, which may provide a different connotation to the English-speaking reader than the angle bracket does to the Japanese-speaking reader. The Chicago Manual of Style indicates that quotation marks used around words or short phrases often “alert readers that a term is used in a nonstandard (or slang), ironic, or other special sense.” (Chicago 7.55) It further states that overuse causes these “scare quotes” to quickly become irritating to readers, suggesting that placing each angle bracketed word in quotes would be a less than ideal strategy, particularly as there are many words found in Mizumura's text in angle brackets (often five or six per page).

Fortunately, Chicago offers an alternative suggestion that seems reasonable. As discussed in section 3.4.3, italicizing key words may also be a workable strategy. In such cases, Chicago recommends that key terms be “italicized on their first occurrence. Thereafter they are best set in roman.” (Chicago 7.54) This seems to be a profitable strategy for handling these key words; the original italics indicate to the reader that Mizumura is placing emphasis on these terms, and so long as they are always translated the same way, there should be no confusion that the key words are being repeated

throughout the text, even if they do not appear in italics after their first appearance in the translation.

5.3. Theoretical issues

The previous section has focused on identifying potential solutions to linguistic issues in the text and translation that are found primarily on a micro level. Creating a consistent approach to handling these micro issues helps to create a unified translation that is both easily readable and understandable for the reader, yet also remains true to the structure and feel of the source text; however, this should not be considered to be an all-encompassing approach. Issues are also present at a macro level that need to be addressed in the translation; while some of these issues are linguistic in nature, often they have more to do with translation theory. Identifying solutions to these problems can help to guide the translation on a larger level, and taken in conjunction with linguistic solutions at the micro level, can create a unified discourse and make for a text consistent in character.

5.3.1. Role of the translator

As mentioned in Chapter IV, a translation is necessarily a product of two writers. The author produces the source text, while the translator recreates that text in a way that is accessible to readers without access to the source text. While the author's role in creating the text is clear, the translator's role is murkier and varies from text to text. The role that he or she chooses to play in creating a translation can have a great deal to do with how the translation is received by the reader and often depends on what the translator has to say on the subject matter, even if he or she feels there is nothing more to say. As such, it is important that a translator consider and decide on his or her own role

before embarking on the translation in order to ensure that the text is consistent and that he or she does not unintentionally send an unintended message.

Broadly speaking, translators can play one of two roles in a text: that of an invisible translator, or a visible one. An invisible translator tries to remove his or herself as much as possible from the text, focusing on making the translation sound as natural as possible in the target language. Doing so not only privileges the content of the source text over the form, but also the target culture and language over the source. The cost of creating a text that is easily readable and digestible by the target culture is that the translation loses any connection it had with the source language and culture. The translator's intention may simply have been to stay out of the way and let the author speak as directly as possible with the readers in the target culture, but such an approach has the unintended consequence of changing the author from a member of the source culture into a member of the target culture, possibly changing the way that the text is received and understood.

On the other hand, a visible translator wants to be seen and noticed in the translation. Rather than focusing on ease of understanding, a visible translator wants the reader to labor somewhat in order to understand the text. The reader should always have a sense that the text was not originally written in the target language, nor did it come from the target culture. A visible translator prizes form over content to a degree; he or she not only wants the reader to understand what the author has to say on the subject matter, but also how the author says it. A visible translation allows the reader to see more clearly how the source language functions, as well as what the source culture values. Since the

translator wants the reader to understand the foreign character of the text, he or she is placing a higher value on the source culture.

Since Mizumura's text is so caught up in issues of national identity and language, a visible approach seems to me to be the only tenable one. While an invisible approach would allow me as a translator to stay out of Mizumura's way and allow her to more directly make her case to the reader, it would change the way the reader perceives her. She is a Japanese novelist and very proud of that fact; phrasing her text in such a way that it sounded like smooth and natural English runs the risk of causing reader to perceive her as an American novelist, robbing her of much of her credibility on the matter. Consider the difference in how Mizumura sounds in each of these two translations:

(6) 今、日本の本屋に入ってあたりを見回せば、〈書き言葉〉としての日本語は、溢れ返っている。しかも、西洋語から日本語へと翻訳をするようになって、ほぼ一世紀半。世界と共通する概念も定着し、現在、新聞や雑誌などで流通している日本語の質は、開闢以来の高さを誇っているかもしれない。

“Today, if you look around a Japanese bookstore, the place will be flooded with books written as the language is spoken. But it hasn't even been 150 years since we've started translating from Western languages to Japanese. Ideas we share with the world have taken hold, and nowadays, we might boast that the quality of the Japanese found in newspapers, magazines, and so on is at its highest since the dawn of time.”

(6') “Now, if you enter a Japanese bookstore and look around the area, it is overflowing with Japanese as the “written word.” What is more, since the time Western languages were translated into Japanese, it has been almost a century and a half. Notions in common with the world have also been established, and at present, the quality of the Japanese circulating in newspapers, magazines, and the like may be boasted of as the highest since the start of history.” (Mizumura, 2008, p. 261)

While Mizumura's words are likely more readily understood in the first approach, the main thrust of her argument comes through more clearly in the second. Her identity as a Japanese writer is highlighted, helping the reader to understand where she is coming from and why the issue is so important to her. Identifying what aspects of the text are

most important and need to be communicated to readers can help a translator in determining what sort of role to play in the translation, as well as helping to create a text that is unified in character throughout.

5.3.2. Disagreement with the author

As previously mentioned, while I find Mizumura's text and argument interesting and of worth to non-Japanese readers, I personally do not agree with much of what she has to say. However, by choosing to translate her text over others, I may communicate to readers that I am doing so because I feel her text has particular value and that I agree with her and even endorse her argument. This puts me in a difficult situation, as I have a foot in both camps. While an explanatory statement in a translator's introduction would be the simplest way to tell the reader exactly what my stance on the text is, unfortunately one cannot count on a reader reading an introduction. As such, as a translator I need to look for a way to indicate to the reader in the body of the text where I stand in relation to Mizumura.

As mentioned throughout this text, a visible approach will allow me to do just that by showing the reader that a second person is involved with the text and that since we are separate people, the two of us do not necessarily see eye to eye on the subject matter. This is not, of course, to say that a visible approach will necessarily show the reader that the translator and the author disagree; in fact, often the reverse is the case. However, by presenting myself as someone distinct from the author, I can at least give the reader the opportunity to recognize that I may have different opinions than Mizumura does. Were I to adopt an invisible approach, the same would not be the case. An invisible translator will go unnoticed by the reader, intentionally hiding his or her own views on the subject

in favor of letting the reader see what the author has to say. To the extent that a reader would even think of an invisible translator, he or she would probably assume that the translator's opinions were either the same as the author's, or that they did not exist. A visible approach at least gives the reader the chance to see that two people, as well as two ways of thinking, are involved in the creation of the translation.

5.3.3. Acceptability of more radical approaches

Two radical approaches (abusive and dynamically equivalent translations) were considered in Chapter IV. Both go further than do visible and invisible translations, respectively, so each would seem to be an inappropriate choice for a translation such as this one in which the goal is to create a middle path between fidelity to the form of the text and the argument. An abusive translation would give undue weight to the structure of the source language, making it overly difficult for the reader to come to a complete understanding of Mizumura's argument. A dynamically equivalent translation, on the other hand, would emphasize readability at the cost of the structure and character of the source text. The reader would be able to read and understand the text readily, although he or she would likely not recognize the Japanese origin of the text, causing it to lose much of its force. Both approaches come at a steep cost, and since neither seems able to achieve the intended goal of this translation, both have been rejected as workable strategies.

5.4. Summary

The above strategies, aimed at creating a foreignizing translation and reminding the reader of the foreign origin of the text, will not only help to focus the desired effect of the translation in the mind of the reader, but also to direct the choices I will make while translating the text, creating a consistent character to the translation. By discussing my

approach here, I also hope to allow the reader to see my intent for the translation, which will help him or her to more fully understand the translation in the following chapter as he or she reads it. While I hope my translation strategy is strong enough that the reader will be able to arrive at my intended conclusions on his or her own, I anticipate that this chapter will solidify those conclusions in the reader's mind. At the very least, the treatment of the problems faced in translating this text will enable the reader to understand why the translation reads the way it does and why some strategies have been chosen over others.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The intent of this thesis was to show that the fields of linguistics and translation theory inform each other, and a full understanding of both is necessary for an effective translation. While my discussion of linguistic and theoretical issues faced by translators was broken into separate chapters for each, elements of each appear throughout both chapters. Linguistic decisions necessarily have theoretical consequences. For example, if a translator chooses to render *no da* (covered in sections 3.2.1 and 5.2.2) in English simply as “because,” the translation, while accurate, will tend slightly toward favoring ease of readability over fidelity to form. It is unlikely something as small as a single instance of this linguistic choice would dramatically change the reader’s perception of the translation, but the effect is tangible, and as other similar choices are made, their effects can compound, possibly making a substantial impression on the reader. Linguistic choices do not occur in a vacuum. Whether intentional or not, the linguistic choices a translator makes have theoretical repercussions.

Of course, the reverse is also true. The theoretical choices a translator makes can inform the linguistic choices he or she makes. A translator who chooses to adopt, for example, an abusive translating strategy (addressed in section 4.3.1), may find him or herself forced to make some linguistic choices that a translator more concerned with dynamic equivalence (section 4.3.2) would not need to make, or at least not need to consider as deeply. When faced with a section of the text containing multiple orthographic styles (sections 3.3 and 5.2.4), an abusive translator would need to consider the effect created by each of those orthographic styles as well as how he or she could

effectively “break” the orthographic conventions of English in order to communicate those differences to the reader; on the other hand, the second translator could simply choose to ignore those differences and focus instead on linguistic constructions that would allow the reader to more readily understand the text in a culturally familiar way. The theoretical choices a translator makes affects not only the linguistic choices he or she makes, but can also influence the choices he or she is able to make in order to reach the theoretical goal he or she has set out for the translation.

I have striven to consider both disciplines in developing my approach to translating Mizumura’s book. While a reader may not agree with the choices I have made in my translation, I hope that at the very least, he or she can see that I have made consistent theoretical and linguistic choices to achieve the ends I laid out in the beginning of Chapter V. I further hope that readers of this thesis will see the careful considerations I have made and be inspired to make similar considerations in their own translations in the future. Each of us has personal biases that affect our understanding of both language and theory, whether spoken or unspoken. Understanding those biases helps us to know what choices we need to make to overcome them in order to create a translation that provides the effects we want it to, or alternatively, the effects ignoring those biases will have on the translation. Finally, I hope that the description of my translation approach and the interplay between linguistic and theoretical considerations therein will show scholars in both fields the valuable role each has to play in the art of translation. As translators make an effort to incorporate an understanding of both fields in their work, I feel that the quality of translations can be improved and that those translations can have the impact on readers that their translators intend them to.

APPENDIX

TRANSLATION OF SELECTED CHAPTER OF MIZUMURA'S TEXT

The Fall of Japanese in the Age of English is, in its entirety, 323 pages long, so a full translation of the book, as interesting as it would be, would not be appropriate here. In its place, I have provided a translation of Chapter Six (English and “National Language” in the Internet Era). I selected this chapter not only because it is representative of Mizumura's book and argument as a whole (as discussed in Chapter II), but also because it contains many interesting linguistic and translatorial challenges (addressed in Chapters III and IV). Translating a single chapter allows me to demonstrate my translation approach while not overshadowing the rest of my paper with the weight of an entire translated novel in the appendix.

Chapter 6 - English and “National Language” in the Internet Era

“The end of literature” is an expression that everyone is tired of hearing. What is more, for at least the last half a century, it has been said not only in Japan, but in the world. No, it has been said for the last century.

Even so, in recent years, the mourning cries of “the end of literature” have been tinged with the echoes of tension. This is true for the world, not only Japan. Even though the act itself of reading *written language* is becoming increasingly important through the spread of the internet, literature, particularly novels that have been widely read until now, is becoming less read. To make matters worse, now, when speaking of widely read novels, people say they have all become boring.

Here, I want to leave Japan once more and think about “the end of literature.”

Today, many people throughout the world are mourning “the end of literature,” but that is not some sort of complaint from an old person reminiscing about a golden age remembered from the past. It is that when people mourn “the end of literature,” there is an unmistakable change in the times. There is a historical basis for this.

And that historical basis is what?

First is the rapid progress of science. Second is the diversity of *cultural commodities*. And third is the realization of a mass consumer society. Mostly through these three historical reasons, as we enter the modern age, the virtue of that which is called *literature* is now being lost at an accelerating rate, and there is nothing that can be done about it.

First, the rapid progress of science.

Nothing is more important to us as humans than the question, “What is mankind?” — rather than reading novels and so forth in order to answer this question, knowing the latest scientific discovery, and particularly knowing the latest discovery of genetics or neuroscience has come to hold much more meaning. The question “Who am I?” can also be more objectively understood by first studying DNA, scanning the brain, and so on. We can objectively understand that someone has a genetic makeup that makes them susceptible to alcoholism, sensitive to the pain of others, and so on. The fact that the importance of science is increasing can be most plainly seen in that the literature departments of the universities of any country are being mercilessly reduced.

Next, the diversity of cultural commodities.

Cultural commodities are commodities that combine art and entertainment. Literature, since the time it took the form of books and began to gain currency in markets, prospered as a cultural commodity only when it arrived in the hands of ordinary people. In an age when one could not experience a painting or carving without struggling through a long journey to a church or temple, an age when one could not hear music except at a live performance, an age when one could not see theater without living in a city, it was

that books, and particularly novels, spread among people as cultural commodities as the “mass-produced manufactured goods” Benedict Anderson describes. However, it is that it spread while demonstrating the specialty of *written language*, which is that one can copy as much as one wants, especially on something like paper that can be easily carried. The era in which novels met the golden age as *national literature* was the era in which novels monopolized the cultural commodity market and reigned from that throne.

However, soon after, one by one new low-cost cultural commodities began to appear. Through new technologies, cultural commodities that were, of course, “mass-produced manufactured goods” like records, radio, and movies appeared on the market in the first half of the twentieth century. Television appeared in the second half of the twentieth century. Before long, videos, CDs, DVDs, video games, iTunes, YouTube and on and on continued in rapid succession.

Particularly movies, and now especially in America drama series that fill an important place in mainstream television programs. These are extremely literary composite arts in terms of asking the meaning of why people are alive, even while relating to the audiovisual senses. One part of the role novels have, asking the question of what people should live for, has been taken by these cultural commodities. Novels have fallen off the throne of cultural commodities, becoming one of thousands of low-cost cultural commodities.

Adding insult to injury was the appearance of the public consumer society.

Words written by mankind, since taking the form of books and becoming commercial cultural commodities, always have the fate of inherently having two different values. On the one hand, to what extent is the book *a great work*, or in other words, how much *literary value* does the book have? On the other hand, to what extent is the book a sellable product, or in other words, how much *commercial value* does the book have? In Europe the fact that the written language that first appeared in markets as a book was the Bible probably shows this symbolically. The Bible is literally holy writ while at the same time being merchandise. Since then, books have always been things that inherently have the two different values of literary value and commercial value.

It is that the realization of a public consumer society has brought even more attention to the arbitrariness in between those two values.

This is because with all cultural commodities, the more they are a low-cost good, the more people will like them and the more widely they will be sold.

A person who wants to buy a Rikyu teacup might endure reluctantly buying an imitation Rikyu teacup. However, a person who wants to hear a song by Maria Callas, the biggest prima donna of the twentieth century, would not consult with the contents of their wallet and tearfully buy a song by Madonna, the queen of pop. Both songs can be similarly cheaply obtained, and so it is that a person buying a Madonna song does so because they want to listen to a Madonna song. Low-cost cultural commodities reflect the preferences of consumers in how much they are sold in markets. And, though this is

obvious, in the case of novels, something that is sold to many people, or in other words, something that has high commercial value, is not restricted from having high literary value.

This is the nobility of art.

The dream of a conscientious editor, publisher, or bookstore is that a book with literary value fly off the shelves, but such a beautiful and selfish situation is too much to be hoped for in reality.

This is not all.

The appearance of the mass consumer society will, as part of a mass phenomenon, cause a single book to gain tremendous popularity at some moment. The reason for this is that in a public consumer society not only have books become inexpensive, information has become inexpensive — it is a society in which information has become effectively free. The appearance of the public consumer society has made it inevitable that through electronic transmissions, the spread of radio and television will coincide with information entering every house for free. Public consumer society is a society in which, through mass media, rich and poor, high-class and common people, people of culture and pitifully ignorant people all cannot help but share essentially the same information, and therefore, since everyone cannot help but share essentially the same information, it is impossible that everyone not be a member of the masses.

Therefore, in a public consumer society, people know which books everyone is buying. And then, since they know that, they will also buy those books, and other people who know that will buy still more of those books. This chain reaction gains momentum, and as part of a mass phenomenon, it is that at some time some book will gain tremendous popularity.

An example of this happening on a global scale was the Harry Potter series, written in English and fortunate to be an American best-seller. From English nobility having reading rooms from their ancestors for generations in large halls to white collar workers in developing countries who until now have not bought children's books or the like for their children, *Harry Potter* bridged the gap. *Harry Potter* is a book that because other children were reading it, parents throughout the world thought they must make their children read as well.

Fundamentally, it is possible that that book could have been anything. There is even a possibility that it could be great literature. Literature that is popular in a public consumer society has no relation to whether or not the words written in it are a great work, but because it is a book that is read because everyone reads it. However, in all likelihood, those books will often be boring. This is because in many cases, these are books read by people who normally do not read, young people who, in the same way as pop music, are almost endowed with a biological predestination to react sensitively to trends — they are popular among young people who spend all day sharpening their senses figuring out what their same generation, with future partners and rivals, are doing.

However, because everyone is reading so much, adults who normally read also cannot help but be lured into buying them. Even if after reading and snapping the book shut they are dumbfounded, look at someone else who is similarly taken aback, and shout, “What kind of book was that?”, the damage has been done.

To repeat, books always inherently have the two different values of literary value and commercial value. The appearance of the public consumer society has not only widened the arbitrariness between these two values. By causing these books to gain currency as part of the public consumer society, this arbitrariness has been infinitely expanded.

In fact, now, it is difficult to enter a bookstore, look at the books lined up there, and not feel a sense of the end of literature.

And yet, the idea of literature in a broad sense ending is impossible.

Even if there are people who say that it would be okay for literature and the like to end, or even if they declare that literature and the like should end, I apologize, but literature in a broad sense will not end.

The idea of the advance of science and the like bringing the end of literature in a broad sense is impossible. This is because as science advances, instead, the area for which science cannot provide an answer — the area in which literature specializes — will become clear. This is none other than the area of meaning. Even as science explains how humans came to be born, it cannot give an answer to the question of how people should live. It is that literature is the thing that makes this question possible in the first place. If there is no answer, then it is that literature shows us precisely that lack of an answer. No matter how much science grows, there can be no idea of literature ending.

Furthermore, the idea that literature will end because it has become one of thousands of low-cost cultural commodities is impossible. Just as can be understood from the fact that people who watch movies read novelizations in which those movies are turned into novels, there are things that can only be understood to mankind through written language. If there is pleasure that can only be obtained through written language, then there is also passion.

In other words, through the appearance of public consumer society, because literary value and commercial value have become exceedingly arbitrary, literature will not end. This is because the idea that a people that has once known written language will no longer want to read great written language, or in other words, a great work, is impossible. Particularly that idea that *seekers of knowledge* will no longer want to read great works is impossible. And seekers of knowledge will exist at some rate in any society. No matter how much it seems only that boring books exist in markets, it is that off to the side, great works will continue to exist.

The real problem is the fact that we have entered the Age of English.

Fifty years from now, or a hundred years from now, or even two hundred years from now, will those seekers of knowledge really continue to read great works in *their own languages*?

What does it mean to have entered the Age of English?

It means that the *universal language/vernacular* dual structure of languages that covered the earth before the appearance of the things we call national languages has once again returned from the dead. In recent years, as the earth has become smaller and smaller through the development of means of communication, English, the present *universal language*, has become a large-scale thing covering the entirety of that shrunken earth. And it is that none other than the technology of the internet has applied the final blow.

Anyone will say that concerning mankind's culture of letters, the internet has been *the* revolutionary invention since the Gutenberg press. In this world, there are times when the things everyone says are true, and in actuality, from this point on one cannot conceive of written language without the internet. Particularly, one cannot conceive of the universal language/vernacular dual structure of language that I am trying to problematize here. It is not only that English has made its position as a universal language in the world more immovable through the introduction of the technology of the internet. It is that the internet and English have secured their destiny of being able to preserve their position as that universal language effectively forever. Mankind has now not only entered the age of English, but will continue to live in the age of English from now on. The age of English will continue through the next century and the next. The dual structure of English and a language that blocks out non-English languages will continue not only in this century, but in the next, and the next, and possibly ever on from that point.

As you know, the internet is a technology that was invented in America. At first it was only in English, but the increasing control of English was stressed and feared, so all the world's languages began to appear surprisingly quickly; it has already been some time since then. In the middle of this, languages that had not yet received citizenship — languages artificially suppressed by states, naturally suppressed by surrounding major languages, and in the end, languages disappearing from the earth because they did not yet have letters, even these languages were making an appearance. During this state of the internet, there were people who saw a victory for multilingualism. However, there was no contradiction between the control of English through the internet and the fact that the languages prevalent on the internet were diversifying. This is because English and non-English languages were prevalent on different levels.

This is clear if you think about the thing that is a *great library* that can eventually be implemented on the internet.

The great library is the ultimate *library* in which one can access all the world's books through the internet. Mankind, since the Library of Alexandria in 300 B.C., has

dreamed of a library with all the world's books, a library that has accumulated all of mankind's wisdom. This dream is now on the verge of being possible on the internet and more so with two additional technologies. The first is scanning technology by which books can be digitized and scanned. The second is search engine technology by which the books one wants can be found. It is that an age is coming in which on the internet, and by adding these two technologies, no matter where on the earth one is living, if one has a mobile phone, every book that has been turned to data and every cultural asset that has been turned to data can be for the most part for free, and yet appear before your eyes in an instant.

People immediately get used to new technology, and are already getting used to the concept of this great library. However, when that concept first presented itself, it was met with surprise and excitement. And people passionately envisioned before their eyes the ultimate library that would eventually be possible, a world that could even be called a paradise of information.

However, as long as no one realized that English and other national languages were different — that English was a national language as well as a universal language, that envisioned paradise was nothing but a fruitless thing.

For example, in the May 14, 2006 *New York Times Magazine*, a long article centering on this sort of great library—called a “universal library”¹ in the article — was published. As soon as it was published arguments both for and against it appeared, and it became a famous article. The author was Kevin Kelly, an American. He is well-known as one of the founders of *Wired*, a computer-related magazine.

In the latter half of the article, the primary issue is how the copyright so strongly protected in America (seventy years after the author's death) should change with the appearance of this sort of great library, but the former half, he passionately writes about how now that this sort of great library is being made, how wonderful a paradise can be implemented in this world once that great library is completed.

According to Kevin Kelly, the first step mankind took toward a great library was in December 2004. It was that the search engine giant Google announced that it would be partnering with five major libraries in America and Great Britain, digitally scanning their entire book collections, entering them into a single database, and making them readable from anywhere in the world. It was given the long name “Google Book Search Library Project,” but here it will be called the “Google Project.” At the time the article was written, it seems that Google was already using cutting-edge Swiss-made robots to scan, for example, the collection of eight million books at Stanford University at a speed of a thousand pages an hour.

Moreover, Google were not the only ones moving toward a great library. Other universities, as well as other corporations, were competing and moving toward a great library. He says that at Carnegie Mellon University, due to seasonal labor costs books

¹ Mizumura writes “universal library” in English here in the text.

were sent to China and India by boat and scanned. He says that internet bookstore giant Amazon had, at the time the article was written, already scanned hundreds of thousands of books available for sale.

In this way, a million books are now digitally scanned a year.

Of course, ultimately items added to the great library will not be limited to books.

According to Kevin Kelly, the items added to the great library other than books will be newspapers, magazines, reproductions of visual art such as paintings, sculptures, and photographs, movies, music, programs broadcast on radio and television, as well as their commercials, and of course personal videos, spanning from the past to the present. Furthermore, webpages no longer found online and blog posts will be included. The list of items that will be added to the great library is limitless. Since this article came out, YouTube has appeared through the further advance of technology, and now publicly circulating videos have rapidly multiplied; these will probably also be added to the list.

The information paradise Kevin Kelly describes is as follows.

From the days of Sumerian clay tablets till now, humans have "published" at least 32 million books, 750 million articles and essays, 25 million songs, 500 million images, 500,000 movies, 3 million videos, TV shows and short films and 100 billion public Web pages. All this material is currently contained in all the libraries and archives of the world. When fully digitized, the whole lot could be compressed (at current technological rates) onto 50 petabyte hard disks. Today you need a building about the size of a small-town library to house 50 petabytes. With tomorrow's technology, it will all fit onto your iPod. When that happens, the library of all libraries will ride in your purse or wallet. (Kelly 2006)²

And yet, this is not all. All of the information will be linked together, and for example, if one were to read the above article, encounter the word "petabyte," and want to know what on earth a thing called a "petabyte" is, one could link all the information ever written about "petabytes" at the click of a mouse. (Incidentally, if one searches on Google, it would appear that a gigabyte is two to the thirtieth power, a terabyte is two to the fortieth power, and a petabyte is two to the fiftieth power.) And all the information written about all the things encountered while acquiring that information can be linked to that. And everything encountered while acquiring that information... so it is that a web of information will spread endlessly.

According to Kevin Kelly, this extraordinary great library, "unlike the libraries of old, which were restricted to the elite, ...would be truly democratic." Until very recently, those who could use libraries of scale were limited to people living in college towns or in large cities. However, now that this sort of great library has been realized, those who

² Mizumura does not cite Kelly's article at this point in the source text; the citation is added here for the sake of clarity.

receive the greatest benefit are the billions of people on the face of the earth who are not blessed with the opportunity to come into contact with books. The examples Kevin Kelly raises are people like “students in Mali, scientists in Kazakhstan, [and] elderly people in Peru.” He calls these people “underbooked.”

The internet, which has been made to peacefully cross national borders, receives a lot of attention for the ironic fact that in actuality, it can easily be gagged by nations, but I will not touch upon that here.

I will also not touch on the problem that this would likely presently violate copyrights.

The thing I want to take up is the problem of language.

Kevin Kelly raises the “students in Mali, scientists in Kazakhstan, [and] elderly people in Peru” as an example.

Exactly which language is it that they will be accessing the accessing this great library in? There are only two parts touching on language in this long article. And both of those parts only say that “all languages” will be in the library. Kevin Kelly’s good intentions concerning the “underbooked” are honestly wonderful, here too I feel the bottomless naivete and insensitivity of writers whose *mother tongue* is English.

“It is that it cannot be done in English, I assure you,” Benedict Anderson loudly proclaimed in English with the same bottomless naivete and insensitivity.

Certainly it is possible that someday this great library will contain “all languages.” However, just because a great library contains “all languages” does not mean that people can read “all languages” contained in the great library. Many people, even if they can read written letters, can only read their own language.

People will make great practical use of and greatly enjoy the great library through non-lingual media (media)³. Wherever they live on the earth, whatever language they speak, if they enter the great library, they can see pictures of the paintings of the Altamira caves, the temple pyramids of the Mayan civilization, and the Great Wall of China. They can watch a favorite dance or listen to a favorite song. The things that appeal to eyes and ears appeal can, on some level, cross the linguistic barriers, and can somehow be understood.

However, it is that words themselves are an entirely different dimension of media (media).⁴

Words are things that are completely without meaning if they cannot be read.

Written language, if it cannot be read, is only little lines and dots lined up on a white paper — a screen in a computer’s case. Even if we try to implement a great library

³ Mizumura here writes “media” once in *katakana* (メディア, *media*) and once in *kanji* (媒体, *baitai*), providing the second as a gloss for readers who may not be familiar with the English word.

⁴ See above note.

containing all of mankind's heritage tomorrow, particularly as concerning language, people can only patronize a library whose language they can read. "Students in Mali, scientists in Kazakhstan, [and] elderly people in Peru" too can only patronize a library whose language they understand. In trying to implement a great library, there will only be, particularly as concerning language, disparate libraries that are shut out in all directions by the tall walls of language. And it is that most of those libraries will only be patronized by people who view those languages as their own languages.

The bottomless naivete and insensitivity of writers whose mother tongue is English.

That comes out further at that moment in the same article as Kevin Kelly touches on the same project progressing in China. According to Kevin Kelly, a Chinese corporation called SuperStar has started a project resembling the Google Project, and at the time the article was written had digitized a total of 1.3 million books. Well, what sorts of books are these 1.3 million books? Well, they are the books published in China *since 1949* gathered from two hundred libraries amongst the libraries in all of China. Those participating in the Google Project from the start were Stanford University, Harvard University, the University of Michigan, the New York Public Library, and Oxford University; the Google Project used, from the start, the leading English language libraries. By contrast, when SuperStar was starting up, it did not only use Chinese-language libraries. Because of the Communist Party dictatorship, it is that used libraries filled only with books published without freedom of speech. That notwithstanding, Kevin Kelly's article is written so as to give the impression that, at that very moment, America and China, the two superpowers of the twenty-first century, are simultaneously developing the same ideas.

Will people throughout the world who view English as an *outside language* be able to use the Google Project? By contrast, it looks like SuperStar will be a library not much used except by Chinese people in mainland China. Even among Chinese people in mainland China, it looks like only those who have received higher education will use the Google Project.

Furthermore, in the age of the internet, how will we measure a library's true quality? It is obvious that a library patronized by people of the whole world who have received higher education will become, from a content standpoint, from here on a more complete library — a library that has accumulated great works. However, in the coming age, as for a library's true quality, we will not even care to what extent it has accumulated great works. It is that we will most care about the ability to tell us which of the great works that have been accumulated should be read the *most*.

In essence, it is that in the coming age, we will most care about the quality itself of ranking great works.

The paradise that Kevin Kelly describes is far from a paradise, but actually a hell of overinformation. There are people who predict that in the future, the average lifespan

of a human will someday reach 120 years. There are also people who predict that humans will not die except in accidents. But if seen from a universal viewpoint, no matter how long it stretches, it is that life is a brief thing. To we humans living those brief lives, knowing which words should be read the *most* is an important matter. Even more, to seekers of knowledge, it is the most important matter.

English, unlike the Latin of long ago, is a language having the dual nature of being a universal language as well as a national language. Most of the items in English libraries, similar to other libraries, will not leave the realm of chatter (chat)⁵. However, since these English libraries are also universal language libraries, seekers of knowledge throughout the world will access them, and inevitably naturally create a ranking of which words should be read the *most*, where it will have the most *universality* and is the most rigorous. To seekers of knowledge, it is inevitable that a ranking of the information with the most meaning — a ranking of information on a completely different level than a mere popularity contest — will naturally be created. And this ranking (ranking system)⁶ will inevitably change like a permanent revolution and continue to be the most meaningful thing to seekers of knowledge. The ranking system of these ranking systems will inevitably naturally be created where it will have the most universality and is the most rigorous.

Of course, there are idealists in the world who always dream of trying to make the impossible possible.

It is not unusual that there are idealists who are trying to make the internet a truly open media to the world — who dream of making all people able to read “all languages.” The solution thought of by those people is obviously, as a logical conclusion, an automatic translation machine. It is already clear that an automatic translation machine is significantly more difficult than they first dreamed of, but even so, their efforts toward this ideal have borne fruit year by year, and they have now become extremely useful. This is particularly so with Western language pairs. However, thinking that the day will come when automatic translation machines replace human translators is as unrealistic as thinking that the day will come when paper will disappear with the spread of e-readers like the Kindle.

In my opinion, machine translation is fundamentally impossible, no matter how much the technology advances. For example, constructions in which there is a difference between what a sentence says and what it means (saying one thing and meaning another)⁷ come from the rhetorical devices of language which are the essence of all languages. For

⁵ “Chat” is written in *katakana* (チャット) to reflect the English word.

⁶ As above, “ranking system” is written in *katakana* (ランキング・システム) to reflect the English word.

⁷ “Saying one thing and meaning another” is written in English in the source text.

an automatic translator which only deciphers words which are unrelated to the intentions of the human who wrote them to understand the rhetorical devices of that language—for example, to understand that an expression functions ironically — is impossible. How do you program a translation so that one can understand whether or not “it’s a big deal to have translated with an automatic translation machine!” is ironic in context? One can only do it randomly. There are those for whom irony does not come through, so there is nothing surprising about this. Of course, compositions translated by an automatic translating machine do not provide reading pleasure. And compositions which do not provide reading pleasure are not compositions.

No matter how much the quality of automatic translation machines improves, it will not be able stop the fact that English is increasingly gaining currency as a universal language because of the appearance of the internet.

Furthermore, English is already—setting aside the artificial language of mathematics — a universal language related to the technology of the internet itself. The internet is a technology that strengthens the fact that English has currency as a universal language in the world, but it is also that the *metalanguage* related to the internet is English. People throughout the world use English when they talk about the internet.

The fact is that English is becoming a universal language. As touched upon earlier, in the world of *scholarship*, this had already become radically apparent by the middle of the twentieth century. This is because in addition to the overwhelming military, economic, and political power of the English-speaking world, the reality of scholarship had become apparent, which was that non-Westerners were beginning to participate in what had come to be called scholarship in the modern age, and along with that were primarily reading and writing scholarship in a universal language. This was not due to a behind-the-scenes agreement of the world’s scholars, nor was it because of a conspiracy of English speakers, but it is that universal language of English would inevitably, bit by bit, become polarized precisely due to the reality that scholarship is commonly carried out in a universal language. In recent years, the fact that scholarship has become more formulaic has further spurred this movement.

It was to that end that the internet was born.

Today, what is conspicuous is the protrusion pressuring non-American universities. America has a tradition as a nation of immigrants, and like a great whirlpool, talented scholars from throughout the world gather in America; of the twenty greatest universities in the world, seventeen are in America. Further, seventy percent of Nobel Prize recipients teach in American universities. However, the spread of the internet should produce the opposite development. This is because as *scholarly language* becomes increasingly polarized around English, conversely, the inevitability of geographic polarization, the inevitability of scholars gathering to the nation of America will begin to fade away. In fact, America is beginning to export its universities, and even

the non-English-speaking world, noted universities beginning to try switching instruction into English. Just as the universities that dotted Europe became the hub of scholarship through the universal language of Latin, within fifty to a hundred years, the universities that dot the whole world will likely become the hubs of scholarship through the universal language of English. The surprising fact that papers are presented in English even in the Pasteur Institute in Paris, the city of flowers, is none other than the start of this development (a possible switch since it is a private research institution).

Natural sciences that center on numeric formulas are already polarized around English, but the important thing is that this movement cannot be marked off with a line saying “*up to here.*” Polarization around English has already moved past the natural sciences and into the social sciences and the humanities, and it is now slowly, but surely, expanding within scholarship. And it is that it has no reason not to expand someday into the region outside of scholarship.

Now that I am once again thinking about the issue of *textbooks* and *texts* I touched on before, what sort of meaning will this movement surely have?

I repeat myself, but there are two types of *truth* in this world. There is truth that has been put into other words, and there is truth that has not been put into other words. Truth that has been put into other words is truth that has been put into a textbook, and that sort of truth is sufficient as a textbook. However, one cannot put the other kind of truth in other words. That is because truth depends on the very words representing that truth. In order to arrive at that truth, there is always a text to which one must return and reread.

The problem is from this point, in exactly which language will these texts be read and written?

The fact that Aristotle still continues to be read is none other than because the things he wrote are texts which cannot be reduced to textbooks. In order for people to understand Aristotle, they must ultimately return to his text. From now on, specialists of Greek philosophy will likely continue to read Aristotle in Greek. However, in the age of English, what will happen as scholarship is polarized around English? These specialists, when they write anything about Aristotle, will start to write not in their own languages, but in English. Once they do that, they will begin to use not quotes from Aristotle translated into their own languages, but those translated into English. As a result, it is that not only will the things written about Aristotle begin to be prevalent in English, but that gradually, Aristotle’s text itself will begin to be prevalent as an English translation.

The oldest text presently remaining of the New Testament is written in Greek, the universal of the Mediterranean culture of the time, but when the New Testament spread to western Europe, it spread as a translation in Latin, the universal language of Western Europe at that time. Buddhist scriptures, which were originally written in Pali and Sanskrit, also spread in China, Korea, and Japan, the world of Chinese writing, as a

translation in the universal language of *kanbun*. No matter what language *scriptures* themselves are written in, those scriptures spread in a universal language.

Both now and in ancient times, this is the power held by universal languages.

From this standpoint, if even Aristotle is predominantly in English, what scholars would go to the trouble of writing in their own languages if they could write in English?

Not only scholars, but who at all would go to the trouble of writing in their own languages if they could write in English?

The fact that scholarly language is polarized around the universal language of English is already being pointed out by many people. However, no one has yet seriously thought about the effect this fact will have on national languages other than English. Scholarly language becoming universal language means that the better a scholar one is, the less he or she will write things that can be worthy as texts in a national language, but it is that such a movement is not something that can be limited to the world of scholarship. This is because the boundaries between the world of scholarship and the world that is not are not clearly defined. The appearance of the universal language of English ultimately means that people who write things, be they journalists or bloggers, the more they are seekers of knowledge, the less they will write texts in their national languages.

And, needless to say, the most conspicuous example of a text is literature.

Only one time in the history of mankind has mankind manufactured national language. And the age we might call *the feast of languages* has arrived. The age of the feast of languages is an age in which national languages are not only *cultural language* but also scholarly language. Furthermore, it is an age in which cultural language written in a national language is thought to transcend scholarly language.

Today marks the end of the age of the feast of languages.

Just as once mankind knew of fire it was different from mankind that did not know fire, or just as once mankind knew letters it was different from mankind that did not know letters, once mankind knew of the existence of national languages, it was different from mankind that did not know of national language. Mankind that knows how to read and write in their own languages in order to bear not only an aesthetic responsibility, but also intellectual and logical, will not instantly lose stop bearing that intellectual, logical, and aesthetic responsibility in the national language they have come to have such a deep attachment to, even if a global-scale universal language should appear. However, when words both in a universal language and not in a universal language exist in a society at the same time, yet it is felt that the universal language will have more force in the future, even seekers of knowledge will be attracted to the universal language. This is, the same as flowers blooming in spring and fruit will ripen in autumn, close to a natural trend, the destiny of people as *homo sapiens*.

What will truly start a vicious cycle is not when seekers of knowledge *no longer write* in their national languages, but when they *no longer read* in their national

languages. If even seekers of knowledge are attracted to universal languages, even seekers of knowledge will try to read in universal languages, even if, for example, they cannot write in universal languages. I reemphasize, but the task of reading and the task of writing are fundamentally asymmetrical things, and reading an outside language like a universal language is far easier a task when compared to writing. And because seekers of knowledge cannot get the readers they want to read what they want them to, they will want less and less to write in their national language. As a result, that which is written in national languages will become even less interesting. And clearly, seekers of knowledge will have less and less a desire to read things written in national languages. Thus a vicious cycle begins, and to seekers of knowledge, languages other than English will gradually lose their value as great works. And it is that seekers of knowledge will seek less and less to even bear an intellectual and logical responsibility, and furthermore an aesthetic responsibility in their own languages.

People teach in elementary schools, become nurses, and become lawyers, among other things. They work in small to medium-sized corporations, work in large corporations, or raise up their own corporations. They engage in agriculture, forestry, and fishing. They belong to NPOs or NGOs. They can become politicians. But once a vicious cycle starts, no matter their occupation, the desire of even seekers of knowledge to read a universal language will become increasingly strong. And if they are able to read a universal language, before they know it, even in their daily lives they will start to read texts in the universal language more carefully. Before they know it, they will begin to skim texts written in their own languages simply for pleasure. When they want to know about important events happening in the world they will start to look over English media, and when they want to know the result of a domestic sports match, they will start to look over domestic media. And eventually they will stop seriously wanting to know what they should think about in their own languages.

To repeat, the notion of literature ending in a broad sense is impossible.

But through the fact that English has become a universal language, it is that there is a now real possibility that national languages other than English are facing the end of literature. In other words, it is that there is now a possibility that seekers of knowledge will stop seriously reading texts written in their national languages. It is none other than the fact that there is now a possibility that national languages themselves will be reduced even to vernaculars.

It is none other than the fact that there is a now a possibility that national literature will be reduced to vernacular literature.

If you think about it, until just recently, how trying a road have Japanese scholars walked?

To repeat, when Japan was facing the Meiji Restoration, English, French, and German, the *three great languages* of Europe, were the scholarly languages. Japanese

scholars specializing in the social sciences, or at the end of the day the natural sciences, as intellectuals of the non-Western language-speaking world — additionally, together with the *kanbun* that had influenced them since the Edo period — lived with an obsession that they must be able to read those three Western languages to some extent as though they themselves were Europeans. On the other side of the world, to people who had a mother tongue as quite different from Western languages as heads and tails, this burden was not a light thing. Furthermore, if they tried to further understand the true essence of the European spirit, they had to go the extra mile and go as far as to learn Greek and Latin.

And yet, the physical distance to the West was very far, yet the notion of scholarship being something that is done in a national language was unconsciously deeply rooted in their hearts, and there were for the most part obviously no scholars that tried to write or do other things in Western languages, if one removes the exceptions. The state of the university people Sōseki described in *Sanshirō* — if one removes those who finished without reading the original works as translated versions increased — has not greatly changed over a hundred years. The great majority of Japanese scholars, even if they were born with the disposition to become outstanding scholars, resigned themselves to the role of the introducer of Western scholarship, and that they must feel satisfied only to cross the ocean once in their lifetime, meet a Western scholar who researches that work, take a picture smiling together, shake hands, and return home.

Those Japanese scholars are, today, still *writing* in English. Needless to say natural scientists, but also social scientists and even researchers doing meaningful research are slowly becoming so. And, by writing in English, they are for the first time in the process of achieving a transformation from the role of introducers of Western scholarship to researchers participating in the discipline of world scholarship — in the process of joining the chain of the world's great works. In actuality, it is that words like “actively participating internationally” are now beginning to have meaning even as far as when talking about scholars who put themselves in the field of only actively participating with an eye to the domestic, and for whom doing scholarship only means laboring to write in English so that they can in some way actively participate internationally. It is obvious that even if they write something about Japan, the more they handle big issues, the more meaningful it is if it written in English. The development of Japanese scholars writing in English is still only a behind-the-scenes development, and is not noticeable to the average person. However, at some point, it will be clear to everyone.

History is an ironic thing.

Roughly a century and a half ago, the central office of Japanese scholarship, as a large translation organ, tried to make Japanese a language capable of scholarship — tried to make Japanese a national language. Now, as English becomes a universal language that covers the world, it is that the central office of Japanese scholarship is trying to stop remaining a large translation organ. Japanese will continue to be emphasized at Japanese

universities that have been reduced to being universities in name only. However, Japanese graduate schools, and even graduate schools that bring in excellent students, are trying to move toward doing scholarship in English. If you remove special fields, it is that Japanese is in the process of moving toward not being a scholarly language.

As just one novelist — and before that, as just one Japanese person, this sort of development cannot help but have an effect on Japanese from here on out.

For example, let us suppose that a person was born in Japan today with Sōseki's level of qualifications. What path would he follow from this point?

Sōseki was, like Fukuzawa Yukichi, a truly outstanding seeker of knowledge.

For example, a correspondence Sōseki addressed to his father-in-law in London.

This was something he wrote while refining the conception of *The Theory of Literature*, but it is that he wrote it when it was first truly possible for him to freely enter an English language library as a consequence of studying abroad in London. From this correspondence, just how much at the time Sōseki wanted to do nothing but study — how much he wanted to know everything that mankind knew at the time comes suffocatingly through. His spirit of thirsting for knowledge in the isolation of a foreign country can still be felt.

In Sōseki's first conception, he expected *The Theory of Literature* would become a very great literary work. The areas Sōseki had an eye on are, according to this correspondence, as follows. “One starts with the issue of how one should view the world, then moves on to the problem of how to understand life, and the meaning and purpose of life, as well as the development of its vitality, and then proceeds to define civilization, as well as the elements that constitute it, and then discusses their impact on the development of literature.” In short, it was that he wanted to discuss everything. According to Sōseki, to that end, he must be well informed about “philosophy, history, politics, psychology, biology, and the theory of evolution.” He did not want to return to Japan, become a “language professor,” and lose “time to think and time to read,” and it seems he had “a dream of occasionally finding a hundred thousand yen, *building a library*, and writing great works.” (emphasis added) The strength of Sōseki's desire to do nothing but study makes one dizzy.

Furthermore, Sōseki, just as Fukuzawa Yukichi, was a seeker of knowledge who did not was not simply suited for being a scholar, but also for being a scientist.

As you know, it is said that Nonomiya from *Sanshirō* is modeled on the physicist Terada Toruhiko. The fact that Sōseki was also the owner of qualities suited for being a scientist is clear from looking back at the words of Terada Toruhiko looking back at the time. According to Terada Toruhiko, as for the scene of the experiment of the pressure of the light in Nonomiya's cellar, it seems that he wrote that Sōseki listened to Terada Toruhiko's explanation “just one time, and completely understood the essentials.” Terada Toruhiko recollects, “It was that he described an experiment he had only heard and never seen in a very real way. I feel this is rare among Japanese writers.” There is another scene

in *Sanshirō* in which there is a discussion amongst fellow scholars regarding the pressure of light. There is talk of melting “crystal powder” with the “flame of an oxyhydrogen blowpipe,” of the English physicist Maxwell and the Russian physicist Lebedev, and of things like “the pressure of a beam of light is proportional to the square of the radius, but it is that the attracting force is proportional to the cube of the radius, so the smaller things get, the more the attracting force loses out and the pressure of the beam of light gets stronger.” It is a scene in which one gets a glimpse of the possibility of Sōseki as a scientist.

If a Sōseki were to be born today, what would he do?

Today, Indians, Chinese, Koreans, Japanese, and other Asians play an active role worldwide in fields such as mathematics, natural sciences, biology, engineering, and medicine. It is known to some extent that there are outstanding authors who write in English among people from India, which was an English-speaking colony for many years — Indians, or people of Indian descent, who grew up speaking English. However, everyone has been given the impression that when it comes to East Asians, they are a race that only really has a mind for mathematics. It is that it is difficult for the people of the world, or rather, particularly for Westerners, to see the obvious fact of how troublesome writing English is for people with a non-Western mother tongue, and how much they focus their talents on fields that are suited for mathematical formulas because it is so troublesome.

If Sōseki were born today, and if the home he was born into was a home that was somewhat economically wealthy, and he had those qualities and that intellect, there is a high likelihood that he would have gone on to university and graduate school. And there is a high likelihood that he would have become a scholar. What sort of scholar would that Sōseki be? Would he, as an East Asian scholar with a mind for mathematics, write papers riddled with formulas? If so, perhaps he might known as a global scholar possibly because he is Sōseki. However, suppose Sōseki did not want to write papers riddles with formulas — which could be said otherwise as textbooks. Suppose he wanted to move from the natural sciences to the humanities and write a text in English.

What would he do then?

If we suppose that Sōseki were born today, then he would become an adult a quarter of a century later. In the world of a quarter of a century in the future, it would be increasingly common for non-Western scholars to write in English. Sōseki might resolve to join the chain of the world’s great works by writing texts in English, and if he was able to actually write a text capable of being read fully in English, he might actually join the chain of the world’s great works.

However, Sōseki would then likely curse his fate as one with a mother tongue quite removed from English, be jealous of the good fortune of people whose mother tongue is English, and while feeling anger at their simple-mindedness and insensitivity, spend most of his life combating the English language itself. In any case, Sōseki would

not be the type of person to happily give up. However, his days combating the outside language of English would be even more unhappy compared to his days writing in Japanese, his own language. The act of writing in the outside language of English would continue to make him feel an unavoidable feeling of alienation. Furthermore, the things he wrote would be gratifying to him.

But even still, a quarter of a century from now, would a person like Sōseki decide to write in Japanese — particularly, would that person decide to write *literature* in Japanese?

The historical conditions that made it possible for outstanding literature to be created in modern Japan — these are now visibly crumbling. This is because it is now sadly possible for bilinguals participating in scholarship to write in a universal language and join the chain of great works. Furthermore, in Japan there is no longer a tendency to them feel a need to rush out of university in order to understand the *reality* of Japan in new Japanese and in order to give the reality of Japan form. One hundred and fifty years after Commodore Perry, Japan has lost its sense of tension with the West, and at the same time, lost the tension between Japanese and Western languages by equating modernization with Westernization. The origin of the once-new Japanese language has now been forgotten, and for the most part is told by rote. As long as the human spirit trying to stimulate the reality of Japan cannot be thought to exist in the background, it will continue to be told by rote.

So, setting aside a quarter century from now, let's think about the current condition of Japan today.

Would a person at Sōseki's level really rush out of university and decide to go to the trouble of writing a novel in Japanese today? Would that person want to join the company of people writing novels in Japanese today? No, first there is a question we must ask. Would a person at Sōseki's level, if one existed today, really even think to read novels written in Japanese?

Sadly, hasn't a vicious cycle has already started, and isn't the literature predominant in Japan already showing signs of vernacular literature?

Today, if you enter a Japanese bookstore and look around, you will find it is overflowing with Japanese as written language. Furthermore, it has only been about a century and a half since Western languages have been translated into Japanese. Ideas common in the world are taking hold, and the quality of the Japanese in things like newspapers and magazines might boast of being the highest since the dawn of time.

Yet *literary words* are something else.

Even in today's Japan outstanding literature is being written. It is being published as well. In a Japan encompassing only these, it is unlikely that there are no authors with talent and high intentions. However, rambling literature that gains currency widely is something else. Most of it makes us forget that Japanese literature had once reached great

heights. Indeed, it is for women and children. It is something that can barely be called by the name of literature and gain currency only because there was once a miracle of Japanese literature.

Actually, today, even if they are not bilinguals, the more people are seekers of knowledge, the less they read *only literature* written in Japanese. Even if they read it, they only skim it for pleasure. Will they read various books in Japanese in order to learn about things like global warming, recent discoveries in biology, or movements in the world of Islam? It is inevitable that these books are written with a sense of universality. Will they also read about Japan's pension and low birth rate problems or its ancient and modern history in Japanese? It is inevitable that those books are written with at least a minimum of universality. On the other hand, because it is possible for literature, or national literature, to be sufficient even if only in their own languages, when it is once sufficient in their own languages, before you know it an automatic movement begins, and in the end it can become a hideout for people left behind from universality. And it is that even seekers of knowledge will keenly feel signs of vernacular literature — signs of being “Japanese” literature.

As English has become a universal language, literature prevalent in Japan is becoming reduced to “Japanese” literature.

There is no causal relationship between these two.

This is because before it became plainly visible that English had become a universal language, Japanese literature had become jejune on its own from the inside. The fact that the nation of Japan is, even among developed nations, a nation in which the mass consumer society has advanced radically, as well as the fact that it is a non-Western island nation, and no matter how much it opens, it naturally closes, will be cited as explanations for this. The fact that when new Japanese and new Japan are common things and they are trying to grasp a present reality that is difficult to grasp, authors are becoming less compelled to face words themselves will also be cited. And also, as will be touched on later, post-war Japanese education will be cited.

However, art is a movement like nature that has surpassed human knowledge. This will, just as the swelling of a wave climb higher and higher, rush through the sky in a grand, magnificent, and showy way, and before you know it come crashing down. Somewhere, sometime, it will be impossible to adequately explain why some art has *fallen*, no matter how hard one tries to explain it.

What is certain is the danger of the future of Japanese literature.

Art, even if it has once fallen, if it bides its time, will change its form, gather momentum from all directions, and begin to climb. However, the fact that English has currency as a universal language could threaten the national language of Japanese. If Japanese is threatened, the destiny of Japanese literature, which originally should have been a feast of the Japanese language, will be threatened.

Actually, seekers of knowledge are already less willing to talk seriously about today's Japanese literature. They are less willing to seriously consider today's Japanese literature. Precisely because of that, in today's Japan, there are not even people who will point out the meaninglessness of a type of Japanese literature "being valued in the West." While one stops seriously considering language, it is that even the difficulty of translating Japanese into Western languages is sadly forgotten. As we entered the modern era, it was inevitable that Japanese would change into a language that could be translated into Western languages. This is why even if read in Japanese, the merits of Western-language literature can be understood to some extent. However, it was not inevitable that Western languages would make that change. It is that it is nearly inconceivable that one would read Japanese literature translated into a Western language and understand the true merits of that literature. What would be understood would be mainly a sense of strangeness, and that sense of strangeness would be nothing more than a single element making it literature.

That is exhaustively shown by the fact that Sōseki's writing cannot be translated well into Western languages, for one. In actuality, Sōseki translated into a Western language, while it may be a good translation, is not Sōseki. Regard for Sōseki among foreigners who can read Japanese is high. Among those who can read Japanese well, it is fairly high. But among foreigners who cannot read Japanese, Sōseki is not valued at all. I will always remember the anger and sadness, and the resignation, I felt when I read a *New Yorker* book review in which John Updike wrote that as he was reading in English, he absolutely could not understand why Sōseki was made out to be a great author in Japan.

Truly understanding the merits of Japanese literature is a special privilege allowed only to people who have read Japanese great works.

To emphasize, no matter how many global cultural commodities exist, truly global literature, among other things, can never exist. It is impossible to conceive of global cultural commodities other than those that do not require language for their real meaning — that do not require translation for their true meaning. Hollywood films are representative of global cultural commodities, and the greater the production costs of the film, the more the Hollywood film industry, which relies on the international market for over fifty percent of its revenue, goes out of its way to avoid dialogue for the international market, and rather than trying to depict a particular reality that is difficult to grasp, it tries to depict a mythical world common to mankind. It is a place that, while freely using CG technology that is advancing with eye-opening force, is flooded with epic battles between good and evil which are stale enough to make your eyes open again. It is that the difficulty of translation is well acknowledged precisely because Hollywood is so commercialist. The power of language can only be conceived of as unrelated to global things.

And it is precisely that fact that is the power of language.

I ask again, would a talented person on the level of Sōseki go so far as to try to write a novel in Japanese today?

I apologize to people who write today, including myself, but I feel like that person probably would not.

We are now already in such a state of affairs.

If we just stand here with our arms folded, will even a person such as myself really write a novel in Japanese twenty-five, fifty, or a hundred years from now?

And before that, will that person actually seriously *read* in Japanese?

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