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Translation and Formation of Style in the Modern Japanese Novel

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It is impossible to discuss the formation of the modern Japanese novel in the Meiji Era of Japan [明治時代] without first considering the role of translation. In creating the modern Japanese novel, the author of *The Essence of the Novel*, Tsubouchi Shoyo, invented his own new novelistic style.

The most important methodological choice in Tsubouchi Shoyo's *Imouto to Sei Kagami* [*Husband and Wife*] is to give the job of expressing conversation in the narrative not only to the sentences, but also to the characters themselves. The characters, who have a limited field of vision within the narrative, peep at and "eavesdrop" on others (Tsubouchi 241), but because of certain limitations they cannot reproduce the original meaning of the conversation they listen in on and thus make decisive mistakes. Tatsuzo and Otsuji, the husband and wife of the story, seem at first to be happily married but the mistakes gradually tear the two apart as the narrative progresses.

Shoyo is very conscious of the reasons of deciding on this style of narrative. He points out that in most cases eavesdropping misses the truth of the conversation, leading from thoughts of suspicion and prejudice to paranoid jealousy and feelings of doubt and the main reason for the husband and wife, who should really trust one another, to break apart. Eavesdropping, like a broken mirror that distorts the information gathered from the conversations in the novel creates an entirely new narrative of thoughts of suspicion and prejudice that depart from the meaning created by the people present to the actual conversation. While Shoyo entrusts the narrated discourse, that creates the story, to the characters that eavesdrop, this choice is also essential to understanding his concept of the "modern novel" and his removal of the ideas of the author.

The attempt to make transparent the position of the author, who orients the reader with sentences, results not in providing an opportunity to develop the story within the characters' conversation, but rather the nature of their conversation, which warps and inflects the traditional love story and comedy

by eavesdropping. Ultimately, this is what constitutes the story. Perhaps, in this process, we can see the fate of Japan's modern novel, which was unable to form an original style along the lines of "the Eye of God" in the Western novel (to be sure, the inability to develop an original style that expresses the Eye of God position should not simply be taken as a negative; the modern Western novel is not the only benchmark when it comes to questions of genre). Japanese, and in particular spoken Japanese, has a strong orientation towards reflecting the place and conditions of the development of speech more so than presenting an abstracted world through the lens of language.

Later, Shoyo's own methodological groping would investigate standardizing the limited perspective of the narrator within the story world. That is to say, the difference between the first person and the third person in Western languages does not appear within the structure of the Japanese sentence. The uniqueness of Japanese is only revealed when the personhood of aspects, other than personal pronouns within the language, are intentionally emphasized. As Yanabu Akira correctly points out, the emphasis on personhood was influenced during the Meiji Period by the rapid spread among intellectuals of the culture and style of translation (predominantly from English) (43-63). The Japanese sentence structure that supported this spread was the second person and the utterances made possible by the presence of both the narrator and the audience in the second person come out in the process of Shoyo's experimental style.

Shoyo succeeds in depicting a narrator who can follow the protagonist's inner consciousness while at the same time eavesdropping on other characters' conversations, which develop outside that consciousness, disclosing and relativizing the conscious state of the protagonist held captive by the delusions caused by a wandering ear. Here, Shoyo tries his best to make transparent the way the narrator narrates by not using value-laden words or phrases, and by capturing the world from the position of the protagonist while functioning at the same time as another story based on the conversations of other characters that reveal the protagonist's delusory state. In other words, Shoyo creates a mechanism whereby reading through the conversational sentences the reader becomes organically involved in both stories causing a mutual interference, which allows the meaning of the text to appear from in-between. Mediating the reader's consciousness, the two topologically different stories create more meaning than is simply written in the text giving potential to the communication between the author and the reader, and fictionalizing the

reader's communication and the subject of expression.

The change in the interaction between the sentences and the conversation scenes of Futabatei Shimei's *Floating Clouds* can be said to correspond with the process of Shoyo's change of expression. The narrator, with a keen sense towards the reader, follows how the protagonist Bunzo feels and looks within the story, which also reflects the particular words Bunzo uses to capture the world within the story, and by using his words to capture this he makes his own image transparent outside of the story. Through this transparency the reader is literally able to understand the meaning between the two interactive story lines provided by the narrator, one which tells of the satiric and ridicule filled story of Bunzo and Osei's past and the course of their love, and the other which follows Bunzo's misunderstanding of his relationship with Osei. These two lines represent the basic pattern of the change in the story. Here the reader needs to pay attention to how the perspectival description and the description provided by the characters within the story, which are ways to apprehend the outer natural world, function in and act upon the story. One important reason writers praise Futabatei's *Genbun Ittchitai* [*The Transparent Narrator*] is because of the unique description of the outer world it provides. For example, this description was formed in Futabatei's translation process of Turgenev's stories, but only the reality of these descriptions is emphasized and thus the actuality of the reality needs to be questioned. The Russian sentences that Turgenev used in his collection of short stories, *A Sportman's Sketches*, were translations of the perspectival description taken from Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*. First, the perspectival description provided by one of the characters in the story not only captures the nature of the outer world but simultaneously captures the feelings and state of mind of the characters. Therefore, the description is not simply of the background or the stage setting. Included within the characters' words, that capture nature and the outer world, is their mental conflict; thus, the perspectival description acts as a dramatic look or gaze.

"Description" as a concept suggests that the natural and outer world, as an already existent object of indication, is spatial, and this spatial object is expressed through a language bound by temporal succession. As a result, the spatial object indicated is apparently reproduced at the stage of reading a description but this is incorrect. As a result, a spatial shadow is formed from the words that appear in succession, and the reader must consciously reconstruct and integrate the images that are aroused by words. The way these

images are reconstructed and integrated, or rather the power that urges such a reconstruction and integration, depends actually on what the words describe, capture and exclude, and what order and style they are arranged in. Therefore, description is not de-temporalizing. Instead, when it follows the character's perspective folded into the flow of time in the story, the way of looking and the characteristic way the eyes flow forms a story.

The outer image of the spatial shadow internalizes another story line—the dramatic act of looking—concealed within. Of course, at first glance the narrative does not seem to have any connection with the principal story line. However, essentially the most important function of the perspectival description is that the dramatic act of looking and the flow of the eyes are both involved. The perspectival description is not the suspension or interruption of the story. There is another story concerning how the characters feel and think concealed behind the successive meaning of words (the image of nature and the outer world).

The reader, reconstructing the scene motivated by the perspectival description and imagining an integrated spatial image, in other words, re-experiencing how and what the character in the text feels and thinks, also comes into contact with that character's integrated image by reintegrating the memory of what they have just read. In other words, the reader and the character's personality captured via this continual action of re-experience meet at a subliminal level. When this happens, the various stories that develop like a thread following a temporal succession create new meanings as a surface story reconstructing and integrating mutually intervening memories. The subject of written narrative in the modern novel can be said to arise where two stories integrate: the story threads, which appear with the temporal act of reading, and the surface story, which is created in the memory by reading the words split from the story thread.

The first person to become aware of this process was Futabatei Shimei, who focused on the expressions used by Morita Shiken in his texts on translation. There are two memories at work when Shimei's *Floating Clouds* enters the third volume. By reintegrating his textualized memory of Osei, Bunzo must decide how he will continue to be involved with Osei and her deepening relationship with Noboru. The second is how Bunzo will also reintegrate the memories of his relationship with Osei and try to understand his own image within the story as a man who has been dismissed from work. Problems arise, however, when we discover that the necessary energy to integrate and reconstitute the

meaning of these memories within the story is not provided in the sentences that describe Bunzo's understanding of himself. In fact, the style of Bunzo's self-understanding is directed by his deep attachment to the delusional image he has of Osei and himself. All of this suggests that Morita Shiken's series of books on translation (which Shimei incorporated into his novel) clearly call attention to the new contemporary texts and readers.

That Morita Shiken started his writing career as a journalist and reporter has serious repercussions when considering how the modern novelistic style was created in Japan. The central task of a journalist is to see how well they can correctly report the truth of the event and clearly express the central issue while providing the reader with the feeling of actually being at the scene. Shiken was working as a reporter for the *Postal Information Newspaper* at a time when the Movement for Democratic Rights was on the wane and the papers were moving away from focusing on political debates to an excessive focus on reporting the truth about various incidents.

Regardless of whether they appear domestically or internationally, in order to comprehend the individuality and uniqueness of new situations, aspects, and phenomena, reporting must rely on language. To recognize the newness of truth or to perceive newness in truth, the reporter who recognizes these prerequisites must demolish the traditional frames of understanding and emotion, and express words that adhere to this new individuality and uniqueness. Such an expression must also require the reader to remove the already existing frames of understanding and emotion. Reports that textualize truth, only through revealing the sign of the times, pressure both the reporter and the reader to alter the preexisting linguistic paradigm.

Thus, as a reporter in touch with the zeitgeist, reforming the style of reporting is a necessary practice to capture the truth. That Morita Shiken started his principal job as a reporter by declaring a revolution in style proves his penetrating sense of language. As will become clear, Shiken started his career as a journalist by distancing himself from his forte of the classical Chinese style because he found this debilitating style alienated the words he used to express the truth of what he saw and heard.

When writing *Shrouded in the Stench of the Classics*, Morita Shiken, who was posted in China at the time, became aware of how the classical Chinese style was no longer useful to report on the "truth," because the official and legitimate style ceased to reflect the very changes that had occurred within China. The long classical tradition had turned the reality of China into a topoi

of words accumulated for their aesthetic value. No matter which mountain or river was reported on, poetic language was always mixed into the image of the physical object. Shiken realized that it was impossible to express his *An Itinerary for the True China* without freeing himself from the aesthetics of the classical style. In order to capture the real borders of the truth, Shiken had to acquire a style along the new borders that did not withdraw into traditional and cultural connotations.

The direction of Morita Shiken's stylistic revolution gradually became much clearer after he took clues from translated novels. One clue was to reject the conventional stereotypical expressions used when describing a condition or object. As Shiken points out, narratives, articles, and polemics use a fixed form in certain cases. Here, Shiken complains that the style used to report or tell the truth or to argue for the truth is too focused on regulating fixed words to express fixed things. Shiken shows just how much the composition capturing the truth of this period was expressed in stereotypical and outmoded vocabulary.

Of course the problem that expressions were stereotypical and outmoded does not simply refer to a lack of interesting sentences, freshness, or dynamism. When a battlefield is discussed, the time, place, and type of war are all described in terms of the classical "asura [the world of endless war]," or when some predicament is discussed, the time, people, and conditions are described in terms of "the eight levels of hell." Truth is deprived of its uniqueness and co-opted within a safe linguistic universality. The aesthetic understanding of composition dissolves the individual appearance of each truth turning them into the same universalized aesthetic face.

Taking into account that each event occurs as a result of very particular conditions, including time and place, the value of information and news comes from the value of reporting truth as it is. Journalists put their lives on the line to communicate this particularity and uniqueness while they are on the scene.

Starting his career as a writer abroad for the first time, reporting on the different events that occurred and compiling them in his itinerary, Morita Shiken, no doubt, felt that the most important task was to communicate the particularity and uniqueness of the truth. This position also runs through his translations because he realized that a translator must communicate the particularity and uniqueness of the original text to the reader. In his "Understanding Translation," Shiken insisted that when translating Western

texts, expressions from Chinese Classics and Classical Japanese Poetics should not be used because the vocabulary was particular to a country and that taking these texts particular to one country and mixing them with another country's writing means that the particularity will end up only coming from the country that does the translating.

It is clear that Morita Shiken's approach to translation included a severe criticism of the translation style used at the time because the translated novels, in particular the descriptive and narrative passages, include traditional and cultural connotations, which warp the drama and plot development of the original stories. It is difficult to think that Shiken would have been content with the stereotypical cliché of the classics. Shiken's sense of expression as a journalist expelled both classical Chinese and traditional Japanese stylistics of beauty and convention from his style.

Hence, it can be argued that a new style cannot be created by only making changes in the vocabulary. More than anything, it is the syntax used to develop a fixed sentence that decides the quality of style. Morita Shiken recognized that in 1887-96, common Japanese sentences had no fixed appearance ("The Future" 463-75). Moreover, Shiken put emphasis not simply on the issue of Chinese classics or traditional Japanese stylistics, or direct translations of Western texts, ordinary conversations or language "as it is," but on the birth of a style of minute complexity that could deal with a new age of human thought that had become meticulous and societal matters that were in confusion. Thus, in order to bring about this new style, Morita Shiken said there had to be a separation from the stylistic regulations of pure Chinese composition, and an emphasis on a style that freed up the order of expression (Ibid.). What Shiken meant by freeing up the order of expression was that the meaning of a sentence changed significantly depending on how the words were ordered.

Concerning this freedom to change the order of expression, compared to classical Chinese stylistic regulations, Morita Shiken demonstrates that the Japanese style is superior. He gives the example of the inverted form of Japanese waka and haiku, emphasizing the fact that the reader's impression changes depending on the order of how each word is presented. It seems that Shiken was aware of the function of creating meaning in the form of the combination of words in the sentence.

Morita Shiken chose for the base of his future style the literal translation of Western texts because they had a complex and minute structure of human thought, that once adopted into the Japanese style would acquire a language

that could cope with the new age of thought and society. Although he chose English from the Western languages as his base, his series of translations show sensitivity to compounds, complex sentences, and relevant sources in the original. Be that as it may, Shiken seems to have become aware of not only the order of words and sentences, that is to say, words actually expressed, but more so of creating meaning in what was not expressed, in the power of combining words in different orders to create meaning from the spaces in-between.

Thus, there was an unusually strong connection between the direction of Morita Shiken's stylistic revolution and the genre of novels he translated. Most of his translated works were adventure and detective novels and his translation of Jules Verne has an excellent reputation. The life of adventure and detective novels depend more than anything on enticing the reader into a fictional time and space they have never experienced before, and once in this space, they meet with a unique and strange incident. One of the most effective techniques for enticing the reader into this space is the use of suspense. The technique of suspense weaves into the depiction of the conditions an omen of an incident still to occur, increasing the tension as the incident approaches, while not allowing the reader to guess from the context what exactly will happen, after which the incident is finally dramatically presented. First, in order to bring to life the suspense in the depiction of the conditions, following the changes in time within the novel, the spatial depiction of the scene of the crime has to be carried out before the incident happens. Suspense has the greatest impact when the conditions that change moment by moment bring to the surface the event about to happen, and in particular, when the portentous incident is connoted within the very structure.

Second, the description of the conditions has to follow the changes in the character's point of view and consciousness because only by following the character's consciousness constricted by the conditions within the story and their limited point of view can the reader have the feeling of actually being at the crime scene and thus share in the tension. But this is not all. If the description of the conditions transgresses the visual field and consciousness of the character in the story, the surprise of the incident and the creation of the feeling of unexpectedness from the suspense will be blocked.

Third, in order to unravel the mystery of the incident, reveal the truth, and give greater impression to the decisive truth in an adventure novel, a method to confuse the reader's sense of time is necessary. In the changing series of situations in the story, things that were not considered important first

gradually take on a greater relevance to the main incident as it becomes clearer to the reader. Conversely, the example of a character who did not seem to have any relation to the incident but is later revealed to be the criminal, shows how something that follows the shifting time in the story, when retold at the end to reveal the truth, is very effective. Of course, this method of retroactively giving meaning to people or incidents in the story is most effective when it is tied to the momentary description of the conditions.

The technique of suspense essentially relies on the composition and the order of meaning created in the story: immediate meaning that is structured moment by moment from the beginning to the end of the story, and retroactive meaning that is created within the correlation between past and present. Furthermore, a predictable meaning is formed in the meaning of the present, which is based on the horizon of expectation, and when the integrated de-temporal/spatial creative time is realized, suspense will thoroughly grasp this function. Furthermore, in detective novels that solve riddles, the horizon of expectation is at once betrayed, and when the unexpected happens, the empty point of unity creating meaning is enlarged.

A text that creates a location for such an act of meaning has no choice but to separate from a form of expressing that depends on traditional and cultural connotations. In addition, rather than follow the rules of creating genres such as the love story or comedy, which simply connect conversations in the present tense, this style must have the syntax of a new composition filled with the complicated time of the contents and language of the story. This is the concept in the books that Morita Shiken brought back from the West.

Besides the novelty of the material and the startling ideas in the original texts, the appeal of Morita Shiken's translated novels was in the way the style incorporated a mechanism that lured the reader into a completely unknown fictional world. Shiken was only able to create this new style and form by breaking with the rules of composition that were rigidly fixed on set forms, outmoded vocabulary, and well-trodden ideas. Through his understanding of the truth of the text and how the mutual interaction with the reader could create an entirely new fictional world, Shiken was also able to develop a style of translation faithful to how the original created sentences.

Rather than filling the space of the text with the traditional cultural context, such as the memory of past genres and the horizon of expectation, Morita Shiken's experimental style developed via the relationship it created between the reader and the memory of meanings created within the textual

space.

It is necessary to wipe away from the reader (whose innate tendency is towards well-established cultural contexts) expressions within the language that unify foundations, while at the same time separate the reader from their own preexisting cultural contexts. To do this, the most effective translation style is based on English because it clarifies the relationship between the subject and the predicate, and objectifies the situation. Morita Shiken's experimental style subtly cooperates with Futabatei's translations, *Aibiki* [*Secret Love Affair*] and *Meguriai* [*Chance Meeting*], creating territory for expressions that draw a clear line with the style of novels in the past. Through its concern with the individuality of the textual world, the limitations, and individuality of the characters within that world, the modern novel, as a location that creates form from the interaction between connoted reader and connoted author, is able to acquire the structure of narrative.

This was not because the connoted reader reads the expressions of the narrator in front of them simply as language, but because they read into the empty spaces left unexpressed by the narrator, and because of the connoted author who manipulates the background of the narrator's words inviting the reader to comprehend these empty spaces. Of course, it is incorrect to connect the connoted author with the actual author because even if the actual author is unconscious of it, the connoted author, in superior texts, is able to invite the reader to unify both the conscious and unconscious creating a rich tapestry of meaning.

With its study of the structure and style of the modern Western novel, the central focus of the work from the late 1880s to 1890, drawing a clear line with the novel genre in the past, was the establishment of a space that allowed for the composition of new meaning. For this reason, the superficial difference between styles that tried to compromise or combine the written word with the spoken, the slang with the elegant, the classical Chinese style, through the act of translation, the imitation of the classical style was not important. Rather, it is in the common understanding of expression, concealed "behind" these superficial differences, that we should comprehend the dynamic movement in the expressions of this age.

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Abstract

This paper examines the role of translation in modern Japanese literature. The formation of the modern novel in Meiji Japan is deeply connected to the style of translation. The uniqueness of modern Japanese literature is revealed when the personhood of aspects other than personal pronouns within the language are intentionally emphasized. The emphasis on personhood was influenced during the Meiji Period among intellectuals of the culture and style of translation. Morita Shiken, who is called the king of translation, clearly called attention to the new contemporary texts and readers. The direction of his stylistic revolution became much clearer after he took clues from translated novels. He rejected the conventional stereotypical expressions used when describing a condition or object. Shiken's experimental style cooperates with Futabatei Shimei's translations creating territory for expressions and also draws a clear line with the style of novels in the past. Through its concern with the individuality of the textual world, the limitations, and individuality of the characters, the modern novel was able to acquire the structure of narrative. The central focus of the translation work in modern Japan and also in other East Asian country was the establishment of a space for new writing. The superficial difference between styles that tried to combine the written word with the spoken or the slang with the elegant, the classical Chinese style, or the imitation of the classical style was not important. The common understanding of expression concealed behind these superficial differences is that we should comprehend the dynamic movement in the border expressions of this age.

Keywords: translation, Morita Shiken, Futabatei Shimei, Tsubouchi Shoyo, translation of Turgenev, structure of narrative

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