

Proper Names in Translational Contexts

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Abstract—Rendering of proper names in translational contexts may be a simple and automatic procedure that only involves minor sound adjustments. However, translators take, and sometimes have to adopt, all kinds of strategies with proper names, especially in fictional texts, where names almost always carry auctorial meanings that implicitly support the theme of the story. Names, in fact, bear a variety of connotative meanings and also serve as cultural identifiers of texts. Accordingly, rendering of names in translational contexts often has to deal with many issues such as their phonological, orthographical, morpho-semantic, and pragmatic idiosyncrasies, their accessibility to the target language readers, and their socio-political implications. Following the framework of descriptive translation studies, this paper first examines some English translations of Japanese literary texts from primary and secondary sources, and then provides a qualitative analysis of English translations of a novel by Kenji Miyazawa (1896-1933), *Ginga Tetsudō no Yoru* (*Night of the Milky Way Railway*), focusing on proper names. The latter novel is filled with fictional and non-fictional names whose cultural identities are deliberately made unclear or paradoxical to support the theme of the novel. The analysis provided in this paper empirically shows that translation of proper names plays a pivotal role for sustaining the cultural orientation of the text and the theme of the story.

Index Terms—translation studies, proper names, domestication, Japanese, semantics

I. INTRODUCTION

Rendering of proper names in a translational context may be considered a simple and automatic process that only involves minor phonological adjustments. It should indeed be the case if the meaning of a name is only its referent. However, as Tymoczko (1999) claims, names are “dense with information” (p. 223). They can bear many connotative meanings that result from their history, ownership, geographic, social affiliations and so on. In addition, as Lyotard (1992) claims, names serve as a “rigid designator” of the textual context (p. 319). They can act as an anchor that designates the text’s identity regardless of whether it is about its genre, theme, or cultural context. There are many factors that affect translation of proper names: phonological, orthographical, morpho-semantic, and pragmatic idiosyncrasies; the accessibility to the target language audience such as “recognizability and memorizability” (Tymoczko, 1999, p. 225) as well as auditory preference and familiarity; and socio-political factors such as publishers’ reception and manipulation (Venuti, 1995, 1998). As Nord (2003:182) states, “translators do all sorts of things with proper names.” The latter is true especially in literary translation, where fictional names can allude to the hidden theme and existing names can function symbolically or metaphorically.

Following the framework of descriptive translation studies (Holmes, 1988, van den Broeck, 1981, Toury, 1995, Chesterman, 1997, 2012 among others), this paper examines the state of translated Japanese names in a literary context from linguistic, cognitive, socio-cultural and socio-political points of view, and then provides a qualitative analysis of English translations of the novel *Ginga Tetsudō no Yoru* (*Night of the Milky Way Railway*) by Kenji Miyazawa (1896 - 1933). This novel attempts to create universal and cosmic contexts by crossing cultural, racial, and religious boundaries. For this purpose, the author uses proper names in a unique way (Pulvers, 2013): no Japanese place names appear in the novel although the story obviously takes place in Japan; a variety of non-Japanese place names, both existing and fictional, are mixed and appear unexpectedly; the characters who are obviously Japanese have European names and those who are obviously European have Japanese names; a pet has an unusual name whose origin is unclear; the name of an obviously traditional Japanese festival is given the name of a constellation. The question is what strategies translators implement in reality.

The structure of the paper is as follows. Section II provides a brief historical review of the basic concepts of proper names and their translatability, as well as some consequences of translating proper names. Section III qualitatively analyzes multiple English translations of the novel *Night of the Milky Way Railway* focusing on proper names. Section IV is a conclusion.

II. PROPER NAMES

This section provides a brief historical review of the basic concepts of proper names and their translatability, as well as some consequences of translating proper names.

A. Semantics of Proper Names

The semantic meaning of a proper name has been a controversial topic among philosophers and logicians. Mill (1843/1956) claims that the meaning of a name is its bearer and a name has no connotative meaning:

Proper names are not connotative: they denote the individuals who are called by them; but they do not indicate or imply any attributes as belonging to those individuals. ... It may be said, indeed, that we must have had some reason for giving them those names rather than any others; and this is true; but the name, once given, is independent of the reason.

(Mill, 1956, p. 20)

This view predicts that a name without its bearer is meaningless. By contrast, Frege (1892/1948) argues that the primary semantic value of a name is the sense whereas its secondary value is its referent; accordingly, a name can meaningfully refer to an imaginary entity that actually does not exist, and an existing item may meaningfully be referred to by multiple names:

The regular connection between a sign, its sense, and its referent is of such a kind that to the sign there corresponds a definite sense and to that in turn a definite referent, while to a given referent (an object) there does not belong only a single sign. The same sense has different expressions in different languages or even in the same language.

(Frege, 1948, p. 211)

Under this view, the sentence *Santa Claus does not exist* is meaningful and has a truth value. This is because the proper noun *Santa Claus* has its sense even though it has no referent. Similarly, the sentence *Superman is Clark Kent* is also a meaningful sentence with a truth value. This is because the two names have two different senses even though there is only one referent for them.

Russell (1905) shares the basic idea of Frege's notion of sense in names and proposes that the semantic value of an ordinary proper name is its definite description. The latter is a set of properties that can single out the bearer of the name. However, his theory is rejected by Strawson (1971):

An ordinary personal name, is, roughly, a word, used referringly, of which the use is not dictated by any descriptive meaning the word may have, ...

(Strawson, 1971, p. 340)

Similarly, Kripke (1979, 1980) argues that descriptions might or might not have been true and thus, a name always rigidly designates its bearer. If the bearer of the name does not exist in a possible world, then the name does not refer to anything at all. If the same object is named more than one way, it is because names are linked to their bearer through causal and historical contexts, as in the case of Istanbul, Byzantium, Stamboul, Tsarigrad, and Constantinople, all of which refer to the same place.

Searle (1975) takes a somewhat middle ground between Mill's view and Frege's view, where a name has its referent and also a sense, but the sense is the collection of the characteristics of the referent that the name is logically connected to rather than the description of the referent (p.139). Similarly, Tymoczko (1999) argues that names are "dense signifiers, signs of essential structures of human societies" and they indicate information such as "tribal and familial affiliation; gender and class; racial, ethnic, national, and religious identity" (p. 223).

B. Translatability of Proper Names

Sciarone (1967, p. 86) and Vendler (1975, p. 117), following Mill, consider names to be inherently untranslatable. For them, phonological and orthographical adjustments as well as equivalent names (e.g. the English name, *Vienna*, for the German name, *Wien*) are not translations, but are versions, which can be simply added to the stock of proper names in the given language. In fact, it is very commonly believed that names do not have to be translated. Newmark (1981) also argues that names should not be translated, following Mill's view:

In fact, while the position is nothing like so simple, the principle stands that unless a single object's or a person's name already has an accepted translation it should not be translated but must be adhered to, ...

(Newmark, 1981, p.70)

However, Aixelá (1996) argues that rendering names unchanged (e.g. Seattle → Seattle), though most "respectful," has the danger of creating a distance between the text and the target language reader because they feel "alien" (p. 61). Tymoczko (1999) strongly argues, though it is as a part of activism in postcolonial contexts, that names must be translated. Nord (2003) also argues that names are loaded with information, especially in fictional contexts where almost all names bear auctorial meanings, which must be made intelligible and familiarized for the target-culture audience (p. 183-185).

A number of strategies for rendering names from a SL (source language) text to a TL (target language) text have been proposed, labeled, or discussed including direct transfer (repetition), transliteration, transcription, substitution, modification, semantic translation, addition, omission, cultural adaptation (cultural transplantation, localization) and various combinations (Catford, 1965; Herman, 1988; Newmark, 1981, 1988; Hervey and Higgins, 1992; Aixelá 1996; Tymoczko, 1999; Nord, 2003; Vermes, 2001; Burgess, 2005; Fernandes 2006; Zauberga, 2006; Hasegawa 2012, among others). Some methods are faithful to the original, but others are not. However, once transferred to a different language, even the name rendered unchanged will also receive automatic phonological adjustment when they are read by the TL readers. That is, the name *Seattle* will be read differently from the original once read by the TL readers. It follows that every name will undergo a change to some degree once rendered into a TL text. Then, it logically follows that the numerous methods mentioned above are all methods of "translation."

C. Consequences and Implications of Translating Proper Names

Translation of proper names often has some consequence. The following excerpt from Adams (1973), which is quoted in Bassnett (1991), shows the sentiment for the fate of names in translational contexts:

Paris cannot be London or New York, it must be Paris; our hero must be Pierre, not Peter; he must drink an aperitif, not a cocktail; smoke Gauloises, not Kents; and walk down the rue du Bac, not Back Street.

(Adams, 1973, p. 12)

Lytard (1992) extends the significance of names on pragmatic grounds. He convincingly shows that names are “rigid designators” of the context of any discourse, regardless of whether it is about historical discussion, scientific research, an immigrant child’s new life, a fictional story, etc., (while a possible exception is philosophical doctrine) and names are not created or learned in isolation, but are embedded in little stories (p. 319-320).

Consider the following three cases where Japanese names are translated into English.

Semantic translation of kanji

Japanese place names and personal names are mostly written in kanji characters¹. Each kanji character bears meanings and sounds. For example, a place name, Tokyo, is written with two kanji characters:

東京 [Tōkyō]

The first character 東 [tō] means *east* and the second character 京 [kyō] means *capital*. Its etymology is a capital established in the eastern region. However, once established as a name, only the sound and the characters are sensed, and the etymological meaning or the morpho-semantic meaning embedded in kanji are not sensed. Thus, Japanese place names are usually rendered in English based on the sound, as in *Tokyo*, *Osaka*, *Kyoto*, and *Okinawa*. However, there are some cases where place names are translated based on the morpho-semantic meaning of kanji. Observe how the first line of the poem, “Chidori to Asobu Chieko” (Chieko Playing with Plovers), written by Kōtarō Takamura² (1883-1956), was translated into English by four translators:

人つ子ひとり居ない九十九里の砂浜の

砂にすわつて智恵子は遊ぶ。

<Literal Translation>

Chieko plays as she sits on the sand of Kujūkuri beach, where there is not a single person.

Translation by Hiroaki Sato (Takamura, 1980; Takamura and Sato, 1992)

Where there is no one on the sands of Kujūkuri

sitting on the sand Chieko plays alone.

Translation by Soichi Furuhashi (Takamura & Furuta, 1978)

Sitting on the desolate sand

of the 99 Mile Beach, Chieko plays.

Translation by John Peters (Takamura & Peters, 2007)

On abandoned Kujūri Beach

Chieko plays in the sand.

Translation by Paul Archer (Takamura, 2012)

On the empty Ninety-Nine Mile Beach,

Chieko sits in the sand and plays.

This line includes the name of a beach called 九十九里 [Kujūkuri], where these four kanji characters mean nine-ten-nine-ri. The last character 里 [ri] is the archaic measurement unit for distance, where 1 ri corresponds to 2.44 miles.³ This name’s etymology is the length of the beach: ninety-nine ri. Two of the above translations are based on the sound, but the other two are based on the meaning of the kanji characters, which is not sensed by native speakers of Japanese. Interestingly, the measurement unit, *ri*, is replaced by *mile*, as in *the 99 Mile Beach* and *Ninety-Nine Mile Beach* in the translations based on the meaning of kanji. As argued by Lyotard (1992) and others, measurement units function as rigid cultural designators. Thus, the use of the measurement unit *mile* completely changes the cultural identity of the poem, shifting the context from Japan to America, for example. Yet, the name of the person who appears in the poem, *Chieko*, is unchanged, remaining as a Japanese person, so the poem loses cohesion. Furthermore, the length of the beach is perceived about 2.5 times greater than the actual length due to the difference between *mile* and *ri*. In addition, back translation becomes impossible. Translating proper names based on the meaning of characters seems to eventually cause serious consequences, even though they may look familiar to the TL audience.

Cultural transplantation

¹ Kanji characters are Chinese characters that were adapted in Japan with radical phonological change and minimum semantic change.

² Kōtarō Takamura (1883-1956) is one of the pioneers of modern Japanese poetry written in free verse in the vernacular and is one of the most widely read poets in Japan. He wrote a collection of poems about his wife, Chieko, and published them in 1941, as *Chiyokosho* (Chieko Poems). The poem “Chidori to Asobu Chieko” (Chieko Playing with Plovers) is one of them. It depicts how Chieko, who was suffering mental illness, frolicked childishly with numerous plovers in a completely deserted beach called Kujūkuri.

³ 里 [ri] has its root in Chinese 里 [li]. Since Japan adopted the metric system during the Meiji Era (1868-1921), 里 [ri] has not been used for more than a century. Today, the Japanese would only hear this unit referenced in a handful of proverbs such as, 千里の道も一歩から [Sen-ri no michi mo ippo kara] (Even a journey of a thousand ri begins with a single step); 虎は千里行って千里かえる [Tora wa sen-ri itte sen-ri kaeru] (A tiger can go a thousand ri and also come back).

Hervey and Higgins (2002:29-30) define cultural transplantation as “the process where SL names are replaced by indigenous TL names that are not their literal equivalents, but have similar cultural connotations.” According to them, cultural transplantation is “the extreme degree of cultural transposition” and its effect could be incongruous. Sato (2015) shows a Japanese place name, Tsurumaki Town, in Kōtarō Takamura’s poem “*Hito ni*” (To a Person) is substituted by *Times Square* in one of the four identified published English translations. Although this place name appears in a metaphorical context, the text identity is swiftly shifted from Japan to America. Expectedly, it causes an incongruous effect because the poem is a part of Chieko-sho, a collection of poems for Chieko. In addition, as Sato (2015) argues, there are too many mismatches between Tsurumaki Town and Times Square: when the poem was written, Tsurumaki Town was a common ordinary town developed around a university, filled with boarding houses and restaurants for students, and it was in the author’s neighborhood; Times Square has been a globally known entertainment district, but Tsurumaki Town has never been a well-known town and most Japanese do not know its name. This case shows that cultural transplantation has a significant risk as warned by Hervey & Higgins (2002).

Socio-political factors

Hasegawa (2012) discusses Aoyama’s (1996:37-38) observation that the name of a Japanese actress, *Ruriko Asaoka*, which appears in the novel 69⁴ was substituted by *Brigitte Bardot* in its English translation published in 1993. In the scene where the protagonist and his schoolmates decide to make a film, featuring one of the girls in their high school as the main actress, someone says that they have to make her look more beautiful than Ruriko Asaoka and use Yujiro Ishihara’s song as the theme music. Ruriko Asaoka was a popular and attractive actress in the 1960s and Yujiro Ishihara was the actor who regularly worked as her partner. Aoyama (1996) considers the substitution of *Ruriko Asaoka* with *Brigitte Bardot* is fair, but is not appropriate because only Ruriko Asaoka’s name is substituted and the name of her partner, Yujiro Ishihara, was not. This is clearly what Hervey & Higgins (1992) warn against as an incongruous case.

Aoyama (1996:39-40) also reports that this novel has two versions of English translations by the same translator: the first was published in 1991 targeting bilingual readers in Japan; the second was published in 1993 targeting audiences overseas. Interestingly, the above-mentioned substitution is found only in the 1993 version for the overseas audiences, but not in the version for Japanese audiences (p.39-40). This shows that the cultural transplantation observed here can be politically motivated, as the publisher’s strategy to serve different readerships.

The practice of such cultural transplantation seems to be common in dominant cultures. Yamazaki (2002) reports that the practice of replacing characters’ names in children’s books is very common when the target language is English or German:

I also noticed that basic attitudes to translation differ from culture to culture and that it is especially obvious between Japanese and English/German translations. This difference has a political implication, for translation is never a purely linguistic matter. The attitude toward and practice of translation reflect intercultural power balances. Translated texts not only reveal what kind of relationship the target culture (to which the translation is aimed) has with the source culture (where the texts come from), but also affect that relationship by presenting a certain image of the source culture. I was shocked and became indignant at this change of names. I felt that I had been cheated by the German translation. For me it was a matter of credibility, and it was my first lesson on how arbitrary a translation can be.

(Yamazaki, 2002, p. 53- 54)

Venuti (1995, 1998) describes this practice literally as “violence”:

The relationship points to the violence that resides in the very purpose and activity of translation: the reconstitution of the foreign text in accordance with values, beliefs, and representations that preexist it in the translating language and culture, always configured in hierarchies of dominance and marginality, always determining the production, circulation, and reception of texts.

(Venuti, 1995, p.14)

III. NIGHT OF THE MILKY WAY RAILWAY

Ginga Tetsudō no Yoru (Night of the Galactic Railway) was written around 1927 by Kenji Miyazawa (1896 -1933), and was discovered and published in 1934, one year after his death. Miyazawa was born in Hamamaki Town in Iwate Prefecture, a northern area of Japan, where people were mostly poor farmers due to the harsh climate and uneven economic development within Japan at the time. However, Miyazawa’s family was extremely wealthy, running a successful pawnbroking business. As a devout Buddhist, he refused to engage in his family’s business, but dedicated his life to helping the poor, working as a teacher (agronomy) and an activist for utopia. Besides being a poet and novelist, Miyazawa was a dedicated scientist (agronomy, biology, geology, and astronomy) and artist (painter, cellist, and composer, loving opera and classical music), and studied English, German, and Esperanto (Miyazawa, 1991; Miyazawa & Bester, 1996; Miyazawa, 1996, 2009; Miyazawa & Pulver, 2007; Pulver, 2013; Miyazawa, 2013; Miyazawa, 2014).

⁴ The novel 69 (Shikkusutainin, sixty nine) was written by Ryu Murakami and published in 1987. The setting of this novel is in 1969 at a high school in Kyushu in Japan, where a few students wildly attempt to organize something outrageous. The novel is filled with proper names of singers, actors, activists, politicians, songs, plays, books, schools, and places mostly from Western culture, but some from Japanese culture.

The protagonist (Giovanni) is a schoolboy from a poor family, having multiple part-time jobs such as delivering newspapers in the morning and working at a print shop after school. His schoolmates often ridiculed him, but one of them, Campanella, never did. The story is about Giovanni's surreal train trip through the stars on one summer night, after which Giovanni hears about Campanella's drowning in the river.

The novel introduces proper names in a unique way. Although the story seems to be based on his hometown, Hamamaki, and the nearby river, Kitakami River, these names do not appear in the novel. There are no fictional place names that sound Japanese, either. By contrast, it includes non-Japanese place names, both real and fictional. For example:⁵

コネティカット州 [Konetikatto-shū] Connecticut State
 ランカシャイヤ [Lankashaiya] Lancashire
 コロラド [Kororado] Colorado
 パシフィック [Pashifikku] the Pacific
 プリオシン海岸 [Purioshin kaigan] the Pliocene⁶ Coast
 銀河ステーション [Ginga Sutēshon] the Milky Way Station
 アルビレオの観測所 [Arubireo no kansokusho] the Albireo Observatory
 バルドラ [Barudora] *English spelling is not clear.

There is no specific time reference in this novel, except the appearance of the victims of a shipwreck, which is clearly based on the story of the Titanic that sank in the North Atlantic in 1912 (Miyazawa, 1991, p. 107).

Most interestingly, the main characters, who are obviously Japanese, have European names.

ジョバンニ [Jobanni] Giovanni (the protagonist)
 カムパネルラ [Kamupanerura] Campanella (the protagonist's schoolmate)
 ザネリ [Zanneri] Zanelli (the protagonist's schoolmate who constantly ridicules him)
 マルソ [Marusō] Marso (the protagonist's schoolmate)

By contrast, obviously European characters, who are Christians and victims of the shipwreck mentioned earlier, have Japanese names:

タダシ [Tadashi]
 かおる [Kaoru]

The name of Campanella's family's dog is ザウエル [Zaueru], which does not sound Japanese. Its origin and spelling are not clear. The food items that appear in the protagonist's household are tomatoes, bread, milk, and lump sugar, which were not common Japanese food items when the novel was written (Miyazawa, 1991, p. 83). The plants found near the protagonist's house are asparagus and kale, which were also rare in Japan at that time (Miyazawa, 1991, p. 83). Many names of trees, birds, insects, vegetables, gemstones, and minerals appear in the story, some of which have Japanese names while others have non-Japanese names (e.g. ポプラ [popura] populus; プラタナス [puratanasu] platanus). Some religious icons such as 十字架 [jūjika] the (Christian) cross and バイブル [baiburu] bible appear in the novel. Only one measurement unit, 尺 [shaku]⁷, appears. The word *kimono* appears twice in the novel, but it seems to refer to clothing in general rather than the traditional Japanese clothing.⁸

This novel was translated into English by multiple translators, including:

- *Night of the Milky Way Railroad*: translated by Joseph Sigrist, edited and abridged by D. M. Stroud (Miyazawa, 1984)
- *Night Train to the Stars*: translated by John Bester (Miyazawa & Bester, 1987)
- *Night Train to the Stars*: translated by John Bester (Miyazawa & Bester, 1996)
- *Night of the Milky Way Railway*: translated by Sarah Strong (Miyazawa, 1991)
- *Milky Way Railroad*: translated and adapted by Joseph Sigrist and D. M. Stroud (Miyazawa, 1996)
- *Milky Way Railroad*: translated by Joseph Sigrist and D. M. Stroud (Miyazawa, 2009)
- *Night On The Milky Way Train*: translated by Roger Pulvers (Miyazawa & Pulvers, 1996)
- *Night on the Milky Way*: translated by Paul Quirk (Miyazawa, 2013)
- *Night on the Galactic Railroad*: translated by Julianne Neville (Miyazawa, 2014)

⁵ Specifications based on the most commonly adopted Romanization method (Hepburn Method) are provided in square brackets [] throughout this paper.

⁶ Pliocene is the name of the epoch in the geologic timescale that existed from five and a half million to two million years ago (Miyazawa, 1991, p. 99)

⁷ 1 *shaku* is approximately 1 foot. Since Japan adopted the metric system during the Meiji Era (1868-1921), 尺 [shaku] has not been used for about a century.

⁸ *Kimono* used to have two meanings in the past until the early 1900s: (i) clothing in general; (ii) traditional Japanese clothing. However, the use of the former meaning has gradually declined as the Japanese started to wear Western clothes (Miura, 2015). It is very likely the case that both meanings were available at the time when the novel was written.

Sigrist and Stroud's 1996 edition alters some of the proper names although it is undone in their 2009 edition. This is probably the reason why the cover of their 1996 edition says, "Translated and adapted" while their 2009 edition just says, "Translated." Sato (1996) provides a critical review of the change of the proper names found in their 1996 edition.

A. Character's Names

While all other translators listed above keep European names assigned to the four obviously Japanese characters, Sigrist and Stroud (1996) replace them with ordinary Japanese names as follows:

ジョバンニ [jobanni] Giovanni	→ Kenji
カムパネルラ [kamupanerura] Campanella	→ Minoru
ザネリ [zanneri] Zanelli	→ Akira
マルソ [marusō] Marso	→ Masaru

Accordingly, the protagonist's name becomes identical to the author's name, Kenji. This has an immediate consequence: TL readers would think that the protagonist is the author himself. Sigrist and Stroud state in their introduction that this change of names is to "eliminate any confusion caused by Japanese characters in a Japanese setting having European names" (Miyazawa, 1996:11). This change of names is extremely interesting because its motivation is the opposite of the commonly practiced cultural transplantation motivated by domestication (Venuti 1995, 1998). It may appear to be an instance of foreignization, but its purpose is a corrective intervention. However, if this is the case, they should have changed the Japanese names of the obviously European children from the shipwreck, but they did not. This incompleteness causes an incongruous state, which is common in cultural transplantation, warned about by Hervey and Higgins (1992).

Almost all literary scholars who studied this novel seem to agree that these mismatching names in the SL text were deliberately done by the author. Strong states that Miyazawa is cleverly challenging the conventional distinction between *familiar* and *foreign* (Miyazawa, 1991, p. 84). Pulver (2013) states that it is not only to achieve universalism, but also to represent the author's "social model, the kind of ideal society that he envisaged for the human race, where boundaries are not even earthly, but cosmic." If this is the case, the corrective manipulation of the main characters' names by Sigrist and Stroud (1996) is altering the theme of the novel. Tinh (2013) describes her frank perceptions of this version in her book:

In the first version I read of his novel *Milky Way Railroad*, the translators had taken the liberty of changing the characters' names into Japanese names, under the pretext that it would "eliminate any confusion caused by Japanese characters in a Japanese setting having European names." Since I usually prefer (at first) to enter a text directly and to follow the writer's thought process afresh, without the mediation of an introduction, at the end of the book I was deceptively left with a feeling of wonder for what I considered to be a harmlessly charming story of coming to terms with death, a story "typically Japanese," as my prejudices dictated. It was only a year later, when a Japanese friend offered me another translated version of the novel, *Night Train to the Stars*, that I realized with awe and utter excitement the scope of Miyazawa's experimental and cosmopolitan mind. In this translation, not only do the main characters' names, Giovanni (Jovanni) and Campanella (Kanpanera), appear as originally intended, but a whole complex tapestry of foreign-sounding names of people and places emerges from the story, as if by magic. Suppressed in the first adapted version I read, these Italian, French, English, and American names, coexisting with Japanese names, make all the difference. Here the politics of naming takes on an inventive role of its own.

(Tinh, 2013, p. 7)

The change of these characters' names are undone in the later edition of this book published in 2009 (Miyazawa, 2009) while almost all other parts of the text remain the same.

B. Pet's Name Zaueru

Campanella's family has a dog. Its name is written as ザウエル in katakana⁹, which can be converted to [Zaueru] using romaji, a romanization method commonly used in Japan. Note that romaji does not represent all sounds in English because the inventories of Japanese phonemes and English phonemes do not match. For example, two liquid sounds [l] and [r] in English are represented only by [r] in romaji because they merge into one phoneme in Japanese. Similarly, two bilabial sounds [b] and [v] in English are represented only by [b] in romaji. Giovanni sees this dog when he delivers newspapers early in the morning when it is still dark outside. Its tail looks like a broom and it follows him for quite a distance. This dog's name, ザウエル [Zaueru], sounds exotic to Japanese. The impression perceived from this name is not associated with cuteness or smartness, probably due to the voiced obstruent [z] at the beginning of this name. Voiced obstruents ([b], [d], [g], and [z]) are perceived as *marked* by Japanese, as evidenced in their phonological rule that limits their occurrence.¹⁰ In addition, voiced obstruents tend to be used for slangs with a negative connotation such as with ブス [busu] (ugly face) and ザマ [zama] (miserable/helpless state). Voiced obstruents can be easily recognized in the syllable-based phonetic writing systems, hiragana and katakana, in Japanese: the characters with a voiced

⁹ Katakana is a set of phonetic syllabary symbols used to represent names, things, and concepts from non-Japanese cultures. It is also used to represent onomatopoeia.

¹⁰ This rule is called Lyman's Law, which blocks sequential voicing when there is a voiced obstruent (a sound formed by obstructing airflow) in the same phonological unit.

obstruent are marked by the diacritic ̣, placed at its upper right corner, as in ザ in this dog's name ザウエル. The author's use of a name that starts with [z] for this dog may be due to this dog's strange behavior and its strange broom-like tail, which can be impressionistically represented by sweeping or a dry rustling -like sound. In fact, this novel heavily utilizes onomatopoeia, more precisely sound symbolism¹¹. For example, the following sentence contains three such sound-symbolic expressions, which are all underlined:

するとびたっと鳥の群は通らなくなりそれと同時にぴしゃぁんという潰れたような音が川下の方で起ってそれからしばらくしいんとしました。

[Suruto pitatto tori no mure wa tōranaku nari sore to dōji ni pishān to iu tsubureta you na oto ga kawashimo no hou de okotte sorekara shibaraku shīn to shimashita.]

Abruptly, the locks of birds stopped crossing while at the same time, from further downstream, came the sound of something going splat. This was followed by silence. (Translation from Sarah Strong (Miyazawa, 1991, p. 62))

Japanese has a large inventory of lexicalized sound symbolism, which is commonly thought of as onomatopoeia. Pulver (2013) claims Miyazawa is using onomatopoeias as a universal language in this novel.

To Kenji, all sound is produced by nature. That is why his use of onomatopoeia is so amazing. This use of onomatopoeia is the most striking symbol of his universal approach to language. Of course he is using the Japanese language. But he is using it out of the context of the Japanese nationality.

(Pulver, 2013)

Miyazawa is known to extensively utilize onomatopoeia, and even coin new expressions sound-symbolically in his literary works (Liman, 1995; Nicolae, 2014).

Now, observe how this pet's name is translated. The section about this dog and its translations are as follows:

ザウエルという犬がいるよ。しっぽがまるで箒のようだ。ぼくが行くと鼻を鳴らしてついてくるよ。ずうっと町の角までついてくる。もっとついてくることもあるよ。

<Literal translation>

They have a dog named ザウエル [Zaueru]. Its tail is just like a broom. When I go there, it follows me whining. It follows me all the way to the edge of town. It sometimes follows me farther.

Translation by Bester (Miyazawa & Bester, 1987, 1996)

They've got a dog called Sauer. His tail's just like a broom. When I go there, he comes snuffling after me. He comes all the way to the corner of the block, sometimes further.

Translation by Strong (Miyazawa, 1991)

They have a dog named Zoel. He's got a tail just like a broom. When I go there he always follows after me whining. He follows me right to the edge of town, sometimes even farther.

Translation by Sigrist & Stroud (Miyazawa, 1996, 2009)

They have a dog called Pooch. His tail is just like a broom! When I go, he runs along beside me whining. He goes all the way to the corner in town with me. Sometimes even farther.

Translation by Pulver (Miyazawa & Pulver, 1996)

They've got a dog named Sauer and he's got a tail just like a broom. He yelps and sniffs and when I'm there he follows me all the way to the end of the block. Sometimes he even follows me further.

Translation by Quirk (Miyazawa, 2013)

They have a dog named Sour. It's got a tail like a broom. Whenever I go there it follows me, sniffing the whole time. It follows me all the way to the next street; sometimes even further.

Translation by Neville (Miyazawa, 2014)

They have a dog called Sauer, who's got a tail like a broom. Whenever I stop by there, he follows me around, sniffing at me the whole time. Then he follows me all the way down the street, and sometimes even farther than that!

Some translations approximate the sound of the name, retaining the initial [z] and the last liquid consonant [l] or [r]: Strong spells this dog's name as Zoel; Bester, Pulver, and Nevil spell it as Sauer, which is pronounced with the sound [z] at the beginning if it is meant to be a German word that means *sour*. Quirk spells it as Sour. On the other hand, Sigrist and Stroud substitute the dog's name with Pooch in both 1996 and 2009 editions (Miyazawa, 1996, 2009). Pooch is a colloquial term for a common noun *dog* rather than a proper name, but is used as a proper name in their translation. Evidently, its sound-based impression is quite different from the original.

C. Place Name Barudora

One of the place names that appear in this novel is written as バルドラ in katakana, which is encoded to [Barudora] in romaji. It obviously sounds like an exotic name to Japanese ears, but it seems to be a fictional name. Because this novel was discovered after the author's death, there is no way to clarify the author's intention. Sadakata (2012) considers this proper name to have been created by Miyazawa based on the Baltoro Glacier in the Karakoram mountain range in Pakistan.

This place name appears in the novel when the protagonist and a few other passengers in a train see the fire of Scorpio in the distance in the night sky and the Christian girl from the shipwreck starts talking about the story of a

¹¹ Sound symbolism includes phonomimes (onomatopoeia), phenomimes, and psychomimes.

scorpion that she heard from her father in the past. She talks of a scorpion in the field of バルドラ [Barudora] that lived by killing and eating small insects. One day, it fell into a well when it ran away from the weasel that tried to eat it. When it was about to drown in the well, the scorpion became remorseful because its body would be wasted instead of being consumed by another creature to live. Feeling emptiness, the scorpion begged the god to use its body for others next time. Then, the scorpion's body turned into a beautiful flame and it is still burning now, lighting up the darkness of the night sky. According to Strong, the story is the author's invention, but has the tone and texture of Jataka tales, ancient Indian legends that recount the heroic past lives of the Buddha before he was born into the world as Sakayamuni, where the Buddha is frequently an animal (Miyazawa, 1991, p. 114). According to Sadakata (2012), the story seems to be rooted in Yakuōbosatsu, a Buddhist saint who burned his own body to light the world.

As in the case of the pet's name discussed in the previous section, we cannot decisively spell バルドラ in English based on the romaji representation [Barudora] due to the difference in the phoneme inventory between English and Japanese. For example, the two bilabial consonants [v] and [b] and the two liquid consonants [l] and [r] are not contrasting phonemes in Japanese. The sentence that includes this place name and its translations are as follows:

むかしのバルドラの野原にびきの蠍がいて小さな虫やなんか殺してたべて生きていたんですって。

<Literal Translation>

Long ago in a field of Barudora, there was a scorpion that lived by killing and eating small bugs.

Translation by Bester (Miyazawa & Bester, 1987, 1996)

Long ago, in a certain vale, there was a scorpion that lived by eating small insects and so on.

Translation by Strong (Miyazawa, 1991)

Long ago on the plains of Bardora there lived a scorpion who got along from day to day by killing and eating small insects and the like.

Translation by Sigrist & Stroud (Miyazawa, 1984, 1996, 2009)

Long ago in a field in India there was a scorpion, and he lived by killing little insects and things and eating them.

Translation by Pulver (Miyazawa & Pulver, 1996)

My father told me that a long long time ago Scorpio lived in Valdola Vale and he survived by killing teeny bugs and eating them up.

Translation by Quirk (Miyazawa, 2013)

Long, long ago, there was a scorpion that lived in the fields of Badrah, who killed and ate all kinds of small bugs and insects.

Translation by Neville (Miyazawa, 2014)

A long time ago in a field there lived a scorpion that ate other bugs by using its tail to catch them.

As shown above, Strong's spelling, *Bardora*, is the closest to *Barudora*, where the vowel [u], presumably an epenthetic vowel, is removed. Pulver's spelling, *Valdora*, is just like Strong's *Bardora*, except that alternative consonant choices, [v] instead of [b], and [l] instead of [r], were taken. Quark's spelling, *Badrah*, is also quite close to *Barudora*. By contrast, Bester and Neville omit this place name and use a common noun, *vale* and *field*. Sigrist & Stroud's translations in all of their versions (Miyazawa, 1984, 1996, 2009) do the same, but also add an existing country name, *India*, as in *in a field in India*.

Some of them tried to preserve the sound, while others abandon it. It is possible that the latter strategy lost the author's expressive effort utilizing the perception of the sound to create exotic nuance described in the above section. An addition of a concrete existing place name such as *India* will introduce a new and rigid cultural designator, which may be what the author wanted to avoid as discussed earlier.

This case shows the difficulty of transliteration when the languages have different sound inventories, the risk of introducing a different referent, and the loss of sound effect when names are omitted.

D. The Name of the Festival (the Centaurus Festival)

There is a fictional festival named ケンタウル祭 [Kentauru-sai] (the Centaurus Festival) in this novel, where children go to float gourd lanterns on the river, whistle the star song, and shout:

「ケンタウルス、露をふらせ」 [Kentaurusu, tsuyu o furase]

<Literal translation>

Centaurus, let the dew fall!

This festival is obviously referencing the Tanabata Festival in Japan, which is commonly referred to as Star Festival in English. The above quotation is translated into English as below:

Translation by Bester (Miyazawa & Bester, 1987, 1996)

Centaurus, send down the dew!

Translation by Strong (Miyazawa, 1991)

Centaurus, send the dew!

Translation by Sigrist & Stroud (Miyazawa, 1984, 1996, 2009)

Sagittarius, send down rain!

Translation by Pulver (Miyazawa & Pulver, 1996)

O Centaurus, Let the Dew Fall!

Translation by Quirk (Miyazawa, 2013)

Centaur! Send down your dew!

Translation by Neville (Miyazawa, 2014)

*The quotation was omitted.

In Sigrist and Stroud's translation, *Centaurus* is replaced by *Sagittarius* and *dew* is replaced by *rain* (Miyazawa, 1984, 1996, and 2009). Strong reports that Miyazawa, who had a deep knowledge of astronomy, was particularly interested in the constellation, Centaurus, and that "dew" for Miyazawa seems to be "a sacred life-bestowing elixir sent from the sky rather than a reminder of impermanence" (Miyazawa, 1991, p. 90-91).

Centaurus and Sagittarius are separate constellation although they are similar. Dew and rain are different types of entities in nature although they are both water. In addition, the name of the festival (The Centaurus Festival) is changed to The Sagittarius Festival in Sigrist and Stroud's translation in 1984 and The Milky Way Festival in their translation in 1996 and 2009 (Miyazawa, 1984, 1996, and 2009). It is not clear why they had to change these proper names and it may be an ethical issue.

IV. CONCLUSION

The descriptive analysis of translations of literary Japanese texts presented in this paper has empirically shown that the same proper name in the same text can be translated in many different ways and each translation method has a unique difficulty, advantage and/or risk. Transliteration and transcription of names are not as simple as expected to be especially when languages have different sound inventories or different orthographical systems. Semantic translation of a name may make back translation impossible. Substitution or modification of a name may cause a loss of nuance. Cultural transplantation of a name may radically change the text's identity. Addition of the description of a name might be counter-effective especially in literary contexts. To make the situation more complex, the choice of the translation method may be influenced by socio-cultural and socio-political factors motivated by the translator's consideration toward the TL readers and publishers. At any rate, Millian's view, where the meaning of a name is just its bearer, does not survive in translational contexts. Names are loaded with information regardless of whether they are etymological, connotative, allusive, or implicational. Fictional names often implicitly support the theme of a story, which could be hinted just by a single sound in a name.

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