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**Bill Fryer**

*In the Shadow of Waleyites:  
Authority, Creativity, and the Translation of Modern Japanese Poetry*

## ABSTRACT

This article describes briefly the dominant translation approaches and reception trends of English language translations of Japanese literature in the early post WWII period, and analyses and positions, against these trends, the diverse approaches of some early translations of modern Japanese free verse poetry.

The translational atmosphere of the times was largely set by the influence of Arthur Waley and his successors. The dominant translation method espoused by this group generally condoned accuracy while condemning literalism and asserting the creative control of the translator.

The central clique of translator-scholars did not initially engage with modern Japanese poetry, and thus the first book-length translations of individual poets came from the periphery, notably from translators who were not experts in Japanese literature. Their diverse approaches—interpretive, free, and source language oriented—showed both the influence of the Waley method and the translators' willingness to assert their own creativity in new forms that challenged the authoritative approach to translation.

## BIOGRAPHY

Bill Fryer is a PhD candidate at the University of Queensland. His main areas of research are Japanese literature, modern Japanese poetry, poetry translation, and the history of translation. Bill has completed a master of literature degree at Kochi University in Japan,

and an honours degree in Japanese studies at UQ. His PhD thesis concerns interpretive and source-oriented translation strategies in the translation of Japanese poetry.

## IN THE SHADOW OF WALEYITES: AUTHORITY, CREATIVITY, AND THE TRANSLATION OF MODERN JAPANESE

### INTRODUCTION

Arthur Waley (1889-1966) was a British scholar-translator of Chinese and Japanese literature who had a large and lasting influence on the dissemination and study of those literatures in the West.<sup>i</sup> Waley was the first Orientalist whose translations of Japanese literature made an impact on the general reading public, and his translation of Japan's classic work, *Genji monogatari* (*The Tale of Genji*), gained fame both inside and outside of Japan. His achievement as a translator was accompanied by an overwhelming aura of authority: the post-war generation of translators looked up to him as the godfather of East-Asian literary scholarship and a master translator who had shown it was possible to make Japanese literature the property of a general English readership. In the first few decades following the war, this new generation of scholars helped to reinforce and spread the influence of what they understood to be Waley's translation approach. However, it was not just his translation style that was influential. As I show below, all Waley's publications were invested with a strong air of authority that he himself promoted, and this aura of authority can be viewed as one aspect of his approach to translation. Below I will describe some aspects of this influence, before introducing some early translations of modern Japanese poetry that exhibit both the influence of the dominant method of translation, and a willingness to challenge it.

### BECOMING THE AUTHORITY ON JAPANESE LITERATURE

Waley began to teach himself to read Chinese and Japanese at the age of twenty-four, when he was employed by the British Museum in 1913 to catalogue its oriental art collection. Several years later he published some translations of Chinese poetry, the first of his many successful publications. These early translations exhibited a surprising degree of confidence. His prose was immaculate, his verse simple and modern while retaining a certain poetical verbosity. Though self-taught, his linguistic abilities were remarkable<sup>ii</sup> and he was prepared to correct his predecessors in translation on all counts—their inaccuracies, their lapses of taste, and their inadequacy of form.

In his first publications, *One Hundred and Seventy Chinese Poems* (1918)<sup>iii</sup> and *More Translations from the Chinese* (1919),<sup>iv</sup> Waley gave selections from two millennia of Chinese verse and provided bibliographical notes on the accuracy of previous translations of Chinese poetry published in five languages. In 1919 he also published *Japanese Poetry: the Uta*,<sup>v</sup> a bilingual manual-like introduction to the 31-syllable *tanka* or *waka*. His self-confidence had moved up a notch, and in the introduction to *Japanese Poetry*, he proceeded to dismiss the flawed taste of his unfortunate predecessors in subtly sarcastic tones. According to Waley, the *naga-uta* (*chōka* or long songs) of the *Manyōshū* collection (8<sup>th</sup> Century) were 'an unsuccessful experiment,'<sup>vi</sup> and he could only find three worth including in his book. Unable to hold his tongue there, he continued: '[b]ut the curious will find 263 of them translated in [F.V.] Dickins's *Japanese Texts*.'<sup>vii</sup> Frederick Victor Dickins (1838-1915), a doctor and barrister, was one of the first English-language translators to work with Japanese literature in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Another collection that he had translated, in 1867, was the 13<sup>th</sup> century anthology *Hyakunin isshu* (a hundred verses by a hundred poets). It had also been translated by Clay MacCauley in 1899, and by William Porter in 1909. Waley took advantage of the fact to dismiss two more translators, stating that although it was 'chiefly through translations of [...] the *Hyakunin isshu*, that Japanese poetry [was] known to English readers,'<sup>viii</sup> the *Hyakunin isshu* was not by any means worthy of translation, as it displayed 'the least pleasing features of Japanese poetry'.<sup>ix</sup> Japanese poetry, in fact, was not worth translating at all, since it could 'only be rightly enjoyed in the original.'<sup>x</sup> Waley's translations in *Japanese Poetry* were thus intended merely to 'facilitate the study of the Japanese text,'<sup>xi</sup> and as well as the transliterated source texts, he included a seven-page introduction to the grammar and an eight-page vocabulary list.

Having corrected a good portion of his predecessors, Waley then moved onto something more worthy of translation, namely the Japanese *Nō* plays, which had already been translated by Ernest Fenollosa (1853-1908), an enthusiast of Japanese arts and letters, and adapted by Ezra Pound (1885-1972), the modernist poet who used the Chinese ideogram and the medium of translation to infuse energy into the modernisation of English poetry.<sup>xii</sup> Having the advantage of knowledge of the Japanese language, Waley could claim accuracy in his *The Nō Plays of Japan* (1921), as opposed to the Fenollosa/Pound versions<sup>xiii</sup> published in 1916, which he referred to in his book as 'fragmentary and inaccurate'.<sup>xiv</sup> Basil Hall Chamberlain (1850-1935), a Victorian scholar of Japanese literature who was one of Waley's few predecessors, had also published translations of the *Nō* in 1880, which Waley dismissed as 'rhymed paraphrases.'<sup>xv</sup>

Waley's tendency to dismiss the work of previous translators was most notable in his *The Pillow Book of Sei Shōnagon* (1928), where he was able to write off several of the remaining European translators who had so far escaped his criticism:

Short extracts from the *Pillow-Book* will be found in Aston's *Japanese Literature* (1899), Florenz's *Geschichte der Jap. Litterature* (1906), and Revon's *Anthologie de la Litterature Japonaise* (1910). [...] I have avoided what has been translated before, not on principle, but because it seemed to me that, on the whole, the least interesting passages had been chosen.<sup>xvi</sup>

The tone in all these publications is that of overwhelming confidence: a confidence in his own abilities and taste, and in his ability to judge the achievements of others.<sup>xvii</sup> Of course, Waley's self-assurance was not without reason. He achieved a level of fluency in terms of his ability to read both the classical Japanese and classical Chinese languages that is still considered remarkable.<sup>xviii</sup> This linguistic ability allowed him to sense, where other Western scholars did not, the value of Murasaki Shikibu's *Genji monogatari* (*The Tale of Genji*) and the pleasure it could bring to modern English readers. In 1925, he published the first volume of his translation of the *Genji monogatari*. The remaining five volumes were published in 1926, 1927, 1928, 1932 and 1933. In terms of its impact on translators and scholars of Japanese literature, Waley's *Genji* was arguably the most influential publication of the twentieth century. *The Tale of Genji* was not only well received by students of Japan and Japanese literature, but was also widely read by the general public as a genuine English novel.<sup>xix</sup> Reviewers were quick to praise Waley's prose, his taste, and his ability to bring Murasaki's novel to life. While the English literary world proclaimed *Murasaki Shikibu* as one of the great novelists, Waley's translation—and Waley himself—also achieved fame in Japan. The Japanese government invited him to Japan several times,<sup>xx</sup> and apart from countless studies of his *Genji* by Japanese scholars, a book-length biography of Waley has been published in Japanese,<sup>xxi</sup> and his translation of *The Tale of Genji* has recently been retranslated into Japanese, the first volume of which was published in September 2008.<sup>xxii</sup>

The success of his *The Tale of Genji* and other translations was solid proof of Waley's gifts. We must thus take into account these achievements when we consider the declarative, dismissive tone that figures prominently in his comments on other people's translations. Indeed, the position of authority bestowed upon him by himself, his contemporaries, and later by the post-war generation of translator-scholars,<sup>xxiii</sup> should be attributed to several things at once: his linguistic and literary abilities, the success of his translations, and his immense self-confidence.

## TRANSLATION PRINCIPLES

Nowhere is Waley's self-confidence more evident than in his essay 'Notes on Translation', which was published in *Atlantic Monthly*, in 1958.<sup>xxiv</sup> In this essay he discusses several principles that he adhered to in his own translations, including: being faithful by avoiding literal translation; the occasional necessity of elaboration; using natural English for dialogue; the importance of rhythm; accuracy; and the choice of texts. In discussing these points, he compares passages from some published translations of Asian literature with his own versions, and in every case it is Waley that comes out on top. The only translator seemingly worthy of his praise turns out to be Lin Shu, a 19<sup>th</sup> century scholar who translated Charles Dickens into classical Chinese. In the closing statement, Waley writes:

I have found fault with a good many other people's translations and in some cases have implied that I preferred my own. But I think it is natural that anyone should prefer his own translations. After all, he has made them to the measure of his own tastes and sensibilities, and it is as natural that he should prefer them to other people's as it is that he should prefer to walk in his own shoes.<sup>xxv</sup>

Most interesting in this essay is the suggestion that it is possible and even acceptable for a translation to improve upon the original. Waley does not state this outright. On the contrary, in response to Sam Houston Brock's concise translation of a passage in the Nō play *Sotoba Komachi*, he exclaims: 'I felt at once that my translation was hopelessly overlaid and wordy and that it tried in a quite unwarrantable way to improve upon the original.'<sup>xxvi</sup> However, he goes on to state that he is not all satisfied with Brock's version, while his own version is 'not bad verse.'<sup>xxvii</sup> The conclusion is left ambiguous. He has not entirely condemned the idea of trying to improve on the source text, and he has suggested in so many words that he may have done exactly that.

The idea that a translation can be better than the source text is a controversial one. On the one hand, there is Walter Benjamin's concept of the 'afterlife' of the original,<sup>xxviii</sup> and George Steiner's suggestion that, '[w]here it surpasses the original, the real translation infers that the source text possesses potentialities, elemental reserves

as yet unrealized by itself.<sup>xxxix</sup> On the other hand, some translators warn against trying to improve on an original text, calling it irresponsible and misleading.<sup>xxx</sup>

Several scholars have suggested that Waley's translation of the *Genji monogatari* improved on the original text, but their statements unfortunately echo a linguistically colonialist posture. For example, the Japanese historian George B. Sansom (1883-1965) made the following comment in 1931 on the success of Waley's *Genji*: '[i]s it ungrateful to add that perhaps it does more than justice to the original—not because of any short-comings in Murasaki, but because modern English is incomparably richer, stronger, more various and supple than Heian Japanese?'.<sup>xxxi</sup> Japanese literary scholar Donald Keene (1922-) has also claimed that the richness of the English language 'sometimes makes it feasible for a translator actually to improve on the original'.<sup>xxxii</sup> Referring to Waley's translation of the *Genji monogatari*, he states, 'I for one in going from the translation back to the original miss something', and suggests that the reason is because 'twentieth-century English has a greater variety of nuances of meaning than the Japanese of almost a thousand years ago'.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

The possibility that Waley had improved on the original *Genji* was even suggested by the Japanese novelist/critic Masamune Hakuchō (1879-1962). Writing in 1938, Hakuchō asserted that although he had read—or attempted to read—the *Genji* several times, it was not until he read Waley's translation that he developed a genuine interest in the story.<sup>xxxiv</sup> Furthermore, he stated that he found the original not as interesting as Waley's translation, and that he preferred Waley's version because it was sharper and crisper than the swirling original.<sup>xxxv</sup> Of course, behind this idea of improving the original through translation, lies the notion of the translator as creative artist, an interesting notion which needs to be considered in light of its relation to translation attitudes towards literal accuracy and source language oriented approaches.

## TRANSLATION AND CREATIVITY

This notion of translation 'improving' on a source text is often linked to 'freedom' and 'creativity' in translation, and a disdain for 'literal' translation. As the acknowledged Western authority on Japanese literature, one particular attitude that Waley transmitted to the immediate post-war generation of translators was contempt for the vague notion of literal translation. A translation should be as readable as possible, and literalness was often the enemy. As Donald Keene puts it, the translator is 'entitled to resort to every legitimate means at his disposal in order keep the work he is translating immediate and alive'.<sup>xxxvi</sup> In some cases, this meant cutting; in others, it meant elaboration. Close reading of Waley's *Genji* by a new generation of scholars had shown remarkable discrepancies with the original. A whole chapter had been cut, and elaboration was rampant. Waley cut or abbreviated descriptions of clothes and rituals. There seemed to be more words, more adjectives, in Waley's version. He had claimed that it was necessary to depart from the literal meaning in order to convey the mood or feeling of a work, and the post-war translators generally agreed, although some of them leaned further towards literal accuracy and further away from Waley in later years. Edward Seidensticker (1921-2007), one of the most respected post-war translators of Japanese literature, is one of these, and he spent a decade doing his own translation of *The Tale of Genji* (1976), which he claimed was complete, accurate, and more faithful to the rhythm of the original.<sup>xxxvii</sup> Yet in his early years as a translator, Seidensticker admitted to being under the strong influence of Waley who, he claimed, 'has never minded a bit of trimming here, a bit of padding there, to make his originals more coherent and pungent'.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

Some have linked this role of the translator who cuts, pads, or improves with the concept of literary originality and creativity. For example, in an appraisal of Waley's translation skills, translator Ivan Morris (1925-1976) asserted that Waley 'possessed the literary talent of a true imaginative artist'.<sup>xxxix</sup> It is significant that Morris associated this creative ability with a fluent writing style. Morris stated that Waley's translations conveyed the meaning fluently in 'plain, spontaneous English so that after a few pages one entirely forgets one is reading a translation'.<sup>xli</sup>

The recognition of Waley's creative input into his translations was nothing new. Even the early reviews of *The Tale of Genji* tended to give as much attention to Waley as to Murasaki Shikibu. One reviewer of the second volume wrote, 'one realizes how much of the art of the narrative in its present form is due to the translator'.<sup>xlii</sup> In the post-war years, the recognition of this 'creative' role in the translation process was generally linked with literary quality and with a fluent, anti-literalism approach. While Waley's *Genji* may be cited as an example of the successful employment of such an approach, post-war translators such as Donald Keene, Edward Seidensticker, and Ivan Morris were all under the direct influence of Waley, particularly in their formative years. It was Waley's translations that had first attracted these three scholars to Japanese literature and hence decided their future careers, and his creative, non-literal approach would naturally exert a strong influence on their translational practices. The basic stance of these translators in the early post-war years is summed up by

Morris, who stated that suggesting the ‘artistic quality’ of the source text ‘demands a free, creative type of translation, involving a readiness to depart, wherever necessary, from the original wording, construction, and imagery.’<sup>xliii</sup>

## AUTHORITY AND TRANSLATION

The degree to which the fluent, non-literal approach had come to be seen as the authoritative model was demonstrated in 1964 when Joyce Ackroyd of the Australian National University (and later of the University of Queensland) wrote an article titled ‘Can Japanese be Translated?’, which protested against this approach.<sup>xliiii</sup> In the article, Ackroyd compared passages from translations by Morris, Seidensticker, and Waley, with literal versions she had done herself, in order to show the discrepancies with the original texts. She asserted that the dominant method of translation among translators of Japanese literature was concerned only ‘with kindness to the reader, that is with making the translation as easy and familiar as possible.’<sup>xliiv</sup> She went on to suggest that this free and familiarising translation practice was to a degree inherited from Waley, whose *The Tale of Genji* took ‘[g]ross departures from the text’ on every page.<sup>xliv</sup> Ackroyd concluded that it was possible to achieve both a readable and literally accurate version of a text, and thus the method by which the dominant translators occasionally sacrificed literal accuracy for readability was irresponsible.

Ackroyd’s article was provocative enough to elicit an angry response from Donald Keene, which was published in *The Journal-Newsletter of the Association of Teachers of Japanese*.<sup>xlvi</sup> The indignant tone of Keene’s response seemed prompted by a certain loyalty towards his colleagues—Ackroyd’s article was essentially an attack on the professional practices of Keene and his colleagues—and his answer to Ackroyd’s contentions was that if a source text exhibited a naturalness of expression, the translation should also do so, in order to give a ‘true equivalent of the original text’.<sup>xlvii</sup> And this could often be achieved only if small changes were made to the text. Keene’s understanding of translation exhibited in his reply coincides considerably with translation theorist Eugene Nida’s ‘principle of equivalent effect’ and his strategy of ‘dynamic equivalence’ whereby a translation should have the same effect on its reader as the source text had on the original receptors. For Nida, such an approach required a naturalness of expression.<sup>xlviii</sup>

In a final reply to Keene, printed a year later in *The Journal-Newsletter of the Association of Teachers of Japanese*, Ackroyd reiterated her claim that the literal meaning, the word choice, the progression of ideas and even the word-order of the original text are significant features which do not necessarily have to be altered in order to produce a translation that reads naturally. She concluded her reply by arguing that translations produced by the dominant group of Japanese literature translators should not be above reproach, and that the questioning of their theory of translation is a natural outcome of the ‘desire to see scholarship advance.’<sup>xlix</sup>

If the Ackroyd-Keene dispute shows anything, it is how entrenched the dominant style of translation had become in the post-war institution of Japanese literary studies. Of course, one must consider the translator’s intentions for his or her text in understanding Keene’s and Ackroyd’s arguments. Ackroyd leaned more towards the historical side of literary scholarship, and naturally felt a greater responsibility for literal accuracy. Keene, on the other hand, has spent the greater portion of his life exporting Japanese literature to the West—even for the reader who is not a specialist—and thus leaned towards the importance of the functionality of the target text and accessibility in his translation approach.

## MODERN JAPANESE POETRY

One notable trend among the central group of scholar-translators in the post-war decades was a relative disregard for modern Japanese free verse poetry. It is tempting to attribute this trend somewhat to Waley’s influence—the Waley who never once traveled to Asia, and the Waley who rarely ventured past the pre-modern in his reading or translation. In his assertion that Japanese poetry ‘can only be rightly enjoyed in the original,’<sup>1</sup> Waley may have been referring specifically to traditional forms, but his failure to make a distinction between modern and traditional forms in this statement indicates that for him, modern Japanese poetry did not exist.

However, it is principally in the post-war years that the disinterest of Western scholars in modern Japanese free verse becomes notable. Although Keene would later give a fine account of the development of the modern poetry in his book *Landscapes and Portraits*,<sup>ii</sup> his earlier attitude was rather disparaging. For example, in his *Japanese Literature: an Introduction for Western Readers* (1955), Keene limits his discussion of modern poetry to only one page.<sup>iii</sup> Furthermore, in his landmark anthology *Modern Japanese Literature* (1956), Keene claims the modern poetry is ‘curiously lacking in substance’,<sup>iiii</sup> and displays a lack of ‘concern with intellectual

matters.’<sup>liv</sup> This ‘poverty’<sup>lv</sup> among modern poets is apparently related to their break with the traditions of Japanese literature, but also to their lack of knowledge of western poetry:

A Japanese poet is unlikely to think of quoting Dante; if he did, the quotation as such would have little meaning to most readers. Japanese modern poetry tends thus to be bounded by the translatable parts of foreign poetry: the decadence of Rimbaud without his overtones, the gloom of T.S. Eliot without his sense of tradition, the fantasy of Max Jacob without his religion.<sup>lvi</sup>

Modern Japanese poets thus remained for the most part untranslated into English, apart from selections in several anthologies, including Keene’s *Modern Japanese Literature*. Yet the unique qualities of the modern poets were being discovered even by people who were not experts in Japanese literature. In the early 1960s, American poet Gary Snyder (1930-) began translating poems by Miyazawa Kenji (1895-1933), which would eventually be published as part of his own book of poetry, *The Back Country*, in 1968.<sup>lvii</sup> Cid Corman (1924-2004), another American poet, teamed up with scholar Kamaike Susumu to translate poems by Kusano Shinpei (1903-1988), which were published in 1969.<sup>lviii</sup> Graeme Wilson, a British civil servant and aviation expert, began translating Hagiwara Sakutarō (1886-1942) in the mid 1960s, publishing poems in thirty-eight different journals before his translations were published in book form in 1969.<sup>lix</sup>

Each of these translators took a different approach to the translation process. Gary Snyder took an interpretive approach to Miyazawa Kenji’s poetry, throwing his own interpretations onto some ambiguous—and non-ambiguous—lines of Kenji’s.<sup>lx</sup> Since Snyder’s translations appear in his own poetry collection, his interpretations of Kenji have significance not only for Kenji’s poetry, but also for Snyder’s own poetry. We are forced to consider that Snyder has deliberately manipulated the texts in the interests of his personal poetic statement and his Buddhist philosophy that differs from Kenji’s. Absorbed into the thematic movement of Snyder’s collection, the translations are subject to new rules, and take on new meanings.

Graeme Wilson’s translations of Sakutarō took the creative role of the translator to the extreme, resulting in poems that only vaguely resemble Sakutarō’s originals. Wilson inserted whole lines and images that were not in the source texts, and added poetic effects such as rhyme and alliteration. In a review of Wilson’s translations of Sakutarō, Ivan Morris recognized the quality of Wilson’s poetry, but expressed reservations in regards to his extreme creative approach. Interestingly, Morris made the following comment: ‘[i]t is only a scholar-poet with the overwhelming linguistic command of an Arthur Waley who can permit himself to take such liberties with the text; and at times even Waley went too far.’<sup>lxi</sup>

But it was Cid Corman and Kamaike Susumu’s *frogs & others: poems by Kusano Shimpei*—even the unusual punctuation in the title indicates the translators’ playful approach to language and their unwillingness to bend to convention—that presented the greatest challenge to the dominant translation method. Corman and Kamaike’s translations show an inconsistent approach to the source text syntax, occasionally free, more often literal, but it is an approach which often attempts to suggest the difference of the source language through its reproduction of line and word order and through its abusive syntactic patterns that can be traced back to the distinctive features of Kusano’s language. Corman and Kamaike also choose a non-interpretive translational approach by refusing to insert pronouns, articles, and subjects in the target text where there are none in the source text, even if English would normally demand them in the interests of clarity and grammaticality. A typical example can be seen in the following translation of ‘Kaeru’ (‘frog’):

夢は。	dream.
山嶽の天辺を越え。	beyond mountain horizon.
背中は。	back.
空の陥穽を知る。	knows pitfall of heaven.
(ハイ。サウデス。) <sup>lxii</sup>	(yes. absolutely.) <sup>lxiii</sup>

In the translation, the ellipsis of normal English syntax both respects and ignores the patterns of the source text. This is partly necessitated by the non-interpretive approach. ‘[D]ream beyond mountain horizon’ does not meet the requirements of English grammar, even if we imagine ‘dream’ as an imperative verb, while the original *yume wa sangaku no teppen o koe* is not syntactically deviant.<sup>lxiv</sup> Yet to furnish the sentence with articles or possessive pronouns would be to provide an interpretation of the text. Depending on the placement of these elements, the statement could refer to the dreams of frogs, the dream of a single frog, or dreams in general. D. J. Enright and Ninomiya Takamichi’s version reads more naturally:

Your dream  
 Is beyond the horizon of peaks;  
 Your back  
 Is a trap for the heavens...

(Yes, that's right.)<sup>lxv</sup>

The inclusion of second-person possessive pronouns creates a narrator who is addressing an actual frog or an abstract frog. Enright and Ninomiya's interpretation is not a big leap. It draws on information provided in the source text, such as the different script—*katakana* as opposed to *kanji* and *hiragana*—used in the final line, which poses the possibility of there being two distinct speakers: the addressor and the addressee. The two different scripts also suggest that the two speakers are entirely different creatures. It is not much further a jump to assume that the addressee who responds *hai sō desu* or '[y]es, that's right' in the final line is a frog croaking his assent with the first speaker's statement.

The difference between these two translations might be expressive of the distinction between interpretive and non-interpretive translation approaches. Corman and Kamaike's translations of Kusano often seek to retain the ambiguity inherent in the source text and source language, even at the cost of clarity and a loss of information implied or provided explicitly by the source text.<sup>lxvi</sup> Their approach also exhibits a strong elliptical tendency, which occasionally emulates the ellipsis and brevity of the source text, but which is more representative of a common strain in modern poetry that can be traced back to the imagist poets and beyond.

Another challenging aspect of *frogs & others* was simply its text selection, which presented a generous selection of Kusano's frog poems with their unusual punctuation, wordplay, sound play, onomatopoeia, and visual elements. It is no exaggeration to say that nothing like this had been seen before in translations of Japanese literature:

[...]

killifish glitteringly splash.  
 innumerable fireflies streaming mingle.

li li-        lililu lililu liffuffuffuff'  
 li li-        lililu lililu liffuffuffuff'

              lilinf fkenk'  
               fkenk' kekekke  
 kekukku kekukku kensalili-olu  
 kekukku kekukku kensalili-olu  
               biida-lala biida-lala  
               binbin begank'  
               biida-lala biida-lala  
               binbin begank'  
 begank' begank' gaggaga-lili-ki  
 begank' begank' gaggaga-lili-ki

[...]

              gamb'yan gamb'yan  
               our dream.  
               color of dawn.  
               our song.  
               gamb'yan gamb'yan

gyawalot' gyawalot' gyawa-lololololi(t)  
 gyawalot' gyawalot' gyawa-lololololi(t)  
 gyawalot' gyawalot' gyawa-lololololi(t)  
 [...]<sup>lxvii</sup>

Read against the dominant trends of translations of Japanese literature as described above, Corman and Kamaike's versions of Kusano Shinpei's poems stand out as an assertive and challenging statement on translation. Of course there are other factors that must be taken into account in this viewpoint. For instance, the

dominant group of literary translators worked in different genres, primarily in classical texts and modern novels, and obviously had different intentions and market concerns. Nevertheless, even when read in comparison with previous anthologies of Japanese poetry in translation—many of which had tended towards the fluent, prosaic, and nondescript—Corman and Kamaike’s approach of suggesting the difference of source text syntax and asserting the significance of sound effect, resulted in translations that are boldly foreignising<sup>lxviii</sup> in a receiving culture that emphasised equivalent effect and fluency. The translational approaches taken by Snyder and by Wilson, which exemplified interpretive and creative strategies, also stand out, and the three approaches together anticipate issues in the translation of modern Japanese free verse that can be traced in the work of later translators of modern Japanese poetry.<sup>lxix</sup>

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## REFERENCES

- <sup>i</sup> Although Waley was also a scholar of art, philosophy and history, in this paper I am chiefly interested in his translations of literature.
- <sup>ii</sup> For a discussion of how Waley managed to teach himself to read two difficult Asian languages in his mid twenties, see John Walter de Gruchy, *Orienting Arthur Waley: Japanism, Orientalism, and the Creation of Japanese Literature in English* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2003), 55-56. De Gruchy suggests Waley’s education (he was already familiar with eleven languages), a natural linguistic ability, and unusual patience and perseverance as important factors.
- <sup>iii</sup> Arthur Waley, *One hundred and seventy Chinese poems* (London: Constable, 1918).
- <sup>iv</sup> Arthur Waley, *More Translations from the Chinese* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1919).
- <sup>v</sup> Arthur Waley, *Japanese Poetry: The Uta* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1919).
- <sup>vi</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-6.
- <sup>vii</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.
- <sup>viii</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.
- <sup>ix</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>x</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.
- <sup>xi</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>xii</sup> Ernest Fenollosa and Ezra Pound, *‘Noh’, or, Accomplishment : a Study of the Classical Stage of Japan* (London: Macmillan, 1916)
- <sup>xiii</sup> Pound worked from Fenollosa’s notes, which he had received from Fenollosa’s widow.
- <sup>xiv</sup> Arthur Waley, *The Nō Plays of Japan*, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1921/1950), 304.
- <sup>xv</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>xvi</sup> Arthur Waley, ‘Preliminary Notes’, *The Pillow Book of Sei Shōnagon*, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1928/1957), 5.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Adrian J. Pinnington has suggested that there may have been ‘some degree of bluff or self-delusion’ in Waley’s self-confident air. See Pinnington, ‘Arthur Waley and Japanese Literature’, in *The Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* 4, vol. 12 (1997): 34.
- <sup>xviii</sup> Keene, for instance, comments, ‘Waley’s extraordinary knowledge of every period of Chinese and Japanese made it possible for him to comprehend instinctively even passages of the utmost obscurity.’ Donald Keene, *Landscapes and Portraits: Appreciations of Japanese culture* (Tokyo & Palo Alto: Kodansha International, 1971), 334. Another translator, Edward Seidensticker, stated that Waley’s ‘command of classical Chinese and classical Japanese had scarcely a rival.’ Seidensticker, ‘The free ways of Arthur Waley’, *Times Literary Supplement* (30 Oct, 1981): 279.
- <sup>xix</sup> For an analysis of the reception of Waley’s *Genji*, see John Walter de Gruchy, *Orienting Arthur Waley*, 125-133.
- <sup>xx</sup> Donald Keene, *The Blue Eyed Tarōkaja* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 78-79. Waley declined the invitations because, according to Keene, he was not interested in twentieth century Japan. Waley never once travelled to Asia.
- <sup>xxi</sup> Miyamoto Shōzaburō, *Genji monogatari ni miserareta otoko* (Tokyo: Shinchō, 1993)
- <sup>xxii</sup> Samata Hideki (tr.), *Waley ban Genji monogatari 1* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2008).
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Donald Keene, for instance, asserted that, ‘[f]or me, as for all others interested in translating either Chinese or Japanese literature, Waley was our only predecessor.’ Keene, ‘In Your Distant Street Few Drums Were Heard’, in Morris, Ivan (ed.) *Madly Singing in the Mountains: an Appreciation and Anthology of Arthur Waley* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970), 56.

- <sup>xxiv</sup> Arthur Waley, 'Notes on Translation', reprinted in Ivan Morris (ed.), *Madly Singing in the Mountains: An Appreciation and Anthology of Arthur Waley* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970), 152-164.
- <sup>xxv</sup> *Ibid.*, 164.
- <sup>xxvi</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.
- <sup>xxvii</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>xxviii</sup> In 'The Task of the Translator: an Introduction to the Translation of Baudelaire's Tableaux Parisiens', Benjamin argues, among other things, that through translation the source text attains its 'ever-renewed latest and most abundant flowering' (tr. Harry Zohn), in Lawrence Venuti (ed.), *The Translations Studies Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 77.
- <sup>xxix</sup> George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 318.
- <sup>xxx</sup> Edward Seidensticker is one, and he asserts that '[i]mproving means changing the shape, and this the translator should not consider it his privilege to do.' Seidensticker, 'Translation: What Good Does It Do?', Jean Toyama and Nobuko Ochner (eds.), *Literary Relations East and West* (Honolulu, Hawaii: College of Languages, Linguistics and Literature, University of Hawaii at Manoa East-West Center, 1990), 177. In contrast to this stance, it is interesting to note Joyce Ackroyd's claim that Seidensticker's translations 'almost invariably read better than the original'. Joyce Ackroyd, 'A Reply to Donald Keene', *The Journal-Newsletter of the Association of Teachers of Japanese* 3, no. 1/2 (Nov., 1965): 15.
- <sup>xxxi</sup> G. B. Sansom, *Japan: a short cultural history* (London: The Cresset Press, 1931), 235.
- <sup>xxxii</sup> Donald Keene, *Landscapes and Portraits*, 323.
- <sup>xxxiii</sup> *Ibid.*, 324. The sentiments expressed in such comments as these by Keene and Sansom are not uncommon in early comparisons of Japanese and European literature, and can be traced back to opinions expressed by such Victorian scholars of Japanese literature as Basil Hall Chamberlain and W.G. Aston. Chamberlain, for instance, stated, 'what Japanese literature lacks is genius. It lacks thought, logical grasp, depth, breadth, and many-sidedness. It is too timorous, too narrow to compass great things. [...] If Japan has given us no music, so also has she given us no immortal verse, neither do her authors atone for lack of substance by any special beauties of form.' Chamberlain, *Things Japanese Things Japanese: Being Notes on Various Subjects Connected with Japan for the use of Travellers and Others* (London: Murray, 1902), 294. With a special touch of irony, the latest Tuttle edition of this book (1971) gives a list of recommended Japanese literary works directly after Chamberlain's comment.
- <sup>xxxiv</sup> Masamune Hakuchō, 'Eiyaku Genji monogatari', *Masamune Hakuchō Zenshū* V. 8 (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1968), 349.
- <sup>xxxv</sup> *Ibid.*, 350-351.
- <sup>xxxvi</sup> Donald Keene, *Landscapes and Portraits*, 327.
- <sup>xxxvii</sup> Seidensticker (tr.) *The Tale of Genji* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle, 1976). The reviews of Seidensticker's *The Tale of Genji* were generally overwhelmingly positive, although some still stressed important points of difference between the translation and the original. Masao Miyoshi, for example stated that Seidensticker's translation reads '[p]erhaps too well,' and that Seidensticker 'clarifies the narrative voice, and lessens ambivalences and ambiguities.' Miyoshi, 'Review Article: Translation as Interpretation', in *Journal of Asian Studies* XXXVIII, No. 2 (Feb, 1979): 299-300.
- <sup>xxxviii</sup> Edward Seidensticker, 'On Retranslation', *Japan Quarterly* VII, no. 4 (Oct-Dec 1960): 487.
- <sup>xxxix</sup> Ivan Morris, 'Arthur Waley', *Encounter* XXVII, no. 6, (Dec 1966): 51.
- <sup>xl</sup> *Ibid.* The issue of transparency and fluency mentioned here by Morris may remind us of Lawrence Venuti's argument concerning the correlation between the dominant translation trend of fluency in Anglo-American society, and the 'invisibility' of the translator (see *The Translator's Invisibility* (London and New York: 2008)). However, Venuti's argument does seem to apply comprehensively to the case of Waley, who was one of the more visible translators of the last century. Indeed, Waley is the only 'famous' translator I can think of who was not also a writer of original literary works.
- <sup>xli</sup> *The Times* (Friday, 11 Feb, 1927): 19.
- <sup>xlii</sup> Ivan Morris, 'Notes on Literary Translation from Japanese into English', in *The Journal-Newsletter of the Association of Teachers of Japanese* 2 no. 1/2 (May, 1964): 1
- <sup>xliii</sup> Joyce Ackroyd, 'Can Japanese be Translated?' in *Orient/West* 9, no. 5 (Sep/Oct, 1964).
- <sup>xliv</sup> *Ibid.*, 70; italics in original.
- <sup>xlv</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>xlvi</sup> Donald Keene, 'A Reply to Joyce Ackroyd', *The Journal-Newsletter of the Association of Teachers of Japanese*, 2, no. 3 (Dec., 1964): 19-22.
- <sup>xlvii</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.
- <sup>xlviii</sup> See Eugene Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating: with Special Reference to Principles and Procedures involved in Bible Translating* (Leiden: Brill, 1964), 159-160. Peter Newmark would later rename this approach,

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which aims to produce—as closely as possible—an equivalent effect, or similar effect, as ‘communicative translation’. Newmark, *Approaches to Translation* (Oxford, New York: Pergamon Press, 1981), 39.

<sup>xlix</sup> Joyce Ackroyd, ‘A Reply to Donald Keene’, 20.

<sup>l</sup> Arthur Waley, *Japanese Poetry*, 8.

<sup>li</sup> Donald Keene, *Landscapes and Portraits*, 131-156.

<sup>lii</sup> Donald Keene, *Japanese Literature: an Introduction for Western Readers* (New York: Grove Press, 1955).

<sup>liii</sup> Donald Keene, *Modern Japanese literature: an Anthology* (New York: Grove Press, 1956), 22.

<sup>liv</sup> Ibid.

<sup>lv</sup> Ibid.

<sup>lvi</sup> Ibid.

<sup>lvii</sup> Gary Snyder, *The Back Country* (New York: New Directions, 1968).

<sup>lviii</sup> Kusano Shinpei, *frogs & other.: poems by Kusano Shinpei*, tr. Cid Corman & Kamaike Susumu (Tokyo and New York: Tuttle, 1969).

<sup>lix</sup> Hagiwara Sakutarō, *Face at the Bottom of the World and Other Poems*, tr. Graeme Wilson (Rutland, Vt.: C. E. Tuttle Co, 1969).

<sup>lx</sup> Unfortunately it is beyond the scope of this article to examine of Snyder’s interpretive transformations of Kenji. However, I hope to publish a paper on this—and on the curious phenomenon of interpretive translation—in the near future.

<sup>lxi</sup> Ivan Morris, ‘Transmutations of a Westernizer’ (review of *Face at the Bottom of the World and Other Poems*), *Times Literary Supplement* (2<sup>nd</sup> July, 1971): 755.

<sup>lxii</sup> Kusano Shinpei *Zenshū* 1 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1978), 179.

<sup>lxiii</sup> Kusano Shinpei, *frogs & others*, 56.

<sup>lxiv</sup> I have removed the full stops from the source and target lines in my quotations here, to indicate the grammatical constructions that proceed irrespective of the use of the full stop at the end of every line.

<sup>lxv</sup> D. J. Enright and Takamichi Ninomiya (tr.), *The poetry of living Japan: an Anthology with an Introduction* (London: John Murray, 1957), 82

<sup>lxvi</sup> The non-interpretive approach exhibited by the translation can be considered a conscious strategy on the part of the translators and not a mere unintentional outcome of the source language oriented approach, since Kamaike, in discussing another translation he produced Cid Corman—Bashō’s *Oku no hosomichi*—asserted that avoiding interpretation was one of the four principles adhered to in the translation process. Kamaike Susumu, ‘Hon’yaku to hon’yakushū / Some Problems of ‘Original Flavor’ in Translation’, in *Hikaku bunka kenkyū* 22 (30 March, 1993): 6.

<sup>lxvii</sup> The poem is ‘Tanjōsai’ (‘birthday party’). Kusano Shinpei, *frogs & others.*, 12-13.

<sup>lxviii</sup> Signalling the difference and peculiarities of the foreign text and its language.

<sup>lxix</sup> For example, Hiroaki Sato’s translations in *Howling at the Moon: Poems of Hagiwara Sakutarō* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1978), which often attempt to reproduce Sakutarō’s unorthodox syntax, are non-interpretive, overwhelmingly literal, and surprisingly consistent in their intratextual approach to the vocabulary. Robert Epp’s versions of Sakutarō—*Rats’ Nests: the Poetry of Hagiwara Sakutarō* (Stanwood, WA: Yakusha, 1993), with a revised edition published in 1998—are more interpretive and less source text oriented than Sato’s, and the stunning differences between his 1993 and 1998 versions invite us to consider the element of creativity involved in the translation process.