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Translating Style in Dazai Osamu's *Ningen Shikkaku*

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Abstract

Dazai Osamu (1909-1948), born Tsushima Shūji, remains famous throughout Japan, with his magnum opus, 人間失格 (*Ningen Shikkaku*), being the second most purchased book in Japan of all time. Despite this fame, it is rare to see his texts in circulation in English, and those that do exist are largely relegated to manuscripts and translations put forward in journals (Lyons 1). However, with his texts being released to the public domain, many have seen re-translation; notably *Ningen Shikkaku* was translated as *No Longer Human* and recently retranslated as *A Shameful Life*. This essay attempts to analyse Dazai's style and most famous literary techniques in Japanese, and considers the techniques used by different translators to emulate these techniques in English. In doing so, it hopes to create an understanding of the effect of these techniques on the audience, and how to recreate them effectively in translation.

Introduction

Who is Dazai Osamu?

Dazai Osamu (1909-1948), born Tsushima Shūji, is regarded as one of Japan's greatest authors, due to, or perhaps despite, his numerous transgressions against not only the law, but also his moral conduct in general; discussions of his life invariably return to his addictions to alcohol and opioids, his many affairs, and his equally numerous suicide attempts. It is no surprise, then, that when Dazai committed suicide shortly after completing the final chapter of 人間失格 (henceforth *Ningen Shikkaku*) that the mystery of Dazai and his near flagrant disregard for Japanese societal norms became part of his charm. This charm continues to this day, with *Ningen Shikkaku* spawning several manga, anime, and live action film versions as recently as 2019, and being revered as a classic in Japan; Lyons (1) likens his level of popularity and tone to that of F. Scott Fitzgerald and J. D. Salinger in the West.

While he is famous within Japan, the selection of texts translated into English that is commercially available to the public is limited: Lyons (iii) noted that at the time of his writing, only 斜陽 (Henceforth *Shayō*) and *Ningen Shikkaku* were commercially available, and they had been translated in the 1950s. In the years since, Dazai's works in their entirety have entered the public domain, inspiring more translations, though much remains hidden away in academic texts, or has simply not been translated at all.

Ningen Shikkaku

This research aims to interrogate how translators have attempted to emulate Dazai Osamu's style in translating his works from Japanese to English. To do so, I will consider his most famous work, *Ningen Shikkaku* and its two translations by Donald Keene and Mark Gibeau. *Ningen Shikkaku* is semi-autobiographical, fitting into the 私小説 (*shishōsetsu*), or "I-Novel" genre, like most of Dazai's other works. The main difference is that while Dazai's short stories were often single instances or events that he detailed without hiding that it was, in fact, his life, *Ningen Shikkaku* dramatizes, alters, or entirely invents events, and is done so under the guise of a man reading the diaries of the character meant to represent Dazai, Ōba Yōzō.

Ningen Shikkaku opens with an unnamed narrator effectively stumbling upon three

journals and pictures of a man he has never met, Ōba Yōzō, and publishes them as a writer, after which Yōzō becomes the narrator. In his journals, Yōzō details the varied events of his life, and the reader follows him as he attempts to relate to those around him through consistent pranks, which he refers to as “clowning”. Believing himself to be alone, fundamentally not a human being and therefore incapable of understanding others and being understood himself, he sinks deeper into depression and addictions to drugs and alcohol, before finally ending his journals in a decrepit house. While the reader is left to ponder his fate, we switch back to the unnamed narrator, who returns to discuss the journals with the madam of a bar from whom he first received them. Here, the real question of the text is revealed: is Yōzō the “angel” the madam believes him to be, or the distasteful man with whom our narrator initially presented us? Particularly when Dazai’s life so closely mirrors that of Yōzō, the internal conflict within Dazai of whether he deserved pity and redemption or to be cast out of society is what stays in the audience’s mind, and what spurred it to become a modern classic.

This closeness between Dazai and Yōzō is key, and, mixed with the knowledge that Dazai himself is a fictionalized version of Shūji, has been the source of much critical consideration; notably, Keene, Gibeau, and Lyons all agree that the three are entirely distinct characters, despite being superficially the same man. Lyons (3-4) summarizes this tension succinctly by indicating that the main character, Ōba Yōzō, is a fictionalized version of Dazai Osamu, who himself is an authorial persona of Tsushima Shūji. For this reason, when I refer to the author, I refer to him as Dazai Osamu; similarly, when I refer to the character, I refer to Ōba Yōzō. The lines between the two are blurry at times, so it is important that it is Dazai’s style (as author) and Yōzō’s *voice* (as principal narrator): while Dazai is the one writing, it is Yōzō whose emotional response gives meaning to the words.

Research outline

This research focusses on *Ningen Shikkaku* not only because it is Dazai’s most commercially successful work in Japanese, but also because it provides us with the greatest detail and number of examples of his stylistic choices. I will also consider the importance of the sixty years that divide Donald Keene and Mark Gibeau’s respective translations, which saw not only great changes within Japan, but also in how Japan and Japanese people were seen, as well as norms in Japanese to English translation.

In essence, this research intends to: (1) consider Dazai’s most famous techniques in Japanese; (2) consider how these have been emulated in the English target text (TT); (3) search for similarities and differences across the two translations; and (4) consider the effect of these different techniques on a TT audience. To do so, I will: (1) Consider the analysis of style and literary techniques put forward by academics and translators, and (2) analyse short sections of the texts in the source text (ST) and two TTs that best display these techniques and what effects these would have on their respective audiences. Currently, there is a lack of research on Dazai from a Translation Studies perspective; indeed, most of the references pertaining specifically to Dazai in this research are both several decades old and only included as part of anthologies of translations done by the same translator who is commenting on Dazai. Given that Dazai’s work in its entirety has recently entered the public domain, and there are likely to be a variety of re-translations in the future, it would be beneficial to provide translators with an interpretation of Dazai’s style and how to emulate it. There is also likely to be significant overlap with Dazai’s style and that of other Japanese authors. Therefore, it would be useful to consider the analysis put forward in this research in terms of how one might translate similar stylistic techniques of other Japanese authors, particularly as authors such as Haruki Murakami push Japanese translated texts into the mainstream in English bookstores.

Literature review

The nature of style

To begin a critical review of Dazai's style in translation, we must begin with an understanding of what "style" means, and how it is understood in translation studies. Wales (398) describes style (in part) as "the set of features peculiar to, or characteristic of an author; his or her 'language habits'" and, importantly in terms of translation, that "stylistic features are basically features of language; so style in one sense is synonymous with 'language'"; that is, that the language in which a text is written is an important feature of its style.

Boase-Beier (32) follows the same definition given by Wales, and notes that style in translation is difficult because there are effectively *two* styles: that of the ST, and that of the TT. While the TT's style is informed by the style of the ST, it is also informed by the translator's understanding of authorial intent, as the thematic message of the author is intrinsically linked with their writing style; as each reader has a different understanding of authorial intent, this can impact the translation. Boase-Beier (32) further notes that style is merely "perceived": meaning is "constructed according to the cognitive context of the person reading", and so while there may be "communal elements", there will also be individual ones. In short, a translation is read through the lens of the reader, who in turn is reading it through the lens of the translator, who is reading it through a lens of perceived authorial intent and thematic concerns (which may not be what the author had intended).

The translation of style

If we accept Boase-Beier's suggestion that style is interpreted by the reader as much as it is written by the author, and that as a result a translator will bring their own understanding of style through in their translation, then we must understand how Dazai's techniques affect the reader. Reader-response theory supports this understanding, and essentially supposes that a text is transactional: regardless of what the original author had intended, its existence is determined based on those who read it, perceive it, and react to it (Johnson 161).

This is useful in terms of this research for two reasons: Firstly, as Boase-Beier has indicated, translation of literary texts relies on the translator's interpretation of a text, and therefore is inextricably linked with the effect that the text has on the reader, rather than authorial intent; Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, the translators of Dazai's works, in particular of *Ningen Shikkaku*, have admitted that Dazai is a mystery in terms of his intent. Gibeau (137) notes that while Dazai's suicide pushed *Ningen Shikkaku*'s sales, it "also made it impossible for the mind of Tsushima Shūji to ever be known", and it is this mystery that surrounds him that makes his intent almost impossible to confirm. Knowing that we cannot understand Dazai as an author, all we can do in terms of analysing his works is to analyse the range of potential effects on the audience, intended or not.

Translation as interpretation

Gutt (69-70) notes that contemporary (post-1960s) translational theory has generally focused on translating the *meaning* of the text, rather than its stylistic features; this presents an issue insofar as, as Boase-Beier noted, these interpretations of meaning may be incorrect, and stylistic techniques are important in expressing this meaning. Because meaning and style are closely linked, it is important that translators consider *both* the content and form of fiction in their translation.

While it is impossible for one to be able to remove one's prejudices and read entirely as the author intended in any circumstance, this is particularly pronounced when the time and place in which the author has written is distant from one's own (Gutt 78). Given that we are to consider Dazai in an increasingly modern context as we compare Keene and Gibeau's

translation, this is of particular importance. Gutt (78) notes that where contextual assumptions about a text are incorrect, the ambiguities will be resolved incorrectly, and lead to a cascade in which the original intention is missed entirely, and that this becomes more likely the further away from the time and cultural context one is. In answer to this issue, Gutt (79) suggests that this problem could be resolved two ways: either the translator supplies the contextual information (e.g., in the form of a footnote), or adds an expository comment as part of the text that explains the contextual implication.

Keene saw fit to include a foreword about the importance of Japanese writers of the time as divorced from their own literary tradition, whereas Gibeau includes an afterword to explain the relevance of Dazai's life to the writing of *Ningen Shikkaku*, and necessarily its connection to the *shishōsetsu*. In comparing these commentaries, we can see that there is an increasing need to explain the writings of Dazai to the average reader, as Gutt anticipated.

Japan and Orientalism

As this research intends to consider the difference between the two translations, we should also consider how translation norms have changed over time. In Keene's (3) foreword, he notes that "for once nobody thought to use the damning adjective 'exquisite' about an unquestionably Japanese product", suggesting that views on Japan and the Japanese directly following WWII were often exoticized as part of an Orientalist mindset. In his scathing discussion of Orientalism, Said (9) suggests that "the Orient" is a European invention that allowed it to contrast itself to its oldest and richest colonies, its cultural competitors to which it needed to continue to be superior; following WWII, America continued this tradition with China and Japan, becoming the pre-eminent power within the Pacific.

Keene was thoroughly frustrated with Orientalism and commented in his foreword that the Japanese are no different to Americans than Europeans, and that this is particularly reflected in their literature. Fowler (*On Naturalizing* 116) continues this critique, noting that languages such as Japanese are often forced into awkward approximations and equivalents in English, while English itself continues with no bending of the rules allowed, and lamenting that what are considered the best translations are those that do not sound or feel like translations, despite obvious differences in culture, setting and, of course, language. Two years later, Fowler (*Rendering Words* 3) furthered this discussion, noting that the great strides of Japanese translation in the 1950s were what had hindered later translations: the whiplash of change from the pre-war Japan (an immediate encroaching power that encouraged nothing but fear) to post-war Japan (an exoticized ancient land full of mystery and intrigue) was too much for the average American audience to withstand. Thus, interest in Japanese literature dwindled as it failed to capture both the reality of modern Japan and American preconceptions of it.

While interest in Japan increased in the 1980s, following the so-called "economic miracle", this interest was largely in society and economy, rather than literature; indeed, Fowler (*Rendering Words* 4) cites that only fifty-four and twenty-two Japanese texts had been translated into US and UK English respectively in 1981, while the number of texts translated from all other languages that year was 1086 and 1035 respectively. So, while Japanese literature saw a "golden age" in the 1950s (Fowler, *Rendering Words* 8), this was followed by years of floundering in which Japan's cultural sway was limited in comparison to that of its economic power. As a result, many translators were encouraged to treat Japan as "the Other", exaggerate its foreignness, and encourage an exoticized view of the country (Fowler, *Rendering Words* 6), yet simultaneously, and contradictorily, be accessible to the average reader.

Modern Japan

Younger readers may express some confusion at this: Japan's cultural power has been considered a key part of its economic and political agenda for quite some time following the nation's rebranding efforts of "Cool Japan" that were solidified in the 2000s (Ronalds 27). Hijiya-Kirschner (144) notes that while Japanese writers, up to and including the twentieth century, were avid readers of international literature, they rarely aspired for their own literature to be translated. This, Hijiya-Kirschner (145) says, changed in the 1990s, when periodicals promoted translation out of Japanese, alongside support programs and prizes, though many Japanese authors continued to refuse to grant translation rights. More modern writers, however, have taken to performing what Hijiya-Kirschner (147) refers to as "pretranslation" (that is, the act of writing in a manner that presupposes translation), and refers to Haruki Murakami as a pre-eminent user of such a form. Hijiya-Kirschner (148) notes that while pretranslation is not unique to Japanese, it is certainly very present in the ways that writers attempt to make a text distant from its home nation, both linguistically and in descriptions of locales and characters. In summary there appears to be an effort in STs to make texts *less* Japanese in order to appeal to the international audience.

Keene and Gibeau

The theory discussed thus far can be seen in the different views that the two translators have brought to their respective translations of *Ningen Shikkaku*. Donald Keene (1922-2019) is an extremely famous translator, both within and outside of Japan, and was known particularly for his work during Fowler's (*Rendering Words* 8) aforementioned "golden age" of translation in the 1950s. Working as an intelligence officer in WWII, Keene was interested in the diaries of Japanese soldiers that he translated, leading him to gradually increase his role as a translator after the war and become one of the leading Japanologists of his, if not all, time.

Mark Gibeau is a current senior lecturer of Japanese language and Culture at Australian National University, specializing in literary translation and Japanese post-war literature. Gibeau and Keene share some similarities insofar as both were professors at the time their translations were published, and interest in similar Japanese authors; obviously, however, their translations must certainly be different enough to warrant Gibeau's retranslation. Commenting on this, Gibeau (138) says that *A Shameful Life* "is not intended to be a criticism of [Keene's] work" but notes that his "answers" to the questions of translation "differ significantly from Keene's answers" (140).

Methodology

This research intends to consider how the effect of specific language techniques used by Dazai, making up his "style", have been replicated for English audiences by considering how his magnum opus has been translated. *Ningen Shikkaku* was chosen because, as his last completed work, it shows Dazai's coming-of-age as an author (Lyons 17), as well as a variety of examples of his stylistic techniques. Drawing on two translations, specific short sections, in which the ST is compared with the TT and TT2, will be chosen for dissection.

In comparing the three texts, I shall consider the techniques that the translators of both TT1 and TT2 have used to emulate Dazai's ST, and their respective effects on the audience. The aim is not to look for whether the translators have kept the exact same techniques as Dazai, as this would be near impossible in some instances in English. Instead, this analysis explores how, where, and why translations differ from one another, and the potential effects of translation choices on readers, in order to inform later translations of new texts.

Analysis

Narrators and author

As has been discussed in the introduction, Ōba Yōzō and Dazai Osamu are fictionalized versions of Tsushima Shūji, and *Ningen Shikkaku* sets itself apart from large swathes of Dazai's work in being a far more fictionalized account of his life. Within *Ningen Shikkaku* itself, though, lies a hidden *fourth* character: the unnamed narrator, who provides us with further opportunity for unreliable narration. While Shūji masquerades as Dazai, Dazai fictionalizes himself in Yōzō (who, by his own admission, never speaks a single word of truth), and then finally the obtrusive unnamed narrator who has never known Yōzō reads his diaries and immediately notes his contempt for him. The mystery of narration and truth becomes ever more confusing, as while our unnamed narrator has no reason to lie, and Yōzō is supposedly writing a journal that is not intended for other readers yet reads as a performative memoir, we cannot shake the belief that there are lies, hidden truths or a message from Dazai in the words of the characters. These four characters (Shūji, Dazai, Yōzō, and the narrator), all similar and yet distinct, create something of a house of mirrors, wherein truth is distorted, and any hope of finding the reality of events becomes difficult, if not impossible.

The difficulty, then, becomes extracting Dazai's sincerity from this web of writers: is it Dazai, the unnamed reader of the diaries, or Yōzō speaking? Is the lack of clarity intended to be more "clowning" on the behalf of Dazai? Should readers even be concerned about this given that Dazai's suicide leaves these questions forever unanswered? These are questions often posed by Dazai's translators, and, of course, spring forth a variety of interpretations.

Dazai Osamu's Style

Referring solely to Dazai's ST for the moment, we can look to Dazai's "language habits" (Wales 346) for an idea of what we should consider in translation. Lyons (ix) summarizes his style succinctly in writing that "while Dazai's language is accessible and evocative, it is also idiosyncratic and sometimes oblique", and points to his "long and meandering" sentences, repeating "words or phrases from one sentence to another", paragraphs that "run on for a page or more", "direct quoted statements without quotation marks", and "the shift of pronoun referent within a single paragraph" as his most notable techniques. This typically means that while Dazai's style lends itself to short, simple clauses in Japanese that flow readily into one another and excluding information such as the subject, it causes issues in translation with sentences too long for English to sustain comprehensibly, and often requires changing subtle shifts into new sentences and even paragraphs.

In this research, I will look specifically at his extended sentences (as they often include far more clauses and sub-clauses than can realistically be used in English), quoted statements without quotation marks, and others. These have been chosen because they directly relate to the interpretation of the narrative voice within *Ningen Shikkaku*, as will be discussed individually with examples. While I discuss Dazai's style, there is no doubt that similar techniques will be used by other writers, as is always the case in any language, and so this research also hopes to add perspective upon which translators of other authors can consider translation based on style.

Mind Style

Bockting describes mind style as being "concerned with the construction and expression in language of the conceptualization of reality in a particular mind" (159); that is, that the use of language indicates the way the world is perceived at any given moment by a character through their narration. This is crucial within texts such as Dazai's where the narrator is not omniscient but merely a character: In *Ningen Shikkaku*, readers are always aware that Dazai is author, yet

similar to his character and narrator, Yōzō, and so we can feel an overlap between the style and voice of the two. In considering the below techniques, we should be aware of how they are all representative of the mind of Yōzō, and indeed perhaps Dazai himself.

Example 1: Free Indirect Discourse

Maier (346) refers to dialogue without quotations as part of “free indirect discourse”. Free Indirect Discourse (henceforth FID) is a mix of indirect or reported speech in which the speech of a character and that of the narrator blends, so it is difficult to tell which of the two is speaking and is often marked by a lack of reporting clause. This can be marked by a merging of narrative and story-time, what Wales (120, 199-200) refers to as “Histoire” and “Discours” respectively. For example, while a story may be narrated in past tense (Histoire), the character is experiencing it in their present (Discours), and thus in a merging of the two voices one can see the change in voice through tense.

However, FID does not wholly match with Dazai’s style: as mentioned before, our narrator and character in *Ningen Shikkaku* are one and the same, and so we are not shifting from omniscient narrator to character, but from narrator to deeper within the mind of the character (who is that self-same narrator). It is often used to represent a form of retreat by Yōzō, who, unable to address his feelings nor communicate with others, falls back in on himself.

For example, let us consider the below passage:

人間、失格。

もはや、自分は、完全に、人間で無くなりました。

ここへ来たのは初夏の頃で、鉄の格子の窓から病院の庭の小さい池に紅い睡蓮の花が咲いているのが見えたが、それから三つき経ち、庭にコスモスが咲きはじめ、思いがけなく故郷の長兄が、ヒラメを連れて自分を引き取りにやって来て、父が先月未だに胃潰瘍でなくなったこと、自分たちはもうお前の過去は問わぬ、生活の心配もかけないつもり、何もなくていい、その代り、いろいろ未練もあるだろうがすぐに東京から離れて、田舎で療養生活をはじめてくれ、お前が東京でしでかした事の後仕未だは、だいたい渋谷がやってくれた筈だから、それ気にしないでいい、とれいの生真面目な緊張したような口調で言うのでした。

(Dazai 147)

Disqualified as a human being.

I had now ceased utterly to be a human being.

I came at the beginning of summer. Through the iron bars over the windows I could see water-lilies blossoming in the little pond of the hospital. Three months later, when the cosmos were beginning to bloom in the garden, my eldest brother and Flatfish came, to my great surprise, to take me out. My brother informed me in his habitually serious, strained voice that my father had died of gastric ulcers at the end of the previous month. “We won’t ask any questions about your past and we’ll see to it that you have no worries as far as your living expenses are concerned. You won’t have to do anything. The only thing we ask is that you leave Tokyo immediately. I know you undoubtedly have all kinds of attachments here, but we want you to begin your convalescence afresh in the country”. He added that I need not worry about my various commitments in Tokyo. Flatfish would take care of them.

A human, failed.

I had, utterly and completely, ceased to be human.

When I arrived, it was early summer, and, peering through the bars of my window, I could see the red blossoms of lilies floating atop the small pond in the hospital garden. Three months later the cosmos were starting to bloom, and, my eldest brother, with Flounder in tow, appeared out of the blue to get me out. Father had died of a gastric ulcer at the end of last month. We don't care about your past. We don't want you to worry about money. You don't have to do anything. In exchange, you have to leave everything, get out of Tokyo right away, and go to the countryside to recover. We know you still have unfinished business in Tokyo but Shibuta has already taken care of most of the loose ends so you don't need to worry about it. My brother spoke in his characteristically tense, somber manner.

(Gibeau 115-116)

In one of the most memorable sections of the text, as Yōzō is at his absolute lowest and, moments before his final diary ends, we see how the character's mind wanders: He conflates his arrival and departure within a single sentence, the blooming of the lilies and cosmos painting the background of an otherwise sombre, one-sided conversation between himself and his brother. As with most other times in which Dazai opts for this dialogue without quotations, Yōzō is devoid of agency, and has retreated to the recesses of his mind, incapable and/or unwilling to voice his concerns or act on them. We understand here that Yōzō is empty, and that things happen around him, but he no longer acts; he is, as he was described in the final photograph, "devoid of expression" (Keene 16).

In Keene's translation, there is a considered use of quotation marks, alongside some syntactic reformatting: while Dazai ends his sentence with a comment on his brother's tone, Keene precedes his quotes with this. However, Keene does eschew traditional English conventions by including quotations within the paragraph, rather than beginning a new line. It is interesting to note that he also follows the large slab of quotations with a simple sentence to summarize Shibuta's¹ role in this, which was otherwise included in the brother's speech in the ST. Finally, and most importantly, Keene has translated the singular, long, winding sentence into a variety of shorter, sharper, sentences, moving hypotaxis to parataxis.

Keene's use of quotation marks where there are none in the Japanese is fairly consistent, as we will see in the other examples, and was likely used to avoid confusion because Dazai's technique is not used in the same way as FID. The use of parataxis, on the other hand, is an effective way of communicating Yōzō's apathy, particularly as, while the sentence itself is extensive, the clauses are exceptionally short and simple to parse in the ST.

In contrast, Gibeau's translation does not have quotation marks, and attempts to relay at least part of the ST's hypotaxis by using multiple commas and conjunctions until Yōzō's brother begins speaking. While the hypotaxis does give a momentary sense of confusion, the sentences group specific ideas, such as Yōzō's arrival followed by the arrival of his brother and Shibuta in the next sentence: the hypotaxis is not sustained enough to capture the ST's strangeness nor detachment. The lack of quotation marks, emphasized by the pronoun "we" that was present in the ST and indicate it is not Yōzō speaking, do well to capture the strange retreat by Yōzō into his mind, however. This effect appears to better capture the ST's escapism

¹The translation of the more commonly used nickname, ヒラメ (Hirame) differs in the two translations, so I will defer to his real name instead.

and helps readers to imagine Yōzō as the empty husk who is now beyond caring about the situation.

Example 2: Hypotaxis

“Hypotaxis”, as per the definition put forward by Wales (204), is a heavy use of subordination by means of conjunctions to connect clauses. In her research of English-language hypotaxis, Cerban (52) refers to the 2006 short story *Manhattan Days* by Hermione Lee to describe its use and effects: Interestingly, while there is indeed a heavy use of conjunctions and the associated punctuation of commas and semicolons, the sentences are relatively short, in direct contrast to Dazai’s use in which his sentences can span entire paragraphs, and thereby entire pages.

Of importance is Cerban’s (53-4) discussion of how these clauses are either a form of *elaboration* (a clause that expands on another, generally giving additional information while focusing on the same event or idea), *enhancement* (a clause that qualifies another with circumstantial information such as place or time, etc.), or *extension* (a clause that provides new information, gives an exception or alternative). Dazai’s use of hypotaxis is largely one of *elaboration* and *enhancement*: There are often ideas that have multiple new actions performed while serving the same main action, and, when these actions have reached their limit of information, he swiftly moves to a new action and fills it, too, with additional information. The effect is largely one of confusion, wherein objects or actions are flooding one’s view while a hyperactive narrator tries to detail every minutiae to his audience; at the same time, the numerous actions can feel disjointed, like the fleeting memories of a dream not fully remembered.

While hypotaxis can be seen in the example above, similar examples are recorded throughout *Ningen Shikkaku*, such as below:

しかし、はじめは、この男を好人物、まれに見る好人物とばかり思い込み、さすが人間恐怖の自分も全く油断をして、東京のよい案内者が出来た、くらいに思っていました。自分は、実は、ひとりでは、電車に乗ると車掌がおそろしく、歌舞伎座へはいりたくても、あの正面玄関の緋の絨緞が敷かれてある階段の両側に並んで立っている案内嬢たちがおそろしく、レストランへはいると、自分の背後にひっそり立って、皿のあくのを待っている給仕のボーイがおそろしく、殊にも勘定を払う時、ああ、ぎごちない自分の手つき、自分は買い物をしてお金を手渡す時には、吝嗇ゆえでなく、あまりの緊張、あまりの恥ずかしさ、あまりの不安、恐怖に、くらくら目まいして、世界が真暗になり、ほとんど半狂乱の気持ちになってしまって、値切るどころか、お釣を受け取るのを忘れるばかりでなく、買った品物を持ち帰るのを忘れた事さえ、しばしばあったほどなので、とても、ひとりで東京のまちを歩けず、それで仕方なく、一日一ぱい家の中で、ごろごろしていたという内情もあったのでした。

(Dazai 45-6)

At first, however, I was convinced that Horiki was a nice fellow, an unusually nice fellow, and despite my habitual dread of human beings I relaxed my guard to the extent of thinking that I had found a fine guide to Tokyo. To tell the truth, when I first came to the city, I was afraid to board a streetcar because of the conductor; I

was afraid to enter the Kabuki Theatre for fear of the usherettes standing along the sides of the red-carpeted staircase at the at the main entrance; I was afraid to go into a restaurant because I was intimidated by the waiters furtively hovering behind me waiting for my plate to be emptied. Most of all I dreaded paying a bill – my awkwardness when I handed over the money after buying something did not arise from any stinginess, but from excessive tension, excessive embarrassment, excessive uneasiness and apprehension. My eyes would swim in my head, and the whole world grow dark before me, so that I felt half out of my mind. There was no question of bargaining – not only did I often forget to pick up my change, but I quite frequently forgot to take home the things I had purchased. It was quite impossible for me to make my way around Tokyo by myself. I had no choice but to spend whole days at a time lolling about the house.

(Keene 60-1)

In the beginning, however, I thought him a fine fellow indeed. So fine a fellow one hardly saw his like, and, terrified of people though I was, even I was put off my guard as I found myself thinking I had discovered the perfect guide to Tokyo. To be honest, left to my own devices, I was even terrified of the conductors when I set foot on a train. I yearned to see a Kabuki play but was frightened of the young, female ushers who lined either side of the red carpet leading up the theatre steps. At restaurants I was scared of the busboys, lurking silently behind me, waiting to clear my plate. And when it came time to pay the bill – oh, how I fumbled. I grew dizzy when it came time to hand over the money. My head spun, the world went dark, and I thought I was going half mad. Not out of parsimony, you see, but because I was so nervous, so embarrassed, so anxious and terrified. Far from trying to haggle the price down, not only would I often forget to take my change, it was so bad that I often even forgot to take the thing I had just purchased. It was utterly impossible for me to go walking about Tokyo on my own. That was the real reason I spent whole days lazing about at home.

(Gibeau 39)

As Yōzō meets Horiki, the audience is presented with a sentence far longer than could be sustained in English, using commas as its only form of punctuation in the ST, describing Yōzō's inability to live in Tokyo. The three rapid fire は at the beginning immediately prepare the audience for what is to be a fumbling speech, as we can see again in his triplicate repetition of おそろしく and あまり, only for it all to be contained, finally, as an expansive relative clause to という内情もあったのでした. Yōzō presents the audience with a variety of verbs strung together to create a feeling of hyperactivity, as if it is all too much all at once, and thus give readers the same feeling of desperation that he himself feels.

Keene's translation captures this by repeating "I was afraid" and connecting the clauses via semicolons, alongside the repetition of "excessive"; however, in contrast to the earlier example, he does not use parataxis in place of hypotaxis, and instead groups ideas into sentences with often fewer than two clauses, much like Gibeau in the earlier example.

Gibeau's translation instead replaces the three "おそろしく" with "terrified", then "frightened", and finally "concerned", making Yōzō's speech seem far more controlled than in the ST, though he does keep the three "あまり" as "so". Further, he largely uses the shorter, sharper sentences that Keene utilized in the earlier example, creating a sense of rapid-fire examples in which we can see Yōzō falling over himself repeatedly. While each case of hypotaxis is individual and should be treated according to the effect at the time, Dazai often

uses hypotaxis in this way, flooding the reader's view with a variety of examples. In such cases it appears that parataxis, as used by Keene in the first example and Gibeau in the second, is the ideal way to capture this sense in English.

While it may initially seem counterintuitive to use these shorter sentences to express rambling, it is also important that readers appreciate that Dazai is attempting to overwhelm them with numerous examples, and parataxis achieves this effect. It is important that translators approach these techniques not only with an eye to being faithful to them, but also to the effect it has on the audience and, particularly in this case, the characterization of the protagonist. This is particularly important in texts such as *Ningen Shikkaku* where the character's journey and self-image are the driving force of the novel, rather than necessarily the events that occur around them.

Example 3: Parentheses

To summarize briefly, stream of consciousness is a form of writing in which a person's thoughts and impressions are written down as they occur, including the mistakes, dead ends, recursions, and so on that one might expect within their own thought patterns (Wales 393-5); Dazai often relegates his innermost thoughts to within the parentheses, or, in other cases, goes on extended tangents about unrelated events or memories, similar to stream of consciousness. Let us consider the below example:

秋の、寒い夜でした。自分は、ツネ子（といったと覚えています、記憶が薄れ、たしかではありません。情死の相手の名前をさえ忘れていような自分なのです）に言いつけられたとおりに、銀座裏の、或る屋台のお鮓やで、少しもおいしくない鮓を食べながら、（そのひとの名前は忘れても、その時の鮓のまずさだけは、どうした事か、はっきり記憶に残っています。そうして、青大将の顔に似た顔つきの、丸坊主のおやじが、首を振り振り、いかにも上手みたいにごまかしながら鮓を握っている様も、眼前に見るように鮮明に思い出され、後年、電車などで、はて見た顔だ、といろいろ考え、なんだ、あの時の鮓やの親爺に似ているんだ、と気が付き苦笑した事も再三あったほどでした。あのひとの名前も、また、顔かたちさえ記憶から遠ざかっている現在なお、あの鮓やの親爺の顔だけは絵にかけるほど正確に覚えているとは、よっぽどあの時の鮓がまずく、自分に寒さと苦痛を与えたものと思われま。もともと、自分は、うまい鮓を食わせる店というところに、ひとに連れられて行って食っても、うまいと思った事は、いちどもありませんでした。大き過ぎるのです。親指くらいの大きさにキチッと握れないものかしら、といつも考えていました）そのひとを、待っていました。

(Dazai 61-2)

It was a cold autumn night. I was waiting at a sushi stall back of the Ginza for Tsuneko (that, as I recall, was her name, but the memory is too blurred for me to be sure: I am the sort of person who can forget even the name of the women with whom he attempted suicide) to get off from work. The sushi I was eating had nothing to recommend it. Why, when I have forgotten her name, should I be able to remember so clearly how bad the sushi tasted? And I can recall with absolute clarity the close-cropped head of the old man – his face was like a snake's – wagging from side to side as he made the sushi, trying to create the illusion that he

was a real expert. It has happened to me two or three times since that I have seen on the streetcar what seemed to be a familiar face and wondered who it was, only to realize with a start that the person opposite me looked like the old man from the sushi stall. Now, when her name and even her face are fading from my memory, for me to be able to remember that old man's face so accurately I could draw it, is surely proof of how bad the sushi was and how it chilled and distressed me. I should add that even when I have been taken to restaurants famous for sushi I have never enjoyed it much.

(Keene 78-9)

It was a cold, autumn night. At Tsuneko's request (I think that's what she called herself but my memory has faded so I can't be sure. That says a lot about the kind of person I am. I even forget the name of the person I tried to commit suicide with), I went to a sushi stall in one of the alleys of Ginza and, eating truly terrible sushi (though I can't recall her name, the sushi – or rather, how bad it was – remains firmly fixed in my memory. I remember the old man running the stand had a crew cut and a face like a Japanese rat snake. He made a show of flailing about as he made the sushi, pretending he actually knew what he was doing. I can see all of this as clearly as if it were right before me. Years later and more than a few times I have caught myself looking at a face that seems oddly familiar before realizing, with a wry smile, that it looks like that old man from the sushi stand. Though the woman's name and, by now, even her face have faded from my mind, the fact that I can still recall that old man's face so clearly I could draw it from memory shows how bad the sushi was and how cold and miserable it made me feel. In any case, though I've been taken to supposedly famous sushi restaurants, I've never enjoyed sushi. The pieces are too big. Why couldn't they just make them smaller? Why not just make them thumb-sized?), I waited for her to finish her shift.

(Gibeau 52-3)

Here we see that Yōzō discusses the events prior to one of his many suicide attempts. Within the brackets, specifically the second in which he includes six individual sentences, we see that Yōzō's mind wanders, seemingly more interested in the sushi that he ate than the woman with whom he is about to commit suicide. Nonetheless, it is obvious that this is an attempt to deflect from the situation unfolding, and despite Yōzō's protestations, the audience is aware of the importance this moment holds for him: ironically, in his attempts to hide what he truly feels behind glib humour, Yōzō instead brings greater attention to it. Whether Yōzō is truly trying to hide this information, or instead highlighting it, is largely up to the reader: we are left to wonder whether Yōzō is the callous individual who forgets the name of the woman he commits suicide with, or instead so thoroughly ashamed of the event that he tries to palm it off with more "clowning".

The most obvious difference between the ST and Keene's translation is the lack of a second set of brackets. While Yōzō interrupts himself twice within his sentence, Keene elects to make this interruption once and instead push the second set of brackets out so that, instead of an interruption, it appears as a more natural flow of mind from Tsuneko to the sushi he is eating. Unsurprisingly, this creates something of a departure from the ST: while Yōzō brings us back to the present by ending his sentence with “そのひとを、待っていました”, emphasizing Tsuneko's existence when outside of his brackets, Keene's translation instead leaves the audience focusing on the sushi at the end of the paragraph. As a result, it appears that Yōzō is indeed more focused on the foul sushi than Tsuneko, creating a much more callous

appearance than is present in the ST. Furthermore, Keene also removes Yōzō's more strange musings on sushi, in that they are "too big" and should be "thumb-sized", which again adds to his strange and desperate clowning even in this situation.

In contrast to Keene, Gibeau's translation does include the second set of brackets, as in the ST. Interestingly, he opts for several instances of parataxis within the brackets, breaking up often much longer sentences. It is otherwise a fairly direct translation that keeps the emphasis on Tsuneko at the end of the paragraph, and manages to place the brackets within the same area as the ST; given the opposing syntax of Japanese and English, alongside Dazai's intent to delay the final verb in the sentence to emphasize Yōzō's evasiveness, this is an ideal, if at times difficult, way to translate the use of brackets in this instance and others.

Discussion

Unsurprisingly, there are many differences between the translations of Keene and Gibeau; even Gibeau himself notes that if this were not the case, his translation would need not exist. We shall begin, then, with surface level differences indicative of the shift in translation and the view of Japan over the past sixty years: the role of foreignization within the texts. While Keene makes note that the text is an "unquestionably Japanese product" (3), it is obvious that the average reader at the time did not know much about Japan aside from the propaganda that had been involved in WWII (Fowler 6), a war that had ended little more than a decade before the translation was published. This is reinforced by Keene's translation of what are now more commonly accepted words: 鮓 is *sushi* (italicized as foreign), 浴衣 is "summer suit" or otherwise "kimono" (despite being a different article of clothing), 焼酎 is gin, and several other minor changes abound in the book. Aside from the lack of commentary on sushi, as was noted earlier, this rarely manifests as a complete omission or edit within Keene's translation, but it does speak to a softening of the Japanese-ness of the text that Keene himself champions. In the 60 years since, Japanese culture (at least in clothing, food, and beverages) has become significantly embedded enough that these changes do not exist in Gibeau's translation, and while only a minor shift towards the ST, it certainly speaks to a change in views of Japan, as well as creating a more Japanese image of the world as presented within the text.

There are, however, much greater differences that exist between the two in terms of their language use. As has been discussed, the major concern in translating Dazai is the effect on the reader, as the author is both dead and mysterious, and so it is important to consider the context of the technique being used, rather than considering the technique in isolation. For example, while Dazai frequently uses hypotaxis, it was noted that in some areas parataxis better replicated the emotional frenzy in English, though this was not always the case. In Example 2, while Gibeau changes hypotaxis to parataxis, which is more apt for representing Dazai's repeated fumbles, Keene presents this just as well using semicolons and repeating "I was afraid" in the beginning, though the latter end is perhaps better represented through Gibeau's parataxis. Keene appears to be of the same mind that parataxis is an apt replacement for a linguistically impossible level of hypotaxis, as we see in Example 1, though he uses it infrequently in comparison to Gibeau. In short, effective techniques depend on the surrounding context, so while parataxis has been effective in many instances, it is not definitively the "correct" choice.

Dazai's lack of quotations are perhaps easier to make a definitive suggestion upon, given that Keene's translation reintroduces quotation marks. It is understandable, given the outright strangeness and confusion this technique can bring to a reader, and he does attempt to recreate this strangeness by eschewing English quotation style, but it is still undeniably a significant change that does not meet the ST's effect on the reader. With the benefit of hindsight, Gibeau's translation opts to keep this technique, which does undeniably help the

effect on the reader, and while it is not perfect (Dazai relegates the quotative clause from a new speaker to the end of the sentence, if it is included at all, which is not as simple in English where an audience is familiar with this clause in the middle) it is certainly a closer translation to the ST. This is perhaps Dazai's most idiosyncratic technique, and one with few similarities to English, so it is understandable that it caused issues for both translators.

Finally, Dazai's use of brackets is more inline with the Western canon and accepted techniques, and so we would assume to find few issues with it in translation; despite this, Keene once again decided to drop the extended brackets as seen in Example 3. While it is difficult to ascertain Keene's exact reasoning, it would not be unreasonable to assume that, as with the lack of quotations, it was deemed to be too strange for the average English reader, despite similar examples existing in Western literature. Regardless of the reasoning, Gibeau's translation shows us that it is possible to recreate the use of brackets in translation, and indeed that it works well with a very similar effect on the audience. While the hypotaxis within the brackets could not be recreated, parsing it to relatively short sentences and including Dazai's musings on sushi make for a very close translation. This is in contrast to Keene's, which can leave the reader thinking more of sushi than Yōzō's desire to avoid thinking about Tsuneko.

In summary, while various techniques have been trialled by both authors, and while they are not always exactly the same as the ST, it appears that the 60 years that have passed since the release of *No Longer Human* have given Western audiences greater insight into Japan and allowed for wider understanding of less familiar techniques such as Dazai's lack of quotations and extreme hypotaxis. Whether this is true, or whether modern audiences will still refer to Keene's translation, remains to be seen, but the difference in translations speaks to an increasingly globalized world of literature.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research has aimed to explore how Dazai's style has been translated over sixty years by considering the translation of Keene and the contemporary Gibeau. In doing so, it has become evident that close analysis of both the *meaning* and the *style* of any given text are important to fully achieve a translation, notwithstanding that the translator's interpretation of a text is only one possible interpretation. As a result, translators should aim to preserve the style of the text as much as the meaning, as the two are interconnected and combine to produce effects on the reader.

One of the more surprising revelations of this research was that a one-to-one translation of style will not always yield the same effect on the audience: while Dazai regularly used hypotaxis, this was often better relayed in English through parataxis. Once again, this reinforces the need for translators to focus on the effect of any given style and consider how this might best be shown in their own language. Particularly, Dazai was known for novel stylistic techniques, and a desire to make the text more accessible, as was seen in Keene's translation at times, only removed the markedness of certain sections, denying the audience of the TT a deeper understanding of the character's emotions. While translation norms, particularly in Japanese-English, have changed with respect to such domestication strategies, it remains a balancing act for translators.

Finally, while this research has focused on Japanese-English translation, and on a single author, it should be noted that many of the suggestions made here could be related to other authors, and indeed other languages. This research encourages translators to be conscious of their approach to translating style and make use of the possibilities of their target language, noting that changing the stylistic technique may sometimes create a better outcome in translation if it more closely renders the effect of the source text. As always, however, research can always be improved, and such is the case here: Dazai wrote a variety of stories using a

variety of techniques, and this research has barely covered the surface of *Ningen Shikkaku*, let alone his numerous short stories. Furthermore, the entire premise of this article, “style”, is one with varying views and definitions, and leaves it open to further criticism and research beyond the limited scope I have ascribed it.

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