

Fracturing the Translation or Translating the Fractures? Questions in the Western Reception of Non-Linear Narratives in Japanese Arts and Poetics

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IN A COUNTRY OF TOPSY-TURVY

Let us begin with a quote from the well-known astronomer and American diplomat Percival Lowell, who knew Japan well:¹

The boyish belief that on the other side of our globe all things are of necessity upside down is startlingly brought back to the man when he first sets foot at Yokohama. [...] they seem to him to see everything topsy-turvy. [...] Intellectually, at least, their attitude sets gravity at defiance. For to the mind's eye their world is one huge, comical antithesis of our own. What we regard intuitively in one way from our standpoint, they as intuitively observe in a diametrically opposite manner from theirs. To speak backwards, write backwards, read backwards, is but the *a b c* of their contrariety.²

An anecdote recounted by the art historian YASHIRO Yukio about the *Heiji Tale Scroll* will suffice to illustrate Lowell's observation. The Scroll depicts the so-called Heiji disturbance that occurred in Kyoto in 1159. One evening, when he was giving a series of lectures on Japanese Art History at Harvard, an old professor of aesthetics confessed to Yashiro that, as a Westerner, he had naturally thought that the scroll must begin on the left. So he used to explain to his students that the soldier at the top of the procession was the symbolic herald of the entire epic. The figure was as dramatic as the opening of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony: 'Thus Fate knocks at the door.' Listening to Yashiro's lecture however, he recognized his error, and good-humouredly told the Japanese guest that he would no longer be able to use his striking comparison. 'Funny as

it was', Yashiro recalls, 'his confession was so painful to me that I could not find words to console him.'³

Yashiro noted that this would serve as a lesson in the future. Indeed, the case gains a vivid actuality when we examine what has recently happened in English translations of Japanese comics. Take one of the most famous examples: *Akira*, by OOTOMO Katsuhiro. The original, completed in 1984, was translated into English in 1988. Naturally the story goes from right to left in the Japanese original, and it should be reversed from left to right in the Western translation. Many pages were therefore turned around and printed in reverse.⁴ Though appropriate in appearance, this inversion caused an unexpected problem. Most of the characters, who were right-handed, all of a sudden became left-handed. Tetsuo, one of the protagonists, who suffers from hypertrophy of his right arm, suddenly has to experience an identity crisis, as it were, because of the iconographical, semiotic as well as syntactical 'fracture' which his character undergoes in the English translation. IWAAKI Hitoshi's masterpiece, *Kiseijū*, or *The Parasite Beast*, tells the story of a boy whose right hand was kidnapped by an extra-terrestrial parasite, which he nicknamed 'migy' (deriving from 'migi', 'right' in Japanese). When 'translated' into the reversed English edition, the parasite can hardly be named 'migy', and the basic structure of the original narrative had to suffer from a major 'fracture'.⁵ In the case of TEZUKA Osamu's *Buddha* (1973–1982), the reversed images of the translation even violated a social taboo, as the Buddha no longer blessed children with his right hand but with his left.⁶ As Indian readers may not know that the English version has reversed the images of the original Japanese, this may be interpreted as a Japanese racial slur against Indian people. But, surely, we do not expect that the original be altered and 'fractured' for the sake of a 'politically correct' English translation?

A BLIND SPOT IN TRANSLATION STUDIES

Probably directly inspired by the remark by Lowell quoted above, the well-known Japanologist Basil Hall Chamberlain included an entry on 'Topsy-Turveydom' under the letter 'T' in his famous *Things Japanese*:

It has often been remarked that the Japanese do many things in a way that runs directly counter to European ideas of what is natural and proper. To the Japanese themselves our ways appear equally unaccountable. It was only the other day that a

Tokyo lady asked the present writer why foreigners did so many things topsy-turvy, instead of doing them naturally, after the manner of her country-people. Here are a few instances of this contrariety [...].⁷

According to Chamberlain's observation, 'Japanese books begin at what we should call the end, the word *finis* (終) coming where we put the title-page. The foot-notes are printed at the top of the page, and the reader puts in his marker at the bottom.' He continues: 'Politeness prompts them to remove, not their head-gear, but their foot-gear. [...] In Europe, gay bachelors are apt to be captivated by the charms of actresses. In Japan, where there are no actresses to speak of, it is the women who fall in love with fashionable actors.'⁸

Lowell tries to transmit to his reader the secret of survival in this country of Topsy-Turvy. The concept of 'equal but opposite' is the first step. The words by Chamberlain quoted above seem to have been adapted, in more sophisticated prose, directly from Lowell's: 'In a land where, to allow one's understanding the freer play of indoor life, one begins, not by taking off his hat, but by removing his boots, he gets at the very threshold a hint that humanity is to be approached the wrong end to.'⁹ Lowell pursued his logic further:

When, after thus entering a house, he tries next to gain admittance to the mind of its occupant, the suspicion becomes a certainty. He discovers that this people talk, so to speak, backwards; that before he can hope to comprehend them, or make himself understood in return, he must learn to present his thoughts arranged in inverse order from the one in which they naturally suggest themselves to his mind. His sentences must all be turned inside out. He finds himself lost in a labyrinth of language.¹⁰

His advice is still relevant today. When translating Western texts into Japanese, translators know well that the word order has to be turned upside-down and that one has to begin from the end of a sentence to come back to the beginning. Simultaneous interpreters agree that one of their main difficulties is that they have to wait until the end of a sentence to begin the interpretation. When it comes to paragraph making or composition, Lowell's view is no less pertinent. What should be declared at the beginning in Western-style negotiations is seldom made explicit according to Japanese custom, and those who are not accustomed with these differences may feel at a loss about what to do. Lowell concludes: 'The same seems to be true of the thoughts it embodies. The further he goes the more obscure the whole process becomes, until, after long

groping about for some means of orienting himself, he lights at last upon the clue. This clue consists in “the survival of the unfittest.”¹¹

This brings us to our main question. *Shocking au Japon* is a satirical caricature of Japan by Georges Bigot.¹² What is ‘shocking’ is not necessarily inherent in Japan, but derives from the lack of concordance between things Japanese and the Western mindset that fails to comprehend them. As Lowell observed, many aspects should be inverted, whether upside-down, left-to-right or inside-out, so that the communication or translation can be established. The ‘shocking’ effect is the outcome of the fractures that occur in the process. However, this structural reversal tends to be concealed in the process of translation or simultaneous interpretation. Those who see only the end product in the target language cannot recognize (and, normally, should not perceive) that such distortions or fractures have taken place, and should not be left under the impression that something has gone wrong. But if such invisible fractures are indispensable and inevitable in the process of translation, then we automatically have to call into question the classic notion of equivalence in translation.¹³ If translations worthy of the name are not exonerated from the risk of fractures, and in fact such fractures are the necessary prerequisites, the problem is no longer that of successfully avoiding (or pretending to avoid) fractures, but of understanding where the cause of this ‘fracture’ resides. The question will be threefold.

Firstly, there is a case in which the ‘fracture’ potentially already exists in the original, and is made manifest only in the process of translation. A classic example is the *haikai* by Bashô: ‘Kareeda ni Karasu no tomaritari Aki nokure’. Although every student of Japanese literature knows it by heart, we are not sure if the raven (*karasu*) perching on (*tomaritari*) the dead branch (*Kareeda*) is singular or plural; and we cannot say if ‘*aki-no-kure*’ means ‘the end of fall’ or ‘the evening of a fall’. The ambiguity in the Japanese original can thus be seen as the cause of ‘fracture’ in translation.¹⁴ Secondly, we have the cases, seen above, of such ‘fractures’ being buried, as it were, in the end-product of translation (which looks, naturally, seamless); the only way to uncover these would be to make a textual comparison between the original and the translations. Thirdly, therefore, one may observe that in most cases the ‘fractures’ remain unseen simply because the translators and interpreters have taken it upon themselves to conceal them, as if it were part of their professional duty.

TRANSLATION AS 'INVISIBLE FRACTURE'

Unavoidable sacrifices are requested in the process of translation.¹⁵ This can be frequently observed in the process of diplomatic negotiations. Scholars in international relations researching de-classified diplomatic documents look for discrepancies in the translated terms. 'Fractures' are thus revealed only retrospectively. In other words, the efficacy of diplomacy consists in knowing how to dissimulate 'fractures'. I suggest that this should also apply to poetry in translation.

How can, then, the topsy-turvy, upside-down, inside-out survive in the process of translation? Can a fracture be faithfully transmitted as a fracture through translation, or should it be sacrificed for the sake of (illusory) communication?¹⁶ Is it a case of fracturing the translation or translating the fractures? Is it possible to transmit the fracture without causing fracture, or is it inevitable that a new fracture occurs when one tries to transmit the fracture? In the rest of this paper, I will examine these questions of translatability by focusing on the Western reception of 'non-linear narratives', necessarily focusing on a microscopic range of Japanese arts and poetics.

HAIKAI AND EPIGRAM

Let us begin by revising a classical debate: Is a *Hokku* the equivalent of the 'epigram'? For William George Aston, the first author of *A History of Japanese Literature* (1898), 'It would be absurd to put forward any serious claim on behalf of *Haikai* to an important position in literature.'¹⁷ Chamberlain however noted: 'Their native name is *Hokku* (also *Haiku* and *Haikai*), which, for lack of a better equivalent, I venture to translate by 'Epigram', using that term, not in the modern sense of a pointed saying, – *un bon mot de deux rimes orné*, as Boileau has it, – but in its earlier acceptance, as denoting any little piece of verse that expresses a delicate or ingenious thought.'¹⁸

Behind Chamberlain's choice of term is the famous debate among Western Japanologists concerning the appreciation of a famous 'hokku-epigram' by ARAKIDA Moritake: 'Rakka Eda ni modoru to mireba Kochô kana'. Similar to a proverb or a maxim, the piece is hardly a representative 'hokku' and its interpretation as such may reflect early Western scholars' preconceptions. Carl Florenz, famous for his studies in Japanese mythology, proposed the following German translation

in verse:

Augentäuschung

Wie? Schwebt die Blüte, die eben fiel,
 Schon wieder zum Zweig am Baum zurück?
 Das wäre fürwahr ein seltsam Ding!
 Ich näherte mich und schärfte den Blick. . .
 Da fand ich—es war nur ein Schmetterling¹⁹

This version captures the moment when the optical illusion causes a ‘fracture’ in the visual perception. Let us try, then, to relate the syntactical and semantic ‘fractures’ to the poetical ‘cut’ (*kire*) stipulated in Japanese poetics, and then to the fractures that inevitably happen in the process of translation.

In 1895, UEDA Kazutoshi, the first incumbent of the chair of linguistics at the Imperial University of Tokyo, objected to Florenz’s translation, which he saw as too long and as destroying the original flavour. Florenz riposted deploring the disastrous shortness of Japanese poetry, which – if kept in translation – would relegate Japanese literature only to a minor position in world literature.²⁰ Ueda’s objection to Florenz was that by describing the logical development of perception to cognition he had killed the poetical moment. Florenz, in contrast, found in the fragility of the logical construction the weakness of Japanese literature at large. Both Aston and Chamberlain had also tried to translate the same Japanese piece:

Thought I, the fallen flowers
 Are returning to their branch;
 But lo! They were butterflies! (W.G. Aston, 1870)²¹

What I saw as a fallen blossom
 Returning to the branch, lo! it was a butterfly (B.H. Chamberlain, 1888)²²

In comparison with Florenz’s German version, one immediately notices the insertion of the exclamations (‘But lo!’ in Aston or ‘lo!’ in Chamberlain), marking the breaking point of cognition. The exclamation signals the leap of consciousness at the revelation of the truth. While Aston and Chamberlain tried to preserve brevity, they did feel the need to highlight the moment of ‘fracture’ where cognition intervenes to ‘correct’ perception. It is with the same concern that NOGUCHI Yonejirô later returned to the same poem so as to further clarify the point:

I thought I saw the fallen leaves
 Returning to their branches:
 Alas, butterflies were they. (Yone Noguchi, 1914)²³

The gap in cognition occurs in the third line, with Yone Noguchi's use of 'Alas'. Though not explicit here, the word indicating this gap is usually called 'kire-ji' or 'cutting'. KONISHI Jin'ichi, Karen Brazell and Lewis Cook define this as following: '*Kire-ji* (cutting, scissoring word, *caesura*): Semantic and syntactic disjuncture, which lends the verse structural support, allowing it to stand as an independent poem.'²⁴ '*Kire-ji*' can thus be counted among the 'fractures' examined here. How are these 'fractures' in the original rendered in Western translations? Yone Noguchi explains:

What real poetry is in the above, I wonder, except a pretty, certainly not high ordered, fancy of a vignettist; it might pass as fitting specimen if we understand *Hokku* poem, as some Western students delight to understand *Hokku* poem, by the word 'epigram.' Although my understanding of that word is not necessarily limited to the thought of pointed saying, I may not be much mistaken to compare the word with a still almost dead pond where thought or fancy, nay the water, hardly changes or procreates itself; the real *Hokkus*, at least in my mind, are a running living water of poetry where you can reflect yourself to find your own identification.²⁵

THE SOUND OF WATER AND THE CUTTING OF MEANING

Noguchi's reference to the 'dead pond' clearly alludes to the famous hokku by Bashô Matsuo, 'Furuike-ya Kawazu tobikomu mizu no oto'. This is a most typical instance of the notion that 'poetry travels badly'.²⁶ What point exactly was Yone Noguchi making for a British audience? A brief comparison with earlier translations will help clarify this. The first example is from Aston's *A History of Japanese Literature* (I add the Japanese corresponding lines to show how the word order is modified):

An ancient pond!	Furuike ya
With a sound from the water	Midzu no oto
Of the frog as it plunges in. ²⁷	Kawazu tobikomu

The logical rendering of the meaning inevitably causes a formal 'fracture' in the word order. Semantic fidelity is obtained through the sacrifice of the formal sequence of the original, inevitably affecting the poetic sensation. Lafcadio Hearn, the American writer naturalized in Japan as KOIZUMI Yakumo, goes for the opposite solution in his rendering 'Frogs' (also of 1898):

Old Pond—frogs jumping in—sound of water²⁸

Respecting the word order of the original, Hearn breaks the syntax of the translation. This radical choice enables him to transmit the leaping of the

images and the natural development of the mental landscape, obtained thanks to his sensitivity to the acoustic effects in the breathing of the Japanese verse. The ‘cuttings’ create the semantic gaps in which the reader can let his/her imagination work.

Chamberlain’s 1902 version can be seen as a compromise between the previous solutions:

Furu-ike ya/ Kawzu tobikomu/ Mizu no oto

The old pond, aye! and the sound of a frog leaping into the water²⁹

By juxtaposing the original and his own translation, Chamberlain proudly demonstrates his linguistic accuracy. Whether the original should be translated in one line or not was one of the subjects of controversy. While Chamberlain followed Hearn in rendering the poem in one line, he nonetheless made a compromise with Aston by putting ‘and’ after the ‘cut-word’, neutralizing, as it were, the semantic leap. The cutting word ‘ya’ was punctually translated by ‘aye!’ The British philologist also pays attention to the fact that the sound (‘mizu no oto’) is heard at the end, and seems to have rectified the word order from Aston’s rendering. However, the desire to preserve the semantic structure led him to separate ‘sound’ from ‘water.’ This ‘fracture’ between semantics and syntax could not help but bring about a serious consequence: the cosmic isolation and resonance of the ‘sound of water’ in the original was dissolved and replaced by a prosaic and banal observation that the frog’s jumping in the pond caused the sound. Yet more curious is the following excuse: ‘From a European point of view, the mention of the frog spoils these lines completely; for we tacitly include frogs in the same category as monkeys and donkeys, –absurd creatures scarcely to be named without turning verse into caricature.’³⁰ One may suspect the author’s double concern: while excusing himself to the Western readership for deplorably un-poetical inconveniences, Chamberlain does not deny the fact that even Bashô looks ridiculous to the Western eye. OKAKURA Kakuzô, alias Tenshin, is known to have reposted, ‘Are you Donkey, Monkey or Yankee?’ when asked, in America in 1904, ‘Are your Chinese, or Japanese?’³¹ We may speculate that Okakura’s utterance reflects his reading of Chamberlain’s poetics. Yone Noguchi’s own lecture on *Japanese Poetry* (1914) must be located in the context of such pre-histories. His translation reads:

The old pond!
A Frog leapt into—
List, the water sound!³²

Noguchi comments on his translation: 'I should like, to begin with, to ask the Western readers what impression they would ever have from their reading of the above; I will never be surprised if it may sound to them to be merely a musician's alphabet; besides, the thought of a frog is even absurd for a poetical subject.'³³ Once again it is obvious that Noguchi constructs his lecture in reference to Chamberlain and the aesthetic assumptions contained in what Chamberlain did not hesitate to call 'caricature'.

Contrasting this with the 'high poetry' perceived by the Japanese mind in a 'picture of an autumnal desolation reigning on an ancient temple pond whose world-old silence is now broken by a leaping frog', Noguchi explains: 'Basho is supposed to awaken into enlightenment now when he heard the voice bursting out of voicelessness, and the conception that life and death were mere change of condition was deepened into faith.'³⁴ The sound that a tiny ridiculous creature has made is sublimated into the moment of the truth revealed: that which the *Lotus Sutra* called 'the revelation of the truth in all phenomena', or, according to the thirteenth-century Monk Dōgen: 'All represents the Buddha Nature, which ultimately leads us to Nirvana.' But we shall return to this later.

Noguchi comments on the empathy to be established between the author and the reader. 'It is true to say that nobody but the author himself will ever know the real meaning of the poem; which is the reason I say that each reader can become a creator of the poem by his own understanding as if he had written it himself.'³⁵ 'Our Japanese poets at their best, as in the case of some work of William Blake, are the poets of attitude who depend so much on the intelligent sympathy of their readers.'³⁶ By the term 'intelligent sympathy' Noguchi transmits the message that poetic experience cannot be achieved without the participation of the readers. We may suppose Noguchi to be inspired by Okakura's famous *The Book of Tea* (1906). Let us quote from the latter:

Once in the hoary ages in the Ravine of Lung Men [龍門] stood a kiri [桐] tree, a veritable king of the forest. [...] And it came to pass that a mighty wizard made of this tree a wondrous harp [...] but all in vain were the efforts to those who in turn tried to draw melody from its strings [...] At last came Pai Ya [伯牙], the prince of harpists. With tender hand he caressed the harp as one might seek to sooth an unruly horse, and softly touched the chords. He sang of nature and the seasons, of high mountains and flowing waters, and all the memories of the tree awoke! [...] In ecstasy the Celestial monarch asked Pai Ya wherein lay the secret of his victory. 'Sire,' he replied, 'others have failed because they sang but of themselves. I left the

harp to choose its theme, and knew not truly whether the harp had been Pai Ya or Pai Ya were the harp.³⁷

At the end of this mysterious anecdote, Okakura notes: 'At the magic touch of the beautiful the secret chords of our being are awakened, we vibrate and thrill in response to its call. Mind speaks to mind. We listen to the unspoken, we gaze upon the unseen.'³⁸ Significantly, *Seen and Unseen* (1896) was the title of the first collection of English poems published by the young Yone Noguchi.

THE PERFECTION AND IMPERFECTION OF *HAIKAI*

The discussion above has made evident the distance that separates Noguchi from Chamberlain in terms of appreciation of poetry. It will be useful also to consider the section on poetry in *Things Japanese*, where Chamberlain explains how the *Haiku* derived from *Renga*, or linked poems:

A favourite game at these tournaments, called *Renga*, wherein one person composes the second hemistich of a verse and another person has to provide it with a first hemistich, seems to date from the eleventh century. Out of this, at a later date, by the dropping of the second hemistich, grew the *Haikai* or *Hokku*, an ultra-Lilliputian class of poem having but seventeen syllables (5,7,5). [...] Naturally the brevity needed to put *any* statement into so narrow a compass soon led to an elliptical and enigmatic style, which continually crosses the border-line of obscurity.³⁹

Beneath the neutrality of the academic style creeps the author's distrust of the 'obscurity' that stems from the 'elliptical and enigmatic style'. Noguchi felt he had to challenge this view of Japanese *hokku* poetry proposed by such authority of Japanology. Relying upon the words of his friend, Arthur Ransome, Noguchi argues:

I agree with Ransome in saying: 'Poetry is made by a combination of kinetic with potential speech. Eliminate either, and the result is no longer poetry.' But you must know that the part of kinetic speech is left quite unwritten in the *Hokku* poems, and that kinetic language in your mind should combine its force with the potential speech of the poem itself, and make the whole thing as once complete. Indeed, it is the readers who make the *Hokku's* imperfection a perfection of art.⁴⁰

One may find Noguchi's argument confusing, as he does not make the necessary distinction between the inner structure of a poem, on the one hand, and the problem of the participation of the readers, on the other. Further distinction is also required: despite its apparent independence, the *hokku* nevertheless still keeps the traces of its creation in relation

to a linked poem; nor can it be fully disconnected from the role it had as the greeting address in a poetical gathering. The participation of the readership as an indispensable element for the full appreciation of a poem needs to take these ‘gaps’ into account. Yet one should not overlook the fact that here was the most crucial point in Noguchi’s discussion: despite its apparent obscurity and incompleteness, the *hokku*, this tiny and fragile object, requires all the more urgently the participation of the reader to accomplish its completeness. This social function is for Noguchi the essential element of poetic language. The ‘kinetic’ speech act that guarantees the perfection of a poem reaches to the poem from the outside, and is, as it were, absorbed by it. To come back to Okakura’s anecdote, one may say that the harp named *haikai* awaits the coming of the harpist. And the gap (or the ravine) which allows the musician access to the instrument is identical with the *kire-ji*, cut-word, where the semantic and syntactical ‘fracture’ occurs—namely the ‘elliptic’ part which Chamberlain negatively judged as ‘enigmatic’ and ‘obscure’, but which for Noguchi allows the poem to achieve its perfection.

THE WORLD CONNECTED BY THE ‘CUTTING’

Let us finally examine a case where the call to the outside, or rather the access from the outside, can be perceived within the inner structure of a piece of poetry. Noguchi takes up here a famous poem by KAMO no Chiyo-jo. The juxtaposition of the Japanese wording and its corresponding literal translation in English will allow us to recognize what sort of ‘fracture’ inevitably happens in the translation process (this may also help us understand, to a certain degree, the impression of ‘elliptic’ nature as well as the ‘enigmatic’ ‘obscurity’ for which Chamberlain blames the Japanese *hokku* poets):

Asagao ni	By a Morning Glory
Turube	Handle
torarete	was taken away
Morai	begging
Mizu	some Water

No water bucket is explicitly depicted in the original. The semantic link between the first three words and the last two also remain quite ‘elliptic’ and the meaning remains ‘enigmatic’ and ‘obscure’. Edwin

Arnold, the poet and journalist, and friend of the legendary folklorist MINAKATA Kumakusu, proposed the following interpretation:

The morning-glory
 Her leaves and bells has bound
 My bucket handle round.
 I could not break the bands
 Of these soft hands.
 The bucket and the well to her left,
 'Let me some water, for I come bereft.'⁴¹

While Arnold clearly assumed that English poetry, even in translation, should have a rhyme pattern, Yone Noguchi presents his 1914 version in three lines. Unlike Arnold, he took pains not to introduce the 'P':

The well-bucket taken away,
 By the morning-glory –
 Alas, water to beg!⁴²

Noguchi's translation, closer to the original, supports his refutation of the 'elliptic', 'enigmatic' and 'obscure' nature of the hokku. In fact, the Japanese poet admired by W.B. Yeats and Ezra Pound states, 'I come always to the conclusion that the English poets waste too much energy in "words, words, words," and make, doubtless with all good intentions, their inner meaning frustrate, at least less distinguished, simply from the reason that its full liberty to appear naked is denied.'⁴³ Indeed, imagist poetry could not have developed without a similar confidence in the 'full liberty to appear naked'.⁴⁴

While Arnold marvellously effaced the 'fracture' of the original by his seamless rhyme and additional explications, one may ask if Noguchi's English translation efficiently transmitted that 'fracture'. So long as the perfectly rhymed verse, allowing oral recitation, is appreciated, the kind of 'fracture' Yone Noguchi tried to preserve would have been rejected as a violation of the rules of well-composed poetry. As Western modern poetry since the time of Noguchi has moved toward blank verse, however, this kind of 'fracture' became not only possible, but even preferable, and was one of the reasons for Noguchi's success in English-speaking countries.⁴⁵

In Noguchi's English translation of Kamo no Chiyo-jo, the suspension marked by the dash between 'morning-glory' and 'Alas', and the final exclamation, announce the syntactical break and semantic leap. The 'fracture' in the piece suggests a change in direction of the behavior of the poetess herself, as well as the viewpoints by which the poem is composed.

As the poetess ‘begs some water’, the act can hardly be completed within the poem itself; it begins to work outside of itself. And readers can no longer be satisfied by simply identifying themselves with the poetess beside the well; they find themselves summoned to assume the role of an interlocutor who should offer to help her. Thus it turns out that the ‘elliptic’ ‘enigmatic’ and ‘obscure’ lack constituted in fact the juncture of the entire poetic sentiment. The vacuity or the void – by which the piece testifies its giving up of its own self-fulfilling completeness – is physically ‘sustained’, as it were, by nothing else than the ‘fracture’ in the poetic composition.

FRACTURE: SEMANTIC LEAP OR SPIRITUAL REVELATION?

This brings us back again to Okakura, who makes it clear that the pursuit of self-sufficient and complete expression fails to attain the goal:

The great masters both of the East and the West never forgot the value of suggestion as a means for taking the spectator into their confidence. [...] Like the musicians who vainly invoked the Lung Men harp, he sings only of himself. His works may be nearer science, but are further from humanity. We have an old saying in Japan that a woman cannot love a man who is truly vain, for there is no crevice in his heart for love to fill up. In art vanity is equally fatal to sympathetic feeling, whether on the part of the artist or the public.⁴⁶

It may be possible to see a direct resonance between this ‘sympathetic feeling’ in Okakura and what Yone Noguchi formulated as ‘intellectual sympathy’. No less important is the fact that Okakura refers to ‘crevice’. The crevice is nothing else than the blank space that the *kire-ji* / cutting word creates, the fault line on which the ‘fracture’ occurs. The crevice guarantees a space where the sympathy is communicated between the author and the readers; it also assures a privileged ‘point of encounter’ (*Treffpunkt*). Okakura continues:

At the moment of meeting, the art lover transcends himself. At once he is and is not. He catches a glimpse of Infinity, but words cannot voice his delight, for the eye has no tongue. Freed from the fetters of matter, his spirit moves in the rhythm of things.⁴⁷

At the ‘crevice’ we cross the limit of Self and Non-self, and lose sight of the distinction, not knowing whether we are ‘harp or musician’. In this ecstasy (*ex-stasis*, being out of oneself, *hors de soi*, *ausser-sich-sein*), one is in a state of ‘kenosis’, or ‘*Gelassenheit*’ in German theological thinking – that is, experiencing a calmness, liberated from the attachment

to one's ego.⁴⁸ Denoting in Christian theology the 'emptying out' of Christ's divine nature to take human form, *kenosis* ('emptiness') leads to the self-emptying of one's own will and desires to become receptive to the Divine will. This accounts for the mystical experience of being caught by enthusiasm (from the Greek *en + theos*, possessed by the God); the self (Sanskrit *Atman*) becomes one with the cosmos (*Brahman*), identifying itself with the cosmic breathing and rhythmic movement.⁴⁹ At this point 'his spirit moves in the rhythm of things'. By this expression Okakura seems to evoke the Chinese notion of *qi-yun sheng-dong*, or spiritual resonance and vital movement. The notion will be resurrected and elaborated as one of the key concepts of so-called Oriental Aesthetics. *Qi* in Chinese can be compared with Greek *pneuma*, living breath, translated in Latin as *spiritus*, in German as *Atmen*, which in turn stems from the Sanskrit *Atman* (self). Breathing is the sign of life, nothing other than *qi*, equivalent of the *aura* that emanates from living substances.⁵⁰ In front of this resonance of *qi-yun sheng-dong*, the rhythmical movement of vital energy, one may ask if the 'cutting' in poetry and the 'fracture' in trans-cultural translation, combined and superimposed with each other, may constitute a passage/crevice to spiritual revelation.

Let me then, by way of a curtailed conclusion, summarize some of the questions asked in this paper. Can we overcome the cross-cultural fracture without causing fracture in the target language of a translation work? Or should we fracture the source language so as to reconstruct and realize a non-fractured translation? Is it better to make the fracture visible in the process of translation, or conceal it? To what extent, and under what conditions? Ultimately, who is authorized to regulate where the border lies, between permissible heterogeneity (at the limit of acceptable strangeness) and intolerable homogeneity (lack of necessary exotic flavour and foreign taste)?⁵¹ These questions can have no definitive answers, leaving gaps in the texts and between the texts, opening up the text to further meaning and spiritual resonance, continuing to exercise critics, to stimulate the ingenuity of translators.

NOTES

- 1 A different version of this essay has appeared in Japanese: INAGA Shigemi, 'Hon'yaku ha ikani Kossetsu suruka, aruiha, Kossetsu wo dou hon'yaku suruka', in *Hikaku Shigaku to Bunka no Honyaku* [Comparative Poetics and Cultural Translation], ed. by KAWAMOTO Kôji and KAMIGAITO Ken'ichi (Kyoto: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 2012), pp. 102–135.

- 2 Percival Lowell, *The Soul of the Far East* (Boston, MA, and New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1888), pp. 1–2. Although he does not mention Lowell, Claude Lévi-Strauss develops similar thoughts in relation to B.H. Chamberlain and Luís Fróis. See his preface to *Européens et Japonais. Traité sur les contradictions et différence de moeurs, écrit par le R.P. Luís Fróis au Japon, l'an 1585* (Paris: Chandeigne, Librairie Portugaise, 1989), p. 8. I discuss Lévi-Strauss's views in the article referenced in the previous note.
- 3 YASHIRO Yukio, 'Recollection of my days in Harvard as lecturer, 1932', *Watashino Bujitsu Henreki* [My Artistic Pilgrimage] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1972), pp. 289–290.
- 4 YOMOTA Inuhiko, *Manga Genron* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobô, 1994; paperback reprint 1999), p. 129.
- 5 See INAGA Shigemi, 'How to Do Things with a Parasite: *Kiseijû* by IWAAKI Hitoshi (1990–Feb.1995), or A Vision of the Dividable Self in a Contemporary Japanese Comic-Book', in *The Imagination of the Body and the History of Bodily Experience*, ed. by KURIYAMA Shigehisa (Kyoto: I.R.C.J.S., 2001), pp. 231–247.
- 6 TEZUKA Osamu, *Buddha*, 8 Vols. (London: HarperCollins, 2004–2005).
- 7 Basil Hall Chamberlain, *Things Japanese* (1890), fifth revised ed. (London: John Murray; Yokohama, Shangai, Hong Kong, Singapore: Kelly & Walsh, 1905), pp. 480–481.
- 8 *Ibid.*, pp. 481–482. For a critical reexamination of Chamberlain's approach, see Sukehiro Hirakawa, *Japan's Love-Hate Relationship with the West* (London: Global Oriental, 2004), pp. 517–535.
- 9 Lowell, *Soul*, p. 7.
- 10 *Ibid.*, pp. 7–8.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 8.
- 12 Fernand Ganesco, *Shocking au Japon: De l'évolution de l'art dans l'empire du soleil levant: Dessins de Georges Bigot* ([n.p.: [n.pub], [1985]).
- 13 For a critical and useful overview of the notion of equivalence, see Andrew Chestermann, *Memes of Translation, The Spread of Ideas in Translation Theory* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2000). I discuss the notion of 'équivalent' in Shigemi Inaga, 'Maurice Denis "historiographe" du symbolisme', in *Des mots et des couleurs II*, ed. by Jean-Pierre Guillaume (Lille: Presses Universitaires de Lille, 1983), pp. 197–236. Wolfgang Iser also studies the notion of 'äquivalenz' in his *Der Akt des Lesens* (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1976) in reference to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's discussion of 'déformation' in Cézanne. As I argue in the abovementioned paper, Merleau-Ponty's reflections on 'équivalent' and 'déformation' stem from the terminology proposed by Maurice Denis in his analysis of Cézanne. The genealogy of the key terminology crossing the field of aesthetics and philosophy can be examined in this perspective as a 'prehistory' of translation studies—a task for which I have no space here.
- 14 See Donald Keene, 'Japanese Aesthetics', *Philosophy East and West*, 19.3 (1969), 293–306.
- 15 This may cause 'mental fracture' in the mind of translator. See NAKAI Hisao, *Chôkô, Kioku, Gaishô* [Sign, Memory, Trauma] (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobô, 2004), pp. 1–80.
- 16 On 'domestication' and 'foreignization' in translation, see Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (London: Routledge, 1995), and *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference* (London: Routledge, 1998).

Many translation studies scholars in Non-Western languages observe that the simple dichotomy between domestication and foreignization is too schematic to be a sufficient practical guide for translations bridging (major) European to (minor) non-European languages, if not vice-versa.

- 17 William George Aston, *A History of Japanese Literature* (New York and London: D. Appleton, 1899), p. 294.
- 18 Basil Hall Chamberlain, 'Bashô and the Japanese poetical epigram', *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, 30 (1902), p. 279; included in *Japanese Poetry* (London, 1910), p. 147.
- 19 Karl Florenz, *Dichtergüsse aus dem Osten: Japanische Dichtungen* (Leipzig, 1895), quoted here from HORI Madoka, 'Nijûkokusei Shijin' Noguchi Yonejirô (Nagoya: University of Nagoya Press, 2012), p. 506. To aid the English reader, a close translation of the German, more interested in reproducing the sense and line breaks than in poetic effects, could be:

'Optical Illusion' [or: 'Deception of the Eye']
 How? Does the petal, which just fell, float
 already back to the branch on the tree?
 That would be a strange thing indeed!
 I approached and sharpened my gaze...
 Then I found – it was only a butterfly.

Thanks are due to Frank Krause for his advice on the translation.

- 20 On this debate, see Roland Schneider, 'Karl Florenz als Übersetzer – Der Übersetzungsdisput zwischen Karl Florenz und Ueda Kazutoshi', *Nachrichten der Ostasiatischen Gesellschaft*, 137 (1985), 69–73.
- 21 Aston, *History*, p. 290.
- 22 Chamberlain, *Things Japanese*, p. 377.
- 23 Yone Noguchi, *The Spirit of Japanese Poetry* (London: John Murray, 1914; reprinted, Tokyo: Edition Synapse, 2007), p. 50.
- 24 KONISHI Jin'ichi, 'The Art of Renga', translated with an introduction by Karen Brazell and Lewis Cook, *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 2.1 (Autumn 1975), 29–61 (p. 39).
- 25 Noguchi, *Spirit*, pp. 50–51.
- 26 KAWAMOTO Kôji, 'Poems Travel Badly: Observations on Poetic Translation', paper presented at the symposium *Translating/Comparing Poetry*, Otemae University, November 2011, published as 'Ayame mo Shiranu-Dôon Igi no Shigaku ni Mukete', in *Hikaku Shigaku to Bunka no Honyaku*, ed. by Kawamoto and Kamigaito, pp. 11–36.
- 27 Aston, *History*, p. 295.
- 28 Lafcadio Hearne, *Exotics and Retrospectives* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown & Co, 1898), p. 164.
- 29 Chamberlain, 'Bashô', p. 279.
- 30 *Ibid.*
- 31 OKAKURA Kazuo, *Chichi Tenshin* [Tenshin, My Father] (Tokyo: Seibunkaku, 1939), p. 46.
- 32 Noguchi, *Spirit*, p. 45.

- 33 *Ibid.*
- 34 *Ibid.*, p. 46.
- 35 *Ibid.*, p. 46.
- 36 *Ibid.*, pp. 44–45
- 37 OKAKURA Kakuzo, *The Book of Tea* (1906) (New York: Dover, 1964; 2010 reprint), pp. 54–56.
- 38 *Ibid.*, p. 56.
- 39 Chamberlain, ‘Poetry’, in *Things Japanese*, pp. 377–378.
- 40 Noguchi, *Spirit*, p. 53. Noguchi is referring to Arthur Ransome, ‘Kinetic and Potential Speech’, in *Portraits and Speculations* (London: Macmillan, 1913), pp. 207–225.
- 41 Quoted in Noguchi, *Spirit*, p. 49.
- 42 *Ibid.*, p. 50.
- 43 *Ibid.*, p. 15.
- 44 It would not be superfluous to add that ‘Morning Glory’ was a special flower for Noguchi. In *A Diary of a Japanese Girl* (1902), his first commercially successful novel, Noguchi disguised himself as a Japanese lady, in the style of Ki no Tsurayuki’s classical *Tosa Diary* of 935; the narrator-protagonist was nicknamed ‘Lady Morning-Glory’. See Yone Noguchi, *The American Diary of a Japanese Girl* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1902). On this novel see HADA Miyako, ‘Between Patriotism and Internationalism: Yone Noguchi as a Japonisme Novelist’, in *Artistic Vagabondage and New Utopian Projects: Transnational Poietic Experiences in East-Asian Modernity (1905–1960): Selected Papers from the XIXth Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association Seoul, 2010: Expanding the Frontiers of Comparative Literature*, ed. by INAGA Shigemi (Kyoto: I.R.C.J.S., 2011), pp. 79–88. *The Tosa Diary* was translated from the Japanese by William N. Porter (London: Henry Frowde, 1912).
- 45 Ironically, Noguchi, who had been the standard-bearer of Oriental poetry in the period between the two World Wars, found himself transformed into the mouthpiece for Japanese militarism. After Japan’s defeat, he was ostracized and was no longer appreciated as a poet, whether in English or in Japanese literature. Was this an existential ‘fracture’ that Noguchi has to witness? Dubbed ‘poet of dual nationality’, Noguchi felt himself expelled both from Japan and America. His poems are judged falling into the crevice engulfed between English and Japanese, instead of bridging the two languages. See HORI Madoka, ‘Yone Noguchi’s Poetics as a Writer of “Dual Nationality”’, in *Artistic Vagabondage*, ed. by Inaga, pp. 89–102.
- 46 Okakura, *The Book of Tea*, p. 45. It is worth noting that the ‘gap’ we are treating here in the process of translation is quite different in nature from the one treated by Wolfgang Iser in *The Implied Reader* (Baltimore, MD, and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), though Iser also partly deals with gaps in the text that need to be filled in by the reader; see esp. pp. 34–40; 208–214, 280. A ‘reception history’ and a ‘Wirkung’ of the very notion of ‘gap’ in cross-cultural perspective should be pursued in order to reach an understanding of the historical background of the concept. I propose this in Shigemi Inaga, ‘Commentary’, in *Is Art History Global?*, ed. by James Elkins (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 268–278.
- 47 Okakura, *The Book of Tea*, p. 45.

- 48 For these terminologies, see Shûzô Kuki, 'La notion du temps et la reprise de l'infini en Orient' and 'L'Expression de l'infini dans l'art japonais', in *Propos sur le temps* (Paris: Philippe Renouard, 1928); also in *Kuki Shûzô Zenshû* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1981), Vol. 1, pp. 1–46.
- 49 ÔHASHI Ryôsuke, *Kire no Kôzô* [Structure of 'kire'] (Tokyo: Chûô-kôronsha, 1986), p. 293. Ôhashi's reflections are useful in this respect, especially in terms of 'kenosis' or 'Gelassenheit', which are translated into 'houge 放下' in reference to Zen Buddhism. See also *Il Pensiero Debole*, ed. by Gianni Vattimo and Pier Aldo Rovatti (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1983), esp. the conclusion of Umberto Eco's essay 'L'antiporfirio', pp. 52–80.
- 50 Ôhashi, *ibid.*, p. 125. Ôhashi quotes Nietzsche's Zarathustra, singing this delight of becoming one with the wind so as to get rid of one's own stable identity.
- 51 For further reflections, see Shigemi Inaga, 'Cultural Gap, Mental Crevice, and Creative Imagination – Vision, Analogy and Memory in Cross-Cultural Chiasm: A Challenge to Occidental Epistemology and Revisions of some Basic Prerequisites', in *On Creativity and Imagination: Wasan Conversation*, No. 5, July, 17–22 (2012) (forthcoming).