

“New” Translations of Japanese Literature: Socio-cultural Impacts on the Japanese Mind*

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In terms of translation theory today, the essential discussions of “otherness”, coupled with the agenda of bilateral approaches to its untranslatability, are much more intense than ever. The stereotypical images of Japan as something quite alien yet enchanting in Japanese literature, in *The Tale of Genji* for instance, are drastically different from those in modern novels, where the experience of conflicts with the West in the course of modernization could not be ignored. Shusaku Endo’s *Silence* for example, paradoxically questions the translatability of Christianity in the historical context of the Japanese mind. By reading some translated texts of Japanese literature, we come to be aware of the essential factors of “otherness” inherent in Japanese culture and language which, in some socio-cultural ways, has had an interesting effect on Japanese minds. With the growing interest in “world literature,” “otherness” and “untranslatability” illuminated in the translations of Japanese literature offer a new perspective with which we can re-think our sense of history of modernization on the one hand; and re-evaluate the uniqueness of Japanese language on the other. The remarkable influence of translators whose mother tongue is not Japanese, but who have an excellent command of the language, enables a new Japanese culture to emerge. This is evident in the works of Arthur Binard, an American poet and translator, who enthusiastically criticizes the Japanese policy of atomic energy in his translations of the Japanese poems after World War II, and in the very inspiring essays on Japanese by Roger Pulvers, an Australian writer and playwright who won prizes for his translations of Kenji Miyazawa. Along with such new trend of translations of Japanese literature, how it affects the Japanese mind will be discussed.

Keywords: translation of Japanese literature, Orientalism, “otherness”, modernization, world literature, translation studies

Focus on “World Literature” in Japan Today

In March 2015 the newly established forum with a very big name “Cross-lingual Network of World Literature” (CLNE)¹ held its second conference in Tokyo where very energetic academics not only of literature but also of cultural studies and translation studies had evocative discussions on various topics such as “Nationalism in the South African Literature under Apartheid” to “Polish-Jewish Identity of Writers in Exile”

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¹ CLNE (Cross-lingual Network of World Literature) is a network of the academics of foreign languages and literature in Japan established in 2014. One of the most important and unique characteristics is the idea to exchange views and opinions between the scholars beyond boundaries of various languages.

attracted audiences of all ages. One of the panel sessions was on “Translation”. It was amazing that the presentations concerned primarily the problems of translations in Japan—both from and into Japanese—in historical context. Among them, “Translation and Adaptation of Japanese Theatre into Chinese in Edo Period”, and “How was the Modernization in Japan Made Possible in Meiji-Period?” were the examples focused on what Translation Studies (TS) could have dealt with in the context of “foreignization/domestication” of other cultures. As has been often referred to Lawrence Venuti’s term, these two polarities of foreignization vs. domestication in translation clearly put a border between source text (ST) and target one (TT). Historical background of Japan as an alienated country cut off from the rest of the world by the national policy of closing the country for centuries until the late 19th century had obviously affected the development of Japanese culture and literature as something unique and different. TS eventually seems to illuminate the way how Japanese literature has changed after Japan came to open the country to the world, when great many “others” rushed into the small country through translations.

On the other hand, in the wider arena of “world literature” (following Wolfgang von Goethe’s famous manifesto that motivated translations, according to TS²), “otherness” of Japanese literature was highly appreciated as in the case of *The Tale of Genji*. The translator’s perception of “otherness” was crucial when evaluating TT as a reflection of ST from a different culture. Historically speaking, many people consider *The Tale of Genji* representative of translated Japanese literature: The translation of an exotic far-east culture whose “otherness” enraptured the Western mind. It happened once with Arthur Welly’s translation, with a kind of Victorian tonality, and later with Edward Seidensticker’s modernistic consciousness of human mind that reflects upon the nostalgic lost time. In this sense, Japanese literature in translation as TT was read and appreciated in the similar vein with “Orientalism”.

From a Country of “Orientalism” to a Modern Nation

With the social and cultural turn activated by translations inevitably necessary for Japan to be an opened country at the time of new period called Meiji Restoration in the 19th century, the Japanese psyche was shifting from traditional, culture-based identity toward more individualistic, Westernized modernity. The Government initiative of regarding Western society as superior, and its policy of “*Datsua-nyuo*” (leave Asia and join Europe) had a lasting effect. It was in this context that “translation” of Western knowledge was highly appreciated where the East meets the West as a completely different “other” came into the Japanese mind. Then, in responding to its urgent need for the country to be a Modern Nation, Japan’s rapid adoption of Western culture made the Japanese people turn their eyes to outside, to “others”, and to different ways of thinking. It was in this turn that “so-called series of the world classics in translations were published, coupled with urgent urge to have broader viewpoints and the Western ideology of liberal-art’ agenda” (Ikezawa, 2015, p. 15). Introducing ideas of “identity” explored in bildungsroman for example, literature in the West awakened the Japanese readers to self-consciousness as an individual.

Japanese literature obviously showed the thematic concern with the problem of “selfhood”, facing “others” in different cultures. Soseki Natsume (1867-1916), for example, expressed his acute anxiety when facing European culture when he was studying in London. Though being a very able teacher of English himself, sense

² History of Translation Studies and its relation with literary criticism have been discussed in *Honyakuron towa Nanika: Honyaku ga Hiraku Aratana Seiki* (What is translation studies?: A new horizon of translation), the author’s research project published in 2013.

of alienation overshadowed his life thereafter, whose unsolved dilemma of being an outsider as Japanese even when he was back in his mother country was put in the centre of his fictions.

One of the Catholic writers often referred to as “Japanese Graham Greene”, Shusaku Endo (1923-96) in the next generation, also grappled with his dialectic conflict between “otherness” and “self” deeply rooted in his experience of being away from his mother country Japan when he was in France in his young days. Along with his consciousness of being an outsider both to Japanese and the Western cultures, his inner quest as a Christian writer could not but lead him to the fundamental question how the Japanese mind could accommodate itself to the ultimate “other”, Christian God in the West. His well-known novel *Chinmoku* (1966, Silence) focuses on the conflict in the Japanese mind when Christianity was encountered; the struggle between the West and the East, Christianity and Japanese traditional culture, and God’s silence and human faith. Rodrigues, a young Portuguese Catholic missionary in the 17th century Japan when Christianity was prohibited by the Japanese government at that time, endured the painful experience of witnessing the severe persecution of Japanese Christians. His inner conflict culminates in his decision to trample on “fumie” (images of Christ on which suspected Christians were required to step to prove they did not follow the religion) at which point he eventually hears the voice of God beyond silence. Rodrigues’ reflective view becomes a kind of prism through which to view Japan as “other”, and his world of Western “self” had to be discarded when he apostatized. In this complex perspective, the paradoxical relation between “otherness” and the original “selfhood” is vividly illustrated. In this sense, Endo’s challenge in *Chinmoku* is not concerned only with his personal dilemma but also with what the Japanese mind had to face in the process of modernization. It is actually very interesting to learn that the translations of this novel in English and French have been widely read and “universality” rather than “uniqueness” of human nature explored in this novel was highly appreciated³.

After the World War II: Another Turn

In terms of TS, the rapid shift from the isolated country with unique traditional identity to a modern nation facing “others” via translations urged Japanese mind to make a new challenge to re-discover inherent “translatability” by overturning what apparently seemed to be “untranslatable”. In other words, like the attempt Endo seriously made, Japanese writers became to be more consciously looking Japan from objective viewpoints from which they try to translate her into the language of others in a metaphorical sense of the meaning. Especially after the end of the Second World War when Japan was forced completely to be a democratic nation, “the trial of the foreign”⁴ cannot be out of scope for those who are engaged in humanities. Japan is not an isolated island any more but closely connected to the global network.

Kenzaburo Oe (1935-), one of the most conscious writers of Japanese and its history, was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature (1994) nearly three decades after Yasunari Kawabata (1899-1972) had the same honor in 1968. The sharp contrast between these eminent Japanese writers seems to reflect such drastic turn after

³ It is quite interesting to know that the English translator of Endo’s novels, Michel Gallegher who was teaching Japanese literature at the University of John Carroll in the U.S., points out that the thematic concern of “the marginal against the power” could be found in Endo’s works which has made them universally appreciated (cited in Van C. Gessel, et al., *Silence and Voices: The Writings of Shusaku Endo*, 1994, 45).

In Endo’s context, it is always “the marginal” facing the great “other” with power that suffer and need to think deeply on existential questions of selfhood. In this sense, *Chinmoku* can be read as a novel of universal human dilemma as well as a unique historical fiction with specific Japanese background.

⁴ The term is from the title of Antoine Berman’s book on translation, *L’épreuve de l’étranger* (Paris: Galliard, 1984), cited in Lawrence Venuti (2004) as *Translation and the Trials of the Foreign*.

WWII in which “element of untranslatability” which used to be highly appreciated as Japanese uniqueness has been taken its place by “translatability” to be shared with the rest of the world on the common ground. As for Oe, how to pinpoint the problems and experiences of Japan in Japanese language, while making them universally comprehensible, seems to be his mission as a writer today. His consciousness is clearly expressed in his acceptance speech of the Nobel Prize entitled *Japan, the Ambiguous, and Myself*. Referring to Kawabata’s speech *Japan, the Beautiful and Myself*, Oe points out that “Kawabata talked about a unique kind of mysticism” whose uniqueness Oe means “a tendency towards Zen Buddhism”. He continues:

Even as a twentieth-century writer Kawabata depicts his state of mind in terms of the poems written by medieval Zen monks. Most of these poems are concerned with the linguistic impossibility of telling truth. According to such poems are confined within their closed shells. The readers can not expect that words will ever come out of these poems and get through to us. One can never understand or feel sympathetic towards these Zen poems except by giving oneself up and willingly penetrating into the closed shells of those words. (The Nobel Speech, 1995)

While attributing Kawabata’s “Japanese” uniqueness as a writer to his sense of “belonging to the tradition of Zen philosophy and aesthetic sensibilities pervading the classical literature of the Orient”, Oe “feel[s] more spiritual affinity with the Irish poet William Butler Yeats”, appreciating him whose “wake I [Oe] would like to follow”. What Oe might find in Yeats with respect is a poet’s penetrating insight into the human history always in perils of “insanity in enthusiasm of destruction”. He believes, “as someone living in the present world such as this one and sharing bitter memories of the past imprinted on [his] mind”, that he is “one of the writers who wish to create serious works of literature which dissociate themselves from those novels which are mere reflections of the vast consumer cultures of Tokyo and the subcultures of the world at large”. So, he questions: “What kind of identity as a Japanese should seek?”

To seek for the answers himself, Oe reconsiders Japan as “ambiguous”, quoting Kathleen Raine and said, quoting George Orwell, on the other;

To define a desirable Japanese identity I would like to pick out the word “decent” which is among the adjectives that George Orwell often used, along with words like “humane”, “sane” and “comely”, for the character types that he favoured. This deceptively simple epithet may starkly set off and contrast with the word “ambiguous” used for my identification in “Japan, the Ambiguous, and Myself”. There is a wide and ironical discrepancy between what the Japanese seem like when viewed from outside and what they wish to look like. (*Ibid.*)

What should be noted here at the end is his consciousness of the “other” to look Japan from outside. Looking back the process of modernization of Japan that results in “insanity in enthusiasm of destruction both on its own soil and on that of the neighbouring nations”, Oe hopes to “be of some use in a cure and reconciliation of mankind”. His stance clearly shows another turn of Japanese mind after WWII from which a new perspective to re/define “Japan” was offered. In other words, what had been left unsaid in the deep strata of Japanese mind came up to the surface to be defined and “translated”, in the course of which “foreignization” of such words as “insanity”, “reconciliation”, or “ambiguous” in Japanese language invites in effect the inherent “otherness” that Japanese mind should comprehend. In return, once translated, its “translatability” is also illuminated, letting Japanese literature go forward into the arena of world literature.

Natsuki Ikezawa (1945-), a Japanese writer and a poet, who produced *Sekai Bungaku Zenshu* (30 volumes, 2007-11, Collected World Literature) re-defined “world literature” as “qualified literature that enables readers to understand not the nation of its origin, but the whole world itself” (Ikezawa, 2015, p. 20). In this respect, we

can say that uniqueness of each piece comes not from its national traits but from the way how universality from different perspectives is expressed, namely, in a “translatable” way beyond “untranslatability”. Sharing with Oe the sense of identity of being a writer of post-war era, Ikezawa eventually selected for the collection those writers after WWII, for the world itself drastically changed and their literature was the very response to such seemingly “untranslatable” upheaval. In order to make sense of the world, they needed new language of “translatability”. With this, “era of national literature from the 19th century to the middle of the 20th century came to an end” (Ikezawa, 2015, p. 19), and the paradigm-shift toward “new” world literature appeared. Post-colonial, feminism, and so-called diaspora literature are the examples.

Now, in this new category of world literature, there are many Japanese writers who write with the consciousness of translatability that their texts produce: among them, there appeared Haruki Murakami (1949-), Natsuki Ikezawa and Yoko Tawada (1960-) whose works have been translated into many languages. Importantly, rather than their themes and topics being translatable, the close relationship between their ideas and language use consciously put in the core of their texts are. Murakami admits in his essay on translation that “When writing in Japanese, I may have been trying to put Japanese, my mother tongue, in foreignization of an imagined different language—say, foreignizing the familiarity of the Japanese language within my unconsciousness—in the process of constructing sentences to make up a coherent whole as a novel” (Murakami, 1996, p. 283, author’s translation). Therefore, in his novels at least, we can find some space where “otherness” can get into, to be translated and even to be welcomed. Murakami further says that “by way of being transplanted into a different language system, the original world of my own creation would be able to be re-read and be seen from a certain distance” (*ibid*, author’s translation). He feels somehow “rather relieved” to find such space between ST and TT.

What should be emphasized here is that those writers on the list are all translators themselves who learn “otherness” through translating. World literature written in Japan today owes more to such “new” writers/translators rather than to the heritage of “Orientalism” in the past.

Japanese Language at Cross-roads: Crisis to Perish?

As has been discussed, modernization motivated the Japanese mind to be more conscious of cultural “others” which accelerated interests in translation that eventually opened the ways to the potential world literature in Japanese. However, another turn in the sphere of linguistic culture has been pointed out as serious aspect of modern life. That is, Japanese language at crossroads, or, in crisis to “fall” or “perish”. Minae Mizumura (1951-), a bilingual writer writing in both English and Japanese, wrote a provocative essay on Japanese entitled *Nihongo ga Horobirutoki: Eigo no Seiki no nakade* (2006, Fall of Japanese Language in the Age of English). In the book, she says of her own novel using both languages⁵ that her intention was to reveal the unequal balance of power between English, a dominant language, and other languages. She also makes clear the originality and uniqueness of Japanese language: its elusiveness, complex structure with three types of letters, and its materiality (Mizumura, 2008, p. 119).

This is “otherness”, and untranslatability of Japanese language. However, as she points out in the book, with the ubiquitous nature of the Internet, Japanese as language is falling (perishing)⁶, being changed into a

⁵ *Shi-shosetsu from Left to Right (An I-novel from Left to Right)* 1995.

⁶ Mizumura uses the English word “fall” in her essay, but it seems to be more appropriate to put it as “perish” when the nuance of what she implies is considered..

different form as sign. The shared Internet culture dominates the uniqueness, changing language as something through which bilateral translation with “otherness” is made possible into one-way transmission of signs in mass media as information. The more the words are simplified as signs of information, the more difficult it becomes to contemplate on the questions of life without answers. And so, people’s minds are more inclined towards getting information by Google, rather than reading between the lines of literature or challenging untranslatability of the others. What happens is that Japanese as national language is not consciously read or written in the internet-society whose phenomenon she puts “falls” (perishes). These are Mizumura’s analysis on what has happened to the Japanese language in modern life. Mizumura’s substantial essay with careful consideration of Japanese language—difference between spoken and written Japanese, history of Japanese as “national language”, theory of translation as a novelist, and so on—could not be so easily simplified as the title signifies, but her anxiety signals that “Japanese” is now standing at cross-roads. To what extent her opinion could be shared is not clear enough, but her book at least gave a certain impact to the conscious Japanese readers at home.

New Approach: Re-evaluation

Then, is Japanese really falling or perishing? Another possibility could be noticed that “Japanese” has been re-created and re-vitalized by those whose first language is not Japanese. As is often the case with writers worldwide today, there are many who write excellent masterpieces in a language other than their native tongue. Kazuo Ishiguro—a winner of the Booker Prize in the United Kingdom—Salman Rushdie, Nancy Houston, and so on. In Japan, the names Roger Pulvers (1943-) and Arthur Binard (1967-) come to mind. Pulvers is a talented polymath: writer, playwright and co-director of the film *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence*. He is also a translator of Kenji Miyazawa, and speaks seven languages fluently. Although his first language is English, Pulvers’ inspiring essay on Japanese entitled *Odorokubeki Nihongo* (2013, published only in Japanese translation, *An Amazing Language*) begins with his remark that Japanese is thought by the Japanese people to be a kind of secret code which foreigners cannot understand:

The Japanese language has been thought of as a kind of exclusive code used the Japanese people. Foreigners could learn to “decipher” this code, but the deeper meanings of the words—those words that gave voice to the *kokoro* (emotions) of the Japanese *minzoku* (ethnicity)—were considered by most Japanese people to be beyond their grasp, just as beautiful stones at the depths of a clear pond cannot be reached by those destined to remain on the edges of the pond. (Pulvers, 2014, p. 6)

However, what Pulvers tries to prove in his book is the translatability of the “code”, analysing the cultural context of how “untranslatability” affects the versatility of the Japanese language as its characteristic. As an example, he explains how the untranslatable secret code is employed in “Haiku”, a traditional short-poem form which is popular all over the world. He says:

Haikus comprise a single “sight-sound image”. You can see the pond and hear the splash of the frog jumping into it. It describes an instant in time. I described haiku in another book as “re-designing of time and space within 17 syllables”. The working principle in haiku is “the three abbreviations”: abbreviation of sight, abbreviation of sound and abbreviation of time. In much of Japanese art—and Japanese communication—what is left out is more important than what is put in. Japanese people, in art and life, are leaver-outers, not putter-inners. Leaving out is “suggestive and nuanced”; and the Japanese people definitely use the three abbreviations when communicating with each other. (Pulvers, 2014, p. 141)

So, this tactic of abbreviation contributes to the very implicative nature of communications between

Japanese people. It is a cultural phenomenon, and difficult for outsiders of that culture to grasp, and to translate the implied meanings when the code is more sophisticated.

When his book was translated and published, it was surprisingly sold very well in Japan. Positive book reviews appeared in the major papers, most of which highly appreciated the author's insight into a language which might have been considered intrinsically untranslatable. The book itself was evidence that the secret code of Japanese language is, albeit opaquely, readable not only to outsiders but to Japanese readers who could view the language they use from a different perspective. It is interesting that a translation of the book on their own language could re-evaluate its own nature, by being a target text via translation by another's view.

In responding to Pulvers' proposal, to re-think Japanese not as a secret code “that foreigners cannot fathom”, but a source of universal language in which untranslatability becomes translatable, readers are made aware of the necessity to rethink the relations between the secret self, implied and nuanced, and the other cultures, to be understood and shared in the name of globalization.

Another “spokesman” of Japanese, Arthur Binard, is an American poet who has been writing very insightful poetry in Japanese. *Tsuriagetewa* (2001, *Catch and Release*), his collected poems in Japanese, won the 6th Nakahara Chuya Prize, which proved his talent as a poet whose words are “multivocal, harbouring a multiplicity of meanings that can be particularized only in precise linguistic contexts or social situations”⁷.

His writing career has been amazingly rich in “multivocal” ways; translations of Japanese classic poems into English, also of English children's picture books into Japanese, essays on social affairs, and so on. Always with his excellent preface in perfect Japanese, his translations re-activate Japanese words in the new lights.

One of the most challenging works he so enthusiastically created is *Koko ga Ie da: Ben Shahn no Daigo Fukuryu-maru* (2006, *Here is our Home: Ben Shahn's Lucky Dragon*), a picture book with his Japanese text in collaboration with Ben Shahn's series of paintings of “Lucky Dragon”. The story is about the Japanese fishermen who narrowly survived the nuclear test in the Bikini Atoll while fishing there in 1952, when the Captain Aikichi Kuboyama's tragic death immediately after his return home foretells what would be waiting in the future. Binard's challenge is to select himself the paintings of Ben Shahn and wrote text with a poet's magic and imagination to create a picture book which is both works of art and of criticism at the same time. By letting the Lithuanian artist's paintings speak in a different “language”, Binard successfully achieved foreignization of the real story happened to the Japanese people, while re-activating and translating the word “home”, a word quite familiar to the Japanese mind as something that evokes sense of security, into the one more threatening and dangerous. It is a kind of paradox that foreignization and foregrounding as such more sharply illuminate the real story concealed and untold in Japanese society. In this sense, Binard is an activist with a real critical mind who accuses “insanity in enthusiasm of destruction”. His work as social criticism is followed by other ones in the similar vein; *Sagashite-imasu* (2012, *I'm looking for*), a book of photographs of the survived mementos of the atomic-bombing of Hiroshima with Binard's Japanese text. He makes “things” speak as narrator of each story on that day, August 6th 1945; a broken clock, atomic-bombed lunch-box, burnt cloth, shadow of a human instantly printed on a stone by a moment of radiation, etc. Those voices make the book itself a kind of historical record, turning untranslatability into translatability beyond time and space. Binard's tireless challenge is now extending to Fukushima nuclear disaster, which makes his “Japanese” a new kind of political discourse.

⁷ Minoru Nakamura, cited in *Catch and Release*, p. 12.

What should be emphasized at least is that these writers are creating a new style of Japanese, in their foreignizing translations, translating fundamental “leaver-outer”—to use Pulvers’ term—culture back to the Japanese readers’ consciousness. In this sense, a new arena of Japanese texts has been explored by “others”.

Along with these non-Japanese writers who have been re-activating and re-vitalizing Japanese, Natsuki Ikezawa also made a new challenge, after having completed Collected World Literature series; he launched a new project of Collected Japanese Literature series with the same volume of 30 books each of which has translator. This time, the “translator’s task”⁸ is not to translate ST of foreign language into Japanese, but to translate Japanese of ST into modern Japanese to make it a TT in the contemporary world. Ikezawa himself translated the first volume, *Kojiki* (Record of ancient matters), one of the oldest literary writings in prose in the early 8th century, into the language of the 21st century. The preface in the form of a letter to the original author is itself a translator’s note, making his stance clear; how he dealt with untranslatability caused not only by the language but by the cultural and social difference, and what he wanted to put at the core of the story in translation for the readers today. So, readers can hear the voice not only of the author in the past but of the translator in the present.

By this big project, Ikezawa makes two questions to readers; one is “What is Japanese?”, and “Who are the Japanese people?” on the other. As for the former, readers are made aware of the language they use through time and history, while as for the latter, they need to think again of their own identity as recipient of world literature today. Bilateral relations between ST and TT are necessarily put into focus, stimulating readers to be more conscious of the time they are living in. And so, Japanese as language will never fall nor perish.

Conclusive Statement: Translation as Motives to Create Culture

Along with world literature, translation studies have received much more attention due to the powerful investigation of the nation’s history in which language inevitably affects people’s minds. From the perspective offered by TS, Japan is a very interesting country where the interactions of language and the nation’s history have been closely related through translation.

The remarkable upsurge of translations of Western knowledge in the rapid process of modernization of Japan, and the influence of censorship after the war (the Japanese mind was translated by the others under the scheme of censorship⁹) are the examples. And now, the “new” trend of cultural translation coupled with re-evaluation of Japanese language continues apace. The study on “untranslatability” in the field of TS encourages Japanese academia to be concerned with language of translation. With this turn, what had long been hidden in the deep strata of Japanese culture—about which even the Japanese people had not been aware—has been gradually revealed by way of translations. Translation is made possible only when “the other” comes into the mind of a translator.

Facing many “others” in the time of globalization, the so-called Japanese mind has been challenged socially, culturally, politically and ethically. The new translations are welcomed much more than before,

⁸ The term originally used in English translation of Walter Benjamin’s famous essay on “translation”, cited in Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (Eds.), *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings Volume 1 1913-1926*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996.

⁹ The drastic movement toward further modernization was urgently needed under the pressure of GHQ of the allied power after the defeat of WWII. Under the strict political control, not only literature but also every printed materials were censored in Japan under occupation. Details are discussed in Atsuko Hayakawa’s “Translation as Politics: The Translation of Sadako Kurihara’s War Poems” in *Traduction, Terminologie, Redaction*. Vol. XXV, numero1, 1st semester 2012, pp.109-131.

inviting foreigners to look into the pond and find the beautiful stones hidden in its depths.

Haruki Murakami's speech entitled *Always on the Side of the Egg* for the Jerusalem Award in 2009 is implicative:

I have only one reason to write novels, and that is to bring the dignity of the individual soul to the surface and shine a light upon it. The purpose of a story is to sound an alarm, to keep a light trained on The System in order to prevent it from tangling our souls in its web and demeaning them. I fully believe it is the novelist's job to keep trying to clarify the uniqueness of each individual soul by writing stories—stories of life and death, stories of love, stories that make people cry and quake with fear and shake with laughter. This is why we go on, day after day, concocting fictions with utter seriousness. (*Haarets*, 19 Feb., 2009)

Though different in context, his words would be of some interest to writers, readers, translators, and to the academics of TS living in the time of globalization.

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