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## **The Translator's Visible Touch in the First-person Narrative: On the Example of the Japanese Translation of *Hyperion* by Dan Simmons**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The translators have an ambiguous role in the process of a literary translation – they have to be as transparent as possible, though they must often interpret the text before translating it. In fact, they present their own dialogue with the author to the reader and thus, it is difficult for them to not influence a narrative with their presence (Venuti 1986: 182). Translators can, however, choose how and where they are visible. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the way a literary translator becomes visible to the reader through the translation. Three short stories – in first-person narrative – from the novel *Hyperion* by Dan Simmons and translated by Sakai Akinobu are discussed. The article focuses on the analysis of translator's choices regarding vulgarisms and emotional load in a text generally, that influences the way the reader understands the text.

**KEYWORDS:** translation, narration, emotional load, narratology

### **Introduction**

Many theories and even more myths have grown up around translation – from the belief that anyone can translate, to declaring translation impossible (Hejwowski 2004). There have been just as many proposals for translation methods, but the most popular ones are completely extreme, hence no method on its own (i.e., without combining it with another) really has a chance to produce a translation that is good on many levels (ibid.).

The translators themselves, on the other hand, have an ambiguous role in the creative process of a literary text – they stand between the author and reader,

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in a way disrupting the dialogue between them: in fact, the reader of the text in the target language receives the effect of translator's own dialogue with the author. On the other hand, a modern translator's task is most often to remain completely transparent (Venuti 1986: 187–188); to prevent the reader of the translation from feeling that he is reading a translated text rather than the original. So it seems that the two views of the translator's role – the concept of a transparent translator and the concept of the translation as a disruption in the dialogue between the reader and the author – are at odds. It is impossible that the translator's agency should not be seen at all, nevertheless, allowing one's own interpretations and views to significantly affect the reception of the text would be a mistake. Thus, it is important to find the best way possible to allow the reader of the translation to understand the text in the closest possible way to the reception of readers of the original. The goal of this paper is to investigate how a literary translator makes his presence felt in the translated text. To determine where the changes appear, with what they may be connected, by what they are motivated, and how the translator's choices affect not only the overtones of individual passages, but also the overall reception of the text. In order to do that, the review of a translator's particular choices and how they relate to specific translation theories are described.

This analysis is based on the novel *Hyperion* by Dan Simmons originally published in 1989 in USA, or more specifically, on three of the six stories included in it, in Sakai Akinobu's translation from 2000. This particular novel was chosen for its variety of narratives. For the sake of consistency, the third-person narratives are omitted, with the focus being on first-person narratives and their specific aspects that create challenges for the translator – namely, Christian references, vulgarisms and idioms rooted in the Anglo-American culture.

All citations from Polish and Japanese sources were translated by the author of the article. Examples in every table in the article are based on the *Hyperion* by Dan Simmons (2005 [1989], edition published in Great Britain) and its translation *Haiperion (jō)* and *Haiperion (ge)* by Sakai Akinobu (Shimonzu 2000a, 2000b).

## **1. On narrative and translator's visibility in the text**

### **1.1. Narrative and narrator**

[I]n this infinite variety of forms, [the narrative] is present at all times, in all places, in all societies; indeed narrative starts with the very history of mankind; there is not, there has never been anywhere, any people without narrative; (...) narrative remains largely unconcerned with good or bad

literature. Like life itself, it is there, international, transhistorical, transcultural (Barthes 1975: 237).

Barthes substantiates that narration is universal – for narrative forms include not only epic, lyric or drama, but also – and perhaps especially – any act of storytelling. In the Cambridge Dictionary (CD: keyword *narrative*) narrative has two definitions. The first one is described as “a story or a description of a series of events”, and second as “a particular way of explaining or understanding events”. Both definitions are very general, but capture the basic premise of the narrative function.

A more comprehensive explanation is offered by Piotr Kulas (2014: 119), using Margaret Somers’ (1994: 619, as cited in Kulas 2014) theory. Somers argues that narrative is a good tool to understand how people construct their identity, emphasizing that it is impossible to analyze narratives through the lenses of only one field of study. This is not surprising, as some researchers (Bal 2012) argue that it is practically impossible to give a single, definitive theory on the subject of narrative, as it can be dealt with from the perspective of many scientific disciplines.

Patricia Ewick and Susan S. Silbey list researchers who define a narrative by determining what *is not* a narrative (1995: 200–201). As an example they present the reasoning of historian<sup>2</sup> Hayden White (1987, as cited in Ewick and Silbey 1995), who separated out non-narrative historical forms, such as annals and chronicles, which do not contain a plot and an ending – essential components of narrative. Thus, in the process of excluding some forms as those not covered by narrative, certain specific features emerge that a given discourse must contain in order to be called a narrative – such as the aforementioned beginning and ending, plot, characters/actors, and narrator. Narratives can be categorized by their relation to the chronology of the events they describe – so there are linear and non-linear narratives. From the linguistic point of view, there is a distinction due to the grammatical tense used by the narrator or, finally, due to the grammatical person in which the narrator appears. Then, narratives are divided into first-person, second-person or third-person narratives.

It is essential, however, to mention that in Japanese literature the distinction between first- and third-person narratives has gotten closer to the European understanding of these only in the Meiji period, when writers started to experiment with first-person prose (Yoda 2006: 280). “The transformation from the narrator of the early modern novel, in which the storyteller

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<sup>2</sup> It is worth mentioning that historians have had a significant role in narrative studies, as the first field after the literature studies which took interest in the narrative was none other than historiography (Burzyńska 2008: 23).

(*katarite*) is inseparable from the author, to that of the modern novel begins with the differentiation of a narrator who records his circumstances from within the world of the text from the author who controls the story world from outside the text” (Hirata 2010: 73). Along with the concept of “realism”, it has also introduced the third-person “transparent narrator”, “who does not intrude in the text in his own voice” (Königsberg 2008: 200–202). In terms of first-person narratives, on the other hand, one – and arguably most popular – example is *shishōsetsu*, where the narrator usually is the author himself/herself, but it happens that *shishōsetsu* are written in third person (Melanowicz 2012: 313).

“Narratives must be narrated” (Lamarque 2004: 396), thus, a narrator is the central part of a narration – whether or not he is omniscient, one of the characters or somewhere in-between (i.e., in Japanese the term 三人称を仮想一人称 *sanninshō-o kasō ichininshō*, describes “first person pretending to be third”) (Goyet 2014). And just as narratives can be divided into many types, that often intertwine, there are as many different narrators, that are not necessarily opposite to each other. The most obvious and intuitive distinction is the grammatical person in the narration. It is very limited, though (Booth 1983: 230), and thus, literary scholar Wayne C. Booth proposed to divide it on different basis. He first distinguishes dramatized (devoid of any individual features) and undramatized (narrator who refers to himself as “I”, and often is simply a character in the story) narrators (ibid., 152). He also introduces a reliability criterion: a reliable narrator is the one that “speaks for or acts in accordance with the norms of the work” (ibid., 158), and otherwise – unreliable. It is not, however, a flawless distinction, as in line with the above definition, an unreliable narrator would be almost every first-person narrator.

Finally, it is worth emphasizing that the narrator “does not conduct his report continuously”. An independent speech in the text is a kind of indication that the narrator has temporarily given his role to one of the characters in the plot (Bal 2012: 7).

## 1.2. Literary translator and his presence in the narrative

“The translator’s task consists in this: to find the intention toward the language into which the work is to be translated, on the basis of which an echo of the original can be awakened in it”, wrote Benjamin (1923: 258). He compares the language to a forest in which a literary work “finds itself”, but which the translator tries to understand by observing it from the outside (ibid.), and by that one can comprehend that while the act of writing is rather spontaneous (though the writer definitely can be conscious in terms of use of language), the act of translating is more forethoughtful.

Hejwowski criticizes each of the extreme takes on translation: he disputes both the view that translation is impossible and that any philologist can translate any text; he denies the validity of both the use of mere functional translation and literal translation (2004: 163–169). He also stresses that in the process of translation a lot of “unknowns” and “possibilities” appear: a translator must use them in order to convey in the target language the reality presented in the original language. However, he must do it in such a way that the overall image evokes in the “possible” reader of the translation the same set of associations as in the “possible” recipient of the original work – so that this reality of the original narrative is perceived in the same way despite the change of language (ibid., 69–70).

Theories that the ideal translator should be completely invisible in the text, while the translation itself – “transparent”, devoid of features other than the author’s style, are common. As Venuti (1986: 187) pointed out, the sheer idea of an “invisible” translator emerged mostly from capitalism, specifically the business of publishing, for which the “easiness” of reading became important economic factor. “[T]he less awkward, unidiomatic and ambiguous a translation is made, the more readable it is, and hence the more >>consumable<< it becomes as a commodity on the book market” (ibid.). However, even if the translator intentionally tries to become completely invisible to the reader, no matter what translation techniques they use, it is obvious that the distribution of accents in the text changes somewhat when it is translated. For it is the language and the authors’ conscious and unconscious choices concerning it that are important in the process of analyzing the narrative: how this language affects the presentation of the narrator (or narrator-character in the case of first-person narration) and their creation. And – in the narration of a translated text – it allows the presence of the translator in the translation to be examined (Sadza 2013: 243).

Along with obvious changes related to a translation that include differences between languages of original work and translation, some disparities related to translator’s choices appears. Such disparities – sometimes derived from misinterpretation of the source text – are usually caused by the fact that translators are in a kind of “limbo”, as Rachel May (1994: 33) puts it, between an author and a text. Their agency is seen in the shifts – whenever translator has to choose between two or more alternatives (Pekkanen 2013: 3). However, differences between the source text and a translation do not have to determine the visibility of a translator. The easiest way to become seen by the reader is to make a mistake that is obvious even to those not familiar with the source language, i.e., by using a loan translation for idioms. But when the translator consciously decides on changes for specific reasons,

they can even make the translation easier to read (and quite often, that is the aim imposed on translators by the publishing industry) (Venuti 1986: 187). Consequently, a translated work will almost never be devoid of the translator's visible touch, as discrepancies between the source and target texts are inevitable (ibid., 208).

Lastly, it is worth noting how Japanese and English languages are different from each other – not only in terms of grammar or the word order of the sentence, but also what both languages focus on. While English is more person-centered (focused on *who* does what), Japanese is rather situation-centered (the most essential information is not *who*, but *what* has happened) (Lee 2014: 100), so certain shifts can be expected in the narrative. Also, as will be highlighted in the analytical part of this article, the expectations towards use of vulgarisms are completely different in both languages – in Japanese, it is mostly associated with particular type of people and/or their age (also, may be considered a part of *yakuwarigo* 'role language', which will be discussed later), while in English they are rather commonly used, simply to emphasize emotions.

## **2. On the structure and narration of the *Hyperion***

*Hyperion* is a novel. Since it is an epic genre with a structure that lacks a strict framework (unlike other literary genres) (Głowiński et al. 1986: 367), it is not uncommon to see authors experimenting with the form (ibid.). And this work is exactly that. The entire novel is divided into six separate stories told by the characters and everything happens, so to speak, "in between" their tellings – so we can actually distinguish seven different narratives, each taking place in a completely different time. They are not linear with respect to each other, and sometimes even the individual stories are told out of chronology.

A classification that comes to mind first is that based on narrative perspective – third-person and first-person. Two stories (Soldier's and Scholar's) and "interludes" are presented in the former, while the others are presented directly from the protagonist's point of view: the stories of the Priest, the Poet, the Detective and the Consul. It is the latter group that his paper will focus on.

## **3. On the Japanese translation of emotional load – analysis**

According to Nicholas A. Bayley, there are four main ways to express emotions via language: prosody (intonation), lexis, morphology and syntax (Bayley 2013: 3–4). It is intonation that is probably the most difficult to notice and correctly translate because of obvious lack of vocalization in the

text. However, natives are usually able to grasp character's or narrator's tone. Bayley provides the following example: *Fine, fine, you're right, I'm wrong, we'll do it your way!* – “This sentence can indicate agreement with what has been said if presented flatly and intended sincerely, or, if accompanied by an expression of anger, it can mean that the respondent does not agree at all, but is capitulating.” (ibid., 3). A native or fluent English speaker is likely to quickly realize that the sentence was not uttered with complete sincerity – the presence of an exclamation point also helps here. However, such parts are sometimes incorrectly translated into the target language. “Since written texts lack intonation, a writer has to rely on the words, grammatical constructions, and discourse tricks to bring across emotions” (ibid., 5).

### 3.1. *Yakuwarigo* and identification of the emotional load in text

In the translation of the fourth chapter of *Hyperion*, detective Lamia's story, the emotional load is visible in the use of particular role language (*yakuwarigo*).

*Yakuwarigo* manifests itself when specific linguistic choices (such as vocabulary, grammar, phraseology or intonation) evoke an image of a particular character (age, gender, occupation, social standing, era, appearance or character), or when, seeing a particular character, the reader/viewer is able to imagine how they will speak (Kinsui 2003, quoted in Bun 2018: 3).

In other words, *yakuwarigo* can be considered a kind of stereotype visible in the language (Kinsui 2017: 23), which has its place in everyday conversations (i.e., in the form of pronouns precisely), and which provides an additional layer of character creation. With this kind of stylization, the English sentence “Yes, I know” in Japanese can be expressed in different ways:

- a. そうじゃ、わしが知っておるんじゃ。[*Sō ja, washi-ga shitte oru-n ja.*]
- b. そうよ、あたしが知ってるわ。[*Sō yo, atashi-ga shitteru-wa.*]
- c. そうだ、おれが知ってるぜ。[*Sō da, ore-ga shitteru-ze.*]

(Kinsui 2010: 51, as quoted in Kinsui 2017: 125)

Each of these brings to the reader's mind a completely different character: example a) will be pronounced by an older man (as indicated by the ending じゃ *ja* and the pronoun わし *washi*), b) a young woman/woman from a rich household (お嬢様 *ojōsama* – here emphasized by the final particle わ *wa* and the pronoun あたし *atashi*), while c) young man/man in a high position (final particle ぜ *ze* and pronoun おれ *ore* are associated with masculinity). These styles are often intertwined with each other, and are also dependent

on the situation the character is in, but nevertheless evoke specific associations.

The above examples are explained primarily on the basis of the gender and age of the characters who can utter these sentences, but the styles are often mixed together and it is difficult to distinguish between them completely. Thus, at least sentence c) can be uttered by a woman (leaving aside the typically masculine pronoun おれ *ore*, although there may be exceptions to this as well), but it will almost undoubtedly be a female character with a strong character.

*Yakuwarigo*, then, is an important aspect of Japanese language stylization and is also essential in literature translated into the Japanese, of which *The Detective's Tale* is a prime example – with Lamia being the only character that uses such variety of pronouns. Lamia changes them depending on the situation and what exactly she means by “I” at any given moment and to whom she speaks (which, in comparison, seems not to have any influence on the way the Priest or the Poet speak about themselves). The most common one she uses during the story is the pronoun こっち *kotchi* or こちら *kochira*, which seems to be the most natural option for the character – throughout the story Lamia most often describes herself and refers to herself precisely through the pointing pronoun. It is worth noting here that it is not equated or even associated with any gender, and depending on its form (こちら or こっち) can be both formal and not. However, when she refers to herself in the meaning of her detective agency, she uses word うち *uchi* (lit. ‘inside’/‘oneself home’), which is much more feminine (keyword *uchi*, *DD*). An interesting shift in the choice of pronouns appears, when between Lamia and Johnny rises an affection. Then, when speaking to him, Lamia refers to herself as あたし *atashi*, which is seen as an entirely feminine pronoun. As Takubo (1997: 3) points out, when there is a significant change in the relationship between individuals, there is a need not only to change the pronoun in the second person, but also in the first person.

Lamia starts her story without any unnecessary preface and gets straight to the point.

no.	original English version	Japanese version	romanization	back translation
1.	I knew the case was going to be special the minute that he walked into my office.	男が事務所にはいってくるなり、こいつは特殊な事件	<i>Otoko-ga jimushō-ni haitte kuru nari, koitsu-wa tokushu-na jiken da-na-to pin-to kita.</i>	The man entered my office and I knew this would be a special case.



		だたとピンと きた。		
2.	My first thought was, <i>Is this a client?</i> My second thought was, <i>Shit, this guy's beautiful.</i>	最初に思ったのはこうだ。 (この男、客か?) それからつぎに、 (おほう、なかなかの上玉じゃないか)	<i>Saisho-ni omotta-no-wa kō da.</i> ( <i>Kono otoko, kyaku-ka?</i> ) <i>Sorekara tsugi-ni, (ohō, nakanaka-no jōdama ja nai-ka)</i>	The first thing I thought was this: “Is this man a client?”. Then: “I see, prince charming, are you?”
3.	‘Yeah’, I said, able to hold back my own tears without too much effort.	「なるほど...」さほど努力することもなく、笑いをこらえることができた。	“ <i>Naruhodo...</i> ” <i>Sahodo doryoku suru koto-mo naku, warai-o koraeru koto-ga dekita.</i>	“I see...”, I was able to hold back laughter without too much effort.

Table 1. Examples of translating the emotional load contained in the text.

The examples presented in the Table 1 point to the simplicity of the style Lamia uses, not only in dialogue but also in narrative. Just as in every story in *Hyperion*, the character of the protagonist is expressed in language; Lamia, a hard-boiled detective straight out of a noir novel, says everything straightforwardly (as can be seen, for example, in the introduction of The Poet’s Tale – both are unconcerned about curt language, although it is Silenus who nevertheless leads the way here). As a result the narrative she conducts is matter-of-fact, devoid of consideration of abstract themes (very evident in both The Priest’s and The Poet’s Tales). Lamia primarily describes her observations.

Example 2 shows simplicity through repetition: the two sentences, one after the other, have exactly the same structure, which was not accurately reflected in the Japanese translation. In this case, the translator or the editor has decided to edit the two sentences so that the repetitions disappear completely. In the same example, translator’s tendency to smoothing out vulgarisms is clearly visible: *shit* is translated to おほう (*ohō*, lit. ‘huh’, exclamation with an emotive function or ‘I see’), which in no way conveys to the Japanese reader the same emotions that were conveyed to the reader of the original text. In the English version Lamia’s words show not irritation or anger (which the vulgarism may indicate), but a genuine admiration for stranger’s beauty, maybe astonishment even. On the other hand, in Japanese she seems to disregard him: “I see, prince charming, are you?”. Emotional

load in this sentence changes fundamentally depending on the language version.

A similar problem appears in example 3, but here the whole meaning of the sentence changes, not only the intonation. Cybrid Johnny explains to her that “death” for him means disconnection (“turning off”, so to speak) from the web and only for a minute, Lamia bursts into laughter. Then, when her companion explains how serious was this situation, she replies: *Yeah*, and adds in narrative: *I said, able to hold back my own tears without too much effort*. Context and word choice allows reader to relatively easily notice that Lamia is sarcastic in narrative. In the Japanese version, however, Lamia says nothing about tears. She does tell that “she held back laughter without too much effort” – and thus, not only sarcasm is lost in translation, but the meaning of the sentence too. In this particular case, the translator only needed to translate the part literally and a tone would be easily conveyed to a Japanese reader as well thanks to the context – Lamia has previously signaled that the whole situation seems trivial to her and has little in the way of tragedy, so holding back any tears in this case can only be sarcastic.

### 3.2. Translating expressions rooted in Christianity

Staying on the subject of laughter, it is not difficult to notice that Lamia, in addition to vulgarities, often uses exclamatory phrases related to religion, which is very typical of cultures within the Christian sphere of influence.

no.	original English version	Japanese version	romanization	back translation
1.	I laughed but managed to keep the laughter under control. – Jesus wept, Johnny.	笑いがこみあげてきた。その笑いがヒステリックにならないように、かろうじて自分を抑えこんだ。 あきれかえってことばないよ、ジョニー。	<i>Warai-ga komiagetekita. Sono warai-ga hisuterikkuni naranai yō-ni, karōjite jibun-osaekonda. Akirekaette kotoba nai-yo (Jīzasu weputo), Jonii.</i>	The laughter surged. I barely restrained myself, so that it wouldn’t become hysterical. “I have no words” (Jesus wept), Johnny.

2.	(...) I said “Why, for God’s sake”, and you said something like “That may be the case”.	それに対して “ <small>フォー・ゴッズ・</small> “いったいなんの <small>セイタク</small> ために?”と問い 返すと、あなたは “答えはそこにあ るかもしれない” と応じた。	<i>Sore-ni taishite</i> “ittai nan-no tame-ni? (fō gozsu seiku)”-to toikaesu-to, anata-wa “Kotae-wa <u>soko-ni aru</u> kamo shirenai”- to ōjita.	I asked “For what, on Earth?” (For God’s sake), and you responded: “Maybe the answer is there”.
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Table 2. Examples of translating the emotional load contained in expressions.

It is difficult to judge from the example 1 of Table 2 if the translator read emotions in the text correctly or not. In this scene Lamia is laughing nervously, in disbelief, in reaction to new information about AI. She cannot believe that they deem people irrelevant in the face of, among others, recreating the original Earth. The laughter here can be of course interpreted as hysterical – just as Sakai did – but it will remain nothing more than an interpretation, while at the text level there is no such information. So one can question the validity of the choice to add in the translation the sentence underlined in the Table 2.

The quotes in Table 2 are from the same passage, they are separated by only a few lines, and both are spoken by Lamia. The first one is her comment regarding AI’s attitude towards humans – “Jesus wept” is a famous quote from the Bible, important for Christians as it shows human side of Jesus (he wept over his friend’s death) (Law 2022) and known for its length – it is considered the shortest line in King James Bible (however, that is not the case in the source languages) (Verett 2022). On the other hand, in English slang literal quotation from the Bible used in an exclamatory form expresses annoyance or surprise. It fits the situation by perfectly expressing Lamia’s emotions but it is hard to say that the specifically religious context of the phrase is relevant here. Through these words the author most likely wanted to convey surprise or irritation and not necessarily anything related to Jesus. That is why furigana ジーザス・ウェプト *Jīzasu weputo* appears to be absolutely unnecessary – Japanese reader does not have to be aware that Lamia said anything about Jesus because that was not the purpose of the message.

The second example presents exactly the opposite situation. Again, Lamia uses a phrase connected to God, but this time the religious context is most important. During a conversation with Johnny about the recreated Old Earth and some of its most famous habitants, Lamia asks: *why, for God’s sake?* – and again, she does not really mean God literally, as the expression serves

only to emphasize her emotions. However, Johnny replies: *That may be the case* and in this instance he uses Lamia’s words in its literal sense. They start talking about God himself then, and how AI tried to create it.

It is not surprising that in this case the translator decided to add a furigana to the Japanese sentence with the transcribed “why, for God’s sake?” so that the Japanese reader would be aware of what Johnny’s reply refers to. Known as *gikun*, it is a typographic technique of adding unique furigana often used by Japanese translators to convey dual meanings of one word or expression – enabling them to show a reader not only what it means but how was it originally expressed as well. The translation of phrases related to Christianity into Japanese is a difficult task if a translator aims to keep the emotional load of original text and the naturalness of the target language. That is why in this case using the *gikun* technique seems to be the best option.

### 3.3. Specifics of the language of a priest

Lamia is not the only character that uses phrases related to Christianity. In fact, the best source of such expressions is a protagonist of the first story in *Hyperion* – Paul Duré.

no.	original English version	Japanese version	romanization	back translation
1.	To hell with that.	なんと穢らわしいことか。	<i>Nan-to kegarawashii koto-ka.</i>	What an abhorrent thing.
2.	Weeks of studying the damn parasite and still no clue as to how it functions.	忌まわしい寄生体を研究しだして数週間、いまだにどう機能するのかは、手がかりすらもつかめていない。	<i>Imawashii kiseitai-o kenkyū shidashite sushūkan, imadani dō kinō suru-no-ka-wa, tegakari sura-mo tsukamete inai.</i>	Several weeks passed since I started studying this disgusting parasite and I still have not even hints as to how it functions.

Table 3. Examples of vulgarity in the language of a priest.

Duré is a priest, and specific behaviors – or lack thereof – are stereotypically associated with this role, such as avoiding vulgar language. Dan Simmons does not really seem to care about such convocations in his work and the priest’s language sharpens from time to time as well. After a few days on *Hyperion*, he observes how – despite some mosques and basilicas in the city – people lead decadent lives, entrusting themselves to the worship of a semi-fantastic being called the Shrike, among many things. When the priest decides to leave the planet’s capital, he comments: *To hell with that*, which

Sakai translated as presented in example 1 of Table 3. And here a gap in the meaning between original and Japanese version appears. The phrase Sakai used literally means ‘what an abhorrent thing’, and the adjective itself – according to DD dictionary (kotobank.jp; keyword *kegarawashii*) – means “something that creates a repulsive feeling of becoming dirty yourself”, which by all means expresses priest’s disgust and conveys more in language about the character’s profession itself. However, it completely ignores situational context and Duré’s emotional state.

Duré with the aforementioned phrase definitely reveals his emotions spontaneously, which is one of the characteristics of curse words, but it does not seem to be a mere exclamation, containing no meaning per se. He shows his attitude and even emphasizes his opinion on Hyperion’s society. Does it violate language’s taboo? *To hell with that* itself does not seem to be obscene, but given his position as a clergyman, the reference to hell may sound like it. Nevertheless, the protagonist still remains within the clergy, so the author used a vulgarism which was ignored in Japanese translation – it seems that in favor of staying with the choice of words that fit the priest. However, it was not impossible for Japanese reader to perceive character’s emotions in similar way as an English-speaking reader would do. With choice of this particular word (穢らわしい *kegarawashii*), Sakai in a way translated Christian context into Shinto – *kegare* (穢れ) is religious term in Shinto, as one of the primary functions of Shinto shrines is to purify (sweep away) *kegare*. Thus, in this case translator’s decision is understandable – for obvious reasons, Japanese language lacks vulgarisms related to Christian culture, so he had to decline literal, syntagmatic translation, which “may be (...) disconcerting for the recipient of the translation, because it is much easier to explain the incomprehensibility of a foreign phrase than the opacity of a phrase seemingly formulated in one’s native language” (Hejwowski 2004: 78), and instead chose to use a term related to Shinto.

In the much later passage in example 2 of Table 3, Duré says *damn*, etymologically referring to cursing something, which was translated to 忌まわしい *imawashii*. It does evoke a relatively similar feeling in both Japanese and English-speaking readers, so by no means is it an incorrect translation, however in this case it was possible to choose an adjective that also in Japanese conveys meaning of cursing: 呪わしい *norowashii* (which means ‘wish to curse something/somebody’).

### 3.4. Translating vulgarisms and swearwords

As it was mentioned in section 3.3., Dan Simmons does not shy away from vulgarisms in general – no matter if he writes from a priest’s or detective’s

perspective. The character that uses them the most and almost relentlessly is Martin Silenus – a Poet.

The word “vulgarity” itself is etymologically derived from Latin word “vulgus”, which means ‘a crowd’ – associated with cheapness (Schnurer 1941: 502), and “[t]he concept of vulgarity is rooted in the capacity for contempt. It implies a hierarchy of values. By and large it springs from the intent to denigrate, to exclude, to dismiss, to ignore” (ibid., 501). It is a mostly intentional behavior that is supposed to evoke a specific reaction. According to Grochowski (1995: 15) people are subconsciously self-censoring themselves – they know which phrases or words are violating widely accepted norms in specific communities and which are a taboo.

On the issue of translating vulgarisms from a foreign language into the native one, there is a theory that they lose their force in translation. As some studies suggest, it is more difficult to identify intensity and nuances of vulgarisms in a later learned languages than a native one, which often leads to an overly cautious usage of them in translations (Hjort 2017: 165).

Nevertheless, Hjort admits that further research is required to prove this thesis and some researchers have attempted to prove the contrary – a change in the degree of vulgarity to a stronger one in the target text. Gruszczyńska presents it on only one translation from English to Polish, so, as the author herself writes, this also is not enough evidence. But according to her, it seems like translators are increasingly breaking the taboos. “Audiences carry stereotypes of verbal behavior found in other languages and cultures [...] and translators, in turn, in their pursuit of meeting the expectations of audiences, depart from the original and reproduce and perpetuate the stereotypes of the target culture in their translations” (Gruszczyńska 2019: 181).

In the case of translations into Japanese, it can be observed that the predominant tendency is to reduce the intensity of vulgarisms, which is probably due to the expectations of the target text's audience, as well as the nature of the Japanese language itself. Of course, its native speakers are not deprived of possibility to express pejorative emotions vulgarly and they are, in fact, often conveyed through grammatical forms (～やがる *~yagaru*, which is usually used to indicate contempt or hate, ～くさる *~kusaru*, which literally means ‘to rot’ and is used similarly to *~yagaru*). There are also vulgar lexemes such as アホ *aho*, ボケ *boke*, バカ *baka* (all of them mean literally ‘an idiot’ or ‘a fool’) (Nishio 2003: 47). Nonetheless, the results of Nishio's study (ibid., 69–81) showed that Japanese speakers do not have tendency to express anger or other negative emotions verbally via vulgarisms. Or at least not publicly. It can be assumed that, as vulgarisms

are a relatively small part of everyday language, this is also what the Japanese expect from literature.

no.	original English version	Japanese version	romanization	back translation
1.	In the beginning was the Word. Then came the <u>fucking</u> word processor. Then came the thought processor. Then came the death of literature. And so it goes.	初めに言葉ありき。つぎにワードプロセッサなる <u>しろもの</u> が現れた。おつぎは思考プロセッサ。最後に、文学の死。ま、そういうものだ。	<i>Hajime-ni kotoba ariki. Tsugi-ni wādo purosessā naru shiromono-ga arawareta. Otsugi-wa shikō purosessā. Saigo-ni, bungaku-no shi. Ma, sō iu mono da.</i>	First, there was word. Then, word processor thing appeared. The next was thought processor. In the end, the death of literature. Well, that's how it is.
2.	Anyway, I was born on Earth... Old Earth... <u>And fuck you, Lamia</u> , if you don't believe it.	ともかく、そうして小生は生まれた。生まれは、地球.....ニューアースではないぞ、オールドアースだ。 <u>これこれ、こまった人だな、</u> レイミア、そんなに小生の話しが信じられんか。	<i>Tomokaku, sō shite shōsei-wa umareta. Umare-wa chikyū... Nyū āsu de-wa nai-zo, ōrudo āsu da. Kore kore, komatta hito da -na, Reimia, sonna-ni shōsei-no hanashi-ga shinjiraren-ka.</i>	Either way, and so I was born. I was born on Earth. Not the New Earth, I mean the old one. <u>Eh, eh, you're a difficult person, Lamia.</u> You cannot believe my story this much?
3.	(...) my vocabulary was now down to nine words. (...) For the record, here is my entire vocabulary of manageable words: <u>fuck, shit, piss, cunt, goddamn, motherfucker, asshole, peepee, and poopoo.</u>	というわけで、小生の語彙はただの九語におちこんでしまった。(...) 記録のために申しあげておくと、わがあつかいうる語彙のすべては、これだけだった。 <u>ファック、くそ、しっこ、まんこ、</u>	<i>To iu wake-de, shōsei-no goi-wa tada-no kyūgo-ni ochikonde shimatta. (...) Kiroku-no tame-ni mōshiageite oku-to wa-ga atsukaiuru goi-no subete-wa, kore dake datta. Faku, kuso, shikko, manko, imaimashii</i>	And so, my vocabulary shrunk to nine words. For the record, this was all the vocabulary I could handle. Fuck, shit, piss, cunt, goddamn, motherfucker, asshole, peepee, poopoo.

		ガッ デム 忌々しい、 マザーファツカ アス 一、ケツ ホール の穴、しーし 二、うんち。	(gaddemu), mazāfakkā, ketsu-no ana (asuhōru), shīshī, unchi.	
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Table 4. Examples of vulgarisms and swearing.

The first paragraph (example 1 from Table 4) already presents what kind of character and what kind of language a reader can expect. Silenus begins his tale with the very first words from the New Testament which in Japanese is expressed in *bungo* – classical language. As Venuti describes, “the translator’s hand is most visible whenever the translation manifests a tendency toward archaic language, something that seems to occur most often when the original text is remote in time and place” (Venuti 1986: 197). Also, what is interesting, this one sentence serves as a source for two information regarding him, meaning arrogance and education. He then goes on to take a turn in a completely different direction, emphasizing the word itself and its processing.

Vulgarisms appear immediately as well. Silenus’ tale is the third one in *Hyperion*, therefore a reader may have already become accustomed to his manner of expression – he rarely says anything without swearing and the topic of conversation does not matter to him. What is more, linguistic issues aside, Silenus almost always sipping his wine and his behavior is simply vulgar.

It is a fact, however, that though the Japanese language is not as creative in terms of vulgarisms, it is not deprived of them entirely. What is more, when the most frequently used curse word by a character is *fuck/fucking*, there is a good alternative that would also correspond to both the noun (exclamation) and the adjective – the Japanese noun くそ *kuso* (lit. ‘shit’). Therefore the translator had the possibility to convey Silenus’ manner of speaking more faithfully, while keeping with Simmons’ literary style.

Sakai, however, decided to smooth out vulgarities (just as he did in *The Priest’s Tale*) even though in the original Silenus does not spare them reader. An excellent example is the highlighted passage from example 1 in Table 4: the equivalent for *fucking* was the word しろもの *shikomono*, which, according to the dictionary *Nihon Kokugo Daijiten*, means the subject of a conversation whose value a speaker questions (NKD; keyword *shikomono*). Taking into account Silenus’ attitude toward the subjects he speaks of, the



decision to choose *shikomono* seems to be on point – despite the lack of vulgarity, it conveys the feelings of the protagonist.

In example 2, however, the translation seems to distort the meaning of the text. The phrase Silenus uses towards Lamia, that has been expressing disbelief since the beginning of the story, is: *fuck you, Lamia, if you don't believe it*. In the Japanese version, on the other hand, he says literally “you’re a difficult person, Lamia” (as underlined in the Table 4, example 2) and through this phrase he shows tiredness, disregard toward Lamia and maybe mild annoyance. In the original text the very same sentence is a sign of Silenus’ directness and his indifference – he does not seem to care about Lamia’s opinion.

A twist in the translation of the vulgarisms comes when Silenus moves on in the story to the next stage of his life, where he found himself on the planet Heaven’s Gate after a journey of about a century from Earth, which he spent frozen. After too long in the ice, Silenus suffered a stroke that caused his vocabulary to shrink to just nine words.

no.	original English version	Japanese version	romanization
1.	cunt	まんこ	<i>manko</i>
2.	fuck	ファック	<i>fakku</i>
3.	motherfucker	マザーファッカー	<i>mazāfakkā</i>
4.	shit	くそ	<i>kuso</i>
5.	asshole	アスホール ケツの穴	<i>ketsu-no ana</i> ( <i>asuhōru</i> )
6.	goddamn	ガッデム 忌々しい	<i>imaimashii (gaddemu)</i>
7.	piss	しっこ	<i>shikko</i>
8.	peepee	しーしー	<i>shīshī</i>
9.	poopoo	うんち	<i>unchi</i>

Table 5. Curses from Table 4 arranged by intensity.

In a situation where the only thing the character is capable of uttering is curse words, the translator was probably no longer able to avoid them. Or, it is possible that reducing their strength previously was intended to emphasize them even more vividly in this situation.

The words in the table above this time are arranged by level of intensity. Thus, in the first place is *cunt*, which is considered the most obscene by English speakers in Britain and America (Livni 2017). It is a vulgarism derived from and referring directly to female sexuality and sexual organs,

hence Sakai's choice seems very apt. Next, however, there is *fuck* and *motherfucker*, which have not been so much translated as used as loanwords. It does seem strange because it would be very difficult to find a Japanese equivalent to these words, when the most popular くそ *kuso* has been used as a translation for word *shit*. Here, as well, it is the best choice in terms of a literal meaning. The most interesting, however, is the translation of the words *goddamn* and *asshole*, which Sakai decided to translate on two levels: by using both Japanese equivalents and loanwords added as *gikun*. It is a common solution and thanks to this, two layers are presented to the reader: a meaning and a reading – whenever it is important for author/translator to differentiate between them. ケツの穴<sup>ア ス ホール</sup> conveys the literal meaning (ケツの穴 *ketsu-no ana*) and the suggested reading (アスホール *asuhōru*), which emphasizes that the word in question is indeed vulgar. 忌々しい<sup>ガ ッ デ ム</sup> is similar: 忌々しい *imaimashii* means something annoying, irritating, and so the addition of *gikun* (ガッデム *gaddemu*) helps the reader get an idea of the linguistic register used by the character originally.

The last three items on the list include words describing physiological activities: *piss*, *peepee*, *poopoo*. The first one is considered to be offensive (CD; keyword *piss*), but the latter two words are often used by children (CD; keywords *peepee*, *poopoo*). When translated into Japanese, however, all three equivalents can be categorized as children's speech (NKD; keywords *shikko*, *shīshī*, *unchi*).

## Conclusion

The narrative of each of the stories presented in this article was built in a unique way, making them diverse, although each can be classified as “first-person”. The emotional charge in each also presented itself in different ways depending on the narrator – vulgarisms or Christianity-related idioms etc. Each arguably generated a separate pool of problems and dilemmas for the translator to solve – Sakai Akinobu dealt with these challenges differently, sometimes adding a layer to help reader comprehend the context fully, and sometimes subtracting meaning to adapt it to the reader's expectations (as happened with vulgarisms). He used the *yakuwarigo* (role language) technique to give the characters unique ways of speaking, which was accurately shown in the translation via *yakuwarigo*, and was especially diverse in *The Detective's Story*. Also the use of *gikun* (artificial reading added as furigana) played a significant role – mostly in case of expressions rooted in Christianity – whenever the translator had to help reader understand the meaning while leaving the original context.

As mentioned in the introduction, the translator is a person who stands between the author and the reader and presents the result of his dialogue with the author, his interpretation of the text, to the recipient of the translation. According to some, the invisibility of the translator to this recipient means success, but full transparency is never possible – as long as the translator has more than one option for translating the same text, as long as he has a choice, he will be visible to the reader.

Since the present analysis is based on the work of only one translator on the text of one author, it cannot provide sufficiently comprehensive evidence and conclusions. Nevertheless, it allows one possibility to be shown. In the case of *Hyperion*, Sakai, in making specific choices, presented examples how translations generate gains (the variety of pronouns adds value) and losses (by often distorting the meaning of the source text or depriving the reader of some layers of its meaning).

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keyword *shimono*

keyword *shikko*

keyword *shiishii*

keyword *unchi*

DD: *Dejitaru Daijisen*, URL: <https://kotobank.jp/> [access date: 10 January 2023]:

keyword *kegarawashii*

keyword *uchi*

CD: *Cambridge Dictionary*, URL: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/> [access date: 10 January 2023]:

keyword *narrative*

keyword *piss*

keyword *peepee*

keyword *poopoo*

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