

# Omitted Emotions: Miyuki Miyabe's "Kasha" (Original) and "All She Was Worth" (English Translation)

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*Abstract: An essential component of readers' experiences is their emotional involvement with a work and its characters, often invoked by emotive or descriptive language. In translation it is important that this relationship between the reader and the work created by language is maintained so that the reader is still able to experience the work as the original author intended. With the increase in English translation of Japanese contemporary fiction comes the requirement to examine the reception of these works. To do so, this paper will compare Miyuki Miyabe's "Kasha" (the Japanese text) with the English translation "All She Was Worth". In this novel, Miyabe seeks to realistically convey the dangers of personal debt and the frailty of privacy and identity in contemporary Japan. The reader is asked to understand the tragedy of this moralistic story by empathizing with the emotional motivations of the characters. The usually subtle yet engaging language of the text is used to invoke the reader's emotional response and plays a critical role in this cautionary novel's impact. However, many emotive, metaphoric or descriptive phrases were omitted in the translation. The combined effect of these omissions is to prevent the English translation from effectively communicating a pivotal aspect of the original text. This paper will analyse the effect this omission has on both the English-language work as a whole and the reader's response to the translation.*

Keywords: Translation, Equivalence, Japanese Contemporary Fiction, Miyabe

**T**HIS PAPER WILL make a comparison of Miyuki Miyabe's (宮部みゆき)'s Japanese novel *Kasha* (火車) and the English translation titled *All She Was Worth*, with the aim of evaluating the reader's reception of the novel in translation.<sup>1</sup> Miyuki Miyabe's novel *Kasha* is a story of desperation and destruction caused by insurmountable personal debt. Miyabe's skill is her subtle use of descriptive and emotive language to convey the emotional turmoil and ultimate tragedy of this cautionary novel. As one of many works in an increasing collection of crime fiction by Japanese authors, this novel, like many others in the genre, seeks to realistically capture the society in which the fiction takes place (Seaman, 2004b).

After reading both versions of this text it was apparent that the emotional power and impact of the original far exceeded that of the translation. By analysing excerpts of both versions, this paper will show that the reason for this disparity is that a significant amount of emotive language was omitted in the translation.<sup>2</sup> This paper will examine typical examples of these omissions with reference to the theory of linguistic relativity, in terms of the translatability of emotive language. Assuming that translation strategy dictated the omissions, it may be suggested

that the omitted text was not included because its value and function in translation was not fully recognised; that is, incommensurable world views generated by two different languages made the text untranslatable. It is this author's contention that whilst a translation of complete equivalence is impossible, *Kasha* explores concepts and themes and employs environments and characters that can be expressed as powerfully in English as they are in the original.

Miyuki Miyabe seeks to comment on personal debt in Japan in *Kasha* – as we learn, a not uncommon problem in a society with a rapidly expanding consumer finance industry. The story begins with the disappearance of Shoko Sekine, and we discover that another woman, Kyoko Shinjo, has been living as Shoko for some time. We soon find that Kyoko was driven to murder and steal the identity of Shoko after a life spent trying to escape unrelenting debt collectors, chasing her for enormous debt incurred by her parents. Divorced after a wretched marriage and with no family or friends, at 26, Kyoko has endured many years of instability, threats and physical and sexual abuse. Despite having no legal responsibility for the debt, she has no protection from the illegal actions of the *yakuza* employed to track her. We are guided through the search for both women by

<sup>1</sup> The names of some characters were changed in *All She Was Worth*. When analysing both works this paper will refer to the names used by Miyabe in the original work, *Kasha*. However, as with the English language version of the work, this paper will refer to both the characters in the novel and its author by placing first name before surname.

<sup>2</sup> When analysing the extent of this omission and its effect on the reader's response, this paper will focus on chapters 22 to 25. The events of these chapters make an important contribution to the emotional impact of the original novel, and therefore provide ideal examples of Miyabe's skilful use of language to convey this impact, and consequently, the underlying message of the novel.

the middle-aged Detective Shunsuke Honma of the Tokyo Metropolitan Police: widower, father of one, resident of the housing projects of north-eastern Tokyo and currently on leave after being shot on duty. He is an upright, persistent and devoted professional; he is genuine, kind but stubborn, reserved but straightforward. He serves as the reader's source of reason and moral gauge through this story of immorality and injustice.

Miyabe's message is a cautionary one: to explain the dangers of consumer loans she devotes Chapter 11 (approximately 5 per cent) of the novel to a detailed explanation of the system of lending and the havoc it can cause for debtors in Japan. She describes the history and problems of consumer lending in Japan, the unprincipled practices of some companies, and even includes statistics on the growth in the number of credit card holders and the increase in consumer lending. Her message is that bankrupts are often stigmatised or abandoned by society in general; she asserts that the government authorities responsible for consumer lending should better protect susceptible customers who can become victims of an unforgiving and ruthless system.

Miyabe also highlights the fragility of privacy and identity in Japan. In Chapter 7, we learn in detail about the family register, a confidential record of a family's details (like births and deaths) kept in their hometown and regularly updated. Miyabe infers that despite the sensitivity of this information, it is accessible by others and this lack of privacy can have severe consequences. In Chapter 8 Honma is able to obtain a transcript of Shoko Sekine's family register when his friend's employee goes to a government office and impersonates Shoko. In Chapter 23, we find out that debt collectors were able to locate Kyoko after she has married by accessing her family register, which has been automatically updated with her new personal details, including her address. Thus the official system for documenting identity in Japan is also a means for violating privacy, and in Kyoko's case, it enables debt collectors to continue many years of emotional and physical abuse as they track her across the country. Their discovery of Kyoko's location once she is married is the basis for the destruction of her marriage, and undoubtedly, a key motivation for her desperate need to escape her own identity.

As the novel progresses it is evident that the mystery or investigative element in relation to the crime in this detective story is not an overriding one. After approximately one third of the novel, we are already aware that Kyoko has stolen Shoko's identity, that Shoko is most likely dead, and that there is a real possibility that Kyoko has murdered her (*Kasha*, p. 163, *ASWW*<sup>3</sup>, p. 89). The remaining two

thirds of the story are occupied with unravelling the emotional complexities behind these events. Miyabe uses the majority of the novel to help us to identify with the utterly desperate motivations behind girl-next-door Kyoko's despicable and apparently extreme actions. In devoting such a large amount of the text to such aspects, Miyabe signals the major role that reader involvement with these aspects – understanding the depths of Kyoko's tragedy, and subsequently, the plight of debtors in a consumerist environment like contemporary Japan – plays in the novel as whole.

The description of appearance or setting throughout the novel usually focuses on providing a straightforward picture of the exterior – Miyabe is not often concerned with evoking a strong sensory impression. Some examples of this practical description include her portrayal of Kyoko's apartment in Tokyo: "A refrigerator, cupboard and a microwave oven on a cart stood flush against the wall... a simple bedframe was set back along the right-hand side. The bedcover was drawn up over the pillow" (*ASWW*, p. 54); and of the office of a lawyer specialising in bankruptcy that Honma visits during his investigation: "Honma stood in the hall on the eighth floor of a small building tucked back two blocks from central Ginza... The suite was L-shaped, with the main staff area perpendicular to a corner used for consultations" (*ASWW*, p. 42). Seaman (2004a) calls Miyabe's description "careful", "detailed" and even "lavish" (p. 30). In fact, the descriptions of surroundings are practical and usually precise, but not particularly evocative or emotive, and so create a bleak tone. This means that any other descriptive language in the novel becomes a particularly important component in shaping the reader's response.

Given the style of the narrative (basically a series of interviews) it is speech which regularly drives the plot (Seaman, 2004a). Honma interviews an array of Kyoko and Shoko's associates: employers, work colleagues, neighbours, childhood friends and flatmates. Two examples of chapters that are significant components in Miyabe's moral message are Honma's meetings with Mizoguchi, the lawyer specialising in bankruptcy in Chapter 11, and with Kyoko's ex-husband Kurata, who tells us about Kyoko's horrifying life fleeing debt collectors and their brief, wretched marriage five years earlier in Chapter 23.

Each interviewee provides important pieces in Honma's quest to untangle the emotional motivation behind Kyoko's actions. However, because of the transitory nature of the interviewees, they lack substance as people. It is not their background or their identity, but their speech and anything else conveyed, like small gestures or subtle physical descriptions, along with the effect they produce on our compass

<sup>3</sup> Any in-text references to Alfred Birnbaum's translation of *Kasha*, titled *All She Was Worth*, will be cited using the abbreviation *ASWW*.

Honma, which hold greatest value as story-telling components. For example, Miyabe's subtle portrayal of Kurata's reaction to Honma's questions about his distressing relationship with Kyoko includes him "spitting out" replies or speaking in a strained whisper; his hands shake, and he is "drained" and "wilted" (*ASWW*, pp. 226-238). With limited intervention by Miyabe to describe each interviewee's history and experiences (they must do it themselves through conversation) such descriptions by default take on the role of expressing a great deal of emotion.

Moreover, Honma's thoughts and judgements throughout the novel, interspersed between questions and answers, or drifting in at the end of an interview, complement the responses of the interviewees, and have a moralistic function, because they direct our responses to his discoveries and control our connection with the characters, especially Kyoko. For example, below, in one of many observations in the novel, Honma adds detail to the character of Kyoko to augment our understanding of her:

It was because she was so alone, Honma thought, that she had tried to become someone else. If a close friend had been there to understand, she wouldn't have done it... If someone had cared for her, she'd never have tossed her name away. (*ASWW*, p. 202)

The effect of such subtle descriptions and sparse settings, and constant insertion of Honma's disapproval or sympathy to guide us, is that of gently swaying the reader, composing a network of nuances which ultimately leaves the reader ambiguous about who the victim is, and consequently identifying with the tragedy of the story. Thus, the inclusion of such description and narrative tools is vital because of the substantial responsibility they carry in conveying the emotional impact of the novel.

To evaluate the reader's reception of the novel in translation, we should now move to comparing the original and the translation.<sup>4</sup> Despite Miyabe's efforts to place consumer finance problems in a realistic and tragic human context in the original, in translation the characters and the story do not inspire the same empathy with their experiences or feelings. As with the Japanese, in the English version we are rarely given a strong physical picture of the characters, but in the English text, the vital element of the responses of the characters often comes across as bare, like a

plain narration of facts. Moreover, the outcome of the story does not inspire the same level of emotional response; the same feelings of sympathy, relief or closure are not produced. After making comparisons with the original text, there is clearly one major factor contributing to these impressions: a lack of emotive and descriptive language. The sections omitted from the translation are usually Honma's observations and opinions, which, as mentioned previously, have a strong impact on our emotional involvement with the characters, and therefore shape our response to the novel. Some typical examples of omission follow.

Firstly, in the excerpt below, Miyabe compels us to feel empathy for Kyoko through Honma's observations. Feeling an emotional involvement with Kyoko is crucial to developing an understanding of the real problems that Miyabe is portraying in the novel, because she is both a criminal and a victim in this story. When we learn of the suffering she endured and understand the effect it had on her, we can find the basis for her actions. Although we may find her reprehensible and cruel, we also need to feel sympathy for her for the book to have its full impact. Honma is the architect of our sympathy for the silent Kyoko.

手の指のあいだからこぼれ落ちる、砂の一粒だ。彼女の存在は、社会にとってその程度のものなのだ。  
 這いあがっていかないことには、生きる道はないのだ。  
 もう誰も当てにはできない。男に頼ってもしょせんは虚しいだけだ。自分の二本の足で立ち、自分の両手で闘うのだ。どんな卑怯な手段でも、甘んじて使おう—喬子はそう決めていたのだ。(p. 505)<sup>5</sup>

Like grains of sand spilling through your fingers. That's what her existence was worth to the rest of the world.

She was going to have to fight to make a life for herself.

She could not rely on anyone. There was no point in looking to a man for help. She would have to stand on her own two feet and fight with her own hands. She'd have to use any means possible, however cowardly – that must have been what Kyoko decided. [Author's translation]

<sup>4</sup> It seems pertinent here to include some comment on the aim of this paper. The obligations of the translator have been specified by scholars from many fields on many occasions, and with the analysis that follows this paper is in no way attempting to deny the difficulty of producing a successful translation. As Araki (1976) mentions, "Comprehending the original Japanese work is a relatively simple matter compared with the task of successfully transferring it into English" (p. 84). Evaluating the functional equivalence of a translation is especially difficult because the experience of reading any text is a very personal one. However, Nida (1969) points out the importance of the translation critic evaluating the level of comprehension of the "typical receptors" of a message when attempting to analyse the level of functional equivalence (p. 495). Thus this paper is taking as its basis the reaction of an assumedly "typical receptor" of a work of fiction, (i.e. the author).

<sup>5</sup> All page citations for excerpts in Japanese refer to Miyuki Miyabe's *Kasha*.

In *All She Was Worth*, the above Japanese is translated as, “Men just let you down. From that point on, she couldn’t rely on anyone. She’d have to fend for herself, crawl her way back up” (p. 259).

In the original, we are compelled to think as Honma supposes Kyoko thought. We are made to feel her sense of worthlessness and identify with her drastic situation. When we are asked to reach the character’s judgements with them, they become more resonant and full, and our emotional involvement is stronger with each individual character, and subsequently the novel as a whole. That is, the Japanese text evokes sympathy for Kyoko Shinjo, almost justifying her extreme actions because of the trauma she has experienced. In turn, this sympathy is a very powerful tool for enlightening the reader regarding problems in the consumer finance industry, as the reader is led to consider that this plight afflicts supposedly “average” people. However, in the translation, we are unable to participate in this thought process. Kyoko is distanced from us, and this means we do not develop the same level of sympathy for her.

Below is another example of an omission from the translation where Honma helps us to understand that Kyoko’s actions are her attempt to alleviate extreme suffering.

新城喬子という名前を捨てなければ、もう  
平和な生活など望めない—彼女はそう思い  
つめていったのかもしれない... (p. 505)

Unless she was able to get rid of the name Shinjo Kyoko, she couldn’t even begin to think of living in peace and safety – she was probably consumed by thoughts like this. [Author’s translation]

To most, Kyoko’s reasoning is unthinkable, but she has reached this point only after years of misery. She is “consumed” by her desperation – she has no gauge of the immorality of her actions, and thus Miyabe seems to imply that Kyoko can be spared some responsibility. However, if we are unable to identify with the motivations of the character, the tragedy of this story is not truly exposed to the reader.

Assuming that these omissions were made due to a translation strategy that deemed them unnecessary for the English-language reader, and considering the emotive nature of the omitted text, it is relevant to view them in reference to the theory of linguistic re-

lativity, as it is there that we may find a useful framework for further analysis. The theory of linguistic relativity, and the related theory of linguistic determinism, are usually grouped together to be called the Sapir/Whorf Hypothesis (Gumperz & Levinson, 1991).<sup>6</sup> Linguistic determinism posits that language determines how an individual views the world; there is no objective, universal reality because different languages build different realities (Sapir, 1921; Steiner 1972). The “strong” version of the hypothesis would have that language restricts thought so that we are unable to grasp concepts that do not belong to our native language; it follows that successful translation is impossible (Swanson, 1961; Hatim & Mason, 1990). Linguistic relativity is commonly termed a “weaker” version of the hypothesis, in that it infers that language influences thought; however, languages are still viewed as essentially different, and to partition reality to create a unique world view (Gumperz & Levinson, 1991; Katan, 1999). Translation of “cognitive content or message” is possible, but there are some texts that will inevitably lose meaning due to the untranslatability of more subtle aspects like “emotive meaning” (Catford, 1969, p. 188).<sup>7</sup>

Theory on translation in relation to linguistic relativity covers both extremes. The “monadic” (formulated by Sapir and Whorf, amongst others) position posits that concepts cannot be wholly translated because each language contains connotative meaning that is incommensurable with other languages; the theory in direct opposition to this, universalism, states that there are deep structures that form the basis of all language, and the surface structures of this universal basis are realised in the many and varied languages we speak (Steiner, 1972, p.15). This fundamental commonality between languages would imply that translation of any concept into any language is possible in some way (Jakobson, 1959; Steiner, 1972).

There are aspects of both positions that are true. We must accept that it is inevitable that our understanding of a work will not be identical to the producer’s, nor will it encompass all the specific meaning attached to it. Further, each reader interprets a text through a subjective set of circumstances; that is, words will be interpreted differently not only by readers of the same language but also by source text readers and the readers of a translation (Gumperz &

<sup>6</sup> According to Gumperz and Levinson (1991), the origin of this theory has been attributed to several scholars including Humboldt, Boas, Sapir and Whorf.

<sup>7</sup> Most current theory on linguistic relativity occupies an intermediate stance. Cognitive science and linguistic anthropology, by highlighting evidence of “significant universals in language, perception and cognitive development” have contributed to the current view that, whilst no substantive data is yet available, perception is a combination of internal (thought) and external factors (technology, literature, cultural systems and social procedures), and therefore not solely determined by language (Gumperz & Levinson, 1991, p.615). There has been adamant opposition to the notion that language controls thought by Pinker (1995), who asserts that if we were to accept the theory of linguistic determinism, it would also mean accepting that it is not possible to think without words, (when experiments have shown that this is possible). This in turn would imply it is impossible to invent new words or to translate between languages, which occurs frequently.

Levinson, 1991; Hatim & Mason, 1990; Steiner, 1972). In this sense, Sapir was correct when he stated that meaning will always be lost or modified in translation (Sapir, 1921). We must also accept that the culture-specific meaning imposed by language makes translation problematical in some circumstances (Jakobson, 1959). It is undeniable that during the translation of some texts, like poetry, or those employing distinctive accents, it will be extremely difficult to produce an adequate level of equivalence (Catford, 1969).

It may be suggested that *All She Was Worth* loses meaning because the concepts in the original were not translatable. That is, the omitted text was not provided for the English language reader due to a lack of understanding of its value and function in the original novel. A fundamentally different world view influenced by each language would provide the explanation for the disparity in interpretation of the source text.

However, this analysis of *All She Was Worth* supports the concept that there is a scale of translatability (Bell, 1991). We cannot assume that any translation strategy could have conveyed the entire spectrum of meaning deposited by Miyabe, consciously and unconsciously, in the original text. We will not feel precisely the same way about Kyoko or Honma as another reader, be they a native Japanese reader or non-native reader. However, we can assume that there is shared understanding across cultures, even with unfamiliar concepts (Wierzbicka, 1986).<sup>8</sup> Hatim and Mason state that “there is sufficient shared experience even between users of languages which are culturally remote from each other to make translatability a tenable proposition” (p. 105). Moreover, it has been shown that *Kasha* does not attempt to introduce emotional concepts that would be alien to the English-language reader; in fact the story revolves around the very humanness of its characters in desperate situations. It follows that empathy would be more easily achieved by an average reader in this case, and it would be incorrect to state that the text lost meaning in translation because the original emotive concepts were untranslatable. The omitted text, if included, would have enhanced our connection to the original text and to the emotional concepts used by Miyabe.

When we return to analysis of the excerpts, we must also note that we lose many descriptive phrases that Miyabe included in the original. When Kyoko’s former husband Kurata learns from Honma that she has stolen the identity of Shoko Sekine, who was bankrupt, his reaction is one of disbelief and irritation, and Miyabe’s description of him is:

驚愕のためか、倉田は半ば腰を浮かしかけた。目や鼻や口が、彼のちんまりと整った顔の外に飛び出してしまいそうなほど、大きく広がっている。(p. 439)

It seemed his astonishment lifted him from his seat. His nostrils flared and mouth gaped open; his eyes grew so wide it seemed they would burst from their sockets in his usually refined, composed face. [Author’s translation]

In the translation, the above Japanese is reduced to, “Half rising from his seat,” as follows:

*Kurata showed almost no reaction till Honma mentioned that Kyoko had disappeared when her fiancé learned of Shoko’s bankruptcy. Half rising from his seat, he said, ‘I’ve never heard anything so stupid!’ (p. 229)<sup>9</sup>*

That is, the physical description is not included. We require these physical descriptions because they make the person immediate and tangible, thus having a stronger effect on our experience as a reader.

Another instance where Miyabe humanizes Kyoko is shown below. Miyabe wants us to see her as fundamentally a normal person in extraordinary circumstances.

…喬子は掃除をし、洗濯をし、買い物をして料理を作り—そう、節約チャーハンをつくったと、市木がおりは言っていた—雨の日は傘を広げてその戸口から出てゆき、夜眠る前に、カーテンを引きながら月を見あげ、靴を磨いたり、花に水をやったり、新聞を読んだり、雀にパン屑を投げてやったりしながら暮らしてきたのだろう。(p. 509)

Kyoko had done the cleaning, washing, shopping and cooking – that’s right, Kaori Ichiki had said that she made great fried rice from leftovers. He could just imagine the life she led:

<sup>8</sup> To aid in the cross-cultural communication of emotion, Wierzbicka (1995) has developed a system of using simple, self-explanatory, intuitive concepts (e.g. good and bad) for conveying universal emotion concepts in different languages. Wierzbicka (1986) also states that human emotions can presumably be expressed in any human language, and even if one language has not lexicalised a particular emotion, it does not mean its speakers are not capable of perceiving it. Further, Izard states that “the emotions have innately stored neural programs, universally understood expressions, and common experiential qualities”, which again implies that there is shared understanding across cultures (as cited in Wierzbicka, 1986, p. 584). This would imply that different languages, and therefore the speakers of those languages, share fundamental emotion concepts, despite culture-specific frameworks for expressing emotion. This is particularly important for this translation, because it implies that source text readers are capable of empathy even if the concept being expressed is unfamiliar.

<sup>9</sup> The text corresponding to the Japanese text provided above is written without italics. With the aim of assisting the reader in understanding the context of the excerpt, and also to indicate the extent of the omission, the adjacent text has been italicised. This adjacent italicised text was included in *All She Was Worth*.

stepping out the door on a rainy day, putting up her umbrella; looking up at the moon through the curtain before she went to sleep, polishing her shoes, watering the plants, reading the paper, feeding breadcrumbs to the birds. [Author's translation]

The translation is, “Kyoko had fended for herself: cleaning and washing clothes and doing the shopping and cooking” (*ASWW*, p. 261). These everyday aspects of Kyoko's life in the original text mirror our own lifestyles, so it is easy to recognize a connection with her on a human level. This is another effective way to heighten our involvement: when the characters are realistic, we can more readily adopt their emotions because of their similarity with our own. The translation does list some everyday activities, but without the subtle touches of beauty and nostalgia of the original, which install the reader so much more effectively in the scene.

We can return to the analysis of translatability here, making reference to Miyabe's description of

setting and literary technique. As we see above, we move through the novel with characters not unlike ourselves. Being set in various modern cities in Japan, *Kasha* is not like ancient or even some 20<sup>th</sup> century works that may require extensive annotation to connect the reader with what may be detailed or unfamiliar environments, accents, events or customs. Further, there are no conspicuously foreign or ornate elements in this novel which need to be normalised, so we can easily digest the text's structure and form (Fowler, 1990).<sup>10</sup> Therefore, unlike that of some poetry, (the text type singled out for being extremely difficult to wholly translate because meaning is often inseparable from style), the style of this text does not render it untranslatable (Hatim & Mason, 1990). Hence, in terms of Japanese literature, *Kasha* provides the translator with a relatively unproblematic basis from which to produce a translation.

Further, statistical analysis proves useful when comparing the texts. Below, figure one shows the ratio of English pages to Japanese pages.

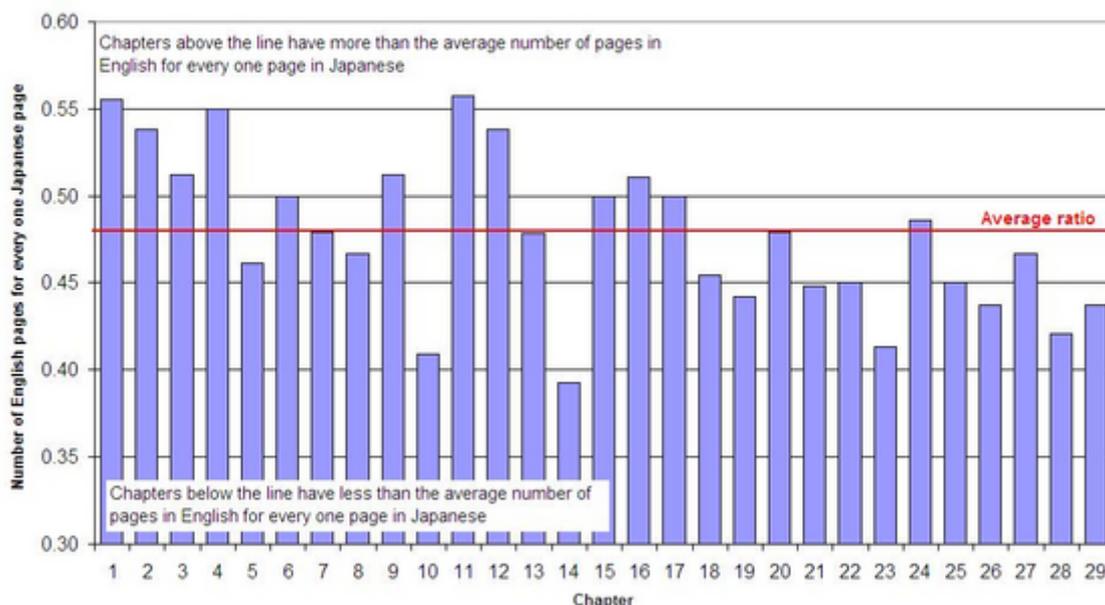


Figure 1: Ratio of English pages to Japanese pages

For this translation there is an average ratio of 0.48 pages in the English text for every page in the Japanese text; that is, in total, the Japanese work is roughly

<sup>10</sup> Some frequently mentioned instances of normalisation by translators in other Japanese works include Waley's replacement of Japanese architecture and furnishings with Western equivalents in his translation of *The Tale of Genji*, and Seidenstecker's attempt to convey the Tokyo and Osaka dialects in his translation of Tanizaki's *The Makioka Sisters* (Fowler, 1990; Ury, 1976; Seidenstecker, 1980). Keene (1964) provides an ideal example of attempting to convey decorative elements as a translator of modern Japanese: “[Tanizaki's] *Shunkinshō* in the original edition is given a peculiarly Meiji flavour by such devices as vertical lines on the page or the occasional use of old-fashioned *hentaigana*. Such features have little to do with the purely literary value of the text, and it is obviously impossible to convey their effect in translation... but the translator... feels himself obliged to make a stab at verbal decoration, though he knows in advance the effect may be strange rather than beautiful” (p. 5).

twice the length of the English work in page numbers.<sup>11</sup> The differing column heights illustrate where the texts differ in the number of pages per chapter. The chapters below the line have fewer than the average number of pages in English for every page of Japanese; that is, content in these chapters was omitted or may have required fewer words in English to translate. The chapters above the line have more than the average number of pages in English for every page of Japanese, which means the Japanese content may have required more words than average to translate or the translator may have added content. Interestingly, Chapter 11, when Mizoguchi explains to Honma in great detail the Japanese consumer finance industry, is well above the average ratio, which indicates this chapter required more words than av-

erage to translate or that additions were made. Conversely, Chapter 23, when some of the most evocative scenes of the novel are played out through Kyoko's ex-husband Kurata's recollection of his relationship with her, is well below this average ratio, which signals omission of original text. This indicates a translation policy that perhaps focuses on factual information and incorporates less of the emotive language of the dramatic chapters.

Following on from figure one, the percentage of the whole novel occupied by each chapter was calculated for each version, and these percentages were then compared. Figure two illustrates the chapters which occupy greater and lesser proportions of the English work compared to the number of pages they occupy in the Japanese work.

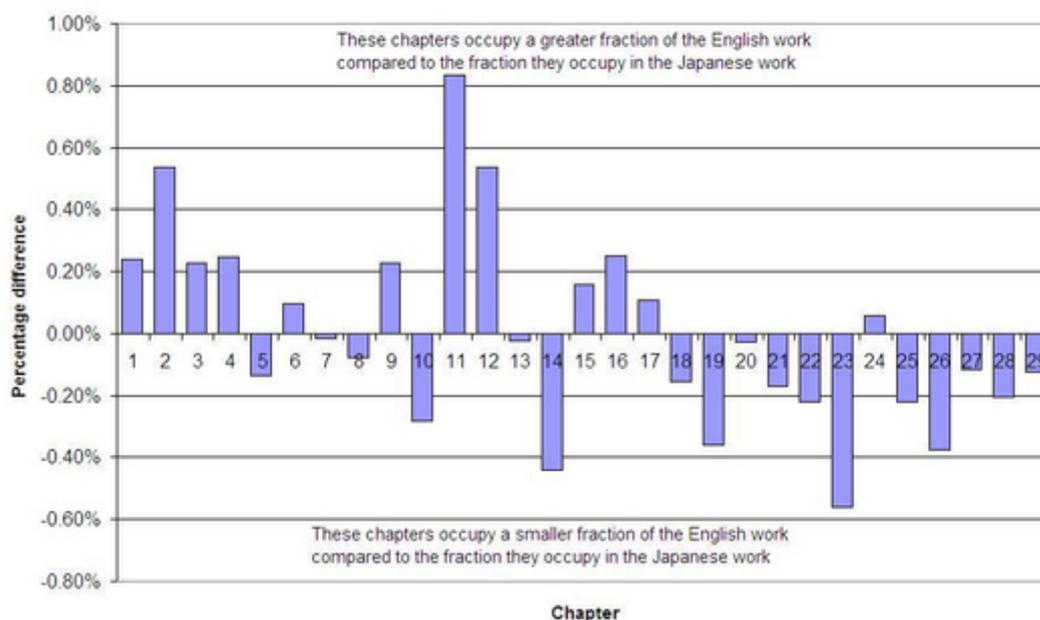


Figure 2: Difference in Chapter Length from Japanese to English as a Percentage of the Work

The percentage values on the Y axis indicate the amount by which each chapter is either proportionately smaller or larger in the English work compared to the share it has of the Japanese original. Thus, the columns above zero per cent occupy a greater portion of the English work compared to the portion they occupy in the Japanese version. This would imply that because these chapters take up proportionately more of the whole work in English than they do in Japanese (but are not necessarily longer), they may have a greater effect on our experience as a reader. The columns below zero per cent indicate chapters that occupy a smaller fraction in the English version

than they do in the Japanese text. This may signify that because they occupy proportionately less of the work than they do in Japanese (but are not necessarily shorter) they will have less effect on the reader's experience. Notably, Chapter 23 is a smaller proportion of the English work, but Chapter 11 is a greater proportion of the English work. With Chapter 11 occupying such a large fraction of the English version, the technical side of Miyabe's message has a strong impact on the overall tone. The consequence of simultaneously reducing the emotional content (like that in Chapter 23) is that the reader will develop less connection with the emotional aspects of the

<sup>11</sup> This figure was obtained by counting the number of pages in each chapter of both versions (29 chapters in total). A ratio of the number of English pages for every one Japanese page was then calculated for every chapter. The average of 0.48 English pages for every Japanese page is the average of all chapters in these two works and is not necessarily correct of all Japanese to English translation.

story and their experience will be dominated by the technical aspects.<sup>12</sup>

It is obvious from this paper that the translator has many difficult responsibilities to fulfil. Despite their challenging role as both receiver (of the original message) and communicator (of the translation), where modification will undoubtedly take place, the translator must aim to convey the overall meaning of the work, which includes exposing the reader to the different interpretations generated by the range of meaning associated with the text (Hatim and Mason, 1990; Ivir, 1981; McClellan, 1964). Hatim and Mason (1990) label the translator a “cultural mediator”, as it is their job to gauge any cultural difference in meaning and/or interpretation and render the source text as faithfully as possible in the translation (p. 223). *Kasha* relies on the raw emotions of the characters and their interactions to be successful (that is, a work that is evocative and powerful and to some extent didactic). This makes the emotive meaning of primary concern when translating the overall meaning of the text, and as has been shown, any omission of it will negatively impact on the overall message of the work.

Miyuki Miyabe’s *Kasha* is a realistic portrayal of the risks of the Japanese consumer finance system, as well as an examination of privacy and identity in

modern Japan. It is imperative that the non-Japanese reader is able to fully experience the realism of a novel like *Kasha* (where realism is such an important component of the tragedy of the story and of its success as a “mystery”) in order to attain an accurate perspective on contemporary Japan. The reader is drawn to experience the tragedy of the novel through a subtle yet unwavering use of emotive and descriptive language, which is used to develop an emotional connection with the actions and motivations of the characters. Unfortunately, a great deal of this emotive language was omitted in the translation. The omission of such language results in the emotional connection between the reader and work being restricted. Consequently, the reader is prevented from experiencing the full emotional impact of the powerful original text. Upon examining the omissions in terms of the theory of linguistic relativity, it has been shown that the omissions could not have been the result of concepts or literary techniques that would be so incomprehensible that the non-native reader would deem them untranslatable. The translator faces many challenges when communicating across cultures, and this analysis shows that whilst emotive meaning is a complex aspect of literature to interpret, it is a vital component of the reader’s experience in any language.

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<sup>12</sup> It is important to note that in figure one Chapters 10 and 14 are further below the average than Chapter 23. This implies that these two chapters have the greatest amount of omission. However, as shown in figure two, in terms of change in their share of the novel as a whole, these two chapters do not show the greatest change – this title belongs to Chapter 23. At 5.5 and 7 pages respectively, these chapters are two of the shortest in the novel. Chapter 10 brings the troubled relationship between Honma and his nephew Jun (who asked Honma to search for Shoko) to a dramatic end. Chapter 14 provides us with more commentary on the financial troubles of young Japanese people. Here both emotive content and technical content are being deleted. However, Chapter 23, at 23 pages, is longer than both Chapters 10 and 14, so deletion equates to a greater effect on the whole work. Given that Chapter 23 incorporates some intensely emotional scenes in the original, figure two also substantiates the impression that the emphasis of the entire work has been shifted away from emotive language through these deletions. It may be argued that comparing the amount of deletion in this way is irrelevant, as momentous events could occur in but a few pages. However, Miyabe’s message is conveyed in its entirety through consistent, subtle use of emotive language, so the considerable amount of deletion in Chapter 23 will undoubtedly interfere with the faithful transmission of the overall message.

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