

Julio Perez Jr.

Subtleties at the Site of Translation: A Study of *Botchan* in Multiple Translations

Introduction

Translations are never made in a vacuum. There is a historical context and a number of figures that play a role in the production of a translation, and each of these figures has their own motivations for doing so. Natsume Sôseki's *Botchan*, written in 1906, is a unique text that has been translated in its entirety into English five separate times between 1918 and 2009. The study of the different figures that played a role in the creation of the *Botchan* translations and the differences between them yield interesting results that reflect on the changing relationship between Japan and the English speaking world over time. The fact that several translations of *Botchan* exist also presents the unique opportunity to compare different ways of translation when confronting situations, such as humor and dialect, which are generally problematic for translation in other works as well. Furthermore, analyzing the translator's motivation in undertaking the task of translation reveals relationships of power among countries that use the target and source languages.

The two pre-World War II translators, Môri Yasotarô and Sasaki Umeji, were native speakers of Japanese and took on the burden of representing their present day country to the western world by translating *Botchan*, which was a novel on the cutting edge of modern Japanese literature and represented contemporary Japan's growth and internal conflicts. Môri and Sasaki translated *Botchan* in 1918 and 1922 respectively. Based on the way they translated, their extratextual information and their other work, it can be inferred that the audiences they had in mind for their translations were primarily English speakers outside of Japan who knew little

about Japan. Their choice of *Botchan* for this audience was strategic, as during this time, Japan's classical literature and art were highly esteemed and collected in Britain and, translators based in England capitalized on this tendency by translating such texts as *The Tale of Genji*.

The post-war translations were made by native speakers of English who had academic interests in Japanese literature and culture. From the perspective of their own time they found trends in *Botchan* that well represented the variety of conflicts of Japan's modernization in the Meiji period. Alan Turney's translation was published by Kodansha in 1972 and remained uncontested until 2005 when Kodansha published Joel Cohn's translation of *Botchan*. It is strange that the same publishing company, after such a long time, would publish a new translation of *Botchan* when a high quality one already existed. It is even more strange that yet another translation by Matthew Treyvaud became available on Amazon Kindle in 2009.

In her work on the translations of Sôseki's works, Kyoko Omori undertakes an analysis of the importance of balancing meaning and tone in the process of translation and used *Botchan* as a case study for her analysis. She uses the translations by Môri, Sasaki and Turney, which were extant at the time, as well as a translation of the first chapter by Burton Watson that appears in *Modern Japanese Literature, an Anthology* (1956). Omori identifies several traits of *Botchan* that she felt were crucial to the text and analyzed how the translators reproduced them in English. She stresses the importance of the translation of the nickname Botchan itself (Omori 1996 p. 48), the representation of personality through different speech styles (Omori 1996 p. 52), the nature of the "reportive" narrative in the form of indirect speech (Omori 1996 p. 55), and the play on words and jokes that appear (Omori 1996 p. 67). These points all hold true for the translations she analyzed and I will demonstrate later that the more recent translators have their own unique ways of approaching these aspects of *Botchan*.

While Omori gives an effective textual analysis of the various translations, she does not consider the historical contexts in which the translations were produced. What is it about the text that has attracted so many translators to it? Why did they choose this work in particular, and what did they hope to gain by translating it? Omori's paper also precedes the two very recent translations of *Botchan*. Finally Omori considers neither the extratextual portions of the translations nor the various intentions and motivations surrounding the site of translation. Asking these questions will lead us to consider the eminent place in modern literature of Natsume Sôseki and *Botchan*'s unique position among his works.

The Appeal of *Botchan*

Botchan and *I Am a Cat* (1905) are usually analyzed with regard to their humor and satire. What separates *Botchan* from *I Am a Cat* and Sôseki's later work is the immediate style of its first person narrative, which is a result of the unique nature of the main character, and the profound insight the novel gives into Sôseki's view of Japan in his time. While his later works without a doubt take place in a similar time period, they are principally concerned with an internal and psychological world. They focus on depicting characters involved in complex relationships rather than on a larger critique of external society. Sôseki focused on satire in *I am a Cat* and *Botchan* continued that trend and began his novel writing career. Moreover, *Botchan* presents a very different character from Sôseki's other protagonists, such as the titular character of *Sanshiro*, Daisuke of *Sorekara* and both the unnamed young narrator and Sensei of *Kokoro*. *Botchan* is neither highly educated nor eloquent, and is a youthful character that does not possess a dark past that haunts his living experience. He is just the opposite: reckless, quick tempered, gullible and lives in the moment. *Botchan*'s greatest redeeming quality is his honesty and his firm belief in a sense of social justice. In the preface to his translation, Turney suggests that the

main reason why Sôseki chose *Botchan* for the title is “to convey the deep feelings of affection and loyalty which the old servant, Kiyô, had for him” (Turney 1972 p. 7). Cohn remarks that the nickname has several connotations including “[one who is] inexperienced or naïve; easygoing in a way that can either be mildly endearing or distressingly irresponsible” (Cohn 2005 p. 5). While both aspects are important it is very likely that Botchan’s gullibility and belief that the world should not be full of injustices is characteristic of a child-like view of the world and one that all readers can empathize with on some level.

Sôseki shows us bits and pieces of the harsh qualities of the real world and has Botchan react against these problems in his own way, which is unapologetic and sincere. For example, shortly after Botchan sees Redshirt in a secret rendezvous with Madonna at the Bathhouse, Redshirt summons Botchan to his house and discusses a promotion for him as Uranari was planning to transfer to another school. After he goes home his landlady has to spell out for him how Redshirt is using his power to push Uranari out of town so that he can marry Madonna. Botchan’s immediate reaction is characteristic of his sense of social justice, which is all the more emphasized by his landlady’s advice to restrain his temper.

“But that’s terrible! What a trick to play on somebody!...No wonder he says there’s no problem with giving *me* a raise. But if they think I’m going to accept it now, they’ve got another thing coming...Let me tell you, that Redshirt is a fool and a rat.”

“Even if he is, if he offers you a raise you’d be better off taking it, no questions asked, *na moshi*. When you’re young you get upset about all kinds of things, but then later on you realize that you were only getting yourself into more trouble that way and you should have controlled yourself. The only person you hurt by losing your temper is you, and you’ll end up regretting it. That’s the way it is, so take this old lady’s advice--- if Redshirt says he’s going to give you a raise, just say thank you and accept it.” (Cohn 2005 p 118).

Botchan basically tells her to mind her own business and, because he does not want to get money taken out of someone else’s salary, he goes back to Redshirt to refuse the raise straight away (Cohn 2005 p 119). Botchan cannot be swayed by arguments presented as reasonable for living

in a less than ideal society, whether by his hated enemy Redshirt or his landlady who is genuinely looking out for him. Botchan proves time and time again that he is unfaltering in his beliefs about justice. He is equally immovable on the point of honesty. Upon meeting the principal for the first time the principal gives a short lecture about how a teacher is expected to be a role model for the students and a paragon of positive moral influence. Botchan can only think as follows:

“...this was asking for a lot more than he had any reasonable right to expect...If the assignment was so demanding, they should have explained...before they'd hired me. I don't like lying, so there was no way out of it: I just had to...make up my mind to give up the job and head for home right away...when I informed the Principal that I couldn't possibly live up to the expectations he had for me...he blinked those badger eyes of his...then he laughed and said that what he had been talking about before was simply his ideal, and he was well aware that I wouldn't be able to live up to it so there was no need for me to worry” (Cohn 2005 p. 31).

From these two episodes it is clear that Botchan's sincere sense of justice and honesty makes him a round peg in the square society he lives in. To everyone around him he is unable to see reason and so he is rightly awarded his “Botchan” status because he is overly idealistic in his expectations of people's behavior, to the extent of childishness.

Botchan is also very revealing of some realities in Japan that lies outside of the rapidly changing urban centers like Tokyo. As will be discussed in depth later, one of the central aspects of *Botchan's* effective humor is showing the conflict of urban and rural cultures, especially in modes of speech. This aspect of the novel also illustrates a reality that is relevant to Japan today: Not everyone in Japan speaks the same Japanese, lives the same way, has the same values as those living in Tokyo. The government of Japan in Sôseki's time and onward increasingly sought to unite Japan as a modern nation state in order to strengthen itself and stand against the western powers encroaching on it. Botchan, as a teacher from an urban center, in many ways represents

this difficult process, and his views on what he considers to be the backward local culture reveal the prejudices held by urban intellectuals.

Through the character of Botchan, Sôseki counters the hypocrisy represented by someone like Redshirt. Botchan invites the reader to understand that there are problems with the way things work in modern day society, and to illuminate the compromises we make when we accept the way things are to be safe or to get an advantage. Sôseki also draws attention to features of his time such as the celebration of the end of a war which is agreed to represent winning Russo-Japanese war (Cohn 2005 p. 140), the value and esteem of a BA (Cohn 2005 p. 32), and a typical figure of Meiji society: the western educated intellectual. The book draws its satirical reputation from characters like Redshirt who represents the direction that many intellectuals were viewed to take in the Meiji period: to embrace Western literature, culture, and customs and put on airs to show off these traits. In everyday conversation he finds ways to show off his Western learning by throwing around names of western artists and writers such as Turner (Cohn 2005 p. 63), and Gorky (Cohn 2005 p. 66). Redshirt is obsessed with how others view him to the point he wears something like a red shirt that makes him stand out visually.

It is very common to analyze *Botchan* the way Sasaki does in his preface: as illustrating a conflict of “Old Japan with her polite yet often deceptive ways...and New Japan with her honest, simple, frank democratic ways” (Sasaki 1968 p. 7). The idea may seem applicable at first as there is a central conflict of deceptive characters against honest characters. However, it must be stressed that viewing aspects of Japan in the novel in a binary of Old and New and setting these two aspects against each other through the characters is not only superficial but unproductive. The theory is easily discredited by considering that while Botchan at some points seems unrefined as he is not interested in or knowledgeable of things like the curios that his first

landlord tries to push on him (Cohn 2005 p. 42) or the Noh songs that his second landlord sings (Cohn 2005 p. 119), he also has nostalgia for lingering aspects of pre-Meiji Japan. Kiyoo, the character he has greatest affection for, is like a remainder of the Edo period as a former member of a samurai family who, down on her luck, had to resort to becoming a servant (Cohn 2005 p. 16), and Botchan bolsters himself when struggling with his students by thinking about his samurai ancestry (Cohn 2005 p. 58). Elements of traditional Japan are not set against elements of modernizing Japan so much as displayed alongside each other in *Botchan*.

Natsume Fusanosuke, Sôseki's grandson, argues in the epilogue of *The Times of Botchan* that the Meiji era is characterized by its tendency toward modernization as "an unavoidable movement of the time," which, despite Japan's growing economic and military power, left many Japanese people frustrated with the many new changes that forced them to abandon their older ways of life.¹ *Botchan* reveals this as we find Botchan consistently at odds with characters who abandon any sense of values to benefit themselves, like when Redshirt forces Pale Squash out of town, Redshirt's excessive showiness of his intelligence, and his two faced way of interacting with people. Then there is the principal, Badger, who talks about ideals that he does not actually expect anyone to measure up to (Cohn 2005 p. 30). Overall Redshirt represents figures in the Meiji period who abandon values and traditions out of selfishness and Sôseki, through Botchan frustration, is pointing out how these tendencies can lead to conflict social injustice. *Botchan* displays both the simultaneous existence of ideas about old and new values and traditions and the conflicts that the old and new values can lead to among Japanese people.

The conflict of old Japan and new Japan in the Meiji era should never be seen as a binary. It was a chaotic time filled with individuals moving in multiple directions for a variety of reasons.

¹ Taniguchi and Sekikawa 2005 p. 139

Botchan is right in the middle of it as he is part of the newer education system that seeks to bring youth to a certain level of knowledge and appreciation of both Japanese and western culture. He is witness to intellectuals like Redshirt who see themselves as moving with the times by embracing western culture in literature, dress and simple habits. He is also surrounded by characters that live in a modern time but also engage in traditional arts and hobbies, the two land lord characters indicated above are good examples. Furthermore, the first landlord who deals in curios tries to cheat Botchan out of money by selling him useless goods while the second landlord's hobby is harmless to him albeit noisy. There is no gurantee about who is good or bad in Botchan based upon whether they seem traditional or modern. Sôseki is attacking a self serving attitude at the expense of others

In addition to using Botchan as a lens to view Meiji society through his uncompromising honesty and sense of justice, Sôseki gives Botchan a lively and unique voice in the original text. Cohn characterizes Botchan's narrative voice as "striking, not quite like anything seen in Japanese fiction before, and not often matched since" (Cohn 2005 p. 5). Môri, in his preface, comments that narrative is filled with "spicy, catchy colloquials patent to the people of Tokyo" (Môri 1918 p. 3). Botchan's defiant attitude is closely linked with his blunt and engaging manner of speech, and both of these features draw readers in and make Botchan an attractive and amusing character overall. Setting aside all of the discussions about humor, cultural objects and ways to portray dialect, the overarching challenge that all of these translators had to face was how to capture reader's attention in the same way the original Japanese text does. At its heart *Botchan* has great depth to explore, while, on the surface it is meant to be a fun read and this effect requires considerable ability to translate. Each of the translators make different attempts at recreating Botchan's voice and some are more successful than others in different areas.

Môri Yasotaro and His Translation

To begin chronologically, the first translation of *Botchan* was published in 1918 and written by Môri Yasotaro (毛利八十太郎). Môri Yasotaro was born in Azabu, Tokyo in 1882. He went to America alone at 17 years of age and studied English while washing dishes to get by for 14 years. He returned to Japan in 1913 and quickly became a respected scholar of English. He wrote his translation of *Botchan* in 1918. He later became the first Editor of the English edition of the *Osaka Mainichi* newspaper in 1922. (*Hyôgoken jinbutsu jiten* 1968 p. 106) Môri continued to work in journalism as a writer and staff member in both the *Osaka Mainichi* newspaper and the *Japan Times*. After World War II he is credited to working as an English consultant of the governor of Hyogo prefecture and wrote a military history of the prefecture to give to the local commander of the Occupation forces (*Hyôgoken jinbutsu jiten* 1968 p. 106).

Môri seemed to be well informed of Western culture and in particular seemed to enjoy Western humorous writing and speech. He wrote several comical short essays in English that appeared in the *Japan Times*, *English Osaka Mainichi* newspapers and in some American newspapers as well (Môri 1925 p. ii). He also wrote a book explaining English jokes and colloquial speech in Japanese.² His interest in comedy could explain his affection for *Botchan*. He says that, “Its quaint style, dash and vigor in its narration appealed to the public who had become somewhat tired of the stereotyped sort of manner with which all stories had come to be handled” (Môri 1918 p. 3). This particular text may have matched his tastes in humor and for that reason he chose to render it into English.

² Môri Yasotaro, 1957.

Môri's wrote his translation not long after Natsume Sôseki's death in 1916, a short time after his own return to Japan and before his post at the *English Osaka Mainichi*. What motivated Môri to write a translation of *Botchan*? What kind of audience was he writing for? The best place to look for answers is in the preface he wrote for his translation.

In his preface he begins by cautioning the reader that full benefit of a text can only be derived from reading it in its original language and any merit found in a translation is a credit to the original, whereas faults found in the translated text should be attributed to the translation alone (Môri 1918 p. 2). He then introduces Natsume Sôseki as writer whose fame began with *Botchan*. He goes on to say that *Botchan* can be an entertaining means of studying the character of Tokyo natives, based on the titular character, and praises the spicy colloquial speech comparative to the American Chuck Connors of the Bowery (Môri 1918 p. 2). Chuck Connors (1848-1913), "the Mayor of Chinatown" was a famous character of New York City who had a witty and creative way of talking, invented a lot of slang and gave tours of Chinatown for celebrities.³ Môri ends his foreword by saying that he took special care in rendering the text into colloquial English but cautions the reader that the style may be offensive to a "'cultured' class with 'refined' ears" (Môri 1918 p. 4). This implies that the colloquial English Môri will use will be something native speakers will be sensitive to.

It can be inferred that this preface was addressed to a non-Japanese, English speaking audience for several reasons. Firstly, Môri takes the time to introduce Sôseki and *Botchan* and compares the novel's narrative style to the speech style of a famous figure in contemporary American media. He also begins by asserting that the greater merits of the text are to be found in the original Japanese, which implies that he is addressing a reader who has not read the Japanese

³ Bellel David, 2010.

text and is unable to do so. Finally, he takes the time to warn the reader that the colloquial style he has used in the translation may be offensive to some readers. It is reasonable to presume that this caveat is directed at a contemporary native speaker of English who could be sensitive to a more vulgar style of speech.

While that may be enough to ascertain the audience Mōri wrote his translation for, it is still not clear why he chose to translate *Botchan*. It may well have appealed to his sense of humor as discussed above, or it could have been an exercise of his English ability. Based on the information available about him in relation to his career, however, there may have been far more interesting motivations underling Mōri's act of translation.

To put Mōri's place in history in better context, English-language journalism in Japan during his time should be discussed. *The Japan Times*, Japan's oldest still extant English newspaper, was created in 1897. According to *Short History of Japan Times*, a history written to commemorate the 44th anniversary of its publication in 1941, the object of the newspaper was "diffusing abroad information on this country which had just set forth on its career of increasing international importance but remained...unknown to other countries except for the conflict [with China] from which it had successfully emerged" (*Japan Taimusu shōshi* p. i). *The English Osaka Mainichi* (founded in 1922) seems to have had similar objectives as the president of the *Osaka Mainichi* at that time wrote a message included in the same *Short History* adding his own take on the difficulties of publishing an English newspaper. He wrote in particular that the readership of English newspapers was small and presumably mostly foreign as he added that at the present time international tension was causing the foreign audience to decrease (*Japan Taimusu shōshi* p. viii). It should be noted that when this *Short History* was published Japan was an Axis power and at odds with the Allied powers that made up much of the English speaking world. Although it is

worth mentioning that the *Short History* was published several months before the attack on Pearl Harbor so the worst of Japan's unpopularity among English speakers was yet to come.

Môri was a journalist who contributed to newspapers whose primary audiences were not just English-language speakers residing in Japan, but English speakers outside of Japan, who did not know much about the then developing country. That being the case, it is likely that Môri had a personal interest in the cause of promoting Japan to the world since he became a journalist associated with these English-language newspapers. This interest, whatever the cause, may have been a significant reason for his devotion to learning English in the first place. Môri may have been translating *Botchan* with these aims in mind. At the time of Natsume Sôseki's death in 1916, Japan had already gained international attention by emerging the victor from wars with China (1895) and Russia (1905) and was presently involved in the First World War as an ally of Britain. English-language newspapers in Japan sought to publicize not only Japan's military achievements but also make its history and culture known to the rest of the world which at that time knew so little of Japan. Môri likely selected Natsume Sôseki's *Botchan* to represent what he felt was in line with the spirit of his country in his time. The story represented a country full of individuals negotiating with new innovations in education and society which were often in conflict with lingering traditions left over from before the Meiji era. Most importantly he probably wanted to represent a country that was persevering against all difficulty toward a modern state, just as *Botchan* himself clings steadfast to his principles of honesty and fairness in the face of hypocrites, scheming Redshirts and as Môri says, "petty red tapism" (Môri 1918 p. 3).

It should be noted that Môri translated another Japanese novel called *The Descendant of Cain* (1917) by Arishima Takeo. His translation appeared in the *Osaka Mainichi English* edition in 1923 and became available in book form, along with some of Môri's comical essays, in 1925.

Môri asserts that Arishima is “regarded as one of the most representative writers of present-day Japan” (Môri 1925 p. i). Môri also finds the text very similar to Jack London’s *The Sea Wolf* in depicting a figure who believes “in nothing but brute force and...held society at large in defiance...and went right ahead to what they wanted” (Arishima 1925 p. i).

It is clear that Môri himself felt that Arishima’s work was representative of Japanese writing in his time and it is likely for this reason that the work was selected for translation, whether by Môri himself or by other members of the *Osaka Mainichi*. It is very likely that Môri’s *Botchan* project would have been undertaken with similar motivations. The published copy of *The Descendant of Cain* features end notes in Japanese that explain the meaning English phrases that appear in the text. This feature suggests that the publication of the book probably had in mind an audience of Japanese speakers practicing and learning English. This feature is absent from all editions of Môri’s *Botchan* that I have examined. This further supports the idea that *Botchan* was meant for an audience of native speakers of the English language, in contrast to the bound edition of *The Descendant of Cain*.

The image of Môri as a man seeking to spread knowledge of Japan’s culture and spirit in the English speaking world comes into sharper focus when his writing of a much later time is taken into account. In 1935, after the Manchurian incident and only a few years before World War II began, Môri finished writing his own book, written completely in English, called *Sunrise Synthesis: Aspects of Changing Japan*. He says directly in his foreword that the book is not meant to have anything to do with conveying the beauty or Japanese scenery or appealing to tourism or even to say that Japan was a great nation. In his words, “This book is intended to show how Japan has changed in many respects and will keep on changing, and how these changes have been inevitable” (Môri 1935 p. v). In the book are some of Môri’s general

observations about Westerners visiting Japan and finding a country contrary to what they had imagined. His amusing description of what they imagine is:

A country of extremely polite men, always going about kowtowing, of women invariably carrying folding fans, of cherry blossoms blooming all year round, of Mount Fuji visible everywhere, and of houses built of bamboo poles plus sliding paper doors and thatched roofs (Môri 1935 p. 1).

The Westerner's disappointment at finding Japan to have become so much like the West and the notion that Japanese exoticness is dwindling is reminiscent of the feelings that many Westerners visiting Kyoto today feel when they find that modern Kyoto is at odds with the constructed tourist destination of Kyotoland.

The book is indeed an extended analysis of the changes that had occurred in Japan since the Meiji revolution on a variety of fronts including changes in clothing styles, language and also changes in the realm of entertainment. He spent time on books, newspapers, cinema and cafes in particular. Môri's main message seems to be that although the process of these changes in Japan is called westernization, people have the wrong impression that the changes were implemented blindly to make things more western. The truth of the matter was that changes were made only to suit the needs of Japanese people in specific situations (Môri 1935 p. 10). Moreover, there is an aspect of Japan that has not really changed despite all of its changes on the surface. He illustrates this idea when he says:

A little Japanese girl, dressed in European clothes, going to school, carrying bread spread with strawberry jam for her lunch...is now a common sight, but it is also one that symbolizes Japan as she is today, apparently westernized but still Japan (Môri 1935 p. 48).

He goes on to assert that in fact Modern Japan had not undergone westernization but rather Western culture had undergone Japanization in Japan (Môri 1935 p. 142). Môri's understanding of his country's change is in line with the society that is reflected in *Botchan*, as discussed

previously the Japan *Botchan* depicts is one in flux but is not simply a conflict of old and new but the simultaneous presence of both and the growth of both in different areas. His point that Japan did not adopt western culture blindly but rather selected things and adapted them to suit their own purposes is a better representation of the spirit of the age than Sasaki's sense of a binary that he found in *Botchan*. This quality of *Botchan* may have been yet another factor that endeared the novel to him.

For Mōri, what remains unchanging about Japan in the face of all of its adapted Western customs and the drastic differences of the Japanese way of life that can be seen between the Meiji Restoration and his present day is a sense that Japan has a strong spirit and determination as a foundation that sees it through hardship and change toward becoming a better nation (Mōri 1935 p. 142). While he spends much of the book making observations about Old Japan and New Japan, his main point is that there's a Japan that never changes and it is its spirit which made its rapid modernization and success possible.

The significant change in Mōri's view of the world is revealed in the final chapter of the book. Mōri hints at its contents in his foreword by saying that it might not be pleasing to foreign taste, but truth can hurt (Mōri 1935 p. v). Within the chapter Mōri asserts Japan's disappointment with the West with regard to unfair treatment of Japan in the diplomatic sphere on a variety of issues. In particular, he points out that Japan was forced to give up land it had taken in its war with China and also how was Japan humiliated at the Washington Conference (Mōri 1935 p. 145). This disarmament conference Mōri is discussing began in 1921 and negotiated territories of Imperial powers in the Pacific. One of the results of the conference was that Japan's expansion and naval power in the Pacific was restrained. The land Mōri mentions Japan giving up refers the provision in the treaty for Japan to return Shantung province to China. The results of a treaty

were regarded as a victory for American diplomacy but there were clearly mixed feelings about the conference among Japanese.⁴

Môri's outrage seems to stem from a perceived hypocrisy in the Western nations for considering Japan a violator of treaties and a land greedy aggressor (Môri 1935 p. 146), and also observes that diplomacy is not fair at all but more like an exclusive club of nations striving to leave Japan on the outside. He points out that in the end only Japan has made any attempt at understanding and joining the West whereas the West has not made any such effort and does not see a benefit in doing so (Môri 1935 p. 149). Reading this chapter is like catching a glimpse of a disappointed man.

Môri devoted many years to English language journalism for the sake of informing the world about his country, its culture, and its ambitions. Some 15 years after his translation of *Botchan*, Môri seems to feel a sense of failure and that the West never really had an interest in understanding Japan. In *Sunrise Synthesis* he states what he believes to have been the inevitable tendencies and events that lead to his country becoming a world power and that Western countries are not and have not been making any attempt to understand or accept Japan as an equal despite all of Japan's efforts to do so.

Sasaki Umeji and His Translation

The second translator of *Botchan*, Sasaki Umeji, is by comparison to Môri almost invisible. The only evidence of his existence is his translation of *Botchan* in 1922, a translation of Sôseki's *Kusamakura and Bunchô* in 1927, a translation he made of a German book into Japanese called *The Conflict of Christianity and Heathenism* by Gerard Ulhorn in 1904. He most

⁴ Hata 1988, p. 283

likely translated from the English translation of the book. Finally, a book of English-language instruction called *Elementary English Composition* that he wrote and Kodansha published in 1908.

Môri had a very active career as a journalist whereas Sasaki seems to have been a teacher of English at Kaisei School in Tokyo. The only clear evidence for his career is available only because of his connection to the famous Saitô Mokichi whom he taught English to. Mokichi references him a few times in an essay called *Gurei no shi* (グレエの詩) (Saitô Mokichi 1981). Mokichi wrote that Sasaki taught him English in Middle School and he translated Sôseki's *Kusamakura*. Mokichi reflects on how his former teacher contacted him for assistance in getting illustrations from a certain painter for *Kusamakura*. Since the translation was able to feature illustrations by the famous painter Hirafuku Hyakusui and was published by Iwanami, Mokichi seemed to evaluate this work highly as a testament to Sasaki, whereas he makes no mention of *Botchan*. (Saitô Mokichi 1981). Mokichi also adds that Sasaki's area of expertise was in conversational fluency and that Sasaki felt very strongly that grammar was overemphasized in the teaching practices of his other peers. Mokichi quotes Sasaki's commentary on the principal's English doctrine as, "Grammar! Grammar! Nothing but grammar!" (Saitô Mokichi 1981).

In the preface to his *Elementary English Composition* Sasaki wrote that his desire was to write a book useful in teaching middle school children how to write English compositions and translate from Japanese into "simple and plain English" (Sasaki 1902 p. ii) He advocates writing the text of a Japanese short story on the black board for the students to translate and use in a composition (Sasaki 1902 p. ii). Grammar also comes up in his foreword where he says that it is not a focus of the textbook, but the student should already have a grasp of grammar. He also says, however, that the student should still be guided by a teacher in this area if the need arises (Sasaki

1902 p. i). Aside from these statements there is nothing else to be found on his teaching style. Based on his teaching style, it would be logical to conclude that Sasaki's translation of *Botchan*, which first appeared in 1922, was intended for use in relation to teaching English. More specifically, it seems to relate to his teaching strategy of translating Japanese texts into English which is revealed in his textbook.

Sasaki's foreword of his *Botchan* translation discusses how the main character, Botchan, is popular among young people because of his rashness and simple honesty (Sasaki 1968 p. 7). He also discusses how Botchan represents New Japan, "with her honest, simple, frank democratic ways" in opposition to Old Japan which is "polite, yet often deceptive" (Sasaki 1968 p. 7). He then discusses Natsume Sôseki in reference to a poem he wrote about enjoying basking in the sun. He goes on to compare him to Diogenes when he encountered Alexander and talks about the poetic suggestiveness that appears in *Botchan* that he attempted to maintain. Sasaki may have chosen this text with an educational intent as he says that young people, i.e. his students, enjoy *Botchan* and it seems reasonable that based on his emphasis on conversational ability over strict observance of grammar he would choose a text like *Botchan* which is praised for the immediacy of its narrative style and tone.

Sasaki's translation of *Botchan* is more easily found than Môri's today because Sasaki's translation was republished by Tuttle in 1968. In the Publisher's foreword it is written that Botchan "typifies the fascinating combination of old idealism with modern independence" (Sasaki 1968 p. 5). As for why the book was published again to a Western audience after such a long time, the reason given is simply to "provide to a new generation of readers the opportunity to read this timeless work by Sôseki Natsume" (Sasaki 1968 p. 5). Whether or not Sasaki

intended for his translation to be read by a native English speaking audience is not entirely clear from his own foreword, it still reached such an audience years later through Tuttle.

Direct Comparison of the Two Earliest Translations

Food and Audience

Setting the forewords aside, a better way to get a sense of what kind of audiences the translators had in mind when they translated *Botchan* is an analysis of the texts themselves. One aspect that is good to examine is how they translate certain cultural objects, such as food.

After Botchan begins teaching he uses his spare time to sample the cuisine of local restaurants and a high class hot spring nearby. He becomes frustrated as he finds out that what he eats and where he goes are well known to all of his students as if they have some kind of network of spies following him. They mock him by writing out messages on the blackboard related to his activities for him to discover when he enters the classroom. The two translators tackle these same food related incidents but translate the names of food that Botchan eats in different ways.

Botchan's first dinner adventure is eating several bowls of soba with shrimp tempura at a restaurant advertising its Tokyo style noodles. Of course there is no mystery in the original

Japanese as to what he is eating but there is not an exact translation for the name of a food to use when translating the passage into English. Even today not all, perhaps only a small amount, of English-language native speakers will understand what soba and tempura is, so Mōri is well within his rights to translate soba simply as noodles and then explain tempura in parentheses by saying, “(noodles served with shrimp fried in batter)” (Mōri 1918 p. 25).

On the other hand, Sasaki does not explain what the food is but in the case of soba he supplies an alternative English word in parenthesis “(buckwheat)” (Sasaki 1968 p. 45) and does not make any attempt at a translation or explanation of tempura. Tempura is the more significant word for the reader to have an understanding of as it is a keyword in the blackboard messages that follow, such as Prof. Tempura (Sasaki 1968 p. 47). Despite this Sasaki does not make any attempt to explain what Tempura is. The different treatment of the same food further supports the above hypothesis that Mōri, more so than Sasaki, had an English-speaking audience, who might not be familiar with Japanese cuisine, in mind for his translation, whereas Sasaki may have been writing for a Japanese audience in the capacity of learning and appreciating English composition. It’s also possible that these audiences may have included English-speaking audience residing in Japan.

The two men also make different choices when they translate Botchan’s next meal: a few dishes of *dango*. Mōri remains consistent in his style of translation as he explains what *dango* are in in-text parentheses, “(small balls made of glutinous rice, dressed with sugar-paste)” (Mōri 1918 p. 26). Sasaki chooses to simply translate *dango* as dumplings (Sasaki 1968 p. 48). This may have been a clever choice as when one considers dumplings as a soft and round wrapped snack it does indeed describe *dango* to some extent and by the time of Sasaki’s translation it seems likely the word dumpling may have been a part of the English language. What’s strange is

that this word choice seems to be in line with an attempt at relating to a Western audience for that reason. In Sasaki's time it is likely that dumpling, probably more in the context of Chinese dumplings, was a word that a Western audience would be familiar with much more than *dango*. This is certainly true today.

So it is almost as if Sasaki made a compromise in the actual meaning of the original text in order to convey something that has an equivalent meaning to an audience coming from a different cultural and linguistic background. This is a compromise that translators continue to make today when they translate into a target language for an audience of native speakers of the target language. Some other choices that Sasaki makes in translation, like this one, call into question whether or not he may have solely written his translation for use by Japanese students of the English language.

Just as Mōri's explanatory notes strongly suggest his appeal to a non-Japanese audience so should Sasaki's explanatory notes reveal whom he had in mind to read his *Botchan*. Looking through Sasaki's translation he frequently follows a format of putting a Japanese word next to an English translation or alternative word for it in parentheses. He is not consistent as to which language is parenthesized, for example he writes "Square characters (*katakana*)" (Sasaki 1968 p. 73) in one instance but then "*hiragana* (cursive characters)" (Sasaki 1968 p. 109) later on. Nevertheless, this style could be seen as Sasaki's indicator to a Japanese reader learning English how he chooses to translate a given Japanese word into English. The tactic may also be able to be seen as defining the Japanese word for the English-speaking reader who does not know any Japanese, who may be abroad or residing in Japan.

The fact that Sasaki did indeed make allowances for an English speaker reading his translation becomes clear when certain parenthetical definitions and footnotes are taken into

account. For example, at the end of Botchan's fishing trip with Red Shirt and Nodaiko, Nodaiko is said to beat on his drum, meaning his stomach, to make a joke on his name. Nodaiko's nickname is one of the more difficult ones in translation, as it refers to a particular person who tags along in a party and provides entertainment. Some of the translators feel the nicknames best approximates to Clown and call him by that title. Sasaki explains the joke about beating on his drum, or stomach, by saying, "he gave a beat upon his professional drum (stomach). (A Japanese clown's musical instrument is a drum" (Sasaki 1968 p. 80). Regardless of whether or not a Japanese reader would need the joke explained to them, the way that Sasaki writes "a Japanese clown" he takes on the tone of a person explaining his own culture to an outsider. This tone appears again less blatantly with when he writes "the old gentleman sang *utai* (an operatic song)" (Sasaki 1968 p. 104). The same tone also appears in one particular footnote describing the difference between the two rival schools when they come into contact. Sasaki explains that the middle school is paid for out of local taxes whereas the normal school is provided for by the national treasury (Sasaki 1968 p. 156).

Another habit of Sasaki's that could be a strange way of catering to an English speaking audience is a tendency to reference the Western classical tradition. The first instance is in his foreword where he discusses Sôseki as a poet and as an example inserts his poem about basking in the sun. He then takes pains to compare this desire to that of Diogenes when he meets Alexander (Sasaki 1968 p. 8). Another instance is when one of Botchan's students approaches him with a geometry problem he is unable to solve. All of the other translators present the problem as simply a geometry problem but Sasaki chooses to write "a hard problem of Euclid" (Sasaki 1968 p. 41). Whether he chooses to insert these references to show his own learning or to

relate to a Western reader in some way is unclear, however, in either case he seems to be catering to someone informed of Western classical tradition.

Humor: Puns and Peripheries

Comic effect is often considered to be the most difficult aspect of a text to translate. Comedy is not entirely based in language, however, so some aspects of a text that makes its original readers laugh are not necessarily impossible or difficult to recreate in translation. Much of the instances of humor in *Botchan* are tied to Japanese language and culture as puns frequently appear. However, many of the humorous situations in *Botchan* are in fact arising from universal modes of joking, some of which Susan Purdie describes in her book: *Comedy: the Mastery of Discourse*. In particular, her points are about how joking can create excluding relationships and degrades the speaking ability of periphery groups.

Puns forever remain a challenge in translation for the obvious reason that in translation the connections between the words just aren't the same as in the source language. Faced with this problem a translator can resort to translating word for word and noting that an instance of humor occurred in the original language in a footnote of some kind, by finessing the equivalent words into an attempt at a joke although not the same one, or by throwing away the original joke entirely and trying to make a new joke in an attempt to preserve the quality and amount of humor in a text rather than the Japanese language based jokes themselves.

One of the greater difficulties in *Botchan* translation is the translation of the different speech styles of the Matsuyama dialect and Botchan's own Tokyo dialect. One particular example that reoccurs is the use of "*na moshi*" by Botchan's students. According to Kyoko Omori, whose thesis work on translation will be discussed more later, "*Na moshi*" means something close to 'isn't that right?' in Matsuyama dialect which is the roundabout speech

pattern in the region, unlike the preference for straight speech in Tokyo” (Omori 53). The translators all have different ways of trying to capture the feeling and impression of *na moshi* but the larger problem becomes incorporating the punning that Botchan makes on it. Two incidents where Botchan comments on this style of speech are presented in the original and in each translation below.

Natsume Sôseki: 「あまり早くて分からんけれ、もちっと、ゆるゆる遣って、おくれんかな、もし」と云った。おくれんかな、もしは生温るい言葉だ。(pp. 31-32)

Môri Yasotaro: “A-ah sa-ay, you talk too quick. A-ah ca-an’t you make it a leetle slow? A-ah?” “A-ah ca-ant you?” “A-ah?” was altogether dull. (p. 21)

Sasaki Umeji: “Sir, you talk too fast to follow. Will you not please speak a little more slowly?” “Will you not, if you please?” is a hatefully moderate expression...one of the lads approached me with a hard problem of Euclid, saying, “will you not solve this for me, if you please?” (p. 41)

Within *Botchan* there is a constant tension of Matsuyama representing “the country” and Tokyo “the city.” Botchan frequently looks down on the people he encounters and in his narration expresses outrage at their simpleton ways. When speaking about his students during the tempura affair he says, “These country simpletons, unable to differentiate upon so delicate a boundary, would seem to be bent on pushing everything to the limit. As they live in such a narrow town where one has no more to see if he goes on strolling about for one hour...” (Môri 1918 p. 25). Môri chooses to convey this feeling directly in his translation of the dialect by adding an American southern twang to the student’s way of speaking. This strengthens the reader’s understanding that to Botchan the students speak differently and come from a different background. It also contextualizes for an American reader that the Matsuyama students represent an area of Japan that is considered different from the developed urban centers like Tokyo. Môri also keeps their statements more indirect to capture a similar effect to the *na moshi*.

Sasaki's student is a completely different character based on the one line of dialogue. Sasaki has the student speaking very properly but stresses the indirect style of speech with "will you not, if you please" (Sasaki 1968 p. 41). He makes the indirectness excessive to a level that makes Botchan's frustration understandable. Unlike Mōri, however, Sasaki is not reproducing the different style of speech that marks one of the central differences of Botchan and his students.

The second instance, where Botchan makes a joke about his students way of speaking in frustration occurs when he is drilling the students about the grasshoppers that were put in his bed.

Natsume Sōseki: 「そりゃ、イナゴぞな、もし」と生意気におれを遣り込めた。「籠棒め、イナゴもバツタも同じもんだ。第一先生を捕まえてなもした何だ。菜飯は田楽の時より外に食うもんじゃない」とあべこべに遣り込めてやったら「なもしと菜飯とは違うぞな、もし」と云った。いつまで行ってもなもしを使う奴だ。(p. 47)

Mōri Yasotaro: "A-ah say, that's a locust, a-ah---."

"Shut up. They're the same thing. In the first place, what do you mean by answering your teacher 'A-ah say'? Ah-Say or Ah-sing is a Chink's name!"

For this counter-shot he answered:

"A-ah say and Ah-Sing is different, --A-ah say." They never got rid of "A-ah say." (p. 31)

Sasaki Umeji: "Why, it's a locust, don't you see?"..."Moreover, 'don't you see?' is an extremely impolite expression to your teacher. What is your *Namoshi*? *Nameshi* is eaten only when you take *dengaku*." At this rebuff, he said that *Namoshi* and *Nameshi* are not the same. This fellow would not give up his dreadful *Namoshi* to the last. (p. 58)

Botchan, in exasperation, points out their excessive use of *na moshi* and mocks the phrase by comparing it to *nameshi* which is a word different only by one vowel in Japanese. What is more amusing than Botchan's attempt at degrading the speech style is the stubborn persistence of the student in exasperating Botchan. This incident is the kind of joke that is regarded as difficult to translate because the humor is rooted in the Japanese words themselves. Mōri chooses to keep the spirit of the kind of joke by coming up with a similar sounding word to his version of *na moshi* to set up for the same student rebuff. His choice of "Ah-sing" indeed reflects on his

warning in his foreword for speech not meant for sensitive ears but he succeeds in being clever and to some extent domesticating the joke to an English-speaking reader of his time.

Sasaki's translation, on the other hand, completely foreignizes the joke. He does not even attempt to translate the joke as he leaves the key words in the original Japanese. This is especially jarring because up until this point he had translated *na moshi* into "don't you see?" or "if you please?" and puts *na moshi* in for the first time. This passage, as it is, does not really have any joke a reader who doesn't understand Japanese would be able to follow. Sasaki even excuses himself for this infraction on the purpose of translation in a footnote where he says, "Here is a play on words, *namoshi* and *nameshi*. It is entirely beyond my power to render them into appropriate English" (Sasaki 1968 p. 58). Even the humor of the student's stubbornness is lost because, to the reader of the translation, the *na moshi* that the student is clinging to only just appeared for the first and last time.

Translating these particular incidents effectively helps to create an overall feeling that can be easily understood regardless of language. This is the ever present conflict of Botchan's representing the developed urban area of a country and his students and the other people he encounters representing the periphery other of the same country. The notion of a periphery within one's own country is something of a universal cultural trait. The idea is reinforced through such practices as joking. Purdie asserts that the teller of jokes that uses other groups in society is often asserting a kind of mastery of discourse and language versus the degraded group's inadequacy (Purdie 1993 p. 129). The phenomenon of joking about groups that are close to the teller but not the same, especially with regard to groups that speak an "'inferior' version of the same tongue" (Purdie 1993 p. 130) is playing out very vividly in the humor of *Botchan*. Botchan's narrative is constantly reminding the reader of how he views many of his country

acquaintances and their ways as stupid and dishonest. *Botchan* is often read today as a moral tale because it features a stubbornly honest main character going against dishonest and self serving antagonists. But it is exactly these tendencies of looking down on one's own periphery groups as having a different way of speaking associated with a lack of learning that causes the core of the *Botchan*'s humor to lend well to translation. All of the finer points in conveying a difference in speaking styles and strengthening the dichotomy of urban and country are toward replicating this overall experience into another language.

There is more to be said on this issue, as *Botchan* does not necessarily present a binary of dishonest country folk and straightforward city people. For example, Botchan's foil *edokko* character, Nodaiko, is one of his main antagonists and according to Botchan himself a disgrace to *edokko*. Also Botchan does have some esteem for several characters he meets in Matsuyama including Pale Squash and Porcupine, although Porcupine himself is not a native. Furthermore, the humor of *Botchan* is also pivotal on the changing "butt" of the jokes and mischief in the novel. It is clear to the reader that it is really often at Botchan's expense that the other characters, and the reader as well, laughs. For example, in the grasshopper incident that lead to him interrogating his students, Botchan's outrage is itself laughable. He is also the "butt" of Redshirt's and Nodaiko's jokes just as much as they become the "butt" when Botchan and Porcupine have their vengeance at the novel's climax.

When multiple translations of a single text appear, the question arises, why retranslate the text? With these two first translations it would appear that they were entirely independent projects made within four years of each other. So it is unlikely that Sasaki had read Mōri's translation and was attempting to make a better product. Nevertheless, both writers chose to translate *Botchan*. A significant question to ask is, why *Botchan*? As discussed previously Mōri's

intention was likely to expose Western readers to his own country's literature and culture. It is probable that he chose to translate *Botchan* in particular because of his affection for humorous writing in addition to his esteem for Natsume Sôseki as a writer representative of his country. He may also have been fixated on showing English speakers that Japan was not underdeveloped and clinging fast to tradition by showing the conflict between characters who do just that and those who are believed to represent honest and straightforward idealism toward overcoming obstacles.

Sasaki Umeji's purposes are less easy to hypothesize because there is very little information available on him. It is very likely that he translated *Botchan* as a continuation of his philosophy of teaching English composition through translation of Japanese texts, but as discussed previously many facets of his translation seem to be directed toward a Western audience rather than simply an audience of English language students. All that can be said about his choice of *Botchan* is that he feels it is a book very popular among young people and in his foreword he says that he feels the book represents a conflict of New Japan represented by *Botchan* and the polite yet deceptive Old Japan (Sasaki 1968 p. 7). So it would appear that he felt this conflict he perceived in the book was worth making available to an English-speaking audience.

Native Japanese Speakers Translating for an English Audience

The Pre-war translations discussed above were made by native speakers of Japanese who had nationalist agendas to represent their present day nation and culture to the Western world through the translation of authors such as Sôseki. Many Japanese people were well aware that they had avoided being explicitly colonized by European nations but Japan was still the victim of unequal treaties which restricted their freedom to act internationally in trade and also dealing with foreigners domestically in the legal sphere. In a book on Arthur Waley and the

establishment of Japonism in Britain, de Gruchy states that Japanese felt in order to abolish the treaties and enable the country to develop into a world power, “Japan had to prove to the Western powers- especially Britain...- that she was ‘civilized’ by Western standards” (de Gruchy p. 25). In the late 1800’s and early 1900’s, when the movement of aestheticism was prominent in Britain, Japanese art became immensely popular. With the imported pieces, travelers’ stories and their exoticizing tendencies for evidence the British people tended to imagine the Japanese as “a simple, innocent, primitive people living in blissful harmony with gentle benign nature...a general view that the Japanese civilization had been arrested in permanent infancy.” (de Gruchy p. 17). Along with this orientalist imagining of a Japan separate from reality, intellectuals in Britain became interested in Japan for its aesthetics and especially those found in its classical literature such as *The Tale of Genji*. Some Japanese capitalized on this interest in order to become civilized in the eyes of Britain and reap benefits of “mutual” respect and partnership. One significant example was Kencho Suematsu, a Japanese Cambridge graduate who encouraged the fascination with aestheticism and was the first translator of *The Tale of Genji*. Using his diplomatic ties he created a slant in the British press sympathizing Japan in the Russo-Japanese war (de Gruchy p. 24). De Gruchy shows that Japanese diplomacy was closely tied to encouraging appreciation of Japanese art and culture. As an extension translation of literature also strengthened diplomatic bonds, especially texts that engaged in traditional aesthetics that Europeans were interested in. *Botchan*, unlike *Kusamakura*, is interesting because it does not embrace this trend so Mōri made an unusual choice for his time while Sasaki translated both of these titles. Perhaps if not for popularity of the aestheticism in Japanese classical texts in Britain Suematsu may have instead chosen to translate a more contemporary novel that better

represented his country as it was in his time. But with things as they were it would appear the popularity of Japanese art and poetry was a successful trend to follow.

Considering the fascination for classical Japanese art and culture in England, we can read Mōri's and Sasaki's choice to translate modern literature, rather than classical, as a subversive act of revision of the international image of Japan. If *Botchan* were widely read in England there would have been a much better sense among the majority of the English-speaking world of what contemporary Japan was actually like at that time. However, Sasaki seems to have embraced the tactic of endearing Japan to the west through aestheticism with his translation of *Kusamakura*. While *Kusamakura*, like all of Sōseki's work, depicts modern Japan, *Kusamakura* seemed to attract Sasaki based on its aesthetic qualities based on his interest Sōseki's haiku and translating poetic language. As *Kusamakura* also has an interesting history of translation it alone may warrant a separate study but here it is interesting to note that in his preface to *Kusamakura* Sasaki tells an odd story about his inspiration coming from visiting the grave site of Sōseki where he encounters a bird who communicates with him. The message he gets from the bird is effectively, "Dost thou then mean that we have to *return* something at least to the West as we have already borrowed too much from her?" (Sasaki 1927 p.i-ii). Although Sasaki's motive's for translating *Botchan* are mostly uncertain it is explicitly clear in *Kusamakura* that Sasaki intends for his translation to be read by English speakers outside of Japan and was exporting Sōseki's more artistic novel perhaps with the same motive as other translators who selected classical aesthetic texts; to capitalize on the popularity of Japanese aestheticism in the West.

Naoki Sakai offers a number of interesting thoughts on national language and literature that may have been true of Mōri's, Sakai's and the intentions of other Japanese translators as well. Sakai notes that English-language imperialism in the world is criticized based on the notion

that cultures have a “natural language” language that they should be able to use and to recognize that “‘authentic’ linguistic and cultural identity equates to paying respect to them” (Sakai p. 19). In a later chapter on a notion “Japanese thought” created by Japanese people in opposition to the western other, offers some insight into the state of mind of a native speaker of Japanese translating a text into English:

“The regime of translation is an ideology that makes translators imagine their relationship to what they do in translation as the symmetrical exchange between two languages. The conventional notion of translations...presumes that both English and Japanese are systematic wholes, and that...translation is to establish a bridge for the exchange of equal values between the two wholes. A translation is believed to become more accurate as it approximates the rule of equal value exchange” (Sakai 1997 p. 51).

In other words, the act of translation is conventionally seen as creating a more equal relationship between two cultures linguistically and perhaps by extension equal in power. An act of translation of a text like *Botchan* could be seen as, first, an assertion of Japan’s modernity evidenced in the story’s characters and setting in opposition to the image of a “simple” country that the western colonial powers seem to have had, second, an attempt to show an equal level of ability to produce modern literature in the native tongue and reproduce that literature in translation, and lastly, asserting the equality of Japanese language with English through the act of translation and expecting the legitimacy of the Japanese language and culture. These ideas seem to be in line with Mōri’s intentions based on his work as a journalist and writer. Sasaki may have been a separate case as his translation may have had educational purposes as discussed previously.

Post-War Translations: the Scholars Turney and Cohn

The translations of *Botchan* made after World War II are products of both very different ages and very different people when compared to the previous translations. The boom of

Japanese literature in translation in the post-war period is usually associated with those dubbed, by Andrew Fowler in his study of Modern Japanese fiction in translation, the “trium virate” of Tanizaki Jun’ichiro, Kawabata Yasunari and Mishima Yukio (Fowler p. 8). Fowler’s study analyzed the popularizing of these authors through the work of large publishing companies. *Botchan* also makes its reappearance later in this period when Sasaki’s translation is republished by Tuttle in 1968 and a new translation by Alan J Turney was published by Kodansha International in 1972 (Fowler p. 14). By this time Sôseki’s works have become established in the canon of Japan’s great early modern literature within Japan so it is not surprising that it would also receive enough attention to warrant an updated translation. The post-war boom of translation has received plenty of attention in academic study but developments in the past decade are still fresh for critical thought. Joel Cohn’s translation of *Botchan* in 2005 is particularly interesting because, just like Turney’s translation, it was published by Kodansha International.

Many of the important issues in the pre-war translations of *Botchan* remain significant but they are looked at afresh by new translators who are native speakers of English and citizens of the western countries that make up the consumers of these translations. The treatment of cultural objects such as food remains dependent upon the knowledge of the target audience and presenting the tension between urban and rural languages in *Botchan* remains a challenge to overcome. However, Turney and Cohn bring new things to the table. They are both scholars with strong backgrounds in the study of Japanese literature and had done research in specialized areas, including the study of humor and artistic sensibility, when they entered the site of translation. In the Pre-war translations, evidence suggests that there was a degree of agency in Môri’s and Sasaki’s choice to translate *Botchan*. On the other hand, in the present day, translators can be often selected for a project based on their abilities and recommendation from their academic or

professional peers. In my interview with Joel Cohn he stated that Kodansha approached him to translate *Botchan* based on a recommendation of his ability.

Before his *Botchan* translation Alan Turney completed extensive research on Sôseki, especially with regard to Sôseki's *Kusamakura*. His area of interest culminated in the form of his PhD thesis at the University of London in 1978 which was published in 1985 as *Sôseki's development as a novelist until 1907 with special reference to genesis, nature and position in his work of Kusa makura*. His thesis was directly connected to his translation of *Kusamakura* titled *The Three-Cornered World* (Turney 1965). Overall Turney's interest in Sôseki seemed to fixate on the poetic and aesthetic elements that were emphasized in some of Sôseki's other "poetic" works like *Ichiya* and *Kairo-kô* (Turney 1985 p. 197-198) and in his extensive haiku. Turney has also written several articles, mostly Sôseki related reviews, which appeared in *Monumenta Nipponica* in the 70's and 80's. He was born in Britain, graduated from London University and in his late life he lived in Japan while teaching at Seisen University until he passed away in 2006.⁵

Joel Cohn is an American scholar who completed his PhD at Harvard in 1984. His work primarily focuses on humor in Japanese fiction and his most prominent piece is *Studies in the Comic Spirit in Modern Japanese Fiction* (1998), which deals with the trends of the comedy appearing in Japanese literary history with attention to the works of post-war writers such as Ibuse Masuji, Dazai Osamu and Inoue Hisashi. Like Turney his writing can be found in academic journals like *Monumenta Nipponica*. According to Cohn he was offered the job to translate *Botchan* by Kodansha. Unfortunately we cannot ask Turney and the other predecessors how they arrived at translating *Botchan*, we can only make assumptions based on the other work

⁵Alan Turney-shi shikyo 2006

and reputations they've left behind. In contrast to Cohn, and probably Turney as well, it is tempting to think that Mōri and Sasaki may have had more agency in their choices for translation. Mōri may have chosen *Botchan* based on the running themes in his work of taste for comic finesse, colloquial language and the overall passion for bringing his country and its culture onto the international stage. Sasaki seems to have been interested in educational resources for his *Botchan* but his *Kusamakura* piece certainly indicated his own desire to translate for Western consumption.

In his preface, Turney first introduces Sōseki and gives a discussion of the Meiji era. As someone removed from the period about which he writes, Turney is able to offer a historical analysis of the period as a time of flux with the admission of Western ideas (Turney 1972 p. 5). Turney's objective in this preface is to prove the value of *Botchan* by asserting that it represents a significant period in Japanese history. He supports this idea by stating that the modern day Japanese reader gets a sense of nostalgia for the Meiji period from *Botchan* that is very appealing (Turney 1972 p. 7). Unlike Mōri, who was interested in publicizing a new style of literature which pointed to a new direction for Japan, Turney is writing about an older novel and about the past at the same time that novels from present day authors, that Fowler indicates, who had hopes for the Nobel Prize, were also being translated into English (Fowler p. 8). By that time Soseki's novels had become canonized as classics of modern Japanese literature, and Turney is supporting this trend by asserting that the novel is a valid representation of the Meiji period. Turney closes his preface by discussing some of the problematic areas in the translation, such as the title, the puns and dialect differences. What he hoped to have achieved, however, was capturing the original atmosphere, keeping a sense of nostalgia and "to give to foreign readers...at least some inkling of the Japanese taste in literature". (Turney 1972 p. 8). In other words, he hopes that

from *Botchan* English speakers can get a sense of Sôseki's writing, who represents the cream of the crop of early modern Japanese literature, and also a sense of a period past in Japan that still has deep meaning for contemporary Japanese people.

Turney's translation, by virtue of his native fluency, is definitely an improvement from Sasaki's awkward language and in many places reads better than Môri's translation. Turney's version features only seven footnotes at the end of the book which explain some historical and cultural references and cultural objects such as *hakama* and *shoji*. Turney shows restraint in his footnotes and Cohn chooses to use none at all in order to keep a natural flow of reading in English. This technique is different in both conception and effect from both Môri's and Sasaki's explanatory notes. Their goals were to convey their culture to an outsider and as such took the form of footnotes for many instances of unique cultural attributes. Môri uses footnotes on many occasions to explain cultural items reaching as many as twelve. For example, when Kiyô asks Botchan to pick up the *sasaame* treat in his travels Môri describes the treat in the footnote as "a kind of rice-jelly wrapped...with bamboo leaves" (Môri 1918 p. 12). Sasaki leaves *sasaame* unexplained but on many occasions he uses both footnotes and parentheses to provide insight into the meaning of words, although, as discussed previously this may have been a way for him to indicate his individual choices for translating certain words as a model for others rather than to explain to a non-Japanese speaker.

The two pre-war writers fall back on these extratextual explanations in their translations whereas Turney shows more restraint in his use, focusing on cultural references such as to Bashô's poem and significant objects, which are unknown among English speakers, for visualizing the scene like *hakama* (Turney 1972 p. 173). Turney decided to describe what *sasaame* is by putting the definition into Kiyô's words rather than calling attention to his act of

translation through a footnote, “Some of those sweets wrapped in bamboo grass that they have in Echigo” (Turney 1972 p. 21). Cohn uses exactly the same technique. This tactic of incorporating an explanation into the narrative demonstrates a consideration for one’s audience, as it provides information in within the text rather than requiring the reader to look to the bottom of the page or the back of the book to understand something.

To go back to the food example from earlier, Mori and Sasaki both used parenthetical text to explain *soba* and *dango*. Turney does not even resort to foot notes and describes Botchan’s meal as noodles with fried prawns and rice dumplings (Turney 1972 p. 41-42). Cohn also does not use a footnote to describe tempura noodles and maintains the original word tempura to preserve the student’s nickname for Botchan: Mister Tempura (Cohn 2005 p. 44). The small problem with this choice is that a reader unfamiliar with tempura will not have any indication of what it is, but this will not impede a reading of the passage as the reader will at the very least know it is related to noodles in some way. Turney on the other hand changed the student messages on the chalk boards to focus on the prawns as he omitted the word tempura in favor of a word familiar to an English reader (Turney 1972 p. 41). While both translators made sound choices that convey what the food was and link it in a sensible way to the messages on the blackboard, in the end perhaps Cohn’s “Professor Tempura” has more of a childish brand of comical ring than Turney’s message “A FRIED PRAWN FOR THE TEACHER” (Turney 1972 p.41). Both decisions have their benefits and areas they lack as is often the case between any two high quality translations of a text.

In the end the act of translation always comes down to a single choice and for this reason a text can be translated an endless number of times even if two translators have competing levels of understanding of the original text. This tendency is best illustrated in translating the dialects

and speech styles in *Botchan*. As the Matsuyama speech dialect discussed earlier is unique to Japan there is no equivalent in meaning in English. Each of the translators, in their own way, tries to reproduce the differences in the speech patterns by the effect they have on Botchan and the reader or create a difference in speech pattern that implies their rural origins. For the *na moshi* sentence ending, which best represents the Matsuyama dialect portrayed in *Botchan*, Mōri tried to add a southern twang to the English to give the student dialogue an American rural flavor. Sasaki focused on the meaningless aspect of the ending by instead making sentences more indirect with phrases such as “don’t you see?” (Sasaki 1968 p. 41). Turney and Cohn both make new and interesting decisions to translate this problematic phrase as can be seen below.

Natsume Sōseki: 「そりゃ、イナゴぞな、もし」と生意気におれを遣り込めた。「籠棒め、イナゴもバッタも同じもんだ。第一先生を捕まえてなもした何だ。菜飯は田楽の時より外に食うもんじゃない」とあべこべに遣り込めてやったら「なもしと菜飯とは違うぞな、もし」と云った。いつまで行ってもなもしを使う奴だ。(p. 47)

Alan Turney: The boy on the far left of the group had the cheek to try and score off me by saying, “That’s not a grasshopper. It’s a locust, like.”

“You damned idiot! A grasshopper and a locust are the same thing. And while we’re about it, stop finishing every confounded sentence with ‘like.’ It sounds like ‘tyke,’ and if that’s what you’re trying to call me come straight out with it and don’t mumble. I thought that would shut him up, but no.

“Like and tyke are different, like,” he said.

Like, like, like! That’s all you ever heard out of them. (p. 53)

Joel Cohn: “No,” said a moon-faced boy on the left edge of the group, “that’s a locust, na moshi.” The kid had some nerve, but now I was on the spot. “Grasshoppers, locusts, they’re all the same! And who do you damned jackasses think you are sticking that stupid na moshi on the end of everything when you’re talking to a teacher? It just makes you sound mush- that’s all it’s good for!” (p. 53)

Turney translated *na moshi* as “like” which in his time, and to some extent still today, was a colloquial filler word (Omori p. 54), in other words, a word without meaning used in spoken utterances. The tendency to use such a word can certainly be infuriating to an outsider to that

register of speech and Botchan responds to this frustration and the desire to assert his dominance over his students by mocking their speech style.

In Japanese Botchan makes a pun that is rendered meaningless in English translation as the play on words is based in the original text. Turney's attempt at the effect is to rhyme "like" with "tyke" and unfortunately it is kind of a failure from a comedic stand point as it does not strike the reader as particularly witty or even creative. Moreover the challenge Botchan makes for them to call him Tyke straight is awkwardly forcing the joke in. Turney makes an interesting point in his preface, perhaps to prevent too harsh a critique of the puns he comes up with, where he writes, "The problem is not merely that it is difficult to find a comparable pun in English, but that puns in English are very rarely funny...I am aware that the result is far from ideal" (Turney 1972 p. 8). While rhyming "like" and "tyke" is certainly far from the ideal of something clever or funny, it is a reasonable attempt at working out a "comical" relationship with the word he chose to carry the effect of *na moshi*. Moreover, perhaps Turney is right that puns simply are not really that funny in English and for all a native English speaker might know they might not even be quite so knee-slapping funny in Japanese as one might be assume.

The comical aspect that drives this exchange is Botchan's exasperation with the way his students speak and his attempt to put them down only to be rebutted by their resilience in frustrating him to no end. Sasaki, as mentioned earlier, gave up on this exchange and did not make an attempt at humor or at effectively conveying the situation. While Cohn's choice at first seems similar to Sasaki's neglectful translation, Cohn's method is actually working to achieve the right effect through creative means. Sasaki's rendition of this passage leaves *na moshi* in the Japanese original for the first time and so its sudden appearance does not make sense. Sasaki had formerly translated it with phrases of indirect speech that did not add anything to a statement. In

contrast, Cohn chose to leave *na moshi* in the English translation from the beginning. Cohn wrote in our email correspondence that tagging *na moshi* on the end of the sentences did not interfere with the structure of the English text, and actually assists in conveying to the reader the feeling of encountering a strange and foreign way of speaking in a more direct manner than an attempt at finding an English equivalent. In other words, the English reader's *experience* actually becomes similar to a Japanese reader's despite the fact the phrase remains untranslated. The only negative repercussion is the difficulty of making a pun out of a word in another language. As lacking in impact as "mushy" is, it is doubtful anyone could come up with anything much better.

Translators who approach their work seriously take on a very heavy burden. A translator has to make difficult choices to write in ways that retain meaning, feeling and effect. More often than not they have to compromise and retain only one of these. Cohn's preface continues an overall trend in translation that appears in Mōri's opening statement: an apology. Mōri does not dodge the issue; he writes simply "No translation can expect to equal, much less to excel, the original...any fault found...the whole responsibility is on the translator" (Mōri 1918 p. 2). Although he states that the translation is not equal to the original, Mōri does not indicate what areas he felt he were not up to par or misrepresenting of the original novel. Conversely, Cohn uses much of his preface to discuss the areas of difficulty in translating *Botchan* and defending his own choices.

As Cohn's primary text is without footnotes, his preface acts as an extra textual source of explanation for what is to come. He explains the uses of the word "*botchan*" to at times express intimacy and others to express contempt and how it lacks an equivalent in English (Cohn 2005 p. 5). Cohn is the only translator to discuss the issue of the nicknames in the novel in depth. The nicknames that *Botchan* gives the other characters are one of the more memorable aspects of the

story and have endeared the book to many. While a few of the names are straightforward, Cohn draws our attention to the nicknames that are challenging to translate. While the principal, Tanuki, easily translates to Badger it does not carry the Japanese connotation of a comical and strange folkloric creature with magical shape-shifting abilities. Cohn mentions that the Tanuki resembles a raccoon and is commonly translated as badger but in fact this is a commonly accepted mistranslation as the Japanese raccoon dog is actually not the same species as either of these animals.

The art teacher is called Nodaiko, a term that Cohn explains as referring to “flunkey-like entertainers who attached themselves to parties of pleasure seekers and provides a range of mood-enhancing services including flattery, jesting and cajolery...” (Cohn 2005 p. 10). Nodaiko presents the greatest difficulty as there is no word with an equivalent meaning or a functional equivalent word. The previous three translators tended to use Clown as an approximation to convey the laughable yet pathetic entertainer aspect while Cohn chooses to emphasize the sycophantic and parasitic qualities of the character by calling him Hanger-on. In my opinion, Fool or (Court) Jester may have both the entertaining and sycophantic connotations necessary to take the place of Clown.

Finally the English teacher Uranari Hyôtan comes from “a pale puffy squash that grows at the end of a vine that has lost much of its vitality” (Cohn 2005 p. 10). This is another controversial name as Cohn correctly describes the image the name is meant to conjure up but all of the other translators use different translations of the name including variations on squashes, pumpkins and even a green color. The nickname is meant to derive from his complexion so a pale or even sickly green evoking name would be most appropriate.

This part of the prefaces serves to not only explain to the reader the logic behind the nicknames in the original Japanese, as a footnote might in other texts, but also has an apologetic function. Cohn's overall message is that these particular, and very essential, jokes are incommensurable and the only way to help the reader understand is through an extended explanation. In many ways this decision shows the reader the thinking processes involved in translation.

Sôseki p. 29	Môri p. 17	Sasaki p. 38	Turney p. 31	Cohn p. 35	Treyvaud
狸 Tanuki	Badger	Badger	Badger	Badger	Tanuki
赤シャツ Akashatsu	Red Shirt	Red-shirt	Redshirt	Redshirt	Redshirt
のだいこ Nodaiko	Clown	Clown	Clown	Hanger-on	Clown
うらなり Uranari	Hubbard Squash	Green Squash	Green Pumpkin	Pale Squash	Pumpkin
やまあらし Yamarashi	Porcupine	Porcupine	Porcupine	Porcupine	Porcupine

Môri tells us that his piece is lacking but does not describe his struggles in detail, and Turney explains the meaning of the title and expresses the difficulty of translating humor but Cohn is the only one to go into great detail to explain the process of his translation, and the imperfect nature of his decisions. His choice to talk about the issues in this way is appropriate considering that his translation follows in the footsteps of many, as his answers to the problems

of translations are in some ways in their shadow. His discussion also serves to draw the reader's attention to the role of the translator in making this book available in English and perhaps by extension highlights the role of translators in other novels. Translators are often taken for granted by readers and few respect that the process is most often a labor of love rather than of profit. Cohn delivers not only a strong translation of *Botchan* but gives us a peek at just how extensive and difficult the work actually is.

e-Botchan

The fifth and final translation, which as of yet has not been discussed but is significant to the study, was written by Matthew “No-sword” Treyvaud, who maintains a blog about Japanese language, literature, culture and art at <http://no-sword.jp/blog/>. He is a writer and translator living near Yokohama in Japan, has a high level of fluency in Japanese and, although he does not appear to be affiliated with any university, he has an academic in linguistics and reading classical, medieval and modern texts in English and Japanese.⁶ He undertook a speed translation of the text over the course of a month posting the sections he translated on his blog as he went in order to ensure he would keep enough momentum to complete the project. What is most significant about his translation is his initial inspiration for translating the novel and his stylistic choices for keeping the narrative lively and fun. Unfortunately, when Treyvaud's translation was chosen for publication through Kindle he changed the amount of information about his translation process and thoughts available on his blog. The information that follows is based on email correspondence with him during research for this paper.

When Treyvaud read *Botchan* in Japanese he was struck by its humor and how reminiscent Botchan's complaints were of some of his peers in JET when they complained about

⁶ No-Sword – About, 2010

their difficult work environments in certain schools in Japan. Ironically, when he read the English translation available to him, prior to his trip, he did not realize the work was meant to be funny. So with this in mind he undertook the translation with an emphasis on maintaining the elements of humor and culture shock in the novel.

As discussed previously, the narrative style of *Botchan* is meant to be comical and fun. This is one of the aspects that Treyvaud found lacking in the earlier translations. Mōri makes a praiseworthy attempt to integrate colloquial English speech into the narrative to great effect although the readability of the text today is hampered by his inevitable awkwardness at certain points in use of English and the overall datedness of his words. Sasaki's style is even more awkward and outdated.

Turney's style is a significant improvement over Sasaki. Oliver Statler's statement on the back of the book rings true, "At last *Botchan* is fun to read in English" (Turney 1972). However, many American readers find that the *Botchan*'s voice in the Turney translation is a little too refined. Cohn makes great strides in creating the right voice but unfortunately the effect is diminished because indirect speech in the English language appears as large blocks of text that do not catch the eye and hold interest well. This tendency can be noticed later when the translations are compared side by side. Breaking up paragraphs with direct quotes tends to be more appealing to readers in English-language novels. There is no such problem in the original Japanese text.

Treyvaud's translation stands out immediately from the rest due to different impact of his word choice which may help in approaching the attention grabbing style of the original text in effect if not meaning. For comparison, here is one of the more famous first episodes *Botchan* recounts:

Sôseki: 親類のものから西洋製のナイフを貰って奇麗な刃を日に翳して、友達に見せていたら、一人が光る事は光るが切れそうもないと云った。切れぬ事があるか、何でも切ってみせると受け合った。そんなら君の指を切ってみろと注文したから、何だ指ぐらいこの通りだと右の手の親指の甲をはすに切り込んだ。(p. 5).

Môri: One of my relatives once presented me with a pen-knife. I was showing it to my friends, reflecting its pretty blades against the rays of the sun, when one of them chimed in that the blades gleamed all right, but seemed rather dull for cutting with.

“Rather dull? See if they don’t cut!” I retorted.

“Cut your finger, then” he challenged. And with “Finger nothing! Here goes!” I cut my thumb slant-wise (p. 5).

Sasaki: A foreign-made penknife had been give me by one of my relations, and I was showing it proudly to my comrades, the bright blades reflecting the sunlight, when one of the boys said that bright as it shone it was a dull knife after all. I told him that it was sharp and I could cut anything with it. “Well,” said he, “try it on your finger!”

“Look here,” said I, and I tried it on the thumb of my right hand (p. 13).

Turney: A relation of mine had given me a foreign-made pen-knife, and I was holding up the beautiful blade to show my friends how it caught the sunlight when one of them said, “It shines all right, but I bet it won’t cut.”

“What do you mean won’t cut? It’ll cut anything,” I replied, accepting the challenge.

“All right then, let’s see you cut your finger” he demanded.

“A finger? Huh! It’ll cut a finger as easy as this.” So saying, I cut diagonally into the back of my right thumb (p. 9).

Cohn: I had a nice imported knife that one of my relatives had given me, and once when I was holding it up to the sun to show my friends how shiny the blade was, one of them said that it was shiny all right but it probably wouldn’t cut anything. I told him that it would cut through anything just fine and if he didn’t believe me I would prove it. He dared me to try cutting my finger with it, so I said all right, just watch and cut a diagonal slice across my right thumb (p. 13).

Treyvaud: Another time, one of my relatives gave me a knife from overseas. When I held the blade up to the sunlight to show my friends how awesome it was, one of them said, “It’s shiny enough, but it doesn’t look like it’d cut worth shit.”

“Shut up, buttmunch. It’ll cut anything you like,” I replied.

“OK, smart guy. Cut your finger then.”

“Is that all? Watch this,” I said and cut a diagonal line into the ball of my right thumb (p. 1).

Treyvaud is indeed successful in his translation of keeping things lively and amusing although the excessive use of colloquial language can at times be distracting. He uses it with more restraint and to better effect after the early part of the story

Another remarkable thing about Treyvaud's translation is its presence on the internet. It attracted enough attention that Amazon Kindle made a deal with Treyvaud to publish his translation as an e-book. They had previously been offering Mōri's translation on Kindle as the copyright had expired and the text could be distributed but they received complaints about the datedness of the text and so approached Treyvaud. Treyvaud's translation actually replaced Mōri's translation as an alternative in a more direct way than any of his predecessors. It seems that in the future the internet will alter the way translations are made, become known, and distributed. The low cost of distributing electronic text may actually place more agency for choosing and translating a text in the translator which is a tendency that has become more rare in the present day.

As a result of the novel being distributed through the internet, Treyvaud is able to make hyperlinks to pages with information about cultural terms, places, or strange words. He uses these links in lieu of footnotes. This technique is unlike anything that would have been possible for the previous translators as including pages taken from an encyclopedia in their book would have been unacceptable and even technologically unimaginable. However, written discourse on the internet today often makes use of this tactic to allow the reader access to more information without interfering with the flow of text. The main downside is that the information is not summarized for the reader so it is unlikely that many readers of Treyvaud's book have the patience to go through the sources he has for every term in order to understand the

Although Treyvaud's attempt to make the narrative livelier, through use of colorful phrases and expletives, is not a completely new technique but his approach is more colloquial and more extreme in an attempt to achieve a greater shocking effect on the reader. Mōri also used colloquial styles of his time to achieve what he felt was the right effect and Cohn makes

some use of this technique in moderation as well. In the climax of the novel Botchan and Porcupine give Redshirt and Yoshikawa a beating and this section permits the translators to go toward using colloquial profanity or expletives as Botchan calls Yoshikawa *konchikisho* (こん畜生) which is equivalent to calling someone a beast, brute or any animal lesser than a human. The way the first four translators translated this word demonstrates the extent of colorful language that they use.

Sôseki: こん畜生、こん畜生と云いながら(p. 176).

Môri: Darn you, you sonovagun!” (p. 109).

Sasaki: You Brute! (p. 185).

Turney: ...calling him a pig...(p. 169-170).

Cohn: “You goddamned son of a bitch!” (p. 170).

While Sasaki and Turney translate to an insult with an equivalence of meaning, Môri and Cohn translate for a greater shock on the reader by using contemporary obscenities. Treyvaud chose not to translate the word directly but simply writes “I launched into a tirade of obscenities” (Treyvaud, Chapter 11). Treyvaud’s style at its greatest extreme is better illustrated in an exchange on the next page when Porcupine and Botchan are berating Redshirt and the art teacher.

Sôseki: 野だに「貴様もたくさんか」と聞いたら「無論たくさんだ」と答えた。
「貴様等は奸物だから、こうやって天誅を加えるんだ」(p. 177-178).

Môri: “Want more? You?” we turned to the Clown, and he answered “Enough, of course!”
“This is the punishment of heaven on you groveling wretches” (p. 110)

Sasaki: I asked the Clown if he was satisfied, too, and he answered, “Yes, fully satisfied.”
“Great ruffians you two are, and we have inflicted a Heaven-commissioned punishment upon you both,” said Porcupine (186).

Turney: “How about you?” we asked the Clown.
“I’ve had enough, of course” he replied.

“You’re a pair of ruffians,” said Hotta. “And what you’ve just had from us is a taste of divine retribution” (170).

Cohn: I turned to the Hanger: “And what about you? Had enough?”

“That’s enough of course!”

“This is the just punishment you rogues deserve” (p. 171).

Treyvaud: "How about you, motherfucker?" I asked the Clown. "You good?"

"Of course I am!" he said.

"This is divine vengeance for being such sons of bitches," the Porcupine told them (Chapter 11).

In this passage it is clear that Treyvaud makes the most use of today’s colorful language but the language the other translators use could just as well have been offensive obscenities for their time. It is difficult to determine the shock value of words in different times but it can be inferred that Treyvaud, who was not writing for an official publication at the time he undertook the project, did not restrict his language but used his knowledge of English colloquial register to the greatest extreme of making the reader laugh through inappropriate language. As his aim was to create comical effect and maintain the reader’s interest he also exaggerates the roughness of the language at times. This is demonstrated above where he has Botchan and Porcupine using stronger language than the other translators felt necessary.

Conclusion

My thesis on comparing the five translations of *Botchan*, their translators and the historical contexts in which they appeared demonstrates the way in which translations are affected by a variety of factors beyond simply the level of linguistic ability the translator has in the target and source languages. The five translators I have discussed are different not only in nationality, but also in their various motivations for translating, whether it is national, academic or professional. Furthermore, when and how the translations were made was influenced by the

historical events surrounding them and what kind of relationship there was between Japan and English-speaking countries at the time.

Botchan is particularly ideal text for this study as it features a number of elements that pose difficulties for translation and as a result tend to be rendered very differently. Many of these attributes, such as the differences in dialect and the isolating and othering effects of humor, are also essential to what makes *Botchan* a valuable text.

This study could have been enhanced with research into other lines of inquiry that were beyond the scope of the paper. This includes one of the primary figures in the creation of a translating: the publishing company. Joel Cohn reported that it was the Japanese Literature Publishing Project (JLPP)⁷, a government-funded undertaking that supports the translation of Japanese literature, that chose *Botchan* among other texts to be translated and then Kodansha asked him to publish it. Clearly government and private funded institutions and companies both have an impact at the site of translation and warrant further research.

Also, Sôseki's *Kusamakura* is an interesting parallel text to *Botchan* that could receive an equal amount of attention as there are four translations of it which follow similar patterns, one of which is Sasaki and Turney both translated *Kusamakura* as well. Lastly, a study the process of the canonization of Natsume Sôseki as a representative writer of modern Japan could enrich the study of how, why and when certain novels of his are chosen for translation and what different images of Japan those novels potentially bring to an English speaker.

⁷ Japanese Literature Publishing Project: JLPP, 2010

Works Cited

Alan Turney-shi shikyo 2006

Alan Turney-shi shikyo 2006 アラン・ターニー氏死去アラン・ターニー氏死去. Posted on 47 news website, <http://www.47news.jp/CN/200612/CN2006122201000194.html>. Viewed on 2 October 2010.

Bellel David 2010

Bellel David, Knickerbockervillage. "Chuck Connors: The Mayor of Chinatown Dies, 1913". Article published May 1913. Posted on Knickerbockervillage website, http://knickerbockervillage.blogspot.com/2010/03/chuck-connors-dies-1913_20.html. Viewed 30 April 2010.

Cohn 2005

Joel Cohn, trans. *Botchan*, by Natsume Sôseki. Kodansha International, 2005.

Fowler

Edward Fowler. "Rendering Words, Traversing Cultures". In vol. 18, No. 1 of *Journal of Japanese Studies*. The Society for Japanese Studies, 1992. Posted on Jstor, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/132706>, viewed on 16 November 2010.

De Gruchy 2003

John Walter de Gruchy. *Orienting Arthur Waley*. University of Hawai'i Press, 2003.

Hata 1988

Hata Ikuhiko. "Continental Expansion, 1905-1941". In vol. 6 of *The Cambridge History of Japan*. Ed. Peter Duus. Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Hyôgoken jinbutsu jiten 1968

"Môri Yasotaro" 毛利八十太郎. In vol. 2 of *Hyôgoken jinbutsu jiten* 兵庫県人物事典. Kobe: Nojigiku bunko, 1966-1968

Japan Taimusu shôshi 1941

Japan Taimusu shôshi ジャパン・タイムス小史. Japan Taimususha, 1941.

Japanese Literature Publishing Project: JLPP

Japanese Literature Publishing Project: JLPP. "About JLPP". Posted on JLPP website. <http://www.jlpp.go.jp/english.html>. Viewed on 15 December 2010.

Mokichi 1981

Saitô Mokichi 斎藤茂吉. "Gurei no shi" グレエの詩. In vol.11 of *Saitô Mokichi Senshuu Zuihitsu* 斎藤茂吉選集 随筆. Iwanami Shoten, 1981.

Môri 1918

Môri Yasotaro, trans. *Botchan*, by Natsume Sôseki. Ogawa Seibundo, 1918.

Môri 1925

Môri Yasotaro, trans. *The Descendant of Cain* by Takeo Arishima. Ri Bun Kaku, Kobe 1925.

Môri 1935

Môri Yasotaro. *Sunrise Synthesis: Aspects of Changing Japan*. Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1935.

Môri 1957

Môri Yasotaro 毛利八十太郎. *Jyôku shûsei* ジョーク集成. Kenkyuusha, 1957.

Natsume Sôseki 1950

Natsume Sôseki 夏目漱石. *Botchan* 坊ちゃん. Shinchôsha, 1950.

No-sword – About

- No-sword – About. “About No-sword”. Posted on No-sword internet blog. <http://no-sword.jp/about/>. Viewed 15 December 2010.
- Omori 1996
 Omori Kyoko. "Problems in English Translation of Japanese Literature: A Study of Natsume Sôseki's *Botchan* and *Kokoro*." M.A. Thesis, Ohio State University, 1996.
- Purdie 1993
 Susan Purdie. *Comedy: The Mastery of Discourse*. University of Toronto Press, 1993.
- Sakai 1997
 Sakai Naoki. *Translation and Subjectivity*. University of Minnesota Press, 1997.
- Sasaki 1902
 Sasaki Umeji 佐々木梅治. *Shotô Eisakubun* 初等英作文. Kobunsha, 1902.
- Sasaki 1927
 Sasaki Umeji, trans. *Kusamakura and Bunchô* by Natsume Sôseki. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1927.
- Sasaki 1968
 Sasaki Umeji, trans. *Botchan* by Natsume Sôseki. Tuttle, Boston 1968.
- Taniguchi and Sekikawa 2005
 Shizuka Shimoyama and Elizabeth Tiernan, trans. *The Times of Botchan* by Taniguchi Jiro and Sekikawa Natsuo. Ponent Mon, 2005.
- Turney 1965
 Alan Turney, trans. *Kusamakura* by Natsume Sôseki. Peter Owen, London 1965.
- Turney 1972
 Alan Turney, trans. *Botchan* by Natsume Sôseki. Kodansha International, 1972.
- Turney 1985
 Alan Turney. *Sôseki's Development as a Novelist Until 1907*. The Tokyo Bunko, 1985.
- Treyvaud 2009
 Matthew Treyvaud, trans. *Botchan* by Natsume Sôseki. Ray Ontko & Co., 2009.