

## **Creating Personae: the translator's afterword in Japanese translations of teen fiction**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper investigates how translator afterwords can impact the visibility of translators. A reading of the highly personal *yakusha atogaki* (translator afterwords) written for the Japanese translations of the *Harry Potter* and *The Princess Diaries* series reveals the translators' self-presentation strategies. In these texts, the translators create personae that link them closely with the author and the fictional world of the books. They present the work of translation as an emotionally involving adventure, while largely eschewing discussion of translation strategies. Their insistence on strong identification with the authors and characters can be read as an attempt to authenticate their intervention as translators. Whereas past studies have insisted on the role of translator afterwords as critical interventions that "demystify" translation for the reader, this study points out the potential of these uncritical yet charismatic translator personae in making the idea of translation appealing to readers.

**KEYWORDS:** Japanese translators, persona, translator afterwords, translator status, Venuti, visibility, young adult novels.

### **Introduction**

How can translator afterwords impact the visibility and status of translators? The low status of literary translators is a subject of concern within Western translation studies. The issue of status has both stylistic and socio-economic aspects: readers in the West favour reader-friendly translation styles that limit the visibility of the translator's intervention, and consequently, North American and European publishers often relegate translator credits to the title page rather than the more visible cover.

In *The Translator's Invisibility* (1995/2008), Lawrence Venuti argues that such "invisibility" is a specific condition of Anglo-American translators, and that it is tied to a cultural penchant for plain, idiomatic style, or "transparency", which equates good translation with unobtrusiveness. Venuti connects this stylistic invisibility with the low cultural status and lack of clout of Anglo-American translators (1992:1-2; 1995/2008:7-13, 273). In essence, the conventional wisdom is that a good translator should be neither seen nor heard: the ability to translate in a fluent, discreet style is somehow equated with the social virtue of disinterest in self-promotion.

Similar conditions exist in other translation cultures as well. Isabelle Kalinowski's (2002) study of French translators shows that the "disinterested" stance is often internalized as a virtue by the translators themselves, much to the advantage of French publishers who exploit this stance by offering low rates and disadvantageous work conditions. This is not only the case in France: results of a recent survey on the economic conditions of literary translators by the European Council of Literary Translators' Association (CEATL) indicate that in most European countries, professional literary translators exist in precarious economic conditions (CEATL 2007/2008). Like Venuti, the CEATL also ties this economic situation with translators' weak cultural positions, seeing it as "due mainly to the invisibility which is almost inherent in the act of translation: in a translated work, it is hard to identify the translator's

personal, creative contribution, and, as long as the public remains unaware of that contribution, translators have no symbolic capital with which to enter the market as ‘cultural entrepreneurs’”.<sup>1</sup>

### *Socio-economic translation research in Japan*

If “the public remain[ing] unaware of that contribution” is the main obstacle to translator recognition, we can expect that conditions differ in a publishing culture like Japan’s where translators are systematically credited on the covers of books. Several scholars have begun to examine the social and economic positions of literary translators in this cultural setting. Furuno Yuri<sup>2</sup> (2002) correlates the rise of commercial translation schools in the 1970s with a switch from the dominant “foreignizing” translation norm to a more fluent, reader-oriented norm, as well as with a rise in the standing of the profession in the public eye. Tanabe Kikuko (2009) sheds light on the self-image of contemporary translators as social individuals, using an interview process developed in psychology. Tamaki Yuko’s (2009) investigation of TranNet, a web-based literary translation agent that caters to aspiring translators, highlights the power of some publishers to dictate the style and approach to non-literary book translation through a call-for-translators system that rewards translators for applying a publisher’s stated translation style guidelines. In contrast, Sato Miki (2009, 2010) examines the recent shift in translation norms implied by the recent *shin’yaku* [retranslation; literally: ‘new translation’] boom, a trend where publishers compete to issue new reader-friendly translations of classic literature.

The above studies give much-needed attention to the translator as individual agent within the evolving industry of foreign literature publishing in Japan. Still, the visibility Japanese translators enjoy compared to their European and American counterparts has yet to be fully investigated. Publishing practices such as systematic naming on book covers, inclusion of short translator biographies, and writing of *yakusha atogaki* (translator afterwords) give rise to a publishing culture that publicly acknowledges translators’ contributions. Whereas in much European and American publishing, translators’ prefaces, introductions, afterwords, or similar commentaries tend to be included only in certain cases, and are used for example to explain the need to retranslate a classic, *yakusha atogaki* in Japanese publishing are nearly obligatory in all genres of foreign literature, including first translations, and extending to non-canonized forms such as adolescent fiction, romance novels, and thrillers, popular genres that are seldom dignified with commentary in Western publishing. Elements, such as the aforementioned cover naming, biographies, and *atogaki*, make readers aware of the translator’s intervention in a text and, as the CEATL website points out, this is a crucial element in allowing translators to function as “cultural entrepreneurs” in publishing.

### *Yakusha atogaki*<sup>3</sup>

The requirement to write afterwords means that Japanese translators must develop a first-person voice as essay writers separate from their voice in translation. Most *yakusha atogaki* keep to a standard form that comprises the following features:

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<sup>1</sup> “European Union” <http://www.ceatl.eu/actions/european-union> (accessed 15 January 2011).

<sup>2</sup> Japanese names are given family name first throughout.

<sup>3</sup> In this study, I use the Japanese words *yakusha atogaki* rather than “translator’s afterword” to emphasize the difference in text type with the translators’ afterwords produced in North America and Europe. As Maria Tymoczko points out, although text types are often taken for granted, they “can vary dramatically from culture to culture, and defining a culture’s repertory of primary forms and text types is enormously complex” (Tymoczko 2006:17). A comparative study of the translator’s afterword as a secondary text type in different cultures would be a valuable reference.

**Contextualization:** a summary of the book, comments on the story and characters, a discussion of genre, a summary biography of the author, and comments on the reception of the book in its source context.

**Praise:** explicit or implicit. The achievements of book and author are presented in a positive light.

**Acknowledgments:** the contributions of other persons to the translation and publishing processes, in particular the editor.

Although some translators include a discussion of translation methods and challenges in their *atogaki*, this does not appear to be a required element. In fact, many *atogaki* limit themselves to an impersonal (though implicitly laudatory) statement providing contextual information. In such cases, the information given could have been collected and the *atogaki* written by anyone with a superficial knowledge of the text and author. Nevertheless, this is considered a task for the translator specifically, as indicated by *yakusha* [translator] in the commonly-used heading “*Yakusha atogaki*” and by the name of the translator which usually appears at the end of the text. In the publishing context, this practice positions the translator as an expert mediator and an authority on the book, the author, and the foreign context. In this sense, *atogaki* contribute to the prestige of translators regardless of the breadth of their content.

However, there are translators who exploit the potential of the *atogaki* more fully than is the norm, producing highly personal texts that experiment with form and address readers directly. Such *atogaki* can be used by translators for self-presentation and, accordingly, self-promotion. It is useful to examine this type of translator afterword in order to understand the potential of *atogaki* in constructing what Rakefet Sela-Sheffy calls an “occupational image” (2008:610) of translators because, through these texts, translators can contribute to their own visibility and appeal to readers by constructing strong public identities, or personae.

### *Translator personae*

Sela-Sheffy, in her studies of Israeli translators’ personae, has noted that contrary to the retiring image we have of translators as a professional group, certain literary translators “may often be rather ambitious regarding their social status, and invest considerable efforts in establishing a distinctive professional prestige for themselves” (Sela-Sheffy 2005; 2006; 2008). This prestige corresponds to a prevalent “occupational image” of what translators should be in their field of cultural production.

Moreover, caught in a dynamics of competition which characterizes all fields of cultural production, they [translators] tend to employ different – and differentiated – strategies of status attainment [...]. These different strategies entail the cultivation of different ethoses and aspirations and the adoption of different persona-types which provide the translators, in different contexts, with a distinguishing symbolic capital (ibid.).

Through her readings of translator interviews in the media, Sela-Sheffy discovers translators who, while maintaining the “tricky sense of humbleness” (2008:616) expected of secondary authors, find ways to promote themselves as creative personalities with singularly artist-like beliefs and lifestyles. In this way, they “mystify [...] the rules and requirements of their profession” (2008:615) and secure its prestige as well as their own in the literary field. The

present study, however, focuses on self-representation in translator afterwords rather than image-making in the media. Like media interviews *atogaki* can, as mentioned previously, be used for self-presentation. However, *atogaki* differ from media interviews in two major ways: first, the translators are the authors of these texts and represent themselves to readers through their own writing; second, since the *atogaki* are present in the physical book, their author's self-representation is tied to specific interests in the publication's commercial and cultural success.

To examine some ways in which translators make use of this forum, this study looks at the *atogaki* of two recent bestselling teenager-oriented novel series: *Harry Potter* and *The Princess Diaries*. The *atogaki* of young adult series are a practical choice for several reasons. The serial format means that the translators repeatedly address an ostensibly stable audience. Furthermore, adults writing for an adolescent demographic tend to be mindful about 'reaching out' to draw readers into their discourse. Consequently, the *atogaki* examined here display a range of tones less common in the more subtle, critical, or sometimes perfunctory *atogaki* of novels for adults. In this way, they may reveal startling aspects of how certain translators construct their public identity, or persona.

The *atogaki* of *Harry Potter* and *The Princess Diaries* were chosen because of their unusual formats, which will be discussed below. They constitute examples of creative commentary that openly reaches out to readers. However, it should be noted that in this, they differ from the great majority of *atogaki*, even within the young-adult genre. A friendly, chatty tone has become fashionable especially in fiction for young women,<sup>4</sup> but the soul-baring of Matsuoka or the total character-identification of Daita are extreme cases, as we shall see. Thus, rather than make any generalizations about *yakusha atogaki* – which would require a broader study – this paper aims to reflect punctually on what occurs when these translators show themselves to readers. What do they gain by reaching for such visibility?

## Harry Potter

The *Harry Potter* series (seven books by J.K. Rowling published 1997–2007; see Table 1) tells the adventures of a young wizard who, while growing up and learning magic skills at school, must repeatedly confront a powerful, evil wizard. This enormously successful series made its author a multi-millionaire celebrity. It also fuelled the publishing trend of series for young adults in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Worldwide demand meant that new instalments were translated in rushed conditions under media scrutiny into over sixty languages.<sup>5</sup> As a global literary phenomenon, it is probably one of the most commented on translations in recent years, often by its translators themselves.<sup>6</sup>

### *Just a fan*

From 1999 to 2008, Matsuoka Yūko,<sup>7</sup> a conference interpreter for whom this was a first venture into literary translation, rendered the *Harry Potter* series into Japanese. Her afterwords for the seven books are written in a strikingly personal tone. In fact, she does not title them “*yakusha atogaki*”, but rather “*rabu retā*” [love letters].

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<sup>4</sup> The *atogaki* to the *Gossip Girl* series, from the same publisher as *The Princess Diaries*, are a case in point.

<sup>5</sup> Goldstein (2005) presents some of the shorter *Harry Potter* translation deadlines for several languages.

<sup>6</sup> For an example, see Brazilian translator Lia Wyler's 'Harry Potter for Children, Teenagers and Adults' (2005).

<sup>7</sup> 松岡佑子

Table 1: The *Harry Potter* books and their respective *atogaki* titles

Book title (original) <sup>8</sup>	Ref.	<i>Atogaki</i> title
<i>Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone</i>	HP1	Love letter to Harry ( <i>Harī e no rabu retā</i> ) <sup>9</sup>
<i>Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets</i>	HP2	Love letter to friends ( <i>Tomo e no rabu retā</i> )
<i>Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban</i>	HP3	Love letter to readers ( <i>Dokusha e no rabu retā</i> ) □
<i>Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire</i>	HP4	Love letter to Harry again ( <i>Futatabi Harī e no rabu retā</i> )
<i>Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix</i>	HP5	Sad love letter ( <i>Kanashimi no rabu retā</i> )
<i>Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince</i>	HP6	Love letter to the last chapter ( <i>Saishūsho e no rabu retā</i> )
<i>Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows</i>	HP7	Phoenix Song ( <i>Fushichō no uta</i> )

The *atogaki* titles obviously express Matsuoka's feelings for the series, and anticipate the affectionate praise her *atogaki* will liberally bestow on the books. Also, Matsuoka appears to deliberately avoid the use of the word *yakusha* (translator) in her titles. This may stem from the fact that, in addition to being the translator, she is also the owner of the small publishing house that obtained the rights to the series. Thus, the commonly used title *Yakusha atogaki* would not reflect her full stake in the books. Most interesting is the insistent repetition. The *Harry Potter* books made Matsuoka wealthy and a celebrity in Japan, much in the same way the series did for their author, J.K. Rowling. The translator/publisher's insistence on affection for the books may serve to defuse any suspicions of mere economic ambitions.

In her *atogaki*, Matsuoka indirectly attempts to deflect potential suspicion of her financial motives by obsessively recalling the time before *Harry Potter* became a hit in Japan. The story of the finding and publishing of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* is repeated and refined throughout the seven *atogaki*.

In HP1, Matsuoka explains how she encountered *Harry Potter* at a turning point in her life, a year after she had inherited her husband's tiny publishing house, Say-zan-sha,<sup>10</sup> following his death. During a visit to London, friends lent her the first *Harry Potter* book. She read it in one night "as though under a spell" (*marude mahō ni kakatta yō n*)<sup>11</sup> (HP1:457), and immediately sought the translation rights. This first rendering gives the main elements of Matsuoka's narrative—difficult initial circumstances, chance encounter with the book, love at first sight, and unshakeable faith in her project. In HP2 and HP3, writing at a point where she is now conscious of the "Pottermania" that has taken Japan by storm (and of her part in it), Matsuoka gives more detail about the publication of *The Philosopher's Stone*. She relates how she worked hard for the initial book's success, setting up a newsletter and fan-site with the help of

<sup>8</sup> See Primary Sources for the Japanese titles and their back translations.

<sup>9</sup> The Japanese titles of the *atogaki* are: ハリーへのラブレター; 友へのラブレター; 読者へのラブ・レター; 再びハリーへのラブレター; 悲しみのラブレター; 最終章へのラブレター; 不死鳥の歌. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from Japanese are mine.

<sup>10</sup> 静山社 (*Seizansha*). The unusual Romanization 'say' for the character 静 (*sei*) is used by the publisher.

<sup>11</sup> まるで魔法にかかったように

dedicated friends, visiting booksellers, receiving advice and assistance from professionals and volunteers, as she was only “the novice president of a tiny publishing company” (*mini shuppansha no shin'mai shachō*)<sup>12</sup> whose “entire life until now was on the line with this translation” (*hon'yaku wa koremade no zenjinsei o kakete neriageta*)<sup>13</sup> (HP2:503). While the hard work and planning that went into the translation's material success are acknowledged, they are shown to rest mainly on Matsuoka's and her friends' naïve devotion to the project, thus reinforcing the “love” motif.

In HP4, Matsuoka again recalls how when her London friends first handed her their copy of *Harry Potter* to read, none of them foresaw the success of the Japanese translation. Neither she nor the people who helped her, Matsuoka insists, then thought that they would produce a “bestseller” or make a dime out of this “reckless dream” (*mubōna yume*)<sup>14</sup> (HP4:579). Even Matsuoka's mother is said to have contributed grassroots efforts for the initial publication, making the rounds of local booksellers in their hometown on her daughter's behalf (HP6:507). In HP7, the final book of the series, Matsuoka reminds her readers how rare it is for children's books to become bestsellers (HP7:560), thus implying that this translation could only have been a labour of love.

For Matsuoka, the moment of discovery of *The Philosopher's Stone* epitomizes her emotional allegiance to *Harry Potter*. As enthusiastic as she professes to be about each book in the series, she insists on a special attachment to HP1. In HP3, she writes that, two years after the event, she still feels shaken by the excitement of discovering the first book: “I relive that moment when my body trembled, reading the last sentence of the first chapter” (*Daiisshō no saigo no bun o yonda toki karada ga furueta, ano shunkan ga yomigaeru*)<sup>15</sup> (HP3:574). During the marathon of translating the 600-page HP4, she writes that she cast off her weariness by rereading *Harry Potter* “from the first book” so as to recapture the magic and enthusiasm she felt at that first encounter (HP4:576).<sup>16</sup> Finally, the significance of the first book is linked to her husband's death, evoked as a sad yet pivotal event that launched her career as translator and publisher. In HP2, she tells how she placed a copy of the first book on her husband's grave, saying to him: “You used to say that just once you would like Say-zan-sha to produce a bestseller; now your dream has come true” (*ichido de ii kara seizansha no hon o besutoserā ni shitai to itteita, anata no yume ga kanaimashita*) (HP2:508; see also HP6:509).<sup>17</sup>

In this way, the six later *atogaki* hark back to what seems like a time of innocence before the *Harry Potter* series became a commodity worth billions. Taken together, the depiction of Matsuoka's rookie efforts at promotional activities, the insistence on her lack of publishing know-how, and the assertions regarding the risks she was taking, both financial and personal, appear as an indifference to any form of reward except her own satisfaction and that of readers. By telling these anecdotes, Matsuoka establishes her motive for translating as purely

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<sup>12</sup> ミニ出版社の新米社長

<sup>13</sup> 翻訳はこれまでの全人生を賭けて練り上げた

<sup>14</sup> 無謀な夢

<sup>15</sup> 第一章の最後の文を読んだとき体が震えた、あの瞬間が蘇る

<sup>16</sup> “When I felt totally exhausted from translating, I read the series over again from the first book” (*Hateshinaku hon'yaku sagyou ni tsukareruto, watashi ha mata ikkan kara hon o yominaoshita*) 果てしなく翻訳作業に疲れると、私はまた一巻から本を読み直した。

<sup>17</sup> 一度でいいから静山社の本をベストセラーにしたいと言っていた、あなたの夢が叶いました。Before the death of Matsuoka's husband, Say-zan-sha's previous president, in 1997, the company had specialized in philosophical and historical texts that were unlikely to become bestsellers.

affective, originating and continuing in her strong, instant ‘bond’ with the first *Harry Potter* book. Each time she mentions the impact this first book had on her, Matsuoka reminds her readers that she was originally, like them, just a *Harry Potter* fan.

### *At one with Rowling...*

In addition to establishing her stance as the original Harry Potter fan, Matsuoka creates correlations between herself and the author, further asserting her attachment to the series. In HP2, she makes explicit parallels between Rowling’s motivation for writing and her own motivation for translating *Harry Potter*. First, drawing on Rowling’s statements at press conferences and on conversations with Rowling herself, she establishes Rowling as an author who writes purely for pleasure:

Ms. Rowling wanted to write Harry Potter. And she wrote it. And she will continue to write it. She will continue to write books that she finds interesting. And she hopes there will be people who enjoy Harry’s world as much as she does. That’s all there is to it.

*Rōringu joshi wa harī pottā o kakitakatta. Soshite, kaita. Korekara mo kakitsuzukeru. Kanojo jishin ga omoshiroi to omou hon o kakitsuzukeru. Soshite jibun to onaji yō ni harī no sekai o tanoshinde kureru hito ga iru darō to kitai shiteiru. Sore dake da.*<sup>18</sup> (HP2:507)

Matsuoka immediately continues by describing herself in near parallel wording:

My present state of mind is the same as Ms. Rowling’s. I wanted to translate this book. I wanted to publish a fine book. And I did this with the first book. I will continue doing such happy work. And I hope that the number of people who, like me, are enchanted by Harry’s world will keep growing. That’s all there is to it.

*Watashi no shinkyō mo, Rōringu joshi to onaji da. Watashi ha kono hon o hon’yaku shitakatta. Yoi hon toshite shuppan shitakatta. Soshite daiikkan ha sore o nashitogeta. Korekara mo kono kōfukuna sagyō o tsuzuketeiku. Soshite, watashi to onaji yō ni harī no sekai ni miryō saseru hito ga fueru koto o kitai shiteiru. Sore dake da.*<sup>19</sup> (HP2:506-7)

Matsuoka portrays herself and the author as driven, on the one hand, by their own fascination with “Harry’s world” and, on the other hand, by an altruistic desire to keep readers, those without direct access to “Harry’s world”, satisfied. The parallel is drawn not only between author and translator, but also between the work of writing, translating and publishing, all depicted as feeding readers’ access to the fantasy world. In HP4, Matsuoka develops the parallel between herself and Rowling further, describing her state of mind when she finished translating what was at the time the longest book in the series:

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<sup>18</sup> ローリング女史はハリー・ポッターを書きたかった。そして、書いた。これからも書き続ける。彼女自身が面白いと思う本を書き続ける。そして自分と同じようにハリーの世界を楽しんでくれる人がいるだろうと期待している。それだけだ。

<sup>19</sup> 私の今の心境も、ローリング女史と同じだ。私はこの本を翻訳したかった。よい本として出版したかった。そして第一巻はそれを成し遂げた。これからもこの幸福な作業を続けていく。そして、私と同じようにハリーの世界に魅了される人が増えることを期待している。それだけだ。

Finished... Along with a long sigh, a feeling welled up in me of wanting to leap up and dance for joy. [...] Rowling, too, must surely have felt this way when she finished writing the fourth book.

*Owatta... Nagai tameiki to tomo ni, tobihanetai yō na yorokobi ga waitekita. [...]*  
*Rōringu mo, daiyonkan o kakioeta toki, kitto konna kimochi datta no darō.*<sup>20</sup>  
(HP4:575)

Likening the translator's and the author's feelings upon completing a long work performed under much public pressure contributes to blurring the lines between translation and writing. In the following passage, Matsuoka channels an image of Rowling as an idealized author who is driven to write solely by passion for the world she creates:

But Rowling surely did not write simply out of a feeling of responsibility that she "must write it". It must have been for pleasure [...]. Images growing in her head, the story unfolding. That's surely why Rowling pursued that imaginary world so intently, to enjoy herself in it.

*Shikashi, Rōringu wa tan ni "kakanakerebanaranai" to iu sekininkan dake de kaita no deha nai darō. [...]* *Sore ga tanoshikatta ni chigainai. Atama no naka de imēji ga fukureagari, monogatari ga kurihirogerareru. Rōringu wa hitasura sore o otte kusō no sekai ni asonda ni chigainai.*<sup>21</sup> (HP4:575)

She then proceeds to point out the similarities with her own devotion to *Harry Potter* as translator.

[...] it was pleasure rather than duty that motivated me to continue through many waking nights. The story had me captivated.

*[...]tetsuya ni tsugu tetsuya no naka de, watashi o tsukiugokashiteita no wa, gimukan yori tanoshisa datta. Monogatari ga watashi o toraetehanasanai.*<sup>22</sup>  
(HP4:576)

Just as she portrays Rowling as an idealized author who channels an independent, fully-formed "imaginary world" in her writing, Matsuoka describes herself as borne passively through the hardships of translation in the grip of a story-world that, she also asserts elsewhere, "holds [her] captive" (*watashi o toriko ni shiteiru no da*)<sup>23</sup> (HP3:573).

Incidentally, Matsuoka gives readers occasion to draw other parallels, for example on the subject of Rowling's famous rags-to-riches life story. Rowling has been widely characterized in the press as a "single-mother on welfare" (Park 2003:181) at the time of writing the first

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<sup>20</sup> 終わった……長いため息とともに、飛び跳ねたいような喜びが沸いてきた。[...]ローリングも、第四巻を書き終えたとき、きっとこんな気持ちだったのだろう。

<sup>21</sup> しかし、ローリングは単に「書かなければならない」という責任感だけで書いたのではないだろう。[...]それが楽しかったに違いない。頭の中でイメージが膨れ上がり、物語が繰り広げられる。ローリングはひたすらそれを追って空想の世界に遊んだに違いない。

<sup>22</sup> [...] 徹夜につぐ徹夜の中で、私を衝き動かしていたのは、義務感より楽しさだった。物語が私を捕らえて離さない。

<sup>23</sup> 私を虜にしているのだ

book. Matsuoka evokes the “single mother on welfare sitting in a coffee shop to write with her baby on her lap” narrative about Rowling so often rehashed by the media (ibid.) on three occasions (HP1:461; HP2:506; HP4:575), while also repeatedly describing her (Matsuoka’s) own lack of resources at the outset of her venture (HP1:459; HP2:508; HP4:579; HP7:560). Building on such author-translator symmetry in background, attitude toward readers, and relationship to the fictional world of *Harry Potter*, Matsuoka’s narrative subtly grounds in her own personality and experience her qualifications for providing Rowling’s Japanese voice.

### ...and Harry

Eventually, Matsuoka takes the parallels beyond the writer to the *Harry Potter* story itself. In her mind, the image of the main character, Harry, fighting for his life blurs with that of her departed husband (HP4:577), and she identifies Harry’s stubborn will to battle against all odds with her own will to succeed in this difficult publishing venture (HP4:578). A striking example of this translator–story fusion occurs in HP6, when Matsuoka tells her readers about her father’s death. He passed away, she says, precisely as she was struggling with the chapter in which the wizard Dumbledore, a principal paternal figure in the books, dies:

[...] When it came to translating, the last five chapters were the most painful. Would I be able to communicate the heart-wrenching sadness, the magnificent drama that strongly pulls us in? I would have to spin out the story with [equal] impact in Japanese. I wasn’t able to translate in one go. In the middle of this work, in October when I was translating the last five chapters, I lost my father. My sadness merged with Harry’s sadness, and the figure of the great character [we have] lost merged with that of my father. As I translated, my tears would not stop.

[...] *yakusu to naru to saigo no goshō ga ichiban tsurai. Guigui hikikomareru sōdaina dorama, mune o shimetsukeru kanashimi o tsutaekireru darō ka. Nihongo toshite hakuryoku no aru monogatari o tsumuganakerebanaranai. Ikki ni yakusu koto ha dekinakatta. Sonna sagyō no saichū, saigo no goshō ni torikakatta jūgatsu ni, watashi ha chichi o ushinatta. Jibun no kanashimi ga harī no kanashimi ni kasanari, ushinawareta idai na jinbutsu no sugata ga chichi no sugata ni kasanatta. Yakushinagara namida ga tomaranakatta.*<sup>24</sup> (HP6:506)

Here, the problem of translating an emotion-laden passage is solved by a “real life” event: unsure of her powers, the translator is given a chance to draw on her personal experience of grief to convey the drama of a major character’s demise. This passage portrays the translator’s sympathetic involvement with the source text as a strength, since personal grief becomes a chance to draw closer to the text. Rather than adopting the usual translator posture of neutrality, Matsuoka lays claim to her emotional participation, a “merging” with the story, as part of her unique contribution to translating the book.<sup>25</sup> Finally, highlighting the unexpected synchrony between the translator’s life and the book’s story, she suggests again an uncanny,

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<sup>24</sup> [...] 訳すとなると最後の五章が一番辛い。ぐいぐい引き込まれる壮大なドラマ、胸を締め付ける悲しみを伝えきれぬだろうか。日本語として迫力のある物語を紡がなければならない。一気に訳すことはできなかった。そんな作業の最中、最後の五章に取り掛かった十月に、私は父を失った。自分の悲しみがハリーの悲しみに重なり、失われた偉大な人物の姿が父の姿に重なった。訳しながら涙が止まらなかった。

<sup>25</sup> Contrast this attitude with that of French *Harry Potter* translator Jean-François Ménard: “As translator, I do not really have the right to let myself be charmed by the work I must render in French.” (*En tant que traducteur, je n’ai pas vraiment le droit de me laisser charmer par l’œuvre que je dois restituer en français*) (Delcroix, 27 November 2000).

exclusive connection to *Harry Potter*. At the very least, the translator, who feels and lives the books with such intensity, presents herself as an adequate substitute for the author.

### *Glamorizing the translator as reader*

As *yakusha atogaki* are intrinsically translator-authored texts, we may expect them to provide a unique point of view on the practical details of translation, which the translator is qualified to discuss. And, indeed, Matsuoka frequently refers to herself as the “translator” in her texts, emphasizing that role as her “occupational self” (Sela-Sheffy and Shlesinger 2008:79). She freely discusses her work of translation in terms of motivation, hardship, time constraints, public pressure, and collaborators, even including details such as the location and seasonal conditions where the translation was performed. However, she does not discuss the pragmatics of translation in any specific terms. No dry “trade secrets” such as work method, word choices, or linguistic challenges in the *Harry Potter* books<sup>26</sup> are disclosed. Instead, when she talks about the work of translation, Matsuoka emphasizes its emotional intensity.

Matsuoka’s reactions to translating are corporeal. Her “blood stirs” (*watashi wa chi ga sawaida*)<sup>27</sup> (HP1:457) at encountering her destiny<sup>28</sup> in the form of the first *Harry Potter* book. When finishing a translation, “a feeling well[s] up in [her] of wanting to leap up and dance for joy” (*tobihanetai yō na yorokobi ga waitekita*)<sup>29</sup> (HP4:575). Reaching an exciting passage, she “sh[akes] with emotion while translating” (*yakushinagara kandō de furueta*)<sup>30</sup> (HP4:578). As we have seen, tears can also be involved (HP6:506). Translating a sad chapter “[her] heart” (*watashi wa mune o kakimushirareru omoi datta*)<sup>31</sup> (HP5:699). She believes that to create a high quality translation she must “cry, laugh, get angry or hurt along with Harry” (*Harī to issho ni naki, warai, ikari kurushindari suru mono da*)<sup>32</sup> (HP7:562), and she asserts that, “When I translate *Harry Potter*, I can hear the characters’ voices, feel their breath” (*Harī*

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<sup>26</sup> Two statements concerning translation goals are found in HP1: “I wanted to transmit enjoyment of reading *Harry Potter*’s world in English exactly as is to Japanese readers” (*Harī pottā no sekai o eigo de yonda kono omoshirosa o, sokkuri sono mama nihon no dokusha ni tsutaetai*) ハリー・ポッターの世界を英語で読んだこの面白さを、そっくりそのまま日本の読者に伝えたい (HP1:457); “If I succeeded in clearing even in a small way the eternal translator’s hurdle of translating in a readable style without losing the feeling of the original, it’s thanks to [members of a children’s book translation club who provided translation ideas]” (*Gensaku no tezawari o ushinawazu, ikani yomiyasui hon’yaku ni suruka, hon’yakusha no kono eien no kadai o, moshi sukoshi demo kuria suru koto ga dekita to sureba, sasaetekureta minasama no okagedeari*) 原作の手触りを失わず、いかに読みやすい翻訳にするか、翻訳者のこの永遠の課題を、もし少しでもクリアすることができたとなれば、支えてくれた皆様のおかげであり (HP1:460). However, neither statement goes beyond generalities. In HP7, Matsuoka reveals her favourite aspects of translation, again without specific examples: “I’ve always liked merging a wealth of emotions into a short phrase, so I burned [with enthusiasm] when I encountered such lines; and I engaged with wordplay as a puzzle to be solved. More than anything, I strained to make [a translation] with a high degree of perfection in Japanese” (*Motomoto, mijikai kotoba ni bankan no omoi o komeru no ga suki na no de, sō iu serifu ni deau to moeta shi, kotoba asobi ha pazuru ni chōsen suru omoi de torikunda. Naniyorimo nihongo toshite kanseido no takai mono ni shiyō to shingin shita.*) もともと、短い言葉に万感の思いを込めるのが好きなので、そういう台詞に出会うと燃えたし、言葉遊びはパズルに挑戦する思いで取り組んだ。何よりも日本語として完成度の高いものにしようと呻吟した (HP7:562). Again, an ideal goal is evoked, but not the means taken to reach it; while the “burning” pleasure of translation work is emphasized.

<sup>27</sup> 私は血が騒いだ

<sup>28</sup> “This is it! It’s the book given to me by heaven.” (“これだ！ 天が私に与えた本だ。 [*Kore da! Ten ga watashi ni ataeta hon da*]”) (HP1:457).

<sup>29</sup> 飛び跳ねたいような喜びが沸いてきた

<sup>30</sup> 訳しながら感動で震えた

<sup>31</sup> 私は胸を掻きむしられる思いだった

<sup>32</sup> ハリーと一緒に泣き、笑い、怒り苦しんだりするものだ

*pottā no hon'yaku o shiteiru to, tōjōjinbutsu no koe ga kikoe, ibuki ga tsutawattekuru*)<sup>33</sup> (HP4:578). In linking this participation in the story-world action with the act of translation, she seems to suggest that it puts her in an enviable, exciting position out of reach of the ordinary readership. Thus, Matsuoka's *atogaki* insist that in translating, she experiences the visceral joy and pain of a sympathetic reader. Requiring an exhausting effort,<sup>34</sup> but rewarded with actual participation in the fictional world, translation is represented primarily as a direct emotional response to reading. Depicting translation as an emotional roller-coaster ride while keeping practical details and rationales of this work out of sight, Matsuoka paints a glamorized portrait of her profession.

### *Simpatico*

Arguably, such a mystification of translation work in an afterword does little to pre-empt the inevitable ethnocentric assimilation to the target culture the text undergoes when rewritten and read in a foreign language (Venuti 1996:93). Indeed, Matsuoka's unapologetic identification both with author and text correspond to what Venuti critically terms *simpatico* (1995/2008:243, 248): the myth of total identification between translator and author as the basis for the claim to an "untroubled communicative act" (Venuti 1996:93).

Matsuoka unabashedly affirms her *simpatico* with Rowling as vicarious "participat[ion] in the author's thoughts and feelings" (Venuti 1995/2008:238). However, Venuti's assertion that "[t]he voice that the reader hears in any translation made on the basis of *simpatico* is always recognized as the author's, never as a translator's, nor even as some hybrid of the two" (ibid.) does not apply so neatly to her case. As we have seen, this translator makes no pretense of abstracting herself from her work; rather, she implicitly contends that personal experience enhances it as a source of creative force. She insists on her unique input as reader-translator and assumes that her readers also accept the innate hybridity of the enterprise.

Venuti calls for greater transparency of translators in revealing to readers the inner workings of translation, that is, the strategies and reasoning behind translation choices. He suggests that translator afterwords, which remind the reader of the translator's intervention, may be used in the interest of such demystification, presenting "incisive rationales" for translation practices in prefaces (1995/2008:273). Matsuoka's *atogaki* are no doubt a counter-example to such practices: their narrative "mystifies" her translator role into that of an author-substitute, who shares in the persona of the author and inhabits her fictional creation. In addition, the persona she builds as an idealized Harry Potter fan with privileged access to the world of the book through the emotive work of translation seems neatly geared toward securing the sympathy and admiration of *Harry Potter*'s readers.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> ハリー・ポッターの翻訳をしていると、登場人物の声が聞こえ、息吹が伝わってくる

<sup>34</sup> "[Translating made me] very tired, and at times I felt like my soul had been sucked by a dementor" (*guttari tsukarete, kyūkonki ni tamashii o suwareta yō na jōtai ni naru koto mo atta*) ぐったり疲れて、吸魂鬼に魂を吸われたような状態になることもあった (HP7:562).

<sup>35</sup> On a different level, this persona also goes a long way towards defending her privileged position as Harry Potter translator and publisher – and her claim on the series' lucrative translation rights. In 2006, this became a real public-relations issue: shortly after Matsuoka published HP6, she faced an accusation, and later a conviction from the National Income Tax Office for tax evasion on her translation income from the *Harry Potter* books. The incident was reported on the front page of major newspapers (*Asahi Shimbun* and *Chunichi Shimbun*, 26 July 2006).

## The Princess Diaries

The second selection of *atogaki* examined in this study comes from the Japanese translation of American author Meg Cabot's highly successful series *The Princess Diaries* (originally published 2000–2009). The *Diaries*' fictional author is Mia, an ordinary New York teen who learns that she is the heir to the throne of a small European country and from then on has to balance “princess lessons” with a normal high school life and dating. Mia's narrative voice comes across as that of a scatter-brained teenager putting her thoughts on the page as they come, and she often reports her conversations with friends as dialogues, a form reflected in several of the series' *atogaki*.

Major Japanese publisher Kawade-shobō-shinsha<sup>36</sup> issued translations of *The Princess Diaries* series' thirteen books from 2002 to 2010. Two Japanese translators worked on the books, Kanehara Mizuhito<sup>37</sup> (books 1–3) and Daita Akako<sup>38</sup> (books 1–10). They are credited jointly in the first three books, and Daita takes over as sole translator for the last ten.<sup>39</sup>

The *atogaki* in this series take different forms; six are regular essays, while seven are given in the unusual form of dialogues between two or three persons: Daita, Kanehara and the series editor, Tanaka Yūko<sup>40</sup>. Kanehara writes the first *atogaki* and appears in two dialogues (PD3 and PD6.5). Daita writes five *atogaki* (PD2 and PD4–6), and appears in all seven dialogues (PD3 and PD6.5–10). As shown in Table 2, the first seven texts are all titled “*Yakusha atogaki*”, but Daita and Tanaka come up with humorous titles for their final six “non-*atogaki*” exchanges.

Table 2: *The Princess Diaries* books and *atogaki* titles

Translators: Kanehara Mizuhito (K) and Daita Akako (D). Editor: Tanaka Yūko (T)				
Book title (original) <sup>41</sup>	Ref.	<i>Atogaki</i> title	Translator	<i>Atogaki</i> form
<i>The Princess Diaries</i>	PD1	<i>Yakusha atogaki</i> <sup>42</sup>	K & D	Essay by K
<i>Princess in the Spotlight</i>	PD2	<i>Yakusha atogaki</i>	K & D	Essay by D
<i>Princess in Love</i>	PD3	<i>Yakusha atogaki</i>	K & D	Dialogue: K & D
<i>Princess in Waiting</i>	PD4	<i>Yakusha atogaki</i>	D	Essay by D
<i>Project Princess</i>	PD4.5	<i>Yakusha atogaki</i>	D	Essay by D
<i>Princess in Pink</i>	PD5	<i>Yakusha atogaki</i>	D	Essay by D
<i>Princess in Training</i>	PD6	<i>Yakusha atogaki</i>	D	Essay by D

<sup>36</sup> 河出書房新社

<sup>37</sup> 金原瑞人

<sup>38</sup> 代田亜香子

<sup>39</sup> Although the series comprises thirteen books, three of these are “half” books—novellas that were published between the regular length books.

<sup>40</sup> 田中優子

<sup>41</sup> See Primary Sources for the Japanese titles and their back translations.

<sup>42</sup> 訳者あとがき

<i>The Princess Present</i>	PD6.5	Conversation one day between Princess Diaries ‘old boy’ translator M.K., editor U.T., and current translator A.D. ( <i>Purinsesu shirīzu yakusha OB no M.K, henshūsha U.T, gen’eki yakusha A.D no aru hi no kaiwa</i> ) <sup>43</sup>	D	Dialogue: K, D & T
<i>Party Princess</i>	PD7	Conversation between editor U-ko and translator A-ko at the launching party for <i>Party Princess</i> ( <i>Pāti-purinsesu hen ni kakotsuketa uchiagepāti de no henshūsha U-ko to yakusha A-ko no kaiwa</i> ) <sup>44</sup>	D	Dialogue: D & T
<i>Sweet Sixteen Princess</i>	PD7.5	Late-night online chat just before finishing <i>Sweet Sixteen</i> between editor U-ko (handle: <i>I love kimonos</i> ) and translator A-ko (handle: <i>Fat Cat A</i> , similarly named by shortening the name of her “Fat Cat A-chan” cat who is at least as cute as “Fat Louis [Mia’s cat]” ( <i>Sūto shikkusutīn hen” no dekiagari chokuzen no aru hi no shin’ya, henshūsha U-ko (handorunēmu ha, “kimono daisuki”) to yakusha A-ko (onajiku, debuneko rūi to onajikurai kawaii kaineke “debuneko ā-chan” o ryakushite “debuneko ā”) no chatto</i> ) <sup>45</sup>	D	Dialogue: D & T
<i>Princess on the Brink</i>	PD8	Conversation between translator A-ko and editor U-ko, both on the brink of a cliff ( <i>Gakeppuchi yakusha A-ko to gakeppuchi henshūsha U-ko no kaiwa</i> ) <sup>46</sup>	D	Dialogue: D & T
<i>Princess Mia</i>	PD9	Conversation between editor U-ko and translator A-ko who have somehow managed to stay on top of the cliff ( <i>Gake no ue de nantoka fumitodomatta henshūsha U-ko to yakusha A-ko no kaiwa</i> ) <sup>47</sup>	D	Dialogue: D & T
<i>Forever Princess</i>	PD10	Instead of a <i>Yakusha atogaki</i> ( <i>Yakusha atogaki ni kaete</i> ) <sup>48</sup>	D	Dialogue: D & T

As in the *Harry Potter* series, these *atogaki* can be examined as a whole body of work, focusing on what the two translators reveal to readers about themselves, their relationship to

<sup>43</sup> プリンセスシリーズ訳者OBのM. K、編集者U. T、現役訳者A. Dのある日の会話

<sup>44</sup> パーティ・プリンセス篇にかこつけた打ち上げパーティでの編集者U子と訳者A子の会話

<sup>45</sup> 『スイートシックスティーン篇』のできあがり直前のある日の深夜、編集者U子（ハンドルネームは、「着物大好き」と訳者A子（同じく、でぶねこルーイと同じくらいカワイい飼い猫「でぶねこあーちゃん」を略して「でぶねこあー」）のチャット

<sup>46</sup> がけっぷち訳者A子と崖っぷち編集者U子の会話

<sup>47</sup> 崖の上でなんとか踏みとどまった編集者U子と訳者A子の会話

<sup>48</sup> 訳者あとがきにかえて

the book, and their views on translation. As we will see, the essay-form *atogaki* reveal the contrasting personae of the two translators, and these personae are heightened when the translators come face-to-face in dialogue-form *atogaki*. Daita's translator persona is also reinforced in her dialogues with Tanaka, the series' editor, as they role-play the novels' characters in the later *atogaki*.

### Essay style *atogaki*—getting into character

In the series, Daita writes five essay-form *atogaki* to Kanehara's one, incurring an imbalance in their representation. Nonetheless, in these essays the language of each translator shows their different approaches to presenting the series and introduces elements of their personae that are later developed in the dialogues.

Writing her *atogaki*, Daita takes care to let the reader know of the many similarities between herself and the books' narrator, Mia. For example, she indicates the youth of her persona by deploying contemporary colloquialisms, such as “[it] totally clicks” (*mecha kucha ukeru*)<sup>49</sup> (PD2:283) or the story as a “pull[ing] on the heartstrings x 2” (*mune kyun kyun*)<sup>50</sup> (PD2:284). In PD4.5, she self-consciously<sup>51</sup> mimics the heroine's frenzied writing style: “Oh my God. I can't believe an off-series book has come out when I already have a mountain of [author] Meg's books to translate!” (“*Ō mai gā. Sude ni hon'yaku shinakyaikenai megu no sakuhin ga yamazumi na no ni, kore demo ka tte kanji de bangaihen ga deru nante!!!*”)<sup>52</sup> (PD4.5:65)—mixing a typical Mia attitude into a personal complaint. She also is explicit about their “points in common” (*kyōtsūten*)<sup>53</sup>, stating that she and Mia are both cat-loving, indecisive, clumsy, scatterbrained—and that they even share the same talent for writing and taste in food (PD4.5:65-6).

In contrast to the character-imitation in Daita's *atogaki*, Kanehara takes some pains to keep his identity separate from that of the book's narrator. This distance notably appears in the way he praises the book. Although praise for the original is a required element of *atogaki*, its manner can reveal much about the writer's position. Kanehara evaluates the novel from a critical perspective as an entry into the young adult genre, opining that “few books for young people are so adept at captivating readers” (*korehodo muchū ni nareru seishun shōsetsu ha metta ni nai*)<sup>54</sup> (PD1:295), and calling it “a funny, slightly wistful school drama” (*okashikute chotto setsunai gakuen dorama*)<sup>55</sup> (PD1:297), as well as “a young adult novel that's not a bit 'cool', but very hip, I think” (*chittomo kūru janai kedo, tottemo iketeru yanguaruto shōsetsu da to omou*)<sup>56</sup> (ibid.). Moreover, in his acknowledgments, Kanehara takes care to thank the editor for “unexpectedly throwing such a fun book my way” (*konna tanoshii sakuhin o ikinari pon to nagetekudasatta*)<sup>57</sup> (PD1:299), making it clear that although he is appreciative of *The Princess Diaries*, it is not his usual fare. This critical perspective hints at

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<sup>49</sup> めちゃくちゃウケる

<sup>50</sup> 胸キュン×2

<sup>51</sup> “Since this is an off-series book, I've tried to end it in Mia's style” (*konkai ha bangaihen na no de, mia fū ni shimete mimashita*) 今回は番外編なので、ミアふうにはめてみました (PD4.5:66).

<sup>52</sup> オーマイガーッ。すでに翻訳しなきゃいけないメグの作品が山積みなのに、これでもかってカンジで番外編が出るなんて!!!

<sup>53</sup> 共通点

<sup>54</sup> これほど夢中になれる青春小説はめったにない

<sup>55</sup> おかしくてちょっと切ない学園ドラマ

<sup>56</sup> ちっともクールじゃないけど、とつてもイケてるヤングアダルト小説だと思う

<sup>57</sup> こんな楽しい作品をいきなりポンと投げてくださった

Kanehara's wider public identity: he is, in fact, one of the better-known translators and critics of books for young readers in Japan.<sup>58</sup> His measured stance towards the series in this *atogaki* intersects with his professional position as an expert in the field of young adult literature in contrast with Daita's youthful engagement with the characters.

### *Dialogues—teasing out personae*

In dialogue-form *atogaki* with Daita (PD3; PD6.5), Kanehara's distanced, critical persona develops an older, masculine dimension, while Daita steps up her youthful feminine persona. First of all, Kanehara addresses Daita in the plain form of Japanese, used when speaking with people of lower status or age, while she addresses him in polite form, thus hinting at both an age difference and a gap in the professional hierarchy. In fact, since Kanehara acted as teacher and mentor to Daita at the start of her career,<sup>59</sup> this usage reflects a relationship that is not directly mentioned in the *atogaki*, but that, again, intersects with real-life identities. In addition, Kanehara and Daita take different verbal stances towards the series' characters, with Kanehara calling the heroine simply by her name, "Mia", while Daita calls her "Mia-chan"—*chan* being an affectionate suffix for a friend or child that emphasizes closeness.

Much of the zest in the two translators' exchange springs from Kanehara's teasing and Daita's spirited response. In one instance, he pokes fun at her for identifying with a teenage girl at her age, and Daita's offended response confirms her self-characterization.

D: But I do understand how Mia-chan feels.

K: Uh?! You understand her, you say... But isn't Mia supposed to be an adolescent girl?

D: Huh??? What are you trying to say??? Anyway! It doesn't matter how old a girl gets, at heart she is still a young girl full of dreams!!!

D: *Demo, wakarundesu yo nee, Miachan no kimochi.*

K: *Eee?! Wakarutte..... Mia ha shishunki no gyaru janakatta kke.....?*

D: *Ha??? Nani ga iitaindesu ka??? Tonikaku! Ikutsu ni natte mo onna no ko ha, yume miru otome nandesu!!!*<sup>60</sup> (PD3:281)

In another exchange, Kanehara and Daita display their differences as readers. In the story, he pays attention to the school-life plot and she to the romantic intrigue.

D: Mia had some especially tough problems in this book, so I was like, what is she planning to do? I was on the edge of my seat.

K: You mean about the term-end test?

D: No, come on! What's the subtitle this time?

K: *Princess in Love.*

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<sup>58</sup> "Profile Daita Akako" 「PROFILE 代田亜香子」 [http://www.fellow-academy.com/fellow/pages/tramaga/backnumber/bk\\_6.jsp](http://www.fellow-academy.com/fellow/pages/tramaga/backnumber/bk_6.jsp) (accessed 20 October 2010).

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> D: でも、わかるんですよねー、ミアちゃんの気持ち。

K: ええっ?! わかるって.....ミアは思春期のギャルじゃなかったっけ.....?

D: は??? なにがいいたいんですか??? とにかく! いくつになっても女の子は、夢みる乙女なんです!!!

D: *Konkai no Miachan no nayami ha tokuni setsujitsu dakara, ittai dōsuru tsumori nan darō tte, kanari harahara dokidoki shichaimashita.*

K: *Kimatsu tesuto no koto?*

D: *Chigaimasu tteba. Konkai no sabutaitoru wa?*

K: “*Koi suru purinsesu*”<sup>61</sup> (PD3:281)

Later in the text, when Daita again indicates her sympathy for the heroine’s romantic outlook, Kanehara provokes her by calling Mia “calculating” (*chakkari shiteru*)<sup>62</sup> for approaching the boy she likes, prompting Daita to defend the character.

D: Oh yes. I understand [just how Mia feels]—

K: But she can actually be quite calculating, too, can’t she.

D: Huh?

K: I mean, look how resolutely she approaches Michael.

D: Well, that’s what you do when you’ve got to. It’s the basics!

D: Sōsō. Wakaru na—

K: Dakedo, chakkari shiteru toko mo arunjanaino.

D: Ee?

K: Datte sa, shikkari maikeru ni apurōchi shiteru shi.

D: Sorya, yaru toki wa yaru. Kihon desu!<sup>63</sup> (PD3:282)

Finally, in PD6.5, Kanehara returns for a three-way conversation with Daita and the editor, Tanaka. By then he has effectively distanced himself by ending his involvement with translating the series, but he also takes pains to indicate that he has not continued to read it—“What book was it, in which Mia and Michael started dating? (*Mia to Maikeru ga tsukiaihajimeta no ha, nan kan kara dakke?*)<sup>64</sup> (PD6.5:82). In talking with the two women, he professes to remain hazy about female psychology:

K: Mia spends half the time dreaming about Michael kissing her. Is that the way girls are, I wonder?

T&D: Of course!

K: *Mia ha shotchū, Maikeru to no kisu o yume miteiru yo ne. Onna no ko tte, sonna mon nano kanaa.*

T&D: *Mochironn.*<sup>65</sup> (PD6.5:82-3)

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<sup>61</sup> D: 今回のミアちゃんの悩みは特に切実だから、いったいどうするつもりなんだろうって、かなりハラハラドキドキしちゃいました。

K: 期末テストのこと?

D: ちがいますってば。今回のサブタイトルは?

K: 『恋するプリンセス』

<sup>62</sup> ちゃっかりしてる

<sup>63</sup> D: そうそう。わかるな—

K: だけど、ちゃっかりしてるとこもあるんじゃないの。

D: えっ?

K: だってさ、しっかりマイケルにアプローチしてるし。

D: そりゃ、やるときにはやる。基本です!

<sup>64</sup> ミアとマイケルがつきあい始めたのは、何巻からだっけ?

<sup>65</sup> M: ミアはしょっちゅう、マイケルとのキスを夢見ているよね。女の子って、そんなもんなのかなあ。  
U&A: もちろんっ!

Throughout these exchanges, Kanehara is the provocateur, with an outsider, adult male viewpoint, while Daita aligns her own perspective with that of the fictional heroine. The light-hearted dialogues confirm the positions the translators developed in their respective essays: Kanehara staying at a critical distance from the novel and a safe emotional distance from the characters, Daita strongly involved in a sympathetic relationship with the characters.

### *Girl Talk*

Dialogues between Daita, nicknamed “A-ko” in the later texts, and the editor Tanaka, nicknamed “U-ko”, make up the final five *atogaki* of the series. The nicknames, half elision of their real first names (Akako and Yūko; “ko”, meaning ‘child’, is a common ending for Japanese female names), half pseudonym, reflect the friendly masks worn by the speakers. In these exchanges, Daita gets even more into her Mia-like persona, while Tanaka becomes a composite of other female characters (Lily, Mia’s down-to-earth best friend, and Grandmere, Mia’s overbearing grandmother). Their characterization is discussed and solidified in dialogue, as they point out the other’s likeness to characters and mimic the voices of Mia, Lily or Grandmere. On several occasions they apply *-kyara*<sup>66</sup> (the shortened form of “character”) as a suffix to describe themselves: “Me, as the Lily character, ...” ([...] *Rirī-kyara no watashi to shite ha...*)<sup>67</sup> (PD9:297; see also PD10:395) or “U-ko-san’s Lily character (*Rirī-kyara no U-ko san*)<sup>68</sup> (PD8:260). The links rapidly become set, and at one point, the two talk of “switching characters”, only to quickly agree that A-ko as Mia and U-ko as Lily are the best fit for their respective personalities (PD8:260).

In their dialogues, Daita and Tanaka maintain the polite form of address that their working relationship requires (both use the polite *desu/masu* form, and attach the honorific *san* to their nicknames). However, they also let readers know that they are on friendly terms, revealing that their business conversations as editor and translator tend to lapse into “girl talk” like Mia and Lily’s (PD9:298). In some ways, the personal dynamics between “U-ko” and “A-ko” resemble those between Kanehara and Daita, with the more professional, mature Tanaka often chiding Daita to stop daydreaming and get some translating done (PD7:317; PD7.5:85; PD9:298). While this is in character with both, it particularly emphasizes Daita’s resemblance to the impractical heroine. In this way, editor Tanaka’s impersonation of secondary characters contributes to establishing the identity of translator Daita with the book’s narrator.

Finally, in addition to building up their personae, the references to and imitations of the characters also accentuate both women’s engrossment in the series they are working on. Like Matsuoka writing on *Harry Potter*, they share with their readers the emotional trials of publishing a translation. At one point, U-ko (Tanaka) asserts she feels depressed because two characters are not getting along (PD9:297). Similarly, A-ko (Daita) reports her agitation while she translates a passage in which the teenage characters are talking about having sex (PD8:259); she also describes how she tends to fall into Mia’s mindset when she translates (PD9:297). While Tanaka’s identification shifts between two characters,<sup>69</sup> Daita establishes a

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<sup>66</sup> キャラ

<sup>67</sup> リリーキャラのわたしとしては

<sup>68</sup> リリーキャラのU子さん

<sup>69</sup> For example, in the following, A-ko points out U-ko’s character shift for the readers:

U: [...] well, you know, the faster you translate, the more you get done, the more you can enjoy being deeply moved.

A: Woah, U-ko, aren’t you turning into Grandmere instead of Lily?

U: *A, ja, dondon yakuseba, dondon sakuhin ga dekiagatte, dondon kandō dekimasu nee.*

strong, single likeness based on shared language, ideas and feelings between herself and the heroine, convincing readers that, like an idealized author, she *is* the character she “translates about”.

In this way, both translator Kanehara and editor Tanaka take supporting roles to the principal role of Daita who embodies the heroine and narrator of the text under translation. Tanaka does this by participating in Daita’s role-playing, remaining flexible as to her character identifications, and Kanehara by establishing his own persona as a rational observer bemused and marginalized by the core femininity of the series.

### **Concluding remarks**

Two main points emerge from reading the *yakusha atogaki* in *Harry Potter* and *The Princess Diaries*. First, the translators demonstrate a strong interest in identifying themselves with the characters and authors.<sup>70</sup> Second, while the translators of these two series make extensive use of *atogaki* as a platform for connecting with readers, they do not employ this space for a pragmatic discussion of translation techniques and goals. It appears that the visibility sought by the translators in these afterwords contrasts strongly with the kind Venuti suggests can improve translators’ status.

In *The Translator’s Invisibility* (1995/2008) and several of his other works, Venuti has presented us with the striking reality of the translator’s lack of power in the Anglo-American publishing culture, where book publishing obscures the translator to better highlight the source-language author. Venuti has called for translators, invisible by trade and tradition, to make themselves seen and their intervention felt by selecting works from marginal cultures, by subverting reader expectations through translation choices that provoke recognition of “otherness”, and by writing translators’ afterwords (1995/2008:273-4). In other words, translators should strive to reflect on what and how they translate. Such critical mediation is unquestionably important to cultural exchange and the translation of highbrow literature, particularly “texts that foreground the play of the signifier” (Venuti 1992:12). But are the translators of classics and avant-garde literature the only kind who can or should achieve visibility? The present study suggests that so-called lowbrow fiction, with its wide distribution and often passionate readership, may be precisely the area where book translators can make the most decisive breakthrough in achieving visibility for literary translators in general.

Of course, Venuti’s appeal, intended to help check the cultural hegemony Anglo-American culture enjoys worldwide, does not really apply to the texts in this study. Their situation is rather the reverse: the Japanese translators and publishers of *Harry Potter* and *The Princess Diaries* are importing books both from the culturally dominant English-language<sup>71</sup> and the economically dominant bestselling fiction sector, far from marginalized literature. Yet in Anglo-American and European publishing, these would be the least visible of all literary

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A: *Hieee, nandaka U-ko san, rirī janakute, obāsama-kyara ni nattekitemasenka.* (PD7:317)

U子：あ、じゃ、どんどん訳せば、どんどん作品ができあがって、どんどん感動できますねえ。

A子：ひえーっ、なんだかU子さん、リリーじゃなくて、おばあさまキャラになってきてませんか。

<sup>70</sup> Further research might show that editors also recognize the potential of this strategy: Daita’s assertion of identification with the novel is evidently backed by her editor, while Matsuoka’s is undoubtedly part of her publishing strategy.

<sup>71</sup> English-language books are, by all counts, the most frequently translated into Japan (see Matsunaga-Watson 2005 for figures).

translators, that is, the least likely to write commentaries and be named on the cover. How then does their visibility as translators in *atogaki* manage to agree with commercial publishing interests?

In their *atogaki*, the translators in this study seem intent not so much on explaining how they mediate the “cultural other” in the books (although such a critical approach is present with Kanehara, who is already an established translator) as in introducing themselves *as* the other, an “other” at once intimate with the foreign source and the target readers. The “sympathetic identification” Matsuoka and Daita establish with the characters and the works is fundamentally uncritical in Venuti’s sense (1995/2008:163). So is the confidential way they address and attempt to engage their young audience.

Yet these texts suggest that the critically-inclined, reader-challenging visibility proposed by Venuti is not the only kind available to translators. Visibility is often a question of personality, and the *atogaki* discussed here are commercial tools in which the translators connect with readers, ease their identification by exemplifying it, entertain, and promote both the book and themselves as translators. As relative newcomers to the literary translation field, Matsuoka and Daita understand the value of standing out with a strong, personal voice that links them to the authorship of the novels. Their personae establish the translator as someone who is as integral to the translated book as the author.

Matsuoka’s *atogaki* for *Harry Potter* in particular do little to demystify the actual work of translation; rather, they glamorize it as an intense, almost mystical experience. Similarly, Daita’s translator persona in the *atogaki* of *The Princess Diaries* mirrors the series’ heroine, suggesting an intimacy with the fictional world similar to what readers might expect from an (idealized) author or from a fan like themselves. Venuti’s notion of visibility calls for practices that demystify translation through style and commentary, the latter being particularly useful to raise reader awareness of translator presence. However, this strategy can be assessed as unrealistic in a commercially-driven industry such as publishing.<sup>72</sup> Venuti deplores readers’ supposed desire to eschew the complexity of layered voices in translation, and suggests they need to be educated to no longer mind awareness of textual heterogeneity.<sup>73</sup> In Anglo-American and European publishing, the commercial solution to this problem of multiple voices has been to efface translators, keeping their names off covers, and hiding their individuality from the reader, as though any glimpse of the translator would break the illusion of singular authorship. In Japanese publishing,<sup>74</sup> the issue of hybridity seems to be partly dealt with by giving readers the translator as a guide to the foreignness of the book. In this way translation is allowed to participate in the allure of foreign novels, and the frightening complexity of translation is managed through translators who mediate the fictional characters. The illusion of originality is taken as already broken, and the translators’ masks become part of the entertainment. As debates grow over how to improve translators’ status in the West, adapting translator visibility’s potential as entertainment or diversion to European and American publishing practices should be the object of further research.

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<sup>72</sup> For example, in 2002, a Canadian publisher decided to take all translators’ names off the cover of books, because “[translation] is a strike against the book in the marketplace” (Grani 2006:180). In other words, readers were perceived to be intimidated by the idea of translation.

<sup>73</sup> In considering strategies that “would address both popular and elite readerships”, Venuti explains that these strategies’ “goal is ultimately to alter reading patterns, compelling a not unpleasurable recognition of translation among constituencies” (Venuti 1996:95; see also Venuti 1995/2008:124).

<sup>74</sup> Although my study is limited to Japanese publishing, there is some indication that other neighbouring cultures such as Korea and China may have similar publishing practices, which would require detailed studies in turn.

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