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Translation as Politics: The Translation of Sadako Kurihara's War Poems
Traduction et politique : la traduction des poèmes de guerre de Sadako Kurihara

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Volume 25, Number 1, 1er semestre 2012

Méthodologie de la recherche en traductologie : applications
Applied Research Methods in Translation Studies

URI: https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1015349ar
DOI: https://doi.org/10.7202/1015349ar

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Publisher(s)

Association canadienne de traductologie

ISSN

0835-8443 (print)
1708-2188 (digital)

Explore this journal

Cite this article

Hayakawa, A. (2012). Translation as Politics: The Translation of Sadako Kurihara's War Poems. *TTR*, *25*(1), 109–131. https://doi.org/10.7202/1015349ar

Article abstract

The dynamic power shift of the world picture from a dominant *hegemonic* power structure to a global consciousness of hybridity accelerated by postcolonialism in the late 20th century has opened up a way to re-read history from a new perspective. The major point in the process is the recognition of both the cultural and political *others* which had long been made invisible and silent by the politics of power. It is in this light that translation must be addressed by scholarly discourse.

This paper focuses on war poems by Sadako Kurihara both in the time of and after the censorship that occurred during the occupation. Through the lens of translation and its modalities, I would propose here, history can be re-addressed. How the narrative of translation creates an arena where an individual voice is made to be heard in the language of *others* is closely related with the translator's stance in the political context. The task of the translator today is much more important than ever, not only culturally but also ethically.

Translation as Politics: The Translation of Sadako Kurihara's War Poems

Atsuko Hayakawa

Introduction: Translation and Re-Reading History

In the era of "globalization," as our perception of the world as a constellation of hegemonic power structures gives way to one of a world inexplicably hybrid and multiple, postcolonial theory and Translation Studies (Dizdar, 2009) have found a common ground (Wolf, 2007; Tymoczko, 1999). In the context of criticism primarily concerned with politics and power, translation has come to be considered as a form of resistance (Venuti, 2008), a way of re-reading history (Niranjana, 1992), or a form of dissemination. For example, Tejaswini Niranjana questions the collusiveness of *translation* with colonial power in *Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism, and the Colonial Context*:

> In a post-colonial context the problematic of translation becomes a significant site for raising questions of representation, power, and historicity. Conventionally, translation depends on the Western philosophical notions of reality, representation, and knowledge. (1992, p. 2)

Douglas Robinson, in his approach to translation studies from the postcolonial perspective (1997), mounts further opposition against colonial strategies that create and re-produce, through translation, biased representations of the colonized:

> Translating, like rereading/rewriting history, involves a "citing" or "quoting" of words from one context to another. This means, on the one hand that the words of colonized populations can be "cited" or "translated" or "reread/rewritten" by colonizers in ways that reframe the colonized culture in the interests of colonial domination, ways that interpellate Indians for example as mystical, childish, sexual, primitive, mendacious and above all as subject to British rule. But it also means that postcolonial subjects can use the same processes to decolonize their own individual and collective minds. (Robinson, 1997, p. 93)

As it is implied here, the *others*, as subjects and not objects, are speaking out, exposing Western representations, and rejecting "domesticating methods," as Lawrence Venuti (2008) convincingly points out. Just as hegemonic power structures have been losing strength, a great many *others* have been liberated from custody, and have begun to insist on their own presence through foreignizing translation. With the emergence of *the other* as equal counterpart of *the self*, what used to be *invisible* and *unheard* has recovered its visibility and voice in *language*, as we can see in the so-called minority literature of African writers, or in Holocaust fictions, which are widely appreciated today.

The role of *translation* in this power-shift, as focalized by translation scholars with their interdisciplinary interests, has become more compelling than ever. Both as a translator of the writings of "Hiroshima/Nagasaki," and as an academic of modern literature, especially of Holocaust fiction, I am extremely interested in the mutual relationships between the narratives of *trauma* and the historiography affecting the context in which those voices are expressed. How are the silenced voices made to be heard by *translation*? In what context can a translator make the unheard voices *speak* in the language of translation?

Narrating the unheard voices in the language of translation becomes possible when a translator has an interdisciplinary consciousness of the power shift implicit in globalization. Translation functions in the realm between two different contexts: negotiations, and sometimes conflicts, between the culturally and politically differing contexts of the source and target languages eventually cut open a breach and give rise to a

new perspective, bringing to light a history previously unseen, even deliberately concealed. In this sense, translation uncovers the power politics that once manipulated the context itself. Through this process, the unheard voices of the oppressed and the invisible in the power politics of history come to be heard, and history is re-read form a new perspective.

While translating, from Japanese into English, poems written by the survivors of the atomic bombing of Japan, I came to realize that their individual voices should, first of all, be given meaning within their historical context. It is by the contextual knowledge of the historical background of the catastrophe that readers in the target culture can find in the translated text a common ground on which to understand the painful experience of the victims as the *human* reality of war. From the deep strata of atomic bomb poems, composed during one of modern history's darkest moments, a penetrating, trans-contextual clarity emerges. The human dignity of those who were victimized can be recovered through *translation*. The latter, as a "frame" (Baker, 2006, p. 105), makes the reality of the atrocity a *human* reality, to be understood ethically regardless of the political dispute surrounding the atomic bombing itself. The voices of the victims, now considered as *subjects* and not *objects*, come to be heard through translation, not only in the literal sense, but also metaphorically. Through translation, that which was previously *untranslatable* in these poems becomes *translatable*.

In other words, the real human experience of the atomic bombing was not made visible until so-called "atomic-bomb literature" came to be *translated* after a certain period of silence, and after historical facts were examined, and knowledge accumulated. Without this critical distance and broader perspective scope after the War, the *untranslatability* of the unprecedented devastation would not have been challenged. Here, an interdisciplinary approach and comprehension of the original texts as immediate records of human experience comes to be of great use. As a historical consciousness of an inexplicable trauma developed—the Holocaust for example—the voice of the individual came to be understood in the wider context of world history. In the process, the language of the source text has been

translated and transformed into something other, opening a new arena in history, conferring upon the *other* not only a signified, but a *significance*.

Atomic bomb poems, for example, censored as political discourse half a century ago, have now been translated for their legacy. It is interesting to see how the English translations of the poems were "framed" by censorship and "re-framed" by post-war consciousness. Soon after the war, the victims were termed *hibaku-sha* (atomic-bombed victims), who began to raise their voices after occupation as "survivors" bearing witness. The atomic bomb poets were among those who re-framed the experience of *hibaku-sha* as the reality of the *survivors*.

1. The U.S. Censorship in Japan as Occupation Policy

The way that Holocaust fictions have been accepted and recognized worldwide demonstrates, interestingly enough, a dynamics of transaction between the individual voice of *the self* and the historical meaning of *the others*. Second-generation Holocaust writers, who do not have a direct experience of the trauma, are at once *translators* of the historical record and *narrators* of the stories they are creating with "new language." Eva Hoffman, author of *Lost in Translation: A Life in a New Language* (1989), is a powerful example. "Hiroshima," however, has remained relatively unexamined, even in the realm of the New Historicism, which has so enthusiastically encouraged the re-reading of the master-narrative of the 20th century. Why?

To answer this question, one must look closely at censorship in occupied and post-war Japan. It has been commonly recognized that censors, starting in 1945, "cracked down not only on expressions of ultra-nationalism but also on criticism of the occupation, General Douglas MacArthur, the Allies, and occupation personnel." They also targeted "anything which might disturb public tranquility" (Mayo, 2012, p. 175), including the aftermath of the atomic bombings. In Sadako Kurihara's case, which will be discussed later as an example, censorship had a tremendous influence not only on her publications at home, but also on her *stance* as a writer when she came to know that her

works had been *translated* into English in the highly political context of a post-war Japan disguised as a democracy.

As is pointed out by Mayo, the guidelines of the censorship process were not disclosed to the public, and so the authors, who were "largely unaware of the official censorship process, may not have realized that their poems had in fact been disapproved" (*ibid.*). While democratization was the prime agenda in occupied, post-war Japan, censorship ironically took priority over freedom of expression, even in the literary domain.

Among the studies on censorship under the occupation, Jun Eto's intensive research, based on materials collected in the Gordon Prange Collection of the University of Maryland, has been highly appreciated for its minute examination of those texts and journals censored in the occupation period.[1] It has revealed how the U.S. government, as a part of an occupation policy, had carefully prepared a censorship programme bearing upon every sort of publication in Japan, even before the end of the Pacific War. Eto demonstrates that "censorship planning can be traced back as early as mid-1943," and that "its structure and techniques owed much to the U.S. Office of Censorship, a civilian agency that had broad powers of censorship over U.S. media during the war" (Rubin, 1985, p. 41). The guideline (with 12 headings), which was strictly enforced by the CCD (Civil Censorship Detachment) of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Power in charge of censorship of Japanese newspapers, articles, and books, "was inherently double-standard" (Eto, 1994, p. 39). On the one hand, civil censors had a passive function: to collect information circulated in Japan. On the other hand, they had another highly active function: to activate the occupation policy by oppressing underground antipathy against the U.S. power. While insisting that liberation from pre-war militarism be achieved by "freedom of expression" under democracy, the U.S. occupation policy was

1 Jun Eto (1994). Eto's arguments are mainly based on his research at Mckeldin Library, University of Maryland, and at The National Record Center (Maryland) during the period from 1979 to 1980. His sources are from "the Gordon W. Prange Collection," including the censored publications (books, gazettes, magazines, newspapers, and so on) as well as the reports kept at the National Archives, in Washington, D.C.

in fact infringing, through strict control and censorship, upon freedom of the press and of public opinion.

Moreover, "the Occupation-period censorship utilized methods that eliminated the traces of censorship" (Suzuki, 2012, p. 10). As a result, what had really happened in the process of censorship was not made clear, and was subsequently forgotten. In this sense, we owe much to Eto's research in the Prange Collection, which focuses on the deletions applied in the literary texts. According to Eto, when "the censorship examiners," including Japanese intellectuals, found any seemingly "inappropriate" expressions in articles, books or even in advertisements for commercial use, the whole text would be forwarded to executive upper-class American translators to be re-written (Eto, 1994, p. 182). Quite ironically, it was those who were engaged in censorship that became the first translators of such texts during and after the Pacific War. (Unfortunately, however, those initial translations have been lost.)

In any case, one of the main points emphasized by Eto is the serious influence of U.S. censorship on the Japanese "psyche": Censorship functioned as a power to cut off interaction between language and national identity by putting "Japanese" language into "a gigantic cage," a kind of "sealed linguistic space" in which "the paradigm of language and identity was drastically destructed" (*ibid.*). Here in this "space," we can see a similar mechanism working as the occupier and the colonizer manipulate power to re-set and re-model the notion of *nation* among the occupied and the oppressed, as post-colonial translation theory has pointed out. The image of *nation* as representation of national identity, as well as the memory, even, of the homeland, was erased, subsumed by the discourse of "individualism" and the "new democracy." By intervening in the sphere of language, censors ultimately extended the occupation even into the realms of culture, identity, and psyche.

As poetry is one of the most familiar and influential forms of expression shared commonly by the public as mass culture, it became the target of the censors, who were on the alert for nationalistic propaganda. Any expression suspected

to be a kind of representation of nationalistic emotion toward the *homeland* lost by war, for example, could be deleted, and any tragic image of the post-war devastation, particularly related to the atomic bombings, could be prohibited. The reality of human experience expressed in poetry, therefore, came to be suppressed in post-war occupied Japan, and the voices of the oppressed poets had to endure the difficult time of the occupation.

2. Sadako Kurihara: A Case Study

In order to pinpoint the interesting relationship between the mechanisms of censorship and translation, I will focus on Sadako Kurihara as a case study. She was not only a survivor of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, but also one of the most influential female war poets who powerfully advocated for humanity and democracy, with a strong belief in the power of words. Here, I am primarily concerned with what happened during the translation and publication of her poetry in English.

Sadako Kurihara was born in Hiroshima in 1913 and was a victim of the atomic bombing—though not seriously injured because of her distance from ground zero—on 6 August 1945. As a poet with a strong social consciousness—especially of the time when Japan was fanatically rushing ahead to war—she could not help but express her indignation against the inhumanity of the first atomic bombing in human history. She witnessed many victims of the bombing in the destroyed city of Hiroshima, and this strongly motivated her to write poems and *tanka* (a short verse form in traditional Japanese style) to mourn the dead, to express anger against the war, and resistance against the political power that was silencing the victims suffering in the aftermath. She had already been a very active member of a literary circle, *Chugoku-Bunka* ("Hiroshima culture"), which empowered her to publish her own collected works. In the following year, 1946, she published, privately and at her own personal risk,[2] her collected

2 Kunio Abo (2009). Abo, a researcher in Japanese literature as well as archivist himself in Hiroshima, points out that Kurihara dared to publish *Kuroi Tamago* though she had been informed that the topic of atomic bombing would cause troubles. In his "Notes" on Kurihara's *Hiroshima no Genfukei wo Idaite* ([*Embracing the Atomic Landscape of Hiroshima—*

poems written between 1940 and 1945, despite the censorship under the occupation: *Kuroi Tamago* (*Black Eggs*).[3] Before publication, the original draft was to be submitted first to the CCD to be censored, and many words and lines in the original texts were deleted. In those days, when all publications, from articles to advertisement, were subjected to strict censorship by the GHQ under the power of General MacArthur, *Kuroi Tamago* was no exception, though it was planned as a private publication.[4]

Any expression or opinion that might cause trouble for the GHQ was deleted, or altered, and in some cases, publication was denied altogether. Kurihara later recollects in her "Foreword" to *Kuroi Tamago*, revised in 1983, that "[the] censors made partial deletions in the inaugural issue of *Chugoku-Bunka*, and *Kuroi Tamago*, too, which I published privately, had three free-verse poems and eleven *tanka* deleted" (Kurihara, 1994, p. 42). Those words and lines judged to be inappropriate were checked in red or deleted with black ink, so some pages of the original text of *Kuroi Tamago* were almost all black from the top to the bottom (*ibid.*). The following poem, "What is War?"(1946), was entirely deleted, with black ink, from the original publication, because many words clearly expressed Kurihara's anti-war opinions by laying bare the human reality of war:

I do not accept war's cruelty.

My Postwar History] Kurihara, 1975), we read the following: "When thinking of publication of a kind of anti-war journal *Chugoku-Bunka* for her literary group, Kurihara visited Home Office of Hiroshima Prefecture to ask for information regarding censorship. She was advised not to say anything of 'atomic bombing,' for it was in those days the last taboo to be expressed in writings to be censored" (p. 206).

3 There are three versions of *Kuroi Tamago*: the private publication (1946), the complete version (1983), and the English translation by R. H. Minear (1994). To avoid confusion, I cite the original version and the complete one as *Kuroi Tamago* with the years of publication, and the English version as *Black Eggs*.

4 According to Minear, after September 18, 1945, "all the Hiroshima writers—Ota [Yoko], Hara Tamiki, and Toge Sankichi—encountered in varying degrees the heavy hand of the censors" (Minear, 1994, p. 29).

> In every war, no matter how beautifully dressed up,
> I detect ugly, demonic intent.
> And I abhor those blackhearted people
> who, not involved directly themselves,
> constantly glorify war and fan its flames.
> What is it that takes place
> when people say "holy war," "just war"?
> Murder. Arson. Rape. Theft.
> […].
> At home they are good fathers, good brothers, good sons,
> but in the hell of battle,
> they lose all humanity
> and rampage like wild beasts.
> (Kurihara, 1994, p. 53)

First of all, "holy war" is represented in the image of "murder, arson, rape, theft," as a reality where "good fathers, good brothers, good sons" are turned into "wild beasts," who "lose all humanity." In the context of post-war publication, those images of brutality could indirectly refer not only to wartime Japanese militarism but also to the U.S. power that defeated Japan with nuclear weapons, turning Hiroshima and Nagasaki into a hell on earth. Moreover, Kurihara's keen insight into the many ways that power manifests in war illuminates the nature of victimization and domination, and foreshadows the reality of the impending occupation.

Though the guidelines of the censors were not made explicit, Kurihara obviously understood why her words—written by her pen, her "dangerous weapon"—had been deleted. And so, she made up her mind to self-censor, to delete some more poems herself. When she re-published an integral version of *Kuroi Tamago* in 1983, including those poems deleted from the first edition published in 1946, she included notes on what had happened to the deleted/altered poems after censorship. From those notes, we can now trace how her source text had been

translated under censorship, though she had lost the original manuscript in the confusion of post-war period. In her "City Ravaged by Flames," Kurihara wrote:

> Houses where wives, children, relatives lived happily:
>
> all now rubble.
>
> Amid rubble ravaged by flames,
>
> the last moments of thousands:
>
> what sadness!
>
> Thousands of people,
>
> tens of thousands:
>
> lost the instant the bomb exploded.
>
> (Kurihara, 1994, pp. 92-93)

While the poem with three parts passed prepublication censorship, Kurihara eliminated the above first part from the first publication, for fear that "the bomb," referring to the atomic bomb, should cause trouble post-publication (Abo, 2009, n.p.). Her criticism of wartime infringement on humanity was therefore coupled with anxiety about censorship. She seemed to realize that the political consciousness of wartime Japan expressed in her poems would eventually, after the war, be *translated* into that of the post-war U.S. occupation. In this sense, censorship functioned as a kind of displacement mechanism for transferring the original text into a different context. At the time of the atomic bombings, even literary expression was taboo, and translated into new forms that were highly charged politically.

Kurihara also noted in her "Afterword" that "Occupation censorship cast a long shadow in the form of the aftereffects of the atomic taboo." She continues:

> In the case of "atomic bomb literature," people continued to smile coldly and ask, "Does such a genre—'atomic bomb literature'—really exist?" Writers andpoets who had experienced the bomb suffered from *the psychological pressure of censorship* and from alienation inside and outside the literary establishment, and

> after hard and bitter struggles, they died sad deaths." (Kurihara, 1994, p. 151; my italics)

As Kurihara's self-censorship implies, the voices of those suffering have long been silenced. However, with her knowledge of post-war history—38 years after the end of the war—Kurihara brought her source text to the forefront of the literature of the 20th century, re-asserting control over her art and expression. She insists that the re-publication of *Kuroi Tamago* "indicates a common determination, in today's crisis, to authenticate the meaning of that time" (*ibid*., p. 152). While the CCD translated Kurihara's incendiary poems, creating a historical narrative of defiance and perhaps antipathy for the U.S. occupation, she herself succeeded in re-translating them into a language of human experience speaking to the past, the present, and the future.

The first edition of *Kuroi Tamago*, which had originally contained 32 poems and 270 *tanka*, was eventually published with 29 poems and 250 *tanka*, with many words and lines deleted (As for the deletion of 20 *tanka*, 9 were deleted by Kurihara's own decision.) It is quite interesting to note that Tadaichi Kurihara, her husband, who was a more radical activist, said with indignation:

> I trust that the United States is a democratic country. For a democratic country to set up a system of censorship, and then, once a publication has been censored and cleared for publication, to make it once again the target of complaint: that is worse than Japan's prewar and wartime censorship. It absolutely wipes out my trust in American democracy. (Kurihara, 1994, p. 29)

Very often, works that had cleared the censors before publication were obstructed post-publication by the CCD. The main point I would like to emphasize here is that, in the course of building democracy in the post-war period, the censorship of publication dominated the voices of the Japanese people. Ironically, under the name of new "democracy" transplanted from the U.S., many *unheard voices* were suppressed.

When history became clear after a certain period of post-war investigation and re-reading, the unheard voices came to be

liberated from the "sealed linguistic space." These voices, heard now as *subjects*, speak not only of the individual experience of the oppressed, but also of that particular time in history from a broader perspective. Thanks to the discovery of the records of censorship, as well as the censored texts, in the archives of the Gordon W. Prange Collection, the deleted poems from the original text were restored and re-published in 1983, and were also translated into an English version. And so, historical consciousness actually created the arena where the original words were *translated* into those of the historical voice to be shared globally.

Returning to the complete edition of 1983, we know that Kurihara recovered the deleted works that she had found assembled at the University of Maryland's McKeldin Library. She said in her "Introduction" of the completed version:

> Reading those original scripts, I clearly remembered the wartime experience where I wrote those poems and the troubled way to publish them by personal publication. Then, the idea of publishing the whole text as a complete version with restored deletions and recovered changes, as well as with the explanations of the detailed background of the time, came up to my mind. (*ibid.*, p. 4)

In this completed version, the poems she had been writing after the war were newly integrated. The perspective having thus been transferred to the present, could "frame" the wartime experience in the context of continuing history.

There is a certain change of tonality in the poems written after she had experienced the power of censorship. Under the pressure, she became more careful and self-restrained in her composition. She tried her best not to use provocative expressions regarding atomic bombing, and she sometimes preferred metaphorical expressions rather than direct and specific reference to facts. Rather than focusing on the painful reality of *hibaku-sha* (atomic-bombed victims), Kurihara seems more inclined, here, to turn her gaze toward the future. In her work written in 1952, she declares, "as a survivor," to be first of all "a human being, and all the more, as one mother." "I Bear Witness for Hiroshima":

> Above all, I oppose war,
> and even if they try under one label or another to punish
> a mother's saying no to her children's death,
> I will not flee or hide,
> for that day's hell
> is seared onto my retinas.
> The tale goes that if those who get a look at hell talk of hell,
> hell's devil-king will call them back,
> but as a survivor, witness for Hiroshima,
> I testify wherever I go,
> and even if it should cost me my life, I sing,
> "An end to war!"
> (Kurihara, 1994, p. 160)

Though the censorship had been lifted before she created this poem, her voice expressing the event seems to be more literary and ethical, rather than political. With her experience of censorship, she learned how her works would be *translated* as something politically dangerous. Instead of being an activist throwing stones at the power, she decided to "sing" to the ordinary people in the world. With a certain change of mode in narrative strategy, her discourse of reportage or impeachment seems more inclined toward a language of literature than one of politics.

Because controversy persists among those who insist on the war-ending benefit of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings, and those who strongly denounce them, Kurihara's works, including those she continuously created after the war, have come to be read not only in Japan but also in foreign countries in translation. In 1994, *Kuroi Tamago*, along with some later poems of Kurihara—who had been more energetically involved in antinuclear movement as a poet—was translated into English as *Black Eggs* and published by the Center for Japanese Studies of the University of Michigan, resulting in a substantial volume with a long introduction and notes by translator Richard H. Minear. It is, according to the translator, "one of the major artistic

testimonies to life in the nuclear age" (Kurihara, 1994, p. 35). In our contemporary political climate of conflict, Kurihara's literary works have been regarded as part of the legacy of Hiroshima.

As far as the political aspects of translation are concerned, Mona Baker uses the concepts of "frame" and "narrative," to argue that a translator frames the narrative, providing a lens through which the translated text may be interpreted in line with his or her own beliefs (Baker, 2006, p. 110). When we read Kurihara's works in translation, the translator's stance, clearly stated in the introduction, influences the way we read each work. In other words, the translated version of *Kuroi Tamago* with Kurihara's later works. is set in the context of political engagement again, though in a different way from the one under censorship, which wouldn't have become possible without the translator's visible intervention.

This time, the framing is set not by the oppressor but by the translator, who tries to criticize the oppressor in the contemporary context. In his introduction, Minear, the translator, traces Kurihara's path up to the present (she passed away three years ago, after seeing the tragic events of 9/11 and the Iraq war thereafter, which she of course opposed), and implies that her works should be read as a humanistic anti-war message in this century of crisis. He cites Kurihara's essay from 1974: "Hiroshima is an idea that transcends nuclear bombing. Hiroshima is the conscience of a world that does not allow nuclear bombs" (Kurihara, 1994, p. 37). It is clear that the translator highlights Kurihara's fears for a contemporary world endangered by war. For example, in her poem entitled "Vietnam, Korea, Hiroshima" written in 1975, she compares the atrocities carried out in these three wars, conceiving contemporary history as a continuous process of wars: "Hiroshima's war is still not over, but the smell of gunpowder envelops us anew" (p. 37). Here appears a "narrative of translation as a means of promoting peace, tolerance and understanding through enabling communication and dialogue to take place" (Baker, 2010, p. 4).

3. The Translator's Stance

Kurihara's translator makes his stance visible. In the following example, we can see how this stance affects the tone of the translated text. I, myself, translated one of Kurihara's most striking works, written soon after the bombing in Hiroshima. She had heard a very moving story of a baby born in the utter darkness of a basement where those injured by the bombing had crowded in despair. A midwife was among them. Hearing that a wounded mother was going into labour, she offered help and delivered the baby at the cost of her own life. I translated the poem with the title "I Will Deliver the Child" from the point of view of the midwife, who had bravely declared that she would help a life coming into the world while so many people were losing theirs. To my great surprise, Minear chose the following English title: "Let Us be Midwives." I offer my translation here, followed by Minear's:

> "I Will Deliver the Child" (hereafter abbreviated as IC)
> It was night in the basement of the destroyed building
> Victims of the atomic bomb seriously injured
> filled the dark basement, in which even a single candle was found.
> The sickening smell of blood, the stench of death,
> stuffy breathing mingled with sweat.
> And the painful moans were everywhere.
> Out of all these, a strange voice was heard;
> "A baby is about to be born!"
> Now, in the darkness of the basement like the Abyss
> a young woman was beginning to labour.
> In the depth of darkness without even a single match
> what could be done?
> Forgetting the pains, everyone there worried
> about her with sympathy.
> And then, there heard a voice;

"I am a midwife. I will deliver the child."
It was a woman, seriously injured herself, moaning
only a few moments before.
And so, in the bottom of darkness,
a new life was born.
And the midwife died, bathed in blood
without even waiting for the dawn.
I will deliver the child…
I will deliver the child…
Even at the cost of my own life.
(Hayakawa, 1997, p. 2)

"Let Us be Midwives!—An Untold Story of the Atomic Bombing" (hereafter LM)
Night in the basement of a concrete structure now in ruins.
Victims of the atomic bomb jammed the room;
it was dark—not even a single candle.
The smell of fresh bold, the stench of death,
the closeness of sweaty people, the moans.
From out of all that, lo and behold, a voice:
"The baby's coming!"
In that hellish basement, at that very moment,
a young woman had gone into labor.
In the dark, without a single match, what to do?
People forgot their own pains, worried about her.
And then: "I'm a midwife. I'll help with the birth."
The speaker, seriously injured herself,
had been moaning only moments before.
And a new life was born in the dark of that pit of hell.
And so the midwife died before dawn, still bathed in blood.

> Let us be midwives!
> Let us be midwives!
> Even if we lay down our own lives to do so.
> (Kurihara, 1994, p. 67)

While IC "frames" the strong will of the midwife with the subject "I," in LM, the subject is "we." The point of view in IC is that of a first-person narrator who sees a midwife helping a baby to be born, with other survivors and victims in the background. The point of view in LM, on the other hand, is the first-person plural: "we" are the spectators and participants as well, seeing the event with those who were present. Each translator's stance is decisive in its specific tone: one is more inclined to highlight a contrast between the tragic events of the past and the courageous action of an individual, while the other is more optimistic, encouraging readers to engage and strive, together, to build a better future.

In this sense, IC is an enclosed story with its own beginning, middle, and end, narrated from objective point of view, while LM is an open text, leading the story from the past to the present and even to the future, transforming "their" story into "our" story narrated from subjective point of view. These interesting differences come from the intention of each translator. How a translator wants readers in the target language to read the text makes limitless versions possible. As for LM, the translator explains his interpretation of the poem, in his introduction, citing Kurihara's two different comments in her later essays regarding what a critic appreciated in her work as "evidence of the beauty of human nature that not even atomic bombs could break" (Minear, 1994, pp. 21-22). According to Minear, Kurihara was concerned in 1960 about "the rebirth of humanity in the depths of inhumanity" than about "technique." Later, however, in 1984, she "proceeds to introduce the element of technique" by stating that "the techniques of poetry are [her] hope to express [herself] more deeply and more beautifully, so that [she] can be understood better and by more people" (*ibid.*). After looking into Kurihara's later style, which is more conscious of expressions and techniques, Minear translated LM according to her earlier, simpler style.

As for IC, it was translated as a part of a collection of atomic bomb poems written by Kurihara's contemporaries, entitled "The Second Movement." If the disastrous time soon after the war was the first movement, then the post-war world is "the second movement," passing on hope for peace to the next generation. The framing of Kurihara's work, therefore, is different from that of Minear's translation of *Kuroi Tamago* in 1994. I read Kurihara's poem as "atomic-bomb poetry," while Minear focused on her later development as a poet. My IC pinpoints the human dignity that overcame the cruelty of atomic bombing, while Minear's LM creates emotional power "with no apparent technique" (Minear, 1994, p. 21). We see, then, that interpreting the same poem either in the horizontal context of the literature of the time or a vertical context of a poet's development results in different translations.

In this time of globalization, translators should be visible in order to illuminate the hybrid realities in which the translator's intervention efficiently functions (Baker, 2006, 2010). What I would like to point out is that the task of a translator is to create a new arena for the unheard voices to be narrated, the translator being a receiver of the voice and the narrator at the same time. As Spivak argues in her "Translator's Preface" to Derrida's *Of Grammatology*: "Translation is, after all, one version of intertexuality, translation itself is in a double mind" (Spivak, 1976, p. x). Though once made silent by the power of censorship, Kuhihara's words came to be heard in time, and time itself always provides the world with new contexts, where the "infinite web of intertextuality" becomes possible. Since Kurihara's works were introduced to English readers, a new arena has been created for re-narrating the world under the nuclear power. In the U.S., for example, HBO has produced the documentary film of Hiroshima survivors "White Light/Black Rain" by Steven Okazaki (2007), which was highly appreciated and widely supported. The sense of crisis after 9/11 urges us, perhaps, to see Hiroshima as "our story" in the present rather than "their story" of the past.

Conclusion

As the unheard voices are beginning to be heard, the arena of translation has become more diverse as a discourse of resistance (Venuti, 2008), of re-reading history (Niranjana, 1992), or of intertextuality (Spivak, 1976), as we have seen so far. The translator's stance as visible *narrator* of the translated text has become emphasized in translation studies. In order to make unheard voices heard in the language of different cultures, translation projects obviously re-read history and re-form the world picture, re-mobilizing the borderline between *I* and *You*, and between *We* and *They*, transforming the static binary relationships into a dynamic, continuous process of negotiation and interaction. This is how the ever-changing world is understood and conceived today. In the process, the translation of *the other* is always intertwined with self-translation, just as the translation of Kurihara's war poems interestingly "writes back" against the hegemonic power of the U.S. *Globalization* is not possible without these gestures of opposition, where the voices of the unheard are finally brought into a dynamic of reciprocity with those of power.

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ABSTRACT: Translation as Politics: The Translation of Sadako Kurihara’s War Poems — The dynamic power shift of the world picture from a dominant *hegemonic* power structure to a global consciousness of hybridity accelerated by postcolonialism in the late 20th century has opened up a way to re-read history from a new perspective. The major point in the process is the recognition of both the cultural and political *others* which had long been made invisible and silent by the politics of power. It is in this light that translation must be addressed by scholarly discourse.

This paper focuses on war poems by Sadako Kurihara both in the time of and after the censorship that occurred during the occupation. Through the lens of translation and its modalities, I would propose here, history can be re-addressed. How the narrative of translation creates an arena where an individual voice is made to be heard in the language of *others* is closely related with the translator’s stance in the political context. The task of the translator today is much more important than ever, not only culturally but also ethically.

RÉSUMÉ : **Traduction et politique : la traduction des poèmes de guerre de Sadako Kurihara —** Le changement radical dans la perception du monde observable depuis la structure de pouvoir *hégémonique* dominante jusqu’à la prise de conscience mondiale de l’hybridité, accélérée par le post-colonialisme de la fin du XXe siècle, a ouvert la possibilité de *re-lire* l’Histoire sous un nouvel angle. Le point essentiel de la démarche est la reconnaissance des *autres* à la fois dans leur aspect culturel et politique, ce qui avait été longtemps occulté et passé sous silence par le pouvoir politique. D’où l’importance d’examiner la traduction sous cet angle-là.

Cet article porte sur les traductions des poèmes de guerre de Sadako Kurihara écrits pendant et après la censure sous l’occupation. Sont explorées les modalités de traduction

dans le cadre d'une re-lecture de l'histoire. La manière dont le récit de traduction crée une arène dans laquelle la voix d'un individu se fait entendre dans la langue des *autres* est étroitement liée à la position du traducteur vis-à-vis du contexte politique. Aujourd'hui, la tâche du traducteur est beaucoup plus importante qu'elle ne l'a jamais été, non seulement d'un point de vue culturel, mais également éthique.

Keywords: war poems, atomic bombings, history, censorship, nationalistic propaganda

Mots-clés : poèmes de guerre, bombardements atomiques, histoire, censure, propagande nationaliste

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