Abstract

Literature in translation has found itself at the behest of publishing economics and this is particularly true of less-translated languages. This is perhaps why translation studies has grown more focused on the social practices surrounding the selection, translation and diffusion of certain texts in certain language pairs at certain times. The concepts of the social theorist Pierre Bourdieu and the use of Actor-network Theory have been embraced in the scholarly community and have shown promise as a multimethod approach to ethnographic investigations. Archival research and the advance of the digital humanities has played an important role. This paper will employ the above-mentioned research apparatus with the use of archived correspondence to investigate the translation process of a Japanese novel, Nobi by Ōoka Shōhei, in translation by the scholar of Japanese studies Ivan Morris. This investigation adds further confirmation that the research apparatus brings depth to the findings and clarifies the historical accounts of the actors involved in the translation process.

Key words: Translation Studies, Japanese Literature in English Translation, Pierre Bourdieu, Actor-network Theory, Digital Humanities

1. Introduction

American publishing grew dramatically in the twentieth century, and the firm of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. figured prominently. The contributions of this publishing house, founded in 1915, are noted in nearly every comprehensive history of publishing concerning the United States in the last century (Tebbel 114). Their strong tradition of literature in translation is documented
by its list of authors, which also includes numerous Nobel laureates and Pulitzer prizewinners. American, British, French, German and Japanese authors were added to their growing list over the years. Authors such as Albert Camus, Raymond Carver, T.S. Eliot, E.M. Forester, Khalil Gibran, Langston Hughes, Kazuo Ishiguro, Kawabata Yasunari, D. H. Lawrence, Thomas Mann, H.L. Mencken, Murakami Haruki, Jean-Paul Sartre and John Updike give a sense of the literature published under the Knopf imprint. Alfred Knopf (1892-1984) published books only in hardcover for most of his working life. The presentation of each title, from typography to binding to artwork, is still attended to with great detail as the company approaches its centennial. The colophone of a Russian wolfhound, a borzoi in stride, is the trademark of a Knopf publication. From 1920 onwards, the Knopfs also published a literary quarterly named after their colophon and The Borzoi Reader Online continues to this day. Alfred Knopf and Blanche Wolf Knopf (1894-1966) worked together fifty years and were a power couple on the 20th century American literary scene. In the mid-1950s, the firm was enjoying prosperous times when Albert Camus was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature; the eleventh such writer at this prestigious house. It was during these heady days that the Knopfs' editor-in-chief Harold Strauss launched a program of Japanese literature in English translation in 1955. This paper will investigate the translation process, which brought the novel Fires on the Plain (Nobi 1952) by Ōoka Shōhei to the English-reading public on both sides of the Atlantic in 1957, and examine academic discourse which resulted from the appearance of this work in translation. The background of the editor, the author and the translator is provided below, after which follows the sections on the research materials, research framework, the study itself and some concluding remarks.

2. Background

2.1 Editor-in-Chief, Harold Strauss (1908-1975)

From 1942 to 1966 Strauss was editor-in-chief at Knopf Inc., and continued as a consulting editor until his retirement in 1974. He presided over the most successful decades of the firm and in addition to his wide range of responsibilities was the personal editor of Jacquetta Hawkes and of John Hersey, who notably became a bestseller in Japan after the war with his book Hiroshima. The licensing of Hersey’s books for publication and sale in Japan was among the first publications allowed during the early years of the Occupation. The novel was used as a English language textbook in Japanese universities.

With the war on and the publishing industry at a standstill, after only a year at Knopf
the young editor joined the armed services in 1943. He had fully expected to be stationed in Europe because of his language aptitude in French. For reasons unknown, he was assigned to the study of Japanese in the Army Language School and then spent ten months in Kyoto, from December 1945 to September 1946, serving the Allied Occupation as a publications monitor. It is possible he was housed at the facility that is now home to the Kyoto Botanical Garden. His duty was to report on the trends and contents of the print media. This experience contributed further to his ability to speak and read Japanese and to interact with the literary community. He recalled that during the stint in Kyoto: “I came to not only know a good many Japanese writers and publishers, but to realize that a contemporary literature of considerable importance existed in Japan at the time” (Strauss 1972). This discovery gave him the idea that he might bring Japanese literature in translation to English readers as Alfred Knopf and his wife Blanche had done with European and South American literature. Strauss supervised the publication of thirty-four works of Japanese literature in English translation between the years of 1955 to 1977, two of which were published after his death. He traveled to Japan frequently over the years. His strategy to cultivate a market in the United States for Japanese novels is well represented in his 1953 account of his travels aimed at the general reading public and entitled “Editor in Japan.” He wrote about his time in Japan visiting writers in several localities in his article published in The Atlantic. On one of his early trips he came into contact with Ōoka Shōhei, a novelist and scholar of French literature.

2.2 The Author, Ōoka Shōhei (1908-1988)
Ōoka was encouraged from a young age to cultivate his literary talents. He graduated from Kyoto University and found work as a journalist and as a translator of French at trading houses throughout Japan. The war intervened and he was conscripted, sent to the Philippines and repatriated after his capture and internment as a prisoner of war. He devoted his time after the war to writing fiction and biographies as well as translating from the French. Much of his work is based on the cruel experiences of war. His semi-autobiographical writings earned him numerous literary awards and he is remembered as one of the influential authors in the postwar era. In addition to war diaries such as Nobi, he wrote novels in the vein of the psychological style employed by Stendahl. Strauss requested that he have translated a couple chapters of his novel Musashino Fujin (1950) into English, which he did at his own expense. However, after reading the sample translation, Strauss declined to take the matter any further (Strauss 1955). Nonetheless, they remained on friendly terms, Ōoka later became acquainted with Ivan Morris who was interested in translating the novel Nobi.
2.3 The Translator, Ivan Morris (1925-1976)

Born in England to an American father and Swedish mother, Morris retained British citizenship and was also a permanent resident in the United States. He was schooled in both countries and entered Harvard in 1942. During the war he studied Japanese at the Navy’s language school in Boulder, Colorado and served as a naval intelligence officer. He was awarded a Ph.D. from the SOAS at the University of London under the guidance of Aurthur Waley in 1951. After a year at the BBC he joined the Foreign Office as a research assistance and then spent the years 1955 to 1959, mainly in Japan, on a grant from the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Varley 1977). He joined the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures at Columbia University in 1960 and remained there until his untimely death in 1976. In addition to his translations of modern Japanese literature, he wrote widely on his historical personages and translated classical literature. His award-winning work on life at court in the Heian era, *The World of the Shining Prince*, was published at Knopf in 1964. It was during his stay in Japan in the mid-1950s that Morris became further acquainted with Ōoka Shōhei, after their first meeting in Paris, and expressed a desire to translate his novel entitled *Nobi*.

3. Research Materials

The Alfred A. Knopf Archives were established in 1996 and are housed at the Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin. The holdings are extensive and cover the dealings of the firm from its earliest years. Of interest to this study is the correspondence between the editor and the translator concerning the title under discussion. These letters contain vital information about the mediation of the text, the editing and the role the various actors played in the process. The study of the translation process has long been neglected mainly because: “Translation has traditionally been regarded as a solitary activity, and translators as invisible middlemen.” (Folaron & Buzelin 2007 22). Publishers for their part are happy to promote this myth as a translation is best marketed as definitive. Moreover, details on innerworkings of the process may take the focus off their product or may disclose information about the mediation process which leads to unfavorable publicity.

Another forum in which archival research may assist in a deeper understanding of translation is to address the discourse that surrounds a text in scholarly communities. The translated text is ostensibly for an audience that does not read the language of the original or source text, but in the fields of area studies or comparative literature, particularly in a less translated literature such as Japanese, the translations serve as text materials as well
as literary works in their own right. As such the texts are subject to literary criticism, comparative analysis and translation criticism. It is not uncommon for translations to be compared to other texts in a similar genre or target texts to be contrasted with source texts. As a result, a body of academic discourse develops around the translated text and archival research may add important details which inform these analyses.

4. Theoretical Background

Translation studies has embraced the tenets of French social theorist Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002). A special issue of the journal *The Translator* was devoted to the use of his work (Inghilleri 2005), and other volumes followed (e.g. Pym et al 2006; Wolf & Fukari 2007) that expound on his concepts and their applications, in particular *habitus* and capital. The application of his concepts allow for more focus on the human participants in the translation process. His work includes numerous volumes which cover his approach to the social sciences, published over several decades, making it impractical to review his oeuvre here. However, the application of his work applied to translation studies has been broadly supported, in large part because translation has come to be seen as a socially regulated activity (Hermans 1997 10) and thereby influenced by both the subjective mindset of an individual and the structural constraints imposed in groups. The analysis of a process involving various individuals moving literature through translation from one culture to another culture is enhanced when seen through the lenses of *habitus* and capital.

4.1 Bourdieu’s Notion of *Habitus*

Bourdieu describes *habitus* in its relation to time as a “system of disposition—a present past that tends to perpetuate itself into the future by reactivation” (1990 54). It is recognized as the ongoing set of dispositions of the individual, and of the individual while engaged in the process itself. Robinson adds clarity to a definition of the term in reference to translation studies: “Put simply, Bourdieu’s notion of the *habitus* is that we are what we do: all the many practices of our social lives, including talking and interacting with others, shape who we are” (2002 143). Thus, *habitus* refers to the evolving dispositions of an individuals while engaged in the unfolding process that is life. It is important to look inside the process wherever possible as the complexities of translation as a socially regulated activity have come to the fore. If we are fortunate enough to have some empirical record of the translation process and the individuals involved, this may allow for a more informed reflection of their practices when viewed over
time. In this study, the *habitus* of the editor, the author and the translator are opened to examination with the use of archival materials from the time when the mediation of the text was in progress.

### 4.2 Bourdieu’s Notion of Capital

The term capital has its origins in the monetary sense, and it is basic to the configurations and accumulation of capital which Bourdieu infers. This paper will focus on the two forms of symbolic and social capital advanced by Bourdieu. Symbolic capital is: “the form that the various species of capital assume when they are perceived and recognized as legitimate” (1989 17). In writing about the accumulation of symbolic capital Bourdieu uses the terminology ‘consecrate’ to signify symbolic recognition, and further argues that economic capital is more effectively derived by this capital of prestige and authority: “for the author, the critic, the art dealer, the publisher or the theater manager, the only legitimate accumulation consists in making a name for oneself, a known, recognized name, a capital of consecration implying a power to consecrate objects (with the trademark or signature) or persons (through publication, exhibition, etc.) and therefore to give value, and to appropriate the profits from this operation” (1993 75). Thus, a symbolic trademark such as a publisher’s imprint, or colophon, according Bourdieu’s theory results in status and influence.

Social capital is derived from membership in a group and is based on mutual acquaintance and recognition; within their various social networks individuals may derive influence from their connections. Acting fast to secure these connections and maintaining these relationships is indispensible to their use in the future. As a field of study progresses and academic societies are formed, social capital grows in importance (1986 21). Status by association is particularly important to younger members of a group who are reliant upon more established players for their recognition, which might pass from one generation to another. Accordingly, *habitus*, symbolic and social capital as defined by Bourdieu may prove useful in deciphering the various influences in the production of a text and reflections on the process over time by the individuals concerned.

### 4.3 Actor-network Theory

Accounting for the individuals and action in a production network is the goal of Actor-network theory (ANT), whose primary proponent is Bruno Latour. The motto is simple: follow the actors. Latour contrasts ANT with mainstream social science: “The choice is thus clear: either we follow social theorists and begin our trouble by setting up at the start which kind of group and level of analysis we will focus on, or we follow the actors’ own ways and begin our
troubles by the traces left behind by their activity of forming in dismantling groups” (2007 29). This may lead us to finding out more about how texts are mediated by the parties involved and gain insight into their view of the translation process as Buzelin suggests:

Inasmuch as it [ANT] consists of tracing the genesis of products called translations, it will enable us to acquire data to which translation theorists have rarely had access so far, namely data on the multiple mediators potentially involving the translation process, including the way they make or explain their decisions (when they are still unsure about the outcome of this process), and the strategies by which they negotiate their place in the process, convince others to participate, etc. (2005 215)

ANT concentrates on tracing the network of actors involved in a production process. Archive research materials complement this research approach well in that the materials provide a level of access rarely visible to the research community and the theoretical apparatus demands the investigation proceed without presupposition.

4.4 On Bourdieu and Latour
The utility of the theory of Bourdieu and Latour used in tandem for the field of translation studies was brought to light by Buzelin (2005) in the journal issue mentioned above. Using her breakthrough analysis, she shows how both make use of the concept of the network, both explain actors behaviors in terms of strategies and struggles, and both make use of ethnographic methods. “The aim is not [italics in original] to fuse existing polemics, but rather to assess how, in some ways, Latour can be useful to translation studies and how his work can, more specifically, complement current Bourdieusian approaches” (195). She argues that the theorists could be “unexpected allies” and this approach has proved useful in applications to research materials in various contexts. Buzelin (199) points to two major assumptions both theories build upon: “First, the idea that scientific (arte-)facts are collective constructions involving the participation of multiple mediators; second, the fact these mediators act in a competitive way. Moreover, both employ a concept of network, both explain actors’ behaviours in terms of struggles, and both use ethnographic methods.” This pairing has been applied in various studies (e.g. Kung; Hekkanen) and suggest that a multimethod approach adds depth to the resulting findings.
5. The Translation of Nobi

The novel concerns battlefield experiences in the Philippines and was written by Ōoka Shōhei, a former POW of the American forces there who returned to writing and his scholarship of French literature after repatriation. Ōoka wrote a series of war diaries of a semi-autobiographical nature which sold well. Strauss had originally turned to Ivan Morris, the translator of the work under discussion, to translate another work by the first novelist Knopf published after the war. The debut title *Homecoming* (1955) by the author Osaragi Jirō, set mainly in Kyoto, was printed in three editions. Strauss was eager to get a follow-up title out, but the Japanese manuscript never arrived. Morris then suggested the novel *Nobi* (1952), after seeing a list of titles Strauss had shown interest in, which centers on the chilling recollections of an imperial soldier stranded in the Philippines toward the end of World War II. Morris had a high opinion of the book and hoped to translate it: “I have incidentally discussed this possibility with Mr. Ōoka, whom I first met in Paris, and more recently in Oiso [Japan], and he is in agreement” (Morris, 1955a). Strauss responded Brewster Horwitz, the translator of the Osaragi novel set mainly in Kyoto, had much the same view so he could not disregard two such informed opinions.

Morris began the translation without a contract. Strauss was pleased with what he read and soon after a contract for the novel to be entitled *Fires on the Plain* was drawn up in April of 1956. The young scholar was grateful: “I need hardly tell you how pleased I was to hear that your firm has decided to publish *Nobi*. As I think you know, I am very much interested in the success of this book (apart from my role in it) and I am delighted to know that is a firm of your caliber that will bring it out. *Nobi* is to my mind a masterpiece of our times and I hope that it will have the reception that I am convinced it deserves” (Morris, 1956a). The esteem in which Morris held this work is unquestionable. He believed it to be a masterpiece, by definition a work without flaws, which he translated from start to finish. He likely was cognizant of the symbolic capital of the prestigious Knopf firm. This gave his translation of Ōoka’s work a better chance to become a recognized and legitimatized work of literature (1989 17), consecrated with the English-reading public. He would also accrue social capital by his association with the author and the publisher.

Strauss relied on the translator to make the arrangements on the ground with Ōoka and to get the contracts signed and returned to New York. These contractual matters Morris dutifully followed through with dealing directly with the author. An option for rights on a future work was included in the agreement. The manuscript record indicates Morris’ typed translation arrived two months later in July of 1956. The translation being finished, the matter
of editing remained. At this point the network grew to include readers from the British house Seckar & Warburg, which Knopf exchanged rights with on these Japanese translations and other titles. Morris was educated in England before university and wrote in British English as a rule. This translation was copyrighted by Knopf, but appeared first in London from Secker & Warburg as a way to save on the costs associated with printing plates and copy editing.

In late July, Strauss wrote requesting two major changes. This involved deleting any reference to the character’s survival before the ending, and a cut of approximately two pages in the Epilogue section. The page numbers below refer to Morris’ typed draft, not the original or published translation:

The first serious question concerns the epilogue. Four out of five readers here objected strongly to the greater part of the epilogue, saying that for them it fell quite flat. We were discussing this when we received Fred Warburg’s initial enthusiastic comment, specifically endorsing the epilogue. We then thought that under the circumstances we would make no comment. But one of his readers—a very good one—in a subsequent report asked if the postscript is really necessary, saying he found it anticlimax. This naturally provoked new discussions here. We are reluctant to tamper with the original very much, and by careful analysis and close questioning I was able to pin down the offending material chiefly to the passage which begins toward the foot of page 251 and ends virtually at the foot of page 253. In this passage Tamura and his doctor exchange a lot of psychiatric jargon. It seems to us that it is this passage which more or less underscores the rather stereotyped nature of the psychiatric ending. After much thought, I must ask you to discuss the possibility of dropping the two pages with Mr. Ooka. We would not want to drop them without his consent. (Strauss, 1956)

A year earlier Morris was convinced the work as it stood was the best novel written about the war. He translated it in its entirety without any mention of an omission(s). The readers at the prestigious houses of Knopf and Seckar & Warburg, the London-based publisher that Knopf had long-standing business ties, thought otherwise. The cuts they wanted involved removing the references to the survival of the main character Tamura, to keep the sense of tension in the narrative, and the cut of a more substantial passage at the end of the novel where Tamura discusses his mental condition with a psychiatrist at an institution back in Japan, and his resulting analysis of a messianic complex. According to the publishers, the offending passage was full of psychiatric jargon and undermined the ending, making it anticlimatic.

Based on the correspondence, this came as a surprise to Morris whose translation was not
itself being questioned, but a section of which was considered unsuitable at two established publishing houses. At the time Morris was thirty years old and had not yet had a full-length translation published. He thought the matter over and responded to Strauss that: “I have carefully studied your letter of the 28th, and agree entirely with your views on the two major problems mentioned, viz. the omission of the dialog with the doctor and of references to the narrator’s survival. I’m seeing Mr. Ōoka on Friday and shall strongly urge him to agree to these changes; I agree with you that they are too important to be made without his consent” (Morris, 1956b). Careful study would seem to indicate that Morris had to consider the omission and it had not occurred to him beforehand. He brought the matter to the author personally: “After some initial hesitation, I am pleased to say that he agreed to both the changes in question, and these can now be made” (Morris, 1956c). Given the symbolic capital the prestigious firms held, or could withhold, the author and the young translator were hardly in a position to contest the ‘possibility of dropping’ the passages. The publishers’ wishes prevailed and the omissions and cut in the epilogue of the book were included in both the British and American printings.

Recent research has called into question the cut in the epilogue section of the translation and extrapolated that this were the doing of Morris. David Stahl argued that: “he [Morris] could not resist the temptation to ‘fix’ it by excising sentences and passages he personally found to be undesirable or extraneous” (Stahl 347), and thus detracting from the work as: “an unstable combination of confession, dissembling, omission, and concealment. This important aspect of Ōoka’s imaginative working through of his personal war experience has yet to be sufficiently appreciated” (96). Stahl contends this deleted passage is crucial to understanding, as Tamura’s psychiatrists do, the contrived nature of Tamura’s writing and how Ōoka: “subtly alerts the reader to the problematic nature of his memoir” (97). While this is a convincing analysis, and highlights how translation may affect literary interpretation in a target culture, the removal of this passage in English translation was not Morris’ doing. The correspondence from Strauss to Morris concerning this omission indicate that Morris may have consented to the decision taken by Strauss, but he did not initiate these cuts or excise them in his revised typewritten draft of the translation. All indications are that he had fully expected the text in question to appear in the published translation. In his developing habitus as a young translator, Morris was swayed by the opinions of the established publishers, as was Ōoka. Their symbolic capital, as Bourdieu theorized (1989 17), was persuasive.

Morris wrote later that he made the cuts with the author’s permission in an article which appeared, translated into Japanese many years later, and was published again after his untimely death in 1976 (Morris, 1969/1978 110). The original English article has not survived
to my knowledge. His recollection is a striking mixture of the commentary by Strauss and the readers in London, and in contradiction with his correspondence held in the archives. Below are excerpts of his memories of the translation which I have translated back into English:

Private also in the 'Bonfire' to praise many of the readers in Europe, and the readers in London, and in contradiction with his correspondence held in the archives. Below are excerpts of his memories of the translation which I have translated back into English:

Most of the English-reading public, including myself, who admire the novel Nobi have expressed some doubt about the ending. Which is to say, it is thought that as the ending is approached, the author veers from the dramatic realism that he had brought to life from the beginning of the novel. (109)

The wordy and tiresome epilogue (with the author’s permission I omitted passages in a few places) is a stereo-typical example of an obsession in the modern Japanese novel, which is indicative of a preference for confessional literature. (109)

Psychiatric jargon is often used. (110)

The first time I read this novel I felt the book would best have ended after Nagamatsu was killed in the Phillipines, and my thoughts have not wavered since. (110)

Regardless of the accuracy of my translation, the overlap of the lexical items is consistent and speaks for itself. The influential comments of the publishers had become woven into Morris’ habitus and eventually became a part of his memories. In July of 1955 when Morris first recommended this novel to Strauss, not a word concerning the epilogue was mentioned. When Strauss wrote Morris about the proposed changes, Morris had to think carefully before writing back to Strauss, making it apparent this was new to him and not something he had thought all along. While some translators might have held a grudge, Morris apparently embraced this change and began to think of it as his own. This finding is not intended as a
dismissal of Stahl's scholarship. In fact, if not for his finding of Morris operating in the
discourse of literary criticism in the source culture Japan, this would not have come to light.
From the standpoint of translation history, Stahl's research coupled with the archival
correspondence have allowed for a more thorough examination of the roles of the actors in the
translation process. His argument concerning Ōoka's imaginative working through of his
personal war experience is not predicated on whether the publisher or the translator was
responsible for the omissions. On the contrary, he fills in the blanks by adding his own
English translations of passages which were deleted. How the passages were taken from the
translation had escaped Morris' memory.

6. Conclusion

This paper has focused on the pairing of Bourdieu concepts of *habitus* and capital paired
with Actor-network Theory in the context of the literature from a less-translated language,
Japanese, being brought to the English-reading public in the mid-twentieth century. Archival
research has proven indispensable in obtaining the data used in this study and in the tracing
of the actors and their interactions. The evolving dispositions of the actors and the nature of
the influence they exercised over each other in the translation process has shown how capital
is employed in the mediation of a text. Morris’ original intentions were thwarted to some
extent in the changes pressed upon him by the two established publishing houses where the
network of those who would have a hand in mediating the text grew in number. It is here
we see Bourdieuf’s concepts in action through the developing dispositions of the actors and
how the forms of capital they possessed shaped their interactions. Ōoka was the successful
writer, Morris the scholar and translator and Strauss the prominent editor with his staff and
collaborators inhouse and overseas. ANT allowed for a deeper look into the process through
the discovery of the archival correspondence and inhouse reading practices that sparked a
rethinking of Ōoka’s epilogue. Through the course of tracing the many actors involved in
the production of this title, Buzelin’s (2005 199) contention is borne out, i.e. that the artifacts
produced in a network are collective constructions with multiple mediators acting in a
competitive manner.

The symbolic capital held by Knopf did not translate into a successful marketing of Ōoka’s
work. Strauss was unable to draw much support for publicity reviews from the community of
Japanese specialists and translators, who apparently were less willing to lend their capital to
the promotion of this title. A quote from the English writer Agnus Wilson was the only one
on the dust jacket. This is quite a departure from the previous five titles at Knopf published in 1955 and 1956 which drew reviews from establish Japanese experts such as George Sansom and Edwin Reischauer, or the growing number of Japanese literary specialists such as Donald Keene or Edward Seidensticker who also translated for Knopf. As of September, 1957, United Kingdom sales numbered a promising 5,678, but by December of 1957 sales had reached only 1,500 copies in the States. In order to soften the news, Strauss wrote to Ōoka that: “this is not a best seller; but it is better than average for the books by writers published here for the first time” (Strauss 1957). This hardly seems probable as the average print run at Knopf at the time was 5,000 copies. The Knopf imprint was influential not enough to bring the novel the attention many thought it deserved. This was the last novel by Ōoka considered for translation at Knopf. Nonetheless, his works have since been studied widely and translated, and it is Ivan Morris who initiated this research with his bold decision to translate this novel.

Works Cited


（2014年10月1日受理）

（ラリー・ウォーカー 文学部欧米言語文化学科准教授）