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Editorial Note

Dear Readers,

大変お待たせしました。

The release of the present Fascicle was accompanied by a wave of unforeseen circumstances and setbacks which have caused this rather substantial delay. Nevertheless, we are now glad to introduce *Silva Iaponicarum* Fasc. LXX (Winter 2023).

The two research papers have both been written by early-career young researchers, who in this way are making their debut on the international academic scene. Aleksandra Przybysz discusses the translation choices observed in the Japanese edition of Dan Simmons' novel *Hyperion*, whereas Błażej Monkiewicz delves into the social ostracism, mental health and identity politics found in modern Japanese society, and modern societies in general, through the prism of the alternative rock band Shinsei Kamattechan. In the review section you will find Aleksandra Skowron's evaluation of Karli Shimizu's monograph on the topic of Shinto shrines constructed outside of Japan.

We are also overjoyed to have Aleksandra Jaworowicz-Zimny, our invaluable typesetter/copy editor, back on board after her maternity break. お帰りなさい!

Starting with our next fascicle, we are planning to implement significant changes to our publication schedule by shifting our timetable from the current Summer/Winter release to the Spring/Autumn release. This year will be a transitional one, with the next two Fascicles released back-to-back in late summer and early autumn while already bearing the new labels of "Spring 2024" and "Autumn 2024" respectively. You can also expect a substantial remodeling in the shape and content of the Review section, which will materialize the vision of our review editor, B.V.E. Hyde.

We hope that these alterations will contribute to a more balanced editorial process and an overall improved reading experience of *Silva*. While we do not have at the moment a fixed deadline for proposal submissions for next issues (Fasc. Autumn 2024 and on), we are constantly awaiting your contributions at silva.iaponicarum.quarterly@gmail.com.

For all *Silva*-related updates, make sure to visit our homepage (https://silvajp.web.amu.edu.pl/) as well as our Facebook profile (https://www.facebook.com/silvaiaponicarum/).

Wishing you all success and many blessings for the freshly-started year of 2024.

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RESEARCH PAPERS

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The Translator's Visible Touch in the First-person Narrative: On the Example of the Japanese Translation of *Hyperion* by Dan Simmons

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ABSTRACT

The translators have an ambiguous role in the process of a literary translation – they have to be as transparent as possible, though they must often interpret the text before translating it. In fact, they present their own dialogue with the author to the reader and thus, it is difficult for them to not influence a narrative with their presence (Venuti 1986: 182). Translators can, however, choose how and where they are visible. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the way a literary translator becomes visible to the reader through the translation. Three short stories – in first-person narrative – from the novel *Hyperion* by Dan Simmons and translated by Sakai Akinobu are discussed. The article focuses on the analysis of translator's choices regarding vulgarisms and emotional load in a text generally, that influences the way the reader understands the text.

KEYWORDS: translation, narration, emotional load, narratology

Introduction

Many theories and even more myths have grown up around translation – from the belief that anyone can translate, to declaring translation impossible (Hejwowski 2004). There have been just as many proposals for translation methods, but the most popular ones are completely extreme, hence no method on its own (i.e., without combining it with another) really has a chance to produce a translation that is good on many levels (ibid.).

The translators themselves, on the other hand, have an ambiguous role in the creative process of a literary text – they stand between the author and reader, in a way disrupting the dialogue between them: in fact, the reader of the text in the target language receives the effect of translator's own dialogue with

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the author. On the other hand, a modern translator's task is most often to remain completely transparent (Venuti 1986: 187–188); to prevent the reader of the translation from feeling that he is reading a translated text rather than the original. So it seems that the two views of the translator's role – the concept of a transparent translator and the concept of the translation as a disruption in the dialogue between the reader and the author – are at odds. It is impossible that the translator's agency should not be seen at all, nevertheless, allowing one's own interpretations and views to significantly affect the reception of the text would be a mistake. Thus, it is important to find the best way possible to allow the reader of the translation to understand the text in the closest possible way to the reception of readers of the original. The goal of this paper is to investigate how a literary translator makes his presence felt in the translated text. To determine where the changes appear, with what they may be connected, by what they are motivated, and how the translator's choices affect not only the overtones of individual passages, but also the overall reception of the text. In order to do that, the review of a translator's particular choices and how they relate to specific translation theories are described.

This analysis is based on the novel *Hyperion* by Dan Simmons originally published in 1989 in USA, or more specifically, on three of the six stories included in it, in Sakai Akinobu's translation from 2000. This particular novel was chosen for its variety of narratives. For the sake of consistency, the third-person narratives are omitted, with the focus being on first-person narratives and their specific aspects that create challenges for the translator – namely, Christian references, vulgarisms and idioms rooted in the Anglo-American culture.

All citations from Polish and Japanese sources were translated by the author of the article. Examples in every table in the article are based on the *Hyperion* by Dan Simmons (2005 [1989], edition published in Great Britain) and its translation *Haiperion (jō)* and *Haiperion (ge)* by Sakai Akinobu (Shimonzu 2000a, 2000b).

1. On narrative and translator's visibility in the text

1.1. Narrative and narrator

> [I]n this infinite variety of forms, [the narrative] is present at all times, in all places, in all societies; indeed narrative starts with the very history of mankind; there is not, there has never been anywhere, any people without narrative; (...) narrative remains largely unconcerned with good or bad literature. Like life itself, it is there, international, transhistorical, transcultural (Barthes 1975: 237).

Barthes substantiates that narration is universal – for narrative forms include not only epic, lyric or drama, but also – and perhaps especially – any act of storytelling. In the Cambridge Dictionary (CD: keyword *narrative*) narrative has two definitions. The first one is described as "a story or a description of a series of events", and second as "a particular way of explaining or understanding events". Both definitions are very general, but capture the basic premise of the narrative function.

A more comprehensive explanation is offered by Piotr Kulas (2014: 119), using Margaret Somers' (1994: 619, as cited in Kulas 2014) theory. Somers argues that narrative is a good tool to understand how people construct their identity, emphasizing that it is impossible to analyze narratives through the lenses of only one field of study. This is not surprising, as some researchers (Bal 2012) argue that it is practically impossible to give a single, definitive theory on the subject of narrative, as it can be dealt with from the perspective of many scientific disciplines.

Patricia Ewick and Susan S. Silbey list researchers who define a narrative by determining what *is not* a narrative (1995: 200–201). As an example they present the reasoning of historian[2] Hayden White (1987, as cited in Ewick and Silbey 1995), who separated out non-narrative historical forms, such as annals and chronicles, which do not contain a plot and an ending – essential components of narrative. Thus, in the process of excluding some forms as those not covered by narrative, certain specific features emerge that a given discourse must contain in order to be called a narrative – such as the aforementioned beginning and ending, plot, characters/actors, and narrator. Narratives can be categorized by their relation to the chronology of the events they describe – so there are linear and non-linear narratives. From the linguistic point of view, there is a distinction due to the grammatical tense used by the narrator or, finally, due to the grammatical person in which the narrator appears. Then, narratives are divided into first-person, second-person or third-person narratives.

It is essential, however, to mention that in Japanese literature the distinction between first- and third-person narratives has gotten closer to the European understanding of these only in the Meiji period, when writers started to experiment with first-person prose (Yoda 2006: 280). "The transformation from the narrator of the early modern novel, in which the storyteller (*katarite*) is inseparable from the author, to that of the modern novel begins with the differentiation of a narrator who records his circumstances from

[2] It is worth mentioning that historians have had a significant role in narrative studies, as the first field after the literature studies which took interest in the narrative was none other than historiography (Burzyńska 2008: 23).

within the world of the text from the author who controls the story world from outside the text" (Hirata 2010: 73). Along with the concept of "realism", it has also introduced the third-person "transparent narrator", "who does not intrude in the text in his own voice" (Königsberg 2008: 200–202). In terms of first-person narratives, on the other hand, one – and arguably most popular – example is *shishōsetsu*, where the narrator usually is the author himself/herself, but it happens that *shishōsetsu* are written in third person (Melanowicz 2012: 313).

"Narratives must be narrated" (Lamarque 2004: 396), thus, a narrator is the central part of a narration – whether or not he is omniscient, one of the characters or somewhere in-between (i.e., in Japanese the term 三人称を仮想一人称 *sanninshō-o kasō ichininshō*, describes "first person pretending to be third") (Goyet 2014). And just as narratives can be divided into many types, that often intertwine, there are as many different narrators, that are not necessarily opposite to each other. The most obvious and intuitive distinction is the grammatical person in the narration. It is very limited, though (Booth 1983: 230), and thus, literary scholar Wayne C. Booth proposed to divide it on different basis. He first distinguishes dramatized (devoid of any individual features) and undramatized (narrator who refers to himself as "I", and often is simply a character in the story) narrators (ibid., 152). He also introduces a reliability criterion: a reliable narrator is the one that "speaks for or acts in accordance with the norms of the work" (ibid., 158), and otherwise – unreliable. It is not, however, a flawless distinction, as in line with the above definition, an unreliable narrator would be almost every first-person narrator.

Finally, it is worth emphasizing that the narrator "does not conduct his report continuously". An independent speech in the text is a kind of indication that the narrator has temporarily given his role to one of the characters in the plot (Bal 2012: 7).

1.2. Literary translator and his presence in the narrative

"The translator's task consists in this: to find the intention toward the language into which the work is to be translated, on the basis of which an echo of the original can be awakened in it", wrote Benjamin (1923: 258). He compares the language to a forest in which a literary work "finds itself", but which the translator tries to understand by observing it from the outside (ibid.), and by that one can comprehend that while the act of writing is rather spontaneous (though the writer definitely can be conscious in terms of use of language), the act of translating is more forethoughtful.

Hejwowski criticizes each of the extreme takes on translation: he disputes both the view that translation is impossible and that any philologist can

translate any text; he denies the validity of both the use of mere functional translation and literal translation (2004: 163–169). He also stresses that in the process of translation a lot of "unknowns" and "possibilities" appear: a translator must use them in order to convey in the target language the reality presented in the original language. However, he must do it in such a way that the overall image evokes in the "possible" reader of the translation the same set of associations as in the "possible" recipient of the original work – so that this reality of the original narrative is perceived in the same way despite the change of language (ibid., 69–70).

Theories that the ideal translator should be completely invisible in the text, while the translation itself – "transparent", devoid of features other than the author's style, are common. As Venuti (1986: 187) pointed out, the sheer idea of an "invisible" translator emerged mostly from capitalism, specifically the business of publishing, for which the "easiness" of reading became important economic factor. "[T]he less awkward, unidiomatic and ambiguous a translation is made, the more readable it is, and hence the more »consumable« it becomes as a commodity on the book market" (ibid.). However, even if the translator intentionally tries to become completely invisible to the reader, no matter what translation techniques they use, it is obvious that the distribution of accents in the text changes somewhat when it is translated. For it is the language and the authors' conscious and unconscious choices concerning it that are important in the process of analyzing the narrative: how this language affects the presentation of the narrator (or narrator-character in the case of first-person narration) and their creation. And – in the narration of a translated text – it allows the presence of the translator in the translation to be examined (Sadza 2013: 243).

Along with obvious changes related to a translation that include differences between languages of original work and translation, some disparities related to translator's choices appears. Such disparities – sometimes derived from misinterpretation of the source text – are usually caused by the fact that translators are in a kind of "limbo", as Rachel May (1994: 33) puts it, between an author and a text. Their agency is seen in the shifts – whenever translator has to choose between two or more alternatives (Pekkanen 2013: 3). However, differences between the source text and a translation do not have to determine the visibility of a translator. The easiest way to become seen by the reader is to make a mistake that is obvious even to those not familiar with the source language, i.e., by using a loan translation for idioms. But when the translator consciously decides on changes for specific reasons, they can even make the translation easier to read (and quite often, that is the aim imposed on translators by the publishing industry) (Venuti 1986: 187).

Consequently, a translated work will almost never be devoid of the translator's visible touch, as discrepancies between the source and target texts are inevitable (ibid., 208).

Lastly, it is worth noting how Japanese and English languages are different from each other – not only in terms of grammar or the word order of the sentence, but also what both languages focus on. While English is more person-centered (focused on *who* does what), Japanese is rather situation-centered (the most essential information is not *who*, but *what* has happened) (Lee 2014: 100), so certain shifts can be expected in the narrative. Also, as will be highlighted in the analytical part of this article, the expectations towards use of vulgarisms are completely different in both languages – in Japanese, it is mostly associated with particular type of people and/or their age (also, may be considered a part of *yakuwarigo* 'role language', which will be discussed later), while in English they are rather commonly used, simply to emphasize emotions.

2. On the structure and narration of the *Hyperion*

Hyperion is a novel. Since it is an epic genre with a structure that lacks a strict framework (unlike other literary genres) (Głowiński et al. 1986: 367), it is not uncommon to see authors experimenting with the form (ibid.). And this work is exactly that. The entire novel is divided into six separate stories told by the characters and everything happens, so to speak, "in between" their tellings – so we can actually distinguish seven different narratives, each taking place in a completely different time. They are not linear with respect to each other, and sometimes even the individual stories are told out of chronology.

A classification that comes to mind first is that based on narrative perspective – third-person and first-person. Two stories (Soldier's and Scholar's) and "interludes" are presented in the former, while the others are presented directly from the protagonist's point of view: the stories of the Priest, the Poet, the Detective and the Consul. It is the latter group that his paper will focus on.

3. On the Japanese translation of emotional load – analysis

According to Nicholas A. Bayley, there are four main ways to express emotions via language: prosody (intonation), lexis, morphology and syntax (Bayley 2013: 3–4). It is intonation that is probably the most difficult to notice and correctly translate because of obvious lack of vocalization in the text. However, natives are usually able to grasp character's or narrator's tone. Bayley provides the following example: *Fine, fine, you're right, I'm wrong,*

we'll do it your way! – "This sentence can indicate agreement with what has been said if presented flatly and intended sincerely, or, if accompanied by an expression of anger, it can mean that the respondent does not agree at all, but is capitulating." (ibid., 3). A native or fluent English speaker is likely to quickly realize that the sentence was not uttered with complete sincerity – the presence of an exclamation point also helps here. However, such parts are sometimes incorrectly translated into the target language. "Since written texts lack intonation, a writer has to rely on the words, grammatical constructions, and discourse tricks to bring across emotions" (ibid., 5).

3.1. *Yakuwarigo* and identification of the emotional load in text

In the translation of the fourth chapter of *Hyperion*, detective Lamia's story, the emotional load is visible in the use of particular role language (*yakuwarigo*).

> *Yakuwarigo* manifests itself when specific linguistic choices (such as vocabulary, grammar, phraseology or intonation) evoke an image of a particular character (age, gender, occupation, social standing, era, appearance or character), or when, seeing a particular character, the reader/viewer is able to imagine how they will speak (Kinsui 2003, quoted in Bun 2018: 3).

In other words, *yakuwarigo* can be considered a kind of stereotype visible in the language (Kinsui 2017: 23), which has its place in everyday conversations (i.e., in the form of pronouns precisely), and which provides an additional layer of character creation. With this kind of stylization, the English sentence "Yes, I know" in Japanese can be expressed in different ways:

> a. そうじゃ、わしが知っておるんじゃ。[*Sō ja, washi-ga shitte oru-n ja.*]
> b. そうよ、あたしが知ってるわ。[*Sō yo, atashi-ga shitteru-wa.*]
> c. そうだ、おれが知ってるぜ。[*Sō da, ore-ga shitteru-ze.*]
> (Kinsui 2010: 51, as quoted in Kinsui 2017: 125)

Each of these brings to the reader's mind a completely different character: example a) will be pronounced by an older man (as indicated by the ending じゃ *ja* and the pronoun わし *washi*), b) a young woman/woman from a rich household (お嬢様 *ojōsama* – here emphasized by the final particle わ *wa* and the pronoun あたし *atashi*), while c) young man/man in a high position (final particle ぜ *ze* and pronoun おれ *ore* are associated with masculinity). These styles are often intertwined with each other, and are also dependent on the situation the character is in, but nevertheless evoke specific associations.

The above examples are explained primarily on the basis of the gender and age of the characters who can utter these sentences, but the styles are often mixed together and it is difficult to distinguish between them completely. Thus, at least sentence c) can be uttered by a woman (leaving aside the typically masculine pronoun おれ *ore*, although there may be exceptions to this as well), but it will almost undoubtedly be a female character with a strong character.

Yakuwarigo, then, is an important aspect of Japanese language stylization and is also essential in literature translated into the Japanese, of which The Detective's Tale is a prime example – with Lamia being the only character that uses such variety of pronouns. Lamia changes them depending on the situation and what exactly she means by "I" at any given moment and to whom she speaks (which, in comparison, seems not to have any influence on the way the Priest or the Poet speak about themselves). The most common one she uses during the story is the pronoun こっち *kotchi* or こちら *kochira*, which seems to be the most natural option for the character – throughout the story Lamia most often describes herself and refers to herself precisely through the pointing pronoun. It is worth noting here that it is not equated or even associated with any gender, and depending on its form (こちら or こっち) can be both formal and not. However, when she refers to herself in the meaning of her detective agency, she uses word うち *uchi* (lit. 'inside'/'oneself home'), which is much more feminine (keyword *uchi*, *DD*). An interesting shift in the choice of pronouns appears, when between Lamia and Johnny rises an affection. Then, when speaking to him, Lamia refers to herself as あたし *atashi*, which is seen as an entirely feminine pronoun. As Takubo (1997: 3) points out, when there is a significant change in the relationship between individuals, there is a need not only to change the pronoun in the second person, but also in the first person.

Lamia starts her story without any unnecessary preface and gets straight to the point.

no.	**original English version**	**Japanese version**	**romanization**	**back translation**
1.	I knew the case was going to be special the minute that he walked into my office.	男が事務所にはいってくるなり、こいつは特殊な事件だなとピンときた。	*Otoko-ga jimushō-ni haitte kuru nari, koitsu-wa tokushu-na jiken da-na-to pin-to kita.*	The man entered my office and I knew this would be a special case.

2.	My first thought was, *Is this a client?* My second thought was, *Shit, this guy's beautiful.*	最初に思ったのはこうだ。（この男、客か？）それからつぎに、（おほう、なかなかの上玉じゃないか）	*Saisho-ni omotta-no-wa kō da. (Kono otoko, kyaku-ka?) Sore-kara tsugi-ni, (ohō, nakanaka-no jōdama ja nai-ka)*	The first thing I thought was this: "Is this man a client?". Then: "I see, prince charming, are you?"
3.	'Yeah', I said, able to hold back my own tears without too much effort.	「なるほど…」さほど努力することもなく、笑いをこらえることができた。	*"Naruhodo…" Sahodo doryoku suru koto-mo naku, warai-o koraeru koto-ga dekita.*	"I see...", I was able to hold back laughter without too much effort.

Table 1. Examples of translating the emotional load contained in the text.

The examples presented in the Table 1 point to the simplicity of the style Lamia uses, not only in dialogue but also in narrative. Just as in every story in *Hyperion*, the character of the protagonist is expressed in language; Lamia, a hard-boiled detective straight out of a noir novel, says everything straightforwardly (as can be seen, for example, in the introduction of The Poet's Tale – both are unconcerned about curt language, although it is Silenus who nevertheless leads the way here). As a result the narrative she conducts is matter-of-fact, devoid of consideration of abstract themes (very evident in both The Priest's and The Poet's Tales). Lamia primarily describes her observations.

Example 2 shows simplicity through repetition: the two sentences, one after the other, have exactly the same structure, which was not accurately reflected in the Japanese translation. In this case, the translator or the editor has decided to edit the two sentences so that the repetitions disappear completely. In the same example, translator's tendency to smoothing out vulgarisms is clearly visible: *shit* is translated to おほう(*ohō*, lit. 'huh', exclamation with an emotive function or 'I see'), which in no way conveys to the Japanese reader the same emotions that were conveyed to the reader of the original text. In the English version Lamia's words show not irritation or anger (which the vulgarism may indicate), but a genuine admiration for stranger's beauty, maybe astonishment even. On the other hand, in Japanese she seems to disregard him: "I see, prince charming, are you?". Emotional load in this sentence changes fundamentally depending on the language version.

A similar problem appears in example 3, but here the whole meaning of the sentence changes, not only the intonation. Cybrid Johnny explains to her that "death" for him means disconnection ("turning off", so to speak) from the web and only for a minute, Lamia bursts into laughter. Then, when her companion explains how serious was this situation, she replies: *Yeah*, and adds in narrative: *I said, able to hold back my own tears without too much effort*. Context and word choice allows reader to relatively easily notice that Lamia is sarcastic in narrative. In the Japanese version, however, Lamia says nothing about tears. She does tell that "she held back laughter without too much effort" – and thus, not only sarcasm is lost in translation, but the meaning of the sentence too. In this particular case, the translator only needed to translate the part literally and a tone would be easily conveyed to a Japanese reader as well thanks to the context – Lamia has previously signaled that the whole situation seems trivial to her and has little in the way of tragedy, so holding back any tears in this case can only be sarcastic.

3.2. Translating expressions rooted in Christianity

Staying on the subject of laughter, it is not difficult to notice that Lamia, in addition to vulgarities, often uses exclamatory phrases related to religion, which is very typical of cultures within the Christian sphere of influence.

no.	**original English version**	**Japanese version**	**romanization**	**back translation**
1.	I laughed but managed to keep the laughter under control. – Jesus wept, Johnny.	笑いがこみあげてきた。その笑いがヒステリックにならないように、かろうじて自分を抑えこんだ。あきれかえってことばないよ、ジョニイ。	*Warai-ga komiagete kita. Sono warai-ga hisuterikkuni naranai yō-ni, karōjite jibun-o osaekonda. Akirekaette kotoba nai-yo (Jīzasu weputo), Jonii.*	The laughter surged. I barely restrained myself, so that it wouldn't become hysterical. "I have no words" (Jesus wept), Johnny.

2.	(...) I said "Why, for God's sake", and you said something like "That may be the case".	それに対して"いったいなんのために？"と問い返すと、あなたは"答えはそこにあるかもしれない"と応じた。	*Sore-ni taishite "ittai nan-no tame-ni? (fō gozzu seiku)"-to toikaesu-to, anata-wa "Kotae-wa <u>soko</u>-ni aru kamo shirenai"-to ōjita.*	I asked "For what, on Earth?" (For God's sake), and you responded: "Maybe the answer is there".

Table 2. Examples of translating the emotional load contained in expressions.

It is difficult to judge from the example 1 of Table 2 if the translator read emotions in the text correctly or not. In this scene Lamia is laughing nervously, in disbelief, in reaction to new information about AI. She cannot believe that they deem people irrelevant in the face of, among others, recreating the original Earth. The laughter here can be of course interpreted as hysterical – just as Sakai did – but it will remain nothing more than an interpretation, while at the text level there is no such information. So one can question the validity of the choice to add in the translation the sentence underlined in the Table 2.

The quotes in Table 2 are from the same passage, they are separated by only a few lines, and both are spoken by Lamia. The first one is her comment regarding AI's attitude towards humans – "Jesus wept" is a famous quote from the Bible, important for Christians as it shows human side of Jesus (he wept over his friend's death) (Law 2022) and known for its length – it is considered the shortest line in King James Bible (however, that is not the case in the source languages) (Verett 2022). On the other hand, in English slang literal quotation from the Bible used in an exclamatory form expresses annoyance or surprise. It fits the situation by perfectly expressing Lamia's emotions but it is hard to say that the specifically religious context of the phrase is relevant here. Through these words the author most likely wanted to convey surprise or irritation and not necessarily anything related to Jesus. That is why furigana ジーザス・ウェプト *Jīzasu weputo* appears to be absolutely unnecessary – Japanese reader does not have to be aware that Lamia said anything about Jesus because that was not the purpose of the message.

The second example presents exactly the opposite situation. Again, Lamia uses a phrase connected to God, but this time the religious context is most important. During a conversation with Johnny about the recreated Old Earth and some of its most famous habitants, Lamia asks: *why, for God's sake?* – and again, she does not really mean God literally, as the expression serves

only to emphasize her emotions. However, Johnny replies: *That may be the case* and in this instance he uses Lamia's words in its literal sense. They start talking about God himself then, and how AI tried to create it.

It is not surprising that in this case the translator decided to add a furigana to the Japanese sentence with the transcribed "why, for God's sake?" so that the Japanese reader would be aware of what Johnny's reply refers to. Known as *gikun*, it is a typographic technique of adding unique furigana often used by Japanese translators to convey dual meanings of one word or expression – enabling them to show a reader not only what it means but how was it originally expressed as well. The translation of phrases related to Christianity into Japanese is a difficult task if a translator aims to keep the emotional load of original text and the naturalness of the target language. That is why in this case using the *gikun* technique seems to be the best option.

3.3. Specifics of the language of a priest

Lamia is not the only character that uses phrases related to Christianity. In fact, the best source of such expressions is a protagonist of the first story in *Hyperion* – Paul Duré.

no.	**original English version**	**Japanese version**	**romanization**	**back translation**
1.	To hell with that.	なんと穢らわしいことか。	*Nan-to kegarawashii koto-ka.*	What an abhorrent thing.
2.	Weeks of studying the damn parasite and still no clue as to how it functions.	忌まわしい寄生体を研究しだして数週間、いまだにどう機能するのかは、手がかりすらもつかめていない。	*Imawashii kiseitai-o kenkyū shidashite sushūkan, imadani dō kinō suru-no-ka-wa, tegakari sura-mo tsukamete inai.*	Several weeks passed since I started studying this disgusting parasite and I still have not even hints as to how it functions.

Table 3. Examples of vulgarism in the language of a priest.

Duré is a priest, and specific behaviors – or lack thereof – are stereotypically associated with this role, such as avoiding vulgar language. Dan Simmons does not really seem to care about such convocations in his work and the priest's language sharpens from time to time as well. After a few days on Hyperion, he observes how – despite some mosques and basilicas in the city – people lead decadent lives, entrusting themselves to the worship of a semi-fantastic being called the Shrike, among many things. When the priest decides to leave the planet's capital, he comments: *To hell with that*, which

Sakai translated as presented in example 1 of Table 3. And here a gap in the meaning between original and Japanese version appears. The phrase Sakai used literally means ‘what an abhorrent thing’, and the adjective itself – according to DD dictionary (kotobank.jp; keyword *kegarawashii*) – means “something that creates a repulsive feeling of becoming dirty yourself”, which by all means expresses priest’s disgust and conveys more in language about the character’s profession itself. However, it completely ignores situational context and Duré’s emotional state.

Duré with the aforementioned phrase definitely reveals his emotions spontaneously, which is one of the characteristics of curse words, but it does not seem to be a mere exclamation, containing no meaning per se. He shows his attitude and even emphasizes his opinion on Hyperion’s society. Does it violate language’s taboo? *To hell with that* itself does not seem to be obscene, but given his position as a clergyman, the reference to hell may sound like it. Nevertheless, the protagonist still remains within the clergy, so the author used a vulgarism which was ignored in Japanese translation – it seems that in favor of staying with the choice of words that fit the priest. However, it was not impossible for Japanese reader to perceive character’s emotions in similar way as an English-speaking reader would do. With choice of this particular word (穢らわしい *kegarawashii*), Sakai in a way translated Christian context into Shinto – *kegare* (穢れ) is religious term in Shinto, as one of the primary functions of Shinto shrines is to purify (sweep away) *kegare*. Thus, in this case translator’s decision is understandable – for obvious reasons, Japanese language lacks vulgarisms related to Christian culture, so he had to decline literal, syntagmatic translation, which “may be (...) disconcerting for the recipient of the translation, because it is much easier to explain the incomprehensibility of a foreign phrase than the opacity of a phrase seemingly formulated in one’s native language” (Hejwowski 2004: 78), and instead chose to use a term related to Shinto.

In the much later passage in example 2 of Table 3, Duré says *damn*, etymologically referring to cursing something, which was translated to 忌まわしい *imawashii*. It does evoke a relatively similar feeling in both Japanese and English-speaking readers, so by no means is it an incorrect translation, however in this case it was possible to choose an adjective that also in Japanese conveys meaning of cursing: 呪わしい *norowashii* (which means ‘wish to curse something/somebody’).

3.4. Translating vulgarisms and swearwords

As it was mentioned in section 3.3., Dan Simmons does not shy away from vulgarisms in general – no matter if he writes from a priest’s or detective’s

perspective. The character that uses them the most and almost relentlessly is Martin Silenus – a Poet.

The word "vulgarity" itself is etymologically derived from Latin word "vulgus", which means 'a crowd' – associated with cheapness (Schnurer 1941: 502), and "[t]he concept of vulgarity is rooted in the capacity for contempt. It implies a hierarchy of values. By and large it springs from the intent to denigrate, to exclude, to dismiss, to ignore" (ibid., 501). It is a mostly intentional behavior that is supposed to evoke a specific reaction. According to Grochowski (1995: 15) people are subconsciously self-censoring themselves – they know which phrases or words are violating widely accepted norms in specific communities and which are a taboo.

On the issue of translating vulgarisms from a foreign language into the native one, there is a theory that they lose their force in translation. As some studies suggest, it is more difficult to identify intensity and nuances of vulgarisms in a later learned languages then a native one, which often leads to an overly cautious usage of them in translations (Hjort 2017: 165).

Nevertheless, Hjort admits that further research is required to prove this thesis and some researchers have attempted to prove the contrary – a change in the degree of vulgarity to a stronger one in the target text. Gruszczyńska presents it on only one translation from English to Polish, so, as the author herself writes, this also is not enough evidence. But according to her, it seems like translators are increasingly breaking the taboos. "Audiences carry stereotypes of verbal behavior found in other languages and cultures […] and translators, in turn, in their pursuit of meeting the expectations of audiences, depart from the original and reproduce and perpetuate the stereotypes of the target culture in their translations" (Gruszczyńska 2019: 181).

In the case of translations into Japanese, it can be observed that the predominant tendency is to reduce the intensity of vulgarisms, which is probably due to the expectations of the target text's audience, as well as the nature of the Japanese language itself. Of course, its native speakers are not deprived of possibility to express pejorative emotions vulgarly and they are, in fact, often conveyed through grammatical forms (～やがる *~yagaru*, which is usually used to indicate contempt or hate, ～くさる *~kusaru*, which literally means 'to rot' and is used similarly to *~yagaru*). There are also vulgar lexemes such as アホ *aho*, ボケ *boke*, バカ *baka* (all of them mean literally 'an idiot' or 'a fool') (Nishio 2003: 47). Nonetheless, the results of Nishio's study (ibid., 69–81) showed that Japanese speakers do not have tendency to express anger or other negative emotions verbally via vulgarisms. Or at least not publicly. It can be assumed that, as vulgarisms

are a relatively small part of everyday language, this is also what the Japanese expect from literature.

no.	**original English version**	**Japanese version**	**romanization**	**back translation**
1.	In the beginning was the Word. Then came the fucking word processor. Then came the thought processor. Then came the death of literature. And so it goes.	初めに言葉ありき。つぎにワードプロセッサーなるしろものが現れた。おつぎは思考プロセッサー。最後に、文学の死。ま、そういうものだ。	*Hajime-ni kotoba ariki. Tsugi-ni wādo purosessā naru shiromono-ga arawareta. Otsugi-wa shikō purosessā. Saigo-ni, bungaku-no shi. Ma, sō iu mono da.*	First, there was word. Then, word processor thing appeared. The next was thought processor. In the end, the death of literature. Well, that's how it is.
2.	Anyway, I was born on Earth… Old Earth… And fuck you, Lamia, if you don't believe it.	ともかく、そうして小生は生まれた。生まれは、地球.....ニューアースではないぞ、オールドアースだ。これこれ、こまった人だな、レイミア、そんなに小生の話しが信じられんか。	*Tomokaku, sō shite shōsei-wa umareta. Umare-wa chikyū… Nyū āsu de-wa nai-zo, ōrudo āsu da. Kore kore, komatta hito da -na, Reimia, sonna-ni shōsei-no hanashi-ga shinjiraren-ka.*	Either way, and so I was born. I was born on Earth. Not the New Earth, I mean the old one. Eh, eh, you're a difficult person, Lamia. You cannot believe my story this much?
3.	(...) my vocabulary was now down to nine words. (...) For the record, here is my entire vocabulary of manageable words: fuck, shit, piss, cunt, goddamn, motherfucker, asshole, peepee, and poopoo.	というわけで、小生の語彙はただの九語におちこんでしまった。（…）記録のために申しあげておくと、わがあつかいうる語彙のすべては、これだけだった。ファック、くそ、しっこ、まんこ、	*To iu wake-de, shōsei-no goi-wa tada-no kyūgo-ni ochikonde shimatta. (…) Kiroku-no tame-ni mōshiagete oku-to wa-ga atsukaiuru goi-no subete-wa, kore dake datta. Fakku, kuso, shikko, manko, imaimashii*	And so, my vocabulary shrinked to nine words. For the record, this was all the vocabulary I could handle. Fuck, shit, piss, cunt, goddamn, motherfucker, asshole, peepee, poopoo.

		ガッ(デム),忌々しい、マザーファッカ(アス)ー、,ケツ(ホール)の穴、しーしー、うんち。	*(gaddemu), mazāfakkā, ketsu-no ana (asuhōru), shīshī, unchi.*	

Table 4. Examples of vulgarisms and swearing.

The first paragraph (example 1 from Table 4) already presents what kind of character and what kind of language a reader can expect. Silenus begins his tale with the very first words from the New Testament which in Japanese is expressed in *bungo* – classical language. As Venuti describes, "the translator's hand is most visible whenever the translation manifests a tendency toward archaic language, something that seems to occur most often when the original text is remote in time and place" (Venuti 1986: 197). Also, what is interesting, this one sentence serves as a source for two information regarding him, meaning arrogance and education. He then goes on to take a turn in a completely different direction, emphasizing the word itself and its processing.

Vulgarisms appear immediately as well. Silenus' tale is the third one in *Hyperion*, therefore a reader may have already become accustomed to his manner of expression – he rarely says anything without swearing and the topic of conversation does not matter to him. What is more, linguistic issues aside, Silenus almost always sipping his wine and his behavior is simply vulgar.

It is a fact, however, that though the Japanese language is not as creative in terms of vulgarisms, it is not deprived of them entirely. What is more, when the most frequently used curse word by a character is *fuck/fucking*, there is a good alternative that would also correspond to both the noun (exclamation) and the adjective – the Japanese noun くそ *kuso* (lit. 'shit'). Therefore the translator had the possibility to convey Silenus' manner of speaking more faithfully, while keeping with Simmons' literary style.

Sakai, however, decided to smooth out vulgarities (just as he did in The Priest's Tale) even though in the original Silenus does not spare them reader. An excellent example is the highlighted passage from example 1 in Table 4: the equivalent for *fucking* was the word しろもの *shiromono*, which, according to the dictionary Nihon Kokugo Daijiten, means the subject of a conversation whose value a speaker questions (NKD; keyword *shiromono*). Taking into account Silenus' attitude toward the subjects he speaks of, the

decision to choose *shiromono* seems to be on point – despite the lack of vulgarity, it conveys the feelings of the protagonist.

In example 2, however, the translation seems to distort the meaning of the text. The phrase Silenus uses towards Lamia, that has been expressing disbelief since the beginning of the story, is: *fuck you, Lamia, if you don't believe it*. In the Japanese version, on the other hand, he says literally "you're a difficult person, Lamia" (as underlined in the Table 4, example 2) and through this phrase he shows tiredness, disregard toward Lamia and maybe mild annoyance. In the original text the very same sentence is a sign of Silenus' directness and his indifference – he does not seem to care about Lamia's opinion.

A twist in the translation of the vulgarisms comes when Silenus moves on in the story to the next stage of his life, where he found himself on the planet Heaven's Gate after a journey of about a century from Earth, which he spent frozen. After too long in the ice, Silenus suffered a stroke that caused his vocabulary to shrink to just nine words.

no.	**original English version**	**Japanese version**	**romanization**
1.	cunt	まんこ	*manko*
2.	fuck	ファック	*fakku*
3.	motherfucker	マザーファッカー	*mazāfakkā*
4.	shit	くそ	*kuso*
5.	asshole	アスホール ケツの穴	*ketsu-no ana (asuhōru)*
6.	goddamn	ガッデム 忌々しい	*imaimashii (gaddemu)*
7.	piss	しっこ	*shikko*
8.	peepee	しーしー	*shīshī*
9.	poopoo	うんち	*unchi*

Table 5. Curses from Table 4 arranged by intensity.

In a situation where the only thing the character is capable of uttering is curse words, the translator was probably no longer able to avoid them. Or, it is possible that reducing their strength previously was intended to emphasize them even more vividly in this situation.

The words in the table above this time are arranged by level of intensity. Thus, in the first place is *cunt*, which is considered the most obscene by English speakers in Britain and America (Livni 2017). It is a vulgarism derived from and referring directly to female sexuality and sexual organs,

hence Sakai's choice seems very apt. Next, however, there is *fuck* and *motherfucker*, which have not been so much translated as used as loanwords. It does seem strange because it would be very difficult to find a Japanese equivalent to these words, when the most popular くそ *kuso* has been used as a translation for word *shit*. Here, as well, it is the best choice in terms of a literal meaning. The most interesting, however, is the translation of the words *goddamn* and *asshole*, which Sakai decided to translate on two levels: by using both Japanese equivalents and loanwords added as *gikun*. It is a common solution and thanks to this, two layers are presented to the reader: a meaning and a reading – whenever it is important for author/translator to differentiate between them. ケツの穴(アスホール) conveys the literal meaning (ケツの穴 *ketsu-no ana*) and the suggested reading (アスホール *asuhōru*), which emphasizes that the word in question is indeed vulgar. 忌々しい(ガッデム) is similar: 忌々しい *imaimashii* means something annoying, irritating, and so the addition of *gikun* (ガッデム *gaddemu*) helps the reader get an idea of the linguistic register used by the character originally.

The last three items on the list include words describing physiological activities: *piss*, *peepee*, *poopoo*. The first one is considered to be offensive (CD; keyword *piss*), but the latter two words are often used by children (CD; keywords *peepee*, *poopoo*). When translated into Japanese, however, all three equivalents can be categorized as children's speech (NKD; keywords *shikko*, *shīshī*, *unchi*).

Conclusion

The narrative of each of the stories presented in this article was built in a unique way, making them diverse, although each can be classified as "first-person". The emotional charge in each also presented itself in different ways depending on the narrator – vulgarisms or Christianity-related idioms etc. Each arguably generated a separate pool of problems and dilemmas for the translator to solve – Sakai Akinobu dealt with these challenges differently, sometimes adding a layer to help reader comprehend the context fully, and sometimes subtracting meaning to adapt it to the reader's expectations (as happened with vulgarisms). He used the *yakuwarigo* (role language) technique to give the characters unique ways of speaking, which was accurately shown in the translation via *yakuwarigo*, and was especially diverse in The Detective's Story. Also the use of *gikun* (artificial reading added as furigana) played a significant role – mostly in case of expressions rooted in Christianity – whenever the translator had to help reader understand the meaning while leaving the original context.

As mentioned in the introduction, the translator is a person who stands between the author and the reader and presents the result of his dialogue with the author, his interpretation of the text, to the recipient of the translation. According to some, the invisibility of the translator to this recipient means success, but full transparency is never possible – as long as the translator has more than one option for translating the same text, as long as he has a choice, he will be visible to the reader.

Since the present analysis is based on the work of only one translator on the text of one author, it cannot provide sufficiently comprehensive evidence and conclusions. Nevertheless, it allows one possibility to be shown. In the case of *Hyperion*, Sakai, in making specific choices, presented examples how translations generate gains (the variety of pronouns adds value) and losses (by often distorting the meaning of the source text or depriving the reader of some layers of its meaning).

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keyword *shiromono*
keyword *shikko*
keyword *shiishii*
keyword *unchi*

DD: *Dejitaru Daijisen*, URL: https://kotobank.jp/ [access date: 10 January 2023]:

keyword *kegarawashii*
keyword *uchi*

CD: *Cambridge Dictionary*, URL: https://dictionary.cambridge.org/ [access date: 10 January 2023]:

keyword *narrative*
keyword *piss*
keyword *peepee*
keyword *poopoo*

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Images of Exclusion in Shinsei Kamattechan's Work: Bullying, *Hikikomori*, Unemployment, Mental Illness, Gender Non-conformity in Contemporary Japan

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ABSTRACT

In this article, the author focuses on the contemporary Japanese music band, Shinsei Kamattechan 神聖かまってちゃん. The band's songwriter, who goes by the artistic pseudonym of "Noko" (の子), seems to base their (they are non-binary) oeuvre on their own experiences of being bullied and excluded, as well as that of suffering from mental illness, suicidal thoughts, and unemployment. These experiences found in Kamattechan's work can be called "images of exclusion".

The aim of this paper is to present the aforementioned images of exclusion in a broader sociological context. To do that, the article analyses the band's songs in a broader perspective based on the academic literature on the topic of Heisei Japan (1989–2019).

The paper concludes by providing evidence that his family's origin was as a Heisei era *hi-shimin* (非市民; people excluded from the norm) from the start, with Noko's father being part of the "working poor". Various social problems of Heisei-era Japan (for example bullying or *hikikomori* 引きこもり) are clearly reflected in Noko's biography and closely intertwined with their art.

KEYWORDS: NEET, bullying, *hikikomori*, mental illness, pop rock music, avant-garde, outsider music, Internet, Heisei Japan

Introduction

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The Japanese music scene is vast and holds a variety of styles, from over-produced J-pop on the one hand to avant-garde noise ("Japanese blues" – see: Bath 2014) on the other. Although in general the pop music of the country is seen as being overly refined, produced and polished, as well as narrow-minded (young artist Haru Nemuri talks about strict rules that J-pop follows, see Terry 2021), there are artists who go against the norm. Shinsei Kamattechan, whose music is the topic of this article, may be considered one of such groups. This band's music may be considered a synthesis of pop and avant-garde (pop music cherishes vulgarity too and often incorporates polar opposites, like gangsta rap being a fad in the 90s). But what distinguishes the band is their use of the Internet to self-promote self-recorded music and to stream the daily lives of the members. Nowadays streaming is nothing new, but in the latter half of 2000s, it was a refreshing trend. Then, in the realm of the Japanese Internet, the showing of one's face in the cyberspace was considered a taboo (see Takeuchingu 2020).

The author of the band's music and lyrics, Noko の子 (they are non-binary), bases their songs on their own experiences of being bullied and excluded, of suicidal thoughts, mental illness, unemployment and other such experiences. The aim of this paper is to present those issues in the broader context of Heisei Japan's society. To do that, the paper first draws from the academic literature on Heisei Japan to present the problem, and then introduces the band's songs connected to the issue. These experiences are the titular "images of exclusion" found in Kamattechan's music.

1. Songs like a diary: The introduction to Shinsei Kamattechan's music and *Ringing in Their Ears*

Shinsei Kamattechan was initially formed in 2007 by three friends who had known each other since preschool: Noko の子 – real name Ōshima Ryōsuke 大島亮介, Mono (stylized as "mono", in Latin alphabet) – the leader of the band – and Chibagin ちばぎん. Misako みさこ, the drummer, also joined, but she was found through the Internet.

Since Noko is basing their musical work on their own experiences, this article will now present some events from their life that affected their work. Noko was bullied since primary school both by girls and boys. This is what caused them to drop out of high school (Shiozuka 2011).

Before dropping out, Noko entered a high school distant from their home, Tōkyō-gakkan in Shisui-machi, where they no longer experienced bullying. But because of previous experiences, they had already developed Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder which manifested as hearing voices saying things such as "Die, Ōshima", and "You disgust me". On an Internet stream they

said hearing voices was similar that of the symptoms of schizophrenia. The stream (Noko-kamattechan [kirinuki] 2020) took place when Noko was 31 years old and they said they were now improved. But until the age of 25, the experiences were severe. This means that when they begun Shinsei Kamattechan, they were still very bothersome. The stream must have taken place around 2016, but it was uploaded by a fan account to YouTube in 2020.
There is another significant event from Noko's youth that should be discussed. Noko does not talk about the topic openly (probably it is too much of a private matter), so I could not determine exactly when it happened, but Noko was bereaved of their mom. There is one song of which the lyrics are not published, *Sei Maria Kinen Byōin* 聖マリア記念病院 ('St. Mary's memorial hospital'). It seems that the words "angels are over, over, over, / mom is over, over, game over" can be heard in the song. There is a rumor among fans of the band that the title is a name of a mental institution Noko went to after her death. The author found a mental hospital with that name in Narita, Chiba Prefecture, which is the same prefecture Noko is from. The hospital offers care "based on the Christ's compassion". That could explain the religious motifs that are found in Noko's music.
Some time after dropping out of high school, Noko began to attract attention online by streaming their daily life, releasing homemade music videos, running blogs, and streaming their own guerilla gigs. This became a chance for an EP debut, *Tomodachi-o Koroshite-made* 友達を殺してまで ('Kill even your friends') in 2010 as the band Shinsei Kamattechan (Oricon n.d.a). It is hard to say how much of a mainstream band Shinsei Kamattechan is. Besides the cult following, the band's Oricon (Japanese music charts) results vary from 43rd position (*Tomodachi-o Koroshite-made*, 2010), 16th and 17th position (*Tsumanne* つまんね, 'Boring', 2010 and *Minna Shine* みんな死ね, 'Everyone die', 2010) to 9th position with the album *8-gatsu 32-nichi-e* ('Let it be August 32nd', 2011; see: Oricon n.d.b). It is also notable that there is a fictional movie revolving around the band called *Gekijōban Shinsei Kamattechan. Rokkunrōru-wa Nari Yamanai* (*Ringing in Their Ears*, 2011) released early in their career and a NHK ETV special report about the band from the same year (Shiozuka 2011).
Rokkunrōru-wa Nari Yamanai ロックンロールは鳴り止まないっ (*Ringing in Their Ears*) is considered the most accomplished song that Noko has produced. Combining a simple yet powerful chord progression written out for a catchy piano and noisy guitar, the song's lyrics tell the tale of Noko's initial encounter with rock music. The subject of the song rents The Beatles' and Sex Pistols' CDs in a local Tsutaya (rental service store) near the station only to be disappointed. But then, coming back from extra-

curricular activities in school, he tries to remove his earphones and Walkman only to find that the music did not stop ringing in his ears. What follows is a buildup in which Noko sings that they have not changed from back then and that the melody of the song still rings from afar. The song's narrator craves the stimulus caused by rock music even now: "More, more, more, give me more!". There is also an addressee in the song. The *kimi* ('you') stands far away, and the subject wants to "let it all out" to him. The *kimi* says that "recently every song sounds like shit" whatever the decade. That is why the narrator will shout: "Rock and roll will not stop ringing", as Noko sings in the apogee of the song (the lyrics can be found here: Fujii (ed.) 2010: 22–23).

Saitō Tamaki 斎藤 環 (a psychologist) in *Poppusu-de Seishin-igaku* ポップスで精神医学 ('Psychology of pop') considers the song crucial to the success of the group (Yamato et al. 2015: 85–86). Full lyrics of the song also open the 40-page special material about the band in 2010 *Quick Japan* magazine (issue 90). At the time that issue was published, the song, which had been uploaded to YouTube on 26th of January 2008 (Sawayaka et al. 2010: 56), had already accumulated 471,1278 views (Koyama 2011: 75).

2. "Images of exclusion" found in Noko's music

2.1. *Ijime* – bullying

The previous section has introduced the music of Shinsei Kamattechan and life of Noko. The following parts of the paper explain the lyrics of the songs in the broader context of Japanese society. First is the subject of *ijime*, or school bullying in Japan.

Bullying has been considered a systematic problem in Japan since the 80s, when *ijime* was recognized as a cause of suicides among the pupils (Akiba et al. 2010: 369). Previous to that, school violence was considered an acceptable form of control (Kingston 2004: 25–26). Since the 60s, when Japan's rapid economic growth began, corporations (rather than the government) had increasingly more power over schools. This in the 70s is the cause of "Japanese collectivism". This change caused severe standardization and competitiveness among the pupils, leaving less and less room for individuality. Strict school rules were introduced. The students were expected to conform to group norms and standards, with not much space left for individual needs (Asano 2000: 104–105). It was key to Japan's success, and thus hypothetical changes to this system were feared (Kingston 2019: 232).

In the school year of 1991/92 *ijime* was yet again increasing. Fourteen thousand social workers were hired to battle this problem (Tubbs 1994: 507).

In 1995, MEXT (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) hired psychologists to work in schools (Ando et al. 2007: 766). These measures worked, as the cases of *ijime* decreased by two thirds by 2005 (Akiba et al. 2010: 370).

It is worth mentioning that another major problem of Japanese education is *futōkō* 不登校 or *tōkō kyohi* 登校拒否, that is school refusal. In the school year of 2007/08, 130 thousand pupils were engaged in school refusal (Willis et al. 2008: 496). School refusal is not necessarily connected to bullying, however. It may be a revolt against the rigorous system of education, which prevents creativity (Kingston 2004: 26).

The increase in *ijime* in 1991/92 seems significant in the context of Shinsei Kamattechan, since Noko, born 1985, was just starting to go to the elementary school.

Saitō Tamaki states that the trauma of having been bullied in school may linger on as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and influence adult life (Yamato et al. 2015: 95–98). This may explain why so many of Kamattechan's songs deal with this topic. Saitō writes he sees inspiration from such experiences in songs like *Gakkō-ni Ikitakunai* 学校に行きたくない ('I don't want to go to school'), *Yūrei Miman* ゆーれいみマン ('Less than a ghost'), *Penteru* ぺんてる ('Pentel'), *Ribon* りぼん ('Ribbon'), *Kamisama Soredewa Hidoi Nari* 神様それではひどいなり ('God, why are you doing this to me?') and *Takeda-kun* たけだくん ('Takeda').

According to the editor at Music Magazine, *Yūgata-no Piano* 夕方のピアノ ('Evening's piano') is an even more essential Kamattechan's song than *Ringing in Their Ears* (Koyama 2011: 75). The song's major mode and simple, naïve melody seems to contrast with the lyrics, which deal with bullying experiences at school. "Die, Satō", shouts Noko, his voice's pitch shifted by a vocal processor to sound child-like. This pitch-shifted voice is heard in many of Noko's songs. Satō, a Japanese surname, in the song designates a real-life person – a harasser who bullied Noko in an elementary school and junior high school (Noko 2013: 108). "Every day I leave home / thinking I want to kill you" – one can suppose that Noko is, by this song, reliving the experiences of his past, and the pitch-shifting adds to that (the lyrics can be found here: Noko 2013: 106–107).

In Noko's volume of poems, next to the lyrics of the song we find a quote: "Because Satō changed my life. He ripped it out of the ground and turned it upside-down. He is the one who gave me my first nickname, 'Ōshima alien'" (Noko 2013: 108). Noko also brings Satō up in an internet stream on 12th January 2009 (Saitō Tamaki also mentions these words). They describe the

kind of bullying that they received from him, such as locking Noko in the toilet, pouring water on them, trampling their face, blackmailing them for money – "the typical form of *ijime* (bullying) in Japan", as they say. Noko also said that Satō stood out among the perpetrators, but it was not only him who bullied them.

The band planned for *Yūgata-no Piano* to be a major debut single, but due to the lyrics, which consist of the command "die" for the most part and referencing a real-life person, it was self-released in the quantity of 4000 units. They sold out immediately (Koyama 2011: 75).

According to Saitō, Kamattechan's songs hint at exclusion even when they are not dealing directly with the topic of *ijime*. The psychologist gives a valuable insight into one of these songs, *Tomodachi Nante Iranai Shine* 友達なんていらない死ね ('I need no friends, die'). Saitō first interprets the opening lines of the song's lyrics ("There is one person whose head I would shoot off with a shotgun / and eat it with stew") as referring to Satō. The song's chorus says "'Oh, really?' / If I could speak such lines, / would I have friends?". The psychologist writes this could be an image of a school break. During recess, people who are bullied often pretend to sleep with heads on their desks, scared to move because then someone would take their seats. Then they hear other people chatting: "oh, really?". They feel a mixture of envy and hatred (Yamato et al. 2015: 92–94).

It is worth mentioning that in the 2019 song *Shizuka-na Ano Ko* 静かなあの子 ('Silent girl') there is a similar depiction of a person curling up in their seat at school. Time passes by, but the theme of bullying does not seem to go away from Kamattechan's music.

Noko dropped out of school. By becoming a songwriter, Noko explored the possibilities that maybe only a school dropout could have – school refusal is in many cases a statement of non-conformity to the rules of the rigorous education system. In Noko's case though, the dropping out was connected to *ijime* and a death in the family.

2.2. Dropping out of school and being unemployed

The songwriter dropped out of school early, in the freshman year of high school. There is a song which alludes to this experience. It is called *OS-Uchūjin* Os-宇宙人 ('OS-alien'), which is short for Ōshima alien, Noko's first nickname given to them by their perpetrator. This was the first song that Noko wrote on request. It was used in an *anime* (Japanese animation; in Japan it designates any animation show or movie) show called *Dempa Onna-to Seishun Otoko* 電波女と青春男 (*Ground Control to Psychoelectric Girl*). Even though it was commissioned, the lyrics open with Noko's own experiences: "In second grade, they are all by himself, this idiot / Lifting

their head up, they look at the starry skies above the city, / a truant in pajamas / Dropping out of school is a prolonged summer vacation" (the lyrics can be found here: Noko 2013: 80–82).

"Prolonged summer vacation" is a figure which is explored by Noko in their other works as a symbol of being stuck in life. There is a stream of songs concerning the metaphorical summer vacation among Kamattechan's repertoire: *22-sai-no Natsu Yasumi* 22 才の夏休み, *23-sai-no Natsu Yasumi* 23 才の夏休み, *26-sai-no Natsu Yasumi* 26 才の夏休み, *33-sai-no Natsu Yasumi* 33 才の夏休み ('Summer vacation of 22/23/26/33 years old' respectively). The first two are based on simple major chord progression and are rather bright except for the lyrics: "This year I turn 23 years old / My face is a little tired / Although summer vacation is finally here, / I do not go out anywhere, I do not plan anything" (the lyrics can be found here: Noko 2013: 92–94), opens *23-sai-no Natsu Yasumi*. Age 23 is when the Japanese end their education and move on to work. The third song is, by contrast, minor in key, with lyrics such as "somehow I lost my sensitivity", "this cannot be, I do not feel anything anymore" (the lyrics can be found here: Shinsei Kamattechan kashi 1 n.d.). Although the song was released on a major label's album, it retains the demo sound of that versions of the songs recorded by Noko himself in his home studio have. It has a different quality than that of cleaner album versions of songs. Major key progression returns in *33-sai-no Natsu Yasumi*.

After dropping out from school, Noko spent time as a freeter[2] or a NEET. NEET is an acronym for 'Not in Education, Employment or Training'. In 2012 there were 2,5 million people who belonged to that category. The cause of this phenomenon may be the pressure that is put on young people to succeed (also connected to bullying) or a lack of love and encouragement to children for chasing their dreams by families (also connected to social withdrawal; Baldwin and Allison 2015).

The economic recession of the 90s had a great impact on phenomena like freeters and NEETs. To save the jobs of the middle-aged and elderly, Japan cut down on the jobs for the young (Genda 2007: 23–24). Heisei era Japan carried out neoliberal reforms with the aim of regaining its economic power (*kokuryoku-no fukkō* 国力の復興; Matsubara 2018). There was no culture of protest, with civil society working with the government. This system favored the economically strong (*tsuyoi kojin* 強い個人) and was discriminatory towards the poor, who were regarded as unmotivated and not

[2] Freeters are young people in Japan that lack full-time employment. They rather partake in part-time jobs to make a living.

economically independent enough to participate in society. They were regarded as *hi-shimin* 非市民 (non-citizens). For example, groups such as the homeless, working poor, freeters and NEETs fall unto this category (Murai et al. 2022: 94–97).

Research has also determined that NEET people often dropped out of high school, lacked communication skills, were lonely, and came from prefectures with a higher percentage of low-income families (Genda 2007: 48). Saitō Tamaki in his paper about the band mentions *sukūru kāsuto* スクールカースト, 'school hierarchy'. The position in this hierarchy is determined by one's *komyuryoku* コミュ力, communication skills (Yamato et al. 2015: 93–95). Noko was a person from the lower end of the hierarchy. That means they lacked communication skills, which is characteristic of NEETs. Dropping out of high school is also typical of NEETs.

There is a song that briefly documents Noko's experience being unemployed called *Ikareta NEET* いかれたNEET ('Crazy NEET'): "From morning to evening, I sing songs that nobody cares about, because this is my routine / Crazy NEET", "When it comes to being alone, I alone sing happy songs, because this is my diary / Crazy NEET / Yeah" (the lyrics can be found here: Shinsei Kamattechan kashi 2 n.d.). The whole song sounds disheartened, like they had given up on life, and musically there is painfully offensive noise to be found.

Another song connected to the topic of the employment is called *Ossan-no Yume* おっさんの夢 ('Middle-aged man's dream') in which Noko envisions a salaryman who "works too much", but remembers being an instant kid and wants to chase his dreams again.

2.3. Being a shut-in

The Japanese Ministry of Health gives the definition of *hikikomori*, Japanese term translated into English as 'shut-in', as a social withdrawal lasting more than 6 months (Umeda and Kawakami 2012: 121). The population suffering from *hikikomori* is estimated at 500 thousand people to 1 million people, with diagnoses concerning mostly young males (Kingston 2004: 268). The term *hikikomori* was coined by Saitō Tamaki (Saitō 1998), the psychologist who wrote a paper about Shinsei Kamattechan. *Hikikomori* as a social problem has been recognized since the late 90s, when a moral panic about the alleged crimes committed by the *hikikomori* population occurred, caused by attention from the media.

There are theories that hikikomori may mask psychosis or be a form of *hattatsu-shōgai* 発達障害, developmental pathology (Kingston 2019: 227–228). The phenomenon is very diverse in the behaviors of those concerned

(Rosenthal and Zimmerman 2012–13: 83), and that is a problem in preparing effective help programs (Umeda and Kawakami 2012: 122).

There are many theories (called by people who try to explain and cure *hikikomori* the "hikikomori industry", see Rosenthal and Zimmerman 2012–13: 87) which try to explain the phenomenon. Some connect *hikikomori* to bullying and school refusal, while others concentrate on the ability to communicate (or rather – lack of ability) and past traumas, while still others connect this phenomenon to the poor situation of the job market (freeters, NEET etc.). There is some recent research that suggests a connection to poverty (Kingston 2019: 227), although previously it has been suggested that most of people affected by *hikikomori* come from the upper and middle classes (Umeda and Kawakami 2012: 121–122).

Noko dropped out of school and later became a *hikikomori* and NEET or freeter. The theory of *hikikomori* resulting from poverty is one that is the most interesting in the context of this paper, since Noko's father is part of the working poor. There is an improvised, unreleased song on YouTube of that the title and the chorus sings *Oyaji Wāpua Ore Nīto* 親父ワープア俺ニート ('My old man is working poor, I am a NEET'; see rsskc 2014). In the context of Noko's life a connection between *ijime* and being a NEET is evidenced. Research says that 45,5% of the hikikomori population are not burdened with mental illness (Umeda and Kawakami 2012: 121). In the case of Noko, it is otherwise.

Nihei Norihiro writes that there is a need to hear these "Other" people's voice (Nihei 2005). Their father being working poor, Noko's family members were "non-citizens" from the start.

A song in Kamattechan's repertoire deals with social isolation. It is called *Michinaru Hō-e* 美ちなる方へ ('Into the unknown'). "A song that contains a resolve to come face to face with the world" (Shiozuka 2011), as the narrator in NHK's documentary about the band describes it: "Everyone pretends to be as happy as possible / If you become depressed, suddenly there is no one beside you / I know that and thus I sometimes completely lose my mind / There is a real face I want to show you / I started to go outside, I started to go outside / Everyone pretends to be as happy as possible, even me / When I am depressed, I sometimes hurt others / I know that and thus I sometimes completely lose my mind / I want to show you my sad face / I started to go outside, I started to go outside / I went into the unknown" (the lyrics can be found here: Noko 2013: 14–15). The song documents the struggle to overcome *hikikomori*.

The song's title contains a wordplay. The word *michinaru* is written differently than the standard – 未知なる ('yet unknown'). Instead, it is

written by a kanji which means ‘beautiful’, read as *mi* 美 in names. This hints that Noko expects the unknown to be beautiful.

2.4. Mental illness

In *Tomodachi Nante Iranai Shine* (2.1.), the victim of *ijime* goes the mental health professional: “two of the clock in the afternoon, at the psychiatrist / you are also here with your parents / In the waiting room / we are both as white as sheets”.

Chikako Ozawa-de Silva writes in a book from 2006 (Ozawa-de Silva 2006) that psychoanalysis did not catch on in Japan, where mental disorders were looked upon as a problem with *ki* 気, or vital energy. The fundamental approach to these matters is thus different in Japan than in the West.

Up until the 80s, mental health problems were regarded as a problem of the family of the ill person. Mental institutions were built in case the family could not manage taking care of the patient (Sugiyama-Lebra and Lebra 1986).

Even though 1988 saw an attempt at shifting the center of gravity towards the resocialization of mental health patients in Japan (Nakatani 2000: 591), the stigma remained. Setoya Yutaro writes in 2012 that the level of awareness of the Japanese society on the topic is very low, and that the mentally ill are condemned in Japan (Setoya 2012: 10). Shinsei Kamattechan was already active in 2012. Noko is diagnosed with bipolar affective disorder (they sometimes talks about it on Internet streams, see for example Noko-kamattechan [kirinuki] 2022).

Lifetime prevalent bipolar affective disorder (hereafter BAD) affects around 1% of population (Jain and Mitra 2023). This illness is considered to be the effect of interplay between genetic heritage and environmental factors, although studies shows that genes play a bigger role than the environment (65–80%). Many gene mutations which are responsible for BAD are also found in patients with schizophrenia. Patients may be admitted to a mental institution if they behave recklessly (so that they pose a threat to themselves or the environment), are heavily psychotic, lack criticism and engage in risky behaviors, experience severe psychomotor excitement or intend to harm themselves or others. Medication includes benzodiazepines, antipsychotics, mood stabilizers and antidepressants (Marwick and Birrell 2013: 158–159).

In general, patients suffering from BAD experience manic phases and depressive phases in their illness. In manic phases, patients may overestimate their own position, have problems concentrating, experience racing thoughts, and not be critical of their own state of mind. In severe manic episodes they may also show symptoms of psychosis, such as thought disorder, impairment of logical thinking, persecutory delusions,

hallucinations (ibid., 71–72). In the context of Noko's household, mental patient care being considered a problem of the family (until the 80s) is interesting, because their father is very supportive of them and even helps them shoot music videos.

In general, Noko's songs often deal with suicide, death, mental illness, wrist cutting and such: topics labeled outside of the norm by psychiatry.

It is probable that the illness also affected the creative process of Noko. As the author wrote before, patients suffering from BAD may be impulsive and experience racing thoughts. This may explain Noko's charisma and even lyrics, because in some cases (*Yūgata-no Piano* for example) they resemble a stream of consciousness. Noko once said in an interview: "My songs are all intuitive. They are not something that comes from rational thought. Suddenly they come out" (see Ōyama and Hashimoto 2010).

BAD is characterized by severe mood swings, manic and depressive episodes, and non-normative states of happiness and depression. This is reflected in Shinsei Kamattechan's music itself. Examples of mood swings can be found in the band's music. *Michinaru Hō-e*, even though reflective in lyrics, musically sounds almost manic, especially in the apogee of the song.

As an example of a depressive song there is *Kuroi Tamago* 黒いたまご ('Black egg'). Not only depressive, it also contains lyrics which evidence resentment towards Good ("Do not be ridiculous, [you want to be] pure-white? / Fuck off and die / Do not laugh at me darkly"). "If a pitch-black egg is born, / I will carry it far away / It is a pitch-black, disgusting egg, / but I will call it 'you'" (the lyrics can be found here: Noko 2013: 122–123) – the lyrics suggest that the titular "black egg" is a person who is born different from the others.

A song epitomizing the polar opposite, a manic state of mind, might be *Otoko-wa Roman-da-ze! Takeda-kun* 男はロマンだぜ!たけだ君っ ('Men are idealists! Takeda'), which sounds like Noko was overjoyed when they wrote it. The lyrics encourage the titular Takeda to chase his dreams "with everything he has" (the lyrics can be found here: Shinsei Kamattechan kashi 3 n.d.). He is a shy and depressed protagonist, and maybe a victim of bullying – there is another demo which shares the same Takeda as a protagonist and he is depicted as such there.

One can guess the mood swings that the author of the songs experienced. But there are a few songs that are about taking, or even overdosing on, the psychotropic drugs that were prescribed to Noko, for example *Maisurī Zembu Yume* マイスリー全部ゆめ ('Everything is a dream on Myslee') or *Guroi Hana* グロい花 ('Atrocious flower').

2.5. Neither a boy, nor a girl

Noko goes beyond gender expectations. One term that is important in the context of such people in Japan is X-gender (*ekkusu-jendā*; エックスジェンダー). It designates people who do not fit into pre-existing gender categories or are not sure of their sex. They could be without sex *musei* 無性, of both sexes *ryōsei* 両性, or androgynous *chūsei* 中性 (Coates et al. 2020: 64–65). In 2001 Tsutamori Tatsuru wrote a book called *Otoko-demo Onna-demo Naku: Hontō-no Watakushirashisa-o Motomete* ('Neither a man, nor a woman: I want to live in my own way'; 男でもなく女でもなく本当の私らしさを求めて; Tsutamori 2001). This is one of the pioneering works on non-binary gender research in Japan and the author of this paper notices a striking resemblance to the lyrics of *Jibun-rashiku* 自分らしく ('In my own way') by Noko. "Live like a man, live like a woman, they say / but I cannot do that / It is because I will never be a man, nor a woman / I feel hurt by everyone's judging sights / It is because I will never be a man, nor a woman / I want to live in my own way" (the lyrics can be found here: Noko 2013: 52–54), sings Noko. In that same song there is the line "I am *boku*, but I am also *atashi*". *Boku* and *atashi* are Japanese first-person pronouns, but *boku* is more of a male 'I' and *atashi* is more feminine. *Atashi* is also used by Noko in the song *Tomodachi Nante Iranai Shine*.

In 2010 the term X-gender was still on the margins, but has since then entered the mainstream of LGBTQ terminology in Japan (Coates et al. 2020: 63–64). The personal blogs on the Internet played a part in that (Coates et al. 2020: 214–215). I am not aware of whether Noko has read X-gender blogs or has ever used the term X-gender, but it is possible to describe their gender this way.

The narrator of NHK's documentary about Shinsei Kamattechan, giving viewers Noko's backstory, says that Noko was bullied from young age both by boys and girls. That is why they do not want to be a *otoko-no ko* 男の子 ('boy') or *onna-no ko* 女の子 ('girl'), and that is why they chose their pseudonym to be Noko の子 (Shiozuka 2011). This is the genesis that they sometimes spoke about, but after some time they also said that "I sometimes said that (…), but [my pseudonym] does not have a deeper meaning. Well, [we named ourselves that], just because it sounds adorable" (Noko 2013: 55).

It is true though, that Noko wears dresses for live shows and sometimes posts their photos cross-dressing on social media, constantly blurring the lines of difference between the sexes.

Conclusions

To conclude, Shinsei Kamattechan's music reflects many of the "images of exclusion" that were found in Heisei Japan's society. It may be that it gives voice to the excluded "Other".

Various problems of contemporary Japan are connected to the life and work of Noko. The "images of exclusion" are connected to school bullying, being a NEET, *hikikomori*, mental illness and X-gender. These problems are connected with the band's lyrics and biography of Noko.

As Noko's father was a part of the working poor, the Ōshima household was Heisei era's *hi-shimin* ('non-citizens') from the start. These people were excluded from the society because of their economic weakness.

All in all, Shinsei Kamattechan's music gives voice and courage to those excluded by honestly speaking about these problems in the lyrics.

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REVIEWS

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Review of *Overseas Shinto Shrines. Religion, Secularity and Japanese Empire* by Karli Shimizu, London, New York, Dublin: Bloomsbury, 2023. Xii + 278.

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Conflict of interest statement: Both the author of the present review and the author of the reviewed monograph are currently members of the *Silva Iaponicarum* Editorial Board. The review was commissioned before Karli Shimizu joined the Editorial Board. It has been prepared with strict observance of academic objectivity standards. No conflict of interest has been declared. The text was proofread by Magdalena Kotlarczyk.

The leading ideas of Karli Shimizu's work are secularism related to the concept of the modern state and the relationship it establishes between the secular sphere and religion. The author's reflections on Shinto shrines from the Meiji period (1868–1912) to the post-war[2] era are built around them. The scope of her research concerns Shinto shrines in Japan's changing spheres of influence in the period under consideration.

The book is divided into eight parts, the first being the introduction and the last – conclusion. As the author points out, chapters two and seven "contain portions of previously published journal articles" (Shimizu 2023: ix) written by her. The introduction explains the general historical and semantical context in which Shinto shrines are analyzed. Then, the book is divided according to Japan's spheres of influence. Namely, the work explains how Shinto shrines considered in reference to secularism and its influence on understanding religion were used for the establishment of the modern Japanese state, Japanese colonialism, and expansion. Thus, chapters two to six are focused on the following regions respectively: the Home Islands; Hokkaido and Karafuto; Taiwan; Korea; Manchukuo and other parts in the Asia-Pacific area (e.g., the Kwantung Leased Territory, S. Manchurian Railway Zone, the Micronesian Islands). Chapter seven, being different as it concerns those regions where the Japanese government did not have

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[2] I.e., the Asia-Pacific War.

controlling influence, i.e., the Americas, describes the situation of Japanese migrants in Brazil, the United States, and Hawaii (which became a part of the United States in the 20th century). The last chapter presents a post-war situation of the considered shrines and the conclusion of the whole work. The book discusses the strategies adapted by the Japanese government in its use of Shinto shrines, as well as those of Japanese settlers or Japanese migrants[3]. Thus, Shimizu's book constitutes an overall picture of the problem, including a rich bibliography. Worth noticing are previous partial studies related to the issues mentioned above (e.g., Maeda 1999, Kotani 1985, Seaton 2016) or some general analyses of Shinto (e.g., Hardcare 2017, Breen and Teeuwen 2010, Kasulis 2004, Ono 1962) or its relationship with the Japanese state (e.g., Hardcare 1989). Special attention should also be paid to such works mentioned by Shimizu as, e.g., Kondō's 1943 *Kaigai Jinja-no Shiteki Kenkyū* (one of the oldest works on the subject) or Nakajima Michio's (Nakajima 2013) studies on the subject (concerning the transformation of the sites where overseas shrines were before).

It should be emphasized that the general terms of secularism, the secular and religion, already mentioned above, alien to the traditional Japanese thought, were adopted by Japan during the Meiji period and then used and adapted for the purposes of the creation and development of the modern Japanese state, as well as its expansion. Therefore, the book constitutes an extensive and valuable case study of a strategy by which a non-Western culture deals with concepts foreign to it[4] and, therefore, with a broadly understood otherness. In this sense, the results of the work can be used for further comparative research, especially in the field of intercultural hermeneutics[5]. In fact, in Shimizu's book, one can find three main types of otherness the Japanese had to cope with, namely the aforementioned foreign concepts, the Others in Japan's sphere of influence (the category can again be subdivided depending on the sphere of influence), and the Others outside this sphere (e.g., in Hawaii). The strategies, already signalized and described by

[3] In particular, on the level of Japan's strategies, it presents a change from a pioneer theology (with its space for local identity and consequently a dose of syncretism in order to develop this identity into a Japanese imperial subject) to a universalized one (with its tendency to create broader identity, however, based on the Japanese foundation). On the individual level, it signals the rejection of the idea of multiethnic Shinto by many Japanese migrants.

[4] For more on the subject of the adaptation of foreign patterns by Japan see: Pałasz-Rutkowska 2005: 21–83.

[5] On intercultural hermeneutics see, e.g., Xie 2014: 3–22 and Wong 2014: 165–186. See also Cornille and Conway 2010: ix–xxi on the issue of interreligious hermeneutics.

Shimizu, are worth being subjected to hermeneutical analysis and studied in the context of Japanese hermeneutical strategies towards the otherness, especially to the human Other.

Equally noteworthy is the work methodology with its dynamic structure based on two inextricably linked threads, neither analyzed in isolation from the other. The first thread is the contextually determined dynamic, the changing relationship between the secular sphere and religion in Shinto in the period under consideration (when the separation of the two spheres is needed, the boundary between them becomes clearer, and when it is no longer needed, it becomes blurred). The second thread is the role and place of Shinto shrines analyzed in this dynamic context in the aforementioned period. This structure of considerations, i.e., avoiding the top-down imposition of an abstract or even logically formalized scheme, allows the author to immerse herself in Japanese culture and reflect its characteristic fuzzy, vague[6] paradigm of defining relationships[7], which is shown here in the perspective of its adaptive functionality depending on time, place and needs. Moreover, this functionality translates into a specific framework for the reinterpretation of time, space (meta-geography, topography), and ethics[8].

To conclude, as explained above, Karli Shimizu's book constitutes a significant contribution to the research on Shinto and research methodology on Japanese culture. What is more, as already mentioned, it can be used in the context of interreligious or intercultural research on the issues of adoption, adaptation, and related reinterpretation.

Finally, it is worth adding that although secularism plays an important role in the study of modern religion, it cannot be considered as the only

[6] For more on the subject of vague concepts and the issue of vagueness in the humanities, see Keefe 2000: 6–36.

[7] Although Heisig, Kasulis, and Maraldo (2011) define the paradigm characteristic of Japanese tradition as one of relations being internal, this leads to the inevitable conclusion that the relation and the elements linked by it are vague. Thus vagueness should be considered as an essential characteristic. For more on the paradigm of relation being internal, see Heisig, Kasulis, and Maraldo 2011: 24–26.

[8] The spatiotemporal reference point for this framework is linked to Kashihara Jingū, treated as the center, the birthplace of Japanese history, namely the enthronement of the traditional first emperor of Japan, Jimmu. Such a legitimacy of the imperial house was also used to give meaning to ethics. Thus, time, space, and ethics were given a meaning linked to the nation, an imperial subject, and subject's citizenship. This semantic was conveyed, realized, and promoted by shrines placed in the shrine system in the formal Japanese empire and equivalent or informal ones in Asia-Pacific.

perspective. The multitude of definitions of the concept of religion opens up various research possibilities [9] essential to understanding this complex dimension of human life, in this case, the Japanese one. Thus, although the analyzed period is characterized by weakened syncretic approaches or even the departure from syncretism, it is essential to regard Shimizu's book in the broader context of Japanese tendency to eclecticism and syncretism[10] and especially vagueness – a tendency which escapes sharp distinctions between the secular and the sacred (or the secular and religion). Only by taking into account this broader perspective can one conclude what religion means or meant in Japanese life and appreciate the real meaning of Shimizu's work.

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[9] Certain methodological examples are presented in, e.g., Kozyra 2019: 41–43.

[10] On the issue of eclecticism and syncretism in Japanese culture see, Kordzińska-Nawrocka 2012: 86–92, 95–96. On the issue of religious syncretism in Japan, see Kozyra 2019: 44–48.

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