

***Presents of Mind* Rewrapped: A Study of Hybridization Processes in Japanese Renditions of English Haiku**

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When popular cultural products such as literature, music and cinema cross linguistic borders, they are often reshaped to fit a new audience in a process known as cultural hybridization. This process is more than mere translation, as it must take into account the sensitivities and cultural environments of both the original and the target languages. In their analysis of popular films derived from Chinese sources, Wang and Yeh (2005) define three processes at work in hybridization: deculturalization, reculturalization and acculturalization.

The present study analyzes Japanese renderings of the haiku in *Presents of Mind* (Kacian, 1995), Japanese translation by the Kon Nichi Haiku Circle (2006) from the point of view of these three processes. The 1995 *Presents* is an award-winning collection of haiku poetry originally written in English, and reprinted in the 2006 book alongside their Japanese counterparts. The analysis reveals that within the highly rigid, formal, compact and stylized genre of haiku, the three hybridization processes each work in three separate categories of hybridization: formal, linguistic and environmental, for a total of nine different types of change. Examples are given from the collection for each of these types.

Any creative effort, be it music, art, poetry, literature, or drama, is incontrovertibly linked to and defined by the spatial and temporal culture in which it was conceived. And as translators and interpreters of such products have long known, rendering such creativity outside of its cultural shell to be understood and appreciated by members of a different cultural space and time is generally a task fraught with great difficulty. There are always choices to be made: whether to translate a concept or forego it, whether to emulate the form or convey the meaning, whether to be faithful to the original and add beauty or depth to the derived product. Some go so far as to say that translation is impossible, preferring to use terms such as “rendering” or “recreating” in the new context.

Often “faithful” translation is less preferable to retaining sensibility and nuance, and changes that must be made along the path to a new language are referred to in translation theory as “shifts.” Popovic (1970) remarks that “the translator. . . has the right to differ organically, to be independent, as long as independence is pursued for the sake of the original” (p. 80) and that “shifts do not occur because the translator wishes to ‘change’ a work, but because he strives to reproduce it as faithfully as possible and to grasp it in its totality” (p. 80). Al-Zoubi and Al-Hassnawi (2001) define shifts as “all the mandatory actions of the translator (those dictated by the structural discrepancies between the two language systems involved in this process) and the optional ones (those dictated by the his [sic] personal and stylistic preferences) to which he resorts consciously for the purpose of natural and communicative rendition of an SL text into another language.”

We may add that it is not only two language systems that are involved in translation, but two cultural systems as well. With respect to Hollywood movie renditions of traditional

Table 1. The nine hybridization types: 3 processes x 3 categories

categories	formal	linguistic	environmental
processes			
re-	formal reculturalization	linguistic reculturalization	environmental reculturalization
de-	formal deculturalization	linguistic deculturalization	environmental deculturalization
a-	formal acculturalization	linguistic acculturalization	environmental acculturalization

Chinese stories, Wang and Yeh (2005) refer to cultural translation as hybridization, and define three processes involved in cultural hybridity: reculturalization, wherein a cultural element is changed to fit the new culture; deculturalization, when an element of the original is dropped from the hybrid as it would not be appreciated by the new culture; and acculturalization, when an element of the new culture is added to the original in order to make it more comprehensible or familiar to the new culture. The major part of this paper will focus on the use of hybridization processes seen in the Japanese translations of *Presents of Mind*, a collection of English haiku by Jim Kacian.

In the analysis, three different categories of hybridization are defined and discussed. As a literary form, the “shape” of haiku is important to their rendering in a Japanese that will appeal to native readers, thus one category is termed **formal hybridization**. This category also involves creative use of language-specific devices such as punctuation in English and orthographic systems in Japanese. Next, where the translators chose to add, omit or render specific vocabulary terms in other words is referred to as **linguistic hybridization**. Finally, **environmental hybridization** involves a change by the translators of a cultural aspect of the haiku itself in order to allow the essence of the haiku moment to be better intuited and/or appreciated by the Japanese audience—in order, to render it more appreciable in a different cultural milieu.

Thus, as shown in Table 1, nine types of hybridization will be discussed altogether: three categories with three processes each. Specific examples of each type will be analyzed in detail in Section 3, but it is first necessary to provide a brief review of the evolution of English haiku form and how it differs from Japanese tradition. This background knowledge will allow the reader to better understand the unique situations and dilemmas that the translators were confronted with in their task.

English Haiku Evolution: A Background to *Presents of Mind*

Compared to Japanese haiku with its over 400-year tradition, the English haiku tradition is a relatively recent phenomenon. However, it has evolved over the past century into a poetic form that emulates the Japanese style so as to capture the essence and sensitivities of the original through a vehicle appropriate to the English language and Western culture. In this sense, English haiku has become a cultural hybrid in its form and language. It retains the essence of the Japanese tradition as a universal gift from nature to humanity, and rewraps it to suit the linguistic and cultural environment of the creator and his or her readers.

One representative work of the English haiku world, *Presents of Mind* (Kacian, 1995), is an aptly titled and highly acclaimed collection of 85 English haiku created by renowned haiku

artist Jim Kacian, which received the Haiku Society of America Merit Book Award in 1997. The haiku are arranged in 5 seasons (New Year, spring, summer, fall and winter) of 17 poems each (note how this arrangement evokes the Japanese 17-syllable form). They were translated into Japanese by the Kon Nichi Haiku Circle (Kumamoto University, Japan) and the book was reprinted as a bilingual volume in 2006 (this 2006 version is hereafter referred to as *Presents*). This volume was also awarded the Haiku Society of America 2007 Mildred Kanterman Memorial Merit Book Award (Honorable Mention for Best International Collaboration).

The translation process itself took several years (at an average pace of a poem every 2-3 weeks), as the team of five scholars, including three professors, two Buddhist practitioners and two published Japanese haiku poets wrestled with their “goal to provide readers with a Japanese-interpretative translation which can immediately be felt as native rather than as foreign haiku” (Kacian, 1995, p. xxiv). The resulting work is “the first time such serious, scholarly treatment has been afforded a book of English-language haiku” (Kacian, 1995, p. xxx).

From the point of view of cross-cultural communication, then, the Japanese translation represents an attempt to repatriate a literary *kikokushijo* or expatriate child, with the hope that the English tradition can offer something to the Japanese haiku world (Gilbert, personal communication 2007). It is an example of cultural hybridity gone full circle. The creation of cultural hybrids, in which one cultural product is not simply copied but tailored and reshaped to fit the environment and sensitivities of a new culture, is especially common in humanities such as literature, art, and music.

In the transposition of Japanese haiku to the English speaking world, we can see hybridization processes at work already: the gradual evolution of the “17-syllable” form, for example, into its present day meter-based form (Gilbert & Yoneoka, 2000) is an example of linguistic reculturalization. For the benefit of readers not familiar with the generally accepted characteristics of Japanese vs. English language haiku, Table 2 provides a summary.

Here it can be seen that while English haiku forms have changed, the themes—wherein the essence of the Japanese art form is captured—remain generally the same. In transposition of the form into a new language, with major differences in phonology, syllable structure and orthography, this repackaging of the essence was a necessary step. Moreover, choices had to be made regarding how to best emulate other features of the Japanese form, and whether to include aspects of western literary tradition such as meter, rhyme, assonance and alliteration. These issues have produced haiku battles over the years and some are not yet completely resolved, but the scholarly associations such as the Haiku Society of America and others have provided forums for their discussion in a productive manner. Thus, English haiku as it is known today, with all of its variations, has gone through a sociolinguistic transformation that has gradually reshaped it to fit the linguistic and cultural needs of the English speaking world while retaining the essential experience of the Japanese.

Elements of Haiku in Presents

While generally following the above guidelines for English haiku, Kacian has a unique style of his own which features temporal juxtaposition, wordplay, and “lightness.” His haiku show a healthy respect for the traditional form, and yet try “to speak more directly to

Table 2. Elements of Traditional Japanese vs. Western (English) Haiku Form^{i,ii}

Traditional Japanese Haiku (rules)	“Traditional” English Haiku (tendencies)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Formal 17 “on” in a pattern of 5-7-5 Kigo (season words) Kireji (cutting words) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Formal 3 metrical lines, shorter, longer, shorter Seasonal reference word(s) Alliteration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Thematic Concision Here and now Treatment of nature Imagery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Thematic Concision Here and now Treatment of environment Imagistic disjunction

experience, and less to convention. . .” (Kacian, 1995, p. xxvi). In the translators’ notes, they are described as follows:

. . . Jim’s haiku run a fine line between what we consider to be Japanese gendai (modern) and kindai (early-modern) haiku. . . . Their understatedly paradoxical language is that of our contemporary era . . . at the same time, the classical lineage of haiku is present: each haiku offers the reader an implicit cross-cultural dialogue. (pp. xxiv-xvi)

In terms of form, we can see this “classical lineage” in the general adherence to the guidelines above: each haiku is written in three lines. They average approx. 11 syllables each, and 48 of the haiku (=56%) are either 10 or 11 syllables long, which is slightly shorter than the length of 11-12 syllables “recommended” by Higginson (1985, pp. 101-102)¹. The shortest poem is 7 syllables (there are two), and the longest is 17 syllables, conforming to the Haiku Society of America’s observation that English haiku generally “consist of three unrhymed lines of seventeen or fewer syllables.”²

The “shorter, longer, shorter” style, while seen in only 49 (=58%) of the haiku, is also apparent when the syllables are averaged:

Table 3. Averaged lengths of syllables in each line of *Presents* poems

Line 1	line 2	line 3	Total
3.167	4.452	3.333	10.952

Of the other 36 poems, 23 (=27%) have a 1st or 3rd line of equal syllable length as the second line, and 13 (=15%) of the haiku have a 1st and/or 3rd line of more syllables than the

ⁱ Here the term “traditional” in Japanese haiku is used in contrast to gendai (modern) haiku, which expand and break with many of these traditional rules. In English, too, modern haiku emulate but do not imitate the Japanese traditional form, and are still evolving and innovating today. Thus the term “tendencies” has been used for the English “tradition” instead of rules.

ⁱⁱ See Gilbert (2004) for definitions and discussion of disjunction and concision, and Gilbert (2006) for discussion of the difference between Japanese kigo and seasonal words in English haiku.

second line. Most of these 15%, however, can be read with a shorter, longer, shorter meter (in other words, lines with higher syllable count can be read with only one or two beats, as with the final line in:

1. sudden snow narcissus blossoms on the radiator

The two possible exceptions to this are:

2. blossoms falling in the wind, in the calm
3. on the winter moor overtaken by the wind

In both of these haiku, the unusual briefness of the second line may serve to accent the gust of wind that precipitates the occasion itself. In the first, which would have fit the traditional English haiku convention if “in the wind” were part of the second line³, this brevity it also paves the way for the fluttering falling-petal-like rhythm of the last line.

Punctuation is used sparingly. The entire collection contains only seven apostrophes, three commas, three hyphens, one dash, and notably, one ellipsis as follows:

4. swallowflight . . . looking out the window long after⁴

The use of alliteration is also ubiquitously apparent in Kacian’s work, with juxtapositions such as *lake laps*, *wind’s waltz*, *half hay*, and *spring snake*, for example. As it does in Western poetic tradition, this device creates mellifluousness and brings the haiku nearer to the heart of the Western reader. On the other hand, use of rhyme is scanty, limited to the following:

5. last mums a final fat bee slowly hums⁵

Turning to the thematic elements of *Presents*, we find recurring images of nature: birds (heron, canary, egret, mockingbird, swallow), insects (especially butterflies, but also bees, crickets, lacewings and glowworms), and other animals (cow, deer, mouse, snake); a variety of flowers (crocus, flax, forsythia, morning glory(ies), lilac, mums, narcissus, plum blossoms, rhododendron, sunflower, trillium), trees (spruce and willow) and other plants. Other terms indicating the natural environmental surroundings include universal images such as field, earth, hill, horizon, lake, moon, mountains, path, pond, stream, sun, stars, sky and woods and meadow. The environment is not untamed, as terms such as garden, lawn, and orchard indicate the presence of human hands. Man within the environment is also indicated by terms revealing East Coast home life (bed, doormat, fence, mailbox, metal gate, radiator, porch, planks, snowman, woodstove) and farm life (barn, scarecrow and shed).

A word frequency count reveals that weather-related terms tend more towards the cold: a total of 26 instances of terms such as chilly, cold, flakes, frosty, frozen, iced, icicles, sleety, snow/y, snowfall, and thaw/ed vs. only two instances implying heat (sultry and drought). This in itself is implicational of the weather in Virginia on the US East Coast, the environment in which most of the haiku were written. It is also indicative of the structure of *Presents* itself, which includes 17 haiku in 5 different categories: New Year’s Day, spring, summer, autumn, and winter. Cold terms are prevalent in both the first and last categories, of course, but extend

into early spring and late autumn as well. In terms of style, Gilbert also notes in the introduction to *Presents* the use of “an expansion of conceptions of time in haiku” and conceptual disjunction, atypical or unusual terms (swallowflight, tracery, whirligig duck, wizened, calyx, purples [v.]), and unusual collocations (orchard slush, morning thaw) (p. xvi).

Formal Hybridization Processes in *Presents*

As discussed in the introduction, we follow the tradition of Wang and Yeh (2005) in using three types of hybridization processes: reculturalization, deculturalization and acculturalization. Additionally, we postulate three categories of hybridization: formal, linguistic, and environmental, for a total of nine types (cf. Table 1). Thus in the following sections, examples will be given of each process within each category. Formal reculturalization will focus on two points: (a) the reshaping of the poems to fit the Japanese 5-7-5 form, and (b) the treatment of kigo.

Formal Reculturalization

As noted in Section 2, the form of English haiku has undergone a slow and sometimes painful rebirth in the hands of its aficionados. In the translation of *Presents*, this reformation underwent a renativization; as the translators state, “we modeled our translations on the familiar 5-7-5-on form of Japanese (with a few necessary exceptions)” (Kacian, 1995, p. xxiv-xxvi). The (generally) 10-11 syllable, shorter, longer, shorter form apparent in *Presents*, then, was reformatted in the Japanese style in order to appeal to the Japanese audience. However, as the Japanese haiku embrace the *gendai* tradition as well, only 60 (=70%) of the Japanese haiku are actually 5-7-5. Thus there are 25 “necessary exceptions” that do not fit the form. The shortest of these is only 11 *on*, whereas the longest two are 23 *on* each.

The formal variation in Japanese haiku length does not necessarily correspond to the variation in English syllable length: in other words, the shorter and longer Japanese haiku are not the same as the shorter and longer English ones, respectively. On the other hand, the two longest (23-on) Japanese haiku both contained terms written in katakana (see Section 3.2 for further discussion). Thus, extra Japanese haiku length is more likely a result of the necessity to use katakana than an effort to emulate English haiku length.

Here is a perfect example of formal reculturalization. It is more than simply a transposition to fit a form—each translation required a deliberate decision as to whether the form itself would be an appropriate package in which to wrap the present, or whether the literary shape of the haiku required a different size box, so to speak. The delicacy of each decision, no doubt the result of hours of painstaking debate in some cases, must be appreciated here.

Use of Kigo vs. Seasonal Reference

Another important example of reculturalization – or renativization – is the inclusion of kigo in Japanese. The translator’s notes state that “a search was made for appropriate kigo” but goes on to qualify this search:

...we must add a note concerning the difference between “seasonal theme” in English and kigo in Japanese. The kigo tradition in Japanese poetics finds its roots in ancient China, and has developed over many centuries of literary and cultural evolution. On the other hand, the haiku genre outside of Japan exists within an entirely modern literary ethos. For this reason, a traditional saijiki (kigo compendium) is not possible. (Kacian, 1995, p. xxvi)

Thus, some of the haiku did not contain a word that could be translated into a traditional kigo in Japanese, and others, as the translators note, “...when first translated literally into Japanese, had more than one kigo” (Kacian, 1995, p. xxviii). In actuality, over 70% of the Japanese translations have a single kigo, but several have two, and notably, one has three (underlined):

6. hazy moon the sheen of new leaves of rhododendron
oboruzuki teru wa niiba no tsutsuji kana 朧月照るは新葉のつつじかな
 (hazy moon shines on new azalea leaves)⁶

Often, the seasonal references in the English haiku were typical of the Virginia environment, and did not correspond to any kigo in Japanese. For example, several of the New Year’s haiku contained “wood,” an important seasonal reference in Virginia winters, but end up kigoless in Japanese:

7. woodsmoke the fitful arc of the wind
 気まぐれな風の弧描く木の煙
 (the fitful wind arc drawn by windsmoke)
 8. chopping wood someone does the same a moment later
 薪割れば誰かが遅れて薪を割る

Many of the summer haiku were also of necessity rendered kigoless in Japanese:

9. grass passing the wind hand to hand
 草の葉が手渡す風の過ぎ行けり
 10. above the dust a twitter of sunlight from birds' wings
 塵越えて陽のさざめきは鳥の羽

Finally, we find examples of kigo that, when translated into Japanese, refer to a season that is different from the original. We have included the kigo discussion in the section on form, as kigo are recognized as an important formal element of traditional Japanese haiku. However, it must be emphasized that both Japanese kigo and English seasonal reference are intrinsically tied to the environment in which they were written⁷. As the translators note, there cannot be an English kigo saijiki, as English is common to many diverse environments and cultures around the world. Therefore the examples above represent formal reculturalization only when they are translated so as to render a single kigo in the Japanese version and in many ways, discussion on kigo belongs in the section on environmental hybridization instead.

Formal Acculturalization

Formal acculturalization is the process of adding new elements from the target culture or language, and in terms of haiku hybridization this means making use of formal devices in Japanese that do not occur in English. The foremost of these devices is orthography: Japanese is truly blessed with a selection of four different orthographic systems all having different overtones: (a) kanji Chinese characters are traditional sound-meaning graphs, (b) hiragana is a mora-based writing system used to write Japanese linguistic and grammatical morphemes, (c) katakana is a separate, angular system which is mainly used to write words of foreign (mainly Western, mainly English) origin and (d) romaji, or roman letters, is used to transliterate Japanese into other languages, and often fulfills a decorative function (advertising, etc.). The choice of writing systems enables the Japanese poet to express nuances in ways impossible in English.

In *Presents*, we see creative use of this orthographic choice in several haiku—most notably, the following three which are written fully in hiragana, fully in katakana and using English, respectively:

11. A cow comes out of the barn half hay

hoshikusa ni natta ushi ga detekita ほしくさになつたうしがでてきた

(changed into hay a cow comes out)

12. sharp wind the metal gate bangs shut bangs shut

hatsuarashi tetsu no tobira ga batan batan ハツアラシテツノトビラガバタンバタン

(first storm the metal door goes bang bang)

13. drifted snow the welcome disappears from the doormat

uerukamu no moji keshi yuki no fukiyoseru welcome の文字消し雪の吹き寄せる

(“welcome” the letter-erasing snow piles up)

Chinese characters may also be altered in order to indicate nuances within a certain context. *Ateji*, when certain characters are selected to represent a meaning or word they do not generally express, is found in:

14. marking time to the wind's waltz trillium ⁸

shiki wo toru kaze no warutsu ni enreisou

指揮をとる風のワルツに艶麗草

(marking time to the wind's waltz trillium)



The usual Japanese term for trillium (a small three-petaled flower not generally known in either culture) uses the characters 延齡草 (life-prolonging-grass). The characters 艶麗草, however, have the same reading (enreisou) and mean spectacular or beautiful grass, and are more fitting to the general tone of the haiku itself.

Formal Deculturalization

On the other hand, there are also linguistic devices available in English that are not endemic to Japanese. The most basic of these is punctuation. As described above, even though punctuation is used sparingly in *Presents*, it still fulfills an important and necessary function where it is used. Consider again the following example:

15. swallowflight . . . looking out the window long after
 mado mireba tsubame no tobishi toki no kage 窓見ればつばめの飛びし時の翳
 (looking at the window the swallowflight's shadow)⁹

Here, the ellipsis after swallowflight elegantly serves to emphasize the momentaneity of the swallow passing the window, while temporally separating it from the slower tempo of the rest of the poem. The delicate use of this device was impossible to portray in Japanese, thus the entire haiku itself had to be restructured, with the window coming first, and the swallow's appearance expressed as *kage* or shadow.

Another creative use of punctuation is seen in:

16. caterpillar spins a mid- life crisis
 aomushi no tsumugu chunenkiki no mayu 青虫のつむぐ中年危機の繭
 (caterpillar spins midlife crisis cocoon)

Although midlife can be written both with and without a hyphen, the playfulness of the line break occurring exactly at the point of hyphenation here rivets our attention on the previous “mid”—the middle of the word, the middle of the haiku itself, the middle of life for the caterpillar spinning its rebirth. In the Japanese, hyphenation is impossible; even so, the rather unusual literal translation of “midlife crisis” (*chunen kiki*) is centrally located within the haiku.

We may also point to the lack of alliteration in the Japanese haiku as another example of formal deculturalization. However, this is in part compensated for by the use of assonance in Japanese. Consider this example:

17. heat lightning a silent snake strikes the meadow mouse
 inabikari otonaki hebi wa nezumi utsu 稲光音なき蛇は鼠撃つ
 (lightning flash a noiseless snake strikes the mouse)

The row of s's in the second line emphasize the sound as well as the shape of the slithering snake, whereas the juxtaposition of m's in the final line point to the mildness and meekness of the unsuspecting victim. On the other hand, the Japanese version uses the repetition of /i/ to emphasize the lightning swiftness of the snake.

Linguistic Hybridization Processes in *Presents*

We turn now to a different form of hybridization—treatment of vocabulary items with specific language-bound connotations in the Japanese. These, again, can be classified in terms

of the three processes we have defined. Several of Kacian's haiku involve wordplay—puns, double entendres, etc. that presented special difficulties for the translators, and we will see how in some cases they are brilliantly reborn into the new linguistic environment while in others the translators had to – or chose to – do without.

Linguistic Reculturalization

A mailbox with its flag up, indicating that the mail carrier should pick up the contents for delivery to the outside, is a common sight in rural America. It is such a flag that is referred to in

18. flag up on the mailbox mockingbird

oto suredo yuubinuke ni wa uso ichiwa 音とすれど郵便受けには鴬
一羽

(noise heard but in the mailbox a bullfinch)



10

Of course, Japanese mailboxes do not have flags, and to my knowledge, there was never a similar system of signaling that mail should be picked up. Moreover, the juxtaposition of the mailbox flag with the mockingbird both complements the birdlike image of the flag itself and implies, mockingly, that there is actually nothing in the mailbox. Thus this haiku presents a double dilemma—first, how to express the flag itself, and second, how best to render the lexical wordplay in Japanese.

The solution is inspired. The Japanese retranslates into English as “noise heard but in the mailbox a lie/bullfinch.” The flag is rendered as a noise which presumably prompted the hearer to expect communication from the outside, but instead is disappointed to find nothing more than a bird inside. Moreover, *uso* (with different Chinese characters) means both “bullfinch” and “lie,” successfully emulating the double entendre in “mockingbird.”

Linguistic Deculturalization

The omission of words themselves, as well as reduction of multiple meanings or implications of words is categorized as linguistic deculturalization. This is relatively common in the Japanese renderings of *Presents*; in contrast to English, Japanese is often pointed out to be a high context language, wherein the implied is generally left unstated. We see evidence of this in several translations of Kacian's haiku:

19. New year's dawn light first gathers in the icicles

shinshun no hikari wa mazu turara ni tsudou 新春の光はまず氷柱に集う

(New year's light first gathers in the icicles)

20. shimmering heat a willow dips its branches into the stream

shakunetsu ni yanagi wa eda wo hitashi ori 灼熱に柳は枝を浸しおり

(a willow dips its branches down)

The omission of “dawn” in the first example and “stream” in the second pose no problem for the understanding of the Japanese. “New Year’s first light” implies dawn, and “dips” implies stream, or at least water. It may be argued that one reason for the omission of these specific images was to aid in rendering the haiku in 17 mora, but this was not necessarily the case. In:

21. a cow comes out of the barn half hay
 hoshikusa ni natta ushi ga detekita ほしくさになつたうしがでてきた
 (changed into hay a cow comes out)

the Japanese is only 15 mora long, and the addition of *naya wo* (of the barn) would have rendered it a slightly more acceptable 18 mora. The guiding principle of haiku in Japanese of not stating the obvious (where else would a cow naturally come out of?) seems to have been influential here.

A passing note—this minimalism seems to have had its effect on the original author as well. The first printing of *Presents* includes the following “pond stars ripple away, away but never leave” whereas the reprinted version is:

22. ripples the pond stars move away, away¹¹
 umi no hoshi nami yure sazamekedo kiyuru nashi 海の星波揺れさざめけど消ゆるなし
 (lake stars waved away by ripples but never leave)

Note that the Japanese translation includes the final line, however, as the translators were working from the 1995 text.

The trillium haiku 14 (repeated here as 23) also shows an interesting case of linguistic deculturalization.

23. marking time to the wind’s waltz trillium
 shiki wo toru kaze no warutsu ni enreisou 指揮をとる風のワルツに艶麗草
 (marking time to the wind’s waltz trillium)

The use of *ateji* in conjunction with the translation of trillium has already been noted as formal acculturation. However, there is more to this word in English: the morpheme “tri” (=3) in “trillium” resonates with the 3/4 timing of the wind’s waltz. Rendering this type of lexical wordplay in another language is a difficult task enough, and in the limited space and form of the haiku, it is often impossible to include everything from the original. We have seen how images have been omitted, and here is a case where the wordplay was simply untranslated.

On the other hand, from a musical standpoint, the waltz itself has an important tradition in the West—bringing up images of Brahms and ballrooms and lilting lightness of melody. In Japan, however, 3/4 timing itself is a relatively recent phenomenon—thus the term waltz expresses a certain foreignness that conjures up beauty and mellifluousness, but may not be easily connected with “3.” It can be assumed that the use of *ateji* for enreisou as noted above is to impart this beauty and make up for the lack of lexical wordplay. In terms of processes,

then, this single poem shows a creative amalgam of both linguistic deculturalization and formal acculturation.

Another linguistic device in English is the singular-plural distinction, which is rarely if ever used in Japanese. One poem that makes striking use of this distinction is:

24. one white butterfly out of the green woods over and over
 shirochou ga idete wa modoru aoki mori 白蝶が出でては戻る青き森
 (white butterfly [ies?] come in and out green forest)

The singularity of the noun coupled with the repetition implied in over and over, until we realize that this cannot be a single butterfly, it just looks like one. In Japanese, this juxtaposition must be implied through the use of ga, and still we cannot be sure how many butterflies there are. Additionally, avoidance of the distinction altogether can give a very different effect in English, as in:

25. harvest moon a thud of falling apple in the night
 ureta tsuki ringo no ochiru yoru no oto 熟れた月林檎の落ちる夜の音
 (ripened moon apple falling night sound)

This poem was also changed from the 1995 version, which had apples in the plural form¹².

Linguistic Acculturation

In contrast to linguistic deculturalization, which is prevalent, we find relatively few examples of extra lexical elements being added. Two examples, however, are given below.

26. misty morning each unformed calyx a fruit of dew
 kiichigo no mijukuna gaku ni tsuyu minoru 木苺の未熟な罌に露実る
 (unformed calyxes of wild strawberry ripen with dew)

Here, the English version has an unsaid element which is overtly expressed in Japanese. “Calyx” (like its Japanese translation *gaku*) is a highly uncommon scientific term which gives the reader pause in both languages, and yet the Japanese offers the concrete explanatory image of *kiichigo* (wild strawberry). Similarly, in

27. orchard slush wizened fruit melts into the earth
 kajyuen no setsudei ringo shinabite chi ni tokeru 果樹園の雪泥林檎萎びて地に溶ける
 (orchard slush apples wither and melt into the earth)

The fruit (implied in the English as American orchards are most commonly associated with apples) has been spelled out in the Japanese, providing a more concrete and visual but localized image.

Environmental Hybridization Processes in *Presents*

Finally, words, phrases and concepts that may defy translation for cultural and/or environmental reasons will be discussed. In general, the natural surroundings referred to in the original haiku can be considered to be, if not universal, similar to the surroundings in at least some parts of Japan. Mountains, streams, lakes, rivers can be assumed to look more or less alike; and most of the flora and fauna mentioned, such as willows, flax, and morning glories are familiar. In this sense, the translators can be assumed to have had a relatively easy job. Even though connotations and nuances may be lost, the terms themselves are accessible to both languages and cultures.

Turning to seasons themselves, as noted in the translators' notes, the eastern US has four seasons. Even so, the bitter cold and length of winter and the relative coolness of summer lead to a predominance of terms related to cold and relative lack of terms related to heat. This difference in seasonal length and temperance leads more to a difference in the overall structure of the book than to differences in the individual haiku themselves.

More problematic than nature and seasonal terms, then, are man-made and man-used elements in the environmental background, which must have presented great difficulties in terms of reculturalization. Terms such as garden, lawn, and orchard conjure up very different images depending on the geographical location, as do words connoting rural farm life such as fence, barn, scarecrow, snowmen with coal eyes, and sweatpants. Home accessories denote a certain type of architecture (fence, metal gate, porch) or living style (bed, doormat, radiator, woodstove). Of necessity, some of these had to be left in their original form, but others could successfully be transposed to the Japanese environment.

Environmental Reculturalization

This section will discuss the reculturalization processes involved in transposing three man-made, culturally bound products into the Japanese culture: a church bell, a mailbox and a "whirligig duck."

28. noiseless wind icicles pend from the bell clappers
 burasagaru kane no tsurara ni oto mo nashi
 ぶらさがる鐘の氷柱に音もなし
 (on the hanging bell icicle with no sound) ¹³



On first reading of 28, we immediately note the absence of "clappers" from the Japanese. However, this is not simply a case of formal deculturalization as discussed above. The images conjured up by the English original and Japanese translation are very different and deeply rooted in their respective cultures. The first brings up a row of bells (perhaps church bells, perhaps Christmas decorations) each with a single icicle hanging from its individual clapper. On the other hand, the second reminds us of a single large temple bell (temple bells do not have clappers) in winter, with perhaps several icicles hanging from the rim. On the other hand, summer wind-chime bells in Japan do have clappers, so any mention of a clapper in the Japanese would have created a seasonal non-sequitur in the translation.

In rural America, one of the most poignant images of daily home life may be considered the mailbox. It is the gateway to one's home, as well as symbolizing the connectedness with the outside world. It is both the sender and receiver of information. We have already seen how the mailbox flag underwent linguistic reculturalization in haiku 18. A second mailbox haiku is as follows:

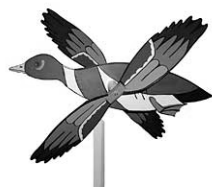
29. cold gathers at the bottom of the hill empty mailbox
 yamasuso ni kan atsumarite tayori nashi 山裾に寒集りて便りなし
 (at the bottom of the hill the cold gathers no letter)

Here, the actual physical mailbox is not important; rather, the focus is on the coldness of the lack of communication. Thus, mailbox is aptly translated as letter or message in this case. The contrast in the two translations of “mailbox” demonstrates the necessity for sensitivity towards the feeling and essence of the haiku.

Finally, one highly environmentally charged term is “whirligig duck”

(30) sultry afternoon the whirligig duck barely flaps
 entei ya karakurikazami no habatakazu 炎帝やからくり風見のはばたかず
 (summer heat the mechanical weathervane doesn't flap)¹⁴

The term “whirligig,” which appears only 13 times in a Google search, is unfamiliar even to most Americans, but we may imagine something that turns around in the wind, and the localized expression tastes of a laid-back rurality that many dream of. How best to bring the subtlety of this expression into the Japanese environment?



whirligig duck¹⁵



karakuri kazami¹⁶

The term *karakuri kazami* is probably even more unusual in Japanese than whirligig duck in English (only appearing once in Google), but *karakuri* indicates clever mechanical movement, and *kazami* is a windvane; thus the term itself has a similar unfamiliarity for the reader, and yet the imagination immediately joins the two parts and comes up with a fairly accurate mental image of something rural, mechanical and moving in the wind. A more common Japanese term (such as *kazamidori* =weathercock) would simply not have had the same effect.

Environmental Deculturalization

Of necessity, some environmentally-related references may not make sense within the Japanese context. As noted in the section on formal deculturalization, for example, the

connotations of the term “wood” are particular to the environment in which Jim produced his works. The bitter cold of a Virginia winter, assuaged only by heat produced in a wood-burning stove, is something most of us in the modern world (whether in Japan or the US) have never experienced, and the predominance of preparing (woodshed, chopping wood) and burning (woodstove, woodsmoke) wood in the New Year haiku points to the function of this all-important commodity as an integral part of the seasonal experience. We have already noted how the Japanese versions lack kigo, even if they contain the term “wood.” We revisit this point here to make a distinction between simple loss of nuance in translation and conscious omission of a culturally charged term on the part of the translator, because of what is **gained** by that omission.

It is not easy to find specific examples of this process. An interesting case of environmental deculturalization of a man-made product, however, is that of

31. drifted snow the welcome disappears from the doormat
 uerukamu no moji keshi yuki no fukiyoseru welcome の文字消し雪の吹き寄せる
 (“welcome” the letter-erasing snow piles up)

Doormat¹⁷Genkan matto¹⁸

Although many Japanese homes do have what is called a *genkan matto*, and many of these do indeed sport the word “welcome” in English, its function is different from the American doormat, which not only welcomes and decorates but is also used to wipe outside dirt and dust from shoes before entering the home. The placement of the *genkan matto* is generally within the home inside the front hall, rather than outside. Thus the doormat cannot be snowed upon, and there is no corresponding term in the Japanese translation. The WELCOME, however, could belong to some other outdoor decoration typical in Japan, such as a garden imp statue or outdoor wall hanging.

Environmental Acculturation

As with linguistic acculturation, environmental acculturation is rare. One especially interesting example, however, is the following:

- (32) falling leaves the house comes out of the woods
 konoha chiru mori no naka kara wagaya kuru
 木の葉散る森の中から我が家来る¹⁹
 (leaves falling from the middle of the forest comes my house)



On initial reading of the English, one does not naturally associate “the house” with one’s own house, which would more commonly be rendered as “my house” or “the home” or even

“home.” The woods in eastern America may often be vast and one can walk for hours without viewing another soul; within this context, the sight of any house is a welcome diversion and reminder of the human element in nature. On the other hand, although Japan is a highly mountainous country, most hiking trails take a few hours at most, and even a trek up Mount Fuji can be done in a day. Moreover, seeing houses here and there along the way is not an uncommon experience. Perhaps, then, to capture the environment in which the walker feels a special affinity with the house, it was rendered as the walker’s own home in Japanese.

Of Petunias and Morning Glories – in lieu of a conclusion

An attempt was made here to categorize the translation efforts involved in *Presents* in terms of hybridization processes: reculturalization, deculturalization and acculturalization. In so doing, three types of each were recognized: formal, linguistic and environmental hybridization. However, it is important to note two points here: (a) a non-literal translation may sometimes be analyzed in terms of more than one category, and (b) often several processes are at work simultaneously in a single haiku. For example, the omission of a word could be formal (e.g. to reduce the number of kigo) or linguistic (e.g. omission of a term that is already implied), or both, and the use of a formal feature such as *ateji* may express a difference both in environment and in form. Even so, it is hoped that the categorizations introduced here will provide a refined framework for future translation analysis, which may also help future translators and researchers feel comfortable about rendering translations from the heart and avoiding pitfalls of “loose” and “literal” translation.

The subtle interplay of these processes in even a single haiku evokes the multiple dilemmas faced by the translation team. Perhaps the most telling example of the complexity of decision making during the translation process is the rendering of “morning glory” in Japanese. The flower itself comes up in two of the English haiku—one in spring and one in autumn—and yet the Japanese translation *asagao* (lit. morning face) is a summer kigo. When we look at the translations, however, the morning glory in the autumn poem is translated as *asagao*, and that in the spring poem is translated as “petunia” (not a kigo):

- (33) (autumn) broken fence morning glory tendrils reach for the missing rung
 yaresaku ya asagao saguru wa arishi san 破れ柵や朝顔探るはありし棧
 (broken fence morning glories search for the crosspiece once there)



petunias²⁰



morning glories²¹

- (34) (spring) morning glories curl in on themselves sleety rain
 pechunia no chizikomaraseru hatsushigure ペチュニアの縮こまらせる初時雨
 (petunias shrunken by the first cold rain)

Why “petunia”? One reason might have been to avoid a double kigo in Japanese (formal); another might have been to provide alliteration of the /ch/ sound (linguistic). A third reason might have been that, as morning glories last only one day anyway, Japanese spring storms might more appropriately make petunias shrink (environmental), or perhaps because *hatsushigere* rarely occurs in summer, which is the season associated with *asagao*²².

Whatever the reasons for the decision, it certainly represented the result of deliberately weighing the possibilities and striking a delicate balance for optimum results. This then is the essence of hybridization: a literal search for the best of both worlds.

Notes

¹ Many haikuists prefer to use the concept of beats or meter with respect to line length, and count stressed syllables only. However, questions of whether to stress a function word or include secondary stress may be highly subjective and vary even with different readings of the same haiku. Therefore, for the purposes of this analysis, both stressed and unstressed syllables were counted here.

² See http://www.hsa-haiku.org/archives/HSA_Definitions_2004.html#Haiku.

³ The 1995 version of Presents actually published this poem in the shorter-longer-shorter form, and the change in the new version is explained by Kacian as follows: “the j version actually returns to the original form of the poem (as published in modern haiku) it was changed for the e version so make the poem look more uniform (short-long-short) while i was in that centering mode” (Kacian, personal communication, 2007).

⁴ The use of ellipses and rendering of swallowflight as one word in this haiku are innovations from the 1995 version. According to Jim, the new word “made one quick thing of the action, and the ellipses simply help the reader linger” (Kacian, personal communication, 2007).

⁵ This poem also represents a change from the 1995 original of last mums/a lone bee/hums by, which is explained as follows by the author: “in last mums, i simply embrace the rhyme in the j version which i had skirted in the e version.” (Kacian, personal communication, 2007)

⁶ From Section 3, all poems are quoted in the following format: () 2006 English version
2006 Japanese version in roman letters 2006 Japanese version in Japanese characters
(literal translation of Japanese version by the author)

⁷ Again, see Gilbert (2006) for further discussion.

⁸ Illustration from http://www.arrowhead-alpines.com/white2_gallery.

⁹ This represents a deviation from one of the basic principles followed in the translation process (Gilbert, personal communication, 2007), which was to keep the “image story” intact as much as possible. In other words, the juxtaposition of images was to be kept in the same order as in the original.

¹⁰ Illustration from http://www.exploreamerica.info/Photos/Mailboxes/Mailbox_Flag_Up_1.htm.

¹¹ Regarding this change, Jim notes: “the English version was a simple statement. The Japanese version changes this into a poem, creating a juxtaposition and a tension which the statement version never contained.” (personal communication, 2007).

¹² About the change, Kacian has this to say: “I went away from apples to keep the moment more concrete and independent, though I do like the idea that one fallen apple sensitizes us

for more; I tried to capture both of these ideas ... making the article indefinite on the one hand and eliminating it on the other”

¹³ Illustration from <http://www.longislandgenealogy.com/barnabas/churchbell.html>.

¹⁴ Entei refers to a summer god of heat or sun.

¹⁵ Illustration from <http://www.gardenguides.com/decor/whirlduck.htm>.

¹⁶ Illustration from http://area-yamazaki.ddo.jp/cgi-bin/mt/archives/2007/05/post_151.html.

¹⁷ Illustration from [http://www.homegardenandpatio.com/cat.cgi?s=WHP-](http://www.homegardenandpatio.com/cat.cgi?s=WHP-05039&c=patio_door_mats_personalized)

05039&c=patio_door_mats_personalized

¹⁸ Illustration from item.rakuten.co.jp/heart-company/hmn-2/.

¹⁹ Illustration from original photograph.

²⁰ Illustration from Petunia. (2007, May 7). In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved May 31, 2007, from <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Petunia&oldid=129043252>.

²¹ Illustration from Morning glory. (2007, May 24). In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.

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http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Morning_glory&oldid=133261911.

²² Gilbert (2007, personal communication) offered the following explanation for the morning glory dilemma: “The main reason for switching from morning glory to petunia here has to do with cultural reference—in Japan the morning glory is perceived as a weak, easily damaged plant, while by contrast a petunia is quite hardy. The ‘japanese’ morning glory would not then survive either into the late fall, or certainly, even hold up enough to “curl in” in sleety rain.”

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