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Þýðing úr プチ・ニコラ

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Translation from プチ・ニコラ



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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a translation from Japanese to English of selected chapters from the book *Le Petit Nicolas* created by René Goscinny and illustrated by Jean-Jacques Sempé. The purpose is to examine the translation process, as well as the main concepts and ideas of the studies of translation. I will explore these concepts and ideas, list some of the difficulties and problems that arose while translating, and finally suggest solutions to these problems. It should be an interesting read for those in the field of translation, veterans and novices alike, or anyone with an interest for Japanese or languages as a whole.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This thesis is divided into four chapters. This first chapter serves as an introduction, leading to chapter two, where I will explore the subject of translation studies and give a short overview of ideas, arguments and theories within these studies. It is the theoretical part, where I give examples from both English and Japanese and borrow ideas from such great thinkers as Cicero and St. Jerome, as well as modern scholars who have left a big mark on translation studies, such as Newmark and Munday. Both the problems and solutions that belong to these studies are given. The third chapter is a report on my own translation, from the French book *Le petit Nicolas*. The problematic sentences are shown in Japanese and romaji, the western alphabet, and the possible and final solutions are written in English, as they appear in the text and the translation here below. In chapter three the reader will find my translation in English, separated into paragraphs according to the Japanese text. It is then in the final chapter that the reader can access the original text in Japanese.

Le Petit Nicolas was a perfect choice for me since I was already familiar with the series. The first three books were favorites of mine as a child. When I went on to go to college the books served as a valuable tool to my French studies and it was a treat for me to be able to read them in the original language. Then, a few days before returning back home from my year in Japan I discovered book number two in the series, in Japanese, and realized it would be a very fitting B.A. thesis topic. I have always felt very passionately about languages and so I jumped at the opportunity to both increase my knowledge of the Japanese language and write a thesis on the difficult task of translation from one language to another.

Little Nicholas is, first and foremost, a children's book, but I believe it can also be enjoyed by adults. The style of writing is very sharp and the stories are filled with humorous situations seen by the eyes of young Nicholas, who often sees things different from his parents or teacher. From the escapades of Nicholas and his friends, to his bickering mother or unlucky father, there is enough humor to go around.

In this thesis I will write any Japanese words in kanji, hiragana or katakana, the three distinct alphabets of the Japanese language.

Chapter 2

The study of translation

2.1 Introduction

Translation studies is a relatively recent university subject. For someone new to the studies it might seem that there are no more than a few things to have in mind when translating, as well as a good grip on both the language you are translating from, the *source language* and the language you are translating into, the *target language*. This, however, could not be further from the truth. There is no end to the books written on the myriad of subjects that fall under translation studies, theoretical, philosophical and practical guides abound in this field of studies. In order to become a good translator it is advised to familiarize oneself with the thoughts of known translators from the past, or the history of translation, how these ideas evolved, and know what theories and methods are favored today.

When it comes to translation, the pitfalls are many and often hidden. With experience and knowledge on the subject, the translator learns and grows and slowly starts being able to translate both quicker and more accurately. In this chapter I will explore translation studies. I will go over common pitfalls to be avoided, as well as some important concepts and arguments within these studies.

2.2 What is translation

Before I outline some of the methods of translation, keywords and debates within translation studies, I would like to look at what translation itself is.

Webster's new collegiate dictionary defines 'translation' as:

a: to bear, remove, or change from one place, state, form, or appearance to another.

b: to turn into one's own or another language.

*c: to transfer or turn from one set of symbols into another.*¹

In 'Introducing Translation Studies', Jeremy Munday writes that the term translation can either refer to the general subject field, the text that has been translated or the process of translation itself. The process involves changing the original text, the source text, into a

1 Wolf, Henry Bosley (ed.) (1979) *Webster's New collegiate Dictionary*. G. & C. Merriam Co. United states of America.

written text in a different language, the target text.²

Roman Jakobson introduced three categories of translation:

1. **intralingual** translation, or 'rewording': 'an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language';
2. **interlingual** translation, or 'translation proper': 'an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language';
3. **intersemiotic** translation, or 'transmutation': 'an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of non-verbal sign systems'.³

Many scholars disagree on how to adequately explain and define the difficult term of 'translation', but all in all, we can agree that it involves some kind of an interpretation of a text or speech from one language into another. Delving deeper into the theoretical part of translation, we see that there are many things to keep in mind simply when changing the language of one text to another. King Duarte of Portugal (1391-1438) wrote that the translator must:

1. *Understand the meaning of the original and render it in its entirety without change.*
2. *Use the idiomatic vernacular of the target language, not borrowing from the source language.*
3. *Use target-language words that are direct and appropriate.*
4. *Avoid offensive words.*
5. *Conform to rules for all writing, such as clarity, accessibility, interest, and wholesomeness.*⁴

As we can see, translation is not simply converting a few words or a few sentences from one language to another, there are many things the translator needs to keep in mind when doing his or her work. Newmark claims that the perfect, ideal or 'correct' translation simply does not exist, and describes translation as a science, a skill, an art and a matter of taste.⁵ Brower has similar ideas, he states that it is self-evident truth that translation is an interpretive art.

Yet it is a paradox peculiar to the translator that he is the only interpretive artist working in a medium which is both identical with, and different from, that of the

2 Munday, Jeremy. (2001) *Introducing translation studies*. (pg. 5) Routledge, London.

3 Jakobson, R. (1959/2000) *On linguistic aspects of translation* (pp. 113-18) L. Venuti (ed.) (2000)

4 Robinson, Douglas. (1997) *Becoming a translator*, second edition. (pp. 214). Routledge.

5 Newmark, Peter. (1988) *A textbook of translation*. (pp. 6) Prentice Hall, United Kingdom.

*original he sets out to render in his own terms.*⁶

2.3 Methods of translation

Now that I have touched upon the definition of translation, I would like to take a look at the different methods of translation available. A translator has many tools to work with as he or she starts to translate a text from the source language to the target language. At first glance, translation might not seem such a difficult task, especially if you are very qualified in both languages but as soon as the translator takes on his or her first work, the difficulties become apparent. Douglas Robinson touches on this topic:

*A novice translator attempting his or her first translation is not likely to realize all the pitfalls lurking in the task, and will make silly mistakes as a result. When translating from a language that we know well, it is natural to assume that we understand the text; that the words on the page are a fairly easy and unproblematic guide to what is being said and done in the text. It is also natural to assume that languages are structurally not all that different, so that roughly following the source-text word order in the target language will produce a reasonably good translation.*⁷

Venuti also wrote on the difficulties of translation:

*Translation never communicates in an untroubled fashion because the translator negotiates the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text by reducing them and supplying another set of differences, basically domestic, drawn from the receiving language and culture to enable the foreign to be received there.*⁸

He mentions the common problem of translating between cultures and rightfully states that there is high risk of missing vital cultural aspects of the source language text when interpreting between two languages. When undertaking a translation project, it is therefore good to prepare oneself and do some research before heading into the process. This leads to a much quicker and better translation. One of the first things the translator should consider are the many methods of translation, counted here by Newmark:

1. *Word for word translation.*
2. *Literal translation.*
3. *Faithful translation*

6 Brower, Reuben A. (1959) *On translation*. (pp. 137) Oxford university press. United state of America.
7 Robinson, Douglas. (1997) *Becoming a translator*, second edition. (pp. 209) Routledge.
8 Venuti, Lawrence (ed). (2000) *The translation studies reader*. (pp. 468) Routledge.

4. *Semantic translation*
5. *Adaptation*
6. *Free translation*
7. *Idiomatic translation*
8. *Communicative translation*⁹

Newmark notes that from this list, only semantic and communicative translation manage to fulfill the two main aims of translation, which are accuracy and economy. In my translation for this thesis I chose to use the semantic translation method. It differs from faithful translation in such a way that it allows for more account on the aesthetic value of the source language text. It is certainly not a word-for-word translation, nor is it an adaptation, the 'freest' form of translation. We shall take a closer look at the debate between literal and free translation as it is a very important subject within the studies of translation.

2.4 *Literal vs. free translation*

This is the main debate within translation studies, should the translator translate the text literally (word-for-word), or should he use a freer translation, straying away from the literal meaning of the source language. This debate traces its roots as far back as to the writings of Cicero (first century BCE). In his work, *De optimo genere oratorum*, Cicero writes on his translation work:

*And I did not translate them as an interpreter, but as an orator, keeping the same ideas and forms, or as one might say, the 'figures' of thought, but in language which conforms to our usage. And in so doing, I did not hold it necessary to render word for word, but I preserved the general style and force of the language.*¹⁰

A strong opponent of word-for-word translation, Cicero writes on how he did not prefer to translate as an interpreter; meaning word-for-word, but as an orator; translating the meaning of each sentence or phrase into the target language. Another scholar, St. Jerome, possibly the most famous of all translators, sided with Cicero and wrote:

Now I not only admit but freely announce that in translating from the Greek – except of course in the case of the Holy Scripture, where even the syntax contains a mystery – I render not word-for-word, but sense-for-sense.

9 Newmark, Peter. (1988). *A Textbook of Translation*. (pp. 45) Prentice Hall International, UK.

10 Cicero, M.T. (46 BCE/1960 CE) *De optimo genere oratorum*, in Cicero *De inventione, De optimo genere oratorum, topica*, (pp. 347-73). Translated by H. M. Hubbel, Cambridge, M.A: Harvard University Press; London: Heinemann.

Long after Cicero and St. Jerome's time, the debate of literal vs. free translation continued when the English poet and translator John Dryden categorized translation into three columns in the preface to his translation of Ovid's epistles:

1. *'metaphrase': 'word by word and line by line' translation, which corresponds to literal translation;*
2. *'paraphrase': 'translation with latitude, where the author is kept in view by the translator, so as never to be lost, but his words are not so strictly followed as his sense'; this involves changing whole phrases and more or less corresponds to faithful or sense-for-sense translation;*
3. *'imitation': 'forsaking' both words and sense; this corresponds to Cowley's very free translation and is more or less adaptation.¹²*

To this day, the pros and cons of literal and free translation continue to be expounded in journal, books and debates between linguists and translators. As I mentioned above, in my translation I opted for a more liberal translation, carefully trying to adhere to the structure of the story and how it is built up, allowing myself the freedom to change the sentence structure and freely translate sayings, slangs and so on.

2.5 Text categorization

When translating a text from one language to another, it is good to be aware of what kind of text it is, in order to know what kind of writing you're expected to do. In the 1970's, Katharina Reiss came up with a model of different types of texts in order to aid the translator to achieve better equivalence between the source-language text and the target-language text. These groups are as follows:

1. *'Plain communication of facts': information, knowledge, opinions, etc. The language dimension used to transmit the information is logical or referential, the content or 'topic' is the main focus of the communication, and the text type is informative.*
2. *'Creative composition': the author uses the aesthetic dimension of language. The author or 'sender' is foregrounded, as well as the form of the message, and the text type is expressive.*
3. *'Inducing behavioral responses': the aim of the appellative function is to appeal to*

11 Munday, Jeremy. (2001) *Introducing translation studies*. (pp. 20) Routledge, London.

12 Munday, Jeremy. (2001) *Introducing translation studies*, (pp. 25) Routledge, London.

or persuade the reader or 'receiver' of the text to act in a certain way. The form of language is dialogic, the focus is appellative and Reiss calls this text type operative.

*4. Audiomedial texts, such as films and visual and spoken advertisements which supplement the other three functions with visual images, music, etc.*¹³

Of course, some texts fall somewhere between these categories and end up as a mixture of two or even three of these types. Nevertheless, with this list, the translator can better understand what kind of text he is translating and figure out the best way of handling the translation. However, not everyone sees the benefits of this kind of categorization. Gentzler, for example, believes that the categories exist only in someone's imagination. They fail to include the things that do not fit into the categories, contradictions get omitted, and ironies as well as distancing devices are disregarded completely.¹⁴ As to which theory is more correct, I believe every translator needs to decide for him or herself. After all, the studies of translation are more philosophical than containing a set rules that must be adhered to at all times. I myself believe it is good to have these categorizations so that the translator can organize him- or herself better and get into a good state of mind before translating a text. Knowing what kind of discourse needed is a good thing to know beforehand.

2.6 Equivalence

Working on the translation of a text, it is common to encounter a word in the source language which is extremely difficult or even seemingly impossible to turn over to the target language. This obviously gets increasingly more common the more different the languages are. Japanese and English are two very different languages with different sentence structures, different cultures and so on. These can be single words or phrases. Words that are hard to translate from Japanese to English are for example:

Japanese:

元気 (*genki*)

もののあわれ (*mono no aware*)

English:

energetic, high-spirited, lively, fun etc.

the ability to be moved, or the sense of sudden emotional awareness and the need to then express emotion

Newmark suggests a few methods to deal with these difficult words. The translator can

13 Munday, Jeremy. (2001) *Introducing translation studies*. (pp. 73) Routledge, London.

14 Gentzler, Edwin. (1993) *Contemporary translation theories*. (pp. 65) Routledge, London.

use a cultural equivalent, functional equivalent or a descriptive equivalent. A cultural equivalent is needed when the word in question is connected to the culture of the source language country, much like the example of *もののあわれ* (*mono no aware*) above, which has deep roots in the Japanese culture. These words, Newmark writes, are approximate cultural equivalents.

*Their translation can be used in general texts, publicity and propaganda, as well as for brief explanation to readers who are ignorant of the relevant SL culture.*¹⁵

Functional equivalents also deals with cultural words, but uses a culture-free word in the target language.

The third way is using a descriptive equivalent. When the word is extremely difficult to translate and simply does not have a proper equivalent in the target language, sometimes the translator needs to resort to simply describing the word in question. The Japanese word *さむらい* (*samurai*) is a good example. The descriptive equivalent of this word in English would be 'the Japanese aristocracy from the eleventh to the nineteenth century.'¹⁶

2.7 Summary

In this chapter I have discussed the pitfalls and problems of translating a text from one language to another. I have tried to define what translation is and some of the main types of translation, the methods of translation and explored debates within these studies. I have also looked at text categorization and touched upon the subject of equivalence and what these things might mean to the translator. I have given examples from English and Japanese and hope to have shed some light on the solution to the problems that I explained. This has been a short overview of the history, problems and theories of translation as a study. In the next chapter I will go over the main problems that I encountered when I translated *Le petit Nicolas* from Japanese to English.

15 Newmark, Peter. (1988) *A Textbook of Translation*. (pp. 83) Prentice Hall International, UK.

16 Newmark, Peter. (1988) *A Textbook of Translation*. (pp. 83-84) Prentice Hall International, UK.

CHAPTER 3

My translation

3.1 Introduction.

In this chapter I will address some of the problems I encountered while translating from Japanese to English. As these two languages are different from one another in many ways there are quite a few things to cover. To begin with, the Japanese and English alphabet and sentence structure have little or nothing in common, false friends are not as rare as one might presume, and a lot of work is needed to carefully take the sentences in Japanese apart and organize them back together in order to avoid making them sound foreign and grammatically wrong in English. Naturally, in doing so, I step into the debate of literal vs. free translation, as mentioned above. As I explained, I used a more free translation, precisely so that I could translate the meaning of the words and sentences properly in English.

I will not spend too much time on relating the differences I encountered, since they, major or minor, are too many for this thesis. Instead, I will mention the ones that stood out the most, or created the biggest problems for me while I was translating.

3.2 Translating names.

The first problem I encountered while working on the translation was in relation with the characters' names. It must be kept in mind that in this case, the names are all originally French, translated to Japanese. That is to say, the French names had been phonetically transcribed when the book was translated to fit the Japanese alphabet. For example, the name Eudes would be rendered into ユード (yuudo), Alceste became アルセスト (arusesuto), Rufus became リュフユス (ryufyusu) and so on. The Japanese use the Katakana alphabet to spell out words that are foreign to their language. As it is almost impossible to find the Japanese counterparts to non-native Japanese names, this method simply involves changing the pronunciation of the name in question so they become legible and pronounceable for the Japanese. When I translated these names into English, there was really only two options available to me; find the original French names and either translate them into English, that is to say, find the English equivalents to these names, or write them the same way they are written in French. In my translation I opted

for keeping the names intact from the French version, but for convenience sake I switched around a letter or two if the French name had an existing counterpart in English. Eudes kept the same form, the same as Alceste and Clotaire, but Nicolas and Geoffroy became Nicholas and Geoffrey simply because these extremely close counterparts are used in English.

3.3 The article

Japanese, unlike English, does not have an article to speak of. Where in English we would need to add an article; *a*, *an* or *the*, in Japanese you would simply say the word in question without adding anything to it. If we look at some examples we should clearly be able to see the difference.

<u>English:</u>	<u>Japanese:</u>
'a bird'	とり (tori)
'an apple'	りんご (ringo)
'a cat'	ねこ (neko)

Thus, I have accordingly added the article where there previously was none. Noticeably in the title of the second story, 'The wristwatch'. In the Japanese version it would simply be 腕時計 (udedokei).

3.4 The kanji

The kanji, or the Chinese characters, appear in the Japanese text below exactly in the same way as they appear in the original text in the book. Being a children's book, it has relatively few kanji, in order to be legible by children. This proved to be a small hindrance at times as it meant that I had to search endlessly for a meaning of a certain word, as many different words are pronounced the same in Japanese, recognized only by the different kanji:

<u>Japanese:</u>	<u>English:</u>
不幸 (fukou)	misfortune
不孝 (fukou)	undutiful

Figuring out the context of this particular sentence:

アニャンがそれに気づかなかったのは、めがねをふこうとして、はずしていたからだ。(Anyan ga sore ni kizukanakatta no wa, megane wo fukou

toshite, hazushiteita kara da.)

where it simply said ふう (fukou) with no kanji to clear the meaning, I translated it as:

Unfortunately for him, his glasses had come off.

Little did I know it was the verb 拭く (fuku), to wipe, in the volitional form, or 拭こう (fukou). After learning this, I was able to give a more correct translation:

...as he had taken off his glasses to wipe them clean.

3.5 Onomatopoeia

Japanese is full of onomatopoeia; words to describe sounds, actions or feelings. There is no shortage of them in this book and they had to be carefully scrutinized and translated. These words can be extremely hard to translate and often cause confusion for those who are not used to them and their usage. Perhaps to underline their foreignness, they are usually written in Katakana, the Japanese alphabet that is usually reserved for foreign loan words.

Japanese:

カチカチ (*kachi-kachi*)

ブツブツ (*butsu-butsu*)

ベトベト (*beto-beto*)

ネバネバ (*neba-neba*)

English:

Tick-tock

Grunt, complain

Sticky, greasy

Sticky, greasy

This Japanese sentence is a good example:

アルセストがきらいだというんじゃないけど、あいつの手はいつでも、
ベトベトかネバネバなんだ。(arusesuto ga kirai da to iun jyanai kedo, aitsu
no te ha itsudemo, betobeto ka nebaneba nanda.)

It contains both of the last words on the list, ベトベト (*betobeto*) and

ネバネバ (*nebaneba*), both translated as sticky or greasy. To take care of this problem, I simply used both the meanings of the words in no particular order:

It's not that I don't like Alceste, it's just that his hands are always sticky or greasy.

3.6 The subject

Often in the Japanese language, the subject of the sentence is omitted as it can usually be

discovered in the context. It is a common practice in the Japanese language to omit words to avoid having to repeat them. For example, when a person talks about his or her house in Japanese, if the said person has mentioned the house a few sentences before, he or she can skip the owner all together and just say 'house' instead of 'my house'. This is very different from English, where usually the subject of the sentence, possessive pronouns, personal pronouns etc. must always be mentioned to avoid confusion. Throughout the text, this did not tend to be a problem since the subject of the sentence is usually easily decipherable when you look at the context. There were times, though, when this kind of sentence structure forced the process of translation to a temporary halt while I figured the most likely subject of a particular sentence. One example is the word 部屋(heya), or 'room'. There is never any indication of whose room in particular is being discussed, other than through context. In my translation, I had to add 'my', 'his', 'her' etc. in front of 'room' for a proper translation. This is an example of how, even in the smallest way, some changes must be made when translating between languages, making word-for-word translation almost impossible, especially when the languages are this different.

3.7 Colloquialisms

One of the most difficult things a translator can face is accurately translating colloquial phrases and expressions. Many of the conversations in *Le Petit Nicolas* are between young schoolchildren, who tend to use words and phrases that are very different from those in the linguistic world of adults. In this case it is important to be familiar with slang and specific words or phrases, in the source language and the target language. I encountered a few specific cases of colloquialism, which I will explain here.

3.7.1 Particles

Specific to the Japanese language are a myriad of particles, good friends of any learner of the language. Usually at the end of a sentence, their purpose is to add emotion to the sentence; shock, mild surprise, doubt, emphasis and so on. Different people use different particles when speaking. The particle わ (wa) at the end of a sentence is usually, though not exclusively, used by women to soften the phrase, while the particle ぞ (zo) is usually used by men, rather than boys, to add emphasis on the end of a phrase. They are extremely hard to translate into another language, without adding one or

more words to the translation to convey the meaning of the particle and its impact on the sentence, and even the mind-set, age or attributes of a particular character within the story.

その時計を貸してみな (sono tokei wo kashite mina)

Here, the particle な (na) at the end is used by the speaker to persuade the person he is talking with to fulfill his request. It could be translated word-for-word into something like:

That watch, lend (me) and see, won't you?

In light of the context and given the fact that these are children speaking, and that the Japanese language tends to be far more polite than English, I translated this particular phrase into:

Give me the watch and we'll see.

3.7.2 Fixed phrases and slang

When it comes to translating fixed phrases and slang, they must be completely pulled apart and reconstructed in a similar manner in the target language. In this section, the particles also play a part, as you can usually find them at the end of a casual slang phrase.

*「そうだな」とリュフユスはいった。 (“Sou da na”,
Ryufyusu ha itta.)*

Here, the speaker is reflecting on the sentence that the speaker before him just expressed, by the phrase そうだな (sou da na), which means something like “It's so.” or “It's like that.”, with the added emphasis of the particle な (na) at the end which adds emphasis and states that the speaker is thinking about what to say next. In fact, this phrase in itself in this context reflects exactly that; the speaker is taking in some information and thinking over what he will say in reply. In trying to translate this phrase, I opted for a simple:

“Hmmm”, said Rufus.

This has the same basic meaning; the speaker is thinking things over before replying. Another option would simply be to omit this phrase and continue straight with his next sentence, cut out the part where he is simply thinking as this is perhaps more common in Japanese than English, but I

feel it would not be as faithful to the original text.

Translating dialogue can be difficult, especially fixed phrases. For example the language a mother would use scolding a child. In this story, Nicholas's mother addresses him like this in Japanese:

「まあ、なんでいうかっこうなの。からだじゅう泥だらけじゃないの、びしょびしょだわ！いつたいなにをしてかしたの？」 (maa, nanndeiu kakkounano. Karadajyuu dorodarake jyanaino, bishyobishyo dawa! Ittainani wo shidekashita no?)

All of those sentences are tinged with colloquial verb endings, slang, onomatopoeia and particles so it had to be completely reconstructed into something a mother would typically say to her child under the same circumstances.

“Would you look at the state of you! You're covered in dirt from head to toe and drenched as well! What on earth have you been up to this time?”

Furthermore, colloquially, Japanese people tend to use other, shorter forms of yes and no. I encountered this in one place in particular in the book, where the speech is incorporated into the sentence, without quotation marks, which I had to add in the English translation.

ぼくはすぐ考えなおし、うん、いいんだよといった。
(*boku ha sugu kangaenaoshi, un, iindayo to itta*)

A very literal translation would be:

I soon changed my thoughts, uh-huh, it's good I said.

This would look a bit better after translating the meaning into good English:

I quickly thought it over and said: “Uh-huh, alright.”

3.8 Nouns

There are a few nouns in Japanese that can be difficult to translate into English, or any other language for that matter. A good example is the word 元気 (genki), which means something like 'to be in high spirits' or 'to be full of vigor'. The problem is, when attempting to translate word-for-word, that there is no noun in the English language that

can substitute the word 元気 (genki). As a matter of fact, this is not always the case with all languages, for example in Icelandic this is no problem as the translation would be 'hress'. In the Japanese text we see the word in this sentence:

こいつはとても元気なやつだった。 (koitsu ha totemo genki na yatsu datta.)

I translated it to:

My tadpole was in extremely good spirits.

3.8.1 Possessives

When it comes to *who* owns *what*, it is sometimes a matter left up in the air in Japanese. Sentences such as this one are grammatically correct and appear in all sorts of texts:

部屋からでてきた。 (heya kara dete kita.)

This sentence could be translated as 'I/you/he/she/we/they/ left my/your/his/her/their room.' There is no clue left to aid the reader, or translator, who is leaving the room or what room said person is leaving, but the context. In the first story we find this sentence:

ママが部屋からでてくるのが見えた。 (mama ga heya kara dete kuru no ga mieta.)

Nicolas could see his mother come out of 'room', but there is no mention of what or whose room. I added the possessive in the translation:

I could see my mom come out of her room.

3.9 Adjectives

A few times, adjectives have to be freely translated for the translation to work and not to sound strange. Such was the case in this sentence:

だって、この公園には、してはいけないことがものすごく多いんだ。 (datte, kono koen ni ha, shite ha ikenai koto ga mono sugoku ooi n da.)

The adjective ものすごく多い (mono sugoku ooi) literally means 'frighteningly many', rendering the word-for-word translation into:

But, this park in, do does not go thing frighteningly many were.

Even after reconstructing the sentence in English, it would still sound foreign and

strange in the English translation:

But, in this park, things you are not supposed to do were frighteningly many.

So I changed this to something more appropriate:

There was also a whole list of things you couldn't do in the park.

3.10 Expressions

When dealing with languages as different as Japanese and English, there are some sentences and phrases that simply cannot be translated word-for-word. High on this list are similes and expressions. I wanted to translate this sentence as best as I could but had a few problems when it came to the right expression:

ぼくが口笛をふいたら、とんでくるんだよ。(boku no kuchibue wo fuitara, tonde kurun dayo.)

The expression used here is 'If I whistled, he would come flying.' The subject being a frog, I felt this expression didn't really fit the context so I opted to change the wording ever so slightly, favoring the phrasing 'to come running'.

“When I whistle, he'll come running.”

3.11 Sentence structure

Dramatically different sentence structure makes completely faithful, word-for-word translation between the languages even more difficult than usual. The sentence structure in Japanese is usually subject-object-verb, while in English this would be subject-verb-object. At times punctuation marks must be removed or placed in a sentence when translating between these languages, such as here:

パパは、ゆうべ、おうちにいなかった。仕事で、夕ごはんは外でとることになっていた。それで、ママが時計の巻き方を教えてくれ、手首に時計をはめてくれた。(Papa wa yuube ouchi ni inakatta. Shigoto de, yuugohan ha soto de toru koto ni natte ita. Sore de, mama ga tokei no makikata wo oshiete kure, tekubi ni tokei wo hamete kureta.)

In my translation, I had these three sentences work together to make two fully-functioning ones in English. A word-for-word translation would be:

Work at, dinner outside at place thing to become did. So, mom watch the way of putting on show I received, wrist on watch fastened I received.

Obviously, this sentence needs to be fixed in the translation simply to be understood,

let alone enjoyed. With the sentence structure fixed and a few words translated better in the new context, it ended up like this:

Dad wasn't home last night. He and the people from his work had gone out to dinner so my mom taught me how to wind the watch and put it around my wrist.

This is simply one example of many, almost every sentence had to be dramatically changed simply in order for the English translation to be understood properly.

CONCLUSION

I started this essay on an introduction, after which I touched on the relatively recent subject of translation. In chapter three I explained the main problems that arose while I was working on the translation. From minor hindrances to problems that took me a long time to resolve, I believe I have gone over the most important things that came up during the translation process. There are many problems that arose while I translated from these two very different languages but I believe I managed to solve them adequately.

It is my sincere hope that I have managed with this essay to properly explore the process of translation and translate the original text as well as possible. The process was all the more daunting as English is not my native language, but I strived to do my best working with these two languages, English and Japanese, neither of which are my own, with the help of dictionaries and by consulting native speakers. After all, a translator has many tools to work with and must strive to use them all in order to give his best translation possible.

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ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Little Nicholas

The wrist watch

Last night, after I came home from school, a post office worker came to our house to deliver a small package. My grandmother had sent me a really cool present. I don't think anyone could have guessed what it was. Inside turned out to be a wrist watch. I was very happy with both the watch and my grandmother. My classmates would definitely be surprised if I showed it to them.

Dad wasn't home last night. He had gone to dinner with the people from his work so my mom taught me how to wind the watch and put it around my wrist for me.

Luckily, unlike last year, I had become really good at telling the time. Back then I was still very young and had to constantly ask people for the time on my watch, which must have been extremely annoying.

My watch had two hands that didn't seem to move at all unless you stared at them closely for some time, but the good thing about the watch was that it had this other long hand, that moved really fast. When I asked my mom about whether or not this long hand served any purpose, she said it was very handy for knowing if a soft-boiled egg was ready or not.

At thirty two minutes past seven, my mom and I sat down at the dinner table but disappointingly there were no soft-boiled egg with our dinner. While I ate I didn't take my eyes off my watch. My mom told me to eat a bit faster because my soup would get cold, so I finished my soup, while I watched the long hand go twice around the clock face.

At seven fifty-one, my mom brought out the candy that was leftover from lunch. When we had finished dining, it was seven fifty-eight. After dinner I was allowed to go play for a little while, so I brought my watch to my ear and listened to the so-called tick-tock sound.

At eight fifteen my mom told me it was time for bed. I was just as happy as the day I was given an ink pen and managed to make ink stains all over. I wanted to go to bed still wearing my watch but my mom told me it wasn't good for the watch so I took it off and put it on the table next to my bed.

In order to see my watch better I lay down facing the table. Then, at eight thirty-eight my mom came to turn off the lights.

This was when something extraordinary happened. The numbers and hands on my watch started to shine and glow in the darkness. Even if I had been trying to boil an egg at this hour it was completely unnecessary to switch on the light. I wasn't tired at all so for a long time I kept my gaze fixed on the watch. In the middle of doing so, I heard the front door open. My dad was back from work. I was filled with joy, this meant I could show him my gift from grandma. I quickly stood up, put my watch on my wrist and went out of my room.

Dad was on his way, tiptoeing up the stairs when I said in a loud voice:

“Dad! Look at the present I got from grandma!” at which my dad became extremely startled and looked like he would topple down the stairs.

“Shhh! Quiet, you'll wake your mother.” dad said. The light came on and I could see my mom come out of her room.

“Mom's already up.” my mom said, throwing my dad a sour look. “But more importantly, why are you coming home from your company dinner at such an hour?”

“Really now, it's not so late yet.” said dad.

“It's eleven fifty-eight.” I said triumphantly. I love it when I can be helpful to my parents.

“Your mother sure always manages to find the best presents to give him.” my dad said to my mom.

“Don't you start talking about my mother! Especially not in front of the child!” my mom said with a stern look, and told me to go to my room to sleep.

I went back to my room and listened to my mom and dad's voices for a while, then at twelve fourteen I fell asleep. At seven past five I woke up. To my disappointment, the lights on my watch had stopped shining as bright because by then it had dawned.

I didn't have to wake up early today as there was no school. Still, my dad had mentioned that if he was late for work his boss would call him on the carpet so I thought that this morning perhaps

I could help him out.

I waited a little while and then, at twelve minutes past five I went into my parents' room.

“Dad! It's dawn already! You'll be late for work!” I shouted.

My dad had an extremely confused look on his face, but as we weren't in the stairway there was no danger this time. He couldn't really fall over in his bed, could he? Nevertheless, he did look like he had been turned upside-down.

My mom sprang straight up. “What's wrong? Did something happen?” she asked.

“It's the watch. It's already dawn” my dad said.

I agreed. “Yup, it's fifteen minutes past five and will become sixteen minutes past in a while” I said.

“We got it. It's alright, just go back to bed, you've woken us up already” my mom said.

I went back to bed but as I expected I had to go back to wake them up three times before they finally got out of bed; at five forty-seven, six eighteen, and two minutes past seven.

During breakfast my dad said to my mom in a loud voice: “Could you possibly bring the coffee soon, I have been waiting five minutes already.”

“Eight minutes.” I said, after which my mom came over and shot me a strange look.

While my mom poured the coffee, she spilled some on the table cloth. Her hands were trembling. I hope she isn't getting sick.

“I'll be coming back home early this afternoon” my dad said. “I'll stamp my time card right on time, to stamp my time card.”

I asked my mom what stamping a timecard meant but she said it didn't matter and that I should go outside and play for a while.

This was the first time I thought what a pity it was that school was off for the day. I really wanted to show my watch to my classmates. The only one who has ever brought a watch to school is Geoffrey, and that was only once. It was his father's, a big pocket watch with a lid and a chain. Besides, Geoffrey's father had told him not to take it with him and it seems that he was scolded severely afterwards for taking it without asking, because we didn't get to see it a second time. According to Geoffrey, he received such a thorough spanking he thought he wouldn't ever see us again.

I went over to Alceste's house. Alceste lives in my neighborhood. He is a chubby kid who is always munching on something. Because it takes him a lot of time to eat breakfast, Alceste tends to wake up early in the morning. When I arrived in front of his house, I shouted:

“Alceste! Alceste! Come see this!”

Alceste came out holding a piece of bread in one hand and had another in his mouth.

“I have a watch!” I brought my wrist up to where the piece of bread was sticking out of his mouth.

Alceste's eyes became round and he vigorously swallowed the piece of bread.

“That's so cool!” he said.

“And it runs really well. There's even a hand for soft-boiling an egg. And in the evening it lights up!” After I explained this to him, Alceste said:

“I wonder what it looks like on the inside.”

I had never thought of looking on the inside. “Wait a second.” Alceste said and ran inside.

When he came back he was holding another piece of bread and a knife.

“Give me the watch and we'll see. I'll try and open it with the knife. I know how to do it properly, I tried it once with my dad's watch.” Alceste said, so I handed him the watch and he started fiddling with it with the knife.

I became worried that he would break it so I told him to give it back.

But Alceste didn't appear to have any intention to hand the watch over. He stuck out his tongue at me and tried to wrench open the watch so I tried to take it back by force. The knife slipped and cut Alceste's finger, at which he started to cry. At ten past nine the watch, now missing its lid, fell to the ground.

Just as I expected, it stayed ten past nine all the while I ran crying back home. The watch had already stopped running. My mom gave me a hug and told me my dad would be able to fix it for me.

When my dad came home, my mom handed him the watch. My dad rotated the watch's screws, looked at my mom, then back to my watch. Then he looked at me and finally said:

“See here, Nicholas, I can't fix the watch. But look, you can still play around with it. And what's more, you don't have to worry about causing any more damage to it, and if you have it around your wrist I think it looks just as cool as it did before.”

My mom and dad were in such a good mood I quickly became cheerful again.

These days, my watch constantly shows 4 o'clock. I like that time, its when I can get chocolate bread. Not to mention that the numbers still light up at night!

Grandma really gives the best presents!

The tadpole King

Alceste, Eudes, Rufus, Clotaire, the usual gang and I, decided to go hunting for tadpoles.

There's a really cool pond in the park we usually go to play in, and it's full of tadpoles. Tadpoles are these little creatures that get bigger with time and in the end become frogs. We learned about this in school, but as Clotaire hadn't been paying much attention in class we had to explain it to him.

I grabbed an empty jam jar from home and, making sure the caretaker wouldn't see me, went inside the park. The park's caretaker, who was always scolding us, was growing a big mustache and carried a walking staff and a whistle much like Rufus's father's, who is a policeman. There was a whole list of things you couldn't do in the park. You couldn't walk on the grass, you couldn't climb the trees, you couldn't pick the flowers, you couldn't ride a bike, you couldn't litter, you couldn't play soccer and you couldn't fight. In spite of all this, we always had fun there.

Eudes, Rufus and Clotaire had already gotten their empty jars and gathered by the pond. Alceste was the last to arrive. Apparently he couldn't find an empty jar so he took an unopened one and emptied it out. His face was still covered in jam and he looked pretty pleased.

The caretaker was nowhere in sight so we immediately started hunting.

It's extremely difficult to catch tadpoles. You have to crawl on your stomach to the edge of the pond, dip the jar into the water and try to catch them, but they scatter this way and that to escape the jar.

The first one to catch a tadpole was Clotaire, who was extremely proud. He tries very hard, but this was the first time he has ever been the first at anything.

Soon all of us had managed to catch one tadpole each. Actually, although he did his best, things didn't go as smoothly for Alceste, but he did receive a small tadpole from Rufus, who had caught two.

“So, what are we going to do with the tadpoles?” asked Clotaire.

“Hmmm” said Rufus. “We'll take them home. Then we'll wait until they grow up and turn into frogs. Then we'll make them compete in races. That would be really interesting.”

“Yeah, and besides, frogs are really useful.” Eudes said. “You know, if you keep a frog in a water tank with a small ladder you'll know when it's raining because the frog will come out of the water and climb up the ladder. If it rains, the results of the horse races will change!”

“And what's more” Alceste added, “frog thighs cooked in garlic are really yummy!”

Alceste looked intently at the frog while licking his lips.

Then we could see the caretaker coming so we all hurried out of the park.

Walking down the street, I stared closely inside my jar. My tadpole was in extremely good spirits. It was moving around quite a bit, and I thought to myself that it would most likely become a great frog. It's sure to win any race.

I decided to call him King. It was the name of a white horse in a cowboy movie I saw last Thursday. The horse was an amazing runner, and whenever the cowboy who owned him whistled, the horse came to him. I'm going to train my tadpole to do tricks as well. After he has become a frog, he will come straight away whenever I whistle.

When I came back home, my mom looked at me and cried out.

“Would you look at the state of you! You're covered in dirt from head to toe and drenched as well! What on earth have you been up to this time?”

It was true, I was covered in dirt. I had completely forgotten to roll up my sleeves when I soaked my hands into the ground.

“What's that jar for? What's inside?” my mom asked.

“It's King.” I said, showing my mom the tadpole. “He'll become a frog. When I whistle, he'll come running. I'm going to make him race and win.”

My mom made a face. “Such a dirty creature! How many times do I have to tell you before you understand, not to bring dirty things inside the house.”

“It's not dirty! It's been underwater for a long time and it's very clean. I'm going to teach him tricks!”

“Alright, if that's so, go ask your father. We'll see what he has to say about this.”

My dad looked inside the jar. “Oh! It's a tadpole.” he said as he folded into his armchair and began to read the newspaper. My mom got very angry.

“Is that all you have to say?” my mom questioned my dad closely. “I am trying to teach this child that I do not want him to bring dirty things inside the house!”

“Well, tadpoles really aren't so bad....”

“Is that so? That's it!” my mom said. “That does it! I don't care so I won't say anything. But I'll give you an ultimatum. You will choose between me and the tadpole!”

At that my mom went into the kitchen.

My dad gave a big sigh, folded up the newspaper and said: “Well, Nicholas, we can't drive your mom away, can we? I think it's best to give up the tadpole.”

I started to cry. I hated being so cruel to King, we had already become friends, I said.

My dad took me by both hands and said: “Hey, little guy. You understand that this little tadpole has a frog mommy somewhere, right? And I think that she is very worried now that her child has gone missing. If you were put in a jar and taken away, your mother would be really worried. It's the same with frogs you know. So, you know the right thing to do, don't you? Let's go together and put the frog back to the place you took it from, shall we? Then, we can go on a trip on Sunday and you can go see it. When we get back I'll buy you a piece of chocolate.”

I quickly thought it over and said: “Uh-huh, alright.”

My dad went to the kitchen and told my mom with a smile that we want her to stay and that we had decided to give up the tadpole. My mom beamed, gave me a kiss, and told me that she would make some sweets for me in the evening.

I became extremely cheerful.

When we arrived at the park, I said to my dad, who was carrying the jar to the pond:
“Here's the place.”

I then proceeded to say my goodbyes to King and my dad poured the contents of the jar into the pond.

When we turned around to go back home, we saw the caretaker step wide-eyed out from the shadow of a tree.

“Are you people absolutely crazy or is it me that has gone mad?” the caretaker said.

“Counting the policeman not too long ago, there are now the seven of you. All of you have come to exactly this spot at the pond today to dump water from jars!”

The art museum

Today I am in very high spirits. Our teacher decided to take the class to the art museum to see paintings. It's a lot of fun going together from school like this. Our teacher is very nice but sadly she doesn't do things like this all too often.

It had been decided that we would go by bus from school. It is not allowed for cars to stop in front of our school, so we had to march in a line across the road. Our teacher told us:

“Form two lines and hold hands. Be very careful!”

I didn't like having to hold hands, because Alceste was the one in line beside me. He's really chubby and always munching on something, so I didn't feel too good about holding his hand. It's not that I don't like Alceste, it's just that his hands are always sticky or greasy. Luckily, today when he gave me his hand it was dry so I asked him:

“What are you eating now, Alceste?”, to which he replied “A biscuit”, blowing biscuit powder all over my face.

Agnan was at the front of the row, right beside the teacher. He's at the top of the class and the teacher's pet. We all dislike him, but he wears glasses and so we can't give him a good slap.

“Forward march!” Agnan ordered while the traffic policeman stopped the cars to let us pass, and we

started to cross.

All of a sudden, Alceste let go of my hand and said he forgot his caramels in the classroom and that he'd be right back. Pushing his way out from the middle of the row, Alceste headed in the direct opposite direction, which caused quite the confusion.

“Where do you think you're going, Alceste?” the teacher shouted. “Return to your place immediately!”

“That's right, Alceste, where do you think you're going? Return to your place immediately!” Agnan shouted.

Eudes got annoyed by Agnan's interference. Eudes is very strong and likes giving people a punch on the nose.

“Hey, you! Stop you interfering, or I'm forced to give you a punch on the nose.” Eudes shot in Agnan's direction.

Agnan hid behind the teacher.

“You can't hit me because I have glasses.” he said.

Eudes is the tallest in the class so he stood in the back row. He started to elbow his way through the line in order to take off Agnan's glasses and give him a punch on the nose.

“Eudes, go back to your place!” our teacher yelled.

“Yeah, Eudes, go back to your place!” said Agnan.

At that, the traffic policeman raised his voice.

“I don't want to interrupt you, but it's been quite some time since I stopped the traffic. If you're going to play school on the highway, I will let the traffic go through the classroom.”

We found this rather amusing but our teacher turned deep red.

“Get on the bus.” she told us. From the way she spoke we understood that it was best to avoid any more noisy playing around. We all quickly obeyed her order.

When our bus started moving, the policeman behind us signaled a row of stopped cars that they could pass through. Then, at the sound of the breaks, we heard a voice cry out. There was Alceste, with a box of caramels in his hands, running down the road, crossing the street.

After Alceste had finally boarded the bus, we could take off for real. Before the bus turned

the corner we saw the traffic policeman throwing his white nightstick to the ground between the two cars that had just collided together.

When we got to the museum we were really well-behaved. Neatly lined up we went inside. We managed to do this as we like our teacher very much, and she had put on an angry face, similar to my mom's when my dad spills ash from his pipe onto the carpet.

We went into a huge room full of paintings that hung on the walls. "Everyone! Here we can see oil paintings by great Flander's style painters." our teacher explained. Not that we were able to follow this lengthy explanation because at this point, the museum guards came running and shouting. Alceste had started touching all the paintings because he wanted to know if they were freshly painted.

When the museum guards told him he couldn't touch the paintings he maintained that it was ok because they had already dried, and insisted that his hands weren't dirty. In any case, they both refused to give in. Our teacher told Alceste to be quiet and promised the museum guard to keep a better eye on the children. The museum guard shook his head and left.

By the time our teacher continued explaining, we had started skating around. The floor was tiled, which made the skating real smooth. Apart from the teacher who turned her back towards us, pointing at the paintings and explaining, and Agnan who was listening closely and taking notes, we were all playing around. Except for Alceste. He stood perfectly still in front of a painting of some fish, a steak and vegetables, licking his lips.

We were having so much fun. Eudes was great at skating. In the huge room, he was skating around in all directions.

When we had skated enough, we started playing leapfrog. However, because Agnan turned around and yelled: "Hey teacher, they're all playing around!", we had to stop.

Eudes became furious and started approaching Agnan, who didn't see it coming as he had taken off his glasses to wipe them clean, which was not a very good move. If he had just been wearing his glasses, he wouldn't have been hit on the nose.

The museum guard came over and asked our teacher if it wasn't time to go back home. Our teacher told him that he was right, she had also had enough.

On our way out of the museum, Alceste approached the museum guard. Carrying the small painting of the fish, beef and vegetables he had liked so much under his arm, he told the guard he wanted to buy it and asked how much it was.

Stepping outside of the museum, Geoffrey invited our teacher to come over to his house if she liked paintings, because his parents had a terrific collection that everyone was talking about. Our teacher covered her head with her hands and said she didn't want to see any more paintings or hear any more talk of paintings.

That's when I understood why our teacher had been in such a bad mood today at the museum. In summary, she really hates paintings.

プチ・ニコラ

腕時計

ゆうべ、学校から帰ってきたあとで、郵便屋さんがぼくに小包みをとどけにきた。おばあちゃんからの、すごいプレゼントだった。どんなものか、だれにもあてることはできないと思うよ。それは腕時計だったんだ。

おばあちゃんも、時計も、とってもいいなと思った。クラスみんなにこの時計をみせたら、おどろくだらうな。

パパは、ゆうべ、おうちにいなかった。仕事で、夕ごはんは外でとることになっていた。それで、ママが時計の巻き方を教えてくれ、手首に時計をはめてくれた。

うまいぐあいに、去年とはちがって、ぼくは時計がよく読める。去年だったら、ぼくはまだ小さくて、ぼくの時計が何時か、しょっちゅうひとにきかなくちゃならなかつたらうし、それはとてもめんどろなことにちがいない。

ぼくの腕時計のいいところは、長いあいだじつとよく見ていないとうごいているのがわからない二本の針のほかに、うんとはやくうごく長い針があることだ。この大きな針はなんの役にたつのか、ママにきいてみたら、これはゆで卵が半熟にできあがったかどうかがわかる、とても便利なものですよといった。

七時三十二分、ママとぼくは食卓についたけど、半熟のゆで卵がついていなかったのて、がっかりした。ぼくが時計ばかり見ながら食べていたら、スープがさめてしまうからもうちよつといそいで食べなさいと、ママにいわれた。それでぼくは、長い針がふたまわりちよつとするあいだにスープをすませた。

七時五十一分に、ママは、お昼ののこりの、おいしいお菓子をだしてくれた。ごはんがすんだのは、七時五十八分だった。それからちよつとだけ遊ばせてもらえたので、時計を耳にくっつけてカチカチという音を聞いた。

八時十五分になると、ママは、もうおやすみなさいといった。ぼくは、いつか万年筆をもらってあちこちにシミをこさえたときとおなじようにごきげんだった。ぼくは手に時計をはめたままで寝たかったけれど、ママが時計のためによくないというので、ベッドのそばのテーブルの上においた。時計をよく見られるように、テーブルのほうをむいて横になると、八時三十八分に、ママはあかりを消した。

ところが、ものすごいことがおこった。くらがりの中で、ぼくの時計の数字と針がぴかぴか光っているんだ。もしぼくがその時間にゆで卵をこしらえようとしても、あかりをつけなくてもいいわけだ。ぼくはねむくなかったので、ずーっと時計を見つめていた。すると、玄関のドアがあくのが聞こえた。パパが帰ってきたのだ。おばあちゃんのプレゼントをパパに見せてあげることができるので、ぼくはうれしくなった。おきあがって手に時計をはめ、部屋からでた。パパは、足音をたてないように、つま先で階段をのぼってくるころだった。ぼくが大声で、

「パパ！おばあちゃんにもらった時計を見てよ！」とさけぶと、パパはとてもびっくりして、階段をころげ落ちそうになった。

「しーっ、しずかにするんだ。ママが目をさますじゃないか」とパパがいった。あかりがついて、ママが部屋からでてくるのが見えた。

「ママは目をさましていますよ。」

ママは、ふきげんな顔で、パパにいった。それから、お仕事の晩ごはんから帰るのはこんな時間になるんですか、とたずねた。

「なあに、まだそんなにおそくはないよ」と、パパはいった。

「十一時五十八分だよ。」と、ぼくはとくいになっていった。だってぼくは、パパやママの役にたつのが大スキなんだから。

「きみのママからは、いつもけっこうなプレゼントをいただくもんだ。」

パパがママにいうと、ママは、

「わたしのママのことをいわなくてもいいでしょう。それも、子どものいる前で」と、にこりもしないでこたえてから、ぼくに、もうお部屋へいっておやすみなさい、といった。

ぼくは部屋にもどって、パパとママの話し声をちょっと聞いていたけど、十二時十四分には眠りだしていた。

ぼくは、五時七分に目がさめた。夜があけはじめていたので、時計の数字はもうそんなに光らなくなっていたから、がっかりした。きょうは学校がお休みなので、いそいでおきなくてもよかった。だけど、パパが会社におくれていくと上役がいつもぶつぶついうと、パパがいていたから、けさはパパの役にたつことができるだろうと、ぼくは思った。

ぼくは、ちょっと待ってから、五時十二分にパパとママの部屋へ行って、

「パパ！夜があけたよ！会社におくれてしまうよう！」とさげんだ。

パパはとてもおどろいた顔をしたけど、階段ではなかったから、あぶないことはなかった。ベッドの中でひっくりかえることはできないもんね。だけどパパは、まるでひっくりかえたみたいにヘンな顔をしていた。

ママは、はねおきて、

「どうしたの？なにがあつたの？」とたずねた。

「時計だよ。夜あけらしいな」と、パパがいった。ぼくは、「うん、いま五時十五分で、だんだん十六分になるところだよ」といった。

「わかったわよ。いいから、もういちど寝ていらっしやい。もう目がさめましたからね」と、ママはいった。

ぼくはまたベッドにもどったけど、パパとママがやつのことでおきるまでに、五時四十七分、六時十八分、七時二分と、三度おこしにいかねばならなかった。

朝ごはんのとき、パパはママに大声で、

「コーヒーをいそいでもらえないかな、もう五分も待ってるんだよ。」といった。

「八分だよ。」と、ぼくはいった。そしたらママがきて、ヘンな目つきでぼくをにらんだ。ママはコーヒーをカップにいれるとき、ちょっとテーブルクロスの上にこぼしてしまった。手がふるえていたからだ。おねがい、ママが病気でないように。

「きょうのお昼は早く帰るからね」と、パパがいった。「タイムカードをおすように、時間どおりにね。」

ぼくがママに、タイムカードをおすってなんのことかとたずねたら、そんなことはどうでもいいから外へでて遊んできなさい、といった。

学校のお休みをざんねんに思ったのは、これがはじめてだった。クラスのなかまに、ぼくの時計を見せてやりたかったからだ。学校へ時計をもってきたことのあるのはジョフ口ワひとりだけ、それも一回きりだ。その時計は彼のパパのもので、ふたとくさりのついた大

型の懐中時計だった。しかも、ジョフロワはパパにだまってもちだしてきたので、あとでさんざんしかられたらしく、時計は二度と見せてもらえなかった。ジョフロワの話だと、ひどくおしりをたたかれ、二度とぼくらに会えなくなるころだったということだ。

ぼくはアルセストの家へでかけた。すぐ近所に住んでいる友だちで、食べものはなんでもがつがつ食べる、デブの子だ。アルセストは早起きなんだけど、それは朝ごはんにとても時間がかかるからだ。

アルセストの家の前で、ぼくはさげんだ。

「アルセスト！アルセスト！これを見にこいよう！」

アルセストは、パンを口にくわえ、もう一つのパンを片手にもってでてきた。

「時計をもってるんだぞ。」

ぼくは、彼がくわえているパンのはしのへんまで、手をもちあげてみせた。アルセストは目をまるくし、パンをぐっとのみこんでから、

「こいつはすごいや！」といった。

「よくうごくんだぜ。半熟のゆで卵用の針がついてるんだ。夜でも光るんだよ。」

ぼくが説明してやると、アルセストは、

「その中はどうなってんだい？」ときいた。

中を見るなんて、これはぼくの考えていなかったことだ。

「待ってな」とアルセストはぼくにいい、家へ走ってはいった。そしてまた、べつなパンを一つと、ナイフをもって、でてきた。

「その時計を貸してみな。ナイフであけてみようよ。やり方は、よく知ってるんだ。うちのパパの時計を、ちゃんとあけたことがあるんだ」というので、ぼくが時計をアルセストにわたすと、アルセストはナイフで時計をひねくりだした。

ぼくは、時計がこわれはしないかと心配になったので、

「時計をかえしておくれよう」といった。

だけどアルセストはかえそうとしないでアカンベーをして、時計をこじあげようとした。

そこで、ぼくは腕づくでとりもどしにかかった。ナイフがすべってアルセストの指にあたり、アルセストは泣き声をだした。時計はふたがはずれて、九時十分に地面に落ちた。

ぼくが泣きながらうちに帰ったとき、時計はやはり九時十分だった。時計は、もううごかなくなっていた。ママはぼくをだきあげて、パパがちゃんとなおしてくれるわ、といった

。

パパが帰ってくると、ママはパパに時計をわたした。パパは時計のねじをまわし、ママを見つめ、時計をまた見つめ、それからぼくを見つめ、そしてぼくにいった。

「ねえ、ニコラ、この時計はもうなおらないよ。でもね、これでけっこう遊べるんだよ。おまけに、もうこれ以上こわれる心配はないし、手にはめていれば、いままでとおなじで、とてもかっこいいと思うよ。」

パパはとてもごきげんだったし、ママもごきげんだったので、ぼくもうれしくなった。ぼくの時計は、いまでは、いつでも四時だ。これはいい時間なんだ、チョコレートパンのもらえる時間なんだ。そして夜になると、数字はやっぱりぴかぴか光っている。おばあちゃんのプレゼントは、まったくすてきなプレゼントだ。

オタマジャクシのキング

アルセスト、ユード、リュフユス、クロテール、それにいつものなかまで、オタマジャクシをすくいにいこうときめた。

ぼくらがいつもよく遊びに行く公園があるんだけど、その公園には、すてきな池があるんだ。池の中には、オタマジャクシがいる。オタマジャクシは、ちいぢな生きものだけど、どんどん大きくなり、おしまいにはカエルになる。ぼくらは学校でそう教わったけど、クロテールは教室でお話をよく聞いていなかったのだから、ぼくらが説明してやらなければならなかった。

ぼくは家から、ジャムの空きびんをもちだし、公園の番人に見つからないよう注意しながら、公園にはいった。この公園の番人というのは、大きなヒゲをはやし、ステッキをもち、おまわりさんをしてるリュフユスのパパのもってるようなホイッスルまでもっていて、ぼくらをよくしかりつけるんだ。だって、この公園には、してはいけないことがものすごく多いんだ。つまり、芝生の上を歩いてはいけない、木にのぼってはいけない、花をむしってはいけない、自転車にのってはいけない、紙くずを地面に落としてはいけない、サッカーをしてはいけない、けんかをしてはいけないってことになっている。それでもぼくらは

、おもしろく遊べるんだ。

池にはもう、ユード、リュフユス、クロデルが空きびんをもって集まっていた。アルセストがいちばんおくれてきた。なんでも、空きびんが見つからなかったの、ジャムのびんを一つ、からにしてこなければならなかったんだという。アルセストの顔はまだジャムだらけで、とてもごきげんだった。

番人がいなかったの、ぼくらはさっそくオタマジャクシをすくいはじめた。

オタマジャクシをつかまえるのは、とってもむずかしいんだ。池のへりに腹ばいになり、水の中にびんをつけてつかまえようとするんだけど、オタマジャクシはにげまわって、どうしてもびんの中にはいろうとしないんだ。

いちばんさきにオタマジャクシをとったのは、クロテールで、すごく大いばりだった。どんなことにしても、一番になるのは、はじめてだったからだ。

やがてぼくらはみな、なんとか一ぴきずつオタマジャクシをつかまえた。じつはアルセストはどうしてもうまうまかかなかったんだけど、二ひきつかまえたリュフユスから、小さいほうを一ぴきもらったんだ。

「さあ、このオタマジャクシでなにをするんだい？」と、クロデルがきいた。

「そうだな」と、リュフユスはいった。「うちにもって帰るんだよ。そして大きくなって、カエルになるのを待つんだ。それから競走をさせてみよう。こいつはおもしろいぜ。」

「それにさ」と、ユードがいった。「カエルってのは、役にたつんだぜ。水そうに飼ってろカエルが水面にでていいる小さなハシゴをのぼると雨が降るってわかるし、雨が降れば競馬の予想がかわるんだぞ！」

「それにさ」と、アルセストがいった。「カエルのもも肉のニンニク料理はね、とってもおいしいんだよ。」

アルセストは、くちびるのまわりを舌でなめまわしながら、オタマジャクシをじろじろ見た。

それから、公園の番人がやってくるのが見えたので、みんないっせいに走って公園の外にでた。

通りにでて歩きながら、ぼくは、びんの中のオタマジャクシを見つめた。こいつはとても元気なやつだった。よくうごきまわってるし、たしかにこいつは、ものすごいカエルになるにちがいない。どんな競走だって勝つにきまってる。

ぼくはこいつに、キングという名をつけてやることにした。このまえの木曜日に見たカウボーイの映画にでてきた、白い馬の名だ。とてもよく走る馬で、飼いぬしのカウボーイが口笛をふくと、すぐやってくる。ぼくも、ぼくのオタマジャクシに、芸をしこんでやるんだ。カエルになったら、口笛をふけばすぐやってくるだろう。

ぼくがうちに帰ると、ママはぼくをじっと見て、さけび声をあげた。

「まあ、なんていうかっこうなの。からだじゅう泥だらけじゃないの、びしょびしょだわ！ いったいなにをしでかしたの？」

ぼくがすごくきたなかつたのは、ほんとだ。池ん中へ腕をつけるときに、シャツのそでをまくりあげとくのを、すっかりわすれていたんだ。

「そのびんはなに？ なにがはいつてるの？」と、ママはたずねた。

「キングだよ。」と、ぼくはオタマジャクシをママに見せながらいった。「カエルになるんだ。ぼくが口笛をふいたら、とんでくるんだよ。競走をして勝つんだ。」

ママは顔をしかめた。

「そんなきたないものを！ なんべんいったらわかるのかしら、おうちの中へきたないものをもちこんじゃダメって、いつてるでしょう。」

「きたなくなんでないよ。ずうっと水ん中にいたんだから、きれいだよ。ぼくはこいつに芸をしこんでやるんだ！」

「いいわ、それじゃ、パパに聞いてごらん。パパがとうおっしゃるか、聞いてみましょうよ。」

パパはびんを見ると、「おや、オタマジャクシだね」といっただけで、ひじかけいすに腰をおろして新聞を読みだした。それでママは、すっかり腹をたてた。

「おっしゃりたいのはそれだけ？」と、ママはパパを問いつめた。「わたしはこの子に、きたならしいものをおうちにもってきてほしくないんです！」

「まあね。オタマジャクシは、それほど手をやくしろものじゃないしね。。。」

「そうですか、けっこうです」と、ママはいった。「けっこうですわよ！ わたしは気にしませんから、もうなんにもいいませんからね。ただおことわりしておきますが、オタマジャクシが、わたしが、どっちかをえらんでください！」

そしてママは、台所へ行ってしまった。

パパは大きなためいきをついて、新聞を折りたたむと、

「ねえ、ニコラ、ママをおっぱらうなんてできないだろ」と、ぼくにいった。「オタマジャクシをおっぱいらわなくてはなるまいよ。」

ぼくは泣きだした。ぼくは、キングをいじめちゃいやだ、ぼくたちはもう友だちになったんだ、といった。

パパは、ぼくを両手でだきあげて、「ねえ、チビさん」といった。

「このちっちゃなオタマジャクシには、カエルのママがいるってこと、わかるだろう。そして、カエルのママはね、子どもがいなくなったんで、とても心配してると思うよ。もしおまえが空きびんの中に入れられて、つれていかれたら、うちのママは、きっとすごく心配するだろう。カエルにしたって、おなじことなんだよ。

だから、どうすればいいかわかるね。パパとふたりで、オタマジャクシをとった場所へかえしてやりにいこうじゃないか。それから、日曜のたびに、おまえはオタマジャクシを見にいつでもいいんだよ。うちにもどったら、チョコレートを一枚買ってあげるよ。」

ぼくはすぐ考えなおし、うん、いいよといった。

そこでパパは台所へ行って、わらいながらママに、ママのほうをのこしてオタマジャクシをおっぱらうことにきめたんだ、といった。そこでママもにこにこして、ぼくにキスをし、今夜はお菓子をつくってあげますからね、といった。

ぼくは、とてもうれしくなった。

公園につくと、ぼくは、びんをもっているパパを池までつれていった。

「ここだよ」と、ぼくはいった。

それから、ぼくはキングにさよならをいい、パパはびんの中にあるものをみんな池に流しこんだ。

ぼくらが帰ろうとしてふりかえると、木のかげから公園の番人が、目をまるくしてでてくるのが見えた。

「あんたがたがイカしてるのか、それとも、このわしのほうがヘンなのか」と、番人はいった。「さっきのおまわりさんをいれて、あんたで七人めだ。みんなきょう、この池のちよどここの場所へ、びんの水を投げこみにきたもんだ。」

美術館

きょう、ぼくはとてごきげんなんだ。先生が、美術館へ絵を見せに、クラス全員をつれてってくれるからだ。こんなふうに、みんなそろって学校からでかけるのは、とても楽しいんだ。先生はやさしいけど、ざんねんながら、そう何度もこんなふうなことはしてくれないんだ。

学校から美術館まで、ぼくらはバスでいくことになっていた。学校の前に車をとめられないもんだから、ぼくらは通りを横断しなければならない。それで先生は、

「二列になって手をつなぎなさい。よく注意してね！」と、ぼくらにいった。

でも、ぼくは、手をつなぐのはすきじゃなかった。だって、ぼくとならぶのはアルセストなんだ。とてもふとってて、しょっちゅうなにか食べてるから、手をつなぐのが気持ちわるいんだ。アルセストがきらいだというんじゃないけど、あいつの手はいつでも、ベトベトかネバネバなんだ。きょうは、運よく、カラツとした手をしていたので、

「なにを食べてるんだい、アルセスト？」ときいてみたら、「ビスケットさ」と、ぼくの顔にビスケットの粉をふきかけながらこたえた。

先生とならんで、アニャンは前のほうにいた。クラスで一番だし、先生のお気にいりだ。ぼくらはアニャンが大きらいなんだけど、めがねをかけているので、思いきりひっぱたけないんだ。

「前へすすめ！」とアニャンが号令をかけ、交通巡査がぼくらを通すために車の列をとめているあいだに、通りを横ぎりはじめた。

とつぜん、アルセストがぼくの手をはなし、すぐもどってくるからな、教室にキャラメルをわすれてきたんだ、といった。列のまん中をかきわけて、アルセストが逆もどりしはじめたので、ちょっと混乱がおこった。

「どこへいくんです、アルセスト」と、先生は大声をだした。「すぐもとにもどきなさい！」

「そうだ、アルセスト、どこへいくんだい。すぐもとにもどきなさい！」と、アニャンがさげんだ。

アニャンの口だししたことが、ユードの気にさわった。ユードはすごく力が強くて、ひとの鼻さきに一発くらわせることがとてもすきだ。

「やい、ひいきのひのこ！よけいな口だしをするな、一発ぶんなぐってやるぞ」と、ユードはアニャンのほうへむかった。

アニャンは先生のかげにかくれて、

「ぼくはめがねをかけてるんだから、なぐったらいけないんだよ」といった。ユードはいちばん背が高いので、いちばん後列にいたけど、アニャンのめがねをとりあけて鼻さきへ一発やろうとして、みんなをおしのけ、かきわけてすすんだ。

「ユード、自分の場所にもどきなさい！」と、先生がさげんだ。

「そうです、ユード、自分の場所にもどきなさい！」と、アニャンがいった。

すると、交通巡査が声をかけた。

「きみらのじゃまをする気はないが、交通をとめてから、もうかなりの時間がたつとる。

車道で教室のまねをするんなら、車の列に学校を通りぬけてもらうことにしますぞ。」

そうになったらおもしろいと、ぼくらは思ったけど、先生はまっかっかになってしまい、

「バスにのりなさい」とぼくらにいった。そのいい方で、これはもうガヤガヤふざけてる場合じゃないことがわかった。みんな大いそぎで、いいつけをまもった。

ぼくらのバスがうごきだすと、そのうしろで交通巡査は、とめていた自動車の群れに、通ってよろしいと合図をした。とたんに、ブルーキをかける音と、さけび声が聞こえた。アルセストが、キャラメル箱の手にして、通りを走って横断しているのだった。

やつのことでアルセストはバスにのりこみ、ぼくらはほんとうに出発することができた。

バスが町かどをまがるまえ、交通巡査が白い警棒を、衝突した自動車と自動車のあいだの地面に投げつけているところが見えた。

ぼくらはきちんと整列し、おとなしく美術館にはいった。ぼくらは先生が大すぎだし、先生は、パパがタバコの灰をじゅうたんの上に落としたときのママみたいに、とてもイライラしてるみたいだったからだ。

ぼくらは、壁にもものすごくたくさんの絵がかかっている大広間へはいった。

「ここでみなさんは、フランドル派の大画家たちのかいた油絵を見るんですよ」と、先生は説明した。しかし、そう長く説明をつづけるわけにはいかなかった。というのは、美術館の監視人が走ってきて、どなったからだ。アルセストが、絵がかかれたばかりかどうかを見ようとして、指でさわっていたというんだ。

監視人は、絵に手をふれてはいけないといい、アルセストは、もうかわいているんだから

さわってもいいんだ、手がよごれることはないから、といいはり、どちらもゆずらなかった。先生はアルセストに、しずかになさいといい、監視人には、よく子どもたちを見張りますからと約束した。監視人は頭をふりふりでていった。

先生が説明をつづけているうちに、ぼくらはスケートごっこをはじめていた。なにしろ床がタイル張りになっていて、とてもよくすべるのでたのしいんだ。ぼくらに背をむけて絵の説明をしている先生と、そばにくっついて話を聞いてノートに書きこんでいるアニャンと、このふたりのほかは、みんな遊んだ。ただ、アルセストはやらなかった。魚やビフテキやくだものをえがいたちっちゃな絵の前に、じっと立ったままだった。アルセストは、舌でくちびるをなめまわしながら絵に見いていた。

ぼくらはとてもおもしろかった。ユードはスケートもすごかった。広間いっぱい、ぐるりとまわるんだ。

スケートごっこがすむと、こんどは馬飛びがはじまった。けれど、アニャンがうしろをふりむいて、「先生！みんな遊んでますよ！」とிட்டので、やめなければならなかった。ユードはカツとなって、アニャンに近よった。アニャンがそれに気づかなかったのは、めがねをふこうとして、はずしていたからだ。よくよくアニャンは運がなかったんだ。めがねをかけてさえいれば、鼻さきをなくられることもなかったはずなのに。

監視人がやってきて、もう帰られたほうがいいと思いませんか、と先生にிட்ட。先生は、そうですねとこたえ、わたしもうんざりですわ、ともிட்ட。

そこでぼくらが美術館をでようとしたとき、アルセストが監視人のそばにிட்ட。アルセストは、すっかり気にிட்ட魚やビフテキやくだもののかかれた小さな絵を、わきにかかえこんでいて、これを買いたいんだけど、いくらぐらいかと監視人にきいた。

美術館をでると、ジョフロワが先生に、絵がおすきなら、ぼくんちにきてください、ぼくのパパとママは、みんながうわさをするようなすごいコレクションをもってるんです、とிட்ட。先生は顔を手でかくすようにして、もう絵なんか見たくありません、絵の話聞くのもいやです、とிட்ட。

そこで、ぼくにはよくわかったんだ。なぜ先生が、みんなと美術館ですごしたこの一日、ひどくふきけんだったのか。つまり、先生は絵がきれいなんだ。