

Itoh Hiromi, writer as a transfer--weaving other voices—

This study aims to analyze Itoh`s Togenuki shin Sugamo Jizo engi (2007) through her distinctive, unconventional style in which she cites, at times explicitly, other`s texts. Herein, I interpret her work as a "transfer genre", both in terms of the narrative and the weaving together of other`s voices.

In Toge-nuki shin Sugamo jizo engi, the narrator "Watashi", who is only partially identifiable with the author, constructs a tale that, moving between the comical and sorrowful, in which her various "difficulties"with regard to elderly care, parenting and the culture gap between her and her husband are conveyed. This modern tale is narrated in the first person, and differs from the more conventional Japanese I-novel in borrowing elements from genres ranging from classic literature to contemporary poetry.

This work is characterized by the use of "citation". Itoh cites a wide range of texts and authors- Kojiki, Sekkyo-Bushi, Franz Kafka, Nakahara Chuya, and Ishimure Michiko. Itoh herself explains that she has "borrowed these voices;" thus, her text can be read as a response to the voices of others. Itoh was conscious of her language belonging to these others and her style is not only an example of intertextuality, but also demonstrates various types of citation, direct reference and allusion. Kawakami Hiromi states that, in some cases, there are no obvious distinctions within Itoh`s quotations from other texts(2007), suggesting that these other voices sometimes dissolve in her texts and her approach relies on polysemy.

A detailed examination of her text reveals that the narrator ("I") becomes a metaphorical representation of various protagonists from the works from which she borrows. Additionally, "I"sometimes directly translates Japanese -to -English word order when communicating with her English-speaking husband, while her mother speaks in Kanto dialect, and her children talk in a Japanese- English creole. Further, she adopts a colloquial style that includes scatological expressions peculiar to Itoh and her sense of body, as well as the use of words to simply represent sound throughout her text. Through this, we become aware of irrational elements within her words.

In the aforementioned examples, the words themselves become fantastic and everchanging. Each time the narrator moves, her words are transformed. Thus, we can characterize her writing as developing a "transfer genre". Further careful analysis is needed to identify the various allusions and references in her words, sentences, and text, which resonate with multiple voices.