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A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY IN TRANSLATION: "OMAR KHAYYAM'S *RUBAIYAT*" IN DAZAI OSAMU'S NOVEL *NO LONGER HUMAN*

GEORGE T. SIPOS
West University of Timisoara
Washington University in Saint Louis

Abstract: *This article explores the source and the meaning of the eleven quatrains quoted by modern Japanese writer Dazai Osamu (1909-1948) in his last complete novel, Ningen shikkaku (No Longer Human, 1948). Although dubbed as "rubaiyat", which would indicate that they are translations of classical Persian poet and mathematician Omar Khayyam (1048-1131), the poems do not seem to match any of the known English translations from his work. This article explores the origin of the Japanese quatrains in Dazai's novel, as well as their possible relevance for his literary work overall.*
Keywords: Dazai Osamu, Edward FitzGerald, Henry Bertram Lister, Horii Ryōho, *No Longer Human*, Omar Khayyam, *Rubaiyat*, translation.

1. Introduction

Japanese writer Dazai Osamu (1909-1948)[i] is best known for his intensely naturalistic explorations of human nature inspired by his own life experience. Equally relevant as his literary work is his life, one fascinating the Japanese imagination to this day, as evident in the fact that a *manga* comics series and *anime* show and film character in the popular *Bungō Sutorei doggusu* (Bungo Stray Dogs, or "Literary Stray Dogs", written by Kafka Asagiri and running serially since 2012) is named after him and bears certain similarities with the writer himself.

The fascination with Dazai's life and work persisted in Japan ever since his untimely death in 1948 following a double suicide, the fourth such attempt on his part. Dazai's postwar novels *Shayō* (Setting Sun, 1947; Dazai 1963-64, 9:77-189) and *Ningen shikkaku* (No Longer Human, 1948; Dazai 1963-64, 9:283-370) established his legacy as part of literary trend sometimes dubbed the *nikutai bungaku* ("literature of the carnal"), as well as a member of a loose group of writers called the *burai-ha* (the decadents). The *burai-ha* writers include, alongside Dazai, names such as Sakaguchi Ango (1906-1955) and Oda Sakunosuke (1913-1947), among others, lesser known. *Libertin*, as defined by Dazai himself in a 1946 letter to former proletarian writer Kishi Yamaji (1899-1973) (see Keene 1998:1023-24; the letter, in Dazai 1963-64, 11:172) who had borrowed the term from French, the writers of the *burai-ha* were rebellious, unconventional, decadent, irreverent when it came to political allegiance and possessed by a deeply seated desire to destroy themselves through suicide or decadent lifestyle.

Translating the work of Dazai can prove to be a difficult task at times, although his writing style is relatively straightforward. Especially in his postwar work, and more specifically in the 1948 novel *No Longer Human*[ii], the writer tends to launch into paragraph-long phrases, in which shorter sentences sometimes seem written outside an internal logic and separated by commas. Only when the overall meaning of such paragraphs becomes evident, the translator can set the sentences in place for a final sequence and meaning in the target language. The added difficulty in the case of the novel *No Longer Human* discussed in this article, is that it was produced at a time when Dazai's writing was getting erratic and some of the ideas on the page seem to trail off. Even more challenging are issues posed by the identification of obscure references which although anchor the

text solidly into the time period in which the work was written, also turn out to be less irrelevant to today's readers. The translator is then put in the position of having to decide whether the rendering of those references into the target language and inclusion in the final translated work makes sense.

The purpose of this article is to focus on one of these period-anchored references that, for better or for worse, cannot be ignored or omitted in any translation, although that has been the case in several of the translations consulted. His last completed novel, *No Longer Human* includes, quoted in full, eleven quatrains in verse identified by Dazai as having been extracted from the work of 11-12th century Persian poet Omar Khayyam (1048-1131). In the novel, the writer gave the title of the poems in Japanese, *Rubaiyatto*, and indicated that the main character, artist Ōba Yōzō, was using Khayyam's poems as texts to accompany sets of pornographic drawings and cartoons he was selling to dirty magazines.

Normally, when it comes to such passages, the work of the translator is somewhat prescribed: identify the original source of the quote and, especially in the case of famous literary pieces such as here, look for the already-published translation into the target language (in my case, Romanian), and use that together with the acknowledgment of the source. However, as soon as I proceeded to identify the quoted quatrains in the English or Romanian published translations of the work of Omar Khayyam, the task proved more difficult than expected. The Japanese poems did not seem to match any of the existing consecrated translations of the Persian poet. Moreover, when consulted as a source for this particular part of the text, the 1958 English rendition of Dazai's novel by celebrated translator and Japanese literature specialist Donald Keene (1922-2019) provided only three poems which had absolutely no connection with the ones quoted by Dazai. The Keene poems were, in fact, rendered directly from the 1859 English translation of Khayyam's work by English poet Edward FitzGerald (1809-1883) (Khayyam 2009), but could not be identified as any of the eleven poems used by Dazai in *No Longer Human*.

The process of uncovering the original source of the *Rubaiyat* quatrains quoted in Dazai's 1948 novel constitutes the core endeavor of this article and led to the uncovering of an obscure, but fascinating triangular relationship between a medieval Persian poet known for flaunting social norms, a minor early 20th century Japanese poet and creative translator from English, and Dazai Osamu, the decadent novelist of the 1930s and 1940s.

2. Dazai Osamu

Dazai, the *nom de plume* of Tsushima Shūji, was born in the Aomori Prefecture in Kanagi, in the Northernmost part of the main Japanese island of Honshū. The tenth of eleven children of a wealthy (albeit of low status) family, his father, Gen'emon's fortune in that part of the country secured him election in Japan's Diet where he served until 1922. Gen'emon's wealth was rewarded in 1922 with a seat in the upper chamber of the Diet, the hereditary House of Peers, but he died only three months later in 1923 without enjoying the benefits of that newly acquired honor. His political service and management of the wealth and household made him mostly absent from young Dazai's life. The writer's mother was very sickly, so the child was left in the care of the numerous servants and relatives who lived in the grand mansion belonging to the Tsushimas (see Nohara 1981, O'Brien 1976, Lyons 1985: 21-54, and Keene 1998: 1026-64, among others).

Soon after his father's death, at age thirteen, Dazai entered the Aomori High School and left the parental home. It was there, partly due to the influence and artistic inclinations of all the Tsushima boys, that young Shūji started writing and publishing literature in the school paper as well as in literary magazines edited together with the older brothers,

Bunji—a Waseda University graduate and soon to become a famous local politician—and Keiji, an aspiring sculptor. In 1927, Dazai entered Hirosaki College, but after initial academic and literary successes that had convinced him that he would become a writer, that summer the news of the suicide of modernist writer Akutagawa Ryūnosuke (1892-1927)—an epoch-making event that marked an important mentality shift not only in the life and career of Dazai, but of an entire generation—the young writer found himself in the midst of an existential crisis that will follow him for the rest of his life. This was a time of profound changes in Japan altogether, as the country was sliding into militarism and authoritarianism after the relatively democratic period that followed World War I, one in which the role of the intelligentsia altogether seemed to be shrinking and the feeling that modernity was not something that Japanese people and society could ultimately benefit from and support was becoming prevalent and would ultimately lead into Japan's long fifteen years of war of aggression against China and then the Allied Powers with the beginning of the Pacific War in 1941. As proof of that foreboding feeling that was suffocating writers and artists like Akutagawa in 1927, his suicide letter, *Aru kyūyū e okuru shuki* (A Note to a Certain Friend) addressed to fellow writer Kume Masao (1891-1952), is often cited. In it, Akutagawa mentioned as the reason behind his suicide "a vague sense of anxiety about my future", a phrase that became iconic for the crisis or modernity in Japan. Akutagawa had long been considered and admired as the most representative *bunjin* (man of letters) of his generation and his suicide has been cited often as the main reason for many subsequent Japanese writers' transformation, either political or artistic. Moreover, it was made into a manifesto of the very defeat of un-engaged, aesthetically driven literature, and the perceived triumph of politically engaged literature, as seen in proletarian literary critic and activist Miyamoto Kenji (1908-2007)'s 1929 essay *Haiboku no bungaku* (The Literature of Defeat). An entire generation of Japanese writers, Dazai Osamu included, would later claim and trace their artistic genealogy to Akutagawa's suicide (for more on the impact of Akutagawa's suicide, see Lippit 2002: 39-72).

After focusing mostly on writing than studies while in Hirosaki, Dazai moved to Tokyo in 1930 to attend courses in the French Language and Literature Department at Tokyo Imperial University, although he was almost never seen in the classroom. He received for a short while a monthly allowance from his family, but instead of studying he found himself absorbed by literary endeavors, political activities on behalf of the Japan Communist Party and the bohemian lifestyle of the capital city. That year he attempted his first suicide, as part of a double suicide together with a bar hostess, Tanabe Shimeko (1912-1930). The woman died, but Dazai survived.

From that point forward, his life entered a pattern of decadence and wishful self-destruction, which resulted in two more suicide attempts, and several volumes of prose. By 1935 it became evident that there was no possible way for him to graduate from university and he worked frenetically to complete a volume of short stories, *Bannen* (Declining Years, 1936), intended as his farewell to the world. In 1935, he attempted to kill himself again, failing once more. Shortly after, in 1936, he tried again, this time together with his wife, *geisha* Oyama Hatsuyo (1912-1944) about whom he had learned that had been unfaithful to him during his long hospitalization with appendicitis, followed by his battle with morphine addiction. They took sleeping pills together, but neither died. They divorced soon after.

Dazai continued to write short stories during this time and throughout the 1940s, many of them demostrating an extraordinarily astute ability to observe society and human nature. Most of his fiction writings fall under a literary category developed in Japan at the beginning of the 20th century as a continuation of and in response to European naturalism, called *shishōsetsu* (often translated as I-novel, albeit that has been shown to be a misnomer), a semi-autobiographical prose that is purporting to be an accurate description of the writer's own life experiences. *Shishōsetsu* relies heavily on the contract between writers and their readership, the latter expecting to detect in the narrative truths about the actual experiences of the former (extensive research on *shishōsetsu*, in Fowler 1988, Hijiya-Kirschnereit 1996, and Suzuki 1996, among others).

Dazai remarried a middle school teacher, Ishihara Michiko (1912-1997), and they had three children together, Sonoko, Masaki and Satoko. Satoko would become of the powerful literary female voices of *shishōsetsu* writing in postwar Japan, under the pseudonym Tsushima Yūko (1947-2016). During the war years, Dazai avoided being drafted due to having developed tuberculosis, and somehow managed to continue publishing despite increased scrutiny from the censors. Commendably, he did not make political and ideological compromises and did not support the militaristic and imperialist agenda during Japan's war in the Pacific, like so many other Japanese artists and intellectuals during that time and focused his work on rewriting and reworking themes and topics from classical and medieval literature or from fairy tales.

Already a famous author in Japan, the years immediately following Japan's defeat in World War II, were some of the most productive in Dazai's literary career. He would now write some of his most important contributions to modern Japanese literature, such as the novella *Viyon no tsuma* (Villon's Wife, 1947; Dazai 1963-64, 9:12-36), and his two novelistic masterpieces, *The Setting Sun* and *No Longer Human*. True to the conventions of *shishōsetsu*, Dazai continued to borrow heavily for these three works from his own life. *The Setting Sun* is almost entirely based on the diary of one of his fans, Ōta Shizuko (1913-1982), with whom he had an affair and a daughter, in 1947.

That same year, Dazai, by now completely addicted to alcohol, abandoned his family and moved in with a beautician, Yamazaki Tomie (1919-1948). It was during his time with her that he completed his final finished work, *No Longer Human*. The two committed suicide together in June 1948, by drowning themselves in the Tamagawa Canal. Dazai was writing a novel entitled *Guddobai* (Goodbye, 1948; Dazai 1963-64, 9:371-390). His body was found on June 19, which would have been his 39th birthday.

No Longer Human

Undoubtedly one of Dazai Osamu's best known and most celebrated novels, *No Longer Human*, is a mix of autobiographical elements from the authors' own life and fictional elements that anchor the text in 1930s-1940s Japan, although the war does not play a part in the narrative.

Narrated in the first person, by a character identified as aspiring artist Ōba Yōzō, and who refers to himself by the pronoun *jibun* (approximately "myself"), the short novel traces through the use of the narrative method of diary notebooks (the story is told in three notebooks, the last one split into two parts) the trials and tribulations of the main character as he is leaving his hometown in the countryside and moves to Tokyo to get a university degree, but instead finds himself attracted by the study of art and artistic endeavors. Accompanied by another would-be artist, Horiki Masaki, Ōba descends into a life of debauchery, heavy drinking and drug addiction and, very much like Dazai himself, attempts to commit suicide on several occasions. The book is overall a meditation on human condition in the modern world, but also a twisted, upside-down *bildungsroman*, as it aims to depict not the evolution, but the devolution of a human being trapped within the conventions of a world that he cannot comprehend and adjust to. The title itself, that would literally translate as "human decay, failure, disqualification", although seems to be pointing at the life of the main character, is in essence a critique of modern society as whole. The tragedy of the character is not that he is not capable to become a true functioning human in society, but that he cannot possibly imagine integrating into that society and abide by its rules in order to live a "normal" life. He is a "failed", "disqualified" human because there is no other way for him to be. The three notebooks are framed by a short preface and epilogue, both written from the perspective of yet another "I" narrator, who self-identifies as *watashi* (I).

Like *The Setting Sun* before it, *No Longer Human* became an iconic work of literature and generations of readers worldwide identified with its powerful albeit bleak

message of incapacity to abide by social conventions for the sake of a society that ultimately does not care about the human beings that form it. The book has been made into two movies, more recently in 2019, under the direction of female director Ninagawa Mika, and the fascination of the young generation with it and with its author is evident in the array of *manga* and *anime* series written and produced in the last two decades alone.

And if in Japan *No Longer Human* became the second-best sold volume of modern literature after Natsume Sōseki's (1867-1916) groundbreaking *Kokoro* (Kokoro, 1914) (see Yoshin 2007), internationally the novel has been translated virtually in all languages of international circulation, as soon as it was published in book format in Japan in 1952. The Donald Keene English translation of 1958 was the first to be published, followed soon after by the French version of 1962 in Georges Renondeau's rendition. The same year, an Italian edition, under the title *Lo squalificato* was published at Feltrinelli Editore in Milan, a Spanish one as *Ya no humano* at Seix Barral in Barcelona, while a Finnish rendition, *Ei enää ihminen*, came out in 1969 at Weilin + Göösin kirjasto in Helsinki, all most probably retranslated from Keene's English version. Editions in other languages either translated from the original or from the Keene translation followed much later, many of them after the 1990s: German in 1997, Russian in 1998, Spanish in 1999, Chinese in 2001 (with three different versions now published), Korean in 2004, Turkish in 2006, Swedish in 2008, Portuguese and Estonian in 2011, Polish and Vietnamese in 2015, and so on. A new English translation of the novel was published in 2018 by Stone Bridge Press in Mark Gibeau's rendition (see Yegulalp 2018). Finally, it seems that a third English translation self-published in 2020 (the book entered public domain on January 1, 2019) is now available from a translator named Mary Fox who used the title, *No Longer Human: Confessions of a Faulty Man* and is only available in e-book and audio book format, but no additional information was accessible at the time of the writing of the present article (Dazai 2020).

The survey of the various translations of the novel so far is all the more salient, as the current research was triggered, as mentioned above, by the translation of the book into Romanian (Dazai 2022). To date, Dazai's work remains vastly untranslated into Romanian, the very few exceptions serving only to confirm the empty spot still needing to be filled. A 1982 rendition into Romanian of *The Setting Sun* as *Amurg* from English and published by Editura Univers was reprinted with new edits based on the Japanese original in 2008 by Editura Humanitas, the translation belonging to Angela Hondru (Dazai 1982). The only other Dazai piece translated into Romanian so far seems to be the 1940 short story *Hashire Merosu* (Run, Melos!), translated by Raluca Nicolae in 2000 (Dazai 2000). As such, the current translation project, which includes not only the novel *No Longer Human*, but also the short stories *Omoide* (Memories, 1933), *Joseito* (Schoolgirl, 1939), *Fugaku hyakkei* (One Hundred Views of Mount Fuji, 1939), and *Tōkyō hakkei* (Eight Views of Tokyo, 1941), is equally timely and very necessary for a wider reception and understanding of Dazai's literary work in Romania.

The *Rubaiyat* Quatrains in *No Longer Human*

Like other modern Japanese writers, Dazai Osamu often refers in his works to prominent figures of the letters and the arts be they from Japan or from the rest of the world. In fact, the very coining of the term *burai-ha* as mentioned above occurs as a parallel with the French *libertins*, among whom Dazai counts figures such as poet François Villon (1431-1463) or writer Cyrano de Bergerac (1619-1655). And while the former is invoked as an inspiration for the main character of the 1947 novella *Villon's Wife*, and the latter is cited as an example of a member of the French *burai-ha*, others such as Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867) or Paul Verlaine (1844-1896) are invoked as models of *libertins* at different moments in Dazai's work (Keene 1998:1024).

> "I am a *libertin*. I reject restrains. I mock people who look pleased with themselves. That's why I seem fated never to be a success, no matter how long I wait", Dazai wrote in his letter to Kishi cited above (Dazai 1963-64, 11:172, cited in Keene 1998:1024).

And it is by this definition that it can be easily surmised that Persian poet Omar Khayyam would have easily made Dazai's list of models when it came to libertinage, and as such it is not surprising to see a number of his quatrains cited directly in the novel *No Longer Human*.

Khayyam and his work need little introduction, having entered the heritage of world literature through the English translations of the Rubaiyat quatrains in mid-19th century. While mostly known as a mathematician and astronomer in his time, Khayyam is now remembered as a poet due largely to the English translations of his *rubaiyat* (quatrains) by Edward FitzGerald in 1859. While initially the volume was completely ignored and did not sell a single copy, as indicated by Daniel Karlin in his "Introduction" to the 2009 publication of the FitzGerald translation (Khayyam 2009:XI), it was the second half of the 19th century and the infatuation of the transcendentalist movement in the United States with the "carpe diem" philosophy of the Persian that pushed his poetry to the fore, among other ideological reasons that served the political aims of various groups at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th (Aminrazavi 2005: 2 et passim). Exotic for some, iconoclastic for others, the proponent of life without limitations and in harmony with nature for yet others, Khayyam's four-verse pills of wisdom (as rendered into English by FitzGerald) remain to this day one of the best-known examples of not only Persian poetry in the Western world, but also of Zoroastrian and Islamic wisdom.

And while the FitzGerald translation (as creative as it may have been) was not the first, nor the last of Khayyam's work into English (a full list, in O'Malley 2019:464-470), it was the one that made its way into Japan through the lecture "Edward FitzGerald and the Rubaiyat" delivered at the Tokyo Imperial University (today's University of Tokyo) by the none other than early Japan studies specialist, writer and journalist Lafcadio Hearn (1850-1904), who was a lecturer at the university between 1896 and 1903 (Kuzumi 2015:147 and Rajabzadeh 2008). The lecture drew the attention of poet and novelist Kanbara Ariake (1876-1952), who would include the first six translated quatrains in his 1908 volume of poems *Ariake shū* (The Ariake Anthology; Kanbara 1908) (see Kuzumi 2015:146). He was followed by others, all translating from the fourth or fifth editions of FitzGerald English version. The first translations directly from Persian (as Kuzumi pointed out, "there were exceedingly few specialists in Persian in Japan at the time", Kuzumi 2015:147) won't be available until 1920 with Araki Shigeru (1884-1932)'s translation from the original of 158 poems, followed by Ogawa Ryōsaku (1910-1951) with 143 poems in 1935 and 1938 (Kuzumi 2015:147 and Rajabzadeh 2008).

Whose "Rubaiyat"?

One of the major pitfalls of the work of the translator is that every so often the direct solution to a cross-reference check completely eludes you. So was the case of the translation of the novel *No Longer Human* from its Japanese original into Romanian. When, way into the first part of third notebook forming the narrative bulk of the novel, the eleven Khayyam poems make their appearance, the instinct is to look for the original source of the quote. In this case, the *Encyclopedia Iranica* and Hashem Rajabzadeh's 2008 entry for "Translations of Persian Works into Japanese" seemed like the logical place to start. Unfortunately, while not directly indicated as the source for the quoted poems in *No Longer Human*, Rajabzadeh's entry does indicate that "Taketomo's translations became the source of several quotations in the works of the popular novelist Osamu Dazai…" (Rajabzadeh 2008). Unfortunately, after extensive archival research through physical and digital databases and resources, the information provided by Rajabzadeh proved to be inaccurate. Not only the poems quoted by Dazai did not match any of the translations from Taketomo Sōfū (1891-1954)'s 1921 or 1947 volumes of translated *Rubaiyat* (Khayyam 1921), but there is no indication that Dazai quoted Khayyam in any other of his works except for *No Longer Human*. A series of other volumes of translations, including Mori Ryō (1911-

1994)'s 1941 (Khayyam 1941) and Ogawa Ryōsaku's 1938 (Khayyam 1938) direct translation, were consulted, but the poems in the Dazai's novel seemed impossible to identify.

Ultimately, the answer to the *Rubaiyat* poems presented itself in Dazai's widow Tsushima Michiko's volume of recollections about her late husband, *Kaisō no Dazai Osamu* (Dazai Osamu in Recollections, 1978). In it, there is an entry pertaining exactly to the volume of rubaiyat that Dazai had in his possession when he died: "*Rubaiyat* (translated by Horii Ryōho, May 1947, published at Nanboku shoen.) A gift," followed by a description of the content of the volume, which includes 101 translated poems, a study entitled *Nihon ni okeru "Rubaiyatto" no shōshi* (A Bibliography of the *Rubaiyat* in Japan), signed by the translator, eulogies for the translator signed by linguist and essayist Shinmura Izuru (1876-1967), philosopher and educator Abe Yoshihige (1883-1966), and an *Afterword* by Miyazaki Yasuemon (1888-1963), a poet and religious leader of the time (Tsushima 1978:58). The volume identified by Tsushima is *Rubaiyatto. Ihon Rubaiyatto* (Rubaiyat. Alternative Rubaiyat; Horii 1947), which explains why the poems utilized by Dazai in his novel could not be matched with their English versions from the FitzGerald classical translations, as it will be shown below. With the source so painstakingly identified, several secondary sources were much subsequently consulted to corroborate the information. Yamanouchi Shōshi's 1990 *Kaidai* (Explanation) in the ninth volume of the *Dazai Osamu zenshū* (Complete Works of Dazai Osamu) issued by publisher Chikuma shobō (Yamanouchi 1990:451-517) dedicated several pages (502-513) to the novel included in the volume, with the discussion of the *Rubaiyat* on pages 510-513. Yamanouchi identifies in his contribution the eleven poems in the novel and notes that Dazai does not quote them in order, but rather at random from Horii's volume of translations.

Other Japanese researchers have also discussed the connection between *No Longer Human* and the *Rubaiyat*, with Kuzumi Kazuo's 2015 research already mentioned and Persian and Middle Eastern studies specialist Sugita Hideaki's 2019 contribution "Shōwa Nihon no 'Rubaiyāto'" (The *Rubaiyat* in Shōwa Period Japan; Sugita 2019). And while Kuzumi's study does not seem as deeply researched[iii], Sugita's approach is thorough and well documented.

Particularly fascinating in Tsushima's *Recollections…* is also the fact that she indicates that the copy in Dazai's possession had a note written in the translator's handwriting, right under his portrait: "*Seishi kara no jiyū no soto ni/ jiyū to iu mono wa nashi/ Shinu ni kimatta kono mi nari/ man is mortal*[iv]*/ Umareta koto ga shimatta koto nari* (There is no freedom other than the freedom from the *samsara* cycle of life and death/ This is the one who has decided to die/ man is mortal/ What a pity it is to have been born.) Now, this 1947 volume of poems is posthumous, Horii having died in 1938 (hence, the inclusion in the book of several eulogies), so it is doubtful that the handwriting would have truly been Horii's. Tsushima's claim is made all the more confusing by the fact that the copy that I was able to consult for the present research, and which I was able to procure from the digital institutional repository of Tokyo Keizai University, has the exact same lines handwritten under Horii's photograph in the opening of the volume. As it is difficult to imagine that the digital copy that I obtained was made from the one once owned by Dazai Osamu, it must be that the lines attributed to Horii were reproduced on all the copies published in 1947 at Nanboku shoen.

A few words are necessary here about the little-known personality of the translator of this volume, Horii Ryōho (biographical information indebted to Sugita 2019 and Shibayama 2014). Born in Akita Prefecture in the family of a wealthy farmer, Horii became a well-known agronomist, with studies in the United States, at Missouri State University. He wrote three volumes on the theory and practice of agronomy and moved around the country and even in colonial Korea to implement new agricultural concepts and techniques. From an early age, Horii was attracted by English literature and became very familiar with the works of Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), the poetry of Walt Whitman, whose work he will also translate, as well as with the American transcendentalists. During a hard time in his personal life, while living in Korea, Horii discovered

Edward FitzGerald's English translations of the *Rubaiyat* and commit to translating them into Japanese. The volume would be published at his own expense in occupied Seoul in 1936 in only 200 copies (Sugita 2019:7). Sugita analyzed the translations carefully and pointed out that while translated with "heart" rather than with "words", Horii's work was far inferior to that of Taketomo Sōfū, for instance, and the volume was replete with translation errors that could not be accounted for.

It was, however, the publication of this self-published translation that drew the attention of poet and English literature professor Yano Hōjin (1893-1988) who introduced Horii to well-known Khayyam expert Ambrose George Potter (1865-1952), whose 1929 *A Bibliography of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* was already published in several editions. Horii and Potter started an active correspondence, and the latter provided the Japanese agronomist and translator with a bounty of materials and information on the Rubaiyat. That is how Horii came to own the 1937 *The Unorthodox Rubaiyat*, in the creative "translation"—in fact, a free take on the Khayyam themes and atmosphere, completely reinterpreted—of Henry Bertram Lister (1869-1959?), published by La Boheme Club in San Francisco (Lister 1938)[v]. Horii could not contain his excitement at the discovery of this new way of looking at the classical Persian poetry as reinvention and direct creation (Sugita 2019:8). He decided that he would also translate/write a similar volume in Japanese. The volume was yet again self-published and included translations of no less than 96 of the Lister poems (out of a total of 110). In addition to Lister's poems, Horii also included in his volume, five other poems from the translations of Edward B. Cowell (1826-1903)[vi] (poem 9 in the Horii volume), Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) (poems 39, 60, and 67) and Edward Heron-Allen (1861-1943) (poem 91)[vii].

It was, then, Horii Ryōho's free take on the *Rubaiyat* quatrains based on the equally creative translation of Henry Bertram Lister that ultimately made into Dazai's novel, causing confusion to translators of the work, who often chose not to even include the poems into their translated works.

3. Conclusion

It is, perhaps, tempting to dismiss the importance of Khayyam's poems in Dazai's *No Longer Human* as no more than mere autobiographical elements, meant to create in the readers the impression that the main character of the novel is the writer himself. The choice of Horii's version of the *Rubaiyat* could also be considered pure happenstance, as this was the version Dazai owned, as we have seen from his widow's recollections. It is, however, difficult to imagine that Dazai was not aware of all the other translations from Omar Khayyam's work that were available to the Japanese reader in the period immediately following the end of World War II. As a self-declared *burai* (decadent), or *libertin*, as he preferred, Dazai identified with free spirits and iconoclasts such as Khayyam, and it is not unrealistic to assume that he would have known well all the other Japanese translations that followed Edward FitzGerald's English version, not to talk about Araki Shigeru's and Ogawa Ryōsaku's direct translations from Persian. Dazai was, however, more interested in yet another act of artistic defiance, Lister's and Horii's own creative, "apocryphal" (or "unorthodox") interpretation of the classic quatrains, perceived as an aesthetic statement that he also embraced in his own rewritings of classical pieces of Japanese and world literature.

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Notes

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[i] Japanese names follow the traditional order, Last name First name.
[ii] The English title is borrowed from Donald Keene's 1958 translation, although the other textual references are not from the Keene rendition. For the Keene translation, see Dazai 1958.
[iii] Kuzumi indicates, for instance, that there are, in fact 12 poems quoted by Dazai in *No Longer Human*, with poem 17 in Horii's volume being split into two. (Kuzumi 2015:145-146.)
[iv] In English in the original.
[v] The title of the volume seems to vary from "unorthodox" to "apocryphal", depending on the source.
[vi] Cowell is mentioned by name in Horii's notes with the Japanese transliteration, Kauru. Sugita mis-identified the reading to mean Cowley (perhaps thinking that Horii was referring to English poet Abraham Cowley, 1618-1667).
[vii] Also, mis-identified by Sugita as *Bodley* (?). The Japanese used by Horii is "Bodorean kōhon kara" (From the Bodleian manuscript), referring to the famous Ouseley manuscript of Khayyam's poetry in the Bodleian Library at The University of Oxford. The only translation that includes in the title a reference to the Bodleian Library is Heron-Allen, Edward (ed. and tr.). 1898. *The Ruba'iyat of Omar Khayyām: Being a Facsimile of the Manuscript in the Bodleian Library at Oxford with a Transcript in Modern Persian Characters*. London. Hence, the assumption here that Horii's translation is from Heron-Allen. For Sugita's full table of correspondences in Horii's volume, see Sugita 2019:36.

Notes on the author

George T. SIPOS teaches Japanese language, literature, and culture at West University of Timisoara in Romania and at Washington University in Saint Louis, in the United States of America. His research focuses on 1930s and 1940s Japan, the rise of militarism and of the authoritarian state, and the response to those through literature and the arts, as well as on Japan and Romania's late arrival to modernity as a whole from a transnational, comparative perspective. In addition to several volumes of translations from Japanese literature into Romanian, he is the co-editor of *Tenkō: Cultures of Conversion in Transwar Japan* (Routledge 2021).