

Title	A "Novel" Outline of Cell Phone Novels : Via Henry James's The Friends of the Friends
Author(s)	Hasui, Misato
Citation	待兼山論叢. 文化動態論篇. 2010, 44, p. 47-74
Version Type	VoR
URL	<a href="https://hdl.handle.net/11094/5437">https://hdl.handle.net/11094/5437</a>
rights	
Note	

*Osaka University Knowledge Archive : OUKA*

<https://ir.library.osaka-u.ac.jp/>

Osaka University

A “Novel” Outline of Cell Phone Novels:  
Via Henry James’s *The Friends of the Friends*

Misato HASUI

**Introduction**

Recently, it is commonly said that Japanese children do not read many “books”. In this context, books mean literary works. According to School Library Association, so many students do not read any books a month.<sup>1)</sup> What is the cause of this serious problem? It is generally said that it is because children hate to read so many letters. However, is it an exact answer to the question? On the other hand, in Japan, cell phone novels have been obviously very popular among the young. If they really hated letters, cell phone novels would never be in fashion.

In this thesis, I would like to show one of the useful solutions to make young people read literary works by way of taking advantage of cell phone novels. In addition to such a suggestion, I would like to refer to the relationship between literary works and cell phone novels from the viewpoint of structuralism. In other words, there are two purposes in this thesis: one is to understand cell phone novels practically and the other is to reconsider them theoretically. Through this thesis we might be a symbiotic relationship between cell phone novels and literary works.

## 1. What Is a “Cell Phone Novel”?

First of all, we have to have a quick look at what a cell phone novel is. The primary stage of cell phone novels could be seen in 2000. In March of 2000, the popular Web site called *Maho-no-i-Land*, adopted “the Book Function”. *Maho-no-i-Land* is one of the most famous Internet Web sites in Japan to which more than 5,700,000 members have belonged. In this Web site, they upload, read or type their cell phone novels by using this popular function.

Cell phone novels are especially unique in the respect that they are so influenced by the readers’ response. Readers can read cell phone novels and the writers’ profiles at the same time. They can send messages to writers. The readers who become the fans of their favorite cell phone novels discuss how their favorite cell phone novels should be written or how the story should be developed; not only writers but also readers can decide how the works develop. Cell phone novel writers are, in other words, the voice of their fans. The young in Japan rather want to narrate and read their stories. In this way, the young in Japan have strong narrative desire. They are fully satisfied with using their familiar tools, cell phones. We have to keep their strong desire in our mind.

Now, we have to pay our attention to a certain trial. We need to take this trial to consider the probable relationship between cell phone novels and Literature. The trial was made by Jakucho Setouchi. Jakucho Setouchi is a nun and she is famous for translating *The Tale of Genji* into modern Japanese. Jakucho Setouchi professed that she had written a cell phone novel at the awarding ceremony of the third Japanese cell phone novel grand prix in 2008. She wrote *Ashita-no-Niji* under the pen

name of Purple. *Ashita-no-Niji* is based on *The Tale of Genji*. The hero of this cell phone novel and the main character of *The Tale of Genji* have the same name, Hikaru. Another main character of *Ashita-no-Niji* is a Japanese high school girl, Yuri. Yuri becomes acquainted with Hikaru and falls in love with him. They come to realize the true love and love each other deeply. Yuri gets pregnant at the last of this story, but Hikaru is killed in a traffic accident. She is very shocked to know his death but she also feels his love because he has a present for Yuri with him when he dies. She gets over the loss of Hikaru and decides to live with her baby.

*Ashita-no-Niji* has an atmosphere of *The Tale of Genji*, and at the same time it can be read as a perfect cell phone novel. This work is written in the style of cell phone novel, and its story also develops like cell phone novels. In a cell phone novel, it is generally said that there are seven deadly sins.<sup>2)</sup> They are prostitution, rape, pregnancy, drugs, an incurable disease, suicide and the true love. Only glancing through the outline of *Ashita-no-Niji*, we can find some characteristics that cell phone novels have. She faithfully imitates both their style and their content. When she interviewed with Shinya Fujiwara, she said that the language will change as we can hardly read *The Tale of Genji* in the classical Japanese. She went on to say that if the modern children preferred cell phone novels to literary works, we should not ignore the phenomenon.<sup>3)</sup>

Like her attempt, it is not until we stand on the same stage that we can bridge the gap between the young and literature. Her attempt astonished the people in the literary world who criticized cell phone novels entirely. We can say that her attempt is so useful because she can

make the young be interested in literature.

## 2.1 An Experimental Translation of *The Friends of the Friends*

As Jakucho Setouchi did, it is effective to use cell phone novels to bridge over the gap between literature and the young. In this second chapter, I would like to show the experiment I did. While she tried to bridge over the gap between the Japanese literature and the young readers in Japan, I tried to bridge over the gap between the English literature and the young. I did it by translating *The Friends of the Friends* written by Henry James like a cell phone novel. I translated like this because I supposed that this experiment could make the young familiar with one of great English literary works. The Japanese young can have little chance to encounter English literatures, if they do not want to read them. Though Henry James is one of the most famous English men of literature, there are few Japanese people who know him except for the researchers of literature. I have thought that it is a pity that so few people know him. That is why I decided to do it.

Before I describe what I did in the experiment, I would like to introduce Henry James himself and his original *The Friends of the Friends*.

Henry James was born in New York to a liberal intellectual family. ...James spent most of his adult life in Europe. He settled in England in 1876, became a British citizen in 1915, and received the Order of Merit shortly before his death. Best known as a novelist, James was also a prolific critic and distinguished essayist.<sup>4)</sup>

*The Friends of the Friends* was written by Henry James. From this short passage, we realize that he is an old man of letter both in Europe and in The United States of America. It seems that he is distant from the young in Japan, but in fact he and the Japanese young are similar in a certain respect. Henry James is almost the only person who had a major effect on both the European literature and the American literature. It is because he always wrote his works as an American and at the same time as a European. He pursued what he was in his works as a real cosmopolitan. His adventure for his identity made hard progress but it is the element that makes his works interesting. Though more than 80 years have passed since he died, we have a similar adventure to know what we are in this internationalized world. In this international world, as one of cosmopolitans we each seek our identities. Of course, the Japanese as cosmopolitans also try to find their qualities and their attitudes. When we face with the danger of our identity, Henry James can give a clue to overcome the difficulty, because he had also the same annoyance as the present people do. *The Friends of the Friends* is not as famous as his other works. However, it is also interesting and worth reading because this short story has unique characteristics which his other stories also possess. Yukari Kanzaki in the introduction of her thesis refers to *The Friends of the Friends*, relating it with his other work, *The Turn of the Screw*.

Henry James’s “The Friends of the Friends” first appeared in 1896 under the title of “The Way It Came”, two years before the

publication of *The Turn of the Screw*, perhaps the most provocative ghost story written by James. Since Edmund Wilson argued that the ghost in *The Turn of the Screw* was simply a production of the narrator's mind, many critics have also focused on the mind of the narrator in "The Friends of the Friends". They conclude that the narrator is jealous of her friend who shares the psychical experience with her fiancé, which makes the narrator imagine the ghost of her friend...The ambiguity of the ghost and the narrator's enigmatic behavior lead the reader to another interpretation.<sup>5)</sup>

Seeing the characteristics in *The Friends of the Friends*, we can find some interesting similarities between *The Friends of the Friends* and cell phone novels. The first similarity is that most popular cell phone novels are love stories or horror stories. *The Friends of the Friends* can be read as a kind of love story as Yukari Kanzaki introduced above. *The Friends of the Friends* also can be read as a kind of horror story. Horror stories are one of the most popular genres in cell phone novels, such as *Keitai-Kareshi* which is already made into a movie in October 2009. Because of a similarity in a genre of story, the young Japanese do not feel strange when *The Friends of the Friends* is translated like cell phone novels.

The second similarity is that the world of "fantasy" is the key both in *The Friends of the Friends* and in cell phone novels. In the same quotation, she uses the words, such as "fantasy" and "the narrator's imaginative world" to introduce *The Friends of the Friends*. It has been discussed whether the ghosts in some of Henry James's stories exist or not. For example, in *The Turn of the Screw*, there are two "ghosts". In

the story, the two “ghosts” named Miss Jessel and Peter Quint seem to frighten the main character, the governess. However, because these two “ghosts” can be seen only by the governess, it can be read in this way: these two “ghosts” only exist in the mind of the governess. In short, we can regard Miss Jessel and Peter Quint as productions of her delusions. Imagination, fantasy or delusion is also one of the most important elements in cell phone novels. In fact, the writers of cell phone novels say that delusion is the very factor which composes the story of cell phone novels. The writers of cell phone novels create their stories on the boundary between their reality and their delusion. Their way of thinking resembles that of the governess who creates the “ghosts” in her mind. The characters in English literatures sound very far from the young people in Japan but in fact we can find that they are close in this respect. The main character in *The Friends of the Friends* is worried about her love. The Japanese young who are developing into adults also yearn for romantic relationship with their lovers. In this way, the main character in *The Friends of the Friends* stands on the same position as the young Japanese, so that this work can be adapted smoothly for a cell phone novel.

Finally, we can dare to say that there is a similarity between the literary form and the form of cell phone novels. Henry James says about the literary theory in *Prefaces to the New York Edition*, quoting an example of the house of fiction.

The house of fiction has in short not one window, but a million--a number of possible windows not to be reckoned, rather; every one



of which has been pierced, or is still pierceable, in its vast front, by the need of the individual vision and by the pressure of the individual will. These apertures, of dissimilar shape and size, hang so, all together, over the human scene that we might have expected of them a greater sameness of report than we find. They are but windows at the best, mere holes in a dead wall, disconnected, perched aloft; they are not hinged doors opening straight upon life. But they have this mark of their own that at each of them stands a figure with a pair of eyes, or at least with a field-glass, which forms, again and again, for observation, a unique instrument, insuring to the person making use of it an impression distinct from every other.<sup>6)</sup>

Actually, the literary form which he explains above might be similar to the form of cell phone novels. Henry James describes his idea about his way of writing, using the example of the house of fiction. Here, he mentions that the writer chooses the subject from the human scene with a particular pair of eyes. The writer of cell phone novels creates their stories just in the same way as he suggests. Cell phone novel stories are written in the first person. The narrators in the stories, to whom the writers themselves are projected, narrate their feelings or their own action in their point of view. As we can see in the works written by Henry James, there is no view of God in the popular cell phone novels. The writers unified with the main character observe the human scene and describe what they see from their own windows. In this way, unexpectedly, there is a similarity between the literary form of which Henry James thought and the form of cell phone novels. That is why

I think that Henry James’s work, *The Friends of the Friends* could be acceptable when it is translated into cell phone novel.

## 2.2 A Code in the Style of Cell Phone Novels

Before we see how to make *The Friends of the Friends* a cell phone novel in detail, we have to know the code which cell phone novels have. We will take care of them in two respects: the code in their style and the code in their content.

Firstly, we will see the code in their style. The text in the cell phone novels is written horizontally and the readers devour the sentences actively by scrolling vertically. In addition to this basic distinction, we have to pay attention to two fundamental characteristics. The first characteristic is that sentences in cell phone novels are shorter than those in the usual novels.

I examined the style in the prologues of stylish cell phone novels: *Koi-Zora*, *Akai-Ito* and *Tenshi-no-Koi*. These three works are so popular that they are the best choice to analyze the style of cell phone novels. *Koi-Zora* is the work situated in the beginning of the cell phone novel history. Following it, *Akai-Ito* is as fashionable as *Koi-Zora* and *Tenshi-no-Koi* is the latest major work of the three.

We will examine the prologues of these three cell phone novels in detail. Each sentence in the prologues of these three cell phone novels is made up of at most 40 letters. Each prologue consists of about 150 letters. All of them consist of short sentences; especially the sentences in the prologue of *Akai-Ito* are extremely short. Short sentences can be seen from top to bottom in the prologue of *Akai-Ito*, and they have a

sense of unity in one page. On the other hand, in *Koi-Zora* or *Tenshi-no-Koi* there are fewer sentences, and so the sentences in these two cell phone novels are longer than those in *Akai-Ito*. In order to make such long sentences be read casually, Mika and Sin, the authors of these two works make more indented paragraphs than Mei. In short, Mika and Sin make sentences short by making indented paragraphs instead of writing short sentences.

An indented paragraph plays an important role in cell phone novels. When Saori, who wrote *Noroi-Asobi*, had an interview, she said that she always makes an indented paragraph instead of punctuating.<sup>7)</sup> Her way of writing is similar to those of Mika and Sin. They also make many indented paragraphs at a time and make blank lines. These blank lines can be seen in every cell phone novel. In the same interview, Bear-Hime, who wrote *teddy bear*, has an interesting statement like this:

An indented paragraph in cell phone novels plays a different role from that in usual novels. The character's feelings inhabit in the indented paragraph or the blank lines. I always pay attention to make blank lines when I want to express the feeling of the character or the passing of time which the character spends.<sup>8)</sup>

When we take these into consideration, we can find that cell phone novel writers manage to make their readers read sentences comfortably. The readers dislike the sentences going on so long because the screen of a cell phone is too small for them to read a long sentence. In order to write short sentences, there is little reference to explanations about

landscapes or sceneries. If scenery descriptions are written, sentences cannot help becoming long, so they are always cut in the cell phone novels. In this way, the cell phone novels are written in so short sentences that they sometimes look like a poem. Especially, in the case of *Koi-Zora* we can see rhyme in its prologue.

Besides this characteristic, we can also find that they often make some indented paragraphs in a row and make blank lines. Inserting blank lines, they often express the progress of time or strong feelings such as astonishment, despair and so on. Cell phone novels use space to express the character’s feeling, so that it can be said that they have an element of comics. The various picture writings are also frequently seen in cell phone novels, and it is also one of the basic characteristics. Writers use picture writings without constraint because they type the sentences like typing e-mails. The most popular picture writing is a clef ( ♪ ). When the character’s cell phone rings, clefs are frequently used to express this situation. In another case, they add it in the end of the character’s line. In this case, they express that he or she is in high spirits.

Considering such a code in the style of cell phone novels, we can find that it includes some cultural elements: poems, comics and e-mails. A cell phone novel is, as it were, a patchwork of Japanese linguistic culture. Various linguistic cultures are sewn together to make one piece. When the creators write their works, they adopt some existent styles and create a new genre: a cell phone novel.

### 2.3 A Code in the Content of Cell Phone Novels

In this section, we will see the code in the content of cell phone

novels. The story of most popular cell phone novels develops as follows: in the beginning of the story, most main characters live in peace and quiet, like normal people. However, after the main characters encounter their special lovers, their normal lives are greatly changed. In relation with their lovers, main characters are involved in a lot of accidents. Through these, they realize the true love and at last the story ends.

Such a content of the story is the secret of its popularity. The main characters are described as those who are so close to the readers in the beginning. In this stage, readers can identify themselves with the main character. Because of the process of this identification, the readers could experience the accidents which happen one after another, as if they were the main character. This identification is the key to understanding the reason why love stories are the most popular genre in cell phone novels. The writers and the readers of cell phone novels are between teens and the low twenties. It is natural that most of them are interested in love stories and that they can identify themselves with characters in cell phone novels so easily. Though the adult may feel that all love stories in cell phone novels look same, and so may feel that they are boring, children project themselves on a particular character and experience a particular life in each story.

In addition to such a development of the story, a “reality” in the cell phone novel has also a unique feature. Toru Honda and Kenrou Hayamizu point out the eccentric reality in the cell phone novels and they describe the popular cell phone novels as “the realistic cell phone novels”.<sup>9)</sup> The meaning of “reality” in a cell phone novel differs from its normal meaning. We can know the meaning of it by seeing the actual

works on the Internet. Before the story begins, most cell phone novels carry the following two instructions. The first one is that the story is a fiction based on a real story and it has no relation to the real people or the real association. Following such an instruction, the writers also emphasize that their works are their real experience. These two instructions contradict each other; the story which describes the real experience is not fiction but nonfiction. This contradiction shows us that the “reality” in cell phone novels actually means the “verisimilar fiction”. According to this verisimilar fiction in cell phone novels, Chiaki Ishihara, who researches Japanese literatures says in his book like this:

“Reality” in cell phone novels rests on the premise that it is not a reality. Stories are seasoned with a reality...If you read cell phone novels, you can understand what the “reality” is in the cell phone novels. If all of the events written in cell phone novels happened in a real world, they would be too depressing to read. In addition, readers can transfer themselves to characters in such a setting...A fiction based on a real story attracts the readers very much.<sup>10)</sup>

As Mr. Ishihara says, the cell phone novel writers create a full-length character by insisting that they should be “real” stories. The “reality” itself is a fiction in the structure of a cell phone novel. This verisimilar fiction is completely different from a fiction seen in a novel. In the case of a novel, readers already admit that the story is a complete fiction. This presupposition may make the young feel distant from the works. They do not want to read a fictional life but to feel an actual life through

reading, even if they know that it pretends a reality.

Taking such a code of the cell phone novel's style and content into consideration, we have to take care about at least three points if we translate the foreign literature like a cell phone novel. Firstly, sentences in literature are usually long, so we have to translate them in short sentences or we have to make some indented paragraphs in a sentence. Secondly, to make the readers feel the characters close to them, we have to use the words which the young people daily use. Lastly, we need to dare to inform the readers that it is a real story in its introduction. This declaration seemed to work as a motivation to make the readers read it. Thanks to this setting, readers could identify themselves with the main character easily.

I translated *The Friends of the Friends* paying attention to these points. From now on, I distinguish my translation from the original by calling it *Tomodachi-no-Tomodachi*.

### **3.1 The Real Statistics and the Readers' Response for *Tomodachi-no-Tomodachi***

First of all, I introduce the experimental translation, *Tomodachi-no-Tomodachi*. It started to be serialized from April in 2009 and ended in the end of May in the same year. It was serialized in one of the most popular cell phone novel Web sites, Mobage-Town. This cell phone novel has 225 pages in all. In the genre, this novel got the 51<sup>st</sup> place at the best. There were more than 611,000 cell phone novels in this Web site, so that we can say that the 51<sup>st</sup> is excellent enough. This cell phone novel came to be very popular as soon as it started to be serialized. Finally,

about 1400 readers in Mobage-Town have been interested in this novel and 114 users gave me their remarks about this cell phone novel. I classified their remarks into four types. The first type is the message for praising the work. It occupies eighty-six percent of all the messages. Seven percent of them emphasize that they feel sympathy with the main character in *Tomodachi-no-Tomodachi*. This is the second type. The third one is advice to make *Tomodachi-no-Tomodachi* a better cell phone novel. They are four percent of all. The last type is negative opinion against *Tomodachi-no-Tomodachi*, as we can see these in the following quotation: “I was so confused because characters in this story have no name”, “I feel that this story is rather a novel than a cell phone novel”, or “I want to know the truth in this story because the ending is so enigmatic”. They amounted to three percent of all the messages. Seeing their opinions, I was surprised that they had a keen eye for the truth. The style is completely one of cell phone novels but they feel the atmosphere of literatures. When I confessed that the story was a translation of *The Friends of the Friends* in the postscript of *Tomodachi-no-Tomodachi*, they were surprised very much and some of them said that unless they had read *Tomodachi-no-Tomodachi*, they could not have a chance to read such an interesting English literature.

There are also interesting remarks in praises: “I thought that her friend and her lover certainly met!”, “This ghost story was very exciting!” “The ending is ambiguous but it makes this work more mysterious”, or “I want to read such a work more!” The ambiguity is one of the characteristics in some works written by Henry James. In *The Friends of the Friends*, readers are left uncertain whether the ghosts



exist or not. It depends on readers whether the accident is due to the spiritual or due to the main character's delusion. Through *Tomodachi-no-Tomodachi*, the readers could experience the same ambiguity as through *The Friends of the Friends* and said that the ambiguity was exciting.

They also express their sympathy with the characters of *Tomodachi-no-Tomodachi*: "If I were her, I also could not believe him" or "In my case, I was so spiritual a person when I was a child that I can feel sympathy with her friends". These remarks clearly show that *Tomodachi-no-Tomodachi* has a "reality". Because of this verisimilar story, they could feel that the characters were very close to them.

### 3.2 Devices in This Translation

This section describes the devices in the real text of *Tomodachi-no-Tomodachi*. These devices which are given in its style work very well in the text.

First of all, in order to be like a cell phone novel indented paragraphs are necessary. In fact, when I show the passing of time or when I emphasize the feelings of a character, I express them by making an indented paragraph or blank lines. Next, I used *katakana* effectively in *Tomodachi-no-Tomodachi*. When the strange atmosphere prevails in the scene or when the main character's aberration is exhibited, *katakana* is seen in the main character's narrations or her lines. Thirdly, in order to make readers comfortable, I translated everything old-fashioned into a modern word. Every new expression works well and *Tomodachi-no-Tomodachi* does not look like an old literature but just a cell phone

novel.

Then, in order to make the young readers in Japan feel close to the situation in *The Friends of the Friends*, I omitted the particular place-names in the original text such as England, Oxford, Wales and so on. If they appeared in *Tomodachi-no-Tomodachi*, readers could not help feeling strange.

Adding to such an omission, in order to translate *The Friends of the Friends* like a cell phone novel, I added some expressions. I added onomatopoeias in some scenes. Inserting these makes the story develop quickly. In some cases, they also prevent the sentence from being long, because we do not need to explain the scene in detail. In addition, I changed some expressions. Every expression involved in the English culture is changed into another. For example, unlike in an English culture, in Japanese culture it is unusual to kiss their friends as greeting. Because of this, I could not translate the word “kiss” as it was. When “kiss” means a deal to greet with someone or to show their friendship, I changed this deal into “hug” in place of “kiss”.

Those devices in styles, letters, changing, omitting and adding are very useful to translate *The Friends of the Friends* like a cell phone novel. Thanks to those devices, *Tomodachi-no-Tomodachi* looks very fresh and novel for the young Japanese. In fact, they said in their message that the way of writing is so ingenious that they could go on reading. If these devices can be motives for them to read, they can be one of the useful clues to make the young read English literatures.

### 3.3 Advantages and Possibilities in This Translation

It is found from this result that *Tomodachi-no-Tomodachi* can show off at least two advantages to its original text. For one thing, devices in *Tomodachi-no-Tomodachi* escalate the interesting story of *The Friends of The Friends* effectively. Originally, *The Friends of the Friends* is written in a super subjective viewpoint, so that whether the apparitions appear in the story or not does not become clear. Because of the feature, the readers have discussed what interpretation is right. Such a super subjective viewpoint is also a unique specialty in cell phone novels. By way of cell phone novels, the ambiguity and the mysterious atmosphere in *The Friends of the Friends* can be described more efficiently.

For another, *Tomodachi-no-Tomodachi* gave the young in Japan a chance to read the English literature. One of the readers said that she had assumed that English literatures had been too difficult for her to read and she even said that English literatures are rather “novel” than “well-worn”. Here, I exaggerate again that *Tomodachi-no-Tomodachi* can be a good bridge between the English literature and the young Japanese. The translation like a cell phone novel has a possibility to make cell phone novel readers encounter the English literature.

Henry James focused especially on the mind of his characters. It is commonly said that Henry James began the stream of consciousness. In fact, this technique is used in every part in his works. For example, especially the 42<sup>nd</sup> chapter in *The Portrait of a Lady* devotes itself to describing the waving of Isabel Archer’s mind so in detail. In such a way of writing, he tried to portray a particular person’s point of view intensively. An interior monologue can make readers trace the

movement of the character’s mind. In cell phone novels, the narrators’ thought is described in their interior monologue as well. The cell phone novel creators also focus on the consciousness intensively, so that they make much of descriptions of thought or feeling. Henry James sought to focus on consciousness in his writings, so that some of them or some parts of them are suitable for a cell phone novel. In this way of thinking, the last scene of *Ulysses* may be also appropriate for a cell phone novel. The final episode, Penelope consists of eight sentences without punctuation. This soliloquy of Molly Bloom’s can be said to be one of the longest sentences in English literatures. In this last episode, James Joyce depicts the stream of consciousness in the strange style. He describes Molly Bloom’s consciousness crossing over 4,391 words in one sentence. This experimental depiction is very interesting but at the same time it is very difficult to understand. If this scene is translated into cell phone novel, we could understand her consciousness easily in short sentences or a sentence with many indented paragraphs. In addition, such a translation remains its queer atmosphere, though the style is changed greatly enough to read easily.

#### **4.1 The Present Movements in Literary World**

It could be found from the result of the experimental translation that cell phone novels are the useful tool to relate the Japanese children with some English literatures. Through the style of a cell phone novel, they can enjoy English literatures. Then, why do they feel irrelevant to English literatures although they can enjoy them? In my opinion, the root cause of this problem exists in the structure of Japanese literary world.

I translated *The Friends of the Friends* like a cell phone novel experimentally, because I wanted to connect the young Japanese environment with the classical literary environment. As a matter of fact, this kind of movement can be seen in Japan. The case of Jakucho Setouchi is one of these movements. In addition, there is another challenger: Variety Art Works Corporation. They introduce about 50 literary works in comics in the series of “Read Through Literatures in Comics”. They obviously take the young as an object of sales. They have various foreign literatures for this comic series such as German, Danish, French, English, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Chinese and American literatures. Though we cannot say that the young Japanese are familiar with foreign literatures in the original, they are popular among them in the style of comic books. Not only these foreign literatures, but also the Japanese classical literatures which are kept at a distance from the young Japanese can be enjoyed in the comic style.

It is “translation” that communicates one culture to another under the process. In the case of foreign literatures, we can boldly put them into the fresh Japanese to show their interesting stories to the young Japanese. *Tomodachi-no-Tomodachi* is an attempt to relate two different cultures. It goes without saying that the present environment of literature is very severe. In the present state of affairs, because the classical literatures do not sell well, they have come to be out of print. Since they do not prevail, they are read by fewer people. We have to cut off such a negative chain at all cost. A cell phone novel can work as a sharp blade to cut such a chain. As we already saw earlier, we can clearly find that the statement that cell phone novels spoil literatures is

wrong. If we make use of them successfully, they can work as a good instrument to bridge the gap between literatures and the young in Japan.

#### **4.2 Considering the Relation between Literatures and Cell Phone Novels from the Viewpoint of Structuralism**

The tide in Japanese literary world which tends to deny cell phone novels may come from prejudice that cell phone novels contradict literatures. Most critics sometimes compare cell phone novels to fast food or transient influenza. They insist that literatures should be more important than cell phone novels because of the universality of them. They protest like this proudly but, at the same time, they feel fear that cell phone novels whose power is so intensive might expel literatures. In other words, they fear lest cell phone novels should come to be the dominant genre in place of literatures, so they criticize them too severely. We will arrange this situation from the structuralist point of view in this section.

Based on the idea of Jakobson and Yury Tynyanov, Terry Eagleton says about the system of literary history as follows:

Jakobson and his colleague Yury Tynyanov saw the history of literature as itself forming a system, in which at any given point some forms and genres were 'dominant' while others were subordinate. Literary development took place by way of shifts within this hierarchical system, such that a previously dominant form became subordinate or vice versa. The dynamic of this process was 'defamiliarization'...a previously subordinate form would emerge to

‘defamiliarize’ this situation. Historical change was a matter of the gradual realignment of fixed elements within the system...it merely changed shape by altering its relations to other elements.<sup>11)</sup>

In this quotation, Terry Eagleton says that there are various elements in the literary system. The literary history develops through their shifts in the hierarchical system. We can quote this way of thinking when we think not only about the literary system, but also about the linguistic cultural system in a wider sense.

As we have seen, a cell phone novel has various elements in it. It has some of the characteristics of poetry, comics and novels. In other words, a cell phone novel is an aggregation of Japanese linguistic culture. Cell phone novels seem to be a brand-new genre which appears suddenly, but in fact it is a convergence of existent linguistic culture. Because of the development of cell phones and the swelling of the narrative desire of the young, it has become as dominant as the existent literature. We can say that cell phone novels defamiliarize the Japanese literary world. In this meaning, a cell phone novel is much more “novel” than novels. Cell phone novels are frequently said not to be novels by critics. I agree to this opinion in a different meaning from them. The naming of a cell phone “novel” is rather annoying for cell phone novels. It is because the name of “novel” reminds us of the stale linguistic culture.

In this current trend, people worry that novels or literatures may be completely expelled by the cell phone novels. However, such an anxiety is beside the point. As we saw in the quotation above, the gradual realignment takes place in the system. Even if the synchronic cell phone

novels took place of diachronic literatures completely, literatures could have a chance to be dominant in the future, unless they disappeared in the linguistic cultural system. As long as they exist in the system, they can be dominant again. In order to survive, they have to continue being read by the present people. However, in fact, it is a bad tendency that literatures are thought to be too difficult by the young Japanese. This recognition is certainly penetrated among the young. This is a thick and big wall constructed by the side of literary world. In my opinion, it is the wall that is the root cause why children do not feel like reading literatures. It is hard to be broken down in a short term. This wall works as a strong defense against the temporal trend, but at the same time it has brought about this severe condition of literatures. More and more people should notice this real cause of the devastation of the literary world. To bring literatures down to the next generation, we now have to batter down the wall between the young and literatures. We can do that because literatures are neither vulnerable nor feeble.

### 4.3 Universality and Novelty in Literature

What surprised me most through that experimental translation is that literature is so tough. Though the style of *The Friends of the Friends* is changed so greatly, it never degrades the worth of it. *Tomodachi-no-Tomodacchi* is as enjoyable as the original. It is a real literature that never loses its charm even if it gets over times, places, countries, languages, cultures and so on. A real literature is sometimes rather more attractive through being expressed by way of another medium. In this meaning, literatures will be innovative as well as



universal and traditional. There are some people who are trying to make them prevail among the young in various ways in order to hand them to the next generation. This movement is so intensive that it produces the force to direct a spotlight on to literatures again. In other words, this movement can lead to defamiliarize the linguistic culture in Japan. If this defamiliarization succeeds well, literatures can be dominant again. The fine example of this is the novel translation of *The Brothers Karamazov*.

In 2008, many mistranslations were pointed out in *The Brothers Karamazov* translated by Ikuo Kameyama. Japanese Dostoevsky Society has inspected these mistakes and uploaded them on the Internet. Expressions which were pointed out as mistranslations had been translated ambiguously in a conventional translation of *The Brothers Karamazov*. These ambiguities are strong charm points in this novel, but at the same time, they prevent the readers from understanding the story easily. Mr.Kameyama interpreted them so drastically and translated them in simpler styles. His “mistranslations” reveal the difficulty in translating the works whose structure in the text is as multi-layered as that of *The Brothers Karamazov*. Through such a translation, he communicates the synchronic feature and the diachronic feature of *The Brothers Karamazov* to the Japanese. Taking this translation’s nature into consideration, we can say that the fuss of his “mistranslations” is rather evaluated than reproached. For him, this fuss was convenient to make the Japanese pay their attention to the classical Russian literature. He commented about Dostoevsky’s works, relating them with the present Japanese society as follows:

Dostoevsky seemed to think that all human beings are naturally wretched, and so he tried to seek how to overcome this nature in order to find the worth to live on. He presented his opinion in his literary works. As if he had predicted this suffering situation in Japan, his opinions are fresh and alive for the present Japanese. It is in this time that each reader tries to find their own answer to their suffering through their reading experience.<sup>12)</sup>

Taking his comment above into consideration, we can find that there is certainly both the synchronic and diachronic features in literatures.

## **Conclusion**

As the movement in which people try to spread the interest of literatures is more and more active, literatures which have a comic style or a cell phone novel style have come to appear. The examples that we picked up are not the existent literatures exactly. The popular styles among the young can work as a medium of literatures. They are, as it were, introductions to the literary world. They are not so many still now but the new genre is certainly being established. In this new genre, the synchronic characteristic and the diachronic characteristic are well grown into one.

They tell the same content as literatures to the readers but they look too innovative to call them traditional literatures. In short, their style is synchronic and at the same time the content is diachronic. This new genre succeeds the good points of both the diachronic literature and the synchronic Japanese linguistic culture. Works in this genre have a

possibility to make the young read literatures actively because the style is very familiar to them. Besides it, they can experience thick and rich contents because the comics or the cell phone novels are translations of the universal literatures. Now, we have to recognize this synchronic and diachronic genre rightly and we have to foster it for children and for literatures.

In this way, cell phone novels never contradict with literatures. The existent opposition must be dissolved so that both of them survive in this severe literary world. If they offer their good points each other, they can live close together in the “novel” genre.

Since they have little chance to encounter them in their environment, children do not read literatures. Children should know the rich and thick literary world. We have to do any attempt to introduce them to the world. Such an attempt enables children to select a book in much more choices. The book gives a new clue to live on or widens one’s view is precious to us. I want children to find their own precious book through their reading experience.

#### Notes

- 1) Tetuya Ikezawa, *Current Affairs in Educational Environment – for Teachers’ Employment Test for 2010*, (Jitsumu-Kyouiku-Shuppan), 2009, p.119
- 2) Toru Honda, *Why Do Cell Phone Novels Sell Well?*, (Softbank creative), 2008, pp.90-91
- 3) Mariko Naito, ed. *Setouchi, Jakucho × Shinya Fujiwara Interview*, (Books and Magazines of Mainichi Newspaper), 2008
- 4) Dorothy J. Hale, ed. *An Anthology of Criticism and Theory 1900-2000*, (Blackwell Publishing Ltd.), p.65

- 5) Kanzaki, Yukari: ‘Henry James’s “The Friends of the Friends” – The Narrator’s “Fantasy” –’, *Journal of Osaka Sangyo University. Humanities* 116, pp.117-125
- 6) Dorothy J. Hale, ed. *An Anthology of Criticism and Theory 1900-2000*, (Blackwell Publishing Ltd.), p.69
- 7) Yuji Kurokawa, *A Separate Volume of JUNON, a Fundamental Introduction to How to Write Cell Phone Novels*, (Shuhu-to-Seikatsu-Sha), 2008, p.29
- 8) Yuji Kurokawa, *A Separate Volume of JUNON, a Fundamental Introduction to How to Write Cell Phone Novels*, (Shuhu-to-Seikatsu-Sha), 2008, p.33
- 9) Kenrou Hayami, *A Sort of Cell Phone Novels. Girls in the Period of Being Punk again*, (Hara-Shobou), 2008, pp.72-86; Toru Honda, *Why Do Cell Phone Novels Sell Well?*, (Softbank creative), 2008, pp.90-91
- 10) Chiaki Ishihara, *Are Cell Phone Novels Literature?*, (Chikuma-Shobou), 2008, pp.59-60
- 11) Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory*, (University of Minnesota Press), 2008, p.96
- 12) ‘*Bakumon-Gakumon* file92: From Dostoevsky with love’, (NHK Television), 17 Nov. 2009

(Former Graduate Student)

## SUMMARY

A “Novel” Outline of Cell Phone Novels:  
Via Henry James’s *The Friends of the Friends*

Misato HASUI

Japanese children are said to hate reading many letters. On the other hand, cell phone novels have been in fashion. These two situations contradict each other. In order to understand these situations we have to inspect the real texts or the real contexts of cell phone novels without any prejudice. In this thesis, I analyze the current literary situation in Japan both in the practical way and in the theoretical way. Through this analysis, I can present one of the possible solutions for the problem. Cell phone novels can be a bridge between the English literature and Japanese children.

The code of the popular cell phone novels is examined in this thesis. The English literature, *The Friends of the Friends* written by Henry James is presented as a material for an experimental translation. Through the analysis of this translation, the cell phone novels’ potentiality appears. A cell phone novel, *Tomodachi-no-Tomodachi* is widely read by cell phone novel readers and we can get useful opinions to reconsider what literatures are.

The possible relationship between cell phone novels and literatures can be seen from the structuralist point of view. The content in literatures is never old-fashioned. However, the young in Japan hardly know it.

In order to break the wall between the young and literatures, some people make literatures easy to read. Some eminent authors deliver their works on the Internet as a cell phone novel. In addition to such innovative authors, publishing companies sell the classical literatures in the style of comics or cell phone novels. Thanks to the works in this novel genre, the young can find the literary works interesting; the works can be gateway to the original literary works. Seeing from such a point of view, we cannot think cell phone novels are opposite to literatures.

**Key words :** cell phone novels, literature, *The Friends of the Friends*, Henry James, structuralism