

The Rendition of Black Characters’ Speech Styles in *The Sound and the Fury* : Four Translations Compared

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Abstract

This paper’s aim is finding appropriate ways to improve translation to make target text readers have similar impressions as source text readers have. In Japanese literary translation, however, there are many difficulties. For example, there are various approaches for using non-standard Japanese for English dialects. To find appropriate translation of English dialect, I chose *The Sound and the Fury* by William Faulkner. He intentionally makes languages different between Black and White and shows large gaps in their economic or living status and also their characters’ traits. How to render Black characters’ utterances is one of the keys in creating an effective translation of *The Sound and the Fury*.

For that purpose, I will analyze four translations of Black characters’ utterances and use a questionnaire contributed by mostly college students. By using the results of that analysis and questionnaire, I aim to discover reasonable utilization of terms for non-standard English translation.

Introduction

Effective translation should be close to the source text (ST) and natural in the target language (TL) as posited in “Dynamic Equivalence or DE” (Nida 166). However, what is natural, what is dynamic, and what methods are best suited to the translation? Finding appropriate ways to approach

those questions are keys in improving translation.

For that purpose I chose *The Sound and the Fury* (TSTF) by William Faulkner (1897–1962), published in 1929. In this novel, Faulkner presents the novel's theme, as well as particular social contexts such as African Americans' status, especially in the American South, by describing people of that era, White and Black, and their styles of living.

TSTF's stylistics has specific features whose rendition necessarily affects the quality of the translation. There are three key difficulties of translation in this novel:

- 1) Rendering speech styles of characters from diverse social communities
- 2) Rendering unique narrative styles
- 3) Rendering metaphorical and religious expressions

Southern Black characters' utterances are constructed with "non-standard literary dialect: phonological, morphosyntactic, and lexical representation of dialect, and eye-dialect" (Määttä 320), while White characters' speech acts are generally standard English. Faulkner intentionally makes Black and White language different and shows their large gaps of economic or living status and also characters' traits. How to render those differences and traits are keys to this novel's translation.

This novel has four Japanese translations. I will analyze their renditions of Black characters' speeches in salient extracts in an attempt to pinpoint effective ways of Japanese translation.

Translators

The Four TSTF translators are all scholars of American literature and

Table A Translations into Japanese of *The Sound and the Fury*

Year Published	abbreviation	Translators	Title	Publisher
1969	O1	Onoe, Masaji (1912-1994)	Hibiki to ikari (Echo and anger) in <i>Faulkner zenshū</i> 5	Toyamabō
1971	O2	Ōhashi, Kenzaburō (1919-2014)	Hibiki to ikari (Echo and anger) in <i>Shinchō sekai bungaku</i> 41	Shinchōsha
1997	T	Takahashi, Masao (b. 1921)	<i>Hibiki to ikari</i> (Echo and anger)	Kōdansha
2007	H&N	Hiraishi, Takaki (b. 1948) and Niuro, Takuya (b. 1960)	<i>Hibiki to ikari</i> (Echo and anger) Vol. 1-2	Iwanami-shoten

all translated the title the same way: *Hibiki to ikari* (See Table A).

Black Characters' Speech Styles Faulkner's Usage of AAE

Faulkner used five different English speech styles among different classes in this novel (Määttä 323-324). Among those, for Southern Black characters' speech, he set "non-standard literary dialect," consisting of "phonological, morphosyntactic, lexical representation of dialect and eye dialect" (Määttä 320) utilizing African American English (AAE), speech definition forms particular to Black people. Professor John R. Rickford at Stanford University introduces AAE this way: "Many people, black and white, regard [AAE] as a sign of limited education or sophistication, as a legacy of slavery or an impediment to socioeconomic mobility" (Rickford par. 6). AAE thus has a negative image.

Faulkner also uses eye dialect ("non-normative spelling which [often] represents the same pronunciation as the standard spelling" [Määttä 320]), most often in the fourth section, to indicate characters' social classes. Even

though the Compson and Dilsey family are living alike on the Compsons' premises, the linguistic and cultural differences between White and Black are sharply distinguished. Therefore, how to translate Black characters' speech styles is an important element in the translation of the entire novel.

Translations of Black Characters' Speech

Japanese literary translators often render English dialects using non-standard Japanese: regional dialects or new words coined by mimicking existing dialects from various regions. However, there are views of pros and cons.

Translator Edward G. Seidensticker (1921–2007) commented in a 2004 lecture that “dialect falls in the category of an impossible problem” adding that when he translated *Sasameyuki* by Jun'ichirō Tanizaki (1886–1965) “I couldn't have Sachiko talking like Scarlett O'Hara [in *Gone with the Wind*].” Sachiko uses the sophisticated, upper-class merchant style speech known as *Senba-kotoba*, a social and regional dialect of Senba, Osaka.

Mie Hiramoto also seems to frown on the use of non-standard Japanese to represent English dialect, noting that AAE is often represented by Tōhoku dialect, taking advantage of what she calls the image of people who are “rough, unpolished, and lacking education” (261).

Motoyuki Shibata's *Huckleberry Finn no bōken* (*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*) (2017) uses a different technique. The runaway slave, Jim's utterances are translated not very much different from those of Huckleberry (Huck). In the title, *bōken* (adventure) is written “冒けん” with kanji and hiragana, and in his afterword, Shibata pointed out that he considered the level of kanji which Huck might use based on his education

level (530). In his translation, both characters use fairly standard Japanese written with few Chinese characters to reflect their low literacy.

In TSTF, Faulkner added large meaning to the different languages among classes especially between White and Black in American South. In that case, can using dialectal Japanese be an effective way to convey those differences?

To show how the four Japanese translations of TSTF have approached those problems which Seidensticker and Hiramoto pointed out, I will analyze them in chronological order. I will look at the translation of dialogue by a local black woman, Dilsey, and a visiting Black clergyman.

1) Local Black Woman

First I will select an utterance from section one. Local Black women are

Table B Local Black Woman's Utterance

	“white folks gives nigger money because know first white man comes along with a band going to get it all back, so nigger can go to work for some more” (15).
O1	「白人が黒んぼにお金くれるちゅうの、やつらがバンドジャカジャカ鳴らしながらやって来るちゅうとゴッソリそれ取りもどし <u>ちやう</u> 、それで黒んぼめお金ほしさにまた働きだすちゅう仕組み <u>だ</u> で」(16)
O2	「白人が黒ンぼにお金をくれるのは、バンドを連れた白人がやっ <u>てくりや</u> 、 <u>そいつ</u> がすぐさまそのお金をすっかり取りかえてくれて、黒ンぼはもつとお金ももらえるように働きに出かけなく <u>ちやなん</u> ね <u>え</u> てことを知ってる <u>から</u> だ <u>て</u> 。」(277)
T	「白人どもが黒んぼに金をくれるのは、楽隊をもった白人がやっ <u>てくりや</u> あ、さっそくその金を全部取りもどせる <u>て</u> いうことを、ちゃんと知ってるからよ。そう <u>すり</u> や <u>あ</u> 黒んぼはまた金が欲しさに働きに出る <u>て</u> ことをな」(29)
H&N	「白人さんが黒んぼに金をくれるのは、あとで楽隊でも連れた白人さんがやっ <u>てくりや</u> あ、とたんに全部取り戻せるとわか <u>っ</u> と <u>る</u> から <u>だ</u> で。そうなり <u>や</u> あ黒んぼは、またあくせく仕事に精を出すことになる <u>だ</u> でな」(Vol. 1, 30)

washing laundry in the river when Luster, a young Black male, comes by. There is no use of eye-dialect in their dialogue but all of the speakers including this woman use AAE.

The four translations each use some non-standard Japanese for representing non-standard English expressions as follows:

O1: “*-chū-no (to-iu-no)*” comes from Kyoto and Osaka (*Kamigata gogen jiten*), “*shi-chau (shite shimau)*” comes from Tokyo (*Tokyo-ben jiten*), and “*-da-de*” used in a part of Nagano, Shizuoka and Kyoto (*Nihon hōgen daijiten*).

O2: “*kurya* (truncated expression of “*kureba*”),” used in Gunma area according to Weblio, “*nakucha (shi-nakucha)*” (*Tokyo kotoba jiten*) and “*nan-nē*” (*Tokyo ben jiten*) come from Tokyo. Adding “*-te*” (*kara-da-te*) to show the reason, combined with “*soitsu* (you),” makes this utterance feeling strong.

T: The only non-standard terms are truncated terms, “*kuryā*” and “*suryā*.” The speaking style is casual and not particularly rustic.

H&N: “*kuryā*” as the same as in T above, “*-toru* (truncated type of ‘*-teiru*’),” and “*-da-de*.”

All four translations use non-standard terms based on various areas' dialects. Translators seem not to consider the terms' geographic region but only seek to convey characters' rusticity using such terms.

Three translators use truncated terms such as “*kurya (kureba)*” or “*kuryā*” to express the washer woman's casual style of speaking talking to fellow Blacks. Only T's translation uses little or no regional dialect.

Next, I will examine how translations of English expressions for the racial group White are indicative of the speaker's attitude toward that group. First, “white folks.” O1 and O2 translate it “*hakujin* (white people),”

which is neutral. T renders it "*hakujin-domo*," which feels a bit contemptuous because of the humble plural suffix "*-domo*," here antihonorific because it is applied to outsiders. By contrast, H&N translates it as "*hakujin-san*," where the honorific suffix "*-san*" conveys deference.

Second, "white man." O1 changes neutral "*hakujin*" to "*yatsura*" which is a third person plural pronoun used for antihonorification of people of the same or lower position (*Digital daijisen*). However, "*yatsura*" can directly refer to (all) "white folks" while "white man" is a different, singular person. Therefore the term "*yatsura*" seems questionable for the latter. O2 uses "*hakujin*" twice and also uses "*soitsu*," antihonorific third person singular pronoun. T changes from antihonorific "*hakujin-domo*" to neutral "*hakujin*." H&N keeps "*hakujin-san*."

Using the term, "*hakujin-domo*" or "*yatsura*" or "*soitsu*," the translation shows the speaker's dislike of Whites with the speaker's rough and unsophisticated speech style. If the translator thinks the Blacks are talking among themselves without concern for Benjy who is White, they do not need to add the respectful suffix "*-san*" to "*hakujin*." On the other hand, if translators think that "*-san*" is penetrating deeply in Black speech styles and the speaker cannot help calling White people "*-san*," that would show the lingering effect of slavery where the Black always looks up to the White, and adding "*-san*" is appropriate for the speaker. Either way works.

2) Dilsey

Next, I will examine a quotation from Dilsey from the third section, which shows her self-confidence and strong will to raise Caddy's baby, Quentin. When Mr. Compson first brings Quentin home, Dilsey makes this speech to Jason. Unlike the first section, this utterance is written using

non-standard morphosyntax and heavier use of eye-dialect.

Table C Dilsey's Utterance to Jason

	"And whar else do she [Quentin] belong?" ... "Who else gwine raise her cep me? Aint I raised ev'y one of y'all?" (198)
O1	「 <u>ただけどほかのどこへこの子を置いたらええちゅうだか?</u> (However, where can I put this child?)」・・・。「 <u>おらじゃなくてほかの誰がこの子育て上げるちゅうだかね? おまえさんたちおら一人残らず育て上げてやったでねえだかね?</u> (Who else, not me will raise this child? Didn't I bring up all of you?)」(200)
O2	「 <u>だって、この赤さんにほかのどこに身を寄せるところがあると言いなさるだね?</u> (However, who else do you say this baby can go to live with)」・・・。「 <u>おらのほかにだれがこの人を育ててあげるだね? おらァ、おめえさま方の一人一人を育ててあげたでねえだかね?</u> (Who else except me will bring up this person? Didn't I raise each of you?)」(440)
T	「 <u>ただけんどよ、この子はこの家以外のどこにおけるっていうだ?</u> (However, where can I put this child except this house?)」・・・。「 <u>おらじゃなくって、一体だれがこの子を育てるっていうだ? お前さんたちのだれ一人として、おらが育てなかつた子供がいるだかい</u> (who else, not me will raise this child? Is there any child who was not raised by me among you all?)」(347-348)
H&N	「 <u>ただけどこの子は、ほかにどこに行くとところがあるだね?</u> (However, where else can this child go?)」・・・。「 <u>おらでなきゃあ、誰がこの子を育てるだね? おらがおまえさんたちを一人残らず育てたでねえだか?</u> (Who else, not me will raise this child? Did I raise you all?)」(Vol. 2, 43)

In addition to non-standard dialectal terms, only O2 uses honorific expressions for the grandchild and son of her master: “*akasan* (baby),” “*nasaru* (do),” “*kono-hito* (this person),” “*ageru* (serve),” “*omēsama gata* (you all)” and “*ageta* (served).” This kind of honorification is appropriate and natural for a servant. However, since the addressee is Jason, who Dilsey raised, she must feel familiarity to him. Also, she seems to dislike Jason, telling him, “you’s a cold man, Jason, if man you is” (207). Therefore these honorifics would seem unnecessary. Despite this, O2’s rendition shows

consideration of Dilsey's appropriate attitude: she can control herself not to directly show her dislike of Jason considering her position. In O2's translation, her speech style has such deference to White people throughout the story.

However, Dilsey's speech style in ST is not especially deferent. The other three translations make Dilsey speak casually like a mother to her child. If both the intimate relationship between Dilsey and Jason and the style of ST English are considered, the other three translations' speech styles also can be said to be appropriate to this situation.

3) Black Clergyman

Finally, I will examine the Black clergyman's sermon. He gradually changes his speaking style from sounding "like a white man" (293) to "negroid [sic]" (295) pronunciation though the context is the same, and the congregation responds more strongly to the latter. How to change the style of translation to match the preacher's different styles would seem to be an unavoidable problem, because in the ST, the change is clearly marked. The congregation's eyes are opened through his language. Therefore, Japanese translation also requires a large-scale change (See Table D).

Table D Two Types of Preaching

	③-1) "I got the recollection and the blood of the Lamb!" (294)	③-2) "I got de ricklickshun en de blood of de Lamb!" (295)
O1	わしは持っているのです、神の子羊の思い出とその血とを！ (301)	わしは持っているのです、神の子羊の思い出とその血とを！ (301)
O2	わたしは神の子羊の思い出と血を持っているのです！ (528)	わしは神の子羊の思い出と血をもっていますじゃ！ (301)

T	わしは神の子羊であるイエスの思い出と血を持って <u>いるのだ</u> ！ (I have the recollection and the blood of Jesus who is the Lamb of God.) (514)	おらは神の子羊の思い出と血を持って <u>いるだ</u> ！ (I have the recollection and the blood of the Lamb!) (515)
H&N	私は聖なる子羊の思い出と血を授かり <u>ました</u> ！ (I was given the recollection and the blood of the holy Lamb!) (Vol. 2, 226)	わしゃあ、聖なる子羊の思い出と血を、授かり <u>ましただ</u> よ！ (I was given the recollection and the blood of the holy Lamb!) (Vol. 2, 227)

Only O1 does not change the preacher's speech style. O2 changes the first person pronoun from "*watashi*," a gender-neutral and formal first person singular pronoun, to "*washi*," used by men who are elderly and/or highly educated, to the addressee of the same or lower position. Also, O2 changes "*motte-iru-no-desu*," (have + "*desu*") to the slightly polite "*motte-imasu+ja*," "*imasu*" plus concluding auxiliary verb "*ja*." The combination of "*washi*" plus "*ja*" suggests a person in higher position is addressing the congregation. Satoshi Kinsui points out this combination is often used as "*Yakuwari-go* (stereotypical speech)" of a wise man or an old man (2014 ix) to show his role of advisor (2003 49) in popular culture such as manga and anime (2014, viii). T changes the first person pronoun "*washi*" to "*ora*" and the sentence ending part "*iru-no-da*," to "*iru-da*" to make the phrase dialectal and vernacular. H&N changes, "*watashi-wa*" (pronoun + case particle) to the truncated casual expression "*washā*," and the ending "*mashita*" to "*mashita-da-yo*" to make this term dialectal and conclusive as well as indicating intimacy with the congregation by the emphatic particle, "*yo*." By the latter two translations, the target reader (TR) can sense the congregation's feeling of familiarity toward the preacher's language and easily acquire an emotional impression.

However, in all four translations, the amount of phonological change is

little or none. Yet using different styles in Japanese translation for the change from “like a white man” to “negroid” is important. In the ST, there is a big gap of effect between different speech styles. There is a reason why the preacher can bring the congregation to a state of furious excitement, and it is only by using the congregation’s own vernacular. Readers might think if the preacher uses the language “like a white man,” the congregation cannot acquire such a huge impression. Therefore, some difference in the translations showing a change in the preacher’s language is required.

Also, translators supply various additional methods to make sentences clear or understandable. For example, in the first utterance, T adds an explanation “Jesus” to “*kami-no-kohitsuji* (the Lamb)” to clarify the expression for the TR’s unfamiliarity with Christianity. Also, H&N renders “got” as “*sazukarimashita* (blessed with)” to show respect for divinity. This rendition is natural for this situation as the word means “receiving from God.” The other three translators simply render “got” as “*motte-iru* (have).”

I believe the translation of the term “recollection” requires some explanation or paraphrase. All four translations render it as “*omoide* (memory)” which is hardly understandable in Japanese. In this case, the term “recollection” implies successive experiences of Jesus over generations, and the congregation reconfirm such experiences by the preacher’s sermon at that time. Then they are reassured that their sins are forgiven and they are in peace. It is necessary to use a clarifying expression such as “*sukui no kakushin* (assurance of salvation)” and an example sentence might be: 「救いの確信と聖なる子羊の血を ([I am blessed with] assurance of salvation and the blood of the Lamb)」

Questionnaire

I conducted a questionnaire to ascertain readers' cognition of dialectal terms in Japanese translation of TSTF and received 78 responses, from mainly females in their early twenties. There might be some bias because the number of male and older respondents is small, but that research can provide clues based on the relatively large number of responses. The chosen dialogue between Dilsey and Luster shows Black characters' usual daily conversation. How Japanese readers feel about this type of translated Japanese can therefore indicate their attitude about using dialect. Table E shows readers' impressions of the geographical region of dialectal terms used.

Table E Reader Impressions of the Dialectal Region

Area	Hokkaidō	Tōhoku	Kantō	Chūbu	Tōkai	Hokuriku	Kinki	Chūgoku	Kansai	Kyūshū	Higashi nihon	Nishi nihon	Total
O1	1	17	1	1	1	1	1			2	1		26
O2		13	1	1				2	3	2		1	23
T		15	2	2						1			20
H&N		8	2	1			1	2		1	1		16

Various areas are shown in Table E, even though most respondents guess the area as Tōhoku in the four translations. However, often respondents reply that they do not know exactly where, but just a rural area. Two respondents mentioned that they recalled TV (NHK) dramas: *Hanako to Ann* (2014) whose characters often speak in Kōfu dialect and *Oshin* (1983–1984), where the eponymous heroine Oshin speaks in Tōhoku

dialect. Those dramas might affect readers' sense of dialects.

Table F Readers' Feelings about Using Standard Japanese for AAE

Suitable	Unnatural	Do not care	Total
5	43	27	75
6.67%	57.33%	36%	

Table F shows readers' feelings about using standard Japanese for characters using AAE. While 8 respondents (1 replied "Suitable," 7 "Do not care") commented that translations can express the difference of group or class without dialects, over half of respondents, 57.3%, felt that is unnatural if AAE is rendered in standard Japanese. The high percentage may indicate that using dialectal literary Japanese for AAE has penetrated deeply into the minds of readers.

Discussion

As the above examples show, there are various interpretations for each term or phrase. Each translator used his own interpretation to construct his translation and tried to transfer the ST's entire message to the target text. As the creator of a translation, each one can freely but judiciously use many types of strategies and methods for conveying the full picture as he sees it.

Also, from the analysis of examples and the results of the questionnaire above, this paper found some clues concerning dialect in translation. The translations all use non-standard literary dialectal Japanese that seems effective to convey characters' AAE speaking styles, and their usages do not suggest any one particular region. Their usages of dialectal terms are

various but particularly convey a rural atmosphere and speakers' unsophistication, simplicity and rusticity.

However, there are two controversial points in using regional dialect in translations as I mentioned in the Translations of Black Characters' Speech section: first, the impossibility of transferring one dialect to another in a different language, as pointed out by Edward G. Seidensticker, and second, the possibility that using rustic dialects can evoke stereotypical negative images as pointed out by Mie Hiramoto.

In consideration of her point, using regional dialect should be carefully handled. On the other hand, some surveys show positive points of view with regard to dialects. Based on those views, translations are able to prudently use literary dialectal terms. According to a 2015 survey about consciousness of regional dialect by Yukari Tanaka, et al, 'like it' and 'slightly like it' for dialects occupied 45.7% while 'dislike it' and 'slightly dislike it' were 8.9% (126, Graph 3). Also, recently, positive views of dialect are on the increase. The question, "Do you like dialects?" refers to a questionnaire for the column *Be between: Dokusha to tsukuru* (2018), conducted by Asahi Shinbun Company. Out of 1,631 responses from readers, 87% said they like dialects (Katsumi). This survey might not be academic, but could indicate a recent tendency. Those survey results indicate Japanese people including TRs may have become more positively familiar with dialects in general because of changing social context: hearing characters' speaking of dialects in drama or seeing rural regions on TV documentary programs. Furthermore, in answer to my questionnaire, over half of respondents thought it is not appropriate if Black characters speak standard Japanese. Summing up, those surveys show people's attitude to dialect is positive. This result can support the

idea that readers do not directly acquire negative stereotypical images such as "limited education" (Rickford para. 6) that AAE might have.

In TSTF, Faulkner uses different types of languages depending on characters' social classes, and using AAE as a part of his representation of Black people's way of life in the deep South. Therefore, translation must convey that specific aim in this novel. Then how to do so is up to the translator and using dialectal terms is one way to transfer the atmosphere of AAE.

There is one more point to be discussed: the existence of translation using generally standard Japanese, as in Motoyuki Shibata's translation of Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. In the afterword, Shibata introduces his point of view: "how narration is handled is very important" (532) and therefore, to have realistic narration by Huck, he tried to avoid words which Huck might not use (530). Huck and Jim construct an equal relationship step by step, and neither of them use standard English. Therefore differentiating their speech in Japanese translation is less meaningful. However, in TSTF, the differences among characters' languages are given strong meanings. Faulkner describes how White and Black are each rooted deep in their own social and cultural societies. Therefore Black people's identities exist in their language. To speak their dialects Black people can have strong attachment to their society and assimilate there and that is why they can easily have empathy for a person like the Black clergyman who speaks their same language. Furthermore, to reflect the ST, using generally standard Japanese for Whites and dialectal terms for Blacks is one effective way to express those cultural differences.

In addition to the points above, Seidensticker's point concerning the impossibility of transferring dialects into another language needs to be

considered. The answer is that the entire images cannot be completely transferred to another. The reason is that languages spontaneously emerge from indigenous people's cultural and social life with particular connotations of terms and ways of speaking. However, some images AAE might have, such as rural atmosphere or speaker's simplicity, can be transferred by using dialectal terms.

Moreover, this paper found the importance of not only using dialectal terms but developing many types of methods for expressing characters' traits and situations. For instance, in Example 1 of a local Black woman's speech, the translations of "White folks" and "white man" have various expressions conveying neutral, contemptuous or polite nuances based on translators' interpretations. However, the term's reference and the distinction between singular and plural have to be carefully considered. In Dilsey's example, expressing politeness or roughness is consistent with the translator's interpretation. Finally, in example 3, the Black clergyman's two types of preaching styles, I myself came up with an alternative rendition for the translation of "recollection"/ "ricklickshun" as "*sukui no kakushin* (assurance of salvation)" to emphasize the stronger effect.

In addition to analyzing example phrases, I acquired readers' feeling toward Dilsey and Luster's dialogue from 78 responses of the questionnaire. Respondents' views for using standard Japanese for Black characters, 57.33% think that is unnatural.

In sum, translators' renditions vary because of the differences of their interpretations of the ST. As a creator of translation work, translators can use various strategies but must do so judiciously.

Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to approach clues to effectively convey ST's messages and stylistic strategies, analyzing three examples of Black characters' speech styles in TSTF, and handling the questionnaire. Translations are based on translators' interpretations and those are varied as they are each creators of translation works. I acquired some clues from four translations using many types of strategies. One of them is using non-standard literary dialectal Japanese for conveying AAE's images and the ST's stylistics.

However, I examined only a small section of Black characters' speech and was unable to address the other challenges mentioned in introduction section for lack of space. I plan to research them further in the future.

Note : An earlier version of this paper was presented at the monthly meeting of The Kansai American Literature Society at Kyoto University of Foreign Studies on September 15, 2018.

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