

Original Author - Supervisor - Scriptwriter Roundtable discussion

Nagaru Tanigawa (Original Author) x
Tatsuya Ishihara (Supervisor) x
Fumihiko Shimo (Scriptwriter)

From the famous words and scenes of the original novel, a 162 minute ultra-epic is formed. That work began three years ago. But now at 21:00 on January 26th, 2010, having just finished watching the freshly made preview showing of the movie, these three people talk about their excitement.

Since they have such confidence in this work, watching the preview screening was tense for them.

-While the excitement from seeing the film is still fresh in your minds, first please tell us your impressions.

Tanigawa Before watching it, my heart was beating rapidly. Even after watching it, my heart's still beating rapidly.

Ishihara How was it you ask? It's the perfect time to ask that to Tanigawa-san, though it's still kind of nerve-wracking.

Tanigawa You've made such a thorough anime adaptation; I'm so lucky to be the original author. Thank you so much.

Shimo My position was writing the screenplay, as in deciding whether or not to change the expressions or increase the word count. At the beginning, I was reconsidering some decisions I made, but as I was watching, it rapidly won me over. I thought of how happy I was to simply see Haruhi and the others once again. Near the end, I was seeing it from a fan's point of view.

Tanigawa Because I wasn't considering the intonations of the dialogue and each character's emotions while writing the story, the voice actors' emotions flavored the performance, making it feel fresh when I watched it. It felt like the novel was being recited in my ear. (laughs)

Shimo In the original story, Kyon's monologue had a unique taste to it, so upon making the script, we couldn't make any careless changes. Every time we were meeting, Tanigawa-san's presence would help us along.

Tanigawa When it comes to things I can do, the stages of the text are my job. I certainly can't draw pictures like that.

Ishihara This time we weren't able to do post dubbing.

Tanigawa Every time there was dubbing, we were only able to take a quick peek. But I'm not saying that it's necessarily a bad thing. This time Tomokazu Sugita-san, the role of Kyon, gave an earth-shattering performance. I thank him very much for doing so (laugh).

-Supervisor Ishihara, what were your thoughts about the film?

Ishihara The words, music, the dubbing of the audio... really, all of the film together created a calming display. The whole feature couldn't be pictured until these credits had finished rolling. Therefore, during checking time, we had to free our minds and watch it without any preconceptions. I was really worried about how I wouldn't be able to go to the bathroom or how I would feel the length of the film. But despite that, I watched it uninterrupted until the end and thought with confidence, "This is good, isn't it?"

-It's a work of self-confidence.

Ishihara For that reason, I was more nervous than I am today. I find it amusing, but others may think it's shocking rather than amusing. That nervousness is because I was watching it together with Tanigawa-san.

Tanigawa I am grateful to you for what you have done with my inexperienced work. As usual, it may be awkward to say now but I haven't yet said it this time.

Ishihara Thank you very for your compliments!

***Disappearance* was first conceived as a TV series**

-We want to hear about the scenario planning for the movie. When did a meeting take place?

Shimo That's already a tale from long ago. (laughs) In June of 2007 was when we first started. At that time we had plans to make *Disappearance* part of a TV season.

Ishihara During the planning for the "re-airing", we had discussions about making a new season. At that time we had thought of making the new episodes go up to *Disappearance*.

Tanigawa We talked about whether we should make it a TV series or a movie. For me, I wanted to see it both ways. In terms of our actual work, we let *Bamboo Leaf Rhapsody*, *Endless Eight*, *Sigh*, and *Disappearance* all progress at the same time.

Shimo I was in charge of the screenplay for *Bamboo Leaf Rhapsody*. From that point I wrote it so it would link with *Disappearance*.

Tanigawa At first we thought, why not split *Disappearance* into seven episodes?

Shimo I wrote several parts of a script for *Disappearance* so that each part could be the script for one episode.

Ishihara We decided on doing the whole plot from the beginning. After that, while the manuscripts for Part A piled up, we would check the proofs for Part B. They progressed forward together.

Shimo And with that, Part A (after the world changed) had already piled up to seven manuscripts.

-About how long of a running time did you intend for the movie?

Shimo We divided it up and progressed without deciding on the full running time. We felt like giving ample time to all the necessary scenes.

Ishihara As the storyboards of the script advanced, we were able to get an idea of a running time. We had many discussions about making it shorter, but eventually it became the size that it is. As one would expect, the running time is a problem when turning a work into animation. It's painful cutting down our favorite episodes, so with *Disappearance*, I'm glad we were able to leave in so many episodes.

Shimo That's why the length is about eight episodes, right?

Ishihara And while we're speaking of wants, I actually wanted it to be a bit longer. There were more scenes I wanted to include in this work. We made *Melancholy* six episodes but we still had to cut down the original work considerably.

Shimo *Melancholy* was five episodes at first, but we were dissatisfied with that and that's how it became six episodes (laughs). But even for *Disappearance*, it's not like we could include everything from the original work.

Tanigawa It's a long story (laughs).

***Disappearance* – the story that must be written**

-Did you have discussions about each of the characters?

Ishihara Yes, especially when we were doing work on the storyboards where I would talk with directors Yasuhiro Takemoto and Touko Takao. I would ask things like "Does the dialogue sound like the true feelings of Haruhi and the other characters?" As we confirmed what they thought about the production, we would draw the expressions of the characters.

Tanigawa That's because not every expression from every character is described in the novel. For the novels, only the parts that have meaning are written.

Ishihara Several parts of Tanigawa-san's original work have an impressive writing style. For example, your line "With eyes that looked like they were drawn up from the waters of a deep sea."

Tanigawa And also, "she silently titled her head about 2 millimeters." It's not a writing style made for pictures.

-Even for the storyboards, instructions like "It's written that 'she titled her head about 2

millimeters"" were put in.

Ishihara They certainly were. We made the anime while being conscious of the feelings in the original work.

I made the decision for Kyon to finally become the protagonist in *Disappearance*.
(Tanigawa)

-Did you pay attention to that while writing the script, Shimo-san?

Shimo Since the original work is a story that's elaborately drawn out, we had no choice but to break it down. Just by changing some scenes, it seemed the meaning would be totally different. In order to bring out the maximum charm of the characters, we had to increase scenes of Haruhi and co. doing activities. I wrote while trying to pay attention to that aspect of the story. For me, it wasn't just that I liked the *Haruhi Suzumiya* series. *Disappearance* itself is also a story I love, so I was really lucky to have been able to write the screenplay. I feel like I wrote it with very festive feelings.

Tanigawa Thank you very much.

Shimo No need to thank me. I noticed something while I was writing. In *Disappearance*, Kyon is interposed between Nagato's world and Haruhi's world, making it seem like there's some form of mutual resentment. You might call it a love triangle... The scenes that Haruhi appears in are from morning until after school while the scenes that Nagato appears in are from after school until night. The scenes where Haruhi and Nagato appear together are only in the SOS Brigade clubroom. I think it's a beautiful composition, but were you aware of it, Tanigawa-san?

Tanigawa I didn't really notice that... (laughs)

Shimo Haruhi is in the bright time periods and Nagato is in the dark ones. Kyon goes back and forth between them. I think that makes it a very reflective world. When you were writing the original novel, you said you wrote it with quite a lot of vigor, didn't you?

Tanigawa I had to write *Disappearance* even though it was a book that stole any will to work that I don't usually have. (laughs) In a way, I felt like I had a duty to write it. First I thought of the goals I had and how everything would flow, then I took my brush and said "Okay, let's write this!" and then I finished it in about three weeks.

Ishihara That was fast.

Tanigawa For me, I felt that I thought up a very honest story. Until this story, Kyon's identity was always wavering, but now there's a story that fortifies it. I felt it was a story the *Haruhi Suzumiya* series needed but I didn't know if it would be interesting or not. Even now I don't know for sure.

Ishihara And now it's said to be a popular work and one you finished in just one go. Although I have experience, whenever quality storyboards comes about I also try to sketch it right away. Even when I look at storyboards that I wracked my brains over and confirmed as good, I get anxious that I might find one more thing to add to the final result.

Shimo It's a way of saying something bad is going to come falling down on you, right?

Tanigawa Even if that's the case, writing without worry is better than writing while worrying.

Ishihara On the surface *Disappearance* seems like a story for Nagato to stand out, but it's actually tightly focused on Kyon and Haruhi. When I was writing the storyboards I thought to myself that this time Kyon is going to actively move about.

Tanigawa I made the decision for Kyon to finally become the protagonist in *Disappearance*.

-Did you have any questions for Tanigawa-san concerning the script?

Shimo I received his opinions while we were reading the script together so I didn't have any question in particular to ask him. Since things like the books Nagato read and the lineup of books in the Literary Club bookshelves are part of the pictures, we should ask Tanigawa-san about them.

Ishihara At the last moment I asked Tanigawa-san about the addresses in Kyon's cell phone. It was good that we put the name of a girl he was friendly with in middle school among the numbers listed.

-Kyon checks his phone's listings two times; once before the world changes and once after the world changes.

Ishihara We don't know how long Kyon has had a cell phone but we figured he'd at least have the name of the girl he was friends with in middle school listed.

Tanigawa Haruhi Suzumiya would be listed in the "Sa" column, right? No one knows the true identity of the name of the girl shown on the phone's screen...it could be someone else with that same name (laughs).

-Did the work from script to storyboards progress smoothly?

Ishihara Actually, there were scenes that were cut at the script stage.

Shimo Yes there were indeed. We imagined a scene before Kyon wakes up in the hospital where he has a vision-like dream. It's a scene at the cafe by the train station in the changed world where Kyon is laughing with long-haired Haruhi, Koizumi, Mikuru, and Nagato. It means that even after Kyon corrects the world, in a parallel world Haruhi and the other SOS Brigade members from the changed world are doing club activities.

Ishihara Then when Kyon wakes up he would have said "I feel like I had an interesting dream," but the meaning of that line was changed.

Shimo When I saw the completed movie without that scene, I was also sort of relieved. In terms of the story, it's not a parallel world but a single world that had changed.

Don't you think there's points where KyoAni is a bit clumsy? (Ishihara)

Classmates not written in the original work or scenario

Shimo There were quite a lot of scenes that we drew, wasn't there?

Ishihara Actually, I was shocked at the amount of stills we had completed. One day I was at the drawing desk when I picked up a cardboard box and said "What's this?" It was some more scenes.

All Laughs.

Ishihara For example, let's talk about the day following Haruhi's disappearance. Before Kyon arrives in the classroom and Asakura asks him "Have you woken up," the camera pans up from the floor and over to behind her head. While the classroom is animated in 3D, the classmates in the room are all hand-drawn. I wanted the audience to focus on both the scenery and the classmates at the same time; it took about 6-7 original images to achieve this. Even while animating the classroom in 3D, we had it move around to add another dimension to the area. As a result, we were able to detail the classmates nicely.

Shimo The classmates are interesting, aren't they?

Ishihara It might be hard to tell, but each classmate has their own story. For example, glasses-kun is a boy with an unrequited love...

Shimo We also had to prepare the background chatter in the script as well.

Ishihara Normally for background chatter, we have a lot of seijuu talk in a suitable role, but this time we asked Sound Director Yota Tsuruoka-san to write the lines.

-But didn't Shimo-san write those lines?

Shimo I just wrote the direction for those parts.

Ishihara The background chatter isn't included in the storyboards, so each part's direction had to be settled afterwards.

Shimo Each classmate was dressed properly too.

Ishihara I didn't think they'd allow individuals to break the dress code by wearing sport pants under the skirt though! (laughs) But each classmate had a different coat, didn't they? Since it's winter, they'd hang it on their seat, obviously. We put a lot of effort into things like that to raise the atmosphere. Isn't KyoAni a bit of airheads sometimes?

- Kyoto Animation's a bit of airheads?

Ishihara Probably. We do things like that when creating the characters after all. (laughs)

Shimo If we were a beautiful girl, we'd be called Ditzzy-chan.

Ishihara Don't you think there's points where KyoAni is a bit clumsy? I think we could do things a bit more stylishly...

Tanigawa But there's no way that I could write all of the lines for the classmates. I surrender!
(laughs)

An original conclusion not present in the novel

-When was it decided to move the climax to the rooftop and to have an epilogue in the library?

Shimo The rooftop was my suggestion. I threw it out to Supervisor Ishihara and Tanigawa-san.

Ishihara I felt having the climax in the hospital room was a bit suffocating.

Shimo Plus you have Yuki in a sentimental spot as snow falls down.

Ishihara Snow falling down was an original design.

Tanigawa There's no way that snow would fall down at that exact time! (laughs)

-Maybe it was someone who was using Haruhi's power to change the weather for that miracle.

Ishihara We wanted to put the individual motif into the cut of *Disappearance* from the scene in the short story *Editor in Chief* ★*Straight Ahead!* (See below) We imagined that Nagato would be thinking about that time when she was writing her story. Once that came to mind, Tanigawa-san gave us his approval and permission to do this.

Tanigawa Well, it's really good, isn't it? I would certainly think Nagato would be reminded of this scene when she was writing her story.

-On the rooftop Kyon states "Why would the Information Data Thought Entity make her some lonely, melancholic girl?" Was that Tanigawa-san himself pondering that?

Tanigawa Criticizing myself, huh? (laughs) Thinking about it now, perhaps her template was the antithesis of a character. She's kind of the antithesis of Kyon in a sense. I put the "straight man" personality into a beautiful girl character template.

Plus you have Yuki in a sentimental spot as snow falls down (Shimo)

-After the credits, there's an epilogue of Nagato's memories in the library.

Shimo The epilogue was all Tanigawa-san's idea.

Tanigawa The idea for the epilogue came from the changed Nagato's "Memories of the Library." Unfortunately, there wasn't any time that we could show Nagato in the library again during an episode. So now you're able to see a new episode of Nagato in the library.

Ishihara Would you say that the epilogue takes place after the events of *Disappearance*?

Tanigawa It's a scene that Nagato just happened to see.

Shimo Tanigawa-san wished for us to "hide her mouth with a book." Was she smiling? Was she emotionless? Nobody knows.

-Tanigawa-san, you also wrote the original draft for the lyrics to the theme song *Yasashii Bokuyaku*, right?

Tanigawa I wanted to write lyrics that felt Nagato-ish. Something like an "eclectic poem" that Nagato had written. To what extent my own writing is left in there, I cannot say.

Shimo Who chose to use the A cappella version?

Ishihara I too would like to know that.

Staff From the beginning, Producer Atsushi Itou had said "make it A cappella."

-Now that you've seen the first viewing, do you feel that today you've finished the first stages of this work?

Ishihara I don't have the feeling that we're done. We can't be finished until we've heard the opinions of the fans and customers. Perhaps those who have read the original novel will have different interpretations of scenes, but they may still approve of this edition.

Shimo I sense that at last the end has come. *Disappearance* is structured like a classic adventure story; going around various world, but, in the end, coming home. That describes the trip Kyon went on, doesn't it?

Tanigawa I believe those who've read the novel as well as seen the movie will accept this work. If they feel the movie's no good, then I'm sure they'll say the original novel was horrible as well. (laughs)

Ishihara Well, the novel is quite popular. If the movie's seen as bad, then it's the supervisor's responsibility.

Shimo No no, the animation is produced by KyoAni. Since they've given it their all, then the script itself would be the bad part.

All together No no! (laughing)

Ishihara ...Well, please go to the theatre many times and enjoy yourselves.

Nagaru Tanigawa. Born on December 19th. Author. His *Haruhi Suzumiya* series (Kadokawa Shouten) won the 8th annual Sneaker Awards' Grand Prize. His other works include the *Let's Leave the School* series and *The Guardian of my World* series.

Fumihiko Shimo. Born on April 28th. Animation Scriptwriter. He has served as the series composer for the *Full Metal Panic!* series, the *Gravion* series, and the *Idaten Jump* series. He wrote the scripts for the *AIR*, *Kanon*, and *Clannad* series as well.

- Tatsuya Ishihara's biography appears in the *Directors' Roundtable*.



This image was inspired by an illustration included in the story *Editor in Chief ★Straight Ahead!* (found in the novel *The Indignation of Haruhi Suzumiya*). The same image was also used in the opening for the 2006 broadcast of *The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya*.