Twitter Thread by foone



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I was todays years old when I learned that Final Fantasy VII's Midgar Zolom is an exceptionally badly translated reference to Jörmungandr, the world serpent from Norse mythology.

The other name for Jörmungandr is Miðgarðsormr, which got rendered into katakana as ■■■■■■■■, or "Midogaruzuorumu".
But when it was translated back into English, the translator didn't get the reference.

So they split that into the city name Midgar and the rest as... "Zolom".
Which is not a word.

It was supposed to be a bit of a pun in Japanese. Midgar, the big city in FF7, is named after Midgard, the Old Norse name for the Earth (as opposed to the other realms of the Nine Worlds)

so obviously a big snake living near the city of Midgar would be the Miðgarðsormr, since that basically translate as "Midgard Serpent"

so "Migar Zolom" is the same kind of "translator ran out of coffee" moment that gave us "Litagano Motscoud" in the Cave Story translation

To explain that one: Cave Story's original title is D■kutsu Monogatari. At one point in the game you're given a password, which is just the name of the game written backwards in kana

Which comes out something like "ritaganomo tsukuudo".
The translator didn't realize it was the name backwards...
So they tried to translate or at least transliterate it, and ended up with "Litagano Motscoud"

The Nicalis port uses "yrotS evaC"

also, the optional location of the crashed Gelnika?

Gelnika is supposed to be "Guernica", as in the Spanish town bombed by the Nazis.

the remake hasn't gotten to the Gelnika yet, but there's a character who mentions the "Relnikha", so apparently the name is continuing to drift.

This kind of thing is why Aerith/Aeris name changed, but in the other direction: She's supposed to be named by transliterating "Earth" into katakana, resulting in "Earisu".
That then got translated back into english as "Aeris", later corrected to be closer to "earth"

Also the worst naming pun is almost in plain sight:
Barret, the guy with the machine gun arm, is named "Bullet"

Both the given name "Barret" and the projectile are "■■■■" in Japanese.

also, Don Corneo's japanese name is ■■■■■■■, or "Don Koruneo". "Koruneo" is pretty close to how you'd transliterate "Corleone"...

But yeah. it seems the main way characters were named in FF7 was:
1. They came up with a clever multilingual pun or reference
2. They didn't explain it to the translators

the worst one in FF7 is probably the item called a "Vagyrisk Claw"
which drops from an enemy called the "Bagrisk".

BOTH OF THOSE ARE SUPPOSED TO BE BASILISK