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JOYCEAN TRANSLATITUDES

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With the conference slogan “Feast of Languages,” it is not amiss to include translation topics, all the less so because every feast is frequently followed by a hangover and misgivings, which is one of many reasons why translations cannot possibly achieve the intricacy of their originals.<sup>1</sup> There is generally one and only one original, which naturally may change with the progress of textual studies — say from the 1922 *Ulysses* to the one edited by H. W. Gabler, which then becomes a new starting point — yet the number of conceivable translations is unlimited: *Dubliners* alone is available in at least ten Italian variants. To display the multiplicity of viewpoints and the complexity of choices, some Italian, French, German, Polish and Hungarian versions will be examined in minute, perhaps excessive, close-ups. In this (exemplary) case they are taken from *Dubliners* and the opening of the “Cyclops” episode in *Ulysses*. While the examples may seem random, they share a complex language register, full of nuances that test translators’ craft. Faced with choices at every turn, translators are inevitably engrossed in minutiae: which word, what sentence construction, which tone, which register, and which correspondences can be sustained within an elaborate network? There is no limit to potential aspects, some of which are here displayed for comparison. The procedure of the Rome panel was that two short passages which could be treated in isolation were matched against a handful of translations, so as to demonstrate perpetual, inherent dilemmas.

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<sup>1</sup> The following remarks are not identical with what was said in the panel at the Rome Conference of 31 January and 1 February 2019, a panel that was open and partly impromptu, as it focused on the texts and selected translations.

## **“Wise Innocence”: “The Boarding House”**

The passage is a moment when Mrs Mooney, the landlady and “Madame” of the house, silently contemplates the involvement of one of her lodgers, Bob Doran, with her daughter Polly minutes before she summons him peremptorily in order to pass judgment upon him.

When the table was cleared, the broken bread collected, the sugar and butter safe under lock and key, she began to reconstruct the interview which she had had the night before with Polly. Things were as she had suspected: she had been frank in her questions and Polly had been frank in her answers. Both had been somewhat awkward, of course. She had been made awkward by her not wishing to receive the news in too cavalier a fashion or to seem to have connived, and Polly had been made awkward not merely because allusions of that kind always made her awkward, but also because she did not wish it to be thought that in her wise innocence she had divined the intention behind her mother’s tolerance. (*D* 64)

This short passage is compared with the following translations:

### Italian

#### **Cancogni**

... e quando la tavola fu sparecchiata, i resti del pane raccolti e lo zucchero e il burro chiusi a chiave nella credenza, prese a ricapitolare fra sé il colloquio avuto con Polly la sera prima. Le cose stavano proprio come aveva sospettato. Era stata franca nelle domande e Polly altrettanto nelle riposte. Entrambe naturalmente si sentivano un po’ imbarazzate: la madre perché non voleva aver l’aria di ricevere la notizia con troppa disinvoltura, dando l’impressione d’essere stata complice; e la figlia non solo perché allusioni di tal genere la mettevano sempre a disagio, ma anche perché non voleva far credere che nella sua oculata innocenza aveva indovinato quali fossero, dietro tanta tolleranza, le intenzioni materne. (65)

#### **Brilli**

Sgombrata che fu la tavola, radunati i pezzi di pane e posto sotto chiave il burro e lo zucchero, si dette a ricostruire fra sé il colloquio

che aveva avuto la sera prima con Polly. Le cose stavano come aveva sospettato: lei era stata esplicita nel porre le domande e Polly non era stata da meno nelle risposte. Non che non si sentissero imbarazzate tutte e due, lei perché non voleva dar l'impressione di ricevere con troppa disinvoltura la notizia, o di essere stata complice, e Polly non solo perché allusioni del genere la mettevano sempre a disagio, ma anche perché non voleva far credere che lei si fosse comportata da ingenua pur intuendo benissimo le intenzioni implicite nella tolleranza della madre. (55-56)

### **Minoja**

... e quando la tavola fu sparecchiata, i pezzetti di pane raccolti, lo zucchero e il burro in salvo sotto chiave e lucchetto, riandò mentalmente al colloquio che aveva avuto la sera prima con Polly. Le cose stavano come aveva sospettato: lei era stata franca nelle domande e Polly lo era stata nelle risposte. Naturalmente si erano sentite un po' imbarazzate tutt'e due: lei nel non voler assumere un atteggiamento troppo indifferente di fronte alla notizia o dar l'impressione di aver lasciato fare, e Polly, non soltanto perché allusioni di quel tipo le davano sempre un senso di disagio, ma anche perché non desiderava che si pensasse che, nella sua accorta innocenza, aveva indovinato le intenzioni che si nascondevano nella tolleranza della madre. (88)

### French

### **Fernandez**

Une fois la table desservie, les croûtons ramassés, le sucre et le beurre mis sous clef, elle se remémora l'entretien qu'elle avait eu la veille en soir avec Polly. Les choses étaient comme elle le soupçonnait d'être; elle avait été franche dans ses questions et Polly non moins franche dans ses réponses. Naturellement les deux s'étaient senties un peu gênées. La mère parce qu'elle ne voulait pas avoir l'air de recevoir la nouvelle de façon trop dégagé ni sembler trop complaisante. Polly parce que non seulement des allusions de ce genre l'embarrassaient toujours, mais aussi parce qu'elle ne voulait pas qu'on la crût capable, dans son innocence avertie, d'avoir pressenti les intentions de sa mère sous son apparente tolérance. (142)

### **Aubert**

Quand la table fut nette, le pain ramassé, le sucre et le beurre sous clé, elle se mit à reconstruire l'entretien qu'elle avait eu avec Polly la veille en soir. C'était bien ce qu'elle avait soupçonné : si ses questions avaient été franches, les réponses de Polly ne l'avaient pas été moins. Bien sûr, l'une et l'autre s'étaient senties un peu gênées : elle, parce qu'elle n'avait pas voulu accueillir la nouvelle de façon trop cavalière, ni donner l'impression d'une connivence, et Polly non seulement parce que des allusions de ce genre la gênaient toujours, mais aussi parce qu'elle ne voulait pas donner à penser que dans son innocence pleine de sagesse elle avait pressenti l'intention cachée derrière la tolérance de sa mère. (9)

### **Tadié**

Une fois la table desservie, les morceaux de pain rassemblés et le sucre et le beurre mis sous clé, elle se mit à reconstituer l'entrevue qu'elle avait eue la veille au soir avec Polly. Tout c'était déroulé selon son attente : elle l'avait questionnée avec franchise et Polly avait répondu du même. Toutes deux s'étaient senties un peu gênées, bien sûr. Elle, parce qu'elle ne voulait pas sembler prendre la nouvelle trop à la légère ou avoir agi de connivence et Polly non seulement parce que ce genre d'allusions la mettait toujours mal à l'aise mais parce qu'elle ne voulait pas laisser croire que dans son innocence sage elle avait deviné l'intention cachée derrière la tolérance de sa mère. (98)

### **German**

### **Goyert**

Als der Tisch abgeräumt war, das Brot eingesammelt, Butter und Zucker hinter Schloß und Riegel waren, durchdachte sie noch einmal die Unterredung, die sie am Abend vorher mit Polly gehabt hatte. Die Sache war so, wie sie vermutet hatte: sie hatte frei gefragt, und Polly hatte ebenso frei geantwortet. Beide waren natürlich etwas verlegen gewesen. Sie war verlegen gewesen, weil sie das, was sie nun erfuhr, nicht zu sorglos aufnehmen oder gar den Anschein des geheimen Einverständnisses erwecken wollte, und Polly war verlegen gewesen, nicht nur weil solche Anspielungen sie immer verlegen machten,

sondern weil man auch nicht glauben sollte, sie hätte in ihrer klugen Unschuld hinter der Toleranz ihrer Mutter die Absicht erraten. (66)

### **Zimmer**

Als der Tisch abgeräumt, die Brotbrocken eingesammelt, der Zucker und die Butter sicher hinter Schloß und Riegel waren, begann sie das Gespräch zu rekonstruieren, das sie am Abend vorher mit Polly geführt hatte. Die Dinge standen so, wie sie vermutet hatte: ihre Fragen waren offen gewesen und Pollys Antworten gleichfalls. Beide waren sie natürlich etwas verlegen gewesen. Sie war verlegen gewesen, weil sie die Nachricht nicht allzu nonchalant aufnehmen oder den Eindruck erwecken wollte, daß sie dieser Entwicklung Vorschub geleistet hätte, und Polly war verlegen gewesen nicht nur, weil Anspielungen dieser Art sie immer verlegen machten, sondern auch, weil sie nicht den Gedanken aufkommen lassen wollte, daß sie in ihrer weisen Unschuld die Absicht hinter der Duldsamkeit ihrer Mutter erraten hatte. (64-65)

### **Beck**

Als die Tafel abgeräumt war, die Brotstückchen eingesammelt, der Zucker und die Butter hinter Schloss und Riegel, begann sie das Gespräch, das sie letzte Nacht mit Polly geführt hatte, zu rekonstruieren. Es stand so, wie sie vermutet hatte: Sie hatte offen gefragt, und Polly hatte ebenso offen geantwortet. Natürlich waren sie beide etwas verlegen gewesen. Sie war verlegen geworden, weil sie die Neuigkeit nicht zu beiläufig hinnehmen oder den Eindruck erwecken wollte, sie hätte es stillschweigend geduldet, und Polly war nicht nur verlegen gewesen, weil sie Anspielungen dieser Art immer verlegen machten, sondern auch weil sie nicht wollte, dass jemand auf den Gedanken käme, sie hätte in ihrer weisen Unschuld die Absicht hinter der Duldsamkeit ihrer Mutter erraten. (66)

### **Raykowski**

Als der Tisch abgeräumt, die Brotreste eingesammelt und Zucker und Butter sicher weggeschlossen waren, ging sie noch einmal das Gespräch durch, das sie am Abend zuvor mit Polly geführt hatte. Es war, wie sie es vermutet hatte: Sie hatte geradeheraus gefragt, und Polly hatte geradeheraus geantwortet. Beide waren natürlich ein

bisschen verlegen gewesen. Sie war verlegen gewesen, weil sie nicht den Eindruck erwecken wollte, als nähme sie die Nachricht seelenruhig hin oder als hätte sie ein Auge zugeedrückt; und Polly war nicht nur verlegen gewesen, weil Andeutungen dieser Art sie immer verlegen machten, sondern auch weil sie außerdem nicht wollte, dass man annahm, in ihrer klugen Unschuld hätte sie die Absicht hinter dem duldsamen Verhalten ihrer Mutter erraten. (76)

### **Strümpel**

Als der Tisch aufgeräumt, die Brotreste eingesammelt, der Zucker und die Butter sorgsam weggeschlossen waren, begann sie das Gespräch nachzuzeichnen, das sie am Abend zuvor mit Polly geführt hatte. Die Dinge lagen, wie von ihr vermutet: Sie hatte klare Fragen gestellt, und Polly hatte klare Antworten gegeben. Natürlich hatten sich beide auch schwergetan. Sie hatte sich schwergetan, weil sie die Nachricht nicht allzu unbekümmert aufnehmen oder als heimliche Mitwisserin gelten wollte, und Polly hatte sich schwergetan, nicht nur weil ihr Auskünfte dieser Art stets schwerfielen, sondern auch, weil nicht der Eindruck entstehen sollte, sie habe in ihrer klugen Unschuld die Absicht hinter der Duldung der Mutter erkannt. (69)

## Polish

### **Wojciechowska**

Kiedy stół został już uprzątnięty, kawałki chleba skrzętnie pozbierane, a cukier i masło bezpiecznie schowane pod klucz, pani Mooney zaczęła w myśli odtwarzać rozmowę, jaką miała z Polly poprzedniego wieczora. A więc sprawy wyglądały tak, jak podejrzewała: jej otwarte pytania spotkały się z równie szczerymi odpowiedziami córki. Obie były cokolwiek skrępowane, oczywiście. Pani Mooney nie miała ochoty usłyszeć wiadomości wyrażonej w zbyt beztroskiej formie ani też być posądzoną o zbytnią pobłażliwość, Polly zaś zawsze peszyły tego rodzaju aluzje, a ponadto nie chciała, aby przypuszczano że w swojej sprytniej naiwności poza tolerancją matczyną dostrzega jakieś intencje. (55)

### **Batko**

Kiedy stół został uprzątnięty, chleb pozbierany, a cukier i masło bezpiecznie schowane pod klucz, pani Mooney zaczęła odtwarzać w pamięci rozmowę, jaką przeprowadziła z Polly poprzedniego wieczoru. Sprawy miały się tak, jak przypuszczała, pytała więc otwarcie, a Polly szczerze jej odpowiadała. Obie były oczywiście nieco skrupowane. Pani Mooney czuła się niezręcznie dlatego, że wolałaby nie słyszeć odpowiedzi zbyt swobodnych ani sprawiać wrażenia zbyt tolerancyjnej, Polly zaś po pierwsze aluzje tego rodzaju zawsze wprawiały w zakłopotanie, a po drugie nie chciała, aby powstało wrażenie że w swojej niby to naiwności domyśla się jakichś ukrytych za zasłoną matczynej tolerancji zamiarów. (55)

### **Hungarian**

#### **Papp**

Mary eltakarította az asztalról a tányérokat, összeszedte a legkisebb kenyérdarabkákat is, Mrs. Mooney pedig hét lakat alá tette a vaját és cukrot, aztán nekilátott összegezni a Pollyval folytatott előző esti beszélgetés tanulságait. A dolgok úgy álltak, ahogy eleve gyanította: egyenes kérdéseire Polly egyenes válaszokat adott. Persze, azért egy kicsit mindketten feszélyezettek voltak. Mrs. Mooneyt határozottan feszélyezte az erőlködés, hogy a hírt se túl könnyedén ne fogadja, se azt a látszatot ne keltse, mintha titokban egyetértene azzal, ami történt. Polly nemcsak azért érezte magát feszélyezve, mert a hasonló célzások mindig feszélyezték, hanem azért is, mert nem akarta, hogy úgy látsszon, mintha bölcs ártatlanságában megsejtette volna az anyja engedékenysége mögött rejlő szándékot.

The aim of the examination of several (among at least 60 existing) translations is to show what priorities the various translators may have had; their individual solutions are not, and have no reasons to be, identical with what emerges from our highly subjective slants.

“When the **table** was **cleared** ...”<sup>2</sup>

The simple sentence combines few striking difficulties on its surface, nevertheless I wonder whether a potential overtone of “*tabula rasa*” has been attempted, in which Latin phrase the “*tabula*” is a slate (to be cleaned), and not a table. To put things in order, far beyond merely getting the remnants of a breakfast out of the way, is Mrs Mooney’s immediate aim; she who deals “with moral problems as a cleaver deals with meat” (D63). Joyce’s meaning often transcends an immediate realistic import.

Whether automatically or by design, the forceful overtone of “safe under lock and key” is caught in phrases like “sotto chiave / sotto chiave e lucchetto,” “sous clef/clé,” “schowane pod klucz” (“placed under lock and key”), “hét lakat alá tesz” (place under seven locks), or “hinter Schloss und Riegel” in the translations adduced, but less so in “sparecchiata / sgombrata,” “eltakarít(otta),” “La table desservie,” “fut nette” and “abgeräumt/ aufgeräumt,” where the stress is mainly on objects being removed.

### “reconstruct the interview”

As applied to an open talk within members of a family, the term “interview” strikes a formal and constrained note. What is the appropriate, right equivalent for the carefully calibrated slightly odd word? Translators resort to something more homely: “colloquio,” “entretien,” “entrevue;” “Gespräch” (a mere talk) or “Unterredung,” “rozmowa” or “beszélgetés” (conversation), all superficially more suitable and therefore less out of place. The “interview,” moreover, was — not just remembered or thought through — but “reconstructed,” which intimates more conscious control than is contained in “durchdachte” (thought through) or “nachzeichnen” (mentally copied<sup>3</sup>), “odtwarzać” (reconstruct); “összegez” (summarize, sum up), on the other hand, highlights Mrs Mooney’s penchant for calculation. In “reconstruct,” which most translations retain, there is a suspi-

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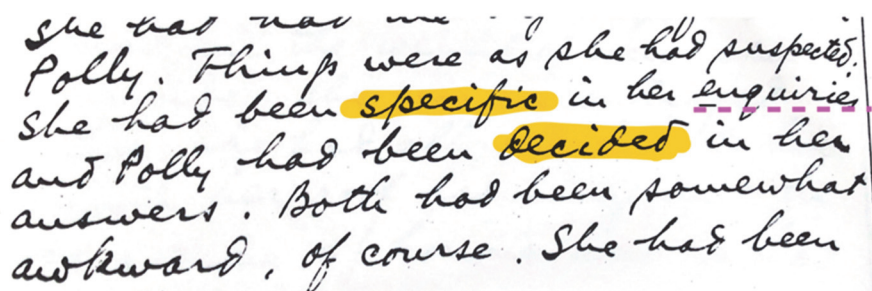
<sup>2</sup> For the sake of demonstration, **boldface** is used to highlight the issues under discussion.



cion that the interview the evening before had been constructed in the first place.

“She had been **frank** in her questions ...”

The repetition of “frank” underlines the honesty of the face-to-face talk. Joyce in fact changed an earlier wording — “she had been **specific** in her **enquiries** and Polly had been **decided** in her answers” — to a streamlined and outspoken “**frank** in her **questions** and **frank** in her answers.”<sup>4</sup>



she was not me  
Polly. Things were as she had suspected.  
She had been **specific** in her **enquiries**  
and Polly had been **decided** in her  
answers. Both had been somewhat  
awkward, of course. She had been

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The parallel repetition is followed by some translations:

Sie hatte **klare Fragen** gestellt, und Polly hatte **klare Antworten** gegeben

Sie hatte **geradeheraus** gefragt, und Polly hatte **geradeheraus** geantwortet

...**egyenes** kérdéseire Polly **egyenes** válaszokat adott

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<sup>3</sup> The fact that there is no satisfactory way to render the exact nuances of all the choices, all of them adequate by ordinary standards, already indicates the issues at hand.

<sup>4</sup> An additional aspect is that the vigorous stress on “frank” will call up, in some readers’ minds, the name of the sailor Frank (without a family name) who engages to abduct Eveline in another story with a similar boy-meets-girl-plot, but with a wholly different outcome. Naturally such potential, but very Joycean, intricacies are beyond translators’ reach.

<sup>5</sup> *JJA* 4:23. Translators would be aware of this change.

[to her **straightforward** questions Polly had given **straightforward** answers]

Others use adverbial reinforcement:

elle avait été **franche** dans ses questions et Polly **non moins** franche dans ses réponses.

sie hatte **frei** gefragt, und Polly hatte **ebenso** frei geantwortet.

Sie hatte offen gefragt, und Polly hatte **ebenso** offen geantwortet.

Most versions under inspection, however, avoid the repetition and opt for narrative variants, rephrasing the second part of the sentence, adding “equally, similarly, no less,” etc., possibly to evade dead pan monotony:

Era stata franca nelle domande e Polly **altrettanto** nelle riposte.

lei era stata franca nelle domande e Polly **lo** era stata nelle riposte.

lei era stata esplicita nel porre le domande e Polly non era stata **da meno** nelle riposte.

elle l’avait questionnée avec franchise et Polly avait répondu **du même**.

ihre Fragen waren offen gewesen und Pollys Antworten **gleichfalls**.

Repetition is also eschewed in Polish where, in Batko’s version, the *act* of questioning and answering is qualified adverbially as **open** and **honest** respectively:

[Mrs Mooney] pytała więc **otwarcie**, a Polly **szczerze** jej odpowiadała

[Mrs Mooney] was asking **openly**, and Polly was **honestly** answering [her].

and in Wojciechowska, **open** and **honest** become adjectives to qualify “questions” and “answers:”

**otwarte** pytania spotkały się z równie **szczerymi** odpowiedziami  
[**open** questions were met with equally **honest** answers]

Even a different construction can be introduced:

**si** ses questions avaient été franches, les réponses de Polly **ne l'avaient pas été moins**.

### **“frank”** against **“awkward”**

It is hardly a coincidence that the doubled frankness is stridently contradicted by a fourfold “awkward.” The exaggerated frankness is revealed as maladroit pretence. It would have been easy, or perhaps all too convenient, for translators to import the conspicuous repetitions, so some must have felt good narrative reasons for their departures. The word “awkward” in itself is already what it describes, expressing in sound and shape (the sequence “-wkw-” being fairly unique in English) its cumbersome nature. No similar unwieldy word may be at hand in other languages. Most versions inspected here render it psychologically as “embarrassed” (“imbarazzata,” “gêneé,” “mal à l’aise,” “verlegen,” “feszélyezett” [awkward, tense]) and so preserve one dominant meaning for a story in which no-one, not even the machinating mother counting her trumps, is really at ease.<sup>6</sup> But the salient adjective also signals something laborious and trickily incommodious, clumsy to handle and not simple to negotiate and full of detours, which would certainly characterise the “interview,” which takes place outside the readers’ presence. Typically, the most important actions in the story — Mr Doran’s specific transgression, the interview of the previous evening, Mrs Mooney’s discussion with the culprit — are not directly reported, which does not deter a majority of readers from knowing *exactly* what happened between Bob Doran and Polly Mooney.

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<sup>6</sup> Note, by the way, that Joyce’s reluctant publisher, Grant Richards, must have felt somewhat awkward about the collection of unusual stories that were submitted to him.

Our translations concentrate on psychological embarrassment, and few of them repeat the respective words four times. Minoja shortens the sentence and gets by with a single “imbarazzate” followed by “un senso di disagio;” Cancogni is at pains to reiterate “imbarazzate/imbarazzata,” but also deviates to “a disagio.” In French, Fernandez avoids repetitions but varies the sentence: a first “un peu gênées” is not echoed in a single subsequent “embarassaient.” Aubert describes the two women as “gênées,” and turns the single echo into an active verb: “la gênaient,” whereas Tadié opts for “gênées” followed by “mal à l’aise.” The Polish translations are also stylistically varied: Polish is unwelcoming to repetition and, in both versions, “awkward” is rendered through nouns, (“zakłopotanie”), adjectives (“skrepowane”), verbs (“peszyły”) and an adverb (“niezręcznie”), all connoting embarrassment and discomfort.

The German translations lean towards a simple repetition of “verlegen” (Goyert, Zimmer, Beck, Raykowski); while Strümpel opts for “hatte(n) sich schwergetan” (“having trouble with something,” more literally “finding it hard, or heavy, to handle,” which covers the other meaning of “awkward”). That the Romance languages quoted here decide in favour of more stylistic variation, whereas the five German ones steadfastly repeat the same term, may owe something to narrative conventions.

Awkwardness is put into practice in the longest, most entangled and meandering, convoluted syntactical sentence in the whole collection, a sentence, in other words, that *acts out* what it recounts. The sprawling arrangement is worth a scrupulous display, split up into extended ramifications:

Both had been somewhat **awkward**, of course. She had been made **awkward** by her not wishing to receive the news in too cavalier a fashion or to seem to have connived, and Polly had been made **awkward** not merely because allusions of that kind always made her **awkward**, but also because she did not wish it to be thought that in her wise innocence she had divined the intention behind her mother’s tolerance.

A short statement is expanded into a period of 73 words, with a quadruplicate “awkward,” in near parallel but expansive structure. Compulsive evasion, or, to put it differently, connivance, is metamorphosed

into grammar. Mother and daughter share a wish of not admitting their tacit understanding and what unites them is their “not wishing” to give a particular impression. The sentence is studded, moreover, with words that are beyond Mrs Mooney’s, and certainly Polly’s, normal register: “allusions,” “wise innocence,” “tolerance;” even more the choice verb “divined,” which is more dignified than a mere everyday guessing; above all, “connive” is an auctorial term, imposed on the story from above; it aptly and sophisticatedly conceals a tacit understanding: precisely what the mother is trying not to face. The vocabulary anticipates the language of “Ithaca” with its Latinate diction. A particularly ironic touch is “too cavalier a fashion” — in a setup where a courtly code is unlikely to prevail.

In French, the word can simply be taken over, as done by Aubert and Tadié, while Fernandez offers a more direct and more colloquial version (“sembler trop complaisante”). In German, with no Latinate corresponding word, the guarded wording of the original brings the motives to the surface: “Anschein des geheimen Einverständnisses“ (“the appearance of a secret understanding), “stillschweigend geduldet“ (“tacitly tolerated”), “heimliche Mitwisslerin” (“someone secretly in the know”), or more metaphorically “ein Auge zugeedrückt” (“closing one eye” = turning a blind eye to<sup>7</sup>); Hungarian, similarly, lets the cat out of the bag with the homely wording of “titokban egyetért[ene]” (secretly agree, be secretly of the same mind) and “engedékenysége mögött rejlő szándék[ot]” (the intention hidden behind [her mother’s] permissiveness, indulgence – from *enged[ni]*: to permit, allow, yield). Polish has imported “tolerance” as “tolerancja,” present in Batko’s translation, though Wojciechowska opted for “pobłażliwość” (“indulgence”).

There is no need of course to emphasize that faithful repetition of the author’s vocabulary is not considered an axiomatic rule. The aim is to show the diverging priorities that translators have chosen, sometimes inadvertently, but mostly for inherent subjective reasons.

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<sup>7</sup> The origin of “connive” is “to “wink at” or “close the eyes” and thereby ignore or tolerate something. When Bloom in *Ulysses* entered the bedroom, he “halfclosed his eyes” to adapt to the changing light (*U* 4.247). No reader can possibly know at this stage that he is also, all through his long day, conniving at the activity of his wife, a latent anticipatory overtone.

Each language determines the order of words in a sentence in its own way. Joyce ends the paragraph inspected with “her mother’s tolerance,” putting “tolerance” last. With the exception of the French version by Fernandez (“son apparente tolérance”), and Polish by Batko (“sprawiać wrazenia zbyt tolerancyjnej,” seeming too tolerant), no other translation ends on the same word, Italian and French because of the inevitable order of the genitive form, and German because a subordinate phrase has to end with a finite verb; the Hungarian sentence ends gravitationally on the hidden *intention* (szándék-ot). This may be a wholly marginal issue, but the story also turns around what tolerance might mean. Tolerance is a passive state, with a touch of endurance, it is the pose to adopt for Mrs Mooney (“she was an outraged mother”) while in fact she is actively and lurkily manipulating the affair. In this light, “tolerance” can be seen as a keyword, in fact “A Mother’s Tolerance” could qualify as an alternative title of the story. It deserves a prominent terminal position in a sentence. In Joyce, certain (potential) key words have a way of wobbling out of their semantic confines. Similarly, “The Boarding House” also hinges around the term “awkward,” which originally meant to go “awk” – that is, in the wrong direction.

Some translations tend to distinctly emphasize what is much more implicit in the original, when for example Polly’s “divining” what is “behind” her mother’s tolerance becomes an outright concealment: in “che si nascondevano” (Minoja); “cachée” (Aubert, Tadié), “rejlő” (hidden /hiding: Papp), the secretiveness is stated more than just intimated.

One peripheral issue is punctuation whose local rules of course are specific in all languages, so they will not automatically be imported; moreover it is not solely at the translators’ discretion, copy editors and publishers’ house style often prevail. The colon is a characteristic Joycean device that often links two items in intriguing ways. “Things were as she had suspected: she had been frank in her questions ...”<sup>8</sup> Most translations follow suit, but a few start with a new sentence (Cancogni),

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<sup>8</sup> The minor, or not so minor, issue can be illustrated by considering what would be changed in tone or implication if the **colon** in the early description of Mrs Mooney,— “She was a woman who was quite able to keep things to herself: a determined woman” (*D* 61) — were to be replaced by a comma.

while Fernandez inserts a semicolon. A German rule is that after a colon a new sentence with a capital letter must begin, so that an original unity is split up.

Translations are not to be evaluated on the base of punctilious examination of words or syntactical constructions, they are to be judged, also and mainly, on their own merit, as autonomous recreations (the “spirit,” not the “letters,” as the cliché has it).

### **The Weight of a Tongue in “Cyclops”**

The opening paragraph in the “Cyclops” episode is well suited to demonstrate specific translation issues. Within the novel, it introduces the narrative technique of an oral report by a participant in the events, interrupted by parallaxic extensions (posing separate translation problems). The opening sentences can be studied in isolation, they are a new beginning that sets the tone for the realistic part of the episode, a tone of rude, hyperbolic and often malicious outspokenness, with a strong Dublin slant.

I was just passing the time of day with old Troy of the D. M. P. at the corner of Arbour hill there and be damned but a bloody sweep came along and he near drove his gear into my eye. I turned around to let him have the weight of my tongue when who should I see dodging along Stony Batter only Joe Hynes.

—Lo, Joe, says I. How are you blowing? Did you see that bloody chimneysweep near shove my eye out with his brush?

—Soot’s luck, says Joe. Who’s the old ballocks you were talking to? (*U* 12.1)

The translations adduced and examined:

#### **De Angelis**

Stavo facendo quattro chiacchiere col vecchio Troy della Polizia Metropolitana all’angolo di Arbour Hill, e mi vengia un accidente se non mi arriva un fottuto spazzacamino e per poco non mi cacciava il suo arnese in un occhio. Mi volto di botto per fargli vedere se mi puzzava il fiato o no quando chi ti vedo a bighellonare dalle parti di Stony Batter? Hynes, Joe Hynes in persona.

— Toh, Joe, gli fo. Cosa si fa di bello? Che l’hai visto quello spazzacamino fottuto che per poco non mi cavava un occhio con la sua granata?

— La fuliggine porta bene, fa Joe. Chi era quel vecchio coglione che parlava con te? (285)

### **Terrinoni**

Ero lì ad ammazzare il tempo col vecchio agente Troy della D.M.P. all’angolo di Arbour hill, e al diavolo, quello spazzacamino mi viene incontro e per poco non mi infila i suoi attrezzi in un occhio. Mi giro per cantargliele di santa ragione e chi ti vedo a ciondolare per Stony Batter? Joe Hynes.

— Ma guarda! Joe, dico io. Come te la passi? L’hai visto quel cavolo di spazzacamino che per poco non mi cacciava via un occhio con la sua scopa?

— Porta fortuna la fuliggine, dice Joe. Chi è quel vecchio coglione con cui parlavi? (297)

### **Celati**

Ero a sfrombo col vecchio Troy della Dublin Metropolitan Police, sull’angolo di Arbour Hill, e là che mi venga un colpo, ti arriva un canchero di spazzacamino che quasi mi cava un occhio col suo coso. Io mi giro per dire al mecco se gli puzza la vita, e là chi ti vedo? Vedo Joe Hynes che arriva bel bello da Stony Batter.

— Ehilà, faccio a Joe. Come ti butta? L’hai visto quel canchero d’uno spazzafumo che quasi mi cavava un faro con la sua scopa?

— Fuliggine porta bene, fa lui. Chi era quel vecchio coglione che ci parlavi? (402)

### **Morel**

J’étais en train de jaspiner avec le vieux Troy de la D. M. P. au coin d’Arbour Hill quand voilà-t-il pas qu’un sacré con de ramoneur arrive et qu’il me fout presque son pinceau dans l’œil. Je me détourne pour lui faire voir de quel bois je me chauffe et qui c’est que j’aperçois bayant aux corneilles du côté de Stony Batter, si c’est pas Joe Hynes en personne.

— Hé, Joe, que j’dis. Comment que ça biche? Avez-vous vu ce nom de dieu de ramoneur qui m’a presque décroché l’œil avec son sacré balai?

— La suie, ça porte bonheur, que dit Joe. Qui c’était le vieux couillon avec qui vous parliez? (285)



### **Samoyault**

J'étais là, peinarde, en train de tuer le temps avec le vieux Troy de la Police Métropolitaine de Dublin au coin d'Arbour Hill quand voilà-t'y pas qu'un connard de ramoneur est arrivé et qu'il m'a pratiquement foutu son attirail dans l'œil. J'ai fait un demi tour pour lui montrer de quel bois je me chauffe quand qui c'est que je vois qui traînasse le long de Stony Batter, Joe Hynes himself.

— Ho, Joe, je dis. La forme ? T'as vu ce connard de ramoneur qui a failli m'éborgner avec sa foutue brosse.

— La suie, ça porte bonheur, fait Joe. Et c'est qui ce vieux couillon avec qui tu parlais ? (421)

### **Goyert**

Ich schwatze eben mit dem alten Troy vom D.M.P. da drüben an der Ecke von Arbour Hill, und da kam verdammt so'n verfluchter Schornsteinfeger daher und rannte mir fast seinen Feger ins Auge. Ich drehte mich um, wollte ihn grade gewaltig ankotzen, als ich auf einmal, nun, wen wohl, über die Stony Batter drömeln sehe — niemand anders als Joe Hynes.

“Sieh da, Joe,” sagt ich. “Was machste? Hast du gesehen, wie mir der verfluchte Schornsteinfeger mit seinem Besen fast das Auge ausgestossen hätte?”

“Russ bedeutet Glück,” sagt Joe, “Wer war der alte Sackträger, mit dem du da sprachst?” (328)

### **Wollschläger**

Ich war just so amgange und vertrieb mir die Zeit bei dem ollen Troy von der D. M. P. an der Ecke Arbour Hill da, und verdammt noch eins, da kommt doch so ein Dreckskerl von Schornsteinfeger lang und rammt mir ums Haar seinen Apparat ins Auge. Ich dreh mich um und will ihm die Leviten lesen, aber da, wen seh ich da die Stony Batter langszockeln? Keinen andern als wie Joe Hynes.

— Schau mal an, der Joe, sag ich. Wie stehn denn die Aktien? Hast du diesen verdammten Kaminputzer gesehn, wie der mir fast das Auge rausgeschauen hat mit seinem Besen?

— Ruß bringt Glück, sagt da Joe. Wer war denn der alte Eiersack, mit dem du da eben gekwatert hast? (404)

### **Revision by Beck**

Ich hab grad ein paar Worte gewechselt mit dem ollen Troy von der D. M. P. dort an der Ecke Arbour Hill und verdammt noch eins kommt

doch glatt so ein Dreckskerl von Schornsteinfeger vorbei und der rammt mir ums Haar sein Gerät ins Aug. Ich dreh mich um und will ihm grad eine Standpauke halten, aber wen seh ich da die Stony Batter langschleichen, ausgerechnet Joe Hynes.

—Hallo, der Joe, sag ich. Wie stehn denn die Aktien? Hast du gesehn, wie mir der verdammte Kaminkehrer fast das Auge rausgestoßen hat mit seinem Besen?

— Ruß bringt Glück, sagt Joe. Wer war denn der alte Sack, mit dem du dich unterhalten hast? (340)<sup>9</sup>

### **Słomczyński**

Byłem właśnie o tej porze ze starym Troyem, posterunkowym, D.M. na rogu Arbour Hill, kiedy nagle, a niech to, jakiś przeklęty kominiarz o mało nie wsadził mi szczotki w oko. Odwróciłem się, żeby mu przygadać jak należy, i kogóż to widzę wlokącego się wzdłuż Stony Batter jak nie Joe Hynesa.

— Cześć, Joe, powiadam. Jak ci leci? Widziałeś tego przeklętego kominiarza? O mało nie wyjął mi oka tą miotłą.

— Sadza to szczęście, powiada Joe. Kto to, ten stary buc, z którym gadałeś? (227)

[I was just at that moment with the old constable, D. M. at the corner of Arbour Hill, when suddenly, darn it, some cursed chimney sweep almost stuck [his] brush in my eye. I turned to snipe at him properly and who do I see schlepping along Stony Batter if not Joe Hynes.

— Hey, Joe, I say. How are you doing? Did you see that cursed chimney sweep? He almout took out my eye with that sweeper.

— Soot means luck, says Joe. Who is that old jerk you were yakking with?]

### **Gáspár**

Éppen ott diskuráltunk az Arbour Hill sarkán, én meg az öreg Troy a D.M.P.-től, hát nem arra jön egy istenverte kéményseprő és kevés híja volt, hogy a szemembe bök a kotrójával. Megfordultam, hogy alaposan megmondjam neki a véleményem, mikor egyszerre látom, ott ballag a Stony Batteren lefele Joe Hynes, személyesen.

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<sup>9</sup> This translation exists only in 200 copies distributed to special libraries and is not commercially available as its publication was interdicted by the Wollschläger Estate for copyright reasons — that “a work of art” has been defaced.

—Na, Joe – mondom neki -, hogy ityeg a fityeg! Láttad, hogy ez a nyavalyás kéményseprő majdnem kiszúrta a szemem a keféjével?

—Korom szerencsét hoz – mondja Joe. – Ki volt az a vén salabakter, akivel beszéltél? (I/235)

[We were just (iron.) discoursing on Arbour Hill corner, me and old Troy from the D.M.P., and doesn't a god-damned chimneysweep come by and it was a near miss that he poked his rake into my eye. I turned to heartily tell him my opinion, when at once I see sauntering down Stony Batter Joe Hynes, in person.

—Lo, Joe – I say to him – how's it going? Have you seen that that poxy chimneysweep near gouged out my eye with his brush?

—Soot brings luck – Joe says. – Who was that (sarc.) old fogey you were talking with?]

### Szentkuthy

Ott vertük agyon az időt az öreg Troyjal a rendőrségtől, tudod, az Arbour Hill sarkánál, és a fene ott ette volna meg, arra jön egy rohadt kéményseprő, és épp, hogy a szememet nem szúrja ki azzal a vacak szerkentyűjével. Utánafordultam, hogy szakramentumos szentintelveimben részesítsem, mikor kit látok ott kocogni Stony Batter felől, mint a mi Joe Hynesunkat és nem mást.

—Nahát, Joe – mondok. – Megvagyunk, megvagyunk? Láttad azt a rohadt kéményseprőt, a söprűjével, majd kiszúrta a szemem?

—Szerencsét hoz – azt mondja Joe. – Ki az a vén fonos, akivel beszéltél? (362)

[There we were striking time dead with old Troy from the police, you know, on the corner of Arbour Hill, and may the pox have him but a rotten chimneysweep comes by and almost gouged my eye out with his lousy gadget. I turned to make him partake of my sacramental holy admonitions when whom do I see trotting from the direction of Stony Batter but our own Joe Hynes and no other.

—Blimey, Joe – I says. – Keeping well, keeping well? Have you seen that rotten chimneysweep with his sweep, almost gouged out my eye?

—Brings luck – so says Joe. – Who's that old *fonos*: *fon*-os, arch. cunt-y, + *fos*, diarrhoea/fizzle, you were talking with?]

### Revised – Gula, Kappanyos, Kiss, Szolláth

Épp csak múltattuk az időt a jó öreg Troyjal a rendőrségtől az Arbour Hill sarkánál, oszt a fene ott ette volna meg, arra jön egy rohadt kéményseprő,

oszt majd kiszúrja a szememet a szerkentyűjével. Utánafordultam, hogy alaposan megmondjam neki a magamét, mikor kit látok ott ódalogni Stony Batter felől, Joe Hynest személyesen,  
—Nolám, Joe – mondok. – Mi szél hozott? Láttad azt a rohadt kéményseprőt a söprűjével, majd kiütötte a szemem?  
—Szerencsét hoz – mondja Joe. – Ki az a vén szivar, akivel beszéltél?  
(283)

[We were just passing the time with good old Troy from the police on the corner of Arbour Hill, and the pox get him, but a rotten chimneysweep walks by and near drives my eye out with his gadget. I turned to heartily give him my own / my version, when whom do I see dodging from the direction of Stony Batter but Joe Hynes in person.  
—Well, Joe – says I. – What wind brings you here? Have you seen that rotten chimneysweep with his sweep, he near knocked out my eye?  
—Brings luck – says Joe. – Who’s that old cigar you were talking with?]

Certain issues will be singled out and treated in sequence.

## **D.M.P.**

One seemingly minor problem concerns the abbreviations of local institutions like “D. M. P.,” short for the Dublin Metropolitan Police. Translators can blandly take over the initials or else spell out the full official designation; and, if it is given in full, should it be in the original English (“Police”) or locally adapted (“Polizia”)? The colloquial short form hides the institution from the foreign readers’ grasp and may necessitate a footnote. On the other hand, in spoken dialogue practically no one would ever use a full title, except perhaps with ironic intentions.

## **Just Passing the Time of Day**

A number of translators render this as variants of “*killing* time:” “ad ammazzare il tempo” or “en train de tuer le temps,” “vertük agyon az időt” [beating/striking time dead]. Similar formulations in other languages are not treated here. The conversation with Troy is probably

nothing more than an exchange of words, but the phrase aptly covers the episode's action. The regulars in Barney Kiernan's licensed premises are not out to "kill" time, that is to get it over quickly, but they enjoy leisurely drinking and gossiping along with airing their prejudices and they are making the most of it. Even Bloom allows himself to be distracted from facing his situation at home. In fact, it seems (at least to me) there is a comical ring about such a common occupation, stereotypically Irish. If *Ulysses* did not have its classical title, "Passing the Time of Day" would be a conceivable alternative.<sup>10</sup> The whole "Wandering Rocks" chapter presents an apparently random survey of how men (mostly) are passing one hour when, for all we know, the pubs might be closed. The dilatory reading finds expression in Wollschläger's fittingly elaborate "Ich war just so am gange und vertrieb mir die Zeit," or in Samoyault's interjected "en peinar" ("in a leisurely fashion"). At the other side of the spectrum Goyert settles for a simple "chatting a bit" ("Ich schwatzte eben"); Beck similarly uses "ein paar Worte gewechselt" ("exchanged a few words"), which chimes in with "Stavo scambiando due parole." Polish departs from these patterns; the narrator states: "Byłem" ("I was") in the company of Troy "o tej porze" ("just at that moment"). It is standard language though the Polish phrase is suggestive of the original's "spending time" in the sense of "being" with someone. The three Hungarian versions show all three strategies, from the slightly pejorative colloquial "éppen ott diskuráltunk" (were discoursing/conferencing, that is, chatting there: Gáspár) through Szentkuthy's "vertük agyon az időt" [beating/striking time dead], to the "Revised" version's (transitive) "passing the time:" "múlattuk az időt."

Translators are not of course obliged stay close to the original wording. Most of them are pictoresquely inventive: "Stavo facendo quattro chiacchiere;" "Ero a sfrombo;" "en train des jaspiner."

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<sup>10</sup> When "Constable 57 C, on his beat, stood to pass the time", he probably did not more than pass on some information ("I seen that particular party last evening, the constable said with bated breath" (*U* 10.217, 225).

## Orchestration

I am not sure that translators experienced the opening sentence as a calibrated orchestration of three different speeds and tones, first a casual, neutral pace

“I was just passing the time of day with old Troy ...”

followed by a somewhat indignant disruption with an increase in speed

“...and be damned but a bloody sweep came along”

and closing with emphatic ponderous echoing monosyllables, the “weight of a tongue,” in other words:

“and he **near drove his gear into my eye**”

Whether such a change of voice and tempo, if pertinent at all, is attempted is a matter for each reader to determine — and it shows the fundamentally subjective nature of gauging nuances. It seems that translators have been successful in imitating the subtleties of tone, unconsciously in all likelihood and due to the sensitivity of the profession.

## “Bloody”

The episode is characterized by a generous sprinkling of the once unprintable expletive “bloody.” Joyce fought for its inclusion in some of the *Dubliners* stories but had to give in at least partially. He then took his revenge in *Ulysses*, which was set up in France where fewer verbal taboos obtained, so that the incriminated word occurs no less than 71 times in the chapter, sometimes in concise clusters.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Imagine how one run — “Jesus, there’s always some bloody clown or other kicking up a bloody murder about bloody nothing” — would lose its punch without the threefold expletive (*U* 12.1793).

The Art of Swearing differs from culture to culture, and in other languages there is hardly an equivalent to the English expletive, whose main impact is to signal resentment or anger. De Angelis in Italian gets by with “fottuto” of sexual orientation, which is applied consistently and introduces another note (there is at least the threat of bloodshed in the episode, but no flavour of copulation); Terrinoni uses an interpolated “al diavolo,” while Celati has recourse to a noun “un canchero di,” as do Morel and Samayoult in French (“un sacré con de,” “Ce nom die dieu de,” “ce conard de”). The German language has a narrow range of maledictory terms and is limited to “verflucht” or “verdammt,” “cursed” or “damned,” so that blasphemy replaces general vulgarity (Joyce uses “bloody” as well as “damned”). In Polish, “bloody” also becomes “cursed” (“przeklęty”) though other words, mostly vulgarities, are used later in the chapter, whose register in Polish is somewhat lower than in the original. In Hungarian, Gáspár’s 1947 version starts on a “god-damned” (“istenverte”), leaning towards blasphemy, whereas the second *bloody* is rendered through a mild expletive derived from an archaic word for pox, disease (“nyavalyá-s”); Szentkuthy and the “Revised” version make use of “rohadt” (“rotten”), the former also adding an extra expletive for good measure, to adorn the chimneysweep’s gear (“vacak:” lousy, shoddy) – none of the sanguine denomination.

The same Szentkuthy, (in)famous for studding his translation of *Ulysses* with extra obscenities, slips in a portmanteau of sorts to lower the register: the low colloquial “old bollocks” gets a simultaneous sexual and scatological colouring, as the (low colloquial) *vén fos* (old fizzle, that is, old fogley) is playfully superinscribed with an archaic word for the (female) pudenda, *fon*. The “Revised” version opts for the colloquial “vén szivar” (“old cigar”) instead, itself a euphemism for “vén szar” (“old crap”).

On occasion, “bloody” can revert to its original meaning, at least as an overtone. In “You were and a bloody sight better” (*U* 12.886) and “There’s a bloody sight more pox than pax about that boyo” (*U* 12.1400), the adjective is used the same way, but it so happens that the Homeric

Kyklops episode contains sights that are indeed full of blood, as when Polyphemos is blinded (*Od.* 9:297)<sup>12</sup>.

To complicate issues, there is another angle to “bloody” in that it was erroneously thought to be derived from “by our Lady,” a wide-spread belief which Joyce, without necessarily subscribing to it, mentions it in a letter to Stanislaus: “... if [Grant Richards, the publisher] follows the only derivation I have heard for it [“bloody”] it is strange that he should object more strongly to a profane use of the Virgin than to a profane use of the name of God” (*LII*, 134). This etymological bypath links “Cyclops” to “Nausicaa,” where the Virgin Mary serves as a foil to Gerty MacDowell (who in turn is generously blushing and beginning to menstruate).

For better or worse, most, perhaps all, translations lose something of their sanguinary punch.

## Tenses

Joyce’s paragraph already switches from the preponderant past tense (I was ... came ... drove ... turned) to the (immediate) present: “who should I see...;” and continues with “says I” ... “says Joe.” The practice, possibly almost unnoticed, is employed all throughout the chapter and effortlessly taken over: “Stavo ... chi ti vedo,” etc in Italian, as well as in French: “J’étais ... j’aperçois,” je vois,” etc. “Ich schwatzte ... sehe ... sagt.” The usage is not found in all languages.

## Homophonetics

Fortuitously for Joyce, in English — and only in English — the first personal pronoun coincides with the organ of vision, as well as with the affirmative “aye.” In the episode, half of which is told in the first person,

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<sup>12</sup> “Cyclops” features blood in various ways: its “circulation” (*U* 12.952), a “deed of blood” (*U* 12.448), as a result of decapitation (*U* 12.624), or a necessity for erection (*U* 12.475), further in a boxing match (*U* 12.980) as well as figuratively: “we gave our best blood to France and Spain” (*U* 12.1381).



“eye,” often in the singular, occurs frequently (25 times, out of 116). “Cyclops” hinges around “I” and “eye,” the pair significantly brackets the introductory sentence, an ideal prerequisite for the episode since the Homeric *Kyklopes* had only one eye so that Polyphemos could be deprived of his sight in one quick stroke.

Given the lexical conditions, translations cannot achieve the same effect of an eye-narrator serving as I-witness with all the overlapping. In the original, both opening sentences begin with “I.” Some languages like Italian or Polish do not use a first-person pronoun as it is contained in the verb form (“Stavo ...,” “Ero ...” “Byłem...”), and it would sound extremely forced to set off with a ponderous “Io” or “Ja.” No homophony can therefore be achieved, and so it hardly matters that Celati does not end his sentence on “occhio” (as the others emphatically do), but with “col suo coso.” French is only slightly better off since the pronoun in a merely apostrophised “J’étais” is hardly noticed and certainly never echoed by “œil.” Most translations inspected are at pains to start off with the first person singular, even if it cannot possibly be matched by a phonetic equivalent.

Objectively, the sound “ai” links beginning and end of the first sentence, it moves from “I” to “eye” in phonetic circularity. If this descriptive fact is translated into Greek (though why should it be?), we arrive at a circle (*kyklos*) combined with *ops* = eye, adding up to *Kykl-ops* — this in an episode in which names are thematically hidden, disguised or distorted.<sup>13</sup>

One way out of such dilemmas is to relegate them to textual notes where anything outside of the reach of translations can be accommodated, with naturally an entirely different impact. Explanations can signal hidden meanings or jokes, but they may also ruin them. Once annotation is accepted,<sup>14</sup> almost everything a reader may have to know can be con-

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<sup>13</sup> Or hidden in other words, like the mock-English pronunciation of “*italiano*” as “signior Brini [...] the eytallyano” (*U* 12.1067), which insinuates a tall single eye into a xenophobic word.

<sup>14</sup> A Spanish translation offers ample footnotes at the bottom of each page and, for example, comments on the first sentence — which moves from “Yo” to “ojo” — as “a reference to Odysseus putting an olive stake into the eye of Polyphemos” (Costa Picazo, 763). It is footnote 2889, out of 6379 — just to give a rough idea of what a reader may be told.

veyed. Translations then become a different game. The decision to include annotation is often made by publishers rather than translators. There is good reason, even a need, for ample annotation; in practice, in effect it turns *Ulysses* from something to be enjoyed into an intellectual task.

A first Finnish translation begins with “Mä” (“I”) and ends the sentence with “silmääni”, where the word for eye, “silmä,” happens to contain “mä,” whether this will be noticed or not (Saarikoski, 287). A later one goes out of its way by setting off with “Silmä” (“eye”) and ending with the identical “silmä,” so the circularity becomes even more visible than in the homophonic original. A footnote explains that what has to be left out in most cases suddenly turns into the most salient effect, the point is thrust into the reader’s eye. The example indicates that the significance of the Cyclopean theme justifies an unusual mark.<sup>15</sup>

### **Idiomatic Side Benefits**

An overall question is whether translations should follow the original when a phrase seems to transcend its immediate context and takes on a thematic significance (as is claimed here), with the obvious answer that, yes, ideally, they should, but without potential confusion or intrusive emphasis. The “weight of my tongue” is a case in point; it is suitably characteristic but also announces a prevailing tone of the dialogues to follow (“The curse of a goodfornothing God light sideways on the bloody thicklugged sons of whores’ gets,” *U* 12.1198). The idiomatic “weight” may have weight. “Cyclops” is saturated with legalese, court procedures are imitated, Justice is weighing the scales, when for example judges “... weighed well and pondered the claim of the first chargeant ...” (*U* 12.1116). Seen from another angle, such serious uses of language contrast pointedly with the prevalent facetious practice throughout – language high and serious as against low and irreverently flippant.

Translators find forceful equivalents for “I let him have the weight of my tongue.” In Italian, “per fargli vedere se mi puzzava il fiato o no” (“his own breath doesn’t smell,” De Angelis), “per dire al mecco se gli

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<sup>15</sup> Lehto, 7. I owe the information about the Finish translations to Rahel Huwyler.

puzza la vita” (“[his own] life is perhaps smelly to himself” Celati) may not be clear to readers. Terrinoni offers “per cantargliete di santa ragione;” somewhat similarly, Szentkuthy has a (flamboyant) holy lesson, complete with the sacraments (in Hungarian, connoting swearwords), recited to the chimneysweep: “szakramentumos szentintelmekben részesít(s)em” (to make him partake of my sacramental holy admonitions / holy lesson). Both Morel and Samoyault substitute... “pour lui faire voir de quel bois je me chauffe;” German idioms are “gewaltig ankotzen” (“firmly vomit on him”), “die Leviten lesen” (“a good scolding,” based on the Old Testament Levites, Wollschläger), “eine Standpauke halten” (Beck, “a dressing down,” originally by means of a big drum [Pauke]); Polish “żeby mu przygadać jak należy” (“to snipe at him”) — they all look vivaciously adequate and impeccably in tune.<sup>16</sup>

The “weight of my tongue” characterizes the speaker, whose tongue is forceful, often maliciously so. It so happens that the first interpolation, only a few lines away from our passage, imitates a contract in which the weight of the goods in dispute is pedantically listed in monotonous legalese: “... videlicet, five pounds avoirdupois of first choice tea at three shillings and no pence per pound avoirdupois and three stone avoirdupois of sugar, crushed crystal, at threepence per pound avoirdupois ...” (*U* 12.37); the precision forms a contrast to “any God’s quantity” in the preceding dialogue (*U* 12.15). It also so happens that the non-decimal English weight system has two standards, one “avoirdupois,” as just quoted, the other “Troy measure,” which Leopold Bloom remembers in the cemetery: “Pennyweight of powder in a skull. Twelve grammes one pennyweight. Troy measure” (*U* 6.681). “Troy” in this context bears no relation to the siege of Troy in the *Iliad*, but derives from the city of Troye in France), nor of course is “old Troy of the D.M.P.” a classical reference, but there seem to be potential marginal wheels within wheels, centred around the name “Troy” which tends to call up the ancient mythical city in a book (mis)named “Ulysses”. This spin-off just serves to show potential interconnections. And, no, no obligation is forced on translators to recreate latent peripheral intricacies of a reverberating orig-

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<sup>16</sup> To convey the exact meaning and particular nuances is a translation issue of its own.

inal. But, for better (readers) or worse (translators), Joyce's works distinguish themselves by gratuitous ramifications.

Take "dodging" as another trivial example. Joe Hynes is "dodging around," a kind of walk with the usual derogative tinge typical of the overriding tone in "Cyclops." The narrator does not appreciate some forms of walking: "sloping around Greek street;" "trotting like a poodle;" "So Bloom slopes in;" "Bob Doran comes lurching around" (*U* 12.780), etc. Translators rise to the occasion with vivid equivalents, "bighellonare," "ciondolare," "arriva bel bello," "bayant aux corneilles," "qui traînasse," "langszockeln," "langschleichen," "wlokący się" ("shlepping"), or "ódalog-ni" (phonetic spelling of "oldalog-ni," to dodge, walk sideways or furtively) with creative license.

Joyce, however, goes beyond a mere slightly humorous gait; to "dodge" is also (though not in this context) to evade or avoid something, it is one of Odysseus' trademarks to escape possible danger. In "Eumaeus," Bloom will be "dodging about in the vicinity of the cobblestones" (*U* 16.211); Boylan is described as "Dirty Dan the dodger's son," his father avoided payment by not listening (*U* 12.998–1001). A dodge can be a ruse, a strategy, "the dodge ... getting dicky meat off the train (*U* 6.397). As it happens, Joe Hynes later on will be dodging to pay back what he owes to Bloom. Come to think of it, "dodge" is an appropriate term for translators: they have to invent dodges, tricks, and at times there is nothing else to do than to dodge some dilemmas.

Translators,<sup>17</sup> as has been shown, dodge some issues that might occupy them out of all proportion. No one would ever fault them for not accommodating essential or merely marginal features. What tends to evaporate in the transit, inevitably, through no-one's fault, are Joycean extras, trivial or minuscule perhaps, that are discreetly reverberating, all those Joycean side effects.

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<sup>17</sup> Not to forget that earlier translators had to rely entirely on their textual memory. It was only in 1951 that a *Word Index to James Joyce's Ulysses* by Miles L. Hanley became available (Madison: University of Madison Press); it does not list words that occur more than 25 times. In 1985 Wolfhard Steppe and Hans Walter Gabler offered a *Handlist to James Joyce's Ulysses*, so that finally every occurrence could be traced. Digital availability of the whole text is a recent benefit that immensely facilitates a translator's task — and possibly renders it even more complex.

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