



“The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine.” (*P* 167):

Translation and Joyce, Joyce and Translation

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This keynote lecture presents annotated and illustrated retrospect of what have been some of the most striking outcomes emerging from the study, over the past sixty-odd years, of Joyce and translation, of Joyce *as* translation, and of the joys — and sorrows — of translating Joyce. A selection of the most significant names, dates, developments and publications in the field is highlighted, and one or two refreshed — and I hope refreshing — ways of looking at a topic that has become a widely recognized field of interest in Joyce studies are suggested. Not only the translation of Joyce’s works *per se* is at stake, but also, and perhaps even more importantly, translation as a critical tool to help further our understanding of his work.

Keywords: James Joyce, translation, translation studies, critical analysis

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Rheumatic wheels

A useful starting point for the study of — in the widest possible meaning — ‘Joyce and translation’ is the first ‘translation issue’ of the *James Joyce Quarterly*, published in 1967. In his introduction to the volume, aptly entitled “The Issue *is* Translation” (italics mine), Fritz Senn stated:

Among the readers of Joyce’s works all over the world there are a great many who have never, in point of fact, read a single word or sentence as Joyce wrote it. They are relying — they usually have to — on translations. Only the more sophisticated, as a rule, are aware that what they read is not a particular work by the author but such and such a translator’s re-creation of it. There is a difference. (1967, 163; italics mine)

Senn positions the subject of literary translation in the frame of the specific translation issues Joyce’s texts offer: “When the writer is Joyce who uses language not only as a medium for something (and a very complex something it usually is) but lets it hold our attention almost in its own right the question is no longer of the difficulty of translation but one of its very possibility” (*ibid.*).

Intriguingly, the question of “the difficulty of translation” seems unrelated to the progressive difficulty of Joyce’s works. That is to say, *Finnegans Wake* is in and of itself is not ‘more difficult’ to translate than, say, *Dubliners* or *Chamber Music*. The *scale* is different, the manifold multilayeredness multiplies with every single reader and every single reading, but as early as the short story “The Sisters” the new-fangled principles driving Joyce’s literary operation become visible; in fact, they become *audible*:

But still and all he kept on saying that before the summer was over he’d go out for a drive one fine day just to see the old house again where we were all born down in Irishtown and take me and Nannie with him. If we could only get one of them *new-fangled carriages that makes no noise* that Father O’Rourke told him about – *them with the rheumatic wheels* [...] (17; italics mine)

Rather than pneumatically silent, from a very early moment on Joyce’s works become rheumatically noisy. Joyce’s language is an English idiolect invented by an Irish writer for his, and its, own purposes. Thus, the difficulties of translating Joyce’s works lie not only in hapax legomona such as “contransmagnificandjewbangtentiality” (*U* 3.51), or “bababadalgharaghtakamminarronkonnbronntonnerronntuonnthunntrovarrhounawnskawntoohohoordenenthurnuk!” (*FW* 3.15-17), but also, as Senn has put it, in the most “homely words as ‘faints and worms’ on the first page of ‘The Sisters’” (1967, 163). To vary on a thought that occurs to Stephen after his discussion with the dean of studies about the various usages of the words “funnel” and “tundish” (“The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine”, *P* 167): the language in which we are reading is his before it is ours. Joyce, I propose, is our dean of studies. His language is his before it is ours. His language, certainly when we’re writing and speaking about Joyce, is always *usurping* ours.



Stately/lily

The 1967 *JJQ* issue features Senn's own, now famous articles "Seven against Joyce", in which he compares excerpts from seven translations of *Ulysses* with the source text, and "The Telling of the Taling", a reading of three translations of eighteen lines from the last book of the *Wake*. It also includes, among others, Jack Dalton's article "'Stately, plump Buck Mulligan' in Djoytsh." Dalton's premise is that the German translator Georg Goyert, by translating as an adverb the adjective "Stately" in the opening sentence of *Ulysses*, had got it all wrong. Two things are at stake here: first, the misapprehension that there is only one way to read the first word of *Ulysses*, namely as an adjective, and second, the conviction that adjectives may only be translated as adjectives. Dalton's first objection may be legitimate: technically (and pedantically), the adverbial form is "statelily." Joyce knows this, and, in episode 7, shows us he knows this. There, William Braydon, the wealthy owner of the *Weekly Freeman and National Press*, is described as a "stately figure", passing "statelily up the staircase" (*U* 7.42-45). Dalton's second objection, however, is evidence of a rather blinkered approach to translation. As Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean-Louis Darbelnet argued in their 1958 classic *Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais*, "transposition", the shift from one word class to another, such as from adjective to adverb, "shows a very good command of the target language"; "modulation", changing semantics or perspective while navigating from one language to another, is "the touchstone of a good translator" (Munday, 58). Dalton doesn't seem to allow for "transposition." One wonders what he would have made of "modulation."

The opening sentence of *Ulysses* even more so than a matter of text, is a matter of intertext and intratext; of context both explicit and implicit within and beyond *Ulysses*. The Benjaminian task of the translator is to render *everything*: all the textual and more-than-textual dimensions. One of the consequences of that Benjaminian task Joyceanly executed, is that the translator must be more radically visible than usual — a point I shall return to in my conclusion.

What is the *everything* we can detect in those famous first words? First of all, coming immediately after the title of the novel, *Ulysses* (intertextually offering a Latinisation — a modulation — of Homer's wily hero), it deflates any expectation that in fact Ulysses, let alone Odysseus, will be the novel's protagonist. At the same time, to complicate things further, it has been argued that the rhythm of the opening sentence reflects the meter of the opening line of the *Odyssey*. Furthermore, the first word of the sentence, "Stately", evokes another intertextual ghost: Hamlet sr., the dead king, in Horatio's words is said to have gone "slow and stately" — not statelily! — by the watchmen Marcellus and Barnardo (*Hamlet* I.2). Stephen, of course, is modelled on classical sons like Icarus, Telemachus and Hamlet jr. Accordingly, while 'literally' out of sight until Mulligan spots him ("Then, catching sight of Stephen Dedalus", *U* 1.11), his invisible presence is made known through "Stately" before he enters the stage, or rather, before he is being materialized by Buck's "Come up, Kinch! Come up, you fearful jesuit!" (*U* 1.8). As Joyce once wrote to Lucia, "*in certi casi l'assenza e la forma più alta della presenza*": "in certain cases absence in the highest form of presence" (*LIII*, 357/357n1) — and for a translator



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to render visibly or invisibly visible such present absence / absent presence, poses some of the biggest challenges of the art.¹

Looking into the first sentence of *Ulysses* from the perspective of the entire novel (“in a kind of retrospective arrangement”, *U* 10.783), it may further be observed that as a matter of *intra-text* Buck Mulligan pre-echoes not only William Braydon, but also Leopold Bloom. The opening scenes of both episode 4 and episode 16 provide evidence of crucial coincidences and contrasts on the level of character and settings. Furthermore, Buck’s plumpness foreshadows — or rather, forefleshes — the “plump mellow yellow smellow melons of [Molly’s] rump” (*U* 17.2241) in “Ithaca.” This link also ‘explains’ the occurrence, in reversed form, of Molly’s repeated “yes” in Buck’s “Stately”. Also intratextually, on a thematic level informing the novel as a whole, State (“Stately”, *U* 1.1) and Church (“crossed”, *U* 1.2), the pillars upholding Ireland’s paralysis, serve as bookends to that first sentence. When this was pointed out to Erik Bindervoet and Robbert-Jan Henkes, they decided to reverse the conventional grammatical order of auxiliary and main verb in their Dutch translation of *Ulysses*, so that “*gekruist*” (for “crossed”) became the last word of the first sentence of their *Ulixes* (Joyce 2012, 7). It made them immediately visible as translators, for which their predecessors Paul Claes and Mon Nys would resolutely chastise them.

The adverb / adjective tension informing “Stately” has long been a happy hunting ground for scholars and translators alike. In his 1985 *JJQ* article “‘Stately, plump’ for Example: Allusive Overlays and Widening Circles of Irrelevance”, Senn writes that “‘Stately, plump,’ the adjectives that modify Buck Mulligan, characterize his visual appearance [insisting on the adjectival function of “Stately”] and, *perhaps*, his first solemn movements [hinting at the adverbial turn, as well as at the dead king Hamlet]” (347; italics mine). Intratextually, the adjective / adverb tension in the first sentence of “Telemachus” is recreated in the first sentence of “Calypso” as an adverbial phrase/noun tension. The fact that Bloom is said to eat “with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls” (*U* 4.1-2) may send the reader in two directions at the same time: does “with relish” mean that Bloom is a keen eater of offal, or does he relish — pardon the pun — a condiment with his kidney?

Intertextual and intratextual echoes, silently or all too audibly reverberating within, without and beyond *Ulysses*, create the soundscape of *everything* — of that *everything* that is to be translated; of the contextuality that gives the novel its ‘untranslatable’ quality.

The critical turn

Translation has become a cornerstone in Joyce studies. By pointing out how the choices translators make represent, underrepresent, misrepresent, or overrepresent the source text, it was Fritz Senn who reshaped the study of translations of Joyce into a critical tool. His essays, collected in *Joyce’s Dislocutions* (subtitled *Essays on Reading as Translation*) from 1984, and *Inductive Scrutinies* (1995), among others, have contributed to the evolution of this notion.

¹ Next to the opening sentence of *Ulysses*, another fine example of a passage in which presence and absence are visible and invisible at the same time, may be found in “Wandering Rocks”: “John Howard Parnell translated a white bishop quietly and his grey claw went up again to his forehead whereat it rested” (*U* 10.1050-53). In that one sentence, Ireland’s still quite recent historical trauma — the death in 1891 of Charles Stewart Parnell — is conspicuous in the simultaneity of its factual absence yet ghostly presence as implied in the character of his brother.

Translations function as amplifications of the source text by way of the *via negativa* of showing how translators must choose, more often than not, options excluding, partly or wholly, certain (or uncertain) lexical, textual, or contextual dimensions of the source text. The voluntary, however ingeniously worded, yet, inevitably, limited ‘understanding’ by the target text of the source text opens up, dare I say, portals of discovery. As Senn put it as early as 1967, “[t]he question of translation is a fascinating one. Every tiny part of a Joyce translation has its torytale [*FW* 20.19] to tell, it is a comment on the original text, a suggestion of what it might mean. At worst, a bad rendering — by its very deficiencies — brings out the achievement of the original all the more clearly” (164). In 2010 he wrote: “Any departure from an original — a different emphasis, a missed allusion, or a downright misunderstanding — may serve as a subsidiary portal of discovery. It points towards features in the text that we might otherwise not have sensed” (550). More recently, Sam Slote, in a similar vein, argued that “[s]ometimes the disambiguation afforded by translations is of the negative variety, that is, the translator makes a mistake, but this mistake reveals an interpretive problem that might otherwise be unsuspected by a native reader of the original” (86).

Over the next almost six decades after that 1967 *JJQ*, articles using translation as a critical tool, as well as scholarly and ‘practical’ publications on translating Joyce have been regularly featured in the pages of the journal and elsewhere. At Joyce symposia, too, translation was given a more prominent place. The first translation panel was organised at the Trieste Symposium in 1970 and since then such panels have become regular features in Symposia, summer schools, and workshops. In 1990, another volume of the *JJQ* was dedicated to ‘Joyce in translation’, this time pivoting on countries more peripheral to Western Europe: China, Korea, Brazil, and Georgia. Edited by Rosa Maria Bolletieri Bosinelli, in 2004 a “special section” of volume 41 of the *JJQ*, devoted to the theme of “Post-Industrial Joyce” was dedicated to Joyce and translation. David Pierce, in a contribution significantly entitled “The Issue *of* Translation” (*italics mine*), reiterated a now familiar point: “It goes without saying that the best readers of Joyce are non-native speakers, non-native English speakers that is, who find themselves hesitating at precisely the points where for others there is nothing to report” (42).

Interestingly, it is in the field of Joyce in particular, that “non-native English speakers” in the shape of translators have emerged as scholars, and vice versa. One thinks of Enrico Terrinoni, Bindervoet and Henkes, and Jolante Wawrzycka, but many more could be mentioned. To some extent, of course, any literary translator briefly becomes a scholar of sorts of the source text they’re translating. In the case of Joyce, however, the fact that scholars often become translators and translators scholars, tells us that translating Joyce means studying Joyce, and that studying Joyce can only take place under circumstances acknowledging the scholarly value of translating Joyce.

Joyce the translator

Wawrzycka’s chapter on “Translation” in *Joyce in Context* (2010) takes as its starting point not Joyce in translation, but Joyce *as a translator*: “Skeat in hand,” she writes,

young Joyce, auto-linguaged into college Stephen, wades through words ‘so familiar and so foreign’ (*P* 205), breaking away from the confines of English into the sophistication of multilinguisticity. [...] Linguaging, wording, punning and riddling are at the heart of Joyce’s



artistic endeavour from the start when, as a novice poet of nine he gave his first poem a Latin title ‘Et Tu, Healy’.” (2010b, 125)

Indeed, as Scarlett Baron has noted, “Joyce’s interest in translation manifested itself early in his ambitious (and yet, by most accounts, flawed) attempts to turn Gerhart Hauptmann’s *Michael Kramer* and *Before Sunrise* [Baron means, of course, *Vor Sonnenaufgang*] into English” (2010, 521). Those flawed attempts are magnified in the short story “A Painful Case”, where Mr Duffy, failed translator of *Michael Kramer*, is unable to translate Mrs Sinico’s feelings for him into anything compatible:

In [his] desk lay a manuscript translation of Hauptmann’s *Michael Kramer*, the stage directions of which were written in purple ink, and a little sheaf of papers held together by a brass pin. In these sheets a sentence was inscribed from time to time and, in an ironical moment, the headline of an advertisement for *Bile Beans* had been pasted on to the first sheet. (108)

It is Mr Duffy’s only ironical moment in the story (and at the same time, outside the story: this was something he did in the past). When, at the end of one of their “discourses” Mrs Sinico takes up his hand “passionately and presse[s] it to her cheek”, Mr Duffy is “very much surprised” (111): “Her interpretation of his words disillusioned him” (*ibid.*), we are told, much as his own interpretation of *Michael Kramer* (with whom, moreover, Mr Duffy shares quite a few character traits) will have disillusioned him, and, likewise, stopped him from continuing his translation.

His own attempts may have been “flawed” but in later years, Joyce became “involved in ‘authorized’ translations of his own works”, even if (perhaps in an ironical moment) “[i]n an interview with Jan Parandowski, who had read *Ulysses* only in its French translation, Joyce recommended the English-language original as the only authentic text” (Baron 2010, 521). Two of Joyce’s most striking ‘involvements’ were in the first French translation of *Ulysses* and the French translation of an excerpt from “Work in Progress.”

Joyce’s involvement in the French translation of *Ulysses* lends it a misleading kind of authority. Paul Claes and Mon Nys, for instance, in their 1996 Dutch translation of *Ulysses*, have based a number of their choices on that French translation. This sparks several issues, many of which scrutinized in the fiery debate between Claes and Nys and their ‘successors’ (or should I say ‘usurpers’), Bindervoet and Henkes. As Kris Peeters has put it in his scrupulous summary of the controversy: Claes and Nys’s prescriptive approach, ostensibly starting from ‘the source text’, “relies on arguments of authority (the classical sources, Joyce’s involvement in the French translation), dictionaries, grammatical rules, contrastive basics such as *false friends*, in short, on everything that canonizes and stabilises” (50; my translation) — on everything, I would argue, Joyce himself did *not* aim to do. The Claes / Nys versus Bindervoet / Henkes debate, in short, is one between advocates of translating Joyce into a given target language, and those of translating Joyce, by a commodious vicus of recirculation, back into a fresh *source* text — a fresh *Joyce* text.

By extension, the debate around the latest two Dutch translations may be usefully framed in the context of ‘retranslation’ studies. After all, many languages have entered the era of *re*-translating Joyce. In 2020, Wawrzycka and Erika Mihálycsa edited the *European Joyce Studies* volume entitled *Retranslating Joyce for the 21st Century*, featuring scholars, translators, and scholar-translators as well as translator-scholars (though few translation scholars). Pivotal in

many approaches to retranslation is the rather overly simplistic “rettranslation hypothesis”, proposed by Antoine Berman and Paul Bensimon: “Later translations (same ST, same TL) tend to be closer to the original than earlier ones” (Chesterman 132). The extent to which the hypothesis is upheld, of course, depends entirely on what we mean by “closer” and “the original.” Retranslators may choose different emphases (comic, philosophical, philological, ‘textual’), every single one of which will yield a translation that may be “closer” to as well as simultaneously more distant from the source text.

In 2024, a *JJQ* issue featured yet another ‘section’ on Joyce and translation. In his introduction, Jeffrey Drouin underlines the topical relevance of the subject. Starting off with the now familiar trope that “[t]ranslation — an act of creation that transforms an expression from one language into another — is at the heart of Joyce’s creative process”, he states:

That Joyce would consider linguistic translation as a spatio-temporal rebirth is significant in light of the renewed energy that is animating literary translation and translation studies today. His work is increasingly relevant in our time because we, like his generation, face the urgency of transnational collapse and communication breakdown while at the same time engaging with new, if uncertain, possibilities such as Large Language Models that translate existing human creations into probability engines that then “write back” to prompts with humanlike output. (199)

“In light of the renewed energy that is animating literary translation and translation studies today”, we may also ask: is “translation” a term still adequate for discussing contemporary ideas about translation – more in particular, about translating Joyce?

Transwhation?

In her contribution on Joyce and translation in *Joyce in Context* Wawrzycka insisted that

the term ‘translation’ has outlived its usefulness in postmodern critical and theoretical divagations and that such terms as ‘trans-semantification’ or ‘re-languaging’ come closer to capturing the complex processes of what it means to translate (2010b, 515)

In fact, she argues that “another term, ‘detranslation’ [...] may be even more useful:

[...] The term ‘detranslation,’ understood as an epistemological detour, destabilizes the implied normative ‘neutrality’ of the term ‘translation’. (*ibid.*)

The usefulness of the term ‘translation’ when it comes to rendering Joyce’s source texts into any language’s Joyce text, has been questioned more often — not only by Wawrzycka herself: she points to Seamus Heaney who suggested “trancelation”, Bossinelli’s “trans-creation”, and Senn’s coinage “transmutation” (*ibid.*). But we can turn to Joyce himself, too, to suggest alternatives to ‘translation.’ In *Finnegans Wake* he offers different modulations of the concept to reconsider ways of thinking about translation, and about what it might mean to translate (all italics mine):

As none of you knows javanese I will give all my *easyfree translation* of the old fabulist's parable. (*FW* 152.13)



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For a haunting way will go and you need not make your mow. Find the frence for frocks and *translace* it into shocks of such as touch with show and show. (FW 233.8-10)

Translout that gaswind into turfish, Teague, that's a good bog and you, Thady, poliss it off, there's nateswipe, on to your blottom pulper. (FW 281n2)

letter potent to play the sem backwards like Oscan wild or in shunt Persse *transluding from the Otherman* or off the Toptic (FW 419.24-26)

traduced by their comedy nominator (FW 283.6-7)

All of these instances are potentially profitable to consider as alternatives to calling the practice of translating Joyce 'translating Joyce.' "Translout", in fact, is a key concept in Douglas Robinson's 2024 monograph *Lessons Experimental Translators Can Learn from Finnegans Wake: Translouting that Gaswind into Turfish*. Robinson, according to the blurb, "analyses Joyce's serial homophonic translations, portmanteau words, and heteronyms along translational lines (following Fritz Senn, Clive Hart, Patrick O'Neill, and others), and offers a showcase translation of Walter Benjamin's 'Task of the Translator' using all three experimental techniques borrowed from the *Wake*." To give an idea of what makes Robinson's approach tick, here is the first sentence from Benjamin's famous essay "*Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers*":

Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers

Nirgends erweist sich einem Kunstwerk oder einer Kunstform gegenüber die Rücksicht auf den Aufnehmenden für deren Erkenntnis fruchtbar.

This is Robinson's homophonic translation:

D'oof- gobble Dusk Over Seltzers

Near guns airviced sick eyenumb coonswork odor ionair coonsform gaygunuber d'rucksicked off deign oofneighmending' fir Derringer Kentness freakedbar. (28)

And so on. I must admit I often become lost in the funhouse that Robinson has erected to stage, with the help of the *Wake*, his ongoing advocacy of "experimental translation," but some of his lines of inquiry are certainly worth contemplating. Take his reading of that one clause from the *Wake* he uses as the subtitle of his book, "Translout that gaswind into turfish":

Read as a characterization of "translation," perhaps, the line seems quite churlish [...] Translators are louts — or else they are people who busy themselves with the words or sounds emitted by louts.

Those words or sounds, the contents of the source text, are "gaswind."

"Turfish" would seem a quite demeaning term for a target language: turf is sod, dirt covered with grass, or maybe a block of peat cut out of the soil to be used as fuel, arguably making "turfish" the language of people who pull on their slops (rough baggy trousers) to go out onto the bog to dig up peat for their stoves.

And once the translator has polished/policed the translation and sent it off, it would seem to be demeaned as mere toilet paper or blotting paper. (4-5)



What Robinson's approach of the *Wake* as a resource for experimental translators implies is that Joyce's language, whether it is shaped in the relative straightforward, scrupulously mean form of *Dubliners*, or as the chaotomic collideoscape of the *Wake*, will always be Greek to us — or rather, I would suggest, French:

- Do you understand what he says? Stephen asked her.
- Is it French you are talking, sir? the old woman said to Haines.
- Haines spoke to her again a longer speech, confidently.
- Irish, Buck Mulligan said. Is there Gaelic on you?
- I thought it was Irish, she said, by the sound of it. Are you from the west, sir?
- I am an Englishman, Haines answered. (*U* 1.424-30)

We are milkwomen all! Reading Joyce is like listening to a foreigner speaking our own language without recognising it as such. Writing, Joyce was always translating. Robinson argues that the *Wake* can be read as a translation of “the waking English of the 1864 Irish-American street ballad ‘Finigan’s Wake’ into an invented dream polylanguage sleepily embedded in English” (5). By extension, in important ways Joyce’s works are translations in themselves; in fact, as Senn has put it, “everything Joyce wrote has to do with translation, is transferential” (*Dislocutions*, 39). And in everything Joyce wrote, Joyce himself can often be seen translating. In a letter to Carlo Linati, he voices his intention to

transpose the myth *sub specie nostri*. Each adventure (that is, every hour, every organ, every art being interconnected and interrelated in the structural scheme of the whole) should not only condition but even create its own technique. (21 September 1920, *LI* 146; bold type mine)

Here, “the author characterizes the book as a transposition,” Senn has argued, “and this twice over: not only is the old myth and epic transposed, but within the book each episode with a distinctive ‘technique’ represents yet another re-formulation of its content” (2013, 126). And so, “[w]hat adds to the vexation [of translating Joyce] is that Joyce’s fictions not only and manifestly transform themselves, but in part also translate their own material” (123). Senn illustrates his point by showing various “representative” samples of Joyce ‘translating’ his own material, such as the mixture of uninflected Latin and English pronouns in “Grace” (*Lux upon Lux, Crux upon Crux*), pseudo-Latin (*Per pax universalis*) and the funnel-tundish exchange in *Portrait*, the word / name Chrysostomos on the first page of *Ulysses*, the extrapolations in “Cyclops”, etc.

Reading Joyce, then, always means retranslating Joyce; thus, translating Joyce always means re-retranslating Joyce, even if it’s done for the first time. The textual, intertextual and intratextual aspects of Joyce’s works, foregrounded by or tucked away in the contextual soundscape of his works, demand that translators dare become as visible in their translations as the omnipresently invisible Joyce the creator himself: like the God of creation as hypothesized by Stephen Dedalus “within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails” (*P* 191). Paradoxically, in retranslating Joyce, the highest form of invisibility *must be* visibility. This is also, if I understand him correctly, an important point in the “lessons” Robinson claims experimental translators can learn from *Finnegans Wake*. Homophonic translation; presenting yourself, the translator, as the author’s Pessoa heteronym; or creating portmanteau words so as to render source text ambiguity: these



strategies, Robinson suggests (I think), will ultimately render a target text more fully representing “*everything*” (33; and of course: see above) the source text has to offer.

Retransjoyce!

Having entered the second century after the publication of *Ulysses*, translators of Joyce — and perhaps in the face of the darkness creeping up on us in the shape of Large Language Models and the billionaires unscrupulously foisting them upon us — I would suggest, not so much following Robinson, but certainly inspired by some of his ideas, that translators of Joyce have to reinvent, recast themselves as *retransjoycers* of Joyce. Even if it is philosophically and practically impossible to reproduce ‘like’ Joyce in their own language what Joyce did in his language(s), only retransjoycers of Joyce will be able heteronymically to represent Joyce, as translators whose visibility is as conspicuous — by its omnipresence recast as refined absence — as Stephen’s God of creation. There is already plenty of such visibility in Bindervoet and Henkes’s retransjoycing of *Ulysses*. Earlier, I mentioned their ‘ungrammatical’ reversal of auxiliary and main verb in the first sentence of their *Ulixes*. Other than Joyce himself, their pastiches of Dutch literature used to represent Joyce pastiches of English literature in “Oxen of the Sun” include female voices. In “Cyclops” we find the following passage: “We subjoin a specimen which has been *rendered into English* by an eminent scholar [...] (U 2.730-31; my italics). Loyal to the extreme to their *target text*, Bindervoet and Henkes have translated — retransjoyced — “rendered into English” as “*overgezet vanuit de Engelse vertaling*”: rendered *from* the English translation, *into Dutch*.

It is time to stop pretending that as literary translators the goal is to persuade non-source language readers that they’re reading the source text “in the original” — whatever “the original” means, and however much those readers themselves know (but often forget they know) that it isn’t the case. Lawrence Venuti, translator and translation scholar (and no friend of Douglas Robinson’s, as far as I can make out from the footnotes in *Lessons Translators Can Learn*), has long argued for translation strategies resisting standardization and foreignness-erasing fluency in the target text. In order to equal, for instance, the post-colonial integrity of the source text, Venuti emphasizes the crucial relevance of radical forms of foreignization, making the translator visible in ways much more explicit than by merely mentioning their name on the cover or title page. In light of Venuti’s “agenda” and Robinson’s “Lessons”, and in the face of the “new, if uncertain, possibilities such as Large Language Models that translate existing human creations into probability engines”, as Drouin has put it, retransjoycing and, by extension, trans- or retrans[insert author’s name here]ing, may well offer humanity the last hope for human literary translation.

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