

“I AM A FAR-FETCHER BY CONSTITUTION:” CONVERSATION WITH FRITZ SENN



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Fritz Senn¹ is a world-renowned James Joyce scholar and the heart and soul of the Zurich James Joyce Foundation, a research centre celebrated among Joyceans for its rich holdings and archives, and for hosting a variety of cultural and scholarly events that include the annual weeklong August Workshops. In August 2011, we attended the workshop on punctuation; our additional goal after the workshop was over was to sit down for a conversation with Fritz Senn. We ended up with well over two hours of recordings and, after transcribing and editing the audio, we are proudly presenting our interview to the reader. Although we prepared lots of questions ahead of time (some were identical so we ask them “together” in this transcript), many questions emerged ad hoc as we were talking, which reflects the spontaneity in our interactions.

The joy of talking to Fritz Senn about all matters Joycean, Homeric, readerly, etc., is that, “a far-fetcher by constitution,” as he fortuitously described himself to us, Senn continually weaves wonderful connections between seemingly disparate elements of texts under discussion. His virtuosity comes from a lifetime of immersion in literature, in writing about the reading process, and in translation issues, to mention just a few of his affections. Senn’s scholarly output in toto is dazzling not only for the connections he makes – and demonstrates – between intra- and extra-textual events, between word-events, etc., but also for his hyper-close attention to the very texture of Joyce’s language and hypersensitivity to both pliability and concreteness of Joyce’s lexical matter. Reading, for Senn, is a deep process of *reading-cum-understanding* – what he terms “hypolexis” (SENN, 1995, p. 228).² The interview below reflects this temperament very well and, as a result, the reader is treated to some fascinating elabora-

¹ The readers of *Scientia Traductionis* were introduced to Fritz Senn and his work in: SENN, Fritz. Translation as Approach / Tradução como Abordagem. Translated by Luana de Freitas & Alessandra Ramos de Oliveira Harden. *Scientia Traductionis*, Florianópolis, n.8, p. 04-62, 2010. Available at: <<http://www.periodicos.ufsc.br/index.php/scientia/article/view/17615>>. Accessed: 29 Nov. 2012.

² SENN, Fritz. *Inductive Scrutinies. Focus on Joyce*. Ed. Christine O'Neill, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995. xix+252 p.

tions on cross-linguistic vocabulary in Joyce's works, on obstacles such vocabulary poses to translators, on ensuing vagaries embedded in most translations, and on many other topics.

A note on Fritz Senn's diction: his delightful Germanic "ja, ja" is legendary among Joyceans and we preserved a few instances of this feature for the reader. There is also a rare "Ja-a" that we preserved as well: a single, slower, thoughtfully elongated pause-like "ja-a" that seems to mark Senn's encounter with a new or different way of thinking about a particular question, something that he possibly had not pondered before. We consider ourselves to be lucky to have happened upon such a "ja-a" in our conversation.

Finally, we'd like to thank Fritz Senn for hosting us at the Foundation and for working with us on this interview – both by spending time with us in conversation and by clarifying some of the textual intricacies in our transcription.³



Jolanta Wawrzycka and Erika Mihálycsa: Hello, Fritz, and thank you for agreeing to sit down for a talk with us. We are interested in your practice of translatorial reading you have gone on recording in your book *Joyce's Dislocutions*⁴ and in numerous articles that span half a century, elucidating factual minutiae and intra-textual connections in all of Joyce's works – how would you describe the drive or the motivation behind your reading-as-translation?

Fritz Senn: It started because I wanted to find out what other readers, who don't read the original, might get out of the text. And what changes in translation. It's very simple, of course: *a lot* changes – and that's how I started out; I was never particularly interested in the philosophy – important as it is, of course, as we know. A huge number of translations have been done, even of *Ulysses*. *Ulysses* in translation is clearly a borderline case. Or, to put it differently, I started out because, for me, "Joyce" is precisely what is not translatable – or I naturally looked at the instances that, in their nature, are beyond the grasp of linguistic transformation.

³ Jolanta Wawrzycka would like to acknowledge Radford University and Dean Katherine Hawkins, College of Humanities and Behavioral Sciences, for grant funds that enabled her to travel to Zurich to participate in the August Workshop and to conduct this interview.

⁴ SENN, Fritz. *Joyce's Dislocutions. Essays on Reading as Translation*. Ed. John Paul Riquelme, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984. 225 p.

JW: So, reading as translation would mean...

FS: Well, in another sense, all reading IS translation; at this very moment I have to articulate my thoughts into well-balanced sentences. Reading and understanding are acts of mental translation.

JW, EM: *Ulysses* in English seems to be already the product of simultaneous translation processes. Much of Joyce's textual dynamics relies on internal translation – you have been writing and speaking about it for decades. How does the text educate the reader about its own medium?

FS: Of course reading Joyce takes on a different quality. First of all, it slows us down, more attention has to be devoted to details, there are stumbling blocks, passages not easy to assimilate. Somehow we are drawn into a game whose rules are never stated. Understanding tends to be suspended and to trail behind. Reading is also moving back and remembering. It is typical of Joyce (more than of others) that we understand retrospectively. Things have to be kept in mind until they come together in a provisional mosaic – all this in itself is a translation process.

EM: How do you see all the internal translation in the text: the historically remote layers of English, the foreignized elements, the elements of different languages, and the like?

FS: Well, yes, this is something I always try to rub in and, in addition to whatever else there is, Joyce's works are already translating themselves; the books are (also) always internal metamorphoses. That's one of the reasons why Ovid is so much behind *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*: Stephen changes from an infant, to a young boy, a pupil through various stages into a very sophisticated young man; and the language reflects the stage, or stages, of his evolution. And in *Ulysses*, too, you have all those different moods, perspectives, styles and features characteristic for each chapter. Parallactic views overlap or modify each other, Stephen's thoughts differ radically from Bloom's; then you have the various registers, all the way from, say, Hiberno-English to colloquial usage, to slang, to literary diction and any number of parodies. And then Joyce even wants to recapture all the old forms of English, so that in "Oxen of the Sun" there is a series of historical fake translations interspersed with heterogeneous elements.

Most saliently, "Ithaca" in particular translates everything into the remote diction with mainly Latinate words that often have to be back-translated into more common and familiar forms of English. In this way, "Ithaca" is itself a translation process with delayed recognition. It takes some time even for sophisticated native speakers to know what exactly is meant. What is a "duumvirate" (*U* 17.1)? – which certainly is not to be taken at historical surface value, because they (Bloom and Stephen) are not city officials, as they were in ancient Rome. The pompous and misleading Latin simply amounts to "two men," given spurious lexical dignity. My favourite test case is from a list of indignities that Bloom would suffer if he were reduced to the lowest level of existence: "the *latration* of ..." ("the latration of illegitimate unlicensed vagabond dogs"; *U*

17.1951). You rarely find a native English speaker who is familiar with that “latration”: I have tried out many native speakers and none of them could tell it off the cuff (an Italian might have less difficulty). It is only when the sequel is reached of all the indignities that a pauper would be exposed to, that we guess by hindsight that “latration” must be either barking or biting; it is barking (Latin *latrare*). So, even the native speaker needs an act of translation – and erudition. Most other languages do not have the double vocabulary of English – Germanic and Latin/French –, and in German for example you have no alternative to an instantly recognizable “bellen”, which lets the dog prematurely out of its lexical bag. The way in which information is released (and suspense kept up) is changed at the cost of a surprise event. Therefore I make so much out of English double vocabulary. John Banville, for example, somewhere mentions “diaphanous underclothes” and the two contrasting words may have a facetious, scientific and erotic effect. English in this has always had great possibilities that speakers and writers have exploited.

JW: What you just said feeds into my next question: can you comment on the interrelation between memory/textual memory and translation, and reading-as-translation?

FS: Well, not unprepared. I mean, memory comes into it anyway; it is at the basis of all reading and understanding. In this sense I can’t offer a very bright connection – except, off the cuff, of course, that Joyce’s text has its own memory and at times displays it; it seems as though the text itself had an awareness of its own textual existence, and even an unconsciousness, with associations of its own (we find it in “Sirens,” for example, or “Circe”). Perhaps Joyce presents a glorification of memory, a concept of course hard to pin down. He also shows up the failures and unreliability of memory.

EM: ...even different Joycean texts seem to have a way with each other, you may say, to recycle each other’s previous ideas ...

FS: Yes; yes. *Finnegans Wake*, anyway, but *Ulysses* as well, increasingly recycles its own material. *Finnegans Wake* in particular and in detail relies on recognition: a perhaps obscure passage brings to mind an earlier one, perhaps equally not understood, but it results in a momentary satisfaction, an “aha” effect. Recognition seems to be a prime pleasure. In *Finnegans Wake*, I often claim, recognition takes the place of understanding. We may never find out what, say, the Prankquean’s riddle (*FW* 21.18) exactly means, but its repeated variations become more and more familiar – familiar, well like a member of the family by habit.

EM: Just to extrapolate on it, one of my favourite examples comes in “Telemachus”, right at the beginning: it is “Cranly’s arm. His arm” (*U* 1.159). Now, Cranly is a character that does not even appear in *Ulysses* but only in *A Portrait...*

FS: Yes; well, yes: in that sense, Joyce is really arrogant. I mean, unduly demanding, as though one *had* to know a previous book, and unfair at that. Of

course, Cranly may just be one more name among many that are not, or not yet, identified. When Joyce continues Stephen Dedalus out of *A Portrait* into *Ulysses* you have a divided audience: some remember the character from the previous work, for others he is a complete blank. Cranly then must be someone unspecified from Stephen's earlier days. Joyce recycles both characters and themes all through his books from *Dubliners* all the way to *Finnegans Wake*. Each work is both unique in itself and part of a chain.

EM: Fritz, you have an impressive collection of Homerica. Do you have a favourite translation of *The Odyssey*? And how should your ideal translation of *The Odyssey* be....?

FS: No, not really, also because I have not read any of those translations through, from beginning to end, but I compare selected passages horizontally. What I would recommend when you do not have access to the original (the most frequent case) is to take a fairly literal prose version, perhaps a pedantic, philological one, and also a more poetic one that gets the drive and splendour and a sense of the whole animation. Impractical of course, for who wants to read two translations side by side? In this connection I have as yet not found a translation of the *Odyssey* that even *attempted* to translate *my* Homer, which is a Homer influenced by Joyce, very much so, with much persistent verbal playfulness and mirroring effects. In the nineteenth century lots of English translations came out. Some of the poetic ones I felt were mainly concerned with the type of verse form or stanza they chose, so that I thought: once it's established what kind of verse form they chose (there is even one in Spenserian stanzas), the Homeric orchestration seemed to take care of itself automatically; that is to say, the order of words, and the *play* on words. I am convinced that such a sophisticated language as Greek allows for all types of effects that passed unnoticed by many translators. One reason may be that play on words was deemed "not classical" and therefore frowned upon. In German for example, a common word for pun, "Kalauer", is considered coarse and often clumsily forced, beneath one's dignity.

It is my experience that Homer offers quite a lot of internal dynamism or echoes, even frivolities. My favourite one is when Odysseus creeps out of the bushes, awakened by the screams of Nausicaa and her companions; he has absolutely nothing, not even clothes, he is at zero point, and he comes out and – a great passage – he breaks off a twig out of modesty or necessity (Joyce called him "the first Gentleman of Europe"). He approaches the girls slowly and ponders the alternatives of touching the knees of the princess (that was probably the custom of the country), or else standing apart and speaking "honeyed words". Homer even repeats this for emphasis, and Odysseus decides to resort to speech from a safe distance, probably aware that the touching of the knees by a naked man would be misconstrued – and what do you do with a bunch of twigs, anyway – and so, after all this, he first says "gounoumai" (γουνούμαι, *Odyssey* VI, 149).⁵ It is a metaphorical touching of the knee, not a physical one. But for one short moment one might wonder what he is doing with that knee after all, until

⁵ HOMER. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Murray, A. T. Loeb Classical Library Volumes. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1919.

the sequence clarifies the context. For one brief transient moment a knee made a spurious appearance. I may be the only one who ever eroticized this trivial event. No translation of course can reproduce it, but for all I know, it was never even attempted. Certain effects simply cannot be achieved. But on occasion I wish some translators would at least try, even if they fail – it might still be better than flattening and trivializing a text, the usual result. Failing with flying colours, or with style, may be worthwhile when no other devices will serve. Perhaps a word about translation theory, no doubt a necessary discipline. Only, theories hardly seem to help the practitioners. In all my long experience in translation seminars and workshops I cannot remember a single case where one of the assembled translators referred to a theory or tried to apply it.

EM: Fritz, decades of Joycean scholarship have illuminated what Joyce learnt, took, from *The Odyssey*, but you are the only one to point out how our reading experience of Joyce's *Ulysses* affects, shapes our reading of Homer's epic. How does Joyce change, shape, condition our experience of Homer's Greek text?

FS: I am convinced that the *Odyssey* could be studied with the same attention to details that readers like myself (a horrible example of close reading or close guessing) pick up from experiencing Joyce, and could uncover analogous devices. This may be my own private obsession.

For better or worse, I am stuck with minutiae, close-ups, and I delight in little touches, especially in "Eumaeus". It is the mini clashes, as when Parnell is said to be "a commanding figure", and this twice (*U* 16.1326, 1505), and pages later Bloom thinks Stephen Dedalus as a tenor could "command a stiff figure" (16.1855), grace notes as they are, typical for Joyce. I have been on the lookout for such tinges in the *Odyssey* and, biased and affected, found amusing what Agamemnon says to Odysseus in the netherworld. Agamemnon has good reasons to bear a grudge against women: his wife after all conspired to kill him, and he condemns them all, with the exception of "Penelope" who, he tells her husband, is prudent or "wise in counsel" – it is a formula, literally "knowing counsel", *médeia*, (μήδεα, *Odyssey* XI, 445). But there is a homonym, *mêdea* of different origin, and it means the private parts, the genitals (Odysseus in the other scene mentioned hides them with his branch from the bush). This may be purely my own warped imagination, but the potential ambivalence (easy to detect, by the way, by a look at any dictionary) adds some titillation to the text, as though Agamemnon's praise were not entirely without a tinge of sarcasm. If an autodidact reader of Greek stumbles on it, Homer's audience might have appreciated it even more.

JW: In many of your essays you stress that Joyce "teaches us how to read"; could you elaborate and give a few examples of how, and where, that happens?

FS: Careful about "Joyce teaches us how to read". I don't know what Joyce does; and I don't know who "we" are, but at least *Ulysses* in fact teaches us how to read it, whatever the author had in his conscious mind. I was always a bit disappointed, honestly, that one of my main points, as I think of it, has fallen on deaf ears. It is that in Latin and classical, inflected languages, words can be ar-

ranged in almost any order, whereas English is much more strict and tends to put subject and predicate near the beginning. My best example is the untranslatable motto of *A Portrait*: “*Et ignotas animum dimittit in artes*”. It sets off with “*ignotas*,” “unknown” (female accusative plural), but no one can tell *what* is unknown. What is its relation to the next word, “*animum*”, mind, how do they relate? They don’t, not yet. Even if Cicero walked in he wouldn’t know. It is only when we come to “*dimittit*” that we find the verb: a mind is sent out, and only the final “*in artes*” provides retrospective anchorage for the dangling “*ignotas*”; the arts or skills were as yet unknown. The language reflects the act: when Daedalus let his mind roam the goal was not yet known. The sentence is imitative, explorative and – in *this* respect – untranslatable. That suits Joyce down to the ground, he proceeds in a similar way.

No first reader can know, through erudition or intuition, why Bantam Lyons runs away from Bloom without even having looked at the newspaper he wanted to consult. It comes out, circuitously, in the “Cyclops” chapter, and not all readers would detect it unaided.

Ulysses opens – where? It takes a bit of perspicuity to figure we are on top of a tower (acute scholars have been misled in this), and only very late can we determine that we are in a place called “Sandycome” (its first mention, “Sandycome milk”, does not determine the name as the actual location). Of course nowadays readers approach the book who may already have visited the tower which has become a Joyce Museum (sometimes depicted on the cover), just as most of them know about Bloomsday before the book is opened. It amounts to putting the note before the text.

Such overall principles also affect minutiae. Bloom’s “dark eye”, we read in “Sirens”, “read Aaron Figatner’s name” (*U* 11.149); in faultless French this is “*lisait le nom d’Aaron Figatner*” (F/A 375), or Italian, “*leggeva il nome di Aaron Figolter*” (I/DA 350; the name had to be changed to sustain the play on the name). All very well and determined by French and Italian syntax, I don’t see how it could be handled differently. Except for a slight falsification of the sequence of perception. Bloom does not read the name of Aaron Figatner, but what he reads is “Aaron Figatner” and then he realizes – no doubt without giving it much thought – that this is the name. Even more so in the next item: “And Prosper Loré’s huguenot name” (*U* 11.150). In my, perhaps only my, view it is something like: “Prosper Loré” – aha, that’s a Huguenot name. The actual name, not the reflection that it is a name, must come first. But local syntax may determine otherwise.

JW: Fritz, could you comment on your interest in coincidences in *Ulysses* and in a wide range of chancy items?

FS: Yes, of course, there is a lot of coincidence in the book, as in probably all fiction. Bloom’s unintended tip to Bantam Lyons, for example: Bantam Lyons wants to look at the horses in the newspaper and Bloom says that he was just going to throw it away. For an inveterate gambler this – that “throw it away” co-

incidentally chimes with a horse Throwaway – is construed as an underlying message (under lying if you want?) with some repercussions later on.

But what I think has largely gone unnoticed, as far as I can tell, is that when others hear of the assumed origin of Lyons's misinterpretation of an innocent remark, right then Bloom turns up. First in "Lestrygonians" when Lyons says, "That's the man now that gave it to me" (*U* 8.1023), as Bloom passes by. The second time Lenehan reports, "I knocked against Bantam Lyons in there going to back a bloody someone gave him that hasn't an earthly" (*U* 10.517-18), then right afterwards spots Bloom and says what looks like a casual remark, "There he is", which really must be an exclamation of surprise, "THERE HE IS!", though the text does not highlight it. That the same thing happens twice is straining probability. Think also of how often Lenehan turns up (in six episodes, I believe) and what the statistical likelihood of such a chance event would be.

I have actually combined two kinds of coincidence: once as a chance, often a chance encounter, but the other, primary, form is literal, that two or more things "fall together" (*co-incidere*). Our meeting right now is such a coincidence, but an arranged one, otherwise we could not talk together now. But I want to stress the mechanical sense of two things coming together. I think this is really one major basis of Joyce's techniques. He makes his novel in some way fuse, or suggest links, with Homer's *Odyssey*; so that Bloom "is" (whatever that means) Odysseus (but also Moses, or the Wandering Jew or, in my view, a grammatical paradigm, and all that). When Bloom imagines, before his bath: "This is my body" (*U* 5.566), his narcissistic remark happens to be identical with what the priest says at Mass (in Latin, "*Hic est corpus meum*"). All quotations, for example, are coincidental overlays. Lexical coincidences are the *élan vital* of *Finnegans Wake*. It occurs to me just now that probably all my life I have been chasing Joyce's coincidences in that basic sense.

Since our topic is translation, I might add that a great many of our difficulties are of a coincidental nature. When Mulligan refers to Stephen as "the loveliest mummer of them all" (*U* 1.97), in most other languages and cultures it will be difficult, or usually downright impossible, to conjure up the ghost of Brutus who "was the noblest Roman of them all" (*Julius Caesar*, V, v.68).⁶ Without such an echo the utterance is relatively flat and does not, as in the original, make different situations and times come together: the present, Roman history and Shakespearean stage. Only in Joyce's Wakean English, "of a trying thirstay mournin" (*FW* 6.14) do "morning" and "mourning" phonetically coincide and can "thirsty" be combined with "Thursday".

EM: So how chancy is *Ulysses* at the verbal, linguistic level? How much does linguistic coincidence shape the book?

FS: OK, Joyce was adept at using them and framing them up to the pulsating dynamism of *FW*. Or else, to put it differently – because I don't know what Joyce did, what he had in mind – some of us, including myself as a terrible ex-

⁶ SHAKESPEARE, William. *The Complete Works*. Ed. W. J. Clark. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1904.

ample, seem incited to do just that, often beyond Joyce. Inevitably one tends to ask, "did Joyce really mean that?" We don't know. In a way we continue the game that we think Joyce imposed on us, ferreting out meaningful semantic coincidences in something that often leads to excessive subjective figments. I am of that nature by constitution. Others are not. I notice – concerning the antics of our Zurich reading group – that some expert Joyceans may not care in the least if there is an intrusive element in a phrase or word. For years I have wondered about the spelling of "the Belle for Sexaloitez" (*FW* 213.18): I can account for the bells of our Zurich spring festival, "Sechseläuten", when the bells start ringing (the German "läuten" chimes easily with "-loite"); there is an element of sex and beauty (absent from the festival) – but why this errant "-tez" at the end (a French verbal form)? In other words, I cannot figure out what else is here made to coincide. This worries me, but fortunately not most others. And good so, for if everyone had my Agenbite of Nonwit, there would be less *Wake* scholarship.

EM: Fritz, you said that Hans Wollschläger, who was the second translator of *Ulysses* into German, had quite normalized the text in some respects. On the other hand, how daring is his translation?

FS: Normalization is, well, normal and unavoidable, and Wollschläger is certainly not excessive. In fact he had excellent ideas and above all, an immense command of German, he spoke in perfectly constructed sentences. I was struck early on by his "meine Herrschaften" for "Shut your eyes, *gents*" (*U* 1.22; *G/W* 7). I would have never thought of that, but then, I would never qualify as a translator (it is much more comfortable to find fault). So he has great runs. He was rightly famous; his own reading of passages is marvellous. He has great qualities; what suits him less are places where the text is broken, where the register changes. Much of this occurred to me much later. During our collaboration in the seventies (I was a kind of internal copy editor for the "Frankfurter Joyce-Ausgabe") whenever there was a disagreement of course his version was allowed (it was *his* translation and his name stood behind it). I also was not quite aware at that stage of how much in the interior monologue does not consist of sentences but is a kind of pre-articulation – subject of our TransWork Workshop⁷ concerns. His formulations are generally in too much linguistic control, more finished, less groping (of course he is not alone in this).

Wollschläger's job was of course frustrating, and the original kept annoying him – which translator is *not* angry at the original? He told us how every morning he shook his fists at a picture of Joyce. Occasionally he complained, "This book is full of commonplaces, clichés", which of course was often the point. On occasion he could be high-handed; I remember he said that a word was not "lexically documented", so I thought he had turned countless dictionaries, but the word "ollav" would have been easy to find (and need not even be translated). After talking over so many problems with Klaus Reichert (who translated *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* into German⁸), I had been looking for-

⁷ "TransWork" or "TransWorkshop" - Zurich Workshop devoted to translation held in May of 2010, with participation of international scholars (whose work appears in the "TransPolylogue" section of this publication [see pp. 133 and 165]).

⁸ JOYCE, James. *Ein Porträt des Künstlers als junger Mann*. Tr. by Klaus Reichert. Frankfurt:

ward to our discussion of some of the issues, but I was disappointed to find that Wollschläger was not interested in them at all, so that when we met we did not really discuss the text. You know my view that the results of translations are inevitably inadequate, especially in Joyce, but the underlying problems are always fascinating.

EM: You often mention Wollschläger's translation of "Oxen" as being more daring, more foreignizing than most other translations.

FS: Yes, this is a good example. At the last editorial stage Klaus Reichert and he found that the development of the German language allows for a wider scope since the language underwent more changes, especially in its vowels. Many became diphthongs: "Hus" (long u) became "Haus", and Middle High German has diacritics that could be used for manifest linguistic historicization. The method was applied (even exaggerated) with zest; as a result the German version is much more difficult to absorb than Joyce's original – this is in reverse from the usual inevitable flattening effect. For once the historical patina does not disappear but is put on with a trowel, all too conspicuous. This distorts the text in exaggeration, for a change, it adds rather than subtracts. The exception (away from the ordinary) reflects back on the general rule (towards the colourless ordinary). This is not to everyone's liking of course. Harald Beck, who is revising Wollschläger's translation of 1975 in the light of new insights, rejects the procedure completely and will have to find a way of his own. The argument that Joyce didn't change the spelling is of doubtful stringency, since each language evolved its own orthography. So naturally Harald Beck is saddling himself with other dilemmas and I do not know at the moment what the outcome will be.

JW: You just walked into our next question that is a bit delicate...

EM: ...so only answer it if you feel comfortable. We know that Harald Beck is at present working with his team on re-editing Wollschläger's translation. How do you relate to this attempt?

FS: No delicacy involved. Harald Beck was on the Gabler team for the "Critical and Synoptic Edition", so he knows his material and is also the driving force behind a Joyce for Experts Yahoo! Group.⁹ He is very accurate and takes relentless pains to find contemporary (that is, 1904) meanings of words and phrases. We would have liked him at our TransWork Workshop, but his duties as a teacher prevent this. He is well at home in the millions of Google Books where contemporary uses of words can be traced and so we owe him many discoveries.

Suhrkamp Verlag, 1973.

⁹ This Yahoo! Group goes by the name of 'Joyce-Ulysses : A look at James Joyce's Ulysses' and can be accessed here: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Joyce-Ulysses/>. However, in more recent years Beck's efforts have been redirected to another project called 'James Joyce Online Notes', "an open-access journal that focuses on the people, the words, and other cultural references in Ulysses and the earlier works". It can be accessed here: <http://www.jjon.org/>.

Such accuracy comes at a price. Other (coincidental) aspects can be sacrificed. I recall quite well that he objected – rightly so – to Wollschläger’s term “Holunder” for the fox burying his grandmother “under a hollybush” (*U* 2.15). Now “Holunder” is “elder” and not hollybush, which in German would be “Stechpalme” or botanically, “Ilex” – the former not quite at home in Germany (and reminiscent of Christmas), the other one hardly of common usage (Goyert in fact used “Ilexstrauch in 1927, G/G 34). “Holunder” is wrong, no doubt, but it is evocative: it does have reverberations in German folklore and you would find it in Grimm’s fairy tales. So you have a common dilemma: plain accuracy or associations (even if different). One more aspect, the bush occurs in an answer to a traditional riddle, and we have no statistics as to under what botanical conditions foxes do bury their grandmothers. I hope you can see the problem. By the way, Harald Beck originally worked with two German scholars with, I understand, long discussions on Skype. Now they are no longer part of the team. Ruth Frehner and Ursula Zeller, of the Joyce Foundation, have now joined him in his revisions, with me watching from the sidelines and of course chipping in with sporadic suggestions, but I am not officially part of it. We have different views and priorities. Now, Harald Beck is a stickler for accuracy, as I said, and this can have effects that I cannot go along with. He is excellent at spotting passages that we never knew we did not understand and finds solutions.

EM: You also have an example of “hencods’ roes”...

FS: I must have mentioned to you those hencods so you bring them up. From it you see it is on my mind, probably far beyond its significance. The second sentence of Bloom’s introduction in “Calypso” is the long list of his food preferences and ends on “fried hencods’ roes” (“Mr Leopold Bloom ate with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls. He liked thick giblet soup, nutty gizzards, a stuffed roast heart, liverslices filled with crustcrumbs, fried hencod’s roes”: *U* 4.3). In German, roes is “Rogen”, cod is “Dorsch”, therefore “Dorschrogen”. Since the text has “hencods’ roes”, the sentence now ends in “Rogen von Dorschweibchen”; “Weibchen”, derived from “Weib”, woman, is used for female animals. There is something tautological in this, since, in order to produce roes, a fish had better be female: yet it is Joyce himself who added “hen-“ in a revision. So the insistence may be justified. What sincerely grates with me is that the sentence – as I said, the second one relating to Bloom, and therefore in a privileged position – ends in “-weibchen”. This word can also be related to humans, “ein hübsches Weibchen” would have a kind of male chauvinistic, slightly erotic touch to it. Nothing wrong with erotic touches, but there is no trace of it in the original. Readers may get a wrong impression early on when the intrusive “Weibchen” stands out in the stressed end position. In my view the order of information dished out in a sentence is of major impact. So then why did Joyce put in “hen” (though not in the accentuated position)? I do not know; it may well have been to improve the rhythm: compare “fried cod’s roes” (as it still was in the placards) with “fried hencod’s roes”. Somehow I cannot reconcile myself with a terminal “weibchen” and its reverberations. Some fastidiousness perhaps, but there it is.

As I keep insisting, the problems behind such issues are absorbing. It was Harald Beck who noticed a grammatical indeterminacy in “She smilesmirked supercilious” in “Sirens” (*U* 11.416): is that “supercilious” now an adjective, or shouldn’t it be an adverb? The question occupied the *Ulysses* Experts for a while. Should it not better be either “She smilesmirked superciliously” or “She smilesmirked, (*comma*) supercilious”? For me it is a wonderful orchestration, not grammatical, but paragrammatical, a perfect composition. Whether you could possibly translate it in its perfect poise, remains a different question, and it might be worth trying. The arrangement seems to be a prime instance of my reiterated view that in Joyce, and in “Sirens” especially, you don’t have to translate sentences but verbal events.

Observations often take the form that Joyce inverts the order of grammatical units, or puts the object before the verb, etc. This is to take a grammatical view in cases – interior monologue – where grammar is not at stake at all, but something that precedes it, which we called inchoative. Examples from our Trans-Workshop – beyond “Exhausted that female has me” (*U* 13.1253) – need not be repeated here. So once more I wish we could have heard Harald Beck’s slant at the Workshop. His revisions will deprive Wollschläger’s renderings of some idiosyncrasies and replace them with accuracies that are often not very exciting. It is, incidentally, not a rewarding task to revise an existing translation, since each interference has unforeseen repercussions, and one never knows where to stop.

Wollschläger of course has a great fellowship still, after his death. He was impressive in speaking, in performing, splendidly charismatic. Incidentally, he really liked to have his picture taken and practically leaned forward for it. He used his attraction with the other sex.

EM: A commanding figure....

FS: Yes, and he also did not hide the great admiration he had for himself. Incidentally, he once asked in public whether a translator inevitably had to be inferior to the original author. When his *Ulysses* appeared in early 1975, it became the Translation of the Century almost overnight before anyone could have taken the time to verify it; he was pleased with the accolades but went on to say that translating was a mere side issue but his own creative work would be the real thing. This was yet to come but never did, in spite of his other great essayistic output or his forays into music and the theatre. As a writer, unfortunately, he never lived up to his promise and remained in the conjunctive mode.

JW, EM: In *Joyce’s Dislocutions*, you write a lot about transluding.¹⁰ You often write that translations, as a rule, foreshorten the potential of Joyce’s original,

¹⁰ “...translations are off the toptic, are less dynamic, less Protean, less gushing, less self-righting, less looming, less weaving, less misleading – also *more* misleading –, less synecdochal, less dislocutory, less everything and – perhaps most bitterly – less transluding. They should be admired, not trusted” (SENN, 1984, p. 37).

that they are painfully less transluding. Are there also positive examples of transluding that you can comment on?

FS: Of course, one tends to harp at the shortcomings, especially me who started out by looking at what translations had done with the most elaborate coincidences (as I can now call them). First of all, a translation must be something in itself, with its own beauty, wholeness, harmony and radiance, to borrow from Stephen Dedalus' aesthetics in *A Portrait*. Conceivably a translation could be "better" than its original, in whatever sense, but according to the game rules, any improvement would be a disallowed departure and therefore "wrong". One handicap translators have is that the benefit of doubt that authors have is rarely accorded to them. When there is something odd in Joyce, we tend to think that the fault is ours for not understanding or that the author must have thought something that simply escapes us. A translator's apparent fault or lapse is attributed to his incompetence also because he cannot usually offer the reasons for perhaps wayward decisions. But the loss in translations is the overriding subject. "Loss", by the way, is a wholly misleading term, as it is quantitative: so and so much (perhaps in per cent) is missing. What is more at stake is the curtailment of a work's dynamics: not so much "less is there than in the original" but "less happens", there are fewer reverberations, fewer events. Not what it "is", in other words, but what it *does*. It is the vitality that changes.

For me the main effect, apart from the inevitable flattening, is that the choices I am faced with as a reader have already been made for me. Translators must be choosers when at one of multiple crossroads. There are what I call, especially in "Penelope", Janus sentences, facing forward and backward. Mrs Riordan's husband, Molly thinks, "was glad to get shut of her and her dog ...", and it makes perfect sense, but the continuation, "... and her dog smelling my fur ..." (*U* 18.14) moves the dog from the object of the previous to the subject of the following sentence. Translations will hardly allow the reader to be misled or at least momentarily puzzled – the experience is changed, and smoothed. Translations attain clarification when perhaps none is called for.

When Bloom thinks: "Could never like it again after Rudy" (*U* 8.610) we can't tell who never liked it, he or she. Many translations must clearly distinguish between first and third person singular and so they solve the issue according to their lights.

Or how do you translate "There all the time *without* you" (*U* 3.27). Does "without" mean absence or space? Most translations settle for the first, *sans*, *ohne*, *senza*. But Stephen also moves from the world *within* (eyes closed) to the world *without* (seeing again); the coincidence is an accident of English etymology as (perhaps) exploited by Joyce, but other languages will *not* allow for corresponding bifurcation. Trivial possibly, but then Stephen later on contrasts "Throb always without you and the throb always within" (*U* 10.822).

Examples can be multiplied of course, *ad nauseam*, rubbing salt into translatorial wounds. But back to possible gains. One could adduce, again, the over-historicizing of the German "Oxen", where one effect is signalled with more

impact than in the original, though in practice it will be experienced as an augmented obstacle in understanding.

I am sure by the way that translators tacitly improve many weak or wrong passages in lesser works and get little thanks for it. Wollschläger has a few good extra touches. The two women ("*Frauenzimmer*", here Joyce uses the German intricate word) are, in Stephen's view, "coming down" to our "great sweet mother" (*U* 3.29). Wollschläger cunningly uses a choice "nieder" for the more common "herunter" and says "niederkommend"; *niederkommen* also means "giving birth" and this fits well into Stephen's associations of womanhood in the context: "mother ... midwife ... relict ... Bride ... sisterhood ... Eve" (*U* 3.30–41; G/W 54) – an appropriate liberty is taken with the original, one way of compensation for what otherwise falls by the wayside.

Wollschläger found a clever solution for one of Mulligan's puns about George Moore when Buck Mulligan refers to George Moore as a "lecturer on French letters to the youth of Ireland" (*U* 9.1101), and, yes, this *is* a pun. In German he says, "Fachmann in Pariser Fragen" (G/W 300); in German, "Pariser" is also a term for a condom. Some effect has to be achieved, and here the translator rose to the occasion, or close to it. The French *Ulysse* of 2004 has a feeble unexciting "ès lettres françaises" (F/A 312). I am sure professionals occasionally have moments of triumph.

By the way, did I ever show you my translation that I'm really proud of?

EM: Is it Edward Gorey?

FS: In all my proverbial modesty, I once had to put Gorey's *The Chinese Obelisks* into German,¹¹ a Gothic short horror story, based on the alphabet and in rhymed couplets, with gruesome haunting illustrations. The alphabet is naturally given, but the drawings could be moved around and the main job was to get the atmosphere of ominously lurking danger. It came off quite well, but then it was limited to some twenty-six short sentences. Out of print, no doubt, and out of mind.

EM: Fritz, there are several new translations of *Ulysses* that are probably going to be published in 2012 and 2013. What do you think these texts should be particularly attentive to, also with respect to previous translations?

FS: Well, I think by now translators can be encouraged to take more risks in following specific Joycean features and innovations. Anyone who tackles Joyce is already under general absolution and granted extra license; idiosyncratic forays are almost expected. They should try the opposite of the generally accepted levelling, going out rather than drawing in. Conformance to rules is not Joyce's characteristic. I remember what someone objected to in the first Italian *Ulisse* of 1960: it didn't do as much to change the Italian language as Joyce had done for English. If anything, err on the side of the unpredicted; the Joycean way is a

¹¹ GOREY, Edward. *Die chinesischen Obeliskten*. Zurich: Diogenes Verlag, 1972. 64 p.

good justification for extravagance, you can get away with a lot that you couldn't in a translation of a bestseller of the year.

I am also in favour of indicating (say, in a preface or on the blurb) which direction a translation is going: say, is it trying to familiarize and to bring idioms perhaps home to roost, or is it going to venture out into the foreign culture? does it try to adhere to the verbal structure? does it opt for creative expansion? – and so on. A reader would then know what to expect, and a lot of foreseeable wind might be taken out of otiose squabbling. No translation can do everything. The eternal balance of domestication as against alienation cannot be achieved to anyone's satisfaction. Homer can be translated into hexameters, into other verse forms, or into prose, either classical dignified or else more colloquial: something can be said for all of these modes. Potential readers should be warned of what they will and will not get.

We all have come to Joyce in our own particular way, which may be the result of a form of instruction. These instructions vary and are subject to fashions. In my case, I know how some exposure to commentaries have left their mark; I still owe a lot to what Stuart Gilbert wrote about *Ulysses*¹² (not that I would go along with all that he claimed and exaggerated). No translator nowadays could afford to be familiar with everything criticism has produced; we only know a fraction of it, and it can be (one more time) coincidental. Whatever we bring along has an impact on how we translate. On top of this there is what I call the Priority of the Accidentally Discovered: whatever we (believe we have) discovered has more weight than it might deserve. Some of what you heard from me is of that kind, so a subsidiary meaning of “without” may not have all the importance I attribute to it, and I may well exaggerate the not quite grammatically formulated nature of associations. The non-spectacular gist is that we cannot get out of the contexts we are caught in. Since we read, say, *Ulysses*, in our own image, we inevitably and unwittingly also translate it that way.

JW: So, what you just said implies readers' pre-existing awareness of what *Ulysses* is, or should be...

FS: It might be interesting to phrase in not too vague terms what an ideal translation would be. Another question that occurs to me is whether translations can profit from teamwork. In some way probably all of them are also a collective effort: there are copy editors and others who will double-check everything. But it is also possible to divide the job among several translators right from the start and then to coordinate their efforts. This was done with the new French *Ulysse* that was ready for the Bloomsday Jubilee Year 2004. Under the supervision of Jacques Aubert, who has translated some Joyce, seven others collaborated, each one doing one or several episodes. One justification of it, quite apart from simply dividing the Herculean task among many, is the idiosyncratic nature of Joyce's episodes, each with its own DNA. The downside is how to deal with the intricate network, with all those recurrent motifs, echoes, links, cross-references. It would necessitate innumerable internal communications. Every change that

¹² GILBERT, Stuart. *James Joyce's Ulysses – a Study*. London: Faber & Faber, 1969.

would be demanded from one translator to another would upset a careful balance already constructed. *Ulysses* is one gigantic hypertext where (almost) everything is connected with so much elsewhere. It is hard enough for a single translator to remember all connections (though digital retrieval makes the task much easier than before), but how can eight individuals coordinate every single detail?

So it is no wonder that internal connections become the weak point, the tender Achilles of the undertaking. If “Homerule” is rendered in some chapters by the English term (“home rule”, “Home Rule” or “homerule”) but in other instances by “autonomie”, a reader may not see the connection. The same goes for Foot and Mouth Disease, which can be “mal du pied et de museau” or else “fièvre aphteuse”. Such a *Ulysses* becomes much less tightly woven. For some reason “Oxen of the Sun”, probably the hardest crux anyway under any circumstances, was taken over unchanged from the 1929 translation by August Morel and others, and transplanted into the new one without any modification, possibly a tribute to the earlier, pioneering effort. But it means that the most biological episode is not connected with the rest of the book, so that “History is to blame” (*U* 1.649) can be rendered as “Il semble que la faute *en revienne* à l’histoire” (F/A 34) by Haines and in its echo later on (*U* 14.1016) as “dont la faute *est sans doute* à l’histoire” (F/A 594) – still within recognizable distance but not identical.

French can be at bit cumbersome at times. I noticed this in comparing a hurried “Lenehan, quickly drinking” (*U* 11.428), where brisk light syllables imitate the action, which is drawn out into “Lenehan qui se dépêchait de finir son verre” (F/A 385), which is anything but quick: an unnecessarily dragging description. A phrase like “se dépêchait de...” is a contradiction in terms, and I think there must be a brisker way to act out what language says. In the same context, another hasty and unusual brisk sketch, “Lenehan gulped to go” (*U* 11.431) is replaced by a wholly non-imitative lengthened “Lenehan dut avaler d’un trait pour le suivre” (F/A 385); the sentence adds some of those moments that Lenehan wants to save. This brings me back to what I wanted to convey earlier: “gulped to go” is unusual and unorthodox, but appropriate shorthand, so something similar might have been risked, perhaps at the cost of violating implicit rules. Not that I know, honestly, how it could be done in German.

As a parting shot at the French translation, I have been told, but cannot vouch for the truth of it, that Stephen James Joyce stipulated that the translators “must not change one single word”! As we have seen, they had to.

Joyce’s works, of course, are by nature internal translations. But that is another story – or perhaps the one I have been telling all along.

JW: We would like you to elaborate on some of the terminology that you introduced into Joyce studies, for example, the idea of “shortmind”...

EM: You're interested in the mind's inchoative, pre-formulated grammar, what you variously term "shortmind", "mental shorthand", "impact" and "process-sentences"...

FS: You have already, Erika, answered it, what I was groping for. My "shortmind" is analogous of course to "shorthand", jottings that are not necessarily coherent. At the time of the collaboration with Wollschläger, in the seventies, I did not yet have more than a vague feeling for it, so I did not insist on what I was just about to grasp nebulously. Its importance or prevalence did not yet dawn on me, so it is certainly not reflected in that translation of 1975; Wollschläger in any case tended to frame watertight grammatical sentences.

But a lot, perhaps most, of the Bloomian interior monologues do not result in *sentences*: they are a succession of emergent associations, of impacts, often fragmentary, but not as yet in the form of a grammatical structure. Such an assembly may of course turn into a real sentence (Stephen in contrast, generally, does think in complete sentences), though a kind of linguistic formation is at work. You see, I cannot quite express myself. It is a state that precedes articulation and in a live talk I have to grope with it right now.

English seems to be much better suited for such mental jottings, for once because of its dearth of inflection, and then because so many words can be verb *and* noun *and* adjective: "sound", "cut", or "right" are in the nature of roots of multiple applicability. Many are only one syllable long and so easily fit into any pattern.

My example is when Bloom thinks of Richard Goulding who had seen greater days: "Now begging letters he sends his son with" (*U* 11.648). This can pass as a sentence in not quite habitual order, but I see it in essence as ideas jostling each other rapidly. The starting point is "*Begging*", which leads to *begging letters*, and these letters are then *sent by his son* – a possible psychological sequence, thoughts *in statu nascendi*, before articulation. (As finished articulation, it might become: "He now sends his son with begging letters"). The best word for it is probably "inchoative", an articulation starting out with at first no definite goal ("articulation" has to do with "joining"). Grammatical ordering comes secondary. That's why I put the shortmind, "Exhausted that female has me" (*U* 13.1253), on our 2010 workshop list that is now a part of this edition of *Scientia Traductionis* (see p.133). It starts with a feeling of exhaustion and its cause is then appended, afterwards. "That female has exhausted me" is a sentence, a reflection. Translations tend to turn shortmind into neat reflection.

Or when Bloom imagines looking down on the décolleté of society women: "Powdered bosom pearls" (*U* 8.877). You can almost see the line of vision. Women are powdered and their bosoms may draw attention, and the glance may then move to pearls. Danis Rose corrected Joyce's wording and put in a comma ("Powdered bosom, pearls"),¹³ since there is no such thing as "bosom pearls", always assuming that we are facing a logical phrase. Thoughts, visions, whatever, are jostling, and controlled grammatical structures may take over later.

¹³ See: JOYCE, James. *Ulysses*. Ed. by Danis Rose. London: Picador, 1997. 739 p.

JW: So, according to you, how do translations into some languages that you work with prove perceptive to these textual nuances?

FS: Well, translators probably never think in these terms; they construct sentences that make sense. A short check of what has been done shows me that the coherent sentence becomes the norm. What does not grammatically parse, like “Nectar imagine it drinking electricity” (*U* 8.927), is generally re-assembled into something “correct” (and usually longer), as in the French rendering: “Le nectar, c’est comme si tu buvais de l’électricité” (F/A 258). You have a definite article, a comma (punctuation signals control) and an explicative “c’est comme si”. Neat and tidy, a finished product.

Translators have a job that is demanding enough without the construction of not-quite-sentences (they might well be taken for clumsiness), but I also think that neat grammatical sentences have been too unquestionably taken as a goal. You mention *ad hoc* terms like “shortmind” which I use simply because I am not aware of pre-existing ones. Even if they did exist, they might not have the meaning you want them to have. Take for example the “parodies” in “Oxen”: some say they are not parodies at all, but pastiches, or not pastiches, but whatever, and so on, in futile terminological shadow-boxing. Existing terms bring their meaning(s) along. Labels are deceptive by nature. I could imagine a Zurich Workshop simply to deliberate on a suitable terminology. I know, by the way, that I am overusing terms of my own coinage, and for my private use I have many more that will never see the light of print. You ought to be grateful.

EM: Fritz, you once pointed out to me that the opening sentence in “The Dead” – “Lily, the caretaker’s daughter was literally run off her feet” – is a perfect hexameter.

FS: Yes, I heard that at a Miami Joyce Conference long ago (I think it was Chester Anderson who brought it up). By the way, this “literally” is one of the origins of the Uncle Charles principle; James Atherton in our first ever conversation (I think it was in 1958, before your time) drew my attention to the common misuse of this adverb, it is used in the sense of, exactly, “not literally”. I discussed it with Hugh Kenner and we found obviously that “I was literally run off my feet” is what Lily might say next morning, while of course still being *on* her feet, by the way. There we have the Uncle Charles Principle *in nuce* (it had other sources of course). I had never thought of a hexameter in “The Dead”, but it makes sense. This, if true, would add a funny note because hexameters, like all verse, have *feet*. We are not far from “Eumaeus”.

As an aside: Tennyson called the hexameter, “that stateliest measure ever trod” (I forget where), and by some odd coincidence Kenner also considered the opening of *Ulysses* a hexameter: “Stately plump Buck Mulligan came from the stairhead...” – Stately. If there is any validity in this observation, no one would ever demand of a translation to aim at such a peripheral nuance.

EM: How far do you think Joycean studies, and translation studies in Joyce in particular, have been attentive to such detail and to such double-decker utterances?

FS: You see, translators have so much on their hands, especially when it is a matter of an early, a first attempt. At that stage it is important to get the basics right, the realistic level, factual objects, the surface, and that is exacting enough. Secondary matters, reverberations, parodies, refractions, overtones, if at all noticed, will of necessity get short shrift. Think of all the Eumaeian twists that we are just now beginning to notice, where almost nothing is right. Later attempts, supported by accumulated critical insights, will venture into these areas.

Ulysses has become something different from what early readers and translators could see in the first decades. We all begin in relative naiveté and get, D.V., more sophisticated as we go along. I am so glad I did not settle for “Eumaeus” when I was asked to contribute to the *James Joyce’s Ulysses* volume that Hart and Hayman edited in 1974;¹⁴ I would not have known enough then – and do not now.

I remember how I came across Frederic Jameson’s casual judgment, as something generally accepted, that “Eumaeus” and “Ithaca” are the most boring chapters.¹⁵ At the time I did not know just how important Frederic Jameson was and I wonder if he ever adhered to his claim.

EM: By the way, at the 2008 Tours Symposium, Leo Bersani had that talk¹⁶ that outraged many Joyceans, when he said that for him, the most overtly experimental chapters in *Ulysses* – he was referring to “Ithaca”, if I’m not wrong – were the same old realist plain sailing, not all that different from Balzac...

FS: I did not follow Bersani’s argument at the time, it was fairly abstract. I am not at all worried by someone disliking *Ulysses* or considering it a failure. In Tours I also heard a not very inspired person who tagged all the “clichés” in “Eumaeus” – as though they could be listed and categorized in bulk, as though they were just *dead* clichés. And “cliché” is an arrogant term anyway, generally used from a position of superiority – a cliché is what others use, not me. I even heard it said that, since the figures in “Eumaeus” are tired (which is true as well as not), one can deduce that Joyce was tired when he wrote the chapter. And, moreover, that the Homeric relations have been abandoned. For me it is the most Homeric episode of them all! Just goes to show how subjective we are. If a translator considers “Eumaeus” a boring effort by a tired writer, its animation is likely to evaporate.

EM: In what ways is it the most Homeric chapter?

¹⁴ *James Joyce’s Ulysses: Critical Essays*. Ed. Clive Hart & David Hayman. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974, 433 p.

¹⁵ JAMESON, Frederic. *Ulysses in History*. In: *James Joyce and Modern Literature*. Ed. W. J. McCormack & Alistair Stead. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1982, p. 126-141.

¹⁶ BERSANI, Leo. Plenary Lecture: *Ulysses*: ‘something with the hoses in it’. In: XXIst INTERNATIONAL JAMES JOYCE SYMPOSIUM, 2008, Tours, France.

FS: Not overtly, not on the level of action, in fact there are salient divergences. In the *Odyssey* father and son meet for the first time; in “Eumaeus” Bloom and Stephen walk in together, so there can be no recognition; in fact, the two talk at cross purposes. Murphy, the sailor, with his doubtful stories, is more of an Odysseus than Bloom. Bloom is the skeptical one and so much more like Eumaios in Homer. The analogy is a basic distrust of news, by word of mouth or printed. Distrust is the link, a mental attitude that suffuses the episode. There are subsidiary avatars of Odysseus apart from the sailor, like a spurious Simon Dedalus, who is a master marksman, the equivalent of Odysseus in the Trial of the Bow (Book XXII and XXIII). But then Bloom’s micturition exploit (“attaining the point of greatest altitude against the whole concurrent strength of institution”, *U* 17.1195) is *another* transposition of that trial. When you still believe in Homeric “parallels” (you know my take on this), then *The Odyssey* is lost sight of. “Eumaeus” is couched in the style of an adventure story where the most ordinary acts acquire the suspense of constant lurking danger (“he heroically made light of the mischance”, *U* 16.38). Words like *shot*, *ventured*, and *stirred* might make you think of belligerent affairs, but “Have a shot at it now, he ventured to say of the coffee after being stirred” takes the air out of it (*U* 16.807). On the other hand, some Homeric adjectives – “much-travelled, long-suffering” – are taken over verbatim, and the chapter abounds in choice epithets.

JW: Makes you wonder how many of the translations are actually very familiar with *The Odyssey* itself...

FS: Well, perhaps if they were, it might not even help so much. Odyssean correspondences are, after all, only one among many aspects. There is so much for translators to take care of, all those incongruities and malapropisms.

JW: But wouldn’t you agree that some of the finest insights that you have made into *Ulysses* come from your excellent knowledge of Homer? From the kind of textual dynamics that you also easily spot in *Ulysses*?

FS: It is mainly the twists and distortions, and as I said, an overall distrust of what is said. Metaphors for one are misleading, digressions abound (by the way, also in the second half of the *Odyssey*). Every metaphor distorts more than it reveals by its hit-or-miss approach. I once made heavy weather out of the etymology of the Greek word for sin, *hamartia* or *hamarte*, which is based on the notion of missing one’s aim.¹⁷ Reading Joyce is hit or miss, and so is translation.

EM: Just a tiny question, coming back to coincidence: you once mentioned to me a fascinating little example of coincidence from “Eumaeus” – a mislaid name, I think it’s Peter Carey, or Casey, occurs in conjunction with Murphy and seems a mislaid character from somewhere else...connected also to Bloom’s “sherlockholmesing”...

¹⁷ SENN, Fritz. Off the Mark: The Thematic Dispersion of ‘Hamarte’. *Papers on Joyce*. Spanish James Joyce Society, No 2, p. 105-115, 1996.

FS: Several things come together here. The name Bloom is aiming for in “Les-trygonians” (“That fellow that turned queen’s evidence on the invincibles he used to receive the, Carey was his name, the communion every morning. This very church. Peter Carey, yes. No, Peter Claver I am thinking of”, *U* 5.378) is *James* Carey, but Bloom hits, inadvertently, on an otherwise non-existent Peter Carey. But that, as it happens, was the name of a murderer in a story Conan Doyle published in *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, which came out in 1904, a Homeric ten years after Sherlock Holmes had died in 1894.

Reading Joyce follows some procedures that Holmes applied to crime: close attention, sifting the evidence and drawing tentative conclusions. Reading is detecting – think of *Finnegans Wake*. In “Eumaeus” Bloom is “sherlock-holmesing” the sailor and draws his own conclusions, at one point he puts it that the storyteller could “lie like old boots” (*U* 16.823). He is off on the wrong foot, for it was precisely old boots that told Sherlock Holmes a lot about new visitors. It is famous, I remember dimly, that someone drops in and Holmes detects where he is from and what his profession may be, by merely looking at his boots.

Boots or shoes go a long way. When Bloom warns Stephen – not that we are sure that the erudite phrasing is actually what Bloom would say – “I wouldn’t personally repose much trust in that boon companion of yours, Dr. Mulligan (...) as a guide, philosopher and friend if I were in your shoes” (*U* 16. 279), he cannot possibly know that Stephen *is* in Mulligan’s boots. This will be lost if the target language does not have the idiom “if I were in your shoes”. Metaphors, as I said, tend to lie or at least go astray. Similarly: “He knows which side his bread is buttered on” (*U* 16. 281) – when earlier Mulligan buttered his bread on both sides (*U* 1.447). This is all part of the off-the-trackness of the episode.

JW: Could you comment on the dynamics of reading-cum-translating that we as Joyce scholars – Joyce readers – engage in?

FS: As I already said, Joyce is already translating within his works.¹⁸ This is another topic, Joyce’s later works also translate themselves (think of the *Ulysses* chapters, think of the *Wake*: Is “Warum night?” (*FW* 479.36) English “Warm night” or German “Warum nicht” (Why not)? This is not, strictly speaking, an internal translation but the coincidence of two languages, you can read the two words as either English or German.

One handicap that other languages have is their lack of a double vocabulary, which in English has always given speakers and writers so much opportunity and scope. Basically English is both Germanic and Latinate – this may involve a class distinction (“odour” is a cut above “smell”). See how a stately “Stately” is pitted against a plump “plump” in the first word pair in *Ulysses*. The Latin element is pervasive in “Ithaca” so much so that it takes an act of recognition, with

¹⁸ This recurring theme is salient in “Joyce’s Dislocutions” (see footnote n.4 for the book reference). A more recent discussion of this subject appears in: *Joycean Murmours: Fritz Senn on James Joyce*. Ed. Christine O’Neil. Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 2007. See esp. chapter on Language/Translation.

a slight delay, to figure out what, say, “vespertinal perambulation” (*U* 17. 1597) is. Understanding trails behind, at least minimally. As I mentioned before, not many native speakers know the noun “latration” – hindsight or a dictionary reveal the sense of “barking.” Incidentally, there you have a minor Homeric reference, for Odysseus, arriving at the hut of Eumaios, was attacked by barking dogs, and he also noticed later, when Telemachos was approaching, that the dogs, not barking, must know him (*Odyssey* XIV 29–36, XVI 8–10). This motif, by the way, was taken up by Sherlock Holmes in the famous “The dog did not bark”.

Now in German we don’t have similarly remote words like “vespertinal perambulation”, which turns into a lucid “abendliches Spaziergehen”: the evening, hidden in “vespertinal” leaps out at once. Or “circumprocession” becomes a trite “Spazierenreiten”, etc (G/G 907). In other words, in the translation no translation from Latin to German is required, reading becomes a shortcut. In Romance languages most words are Latinate to begin with and no transition from the remote to the familiar is necessary.

JW: So, in this context, do you have any insights from your own teaching to your Zurich students that could be useful to readers elsewhere?

FS: Well, you see, my students here just listen to the old man who is supposed to know it all. As there is no grading required and the course has been a kind of luxury, at least before the “Bologna reform” in Europe, they don’t say too much. They are reticent, and often timid, and so I don’t really get much feedback. Even so, there are occasionally original insights and of course the kinds of quintessential questions that are always unsettling. Incidentally, I do not think in terms of my “teaching *Ulysses*”; to teach is a transitive verb that seems to know what it is doing, with a definite goal. This does not quite apply to our various, subjective endeavours: when, under what circumstances, is *Ulysses* “taught”?

As to translations, I think it’s much more profitable to use them to reflect back on the original. On what causes their errors or misdirections – usually some oddity in the original. Rather than gloating over “mistakes” (a cheap thrill), it is better to ask *why* a translation goes astray at a particular point. I learnt something from Hans Wollschläger: Bloom thinks of his advertisement – that Keyes should renew it, and it occurs to him that the August Horseshow in Ballsbridge (where Keyes has his public house) might be a good argument: so he reminds himself to “rub in August” (*U* 7.192), that is to emphasize the horseshow. Wollschläger, educated as he was, thought of Hamlet’s “*there’s the rub*”. This showed me a potential ambiguity, not valid in this passage, but in *Finnegans Wake* you wouldn’t know where to go. Errors are revealing, open portals of discovery. If nothing were wrong, we would not know what is right. So I always advise to hold translation up against the original, I know nothing that would sharpen our observation more acutely. Nothing is more revealing than slips; malpractices, misunderstandings tell us a lot. For translators, errors in the text are not different from plays on words; they present the same challenges. They consist of coincidences: in Bloom’s slip, “the wife’s admirers” (*U* 12.667), “admirers” get in the way of “advisers”, which allows us to guess what goes on

in Bloom's mind. If he had said what he wanted to say, no one would stop at this passage, just as Bloom's fumbles in his short roll-call of famous Jews ("Mendelson was a jew and Karl Marx and Mercadante and Spinoza"; *U* 12.1804) make his speech so memorable by its twists and deviations (but, for once, this is not a translation problem).

EM: Fritz, you once mentioned that you were interviewed by *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* and they asked you the classical question: how many times have you read *Ulysses*...

FS: That wasn't *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, it was a journalist from Dresden who was in town and came up from the Museum below and started by asking how many times I had read *Ulysses*. At such moments I put on my discreet embarrassed face, which is supposed to indicate that I don't think the question too smart, and so I set out that one doesn't, from a certain point onward, re-read *Ulysses* again from cover to cover, but one dips into it here and there, depending on the occasion. And I must have dropped a remark, "the way you read a newspaper: you don't read it completely." When a report of that visit to the Joyce Foundation was sent to me, it showed a picture with a caption to the effect that "Fritz Senn reads *Ulysses* every morning like a newspaper". Which may have created an impression that at daybreak Fritz Senn puts *Ulysses* on the bed and kneels down and then reverently reads his biblical passages. I feel I have been translated.

EM: So how *do* you read *Ulysses*, Fritz?

FS: On my knees, of course, facing East! Often you can see how things go wrong. I habitually point at a Dutch bumpersticker: "*Ik heb Ulysses helemaal gelezen*", to show a kind of attitude that, if you have weathered *Ulysses* (from end to end, "helemaal" = entirely), you deserve a kind of a title, or a diploma. This too has been taken at face value as if I really meant it. Did I tell you what happened in Spain, in Seville? Were you there?

JW: Yes, of course: the memorable 1994...

FS: A journalist wanted an interview and started off: "Is Joyce the Pope of literature?" I went into my best-contorted face routine, remaining polite, the milk of human kindness, you know, oozing at every orifice...

JW: Yeah, that's you, Fritz [*laughter*]

FS: ...your imagination is totally misplaced! Anyway, I elaborately put it that this was not a term I would ever use, not part of my vocabulary, but that – *if* you really want to phrase it in that particular way, *then*, if anything, Joyce is rather an antipope. Next time a headline screamed: "Fritz Senn: Joyce is an Antipope". You can't win. This is almost like the famous anecdote – you must have read this in variants: a cardinal crosses the Atlantic and disembarks in New York and is assailed by journalists. The first question: "Do you intend to visit a nightclub tonight?" He answers, surprised: "Are there nightclubs in New York?" So the

newspaper can report, correctly: “The Cardinal’s First Question: ‘Are there Nightclubs in New York?’” An old journalistic trick.

EM: ...literally...

FS: That is why I want to read such reports before they appear in print, a precaution. You have to insist. What also happened is that, possibly with the best intentions, words are put into my mouth that I would never use. Once I was interviewed by a student and I thought we understood each other quite well, but he made me say, about making a living, dass “*ich meine Brötchen verdiene*” (earn my little bread rolls). Nothing wrong with that, only I would never use the expression, just as one would never wear a certain kind of dress. We are not straying all that far afield, for these too are acts of translation; we assimilate what we absorb into our own frame of reference.

JW: So if I understand you well, Fritz, when translators introduce their own solutions – to come back to Joyce – and when it is done consistently to resemble what Joyce was aiming at in the original, you seem to condone and agree that translations should “do their own thing”. For instance, we once talked about alliterations and you were interested how the translators treat them, whether they notice them and introduce alliterations into their translations, even on a different letter obviously. So however remote and different from what Joyce does translators’ departures may be, would you agree that consistency makes up for the far-flung solutions?

FS: Ja, ja, I am repeating myself. In reading the multi-layered kind of literature we are talking about, nobody can think of all the possible meanings and overtones and quotes and cross references and what not. New aspects can always be discovered. Ideally we would like to achieve the identical combined effects. If Joyce uses an extravagant word, there should be one at the other end too. Something like “rambunctious females” comes to mind (*U* 7.1014) or “galoptious” (*U* 8.666; I think Erika has dealt with that once in Dublin¹⁹). There may be nothing analogous in another language. Each translator will probably compose a list of words in his (or, naturally, her) language that do not exist but ought to. I already mentioned “supercilious” in another context (*U* 11.416): we have nothing corresponding in German. Goyert uses a bland “überlegen” (superior: *G/G* 300), Wollschläger a more visible (here I am in vain looking for an equivalent to our German “anschaulich”) “hochnäsig” (*G/W* 369), someone carrying her nose high. This suggests a look into her nostrils, whereas in “supercilious” only erudite readers will see the high (*super*) eyelids (*cilium*). The word is suitable for a refined English butler of the old school (in the old cliché). Which would bring me to Wodehouse whose astute handling of the English vocabulary is almost out of translators’ reach. Miss Douce in “Sirens” wants to play in the upper register, which is why she says “With the greatest alacrity” (*U* 11.213). This is

¹⁹ “Something galoptious. (Food)notes to the Hungarian and Romanian translations of Lestrygonians”. In: 19th DUBLIN JOYCE SCHOOL (5-11 July 2009, UCD), Dublin. For an expanded version, see: MIHÁLYCSA, Erika. Translators up a (plum)tree: (food)Notes to the Translation of the “Sandwich Passage” into Hungarian and Romanian. *Scientia Traductionis*, No. 8, p. 147-174, 2010.

“class”, attempted class, even if someone found out that the phrase was quite common at a time. Miss Douce wants to impress Boylan who is watching her, preening herself in comportment and style. “Mit der größten Bereitwilligkeit”/ “Mit der allergrößten Bereitwilligkeit” (G/G 294 and G/W 362) is relatively flat and unexciting – but I can’t think of anything more refined.

JW: You have frequently commented on the importance of dynamics, of talking between scholars, of exchanges that are lively, as opposed to paper-reading, and we all know your allergy to papers. Would you comment on the importance of this kind of dynamic interactions between scholars?

FS: My allergy to papers is an allergy to papers at conferences as the only viable procedure. There is no question that, for a certain kind of public information, you have to read a pre-formulated and structured script (not that all lectures are either well structured or clear). No question that there is a market for “papers”. I am tempted to put the word between audible quotation marks, as I always found it strange and revealing that a scholarly form of communication should be named by its least important aspect, the material it is printed on. Well, come to think of it, there is some justice in it. But too often I’ve been attending gatherings where I was condemned to listen to a monotonous exterior monologue, enforced to passivity. Life, we know, is short, but a lecture can be awfully long. Everybody has been inspired by a *lively* discussion, and everybody has been bored to tears by monologues and lectures, and perversely we arrange events as assemblies of lectures. My point is, it should not be the *only* possible way.

So, a prepared lecture does have its place in scholarly conferences. I still prefer a free presentation, possibly based on notes. Or, an old hobby-horse of mine, if you have to read from a typescript, at least prepare it so that you do not have your eyes fixed on it all the time. Readers of papers often *speak to the paper* in their hands. It is easy to arrange speaking lines, not run-on, that is to say, have a new line for each item, maybe indented to guide the voice.

But sometimes a more open format is preferable. I have been arguing for it for years, with little effect – fighting against windmills (well, come to think of it, papers are often “wind-mills”). So often sessions are filled to the last minute by speakers, with no time for questions or responses. Of course, in large plenary sessions with 300 people, there is no scope for small pertinent questions: if you walk up to the microphone, you have to deliver a ponderous statement. When I say something, I would like to have it supplemented, modified, challenged, to get instant feedback. That way I can learn more than when I get in front of you and finally tell you the truth you have been so eager to lap up. Getting a response makes me think of relations that would not have occurred to me without it. My ideal is a lively give-and-take, a kind of bouncing effect. When you know you could always contribute something, you are much more alert.

Of course what I present here is a subjective ideal, I know that it cannot easily be applied in big audiences.

JW: So the Zurich Workshops offer a much more stimulating environment for exchanges, don't they?

FS: It is a home game in Zurich; our workshops are smaller and more intimate so it is easier to include the audience, or rather, there is no audience since everyone potentially participates all the time. We have institutionalized the open format, perhaps erring on the side of openness. The speakers naturally have their say and are in command, but they can be interrupted, clarifications can be requested, points can be developed. The format is also based on the common experience that the best discussions sometimes happen in the intervals of conferences: in the elevator or at a kitchen table. I remember vividly how once after a Symposium we went out to Howth along the cliffs and had one of the best talks about *Dubliners*, spontaneously. Back to the procedures: I much prefer a burst of short statements to one very long monologue – they are certainly easier to absorb.

JW: So, in the spirit of a lively give-and-take, Fritz, you have come up with the idea of a *duologue*, which is really a great way of presenting an exchange in progress.

FS: That is really all about two people speaking about a common topic and responding spontaneously. Of course, they have to be flexible. It can also backfire, but even that is not worse than a tedious lecture.

EM: Fritz, to come back to the issues of translation, you have often said that *Ulysses* is in fact more difficult to translate than *Finnegans Wake*.

FS: Ja-a. But only in one single aspect. In “normal” translations, you can always point out what is missing, something not on target, even plain wrong. In the *Wake* that makes little sense since, of course inevitably, a lot is missing, most is off target. You simply cannot juggle with so many different balls. Apart from the fact that in *FW* nothing is right anyway. It is by nature too coincidental, too much is piled on or fused, so that the usual criteria no longer apply. We become appreciative of what can be achieved and tolerant of erroneous twists. There is some hit and, inevitably, a great deal of miss. There is a kind of general absolution.

I remember a reviewer of a German *Anna Livia Plurabelle* who seriously objected to what was made of “Look at the shirt of it – look at the dirt of it” (*FW* 196.15): “Guck dir den Fleck da an! Guck nur den Dreck daran!”, Wollschläger missed out on translating “shirt”! Or just imagine that you have to do justice to something like “his dayety in the sooty” (*FW* 143.4), that is to combine “day in the city”, a city that is “sooty”, also “duty”, “gaiety”, perhaps also “deity” in another language, including all the perhapses – it would be a futile demand. Allusions in *Finnegans Wake* are there to be missed, in understanding or translating. You can't disqualify a translator for an omission or a mistake when all you can produce is mistakes. Which is not to say that there cannot be really inadequate efforts at translating *FW*.

EM: Still, when speaking about translations of *FW*, you tend to come down quite harshly on certain types of mistakes...

FS: I try not to mention the name of a German who courageously and diligently did all of the *Wake*. First of all, his translation doesn't recommend itself as an event in *sound*; it lacks those seducing rhythms that keep the *Wake* alive – we expect a certain flow of language whether it is understood or not. The translation is unwieldy, full of obstacles, it sports intercaps (“des ReckenBockens” for “regginbrow”; *FW* 3.14).

EM: The translation you are speaking about is...

FS: I forgot the name, in charitable oblivion. I once asked the translator what kind of responsibility does a translator have to the text, because there must be some, but he volunteered no answer. As to responsibility, it seems to be absent in totally misleading associations, as when “viceking's graab” – which magnificently encapsulates Irish history from Viking monuments to what the British rulers could grab (*FW* 18.13) – is rendered as “Fickingörls Grahlp”: this gratuitously combines Vikings with copulating girls and introduces the Grail (“Grahl”), for the simple reasons, it seems, that the German basic words lend themselves to such distortions, irrespective of the context. Then there are real mistakes, based on ignorance. When a simple “the odds are” in normal English (*FW* 35.12) turns into “die Ungeraden sind”, a suspicion arises that the translator looked up “odds” in the dictionary where in fact the first entry for “odd” is “ungerade = uneven” (numbers). It is possible to translate parts of *FW* plain wrong.

I also say that translations into remote languages, say Chinese, Finnish, or Georgian, may be easier *in one respect only*. In our Indo-European languages, from German to Romanian or Polish, you still expect a certain kind of structural similarity. But when the languages are so essentially different, such expectations would be futile, deviations may not be felt as such, because everything deviates anyway (from our provincial perspective). What, for example, would be a substitute for a Biblical echo in, say, Japanese where my guess is that much information would have to be relegated to footnotes?

EM: ...not to mention the blatant impossibility to get this kind of interlingual coincidence in a language that uses ideograms...

FS: In some cases it makes sense to ask: what is the aim of translators? In our TransWorkshop, I put Bloom's “Do ptake some ptarmigan” (*U* 8.886) on the agenda. What is the translator's task? Now, in the first place, few people know what exactly a ptarmigan is – some kind of bird that can also be served on a plate, so there is a word for it in probably every language. In German it is a transparent word, “Schneehuhn”. Now a phonetic or literal (“ptake”) feature has to be transferred to a neighbouring word, and so we get “Bitte schnehen Sie noch etwas Schneehuhn” (*G/W* 246). This sounds like someone having a cold. The point, one point, of the original *ptarmigan* is that it is a choice word with an odd spelling, an intrusive letter “t”. Bloom's notion is a comment on wayward

English orthography, and chances are that in other languages there is no convenient bird at hand. Most translators err in what in essence looks like a speech defect. So what can be done? I honestly do not know. One might hit on the name of some strangely named edible bird or anything fancy sounding that upper class people would have for dinner. The French use “ptrenez” to mismatch “ptarmigan” (F/M 198); Aubert has “Reptrenez”, to go with “tperdrix” (F/A 256), which, out of the blue, doesn’t make sense. This is not fault-finding but essential failed solution-finding. It cannot be done. But, to come back, how would we instruct a translator about what *must* be done?

As for “remote” translations, just imagine the case when Bloom deals with letters: “I.H.S.” = “I have sinned ... I have suffered” (*U* 5.172). It is hard enough for our familiar languages (Italian for example does not have many words beginning in “h”), but what about languages that do not even have letters? How could an errant letter “I” (“wor[l]d”, “B[l]oom”) find expression in Chinese?

JW: So you think that the linguistic solution in those translations should be more daring and cutting-edge?

FS: In this case I cannot imagine which way any daring could go. I do not know what the best way is out of an impossibility. “Ptake” with its intrusive “t” (I believe it is the Greek “pt”, as in *pter*-words, for flying that was imposed on “ptarmigan”) is an accident in English spelling. Other languages don’t have similar spelling problems perhaps; so what should be conveyed? One might even have to let it go rather than create wayward impressions – would, in such a rare exception, *no* translation perhaps be better than a predictably misleading one? A question of general import.

In the same vein, how do you translate “Queen Anne is dead” (*U* 7.90), one of my favourites? Queen Anne is dead: would be no problem on the surface – but in English it means that the news is all too well known, old hat, stale (as in *U* 7.89). That, in other words, it is *no* news.

EM: Fritz, one issue that came up with retranslations of *Ulysses* is – and this is again touching on an earlier question: where should they aim with respect to earlier translations? Recently I had a kind of debate with one of the Hungarian re-translator team, regarding the famous “Nother dying come home father” (*U* 3.199) in the blue French telegram. The dilemma of course was, what should a translator be faithful to: is the error in this case crucial, or is the essential thing here the possibility of the error, the likelihood that something can be misspelt by a telegraphist?

FS: The point is it must be a real one-word mistake, a misreading that is plausible in a telegram. In this case I would simply substitute an initial N for whatever word for mother there is, usually starting with M. This retains the curiosity but does not conjure up a shadow meaning. That the ghost of “another” disappears is a pity. Of course then I have never been a devotee of that famous critical “Other” who has dominated critical usage for a while but whom for some reason I never came across in my walk of life.

EM: Still, to return to this question and to generalize it a little bit more, I wouldn't like to formulate it as signifier vs. the signified, but whenever there is a dilemma in translation, what do you think a translator should go for? Is it the language effects, or is it the "realistic" background?

FS: You see, I wouldn't generalize it. I think it was Leo Knuth who once said that translation is opportunistic: if you have an opportunity, you grab it. If you don't have one, you're at sea. Given the limitations of possible solutions, I would opt for some telegram mistake. But on principle, this being Joyce (notorious for anomalies), I would opt for the venturesome path, otherwise you de-Joyce the works. To put it differently: focus on the "novel" aspect of the novel. In the case of *Ulysses*, there are enough flattening translations already (no-one to blame), so what's the point of adding yet another one? But, back to "Nother", if somebody had a nice overtone at hand – what's *other* in Polish?

JW: ...it depends on the context: "tamten," "inny," ...

FS: ...nothing to do with "mother" – or a shadow of God knows what – why not take it? But it must still be a likely mistake. N and M are a plausible confusion in a telegram and will be easily preserved in most cases. Perhaps at some risk: in German the result is "Nutter" (G/W 60) which sneaks in an overtone of "Nutte", *whore*. A stray meaning is added automatically which here calls up accidental Oedipal ghosts. Translations cannot help diffusing misleading seeds, especially in books where alert readers are on the lookout for latent meanings. That Joyce translators have attentive readers in mind can be taken for granted – otherwise many efforts would be wasted.

I remember a German newspaper article referring to Leopold Bloom committing suicide, obviously the view of someone unfamiliar with *Ulysses*. I am convinced it was based on the wording of a previous article that stated, truly, but with "Nausicaa" in mind: "Bloom legte Hand an sich" ("laid hands on himself"). What is a blatant misreading here is an intended Joycean ambiguity in the "Prankquean Tale" in *FW* ("laying cold hands on himself", *FW* 21.11). Idioms and expressions are treacherous.

Plausibility also comes into play in a graphic modification.

This brings to mind the transition from "POST NO BILLS" to "POST 110 PILLS" by two deft graphic erasures (*U* 8.101). Most of the versions I have seen go to elaborate lengths, so that someone in a urinal would have to spend a lot of time graphically interfering with the standard prohibition, whereas a minimal effort is called in turning an "N" into two figures ("IP") and curtailing a "B" to a "P". Or take another one: "Plasto's high grade ha" (*U* 4.69): it is easy to lose just one single "t". But if you have *chapeau*, what do you do? Take a whole "eau" out of it? The eroding sweat is put to much more work. Quite apart from the fact that a single "t" can, and does, link up to "tea" or "Simon Dedalus takes him off to a tee" (*U* 4.114) – to say nothing about "the reverend T.

Salmon”, where the initial echoes Bloom’s earlier association, “The reverend Dr Salmon: tinned Salmon” (*U* 17.790, 8.496). A “t” can go a long way – but to make this clear, one would never demand that translators should ever reconstruct such peripheral grace notes.

EM: But again, if you don’t have the likelihood – for instance, obviously the *word-world* thing doesn’t work in other languages – but would you just give it up? If the only possible mistake is something very pedestrian?

FS: As a last resort one may introduce an “embedded footnote” (I was once rapped on the knuckles for that naïve expression); or at times translators leave the English word, italicized. Any device that somehow does the trick is welcome. Sophisticated snobs tend to overlook that in practice the alternative to reading the original is Plain Nothing. So any translation, no matter how makeshift, is better than being debarred from reading literature that is out of our linguistic range.

A good case is Bloom’s momentary misreading of his name into “Bloo[d]” (*U* 8.8). Here translators often put in the English, with an appended gloss. “Bloo... Me? No. / *Blood*, sangue dell’Agnello” (*I/DA* 204). Imagine, for a fleeting fancy, the reverse. One might base the protagonist’s name on that link – an essential one, I believe, for we all do read ourselves into a text – and so would name him, accordingly, something close to Sang or whatever the Polish is for “blood”, which of course would never be an English/Jewish name, and one would get into deep and turbulent waters. But on a miniature scale, it is being done. A Spanish translation changes the name of Paul de Kock, a real French author, to “Paul de Verga” to make it “nice” according to Molly’s taste (*S/T* 72). Or when a British name Cockburn has to be morphed into an obscenity (“I know that fellow ... from bitter experience”, *U*12.233), otherwise the passage will be misread. In French the name may become, appropriately, “Chaude-queue” (*F/A* 430), which retains the lewd joke, but then the whole point of the list of names read out from a newspaper is that the names are *English*!

EM: A similarly risky joke was famously made of Paul de Kock in the 1974 Hungarian *Ulysses*: translator Miklós Szentkuthy rebaptized him into the French-looking Paul de Basoche (*H/Sz* 77). Pronounced, the Frenchified surname reads in Hungarian, “Paul the very Effer” – a very “sweet” name indeed, as Molly remarks. The new Hungarian *Ulysses* (2012) changed this back into Paul de Kock – he was, after all, a real author, very popular with Hungarian readers also. The translator team, on the other hand, found a nice solution for the Cockburn obituary: C. Phyllis (*H/“C”* 289)...

JW: These examples illustrate well what you say about the very crux of what it means to translate. In his Polish translation, Maciej Słomczyński leaves Paul de Kock (*P/S* 50) and Cockburn (*P/S* 232) as they are in the original.

FS: Well, when you can do it, then every kind of substitute is useful. I mean, when you ask me how I would translate it, my answer is simply, I wouldn’t because I wouldn’t start in the first place. My own incompetence, on top of inher-

ent impossibilities, would stare me in the face. This explains why I did not become a translator but a heckler.

JW: Really? Are you serious right now?

FS: I simply don't have the imaginative skill.

JW: But you *have* translated...

FS: Ja, ja, but not really or only at gunpoint. In the first place, words don't occur to me and I would have to go to the dictionary (and dictionaries are singularly unhelpful when it comes to translating). Secondly, for us Swiss, German is a closely related, but still a foreign language, since we always use our dialects in daily life. High German sits somewhat uneasily on us, so we have little practice in a genuine German dialogue. I feel this handicap very much.

JW: So would then the Swiss *Ulysses* be slightly different from the German *Ulysses*?

FS: Yes, quite different, in sound, in vocabulary. We have lots of Helvetisms, provincial usages, expressions that are not common, though generally understood, in German, and often we are not aware of using them.

JW: Like? Maybe you could talk a little about Helvetisms?

FS: For bicycle, for example, we say "Velo" and not "Fahrrad". We only have one relative pronoun, "wo" (where, but also for who, whom, which etc.). Our syntactic constructions differ; we only have the perfect tense, no past tense or imperfect.

One might say this is analogous, loosely, to Hiberno-English, which Joyce makes so much use of. But we could never substitute our dialect habits. This is an age-old problem: how to render say, Cockney or Black English into another language? The results would jar. It has been tried of course; Aristophanes features Greek dialects to good effect, but Spartans speaking Bavarian or Bernese, or for that matter Brooklyn English, sound simply ridiculous. So there is a rule that outlaws dialects for distinction, at the risk often of losing characteristic nuances.

But then again, given the lack of adequate alternatives, why should one not attempt the unusual even if it is possibly disturbing? This is what I learnt from Brian Friel's *Translations* (it actually depressed me a lot because very often I couldn't absorb it acoustically). The audience realizes, at some point, that though English has to be spoken throughout, some of it is actually meant to be Irish. Some game rules can be implied. *Something*, possibly awry, may be preferable to *Nothing*.

In this light then, why could one not, in a given context, represent, say, Black English by a local Viennese dialect – but only in Vienna, *ad hoc*? We actually

tried it out once in an Austrian translation seminar, and all of a sudden a wonderful lot of creative potential came to light. The effects would, at first, be disturbing, but it would mean adding another convention (the device could even be stated, say, in the programme). Literature is conventional, rhymes are one example, sonnets are highly artificial. I have never heard people in real life singing at each other, but they do it in operas. Art is based on imagination and illusion. Think of “Circe”.

EM: By the way, the one film adaptation today of Flann O’Brien’s novel *At Swim-Two-Birds* was done by Kurt Palm in Viennese German, so...

FS: Yes, everything is like that. What do you do when Buck Mulligan lapses into Synge’s stage Irish – “and I tramping Dublin this while back...” (*U* 14.1020), there is nothing equivalent anywhere outside of Ireland. Instead of giving up, Wollschläger tried his hand at Berlin speech patterns – rural Aran Islands are thus metamorphosed into urban Berlin. It does not work, no doubt, this is “wrong”, outrageously wrong (and Harald Beck in his revision will not follow suit), but some notable difference, laid on, absurdly, with a trowel, may be better than none at all. I said before that a particular method could be justified in an afterword and shown to be a device. Translations of *Ulysses* may well be equipped with editorial paraphernalia.

JW: Another interesting dilemma is translating songs. For instance, in the Polish *Dubliners*, the way Maria’s song “Marble Halls” is translated into Polish, you cannot really sing it. We can easily forget that the Polish translators²⁰ would not know the song. As an exercise, I managed to put it into singable lines that are faithful to the musical cadences – but it was a challenge. What is your attitude to translating such items as songs?

FS: I would fake some kind of poetic line here. I mean, you probably qualify because you can sing the songs, you have a singing voice... In some cases, where there is no equivalent, all too often, you have to fake quotations, perhaps by rhythm or poetic diction.

JW: Would you go for the rhythm of the line?

FS: It wouldn’t have to be the same rhythm but something recognizable as rhythmic, or poetic, not colloquial or ordinary. This relates in particular to the majority of songs that simply do not exist, often not even in English any longer, that have gone out of fashion and living memory. Now of course, we have Google at least for convenient retrieval. Don’t forget, by the way, that most of Joyce’s songs would by now be forgotten if they had not been revived by our musical experts, like Zack Bowen. And many have been brought to us as you did, this past workshop, and Michelle Witen on various occasions. There is an assiduous Joycean archeology to dig up past treasures. Scholars have revived much that otherwise would remain dead, the ballad of “Finnegan’s Wake”, for one. Joyce has resurrected that song about an Irish resurrection.

²⁰ Kalina Wojciechowska translated *Dubliners* as *Dublińczycy* in 1958 (reprinted in 1991; Oskar, Warszawa); Zbigniew Batko’s *Dublińczycy* was published in 2005 (Znak, Kraków).

Most losses are deplorable. Take Thomas Moore's "The Harp that Once In Tara's Hall", once it was common property, now it may well have faded out even in Ireland. Joyce twists it into "The harp that once did starve us all": so here you have Irish history from the glorious never-existing past to the Famine in a thumbnail. This can hardly be revived. No reverberations will be called up and whatever is at stake may have to be relegated to footnotes. Another issue: should there be footnotes or comments? In Joyce's case, of notorious obscurity, they would probably be accepted even outside the academia. Once a translator can resort to explicative notes, the task changes its nature as there is always a way out – and outside the translation itself. Often it is the publisher's choice. Naturally, there is a difference when I buy a translation with paraphernalia: it tends to provide an air of work and exertion rather than pleasure.

As to songs, we had an ironic problem with *Martha* in "Sirens". The opera is originally German, with words in German. This would give us an advantage and make us fortunate: we have, for once, the original words at hand. In English, the aria begins with: "When first I saw that form endearing ..." (*U* 11.666); this is based on the translation Joyce used (I verified this when I asked May Monaghan in 1966, Joyce's last remaining sister). That line is instantly transferred to a physical reaction: "...feeling that *flow endearing*" (11.668). It again comes to Bloom's mind when a prostitute crosses his way: "When first he saw that form endearing?" (*U* 11.1253), with more variants elsewhere. Now the German version is on a different track: "Ach so fromm, ach so traut..." ("so pious and so familiar"). You see that the whole network cannot hinge on foregrounded piety, or a great deal would have to be modified. So the English translation had to be back-translated into a non-existing German version (which would not strike a chord in a German audience). You can't win. Of course, in an opera texts often are of secondary importance; it is the sound that counts. That also applies to "Sirens", where sound is dominant but, by contrast, the sense is never neglected; if anything, there is too much of it.

Translators are happiest with quotations from Shakespeare or the Bible. But even the locally available translations do not always oblige, especially when they have not attained the same popularity. Shakespeare's "Tell me where is fancy bred" from *The Merchant of Venice* is most likely *not* a live memory in the respective translations (as against "To be or not to be"), and so Bloom's recall of "O tell me where is fancy bread, at Rourke's the baker's it is said" (*U* 16.58) will hardly ring a bell in any rendering. On the whole, Biblical quotations are more conveniently at hand, but not universally: I am thinking of "Cast thy bread upon the waters". What I mean, "cast thy bread upon the waters" is "laß dein Brot übers Wasser fahren" in German, and far less known, and it might have an unwanted side effect: "*fahren lassen*" carries overtones of flatulence, a somewhat unbiblical note would creep in. Each substitute can have its stray risks.

JW: Joyce would have loved it...

FS: “Eumaeus” thrives on such effects, as in “You who know your Shakespeare infinitely better than I”... “who precisely wrote them *Hamlet* or Bacon” (*U* 16.783) – and suddenly a collateral breakfast is served up for free.

EM: Yeah, perhaps with nowadays’ readers it would work, because bacon has become a domestic word in many languages, so... readers would also catch the ham and bacon.

FS: Yes, nowadays ham and bacon would work... With the overall dominance of English, many words have migrated into many languages and become familiar elsewhere. In general, translations should be admired, but not trusted. This does not only relate to Joyce. One particular frustration of translators is that many possibilities in the target languages cannot be exploited, the original does not give them an opportunity. I’m sure Polish has lots of words that just do not qualify.

JW: That’s true. I recall that one time you said you had an insight to what you thought you understood in Joyce, and then it took years of reading to understand that you had made an error in translating – do you remember that?

FS: What I remember was something that Paul Van Caspel taught me. When Milly writes “Fair day and all the beef to the heel were in” (*U* 4. 402), she does not refer to the weather, but to a country *fair*, which makes perfect sense in the context. I had always overlooked it and it makes me shudder how often this must have happened.

JW: ...teaches you humbleness as a translator.

FS: And a reader. Makes sense. And you don’t know how much you overlook, because you didn’t notice it.

And then there are the repetitions, the recurrent motifs, or even simple words like “home” with a wide reach: “What is *home* without Plumtree’s potted meat?”; “are you not happy in your *home*?”; “Who’s he when he’s at *home*?” And we have *Home Rule*, a whole network. Such connections cannot be preserved, certainly not in French or German. “Home” occurs over a hundred times in *Ulysses*, apart from compounds, and, to drive a point home, it could even be linked to “homer”, which brings to mind Flann O’Brien’s “On First Looking into Chapman’s Homer”, one of his comic stories about *Keats & Chapman* and, by extension, his many sketches that hinge on the elaboration of a strained pun – wholly untranslatable.

EM: ...he wrote them backwards...

FS: It originates with Chapman having a pigeon that Keats had to mind during his absence. On his return Keats was just feeding it, opening its beak: so this leads to “Looking into Chapman’s Homer” (I don’t of course have the exact

words at hand). This is extremely contrived, as we can see, and the joke is precisely the forced mechanism of the contrivance. In a translators' workshop in Austria we once aired another specimen as a kind of final puzzle at the end of the demanding day. Here a dog by name of Byrne has to be taken care of, whatever the spelling, who, however, absconds, and his temporary master is playing the violin, which allows for the punch line "Why shouldn't I fiddle while *Byrne roams*?" This simply does not travel abroad, and any "solution" would have to be a wholly different story that allows for a similar grotesque twist, irrespective of dogs or echoes of the emperor Nero. It is only in a British context that a lawyer can be "struck off the rolls" so that it can be jocularly applied to one who was injured by a Rolls (Royce). By the way, the cartoonist of the *Irish Times*, Tom Mathews (we have sort of a liking for each other), wrote a supplement of O'Brien's Chapman and Keats stories. He is the one with the immortal joke of the bartender addressing a visibly inebriated Joyce: "You have had too much, Mr. Joyce" (in essence) "– *Non serviam*". This one can be translated into all languages that have a similar use for "serve."

Perhaps I should throw in how once in a Zurich Workshop a young German author valiantly showed sample passages from *FW* in his own translation, and they were discussed with tactful reticence. I still remember the young man's closing remark that I have often cited since: "What's the point of a translation when it means the same thing as the original?" This insight has sometimes been attributed to me who merely passed it on for posterity.

EM: Since we, all three of us, are coming from a one-week workshop about punctuation, where a lot of talk has also been, at least tangentially, on the importance of punctuation in translation, on the ways in which you can translate punctuation in translation, would you like to comment on that?

FS: I think each language treats punctuation in its own way, with certain almost ingrained rules. Joyce, however, follows his own – if they *are* rules. As we know, some editors have been trying to mend Joyce's errant ways. Punctuation anyway comes late in the history of writing, strictly speaking it is not necessary, but it helps strictly writing. In German, commas follow fairly rigid rules – always before subordinate clauses, for instance, that makes them relatively cumbersome, you have to change gears. In English you may hardly notice. Since Joyce uses punctuation sparsely in *A Portrait*, Klaus Reichert and I did away with many of the obligatory commas in order to pave the way for the German *Ulysses*. But Hans Wollschläger, a commatophile by nature, reintroduced them and in fact put in more of them, especially to separate items in the interior monologue, for the sake of clarity and yet, I think, against Joyce's grain. Commas indicate pauses; punctuation is part of the rhythmic orchestration so that a translator is allowed some scope how to time his sentences. I would guess, off the cuff, that most translators (having European languages in mind) would follow Joyce's use of semicolons (they hardly affect spoken passages, let alone interior ones), and even more so his highly idiosyncratic distribution of colons. I wish I could figure out what *exactly* they achieve; maybe it has something to do with expectation, with suspense. They feel right but I could not spell out the nuances that are achieved. What is the difference between Joyce's opening of "The

Sisters” (“There was no hope for him this time: it was the third stroke”) with its haunting colon, as against the possibility of using a comma, a dash, a new sentence, or else a parenthesis?

My remarks mainly refer to German usage and its particular latitude, but I have no idea what punctuation is in Hungarian, or how much freedom you have...

EM: ...it is basically the same as in German...

FS: Punctuation, of course, often separates items, parcelling them out for easier absorption.

EM: ...whereas Joyce makes it all the more difficult...

FS: It has to do with his overall lack of guidance (which is ultimately trust in our skills of sorting out, a compliment, with barbs on it). Forgive me for thrusting in my old time exhibit number one for Joyce’s underhand ways. Bloom thinks about the cruelty of cats, in his customary shortmind: “Curious mice never squeal” (*U* 4.28). By the time we come across this sentence, in the fourth episode, we already know, without realizing, how to treat such a construction. It says nothing about the effect of curiosity on the squealing habits of mice, as it well might if seen in isolation. We have already processed this to: [It is] curious [that] mice never squeal. Joyce could have put a comma or a colon for instant clarification, or a conjunction, but he leaves it to us. Translators may well step into the breach: “Curieux *que* les souris ne couinent jamais” (F/A 82). This is a simple example. But translations are often shortcuts to a meaning that is not on the surface.

This brings me to all those secondary or tangential possibilities already in *Ulysses* but much more potent in *Finnegans Wake*, where subject, verb, genitive or whatever are not always obvious. When in “Circe” Bloom is almost run over by a sandstrewer, he thinks, “The stiff walk” (*U* 15.207), his walk is of course stiff. But in “Circe” the stiff – the dead – do indeed walk! This could become the title of an essay on “Circe”. But the prime realistic context must prevail here. Characteristic side effects, or our side-inventions, must go by the board.

Many side effects won’t show up in translations, but others may intrude gratuitously. There is a blatant distortion in Georg Goyert’s translation of *A Portrait*:²¹ in one of these students’ conversations in the fifth chapter Stephen says that Pascal “would not suffer his mother to kiss him as he feared the contact of her sex” (*P* 242). In gross Oedipal exaggeration this comes across as “he feared to touch her genitals”. The slip can be reconstructed: in the thirties Joyce was the writer of an obscene book, the word “sex” did not have quite the same meaning as it has now, and so imagination had some free rein.

On the other hand, here is something that made me aware of lurking dangers in idioms. I came across a book by a German critic who had just discovered Joyce,

²¹ JOYCE, James. *Jugendbildnis*. Tr. by Georg Goyert. Zürich: Rhein Verlag, 1948.

relatively late, and saw an elevating tendency in *Ulysses*. You remember that delightful misunderstanding when Bloom asks Stephen about his belief in a soul because he himself thinks of it more in terms of “the convolutions of the grey matter” (*U* 16.749). Stephen launches into dogmatic details, including “They tell me on authority the soul is a simple substance” (16. 756). Bloom admits “you do knock across a simple soul once in a blue moon” (*U* 16.765), conflating “soul” with the “simple substance” of theology. The interpretation I referred to was based on Goyert’s idiomatical rendering of 1927: “einer einfachen Seele begegnet man einmal alle Jubeljahre” (G/G 637: a simple soul you meet once within “jubilee years”). This allows of a more positive twist (jubilee years are more real than blue moons). So this critic saw Joyce’s sympathy on the side of “simple souls”. This may not be entirely wrong but it just is not what the highly ironic passage conveys. A slight translational edge may steer a text towards an authorial worldview.

JW: But such problems are quite often the results of the fact that translators work or focus very locally on a text; it’s only *after* the work is finished that they might want to introduce global and unifying connections that have to be cross-checked before translation is put into its final shape...

FS: Many translated passages we understand *once* we look at the original wording; without it, they may take a different direction.

EM: By the way, Jolanta has long ago made a point that one of the criteria by which translations, particularly of Joyce, could be judged, is how far they can accommodate the critical textual processing that has been done on the original.²² And in this sense, of course, Joyce is special, because it simply doesn’t compare with any realist writer or any of [that] plain sailing. So what kind of additional difference, additional difficulties does it place on translators?

JW: Basically, I compared your and John Bishop’s essays that discuss textual details *absent* from the Polish translations. In order to translate your criticism into Polish, I’d have to re-translate relevant passages and explain them to my target audience.

FS: Of course, if you translate secondary stuff, criticism, a footnote is perfectly appropriate.

JW: But then, imagine how discursive those footnotes would have to be; they would, of course, implicitly and stealthily criticize the accepted or even iconic version of the translations already in circulation.

FS: Joyce’s prose is very slippery; you never know quite well what overtones are at play or which connotations are significant. How often have I harped on the first sentence in *Ulysses*: it moves from “Stately” to “crossed” (“Stately,

²² WAWRZYCKA, Jolanta. ‘A stride at a time’: Thoughts on Translating Critical Readings of *Ulysses*. *Papers on Joyce*, n.14, p. 125-135, 2008; WAWRZYCKA, Jolanta. Transcultural Criticism: ‘jinglish janglage Joyce in Polish. In: *A Collideorscape of Joyce: Festschrift for Fritz Senn*. Ed. Ruth Frehner and Ursula Zeller. Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1998, p. 436-443.

plump Buck Mulligan came from the stairhead, bearing a bowl of lather on which a mirror and a razor lay crossed" *U* 1.1). It foreshadows State and Church, the temporary and the ecclesiastical authorities, two of Stephen's masters; "Wandering Rocks" will be sandwiched between the top ranking Father Conmee, S.J. and the Lord Lieutenant General and General Governor of Ireland, William Humble (first and last section, *U* 10.1, 10.1176), so this aspect can be taken on trust. But "stately – cross(ed)" might (but does not have to) call up The Stations of the Cross. This is farfetched, I am a far-fetcher by constitution, but later on Mulligan actually quotes from the tenth station: "Mulligan is stripped of his garments" (*U* 1.510, "Jesus is stripped of his garments", Math. 27:28).²³

EM: ...and the Ballad of Joking Jesus...

FS: And we know that Oliver St. John Gogarty, model for Buck Mulligan, did this in real life. When he stumbled home late at night, drunk, in Rutland Square he histrionically exclaimed: "Gogarty falls for the first time", and continued it in the next fall: "Gogarty falls for the second time". And when the noise brought his mother to the door he topped it with "Gogarty meets the afflicted mother!" I have this, as I remember, from what Gogarty's biographer, Ulick O'Connor, once told me long ago, but it may well be written down somewhere. So there seems to be evidence for what starts out as a vague suspicion. Not that you can squeeze State(ly) and Cross(ed) into any translation or should be faulted for not doing so.

EM: ...and for all the biased criticism on Joyce's Catholic imaginary...

FS: And let me go to one further extreme, horrible specimen of compulsive over-reading. While the first sentence, no doubt carefully wrought, is under scrutiny, take that bowl, "on which a mirror and a razor lay crossed". How you *can* cross a mirror is something different, but it shows a certain contrivance at work. Since "Stately" and "crossed" seem to do double duty, what about "lay"? It means, no question, lying there. Yet *it so happens* that "*lay*" is also a word for a non-cleric. *It so happens* that Buck Mulligan is acting out the Holy Mass, blasphemously as a layman. Coincidence (we are back to it) at a lunatic fringe? Some of us become so conditioned that every little item can become a Book of Revelations. That way lays madness. (But we enjoy it...)

EM: Fritz, one thing that you are quite notorious for is your absolute refusal to use the word "pun".

FS: Not absolute! But the term is used indiscriminately. Not every semantic overlay (a neutral way of describing it) is a pun. A pun, in my view (against the blurring of lexical edges) must be a self-contained unit, with an internal connection and something like an explosive force, witty at best. Therefore it can bathetically backfire. But Joyce compacts meaning throughout, in part a matter of economy: this is, after all, what slows down our reading so immensely. So not

²³ *The Holy Bible, King James Version*. New York: Oxford Edition, 1769.; *King James Bible Online*, 2008. Available at: <http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/>.

every confluence of meaning, not every ambiguity or overtone should be classified as pun, for then the term would lose *its* meaning.

The simplest way of describing *FW* is that it is made up of puns, plays on words. I have used such a thumbnail description in my time, and am now repenting of my simplifying earlier ways. In most cases the *Wake* combines, condenses, merges disparate items, often in “portmanteau” words (they are over-stuffed). “The Ondt and the Gracehoper”, for example, is studded with insect overtones (or undercurrents) and with philosophers; hundreds of rivers are echoed in ALP. Two of them flow into a colloquial question: “Yssel that the limmat?” (*FW* 198.13), the Yssel in Belgium and our local Limmat, five minutes away from where we are talking. This conveys a fluvial atmosphere, but there is no significant connection between “limit” and our river. It is a nominal convenience that Joyce exploited. Similarly “schoppinhour” calls up Schopenhauer (*FW* 414.33), but the particular philosopher is just one of several that are scattered over the fable and does not add any significance to a shopping hour – as far as I can see. It is always possible of course that some meaningful relation is still discovered, and then it might qualify.

JW: So that is not really a pun...

FS: Not in my puritan view. Contrast what I just said with what I *would* consider a multilayered pun: “*Hearasay in paradox lust*” (*FW* 263L). Here the various items dynamically interact: there was heresy as well as, perhaps, lust in Paradise, which was thereby lost. Milton’s epic gives it a different twist. Paradox is, originally, what is beside *doxa*, opinion, and also beside dogma. The whole Paradise story may be based on hearsay. Self-reflexive comments on the *Wake* are also at play: it deals with original sin, delights in paradoxes and consists of hearsay. And so on in vigorous proliferation. The whole is a pun and in fact much more than that.

There are borderline cases galore. But I believe in accurate tools, not blurry ones, in our own field. Go back to “a mirror and a razor lay crossed”: Joyce, of course, charges the word “crossed” with supplementary implication, but I would not call this a pun. I once tried to use an *ad hoc* term, “symphoric” for a pervading Joycean device, he carried (*phor*) things together (*sym*).²⁴ A partly realistic novel doubles with an ancient epic, in which there are numerous thematic overlays – wind in “Aeolus”, music in “Sirens”, etc. Nor do I consider a related symphoric use of “crossed” a pun. When Eliza in “The Sisters” reflects, “And then his life was, you might say, crossed” (*D* 17),²⁵ we readers of course pick up an authorial hint, but in the context she does not aim at an effect. If however, some wit at this point in the story were to make the same statement, with appropriate intonation or implied invisible quotation marks, then it might qualify as a pun.

²⁴ SENN, Fritz. Symphoric Joyce. In: CLASSIC JOYCE: PAPERS FROM THE XVI INTERNATIONAL JAMES JOYCE SYMPOSIUM, 14-20 June 1998, Rome. *Joyce Studies in Italy*. Ed. Franca Ruggieri, 1999, p. 69-88.

²⁵ JOYCE, James. *Dubliners*. Ed. Robert Scholes. New York: Viking Press, 1967.

To come back to my strictures, I maintain that a pun must have some autonomous force, often witty, or a clever reduction to essential basics. Any pun uttered is immediately subjected to evaluation – spontaneous laughter or, usually, a depreciative groan.

JW: If you look at the term *paronomasia*, it basically speaks to the coincidence in words of sound and different meanings, and that's basically the dynamic of pun.

FS: There are degrees and there is an extensive grey area in between. Joyce is not teaching us to draw lines. "North Armorica" combines North America and Armorica, and "armour", *paronomasia* or not, and to what degree? The sandwich is not witty or funny, by intention of effect, but may be another triumph of brevity, several birds with the one stone. Joyce is not a waster of stones.

Actually I owe my insight, or allergy, to Harry Rowohlt, a great translator before the Lord (he does Flann O'Brien with aplomb, and takes a rather dim view of Joyce). I once talked in Hamburg; he was in the audience and took me up on what I still think one of the tightest encapsulations of Joyce's essence, "the chaosmos of Alle" (*FW* 118.21). This just shows how bad Joyce's puns are, he judged. And it would be if it were. I never saw this as a pun; it combines the Joycean (and universal) poles of utter confusion and order. Out of Chaos the Kosmos originated, according to Greek mythology. In Joyce you have *chaos* and *kosmos* in overplus, in the extreme in *Finnegans Wake*. What is also significant (for me, I can't vouch for others) is that "chaos" is there complete, but "kosmos" partly occluded by chaos, implied more than expressed. But I don't see it as funny or even pointedly witty, just an ideal condensation – an ultimate formula. So that remark started me thinking and led me at times to interrupt an ongoing session with the axiom: "There are no puns in Joyce!", which of course was more meant to aim at a mild healthy shock. It is corrective, but wrong overstatement.

JW: It's funny; as soon as I hear a speaker say the word "pun" I look for you in the audience...

FS: By the way, it is perhaps revealing that in "Eumaeus" there is a mention of a "nasty sidelight on that side of a person's character", with the addition "no pun intended" (*U* 16.1872). This indeed would not be a pun at the best of times. Odd also that "pun" is rare in *Ulysses*. Once it is a truncated word: "How will you pun? You punish me?" (*U* 11.891). The one real instance is "Chamber music. Could make a kind of pun on that" (11.979), its continuation is in the *Wake*: "shamebred music" (*FW* 164.15). The punster in residence in *Ulysses* is Lenehan; everything for him is grist to his not always inspired mill. He produces a genuine example: "What opera is like a railwayline?... *The Rose of Castile* (*U* 7.588–591) – not a great example of wit, and it accordingly falls flat. On the other hand (there always seem to be other hands in Joyce), the contrived combination of a work of art, here an opera, and a feat of civilization, a railway line, is not essentially different from a novel that promises to refer to an ancient epic but deals with practical modern life.

JW: ...the coincidence, again, of the sound/meaning in the homophonic words...

FS: Any funny effect the perpetrator aims for is lacking, it is a patently forced effort. For translation however, and that brings us back, whether pun, witty or silly, a verbal slip, or a symphoric element, semantic overlay or whatever you call it – the translator is faced with the same task, to find coincidental equivalents.

JW: And Lenehan's riddle is really a very big obstacle to translators: you usually have to come up with a totally different context.

FS: I once looked into this, maybe in the first peep at what *Ulysses* translators had been doing so far, in "Seven Against *Ulysses*".²⁶ The first French version came up with "*L'Étoile du Nord... Les toiles du Nord*" (F/M 132). This moves the opera far North, and, as it happens, a "North Star Hotel" past which Bloom and Stephen walk is actually featured in "Eumaeus" (*U* 16.27) so that an attentive reader might find a connection where none is intended. Since the *Rose of Castile*, echoed in "Sirens", may call up Molly of Spanish descent, the Italian version, based on "*La Rosa di Castiglia*" and made to chime with "*La Rosa casti li ha*" (*I/DA* 185) introduces male chastity (*casti*) it may or may not fit the bill. In fact such coincidences, to stick to the neutral characterization, are bills not to be fitted.

EM: Yes, but then, their possibilities are limited...

FS: Such instances cannot be ignored. Something has to be concocted, because the cases are framed, linked to their settings. In Lenehan's case ideally the right kind of feeble pun would have to be found, a similar failure, anchored in the same context. Such over-determination is generally out of reach, and any somehow workable substitute is to be appreciated.

A similar though different case is the term "smuggling" in *A Portrait* (42).²⁷ This is what boys have been doing, no doubt some slight but seamy sexual misconduct. But, in spite of rummaging in dialect dictionaries, we don't know what exactly is meant. Stephen certainly does not. So how do you find a somewhat uncomfortable word with overtones of pubertal misconduct which, however, is not quite understood, when part of the meaning is that it is not entirely clear?

JW: Fritz, could you comment on your use of the words that are seen by other Joyce critics as theoretical? You have introduced very many terms such as *dislocation*, *provection*... or *shortmind*. How do you see the lexical apparatus that you forged to discuss Joyce's textual singularities? Do you see these terms as theoretical?

²⁶ SENN, Fritz. Seven Against *Ulysses*. *James Joyce Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (Spring 1967), p. 170-193.

²⁷ JOYCE, James. *A Portrait of the Artist As a Young Man*. Ed. Chester G. Anderson. New York: Viking Press, 1964.

FS: They damn well are theoretical in their own way, but without the attendant obfuscation, at least that is what I believe. It is usually when I think that the feature focused on has not yet been noticed. So then a tag is called for, and if I make up that tag I can determine what it is supposed to mean. I think, by the way, that this topic has come up before.²⁸

JW: In forging your definitions, you always work from the classical root...

FS: There's a kind of tradition that you take Latin or Greek composites. Most Latin composite verbs/words are originally local, spatial. I admit I like Greek coinages, also because they consist of known elements. Take "sym-phoric" again: it looks transparent to me, something "brought together". Or I was happy to hit upon that "*eutrapelia*", an existing word that implies a clever ("eu": good) turning or twist ("*trap*", related to *trope*). According to Aristotle, it meant the witty distortion of sayings that clever men could bring off.

JW: ...Molly's character does that a lot...

FS: In her case mainly by ignorance. I mean the Buck Mulligan type. But for the Christian Church, making fun of sacred words is an abomination; the New Testament condemns it along with fornication and filthiness (Ephesians 5:3–4). Buck Mulligan's contortion of "And going forth he [Peter] wept bitterly" to "Going forth he met Butterly" (*U* 1.527) is a case in point. St. Paul would not have approved of it. What is appropriate about the term is the element of turning, "bitterly" is twisted to a non-existent "Butterly" and the whole scene is shifted from sacred scripture to a local triviality. This indeed is fornication, that is to say an illicit verbal copulation. Incidentally, I have not found an adequate translation of "*eutrapelia*" in all the versions of the Bible that I have seen – "obscene jokes, coarse jokes, low jesting" etc., just do not describe the mechanism of some twist. Which could bring us to the question of how much of Sacred Books must contain chancy translations that may or may not have a great impact. Witches have been burnt, I understand, on the basis of an unreliable rendering of an Old Testament word.

Eutrapelia is the live essence of *FW*. "Let erehim ruhmuhrnuhr" (*FW* 17.23) changes Thomas Moore's "Let Erin remember the days of old" (1865, p. 100)²⁹ into a dark rumbling murmur of times past, with a lot of glory [German *Ruhm*] and perhaps "*Uhr*" [clock, time] and "*Ruh*" [rest] thrown in for good measure or as irritant stimuli. Sometimes there is an irreverent slant: "Merryvirgin forbed!" (*FW* 376.35).

"*Eutrapelia*" is a subspecies of (concocted) coincidence. In its nature, it is a translation process.

JW: Not everybody gets it, though... One can't footnote a joke.

²⁸ Most recently, in *Joycean Murmoirs*, p. 154-155 (see footnote n.14 for the book reference).

²⁹ *The Poetical Works of Thomas Moore*. London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1865, 691 p.

FS: Jokes by their nature are not democratic and may fail to reach everybody. Rather leave some who do not get it in the dark than alienate the smart ones by explaining.

EM: By the way, how many of the annotations do you think translations should rely on, and use? If somebody, for instance, re-translates *Ulysses* with the annotations, where would you say the aim is?

FS: Ja, ja, I suppose Joyce may be the first writer, one of the first at any rate, whose works were in need of annotation right away, in the present. Usually it's works that are distant in time (like Aristophanes, Virgil or Dante), or geographically (Chinese poetry) that depend on supportive comments. Stuart Gilbert provided it for *Ulysses* before *Ulysses* could be legally bought. Practically the notes preceded the text.

EM: ...yes, T.S. Eliot provided his own notes to *The Waste Land*...

FS: Joyce only did it on demand, as when he explained his procedure to Frank Budgen or Harriet Weaver. Of course annotation provides ample opportunity for academics, it gives us something to do, I have been annotating all my life and am doing it here. This may be why I have been intolerant or even downright nasty about the *Annotations* we have. The job is a thankless one, what good is offered is taken for granted with a curt nod, but shortcomings, inaccuracies, omissions are criticized relentlessly. I regret some of my harsh remarks on, say, Gifford.³⁰ I know, should know, how tricky the task is, to find the correct information, to gauge how far one should go, to feel when annotation glides into interpretation, etc. At which point should one gloss what, and how? Where would one end and what, in the first place, must be annotated, and for whom? Take Parnell for example: how much of his life or doings should accompany which particular passage? More annotation lies ahead, with new editions thronging the market, once copyright is lifted. Sam Slote, from what I saw, is preparing an edition of *Ulysses* with new annotations, and he seems to settle for a satisfactory compromise.³¹

Translations, to wind it up, not only depend on annotation and glosses: they also tacitly provide it. We must be grateful to them. Just because translation is – on one sublime level – impossible, it must be done. Do I sound like Beckett?

JW, EM: Thank you, Fritz.

³⁰ GIFFORD, Don & SEIDMAN, Robert J. *Ulysses' Annotated: Notes for James Joyce's Ulysses*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989. Review by: SENN, Fritz. *James Joyce Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 3, p. 653-652, Spring 1990.

³¹ JOYCE, James. *Ulysses*. Richmond: Alma Classics, 2012. 880 p.

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