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ANNOTATIONS AND US: THE DIALOGUE OF ANNOTATORS AND TRANSLATORS OF *ULYSSES*

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Abstract: This article reflects on the continuous dialogue between the annotations and the translations of *Ulysses*, in the context of the aut hor's experience of translating *Ulysses* into Turkish and the publication of the Slote, Mamigonian and Turner's *Annotations to James Joyce's Ulysses* in 2022.
Keywords: *Ulysses*; Annotations; Translation; Sam Slote; Marc A; Mamigonian; John Turner; Anne Marie D'Arcy; Fritz Senn

ANOTAÇÕES E NÓS: O DIÁLOGO DE ANOTADORES E TRADUTORES DE ULISSES

Resumo: Este artigo reflete sobre o diálogo contínuo entre as anotações e as traduções de *Ulisses*, no contexto da experiência do autor de traduzir *Ulisses* para o turco e da publicação das Anotações de Slote, Mamigonian e Turner ao *Ulisses* de James Joyce em 2022.
Palavras-chave: James Joyce; *Ulisses*; Anotações; Tradução; Sam Slote; Marc A. Mamigonian; John Turner; Anne Marie D'Arcy; Fritz Senn

Today's translator cannot afford to ignore the wealth of accumulated knowledge on *Ulysses*. After a century of efforts by many annotators and close readers, thousands of obscure or possibly confusing phrases are now explicated in various sources. The annotators and close readers have been in dialogue with each other, correcting each other, diverging or converging in their answers over the decades. Their accumulated work has shaped our current

understanding of Joyce's book. The translators have responded to this dialogue in their target languages: they have included the findings of the annotators in their translations, in turn, they impacted following translations and shaped the understanding of *Ulysses* in other languages.

A contrary theoretical position is possible. One can imagine a translator approaching the text afresh, ignoring all external help. Such an approach could indeed result in an interesting text, and it could bring forward unexpected secondary meanings. Yet, it would receive objections of not transmitting the meaning of the text (and the authorial intent) correctly.

In this article, I will present some thoughts on the relationship between annotations and translations, based on my own experience of translating *Ulysses*, and I will reflect on the effects of the centenary publications in 2022 to this relationship.

The case of S, M and P and other symbolisms: Translators responding to annotation

The fact that certain information is present in the annotations sometimes *forces* the hand of the translators. We feel that have to respond to them. Take the case of the opening of the Gifford/Seidman annotations, which was the standard work for decades (Gifford, 1988). In this book, the text proper begins with explaining the significance of the initial letters of the three main parts of *Ulysses*: S, M, and P. According to the annotation, these letters are not only the initials of Stephen, Molly, and Poldy, but also "the conventional terms used in classical logic to denote the Subject, Middle and Predicate of a syllogism". Additionally, we learn that "(m)edieval pedagogy regarded the sequence S-M-P as the cognitive order of thought and therefore as the order in which the terms should initially be taught" (Gifford 1988, p. 12).

Since these explanations are in a very visible place, even some people who have a fleeting interest in *Ulysses* have heard of them.

They may be the first (and only) thing that they would check in a translation. Compare the importance of using the letters S, M and P in the initials of three words to the translational choices in the remaining quarter of a million words: The fact that the Gifford/Seidman annotations start with this explanation gives a totally unbalanced importance to these three letters.

If a translator decides that these initials are important, there are many solutions possible to start the three parts with these letters (or with these sounds in another script). It is quite a simple task to come up with something that starts with a certain letter. The translator might need to bend the sense of three words, add some words, or play with the word order. The theoretical eye checking the work against Gifford will notice such discrepancies, but still approve it, understanding the translator tried to find a word starting with "S". For example, this should be indeed the reason the first Turkish translation of *Ulysses* (Joyce, 1996) starting with the word "*Sarman"* for "*Stately"*; the current meaning of this word is "ginger cat", the obsolete meaning is "a large animal".

Note that if the translators decide go to down the rabbit-hole of trying to keep the original *letters* in translation, they will face a much more difficult problem at the end of the book. In *Ulysses on the Liffey*, Richard Ellmann notes that *Ulysses* ends with another S, and the first word "Stately" includes the letters of "Yes" in reverse order (Ellmann 1972, p. 162). Should a translator attempt to imitate these properties as well? Since languages often have a very direct equivalent of "yes", it will be very difficult to do something similar with the concluding "yes" that links back to the opening letters of the book. Perhaps the translator will try to find a starting word that links to the letters of "yes" in the target language, but then the opening and closing letter will almost certainly not be "S".

This subject raised many questions for me: Are these letter-level properties really important for translation? Do we know for sure that Joyce intended them? If the initials of the names were important, would "Bloom" or "Leopold" not be a more natural choice than "Poldy"? Considering the subjects of the three parts of

the book, would the order of Stephen-Bloom-Molly not be more logical? (Gifford explains this by "who is preoccupied with whom" in each part). Did the medieval pedagogy really teach the grammatical and logical terms Subject, Middle and Predicate in that order? I can imagine that it is fun to construct *Ulysses* as a classical syllogism in the following form, but is this syllogism really there?

> All Mollies are Poldies
> Stephen is a Molly
> Thus, Stephen is a Poldy

When I faced these questions at the start of my translation, I found it sufficient to see that the 1929 French translation approved by Joyce does not have the S-M-P initials (Joyce, 1995). Even if these initial letters were intended by Joyce, they were not important enough to be translated. This decision left me free to look for words that match the nuances of "Stately" and "Preparatory".

Similar information coming from annotations and interpretative texts lead translators to gestures which would not occur to them if they were unaware of these interpretations. Take the case of multiple meanings of "cross" in *Ulysses*, starting from the opening sentence. In Turkish, there are different words for the different senses of "cross": the word for the geometrical shape is "çapraz", and does not have any theological significance at all. The Christian symbol of a crucifix is "haç", and the instrument of execution is "çarmıh". As a result, in both Turkish translations, we added words or used words in unusual senses in the opening sentence: In my translation the razor lies "haç gibi çaprazlanmış", "crossed like a crucifix", and in Nevzat Erkmen's it lays down in a "haçvari" manner, where "haçvari" is a rare word used for the architectural term "cruciform" (Joyce, 2012, p.9, and Joyce 1996, p. 31).

Similarly, Gifford writes that "ungirdled suggests violation of the priestly vow of chastity" (Gifford, 1988, p. 13). Following Gifford, I chose "uçkuru çözük" for "ungirdled". This fitted nicely, since the literal meaning of this phrase is "ungirdled", and it is also

an expression for forbidden sexual activity in Turkish. It also has a certain strangeness that matches the elevated diction of "ungirdled": "Uçkur" is a kind of rope that would be used in a historical robe. A modern dressing gown would never have an "*uçkur"*, but a "*kuşak"* in Turkish.

These examples—all from the very first line of the book—illustrate the dialogue of the translators and the annotators: We keep responding to what the annotators write.

Sometimes, when the source text is obscure or is in archaic language, what the translator translates is actually the annotation itself. We learn the meanings of colloquial or historical usages of phrases from annotations. Some of these are obscure for the native English reader as well. But a translator, after finding out what is meant by an expression, and looking for an analogous expression in the target language, often ends up in an expression that is transparent to the current reader of the target language. For example, the expression "All for number one" (U 8:39, 8:714, 12.761) may be less common in English, but the Turkish equivalent I have chosen for an idiom denotating selfishness, "Rabbena hep bana" (My god, always to me), is a common one (Joyce, 2012, p. 149, p. 166, p. 329).

Thus, when the difficulty is a rare or historical usage in the source text, we translators may create a text that is easier to read than the original (in effect, we *write* the annotation into the text) by translating it with an equivalent but current usage in the target language. It is fair to say that a translation of *Ulysses* is often a translation of the text *and* the annotations.

Annotations in the centennial

The Ulysses centennial in 2022 has brought two important books to us: *Annotations to James Joyce's Ulysses* by Sam Slote, Marc A. Mamigonian and JohnTurner, and *Ulysses: The Cambridge Centennial Edition* edited by Catherine Flynn (Slote, 2022 and

Joyce, 2022).

The Cambridge Centennial Edition consists of a facsimile of the 1922 text, with the annotations in footnotes and the links to the Gabler line numbers in the margins; the margins also include the emendations to the 1922 text. The book itself and every episode is preceded by introductory essays and supporting material. This book clearly aims to present the contemporary information needed by a student of *Ulysses* in a single volume next to the text itself, with the pointers to the other sources for further reading. The introductory essays provide a fresh overview of how the Joycean community is regarding the book today.

Annotations to James Joyce's Ulysses is aimed at the Joycean community rather than student approaching the text for the first time. It consists of annotations in full detail; at 1403 pages, it is double the size of *Ulysses* itself. The concluding chapters of the book includes paraphrases of the opening and closing of Oxen of The Sun, which were published in their earlier forms as articles in *James Joyce Quarterly* by Marc A. Mamigonian and John Noel Turner.

Both books continue the dialogue I mentioned. They even respond to each other in surprising ways—Slote's introductory essay starts by questioning the veracity of the famous quote of "keeping the professors busy for centuries", whereas the Flynn's introductory essay concludes with this quote (Slote, 2022, p. xvi-xvii, Joyce, 2022, p. 11).

What to include in an annotation is a point of contention. According to Fritz Senn:

> Annotation is in the same category as translation: something essentially inadequate which, at the same time, we cannot do without. It is both necessary and wrong by nature. No one can tell, or decree, what should be annotated, and how, or where to stop. Notes, as is implicit in their name ('what is known'), or comments, have something authoritative about them; someone who knows informs those who do not. Annotation divides a text into two categories, one that needs

> comment and one that does not. Glosses are illuminating, stimulating, superfluous, redundant or intrusive. At which point does which reader need to know what, and where does annotation glide into interpretation? How does one help first-time readers? They are involved in a temporal progress with the text's whole future still hidden away, and I strongly argue against glimpses ahead (*explicatio praecox*). (Senn, 2007, p. 135).

Following these thoughts, the example of S-M-P and "ungirdled" above are arguably *interpretations* given as annotations: The reader can perfectly well understand these words without somebody notifying them about their possible symbolisms. On the other hand, "Introibo ad altare Dei" is not transparent, and it does need translation and reference to the Bible and the liturgy as an annotation.

One significant feature of *Annotations to James Joyce's Ulysses* is that the notes avoid interpretation, and focus on explaining the unfamiliar elements. The source of each note is also given. The book synthesizes the information published by many readers and annotators in many formats over the decades. It is an accretive document of what we know about *Ulysses* in 2022; a gathering of the collective efforts of Joyceans. Of course, in the future, new and better information will be added to this body of knowledge, but it is difficult to imagine how this book can be surpassed. I think it will be the standard reference for many decades to come.

Besides the expected references such as the OED, Partridge and Brewer's dictionaries, there are many contributions from sources like the website *James Joyce Online Notes* (jjon.org) and Vivian Igoe's *Real People of Ulysses*. The contributions of Anne Marie D'Arcy's and Fritz Senn's particularly stood out for me. D'Arcy is the source of many details linked to the history and culture of Ireland and Dublin, and Senn's lifetime work on the philological subtleties of the words and identifying Joyce's sources has informed many notes. For example, we learn the probable identity of the

"French Celt" (U 2.248) and the reason of the end of the world having a Scotch accent (U 8.520) from D'Arcy, and we learn points like "et unam sanctam catholicam…" (U 1.651) is probably sung in Stephen's mind, the probable source of the portrait of "Albert Edward, prince of Wales" (U 2. 266), and the philological subtlety that when Stephen is "bayed about" (U 3.311) he is also surrounded by the Bay of Dublin from Fritz Senn.

The three levels of reality

Annotations explain the reality of *Ulysses* to us in three levels. The first level is the external reality that is referred to in *Ulysses* and fits to the narrative: The Gold Cup race of the day, the actual horse Throwaway, Tom Rochford's patent for the device, the physical reality of Dublin as documented in *Thom's*. Annotations help the readers to understand that these are all part of real life.

The second level is externally verifiable events that are not in line with the text of *Ulysses*: The location the sluice of the Poddle river is not in Wood Quay but in Wellington Quay (U 10.1196); sir John Blackwood *died* in the act of putting on his boots to vote *against* the Union Law (U 2.279); Reuben J Dodd was not Jewish (U 8.1159). Such events lead us to speculation: Perhaps Joyce used artistic license, perhaps he made one of his characters make a mistake, perhaps Joyce himself was mistaken. Such speculations are also annotated and discussed in our common body of knowledge.

One such item is the meter of the word "Ohio". Professor MacHugh declares it a "perfect cretic", "long, short and long" (U 7.367-9). However, in standard pronunciation, it is not a cretic, but the complementary foot: It is short, long, short, thus an amphibrach. For years I believed that this was one of the items Joyce used to poke fun at the confused, drunken banter of the newspaper men (I also found Tom Rochford's machine so ridiculous that I never expected it to be an actual thing; Joyceans have dug out the actual patent). But now we learn from the *Annotations to James Joyce's*

Ulysses, via *James Joyce Online Notes*, that the poem "Ohio, My Ohio" was once set to the melody of "O Tannenbaum", where the word Ohio is indeed sung as a cretic, thus MacHugh might be correct after all: Myles Crawford might be singing the phrase.

The third level is the world of fiction, where the characters and events may still bear links to the real people and events, but clearly fictional: Stephen Dedalus is based on the young Joyce but he is a fictional person, and Leopold and Molly Bloom clearly did not exist. However, since Joyce has given the back stories of the three main characters in great detail, there is now a new cloud of "reality" around this fictional world after a century of studies: We "know" some things in their lives with certainty (for example, dates of birth of Molly and Bloom), and we are not sure about some details (for example, the real rank of Major Tweedy: Was he a sergeant major?)

This last cloud of "reality" is part of our common knowledge of *Ulysses* today. We *know* some things about the life of Blooms and Stephen almost with the certainty as they were real people; we almost *believe* in this reality. Since we Joyceans keep reading about and discussing this reality, it became a part of our life in some sense. It is touching to see this fictional world and the external reality described with the same certainty in consequential entries in the *Annotations to James Joyce's Ulysses*, sometimes even mixed together in the same entry, for example in the entry of Joseph Cuffe (Slote, 2022, p. 190):

> **6.392 Cuffe**
> Joseph Cuffe (1841-1908), with the firm Laurence Cuffe & Sons, sold cattle, corn and wood at 5 Smithfield (Thoms, p. 1844), near the cattle market on the North Circular Road. Bloom worked as a clerk for Cuffe from 1893 to 1894 (17.483-86).

The spirals of the conversation from 1922 to 2022

The earliest translations of *Ulysses* were translated without the help of annotations. It is understandable that those translators had to guess many things. Later translations had the help of the accumulating new information, and they gradually corrected the senses of obscure phrases.

Yet, the initial French translation is an interesting exception (which in itself became a source for the later translations): The translators did not have access to a book of annotations, but they had the help of Joyce himself. For example, I noticed a sentence that was more correct in this translation than the English text for decades. In all editions up to Gabler, U 14.440-14.443 was as follows:

> And would he not accept to die like the rest and pass away? By no means would he and make more shows according as men do with wives which Phenomenon has commanded them to do by the book Law. “U13.440” (Joyce 2022, p. 377.)

> In Gabler this is corrected to:
> And would he not accept to die like the rest and pass away? By no means would he though he must nor would he make more shows according as men do with wives which Phenomenon has commanded them to do by the book Law. (Joyce, 1986)

Thus “and” is deleted after “would he”, and “though he must nor” is inserted. Of the insterted words, “though he must” clarify the ambiguity in “by no means would he”, which is helpful. But the “nor” completely flips the sense of the second phrase: Between 1922 and 1984, Stephen would not accept *and make* more shows; after 1984, Stephen would neither accept, *nor make* more shows.

This “nor” is clearly visible in the Rosenbach Manuscript. Although it was missing in all published English texts up to 1984,

the 1929 French translation has it: "ni faire encore" (Joyce, 1995, p. 447). How did the French translation get it right without the correct source text? When I raised this question in our round table in the James Joyce Symposium of June 2021, Jolanta Wawrzcyka remarked that the translators probably received the correct sense of the phrase from Joyce himself. This is an example of a *translation* that can act as an *annotation*, clarifying and correcting an obscure phrase as a result of a textual error, and helping future translations.

When I was working on my translation between 2008 and 2012, my main references were Gifford/Seidman *Annotations* and Dent's *Colloquial Language in Ulysses*. When the initial version of Slote/Mamigonian/Turner annotations was published as part of the Alma Books *Ulysses* in 2012, I had a slight regret that I could not use them; my translation was already finished and published. Furthermore, I did not have the heart to go through all the annotations again at that time. When the new, expanded version in the form of *Annotations to James Joyce's Ulysses* finally reached my hands, after some trepidation, I found myself reading the whole text with pleasure. It is an interesting mixture of sensations: It involves remembering long-forgotten things, the pleasure of having gotten the senses right, and the confirmation of having looked up the correct source at that time. In some way it is very similar to the repeating *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* reading groups are described by the participants: For us, it is a sort of harmless therapy to go through this web of knowledge and question marks yet once again.

But there is also the worrying side. I have reached page 322 at the time of writing this article, and noted around 25 items where the sense given is different than what I had translated ten years ago. For example, I had interpreted the "public life" in "retire into public life" (U 8. 516) as becoming a public servant after retiring from the parliament (*i.e.* the position of the "Steward of the Chiltern Hundreds"), but now I learn from *Annotations to James Joyce's Ulysses* (again via *James Joyce Online Notes*) that this was a common expression and "into public life" denoted "remaining in or entering the public eye" (Slote, 2022, p. 310).

Extrapolating to 1300 pages of annotation, this gives me an estimation of one hundred potential corrections in my translation to align it fully to "*Annotations to James Joyce's Ulysses"*. Whether or not to perform this revision is a good question to ponder on: If and when we reach a fifth printing of my translation, I might decide to leave the work of more than a decade ago in peace, a record of what I understood based on Dent and Gifford/Seidman, or I might want to update it for the ideal, and very probably non-existent future reader who will check every phrase against *Annotations to James Joyce's Ulysses*, adding one more level to the spiral of the dialogue that started with the 1929 French translation.

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