

JOYCE STUDIES IN ITALY

24

**ONE, NO ONE, AND ONE
HUNDRED THOUSAND
*ULYSSES***

Edited by
Serenella Zanotti

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KALEIDOSCOPIC *ULYSSE(S)*: ASPECTS OF MULTIPLICITY IN TRANSLATION

Joyce's *Ulysses* has been translated into over thirty languages, into some of which multiple times. Much akin to the trajectory of James Joyce's book, recent advances in translation studies theory have shifted the focus from unicity to plurality, through a reassessment of the relationship between original and (re)translation, of the notion of translatorship, and of the importance of translators' archives. Studying the two integral French translations of *Ulysses*, published in 1929 and 2004, alongside their genetic dossiers, I argue that these recent reassessments can be used as a lens to study a process that I suggest calling "kaleidoscopic translation."

The word "kaleidoscope" appears once in *Ulysses*, in "Ithaca," when after comparing Stephen and Bloom's "educational careers" (*U* 17.548), the narrator muses on the array of Bloom's "possible inventions" (*U* 17.563), among which "astronomical kaleidoscopes exhibiting the twelve constellations of the zodiac from Aries to Pisces," "intended for an improved scheme of kindergarten" (*U* 17.569-75). Kaleidoscopes are indeed commonly used for children to "experiment with multiple reflections in mirrors," as stated by an instructions' manual for educators featured on no less than the NASA Education website (National Aeronautics and Space Administration 2000: 23). The instrument is made of a tube containing mirrors as well as pieces of coloured glass or paper, whose reflections produce changing patterns when the tube is rotated. We now seem oddly far from translation. Yet, the combination of various parameters producing prismatic, protean, intricate and sequential images or patterns, composed of the multiplied reflections of a few permanent elements, is very reminiscent of the process of (re)translation. Besides, the kaleidoscope brings to mind the generated images, but also the contraption itself, and the

way it works to produce this specific type of unique, transformative reflections, and therefore the possibility to reconstruct the process of their creation.

Addressing the French translations of *Ulysses* through the lens of “kaleidoscopic translation” means highlighting how multiplicity shapes the corpus as a system, or as a “single and coherent object of study,” as was argued by Patrick O’Neill about the translations of Joyce’s works into multiple languages, which he called “a single polyglot macrotext” (O’Neill 2005: 3). To do so, I will first address the notion of “prismatic translation” as a general framework to approach multiple translations, then I will show how tracking traces of collaboration in the archive exposes a form of dynamic and protean multiplicity of the translated text.

Prismatic translation: (re)translating at different times

In 2019, moving away from the conception of translation as “a channel between one language and another” and assessed according to its so-called faithfulness to the original, Matthew Reynolds put forth the concept of “prismatic translation,” which he defines as follows:

Translation’s dominant metaphor would change: it would no longer be seen as a ‘channel’ between one language and another but rather a ‘prism’. It would be seen as opening up the plural signifying potential of the source text and spreading it into multiple versions, each continuous with the source though different from it, and related to the other versions though different from all them too. (Reynolds 2019: 2–3)

“Prismatic translation” therefore highlights the importance of multiple translations, no longer construed as rival projects, but each actualizing part of the “signifying potential of the source text,” while still retaining a form of uniqueness. As critics, it invites us to consider (re)translations as complementary readings of the source text, and as a result encourages us to focus on producing the productive criticism Antoine Berman wished for in *Pour une critique des traductions: John Donne*. According to Berman’s

methodology, such criticism constitutes the last step of a well-structured translation analysis which, by way of elucidating the underlying translation project, aims at defining a space for potential new attempts at translating (Berman 1994: 96).

In the case of the French translations of *Ulysses*, it was achieved by André Topia's article "Retraduire *Ulysses*: le troisième texte", published in 2004, the very year that saw the publication of the second French integral translation. Topia highlighted the qualities of the 1929 text by Auguste Morel, Stuart Gilbert & Valery Larbaud: their translation, authorized by Joyce, was historically close to the original, and represents an "incredible anatomy" of French as it was spoken in the 1920s (Topia 2004: 134). Yet, because it was written so close to the source text, and despite the participation of the author himself, this first attempt could not benefit from the amount of criticism and knowledge about Joyce's work which the 2004 team of translators working under Jacques Aubert's supervision could not ignore. The second team of translators aimed at producing a new translation "closer to Joyce's text and closer to us" (Aubert et al. 2004: 972), mainly focusing on the letter and aiming at a more modern, polyphonic rendition of Joyce's novel. Both translations represent different moments in the reception of *Ulysses*, and embody very different translation projects, thereby consistently actualizing different potentialities contained within the Joycean text.

The dense "sandwich passage" from "Lestrygonians" is a representative example:

— Tiptop ... Let me see. I'll take a glass of burgundy and ... let me see. Sardines on the shelves. Almost taste them by looking. Sandwich? **Ham and his descendants mustered and bred there.** Potted meats. What is home without Plumtree's potted meat? Incomplete. (*U* 8.740-743. My emphasis.)

— Supérieurement... Voyons. Je prendrai un verre de bourgogne et... voyons.
Sardines sur les rayons. On en mange rien qu'à les regarder. Sandwich? **Toute la famille Cochon emmoutardée chez madame Tartine.**

Viandes de conserve. Qu'est la maison sans les pâtés Prunier?
Incomplète. (Joyce 1995: 193. My emphasis.)

— Impecc... Voyons. Je vais prendre un verre de bourgogne et puis...
voyons voir.

Des sardines sur les étagères. Rien qu'à les voir on a l'impression d'en
manger. Un sandwich ? **Lotte et sa descendance assaisonnées ici et
enfournées dans du pain.** Pâté en boîte. Une maison n'est pas une
maison sans les conserves Plumtree. Il lui manque quelque chose. (Joyce
2004: 217. My emphasis.)

Having entered Davy Byrne's, Bloom is musing about a sandwich and in characteristic Bloomian mental association produces the multilayered and humoristic image "Ham and his descendants mustered and bred there." In a 2010 article dedicated to the French translations of this passage, Scarlett Baron underlined the discrepancy in the treatment of the humoristic line, hinging on the Biblical reference to Genesis character Ham (Baron 2010: 140-42) which, as Fritz Senn pointed out, also intertextually quotes from a comic rhyme by C.C. Bombaugh (Gifford 1988: 179). In 1929, Morel translated it by "toute la famille Cochon emmoutardée chez madame Tartine," which gives the translation a nursery rhyme feel. As it often does, the first translation retains the semantic field of food with the metonymic "Cochon" (*pig*), yet the biblical reference disappears. "Bred" and "mustered" represent no less of a challenge. Morel chose to translate "mustered" by "emmoutardé": Baron interprets the word as "a coinage suggestive of mustardy entrapment" (Baron 2010: 140). Characteristically for the 1929 text, it is also an outdated slang word, meaning "ennuyer, mépriser, se soucier" (*bother/bore, despise, worry*) close to the way the verb "emmerder" is used in colloquial contemporary language¹, and reminiscent of the words "moutarde" (*mustard*) and "moutard," another colloquial word used to refer to a small child (*brat, kid*), here echoing "descendants" alongside "toute la famille" (*the whole family*). The prefix

¹ Languefrancaise.net (2022). 'emmoutarder (définition)'. In *Bob, Dictionnaire de français argotique, populaire et familier*. <https://www.languefrancaise.net/Bob/10806>. Accessed May 20, 2022.

“em-” associated with the word “Tartine,” alludes to the composition of the sandwich—a slice of ham, covered with mustard, gathered between two pieces of bread.

In 2004, “Ham” was turned into “Lotte,” which relates to another Biblical character (Lot) while retaining the spelling of the homophonic French word for monkfish (*lotte*), therefore successfully translating the referential layers of Joyce’s text, although straying a bit away from the food specifics. “Mustered” became “assaisonnées”, *to season, to dress, to spice*, but also *to tell somebody off* in colloquial language, hence playing on the shifts in meaning depending on linguistic register. “Bred” was translated by “enfournées dans du pain”, *stuffed into bread*, which again spells out the sandwich structure. The intertextual reference was unfortunately lost in both translations. Yet, providing different creative solutions, the translations complement each other: the second one is more precise in terms of effect, while the first retains the kind of food Bloom does think about in the original text and thereby adheres more closely to its meaning. Each translation reflects different elements of the Joycean text, and as the variants created in the retranslation process supplement each other, they also prismatically recreate in French a form of multilayering characteristic of the source text.

Kaleidoscopic multiplicity: collaborative *avant-textes*

In the corpus under study, the multiplicity conveyed by the notion of “prismatic translation” is magnified by two separate, yet related and cardinal elements: on the one hand, by the conditions of production of the translations, which are collaborative, and on the other hand, by the study of their *avant-textes*. Collaborative translation studies and genetic translation studies have developed as critical fields over the last decade and exist in their own right. Yet, since delineating the various collaborators’ roles entails a focus on the archeological structure of the translated text, those two areas of study are also interrelated.

In 2015, Anthony Cordingley and Chiara Montini emphasized the kinship existing between translation and genetic criticism, two activities dedicated to the multiplication and destabilization of the source text

through a process of diachronic transformation and reincarnation of sorts: “Like translation, it is in the very nature of genetic criticism to unfinish that which seemed to be finished, to destabilize textual authority by submitting a text to its multiple witnesses and incarnations” (Cordingley and Montini 2015: 15). Within the movement of genetic analysis, as the reconstruction of the translation process progresses, the translated text acquires additional complexity and regains a form of dynamism, previously lost in the stabilization of the final, published version.

The question of textual authority further multiplies when dealing with collaborative translations. In their 2017 introduction to *Collaborative Translation, from the Renaissance to the Digital Age*, Anthony Cordingley and Céline Frigau Manning stated that “all translation is collaboration in the sense that it does not *have* collaboration but rather *is* collaboration” (Cordingley and Frigau Manning 2017: 14), arguing that translations are not only produced within a network yielding an editorial project, a system in which the translator cannot exist independently, but also that a form of embedded authorship applies to translation. This essential form of collaboration, which is characteristic of translation, is further enhanced and layered by actual collective set-ups, when multiple co-translators produce a single target text. In that respect, Cordingley and Frigau Manning contended that

A poetics of collaboration will draw attention to the motivations and social forces that animate collaborative projects and the cultural and political statements they embody. It will elucidate stylistic, rhetorical and technical dimensions to translating that are imperceptible or excluded from a single-translator focus. And it will, finally, expose new materialities of the text. (Cordingley and Frigau Manning 2017: 24)

Through the multiplication of actors and perspectives, collaboration increases the number of potential variants and versions of the target texts, while the modalities of their apparition in the genetic *dossiers* in turn reveal the sociology and organization of the collectives. Besides, collaborative translations inherently foster the production of genetic material, because they require translators to communicate and spell out some of their doubts and suggestions, therefore leaving behind multiple traces for the critic to

investigate. In 2013, Hanne Jansen and Anna Wegener named this layering of embedded and collective authorship in translation “multiple translatorship,” and put forth the notion of “voice” as a major concept to approach collaborative translations from different angles:

From a process-oriented, ‘horizontal’ perspective, multiple translatorship can emphasize how agents interact, negotiate and struggle for influence in the various phases leading up to the translated text. The notion of ‘voice’ here refers to the participants who are “united in the same projects but whose viewpoints might diverge.” From the product-oriented, ‘vertical’ perspective, in contrast, ‘voice’ refers to the traces (or layers) left behind in the translated text by the multiple agents involved, and the object of attention is the translation product and its ‘archeological structure’. From the point of view of authority in multiple translatorship, ‘voice’ connects to issues of shared responsibility for the translation, which can be investigated by adopting a theoretical framework originally developed in the sphere of attribution studies. (Jansen and Wegener 2013: 5)

Looking at collaborative translations through the lens of genetic criticism and pinpointing the marks of each co-translator’s voice amounts to Jansen and Wegener’s “product-oriented perspective”, but might very well also yield results regarding the “process-oriented perspective” and the “point of view of authority”, linked to the conditions of production of the text. Indeed, due to their specific sociologies, collaborative set-ups do not only shape the final translated texts but also shape the archive, while the archive, teeming with variants together with traces of both individual and collective doubt and experimentation, *a posteriori* testifies to the shaping the translations.

Dynamic multiplicity: tracking traces of collaboration in *Ulysse(s)*

The genetic dossiers of the French translations of *Ulysses* illustrate this kaleidoscopic multiplication of the text and multilayering of authority within the translation process, as they reflect back onto the collaborative

aspect of their conditions of production—which makes them a compelling case study. For both of the French translations, the archive features a wealth of documents ranging from edited typescripts to translators’ notes and correspondence, as well as more technical documents linked to the editorial process.² The compared analysis of the number, shape and appearance of typescripts is very telling of the collaborative set-ups and dynamically materializes the transformations of the target texts, as each translation works according to a specific model.

In 1929, the edited typescript mostly bears the marks of three hands, among which Auguste Morel’s and Valery Larbaud’s. The co-translators all worked on the same document, which displays traces of the various stages of translation and works as a palimpsest, between the lines of which the hierarchical organization of the collective can be discerned. The following passage from “Telemachus,” describing the interior of the Martello Tower as Buck Mulligan prepares breakfast, and the corresponding transcription of the typescript may be used as an example:

In the gloomy domed livingroom of the tower Buck Mulligan’s gowned form moved briskly to and fro about the hearth, hiding and revealing its yellow glow. Two shafts of soft daylight fell across the flagged floor from the high barbicans: and at the meeting of their rays a cloud of coalsmoke and fumes of fried grease floated, turning. (*U* 1.313-315)

Dans la chambre commune de la tour, obscure sous sa voûte, la robe de Buck Mulligan ~~se prodiguait~~ <*s’activait*> autour du foyer, éclipant ou révélant sa lueur jaune. Des hautes barbicanes, deux ~~flèches de jour tombaient molles~~ <**javelots de jour adouci tombaient rayant**> le sol dallé, et à l’intersection de leurs ~~rais~~ <**rayons**> une épaisse ~~fumée~~

² The available documents relating to the 1929 version are scattered between France and the US – they can be found within the Berg Collection at the New York Public Library, at the Harry Ransom Centre at the University of Texas at Austin (see Brown 1983), at the Institut Mémoire de l’Édition Contemporaine in Normandy and at the Médiathèque Valery Larbaud in Vichy. Jacques Aubert entrusted his papers regarding the 2004 translation to the Institut des Textes et Manuscrits Modernes in Paris (see Épié 2020).

<vapeur> de charbon et de ~~graisse bouillante~~ <lard frit> flottait avec un lent mouvement giratoire. (Joyce undated, [TEAM]: 16–17)

The edited sections appear crossed-out and followed by interlinear successive corrections (between angle brackets), first by Morel revising his own version of the translation (in italics), as he initially translated Joyce’s whole opus on his own, and then by Valery Larbaud, who proofread the text and proceeded with the last round of corrections (in bold). Joyce had vested his authority into the more experienced translator through what the author called the “Trianon treaty,” and Larbaud therefore felt legitimate to alter Morel and Gilbert’s work, as he aimed for the translation to match his view of what a French *Ulysses* should be.³ Upon comparing the crossing-outs and corrections with the published versions of the same passage, one realizes that the version found in *Commerce* in 1924, co-signed by Morel and Larbaud, is identical to the unedited first layer of typescript text⁴:

Dans la chambre commune de la tour, obscure sous sa voûte, la robe de Buck Mulligan se prodiguait autour du foyer, éclipsant ou révélant sa lueur jaune. Des hautes barbicanes, deux flèches de jour tombaient moelleuses sur le sol dallé, et à l’intersection de leurs rais une épaisse fumée de charbon et de graisse bouillante flottait, virevoltant. (Joyce 1924: 137–38. My emphasis.)

This observation enables us to attribute the corrections and assign the typescript to a later date, making the hypothesis that Morel modified his own text under Stuart Gilbert’s guidance, after he joined the team in 1927 and before Larbaud’s later round of corrections, which the 1929 published version later integrated.

³ About the “Trianon treaty” and Joyce’s role in the translation, see Brown (1983: 40-41) and Rodriguez (2013).

⁴ Except for the differing translation of “turning”, “virevoltant”. The typescript has “avec un lent mouvement giratoire”, which is also the final 1929 published version. This correction might be attributed to Morel again, who was probably responsible for typewriting the Berg Collection typescript.

This passage also bears witness to Larbaud’s controlling role, as the translator included a note on “two shafts of soft daylight”, a fragment “that gave him much to think about”, in a letter he wrote to Joyce in October 1928. It is a rare document featuring multiple variants and giving us a sense of Larbaud’s acute awareness of the implications and effects of the Joycean text:

Javelot for *shaft* (“les deux javelots de jour”). — It can be objected that a “javelot” is too short a thing to stand for the sunbeams in the tower. But the *word* is *long*. “Lances” won’t do, the true equivalent for “shaft” being “trait”; but then “trait” would not be clear in the connection with either “jour” or “lumière” (besides, “traits de lumière” is used only in a moral acception [*sic*]); “trait de soleil” would be nearer to the text, and might be adopted. Still I prefer “javelots de jour” for several reasons: 1/ it is longer (u u – u –), 2/ it is uncommon and arrests the attention, 3/ the alliteration j ... j, gives it more strength, 4/ it seems to me that it suggests the word ‘Apollo’ more than “traits de soleil” would do, tho’ it does it by a roundabout way. (Larbaud 1991: 341–43)⁵

Besides sharing many potential translations that illustrate how genetic material may further diffract the source text, Larbaud paired his observations to Joyce with a dramatic remark on the awful atmosphere reigning among the collaborators: “I know [...] that you are managing the torture of acting as empire between the translators and me. I imposed it upon you; but that was, I think, the only means of having the things well done” (Larbaud 1991: 341). The comment highlights the author’s role in the collective work – answering queries and solving conflicts – but also says a great deal about how badly the collaboration developed, to the point of being elsewhere described as five years of continuous trials and tribulations by publisher Adrienne Monnier (Monnier 1989: 162).

Knowing how things turned out in the 1920s, the 2004 team approached their work differently: all eight translators were supervised by

⁵ Here are backtranslations of the featured variants: *javelot* [javelin]; *lances* [spears]; *trait* [shaft/ray]; *jour* [day/daylight]; *lumière* [light]; *traits de lumière* [ray of light]; *traits de soleil* [rays of sunlight]; *javelots de jour* [javelins of daylight].

Jacques Aubert, whose authority stemmed from his brilliant career as a Joycean scholar. Each co-translator worked on one to four episodes.⁶ They read one another's translations and made suggestions, but ultimately the appointed translator was responsible for their own choices. The team met regularly in Lyon to discuss translation problems and general principles, and further along in the process to harmonize their French versions so as to give a sense of unicity to this new *Ulysse*. This process proved to be much more democratic as well as much more overtly polyphonic, compared to the first hierarchical translation in which Larbaud's voice was heard much louder than the other collaborators', to the point of Morel's name fading away from collective memory in the long reception of the 1929 *Ulysse*.⁷

The Aubert archive is characterized by a profusion of typescripts, comparable to snapshots documenting various stages of the translation process and often bearing the handwriting of different members of the collective. Such a multiplication of typescripts of course mirrors the technological possibilities of the early 21st century, when computers and word processors made it easier to produce, print and duplicate typewritten text, but it also reflects the democratic organization of the translating team. As an example, in its current state, the 2004 genetic dossier includes nine

⁶ The team was composed of Joycean scholars Jacques Aubert ("Telemachus," "Wandering Rocks"), Michel Cusin ("Nestor"), Pascal Bataillard ("Proteus," "Lotus Eaters," "Eumaeus"), Marie-Danièle Vors ("Calypso"), of writers Patrick Drevet ("Hades," "Nausicaa"), Tiphaine Samoyault ("Lestrygonians," "Sirens," "Cyclops," "Penelope"), Sylvie Doizelet ("Scylla & Charybdis"), and of professional translator Bernard Hœpffner ("Æolus," "Circe," "Ithaca").

⁷ Other collaborators were also involved, to a lesser extent and as part of the editorial system, such as the editors and publishers, for instance Adrienne Monnier in the 1920s; or other figures of authority, for example the right-holder, Stephen James Joyce, who opposed some of the choices, or the reader of the *Centre National du Livre*, where Aubert applied for subventions, who made suggestions to the translators in the early 2000s. Aubert's team also worked with other Joycean scholars for punctual clarification. Another form of collaboration lies in the very nature of the retranslation process, embedded within the text with the inclusion of the 1929 translation of "Oxen of the Sun." Episode 14 was only recently retranslated into French by Jean-Paul Auxeméry and published on its own by *Le corridor bleu* in February 2022 (Joyce 2022).

versions of Tiphaine Samoyault’s translation of “Lestrygonians,” among which three featuring suggestions in Jacques Aubert’s hand and one displaying Michel Cusin’s comments. These multiple typescripts prove useful for both attribution and diachronic analyses, and may add depth to our earlier reading of the translations of the sandwich passage.

In the first version she sent to Aubert, Samoyault’s early translation appears quite literal (“le jambon et ses descendants moutardés et tartinés”), yet she identified the wordplay as an obstacle by way of a note between square brackets at the end of the sentence (“Jeu Ham/Cham”), materializing in the typescript a form of dialogism between the translator and herself, as well as her co-translators:

Un sandwich ? Le jambon et ses descendants <**Lotte et sa descendance**> moutardé<e>s et tartiné<e>s ici [Jeu Ham/Cham] ***et les descendants de Ham ?***. Viande en boîte. ***potted meat pourquoi pas « pâté » ? voir série*** Une maison n’est pas une maison sans les conserves Prunier. (Joyce undated, [LETS1b]: 24)

The transcription shows that the 1929 crossing-outs were replaced by interlinear (between angle brackets) and marginal (between asterisks) suggestions and comments. Aubert’s annotations (in bold) teach us that the great find “Lotte” was in fact a suggestion of his, and emphasize the density of multiple translatorship, as he proceeded to diffract the French text, and as a result to superimpose new grammatical gender agreements to the adjectives “*moutardés*” and “*tartinés*,” switched from the masculine to the feminine. The next marginal comment regarding the translation of “potted meat” points towards the question of collective harmonization through Aubert’s indication, “voir série.” Further along in the process, a later version of the translation shows Aubert’s suggestions integrated into the new French text, Samoyault’s bracketed comment gone, and Michel Cusin showing his appreciation with the marginal comment “pas mal” (*not bad*, in italics):

Un sandwich ? Lotte et sa descendance assaisonnées ici et enfournées dans du pain. **pas mal (Ham et ses descendants)** Pâté en boîte. Une

maison n'est pas une maison sans les conserves Prunier. (Joyce undated, [LETS3a]: 25)

This version also bears the traces of a subtler transformation of the adjectives, from the literal “moutardés et tartinés” to the final “assaisonnées [...] et enfournées dans du pain”. Besides, both typescripts feature the translation “Prunier” for “Plumtree”, materializing a collective attempt at domesticating proper nouns, later abandoned and absent from the 2004 published version. In this example, the layering of voices and coexistence of potential solutions, either in translation or comments, manifest the polyphonic, democratic aspect of the 2004 team work, and highlight the kaleidoscopic nature of collaborative translation archives.

At the crossroads between retranslation, collaborative translation and genetic translation studies, the kaleidoscope metaphor enables us to get a better sense of how the French translations of *Ulysses* function as a bilingual system. It calls attention to textual multiplication, through a process of retranslation which seems (at least in the French corpus) to encourage experimentation both textually and in the conditions of production and reception of collaborative translations. Collaboration, in turn, fosters the multiplication of variants and encourages the study of precious genetic material, which kaleidoscopically reveals the potential of the original text and the creativity of translators, by retracing the steps of their work, but also precisely through the variants that remain potential, in the archive. The expansion of such a kaleidoscopic system, inward through genetic investigation, and outward with the ongoing publication of (re)translations into many languages, is virtually endless and promises exciting new reflections of Joyce's novel—starting with Jean-Paul Auxeméry's recent retranslation of episode 14, “Oxen of the Sun,” the newest contribution to our collection of French *Ulysse(s)*.

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