

Translating Baby Tuckoo: Portraits of the Artist as a Very Young Man

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Abstract: *A comparative reading across several different languages of the opening sentences of Joyce's text suggests the possible interpretive implications of a macrotextual Portrait.*

Keywords: *translation effects; transtextual reading; texts and macrotexts.*

The first three sentences of James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) focus on how the strangely named budding artist Stephen Dedalus, who will continue his artistic development in *Ulysses*, acquired one of his earliest names. The present discussion involves an exploration of textual effects generated by what I have elsewhere called a *transtextual* reading, a reading, that is to say, across languages, of competing and complementary translations of those three sentences in a variety of versions and languages. The aim of the exercise is not to pronounce on the merits and demerits of individual translations, but rather to explore how Joyce's original text is extended and ramified by its cumulative translations, growing in the process into a multilingual macrotext.¹

For purposes of comparison, we shall examine three versions each in German, Italian, and Portuguese; two versions each in Dutch, French, Norwegian, Spanish, and Swedish; and single versions in Catalan, Danish, Galician, and Irish. All translations are quoted in full for each of the passages concerned, so that interested readers may test my interpretive comments against their own feeling for the respective languages and consequently for the translated texts. Other readers' reactions may of course very well be quite different from my own, but this is entirely to be expected, since we all, as readers, inevitably bring different backgrounds and inclinations and abilities, linguistic and otherwise, to the texts we read in whatever language, whether our own or another.

Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road and this moocow that was coming down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo....

His father told him that story: his father looked at him through a glass: he had a hairy face.

He was baby tuckoo. (7)

Joyce's narrative portrait of the artist as a young man begins with a very young man indeed. The reader who approaches the text for the first time (in any language) may be mildly disoriented by the first sentence (who is speaking?), before being quickly reoriented by the second ("His father told him that story"). On later readings, we realize that the reorientation is actually rather less than complete, in that the opening sentence is in fact embedded in no fewer than four separate narrative presentations, involving two separate voices and two separate (and different) visions: the narrating voice of Stephen Dedalus's father; the remembered consciousness of the very young Stephen (perhaps only two years old) as listener; the remembering consciousness of the older Stephen; and the voice of the primary narrator, the teller of the telling, who may or may not (for all we know at this point in the story) turn out to be identical with the older Stephen, the artist no longer quite so young a man. (We find out only later, of course, that the protagonist is called Stephen Dedalus; so far there is no hint of his name or his identity, other than that, in this opening sequence, he is a baby – more specifically, "baby tuckoo.")

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, as the title already suggests, and as befits a *Künstlerroman* or novel of artistic development, is a highly self-aware artistic construct. The narrative begins with an ironically self-conscious *mise en abyme*, an incomplete (and ostentatiously fictive) narrative listened to by the very young Stephen; it will conclude almost 300 pages later with another incomplete narrative, the older Stephen's journal of some twenty years later. The opening formula – "Once upon a time" – also makes an immediate and artfully doubled reference – "and a very good time it was" – to the importance of narrative time, an essential armature of any *Künstler* – or *Bildungsroman*. Joyce's *Portrait* opens with the remembered narrating voice of Stephen's father; it will end with Stephen's own voice invoking his "old father, old artificer" to stand him "now and ever in good stead" (253). Stephen's reference, as he prepares to leave home and country and set off to make his way alone and abroad as (he hopes) a writer, is not to father Dedalus of Dublin but to father Daedalus of Greek myth, but it also, and of course ironically, brings us back to the narrating father Dedalus of the first sentence.

[1] *Once upon a time*

Savitsky (French, 1924): Il y avait une fois,
 Savitsky/Aubert (French, 1982): Il était une fois,
 Pavese (Italian, 1933): Nel tempo dei tempi,
 Capodilista (Italian, 1973b): C'era una volta
 Oddera (Italian, 1980): C'era una volta tanto tanto tempo fa
 Alonso (Spanish, 1926): Allá en otros tiempos
 Ingberg (Spanish, 2012): Había una vez en otros tiempos
 Vernet (Catalan, 1967): Al temps que les bèsties parlaven
 Vieira (Portuguese, 1945): Certa vez,
 Margarido (Portuguese, 1960): Era uma vez,
 Pinheiro (Portuguese, 1992): Era uma vez
 Araguas (Galician, 1994): Alá noutros tempos,

Goyert (German, 1926): Vor vielen, vielen Jahren
 Reichert (German, 1972): Es war einmal vor langer Zeit
 Rathjen (German, 2012): Es war einmal zu einer Zeit
 Schuchart (Dutch, 1962): Er was eens
 Franken and Knuth (Dutch, 1972): Eens in langvervlogen tijden
 Atterbom (Swedish, 1921): Det var en gång för länge sen i världen
 Olofsson (Swedish, 1988): Det var en gång i världen
 Brusendorff (Danish, 1941): Der var engang
 Brøgger (Norwegian, 1948): Det var en gang
 Svenkerud (Norwegian, 1993): Det var en gang
 Henry (Irish, 1996): Tan ann

Divergent readings begin already with the opening phrase, as its translators choose either to stay with the unspecified mythical past of Joyce’s ironically quoted “once upon a time” or to historicize that past in domesticating it as merely “many years ago.” The former course is followed by most of the translators, including Savitsky/Aubert’s French “Il était une fois” (literally, “there was once”), Pavese’s Italian “Nel tempo dei tempi” (literally, “in the time of times”), and Alonso’s Spanish “Allá en otros tiempos” (literally, “there in other times”). The latter course is followed most overtly in Oddera’s expansive Italian “una volta tanto tanto tempo fa” (“one time, very very long ago”), Goyert’s German “Vor vielen, vielen Jahren” (“many, many years ago”), Franken and Knuth’s Dutch “eens in langvervlogen tijden” (“once in times long gone”), and Atterbom’s Swedish “för länge sen” (“long ago”). Reichert’s German version combines the two options: “Es war einmal” (“there was once”) “vor langer Zeit” (“a long time ago”), while Rathjen’s German “Es war einmal zu einer Zeit” very closely replicates Joyce’s “Once upon a time.”²² Vernet’s Catalan rendering “Al temps que les bèsties parlaven” (“in the time when the animals could talk”) is a colourful and potentially interesting variation that quickly comes to nothing, for we never discover what the moocow might have said, whether in Catalan or otherwise.

Three versions – Alonso’s and Ingberg’s Spanish versions both with “en otros tiempos,” Araguas’s Galician with “noutros tempos” – make the specific point that these mythical times were “in other times,” times unspecified but far distant both chronologically and experientially, in which things might well have been expected to function quite differently. Some versions interestingly add a suggestion of spatial as well as temporal indefiniteness: the most overt of these are Atterbom’s and Olofsson’s Swedish “i världen” (literally, “in the world”), but Alonso’s Spanish “allá,” Araguas’s Galician “alá,” and Henry’s Irish “ann” all literally mean “there” – Henry’s succinct rendering “tan ann” translating idiomatically as “there was a time,” literally as “time (*tan*) there (*ann*).”

[2] *and a very good time it was*

Savitsky (French, 1924): dans le bon vieux temps,
 Savitsky/Aubert (French, 1982): et c’était une très bonne fois,

Pavese (Italian, 1933): ed erano bei tempi davvero,
 Capodilista (Italian, 1973b): nei bei tempi andati
 Oddera (Italian, 1980): [*phrase omitted*]
 Alonso (Spanish, 1926): (y bien buenos tiempos que eran),
 Ingberg (Spanish, 2012): y buenos tiempos eran
 Vernet (Catalan, 1967): – i que n’eren, de bons, aquells temps! –
 Vieira (Portuguese, 1945): – e que linda vez que isso foi! –
 Margarido (Portuguese, 1960): nos doces tempos de outrora,
 Pinheiro (Portuguese, 1992): e uma vez muito boa mesmo
 Araguas (Galician, 1994): e moi bos que eran,
 Goyert (German, 1926): – war das eine herrliche Zeit –
 Reichert (German, 1972): und das war eine sehr gute Zeit
 Rathjen (German, 2012): und eine sehr gute Zeit war’s
 Schuchart (Dutch, 1962): – en dat was een heerlijke tijd –
 Franken and Knuth (Dutch, 1972): en hoe goed waren die tijden niet
 Atterbom (Swedish, 1921): [*phrase omitted*]
 Olofsson (Swedish, 1988): [*phrase omitted*]
 Brusendorff (Danish, 1941): – og hvor dejligt var alting ikke dengang –
 Brøgger (Norwegian, 1948): – og allting var deilig den gangen –
 Svenkerud (Norwegian, 1993): og en riktig så god gang var det
 Henry (Irish, 1996): agus ba h-an mhaith an tan é

The phrase “and a very good time it was,” while once again merely a standard story-telling formula, also hints already at the element of reconstructive nostalgia in all remembrances of things past, whether of Stephen’s father’s squandered but retrospectively heroicized past or of Stephen’s own impoverished youth, out of which he is portrayed as growing towards man’s (and possibly, but only possibly, also artist’s) estate. Most of our translators are enthusiastically nostalgic: Capodilista’s “bei tempi andati” (“good times past”); Vernet’s “and how good they were, those times!”; Vieira’s “and what a good time it was!”; Franken and Knuth’s “and how good those times were”; Brusendorff’s “and how good everything was in those days”; Henry’s “and it was a very good time.” While most versions, as one would expect, use terms literally meaning “good,” several contribute to a range of connotational variety: Vieira’s Portuguese “linda” (“lovely”), Margarido’s Portuguese “doce” (“sweet”), Goyert’s German “herrlich” and Schuchart’s Dutch “heerlijk” (“splendid”), Brusendorff’s Danish “dejligt” and Brøgger’s Norwegian “deilig” (“lovely”) all ring adjectival changes on just how splendid and splendidly different those other times once were, or need to be imagined as having once been. The idiomatic use of the negative rather than the expected positive, however, in three separate translations – Vernet’s Catalan “n’eren” (literally, “were not”), Franken and Knuth’s Dutch “niet” (“not”) and Brusendorff’s Danish “ikke” (“not”) – to reinforce just how good the good old days really were adds a distinctly wistful note (at least for the non-native reader of those languages) to all such memories of days (mythical or not) long gone beyond recall, thus adding a note unsounded either in Joyce’s English or in any of the other translated versions of it.

Three translations, however (Oddera's, Atterbom's, and Olofsson's), for whatever reason or combination of reasons, refuse to be seduced by sentimental memories of the alleged goodness of the good old days, simply omitting the phrase and the wistfully remembered good old days altogether. The omission is a not insignificant one, not only increasing as it does the pace of the narrative, but also removing a very early proleptic hint, however whimsical, of the comfortably self-indulgent nostalgia of Stephen's father for all things past, including especially the increasingly golden-tinted days of his own indulgently remembered youth and prime.

[3] *there was a moocow coming down along the road*

Savitsky (French, 1924): une vache (*meûh!*) qui descendait le long de la route,
Savitsky/Aubert (French, 1982): une meuh-meuh qui descendait le long de la route,

Pavese (Italian, 1933): c'era una muuucca che veniva giù per la strada

Capodilista (Italian, 1973b): una muuucca che veniva giù per la strada

Oddera (Italian, 1980): una muuuuucca che veniva avanti lungo la strada,

Alonso (Spanish, 1926): había una vez una vaquita (¡mu!) que iba por un caminito.

Ingberg (Spanish, 2012): una vaca-muuu que venía por un caminito

Vernet (Catalan, 1967): hi havia una "muu" que baixava pel camí,

Vieira (Portuguese, 1945): vinha uma vaquinha pela estrada abaixo, fazendo muu!

Margarido (Portuguese, 1960): uma vaca (múu!) que vinha pela estrada abaixo,

Pinheiro (Portuguese, 1992): uma vaquinha-mu que vinha andando pela estrada

Araguas (Galician, 1994): había unha vaca que facía mu baixando pola estrada,

Goyert (German, 1926): kam eine Muhkuh über die Straße,

Reichert (German, 1972): da war eine Muhkuh die kam die Straße herunter gegangen

Rathjen (German, 2012): da kam eine Muhkuh die Straße entlang

Schuchart (Dutch, 1962): een koetje-boe dat door de straat kwam gelopen

Franken and Knuth (Dutch, 1972): kwam er een moekoe door de straat

Atterbom (Swedish, 1921): en kossa-mu, som kom gående nerför vägen,

Olofsson (Swedish, 1988): en kossa-mu som gick vägen fram.

Brusendorff (Danish, 1941): en buhko, der kom spadserende hen ad vejen,

Brøgger (Norwegian, 1948): en kvige som het Bassen, og den kvigen kom gående bortover veien.

Svenkerud (Norwegian, 1993): at en mømø kom gående bortover veien

Henry (Irish, 1996): bhí bó bóbó ag dul síos an ród

The moocow poses little difficulty for some translators, metamorphosing easily enough into a French "meuh-meuh," an Italian "muuuuucca," a Spanish "vaca-muuu," a Portuguese "vaquinha-mu," a German "Muhkuh," a Dutch "koetje-boe" or "moekoe," a Swedish "kossa-mu," a Danish "buhko," a Norwegian "kvige" ("heifer") or "mømø,"

an Irish “bóbó” (literally, “cowcow”). Vernet’s Catalan distances itself from the childish expression “muu” by quotation marks, thereby shifting the focalization from the remembered small boy to the remembering consciousness of the older Stephen or of the narrator. Other translators feel the need to resort to more or less awkward paraphrases, such as Vieira’s “a little cow came down the road, going ‘moo.’” Brusendorff’s Danish moocow, acquiring rather more of a personality than most, comes “spadserende” (“strolling along”) with rather engaging nonchalance. Only Brøgger’s Norwegian cow attains to the unexpected dignity of a personal name, “Bassen,” roughly translatable as “Great Big Thing,” and thus implying a possible threat (playful or otherwise) from the implied perspective of a tiny little boy. Bassen therefore stands out from almost all her fellow moocows, who are characterized as friendly by the use of standardized formulas common in children’s language, such as the soothingly reassuring use of repetition (French “meuh-meuh,” Norwegian “mømø,” Irish “bóbó”) or diminutives (Spanish “vaquita,” Portuguese “vaquinha,” Dutch “koetje”), sometimes in combination with rhyme or near-rhyme (Alonso’s Spanish “vaquita ... caminito,” Vieira’s Portuguese “vinha uma vaquinha”). Bassen, we note, is also one of only two moocows who do not choose to moo, Henry’s Irish “bóbó” being the other, while Svenkerud’s Norwegian “mømø” does double duty as both a moocow and a “moomoo.” Dutch and Danish cows, meanwhile, as it emerges, prefer to go “boe” and “buh” respectively, sounds playfully used in the English-speaking world to cause surprise or fright. Transtextually, therefore, there are still some grounds for doubt as to these multilingual moocows’ collective bonafides.

A letter of 31 January 1931 from John Stanislaus Joyce to his son James, the original Baby Tuckoo, asks: “I wonder do you recollect the old days in Brighton Square, when you were Babie Tuckoo and I used to take you out in the Square and tell you all about the moo-cow that used to come down from the mountain and take little boys across?” (Joyce 1966, 3: 212). The moocow’s motives are left somewhat uncertain: on the one hand it might not necessarily have been a wholly benevolent creature, apparently coming down from the Wicklow mountains to carry off little boys from the genteeler Dublin suburbs for unspecified purposes. As opposed to such a worry, however, Don Gifford notes that versions of this story can still be heard in the west of Ireland, involving a supernatural white cow that “takes children across to an island realm where they are relieved of the petty restraints and dependencies of childhood and magically schooled as heroes before they are returned to their astonished parents and community” (131). Various critics (including Gifford) have also suggested that the moocow can be read as evoking the traditional poetic image of the “silk of the kine” (Irish *síoda na mbó*, the “the most beautiful of cattle”), an allegorical epithet for Ireland that a grown-up Stephen Dedalus, still a would-be artist, will briefly recall twenty-odd years later in *Ulysses* during his stay in the Martello Tower in Sandycove (12). For our present purposes, the degree to which the moocow coming down along the road is thus already a prefiguration of that intellectually stifling Ireland that Stephen will eventually feel compelled to flee is a question that need not detain us here.

[4] *and this moocow that was coming down along the road*

Savitsky (French, 1924): et cette vache qui descendait le long de la route
Savitsky/Aubert (French, 1982): et cette meuh-meuh qui descendait le long de la route

Pavese (Italian, 1933): e questa muuucca che veniva giù per la strada

Capodilista (Italian, 1973b): e questa muuucca che veniva giù per la strada

Oddera (Italian, 1980): e questa muuuuucca che camminava sulla strada

Alonso (Spanish, 1926): Y esta vaquita que iba por un caminito

Ingberg (Spanish, 2012): y esta vaca-muuu que venía por un caminito

Vernet (Catalan, 1967): i aquesta “muu” que baixava pel camí

Vieira (Portuguese, 1945): E essa vaquinha, que vinha pela estrada abaixo fazendo muu!,

Margarido (Portuguese, 1960): e essa vaca que vinha pela estrada abaixo

Pinheiro (Portuguese, 1992): e a vaquinha-mu que vinha andando pela estrada

Araguas (Galician, 1994): e esta vaca que facía mu e baixaba pola estrada

Goyert (German, 1926): und die Muhkuh, die da so über die Straße kam,

Reichert (German, 1972): und diese Muhkuh die da die Straße herunter gegangen kam

Rathjen (German, 2012): und diese Muhkuh die da die Straße entlangkam

Schuchart (Dutch, 1962): en dat koetje-boe dat de straat doorliep

Franken and Knuth (Dutch, 1972): en deze moekoe die zo maar eens door de straat kwam

Atterbom (Swedish, 1921): och på den vägen

Olofsson (Swedish, 1988): Och på den vägen

Brusendorff (Danish, 1941): og denne buhko, som kom spadserende hen ad vejen,

Brøgger (Norwegian, 1948): Og mens Bassen gikk bortover veien,

Svenkerud (Norwegian, 1993): og denne mømøen som kom gående bortover veien

Henry (Irish, 1996): agus do chas an bó bó seo a bhí ag dul síos an ród

A central narrative issue here is the element of repetition, an element not only greatly valued in children’s narrative but one that will become a structuring principle of Joyce’s novel, each of the five chapters of which builds up, however ironically presented, to a climactic moment of triumph for the boy hero – whose exploits, indeed, were recounted in an earlier version of the story under the overtly ironic title *Stephen Hero*. Most of the translators respect and attempt to reproduce the repetition in the description of the moocow here. Oddera, Schuchart, and Franken and Knuth, however, choose to make minor changes to their wording instead, while both Atterbom and Olofsson severely limit the extent of the repetition: the moocow came “down along the road, and on the road” it met the nice little boy. Brøgger observes the repetition, but finds it necessary to begin a new sentence, and uses a subordinating conjunction “mens” (“while”). The nonchalance of Brusendorff’s Danish moocow that came “spadserende” (“strolling

along”) on her first appearance is now matched by the equal nonchalance of Franken and Knuth’s Dutch “moekoe,” who comes along “zo maar” (“casually”) “eens” (“one day”).

[5] met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo....

Savitsky (French, 1924): rencontra un mignon petit garçon qu’on appelait tout-ti-bébé.

Savitsky/Aubert (French, 1982): rencontra un mignon petit garçon nommé bébé-coucouche ...

Pavese (Italian, 1933): incontrò un ragazzino carino detto grembialino...

Capodilista (Italian, 1973b): incontrò un bravo bambino chiamato piumino...

Oddera (Italian, 1980): incontrò un simpatico ragazzino a nome confettino....

Alonso (Spanish, 1926): se encontró un niño muy guapín, al cual le llamaban el nene de la casa...

Ingberg (Spanish, 2012): se encontró con un lindo chiquito llamado bebé caramelo...

Vernet (Catalan, 1967): va trobar un noi tot bufó que li deien el cucut...

Vieira (Portuguese, 1945): encontrou um amor de menino chamado Pequerrucho Fuça-Fuça...”

Margarido (Portuguese, 1960): encontrou um amor de miúdo chamado bebé-petenino.

Pinheiro (Portuguese, 1992): encontrou um garotinho ‘engrachadinho’ chamado Bebê tico-taco.

Araguas (Galician, 1994): atopou un rapazoliño ben guapo a quen dicían o neno da casa...

Goyert (German, 1926): begegnete einem netten, kleinen Jungen, und der hieß Spätzchen ...

Reichert (German, 1972): die traf einen sönen tleinen Tnaben und der hieß Tuckuck-Baby ...

Rathjen (German, 2012): traf ein feines kleinches Jungchen das hieß Baby Tuckuck ...

Schuchart (Dutch, 1962): kwam een aardig jongetje tegen dat broekeman heette...

Franken and Knuth (Dutch, 1972): ontmoette een lief ietepieterig ventje dat baby toekoe heette...

Atterbom (Swedish, 1921): mötte kossa-mu en rar liten gosse, som kallades lilleman...

Olofsson (Swedish, 1988): mötte kossan en snäll liten gosse...

Brusendorff (Danish, 1941): mødte den sødeste, lille dreng, og han hed lille Tuckoo...

Brøgger (Norwegian, 1948): traff den en søt liten gutt som het Tassen....

Svenkerud (Norwegian, 1993): møtte en kjekkanes liten gutt som het Veslekosen...

Henry (Irish, 1996): ar bhuachaillín bhán darbh ainm an báibín tucú ...

“Nicens” is baby talk, in the same stylistic register as “moocow.” That Stephen’s earliest memories as recounted by the narrative voice include scraps of baby language is unsurprising; his later reflections on such specialized uses of language as the distinction between funnels and tundishes might nonetheless suggest that even here the text is to be taken strictly at its word. Several of our translators rise directly to the challenge: Alonso’s “un niñín muy guapín” (for standard Spanish *un niño muy guapo*, “a very nice little boy”), Pinheiro’s “um garotinho ‘engrachadinho,’” Reichert’s “sönen tleinen Tnaben” (for standard German *so einen kleinen Knaben*, “a nice little boy”), Rathjen’s “ein feines kleines Jungchen” (for standard German *ein feines kleines Jungchen*, “a nice little boy”), and Franken and Knuth’s Dutch “ietepieterig ventje,” a “teeny-tiny little boy,” all appear to employ roughly equivalent baby language. Other translations use standard diminutives, such as Pavese’s “ragazzino,” Oddera’s “ragazetto,” or Ingberg’s “chiquito,” or else standard adjectival formulas such as Savitsky’s “un mignon petit garçon” (“a darling little boy”) or Vieira’s Portuguese “um amor de menino” (“a little sweetheart of a boy”). Henry’s Irish moocow idiomatically meets a “buachaillín bán,” literally a “little white boy,” where the adjective *bán* (“white, fair-haired”) conventionally connotes innocence, hope, and youth. Yet others employ rhyme to emphasize the niceness of the nicens little boy: thus in two Italian versions, Pavese’s has the moocow meeting “un ragazzino carino detto grembialino,” Capodilista’s “un bravo bambino chiamato piumino.”

We may note that Pinheiro’s linguistic uneasiness with baby language, as marked by her conservative use of quotation marks in the Portuguese phrase “um garotinho ‘engrachadinho,’” has a significant effect on the perceived focalization of this phrase. Joyce’s English allows for a double focalization, that of the younger *and* that of the older Stephen, with the emphasis clearly on the small boy listening to his father’s story. The element of linguistic reflection involved in the use of quotation marks, however, succeeds in shifting the emphasis decisively towards the older, remembering Stephen rather than the younger, experiencing Stephen. (The same is in principle true, though less forcefully so, of Vernet’s likewise conservative usage in translating the Catalan moocow only in quotation marks as “‘muu.’”)

Joyce’s English, we notice, leaves the name “baby tuckoo” uncapitalized, thus leaving open the possibility that it should be read instead (or also) as a descriptive phrase. Not all our translated versions will follow suit. Whether a name or a description, however, “baby tuckoo” at once evokes the playful threat of being tickled (“tick-oo”), the safety of being tucked into bed, and the cuckoo, a nursery favourite whose song from the cuckoo clock also marks the hours until bedtime. The name, as we may continue to consider it, undergoes an interesting variety of transtextual metamorphoses. Vernet’s baby tuckoo, for example, is transformed holus-bolus into a “cuckoo” (Catalan *cucut*), with any other connotations ignored. Reichert’s German “Tuckuck-Baby,” Rathjen’s German “Baby Tuckuck,” and Franken and Knuth’s Dutch “baby toekoe” have little difficulty in staying close to the original and its evocation of the “cuckoo” (German *Kuckuck*, Dutch

koekoek). Brusendorff's Danish "lille Tuckoo" ("little Tuckoo") and Henry's Irish "báibín tucú" ("baby tuckoo") stay close to Joyce's English, but are unable to do more than hint rather faintly at their respective language's word for "cuckoo" (Danish *gøg*, Irish *cuach*).

Savitsky's French "tout-ti-bébé" retains the "baby" but can only gesture towards "tuckoo" with a baby-language "tout-ti" suggesting something like "darling." Savitsky's version is revised by Aubert to "bébé-coucouche," more ingeniously combining tucking in (*coucher* "to put to bed"), the cuckoo (*coucou*), and the nursery game of peek-a-boo (which is also called *coucou* in French). Alonso's Spanish "nene de la casa" and Araguas's Galician "neno da casa" both literally translate as "baby of the house." The three Portuguese-language translators opt for as many different solutions: Vieira chooses "Pequerrucho Fuça-Fuça," invoking *pequeno* ("little") and *fuças* (colloquially, "face, chops") to produce something like "little baby chubby-chops"; while Margarido's "bebé-petenino," at least to the eye of a non-native reader of Portuguese, combines *petiz* ("little") and *ninar* ("go to sleep") to give something like "little sleepy baby"; and Pinheiro's "Bebê tico-taco" plays, again at least for the foreign eye, on the *tiquetaque* ("tick-tock") of the cuckoo clock to suggest something like "Baby Tick-tock."

Other translations evoke other echoes: in Italian Pavese has "grembialino" ("apron strings"), suggesting something like "Mummy's little baby"; Capodilista has "piumino" (literally, "eiderdown"), thus "soft and cuddly"; while Oddera's Italian "confettino" ("sugar plum") and Ingberg's Spanish "caramelo" ("candy") both suggest a baby sweet enough and good enough to eat. Goyert's German has "Spätzchen" ("little sparrow"), emphasizing fragility and smallness – and, alone of all the translations, also invoking Stephen's later Daedalean (or Icarian) attempts to fly the nets that he believes constrain him. Schuchart's Dutch has a more manly "broekeman" ("young fellow"), where *broek* ("breeches") evokes a small boy "in short pants," Atterbom's Swedish has "lilleman" ("little man"), and Svenkerud's Norwegian has "Veslekosen" ("nice little boy").

Olofsson's Swedish version is the only one to leave the "snäll liten gosse" ("nice little boy") without any name at all. In compensation for this, however, his version is one of four that establish a stronger verbal relationship between "moocow" and "tuckoo" than is immediately apparent in Joyce's English. Brøgger's Norwegian goes its own way by giving "baby tuckoo" the name "Tassen," which not only also connotes smallness, "Tiny Little Boy" or the like, but retrospectively draws attention to the moocow's now corresponding name, the rhyming "Bassen" ("Great Big Thing"). Franken and Knuth, Atterbom, and Olofsson all adopt a more subtle approach to suggest a similar linkage, Franken and Knuth establishing a rhyme between Dutch "moekoe" and "baby toekoe," Atterbom and Olofsson independently providing a similar rhyme between their Swedish "kossa" ("moocow") and "gosse" ("boy"). These four versions, and especially Brøgger's, implicitly strengthening an element of potential threat (or at least mock-threat) already present in Joyce's English, could indeed be said to hold the greatest potential narrative interest of all our translations at this point – for all that in Brøgger's case the translator's

particular strategy will certainly not meet with every reader's (or every translation theorist's) approval.³

[6] *His father told him that story: his father looked at him through a glass: he had a hairy face.*

Savitsky (French, 1924): C'était son père qui lui racontait cette histoire; son père le regardait à travers un morceau de verre; il avait un visage poilu.

Savitsky/Aubert (French, 1982): C'était son père qui lui racontait cette histoire; son père le regardait à travers un verre; il avait un visage poilu.

Pavese (Italian, 1933): Il babbo gli raccontava questa storia: il babbo lo guardava attraverso un monocolo: aveva una faccia pelosa.

Capodilista (Italian, 1973b): Papà gli raccontava questa storia: papà lo guardava attraverso un vetro: aveva una faccia pelosa.

Oddera (Italian, 1980): Questa favola gliela raccontava suo padre; suo padre lo guardava attraverso il vetro del monocolo: aveva una faccia pelosa.

Alonso (Spanish, 1926): Este era el cuento que le contaba su padre. Su padre le miraba a través de un cristal: tenía la cara peluda.

Ingberg (Spanish, 2012): El padre le contaba ese cuento: el padre lo miraba a través de un lente: tenía la cara peluda.

Vernet (Catalan, 1967): El seu pare li explicava aquest conte; el seu pare el mirava a través d'un vidre: i tenia la cara tota peluda.

Vieira (Portuguese, 1945): Essa história contava-lhe o pai, com aquela cara cabeluda, a olhá-lo por entre os óculos.

Margarido (Portuguese, 1960): Era seu pai quem lhe contava esta história; seu pai olhava-o através de um pedaço de vidro; tinha uma cara cabeluda.

Pinheiro (Portuguese, 1992): Seu pai lhe contava aquela história: seu pai olhava para ele através dos óculos; ele tinha um rosto peludo.

Araguas (Galician, 1994): Esa é a historia que lle contaba o seu pai: o seu pai ollábao a través dun monóculo: tiña a cara peluda.

Goyert (German, 1926): Sein Vater erzählte ihm eine Geschichte: sein Vater sah ihn an durch ein Stück Glas: sein Gesicht war ganz behaart.

Reichert (German, 1972): Sein Vater erzählte ihm diese Geschichte: sein Vater sah ihn an durch ein Glas: er hatte Haare im Gesicht.

Rathjen (German, 2012): sein Vater erzählte ihm diese Geschichte: sein Vater kuckte ihn an durch ein Glas: er hatte ein haariges Gesicht.

Schuchart (Dutch, 1962): Zijn vader vertelde hem dat verhaal; zijn vader keek hem aan door een stuk glas; hij had een heleboel haar op zijn gezicht.

Franken and Knuth (Dutch, 1972): Zijn vader vertelde hem dat verhaal: zijn vader keek naar hem door een glas: hij had een harig gezicht.

Atterbom (Swedish, 1921): Hans far berättade den sagan för honom; hans far såg på honom genom ett glas; han hade hår i ansiktet.

Olofsson (Swedish, 1988): Hans far berättade den sagan för honom. Hans far såg på honom genom ett glas. Han hade hår i ansiktet.

Brusendorff (Danish, 1941): Den historie fortalte hans fader ham: hans fader så på ham gennem et glas: han havde hår i hele ansigtet.
 Brøgger (Norwegian, 1948): Hans far fortalte ham den historien. Hans far så på ham gjennom et glass. Han hadde hår i ansiktet.
 Svenkerud (Norwegian, 1993): Det var faren hans som fortalte denne historien. Faren så på ham gjennom et glass. Han hadde fullt av hår i ansiktet.
 Henry (Irish, 1996): D'innis a athair an scéal sin dó: d'fhéach a athair tré ghloine air: bhí éadan gliobach air.

In Joyce's English, the parallelism of the three clauses is emphasized by the somewhat unusual punctuation. Each of the three begins with its subject: "his father," "his father," "he." More than half of our twenty-odd translators echo this childishly simple syntactic structure; but five (Oddera, Alonso, Vieira, Araguas, and Brusendorff) choose to introduce a less childish relative clause instead, and in the process also shift the opening emphasis from the teller to the tale, each translating "That was the story his father told him." Vieira, for his part, chooses to introduce a different relative clause and also to alter the sequence of the three clauses: "That was the story his father told him, with that hairy face of his that looked at him through spectacles."

"His father looked at him through a glass" introduces an early element of uncertainty into the account: the English-speaking reader may be momentarily uncertain as to whether the reference is to a (perhaps broken) piece of glass, a drinking glass, an eyeglass of some kind, or even a mirror – invitingly echoing St Paul's "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face." The previous verse in St Paul reads "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (1 Corinthians 13:11). As always in Joyce's writings, the uncertainty is functional rather than incidental.

Discussing this particular biblical echo, Fritz Senn (105-06) also points out that none of the existing translations of *Portrait* makes a similar gesture towards St Paul – a gesture that implicitly thematizes the difficulty of reading, whether the child Stephen's reading of his father's story or our own reading of Joyce's text, "through a glass, darkly." Roughly half of our translators succeed, however, in reproducing the overall ambiguity at least partially: "a glass" is thus translated by Savitsky/Aubert as "un verre," by Capodilista as "un vetro," by Alonso as "un cristal," by Vernet as "un vidre," by Reichert and by Rathjen as "ein Glas," by Franken and Knuth as "een glas," by Atterbom and Olofsson as "ett glas," and by Brusendorff, Brøgger, and Svenkerud as "et glas," each of which seems to allow either for a drinking glass or an eyeglass.

Four translators choose to reduce the uncertainty, without eliminating it entirely. Savitsky thus has Stephen's father look at him through "un morceau de verre," Margarido likewise through "um pedaço de vidro," Goyert through "ein Stück Glas," and Schuchart through "een stuk glas," in each case, that is, through "a piece of glass," making an eyeglass of some kind more likely than a drinking glass, while retaining some of the uncertainty in the form of the very young child's inability to name the object.

Five others aim to excise the uncertainty altogether, ignoring whether the term employed might be in the vocabulary of a child young enough to be called “baby tuckoo.” Pavese thus has “monocolo,” and Oddera has “attraverso il vetro del monocolo,” a quite unambiguous “through the glass of the monocle.” Araguas opts even more plainly for “a través dun monóculo” (“through a monocle”), as does Ingberg with “a través de un lente” (“through a lens”). The search for clarity does not necessarily always succeed, however: in Portuguese Vieira and Pinheiro both opt for “óculos,” equipping Stephen’s father not with a singular monocle but with plural (and more modern) spectacles.

His father’s “hairy face” also emerges as a good deal hairier in some translations than in others. In Vernet’s Catalan “tenia la cara tota peluda” (“his face was all hairy”), in Brusendorff’s Danish “han havde hår i hele ansigtet” (“he had hair all over his face”), in Schuchart’s Dutch “hij had een heleboel haar op zijn gezicht” (“he had a whole lot of hair on his face”), and Henry’s Irish adjective “gliobach” (“hairy”) even suggests a certain air of unkempt shagginess.

[7] *He was baby tuckoo.*

- Savitsky (French, 1924): Le tout-ti-bébé, c’était lui même.
 Savitsky/Aubert (French, 1982): Bébé-coucouche, c’était lui.
 Pavese (Italian, 1933): Grembialino era lui.
 Capodilista (Italian, 1973b): Lui era piumino.
 Oddera (Italian, 1980): Era lui confettino.
 Alonso (Spanish, 1926): El era el nene de la casa.
 Ingberg (Spanish, 2012): Él era bebé caramelo.
 Vernet (Catalan, 1967): Ell era el ninet de la casa, el cucut.
 Vieira (Portuguese, 1945): Ele era o Pequerrucho Fuça-Fuça que tinha encontrado a vaquinha
 Margarido (Portuguese, 1960): O bebé-petenino era ele próprio.
 Pinheiro (Portuguese, 1992): Ele era um bebê tico-taco.
 Araguas (Galician, 1994): El era o neno da casa.
 Goyert (German, 1926): Spätzchen, das war er selbst.
 Reichert (German, 1972): Er war Tuckuck-Baby.
 Rathjen (German, 2012): Er war Baby Tuckuck.
 Schuchart (Dutch, 1962): Die broekeman was hij.
 Franken and Knuth (Dutch, 1972): Die baby toekoe was hij.
 Atterbom (Swedish, 1921): Han själv var lilleman.
 Olofsson (Swedish, 1988): Själv var han gossen.
 Brusendorff (Danish, 1941): Lille Tuckoo, det var ham selv.
 Brøgger (Norwegian, 1948): Tassen, det var ham selv.
 Svenkerud (Norwegian, 1993): Veslekosen var han selv.
 Henry (Irish, 1996): B’é seisean an báibín tucú.

Joyce’s English once again allows for at least a very momentary element of readerly uncertainty here as to whether the “he” who was baby tuckoo is the same “he”

who had a hairy face. Joyce's calculated laconism evidently troubles his translators, the great majority of whom add some element of emphasis or word order that makes clear the difference. Of the twenty-odd translations, in fact, only seven faithfully reproduce the lack of emphasis: Alonso, Ingberg, Vernet, Pinheiro, Araguas, Reichert, and Rathjen. Olofsson limits himself to "He himself was the boy." Vieira, aiming for clarity at all costs, expansively specifies that "he was the baby tuckoo who had met the moocow."

The macrotextual *Portrait* suggested by our transtextual reading of the first three sentences is thus by and large a considerably disambiguated one, with perceived roughnesses silently evened out in the interests of a smoother reading. There are one or two exceptions: the Norwegian pairing of "Bassen" and "Tassen," for example, definitely introduces possibilities that – legitimately or not – go well beyond Joyce's English. Assessing the overall effect of this particular group of translations, however, it is clear that the text has been simplified, downshifted towards the more reader-friendly end of the range, translators in various languages evidently seeing their task as not just to translate but also, in varying degrees, to *explain* Joyce's text.

What does all this go to show? Multiplicity in unity is one thing that is certainly shown. Some translations simplify, and others complicate. Some explain what must have happened, and some anticipate what is going to happen. Some arguably don't go far enough, and some arguably go too far. We do not really know exactly what "baby tuckoo" means, and some score or more of translators, who are of course no less puzzled, provide almost as many suggestions. Translations in a different selection of languages would undoubtedly have left some of these points unanswered and would equally undoubtedly have offered answers for other points left unanswered by the present selection. Our attempts at a macrotextual reading in one sense simply replicate on a larger scale all the uncertainties and indeterminacies, the shrewd guesses and false moves, the gaps and questions and solutions of the act of reading itself as practised by any individual reader in any individual language. It will nonetheless be clear that the competing and complementary versions cumulatively constitute an extension of Joyce's original text. Since these few sentences, moreover, constitute the opening gambit of the narrative to follow, the implication for the reader (in whatever language) is quite clear from the very beginning: *caveat lector*, let the reader beware.

Notes

- 1 The concept of macrotextuality in this sense was introduced in my book *Fictions of Discourse* (O'Neill 1994: 135-54). Two later books employed a macrotextual approach to Joyce's writings, focused in each case on a series of transtextual readings (O'Neill 2005, 2013).
- 2 My thanks are due to Friedhelm Rathjen for helping me to locate his translation.
- 3 My reading of the Bassen/Tassen pair draws on a linguistic clarification kindly provided by Bjørn Tysdahl.

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