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### Interlingual Morphology and Wakean Topology

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## Interlingual Morphology and *Wakean* Topology

My project focuses on Philippe Sollers and Stephen Heath's French translation of part of the concluding section of James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* to observe how the attempt to approximate Joyce's interlingual morphology in translation contributes to reshaping the text's arrangement of parts. The fact that the morphological relation, the most minute level on which units of meaning in a text relate, has consequences magnified at larger levels of structure forces us to attend to the internal relations of the text in their entirety. As an example of limit literature, *Finnegans Wake* has been taken as an example or inspiration for the theories of figures like Kristeva and Derrida. In much the same way, in defamiliarizing the processes of word formation, the *Wake* compels us to attend to morphology's structuring role in a work. Morphology might thus be understood alongside other conceptualizations of the structure of texts and in relation structuralist theories of language and narrative.

### Space

Lamfadar's arm it has cocoincidences. You mean to see we have been hadding a sound night's sleep? You may so. It is just, it is just about to, it is just about to rolywholyover. Svapnasvap. Of all the stranger things that ever not even in the hundrund and badst pageans of unthowsent and wonst nice or in eddas and oddes bokes of tomb, dyke and hollow to be have happened ! The untireties of livesliving being the one substance of a streamsbecoming. Totalled in toldteld and teldtold in tittle- tell tattle. Why? Because, graced be Gad and all giddy gadgets, in whose words were the beginnings, there are two

signs to turn to, the yest and the ist, the wright side and the wronged side, feeling aslip and wauking up, so an, so farth. Why? On the sourdsite we have the Moskiosk Djinpalast with its twin adjacencies, the bathouse and the bazaar, allahallahallah, and on the sponthesite it is the alcovan and the rosegarden, boony noughty, all puraputhry. (593)

In adapting this passage from *Finnegans Wake*, the translators endeavor to preserve the ambiguity and simultaneity of space. While the sleeper lies in bed, to his right is a “sponthesite,” containing the Italian for “river bank.” This tracing of the geography of the bed names two of the cardinal directions, east and west. Joyce includes “sourd” as well, containing French “sud” for “south,” preserved by the translators. The introduction of “tout au four” also seemingly makes a reference to the four points of the compass. “Sourd” is also “deaf” here, an apparent reference to one of Shem’s many disabilities, enhancing his presence in the chapter suggested already by stuttering before.

The character here is monumentalized after the fashion of Rabelais’ gigantic Gargantua and Pantagruel, a major influence on Joyce. Therefore, in understanding the construction of the text’s space at this moment, Bakhtin’s analysis of Rabelais’ representation of the subject might be taken into account here. Bakhtin argues that the world of the text changes in order to receive this new form of character. The character comes to embody the world, as everything surrounding it is represented on the scale of the human body and furniture of the world molds itself to the body. Bakhtin perceives Rabelais’ interconnectivity to “destroy a habitual picture of the world” with its previous orderly conception in literature (176).

The same phenomenon is the basis for the complexity of the scenes Joyce creates. The appearance of disorder, of “mess” in the composition of Joyce’s works and the finished products

themselves, follows from a recognition of the necessity of complexity in a proper picture of the world. It engenders a process that is fundamental to the composition of the *Wake* consisting in endlessly repeating gestures of transgression that open the possibility for formal innovation and complexity while circulating around an emetic fixation. The tendency to fixation within this “messy” text generates proliferating series of like items in movements of simultaneous contraction and expansion. Bakhtin marks Rabelais’ presentation of various kinds of series assembled on the basis of content, nature, location, etc. Objects in the *Wake* are organized relative to the subject represented as center, as with the above series of locations. The recurrent seriality accumulates significance that defines the presence of objects in the text. Through this process, language “makes a return to the body” (Bakhtin 171). This representation confuses the delineation between body and object.

The individual is defined by the linguistic contours within the text, by a “verbal matrix” frequently in the form of compound words (Bakhtin 176). A simplification is, in one instance, a condensation in the form of the neologism, the portmanteau with its contraction. The nature of morphology’s relationality is complex because it obscures and condenses the relations that constitute it. It is part of the overall loss of matter in the representation of an ambiguous space. A lack of definition allows for the range of distortions necessary to constructing the complicated space of the text. Navigating the complex, extensive, and ambiguous relations as the reader does is a task of significant difficulty. Such a scene might be regarded as instructive inasmuch as the influence of all relations of the text cannot be felt simultaneously. Yet one might say of *Finnegans Wake* all the more what Joseph Frank said of *Ulysses*: that it must be apprehended in its entirety simultaneously (250).

“La,” for instance, is the French “there.” “Cocoincidence” describes a cooccurrence of coincidences. This word quite naturally appears without modification in the French. The ease of transitions such as this is due to English’s indebtedness to French. Another moment which attests to this fact is Joyce’s refiguring of the cardinal directions. “Yest” is “west” and “yesterday.” It would seem to also contain “est” (is) alongside its German counterpart “ist,” which is also “east” in this context (“the yest and the ist”). Thus, “yest”/“est” is the simultaneity of past and present. When Heath and Sollers’ render these words as “l’ouirest” and “l’occidest,” it seems that they both become both east and west. “Occidest” contains the root of “occidental for Western as well as “est” for east, while “ouirest” contains both “ouest” and “est” for west and east, respectively. The *Wake*’s interleaving of various planes is thus apparent in its frequent conflation of space and time.

Some vagueness (to adapt a term used by Graham Fraser) inevitably occurs when the text does not offer itself immediately to translation and compromise is necessary.<sup>1</sup> Specific place names disappear. The town “Leixlip,” oblique though it is in “lucksloop,” disappears in translation. Part of the overall trend of a certain loss of specificity is exhibited by the omission of “Lamfadar” the name of an Irish god, in the phrase “Lamfadar’s arm.” It is replaced by the word “brave,” which is simultaneously “bras” and “brave,” “arm” and “brave,” in an attempt to capture Lamfadar’s relevant quality in the passage. “Fingal” is an instance of a specific location that is preserved, partly for the resonance that any occurrence of “Fin” inevitably has in the chapter; the word may evoke Finnegans’ wife here as “gal.” These moments are much like a later

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<sup>1</sup> In his essay “Haze Sole Certitude’: Beckett's Late Vaguenings,” Graham Fraser introduces to Beckett studies the term “vagueness” to describe the author’s progressive removal of specific details over the course of his work.

phenomenon when the section that Sollers translates is intriguing in this regard for representing a moment when the obscurity of the text suddenly dissipates and the per-page neologism count is cut by approximately two-thirds.

Examining the context of Joyce's work and this translation of it aids in understanding how the two are constructed and, therefore, mutable and subject to a variety of influences. My project focuses on Philippe Sollers and Stephen Heath's French translation of part of the concluding section of James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* with a focus on how Joyce's interlingual morphology -- a pattern of word-formation that accommodates numerous languages -- is approximated in translation. *Finnegans Wake* presents an intricate space within which a translator must negotiate multiple textual layers: the juxtapositions created by composite words, the local relationships of elements, relationships between more distant elements in the text, and intertextual relationships. The text's operation on these multiple planes is largely dependent upon Joyce's puns and portmanteaux. Given the difficulty of conveying these words in translation, it is necessary to rearrange some elements of the text to preserve the work's multidimensionality.

## **Narrative**

The central section of Heath and Sollers's translation picks up at the moment when the aforementioned "dreamer" of *Finnegans Wake* finally awakens. He engages in an interrogation of himself or someone else to ascertain what has occurred, leading us to review some of the events of the preceding narrative. Like any moment of self-referentiality in the *Wake*, this contributes to the work's elaborate internal cohesion. There are remarks on the narrative as a story and dream full of "tholes." It is also a day-dream, the product of an active imagination:

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“all-a-dreams.” “Totalled in toldteld....,” the recounting and summarizing of the story, becomes for the translators “comptinuité” -- the whole contained within the continuous stream of telling. The association of rivers with storytelling in the work warrants the appearance of a storyteller in the French; this may be the river ALP, here spitting into a bowl at the end of her course (“bol...crache”), which resonates with her fluidity in the preceding work. This introduction of a motif in the work sets up the replacement of “diastole” in “dystomy” with “diasteme,” referring to a space between teeth (rather than the previous reference to heartbeat)—for the spitting, it would seem. Then there are mentions of the significant narrative events: a parricide and a corpse restored to life in “Shavarsanjivana” -- rather like the awakening occurring here. Characterizations of the story as possessing “bathos” and being “bazaar” are diminished with “bain et bazar.”

There are several types of transposition that can occur based on the units of the text, including the paragraph, sentence, phrase or idea. The necessity of transposition is familiar to translation as a device which permits by altering the syntax of an original text. The ready receptivity of other portions of the text in the network of relations proffer other locations for the element to settle into. The relations that support the movement with limited distortion are variability in syntax and the composition of the text by a set of recurrent elements. Along with the passage's far-ranging interconnections to the rest of the work, correspondences on the page disappear with the Sollers/Heath translation: “Cocoincidence” no longer connects to “luck” and “apuss apurr,” which anticipates the “dog” in “talk,” disappears along with the dog.

An analysis reveals the space of its relations of not just proximate but distant links in the text. John Bishop amasses a tremendous number of correspondences across *Finnegans Wake* to demonstrate his thesis that Joyce's final work must be “read” in a non-linear fashion. This

reading can help us appreciate the entirety of any text's inner cohesion and the essential role the morphology plays in it as something that also largely passes unacknowledged. McHugh's painstaking line-by-line references are foundational to understanding the *Wake* and noting what a translator is trying to convey or what they may miss, to assess the meaning that references accumulate. These topological factors have their effect on the narrative structure: a crucial but largely unacknowledged influence.

The translation concludes with a passage in which this referentiality dissipates. As Anna Livia Plurabelle merges with her father at the conclusion of the work, there is a moment of sudden clarity. The clarity here may portend the work Joyce allegedly had planned following *Finnegans Wake*, which would be much clearer and more simple, as though resolving the language of the *Wake*. Therefore it suggests a telos of a work that is nonetheless also circular, for the *Wake* famously returns to its beginning with its incomplete concluding sentence. Her disappearing body doesn't accumulate the nodes of compound words like the dreamer above, but inhabits a comparatively simplified space.

## Topology

The topology of the work is the arrangement of its parts. It may be understood in relation to the structures of the text generally. It is gradually constituted in response to an array of factors. Joyce's neologisms play a significant role in supporting the structure, particularly his cross-references to other moments in the *Wake*. The phrase "himother" on page 187, for instance, refers to "l'opposition-transformation constante de Shem et Shaun" in "la derniere section" that Heath translates ("Joyce in Progress" 14). In this regard, it is well worth unpacking Joyce's

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creation of simultaneity through the numerous words and references contained in his language. Joyce's work certainly is highly associative and he is not necessarily driving at a thesis by linking together certain elements. Nonetheless, it is highly valuable to describe how Joyce's references relate to each other, what significance might be derived from their association. It is necessary to trace the meaning that recurring elements accumulate and how their various instances relate to one another, to define the topology of the work.

The text is united by merit of the recurrence of themes, the recurrent rehearsal of scenes, on this level, and yet it is this same factor which permits the outward spread in the sense that . In Heath's view, the structure of *Finnegans Wake* might be described as a spiral that consists in a process of continual return ("Ambiviolences" 45). It is this phenomenon that generates a plurality of contexts, [the levels of the text, which create the effect of simultaneity that Heath analyzes](#). In a text that continually reinforces its internal connections, there is no possibility of isolating a textual element, since each word, phrase, sentence exists in indissoluble relation to others. There are always latent further connections [that constitute the machinery](#) that any meaningful unit of language is. The nature of Joyce's text is that it produces an endless series of interrelations. The connections of the text by their nature do not cease to create relations by achieving a single connection; rather, their possibilities remain for endless interconnection that translators may take advantage of.

The neologisms are formed in puns which are inherently intertextual. They always make reference to something external to their immediate context. The comprehension of this secondary semantic level of the pun depends upon the knowledge of the pun's recipient. This dependence on some extra-contextual knowledge of the recipient is well-suited to Joyce's work which depends upon its reader's ideally prodigious knowledge; indeed, it assumes an extent of

knowledge that is likely beyond any single person to attain. Given the referentiality of puns, the translator, then, is confronted with the question of how much of this aspect of Joyce's work to attempt to represent: how much to assume an effectively "perfect" knowledge of the reader that can recognize the original work's wide array of references (Heath). In *Finnegans Wake*, a very meticulously crafted work, there is a greater than normal quantity of details to which a translator is responsible, and consequently a greater quantity of translation decisions.

The preservation of Joyce's "albas" is premised on the assumption of a kind of lopsided perfect knowledge of the reader that recognizes the Latin "albus." The encyclopedic receptivity expected by the text is not preserved as an absolute, as for Joyce, but supposed to have gradation. This is not quite the ideal reader of Joyce but still a generally intelligent and erudite reader with an adequate lexicon to catch rarities, some foreign words, and compounds. The text assumes a perfect knowledge of the reader to fill in the gap of knowledge produced by the pun. The text, of course, is never held simultaneously in the mind of the reader (as in Joseph Frank's ideal reading) but can be forgotten or fail to be fully understood at points.

The topology as the entirety of its relations is disrupted in this portion cut off from the rest of the text and intended to offer access and initial introduction. Often a reader is alerted to the fact that a reference is being made by the distortion of familiar forms. These convey a hint that there is something beyond the knowledge of the reader; the reader is then aware, at least, of their ignorance, and of the fact that the text is not speaking to them. Indeed, sometimes it is merely the point of a link that the translators hope to convey, dulling the explosive force of a pun as a consequence: Joyce's "ghastern," containing "gestern" (yesterday) and "ghost" becomes "fantomhier," a compound rather than Joyce's portmanteau. The mechanism of word-formation in the *Wake* is irresistibly attracted by cleverness and coincidence of like sounds and ideas. This

invites the question of the extent to which Joyce has control over his text and how much he responds to the appeal of a connection when it presents itself, generating new meaning through convenience and coincidence. The etymological intersection of English and French allows for some ease in coining by the translators which are analogous to Joyce's: Joyce's "litanate" shares a Latin base with the translator's "litaner," while each word takes a verb ending reflecting the monolingual core of the work each belongs to ("-ate" vs. "-er"). The mimicry of grammatical forms here thus proves to be a generative source of coinages in both texts, a way of creating new meanings.

This generativity of rupture points to the fact that topology is a set of relations, juxtapositions, and oppositions. Belonging to this last category are Joyce's auto-antonyms (a word or phrase contradicting itself) or oxymorons, some of which are lost in the French in this section. Joyce's "badst," for instance, reads to me as both "baddest" and "best." With both realities possessing equal status, a reader is made to maintain them simultaneously in her head rather than resolve the contradiction. Pursuant with the mechanisms of the text they work on, the translators create their own auto-antonyms as well: the word "rut," along which we move in the translation, is both "route" (road) and "rut." Similarly, Joyce's "untireties" appears to possess the unity and singularity of "un," echoing "unthowsent" above, employs the French for "one." Its plurality possibly suggests "entities;" "un" likely negates the word. Heath and Sollers use "entieretes" --entiretes -- approximately reflecting the ideas above.

The intersection of elements in the text is an intersection and alignment of cultures; the interlingual quality of Joyce's text rendered in translation further complicates the space of textual relations. Amidst this space of the text, Joyce's work could be said to inhabit the spaces between cultures; it is a work which aligns them on the basis of the latent links that hold them in common.

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The *Wake* links cultures through referentiality and intertextuality; through translation these elements are then subsumed into another culture with an alternate linguistic core.

## Context

In his book *French Joyce*, Georg Lernout presents attempts at approximating the *Wake* in French translation, alongside accounts of those attempts' reception and the cultural influences that defined the climate in which they arrived. *Tel Quel* was a product of the lively intellectual culture that France was host to in the second half of the century, and Joyce's work dominated the journal throughout its history. Nonetheless, Lernout says engagements with Joyce were relatively scattered and superficial until the mid-70's. Lernout opines that Stephen Heath's 1972 essay "Ambiviolences" introduces the first proper extended "*telquelian* reading of Joyce" (Lernout 123). Indeed, as Heath says in the English translation of the piece, "Written at the prompting of Philippe Sollers...It was intended to serve as something of an introductory approach to Joyce for *Tel Quel* at the time and is marked by that context throughout" ("Ambiviolences" 31). It is at this moment, then, when Joyce rises most prominently to the forefront of the journal, that Derrida was excised from it. The translation is a site of tension in the journal leading up to a break from Derrida that would be finalized two issues later (following another Joyce-centered issue) with essays critical of the thinkers (*Tel Quel* 56).

These issues are central to how Heath's preface sets up his translation to serve as a site of ideological struggle. As Lernout observes, Joyce featured prominently in the journal throughout the phases of *Tel Quel* in all of its various ideological shifts. This particular translation is the site

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of a momentous shift in the journal at a divide within French theory between Derrida and Lacan at a time after the former had recently written a letter condemning the latter.

In an earlier essay in *Tel Quel*, "Ambiviolences," Heath includes an exposition of Derrida's concept of *différance*. Lernout consequently speculates, in a passing manner, that the substitution of Lacan for Derrida in *Tel Quel* anticipates a burgeoning rift that would be finalized with an essay in the journal two issues later. (125) Meanwhile, Kristeva's intertextuality is imported from the original essay into the preface that he gives to his translation. Kristeva's seminal *Revolutions in Poetic Language* was to be published two years later in 1974, a work containing much of her linguistic theory; an excerpt from the work appeared in the next issue of *Tel Quel*, potently suggesting the context in which Heath wrote. Three years previous, Kristeva gave her clearest articulation of intertextuality, a concept which is referenced by Stephen Heath with regards to "des rapports intertextuels de pastiche, de citation, de plagiat, de contrefaçon" in Joyce ("Joyce in Progress" 5). In his preface preceding the translation, Heath excoriates the previous standard translation by Andre de Bouchet for its inattention to Joyce's intertextuality (indeed, across the history of *Wake* translation, this emerges as perhaps the greatest difficulty confronting a translator of the *Wake*). In "Ambiviolences," Heath also claims that by drawing attention to the multitude of perspectives through which we view the world in place of a single common-sense view, context becomes intertext in the *Wake* (Ambiviolences 39).

Two issues after it, Derrida was excised from the journal in an essay written by Sollers. The reliance on Derrida is replaced by a compensatory reliance on Lacan. Heath references Lacan's "Moebius strip" in describing how writing produces "une representation topologique" (14). To fully understand the implications that this construction of space has, it is worth unpacking Heath's analyses of Joyce's creation of simultaneity through the numerous references

contained in his language (Heath 9). Heath observes a number of thematic correspondences apparent in Joyce's word choices throughout the section he translates:

Il faut donc que le texte se cherche dans cette enigme, lui-même sorte de pantomime de flux et de reflux; fleuve, fleuve de mère, merde; mer d'sens; langage coulé, découlé – “the languo of flows” (621); échanges de son/sens (“the sound sense sympol”, (612), écoute optique (“aural eyeness”, 623), langue déliée...”unglish”, 609). (14)

Thus, as this litany makes clear, the *Wake* comments on several related aspects of its own language, particularly its fluidity. Yet an analysis that sought to assess the accumulating effect of the *Wake*'s topology might assess the relationship between the listed elements.

I argue that these momentary references in Heath's essays take oversize roles in shaping his overall conceptualization of the passage, as exhibited by translation choices. We can therefore see how the translation acts as an intervention on behalf of an ideology and how the text is shaped and reconstituted by ideology. Ideology is one of a set of interconnected planes, interoperating systems, in a text, alongside cultural, historical, narrative, linguistic dimensions. Here I reflect back on my previous considerations through translation theory in considering how a translation sensitizes us to this fact. This capacious work that the *Wake* is, continually incorporates new material as an open system whose operating principles are reconfigured by the translators of the *Tel Quel* piece.

The intertextuality of the *Wake* in the *Tel Quel* piece comes through authors who themselves bear an intertextual relationship to the work. Indeed, Derrida claims the *Wake* as having a formative role in his thought; though he directly references it relatively infrequently, it is a text which for him is working continually in the background. The *Tel Quel* translation is a moment at which Derrida's thought might have reciprocally shaped the text that shaped it, and so

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becomes a dropped connection, as it were (in the terms of Derrida's metaphor of the telephone in "Hear Joyce Say Yes"), when Heath excises him from his essay. But one might trace the residue of his thought in the translation, the outline of his conspicuous absence.

As an example of limit literature (literature that realizes the bounds of what is possible in a given medium), *Finnegans Wake* has been taken as an example or inspiration for the theories of figures like Kristeva and Derrida. In much the same way, in defamiliarizing the processes of word formation, the *Wake* compels us to attend to morphology's structuring role in a work. Morphology might thus be understood alongside other structuralist and poststructuralist theories of language and narrative.

## Language

The concept of *différance* is a natural extension of intertextuality, as both set for a concept of texts as inherently unstable. In contrast, the possibility of grammar for the *Wake* is premised on the supposition that word-formation functions in a consistent manner. The base of a work's topology is grammatical structure, which operates largely undetected as evinced by its neglect by these authors; I attend particularly to how morphology plays a structuring role in texts. With particular attention to the narrative relations, I will consider how novel morphological constructions shape the unique non-linear structure of *Finnegans Wake* and how translational choices to adapt Joyce's morphology reshape it. Joyce's work is noteworthy for its experimentation with language and lexical diversity, inventing an estimated 50,000 words and possessing 500,000 different words, which draw from over sixty languages and over 64,000 morphemes.

The non-linearity of the work is at one with the loss of a systematic conception of language. As Yee argues that, with *Finnegans Wake*, it is apparent that Joyce's work reflects an abandonment of a systematic conception of language in the sense that it makes no reference to external reality, its form instead becoming its meaning (Yee 85). Joyce no longer reflects a systematic conception in any respect; there is one respect especially in which it could be understood to no longer be systematic (Yee 85). The work's relation to music as well precludes the notion of an external reference since music is pure abstraction. Language's lack of a definite tie to reality is reflected by its continual change in the course of its development; in this way it is related to time, like the *nebeneinander* quality of music. The units of language are locked in complex interrelationships which continually change over time in relation to one another. These units of language themselves act out the stages of gradual evolution in their interrelationships; Joyce's work would seem to be acting out the flux, and his language thus must shift at expense of comprehensibility.

Fundamental to the process of transformation of the language is the disassembly of words into units of syllables, which then can recombine freely, serving for various meanings (Yee 145). The system of grammar is thus exchanged for a process of "syllabification," whereby individual syllables function morphologically as formatives, serving as the units of meaning that make up words. Syllables thereby present forms "for content to fill" (145). Syllabification is the basis of distortions and puns, prolific word building devices in the novel, as in the cases of "reduplication" and "alternation of initial consonant:" "missymissy" and "jellybelly," respectively. They aid in Joyce's broad sampling of languages, taking advantage of the fact that all languages make use of a common set of small units of meaning. The pun draws together language by juxtaposition and creates an overdetermination of meaning through redundancy. It

freely and creatively associates, extending morphological processes already at work in language. Like dreams, it condenses and displaces meaning. By these means, the work is creating multiple simultaneous realities. In a similar way, Heath observes that Joyce creates a “soundscrip” consisting in “ceaseless confrontation of writing and speech in which reference is involved in a tourniquet between the two, thus defining yet another strategy of hesitation,” creating a “plurality outside of any context” (“Ambiviolences” 58).

This raises the related issue of nonsense, the vacuity of meaningfulness of a word or a sentence. Of course, as any guide to the *Wake* will attest, the work is not nonsense, but might be mistaken for it in its initial inscrutability. As Senn observes, any sentence can be sensical within the proper context; the context of the *Wake* provides it non-sensences with sense, such that to this extent their meaning is defined relationally. A sentence that makes sense within the context of the work may be nonsensical when taken on its own; but to the extent that the work invents its own language and logic it must be grasped in its totality. Translation intervenes in this replacement of a chain of signifiers, the endless chain, by tying a word in a text to a novel word in another language with the entirety of its relations. The series of relations generates a multiplication of semantic possibilities. This is the case for both Derrida and Kristeva, who draw attention to the generativity of *différance*.

## **Translation**

Translation reflects back on the relationship between morphology and topology by the manner in which it intervenes in the place of a text's already unstable meaning. Within it, the effect that morphology has on topology is made conspicuous in the effect of a translator's decisions.

*Finnegans Wake* is an independent and hermetic system, a hermetic system wherein the content absorbed by it obtains the novel meaning endowed by the novel textual context. Likewise, a translator's intervention entails the production of a new system whose meaning is constituted by the totality of relations within the new text. Senn observes that a translator must balance numerous concerns such as factual concerns, idiomatic interpretations, and hindrances to conveying semantic, morphological, and cultural elements (Senn 29).

The inclusion of French phrases already in the passage translated by Heath and Sollers (such as "la" for "there") justifies Fritz Senn's remark that Joyce's work is "already translation" (89) given the polyphony of language styles that the work subsumes. We might consider the implications, therefore, when Joyce uses the word "goute" for taste in French. The similarity of this word to that for "drop" ("goutte") connects it to the drops of the previous sentence (text). Heath/Sollers' "goutte/goute" makes this connection all the more explicit and reinforces the link between the sentences. The translators also take advantage of similarities in spelling to introduce additional links. "Chaffer," meaning "barter," creates the possibility for the translators' "chauffees," or "heated," which captures the earlier "heat" in Joyce's original sentence.

The translators often strive to preserve original English words to remain close to the original work, reflecting its monolingual nature. For a "sound night's sleep" they use "prosonde" as "deep" as well as a partial representation of "sound." "Papages" makes use of the word in "pageans" that French has in common with English. The word adds an apparent stutter (pa) that echoes that in "cocoidences," but gets rid of "pagans." Mainly the authors do not introduce interlingual words, however, and either preserve without modification or omit completely any non-English or non-French words. The Sanskrit word "antar" as "between or among" remains in the text. It is noteworthy that this secondary semantic level of the word does not make

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grammatical sense in its context, as is often the case with Joyce's punning. However, the pun on the word "altar" is clear enough from context. In one instance, the translators even introduce their own Sanskrit word, Mallah, in "mallah-reves." This word that is "all-a-dreams" in the original text thus becomes "nightmare," or "malreve." In Hinduism, Mallah are the boatmen that appear in Ramayana, complementing the river that the translators also introduce.

The translators are less apt to mimic Joyce's grammatical violations, however, particularly with respect to French morphological rules, and so reenter the constraints of grammar or do not bend language as fully as it might permit. Heath and Sollers sometimes use circumlocutions and hyphenated phrases (instances, text). Their neologisms are usually relatively simple compared to Joyce's, combining generally no more than two elements and following patterns of compounding rather than the radical abridgment and rearrangement of letters that occurs in portmanteaux. For instance, "oubworn" is "born outside" (as well as "worn out"). The translator's less radical "hors-naissance" implements a conventional form of French prefixation. The translators generally abide by more general French grammar rules as well. When Joyce invents "hadding" as a continuous past tense, the translators simply use a passé composé form, "avons été."

Lernout charts a history of these audacious attempts at Joyce translations and how various translators have grappled with the difficulty and polyglot quality of the work as well as the receptions and backstories of these translations. The prospect of translating *Finnegans Wake*, in particular, has been plagued by doubts only overcome by the heroic and obsessive commitment of a handful of individuals. The work is useful, therefore, for assembling translation philosophies of Joyce and demonstrating how they have been applied in numerous languages. Of particular interest to me, as well are O'Neill's accounts of the French translations. His title,

*Fictions of Translation*, contains the belief, held in common with Senn and others, that satisfactory translation (of Joyce) is a fiction, but may be a worthwhile enterprise nonetheless (3-5).

Costanzo, in his article, describes Joyce's most direct participation in a translation of the *Wake*. He would point out difficulties and his collaborators would then suggest an alternative, striving as they did so to preserve the "rhythm, meaning, or word-metamorphosis" (226). Costanzo claims that the difficulty conveying some passages in translation forced Joyce to clearly lay out his intentions for them (226). In the opposition the translators faced, French was "guarded" due to its rigid rules deriving directly from Latin rhetoric, in contrast to the variation that English allowed Joyce due to its parentage by many languages. As Beckett says, "English is abstracted to death, but Joyce makes it less sophisticated." (227). The target language did not allow Joyce quite the range of acrobatic feats in the original text, but he and those he collaborated with found approximations as well as new ways to experiment.<sup>2</sup> As the morphology of French does not have the same malleability as English, the pun created the greatest challenge and a translator dealing with had to negotiate the basic preservation of the story as a whole, while inserting new or analogous references. But the fact of a pun was regarded as more important than conveying a particular meaning (229). Moreover, Costanzo observes that Joyce circumvented this problem by treating groups of words "as single units" (232).

Joyce advised a large effort to translate a section *Finnegans Wake*, headed by Samuel Beckett. In a later attempt at French translation, Bouchet wrote against this translation's failure to properly manipulate the target language in a manner analogous to the *Wake*. His own

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<sup>2</sup> Costanzo gives the names of the collaborators as Philippe Soupalt, Paul Leon, Eugene Jolas, Ivan Goll, and Samuel Beckett.

rendering of a section of the *Wake* set the standard for all later attempts. Bouchet was the standard French introduction to the *Wake* for being the most sustained attempt at a translation into the language. In crafting their own translation, Heath and Sollers were highly critical of Bouchet (Heath 5).

Joyce's translation might be regarded as a foil to that of Heath/Sollers, as a transformation of the text (more) closely aligned with the author's intentions. Beckett, who had earlier championed Joyce in a famous essay, was charged with the translation of this section of *Finnegans Wake*. Though it was never finished, it exhibits certain translation choices informed by Joyce, providing a view into what Joyce felt a translation should transmit from the original (Costanza 234).

The translators confront the question of what among the many aspects of Joyce's work to preserve its original sense (Costanza 234). The translators conceived of their work violently, finding they must recreate "the French language in the image of Joyce's original" (234). In this way, the translation serves as a test of how much the *Wake* presents a method that can be taken up by someone else, evoking Joyce's attempt to pass the writing of the *Wake* off to James Stephens.<sup>3</sup> A translator must try to write as author with the same faculties as the author, cultivating a general instinct for responding in a manner suited to any given purpose. It is to this end that the translator aspires to realize a complete identification with the author to achieve a "reconstitution," as Costanzo quotes a translator saying. Costanzo comments, "What Joyce and his collaborators began amounts to nothing less than a re-creation of the French language in the image of Joyce's original dream" (235). Nonetheless, at a point the ideology informing a

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<sup>3</sup> It is well-known that when Joyce was going increasingly blind during the writing of *Finnegans Wake*, he attempted to pass his writing off to his friend James Stephens because his name contained Joyce's first name and that of his protagonist.

translation will come up against the reality of its execution. With regards to the treatment of groups of words as single units, for example, Costanzo says, "Neither du Bouchet nor Joyce exploits this technique to its fullest extent, but it is clear that any future translations will have to take it into account and develop it further." In a similar way, Heath's avowed intention to form a new text through his translation contrasts with his relative fidelity; yet this ideal is taken much further by Philippe Lavergne's later endeavor.

Writing in a dream language as the translators do, they can leave everyday confinements and associate freely, finding new combinations denied by sense but exposing a certain underlying logic and hidden affinity among things. A translator in such a position may be justified in taking certain liberties. However, these may become excessive, as with the later Bouchet who omits entire sentences and changes the character HCE entirely, altering even his initials (Costanzo 234).

Each translational choice is a compromise among numerous concerns. For instance - "archly" does not merely mean like an arch, yet the word "arch" has an echo in *Ulysses*. The biblical allusion of "whorled without aimed" ("world without end") cannot be easily maintained with the phrase's primary semantic level. One such word at the intersection of the concerns Senn describes is "Womb" in *Ulysses* rendered variously as "matrice, les limbes;" "occasional paraphrase speculations range for midwives via Naval chords to Eve to belly without blemish and onto womb of sin" (25). The unity of these phrases is not wholly intact once the word womb is removed from play, and the translator resorts to an artifice to variously suggest all these meanings and associations when they are relevant (Senn 25). The translated term in Senn's example is removed from the play of relations and references which are dependent upon the separation of signifier and signified.

In the process of transforming the text, modifying its anti-systematic morphological structure, translation sensitizes us to the structure of the *Wake*. Senn asserts that every word in a text is affected and changed by a translation. As he goes on to observe, the success of translation rests on the presumption that form can be separated from content -- yet form and content become one in Joyce. Form and content become one when the work takes form as its content.

## Conclusion

A translator of *Finnegans Wake* thus must discover the latent potential in his own language for the range of morphological deviations that Joyce produces. The fundamental malleability of the work's language allows for its expansive and intricate textual space. But, as has often been the case, the lessons to be learned from Joyce's work are not merely restricted to it. Rather, in laying bare the *Wake*'s operation, a translation demonstrates the enduring importance of sensitivity to the total network of meaning that the text is and the potent connectivity of each of its moments.

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