

# Joyce's Deplurabel Muttertongues

Re-examining the Multilingualism of  
*Finnegans Wake*

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## Abstract

The multilingualism of *Finnegans Wake* has been widely regarded as a feature that makes the text difficult and perplexing, and even inessential to some readers and translators who have chosen to iron it out of their plot summaries and translations. Because the work has a reputation for impenetrability and inaccessibility that at times borders on discursive incoherence, its political value has chiefly been related to its rebellion against linguistic order—specifically the structural, historical, and ideological rule of the British Empire’s primary language, English—rather than its capacity for literary pleasure, inclusivity, and illumination. This project critically complicates established assessments of Joycean multilingualism and develops innovative transdisciplinary approaches to the *Wake*’s multilingual design in an effort to do scholarly, creative, as well as ethical, justice to the text itself as well as its variously diverse global readership.

Chapters 1 and 2 explore the stylistic particularities of the *Wake*’s multilingual design from the perspective of linguistics and second-language acquisition. These chapters engage with the poetic materiality of *Wake* and explore the role of readers’ diverse and variable accents, creative choices, multilingual repertoires, and overall cultural, subjective, and bodily singularities in the text’s capacity to generate multiple semantic and narrative layers. Chapter 1 tests the various material aspects of *Wakean* multilingualism, including but not limited to phonology, considering the various creative effects of embodied readerly engagement with it. It demonstrates that multilingualism is not only a tool for productive linguistic estrangement but also enables a peculiarly intimate access into the language of Joyce’s text. Chapter 2 focuses more specifically on the *Wake*’s multivalent stylistic uses of inter- and intralingual phonologies, beginning with an exploration of the soundscapes, phonotactics, and cultural signifiers of different languages, such as Russian, Swahili, German, and Irish English, and moving onto the book’s internal, fictionalised multilingual system of sound-symbolism, materialised through phonological patterning and the “phonological signatures” of archetypal characters such as ALP and Issy.

While the first two chapters explore how the multilingual text operates across different reading spaces and bodies, chapter 3 looks at how translators engage with it in their capacity as readers and (re)writers. I discuss how *Wakean* multilingualism challenges assimilative and corrective methods of translation and how the act of linguistic transfer inevitably triggers a cultural and material transformation as well. My case studies in this chapter are the two most important Russian translations of the *Wake*, which are virtually unknown in Anglophone Joyce scholarship. I place the Russian translations in a Western scholarly context, assessing their translatorial methodologies in relation to other important projects of *Wake* translation and exploring how they handle its multilingual design, considering the particular effects of transposing the text not only from an Anglophone to a Russophone linguistic and cultural space but also from Roman into Cyrillic script.

Finally, in chapter 4, I argue that the *Wake*’s multilingualism, as a performative literary manifestation and invitation to difference, variability, and changeability, makes it an intrinsically ethical text: its political value simultaneously honours its Irish postcolonial heritage and has a global historical and multicultural reach. The chapter engages with concepts from feminist, queer, and disability theorists towards the development of new theoretical approaches to the political and ethical value of *Wakean* multilingualism in a contemporary global context.

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## Author's declaration

I, Boriana Alexandrova, declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

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Everything in me joined forces to forbid me to write: History, my story, my origin, my sex. Everything that constituted my social and cultural self. To begin with the necessary, which I lacked, the material that writing is formed of and extracted from: language. You want—to Write? In what language? Property, rights, had always policed me: I learned to speak French in a garden from which I was on the verge of expulsion for being a Jew. I was of the race of Paradise-losers. Write French? With what right? Show us your credentials! What's the password? Cross yourself! Put out your hands, let's see those paws! What kind of nose is that?

I said “write French.” One writes *in*. Penetration. Door. Knock before - entering. Strictly forbidden.

“You are not from here. You are not at home here. Usurper!”

“It's true. No right. Only love.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hélène Cixous, “Coming to Writing,” in *Coming to Writing and Other Essays*, ed. Deborah Jenson, trans. Sarah Cornell et al. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 12–13.



## Introduction

This is a project about a difficult text. About the difficult language of a text. About the difficulty of encountering a text written in a language that no one fully understands.

Encountering a text is, in one sense, encountering an-other body: the body of a book; the inked code of writing on a page legible to some, unpronounceable to others. The bodiliness of Joyce's text—here read in three different paperback copies,<sup>1</sup> two hardback editions,<sup>2</sup> and several translations in both book- and digital form—materialises in forms rather different from the reader's own embodied self or from an-other human body: Encountering *Finnegans Wake* is holding open in my lap the taut binding of a grainy paper book, beholding the systemised symbols printed on its pages, and experiencing its creative, emotional, and intellectual influence on my imagination; feeling the change in my posture as my chest and shoulders stiffen while I read an emotionally torrential passage, or as my eyebrows release and my forehead relaxes in a moment of discovery; breathing, chewing, humming, percussing, stuttering, and (re)shaping in my mouth and through my whole body the language I am simultaneously witnessing and re-creating through the filters of my own linguistic proficiency, interpretative skill, and motor functions uniquely enabling and limiting my ability to pronounce what I am reading.

Reading a text is an encounter with difference—an-other body situated outside of my body—and yet it is also an encounter that takes place simultaneously within me and through me. Reading *Finnegans Wake* is an altogether extraordinary encounter that no previous literary experience or linguistic training can prepare us for: its unprecedented multilingual design ensures that no two readers will ever experience the text in the same way; that the very act of naming the language of the text becomes a point of contention because where one reader sees English, another

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<sup>1</sup> James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, ed. Robbert-Jan Henkes, Erik Bindervoet, and Finn Fordham (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2012); James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, Ed. Seamus Deane (London: Penguin Books, 2000). One of my 2012 editions is left completely clear of notes, while my other two paperback copies are heavily annotated with multilingual references, interpretations, sigla (some of my own invention), references to Joyce's canon, etc.

<sup>2</sup> James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (London: Faber & Faber Limited, 1950); James Joyce, *The Restored "Finnegans Wake,"* ed. Danis Rose and John O'Hanlon, Penguin Classics (London: Penguin Books, 2012).

reader will hear German; and contrary to our most deeply, repetitiously ingrained habits of reading,<sup>3</sup> we must resist the temptation to subdue the text to any preconceived expectations of cultural, historical, formal, or linguistic structurality.

This thesis proposes to critically rethink the paradigms that *Finnegans Wake* is basically an English-language text, that Joyce was strictly an Irish writer, and that the *Wake*'s ideal reader is a native (Irish-)English speaker. Throughout I will show how the structural subjugation necessitated by such paradigms can obscure the vast, irreplaceable artistic value of multilingualism (both within and without *Finnegans Wake*) and overlook the significance of the multilingual reader: that imperfect reader who comes to the text with a less-than-fluent grasp of any single language, be that English or any other major or minor, written or oral, historical or fictional, nameable or unnameable language, pidgin, creole, dialect, accent, register, or style and mode of discourse perceptible in the text. I will argue that even the self-identified “monolingual” reader must embrace their own multilingualism in the process of engaging with a text as undeniably, unabashedly multilingual as *Finnegans Wake*, even though the act of claiming one's multilingualism, which may also be an act of irreversibly relinquishing one's monolingualism, is not without consequences—just like the act of de-nationalising Joyce and uprooting *Wake* from its purported Anglophone heritage can destabilise some important paradigms that Joyce scholars have painstakingly built to help ground us in a literary experience so radically different from any other, and so untameable. Finally, I will offer some distinctly multilingual modes of reading the *Wake* with the aim of contributing new methodological tools to the ever-transforming, ever-innovative field of Joyce studies and thus carving out new or underexplored research directions for the benefit of scholars of Joyce, modernism, postcolonial and “global” literary studies, as well as, in part, translation studies. The final chapter of this thesis, “Towards an Ethics of Multilingualism through *Finnegans Wake*,” is dialogically contingent on the important work of several modern and contemporary feminist, queer, and disability theorists, including (but not exclusive to) Margrit Shildrick, Judith Butler, Hélène Cixous, and Sara Ahmed, and as such it also participates in the long-standing yet largely marginal scholarly discourse on Joyce and feminism.

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<sup>3</sup> I presume, of course, that readers choose books written in languages that they expect to have the skills to comprehend.

## I. The multilingual reader in a monolingual bind

I became a committed *Wake*an as a postgraduate student at University College Dublin, when in the absence of a designated module on Joyce's final work a handful of my MA colleagues and I decided to start a bi-weekly *Finnegans Wake* reading group—mostly held on campus but occasionally diverted to our favourite local pubs, including the Chapelizod Inn. Our members were chiefly Irish and American, all native English speakers apart from one Japanese member and myself, a native Bulgarian speaker. None of us had much prior experience with the *Wake*, so our discussions relied heavily on the authority of McHugh's *Annotations* while we whimsically jumped around the text, trying to connect the dots of our collective associations like chasing fireflies in the dark. At first it felt like an even playing field. But then the Irish and Irish English<sup>4</sup> speakers started picking up on linguistic references that were completely inaccessible to everyone else in the room. The collective was humbled by the mystifying ghost of Irishness that seemed to permeate every passage: It felt always meaningful, never random, always part of a grander design governing the text. Meanwhile, the fragments of German, Italian, French, and Latin that we sporadically extracted from it never seemed to signify as weightily or seamlessly. The Irishness of the text quickly came to be regarded as the all-encompassing, illuminating key, wanted by all but accessible to few; and whatever non-Irish English linguistic elements we could identify remained simply random fragments which we enjoyed but never felt confident legitimising as deliberate and meaningful parts of the author's narrative design.

It could have occurred to us that the reason why the text's multilingualism felt so fragmented and non-encompassing might have been because none of us were fluent in German, Italian, French, or Latin, so even when we were reading passages

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<sup>4</sup> The term "Irish English" encompasses the various forms of English spoken in Ireland. Raymond Hickey argues in his book on the history and current forms of Irish English that it is a "simpler, more neutral label" to describe the varieties of English spoken in Ireland, compared to the politically and ideologically charged alternatives, Anglo-Irish and Hiberno-English. Although an argument could be made for the use of either or both of these alternatives to discuss the Irish Englishes spoken in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Ireland of Joyce's lifetime, I have chosen to use the term "Irish English" throughout this study. This is because my engagement with Joyce's texts maintains a constant awareness of the present-day reader, treating the text and the reader as inextricable from one another, and I would not wish to presume the reader's identification with either Anglo-Irish or Hiberno-English, considering their political and ideological implications. Raymond Hickey, "Questions of Terminology: Anglo-Irish, Hiberno-English, and Irish English," in *Irish English: History and Present-Day Forms* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 3–5.

imbued with these languages we simply did not realise they were there. Our experience of the *Wake*'s multilingual referentiality was as sporadic and disjointed as were our personal experiences with those “other” languages at the time. And even though we were all fluent in English, and thus should have felt equally at home with the Anglophonics of the text, the contributions of our Irish- and Irish English-speaking members still felt weightier and more authoritative.

In one sense, *Finnegans Wake* might be one of the world's most democratic works of literature: In theory, it perplexes everyone equally, and equally every *Wake* reader needs to invest plenty of time and patience in researching its thousands of literary, historical, cultural, geographic, and linguistic references to come to grips, at least in part, with the stories Joyce might have been trying to tell. We also know that *Wake* scholarship was pioneered not by full-time academics working in isolation but by an eclectic community of readers with no certified authority in the discipline—such as Adaline Glasheen, a housewife; Fritz Senn, a proofreader and translator; Roland McHugh, a biologist—who simply enjoyed playing Joyce's elaborate language games; and even the academics who authored the earliest published studies of the *Wake*, like David Hayman, Matthew J. C. Hodgart, and Clive Hart, owed significant parts of their analyses to the micro-research done by everyday readers like the contributors to the *Wake Newslitter*. Glasheen's *First, Second, and Third Census of “Finnegans Wake”* and McHugh's *Annotations to “Finnegans Wake”* continue to serve as key reference guides, while even the most seasoned Joyce scholars continue to attend *Wake* reading groups where readers of all levels are encouraged to contribute to the multiplicitous melting pot of references and interpretations. Yet even in light of that democratic tradition, in practice our readings continue to be governed by an unspoken hierarchical order of major versus minor languages, references, interpretations, and even readers, wherein some languages are given more scholarly attention and legitimacy than others, and some readers—particularly native English and Irish English speakers—by default have permission to approach the text with greater confidence than their non-natively Anglophone counterparts.

Of course, Joyce was born and raised in Ireland, a writer trained in the English literary tradition, and although he never became fluent in Irish he spent his formative years within late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Ireland's cultural and linguistic climate, of which the Irish language and oral-literary tradition was an integral part. If we had to assign Joyce a “mother tongue,” it would have to be Irish

English. English does not quite qualify, judging by Stephen's widely-cited dissociation from it in *Portrait*:

The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine. How different are the words *home, Christ, ale, master*, on his lips and on mine! I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit. His language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words. My voice holds them at bay. My soul frets in the shadow of his language.<sup>5</sup>

Prominent Joyce scholars such as Seamus Deane have referenced this sentiment to support a larger narrative encapsulating Joyce as an essentially Irish writer, possibly even an Irish-nationalist writer,<sup>6</sup> and *Finnegans Wake* has acquired the reputation of a textual manifestation of political rebellion against British imperialism that may ironically reaffirm the power of empire in the language of the text.

In *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction* (one of the early cornerstones of my own project), Juliette Taylor-Batty reflects on Joyce's "typically modernist need to break away from traditional literary forms" and his "need to break away from specifically English literary and cultural forms."<sup>7</sup> By contrast to Deane she does not endorse the view that Joyce had nationalist inclinations and rather asserts that he "was very aware of the efforts of Irish Revivalist writers to reforge such an 'essential' connection between culture and native language, but critiqued such cultural nationalism." She recognises that the writer's "relentless literary and linguistic experimentation has often been read as an implicitly political subversion of English language and culture, as well as being radically experimental in aesthetic terms," and she does not challenge this premise so much as expand upon it through her particular interest in the artistic purposes and "expressive possibilities of other languages"—languages "other" than English, that is—in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*.

English continues to provide an ideological centre in scholarship's handling of Joycean multilingualism as translators have unquestioningly deemed Wakese "distorted English,"<sup>8</sup> scholars have developed influential studies on the premise that

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<sup>5</sup> James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 205.

<sup>6</sup> Seamus Deane, "Imperialism/Nationalism," in *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 354–68.

<sup>7</sup> Juliette Taylor-Batty, *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 114.

<sup>8</sup> Leo Knuth, "The *Finnegans Wake* Translation Panel at Trieste," *James Joyce Quarterly* 9 (1972): 268, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25486975>.

multilingualism is a mechanism of “interference” and an “obstruction to the understanding of a message”<sup>9</sup> and a means of “systematic darkening,”<sup>10</sup> to the point where even a scholar of multilingualism like Taylor-Batty has conceded to the shorthand assertion that “the English language is *deformed* beyond recognition” in the *Wake*,<sup>11</sup> implying that Joycean multilingualism, and subsequently the text’s political, ideological, cultural, and linguistic drive and “identity,” are governed by its fundamental attachment to this one, single language it is purportedly seeking to destroy. Even while asserting that the English language is “deformed beyond recognition” in the *Wake*, scholars are driven to define the text by it, to summarise it in monolingual plot summaries,<sup>12</sup> and decodify its multilingual elements into a monolithic database of references aimed at a monolingual Anglophone readership, such as McHugh’s *Annotations* or the *Finnegans Wake Extensive Elucidation Treasury (FWEET)*,<sup>13</sup> which of course are both successors of the collectively gathered treasury of the *Wake Newsletter*. Unquestioningly, this mode of *Wake* scholarship has yielded, and continues to yield, extraordinary results. What troubles me is the persistent, unquestioning drive to “monolingualise” this explicitly multilingual text. It is a highly suspect notion that “domesticating” multilingualism into a pre-determined and determinate monolingual form is the only way to productively and enjoyably engage with it; that full and seamless comprehension seems to be the unspoken aim of the ideal reader; that the effort to relate to a multilingual text should necessitate that it be controlled and confined within a monolingual system; and finally that a multilingual writer like Joyce should be encapsulated within a single nation’s and language’s literary tradition, even though he spent the majority of his life living outside of his birthplace, spoke primarily Italian with his children, socialised in equal parts French, German, Italian, and English, and spent sixteen years of his life writing *Finnegans Wake*.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Margot Norris, *The Decentered Universe of Finnegans Wake: A Structuralist Analysis* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 126, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/JoyceColl.NorrisDecenter>.

<sup>10</sup> John Bishop, *Joyce’s Book of the Dark, “Finnegans Wake”* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986), 4.

<sup>11</sup> Taylor-Batty, *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction*, 117; my emphasis.

<sup>12</sup> Among many others, John Gordon, *Finnegans Wake: A Plot Summary*, Irish Studies (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1986); Joseph Campbell, *A Skeleton Key to Finnegans Wake* (New York: Viking P., 2005 [1944]); William York Tindall, *Reader’s Guide to Finnegans Wake* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1996 [1969]).

<sup>13</sup> Raphael Slepion, “Finnegans Wake Extensive Elucidation Treasury (FWEET),” October 19, 2013, <http://fweet.org>.

<sup>14</sup> Robbert-Jan Henkes and Erik Bindervoet clarify in their “Note on the Text,” in *Finnegans Wake* (Oxford: Oxford World’s Classics, 2012) that Joyce’s actual process of writing took just under sixteen

From a linguistic standpoint, it is difficult to argue convincingly that the *Wake* is indeed an English-language text. Linguists struggle to draw boundaries between languages by default, since the world's languages are in fact so fundamentally interconnected, be that in their coincident grammatical structures, roots and idiomatic expressions, alphabets, or even cultural and mythological backgrounds. Splitting apart the languages embedded in a single *Wake* phrase, such as Florian's "communic suctiones and vellicar frictions with mixum members" (*FW* 385.11-13), which can be read simultaneously as a reference to the USSR ("communist sections and grandiose ['vellicar' from the Russian 'velikiĭ,' meaning grand or grandiose] fictions," potentially referring to communist political propaganda), to a Catholic communion, or perhaps even to an orgy of "whiteboys and oakboys, peep of tim boys and piping tom boys, raising hell while the sin was shining" (385.9-11), is equally difficult if not impossible to do. This becomes apparent in my very attempt to "translate" my experience of the text into standard English: in order to convey my perception of a Soviet reference, I have to exclude from my elucidation the Catholic reference and vice versa. Yet the text, in its original multilingual form, is able to hold all of these and more such different, divergent, parallel references in a single phrase. Umberto Eco's suggestion that the *Wake* is a "plurilingual text written as an English speaker conceived of one"<sup>15</sup> sounds more plausible than the notion that it is basically an English-language text, as once suggested by its Dutch translators, for example,<sup>16</sup> but even so it bears questioning how much of an English speaker Joyce could reasonably be deemed to be during the course of writing his last work in 1923-39. I would argue that behind the compulsion to encapsulate the *Wake* within the confines of a single major language and to define Joyce by a single mother tongue, be that English or Irish English, lies what Yasemin Yildiz identifies as the "monolingual paradigm": An ideological structuring principle, emerging as recently as the late eighteenth century in Europe, which

organizes the entire range of modern social life, from the construction of individuals and their proper subjectivities to the formation of disciplines and institutions, as well as of imagined collectives such as cultures and nations.

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years: "From the first words, 'So anyhow', sent to Harriet Shaw Weaver on 10 March 1923, to the last additions on the final page proofs, marked 'Rush' by the printer, in mid-January 1939" (xlvi).

<sup>15</sup> Umberto Eco, *Experiences in Translation*, trans. Alastair McEwen (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 108.

<sup>16</sup> Katarzyna Bazanik, Erik Bindervoet, and Robbert-Jan Henkes, "Hier Komt Iedereen: An Interview with Erik Bindervoet and Robbert Jan-Henkes, the Dutchifiers of *Finnegans Wake*" (Journal article manuscript, courtesy of Robbert-Jan Henkes and Erik Bindervoet, Warsaw, Poland, 2004).

According to this paradigm, individuals and social formations are imagined to possess one ‘true’ language only, their ‘mother tongue,’ and through this possession to be organically linked to an exclusive, clearly demarcated ethnicity, culture, and nation.<sup>17</sup>

The reach and depth of the monolingual paradigm is enormous and, despite its relatively recent development, it has been normalised to the point of becoming invisible and unconsciously perpetuated. Yildiz traces its emergence to late eighteenth-century German intellectuals like Johann Gottfried Herder, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and Friedrich Schleiermacher, who she suggests formulated the concept of the “mother tongue,” the *Muttersprache*, as one that “stands for a unique, irreplaceable, unchangeable biological origin that situates the individual automatically in a kinship network and by extension in the nation.”<sup>18</sup> She references Schleiermacher’s idea that “The uniqueness and organic nature of language imagined as ‘mother tongue’ lends its authority to an aesthetics of originality and authenticity,” which resulted in a “disavowal of the possibility of writing in non-native languages or in multiple languages at the same time.”<sup>19</sup>

Multilingualism studies, as a relatively new, emergent field, is continuously wrestling with this concept. Every study I have encountered in this research area has begun by explicitly challenging the premises established by the monolingual paradigm without necessarily having Yildiz’s historical research or theoretical vocabulary to do so. As early as 1970, New Zealand scholar Leonard Forster published a small book of lectures on multilingualism entitled *The Poet’s Tongues*, which has been credited as the first discrete study of multilingual writing in English. In the introduction, Forster de-normalises the monolingual paradigm (which he clearly assumed would be his reader’s default attitude to the subject) by stating that

We are in fact all of us more polyglot than we think. Any normally educated person uses his native tongue on a variety of different levels for different purposes. These levels should be conceived of as forming not steps but a rather irregularly inclined plane like the slope of a hill. They merge into one another, so gradually that we often do not realize which level we are operating on. The levels at or near the bottom, which we use for, perhaps, vulgar abuse, are so different from those near the top, which we use for

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<sup>17</sup> Yasemin Yildiz, *Beyond the Mother Tongue: The Postmonolingual Condition*, 2013, 2.

<sup>18</sup> Yildiz, *Beyond the Mother Tongue*, 9.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.



solemn occasions or technical discussion, that they are practically different languages.<sup>20</sup>

Only a few years later, an essay collection by Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *Voprosy literatury i estetiki* (the source of the four essays comprising *The Dialogic Imagination*<sup>21</sup>), was published in Russian, wherein intralingual dynamics in literature and society were conceptualized in a similar way.<sup>22</sup> As per Holquist and Emerson's translation of Bakhtin's argument, even "an illiterate peasant, miles away from any urban center, naively immersed in an unmoving and for him unshakable everyday world"—in other words, even an individual geographically isolated from multicultural spaces like lively cities populated by migrants and thus filled with multilingualism—

nevertheless lived in several language systems: he prayed to God in one language (Church Slavonic), sang songs in another, spoke to his family in a third and, when he began to dictate petitions to the local authorities through a scribe, he tried speaking yet a fourth language (the official-literate language, 'paper' language). All these are *different languages*, even from the point of view of abstract socio-dialectological markers.<sup>23</sup>

In chapter 2, I will show how linguists such as Steven Pinker and Asif Agha have echoed and applied this understanding of social and individual intralingual dynamics in their own discipline. In transdisciplinary dialogue, I will also develop some useful

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<sup>20</sup> Leonard Forster, *The Poet's Tongues: Multilingualism in Literature* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 3.

<sup>21</sup> Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981).

<sup>22</sup> It is worth noting that, although *Voprosy literatury i estetiki* was first published in 1975, the essays themselves were written prior to that, between the 1920s and 1930s. Nonetheless, the essays' publication history is far more recent: Bakhtin's "Problema soderzaniia, materiala i formy v slovesnomkhudozhestvennomtvorchestve" (Problems of content, material and form in the literary arts) was written in 1924 for the journal *Russkii sovremennik*, which was closed down soon afterwards, leaving Bakhtin's piece unpublished until the early 1970s (in the Institute of World Literature of the USSR Science Academy publication *Kontekst* 1973, and again in *Nauka* in 1974). "Slovo v romane" (Language in the novel) was a large study written in 1934-35. Two chapters of it were first published in the journal *Voprosakh literatury* in 1972. Bakhtin also delivered a lecture deriving from this work for the Institute of World Literature of the USSR Science Academy on October 14, 1940, which was subsequently published in the form of two articles in *Voprosakh literatury* (1965) and in *Russkaia i zarubezhnaia literatura* (1967). On March 24, 1941, Bakhtin delivered another lecture, entitled "Roman kak literaturnyi zhan" (The novel as literary discourse), and this was first published in *Voprosakh literatury* in 1970 with the title "Epos i roman" (Epic and novel). "Formy vremeni i khronotopa v romane" (Forms of time and the chronotope in the novel) was written in 1937-38 but Bakhtin prepared it for publication only in 1973, when he accompanied the work with a note entitled "Zakliuchitel'nye zamechaniia" (Concluding remarks). A fragment from *Formy vremeni* was published in *Voprosakh literatury* in 1974. See the editor's note in Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *Voprosy Literatury I Estetiki: Issledovaniia Raznykh Let*, ed. S. Leibovich (Moskva: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1975), 3-5.

<sup>23</sup> Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 295-96.

methodological approaches to *Waklean* multilingualism through their findings. At this point, I would like to emphasise how strikingly similar Forster's and Bakhtin's understanding of everyday multilingualism was,<sup>24</sup> which I would suggest points to the notion that the monolingual paradigm posed similar problems to scholars interested in multilingual writing, and those scholars' reparative responses to those problems have thus often coincided.

In 1986, Elizabeth Klosty Beaujour published *Alien Tongues: Bilingual Russian Writers of the "First" Emigration*, wherein she also makes a point of stating that "In fact, a very large proportion of the world's population is polyglot. The daily use of several languages in different contexts is and has been the norm in many societies,"<sup>25</sup> yet even so she finds herself compelled to debunk monolingual myths that she shows having infiltrated both literature and science: Klosty Beaujour observes that despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, "Linguists who should have known better, including [Věroboj] Vildomec [author of *Multilingualism*, 1963], have maintained that active multilingualism inevitably hampers literary expression."<sup>26</sup> Her investigation relies heavily on scientific research in neurolinguistics, and as such her findings do not need to be outlined in detail here, but the evidence she presents from empirical and medical research of the brains and speech patterns of multilingual speakers points strongly to the fact that not only does bilingualism not impede creative expression but rather bilingual subjects' "experience with two language systems appears to have contributed to a superiority in concept formation and to superior performance on tests requiring certain mental or symbolic flexibility."<sup>27</sup> In closer relation to the demands of literary engagement, the author also cites "numerous recent studies [that] strongly suggest that bilingualism confers a continuing advantage for tasks involving metalinguistic awareness, or separating word sounds from word meaning, generating synonyms, being sensitive to communicative needs, and perceiving new sounds."<sup>28</sup> Thus *Alien Tongues* serves as yet another example of multilingualism scholarship forced to contend with the naturalisation of the mother tongue simply as a necessary way to legitimise the

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<sup>24</sup> It is worth noting that the translators of *The Dialogic Imagination* may have been familiar with Forster's work, which could explain the coincidence in diction between these excerpts. However, the theoretical concepts are clearly identical nonetheless, and that similarity cannot be attributed to any direct influence as neither Forster nor Bakhtin could have read each other's work at this time.

<sup>25</sup> Elizabeth Klosty Beaujour, *Alien Tongues: Bilingual Russian Writers of the "First" Generation* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989), 2.

<sup>26</sup> Klosty Beaujour, *Alien Tongues*, 3.

<sup>27</sup> Klosty Beaujour, *Alien Tongues*, 14.

<sup>28</sup> Klosty Beaujour, *Alien Tongues*, 16.

existence of such research and the importance of releasing multilingual writers like Nabokov, Joyce, Beckett, Mandelstam, or Pushkin, among others, from the shackles of the monolingual paradigm, which has achieved little more than hampering scholarly understanding of multilingual literature past or present.

The next major contribution to literary studies in multilingualism emerged in 1998, when Werner Sollors published an edited collection of essays on American multilingual literatures, entitled *Multilingual America*,<sup>29</sup> which is framed as a political and historical intervention into the effects of immigration, colonisation, and community on the vastly diverse multilingual writings and storytelling practices of that part of the world. The collection revived the conversation in North American scholarship and was followed in 2000 by Steven Kellman's monograph *The Translingual Imagination*,<sup>30</sup> which was the first academic theorisation of literary multilingualism across several different cultures since Forster's *The Poet's Tongues*. Kellman's work dedicates full chapters to Samuel Beckett (through Coetzee), Eva Hoffmann, and Nabokov, and invests significant time in historicising and conceptualising the creative and social factors affecting multilingual literatures on a global scale. He also coins the term "translingualism," which he does not strictly define in any way that would explain its differentiation from *multilingualism*: he simply defines the term as "the phenomenon of authors who write in more than one language or at least in a language other than their primary one."<sup>31</sup> Presumably due to Kellman's own scholarly and cultural context, he finds that the "most celebrated literary translinguals of the twentieth century are Samuel Beckett, Joseph Conrad, and Vladimir Nabokov,"<sup>32</sup> apparently omitting Joyce even from the helpful "Roster of Translingual Authors" listed alphabetically at the end of the monograph. Nonetheless, *The Translingual Imagination* continues to serve as a go-to study of multilingual literatures alongside Kellman's edited collection of essays, *Switching Languages*,<sup>33</sup> written by multilingual writers around the world about their literary practices and personal, creative, and political relationships with their multiple languages.

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<sup>29</sup> Werner Sollors, ed., *Multilingual America: Transnationalism, Ethnicity, and the Languages of American Literature* (New York: New York University Press, 1998).

<sup>30</sup> Steven G. Kellman, *The Translingual Imagination* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000).

<sup>31</sup> Kellman, *The Translingual Imagination*, ix.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> Steven G. Kellman, ed., *Switching Languages: Translingual Writers Reflect on Their Craft* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003).

## II. Writing exile through the monolingual paradigm

Many migrant writers have documented the anxiety-inducing experience of acquiring greater confidence in a language other than their mother tongue.<sup>34</sup> In her essay “The Home of Language: The Pedagogy of the Stammer,” Sneja Gunew compares and theorises some documented experiences of migrant subjects for whom, as Sara Ahmed describes, the “once-familiar home becomes strange” and how “this alienation takes form through language as well as the body.”<sup>35</sup> A particularly striking comment by Polish American author Eva Hoffman relates a rather bleak account of the experience of “losing” a mother tongue as a consequence of migration:

For a while, like so many immigrants, I was in effect without language, and from the bleakness of that condition, I understood how much of our inner existence, our sense of self, depends on having a living speech within us. To lose an internal language is to subside into an inarticulate darkness in which we become alien to ourselves.<sup>36</sup>

Gunew theorises Hoffman’s narrative of loss through Kristevan and Lacanian psychoanalysis, offering possibilities of viewing this experience as “the subject enter[ing] the symbolic order through a *particular* language,” whereby “the first subjectivity, by necessity, is repressed” in the space where one’s mother tongue is at odds with one’s geographical and cultural locus.<sup>37</sup> Yet, insightful as Gunew’s analysis remains throughout, she persistently returns to a notion of the mother tongue as a naturalised and definitive origin, whose inescapability renders it a site of

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<sup>34</sup> Steven G. Kellman's *Switching Languages* and Andre Aciman's *Letters of Transit: Reflections on Exile, Identity, Language, and Loss* (New York: New Press with the New York State Library, 1999), for example, offer an abundant selection of testimonials by multilingual writers remembering, historicizing, and theorizing exile and migration as a political, literary, and deeply personal experience. These edited collections offer a useful starting point for any reader interested in multilingual literature. Vladimir Nabokov's reflections on the integrality of multilingualism in his craft in both English and Russian also culminate in his autobiography *Speak, Memory* (London: Penguin, 2000).

<sup>35</sup> Sara Ahmed et al., “Introduction,” in *Uprootings/regroundings Questions of Home and Migration* (New York: Berg Publishers, 2003), 11.

<sup>36</sup> Eva Hoffman, “The New Nomads,” in *Letters of Transit: Reflections on Exile, Identity, Language, and Loss*, ed. Andre Aciman (New York: New Press with the New York State Library, 1999), 48; Also cited in Sneja Gunew, “The Home of Language: A Pedagogy of the Stammer,” in *Uprootings/regroundings Questions of Home and Migration*, ed. Sara Ahmed et al. (New York: Berg Publishers, 2003), 46.

<sup>37</sup> The author questions whether it “make[s] sense to locate the first subject in language in the pre-symbolic which Kristeva, for example, characterizes as the domain of the semiotic and maternal”; or whether “to refer to a ‘first’ symbolic order and to relocate it in the Lacanian Imaginary where the subject experiences illusory totality with a phallic mother.” Ibid., 46.

tremendous loss for the exile and the migrant; this premise—which certainly does not originate with Gunew—bears critically reconsidering. She asserts that

languages, with their inflections and rhythms, as much as their overt signification, invariably function to remind one of home in palpable ways. It is the meanings we first encounter in a specific language that structure our later lives psychically and physically and at the same time provide a prophylactic against the universalist claims of other linguistic meaning structures. Displaced from home, we are thus unable to feel at home because we are too aware of the alternatives.<sup>38</sup>

Gunew's argument problematically presumes that there can only be one "primary" language, which seems to ignore the widely documented evidence to the contrary as discussed by Klosty Beaujour, and furthermore her preoccupation with narratives of origin in the context of migration suggests an attachment to the monolingual paradigm that bears re-evaluating.

In light of a linguistically decentred text such as the *Wake*, I would like to think about language not as a structural object contingent upon a place outside of the self but rather as an open, permeable space where different bodies encounter one another and themselves. As Yildiz has shown, the belief that every established, or named, language has a single place of origin to which it irrevocably belongs, and that the people born in that place—the nation—are inextricably, "naturally" attached to that single language and its single designated birthplace, is founded upon the monolingual paradigm and not necessarily upon individual bodies' real, tangible experiences of linguistic engagement. I would argue that this belief is sustained by a systematic disregard for every body's singularity: it turns a blind eye to the fact that every day we each encounter other people whose accents and styles of communication differ from ours; that we are perpetually transformed by these encounters and have the ability to effect change through our relational (and linguistic) engagements with others.

Deconstructing and debunking the monolingual paradigm is a key goal of this thesis, but in so doing I do not aim to establish a new, "multilingual paradigm." While I am contesting the ideological presumptions generated and perpetuated by the naturalisation of *the* mother tongue, I also acknowledge the deep, visceral, transformative, and affective relationship between bodies and their most intimately known languages, as well as the experience of comfort and recognition that any

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 42.

person might feel in relation to a particular language, accent, style of discourse, or (cultural) narrative. The experience of estrangement or loss that any person might feel in relation to the unknown, whether that appears in the form of a new language, a perplexing text, or an encounter with an unfamiliar culture, is also undeniable. I am rather challenging the assumption that every person—every author and reader—can (or should) reasonably be expected to have a stable and predictable relationship with a single mother tongue; that this mother tongue supplies a cultural identity, a consistent and comforting realm of home, and that every “other” language this person encounters in their lifetime will gravitate towards the mother tongue like a satellite permanently attached to and governed by a nuclear centre; that “other” languages will be measured up to and inevitably overpowered by the mother tongue; and consequently that one’s experience of multilingualism necessitates a translation into a monolingual framework: the mother tongue, the epitome of “home,” clarity, and (self-)recognition.

Approaches that uncomplicatedly interpret multilingualism, multiculturalism, and migration as experiences of loss fail to address what happens when one’s home turns out to be a hostile, painful, perhaps even dangerous dwelling; or when one’s genesis story does not account for one’s humanity because that narrative was conceived to champion and protect someone of a different class, gender, political affiliation, or body. They fail to account for the experience of the primary, “mother” tongue as stultifying, oppressive, silencing, or isolating. The critical tendency to group migrant writers’ experiences as stories of “exile” neglects how significantly varied and multidimensional narratives of migration and multilingualism really are.

Gunew’s reading of Eva Hoffman above exemplifies one instance where a scholar’s predisposition to the monolingual paradigm has disproportionately emphasised the migrant writer’s sense of cultural-linguistic estrangement and sidestepped Hoffman’s own notable hesitation to characterise her migrant experience strictly as a site of loss. On the one hand, she draws a distinction between her own family’s immigration to the U.S. and that of political refugees like Hannah Arendt, Theodor Adorno, Bertolt Brecht, or Joseph Brodsky, whose displacement was forced by a threat to their lives—an exile bearing the scars of a trauma felt palpably in one’s memory of the place to which one is barred from returning. Hoffman suggests that the dislocation of one’s primary language creates “a psychic split—living in a story in which one’s past becomes radically different from the present and in which the

lost homeland becomes sequestered in the imagination as a mythic, static realm.”<sup>39</sup> She illustrates this split with a scene from her adulthood, where in 1994 she revisited her birthplace, Poland, after more than thirty years living in the U.S. She travelled with an English friend.

When I came upon a lone shop window featuring a display familiar from the days of yore—a dry loaf of bread, an apple, and a desultory can of Coke—I pointed it out to my friend excitedly. Look! This was how it used to be! But this was not the way things were now. The dusty little vitrine was a trace, a remaining mark of a world that, for all its misery, had the appeal of familiarity and, most saliently, clarity.<sup>40</sup>

This moment initiates a turning point in Hoffman’s understanding of exile. Throughout “The New Nomads,” she perpetually oscillates between her strong sense of attachment to her “psychic home”<sup>41</sup> and her present home, where she has long lived and with which she has established a deep relationship. The “psychic home” is described as a site constituted by an experience of a primary place, as well as of early friendships and relationships, but also of her “first recognition” of the world through a particular language and culture: “My first recognition, as I was prized out of familiar speech and social environment, was that these entities are not luxuries or even external necessities but the medium in which we live, the stuff of which we are made.”<sup>42</sup>

Whereas the primary language serves to connect us to our original culture and the community into which we were born, upon migration that same language becomes the thing that marks our difference, isolating us in the present as it connected us in the past. The mother tongue can thus be experienced as a site of loss simply by the act of dislocation—when a body of and with language is transposed to a new dwelling, that new place demands a kind of relational and creative labour that the birthplace, as a site of primary familiarity, did not. If we are constituted by our primary attachments to one language and one place—that “first recognition”—then those attachments, Hoffman suggests, will forever remain familiar, and that memory of the plausibility of clarity will perpetually serve as a reminder of how lacking in clarity any “other” space (geographic, cultural, linguistic, etc.) is destined to be.

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<sup>39</sup> Hoffman, “The New Nomads,” 52.

<sup>40</sup> Hoffman, “The New Nomads,” 46.

<sup>41</sup> Hoffman, “The New Nomads,” 47.

<sup>42</sup> Hoffman, “The New Nomads,” 48.

This ontological scene—not simply the self’s encounter with difference but moreover the self’s experience of change, the recognition of changeability—underlies Hoffman’s exile narrative throughout “The New Nomads.” Yet the essay perpetually oscillates between opposing attitudes to exile—“Is it then all pain and no gain? Of course not”; “Is it then, in this blithe new world, all gain and no pain? I don’t quite think so”<sup>43</sup>—and laboriously complicates each side of the argument as she openly recognises and problematizes her own bias in attempting to address these questions. The author simultaneously declares and queries her sense of longing for “safety or significance or love,”<sup>44</sup> reflected in the memory of her early childhood experiences of home, which drives her perpetual return to this scene. This constant recirculation enables Gunew to reduce Hoffman’s narrative of exile to an experience of lack and loss in the self’s migration away from its ontological home and into a new geographic, cultural, and linguistic space. Yet, palpable and undeniably important as this loss triggered by change might be, we must recognise that narratives of exile are not reducible to a single, immovable, and unchangeable primary centre—that is, a cultural, geographic, or mythological home mutually contingent upon a mother tongue. To fixate, to such a determinant extent, upon the subject’s narrative of cultural, linguistic, and psychic origin represses the inevitability of change and thus suppresses the vital significance of *changeability*.

### III. Singularity and changeability

One of the methods this study employs to both recognise and creatively engage with changeability in the reader’s experience of *Wakean* multilingualism—that is, reading understood as a dynamic process of dialogical, relational encounters, as opposed to an objective, static scene of recognition and comprehension—stems from Derek Attridge’s concept of singularity, developed in his 2004 book, *The Singularity of Literature*. Singularity pertains to both the qualities and the relational standing of the reader, the literary work, and the literary event to each other in the particular times and spaces in which they encounter one another. To speak of the singularity of the reader, we must account for her or his<sup>45</sup> “idioculture,” that is, “the

<sup>43</sup> Hoffman, “The New Nomads,” 50, 56.

<sup>44</sup> Hoffman, “The New Nomads,” 63.

<sup>45</sup> A brief note on my use of pronouns: As part of this project’s concern with diversity (linguistic, cultural, identificatory, bodily, etc.), and in light of some ethical issues becoming increasingly



totality of the cultural codes constituting a subject, at a given time, as an overdetermined, self-contradictory system that manifests itself materially in a host of ways.”<sup>46</sup> The term “idioculture” refers to the “changing array of interlocking, overlapping, and often contradictory cultural systems absorbed in the course of [the reader’s] previous experience, a complex matrix of habits, cognitive models, representations, beliefs, expectations, prejudices, and preferences that operate intellectually, emotionally, and physically to produce a sense of at least relative continuity, coherence, and significance out of the manifold events of human living”; yet it offers neither an exhaustive representation of a person’s individuality—“I am more than the sum of the parts of cultural systems I have absorbed”—nor a stable characterisation of who they are, how they might act, or what they might derive from the process of linguistic or literary engagement at any given moment in any particular context. It is a valuable component of the reader’s singularity without acting as a determinate force, because a person’s idioculture is constantly growing, transforming, and even contracting or shrinking with failed memory or a change in bodily ability.

The process of reading is here conceived as a dialogic interaction between reader and text in a mutually transformative literary event. The singularity of the literary work involves its materiality, history, cultural context, affect, and all other variables in its existence and public engagement. The literary event is the occurrence of relational, dialogic engagement between reader and text—what becomes in practice a mutually transformative constellation of multiple events of recognition, comprehension, interpretation, and emotion “experienced as something that *happens to* the reader in the course of a committed and attentive reading”<sup>47</sup> and taking place at a particular time and in a particular place. Attridge explains that “To respond to the singularity of the work I read is thus to affirm its singularity in my own singular response, open not just to the signifying potential of the words on the page but also to the specific time and place within which the reading occurs, the ungeneralizable

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popularised by current queer and trans discourses, I have chosen to interchangeably use masculine (he/his/him/himself), feminine (she/her/herself), bigender (s/he), and gender-neutral (they/their/themselves) pronouns to refer to the reader. This is part of an effort to allow my own critical language to perform the ethical considerations of which I write in relation to the project’s subject matter: multilingualism and encounters with difference. I would invite my reader to treat these types of pronoun usages as non-definitive. That is to say, if a figure such as the *Wake* reader (when “the reader” represents a broadly encompassing readership) is referred to as a “she,” my reader may view the feminine pronoun as an invocation of the *he*’s, *ze*’s, *they*’s, or *xe*’s of readership as well.

<sup>46</sup> Derek Attridge, *The Singularity of Literature* (London: Routledge, 2004), 22.

<sup>47</sup> Attridge, *The Singularity of Literature*, 59.

relation between this work and this reader.”<sup>48</sup> In this sense, my use of the term “singularity” serves to account for the uniqueness and changeability of the reading body, the literary work, and the literary event on the one hand. And on the other, it facilitates a particular method of theorising literary engagement with a text such as *Finnegans Wake*, whose multilingualism makes the singularity of every reader and literary event unavoidably explicit and necessary to the work’s ability to create meaning, pleasure, and an affective experience.

Singularity does not merely describe an objective phenomenon in literary engagement, however. The term, as a theoretical concept, enables us to study the dialogic relationships between reader and text, text and author, author and reader, text and literary event, all of which act as mutually transformative forces of creativity and affect in the world. Furthermore, it facilitates an ethical engagement with literature that becomes especially valuable to the reading of a multilingual text like *Finnegans Wake*, which thrives on semantic ambiguity, narrative simultaneity, and poetic materiality that can yield as many different textual experiences and interpretations as there are readers—or perhaps even as there are events of reading. The role of the reader is inextricable from the *Wake*’s ability to create meaning and pleasure in the unique way that its multilingual design allows. Although any work of literature can arguably affect each reader differently, or be interpreted and experienced differently by every reader, no other work of Western literature engages the reader’s singularity—including their body, pronunciation habits and abilities, multilingual repertoire, and idioculture—in the creative process quite as deliberately or productively.

Active readerly engagement is not simply an incidental component of reading *Finnegans Wake* as if it were any text; rather it constitutes an integral part of the way Joyce’s particular mode of multilingual writing materialises and what it signifies. As I will show throughout this thesis, a mere change in pronunciation can make a line of the *Wake* reveal a new language, word, or narrative level. Thus a vigilant awareness of the singularity of the reader, the text, the immediate literary event, and the potential for changeability and variance within it enables us to not only observe and critically discuss the aesthetic and interpretative transformations that occur in the dialogic process, but also to actively generate new possibilities of performing, understanding, and deriving pleasure from the text. In other words, methodical

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<sup>48</sup> Attridge, *The Singularity of Literature*, 81.

attentiveness to the text's and reader's singularity carves out new paths and methods of discovery.

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Theorising multilingualism as a literary practice (shaped by texts like *Finnegans Wake*) requires that we also recognise it as a cultural phenomenon and an expansive network of diverse, singular, and changeable subjective experiences of any given literary text. The monolingual paradigm must not persist as the sole structuring principle of scholarship's methodological approaches to multilingual texts. The assumption that the monolingual reader—that is, not strictly or necessarily a reader fluent in a single language but a reader whose mode of linguistic engagement presumes a primary fluency in a single language that allocates any other language(s) in their repertoire to a secondary status—should serve as a representative image of readership as a whole needs to be reconsidered. As the contemporary multilingualism scholars referenced here have shown, theorising literary engagement through the monolingual paradigm has marginalised multilingual texts, as well as the very practices of reading and writing through more than one language.

Reading *Finnegans Wake* compels us to deconstruct our established habits of linguistic comprehension and engagement and to critically consider how our cultural predispositions and our knowledge (or lack thereof) transformatively influence the text's ability to create meaning, emotional experience, and affect. Because encountering *Wakean* multilingualism poses such a radical challenge for comprehension and destabilises the interrelation between a single culture/nation and language (in ways that predominantly monolingual texts written for a fluent, monolingual readership do not), reading this text becomes an actively creative task: *Wake* defies the expectation that language should communicate with universal semantic efficiency and clarity to all fluent readers, and so every *Wake* reader becomes transposed from the monolingual position of fluency (which implies a proficiency in the structural qualities of a language, such as its vocabulary, grammar, and syntax, as well as shared cultural knowledge and values between reader and text) to the estranged position of the foreigner, who is implicitly multilingual: a reader reaching for the text across a linguistic and cultural divide.

Making contact with an-other across such a divide requires an embodied intellectual and emotional labour. Different readers occupy varying positions of

distance or proximity in relation to the *Wake*'s language: For example, seasoned Joyceans may find that they have more shared knowledge with the text than first-time readers would, and as such the experienced reader's labour might be relatively less compared to the inexperienced. However, this text's particular form of multilingualism also ensures that a vast community of potential readers would have at least some point of cultural proximity, or of cultural-linguistic recognition, because it holds such a rich repertoire of linguistic, intertextual, and cultural material. It would be ingenuous to claim that the *Wake* estranges all readers equally, but I would suggest that it estranges all readers, differently. Both the universality and variability of its estrangement are important for this study.

#### IV. Challenging monolingual binaries

The dynamics of Joycean estrangement are not a new concern for scholarship, but, similarly to Gunew's inclination to reduce Hoffman's narrative of exile to the experience of loss, major works of Joyce scholarship<sup>49</sup> have significantly overemphasised the difficult or estranging effects of multilingualism in texts like the *Wake* or *Ulysses*. It seems counterintuitive to associate a text so rich in poetic value and interpretative possibilities with loss, or to define such an extraordinarily inventive reading experience by the pain of difficulty in comprehension. The fact that scholarly narratives of migration are so characteristically preoccupied with the loss of a primary language rather than the gain—of new languages, new cultural knowledge, awareness, and sensitivity, new creative methods of engaging with difference and braving the fear of the unknown towards discovering new worlds, subjectivities, and modes of thinking and relating—also seems counterintuitive. Can, and should, the gain of new languages ever become reduced to a momentary sense of loss? Can we, as scholars and readers, afford to invest such thorough and discerning intellectual labour on theorising multilingual estrangement as a factor of exile without offering at least equal consideration to what we gain—within and beyond the

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<sup>49</sup> I am thinking of canonical studies such as Margot Norris's *The Decentered Universe of "Finnegans Wake"*, which builds a theoretical argument on the premise that *Wake* acts as a creative deconstruction and distortion of the English language; John Bishop's *Joyce's Book of the Dark*, which suggests that the multilingualism of the *Wake* darkens language comprehension in order to performatively embody what he sees as the book's subject matter: dreaming, dreamers, and the night; or, more recently, Juliette Taylor-Batty's theorisation of both *Ulysses* and the *Wake* as prime examples of the "perpetuation of linguistic crisis," defined by Shklovkian estrangement (*ostranenie*) and explicitly achieved through multilingualism.

scope of semantic multiplication—through the creative drive of the multilingual consciousness?

To critically consider the significance of these problems in Joyce's work, as well as in its scholarly reception, let us revisit the popularly referenced crisis of language that Stephen experiences in *Portrait*. Through the following reading, I suggest that Stephen's crisis is not so much *induced by* language as it becomes *materialised in* language. In other words, language is not the cause but the evidence of a personal (psychological as well as emotional) and political crisis:

The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine. How different are the words *home, Christ, ale, master*, on his lips and on mine! I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit. His language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words. My voice holds them at bay. My soul frets in the shadow of his language. (205)

Stephen is born into a country suffocating under British colonial influence; he grows up with the physical and mental violence he experiences as a Jesuit schoolboy, a child of a poverty-stricken home and an abusive, disreputable, and negligent father; his hometown, Dublin, promises no opportunity for either artistic or economic growth, and his college education leaves him feeling silenced and politically, intellectually, and creatively oppressed. As the following examples from *Portrait* will show, the (nationalist) narrative of home as safe and sacred fails to reflect Stephen's experience of his birthplace. As his body gets unjustly punished in the schoolroom or his language gets scrutinised and held up to a standard of English enforced from outside of his embodied reality, thereby pushing to overpower and obliterate his living speech, his body bears the impact of the monolingual paradigm's discursive power over his singularity and authenticity.

Perhaps one of the most devastating and memorable Joycean scenes illustrating the paradigm's infliction of imperialist violence on the body appears early on in *Portrait*, when schoolboy Stephen and his classmates get terrorised by their teachers in Latin class. First, Father Arnall humiliates a boy in the class because "He wrote a bad Latin theme...and he missed all the questions in grammar" (49); then the prefect of studies escalates by beating the boy in way of correcting his linguistic performance—language becoming grounds for literal violence—and subsequently beating Stephen, too, for the perverse pleasure of asserting his authoritative power on the child (though this is done on the pretext that Stephen, who

is unable to work because his glasses are broken, is not writing). The excruciating pain, terror, and humiliation of this “corrective” experience leads Stephen to dissociate from his own body:

Stephen knelt down quickly pressing his beaten hands to his sides. To think of them beaten and swollen with pain all in a moment made him feel so sorry for them as if they were not his own but someone else's that he felt sorry for. And as he knelt, calming the last sobs in his throat and feeling the burning tingling pain pressed in to his sides, he thought of the hands which he had held out in the air with the palms up and of the firm touch of the prefect of studies when he had steadied the shaking fingers and of the beaten swollen reddened mass of palm and fingers that shook helplessly in the air. (52)

Throughout the novel, the monolingual paradigm (expressed equally in the publicly empowered discourse of British imperialism, Irish nationalism, and Roman Catholicism) inscribes its dysfunction on Stephen's body. He experiences a disjunction between language (its implicit political and ideological discourse) and his embodied experience. The dialogic relation between these contradictory dimensions of his existence comes to eventually materialise in the form of multilingual writing, which ultimately becomes his lifeline of escape from the ideologically enforced oppression and paralysis he experiences in his birthplace.

In a later scene, the text again recalls the disjunction between discourse and embodied experience in a depiction of Stephen's ten-o'clock English lecture: While “the heads of his classmates meekly bent as they wrote in their notebooks the points they were bidden to note, nominal definitions, essential definitions and examples or dates of birth or death, chief works, a favourable and an unfavourable criticism side by side,” Stephen's “own head was unbent for his thoughts wandered abroad and whether he looked around the little class of students or out of the window across the desolate gardens of the green an odour assailed him of cheerless cellardamp and decay” (192). The image of Stephen's unbent head ensconced in a mass of bent heads becomes mirrored in the disjunction he perceives in Cranly, whose head, like Stephen's, is not bent but unlike Stephen's (whose thoughts are wandering beyond, rather than trapped within, the classroom) is still, immobilised, “poised squarely above its bending fellows like the head of a priest appealing without humility to the tabernacle for the humble worshippers about him.” Here Stephen raises the metaphorical question that will mirror the disjunction within Cranly that Stephen, too, experiences as his own internal conflict: “Why was it that when he thought of Cranly he could never raise before his mind the entire image of his body but only the

image of the head and face? Even now against the grey curtain of the morning he saw it before him like the phantom of a dream, the face of a severed head or deathmask, crowned on the brows by its stiff black upright hair as by an iron crown.” In Stephen’s perception, Cranly’s body is severed from his head, which I suggest depicts the disjunction between the disembodied politics of oppression (here the ideological weight of British imperialism that is the enforcer of the methodology of English instruction this scene dramatizes) and the hero’s singular, embodied experience. Later in the chapter, the conversation with the dean of studies—“a poor Englishman in Ireland” (204)—sustains this disjunction as Stephen attempts a dialogic exchange on “the esthetic question,” only to arrive at a stalemate: “Stephen, disheartened suddenly by the dean’s firm dry tone, was silent. The dean also was silent” (205). The speechless outcome of this intercultural struggle is broken only by “a distant noise of many boots and confused voices came up the staircase,” which effects a physical rupture in the paralysing silence, like the material rupture in the word “ivory” as I will shortly discuss. This is the context in which Stephen articulates the iconic utterance so widely referenced in Joyce scholarship: his experience of the dean’s language as a coincidence of contraries and a site of struggle, at once “familiar” and “foreign.”

Scholarship has been quick to conclude that Stephen’s “unrest of spirit” uncomplicatedly signifies a revolt against the English language. Declan Kiberd, for example, has reflected on the “split linguistic choice” Stephen encounters in this episode of *Portrait* and has suggested that the text conveys an ideological conflict that effectively makes the subject a battleground of split, and violently splitting, realities: “Hence Stephen's unrest of spirit.”<sup>50</sup> However, Kiberd, too, in line with scholars like Seamus Deane and Emer Nolan, reduces Stephen's irresolute relationship with his language(s) to a binary opposition between “native” and “imperial” without accounting for the multilingualism palpably present in the text or for the psychic and ideological nuances the text develops beyond that binary. It is crucial to note that Stephen’s rejection of Englishness does not necessarily equate to a revolt against, or a desire to destroy, the English language; and neither do his objections to the soul-deadening education methods of his college find solace in Irishness or the Irish language. This becomes evident in his recollection of his “peasant friend” Davin:

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<sup>50</sup> “James Joyce and Mythic Realism,” in *Inventing Ireland* (London: Vintage Books, 1996), 332.

[Davin's] nurse had taught him Irish and shaped his rude imagination by the broken lights of Irish myth. He stood towards this myth upon which no individual mind had ever drawn out a line of beauty and to its unwieldy tales that divided themselves as they moved down the cycles in the same attitude as towards the Roman catholic religion, the attitude of a dull-witted loyal serf. (195)

Similar to the “deathmask” that is Cranly’s face, Davin’s Irish instruction only serves to bind him to a politically contrarian and yet equally shackling, oppressive, disembodied ideology: “Whatever of thought or of feeling came to [Davin] from England or by way of English culture his mind stood against in obedience to a password: and of the world that lay beyond England he knew only the foreign legion of France in which he spoke of serving” (195-96). Through Stephen’s eyes, Davin appears as paralitically subjugated by Irishness as Cranly and the rest of his studiously obedient peers are to Englishness; and Stephen rejects either of these states of being. Cranly’s “priestlike face, priestlike in its pallor, in the widewinged nose, in the shadowings below the eyes and along the jaws, priestlike in the lips that were long and bloodless and faintly smiling” (192-93) associates him with the Roman Catholic Church, which the text echoes again several pages later when Stephen compares Davin’s relationship to Irish mythology, the nationalist sanctimonious depiction of unadulterated, pre-imperial Irishness, to “the same attitude as towards the Roman catholic religion, the attitude of a dull-witted loyal serf.” The passage as a whole seems to imply the sentiment Joyce expressed in an August 29, 1904 letter to Nora, shortly before emigrating from Ireland: “My mind rejects the whole present social order and Christianity—home, the recognised virtues, classes of life, and religious doctrines.”<sup>51</sup>

In the same way that Stephen’s distaste for the oppressive authoritarianism of the Roman Catholic Church does not automatically and uncomplicatedly lead to him rejecting either Latin or Italian, as the reader finds him wholebodily engaging with the poetic materiality of each of these languages throughout the chapter, his rejection of either British imperialism or Irish nationalism does not move him to revolt against, or seek to destroy, either English or Irish. I would argue that what Stephen rejects is not any particular language but the systematic perpetuation of the *disembodied ideal* of any language. The immaterial (that is, abstract) categorisation

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<sup>51</sup> James Joyce, *Letters II*, ed. Richard Ellmann, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (New York: The Viking Press, 1966), 48.



of languages based on a predetermined hierarchical order that holds each language bound to a nation, a place of origin, and thereby a politically charged and moralist ideology, is a mode of linguistic objectification that Stephen works to overcome by *engaging with* language (rather than learning languages as if they are hard-bounded objects) through his body, which renders his poetic writing palpably material and thus rich and inventive, full of creative potential even when the poet feels inclined to slight it for its supposed lack of sense:

His own consciousness of language was ebbing from his brain and trickling into the very words themselves which set to band and disband themselves in wayward rhythms:

*The ivy whines upon the wall  
And whines and twines upon the wall  
The ivy whines upon the wall  
The yellow ivy on the wall  
Ivy, ivy up the wall.*

Did any one ever hear such drive! Lord Almighty! Who ever heard of ivy whining on a wall? Yellow ivy: that was all right. Yellow ivory also. And what about ivory ivy?

The word now shone in his brain, clearer and brighter than any ivory sawn from the mottled tusks of elephants. *Ivory, ivoire, avorio, ebur*. (193)

Multilingualism becomes for Stephen the unnameable linguistic locus that is neither English nor Irish, nor the antithesis of either; it is each of these languages swirling in a perpetual dialogic exchange, wherein national, political, ideological, as well as syntactical, phonological, and graphological interlingual boundaries within a single utterance—in this case, Stephen's epiphanic experience of the word "ivory"—become flexible and permeable. "Ivory" emerges from "ivy," as if "ivy" is a piece of folded fabric unfolding to release a hidden, but ever present, trickle of linguistic material: the letters "or" create "iv(or)y" and then proceed to mirror a kaleidoscopic reflection of the utterance in different languages (French *ivoire*, Italian *avorio*, and Latin *ebur*). Stephen's epiphany arises from a multilingual encounter that takes place within and through a single word.

Its resistance to overdetermination makes Joycean multilingualism politically important, as many Joyce scholars have acknowledged. Rosa Maria Bollettieri Bosinelli, for example, has written on the "transcreative" power of the multilingualism of the *Wake*, which she argues bears stylistic and creative, as well as political importance from a postcolonial perspective: "Joyce's appropriation of the language of the invaders made it his own and made it recognizable as such. His

manipulation of English was a means to make it his individual idiom, and he aimed at having any passage written by him attributable to him alone, as happens with *Finnegans Wake*, whose language has little to do with traditional English and challenges the very notion of semantics itself.”<sup>52</sup> Taylor-Batty echoes this perspective in her own accounts of Joyce’s “relentless literary and linguistic experimentation” as “an implicitly political subversion of English language and culture, as well as being radically experimental in aesthetic terms.”<sup>53</sup> Because of its linguistic resistance to definitive systemisation or centralisation, Philippe Sollers has called the *Wake* “the most formidably anti-fascist book produced between the two wars” and argued that its multilingual narrative design is a politicised construction of “active transnationalism, disarticulating, rearticulating and at the same time annulling the maximum number of traces—linguistic, historical, mythological, religious. In what he [Joyce] writes, nothing remains but differences, and so he calls into question all and every community (this is referred to as his ‘unreadability’),” adding that “Writing as multiplication of languages is not the property of a one-language check.”<sup>54</sup>

Emer Nolan has challenged Sollers by arguing that his politicisation of the *Wake* as a “transnational” text represents a “detached and historically transcendent” perspective that neglects the postcolonial context through which Joyce was writing: the particularly Irish historical and political experience of imperial violence, oppression, and repression, to which she finds many *Wake* readers to be oblivious and to have displayed a “surprising insensitivity to issues of colonial politics.”<sup>55</sup> Meanwhile, Seamus Deane has gone so far as to suggest that Joyce, like Yeats, can be deemed a nationalist writer “with imperial ambitions.”<sup>56</sup> These accounts address the bearing Joycean multilingualism has on grand narratives of political, national, or historical identity: an identity (or perhaps “identities”) rooted in language, and particularly an Irish writer’s relationship with English, which acts simultaneously as a “global” (that is, transnational and transcultural) language and a vehicle of imperial discourse. Even as we recognise the satirical and symbolic power of turning English

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<sup>52</sup> Rosa Maria Bollettieri Bosinelli, “Transcreative Joyce,” *Scientia Traductionis*, no. 8 (2010): 191–92.

<sup>53</sup> Taylor-Batty, *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction*, 114.

<sup>54</sup> Philippe Sollers, “Joyce & Co.,” in *In the Wake of the “Wake,”* ed. David Hayman and Elliott Anderson (Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), 108, 110.

<sup>55</sup> Emer Nolan, *James Joyce and Nationalism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 144–45, 141.

<sup>56</sup> Deane, “Imperialism/Nationalism,” 366.

on its head by “contaminating” it with fragments from “other” languages,<sup>57</sup> devising new phonetic spellings of apparently English words to result in complete and comical irreverence towards all languages involved,<sup>58</sup> or destabilising the transmission of semantic value between text and (Anglophone) reader, we must account for what else *Wakean* multilingualism can do besides its dialogic (linguistic and ideological) tug of war/love with English.

This study will push the boundaries of how multilingualism is critically defined in *Wake* scholarship: I aim to complicate the notion of what constitutes linguistic sovereignty, purity, or boundedness, and how we demarcate the different languages and registers of the *Wake*. I will explore how a language becomes tied to a set of historical, cultural, or ideological values and consider the stylistic as well as theoretical implications of that unstable union. I will demonstrate, through close textual analysis, how the reader’s singular, impermanent perceptions and (embodied) experiences of the languages of the *Wake* can creatively transform the text by generating multiple, variable semantic and narrative layers. And I will show why it is both critically important and productive to conceptualise literary multilingualism as more than the sum of multiple, discrete languages.

In this vein, my understanding of the term “multilingualism” in relation to the *Wake* encompasses not only *interlingual* differences (i.e. the encounters between different national languages, such as Italian and Swahili, in the text) but also *intra*lingual differences: the encounters between different forms of the “same” language, such as the multiple Englishes the text incorporates or the various accents, speech gestures, and interpretations that different readers can bring out. Indeed, *Wake* is simultaneously a kind of language—an artistically stylised and therefore, in a sense, fictional register structured (to a degree) on its own internal patterning that the reader can gradually pick up on—and yet it is not really a language: as I will demonstrate in further detail in chapter 2, *Wake* does not behave quite in the way

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<sup>57</sup> Consider, for example, the *Wakean* portmanteau “Amensch” (397.23): it puns on the English “amen” and the German “Mensch” (person) and “Mädchen” (girl), while also tying in the meaning of “mensch” as a foreignism in English (derived from Yiddish), signifying a person of integrity and moral respectability.

<sup>58</sup> For example, “Hogmanny di’ye gut? Hogmanny di’yesmellygut? And hogmanny d’yesmellyspatterygut?” (FW 455.9-11) visually and phonologically gestures towards “How many d’ye got? How many d’ye smelly got/gut? And how many d’ye smelly, spattery gut?” It simultaneously carries a phonological reference to the Irish greeting/farewell/blessing: “Go mbeannuighe Dia dhuit” (May God bless you), “Go mbeannuighe Dia’s Muire dhuit” (May God and Mary bless you), and “Go mbeannuighe Dia’s Muire’s Pádraig dhuit” (May God and Mary and Patrick bless you). See Roland McHugh, *Annotations to “Finnegans Wake,”* Third Edition (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 455.10-11.

that national languages do. This is in part because *Wakean* multilingualism defies standardisation, and unlike national languages *Wakean* does not have a fixed vocabulary, grammatical structure, or strict rules of pronunciation. (Imagine the absurdity of correcting someone's *Wakean* pronunciation, or their *Wakean* grammar!) In fact, the text creatively capitalises on the absence of such stabilising principles. "Interlingual" and "intralingual" distinctions alike take on new forms, as no single national language, dialect, or register truly and fully features as itself in the multilingual design of the *Wake*. What we rather find are fluid combinations of linguistic fragments—some of them visual, others phonological, and most (if not all) a slippery combination of one language's graphology with another language's phonology, complicated even further by the reader's own accent and multilingual repertoire. Most, if not all, of the time, the multilingual design of the text relies on the slippery contrarian coincidences between different languages, some of which we might know from the extra-*Wakean* world while others, like the characters' "phonological signatures" explored in chapter 2, are purely Joycean inventions. *Wakean* is a complex organism, whose boundaries are unstable and always shifting, and therefore our understanding of its particular multilingual design has to account for more than the sum of multiple national languages.

In the way that the monolingual paradigm punishingly inscribes itself on Stephen's body in *Portrait*, when the multilingualism of *Finnegans Wake* destabilises readers' expectations of what a text or an author owes them—semantic clarity, pronounceability, and translatability—some have blamed either the text for being difficult, Joyce for playing the trickster, or themselves for not knowing enough. Somehow few have considered holding the monolingual paradigm accountable for its failure to accommodate, let alone creatively empower, the multilingualism of the text or the vast diversity of human bodies and (linguistic or literary) experiences. Adherence to the monolingual paradigm can hamper the creative potential of *Wakean* multilingualism and intimidate the reader from surrendering her or his anxious attachment to semantic clarity, the desire for certainty, predictability, and narrative control in the literary experience—whereas letting go of the paradigm can act as an ethical and politically charged gesture that can make textual engagement more inventive and hospitable. My aim is not to master *Wakean* multilingualism or to translate its strangeness into clear and definitive terms: as Cixous has put it, "It is not a question of not having understood

anything, but of not letting oneself get locked into comprehension.”<sup>59</sup> I rather dedicate my critical engagement to the experience of reading, and more specifically reading through the realm of the multilingual consciousness.

This is the point where Bakhtin's theory of novelistic discourse becomes key to my engagement with Joycean multilingualism. In *The Dialogic Imagination*, the Russian theorist identifies the novel form as a phenomenon contingent upon “a very specific rupture in the history of European civilization: its emergence from a socially isolated and culturally deaf semipatriarchal society, and its entrance into international and interlingual contacts and relationships.”<sup>60</sup> He suggests that this historical turn triggered the newfound relevance of multilingualism to literature and declares that “The new cultural and creative consciousness lives in an actively polyglot world. The world becomes polyglot, once and for all and irreversibly. The period of national languages, coexisting but closed and deaf to each other, comes to an end.”<sup>61</sup> With the emergence of “this actively polyglot world, completely new relationships are established between language and its object (that is, the real world)—and this is fraught with enormous consequences for all the already completed genres that had been formed during eras of closed and deaf monoglossia.” Crucially, “Under these conditions of external and internal interillumination, each given language—even if its linguistic composition...were to remain absolutely unchanged—is, as it were, reborn, becoming qualitatively a different thing for the consciousness that creates it.”

Joyce undeniably lived an actively polyglot life, and the disjunction between monolingual literary practices, stilled in the grip of the monolingual paradigm, and his embodied, material experience of language persists through all of his writing. He was a multilingual body who did not simply speak or read in multiple but distinct, discretely bounded national languages that were “closed and deaf to each other”; in his multilingual consciousness, his Irishness encountered his English, his Triestine Italian encountered his Dublinesque Irish English and Nora's Galwegian, his Ibsenesque Norwegian, his Swiss German, his cosmopolitan Parisian French, his scholastic Latin, and eventually, through the writing of *Finnegans Wake*, an abundant melting pot of other languages, registers, pidgins, creoles, and fragments

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<sup>59</sup> Hélène Cixous, “The Author in Truth,” in *Coming to Writing and Other Essays*, ed. Deborah Jensen (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 161.

<sup>60</sup> Mikhail M. Bakhtin, “Epic and Novel: Toward a Methodology for the Study of the Novel,” in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Michael Holquist and Caryl Emerson Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 11.

<sup>61</sup> Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 12.

thereof, including Swahili, Russian, Greek, and so on. The writer's own, embodied multilingualism poetically materialises in his work, becoming not simply a representation of Joyce's embodied reality but an extraordinary technique of literary invention which demands an actively engaged reader.

The *Wake's* extraordinary creative capacity makes the generative value of its multilingualism impossible to ignore, and this is one of many qualities that render Joyce's text an excellent case study for this project, which seeks to overturn assimilationist approaches to multilingual writing and to challenge dismissive attitudes to reading and writing in and through multiple languages. My methodology will involve a series of detailed textual analyses of the various linguistic peculiarities constituting Joyce's narrative design, such as the poetic materiality of *Wakean* multilingualism (onomatopoeic, visual, phonological, rhythmical, and variously synaesthetic effects as explored in chapter 1), which evolves in chapter 2 into an exploration of the multilingual effects used to create systemised phonological patterns that serve as markers of character identity, materialisations of key characters' bodiliness and voices (conveyed in the form of speech patterns, like HCE's stammer or ALP's accent and idiomatic English—her “pigeony linguish” [FW 584.4]), and landmarks that link and leap between key points in space and time (historical, inter- and intratextual, mythological, etc.) throughout the narrative. However, in contrast to other studies of Joycean multilingualism, such as Taylor-Batty's or Margot Norris's, which have focused on the purely linguistic qualities of the text, my methodology will engage the multilingual reader, an embodiment of the multilingual consciousness, as a key point of reference in my analysis.

## V. The multilingual reader

My consideration of the multilingual reader as an integral figure in the theorisation of Joycean multilingualism is, to my knowledge, unique in Joyce scholarship. The figure of the reader in Joyce studies has most prominently featured in Attridge's work, particularly (though not exclusively) in his book *Joyce Effects: On Language, Theory, and History* (2000), wherein he makes a case for the postmodern reflexivity of Joyce's work, particularly in the way texts like *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* share with some postmodern art “an openness to the operations of chance, including an openness to the contingencies of the particular context in

which the work is enjoyed by a particular reader.”<sup>62</sup> He frames the discussion in terms that would later develop into *The Singularity of Literature* to say that “the work of art is experienced every time as a singular event, by an individual with specific (and changing) needs, expectations, memories, and associations, at a particular time and place,” and this “is factored in as an essential part of the work’s mode of operation.”<sup>63</sup>

Attridge’s theorisation of readerly singularity, and specifically the irrevocable importance of the reader’s participation in the creative processes of literature, sets a precedent for Taylor-Batty’s ground-breaking introduction of the language learner as a figure representative of the reader and the writer (both acting as agents of creativity and meaning-making), as well as particular fictional characters: for example, in her chapter on *Ulysses* in *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction*, she presents Stephen Dedalus as a foreigner in his first language, effectively a speaker of a motherless tongue; and in another instance she identifies a “linguistic unease” in the narrative voice of “Eumaeus,” which she suggests “reflects not only his lack of multilingual competence, but his unease with certain forms of English—the suggestion is that the native speaker can be a foreigner of sorts in his own language.”<sup>64</sup> Taylor-Batty argues that the text’s various multilingual techniques serve to perpetually foreignize the familiar, thereby positioning the reader, every and any Joyce reader, as a foreigner who must, then, resort to techniques of linguistic engagement and comprehension that are typical to the experience of language learning. Through this analytical framework, she alludes to the relational labour that Joyce’s inter- and intralingual narrative techniques compel the reader to exercise, arguing that “a multilingual consciousness creates an awareness of linguistic instability, and hence of the need to supplement and improve language”<sup>65</sup>—that is to say, the multilingual consciousness inspired by the text’s defamiliarising effects urges the reader to entertain multiple variations of signification and interpretation in the effort to fill in the semantic gaps or ambiguities opened up through multilingual play, thereby making the literary experience “an unlimited and unmitigated source of creative, stylistic and linguistic possibility.”<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Derek Attridge, *Joyce Effects: On Language, Theory and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 118.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Juliette Taylor-Batty, “Protean Mutations: James Joyce’s *Ulysses*,” in *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 134.

<sup>65</sup> Taylor-Batty, *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction*, 144.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

Taylor-Batty establishes that employing language-learning techniques as a way to read Joycean multilingualism makes for a productive scholarly method that dislocates but also unbridles the creative mind. My study expands to interrogate the capacity of this approach to encompass *Wakean* multilingualism and to then develop further innovative methods of theorising and engaging with it. Taylor-Batty is the first scholar to theorise multilingualism as a discrete stylistic technique in Joyce's work<sup>67</sup>—one meriting its own dedicated monograph, an independent field of interdisciplinary study, and a whole new way of positioning oneself in relation to a text, of employing one's linguistic capacity *and* limitations—but even in light of her notable achievement (whose originality and potential are yet to be adequately acknowledged and pursued in Joyce studies) she has persistently marginalized *Finnegans Wake* in her work with Joycean multilingualism. In her doctoral thesis, for example, she justifies that with the assertion that “though Joyce's last novel of course embodies [multilingualism's] most extreme form, this is fully developed in *Ulysses*,” thereby implying that a study of *Ulysses*an multilingualism is sufficient for the understanding of Joycean multilingualism as a whole.<sup>68</sup> Having dedicated my own project almost exclusively to the *Wake*, I find that this assertion, which is rather an assumption, is simply incorrect.

While in *Ulysses* multilingualism serves as an integral stylistic technique that suggests previously undervalued or overlooked perspectives on the role of non-English languages in Joyce's oeuvre, it remains indisputable that it is an Anglophone novel intended for a fluent Anglophone readership. *Finnegans Wake*, by contrast, is possibly the only work in Anglophone literature where a “native” command of English poses virtually no interpretative advantage for the reader. It renders an entirely unprecedented experience of literary multilingualism as not only does the

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<sup>67</sup> Joycean multilingualism has, of course, been consistently addressed in Joyce scholarship as it is an unavoidable aspect of his works. However, the existing studies have not ventured to develop designated multilingual frameworks of engagement with the texts quite in the way that Taylor-Batty has done, or in the way that I aim to achieve in the present study. Nonetheless, students of Joycean multilingualism would find the following reference list essential reading: Fritz Senn, *Joyce's Dislocutions*, ed. Jean Paul Riquelme (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984); Adam Piette, *Remembering and the Sound of Words: Mallarmé, Proust, Joyce, Beckett* (Oxford: New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1996); Barry McCrea, *Languages of the Night: Minor Languages and the Literary Imagination in Twentieth-Century Ireland and Europe* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015); Steven G. Yao, “‘Transluding from the Otherman’: Translation and the Language of *Finnegans Wake*,” in *Translation and the Languages of Modernism: Gender, Politics, Language* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 191–208; Kimberly J. Devlin and Christine Smedley, eds., *Joyce's Allmaziful Plurabilities: Polyvocal Explorations of Finnegans Wake*, Florida James Joyce Series (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2015); Laurent Milesi, ed., *James Joyce and the Difference of Language* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

<sup>68</sup> Juliette Taylor, “Foreign Music: Linguistic Estrangement and Its Textual Effects in Joyce, Beckett, Nabokov and Rushdie” (University of Warwick, 2003), 53–54.



*Wake* materialise as multilingualism (and multilingualism materialises as the *Wake*)—Beckett's famous notion rings true here: it is not a work “*about* something, *it is that something itself*”<sup>69</sup>—but it is also a work that demands a multilingual readership. Thus, although my research objectives overlap with Taylor-Batty's to a significant extent, and her theorisation of the language-learning experience as a methodological key to understanding and engaging with Joycean multilingualism informs important aspects of my work with the *Wake*'s language (especially in chapter 1), this project formulates a set of textual approaches that emerge from the unique challenges, cultural and ethical considerations, and modes of multilingual writing and reading posed by none other than the *Wake*.

My intervention also responds to a peculiar disjunction between Taylor-Batty's theorisation of multilingualism (that is, how she describes and historicises her methodology) and her readerly practice. On the one hand, she structures a clear, thoroughly researched transdisciplinary framework engaging Shklovsky's theory of *ostranenie*, Mallarmé's manoeuvre of the Babel myth as a metaphor for the “modernist crisis of language,” and Walter Benjamin's approach to translation as a creative, dialogic practice, while employing Meir Sternberg's concept of “translational mimesis”<sup>70</sup> to articulate a rough categorical distinction between the different modernist approaches to multilingual writing covered in her book. Yet her textual analysis, especially in her readings of *Ulysses*, actually relies on her experience as a reading multilingual body: Without explicitly considering the role of her own multilingual disposition and singularity, her background as a language learner and a translator fluent in French and German evidently informs some of her most exciting and innovative readings of *Ulysses*, a text whose interlingual dynamics have been widely overlooked in the midst of scholarship's preoccupation with its intralingual elements. She theorises Joycean multilingualism as stylistic experimentation with “an acute metalinguistic focus, an awareness of the

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<sup>69</sup> Samuel Beckett, “Dante... Bruno. Vico.. Joyce,” in *Our Exagmination Round His Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress* (London: Faber & Faber, 1972), 14.

<sup>70</sup> Taylor-Batty summarises this framework as a spectrum held within the polarities of “two extremes”: “an author might choose to match the languages in the represented reality with the languages in the text (‘vehicular matching’), or they might dismiss as irrelevant the linguistic variations of their characters by presenting an unproblematically unilingual text (‘homogenizing convention’).” *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction*, 41. She sources this terminology from Meir Sternberg's “Polylingualism as Reality and Translation as Mimesis,” which (independently of Taylor-Batty's point) happens to briefly and matter-of-factly mention *Finnegans Wake* as a relative of macaronic writing exemplifying “*vehicular promiscuity*...where shifts of medium are mimetically gratuitous and polylingual means are often flagrantly summoned to represent a unilingual reality of discourse.” *Poetics Today* 2, no. 4 (Summer-Autumn 1981): 224, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1772500>.

arbitrariness of language, and a growing interest in the expressive possibilities of other languages,” as well as a Mallarméan fascination with “the post-Babelian crisis,”<sup>71</sup> in almost the same breath as she offers unique textual interpretations whose insight and originality emerges not in consequence to but in spite of those frameworks. In practice, her readings show how *un*arbitrary—how tactile and materially palpable, how fully grounded in the immediate, singular event of reading, how contingent upon the reader’s body—Joyce’s language actually is. Although her textual engagements are made no less illuminating or significant as a result of this subtle disjunction, she misses a crucial opportunity to explore how the text is transformed by the vast idiocultural diversity of reading bodies creatively engaging with Joycean multilingualism. How can the reader’s unique knowledge, abilities, and limitations become sources of scholarly value, rather than incidental experiences deemed analytically unreliable simply because they do not fit into a standardising theoretical framework, or because they cannot reliably be replicated through one? If a readerly experience cannot be replicated—if it is truly unique—does that mean that it is of no concern to scholarship?

The figure of the multilingual reader envisioned here accounts for the language-learning experience but also expands upon it to consider the reader’s *embodied* position in the literary event, as well as to address what semantic, structural, cultural, and material effects certain specific languages can yield in reading the *Wake*. This approach seeks to account for the singularity of the reading experience (which implies variability between different readers and events, as well as changeability across time or embodied and cultural space), recognising how uniquely significant this is in the capacity of the *Wake*’s multilingual design to create meaning and affect, as well as the particularities of different languages. For example, when I discuss how Joyce uses multilingualism as a technique to render what I term semantic or narrative simultaneity in chapter 1, whereby a single utterance, sentence, or passage can carry multiple and distinct narrative levels using the visual qualities of one language and the phonological qualities of another, I consider how and why the author employs specific languages for the task (e.g. English and German). I also critically consider the implications of the reader’s own unique multilingual repertoire: That is, how does the reader’s fluency in German but not French influence and transform the *Wake*’s narrative? How does the text shift semantically

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<sup>71</sup> Taylor-Batty, *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction*, 114, 117.

and materially when the reader is encountering language(s) s/he does not speak fluently, and likewise how does fluency affect the text's ability to yield meaning?

As part of both the ethical drive of this study and its theoretical focus on singularity, I liberally engage my own readerly experience, noting my particular idioculture and multilingual repertoire (both in the sense of the specific languages I speak and my singular, experiential and biographical relationship with each of them), and I consider this in relation to the relevant experiences of other *Wake* readers as reported in Joyce scholarship (textually and in conference settings) as well as in the *Wake* reading groups I have been part of here at the University of York and the University of Leeds throughout the course of this project. Thus, while I use my own embodied experience as a resource, the scope of the project exceeds the limitations of a single reader's singularity. My use of the multilingual-reader figure is not a mirroring of my multilingual self, and I understand the multilingual reader as not merely a person who speaks multiple languages.

The multilingual reader is an actively engaged reader: a language learner. The language learner's relationship to language is distinct in that s/he never expects to encounter a recognisable reflection of themselves in linguistic engagement. Their proficiency in their "other" language is constantly developing; they are always learning, always carefully attentive to the particularities of other speakers' accents, styles of expression, the rules and exceptions of the language itself, as well as the varied cultural spaces where they happen to encounter it. The language learner is acutely aware of the labour of relating because it takes a conscious, attentive effort to make oneself understood in a language and a cultural space that does not grant one complete, unfettered, effortless access (the kind promised by the various forms of tribal membership constructed through the monolingual paradigm, such as national identity, a mother tongue, citizenship by birthright, etc.). By the act of choosing to learn a new language, one agrees by default to take on the often challenging, always transformative experience of hosting otherness within one's own body. Like reading, speaking a new language is an act of encountering an extraneous otherness within and through one's own body: This is an act of hospitality to difference, as well as an act of inhabiting that difference in one's own, singular way.

Linguistic (and thereby literary) engagement is so fundamentally dependent on memory—on my ability to repeatedly remember and reproduce strings of symbols, verbal units, grammatical structures, the material manifestations of rules and systems that exist outside of myself, that persist in spite of my will, and that are

yet inextricable elements of myself in a way that I, too, can shift and transform them as they ceaselessly move me, sometimes even threatening to unwrite me—that acts of reading and interpretation can easily slip into a compulsive hoarding of knowledge. As Attridge has observed, through the “unparalleled scholarly attention” that texts like *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* have received over the years, they have come to “assert their own massive monumentality, their own pre-programming of every interpretative move...: every detail is assumed to be worthy of the most scrupulous editorial consideration, the most minute genetic tracing, the most careful historical placing, the most ingenious hermeneutic activity—all in the name of greater fixity, permanence, and truth.”<sup>72</sup> The extraordinary body of scholarship dedicated to unpicking the minutest linguistic fragment or intertextual reference in the *Wake*’s multilingual narrative design testifies to this drive—of valuable readerly, scholarly curiosity and creativity to be sure, but also a compulsion to control the text through a perpetually unfulfilled desire for exhaustive comprehension.

I would suggest that this drive is reflected in the desire for monolingualism, which can trigger at once assimilative and exclusionary modes of reading and relating that, as I will show throughout this study, eclipse some of the most inventive and pleasurable ways of engaging with *Wakean* multilingualism. Ironically, as this monumental body of knowledge grows and solidifies the canonicity of Joyce’s work, his text becomes increasingly marginalised to the periphery of specialised scholarship and subsequently gets rendered inaccessible, even intimidating to a non-specialist, or indeed non-natively Western and Anglophone, readership.

My use of the figure of the multilingual, rather than the monolingual, reader thus seeks to open up the boundaries of what constitutes a productive literary engagement with *Wakean* multilingualism. Language learners are (sometimes painfully) intimate with the act of forgetting. We move between languages and cultural spaces, we cross boundaries, and we strive to remember (and accurately place<sup>73</sup>) as many words, grammatical rules, and vernacular conventions as we can; but we always expect to mis-place or forget our words. We discourse through a blind spot—multiple growing, shrinking, and shifting blind spots—that we do not take for granted because the languages and fragments that we do hold (at least momentarily) are not granted to us; we know the labour of acquiring and retaining them, as well as

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<sup>72</sup> Attridge, *Joyce Effects*, 120.

<sup>73</sup> To place language means to use it appropriately, and hopefully accurately, in its appropriate venue.

the anxiety of others questioning the validity of our knowledge and literary practice in them.

Meanwhile, the act of repeatedly misremembering and mis-placing our words constitutes an integral part of our ability to remember and accurately place them. The multilingual reader, my conceptualisation of the actively engaged *Wake* reader, represents this creative drive implicit in the experience of language learning. The multilingual reader approaches the text from a position of vigilant curiosity that is driven by a desire for knowledge and comprehension while simultaneously exercising different creative strategies of engaging with difference that is by default understood to be ungraspable and uncontrollable; the multilingual reader's approach does not compulsively seek to annihilate difficulty or incomprehension but rather employs every intellectual, linguistic, imaginative, and bodily resource singularly available to them to engage in the play of literary engagement. The perpetual, singular encounters with *Wakean* multilingualism are rendered processes of becoming as readily hospitable to its unknowns and untranslatables, as hospitably accepting of our own blind spots in the literary experience, as we normally are hospitable and accepting of the readily familiar languages, cultural references, and symbols we encounter in the spaces and texts we have known as monolingual.

As multilingualism scholars have consistently suggested, no reader is ever strictly monolingual but it is the monolingual paradigm, so fundamentally embedded in how we understand language and how the process of reading has widely been theorised, that compels us to identify and reinforce categorical boundaries between some forms of language and not others. For example, in the scope of the monolingual paradigm, English and French are drawn apart as languages foreign to each other; yet Caribbean English, Irish English, British English, or American English are deemed to be derivatives of the same language even though each of these linguistic forms differ regionally, culturally, verbally, phonologically, and even sometimes grammatically and syntactically. And, as I will explore through my analysis of the *Wake's* multilingual phonologies in chapter 2, the systematic effort to identify where one language ends and another begins proves impossible to do in a way that can yield universally accessible, verifiable, or replicable results.

This is not to say that the interlingual relationship between English and French is identical to the one between Caribbean English and Irish English, or the one between Caribbean English and British English. Even languages that share the same alphabet or adhere to similar grammatical conventions have marked cultural,

phonological, and other differences. Those differences make the study of languages such a politically and ethically important experience (as well as an intellectually enriching one, as Klosty Beajour shows in *Alien Tongues*) in that it broadens our worldview, raises our awareness of different ways of life and thinking, and compels us to learn how to relate to others without obliterating their singularities or projecting our own singular and limited experiences and expectations onto them. In reference to Clarice Lispector's 1964 novel *The Passion According to G. H.*, Cixous suggests that "The text teaches us that the most difficult thing to do is to arrive at the most extreme proximity while guarding against the trap of projection, of identification."<sup>74</sup> The "trap of projection" conceptually refers to a long-standing problem in the discourse surrounding multiculturalism and, reflexively, multilingualism: that is, the difficulty of accepting an-other (of acting in hospitality to difference) without assimilating that other into a familiar and pre-determined order.

*Finnegans Wake* makes for such a fitting case study of the stylistic and theoretical-ethical dimensions of multilingualism precisely because, more explicitly than arguably any other text emerging from a West European Anglophone tradition, it exposes the inadequacy of assimilative approaches to literary engagement (thus also the inadequacy of the monolingual paradigm and the problems that arise when readers and scholars inadvertently or otherwise attempt to adhere to its standards). In chapter 3, I will show how these ethical, cultural, and political dimensions of multilingual engagement have concretely influenced both the stylistic choices that different *Wake* translators have made and the ways in which scholarship (as readership) has qualitatively evaluated and historicised these translations. In chapter 2, my employment of a linguistics-inspired methodological distinction between the "iconic" and "vehicular" qualities of *Wake* will show the interpretative benefits of drawing inter- and intralingual boundaries in Joyce's text, as well as expose the impossibility of solidifying those boundaries when faced with the slippery changeability of readers' culturally varied, singular experiences of language. Hereby I question whether *Wake* can be regarded as a single, unified language system, a collection of multiple yet countable languages, or a different form of literary invention altogether. Finally in chapter 4, I will expose the ethical problems with the assimilative approach to multilingual engagement via a critique of C. K. Ogden's dismissal of Joycean multilingualism and his development of Basic English as a

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<sup>74</sup> Cixous, "The Author in Truth," 170–71.

response to the growing cultural and linguistic diversity following the mass migration and intercultural mixing resulting from the world wars, as well as the rapid advancement of new communication technologies and travel.<sup>75</sup> Throughout I approach Joycean multilingualism from a multidisciplinary perspective: I consider the syntax, phonology, semantics, and other structural qualities of the *Wake's* language, as well as the place of the author in literary engagement, but the key emphasis of each chapter remains the role, responsibility, and singularity of the reader.

## VI. Chapter-by-chapter synopsis

Chapter 1, “Multilingual Matter-er-s: Speaking as a Foreigner through *Wakean* Materiality,” lays the groundwork by studying *Wakean* multilingualism as a stylistic and literary endeavour. Through close textual analysis, I locate the key stylistic effects attributable to Joyce's multilingual technique, including onomatopoeia, narrative layering and simultaneity, and the synaesthetic qualities that enable the reader to experience *Wakean* not as a distanced (and distancing), arbitrary, and abstract linguistic experiment—a mental exercise akin to a crossword puzzle—but as a palpable fabric, a *material* literary experience. Here I use the Shklovskian concept of *ostranenie* in reference to Taylor-Batty's application of it to the multilingual narrative design of *Ulysses* through her own experience as a language learner and translator. I engage with her conceptualisation of linguistic estrangement as central to the multilingual mindset, whose inherent distance from the semantic content of the “foreign” language heightens her or his sensitivity to its material and aesthetic qualities. Because no single reader is likely to be fluent in all the languages, registers, and cultural references woven into the book's complex narrative design, the semantic efficiency of *Wakean* is extremely unstable. I engage with the works of linguists such as Roman Jakobson, Joyce's contemporary Otto Jespersen, Steven Pinker, Natasha Lvovich through her work on the overlaps between second-language acquisition and the synaesthetic imagination-as-interpretation-strategy, and Scott Jarvis and Aneta Pavlenko on crosslinguistic influences in multilingual speakers.

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<sup>75</sup> For detailed analyses of the relationship between multilingual writing, travel, and migration in the modernist period, see Juliette Taylor-Batty, “Modernism and Babel,” in *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 16–38; Bridget T. Chalk, *Modernism and Mobility: The Passport and Cosmopolitan Experience*, First edition (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

The chapter explores the ways in which the *Wake*'s semantic instability engages the reader in a series of interpretative strategies that are akin to the ways in which multilinguals manoeuvre their non-native languages. With that, I show the ways in which *Finnegans Wake* invites every reader—even the self-identified monolingual reader—to cultivate a creative multilingual consciousness that embraces the rich stylistic scope of the text and relinquishes its dependency on the semantic value of language.

Chapter 2 builds on the previous chapter's engagements with multilingual materiality to specifically explore how different types of phonological patterning emerge throughout the text and create some idiosyncratically *Wakean* modes of textual embodiment. In the first half of the chapter, I outline some existing analytical frameworks from linguistics and cultural studies to reflect on how readers identify and respond to particular languages in the text based on their phonological makeup, phonotactics, and cultural signifiers. I demonstrate how phonological identification works in the *Wake* through one example wherein Russian phonology becomes conveyed through what looks like perplexing English, and another example, where I compare Joyce's use of Swahili in I.8, the "Anna Livia Plurabelle" chapter, with its re-imagination in the Italian translation he produced with Nino Frank.

The second half of the chapter deals with the peculiar role of the specifically *Wake* sound patterns: these are recurring visual, rhythmical, and, what is most important for my focus, phonological patterns that constitute the text's idiosyncratic, fictionalised "minor languages." The methodology of this chapter draws on the fields of linguistics and sociolinguistics through the works of Stephen Pinker, Asif Agha, and Ken Hyland, among others, as well as Chris Eagle's *Dysfluencies: On Speech Disorders in Modern Literature*, which traverses across linguistics and disability theory to explore creative literary manifestations of speech impediments, including HCE's stammer and ALP's lisp. The chapter employs the linguistic concepts of the "vehicular" (the semantically communicative function of language) and "iconic" (the symbolic, metadiscursive constellation of meanings beyond, and sometimes in direct contradiction to, the semantic signification) qualities of language to introduce a fresh analytical approach to the phonological complexity and narrative layering generated by *Wakean* multilingualism.

In chapter 3, "Multilingualism in Translation: The Russian *Finnegans Wake(s)*," I decentre the focus from English-as-a-major-language in the text and offer an in-depth comparative analysis of the two most important Russian



translations of the *Wake*: Henri Volokhonsky's *Wéik Finneganov* (FW 3.1–171.28) and Konstantin Belyaev's "Anna Livia Pliurabell'" (FW 209.18–212.19). Thus I offer insight into the stylistic particularities and readerly experience of *Wakean* multilingualism as it is manifest in a minor language, Russian, which unlike the majority of the world's Slavic languages is also based in Cyrillic, a minor graphological system. I place the Russian translations in context with their West European counterparts, framing their translatorial methodologies in relation to important projects such as the Joyce/Nino Frank Italian *Anna Livia Plurabelle*, Beckett and Perón's Francophone *Anna Lyvia Pluratsel'*, Robbert-Jan Henkes and Erik Bindervoet's Dutch *Finnegans Wake*, and (briefly) modern projects such as Philippe Lavergne's French *Finnegans Wake* and Dai Congrong's Chinese translation currently in progress. In my textual analysis and comparisons, I explore how different translators have chosen to handle the text's multilingualism—whether they reimagine and adapt it to their target language's literary and cultural space or edit it out of their translations, whether the translations act as idiosyncratic multilingual texts or rather as elucidations embellished with editorial notes and references to Joyce's "original"<sup>76</sup>—and I consider the stylistic as well as cultural and potentially political implications of their differing methodological approaches to this intrinsic aspect of the *Wake*.

In my final chapter, "Towards a Multilingual Ethics through *Finnegans Wake*," I develop new theoretical concepts to address the key ethical issues of boundedness and hospitality, estrangement and homecoming, as well as mutual transformation and "transmaterialisation," occurring in the space of encountering difference—be that an encounter with an-other subject; with an experience belonging to an-other; with a stylistically estranging or destabilising, "monstrous" text<sup>77</sup>; or with an-other, foreign language. The chapter begins with a backward glance at Bakhtin's theory of literary multilingualism, whereby I re-evaluate the dialogic imagination through an ethical lens. Implicitly mirroring my linguistic preoccupation with the text's poetic materiality in chapter 1, in this final chapter I cultivate an ethical theory of embodied literary engagement with *Wakean* multilingualism through the works of feminist phenomenologist and disability theorist Margrit

<sup>76</sup> Of course, there is no single, uncontested "original" *Wake*.

<sup>77</sup> The theoretical concept of the "monstrous" body (and text) derives from Margrit Shildrick, "You Are There Like My Skin: Reconfiguring Relational Economies," in *Thinking through the Skin*, ed. Sara Ahmed and Jackie Stacey, Transformations (New York and London: Routledge, 2001), upon which I will elaborate in detail throughout chapter 4.

Shildrick, her collaboration with disability theorist Janet Price, and through essays and poetry by multilingual Caribbean poet Marlene NourbeSe Philip in complementarity to Audre Lorde’s reflections on the ethics of establishing a creative dialectic between different bodies and discourses interconnected within public and private spaces. I place my work with these authors in relation to Judith Butler and Maurice Merleau-Ponty as key influences, and within this scope I theorise the ethical significance of controversial responses to *Wakean* multilingualism by Joyce’s contemporaries, such as C. K. Ogden and F. R. Leavis.<sup>78</sup> I introduce an ethical dimension to chapter 2’s stylistic exploration of the *Wake*’s multilingual phonologies through the concept of “transmaterialisation,” used to convey the complexity of engaging with the multilingual text in an embodied and hospitable way, wherein both the hospitable reader and the text become part of a mutually transformative creative encounter. I then demonstrate the cumulative methodological productivity and ethical significance of these concepts through a close textual analysis of a *Wake* passage narrated through Issy’s “little language”—one of the text’s multiple, idiosyncratic, fictionalised, and thus “minor” styles of discourse—in addition to Joyce’s poetic use of unnameable pidgins and ambivalently-allusive multilingual elements lurking in the space between Spanish and Portuguese or English and the characters’ peculiar Anglophone registers.

The second half of the chapter builds on these premises to explore the creative and ethical potentiality of the *Wake*’s public dimension: that is, the ways in which its unique multilingual composition has historically invited—even necessitated—group collaboration and thus established a global reading community. At this point, I focus on the text’s accessibility, challenging some canonised scholarly visions of *Wakean* multilingualism as a distortion of the English language and a “darkening” of sense. Instead, I emphasise the subtle ways in which the reader’s engagement with multilingual difference can be a positive source of pleasure and illumination (as opposed to impenetrable difficulty)—conveyed through my concept of “multilingual homecoming”<sup>79</sup>—and it can offer a hospitable space of encountering other readers with new, singular linguistic and emotional experiences

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<sup>78</sup> Because my aim with chapter 4 is to explore the key ethical considerations of engaging with multilingualism, both in Joyce’s text and beyond, in the present moment as it pertains to Joyce’s contemporary global readership, this chapter does not delve into the historical aspect of the multilingual controversy in the modernist period. However, Juliette Taylor-Batty supplies an excellent analysis of the debate within Joyce’s immediate historical context in the “Modernism and Babel” chapter of *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction*.

<sup>79</sup> The experience of recognising a familiar language and register in the multilingual fabric of the text, thus “coming home” into the estranging multilingual space.

of the text that are both different to and yet compatible with ours—the “multilingual encounter.”

## Chapter 1. Multilingual Matter-er-s: Speaking as a foreigner through *Wakean* materiality

### I. What is *Wakean* materiality?

In the preface to *Joyce's Dislocutions*, Fritz Senn movingly remarks on the communal spirit of Joyce's work: "We could almost define Joyce by one of his most kinetic effects: he actually brings people together and turns more of them into friends than their divergent views would make it seem likely. There is a real, diverse, humane, many-minded Joyce community."<sup>1</sup> The "divergent views" Senn speaks of emerge from singular, thinking, feeling bodies, who not only "understand" the *Wake* differently (however we understand the meaning of "understanding" in relation to this text) but also pronounce, perform, rhythmicise, experience, and embody *Wakese* differently. The *Wake* brings people together not only because it universally challenges and mystifies its readers, but also because it makes reading-together—something many readers may not have experienced since childhood, when they were first learning how to read, pronounce, and process the symbols on a page—fun, surprising, enriching, rewarding, and necessary. Engaging with *Wakean* multilingualism recalls the childlike wonder of reading free of semantic, historical, symbolic, or formal overdetermination: "We are once amore as babes awondering in a wold made fresh where with the hen in the storyaboot we start from scratch" (*FW* 336.16). It evokes the "maternal" hospitality of learning environments where our unique abilities, knowledge, and blind spots are accepted and our singular creative engagement and growth encouraged—a hospitality promised, but not necessarily delivered, by the monolingual-paradigmatic construction of *the* "mother tongue," as discussed in the introduction. The *Wake's* multilingualism makes the text difficult to encapsulate in a tidy, predictable system of comprehension, and while that might withhold some of the shared, predetermined meanings and linguistic structures that make us "fluent" speakers and readers in particular contexts, it also opens us up to new, different, powerful means of comprehending and experiencing literary language.

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<sup>1</sup> Senn, *Dislocutions*, xi.

One of those creatively fruitful modes of reading is an active, dialogic readerly engagement with the poetic materiality of Wakeese. That is, the ability of *Wakean* multilingualism to convey meanings and experiences not strictly through the semantic values of words or the descriptive functionality of language (what Henri Gobard has coined as the *vehicular* function of language<sup>2</sup>) but rather through its material qualities, such as: the way Wakeese looks on the page; the way(s) it sounds; how it engages the reader's body to create multiple and varying semantic and narrative layers; how it creates shapes in and through the reader's mouth to convey particular images, or dramatize the physicality of characters; and how meanings and imagery can transform through the readers' singular accents, multilingual repertoires, and creative or interpretative choices. Through theoretical frameworks derived from the works of Bakhtin, Shklovsky, Taylor-Batty, Attridge, Jakobson, Jespersen, and Natasha Lvovich, this chapter will engage in close textual analysis to illustrate how the *Wake's* multilingual design can diversify our methods of reading and make this apparently impenetrable text uniquely accessible to readers of various idiocultures<sup>3</sup> and bodily dispositions. Part of my goal here is to show that the joys and pleasures of *Finnegans Wake* are not, and should not be, confined to a niche academic readership. Through an analysis of how *Wakean* multilingualism creatively exploits the sounds, shapes, and textures of language, this chapter will show how the dialogic relationship between the text's multilingual design and the reader's singularity (that includes a reader's particular linguistic repertoire, accent(s), deliberate creative choices, and involuntary speech gestures) can produce a richly evocative, and always potentially changeable, literary experience.<sup>4</sup>

My exploration of the poetic materiality of Wakeese urges a reconsideration of the definition, and indeed the necessity, of fluency. Theoretically, my suggestion that stammering comprehension fuels textual creativity echoes Shklovsky's conceptualisation of *ostranenie*: the artistic act that shatters the abstraction of linguistic form in order to expose the materiality of meaning. *Ostranenie* is the poetic gesture of carving through the surface of an image—that is, the predetermined, descriptive, symbolic representation of an object—and extracting from the inarticulate depths of experience a linguistic materialisation of that object.

<sup>2</sup> Cited in Susan Shaw Sailer, "Universalizing Languages: *Finnegans Wake* Meets Basic English," *James Joyce Quarterly* 36 (1999): 864, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25474090>.

<sup>3</sup> Attridge, *The Singularity of Literature*, 22.

<sup>4</sup> While this chapter will set the stage by exploring what exactly constitutes "poetic materiality" in the *Wake* and what role(s) the reader's body plays in creative engagement with the text's multilingualism, chapter 2 will explore the phonological aspects of *Wakean* materiality in further depth.

The concept defies the separation between language and object, and turns language into that material object itself. Beckett's early response to *Work in Progress* parallels Shklovsky's thought quite soundly: "Here form *is* content, content *is* form. You complain this stuff is not written in English. It is not written at all. It is not to be read—or rather it is not only to be read. It is to be looked at and listened to. His writing is not *about* something; *it is that something itself*....When the sense is sleep, the words go to sleep....When the sense is dancing, the words dance."<sup>5</sup>

Shklovsky's preamble to his conceptualisation of *ostranenie* in the essay "Iskusstvo kak priëm" (Art as Reception) articulates his fear of the proverbial darkness of forgetting, of losing a sense of sense and experience, which fittingly parallels something of the *Wake* reader's compulsion to fill in the semantic gaps opened up by the text's multilingualism and to move ever closer to understanding, illumination, and recognition. In working to explain why literary artists must strive to overcome the "automatization" of linguistic communication, Shklovsky invokes a sentiment from Lev Tolstoy's diary, wherein Tolstoy recounts a day when he was dusting in his room, eventually recirculating to the sofa, and failing to remember whether or not he had already cleaned it. This then leads him to reflect on the tragedy of life passing by unnoticed as living ceases to be a conscious experience and instead becomes a stream of automated patterns of habit. Shklovsky, apparently deeply moved by the prospect of a life (and, perhaps, a mind) lost to inertial obscurity, repeatedly reiterates Tolstoy's sentiment: "If the entire, complex lives of many people pass by unconsciously, then it is as if this life never was."<sup>6</sup> "This is how life gets wasted, materialising in nothing," Shklovsky goes on:

Automatization destroys objects, clothing, furniture, wife, and fear of war...And this is why, in order to bring feeling back to life, to experience objects, in order to make a stone feel stony, there exists this thing called art. The purpose of art is to evoke an experience of objects as perception, not as comprehension; the reception of art is the reception of the estrangement [*ostranenie*] of objects and the reception of encumbered form, increasing the difficulty and duration of comprehension, because the process of artistic experience is an end in itself and has to be prolonged.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Samuel Beckett, *Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment* (New York: Grove Press, 1984), 27.

<sup>6</sup> Tolstoy qtd. in Viktor Shklovsky, "Iskusstvo kak priëm," in *O Teorii Prozy* (Moskva: Krug, 1925), 63.

<sup>7</sup> Shklovsky, "Iskusstvo kak priëm," 63.

The metaphorical depiction of *ostranenie* as that method of writing that “make[s] a stone feel stony” is iconic in Russian as well as Anglophone literary theory and criticism; and the term *ostranenie* itself, translatable as “estrangement” or “defamiliarisation,” has come to be understood as a mode of linguistic distancing or foreignization that should lead to an intensified experience of the materiality of written images, and of poetic language as itself a material object. Taylor-Batty makes thorough use of this definition of *ostranenie* (which she references by its English name, defamiliarisation) to theorise Joycean multilingualism as a form of “linguistic alienation” and a “*perpetuat[ion]* of linguistic crisis.”<sup>8</sup> Her valuable, and truly innovative, contribution emerges from her association of Shklovsky’s theory of poetic materiality with the experience of learning a foreign language: “in both *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*,” she writes, “linguistic ambiguity and the resultant materiality of language become the key elements of Joycean punning, wordplay and defamiliarisation. Likewise, foreign languages do not merely emphasise the ambiguity of language, but are used by Joyce for productively defamiliarising effect.”<sup>9</sup> Using concepts derived from Claire Kramsch’s book *The Multilingual Subject*, Taylor-Batty suggests that multilingual defamiliarisation in Joyce triggers a readerly experience with a “metalinguistic focus,” which, similar to the experience of the language learner, culminates in:

[A] metalinguistic focus, heightened perception of the materiality of the foreign language and of the ‘symbolic possibilities of the sign’, an ability to make unconventional associations between words and meanings, and a heightened perception of iconic and performative qualities in the acquired language, even to the extent of giving words ‘a new denotational meaning [...] based on their “sound shapes.”’<sup>10</sup>

In other words, Joycean multilingualism puts every reader in the position of the foreigner and consequently compels every reader to experience the language of the text in a way that is relationally similar to the way the language learner experiences a foreign language.

Language learning, as a method of linguistic engagement, makes for a surprisingly productive analytical framework in approaching the poetic materiality of *Wake* (as well as, potentially, all literary language). Taylor-Batty has exploited this chiefly in her analysis of *Ulysses* multilingualism but also in reference to the *Wake*.

<sup>8</sup> Taylor-Batty, *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction*, 23.

<sup>9</sup> Taylor-Batty, *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction*, 116.

<sup>10</sup> Taylor-Batty, *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction*, 117.

On the one hand, positioning the reader as a language learner of Wakeese dislocates the act of reading from the monolingual framework, wherein the reader has a reasonable expectation of full and fluent comprehension (this expectation of fluency persistently meets the failure of comprehension that *Wake* scholars have, as discussed in the introduction, come to theorise as the very purpose of *Wakean* multilingualism). Rather than resting solely on the premise that Joyce's use of multilingualism is meant to make comprehension difficult, I would suggest that employing language-learning techniques as a reading methodology opens up to the *Wake* reader a host of interpretative approaches that are not limited to purely semantic comprehension, and which can actually make the text's literary language touchable and uniquely accessible. Let us take a look at the *Wake*'s first thunderword as an initial example:

The fall  
(bababadalgharaghtakamminarronkonnbronntoonnerronntuonnthunntrovarrh  
oun-awanskawntooohooordenenthurnuk!) (*FW* 3.15-17)

In the world of *Wake* scholarship—and, even more to the point, *Wake* reading groups—Joyce's text almost inevitably comes accompanied by McHugh's *Annotations*: like a language learner clings to her or his pocket dictionary, the *Wake* reader clings to the *Annotations*, especially in the earlier stages of study. As a trusty *Waketionary*, McHugh's volume helpfully supplies Anglophone translations and educated interpretations of some of the semantic sense veiled beneath the tightly woven multilingual fabric of the text. In this case, it glosses this first occurrence of the *Wakean* thunderword as an amalgam of thunder-signifying words in ten different languages (notably, none of them English): karak (Hindustani), brontaô ("I thunder," Greek), kaminari (Japanese), tuono (Italian), tun (Old Rumansch), trovão (Portuguese), åska (Swedish), tonnerre (French), tórnach (Irish), and tordenen (Danish).<sup>11</sup> Once this layer of semantic sense becomes available to the reader, the cascade of thunder-signifying words renders its own brand of linguistic effect as the reader witnesses the multilingual proliferation of a single word swelling with sense, accumulating the weight of vehicular significance and repetitious permanence. However, the power of Joyce's multilingual portmanteau is not limited to the veiled semantics that we might trace through dictionaries and secondary sources. Rather, "Here form *is* content, content *is* form," and language is not merely "*about*

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<sup>11</sup> McHugh, *Annotations*, 3.



something; *it is that something itself.*" For the *Wake* reader, clues to the significances of the text lie not only with the vehicular functions of multilingual words, fragments, and references, but also with the material object(s) that form(s) visually, phonologically, and physically through the reader's mouth and body.

Opening with a string of apparently nonsensical, repetitive syllables, "ba-ba-ba-dal-gha-ragh-ta-kam," the thunderword physically rattles the reader's jaw: The mouth, as the vessel that carries the sounds of language and the cavity that holds and shapes linguistic noise, contorts with the reader's singular instinct, desire, and ability to pronounce the symbols on the page. The flow of breath brushing over the reader's vocal chords and through the mouth gets rhythmically blocked by bilabial (b-b-b), alveolar (d-r-t), and velar (gh-k) consonants and released by the recurrent vowel (a). With the rise of this syllabic wave, the thunderword unravels in a cacophonous crescendo, developing a growing anxiety and confusion in the reader as s/he struggles to thread and rhythmicise as smoothly as possible the strikingly unfamiliar, yet apparently meaningful, multilingual fragments while running out of breath. The Wakeese comes to gradually materialise into an organic linguistic object that onomatopoeically echoes the sounds of thunder but also physically gestures with the motions of an earth-splitting quake.

Elsewhere in the thunderword, performing the syllabic sequence "too-hoo-hoorden-en" engages the back of the reader's throat as the alveolar *t* releases a deep-seated breath pushed out by the aspirated phoneme (h) and channelled through the elongated vowel sound (*oo*, visually resembling a tubular channel and physically acquiring the shape of one on the reader's lips). The physical motions and shapes, and the sounds the reader's body produces in the effort to speak Wakeese, mimic the act of coughing, as if the thunderous earthquake conveyed in the text has formed a cloud of dust rising from the ground, maybe even making the mythical giant Finn MacCool (aka Tim Finnegan, aka HCE) cough and sneeze ("too-hoo-hoorden-en" looks and sounds quite like the onomatopoeic "achoo," depending on how the reader chooses to pronounce it) through the dust created by his own tumultuous fall. In this way, the text "create[s] the impression that Joyce often *does* with words—not just *says*—what we may have always known, but which now we experience as acted out, as though the words were to perform what, normally, is merely being talked about."<sup>12</sup> The things being "talked about," in this case, are the semantic values of the

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<sup>12</sup> Senn, *Dislocutions*, 59.

multilingual elements that we can trace through McHugh's *Annotations* and *FWEET*, as well as the symbolic motifs, literary and historical references outlined by secondary sources, like Clive Hart's *Structure and Motif*, which imbues the thunderword with, among other things, the significance of Vico's cyclical Four Ages of History (corresponding to the four books of the *Wake*) that "began with a thunderclap which frightened primitive, inarticulate man out of his bestial fornication under the open skies, caused him to conceive of the existence of a wrathful, watchful God, to utter his first terrified words—'Pa! Pa!'—and to retire modestly to the shelter of caves to initiate the history of the family and of society."<sup>13</sup> Thus the text's multilingual design darkens the referential, or vehicular, function of language by accumulating a plethora of visual and phonological references to languages which few, if any, readers would be likely to readily recognise or comprehend without help from other sources; and it simultaneously allows the drama and imagery of the text to materialise in an immediate, palpable, embodied way. *Wakean* multilingualism simultaneously estranges the reader and cuts astonishingly close to the bone. Reminiscent of the Shklovskian scene where the writer's mortal fear of losing memory and meaning triggers the artistic drive to create material poetic language that can "bring feeling back to life, to experience objects, in order to make a stone feel stony," the event of creative readerly engagement with *Wake* produces a literary experience that at once operates outside the laws of language and brings language closer, intimately conjoined with the reader's body. The multilingual experience peculiarly illuminates the ways in which meaning might derive from and through the body—indeed, how we might "read" our bodies as we touch language and language reversibly touches us. The linguistic materiality produced by such active readerly engagement shows that Joyce's multilingual design can peculiarly illuminate, and not merely darken, the reader's "reception" of *Wake*. Moreover, through its poetic materiality, the text's multilingualism can make it uniquely accessible to a widely diverse readership.

By destabilising the exclusive reliance on semantics, the multilingual stylisations compel the reader to employ sense-making strategies typically associated with language learning. Taylor-Batty remarks on this feature of Joyce's language in her analysis of the "Proteus" episode in *Ulysses*:

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<sup>13</sup> Clive Hart, *Structure and Motif in Finnegans Wake* (London: Faber and Faber, 1962), 47.

Most immediately apparent is semantic ambiguity—a distance from the referential function of language that makes it either incomprehensible or only semicomprehensible. This produces the second characteristic, which is a strong sense of the materiality of the foreign words. When words are not immediately or fully understood, the listener or reader acquires a surface perception of language, so that its material properties, its sounds and rhythms, are perceived over and above what it actually signifies.<sup>14</sup>

Her argument accentuates the congruity between the *Wake* reader and the polyglot, whose shared strategies of coping with semantic ambiguity include an impulse to paint over any gaps in comprehension with meanings that one can construct from the available context, such as the material qualities of the language, which are differently (singularly) but nonetheless universally accessible—touchable—to everyone.

## II. *Wakean* onomatopoeia(s)

The mutually transformative effects that this dialogic engagement triggers between language/text and reader are a key concern for *Wake* scholarship, as they must have been for Joyce. Alongside his own multilingual experience—a polyglot among polyglots in Trieste, Paris, Rome, Zürich, etc.—Joyce maintained a keen interest in linguistics, with one of his notable influences, Otto Jespersen, having been thoroughly documented by Joyce scholars like Erika Rosiers,<sup>15</sup> Roland McHugh,<sup>16</sup> and Dirk Van Hulle,<sup>17</sup> among others. In his *Annotations*, McHugh lists several *Wakean* neologisms that, archival research suggests, were coined or inspired by Jespersen, such as “vermicular” (*FW* 82.12), “metropoliarchialisation” (*FW* 181.7), “scribbleative” (*FW* 189.10), or “flutterby” (*FW* 262.13), plus numerous phonological echoes of phrases from and references to Jespersen’s works: for example, during an episode in II.3, wherein a fight appears to break out as some inebriated guests of the Chapelizod Inn shout, bang, benk, boink, and blather in accents and registers that could be pidgin English, and/or some drunken, lispng, Anglophone blubber, and/or an altogether non-English language:

<sup>14</sup> Juliette Taylor, “Foreign Music: Linguistic Estrangement in ‘Proteus’ and ‘Sirens,’” *James Joyce Quarterly* 41 (2004): 410, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25478068>.

<sup>15</sup> Erika Rosiers, *Otto Jespersen at the Wake: A Genetic Study of Linguistic Sources for Finnegans Wake* (Boca Raton, FL: Florida Atlantic University, 1999).

<sup>16</sup> Roland McHugh, “Jespersen’s Language in Notebooks VI.B.2 and VI.C.2,” *A Finnegans Wake Circular* 2, no. 4 (1987): 61–71.

<sup>17</sup> Dirk Van Hulle, “The Lost Word: Book IV,” in *How Joyce Wrote Finnegans Wake: A Chapter-by-Chapter Genetic Guide*, ed. Luca Crispi and Sam Slote, Irish Studies in Literature and Culture (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007), 441.

We dinned unnerstunned why you sassad about thurteen to aloafen, sor,  
 kindly repeat! Or ledn us alones of your lungorge, parsonifier propounde of  
 our edelweissed idol worts!... In the buginning is the woid, in the muddle is  
 the sounddance and thereinofter you're in the unbewised again, vund  
 vulsyvolsy. You talker dunsker's brogue men we our souls speech obstruct  
 hostery. Silence in thought! Spreach! Wear anartful of outer nocense!  
 Pawpaw, wowow! Momerry twelfths, noebroed! (*FW* 378.22-24, 378.29-34)

The onomatopoeic “Pawpaw, wowow!” here functions as a linguistic materialisation of banging or punching on the one hand, and a reference to Jespersen’s discussion of the “pooh-pooh” and “bow-wow” theories of onomatopoeic language and sound symbolism. The pooh-pooh theory argued that “language is derived from instinctive ejaculations called forth by pain or other intense sensations or feelings,” while the bow-wow theory claimed that “primitive words were imitative of sounds” in early humans’ natural environment.<sup>18</sup> This was nicknamed the “bow-wow” theory because it captures the idea that words like “bark” were conceived as onomatopoeic imitations of the sound of a dog’s bark. The bow-wow theory was met with some scepticism in the discipline’s heritage, particularly from nineteenth-century German philologist Friedrich Max Müller, who is quoted in Jespersen’s *Language: Its Nature, Development and Origin* on the point that “the onomatopoeic theory goes very smoothly as long as it deals with cackling hens and quacking ducks; but round that poultry-yard there is a high wall, and we soon find that it is behind that wall that language really begins.”<sup>19</sup> Müller had also remarked that “words of this kind (cuckoo) are, like artificial flowers, without a root. They are sterile, and unfit to express anything beyond the one object which they imitate.” Jespersen promptly defied his predecessor’s dismissal of onomatopoeic speech: “There is not much of value in Max Müller's remark,” he wrote. “[C]uckoo may become *cuckold* (Fr. *cocu*) and from *cock* are derived the names Müller himself mentions, Fr. *coquet*, *coquetterie*, *cocart*, *cocarde*, *coquelicot*. . . .Echoic words may be just as fertile as any other part of the vocabulary.”<sup>20</sup> In *Language*, Jespersen further suggests that, not only is there more to onomatopoeic speech than even the most enthusiastic proponents of the bow-wow theory could imagine, but its relevance was not limited to a “primitive age”: “imitation, in the widest sense we can give to this word...is so

<sup>18</sup> Otto Jespersen, *Language: Its Nature, Development and Origin* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1922), 413–14.

<sup>19</sup> Jespersen, *Language*, 414.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

far from belonging exclusively to a primitive age that it is not extinct even yet.”<sup>21</sup> Joyce had access to this scientifically linguistic model of theorising the origin of language and the role of material life (including gestural speech and onomatopoeia) in literary practice. Furthermore, *Language*, like most of Jespersen’s work available in English in Joyce’s time, was consistently concerned with multilingualism, the roles that different languages play in each other’s nature, origin, and development, as well as the ways in which non-native speakers can irrevocably transform their second languages.<sup>22</sup> Joyce was not only aware of Jespersen’s theories but he actually represented the foreigners Jespersen wrote about: as a non-native speaker of Italian, German, French, and Norwegian, Joyce was that “average foreigner” who was “apt to betray his nationality as soon as he opens his mouth,”<sup>23</sup> and *Finnegans Wake* could be considered a practical test of those theories—a creative push at their boundaries. The text, in other words, embodies an active exploitation of the creative power of non-native engagement with language.

The II.3 barroom brawl represents a play with Jespersen’s concept of the echoic language of foreigners. The previously quoted excerpt appears to dramatize a physical struggle that materialises in the text’s peculiar use of onomatopoeia, but its multilingual design complicates and stretches the boundaries of what onomatopoeic language is and what it can do. Joyce’s language achieves a poetic materiality by constructing verbal units and portmanteaux that *sound* like non-verbal gestures and objects, which satisfies the primary definition of onomatopoeia; but because of its multilingual design, the text opens itself up to an expansive set of semantic possibilities and narrative layers, even in instances where the reader might experience its language as sheer non-lexical noise. If we encountered “Pawpaw, wowow!” in a Henry James novel, for example, we would likely gloss over it as a

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> In *Language: Its Nature, Development and Origin* (1922), Jespersen dedicates a full chapter, entitled “The Individual and the World,” to these questions, with one chapter section notably called “The Foreigner.” Here he remarks that “Many scholars have recently attached great importance to the subtler and more hidden influence exerted by one language on another in those cases in which a population abandons its original language and adopts that of another race, generally in consequence of military conquest,” and he terms this non-native influence the “substratum” underlying and perpetually modifying the structure, grammar, vocabulary, and phonology of a language (191-92). His later book, *International Language* (1929), which Joyce also knew and referenced in the *Wake* as McHugh has shown, theorises the linguistic, political, and practical implications of international languages like Ido, Esperanto, Volapük, and even Latin, ultimately coming out in defence of the need for international languages, whose key purpose is to improve global communications by being as universally accessible as possible (hence their typically simplified grammatical structures, limited vocabulary, and flexible rules of pronunciation). Jespersen, *International Language* [1929], Routledge Library Editions: Otto Jespersen: Collected English Writing (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2007).

<sup>23</sup> Jespersen, *Language*, 192.

linguistic materialisation of non-verbal noise, and we would use the available lexical context to gather what it could represent (this could be anything from a punch or a bang on a door to a dog tapping its paw on a hard surface and baying for attention or a shooting of fireworks). This is because a Henry James novel would generally be deemed monolingual, and if a word does not make semantic sense in the primary language of a monolingual text, it remains safe to assume that it is not a word at all but rather non-verbal noise conveyed through language. However, in *Finnegans Wake* anything that I, as a reader, might not understand is still likely to have meaning—potentially lexical meaning—in some way that is not readily available to me because I do not speak all eighty or more languages proverbially referenced in the text. A material engagement with the text can make meaning peculiarly, palpably accessible even when the semantic value of a word evades the reader, so: even if I do not know what “Pawpaw” might mean, I can still derive meaning from its onomatopoeic value (for example, I read it as a linguistic materialisation of a barroom brawl). Yet, this being the *Wake*, where everything and nothing is meaningless, with a little research I can also track down the “echoic” function of this language: “Pawpaw, wowow!” onomatopoeically embodies not only the non-verbal noise of a bar fight but also the verbal phonology of the linguistic theories discussed by Jespersen—the pooh-pooh and bow-wow theories. Of course, paradoxically, the nicknames of these theories are themselves derivative of non-lexical onomatopoeic noise, and this exemplifies another philosophical quandary that persists throughout the *Wake*: the dialectic between language and the body spins in a perpetual “chicken-and-egg” cycle, making it impossible and futile to determine whether language (discourse) constructs identity or vice versa (or “vulsyvolsy”).

The poetic materiality of *Wakean* multilingualism embodies that dialogical contingency between body (a physical, extralinguistic, objective world) and language (discourse), and this paradoxical dialectic poses some difficulty for linguists to theorise in any determinate way. Theorising the complex functionality of onomatopoeia in Joyce’s work, Attridge has drawn a suggestive distinction between what he calls “nonlexical” and “lexical” onomatopoeia. “Nonlexical onomatopoeia” refers to “the use of the phonetic characteristics of the language to imitate a sound without attempting to produce recognizable verbal structures, even those of traditional ‘onomatopoeic’ words” (he gives examples from the “Sirens” episode of *Ulysses*, including “Prrrrr,” “Fff! Oo. Rrpr,” “Prrrpfrrppffff,” and “kran kran kran,”

“Krandlkrankan,” “Kraaaaaa”).<sup>24</sup> “Lexical onomatopoeia” describes “a verb, adjective, or noun that seems to function onomatopoeically as well as semantically” (for example, again in “Sirens,” “Clock clacked,” “Jingle a tinkle jaunted,” or “liquor for his lips, looked as it flowed”).<sup>25</sup> Admittedly, even in *Ulysses*, Joyce’s language often defies the distinction between “lexical” and “nonlexical” onomatopoeia: as Attridge (echoing Roman Jakobson) points out, “It would be difficult to find a string of letters that had *no* semantic coloring, given a specific fictional setting and the eagerness of readers to find meanings in what they read,”<sup>26</sup> so how could language ever be *purely* nonlexical? Attridge and Taylor-Batty have thoroughly engaged with these issues in relation to *Ulysses*, so I will focus my discussion on the *Wake* and the particular ways in which *Wakean* multilingualism pushes the boundaries of linguistic materiality even more expansively than *Ulysses* (whose multilingualism, as Taylor-Batty has also recognised, can be and has been treated as monolingualism<sup>27</sup>—something the later work simply renders impossible).

If we were to take Jespersen’s definition of the bow-wow theory as a conceptualisation of onomatopoeia that informed the writing of the *Wake*, the peculiar creative abilities of the text’s multilingual design would crystallise even more explicitly. According to the Danish linguist,

the salient point of the [bow-wow] theory is this: sounds which in one creature were produced without any meaning, but which were characteristic of that creature, could by man be used to designate the creature itself (or the movement or action productive of the sound). In this way an originally unmeaning sound could in the mouth of an imitator and in the mind of someone hearing that imitation acquire a real meaning.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Derek Attridge, *Peculiar Language: Literature as Difference from the Renaissance to James Joyce* (London: Routledge, 2004), 136–37.

<sup>25</sup> Attridge, *Peculiar Language*, 148.

<sup>26</sup> Attridge, *Peculiar Language*, 139.

<sup>27</sup> Taylor-Batty has pointed out that “*Ulysses* tends to be recognised more for its overt intralingual diversity than its multilingualism, its use of foreign languages seen by Milesi, for example, as mainly serving ‘to enhance motifs or for purposes of characterization’, or by Yao as indicative of Stephen Dedalus’s own polyglot erudition.” This tendency to treat *Ulysses* as a monolingual text (and its more explicit multilingualism as ornamental and secondary) is what inspires her interest in *Ulysses*, as opposed to *Wakean* multilingualism. Yet this also means that the multilingual effects that Taylor-Batty conceptualises as linguistic “distortion” and “protean defamiliarisation” in the earlier text should not apply to the unmistakably multilingual text in the exact same way. After all, *Ulysses* can be and has been deemed an English-language text (even if it is a text of many Englishes); but *Finnegans Wake*, as I have persistently suggested, is unmistakably a text of many non-Englishes: if it is a linguistic distortion, it certainly cannot unproblematically be considered a distortion of a single language. *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 115.

<sup>28</sup> Jespersen, *Language*, 414.

This idea has resonated with linguists and language theorists all the way through to the twenty-first century. For example, in his *Six Lectures on Sound and Sense*, Jakobson remarks that:

even when we hear, in a discourse composed of words which we know, one word with which we are completely unfamiliar we do not *a priori* consider this word to be lacking in meaning.... To put it another way, as soon as a certain group of phonemes is conceived to be a word, it looks for a meaning for itself. In other words it is a potential semantic element. Signifier: *kuboa*; signified: semantic element of unknown content. Similarly, signifier: *pirots*; signified: plural noun of unknown semantic content.<sup>29</sup>

This idea was supported more recently by psycholinguist Steven Pinker, whose work cites scientific studies of the phenomenon, described as the effect of “sine-wave speech”:

The brain can hear speech content in sounds that have only the remotest resemblance to speech.. Our brains can flip between hearing something as a bleep and hearing it as a word because phonetic perception is like a sixth sense. When we listen to speech the actual sounds go in one ear and out the other; what we perceive is *language*.<sup>30</sup>

The perceptual effect described by Pinker recalls Taylor-Batty’s argument that Joyce’s method of estranging language from its purely referential function can enhance the aesthetic experience of poetic form while multiplying its semantic possibilities in parallel.<sup>31</sup> The multilingual dimension of the *Wake* complicates the dichotomy between what is and what is not a “recognizable verbal structure”<sup>32</sup> because, even when the reader experiences recognition, s/he is compelled to recirculate to the initial state of linguistic estrangement and perpetually pursue further material and semantic possibilities through the text. Thus, while the monolingual paradigm might promise semantic stability and a limit to interpretative possibility, the multilingual consciousness enabled by the *Wake* perpetually questions and revises both the unfamiliar and familiar linguistic structures in the text. Even with the most apparently straightforward passages in the book, we find ourselves asking: What (else) does this word, phrase, or unit signify, sound like, or look like? What else could it *mean*? What else could it *do*? When we encounter units

<sup>29</sup> Roman Jakobson, *Six Lectures on Sound and Meaning* (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1978), 58.

<sup>30</sup> Steven Pinker, *The Language Instinct: How the Mind Creates Language*, First Harper Perennial Modern Classics edition (New York: Harper Collins, 2007), 154.

<sup>31</sup> Taylor, “Foreign Music: Linguistic Estrangement in ‘Proteus’ and ‘Sirens,’” 412.

<sup>32</sup> Attridge, *Peculiar Language*, 136.



that appear like nonlexical noise, we fill them with meaning; and when we come across a familiar linguistic structure, we are compelled to question and amend what we believe we know.

If, as Jespersen suggests, language is a complex material of sound that, as it emanates from speaking/gesturing bodies, “designates” who and what those creatures are, then the accents, registers, languages, and/or fragments thereof that we find throughout the *Wake* can be considered onomatopoeic (or “imitative”) of the creature(s) who produce(s) them. Let us take an example from III.1:

When lo (whish, O whish!) mesaw mestreamed, as the green to the gred was flew, was flown, through deaftths of durkness greengrown deeper I heard a voice, the voce of Shaun, vote of the Irish, voise from afar (and cert no purer puer palestrine e'er chanted panangelical mid the clouds of Tu es Petrus, not Michaeleen Kelly, not Mara O'Mario, and sure, what more numerose Italicuss ever rawsucked frish uov in urinal?), a brieze to Yverzone o'er the brozaozaozing sea, from Inchigeela call the way how it suspired (morepork! morepork!) to scented nightlife as softly as the loftly marconimasts from Clifden sough open tireless secrets (mauveport! mauveport!) to Nova Scotia's listing sisterwands. Tubetube! (*FW* 407.11-22)

In this passage, the dense usage of repetition and alliteration allows the reader to experience the onomatopoeic effects of the text's multilingualism through a succession of sound- and look-alike words cast in varying referential functions. The excerpt shows some illustrative examples of the blurred boundaries between inarticulate noise, unconventional and potentially unrecognisable visual structures, and semantically evocative language. For instance, the phrase, “whish, O whish!” cannot definitively be construed as either lexical or nonlexical onomatopoeia. It is something in-between: a linguistic representation of the sound of the whistling wind, or the gush and splash of river water, or of a bird or a firework whooshing through the air; and a recall of several familiar lexical structures in English, Irish English, and potentially other languages and registers: *wish*, *whist!* (the Irish English equivalent of “hush!” or “be quiet!”), *wash*, *mise* (pronounced “mishe” to signify “me” or “I am” in Irish), *which*, and so on. This passage also incorporates a recurring, *Wake*-specific phonological motif, which materially signals the presence of Anna Livia through the various multilingual metamorphoses of the phrase “whish, O whish!” (an issue I will explore further in chapter 2). Affirming Jakobson's idea, the reader can experience the phrase as simultaneously vehicular and performative, articulate and inarticulate, as language and a non-linguistic object. It is language that

simultaneously draws attention to the arbitrariness of its link to non-linguistic objects and yet compels the reader to fill semantic gaps with familiar sounds, visual patterns, and meanings. This perpetual exchange between the lexical and nonlexical qualities of Wakeese creates a symbiosis of contraries that ultimately results in a dynamic, creative, and self-revising linguistic mechanism.

The use of repetition and alliteration in this passage also conveys that the narrator might be speaking and writing in a pidgin form of English, or is otherwise testing different multilingual variations of phonologically/visually similar words in an effort to pinpoint the optimal word choice. In the line “When lo (whish, O whish!) mesaw mestreamed, as the green to the gred was flew, was flown,” the poetic effect of “mesaw mestreamed” is heightened by the use of alliteration and a slant rhyme, and is furthermore pushed to either an archaic (and thus exaggeratedly literary) or intralingual dimension by substituting “I saw” with “mesaw,” or “it seemed/‘streamed’ to me” with the compact portmanteau “mestreamed.” The perpetual revision of the verb “to fly” follows like an insecure foreigner’s attempt to conjugate it correctly. Then the recurrence of Shaun’s voice takes on aural, visual, and interlingual transformations: “I heard a *voice*, the *voce* of Shaun, *vote* of the Irish, *voise* from afar” (my emphases). With each recurrence, the word “voice” changes in spelling and thereby in pronunciation and meaning. The slightest visual variation—the mere omission of the *i* in “voice” to produce “voce”—can change the word phonetically from [ˈvɔɪs] to [ˈvɔʃɛ] and send us springing from English to a wholly other linguistic and cultural setting: Italian. Another aural variation of “voce” could be [vɔʊs], which might suggest “vows” as pronounced in certain accents, or “vote,” which Joyce also casts in the succession. “Voice” and “voise” could either be read as homophones, or the *s* in “voise” could be voiced, producing [vɔɪz], which echoes “noise” or “voids.” The various metamorphoses of the word “voice” in this passage are not strictly homonymic or homophonic, but they are peculiarly *onomatopoeic* of each other, and altogether of the sounds of language. This brings us back to Jespersen’s idea of echoic language: onomatopoeic expression acts as a linguistic manifestation not only of non-linguistic noise but also of language itself—even of multiple languages.<sup>33</sup> Joyce’s use of cross-linguistically echoic words in the

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<sup>33</sup> Remember that Jespersen refers to the English “cuckoo” as an example of onomatopoeic language based on inarticulate noise and subsequently shows it as phonologically “echoic” of words in both French and English: “*cuckoo* may become *cuckold* (Fr. *cocu*), and from *cock* are derived the . . . Fr. *coquet*, *coquetterie*, *cocart*, *cocarde*, *coquelicot*.” *Language*, 414. Indeed, does this not even resemble

*Wake* also resonates with Derrida's critique in *Glas* of the Saussurian notion that the connection between language and objective reality is arbitrary, or immaterial:

“‘words’ can become onomatopoeic, through the grafting of function, in whole or in part, by decomposition or recomposition, detachment or reattachment”; and, as we have seen in *Finnegans Wake* thus far, “onomatopoeias can become words,” too.<sup>34</sup>

### III. Semantic simultaneity and narrative layering

The examples of multilingually echoic *Wake* words show that each language, accent, or register that the reader might identify in the text can simultaneously act as a vehicle of semantic sense and as a material object that bears symbolic and cultural value. This material linguistic object, in turn, becomes further transformed through the lens of the reader's own singularity.<sup>35</sup> With this in mind, let us explore the II.3 barroom brawl further to consider how the text's echoic language can produce multiple, parallel semantic and narrative layers:

We dinned unnerstunned why you sassad about thirteen to aloafen, sor,  
kindly repeat! Or ledn us alones of your lungorge, parsonifier propounde of  
our edelweissed idol worts!... In the buginning is the woid, in the muddle is  
the sounddance and thereinofter you're in the unbewised again, vund  
vulsyvolsy. You talker dunsker's brogue men we our souls speech obstruct  
hostery. Silence in thought! Spreach! Wear anartful of outer nocense!  
Pawpaw, wowow! Momerry twelfths, noebroed! (*FW* 378.22-24, 378.29-34)

Part of the multilingual technique here emerges in the near-miss between the visual and phonological layer of the text: most of the verbal units in “We dinned unnerstunned why you sassad about thirteen to aloafen, sor, kindly repeat!” do not look like English, but when read aloud the sentence can *sound* like English: “We don't/didn't [din't] understand why/what you said that about thirteen to eleven, sir, kindly repeat!” This can, then, be read as perfectly standard Anglophone speech that is visually distorted; and we might go on to argue, as many scholars have done, that the act of distortion itself is the key, creatively productive goal of the text's

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the way “ivy” becomes echoic of “*Ivory, ivoire, avorio, ebur*” in Stephen's imagination in *Portrait* (193)?

<sup>34</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Glas* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 93.

<sup>35</sup> Every reader would “identify” the languages of the *Wake* differently, based on her or his own linguistic proficiency, experience, mental and emotional state, and other contextual factors in the event of reading.

multilingualism. The *Wake*'s Dutch translators, Henkes and Bindervoet, have observed that “In most of the foreign words [of the *Wake*] there is an English word hidden,”<sup>36</sup> which could be interpreted to mean that the text maintains a primary English layer, hidden behind multilingual distortions, at all times. A closer look at the text suggests otherwise, however.

The passage becomes increasingly trickier to “translate” into standard English as any semblance of grammatical or syntactical consistency found in the phonological layer of the first sentence becomes destabilised by rule-breaking structures and words that do not seem to be straightforwardly convertible into English. “Or ledn us alones of your lungorge, parsonifier propounde of our edelweissed idol worts!” phonologically conveys a formulation that approximates English: “Or let us alone of your language, personifier propound/profound of our edelweissed idle words!” However, linguistically speaking, several things do not add up to (standard) English here: For example, why is the word order reversed in “personifier profound”? What does “edelweissed” mean? Why would “let” be spelled “ledn,” swapping the voiceless consonant *t* with its voiced counterpart *d* and ending on the *n*, which could be either pronounced or omitted, particularly if the reader finds it awkward to transition from *d* to *n*? Should the “dn” in “ledn” be pronounced at all, and if so, what would change if the reader chooses to pronounce the *n* or to leave it silent? And why is it spelled “alones” instead of “alone”? The language of the text opens up significantly when the reader relinquishes their attachment to standard English. In this vein, it could also yield “Or lend us a loan of your language, parson[ifier] profound of our edelweissed idle words!,” which can be read as a tongue-in-cheek plea, spoken in colloquial Irish English (lend us a loan), to an anointed authority (the profound parson suggesting a God-like figure with the power to either endorse or demolish the monolingual Babelian order). Furthermore, if the reader were to pronounce the text as loyally to the graphological layer as possible, that would not yield the phonology of standard English. Rather, the peculiar spellings compel the reader to mouth an entirely different, unfamiliar accent and register: “lungorge” (Brit. [ˈlʌŋɡɔːdʒ]; Am. [ˈlʌŋɡɔːrdʒ]) suggests a pronunciation that does not sound much like the English “language” [ˈlæŋɡwɪdʒ]. Importantly, the visually depicted accent or register does not merely negate English—that is, it does not simply represent “non-English”—but it is the linguistic

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<sup>36</sup> Bazarnik, Bindervoet, and Henkes, “Hier Komt Iedereen,” 6.

materialisation of an-other voice, which sounds like *something* or *someone*, as opposed to a not-something or not-someone. By Jespersen's definition, the language of the text "designate[s] the creature itself," so if we identify the text's peculiar register as a negation of the language we expect to find, then we are performatively suggesting that the foreign (other) is merely a negation of the familiar (self). In this chapter, I will chiefly focus on the practical, stylistic problems of such an approach to *Wakean* multilingualism, but the notion is also ethically, theoretically, and politically problematic, which is why I will return to these issues again in chapter 4.

If the language we encounter in the text is multilingual and thus foreign to the reader (some of it may even fail to produce any semantic meaning for certain readers), then the creatures who produce that language—the author, the text, the character(s)—must also be designated as foreigners.<sup>37</sup> When the reader mouths and/or gestures (performs) the language of the text, s/he is speaking a language of an-other, which moreover defies all interlingual boundaries and language categories, while embodying multiple languages, accents, registers, and thereby multiple voices, bodies, and cultures, which flow in and out of sight and sound, change with the tides of the text, and materially (phonologically, gesturally, visually) transform based on the reader's own accents, abilities, linguistic repertoire, and creative choices.

Further on in this *Wake* excerpt, the text reads: "In the buginning is the woid, in the muddle is the sounddance and thereinofter you're in the unbewised again, vund vulsyvoltsy." Both the visual and phonological layers of this sentence defy any consistent structural or aesthetic adherence to a single language. Testing its Englishness, we could produce several narrative possibilities: "In the beginning is the word/void/world, in the muddle/middle is the sounddance/sun-dance/son-dance/sin-dance and thereinofter/thereinafter you're in the unbewised, and/find/found vice versa." Some combinations of these possibilities make more sense in English than others, but that gives us no reason to discount the possibilities that do not tie in seamlessly with the Anglophone layer of the sentence. Moreover, English clearly does not offer enough flexibility to explain what words like

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<sup>37</sup> Sara Ahmed's concept of "stranger fetishism," that is, "the production of strange bodies as objects," would serve us well here in the theoretical and ethical understanding of what it means to distance oneself by othering an-other body through deeming that body's language as other: as foreign and strange to one's own. Ahmed writes: "the stranger is not *any-body* that we have failed to recognise, but *some-body* that we have already recognised as a stranger, as 'a body out of place.'" Conversely, we might think of an-other language (such as *Wake*) not simply as any language that we cannot recognise but as an object that we have already recognised as foreign, as not-ours and not-us/not-I. *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality*, Transformations (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 51-52, 54, 55.

“unbewised” or, earlier, “edelweissed” could mean. Looking beyond English, “unbewised” suggests the German “unbewusst” (unknown), and the Freudian “Unterbewusste” (the Unconscious), which in turn literally means “what is known beneath,” i.e. what is implied or implicit. The multilingual element introduces new semantic layers while making the text “speak” at once directly to the reader and, metafictionally, about itself: the “unbewised” is what is underneath (implied), and the thing implied is “you.” Furthermore, “vund vulsyvolsy” appears to play with the phonology of a mainstream foreignism in English (vice versa) in a way that pushes the boundaries of what the “sound shape” of “vice versa” could produce. “[V]und” contains the German “und” (and). However, we could also pronounce the voiced consonant *v* as its unvoiced counterpart *f*, because this is how the character *v* is pronounced in German. Therefore “vund” could become funned/fund/find/found; and “vul” and “vol” could be pronounced “full” or “fool.” If we were to read “sy” in “vulsyvolsy” as the Bulgarian “si” (you are), then the text would yield “full you are”/“fool you are”: i.e. “you are full”/“you’re a fool.” We might also consider that “si” means “yes” in Italian, which would suggest: “full yes, fool yes,” and even the colloquial Irish English “full yiz, fool yiz” (i.e. “you all are full of it, you all are fools”). Similarly, how the reader chooses to pronounce *and* visually interpret “Spreach!” would change its meaning: Pronounced [sˈpri:tʃ], it would point to the English imperatives “Preach!” and “Speech!,” which can be read as an invitation to a toast (“Hear hear! Speech!”), a metafictional descriptor (what we are reading is tangible living speech), or an epiphanic exclamation (“Look! Hear! This is speech in an inarticulate world!”). If we pronounced “ch” as [k] instead of [tʃ] (according to Italian phonological rules), we would have “Speak!” as well as “Spreak!,” which would phonologically suggest the German “Sprich!” (also an imperative form of “speak”). What is more, the reader’s choice to pronounce the text in either an English or a German accent bears not only semantic significance but also affects the identity of the fictional speaker: What language does the character speak here? What accent does the character have? Is the character drunk? Do they have a lisp? What if I, the reader, put on a lisp or drunkenly slurred the words of the text? The interpretative possibilities enabled by the poetic materiality of *Wakean* multilingualism are endless, but each phonological, visual, semantic, and narrative layer (as well as the various combinations of all of these elements) can yield an entirely different, singular storyline and set of images/identities. And although it would be difficult to determine the exact semantic values intended by the author, I

would argue that the determination of the text is to engage the reader in a self-perpetuating, creative dialogic process (indeed, a chicken-and-egg dynamic whereby it is impossible, and perhaps needless, to decide whether the literary event and textual significance begin with language or the body) that is inclusive not only of multiple languages but of multiple and varied bodies and experiences, too.

Henkes and Bindervoet's observation that "In most of the foreign words [of the *Wake*] there is an English word hidden"<sup>38</sup> should also be considered in relation to the cohesive non-English phrases that are "hidden" in the visually English layer of the text. For example, "You talker dunsker's brogue men we our souls speech obstruct hostery," although looking and sounding rather like gibberish in English, still happens to contain the largest number of discrete English words compared to other sentences in this excerpt: out of eleven verbal units total, only two are not standard English words ("dunsker's" and "hostery"). This is not an isolated phenomenon in the *Wake* as I will continue to show throughout this thesis. It is worth noting here that, sometimes, if the grammatical or syntactical structure of a sentence does not appear to make sense according to the rules of English, there is a possibility of a "transmissional departure"—an inadvertent typographical, spelling, and/or placement error that has crept up into the widely accepted 1939 edition of the text. Henkes and Bindervoet have recounted the effects these errors had on the making of their Dutch translation:

We saw cristalclear (sic) phrases being ruined and disjointed by an accidental loss of punctuation marks, letters, words and sometimes whole lines. We saw Joyce make the most of typographical errors by concocting something new out of the muddle. We saw how he desperately tried to correct accidental mistakes, but more often than not we saw how he had to admit defeat and lay down his arms in the face of the inevitable inky, murky sea of mistakes his typists and printers made, and by neglecting them, continue them. In short, we were biting our nails in sorrow and impotent rage, howling at the moon of the inevitable course of history.<sup>39</sup>

In their editorial note to the 2012 Oxford World's Classics edition, Henkes and Bindervoet report having discovered some 2,235 such errors,<sup>40</sup> many but not all of

<sup>38</sup> Bazarnik, Bindervoet, and Henkes, "Hier Komt Iedereen," 6.

<sup>39</sup> Erik Bindervoet and Robbert-Jan Henkes, "*Finnegans Wake* in Dutch, Dutch in *Finnegans Wake*, and What to Do with It" (Journal article manuscript, courtesy of Robbert-Jan Henkes and Erik Bindervoet, Cracow, Poland, July 2004), 4.

<sup>40</sup> Henkes and Bindervoet, "Note on the Text," xlviii–xlix.

which they listed in an appendix of “Selected Variants.”<sup>41</sup> However, although the possibility of an error disrupting the transmissional coherence of the text should always be taken into account, plenty of examples of other-than-sensical English remain a recurring phenomenon in the *Wake* and cannot always be explained by omissions or displacements. “You talker dunsker’s brogue men we our souls speech obstruct hostery” did not necessitate a textual variant in the Henkes/Bindervoet/Fordham edition and it appears unchanged in Rose and O’Hanlon’s *Restored “Finnegans Wake,”*<sup>42</sup> so according to the genetic experts’ best guess, the structural basis of this sentence must derive from something else.

In this instance, it is not English words hidden behind another language but another language hidden behind English<sup>43</sup>: according to *FWEET* and McHugh’s *Annotations*, one discernible phonological layer in this sentence is the Danish phrase “de taler danskernes sprog, men vi” (you speak the Danes’ language, but we). The sources suggest that the Danish phonology does not span across the whole sentence, which means that the reader who can pick up on this narrative layer must still reconcile it with the remainder of the sentence as best as s/he can, using her or his particular linguistic repertoire and available knowledge from secondary sources. Combining Danish and English, we could translate this sentence into something like “You speak the Danes’ language, but with our sole speech obstruct/abstract history” or even “You speak the Danes’ language, but we ourselves speak abstract history.” Campbell and Robinson’s *Skeleton Key* renders this as “You talk a dunsker’s brogue, man, we our soul’s speech,”<sup>44</sup> which seems to work reasonably well but omits the last two words of the sentence. “[D]unsker’s brogue” could also be read as “dancer’s brogue” in relation to “soles” (a homophone of “souls”), as well as “sounddance” in the previous sentence (“In the beginning is the word, in the middle is the sounddance and thereafter you’re in the unknown again, and vice versa”); and if the reader experiments with their pronunciation, “brogue” might become the Irish “bréag” (lie, falsehood). Thus, based on how the *Wake*’s language singularly materialises through the reader’s body and creative choices, semantic and narrative layers proliferate, meanings change, and different and changeable voices, bodies, cultures, and characters emerge.

<sup>41</sup> Bindervoet, Henkes, and Fordham, “Appendix: Selected Variants.” In Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, 631–46.

<sup>42</sup> Joyce, *The Restored “Finnegans Wake,”* 239.8–9.

<sup>43</sup> This is not to argue, of course, that Henkes and Bindervoet’s assertion is incorrect, but rather that it could be variously interpreted and thus should be variously reconsidered.

<sup>44</sup> Campbell, *Skeleton Key*, 242.



This phonological-layering technique is an intrinsic feature of *Wakean* multilingualism. It takes on multiple forms: a layering of English diction with a phonological layer of another language; the reverse; or a layering of any multilingual formulation with phonological patterns that carry recurring motifs, character voices, and materialisations of character bodies. The latter category, to which I refer by the term “phonological signatures,” will be detailed further in chapter 2. Here I will explore how specific examples of phonological layering can influence the text’s poetic materiality and the ways in which a reader’s singular manner of speaking and reading, their accent, and their knowledge of the phonological rules of the language(s) of the text can excavate new and surprising discoveries.

Here is one exceptionally wide-reaching example of multilingual layering, wherein a series of verbal units in Roman script (some of which are recognisable English words and some are Joycean neologisms) carry a substantial phonological layer of Russian:

Fetch neahere, Pat Koy! And nouyou, Pam Yates! Be nayther angst of Wramawitch! Here’s lumbos. Where misties swaddlum, where misches lodge none, where mysteries pour kind on, O sleepy! So be yet! (*FW* 27.26-30)

The *Skeleton Key* compresses this quote to the single sentence: “Fetch here, Pat Koy, give a hand!,”<sup>45</sup> which strips the passage down to a series of commands expelled by a drunk, jolly mourner at Tim Finnegans’ wake. Another source offers a more detailed standard English translation that reads:

Fetch the life here... Pat Koy. And fetch a newyou Pam Yates. Be neither worried or anxious about the witch of worry (Lilith). Here are the loins of sleep (lumbos)... In dream where misty visions are born, where mische ‘I am’ or individuality techniques are not in use, where mysteries pour it on, O sleepy. Go there.<sup>46</sup>

These two monolingual readings are certainly suggestive as regards the various symbols and associations the reader may find here even without accounting for the multilingual presence. In a characteristically Joycean fashion, the passage is filled with theatricality and music even when sounded out in the rhythm of the English language alone: “Fétch neahére, Pat Kóy! Ánd nouyouú, Pam Yátes!” (*Strong weak-strong, weak-strong! Strong weak-strong, weak-strong!*) However, the passage also

<sup>45</sup> Campbell, *Skeleton Key*, 51.

<sup>46</sup> John P. Anderson, *Joyce's Finnegans Wake: The Curse of Kabbalah* (Boca Raton, Florida: Universal Publishers, 2008), 330–31.

carries a different lyrical and musical quality that glides on the current of Russian: a Slavic language that repeatedly reappears throughout the *Wake* but which could, indeed, only be found in the phonology of the text—never visually, because it is one of only two languages represented in the text that originally use the Cyrillic alphabet. McHugh glosses “Fetch neahere, Pat Koy! And nouyou, Pam Yates!” as “vechnyi pokoi, na vechnuya [sic] pamyat: eternal peace for eternal memory: R.I.P.,” wherein “vechnyi” (eternal) corresponds to “Fetch neahere”; “pokoi” (peace or rest) to “Pat Koy”; the preposition “na” (*to* or, in the present context, *for*) does not have an English homophone but it could be placed as an inverse “and” [ən]; “vechnuyu” (eternal, conjugated in the feminine, accusative form in agreement with the subsequent noun) corresponds only partly to “nouyou”; and finally “pamyat” (memory) is paired with “Pam Yates.” With Russian musically resounding in the diction, the rhythm of the passage changes entirely to: “Véchnyi pokói, na véchnuyu pámyat,” or “Féтч neahere, Pat Kóy! And [fěтч] nouyou, Pám Yates!” (*Strong-weak, weak-strong! Weak [strong-]weak-weak, strong-weak!*) The infusion of Russophone music into Anglophone diction (in Roman script) works like a change of key—a transition from the major tonality of the Anglophone linguistic setting, which evokes the singing, bouncy dancing, and drinking at the wake, to the minor tonality of Russian, which conveys the lyricism of a mourning prayer. The interlingual effects of pronunciation thus serve to transform and enrich the semantic, aesthetic, and emotional experience of language, which becomes further strengthened by the peculiar dialectic between contraries (major vs. minor, visual vs. aural, Roman vs. Cyrillic, etc.).

Here is another example from I.1, wherein the phonological layer spans across several sentences and, like the Russian mourning prayer, conveys a complete material object—a letter<sup>47</sup>: “Leaper Orthor. Fear siecken! Fieldgaze thy tiny frow. Hugacting. Nap” (9.5-6). At this point of the chapter, we are inside the “museyroom” (8.9), perusing the various historical artefacts that can be found in Phoenix Park. Similarly to the previous example, the visual layer predominantly consists of words and portmanteaux that English speakers would recognise: some standard English words (fear, tiny, nap), an archaic English usage (thy), and portmanteaux made up of English words (field/gaze, hug/acting). The mystifying “siecken” seems to leave the

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<sup>47</sup> These latter examples show a more substantial and cohesive use of the phonology of non-English languages, compared to the fragmented Danish phrase embedded into the previously quoted passage from II.3.

Anglophone reader in a lurch, although, as the most difficult word to place in an English framework, this standalone “foreignism” might also be the key to the passage’s multilingual phonology. Here the multilingual phonology, rather than acting as a distortion, actually coheres the disjointed and fragmented visual layer into a smoothly flowing German sequence: “Lieber Arthur, wir siegen. Wie geht’s deiner kleinen Frau?” (Dear Arthur, we conquer. How’s your little wife?).<sup>48</sup> The signature of this message, “Hugacting. Nap,” is further glossed by Steen Klitgård Povlsen as “Hochachtung. Napoleon,”<sup>49</sup> which translates from German to “Yours faithfully” or “With great respect.”<sup>50</sup> We could read this interlingual encounter between English and German as an instance of a monolingual English speaker making a comically inadequate, and yet semantically productive, attempt to transcribe a phrase originally pronounced in German: this would form yet another characteristic example of the *Wake* placing its reader in the position of the foreigner, compelling the reader to experience the kind of linguistic estrangement that language learners—exiles—intimately know. Beyond that embodied experience, Joyce’s method further demonstrates the creative (and perhaps political and ethical) necessity of acknowledging and playing with the semantic simultaneity produced by interlingual encounters and overlaps.

*Wake*an multilingualism thoroughly capitalises on the coincidental parallels between one language’s graphology and another language’s phonology—another phenomenon intimately familiar to language learners, who are prone to stumbling into misunderstandings and various comical faux pas in communication triggered by interlingual coincidences. In *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction*, Taylor-Batty analyses the stylistic effects and political implications produced by cross-linguistic slippages as specific to *Ulysses*, but she also crucially points out that Joyce’s technique accentuates not only the cultural differences between nationally divided languages (*interlingual* difference, for example in-between English, Greek, or Swahili) but also the multilingual diversity within discrete national languages (*intra*lingual difference, for example between Irish English, Caribbean English, or

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<sup>48</sup> McHugh, *Annotations*.

<sup>49</sup> Steen Klitgård Povlsen, “The Hoax That Joke Bilked: On the Connection Between Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake* and Freud’s *Der Witz Und Seine Beziehung Zum Unbewussten*,” in *Reinventions of the Novel: Histories and Aesthetics of a Protean Genre*, ed. Marianna Ping Huang Karen-Margrethe Simonsen (New York, 2004), 277.

<sup>50</sup> McHugh omits the German valediction and instead glosses “Hugacting” with the Dutch “hoogachteng,” which also translates as “yours faithfully.”

“Standard” English).<sup>51</sup> *Wakean* multilingualism is similarly performative of inter- and intralingual difference, but—more so than *Ulysses*, which destabilises the boundaries between languages while maintaining a deceptively monolingual narrative design—the *Wake* radically defies and rewrites them. Stylistically, this renders the text unprecedentedly exciting, emotionally engaging, intellectually stimulating, inventive, and innovative. Politically, it exposes the confusing, invasive, at times (tragi-)comical, painful, transformative experience of colonialism, exile, and migration. As scholars like Emer Nolan, Seamus Deane, Declan Kiberd, and others have argued, Joyce’s multilingual texts are thus politically motivated, particularly through an Irish postcolonial perspective. I would suggest that their concern with the historical Irishness of both *Ulysses* and the *Wake* responds specifically to the intralingual effects of each text. In regards to the *Wake*, however, it remains just as crucial to respond to the interlingualism of the text and allow it to host other-than-Irish postcolonial experiences, histories, cultural contexts, and reading bodies. As I will show in chapter 4, the performative crossing, blurring, and rewriting of interlingual, intercultural, and intersubjective boundaries effected by *Wakean* multilingualism opens up an ethical space that is empathetic and hospitable to difference. The text simultaneously engages the reader in the Irish colonial experience and exposes the globally and cross-temporally shared human experience of invasion, oppression, change, terror, and creative transformation. This enables a shared, empathetic, dialogic connectivity between different nations, cultures, classes, genders, and bodies—simultaneously offering the possibility of mutual understanding and creating the potential for misunderstanding, confusion, and conflict.

The interlingual encounters stylistically effected in “Leaper Orthor. Fear siecken! Fieldgaze thy tiny frow. Hugacting. Nap” are performative of the symbolism the text conveys. The multilingual stylisation of “Leaper Orthor” (instead of simply “Dear Arthur”) easily perplexes the reader but also semantically enriches the experience of the text’s language, which could suggest the image of a leaping (in space and time) righter of wrongs, or the “uprightness” of the Wellington Monument in Phoenix Park—erected to commemorate the Duke of Wellington, Arthur

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<sup>51</sup> Taylor-Batty, *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction*, 119–20.

Wellesley, who is also the addressee of the letter.<sup>52</sup> “Fear siecken,” in turn, is an onomatopoeic rendering of “wir siegen” (we conquer), but spelled out in Anglophone form it also suggests “fear-stricken.” “Fieldgaze thy tiny frow,” whose German phonological layer translates to “How’s your little wife,” can be read as “Gaze across the [battle?]field to spot your/the/my tiny frown/crown,” which could be a joke at Napoleon’s expense, the author of the warning letter (he was short of height but also short-sighted in threatening the Duke of Wellington, whose forces defeated Napoleon’s at the Battle of Waterloo). The interlingual encounter between the German “Frau” (woman, wife) and the archaic English “frow” (also woman, lady, or wife, but, according to the OED, used to describe “chiefly Dutch or German women, or...others compared to them”<sup>53</sup>) also suggests “Gaze across the [battle]field to spot your tiny wife,” the little feminine subject being both a literal woman and the defeated Napoleon (the weaker military opponent depicted as the “weaker” sex<sup>54</sup>). The multilingual layering of this phrase further draws attention to the phonological similarity between the English “tiny” and the German “kleinen,” which forms yet another echoic multilingual encounter. Finally, the Germanophonically infused layer here serves to produce an economical, immediate, and semantically rich new portmanteau, “fieldgaze,” which is a stylistic improvement upon the monolingual alternatives: “gaze across the field” in English; and “wie geht’s” in German. The poetic materiality of *Wakean* multilingualism thus serves to “supplement and improve”<sup>55</sup> language as it breaches the boundaries and expands the creative possibilities of every language involved.

It seems Joyce was stretching Jespersen’s concept of “echoic words” to an extreme: he allows his multi-layered polylingual portmanteaux to recall the sounds or shapes of other words, almost as if words can become extralinguistic, material objects. As previously suggested through Taylor-Batty, Joyce’s multilingual stylisations heighten the reader’s experience of the materiality of poetic language, and this in turn enables words to act as material objects that can be onomatopoeically

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<sup>52</sup> These associations are possible if we were to read “Orthor” as a personification of the Greek-rooted prefix “ortho,” signifying “straight, rectangular, upright, perpendicular,” or sometimes “right, correct, proper” (OED).

<sup>53</sup> Interestingly, the OED also defines “frow,” or its homophonic variant “frough,” as “liable to break or give way, not to be depended on, frail, brittle. lit. and fig.” Also: froughy/frowy, adj. - musty, sour, stale, not sweet.

<sup>54</sup> I hesitate to subscribe to such a misogynistic interpretation, but it is also worth noting that the *Wake* plays with the trope of femininity as submission, flightiness, or infantilism (Issy, the young ALP, the rainbow girls, etc.) while simultaneously rendering femininity as an all-powerful, maternal, life-giving, and annihilating force (ALP).

<sup>55</sup> Taylor, “Foreign Music: Linguistic Estrangement in ‘Proteus’ and ‘Sirens,’” 414.

echoed by other words, similar to the ways that a dog's wordless bark can be onomatopoeically rendered in language. Thus through its use of multilingualism, the *Wake* redefines the creative possibilities associated with onomatopoeic expression, while also appearing to converse with the "substratum theory" Jespersen discusses in *Language*, which was used to explain what the Danish linguist poignantly describes as "those *splittings-up* of languages which we witness everywhere."<sup>56</sup> This seems like an apt description of the "splittings-up," and also the rejoinings, of languages in the textual examples discussed here. This chapter of Jespersen's book moreover directly reflects on the lasting changes that foreigners instil in their non-native languages—particularly those languages that they are forced to adopt as a result of imperial influence. The notion that an accent, a way of wording an idea, or choosing one language or register over another to convey an idea can suggest the origin and nature of the creature embodying that accent, style, language, or register resonates strongly through the multilingual design of the *Wake*, as the reader's particular mouth shape, accent, posture, tone, and pitch all become contorted and transformed by the multilingualism of the text.

#### IV. "Strangely, the foreigner lives within us"<sup>57</sup>

Just as the reader's singular engagement has the ability to transform the text by creating new voices, characters, characterisations, and narrative/semantic layers, so does the text have the ability to move and change the reader's voice, posture, and emotional and mental state. A peculiar effect of Joyce's technique to layer visually English words with the phonology of other languages is to make the reader experience what it feels like to be a foreigner. Actively engaging with the materiality of the text indeed offers a method of reading that sidesteps the excessive reliance on monolingual plot summaries and defies any assumption that multilingualism is strictly a matter of vocabulary. It would be problematic to suggest that if we identify every language represented in the text and studiously track down the semantic value of every word, we will crack the code of the grandiose multilingual puzzle. Such a method of linguistic engagement consistently fails language learners, who quickly

<sup>56</sup> Jespersen, *Language*, 192; my emphasis.

<sup>57</sup> Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 1.

realise in the process of language acquisition that learning a new language requires not merely a memory for grammar and vocabulary but also, crucially, an embodied experience of the culture(s) of a language. When Joyce's text confronts us with a sentence which seems to make no sense despite mostly consisting of words that English speakers can recognise and semantically understand, it materially conveys a lived reality that any foreigner would know: that is, the experience of reading or listening to a string of words that fail to collectively convey a stable and cohesive idea despite one's best efforts to look up individual words in the dictionary.

Foreigners encounter this problem in relation to euphemisms or idiomatic expressions, which, in order that they make sense, require a lived cultural experience and a shared history with the communities who speak and nurture the language. Cockney Rhyming Slang is one colourful example, which, despite being an Anglophone register, proves impenetrable to plenty of native English speakers: knowing the significance of phrasings such as "Take this up the apples and pears" or "Looking great in that new whistle!" requires shared cultural knowledge and repeated experience with the communities who use this register, because the discrete phrasings themselves offer minimal guidance for the uninitiated. Cockney Rhyming Slang, quite like Wakeese, is not without order: its peculiar phrasings are designed to rhyme with the words that they signify (for example, "apples and pears" signifies "stairs"). However, the rules also demand that the signifier should bear as little semantic resemblance to the signified as possible: the semantic values of the words "apples" and "pears" clearly bear no relation to the meaning of "stairs," and this distance between signifier and signified is intended to include only speakers of a certain social disposition while excluding others, such as members of law enforcement. In other words, phrasings are designed to be simultaneously puzzling (estranging both the uninitiated listener/reader and the non-linguistic object they indirectly signify) and materially echoic of the words that semantically indicate the signified object. Also like Wakeese, Cockney Rhyming Slang phrases sometimes omit the only direct clue to the words that they echo: for example, "whistle" is a deliberately shortened version of "whistle and flute," which by way of rhyme stands for "suit"; or the slang phrase for "hair"—"Barnet fair"—is commonly used simply as "barnet."

By placing every reader in the position of the foreigner, whether or not the reader deems themselves a polyglot, *Wakean* multilingualism maintains the dialectic between language and the body in an irresolvable, self-perpetuating cycle. This

brings another dimension to Attridge's general point about the ability of nonlexical language to feel meaningful: while an actively engaged reader may be prone to gleaning some "semantic coloring"<sup>58</sup> from any linguistic material, the multilingual mindset subtly differentiates the experience of the language learner. While the "monolingual" native speaker has license to assume that a word they do not understand simply is not a word but a typographical error or nonlexical noise, the language learner never takes their own linguistic fluency for granted: she or he always expects that an unfamiliar word or phrase must mean something that they simply do not yet understand. In this respect, the "multilingual consciousness" permanently maintains an actively, creatively engaged attitude to language, which is something that the monolingual paradigm permits "native" speakers to surrender if they wish. Thus readers *can* get away with glossing over some of the onomatopoeic language of *Ulysses* as nonlexical (although, as Attridge has shown, perhaps they shouldn't), but they cannot do so in relation to the *Wake*'s unique brand of multilingualism, which instils the fear of meaninglessness and a fundamental lack of confidence in one's own fluency in every reader. The multilingual consciousness—that is, the subject who has first-hand experience of linguistic foreignness—copes with the unknown or semantically ambiguous by developing "an awareness of linguistic instability and hence of the need to supplement and improve language,"<sup>59</sup> which, in relation to *Wake*, results in a perpetually, singularly inventive and changeable literary experience.

## V. Sound symbolism and the synaesthetic imagination

The different forms of onomatopoeia explored so far have shown how sound can act as a physical manifestation of the linguistic symbols on the page, and thereby stimulate the reader's creative engagement with the text. Clive Hart has noted that "Joyce keeps admonishing his puzzled reader to use his [or her] ears," and indeed much of the criticism that discusses *Wake*an multilingualism tends to fixate on the phonic qualities of language.<sup>60</sup> I struggle to agree that the importance of sound and rhythm in *Finnegans Wake* could possibly be "over-stressed," as Hart suggests in

<sup>58</sup> Attridge, *Peculiar Language*, 139.

<sup>59</sup> Taylor, "Foreign Music: Linguistic Estrangement in 'Proteus' and 'Sirens,'" 414.

<sup>60</sup> Hart, *Structure and Motif in Finnegans Wake*, 36.



*Structure and Motif*, especially based on my textual analysis thus far, but the sensory effects that Wake—perhaps, to some degree, all poetic language—can produce do indeed exceed the boundaries of sound-sense alone. As I have also shown throughout this chapter, perceptions can and do vary from one reading event to another, which means that some readers may experience the visual qualities of the text more intensely than the aural, while others may sense language in ways that some readers might find unrelatable.

“Now, to be on anew and basking again in the panorama of all flores of speech” (*FW* 143.3-4), let us examine a mode of materialisation in the language of the *Wake* to which some readers may struggle to relate, but one which I believe Joyce possibly understood from first-hand experience: the synaesthetic effects of Wake. Synaesthesia is a perceptual condition, believed to affect between 1 and 4% of the world’s population, whereby stimulation of one sensory modality, such as vision in reading, “evokes automatic and involuntary perceptual experiences in another.”<sup>61</sup> According to multilingual writer Natasha Lvovich, who also reports personal experience of synaesthesia, “synesthetes [can] ‘taste’ shapes, or ‘see’ music, or attribute color to personalities, to name just a few examples.”<sup>62</sup> She takes particular interest in Nabokov’s accounts of his own experiences of the condition, as told in his autobiography *Speak, Memory* (1951), as well as in his poetry and fictional works, including *The Gift* and *Bend Sinister*, both of which feature protagonists who are synaesthetes. Nabokov, his characters, and Lvovich herself all share what is widely described as the most common form of the experience, known as colour-lexical synaesthesia, or “*audition colorée*”<sup>63</sup>: an involuntary association of words and phonemes with colours. The protagonist of Nabokov’s *The Gift*, Fyodor Cherdyntsev, describes the experience in this way:

I recommend to you my pink flannel ‘m’. I don’t know if you remember the insulating cotton wool which was removed with the storm windows in spring? Well, that is my Russian ‘y’ or rather ‘ugh’, so grubby and dull that words are ashamed to begin with it. If I had some paints handy I would mix burnt-sienna and sepia for you so as to match the colour of a guttapercha ‘ch’ sound; and you would appreciate my radiant ‘s’ if I could pour into your cupped hands some of those luminous sapphires that I touched as a child....<sup>64</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Mo Costandi, “Synaesthesia - Crossovers in the Senses,” *Notes & Theories: Dispatches from the Science Desk*, 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2010/nov/19/synaesthesia-cross-overs-senses>.

<sup>62</sup> Natasha Lvovich, “The ‘Gift’: Synesthesia in Translingual Texts,” *L2 Journal* 4 (2012): 216, <http://www.escholarship.org/uc/item/0k59250t>.

<sup>63</sup> Vladimir Nabokov, *The Gift* (London: Penguin Modern Classics, 2001), 72.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

For Cherdyntsev, words trigger associations not only of colours but of textures as well. Moreover, the visual and tactile sensations that language instils in him affect his choice of vocabulary when he writes or speaks: his “words are ashamed to begin with” the sound “ugh” because he finds the texture of the sound unpleasant, but he does “recommend” his “pink flannel ‘m’” because his embodied experience of that phoneme is pleasurable. Nabokov’s text also conveys a desire to include the reader in this multidimensional experience of language, whether or not they are themselves a synaesthete. Not every reader would experience a phoneme as a touchable object, but most would likely be able to imagine the sensation of (be)holding a handful of “luminous sapphires” or seeing and/or touching pink flannel. Thus Nabokov’s exploration of the synaesthetic experience of words becomes a method of overcoming the arbitrariness of linguistic symbols. By associating characters and phonemes with widely relatable sensations, like touching textures or physically and emotionally responding to visual images, the text acquires a material quality that heightens the reader’s sensual experience of language and forms a wholly new dimension of meaning-making.

The synaesthetic experience appears in Joyce’s work as early on as *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*:

– A day of dappled seaborne clouds.

The phrase and the day and the scene harmonised in a chord. Words. Was it their colours? He allowed them to glow and fade, hue after hue: sunrise gold, the russet and green of apple orchards, azure of waves, the greyfringed fleece of clouds. No, it was not their colours: it was the poise and balance of the period itself. Did he then love the rhythmic rise and fall of words better than their associations of legend and colour? Or was it that, being as weak of sight as he was shy of mind, he drew less pleasure from the reflection of the glowing sensible world through the prism of a language manycoloured and richly storied than from the contemplation of an inner world of individual emotions mirrored perfectly in a lucid supple periodic prose.<sup>65</sup>

The scientific term “synaesthesia” had not yet been coined at the time of the book’s composition, and the question as to what exactly “harmonised” the words so perfectly with their signified objects remains unanswered. However, quite like Nabokov’s Fyodor Cherdyntsev, Stephen suggests that the synaesthetic experience of language existed as a factor in his literary imagination and a stylistic tool in his writing: he associates words with peculiar hues and degrees of luminosity; his

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<sup>65</sup> Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, 180–81.

metaphor “greyfringed fleece,” used to describe the clouds in the sky, creates a material experience of an otherwise untouchable, ungraspable object by associating it with a textured object that *is* humanly touchable; and even if he would prefer the style of “lucid supple periodic prose” over “the reflection of the glowing sensible world through the prism of a language manycoloured,” he still experiences the images of either type of language visually and tactilely. The text thus depicts literary language not merely as an arbitrary, disembodied system but rather a “supple” object with shape and volume; a “manycoloured” “prism” that simultaneously reflects and reimagines the objective world. As Lvovich points out, some such “cross-modal” metaphors have become colloquialisms so common that we forget that they are also manifestations of the synaesthetic imagination: “sharp cheese, velvety voice, or white noise” are all expressions that are universally meaningful to synaesthetes and non-synaesthetes alike.<sup>66</sup> Whether or not Joyce/Stephen were self-aware synaesthetes quite like Nabokov/Fyodor, each author’s literary language creatively capitalises on that sensory experience.

If being a natural-born or self-proclaimed synaesthete is not a prerequisite to having the ability to experience language multidimensionally, then there must be a universally applicable stylistic technique to be drawn from the synaesthetic imagination. One attempt to explain the multiple sensations that we intuitively associate with certain words or phonemes is the theory of “sound symbolism” or “phonic symbolism.” Jakobson describes this as follows:

The intimacy of the connection between the sounds and the meaning of a word gives rise to a desire by speakers to add an internal relation to the external relation, resemblance to contiguity, to complement the signified by a rudimentary image. Owing to the neurophysiological laws of synaesthesia, phonic oppositions can themselves evoke relations with musical, chromatic, olfactory, tactile, etc. sensations. For example, the opposition between acute and grave phonemes has the capacity to suggest an image of bright and dark, of pointed and rounded, of thin and thick, of light and heavy, etc.... In poetic language, in which the sign as such takes on an autonomous value, this sound symbolism becomes an actual factor and creates a sort of accompaniment to the signified.<sup>67</sup>

He illustrates this argument with examples of phonic oppositions in the Czech words for day and night: *den* and *noc*. Both words show a match between their phonic and semantic qualities as *den* contains the “acute” phoneme *e*, which sounds as open and

<sup>66</sup> Lvovich, “The ‘Gift’: Synesthesia in Translingual Texts,” 219.

<sup>67</sup> Jakobson, *Sound and Meaning*, 112–13.

bright as the light of day, while *noc* carries the “grave” phoneme *o*, which appropriately evokes the darkness of night.<sup>68</sup> More recently, in *The Language Instinct* Pinker cites linguistic studies that have yielded results in support of the sound symbolism theory:

When the tongue is high and at the front of the mouth, it makes a small resonant cavity there that amplifies some higher frequencies, and the resulting vowels like *ee* and *i* (as in *bit*) remind people of little things. When the tongue is low and to the back, it makes a large resonant cavity that amplifies some lower frequencies, and the resulting vowels like *a* in *father* and *o* in *core* and in *cot* remind people of large things. Thus mice are *teeny* and *squeak*, but elephants are *humongous* and *roar*. Audio speakers have small *tweeters* for the high sounds and large *woofers* for the low ones. English speakers correctly guess that in Chinese *ch'ing* means light and *ch'ung* means heavy.<sup>69</sup>

The argument is extremely seductive, especially in a quest for a universal, material linguistic essence that could breach the interpretative obstacles of a signifying system as daunting and at times semantically impenetrable as *Wake*. When the reader or listener encounters a “foreign” word or phrase with an unknown or ambiguous meaning, his or her sensitivity to the raw qualities of language—such as visual appearance, sound, or the physical experience of reading it—is heightened, and s/he can use that sensitivity to adorn semantically estranging language with significance. Lvovich also cites several neurological experiments and related studies that have shown results confirming the hypothesis that there may be universal factors, related to the motor and facial functions that affect pronunciation, as well as to the visual appearance of language, which govern people’s interpretations of unfamiliar verbal units.<sup>70</sup> Thus in reading, preferably aloud, a *Wake* passage like the

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<sup>68</sup> The terms “acute” and “grave” are Jakobson’s own impressionistic descriptors, coined to convey a particular, subjectively experienced aesthetic effect of language. As such, these terms are not in mainstream usage in contemporary linguistics, wherein acute phonemes might rather be described as akin to “high front” or “close vowels,” as well as palatal consonants (i.e. phonemes pronounced by compressing the space in the mouth by pressing the tongue up to the palate, for example), and grave phonemes could be related to “low back” vowels or labiovelars (e.g. *w*, which is produced through a widening of the mouth cavity) and some open vowels, such as *a* and *o*. Jakobson’s terms are familiar in literary theory, however, and they are usefully illustrative of the aesthetic effects discussed in this section, so I have opted to use them in place of the more scientific alternatives. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that Jakobson’s terms do not actually have strict scientific equivalents in contemporary linguistics: in the *den/noc* example, he draws an aesthetic distinction between two open vowels based on a subjective perception of their “lightness” and “darkness” that rather resonates with the synaesthetic imagination than scientific analysis of these words’ phonological makeup.

<sup>69</sup> Pinker, *The Language Instinct*, 163.

<sup>70</sup> Lvovich, “The ‘Gift’: Synesthesia in Translingual Texts,” 219–20.

following, we are bound to glean something about the character it describes from the sheer sound and appearance of the language:

The wagrant wind's awalt'zaround the piltdowns and on every blasted knollyrock (if you can spot fifty I spy four more) there's that gnarlybird ygathering, a runalittle, doalittle, preealittle, pouralittle, wipealittle, kicksalittle, severalittle, eatalittle, whinealittle, kenalittle, helfalittle, pelfalittle gnarlybird. (*FW* 10.29-34)

The prevalence of acute phonemes and the staccato repetition of “alittle” materially create a sense of smallness and speediness. This would suggest that the raw physical quality of Joyce's language, however meaningless it might appear to some readers,<sup>71</sup> can successfully evoke the physique, pace, and kinetic energy of the creature being characterised. In this case, that is the “gnarlybird” representing an archetypal feminine subject (ALP, Kate, the gossiping washerwomen, etc.) embodied in the form of a figurative and literal pecking hen. This visually onomatopoeic effect creates a pleasurable material experience of the text as the semantic value of each verbal unit in the passage functions in tandem with its phonic, visual, and textural qualities—“textural” in the sense that the reader's mouth shapes narrow, jaw-rattling phonemes when reading the passage aloud. As the narrative progresses, the language materially embodying the hen gets juxtaposed with a phonetically “graver” passage depicting a large, heavy, deep-voiced giant:

*Under his seven wrothshields lies one, Lumproar. His glav toside him. Skud ontorsed... She niver comes out when Thon's on shower or when Thon's flash with his Nixy girls or when Thon's blowing toomcracks down the gaels of Thon. No nubo no! Neblas on you liv! Her would be too moochy afreet. Of Burymeleg and Bindmerollingeyes and all the deed in the woe. Fe fo fom!* (*FW* 10.34-11.7; my emphases)

Here we find clusters of grave phonemes to juxtapose the clusters of acute phonemes immediately preceding this passage. This dialogic alternation between clusters of acute and grave, grave and acute, continues throughout the chapter, which dramatizes, among other things, an exchange between husband and wife over the

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<sup>71</sup> I suggest that we envision the *Wake* reader as not necessarily an English speaker because the work's multilingual materiality can make it accessible, to however limited a degree, to readers who may not necessarily be fluent in the “primary” language of the text. For example, in chapter 3 I will show that one of the *Wake*'s Russian translators, Henri Volokhonsky, managed to produce a substantial translation of the text despite his limited command of English. And throughout this project, I frequently and productively compare my “original” versions of the *Wake* with translations into languages that I do not fluently speak, such as Dutch, French, or Italian.

breakfast table. Once again, even if the reader were unaware of the exact scene being enacted, arguably s/he could glean from the material, or “sound-symbolic,” qualities of the language that there is a conversation taking place between a small, squeaky, quick-footed, delicate creature and a bulky, sluggish, lumbering character speaking in a low-pitched voice. Joyce was able to achieve these effects explicitly through his use of multilingualism, employing non-English words like “glav,” “Skud,” “No nubo no,” etc.

This is not to argue that sound symbolism, as a linguistic theory, is either universally applicable or consistently applied in this way throughout the *Wake*. The complexity of Joyce’s technique exceeds the scope of aural and visual onomatopoeia, as discussed earlier. And moreover, readerly responses to sound and form can vary dramatically based on linguistic, cultural, and/or bodily difference. As regards to the breakfast episode, although the narrative design is deeply enriched by the materiality, sound-symbolism, and rhythm of the language, the words interwoven into the description of the hen would be largely recognisable to English-speaking readers: in fact, it would be difficult for an Anglophone reader to ignore the semantic values of the text’s English-inspired verbal units. Indeed, what distinguishes the aesthetic of the hen’s representation from the traditional language of a purely referential form is its sing-song rhythm and childlike simplicity, coupled with Joyce’s visual splicing, rather than hyphenating, of verbal units like “run,” “do,” “pour,” “wipe,” “kick,” and “a little” to produce a string of portmanteaux. The evocative success of the technique lies not merely in the phonic qualities of the language, as the sound-symbolist argument might suggest, but rather in “the momentary and surprising reciprocal relationship established between phonetic and semantic properties.”<sup>72</sup> If the word “little” actually meant “bulky,” and there were thus discordance between the material and semantic features of the language, chances are that the Anglophone reader would be less prone to imagining the character as a small-bodied creature, which would throw the sound-symbolist hypothesis into question.

The multilingual nature of *Finnegans Wake* complicates the question further. Even if, as Pinker suggests, phonetic symbolism could explain why the English speakers in a study guessed the difference between the Chinese *ch’ing* and *ch’ung* correctly, he offers no evidence to support the claim that subjects whose first

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<sup>72</sup> Attridge, *Peculiar Language*, 151.

language might be other than English would respond to acute and grave phonemes in the same way. Let us take the significance of inflections in the construction of diminutive forms in Bulgarian, for example: the Bulgarian adjective for “little” is “málak” [МАЛЪК], which clearly does not contain any acute phonemes to suggest smallness “sound-symbolically.” The diminutive form of “málak” is “manichak” [МЪНИЧЪК], which does include the acute phoneme *i*, but only in the capacity of uniting the consonant-bound root and suffix. In this construction, it is the consonantal suffix *ch* that actually signifies the diminutive form. Thus “butilka” (bottle) becomes “butilchitsa” in the diminutive; “koren” (root) becomes “korenche”; “hliab” (bread) becomes “hlebc hentse,” and so on. In fact, grave phonemes in Bulgarian can be instrumental in creating a sense of smallness because they often appear as the endings signifying the adjectival neutral gender, which, in turn, is commonly projected onto children, animals, and certain inanimate objects. Thus, “dear child” or “precious child” would be pronounced “skəpo dete” [скъпо дете], wherein the grave phoneme on which “skəpo” (precious) ends signifies the neutral gender of the noun “child” and thereby evokes a sense of smallness and vulnerability. Also, “good puppy” sounds like “dobro kuchentse” [добро кученце], wherein the grave phonemes of “dobro” once again signify the smallness and vulnerability of a puppy. These are examples of some regular inflections in Bulgarian show how common grammatical structures in the language can directly contradict the sound-symbolist argument. Every language has its own raw, material quality and cultural, experiential, or conceptual predispositions. Further exceptions to the rules of sound symbolism appear in Mallarmé’s “Crisis of Verse”: “Beside ombre [shade], which is opaque, ténèbres [shadows] is not very dark; what a disappointment, in front of the perversity that makes jour [day] and nuit [night], contradictorily, sound dark in the former and light in the latter.”<sup>73</sup>

Furthermore, every language exhibits singular and varying degrees of cohesiveness between sound and meaning. In their 2008 study, *Crosslinguistic Influence in Language and Cognition*, linguists Scott Jarvis and Aneta Pavlenko suggest that “mental representations of language-independent concepts develop experientially and have no predetermined means of linguistic expression. Language-mediated concepts develop in the process of language socialization where word learning and category acquisition influence each other over an extended period of

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<sup>73</sup> Stéphane Mallarmé, “Crisis of Verse,” in *Divagations*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 203.

time.” They cite previous studies arguing that “as conceptual structure develops, word meanings have to reflect that development. But as word learning progresses, this also creates changes in conceptual structure.” In other words, the language(s) we speak affect how we perceive the world around us. To support this idea, Jarvis and Pavlenko cite studies that have shown how English-speaking children “differentiate between types of movement across space specified by the prepositions in and out (e.g. ‘put the apple in the bowl’ vs. ‘take the apple out of the bowl’),” while, by contrast, “children learning Korean begin to distinguish between types of movement involving a tight and loose fit (e.g. ‘put the ring on the finger [tight fit]’ vs. ‘put the apple in the bowl [loose fit]’).” This further suggests that “children’s patterns of correct and incorrect usage of spatial words differ systematically across languages,” effectively showing a cross-linguistic difference based not only in semantics but in individuals’ spatial and material experiences of language.<sup>74</sup> Following that, the addition of a new language into an individual’s repertoire could arguably introduce a new mode of perception, conceptualisation and/or awareness of experience. Jarvis and Pavlenko offer some fascinating evidence to show language-based variation and crosslinguistic influence in their subjects’ perceptions and linguistic representations of objects, emotions, numbers, senses of identity, gender, time, space, and motion.<sup>75</sup>

Nonetheless, sound symbolist and onomatopoeic engagements with *Wakean* multilingualism offer some valuable perspectives on the study of the text’s poetic materiality as such approaches encourage us to develop an awareness of our visceral responses to language, and to use that awareness in our efforts to creatively engage with, and derive pleasure from, semantically ambiguous or estranging narratives. A major factor in the ability of *Wakean* to make the reader imagine intensely, even in the absence of familiar vocabulary, is its elaborate manipulation of the raw qualities of language. In the “collideorescape” (*FW* 143.28) of the *Wake*, the reader is constantly reminded to suspend all expectations of a lucid, stably referential, and determinate linguistic system. Every moment with the text demands an “earsighted view” (143.9-10), inviting the reader to open up to the possibility that language may awaken the senses visually and aurally, as well as tactilely, emotionally, and even olfactorily (“to be on anew and basking again in the panaroma of all flores of speech” [143.3-4]).

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<sup>74</sup> Scott Jarvis and Aneta Pavlenko, *Crosslinguistic Influence in Language and Cognition*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2008), 114.

<sup>75</sup> Jarvis and Pavlenko, *Crosslinguistic Influence*, 122–52.



The *Wake* reader might take cues from Nabokov's Cherdyntsev, whose experience of the colours and textures of phonemes varies depending on what languages are present in a text. He reports that "the various numerous 'a's' of the four languages which I speak differ for me in tinge, going from lacquered-black to splintery-grey—like different sorts of wood."<sup>76</sup> In the Russian translation of his memoir, *Drugie Berega* (literally *Other Shores*, 1954), Nabokov describes the experience of concocting the colours and textures he would associate with different linguistic structures in a way that recalls Pinker's relation of phonetic symbolism to the motor functions of the mouth in the act of pronunciation:

I'm not actually sure whether 'hearing' is the correct term (to associate with the synaesthetic experience): the sense of colour emerges, I believe, in an enveloping, mouthed, even gustatory manner. In order to define the colour of a letter, I have to savour it, allow it to swell and expose itself in my mouth, as I imagine its visual form.<sup>77</sup>

He then proceeds to identify his "rainbow alphabet": a string of phonemes synaesthetically imagined and ordered according to the colours of the rainbow. In Cyrillic, the rainbow reads: "БѢИЦКЗ" [v-jɔ-ε-p-s-k-z]; and, according to the English translation of the memoir, *Speak, Memory*, the same colours are mirrored in his image of the Latin alphabet as KZSPYGV.<sup>78</sup> Although not every reader is a synaesthete, the experience Nabokov describes nonetheless shows the possibility of a visceral, and thereby creatively productive, relationship between text and reader, speaker and language.

Joyce's diverse and expansive multilingual manoeuvrings of onomatopoeic, gestural, and synaesthetic devices manifest the inherent ability of his poetic language to materialise not merely as a linguistic mirroring of a non-linguistic, objective reality, but as an organic sound, image, or experience whose value simultaneously exceeds its referential function and maintains an interilluminating dialectic with semantics. Cixous identified this dialectic in her reading of Joyce's earliest works, particularly *Portrait*, in her essay "The Pleasure Principle or Paradox Lost," wherein she writes of the artist as:

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<sup>76</sup> Nabokov, *The Gift*, 72.

<sup>77</sup> Vladimir Nabokov, *Drugie Berega* (Online: RoyalLib, 1954), [http://royallib.ru/read/nabokov\\_vladimir/drugie\\_berega.html](http://royallib.ru/read/nabokov_vladimir/drugie_berega.html).

<sup>78</sup> Nabokov, *Speak, Memory*, 14.

the lucky one ‘capable’ of playing with language, that is the lucky, culpable [*coupable*] one. (In Joycean parlance [*En joycien*] capable and culpable are synonymous.) He is the stealer of signifiers, the cunning connoisseur of the Law out of love for *the noise of the Law*. The moral of this tale, or Joyce, is that one needs the Law to derive music from it. The artist needs the Law but only the better to cheat it. Our outlaw [*hors-la-loi*] remains an inlaw [*frôle-la-loi*].<sup>79</sup>

Perhaps Cixous is describing an effect sustained from *Portrait* all the way to the *Wake*. Or perhaps it reflects her reading of *Portrait* through the *Wake*. Either way, her thought remains an apt depiction of the *Wake*’s multilingual design: a materialisation of the perpetual encounter between language and the body, where estrangement brings us closer, and vice versa.

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<sup>79</sup> Hélène Cixous, “The Pleasure Principle or Paradox Lost,” in *Volleys of Humanity*, ed. Eric Prenowitz, trans. Laurent Milesi (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 77.

## Chapter 2. Thereinfter Is the Sounddance: Multilingual Phonologies and Sound Patterning in the *Wake*

### I. The music of Wakese

Expansive and malleable, as variably mouthable, as Wakese may be, there is method to its multilingual design. There may well have been several methods at play in the writing of such a text, just as we exercise (and regularly revise) multiple methods of reading it, but attuning oneself to the *Wake*'s musicality remains a key component of the reader's strategy of textual engagement. Joyce's puns and neologisms are rarely spelled the same way twice. This means that, without a sense of music or rhythmical patterning, the reader would be forced to commit an overwhelming number of new words to memory in order to be able to make some cohesive sense of the storyline(s)—and keeping up with the narrative continuity while manoeuvring through and around the hundreds, perhaps thousands, of polyvocal interruptions and interjections that the text throws at us can be overwhelming enough.

Jennie Wang suggests, in an early essay on her own musical experimentations with the *Wake*, that “hearing becomes the ‘natural necessity’ in reading or reproducing the text, for it is the productive medium between what is written and what is not; sound recalls the presence of what is absent.”<sup>1</sup> In some events of reading, semantic sense itself seems to be the absent thing. Although sometimes the text employs existing words in either English or other-than-English, most of its vocabulary is not a vocabulary at all—at least not in the predictable, systematic sense that standards of literacy expect that languages should have. Though we might refer to the language of the *Wake* by a single name—Wakese—for convenience, it does not quite resemble any standard national (or international) language that exists outside of it because, at the very least, such a language should have a baseline set of grammatical rules, a vocabulary of recurring words with a standard spelling, and some rules of pronunciation. Wakese, however, defies standardisation: its grammatical and syntactical structure is sometimes reflexive of

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<sup>1</sup> Jennie Wang, “The Player’s Song of *Finnegans Wake*: Translating Sound Sense,” *The Journal of Narrative Technique* 21, no. 2 (Spring 1991): 213.

English, but often enough our sense of meaning gets illuminated by another language, as shown in chapter 1; it upholds absolutely no rules of spelling (which gave Joyce the freedom to creatively use his typesetters' errors instead of correcting them<sup>2</sup>); and any rules of pronunciation are governed by the reader's own body, accent, and linguistic repertoire. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the text invites creative experimentation with its material qualities, so numerous lines in the text can produce multiple narrative layers based purely on how the reader is able and willing to embody them. With this in mind, the absent thing Wang speaks of could be "Wakeese" itself: the concept of a bounded, predictable, structured, identifiable, located, and replicable linguistic system that can be learned or fluently commanded. No single reader can claim to have complete and controlled knowledge of the *Wake*, although studious readers have tried to establish some sense of fluency by collating alphabetised lists of every verbal unit in the text,<sup>3</sup> or breaking it down into ever-multiplying categories of character names, sigla, languages, motifs, phrases, idioms, registers, song titles, proverbs, and many other categories,<sup>4</sup> or producing lexicons of German, Irish, and other languages represented in the *Wake*, or organising it by giving names to all its nameless chapters, or attempting any combination and variation thereof. Such administrative methods of coming to grips with the text can never offer a comprehensive account of what can happen when the reader actually engages with it, but they are nonetheless helpful, and indeed they represent an essential part of the reading process: though we can never fully grasp or control the *Wake*, we can create as many stepping stones of comprehension and creative insight into it as we can, as we need, and as we wish.

Few things in the *Wake* can be said to recur—at least not in the same form that they appear elsewhere—but, like music, its multilingual design relies on polyphonic layering and repetition of a certain kind. Languages as we know them in the extra-*Wakean* world—"Standard" English, Irish English, Italian, French, Swahili, Russian, Greek, etc.—do not quite feature as themselves in the fictionalised

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<sup>2</sup> As previously cited, the *Wake's* Dutch translators report that they "saw Joyce make the most of typographical errors by concocting something new out of the muddle. We saw how he desperately tried to correct accidental mistakes, but more often than not we saw how he had to admit defeat and lay down his arms in the face of the inevitable inky, murky sea of mistakes his typists and printers made, and by neglecting them, continue them." Erik Bindervoet and Robbert-Jan Henkes, "*Finnegans Wake* in Dutch, Dutch in *Finnegans Wake*, and What to Do with It" (Journal article manuscript, courtesy of Robbert-Jan Henkes and Erik Bindervoet, Cracow, Poland, July 2004), 4.

<sup>3</sup> Clive Hart, *A Concordance to "Finnegans Wake"* (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1963); Eric Rosenbloom, Online Database, *Concordance of "Finnegans Wake" by James Joyce*, accessed May 26, 2016, <http://www.rosenlake.net/fw/FWconcordance/>.

<sup>4</sup> Slepou, "Finnegans Wake Extensible Elucidation Treasury (FWEET)."

multilingualism of Joyce's text, but they do identify themselves in peculiar ways. Characters, bodies, objects, and events similarly materialise simultaneously as themselves, as not-themselves, as each other, and as us-as-them, us-through-them, them-through-us, and so on.

One of the things that enables the text to reference distinct languages or characters while remaining linguistically boundless is its phonological system. While few words in the *Wake* are visually spelled the same way twice, its multilingual fabric is constantly self-referencing and repeating itself through a rich treasury of recurring phonological patterns and motifs. These include, for example: HCE's polymorphic name—"Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker" (*FW* 24.7), "Howth Castle and Environs" (3.3), "Haveth Childers Everywhere" (535.34-35), "High Church of England" (36.29); or "Dear Dirty Dublin"—"*Hear Hubty Hublin*" (105.18), "Dix Dearthly Dungbin" (366.24), "deep drowner Athacleath" (539.17), "Deep Dalchi Dolando" (570.3); or even the legendary catch phrase of *Father Ted*'s Mrs. Doyle—"go in, go on, go an" (204.27), "Garonne, garonne" (205.15), "O, gihon" (213.08), "Gau on" (233.27), "gaon" (413.29). *Wake* scholarship has of course noted the existence of these motifs, and classic sources such as Hart's *Structure and Motif* or McHugh's *Sigla of "Finnegans Wake"*<sup>5</sup> have studied their symbolic significance at length. The phonological qualities of the text have also been addressed by several scholars,<sup>6</sup> but an understanding of how multilingual stylisations affect and transform these features, both semantically and materially, is yet to be fully developed.

In this chapter, I will offer some new methods of creative engagement with the multilingualism of the *Wake*'s phonological system. In the first half of the chapter, I will discuss *interlingual* phonology: particularly how readers variably identify, experience, and engage with the different languages embedded in the text (such as Russian, Italian, or Swahili). In the second half, I will analyse the book's own, internal *intralingual* system, exploring how the multilingual design of the *Wake* uses distinctive, yet overlapping, phonological patterns, some of which constitute fictional registers (what I call "phonological signatures") that are attributable to archetypal characters such as ALP and Issy.

<sup>5</sup> Hart, *Structure and Motif in Finnegans Wake*; Roland McHugh, *The Sigla of Finnegans Wake* (London: Edward Arnold, 1976).

<sup>6</sup> For example: Derek Attridge, *Peculiar Language: Literature as Difference from the Renaissance to James Joyce* (London: Routledge, 2004); Adam Piette, *Remembering and the Sound of Words: Mallarmé, Proust, Joyce, Beckett* (Oxford : New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1996); or Garrett Stewart, *Reading Voices: Literature and the Phonotext* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), which discusses the literary functionality of homophones in Joyce's major works, including, briefly, *Finnegans Wake*.

## II. Multilingual phonotactics, phonologies, and cultural soundscapes

Every language has a unique set of characteristics that influence its usage and reception. Some of these characteristics, such as grammar, syntax, and phonology often have a predetermined structure endorsed and perpetuated by authoritative sources, such as particular dictionaries, textbooks, institutions, and indeed politically or culturally empowered individuals (for example, the Queen of England, whose entitled claim on the English language is reflected in the linguistic form colloquially known as “the Queen’s English”). Thus while English is spoken in various registers that may differ in structure, usage, pronunciation, literacy, locus, and culture, the language also has several institutionalised standard forms—such as Standard British English (SBE), Mainstream Canadian English (MCE), Irish English, Caribbean English, etc.—which adhere to determined sets of grammatical and phonolexical rules. SBE in particular, as described by sociolinguist Asif Agha, is

a ‘supra-local’ national language; it is widely used in writing and print. For many speakers, SBE is neither the variety acquired first, nor the one used most frequently in casual conversation...; yet the variety is preeminent in public life due to its social prestige, its links to education and economic advancement.<sup>7</sup>

This borderless register represents an institutionally regulated linguistic structure, which can serve as a normalising force in the various cultural, geographic, and literary contexts wherein it is spoken or written (for example in mainstream British media, popularly embodied by the BBC, or in international communities where SBE serves as a common language, since this is the form of English that international language schools typically teach). The standard pronunciation imposed on SBE learners and speakers is known as “Received Pronunciation” (RP), and a person’s ability (and willingness) to use this register carries particular socio-cultural connotations. Agha cites studies which suggest that

Respondents judge RP speakers to be more ambitious, intelligent, and confident, cleaner, taller and better looking—even though they [the

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<sup>7</sup> Asif Agha, “The Social Life of Cultural Value,” *Words and Beyond: Linguistic and Semiotic Studies of Sociocultural Order* 23, no. 3–4 (July 2003): 233n1, doi:10.1016/S0271-5309(03)00012-0.

respondents] are evaluating audiotaped data (!)—but also less serious, talkative, good-natured and good-humored than non-RP speakers.<sup>8</sup>

The fact that the subjects of these studies associated certain phonological characteristics of speech with the speakers' visual aesthetics (i.e. the sound of a person's accent conjured up an image of their appearance) without ever actually seeing them betrays a particular bias that Agha suggests must be culturally ingrained. This perspective derives from scientifically conducted studies, which by the nature of their methodology rely strictly on replicable results. This means that any individual, idiocultural variability or singularity among the subjects studied may not have qualified as evidence for the linguists analysing the data to be able to critically consider in their overall conclusions. And, in fact, these studies may have yielded different results had they employed a more culturally and linguistically diverse set of subjects. In the context of the humanities, we must ensure that readerly subjectivity and singularity is critically accounted for, despite the difficulty that would pose to establishing generalising or universally applicable principles of understanding, so my use of scientific linguistic sources here serves to suggest, rather than determine, the possibilities of cultural bias and the influence of repetitiously ingrained linguistic patterns on our experiences of different languages, and subsequently of the multilingual text.

As noted in the introduction, Elizabeth Klosty Beaujour's observation in *Alien Tongues* that "early and frequently chauvinistic studies of bilinguals assumed that polyglottism could not but be disadvantageous to intellectual growth"<sup>9</sup> indicates something about the mixed readerly reception *Finnegans Wake* has received over the years. That dismissive attitude towards off-beat language forms—characteristically spoken by slaves, exiles, foreigners, and even children—was as deeply ingrained a cultural norm in Joyce's lifetime as it continues to be today, against the backdrop of nationalist and imperialist discourses that continually perpetuate the self-defeating Babelian ideal, whereby the fantasy of a single, perfectly uniform, universally comprehensible, unambiguous language simultaneously looms as a utopian goal and inevitably fails our expectations. The Babelian fantasy and the monolingual paradigm emerge from a shared ideological predisposition: what Bakhtin conceptualises in his essay, "Discourse in the Novel," as the centralising, normalising, politically charged force of the "unitary language":

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<sup>8</sup> Giles cited in *ibid.*, 240.

<sup>9</sup> Klosty Beaujour, *Alien Tongues*, 13.

The victory of one reigning language (dialect) over the others, the supplanting of languages, their enslavement, the process of illuminating them with the True Word, the incorporation of barbarians and lower social strata into a unitary language of culture and truth, the canonization of ideological systems, philology with its methods of studying and teaching dead languages, languages that were by that very fact ‘unities,’ Indo-European linguistics with its focus of attention, directed away from language plurality to a single proto-language—all this determined the content and power of the category of ‘unitary language’ in linguistic and stylistic thought, and determined its creative, style-shaping role in the majority of the poetic genres that coalesced in the channel formed by those same centripetal forces of verbal-ideological life.<sup>10</sup>

Bakhtin attributes the authorship of linguistic standardisation to “Aristotelian poetics, the poetics of Augustine, the poetics of the medieval church, of ‘the one language of truth,’ the Cartesian poetics of neoclassicism, the abstract grammatical universalism of Leibniz (the idea of a ‘universal grammar’), Humboldt’s insistence on the concrete,”<sup>11</sup> and insists that the very concept of standardised “correctness” in language, of permanence and systematic replicability of living, embodied speech gestures is not something factually “given” (*dan*) but is rather abstract and ideological, “posited” (*zadan*) by the politics of monolingualism, nationalism, and structural power.<sup>12</sup> Heteroglossia—the Bakhtinian concept closely associated with the term “multilingualism” in the present context—perpetually destabilises the ideological predispositions of “unitary language,” he argues. Linguistic unity (or standardisation/universalisation) “is opposed to the realities of heteroglossia,” and “it makes its real presence felt as a force for overcoming this heteroglossia, imposing specific limits to it, guaranteeing a certain maximum of mutual understanding and crystalizing into a real, although still relative, unity—the unity of the reigning conversational (everyday) and literary language, ‘correct language.’”<sup>13</sup> Indeed, it is hardly surprising that Bakhtinian linguistics have had such canonical influence on Joyce scholarship.

The issues arising from the Babelian fantasy of power attained through linguistic unity prove relevant to our understanding of *Wakean* multilingualism in historical context. As Taylor-Batty outlines in the “Modernism and Babel” chapter of *Multilingualism and Modernist Fiction*, Joyce’s contemporaries entertained some

<sup>10</sup> Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 271.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 270.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*



rather divergent views on the economic and social politics of globalization, which ultimately materialized in modernist writers' varied engagements with and attitudes towards literary multilingualism. C. K. Ogden, for example, invented Basic English in light of the *Wake* (as well as the cosmopolitan, internationalist literary context provided by Jolas and *transition*, which was the first literary publication to run regular instalments of *Work in Progress*<sup>14</sup>). Basic English was intended as a solution to the communication problems arising from global diversity—problems that *Wakean* multilingualism performatively renders and creatively plays with. Basic English was also an improvement, Ogden claimed, on existing International Auxiliary Languages such as Ido or Esperanto, which he believed “add[ed] to the existing Babel” rather than alleviating the problems it posed. English seemed to him the only existing national language that “need at present be seriously considered” as a candidate for universalization.<sup>15</sup> Although probably unintended as such, his assertion emerged from the established imperial influence of the English language, and thus inadvertently or otherwise colluded with and reinforced the colonial discourse that forced English into cultures and communities through military, political, and economic violence.<sup>16</sup>

*Wakean* multilingualism, on the other hand, acts as an antithesis to Babelian unification or universalisation: the text overflows with interlingual misunderstandings and slippages in communication, both in terms of narrative content and performatively, through its multilingual materiality. For example, we find this embodied in the recurring encounter between Mutt and Jute, who chronically miscommunicate and thus spark wars, frustration, and discursive conflict: “Yutah!” yells Jute, either naming himself in a foreign accent or trying to grab Mutt’s attention (“You there!”). “Mukk’s pleased,” replies Mutt: “My

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<sup>14</sup> Fragments of *Work in Progress* were published in several small-press modernist magazines before the establishment of *transition* in 1927, with the first-ever published fragment appearing in *transatlantic review* in 1924, followed by *Contact Collection of Contemporary Writers in 1925*, and several others before *WiP* headlined the first issue of *transition* in April 1927: According to Dirk Van Hulle, “*transition* was the publication in which, for the first time, the fragments of ‘Work in Progress’ appeared on a regular basis,” and thus it also became “the place where readers taking an interest in Joyce’s writings first got a real sense of the content of his ‘Work in Progress’” (54). For an analysis of the publication history of *Work in Progress*, see Dirk Van Hulle, *James Joyce’s “Work in Progress”*: *Pre-Book Publications of “Finnegans Wake” Fragments*, ed. Ann R. Hawkins and Maura Ives, *Studies In Publishing History: Manuscript, Print, Digital* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

<sup>15</sup> C. K. Ogden, *Debabelization: With a Survey of Contemporary Opinion on the Problem of a Universal Language* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1931), 15. See also: Susan Shaw Sailer, “Universalizing Languages: ‘Finnegans Wake’ Meets Basic English,” *James Joyce Quarterly* 36 (1999): 853–68, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25474090>.

<sup>16</sup> I will discuss the politics and ethics of Ogden’s project, as well as his “translation” of a part of “Anna Livia Plurabelle” into Basic English for *transition* 21, in more detail in chapter 4.

pleasure,” as well as, cheekily and possibly even inappropriately, “Mukk/Mutt is pleased.” “Are you jeff?,” Jute asks, with “jeff” acting as both a proper name and a phonological cousin of “deaf.” “Somehards,” Mutt answers unhelpfully. “But are you not jeffmute?,” asks Jute again, frustrated, wanting to know if the difficulty in communication comes from Mutt being deaf-mute. “Noho. Only an utterer,” replies Mutt: No, no. Only an otherer—the “utterer” who, through uttering, others himself and estranges his others. “Whoa? Whoat is the mutter with you?,” Jute escalates: “Wha/Who? Who/what is the matter with you?”; and also, from the German “Mutter” (mother), “Who is your mother?” and “Who/What in the mother [of God] are you?” (*FW* 16.10-16). This exchange, as frustrating as it is entertaining, continues in this vein until the text “Stoop[s]” to explain that this tale is “the same told of all. Many. Miscegenations on miscegenations” (18.17-20): misunderstandings upon misunderstandings, splitting up nations through the generations.

The “othering” power of the utterance in this passage resonates with Bakhtin’s idea that the embodied speech gesture—“the utterance of a speaking subject”—becomes the site where the ideological forces of the “unitary language” structure and the cultural reality of heteroglossia encounter one another, at once bearing transformative effects upon the body and creating language not in spite of but in engagement with the body. “The processes of centralization and decentralization, of unification and disunification, intersect in the utterance,” writes Bakhtin:

the utterance not only answers the requirements of its own language as an individualized embodiment of a speech act, but it answers the requirements of heteroglossia as well; it is in fact an active participant in such speech diversity. And this active participation of every utterance in living heteroglossia determines the linguistic profile and style of the utterance to no less a degree than its inclusion in any normative-centralizing system of a unitary language.<sup>17</sup>

In other words, language emerges neither solely from the body (as, for example, the bow-wow theory entertained by Jespersen would suggest) nor from disembodied, abstractly conceived linguistic systems (as Saussurian linguistics are inclined to suggest), but from a centrifugal, dialogic exchange between predetermined linguistic systems and the unbridled, multilingual life of embodied speech.

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<sup>17</sup> Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 272.

### III. Readerly engagement with multilingual iconicities

Looking beyond the binary power struggle between language-as-predetermined-ideological-structure and the body (or, instead of the body, the utterance imagined as an event), we might also consider the role of the listener/reader in this transformative encounter. The interilluminating dialogic exchange takes place not only between Mutt and Jute, or between *Finnegans Wake* and Standard English, but among each of these actors and the reader, who in turn converses with them through their own idioculture and singular body. The latter then become transformed through the reader's singular experience of the text, and so the centrifugal process of literary engagement perpetually spirals.

In linguistics, the discursive intentions of speakers—that is the messages that they intend to communicate semantically—are always accompanied by “metadiscursive labels,” which they may consciously exploit in order to qualify, embellish, contradict for ironic effect, and/or contextualise the semantic content of an utterance. Ken Hyland summarises the concept:

Essentially metadiscourse embodies the idea that communication is more than just the exchange of information, goods or services, but also involves the personalities, attitudes and assumptions of those who are communicating. Language is always a consequence of interaction, of the differences between people which are expressed verbally, and metadiscourse options are the ways we articulate and construct these interactions. This, then, is a dynamic view of language as metadiscourse stresses the fact that, as we speak or write, we negotiate with others, making decisions about the kind of effects we are having on our listeners or readers.<sup>18</sup>

Yet the creative power of an utterance is not confined by its author's intent: it acts in relation to how it is received, perceived, mirrored, and potentially replicated by the hearer/reader, who themselves becomes an author in the event of linguistic and literary invention. How different *Wake* readers experience the intersection between the discursive content and metadiscursive labels which each reader singularly perceives in the text's multilingual fabric can thus inform and transform what particular languages become illuminated in the event of reading, how we emotionally and intellectually experience them, what they can make us imagine from within and beyond the *Wake*, and how we come to comprehend the text through that centrifugal dialogic exchange.

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<sup>18</sup> Ken Hyland, *Metadiscourse* (London: Continuum, 2005), 3.

Because not every *Wake* reader is a polyglot—and even polyglots have limited multilingual repertoires—the multilingualism of the text can sometimes seem like a melting pot of inseparable and indiscernible languages. When we choose to approach Joyce’s text as “distorted English,” we inadvertently or otherwise distance ourselves from its multilingual fabric, estranging the text from ourselves, obstructing our own ability to touch it and be touched by it, and fetishizing its difference. As previously suggested, treating the *Wake* as strange, foreign, distant, or detached from the reader—as an opposite to the reader’s “mother tongue” or the single, fluently spoken, “primary” language that the text is expected to uphold—would enact Ahmed’s concept of “stranger fetishism”: the multilingual text as “the stranger is not *any-body* that we have failed to recognise, but *some-body* that we have already recognised *as* a stranger, as ‘a body out of place’”<sup>19</sup>—or indeed as a literary language that disappoints monolingual expectations.

We can see some of the cultural and political implications of fetishizing foreigners in art reflected, for example, in Marlene Dietrich’s rise to fame as Hollywood’s iconic *femme fatale* owing to the stylistic distinctiveness of her non-native English. Josef von Sternberg, the director who cast her in her first English-language picture, *The Blue Angel*, would eventually begin to cultivate the actress’s linguistic distinctiveness as a tool of characterisation, but he initially invested ample time and resources in his unscrupulous efforts to get her to sound as natively Anglophone as possible.<sup>20</sup> In an article entitled “Falling in Love Again and Again: Marlene Dietrich and the Iconization of Non-native English,” Allan Bell argues that “Marlene Dietrich was the first to give the *femme fatale* a voice. With the release of *Morocco* in November 1930, the otherness of the character was inscribed in her non-native English, the fitting vehicle for the persona’s exotic non-Americanism.”<sup>21</sup> The formulaic construction of the *femme fatale* image—“mystery, unknowability and otherness”<sup>22</sup>—materialised in Dietrich’s Germanophonic English. Her register, her “hypnotic accented voice,” radiated the “foreign mystery, [and] European sophistication”<sup>23</sup> that would pave the way for future multilingual, fatal seductresses,

<sup>19</sup> Ahmed, *Strange Encounters*, 55.

<sup>20</sup> “He schooled her daily in English, refusing to speak German and using only English to her...which often reduced her to tears. He corrected her grammar and pronunciation—including most infamously, while she was lying on a stretcher after fainting from the heat during filming of a desert scene for *Morocco*.” Allan Bell, “Falling in Love Again and Again: Marlene Dietrich and the Iconization of Non-Native English,” *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 15.5 (2011): 641.

<sup>21</sup> Bell, “Falling in Love Again and Again,” 650.

<sup>22</sup> Bell, “Falling in Love Again and Again,” 649.

<sup>23</sup> Riva cited in Bell, “Falling in Love Again and Again,” 634.

such as Greta Garbo, in Hollywood. Dietrich's accent became the quintessential iconic register of the *femme fatale* in the 1930s and '40s. It contained an ideology of character—the archetypal, Eve-like, deceptively beautiful, fatally compelling temptress—that would foreshadow the disastrous outcome of the male protagonist's relationship with her from the moment she would first speak. Thus the non-native accent of Dietrich's English would serve as a tool of characterisation on the one hand, and as a broader cultural reference on the other, practically independently of the semantic value of her language. Because her career took off in Hollywood and an overwhelming majority of her audience shared the collective cultural space of early twentieth-century USA, filmmakers relied on culturally ingrained stereotypes to anticipate how viewers would respond to her accent and they creatively exploited it in her films.

In the 1930s, before Germany's rise to infamy throughout the Second World War, Dietrich's German accent was not used by filmmakers to invoke associations of a particular country. Rather, to the American audience of the time, her interlingual register sufficed to signify a general, exotic Otherness, which landed her roles like Concha Perez (Spanish) in *The Devil is a Woman* (1935), Countess Alexandra Vladinoff (Russian) in *Knight without Armour* (1937), Frenchy in *Destry Rides Again* (1939), and even Jamila (Middle Eastern) in *Kismet* (1943). Bell suggests that it was only after the atrocities of Hitler's regime had become part of the American public's collective consciousness that a German accent became the signature register of enemies and villains in Hollywood cinema.<sup>24</sup> This recorded shift in cultural perceptions of foreign accents, as well as the typical function of the German language and phonology in film at that time, shows how the effects of multilingual elements in a narrative depend on the broad cultural context surrounding the artwork, as well as each individual viewer's, or reader's, idioculture.

Arguably the stylistic role of such multilingual shifts is much easier to discern and define when a narrative shows a visible stylistic distinction between different languages and registers, which in turn can inspire readers to associate particular languages with specific ideological distinctions, too. The term “stylistic distinction” here signifies an evincible and systematic change in word choice, accent,

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<sup>24</sup> Bell, “Falling in Love Again and Again,” 642.

idiom, rhythm of speech, and even cultural or narrative knowledge.<sup>25</sup> Bakhtin defines the cultural or “ideological” distinction of an utterance through the idea that “images of language are inseparable from images of various world views and from the living beings who are their agents—people who think, talk, and act in a setting that is social and historically concrete.”<sup>26</sup> As we will find through some in-depth textual engagement with several examples of *Wakean* inter- and intralingualism later in this chapter, style and ideology are connected—perhaps even, as Bakhtin suggests, “inseparable.” Yet it is important to emphasise that the iconic value of a language does not necessarily—if ever at all—remain static. Rather, as shown by American audiences’ shifting perceptions of Dietrich’s German accent, what a specific language represents in the reader’s experience can vary with historical setting and idiocultural, as well as narrative, context. It is hardly conceivable for a critic or author to anticipate how any reader would respond to a given multilingual stylisation. However, these stylisations are still identifiable by their material distinctiveness. It is thus critically important and productive to recognise that multi-layered distinctiveness and explore how it can affect and creatively transform the readerly experience, even if we cannot always, if ever, determine precisely what each textual encounter will bring.

The stylistic distinctiveness of various languages, accents, and registers become fictionally reimagined in Joyce’s texts. In Bakhtinian terms, while languages “interilluminate” each other in the extratextual world, where “one language can, after all, see itself only in the light of another language,”<sup>27</sup> in a literary text “The clearest and most characteristic form of an internally dialogized mutual illumination of languages is *stylization*.” In *The Dialogic Imagination*, the concept of linguistic stylisation encompasses the idea that literary multilingualism represents a creative re-vision and reconstruction of various languages, accents, or registers—a reimagination filtered through the writer’s own idioculture, singularity, and “art-intention”:

Every authentic stylization, as we have already said, is an artistic representation of another’s linguistic style, an artistic image of another’s language.... Stylization differs from style proper precisely by virtue of its requiring a specific linguistic consciousness (the contemporaneity of the

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<sup>25</sup> That is, if a character exhibits knowledge of facts that s/he, as an individual with a limited perspective, would have no way of knowing, then one could argue that the character’s voice has been momentarily usurped by another.

<sup>26</sup> Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 49.

<sup>27</sup> Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 12.

stylizer and his audience), under whose influence a style becomes a stylization, against whose background it acquires new meaning and significance.<sup>28</sup>

In these terms, the appearance of any non-English language in Joyce's texts represents not a strictly objective representation of an "abstractly unitary national language"<sup>29</sup> but rather an artistic stylisation formed by a dialogic exchange between the "styliser's" singular experience of the iconicity of that language and the artistic demands (or intents) of the creative work. This interilluminating dynamic

highlights some elements [of the 'abstractly unitary national language'], leaves others in the shade, creates a special pattern of accents that has the effect of making its various aspects all aspects of language, creating specific resonances between the stylized language and the linguistic consciousness contemporaneous with it—in short, creates a free image of another's language, which expresses not only a stylized but also a stylizing language-and art-intention.<sup>30</sup>

In other words, any linguistic pattern suggesting the presence of a particular national language or register in a literary text is "an artistic image" of that language. Of course, "identifying" precisely what languages feature in the *Wake* can feel like a fool's errand because the fictionalised multilingualism<sup>31</sup> of the text makes it as difficult to draw interlingual boundaries as it is for the reader to separate their own body from the transformative effects of the text (and vice versa). Nonetheless, the multilingual text inevitably predisposes the reader to experiencing different languages, even in moments when the semantic content of a textual utterance evades us. I refer to this act of linguistic identification as the "iconisation" of languages (including intralingual registers, both non-fictional and fictional).

Such multilingual stylisation can be found even in Joyce's earliest works. For example, in the opening paragraph of "Clay," the reader encounters a discernible intralingual shift through the use of idiomatic expressions such as "The kitchen was

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<sup>28</sup> Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 362.

<sup>29</sup> Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 288.

<sup>30</sup> Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 362.

<sup>31</sup> As discussed in the introduction, the languages and registers that readers might identify in the multilingual fabric of the *Wake* do not strictly resemble the national languages or culturally specific registers that we know from the extra-*Wake* world. The multilingual fragments and references in the text flow within and through each other so seamlessly that the reader can never quite separate them. (This is in contrast to other multilingual novels like Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, where non-English words and phrases are clearly demarcated through italics.) Thus what we find in *Wakese* is an artistically stylised, fictionalised multilingualism.

spick and span” or “four very big barmbracks,”<sup>32</sup> replacing more standard (and potentially more widely accessible) formulations like “the kitchen was clean and tidy” or “four very big currant buns.”<sup>33</sup> The stylistic distinctiveness of the narrator’s language materially represents the literary device that Kenner has coined as the Uncle Charles Principle: the language of the story does not merely serve to describe the setting or divulge information about the characters, the city, their histories, and so on but it fleshes the text with the body of a character (although, notably, the narrative viewpoint is not strictly Maria’s—hence the delicate distinctiveness of the Uncle Charles Principle). Everything the narrator of “Clay” chooses to divulge bears at least as much narrative significance as what they omit, both intentionally and inadvertently. As Margot Norris suggests, the text withholds details about Maria’s relationships and history in the shadow of the character’s own “blind spots”—it obstructs our view of the things Maria cannot know, as well as the things she does not want us to know.<sup>34</sup> Yet as the narrative voice embodies the character through the material manifestation of her idiom, it peculiarly grants the reader access to the knowledge that information is being withheld from us, and that withholding in itself becomes an act of illumination. The intralingual stylisations enable the character’s body to materialise within the narrative voice without claiming ownership of the narrative. Thus the author—the Arranger<sup>35</sup>—materialises, too, through the self-conscious fictionality of the text’s intralingual stylisations. The interillumination between the “primary” language (English) implicit in this Anglophone text and the fictional stylisation of the narrative language thus produces a distinctly multilingual effect that never quite loses its subtlety as we approach Joyce’s latest works, but it definitely goes on to grow in intensity and creative capacity.

Later, in *Ulysses*, the text enacts multiple scenes and references that show Bloom becoming captivated by the musicality of Italian speech. Because he does not actually speak Italian, his engagement with the foreign language hinges primarily on his material, phonological experience of it—his metadiscursive perception—which throughout the novel gradually develops into an iconic image that is specific to the character’s idioculture. In “Eumaeus,” for example, the text plays on the comedy of

<sup>32</sup> James Joyce, *Dubliners*, ed. Robert Scholes, 1967 Corrected Edition (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 2008), 121.

<sup>33</sup> The phrase “two big currant buns” does actually appear elsewhere in *Dubliners*: in “An Encounter” (27), further suggesting that “barmbracks” is part of Maria’s idiom, rather than the narrator’s voice.

<sup>34</sup> Margot Norris, “Narration under a Blindfold: Reading Joyce’s ‘Clay,’” *PMLA* 102.2 (March 1987): 206.

<sup>35</sup> Hugh Kenner, “The Arranger,” in *James Joyce’s Ulysses: A Casebook*, ed. Derek Attridge, *Casebooks in Criticism* (Oxford, [England]; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 17–32.



interlingual slippages as Bloom becomes the butt of the polyglot's joke: how silly he looks when he admires the musicality of this foreign tongue—"A beautiful language. I mean for singing purposes. Why do you not write your poetry in that language? *Bella poetria!* It is so melodious and full. *Belladonna voglio!*" (U 716)—when in fact the melodious voices he overhears in this scene turn out to belong to a pair of shmucks who are just "haggling over money," as Stephen explains through a laborious yawn (U 717). Although Bloom's multilingual experience could be read as a means to ridicule the uneducated foreigner, I would suggest that his unabashed openness to the melodious materiality of Italian rather enables him to derive sensual pleasure from, and creatively transform, a language he does not understand. In other words, we could choose to read the multilingual encounter as either a site of farce and failure, or a site of creative development.

Because Bloom is not a fluent Italian speaker, the language bears a predominantly iconic status for him: he remains largely oblivious to the semantic values of Italian speech, but he compensates for that discursive gap by constructing a material image of the language, which comes to accompany Italianate phonology like a metadiscursive label—like a singular linguistic gesture that embodies a host of associations triggered by a character's (or indeed the reader's) idiocultural experience of the encounter. The iconic status of the foreign language contrasts with the vehicular status of the fluently spoken tongue: in Bloom's case, this is English; for Stephen, both English and Italian are semantically accessible, which explains his oblivion to the material poeticity of the Italian hagglers' speech. Every utterance has the potential to attain varying degrees of discursive and metadiscursive force, depending on the communicator's proficiency in the language(s) spoken or written, and the level of engagement s/he chooses to have with its material form. As we will see in the following sections, this perpetual fluctuation between the iconicity and vehicular functionality of the different languages, registers, and recurring sound patterns interwoven through the multilingual fabric of the *Wake* intrinsically drive and transform the reader's creative experience of the text.

Bloom and Stephen's encounter with the Italian hagglers in "Eumaeus" echoes an earlier scene from "Lestrygonians," wherein Bloom attempts to translate a stanza from the opera *Don Giovanni*: "*Don Giovanni, thou hast me invited / To come to supper tonight, / The rum the rumdum*" (229). Just like his confusion of the Italian "poesia" with the Italianified English (or Anglified Italian) "poetria" in the later episode, his re-imagination of *Don Giovanni* into English revises, restructures, and

somewhat misinterprets the source text: “*Don Giovanni, a cenar teco / M’invitasti*” (Bloom thinks that “*teco*” [with you] means “tonight”). Despite the slip in comprehension, he successfully conveys the idea of the original while infusing English with the musicality and rhythmical distinctiveness of Italian. He thereby creates a genuine multilingual encounter. He responds to what he experiences as the stylistic (and particularly phonological) iconicity of the foreign language. And, rather than serving as a mere vehicle of semantic value, Italian comes to represent a cultural image and a singular embodied experience.

I would suggest that Bloom’s material, pleasurable responses to Italian speech and musicality encompasses an iconic embodied experience that is not confined to the boundaries of this one single language. The iconic connotations, memories, images, and visceral sensations associated with Italian also become associated with Molly’s singing, the warmth and “southern glamour” (717) of the Mediterranean climates, sensations, smells, and flavours that are eventually revealed to the reader through Molly’s somnolent recollections of Gibraltar in “Penelope.” While Bloom is humming “*Don Giovanni, a cenar teco / M’invitasti*,” he remembers the flavour of the “Burgundy” French wine (229) that he enjoyed with his Italian gorgonzola cheese sandwich over lunch (218). The ghost of Italian thoroughly infuses the language of “Lestrygonians” with imagery echoing Bloom’s memories of Mediterranean climates, sexual intimacy, music, food (wine, cheese, olives, juxtaposed with “that cutlet with a sprig of parsley. Take one Spanish onion” [219]<sup>36</sup>). And just as his iconic experience of Italian conjures up memories of the flavour and texture of red wine in the sun, so it becomes possible to associate the textures of multilingual materiality with the intoxicating oral pleasures of lovemaking:

Glowing wine on his palate lingered swallowed. Crushing in the winepress grapes of Burgundy. Sun’s heat it is. Seems to a secret touch telling me memory. Touched his sense moistened remembered. Hidden under wild ferns on Howth. Below us bay sleeping sky.... Young life, her lips that gave me pouting. Soft, warm, sticky gumjelly lips.... Screened under ferns she laughed warmfolded. Wildly I lay on her, kissed her; eyes, her lips, her stretched neck, beating, woman’s breasts full in her blouse of nun’s veiling, fat nipples upright. Hot I tongued her. She kissed me. I was kissed. All yielding she tossed my hair. Kissed, she kissed me. (*U* 224; my emphases)

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<sup>36</sup> Bloom has never been either to Italy or Spain, so his idiocultural notion of the Italianate register evokes a blur of stereotypical Mediterranean images, such as the dish cooked with Spanish onions, the French burgundy, the Italian gorgonzola cheese or the Greek-Italian olives.

Such colourful, sensual scenes reflect the pleasure Bloom derives from the phonological materiality and his own idiocultural, embodied experience of language; and this singular set of experiences is repeatedly revived by the character's encounters with Italian throughout the text. His attempts at translating *Don Giovanni* could be read partly as an expression of his desire to penetrate the mystery of Italian, a foreign language that compels him so deeply, in the same way that he jealously yearns to enter the world of Molly's youth, where her sexuality and her womanhood began—a time, a place, and a relational experience that remains forever closed off to him, as inaccessible and yet deeply desirable as the foreign language.

#### IV. The peculiar phonology of Wakese

Wakese entertains iconic multilingual phonologies on a “micro level,” when the inflections and/or overall phonology of an individual verbal structure signals a discernible language or register (e.g. the usage of “Lorenzo” as a way to Italianise “Lawrence” in “Wherefore he met Master, he mean to say, he do, sire, bester of republicans, at Eagle Cock Hostel on Lorenzo Tooley street” [*FW* 53.27-29]); and on a “macro level,” when a textual segment—a phrase, sentence, or even a whole passage—exhibits a distinctive multilingual phonology (e.g. the Francophone sequence: “his oewfs á la Madame Gabrielle de l'Eglise, his avgs á la Mistress B. de B. Meinfelde, his eiers Usquadmala á la Monseigneur...” [184.26-30]).

On the micro level, one of the most effective ways for the text to convey a sense of a particular language is by the use of inflections. For example, the phrase, “Come on, ordinary man with that large big nonobli head, and that blanko berbecked fischial ekksprezzion Machinsky Scapolopolos, Duzinascu or other” (*FW* 64.30-32) contains what appears to be a sequence of family names: “Machinsky Scapolopolos, Duzinascu”—each inflected by the conventions of a different language.

“Machinsky” features the common Slavic ending “sky” [ski:], used in Russian, for example, to signify the masculine, singular form of a family name, similarly to the way the “Mac” in MacPherson points to an individual's familial origin (i.e. “of Pherson”). “Scapolopolos” signals the presence of Greek with the pattern “polopolos” and the inflection “os,” signifying the singular masculine adjectival form, while “Duzinascu” invokes familiar Romanian names, like “Popescu” or “Ionescu.”

On the macro level, a language or register calls attention to itself not only through small-scale grammatical elements, like inflections, but also via its peculiar rhythmical movement and characteristic phonology. Pinker explains that every language has its own unique “table of phonemes,”<sup>37</sup> which are systematically “grouped into units, which are then grouped into bigger units, and so on.”<sup>38</sup> A language’s phonological system rests on a series of rules that determine the “legal” and “illegal” phoneme combinations making up syllables and words. The consistency of the rules ensures that the reader fluent in English, for example, would know how to pronounce even unfamiliar, or outright nonsensical, Anglophone verbal units, such as “*thale, plaft, and flutch.*”<sup>39</sup> Thanks to these rules, the range of legal phonological combinations remains naturally limited and thereby repetitive, all of which helps the reader or listener detect the language’s characteristic sound pattern.

To demonstrate this argument in action, Pinker cites studies by linguist Sarah G. Thomason, who “has found that people who claim to be channelling back to past lives or speaking in tongues are really producing gibberish that conforms to a sound pattern vaguely reminiscent of the claimed language.”<sup>40</sup> For example, one of Thomason’s subjects claimed to be “a nineteenth-century Bulgarian talking to her mother about soldiers laying waste to the countryside.” In a state of hypnosis, she produced the following phrases: “Ovishta reshta rovishta. Vishna beretishti? Ushna barishta dashto. Na darishnoshto. Korapshnoshashit darishtoy. Aobashni bedephta.” With the exception of “vishna” (sour cherry), “ushna” (feminine singular adjectival form of *uhó* – ear), and perhaps the preposition “na” (to; on), her speech indeed sounds like “generic pseudo-Slavic gobbledygook,” as Pinker describes it. Thomason’s subject produced such a characteristically Slavonic sequence precisely because she had only a stereotypical, material notion of the language that in her case was devoid of any access to semantics: she overemphasised the prevalence of the *s*, *sh*, *r*, and *t* phonemes to the point of farce, rendering a stylisation, or an “artistic image,” of Bulgarian that lacks a predetermined systemic cohesiveness between form and semantics. Meanwhile, a fluent speaker would likely employ a more complex sound pattern, diversified by the numerous foreignisms and exceptions that exist beside the recurring phonological and phonotactical patterns found in the language. Nonetheless, twenty one percent of the verbal units in her “gobbledygook”

<sup>37</sup> Pinker, *The Language Instinct*, 168.

<sup>38</sup> Pinker, *The Language Instinct*, 169.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Pinker, *The Language Instinct*, 168.

actually exist in Bulgarian, which works in support of the argument that, despite the exceptions to the phonological rules, the characteristic sound pattern of a language rests on a systematic and predictable sequence of phoneme combinations that shape its unique stylistic identity.

This example from applied linguistics draws attention to the tangible iconic materiality that can identify particular languages, and also distinguish one language from another, in the singular experiences of different people. This scene recalls something of Jespersen's concept of "echoic language" discussed in the previous chapter: the material iconicity of a language can be conceptualised as an onomatopoeic formation that designates an identity and symbolic significance to a phonological pattern, which can subsequently attain multiple new layers of echoic meaning that reach beyond the boundaries of the original object. The images, ideas, feelings, and cultural-historical connotations that a woman singularly associated with the Bulgarian language materialised in a speech-object, which she intuitively stylised according to a set of pre-existing phonotactical characteristics. As such, this scene offers an extraliterary example of how linguistic materiality—and particularly the iconic phonology of a language—can convey meaning nonlexically. It also pertains to our understanding of *Wakean* uses of linguistic materiality and phonological iconicity, as evidently a speech-object can produce a series of associations and emotional experiences without at all relying on semantics.

Of course, this is not to say that *Wakean* multilingualism does not rely on semantics at all; in fact, the text makes thorough use of the proliferative semantic possibilities enabled by the multiple languages encountering each other in *Wakean* portmanteaux. However, the text does destabilise the predetermined relationships between material form and semantic value, and it actively emphasises the materiality of language and literary experience in order to achieve that semantic and narrative multiplication.

An excellent example of how this split between semantic value and linguistic materiality manifests through the text's multilingualism appears in the motif "How are you today, my dark sir?"<sup>41</sup> which *FWEET* spots fifteen times in at least eight different languages. Before pursuing the thread of the motif via secondary sources, I first picked up on one of its Russian phonological reincarnations towards the end of the "Mamafesta" of I.5:

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<sup>41</sup> Hart, *Structure and Motif in Finnegans Wake*, 227.

To all's much relief one's half hypothesis of that jabberjaw ape amok the showering jestnuts of Bruisanose was hotly dropped and his room taken up by that odious and still today insufficiently malestimated notesnatcher (kak, pfooi, bosh and fiety, much earny, Gus, poteen? Sez you!) Shem the Penman. (*FW* 125.18-23)

Although further research eventually revealed many more multilingual instances of the motif, in this first encounter the phrase chiefly struck me because, similarly to the Russian Orthodox mourning prayer discussed in the previous chapter, the visual layer failed to make cohesive sense in English but the phonological layer sounded like it carried some musical consistency: a phonotactical pattern that felt familiar. The abundance of fricatives (*s, sh, ch*) conveyed the presence of a Slavic language. The punctuation of “kak, pfooi, bosh and fiety, much earny, Gus, poteen?” suggests that this could be a series of listed items, but overall it offers little in the way of sense to the Anglophone reader. Assuming that the punctuation and the expectation of English were both deliberate distortions on Joyce's part, I experimented with the metrical patterning while re-reading the phrase aloud, and after some play with rhythm and pronunciation in spite of what the text looked like, the Russophone sequences eventually emerged: “Gus-poteen,” which I pronounced “gus poucheen” [gʌs 'pʌtʃi:n], became the Russian/Bulgarian “gospodin” (sir, gentleman). The opening “kak” quickly lit up as the Pan-Slavic “how,” and as the question mark set the intonation, the remaining elements of the phonological pattern began to fall into place:

/ x x x /xx / / x x x /  
kak, pfooi, bosh and fiety, much earny, Gus, poteen?

/ x x x /x x / / x x x /  
[kak vy pozhivaete moi chyorny gospodin?]

This rhythmical pattern unravelled gradually, more or less simultaneously with my discovery of the overarching Slavonic phonology of the phrase. The elongated, fluid rhythm of the sequence discarded Bulgarian as a possible phonological undercurrent, so I began to search for any Russian words that I could possibly construct out of the available syllables. Thus, with Russian on my mind, “bush and fiety” merged into “bushandfiety” and subsequently “pozhyvaete” (*plural*: you are living, getting along), which pointed to the common Russian expression “kak vy pozhyvaete?” (how are you doing?). I struggled to puzzle out what “much earny” stood for, so

McHugh's gloss, "moi chyornyi" (my black), completed the phonological layer in my reading. In retrospect, the phrase "my black gentleman," although grammatically correct in both Russian and English, simply sounded awkward to my ear—like one language's idiomatic expression transferred semantically into another without accounting for the shift of linguistic and cultural context. As Joyce was not a fluent Russian speaker, this makes sense: his translation of "How are you today, my dark sir?" into Russian relies strictly on semantics, as if the author traced the Russian equivalent of each word separately in the dictionary. If this were a standard English-to-Russian translation, the awkwardness of "kak vy pozhyvaete, moi chyornyi gospodin?" would likely be noticeable only to fluent speakers of the target language. However, as a multilingual stylisation achieved through a simultaneous overlap and split-off between English graphology and Russian phonology, Cyrillic conveyed in Roman script, in *Wake* the phrase feels perfectly dissonant and destabilising to everybody. Joyce's multilingual technique not only enriches the evocative capacity of his poetic language, creating multiple semantic and narrative layers in a single line, but also compels every and any reader to occupy the position of the foreigner—to actively embody the experience of cultural and linguistic dislocation.

## V. *Wake* interlingualism: The material markers of the *Wake*'s non-English languages

Something that often strikes me when reading *Finnegans Wake* is that, most of the time, the languages that I speak fluently evade me, whereas those with which I have only partial familiarity tend to jump out at me very easily. My incidental discovery of Russian in "kak, pfooi, bosh and fiety, much earny, Gus, poteen" notwithstanding, I generally have difficulty identifying the hidden words or phrases derivative from languages in which I am fluent. This aspect of the *Wake* experience results from the perpetual splitting and rejoining of material form and semantics created by the text's multilingual design. Just as the material aspects of the foreign language intensify in the language learner's experience, so does the *Wake* reader become more attuned to the material qualities of the text's semantically unpredictable multilingual design. In this vein, *Wake* lends itself to greater freedom and flexibility in both material and vehicular value: as no single reader can

claim to be thoroughly fluent in it, the language of the *Wake* claims unlimited license to be strange, structurally loose, changeable, and variously exaggerated.

A curious *Wakean* example of this follows from Joyce's creative use of Swahili.<sup>42</sup> Critical sources show relatively few occurrences of the language throughout the text, with the highest concentration of Swahili stylisations appearing in I.8. The majority of these usages are poetic twists on Joyce's apparent perception of Swahili phonology: they are often alliterative, (slant-)rhymed, and consonant/assonant, with frequent emphasis on prenasalised stops (*mb*, *mt*), which are a characteristic feature of the language.<sup>43</sup> Some examples from the text include:

Do you know she was calling bakvandets sals from all around, **nyumba noo**, **chamba choo**....(*FW* 198.10-11)

And there she was, Anna Livia, she daren't catch a wrinkle of sleep, purling arounds like a chit of a child, **Wendawanda**, a fingerthick.... (199.11-12; my emphasis)

(**hamjambo**, **bana?**) (199.20)

Some say she had three figures to fill and confined herself to a hundred eleven, wan bywan, making **meanacumina moyas**. (201.28-30; my emphasis)

And **Simba** the Slayer of his **Oga** is slewd. (203.32; my emphasis)

Drop me the sound of the findhorn's name, **Mtu** or **Mti**, somebogger was wiseness. (204.21-22; my emphasis)

Just the **tembo** in her **tumbo** or **pilipili** from her pepperpot? **Saas** and **taas** and specis **bizaas**. (209.11-13; my emphasis)

**pooleypooley** (206.28)

As someone with practically no command of Swahili, Joyce prioritised the language's stylistically distinctive material form—its characteristic phonology, as he perceived it—for poetic effect. A number of the Swahili stylisations are playfully onomatopoeic. “Wendawanda,” for example, puns on the Swahili *wanda* (a finger's

<sup>42</sup> Or Kiswahili, as it is referenced in McHugh's *Annotations* and *FWEET*. I opt for “Swahili” over “Kiswahili” in my discussion, but the usages are interchangeable. Nick Clements and Annie Rialland, “Africa as a Phonological Area” (Annie Rialland Personal Website, May 15, 2006), [http://annierialland.free.fr/Clements\\_Rialland.pdf](http://annierialland.free.fr/Clements_Rialland.pdf).

<sup>43</sup> P. I. Iribemwangi, “Nasal Consonant Processes in Standard Kiswahili,” *Baraton Interdisciplinary Research Journal* 1.1 (2011): 77.



breadth) with the river names Wende and Wandle,<sup>44</sup> as well as, among others, the English verbs *to wander*, *to wind*, and *to wend*, which suggest both by sound and meaning the turns of direction and splashing waters of Anna Livia's riverrun. The onomatopoeic function of "pooleypooley," from the Swahili *pilipili*, meaning "spicy" and "pepper"<sup>45</sup> and punning on the English *pool* and *to pull*, also appears clearly in the context of the lyrically rhythmical, flowy language through which it is threaded:

Lisp it slaney and crisp it quiet. Deel me longsome. Tongue your time now.  
Breathe thet deep. Thouat's the fairway. Hurry slow and schledt you go.  
Lynd us your blessed ashes here till I scrub the canon's underpants. Flow  
now. Ower more. And pooleypooley. (*FW* 206.24-28)

The phrase "nyumba noo, chamba choo" also stands out as an example of Joyce, a non-fluent Swahili user, creating a new phrase that can be read as the beginning of an ode to a toilet ("house of [whet]stone, a privy hiding place"<sup>46</sup>) out of what he would have perceived to be phonologically characteristic Swahili words, featuring the nasal phoneme *mb* and stylised into a rhymed and alliterative combination. Whether or not this phrase is grammatically legitimate or at all meaningful in Swahili becomes irrelevant to the *Wake* reader, because it has been spun by a foreigner for the pleasure of non-native ears. To the non-native speaker, it sounds sufficiently Swahili so as to stylistically signal its presence in the narrative, and yet it transcends the root language's system of standardisation by making a creative twist on its perceived phonological patterns. The poeticity of the phrase is further strengthened by the pun on "chamber (pot)" with the Swahili "chamba."

Joyce's commitment to this technique—especially as applied to his manipulation of Swahili phonology in *I.8*—is evident in his and Nino Frank's collaborative translation of "Anna Livia Plurabelle" into Italian. The Swahili sound patterns of the original version were consistently preserved in the Italian translation. A few notable examples include:

Do you know she was calling bakvandets sals from all around, **nyumba choo, chamba choo**, to go in till him, her erring cheef, and tickle the pontiff aisy-oisy? (*FW* 198.10-12)

<sup>44</sup> McHugh, *Annotations*, 119.11-12.

<sup>45</sup> Education, *Kamusi GOLD: Global Online Living Dictionary*, (2013), <http://kamusi.org>.

<sup>46</sup> Nyumba – n. a house; noo – n. whetstone; chamba – n. a hiding place; choo – n. privy McHugh, *Annotations*, 198.11-12.. "Choo" can also mean "toilet." *Education, Kamusi GOLD: Global Online Living Dictionary* (2013), <http://kamusi.org>.

Sai che stave chiamando bakvandietro i salsi da tutt'intorno, **nyumba noo, chamba choo**, per scendere in campo fino a lui, il hsuo errante cheef, e solleticare il pontefice oisecilmente? (*Anna Livia Plurabelle* 93.83-86)<sup>47</sup>

**hamjambo, bana?** (*FW* 199.20)

**hujambon, buana?** (*Anna Livia Plurabelle* 97.138)

But the majik **wavus has elfun anon meshes**. And Simba the slayer of his Oga is slewd. (*FW* 203.30-31)

Le majiche **wavuonde hanno elfu ed un meshariccioli**. E Simba lo Sterminatore della sua Oga non è sobrio. (*Anna Livia Plurabelle* 107.322-324)

That was **kissuahealing** with **bantur for balm!** (*FW* 204.3-4)

È stato **kiswahilidente** con il **bantur come balsam!** (*Anna Livia Plurabelle* 107.331-332)

Drop me the sound of the **findhorn's** name, **Mtu or Mti**, sombogger was wisness. (*FW* 204.21-22)

Giocolami il suono del nome di **findhorne** glefino, **Mtu o Mti**, qualchescemodue era tesimone. (*Anna Livia Plurabelle* 109.354-55)

Just the **tembo in her tumbo or pilipili** from her **pepperpot?** (*FW* 209.11-12)

Solo il **tembo nel suo timbo o pilipili** dallia sua **pepaiola?** (*Anna Livia Plurabelle* 121.558-559)

The clear material similarity between these two versions of the *Wake* indicates that the distinctiveness of both style and connotation of Swahili plays a significant role in the chapter to such a degree that the author made sure that the appropriate stylisations were kept in the translation. This might suggest that a foreign language can occupy a more iconic, material, and potentially untranslatable (in terms of semantic transfer) position in the reader/writer/translator's textual engagement, by contrast to the "native" or fluently spoken tongue, whose vehicular properties are more readily accessible and thus more open to material transformation. Perhaps Joyce and Frank kept the Swahili almost intact in the translation because its status in the original was iconic and its function intrinsically aesthetic; whereas what would be considered semantically accessible, Anglophone passages in the *Wake* play a less iconic and more vehicular role, making English more malleable and semantically transferrable than Swahili, Russian, Romani, or any other "foreign" language that

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<sup>47</sup> James Joyce, *Anna Livia Plurabelle Di James Joyce Nella Traduzione Di Samuel Beckett E Altri*, ed. Rosa Maria Bollettieri Bosinelli and Luigi Schenoni, trans. Samuel Beckett et al., Tri-Lingual Series (Torino: Einaudi, 1996).

Joyce wove into the fabric of his text despite—or perhaps thanks to—his degree of estrangement from it.

The iconisation of linguistic patterns in the *Wake* serves numerous purposes: it engages the reader through his or her pre-established, idiocultural relationship with the perceived language identity and the subjective interpretative choices that s/he subsequently makes in the process of reading; it amends the meanings packed into the multilingual portmanteau and inflates the comical in inter- and intralingual wordplay; it creates aesthetic effects; and, as we shall explore presently, it plays a part in Joyce's peculiar techniques of character presentation, development, and motif distribution within the book's internal system of sound symbolism.

## VI. Wakeese intralingualism: Phonological signatures

In the opening of this chapter, I listed several recurring *Wake* motifs, identifiable by their peculiar phonology. Each of them rests on a recurring sound pattern that signals the presence of a character, such as ALP in the onomatopoeic water splashing sounds of “whish, O whish” (407.11) or the clusters of approximant (or “liquid,” as would be more fitting to call them in this context) consonants in “Tell me till my thrillme comes” (148.2); a voice, like HCE's when language literally stutters in phrases such as “bubub brought up” (532.7), “dudu dirtynine” (534.26) or “eggseggs excessively” (537.28); a motif, such as the story of how Buckley shot the Russian general, which often announces itself with Russophonic or Slavonic twists on the language of the narrative like “Of the first was he to bare arms and a name: *Wassaily Booslaeugh*<sup>48</sup> of Riesengeborg” (5.5; my emphasis), “the journeyall *Bugaloffs* since he went Jerusalemfaring in Arssia Manor” (26.3-4; my emphasis), or “*never to aid silleries with sucharow with sotchyouroff as Burkeley's Show's a ructiongetherall*” (346.10-12)<sup>49</sup>; a place and a cultural allusion,<sup>50</sup> like “Dear Dirty Dublin,” the “dirty dubs upin” (60.35) or “distinctly dirty but rather a

<sup>48</sup> “Wassaily” sounds like the Russian name “Vasilyi” and “Booslaeugh” can be read as the Russian “buslai,” meaning “drunkard.” McHugh also indicates a cultural reference to “Vasily Buslaev, hero of ballad cycle of Novgorod” *Annotations*, 5.5.

<sup>49</sup> The latter example appears in II.3, which carries numerous references to Russian and other Slavic languages. Although this does not negate the present argument, it should be noted that many of the Russophonic words and phrases in the chapter are not strictly attached to the Buckley/Russian General motif.

<sup>50</sup> McHugh and others attribute the phrase “Dear Dirty Dublin” to Lady Morgan, early 19<sup>th</sup>-century Irish writer and socialite *Annotations*, 60.34.

dear” (131.6-7); and much more. As the *Wake* reader progresses through the narrative, s/he develops a growing awareness of these recurring phrases and gradually learns to identify them whenever the language of the book mimics their rhythmical and phonological patterns. This, in turn, enables the reader to identify the presence of a recurring theme or character based on his or her material experience of the text, rather than semantic comprehension (which may certainly play a part in the literary event, but the reader need not rely on semantics exclusively).

One of the richest examples of a traceable recurring phonology occurs in the *Wake*'s varied linguistic manifestations of Anna Livia Plurabelle. When she speaks, and when others speak of her, the language of the text lisps with fricatives and swells with liquid consonants such as *l*'s and *r*'s, rolling and trickling through bright, open vowels (*a*'s and *e*'s) interspersed with quick-footed *i*'s, which are all contained in her full name, Anna Livia Plurabelle. The phonological patterns that signal ALP's presence in the text materially “name” her by clustering and anagrammatically rearranging the phonemes of her name into various multilingual combinations: “Anna Lynchya” (325.4), “Allaliefest” (562.7), “Alla tingaling pealabells!” (569.12), “Polycarp pool, the pool of Innalavia” (600.5), Annushka Lutetiavitch Pufflovah (207.8-9), “*Minnelisp*” (105.11), “*Anisette*” (105.17), “Anunska” (585.22), and many more. While ALP's initials, like HCE's, can often also be spotted visually (for example, in the way that we find “HCE” hidden in “**H**owth **C**astle and **E**nviron” [3.3] we could also note “ALP” in “**Ph**all if you but will” [4.15-16], or “the delldale **dal**ppling night” [7.2], or “*Apud libertinam parvulam*” [7.23], or even “**Impalp**abunt” [23.25]), the text most prominently and extensively establishes her presence in all and any of her multiple guises (the Prankquean, Isolde [from *Tristan and Isolde*], Leda [from the story of Leda and the Swan], a mirror image of her daughter Issy, on which I will expand shortly, and so on) through the characteristic phonological and phonetic patterns that identify her. Indeed, an unmistakable clue to her connection to the “gnarlybird” pecking hen<sup>51</sup> lies in their coinciding phonological signatures. The phonological and phonetic patterning of phrases like

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<sup>51</sup> The hen is also associated with Kate the maidservant, for example in I.4, where we stumble upon her rummaging through the rubbish like the “runalittle, doalittle...eatalittle, whinealittle, kenalittle, helfalittle, pelfalittle gnarlybird” from I.1 (*FW* 10.32-34): “Kate Strong, a widow (Tiptip!) - she pulls a lane picture for us, in a dreariodreama setting, glowing and very vidual, of old dump lan as she nosed it, a homelike cottage of elvanstone with droppings of biddies, stinkend pusshies, moggies' duggies, rotten witchawubbles, festering rubbages and beggars' bullets, if not worse, sending salmofarious germs in gleefully through the smithereen panes” (79.27-33). However, Kate has also been identified as “the lower-class flip side of ALP.” Finn Fordham, Introduction to *Finnegans Wake*, xvii.

“Paa lickam laa lickam, apl lpa!” (298.1), “All about aulne and lithial and allsall allinall about awn and liseias?” (154.4-5), or “an yit he wanna git all his flesch nuemaid motts truly plural and plusible” (138.8) name ALP without literally speaking her name. Thereby her phonological signature becomes a performative textual manifestation of her body and voice, and indeed of the experience of knowing her, being near her, and engaging with her.

Similarly to the way one can develop a musical sense for the phonotactical patterns of a new language, the *Wake* reader's ear gradually grows attuned to the phonological, rhythmical, and phonetic patterns that embody particular characters. Phonological signatures—like ALP's lisping, liquid language, HCE's stammer, or Issy's baby talk (inspired by the “little language” Swift created to write to Stella, on which I will elaborate in due course) become part of the text's own, unique intralingual system. *Wakean* multilingualism not only creatively constructs (or “stylises,” to recall Bakhtin's term) new intra- and interlingual combinations from the phonological patterns, phonotactics, and syntactical features (such as inflections) from various different languages, pidgins, creoles, dialects, and registers, but also develops new fictional registers that signify, characterise, interlink, historicise, metaphorically depict, and perpetually transform the book's many characters—some of whom were invented by Joyce (HCE, ALP, Issy, Shem and Shaun, Kate, Sackerson, Jarl van Hooother and the Prankquean, etc.), while others were inspired by pre-existing literary and historical figures (Parnell, the Duke of Wellington, Saint Patrick, Mamalujo [Matthew, Mark, Luke, John], Buckley and the Russian General, Tristan and Isolde, etc.).

The *Wake's* phonological signatures play a key role in both character identification and development. Considering that every major character has numerous doppelgangers (e.g. Issy famously reappears as Nuvoletta, or Swift's Stella and Vanessa; Shem and Shaun are respectively the Gripes and the Mookse one moment, and the Gracehoper and the Ondt the next; while HCE and ALP are Tristan and Iseult here, Jarl van Hooother and the Pranquean there; the metamorphoses are countless!), each with her or his own unique psyche, temperament, physique, and archetypal significance within an elaborate subplot, finding the common mark of identification among them can serve as a useful readerly strategy.

Rather like the different languages recalled, reimagined, and interlinked in the text's multilingual design, the *Wake's* fictional range of phonological signatures comprises multiple different registers that are as interlinked as they are distinctive.

For example, in an essay on the book's stylistic use of speech impediments, Christopher Eagle suggests a gendered approach to distinguishing between the peculiar speech patterns we have come to associate with ALP and HCE:

HCE's stutter is described at various points as a 'speech thicklish,' characterized by the harsh cacophony of his 'masculine monosyllables' (190.35). In contrast to the 'disemvowelled' nature of HCE's 'thick spch spck' (515.12, 23.4), the speech of ALP is always delivered 'with a softrolling lisp of a lapel to it' (404.23). It is characterized, in other words, by a softening or, to Joyce's mind, a feminizing of consonants.<sup>52</sup>

He cites this gendering of character speech as an approach that Joyce actually intended: "When one considers the altogether different phonetic features of stutters and lisps," Eagle argues, "it is apparent that Joyce's rendering of these two conditions is inflected through his deeply gendered sense of language."<sup>53</sup> It remains unclear why he assumes that the stylistic distinction between HCE's and ALP's phonological signatures should be attributed to a gender binary, let alone a gender binary intended by Joyce. Gender certainly does not determine whether or not a person will develop a lisp or a stutter in their lifetime; and in the absence of any indication as to the reasoning behind this argument, other than the critic's own subjective experience of poetic language, the idea seems rather presumptuous to me. Considering Joyce's penchant for blurring and shifting gender boundaries throughout both *Ulysses* and the *Wake*, gendering character speech in this way does not seem particularly useful either.

That said, if Eagle means to suggest that the text's distinctive speech impediments are fictionally gendered—i.e. that gendering language functions as a literary device in the *Wake*—then that could inspire some fascinating readings into the multifarious significances of phonological signatures. One such potential link could lie in the text's references to Medieval literary practices and texts (*The Book of Kells* features as one of the most well-known examples). In a quiz question in I.6, Anna Livia's speech is described as "her coy cajoleries, and her dabblin drolleries" (139.24), which, the storyteller claims, she uses to flirt with and arouse her lover, HCE. The word "drolleries" could phonologically be rendered to suggest: "drawers" (as in undergarments); "drawl-eries," describing a speech effect, perhaps her droll Dublin drawl; or even "jewelleries," both literal (the trinkets she wears, described by

<sup>52</sup> Christopher Eagle, "'Stutturistics': On Speech Disorders in Finnegans Wake," in *Literature, Speech Disorders, and Disability: Talking Normal* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 93–94.

<sup>53</sup> Eagle, "Stutturistics," 93.

the gossiping washerwomen on *FW* 206-07) and figurative (“gems” of speech, witticisms). Curiously enough, the word “drolleries,” in its Wakeese spelling, seems to have a contentious etymological history: on the one hand, in its contemporary usage, it fairly intuitively refers to acting or speaking funny, or in jest. However, “drolleries” are also known as the illuminated marginalia of Gothic manuscripts (such as *The Book of Kells* or *The Croy Hours*, which has come to be popularly known as *The Book of Drolleries*). Scholarship has further traced (and debated) the word’s Shakespearean heritage: for example, in a 1945 note on *The Tempest*, M. A. Shaaber contests widely cited claims that sixteenth- and seventeenth-century usages of the word signified “puppet show,” and instead lists several literary usages from the early 1600s that all together seem to signify a “grotesque picture or other graphic representation.”<sup>54</sup> One of his particularly curious examples as far as ALP’s drolleries are concerned comes from Fletcher’s Jacobean play *The Wild Goose Chase* (1621): “Our Women the best Linguists, they are Parrats; O’ this side the Alpes they are nothing but meer Drolleries.”<sup>55</sup>

Anna Livia’s “dablin drolleries,” which must imply her lisp-ing-liquid phonological signature as I will show in further detail shortly, might bear some relation (whether or not the connection was intended by Joyce) to what Mark Amsler describes as the “disciplining literate technology” of the English *Ancrene Wisse* (c. 1225-40), which is described as a book that established “a devotional literacy program...for devout and lay women”<sup>56</sup> in the Middle Ages. The writer of the *Ancrene Wisse*, Amsler suggests, “contrasts the disciplined with the undisciplined mouth” by associating “an undisciplined mouth with other behaviours and gestures, often coded as feminine.” Such gestures include “carrying the head high, arching the neck, pursing up the mouth, making derisive gestures with hand or with head, throwing one leg over the other, sitting or walking stiffly as if she were staked up, giving men love-looks, speaking like an innocent and *putting on a lisp*.”<sup>57</sup> In another account, Kathleen Coyne Kelly describes the ways in which Medieval disciplining

<sup>54</sup> M. A. Shaaber, “‘A Living Drollery’ (*Tempest*, III, iii, 21),” *Modern Language Notes* 60.6 (June 1945): 388.

<sup>55</sup> Incidentally, McHugh’s *Annotations* and *FWEET* suggest that at least one play by Fletcher, *The Custom of the Country*, is referenced in the *Wake*: “his hollaballoon a sample of *the costume of the country*” (*FW* 322.7; my emphasis), and *The Wild Goose Chase*, although not cited as a reference to Fletcher’s play, does recur in the text as a motif, as in: “away on a wildgoup’s chase across the kathartic ocean” (*FW* 185.6) or “Hark to his wily geeses goosling by, and playfair, lady!” (233.11-12).

<sup>56</sup> Mark Amsler, *Affective Literacies: Writing and Multilingualism in the Late Middle Ages*, *Late Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 19 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 110.

<sup>57</sup> Amsler, *Affective Literacies*, 113; my emphasis.

texts for women, including Ambrose's *De virginibus ad Marcellinam sororem* and Jerome's letters (Kelly cites "Ad Eustochium" [Epistola XXII] and "To Laeta" [Epistola CVII]), "produced and maintained" virginity in a "discursive space" by prescribing "a series of hortatives and imperatives addressed to the virgin: avoid wine and delicacies, avoid vainglory, practice humility, be industrious, spend time in prayer, 'walk not often abroad,' 'let your dress be neither elegant nor slovenly,'" but also, somewhat mystifyingly for the uninitiated reader, "do not imitate those women who use affected speech—who lisp and clip all their words."<sup>58</sup> In both Amsler's and Kelly's studies, these isolated examples contain their only references to lispng, and neither scholar offers any explanation as to why lispng would have been considered a mark of feminine impropriety or even immorality in thirteenth-century Europe. Could "affected speech," materialising in the form of lispng, suggest a manner of speaking that draws attention to itself: an embodied speech act through which women could performatively occupy physical and discursive spaces? Could it have been reflective of a woman's social class—perhaps if she lost her teeth to violence, early ageing, or inadequate healthcare? If we are indeed open to reading lispng as a distinctively feminine speech gesture, which it apparently was for the authors of the *Ancrene Wisse* and *De virginibus*, then ALP's lisp may well come to act as one of the *Wake*'s most prominent gestures of feminist adversity and rebellion against patriarchal, imperialist, "monolingual" structures.

While Eagle's essay does allude to the linguistic peculiarity and broad thematic importance of ALP's lisp, he chiefly concerns himself with HCE's speech impediment, citing the character's association with historical stutterers such as Parnell and Lewis Carroll. Yet, although ALP does not receive quite as much "air time" as her spouse, her phonological signature represents one of the most poetically striking and elaborate fictional registers of the *Wake*. In the following sections, I will discuss some textual examples that accentuate the stylistic and material distinctiveness of ALP's language, and I will subsequently demonstrate how her phonological signature linguistically traces connections between her numerous identities, as well as between her and other archetypal female characters, such as Issy and the rainbow girls, across different times, spaces, scenes, and subplots in the book.

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<sup>58</sup> Kathleen Coyne Kelly, *Performing Virginity and Testing Chastity in the Middle Ages*, Routledge Research in Medieval Studies (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 33.



vi.1. "Alma Luvia, Pollabella" (*FW* 619.16): ALP's liquid lisp

First and foremost, ALP's phonological signature is not limited to lisp. It also poetically materialises as a multilingual encounter between the various bodily traits that define her, such as: her peculiar way of speaking (her linguistic register is "pigeony linguish" [*FW* 584.4]—i.e. Pidgin English, that is Irish English, which also betrays a foreigner's anguish); her wet, watering, menstruating, birthing, sexually ejaculating womanly body; her smooth, soft, fat motherly belly ("Peeld gold of waxwork her jellybelly" [206.36]); her flowing red hair ("her grains of incense anguille bronze" [207.1] plaited through a "garland" woven out of "meadowgrass and riverflags, the bulrush and waterweed, and of fallen griefs of weeping willow" [207.2-4]); and her archetypal embodiment of Dublin's Liffey river. ALP's phonological signature forms a linguistic materialisation of her Irish Englishly accented voice, her womanly fluidity, and her symbolic riverliness through sibilant, liquid language. Her speaking voice becomes conveyed through her "babbling, bubbling, chattering to herself, deloothering the fields on their elbows leaning with the sloothering slide of her" (195.1-3).

ALP's phonological signature encompasses both the language that she speaks and that in which others speak about her, as in the following example from I.8, wherein the washerwomen gossip about her youthful dalliances with various men before she married HCE. This passage comes from the famous "Anna Livia Plurabelle" chapter, which is known for its impressive collection of somewhere between eight hundred and one thousand different river names from around the world.<sup>59</sup> Similarly to the thunderword packed with thunder-signifying words, the text of this chapter is also materially performative of the riverwoman of whom it speaks, becoming infused with sibilant and liquid language that rhythmically gestures all the "canoodling" and sexual exploits she purportedly got up to in her girlhood:

And wasn't she the naughty *Livvy*? Nautic Naama's now her navn. Two lads in scoutsch breeches went through her before that, Barefoot Burn and Wallowme Wade, *Lugnaquillia's* noblesse pickts, before she had a hint of a hair at her fanny to hide or a bossom to tempt a *birch* canoedler not to mention a *bulgic* porterhouse barge. And ere that again, *leada, laida, all* unraidy, too faint to buoy the *fairiest* rider, too *frail* to *flirt* with a cygnet's *plume*, she was *licked* by a hound, Chirripa-Chirruta, *while* poing her pee, pure and *simple*, on the *spur* of the *hill* in *old* Kippure, in birdsong and

<sup>59</sup> Bishop, *Joyce's Book of the Dark*, "Finnegans Wake," 336.

*shearingtime, but first of all, worst of all, the wiggly livvly, she sideslipped out by a gap in the Devil's glen while Sally her nurse was sound asleep in a slood and, feefee fiefie, fell over a spillway before she found her stride and lay and wriggled in all the stagnant black pools of rainy under a fallow coo and she laughed innocefree with her limbs aloft and a whole drove of maiden hawthorns blushing and looking askance upon her. (FW 204.4-20; my emphases)*

Here I have highlighted some of the most explicit instances of repetitious lisp and liquid phonemes, but a visual emphasis can only approximate the full, embodied readerly experience of the chapter's performative language. On the one hand, ALP's lisp materialises in Joyce's exaggerated use of fricatives: instead of spelling "bosom" with one *s* as would be standard in English, he chooses the double-essed "bossom"; instead of "noble picks" (or maybe "noble/novel pricks"), the text picks "noblesse pickts" to simultaneously accentuate the sibilance of the storytelling register and to introduce semantically proliferative neologisms (for example, "noblesse" can be read as a feminisation of "noble," similar to poet/poetess, as well as a portmanteau: no/bless, as in "not blessed" or "don't bless," the latter suggesting a pidgin English formulation). Further on, when her nurse Sally snoozes, sound asleep or indeed asleep to the sounddance of the story, naughty Livvy jovially leaps away, lisp ing "feefee fiefie" as if stumbling over an impediment in speech and stride,<sup>60</sup> and falls "over a spillway" before regaining her footing and "wriggl[ing] in all the stagnant black pools of rainy under a fallow coo"—in other words, getting herself mired in some unsavoury mischief while her guardian is not paying attention. All the while, the clusters of sibilant (*s, c, t, ts, ch*) and labiodental (*f, gh*) fricatives textually embody ALP's lisp and movement as "she laughed innocefree"—"innocently" with the added fricative *f* and the liquid *r*—"with her limbs aloft." Clusters of liquid phonemes wash over the lisp of her speech to embody through the poetic materiality of language: a character archetypally symbolised by river water; one speaking through a speech impediment (a lisp counterbalancing her spouse's stammer) that encompasses both her bodily singularity and her foreign (pidgin) brand of Anglophone speech; and a leaky feminine body that moves like water. The repetitiousness of lines such as "first of all, worst of all, the wiggly livvy" serves to

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<sup>60</sup> This moment also echoes HCE's voice when he appears in the guise of a giant calling "Fa Fe Fi Fo Fum!" (FW 532.3) or "feeh fauh foul finngures" (352.29), which marks another phonological signature in the *Wake*. An echo of HCE's voice in a story about a young ALP who does not know him yet indeed makes for a rather touching multilingual encounter between lovers, meeting each other in language—in a shared history recorded by language—beyond the boundaries of a specific space and time.

multiply the number of approximant and fricative phonemes in the sentence on the one hand, and on the other to gesture the perpetual motions of water splashing and rocking back and forth between the banks of the river (also the motions of “canoedling”). This mirrors the narrative structure of the entire chapter, which rests on a back-and-forth exchange between the two washerwomen swapping gossip across the body of the river (with the transmission of the message becoming disrupted by the noises Liffey/Livvy’s waters make).

A mythical creature and a historical figure of Dublin, ALP seems to mostly be spoken *about* throughout the text—whether that is by the gossiping washerwomen in I.8, her children in II.1, Mamalujo in II.4, or in reference to the fragments of the letter that sporadically appear in various chapters—until she finally speaks for herself in the final book IV, wherein we find that her lisp and fluidity do indeed materialise in her own direct speech: “Soft morning, city! Lsp! I am leafy speafing. Lpfl! Folyt and folty all the nights have falled on to long my hair. Not a sound, falling. Lispn!” (619.20-22). All throughout book IV, the language of the text lisps, whispers, and flows: “Mineninecyhandsy, in the languo of flows” (621.21-22)—a language that flows, but also a hybrid language full of flaws. The text employs its own phonological system to signify the identity of the speaker, her body, and her history. This in turn is punctuated throughout all of the *Wake* through recurring phrasal motifs that materially embody ALP, such as “whish, O wish” (407.11), which perpetually re-emerges in various multilingual forms: “waitawhishts” (345.11), “whishtful” (333.34), “*Older northe Rogues among Whisht I Slips and He Calls Me his*” (105.19), as well as in “mhuith peisth mhuse” (91.4) or “all the time: nor avoice from afire bellowsed *mishe mishe*” (3.9). Joyce’s use of these motifs again recalls Jespersen’s “echoic words”: they are singularly *Wakean* objects that simultaneously act as onomatopoeic language embodying a non-linguistic world (winds blowing, birds whooshing through the landscape where the river flows, tree leaves brushing against each other, etc.) and multilingual echoes.

ALP’s lisping motifs echo Irish English words, such as “whist” or “whisht” (pronounced “hwist” and “hwisht” respectively, meaning “hush; quiet, silence”) and “plámás” ([ˈpl̪ːm̪ːs]: “soft talking; flattery”); or “mise” ([ˈmʲiʃə], i.e. “misheh,” meaning “me; I am”), which onomatopoeically (or “echoically”) places her, via her phonological register, in a specific culture, language, and geographic location. Within the scope of a broader argument about the phonological system of the *Wake*, Eagle suggests that interdental lisping “where fricatives like ‘s’ or ‘z’ are replaced

with a ‘theta’ sound, represents the vast majority of lisping effects in the *Wake*,” and he continues on to say that this particular phonological motif has been “linked to ALP as an onomatopoeic sign of her riverlike nature as early as 1924.”<sup>61</sup> He supports this point with some examples where the interdental lisp (*th*) is explicitly spelled out, as in “Beside the rivering waters of, hitherandthithering waters of” (*FW* 216.4-5). Yet, in addition to the more obviouthly, visthually renthered listhping, by the compulsively repetitious employment of fricatives the text can also cultivate an involuntary habit of lisping in the reader and thus potentially effect a change in the reader’s own accent. As one gets into the flow of reading ALP’s phonological signature aloud, one can easily slip into a habit of converting conventional *t*’s and *d*’s into a “theta” sound also—for example, pronouncing “water” as “wather.”

This pronunciation habit may not be mere coincidence or random incidence either: in a chapter like I.8, which is narrated by two women Dubliners, it makes perfect sense that the reader should adopt a Dublin accent, in which fricatives are typically pronounced as interdental lisps (“water” becomes “wather,” “matter” becomes “mather,” “foot” becomes “footch,” and so on). Thus the lisp that characterises ALP’s phonological signature appears to also embody her “pigeony linguish” (584.4)—that is, her peculiarly accented and poetically rhythmical pidgin, Dublinesque English:

Ann alive, the lisp of her, ‘twould grig mountains whisper her, and the bergs of Iceland melt in waves of fire, and her spoon-me-spondees, and her dirckle-me-ondenees, make the Rageous Ossean, kneel and quaff a lyre! ...with her auburnt streams, and her coy cajoleries, and her dabblin drolleries, for to rouse his rudderup, or to drench his dreams. (*FW*, 139.19-25)

The Irish English charge of ALP’s speech—“her dabblin drolleries” poetically rhythmicised in sexy “spoon-me-spondees” and “dirckle-me-ondenees” that get HCE aroused and “drenched” in his dreams—carries thematic significance in that it reaffirms her living connection to the city of Dublin and environs and makes her seem ever more beautiful, cheeky, and desirable.

The joke played on the “pigeony” nature of her “linguish” (English/language/anguish) further implies that the body who voices it belongs to a colonised people and speaks in a crude form of the coloniser’s language<sup>62</sup>: a register

<sup>61</sup> Eagle, “Stutturistics,” 94.

<sup>62</sup> Pinker describes pidgins as “choppy strings of words borrowed from the language of the colonizers or plantation owners, highly variable in order and with little in the way of grammar.” *The Language Instinct*, 20.

that resists the propriety, correctness, normativity, and structural power of British (or Queen's) English. From a linguistic perspective, Pinker cautions us not to be "misled by what look like crudely placed English verbs"<sup>63</sup> or seemingly clumsy grammar because pidgins and creoles are hybrid languages that rest on their own syntactical logic, resulting from a complex process of interlingual translation and creative cultural, embodied, historical engagement with language. Thus, though pidgins might sound grammatically incorrect or off-beat to the "native" speaker of a politically empowered language form such as "Standard English" or "Queen's English," their singularity is not a sign of flawed language. Rather, their perceived difference should inspire a critical re-evaluation of which language or linguistic form, if any, can or should be considered the governing "standard" against which all other intra- and interlingual forms are measured.

## vi.2. "Leafy speafing" across time, space, and identity: The *Wake's* female characters phonologically interlinked

ALP is the all-powerful archetypal matriarch of *Finnegans Wake*. She moves the earth as her riverbed cuts and flows through it, pattering "arundgiron in a waveney lyne aringarouma..., dribbling her boulder through narrowa mosses" (*FW* 209.18-20), bearing children, collecting spoils of foliage, "fallen griefs of weeping willow" (207.2-4), pebbles, shells, and rubbish to make her jewellery, collecting the blood shed from the violence historically enacted on her banks and making lipstick out of it, "from strawbirry reds to extra violates" (207.10-11), washing her husband's dirty laundry and scrubbing clean his soiled reputation, and carrying on the stories of the *Wake* while simultaneously disrupting and changing them "with her mealiebag slang over her shulder" (207.18-19). ALP's phonological signature carries a multilingual register—a "mealiebag slang"—that is simultaneously distinctive in its own lisping, flowing materiality while also encompassing a whole country's polyvocal history: her "slang" comprises thousands of multilingual fragments collected from different bodies, voices, and events in history; she swallows up, rearranges, and transforms these linguistic particles and the cultural, historical, and subjective memories they hold. She literally embraces and cares for her children—"her arms encircling Isolabella [Issy], then running with reconciled Romas and

<sup>63</sup> Pinker, *The Language Instinct*, 23.

Reims [Shem and Shaun], on like a lech to be off like a dart, then bathing Dirty Hans' [HCE] spatters with spittle" (209.24-27)—while her materially poeticised language performatively encapsulates the speech forms of her children and inspires them to linguistically transform through her influence. In the present example, Shem and Shaun are phonologically conveyed as rivernames, Rom and Rhine: like mother, like sons. "Romas and Reims" also suggests "Romans and Rhymes" or "Rumours and Rhymes," if we pronounce the *ei* in "Reims" according to German phonological rules, *thisszds\*a would also produce a multilingual encounter between English, German, and French: rhyme, *rein* (German for "pure" as well as "inside," as in *darein*), and *rime* (French for "rhyme").

Yet, while ALP's metaphorical and linguistic riverliness might contain her sons through semantic and symbolic association (we know that the phrase "Romas and Reims" points to Shem and Shaun because all such pairings in the text archetypally do so), her linguistic relationship with her daughter Issy takes on a more complex, linguistically material form. "Isolabella" semantically contains the Italian words for "island" (*isola*) and "beautiful" (*bella*); and through its linguistic Italianness, and in relation to the "Rome" contained in "Romas and Reims," this portmanteau transposes the scene to Rome, through which the Tiber river flows (in the way that the Liffey flows through Dublin) and "encircles" the tiny Tiber Island (*Isola Tiberina*) sitting between the riverbanks in the southern bend of the river. Beyond this evocative semantic connection, the Italianification of Issy's name also materially infuses her with her mother's lisping, liquid phonology: "Isolabella" almost exclusively employs approximants (*l*) and fricatives (*s*), rolling through open vowels (*i, a, e, o*), just like "Anna Livia Plurabelle." Moreover, as the text materially establishes a mother-daughter connection within a recurring phonological signature, it explicitly achieves this poetic materiality through the use of multilingual stylisation: the English "island" and "beautiful" cannot produce the material effects of ALP's phonological signature, but the Italian "isola" and "bella" indeed can.

Issy's and ALP's phonological signatures do subtly diverge, although they always remain interlinked through their lisping, liquid materiality, and that material overlap often blurs the boundaries between mother and daughter in ways that can turn quite troubling, for example throughout passages that entertain the possibility of incest. *Wakean* narratives of incest have received some attention in Joyce scholarship: Jen Shelton's book *Joyce and the Narrative Structure of Incest* explores in detail the intralingual dynamics of incestuous relationships, particularly between

Issy and HCE, and Issy and her brothers, drawing extremely suggestive comparisons between Issy and her *Ulyssean* predecessors, Cissy Caffrey, Gerty MacDowell, Milly, and Molly. And indeed, similarly to the way Milly and Molly are mother and daughter who linguistically mirror each other (Milly is a slant rhyme on Molly), Issy and ALP face and reflect one another in the *Wake*, too, sometimes mirroring each other so seamlessly that the reader can struggle to distinguish a scene of father-daughter incest from a lovers' tryst between HCE and a young ALP.

As previously shown, ALP's lisp functions as an onomatopoeic representation of the blowing winds, whooshing birds, whispering leaves, and splashes of her river waters as well as echoic language embodying her "pigeony linguish"; and while the text tells us that her "spoon-me-spondees, and her dirckle-me-ondenees" arouse HCE and can thus be read as erotic language, lisp also frequently slips into baby talk, which in turn becomes echoic of one of Issy's phonological signatures: a *Wakean* re-imagination of the Swiftian "little language." "Little language" refers to the peculiar register in which Jonathan Swift wrote his love letters to his significantly younger girl-lover Stella. Shelton characterises Swift's usage as "baby talk [that] exerted power on the female recipient of his writing"<sup>64</sup>: it is a deliberately infantilising style of speech, and because it employs grammatically simplified structures, a limited vocabulary, and flexible rules of pronunciation that typically sound onomatopoeic (on the assumption that children are more responsive to dramatic, entertaining, onomatopoeic speech gestures, rather than styles of speaking that require a sophisticated range of vocabulary and rely on semantics), "little language" can also easily evoke pidgin formulations.

For example, immediately following the Prankquean episode in I.1, the narrative forms a linguistic parallel between the Prankquean/ALP's pidginy lisp and the baby talk the reader gradually identifies as Issy's phonological signature. The Prankquean's recurring question to Jarl van Hooother appears in one instance as "Mark the Twy, why do I am alook alike two poss of porterpease?" (22.5-6) and just a few lines further as "Mark the Tris, why do I am alook alike three poss of porterpease" (22.29-30). Both versions of the question employ liquid ("am alook alike"), lisp ("poss of porterpease") language, which also sounds quite like a pidgin formulation: "why do I am a look alike" instead of the Standard English "why do I look like." The riddles are useful representative examples, although I should note

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<sup>64</sup> Jen Shelton, *Joyce and the Narrative Structure of Incest*, The Florida James Joyce Series (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006), 87.

that liquid language (“And the prankquean nipped a paly one and lit up again and redcocks flew flackering from the hillcombs” [22.2-4]; the prankquean’s watery body is also conveyed semantically when she “rain, rain, rain” [22.9] rather than “ran, ran, ran”<sup>65</sup>) and pidgin formulations prevail throughout the entire passage, which suggests that the Prankquean represents both a foreigner and an echo of the book’s archetypal matriarch.

After the Prankquean episode has concluded, the text goes on to tell and re-tell the stories of the “Doodles family,”<sup>66</sup> wherein we are told that “audurient,” HCE “would evesdrip, were it mous at hand, were it dinn of bottles in the far ear” (*FW* 23.21-23), while ALP: “With lipth she lithpeth to him all to time of thuch on thuch and thow on thow. She he she ho she ha to la” (23.23-25); she is also described as “the lipalip one whose libe we drink at” (23.33). Issy does not seem to be named in this part of the story, whereas ALP is named (“Livia Noanswa” [23.20-21]), so the reader could easily assume that the lisp in which she whispers to him, “all the time of such and such and so and so” (or “thatch on thatch,” or “thou on thou,” or “sow on sow,” or “Dutch on Dutch,” or “ditch on ditch,” and so on) belongs to ALP. However, something about this particular mode of lispings differs from the onomatopoeic gestures found throughout the “Anna Livia Plurabelle” chapter. In I.8, the lexical onomatopoeic properties of lispings could be associated with the birds and winds surrounding the river, or the splashing of her waters. There the text either employs clusters of fricative-rich words, adds extra fricatives to some words (i.e. “bossom” instead of “bosom”), or swaps non-fricatives with fricatives. Meanwhile, the sentence “With lipth she lithpeth to him all to time of thuch on thuch and thow on thow” employs fricatives in a subtly different way, with one fricative systematically used to replace another fricative: instead of “With lips/lisps she whispers to him all the time of such and such and so and so,” the *s* fricative is systematically replaced with a theta sound (*th*), as if to literally convey lispings as a speech impediment, rather than a pidginy speech gesture or as lexical onomatopoeia. While ALP’s lispings liquid language in I.8 at times acts like a tongue twister, challenging the reader to string together dense clusters of fricative-rich phrasings

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<sup>65</sup> The “rain[ing]” Prankquean also echoes the cyclical relationship between rain and terrestrial water. As will become apparent in the course of this chapter, ALP and Issy are materially related in their linguistic as well as metaphorical wateriness, whereby a daughter weeping in her mother’s arms becomes depicted as a little raincloud raining in the river.

<sup>66</sup> Referring to the sigla representing the book’s archetypal family (HCE, ALP, Issy, Mamalujo, the Book, Shaun, and Shem), Issy metafictionally calls them the “Doodles family” in the fourth footnote on page 299 (*FW* 299n4).



(incidentally, speakers of Slavic languages are well accustomed to this), this textual example puts a fully realised speech impediment on the reader's lips. Here speech is not twisted so much as obstructed through a layering of fricatives (*th* gets layered on top of the implicit *s*), and this obstruction produces a register strongly reminiscent of baby talk. The bilabial lisp that characterises the girl-detective Sylvia Silence, whose "vowelthreaded syllabelles" (61.6) systematically convert *r*'s to *w*'s and thus stretch out consonants into vowels, creates a similar diminutive effect: "Have you eveh thought, wepowtew, that sheew gweatness was his twadgedy?" (61.6-7).

In this way, ALP's sexualised, womanly, pidginy lisp quickly slips into infantilising, girlish baby talk: the multilingual encounter materialising in ALP's and Issy's overlapping phonological signatures simultaneously girl feminine language, infantilise "foreign" or multilingual speech, and eroticise girls, sometimes to the point of violence.<sup>67</sup> In fact, when we arrive at the tenth quiz question in I.6, the answer to which is ultimately Issy, we find that it is linked to the Prankquean episode (and several others) through the recurring "Stop/Don't Stop" motif. In I.1, this is actually uttered by Jarl van Hoother as "Stop domb stop come back with my earring stop" (22.10), and it perpetually returns throughout the text, often in allusion to sexual transgressions and violence: "rosetop glowstop nostop" (144.1); "Please stoop O to please. Stop" (232.18-19); "Fools top!" (222.23), "Where did I stop? Never stop!" (205.13-14), "They keep. Step keep. Step. Stop" (252.29-30), and so on.

The "Tristan and Isolde" episode of II.4 makes this eye-watering, vision-fogging blurring of intersubjective and cross-narrative boundaries between mother and daughter particularly palpable, beginning with the obvious mirroring in the names of the *Wake*'s Issy and the literary Isolde, and perpetually reviving and reimagining that encounter through ALP's and Issy's overlapping phonological signatures, interspersing them with phonologically recurring motifs. II.4 structurally rests on four re-tellings of the same story: Mamalujo voyeuristically observe the lovers' tryst between Tristan and Isolde, each disciple narrating the scene from a different spatial angle and narrative perspective. Because each of them narrates the same scene, the chapter is punctuated with revisions of recurring phonological motifs. For example: "spraining their ears, luistening and listening to the oceans of

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<sup>67</sup> As I will explore further in chapter 4 in reference to the tenth question of the quiz in I.6, this is made even more sinister by the comedic overtones that can be read into Issy/ALP's flirtatious narratives.

kissening, with their eyes glistening, all the four, when he was kiddling and cuddling and bunnyhugging scrumptious his colleen bawn and dinkum belle” (384.19-22); “cuddling and kiddling her, after an oyster supper in Cullen’s barn, from under her mistlethrush and kissing and listening” (385.1-2); “to hear him there, kiddling and cuddling her, after the gouty old galahat, with his peer of quinnyfeears and his troad of thirstuns” (389.22-24); “Arrahnacuddle” (391.3); “with their oerkussens under their armsaxters, all puddled and mythified, the way the wind wheeled the schooler round, when nobody wouldn’t even let them rusten” (393.32-34). In this recurring motif alone, the cross-over between Issy’s “little language” and ALP’s lisping, liquid phonological signature appears unmistakably. The clusters of approximant and fricative consonants persist through each re-vision of the “kiddling and cuddling” motif, but in addition to that onomatopoeic rematerialisation of liquid language, the quick-footed, almost childlike-stammering doubling of the alveolar *dd* and the use of diminutives create a multilingual encounter between the book’s archetypal female characters. In “Matt’s” re-imagination of the motif on p. 393, “oerkussens” becomes a multilingual portmanteau: “oer” phonologically carries the German *Ohr* (ear; plural *Öhre*—the Wakeese spelling invokes the plural form, since the combination *oe* is phonologically equivalent to *ö* in German) and “Küsse” (kisses), inflected to invoke both the diminutive German *Küsschen* (little kisses) and the *Ulyssean* “pussens” (pussy/cat). Pinker’s take on sound symbolism, introduced in chapter 1, again resonates with the way Joyce’s multilingual stylisations render “little language” grammatically, semantically, as well as through the embodied experience of mouthing Wakeese: “When the tongue is high and at the front of the mouth, it makes a small resonant cavity there that amplifies some higher frequencies, and the resulting vowels like *ee* and *i* (as in *bit*) remind people of little things.”<sup>68</sup> The combination of clustered fricatives and alveolar consonants with vowels like *e*’s, *i*’s, and the German *ö/oe* compels the reader to pronounce the multilingual text through a compression, or narrowing, of the space between tongue and teeth, or tongue and roof of the mouth, thereby physically sculpting the littleness of Issy’s language. The multilingual stylisations thus play an active part in the construction of the sounds and visual manifestations of the character’s phonological signature. *Wakean* little language thereby also delicately identifies the subtle linguistic distinction between mother and daughter, and/or woman and girl, in the text: they both share a lisping,

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<sup>68</sup> Pinker, *The Language Instinct*, 163.

liquid phonological signature, but Issy's particular brand of it is also performative of her relative littleness (in age and physique).

Shelton suggestively points out that "Baby talk is mirror-speech: adults who use it are attempting to reflect the child's own sounds, but the adult desires the child in turn to mirror the adult, to 'repeat after me.' Adults then feel pleasure in having successfully commanded the baby's speech."<sup>69</sup> She goes on to relate Issy's little language to Cissy and Gerty in *Ulysses*, chiefly addressing how this peculiar register acts as a satirical resistance to patriarchal control over language and (self-) expression, and a political rebellion against fathers, brothers, and men who transgress girls' and women's bodily and linguistic boundaries. In chapter 4, I will discuss Issy's linguistic resistance of the patriarchal order authored by HCE at further length. Here I would like to consider how Wake's intralingual mirroring materialises in the languages and speech gestures of women and girls in the text.

Issy and ALP share a lisp, liquid language because their phonological signatures performatively embody their relational similarities and differences: They are mother and daughter, so Issy literally derives from ALP's watery flesh. Furthermore, the image of a mother holding and rocking her baby daughter—ALP, "With her halfbend as proud as a peahen, allabalmy, and her troutbeck quiverlipe, ninya-nanya" (*FW* 578.21)<sup>70</sup>—conjures a scene of maternal mirroring, whereby Anna "Liffey" Livia envelops her child, "Pont Delisle" (Pond of the Isle; Point of Delight; Issy as a little pond to her mother's river), in her arms in the same way that the Tiber river (ALP) "encircles" Isola Tiberina (Isolabella). The baby locates her own sense of self and sense of language through mimicking, and gradually transforming, her mother's expression. In Issy's distinctive phonological signature, ALP's intralingual "pigeony linguish" transforms into a lisp, liquid *little* language, which the text frequently romanticises through multilingual stylisations, engaging the material properties and iconic connotations of Mediterranean languages, such as Italian (again recalling the iconic multilingual allusiveness of Bloom's pleasurable material engagement with Italian and Spanish in *Ulysses*), and the diminutive inflections from German as discussed earlier.

<sup>69</sup> Shelton, *Joyce and the Narrative Structure of Incest*, 87.

<sup>70</sup> Among other allusions, "ninya-nanya" sounds like the Bulgarian "nani-nani," which is the noise onomatopoeically mimicking the cradling motions a mother makes while putting her child to sleep. "Nani" is an inflected form of "nankam": a diminutive variation of the verb "spia," "to sleep," usually used by and for children. In Russian, "nyanya" is a term of endearment for "grandmother."

One of Issy's reincarnations, Nuvoletta, is a little raincloud whom we see mirroring things above, around, and below her in her effort to engage with and move the world around her in the way that Shelton has suggested baby talk can act as a rebellious and transformative force in both *Ulysses* and the *Wake*. The "Mookse and the Gripes" fable narrated in I.6 dramatizes this resistance in both vehicular content and multilingual form. This phantasmagorical interlude can be read as a bedtime story told to Shem, Shaun, and Issy, casting the children in a fantasy that tries to capture their easily-diverted attention. The Mookse and the Gripes represent Shem and Shaun (also space and time), who throughout the story get into a physical and philosophical struggle. Meanwhile, Issy's phonological signature shows her perpetually interrupting the narrative continuity, crying out for attention and begging to be included in the fantasy: when the Mookse approaches a "boggylooking stream" (153.3), representative of ALP ("*Amnis Limina Permanent*" [153.2]) cleaning up her baby's soiled bottom, Issy (depicted literally as a "little shit" floating out of the water: "Out of the colliens it took a rise by daubing itself Ninon. It looked little and it smelt of brown and it thought in narrows and it talked showshallow" [153.4-6]) comes up gurgling, like a little raincloud dribbling and piddling in the stream below her: "And as it rinn it dribbled like any lively purliteasy: *My, my, my! Me and me! Little down dream don't I love thee!*" (153.6-8). In her dribbling, "lively purliteasy" language, she mirrors her mother's liquid register, but the littleness and playfulness of it at this point conveys childish girlishness, in contrast to the coprophagic eroticism conveyed earlier in the chapter.<sup>71</sup> Issy continues to disrupt the continuity of the fable by plugging in sporadic interjections,<sup>72</sup> identifiable by her phonological signature, until the storyteller finally grants her a role and a voice in the narrative. Overseeing her brothers' games, debates, fights, and pissing contests from her crib,

Nuvoletta in her lightdress, spun of sisteen shimmers, was looking down on them, leaning over the bannistars and listening all she childishly could...and she tried all she tried to make the Mookse look up at her (but *he* was fore too adiaptotously farseeing) and to make the Gripes hear how coy she could be

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<sup>71</sup> In the quiz question preceding this one, Issy's little language is again associated with shitting and silencing ("Sht! ... Pu! ... Poo! ... O mind you poo tickly ... Mummum" [144.17-34]), but in that earlier passage her body, her mouth, and her language are explicitly eroticised. That scene can be read simultaneously as incest between father and daughter, and HCE's erotic memories of a young ALP. This tense ambiguity, materialised through ALP's and Issy's overlapping phonological signatures, is revived again in the "Tristan and Isolde" episode of II.4 as discussed earlier.

<sup>72</sup> "Ishallassoboundbewilsothoutoosezit" (154.33); or the bracketed commentary on 155: "(what a crammer for the shapewrucked Gripes!)...(what a thrust!)...(Poor little sowsievedsubsquashed Gripes! I begin to feel contempt for him!)."

(though he was much too schystimatically auricular about his *ens* to heed her) but it was all mild's vapour moist. (*FW* 157.8-24)

Failing to get noticed, or mirrored, by her brothers (who are too preoccupied with paying attention to their father, HCE, "Heliogobbleus and Commodus and Enobarbarus" [157.26-27]), Nuvoletta turns to look above and below her for recognition: "her feigt reflection, Nuvoluccia" (157.25), echoing the name of Lucia Joyce as a "Nuova Lucia" (New Lucia) and introducing a multilingual dimension of light ("-luccia" derives from the Italian *luce*: light), Issy-in-the-Mirror as Nuvoletta/Nuvoluccia fails to impress the hopelessly deaf, blind, "obliviscent...menner" (158.4-5) who are dominating the story. So she once again resorts to a teary peal for attention: she begins to sulk in a gloomy, water-welling mood, "and shades began to glidder along the banks, greepsing, greepsing, duusk unto duusk, and it was as glooming as gloaming could be in the waste of all peacable worlds. Metamnisia was allsoonome coloroform brune" (158.7-10). With the glittery raincloud swelling with rain, Nuvoletta/Nuvoluccia produces a rainbow—the "coloroform"—in the crossover between water and light, and with that her phonological signature becomes not only a reflection of her mother but also an encapsulation of the rainbow girls (the seven colours of the rainbow, which produce "brune"/brown when mixed together), whose presence throughout the whole text is frequently triggered by Issy and who are always identifiable by her trickling, "sisteen shimmer[ing]," liquid phonological signature.<sup>73</sup> Hearing the baby cry, her mother rushes to the scene—a cross ALP storming in, breaking up the games between Shem and Shaun, and carrying them away with the river stream in opposite directions: "she gathered up his hoariness the Mookse motamourfully where he was spread and carried him away to her invisible dwelling...and, for he was as like it as blow it to a hawker's hank, she plucked down the Gripes, torn panicky autotone, in angeu from his limb and cariad away its beotitubes with her to her unseen shieling" (158.27-159.1). Thus Issy's great cry ultimately concludes the fable of the Mookse and the Gripes: enveloping the narrative with her liquid, baby-talking style of speech, she successfully draws attention to herself by materially becoming the language of the story, while also incriminating her brothers for upsetting her.

Having disrupted the bipolar patriarchal order and claimed the final, triumphant word (liquefied as "wor/d") for herself, Issy imagines herself climbing

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<sup>73</sup> "And they leap so loopy, loopy, as they link to light. And they look so loovely, loovelit, noosed in a nuptious night" (*FW* 226.26-28).

over the banister of her crib, through which she has longingly, jealously been watching her brothers' games, and cries herself into her mother's riverly arms:

Then Nuvoletta reflected for the last time in her little long life and she made up all her myriads of drifting minds in one....She climbed over the bannistars; she gave a chily cloudy cry: *Nuée! Nuée!* A lightdress fluttered. She was gone. And into the river that had been a stream (for a thousand of tears had gone eon her and come on her and she was stout and struck on dancing and her muddied name was Missisliffi) there fell a tear, a singult tear, the loveliest of all tears...for it was a leaptear. But the river tripped on her by and by, lapping as though her heart was brook: *Why, why, why! Weh, O weh! I'se so silly to be flowing but I no canna stay!* (FW 159.6-18)

Issy thus simultaneously claims ownership of the narrative flow of the fable and linguistically embodies her own littleness, reflexivity, rebelliousness, and transformative power. Her acts of resistance and reclamation materialise beyond the scope of language's vehicular function: even in the instances where she speaks without being named, the reader can experience her presence and her transformative impact explicitly and accessibly through the multilingual materiality of her phonological signature.

## VII. Afterwor(l)d: The same renewed

*Wakean* multilingualism embodies literary acts of political resistance against not only imperialism but also the ideological predispositions that enable and normalise imperial violence. Its inter- and intralingual plurality at once exposes, parodies, and subverts the war waged by the powers that be against difference, immigration, cultural transformation, and the potentiality for change in the status quo—that is, the current power structure. By creating a multilingual text so joyously rich with difference—one so triumphantly creative and successful as literature not in spite of but because of its irreverent multilingualism—Joyce parodied and resisted the Babelian ideal, showing the Tower of Babel to be not only a farcical impossibility but also a needless and undesirable goal. ALP's "pigeony linguish" may be filled with the foreigner's anguish—as is HCE's multilingual stammer, which materially conveys his compulsive need to explain himself, correct his own accent, revise his statements, rework the language in which he might best apologise for the crimes of which he is accused—but the joke ultimately falls on the shoulders

of those who expect literary language to not be singular, changeable, or variously interpreted.

The *Wakean* motif “the same anew”—phonologically carried by phrases such as “The seim anew” (215.23), “The same renew” (226.17), “And Sein annews” (277.18), “The sehm asnuh” (620.16), and so on—can be read to suggest that everything that seems new is actually the same thing that has happened over and over again throughout history. That nothing is ever really new because the same human life cycles perpetually return, quite like the final *the* of the *Wake* always anticipates the return of the riverrun, the end always anticipating the beginning of the same text. And language, in turn, holds a record of all the history that came before us and all the life lived without and despite us, so we ourselves appear to be nothing new either. However, in light of its material performativity, the text seems to me to suggest quite the converse: everything that seems to be the same—familiar—changes each time it returns. The text never repeats a motif in the exact same way but rather each time a phrase recurs, its material form changes: the languages it carries are different; its spellings and phonetic combinations construct new words and thereby new images, rhythms, noises, and ideas; a familiar phonological pattern returns transformed by a new visual layer and a new context (a textual and embodied literary event<sup>74</sup>), which simultaneously echoes something of the same and changes it completely. The same always returns, but each time it returns, it becomes new.

By setting strange, cryptic messages to familiar tunes—some in the form of languages, registers, songs, euphemisms, and cultural references that we already know from beyond the text; others, including recurring *Wakean* motifs and phonological signatures, which we come to learn in the process of reading—Joyce perpetually pulls us back into the arms of the unfamiliar. The text compels us to engage with it despite the sometimes disheartening persistence of its estrangement because the longer we persevere, and the more fluent we grow in the peculiar

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<sup>74</sup> “It is only when the event of this reformulation is experienced by the reader (who is, in the first instance, the writer reading or articulating the words as they emerge) as an event, an event which opens new possibilities of meaning and feeling (understood as verbs), or, more accurately, the event of such opening, that we can speak of the literary. The predilections and conventions by means of which most events of comprehension occur are challenged and recast, not merely as automatic extensions but as invitations to alterity, and thus to modes of mental processing, ideas and emotions, or conceptual possibilities that had hitherto been impossible—impossible because the status quo (cognitive, affective, ethical) depended on their exclusion .... This is what a literary work ‘is’: an act, an event, of reading, never entirely separable from the act-event (or acts-events) of writing that brought it into being as a potentially readable text, never entirely insulated from the contingencies of the history into which it is projected and within which it is read.” Derek Attridge, *The Singularity of Literature* (London: Routledge, 2004), 59.

grammar and phonology of Wakese, the more frequent and rewarding those longed-for moments of recognition become. Quite like the experience of learning a new language, every reader develops her or his own strategies of interpretation and problem-solving in the *Wake*. For the amenable reader, listening to the recurring sound patterns of the text can become key to the understanding (however subjectively) of passages that are filled with unfamiliar cultural references and vocabulary. This strategy helps the reader trace the cross-temporal, cross-historical, cross-bodily links illuminated in the book's various plotlines by the shared phonological signatures of their characters; to access new narrative levels layered on top of what we believe we already know; and to understand why so many readers cannot help but enjoy *Finnegans Wake*, even when it seems to make no sense at all.



## Chapter 3. Multilingualism in Translation: The Russian *Wake(s)*<sup>1</sup>

### I. Introduction

The notion that *Finnegans Wake* is “untranslatable” has become something of a cliché in Joyce scholarship. One report by a team of Joyce scholars and translators from 1972 offers some reflections on the variety of issues, objectives, and concerns surrounding the possibilities of *Wake* translations at a time when authorial guidance can no longer be relied upon as a point of reference:

The general feeling among panel members was one of pessimism as regards the possibility of a satisfactory ‘literary’ translation, especially as even the original is not fully understood (to use an understatement). Mrs. Bosinelli, basing her conclusions on her negative assessment of the Italian translation of ALP, thought that an annotated edition of the original would be far more useful to the foreign reader. Miss Franke’s plea for several translations, done by different translators, printed in vertical columns together with the original was supported by Professor Bonheim, who was of the opinion that a translation as a ‘polystreamed gloss’ might serve as an aid to a better understanding of the original. Mr. Slomeczynski, himself an author and a Joyce translator, was more optimistic than the other panel members. Since *Wake* is *distorted English*, he argued, it should be possible to translate the English component and mold the target language so as to include the necessary *distortions*. The majority of the panel, however, felt that this procedure would result in the creation of what might almost be called an original work, which can no longer be called derivative (as a translation should be), except in the sense that it was inspired by *Finnegans Wake*.<sup>2</sup>

This report alludes to several key questions in thinking about the ethics of translation and of multilingual writing and transfer in general: what constitutes a “satisfactory” translation of any text, and especially, controversially, of *Finnegans Wake*? What are the theoretical and ethical implications of characterising *Wake* as “distorted English,” and how would that influence a translator’s critical and creative choices? What does the *Wake*’s resistance to being translated according to those standards mean for the theory, practice, and ethics of translating Joyce’s works, all of which maintain varying degrees of multilingualism? And if a translation “should be” as

<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this chapter was published as an article in the 2015 issue of *Joyce Studies Annual*: Boriana Alexandrova, “Wakeful Translations: An Initiation into the Russian Translations of *Finnegans Wake*,” *Joyce Studies Annual* (2015): 129–67.

<sup>2</sup> Leo Knuth, “The *Finnegans Wake* Translation Panel at Trieste,” *James Joyce Quarterly* 9 (1972): 268, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25486975>; my emphasis.

strictly derivative as possible, rather than an original creative work “inspired by” the original, then is a translation of the *Wake* indeed a futile exercise that is bound to yield unsatisfactory results—or does this text problematize the concept of “faithful” and “derivative” translations with good reason?

Given the manner in which the *Wake*'s multilingual manoeuvrings complicate its readers' habits of literary-linguistic engagement, attempts to transpose it into an “other” language are bound to encounter some problems along the way. Tim Conley has reflected that “to speak of ‘translating’ this book invites incredulity,” since the *Wake* is “a text that is not ‘read’ in the usual sense that one uses the word, or at least it requires that the reader be willing to ‘translate’ as much as ‘read.’”<sup>3</sup> What Conley is touching upon here is that, by virtue of its extraordinary polyglottism, *Wake* acts as an-other to itself in as much as it is an-other to its reader. Questions of language, culture, semantic definition, and form, which readers can usually answer fairly straightforwardly in relation to texts perceived as prevalently monolingual, become important theoretical, and potentially ethical, issues in our singular, ever varied and changeable encounters with *Wake*'s multilingualism. But is the task of translating *Finnegans Wake* truly insurmountable—a theoretical paradox that deems this text, as Umberto Eco has claimed, “pointless to translate” because, by virtue (or vice) of its multilingualism, “it is already translated”<sup>4</sup>?

Whether or not we might find ourselves partial to this fatalist perspective, scholars have only grazed the surface of the ever-expanding constellation of practical, theoretical, and ethical issues-become-opportunities that the task of translating *Finnegans Wake* sets in motion. Eco's perspective chimes with a chorus of thought-provoking, and yet paradoxically paralyzing, generalizations about the probable problems that aspiring *Wake* translators must consider before they begin. Yet this attitude of sweeping skepticism feels rather like an aftershock of some early, boisterously critical readerly responses to *Work in Progress*, such as D. H. Lawrence's outright renunciation of anything Joycean, or F. R. Leavis's infamous review in *Scrutiny*, wherein he called Joyce's experiment a “self-stultifying” work of

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<sup>3</sup> Tim Conley, “‘Avec Hésitance’: Lavergne's Footnotes and Translations of *Finnegans Wake*,” *Scientia Traductionis*, no. 12 (2012): 21, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5007/1980-4237.2012n12p20>.

<sup>4</sup> Umberto Eco, *Experiences in Translation*, trans. Alastair McEwen (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 108.

“monotonous non-significance,” and proclaimed that, “As a matter of fact, Joyce’s subconscious is worse than boring; it is offensively spurious.”<sup>5</sup>

Such spurts of readerly rage have greatly subsided since the 1930s, because our engagement with literature, and especially multilingualism, globalization, and polyculturalism, has significantly changed—hopefully even evolved—over time. Joyce’s readership has grown more comfortable with the *Wake*’s peculiarities because we simply have more methods and new theories of engagement with its complexly layered, multilingual narratives than we used to. The early expressions of crudely generalizing scepticism towards the text would undermine everything that *Wake* scholars have achieved in the past eight decades; and therefore a similarly dismissive attitude to the possibilities of its translation would downplay the creative, practical, and ethical significance of the hundreds of *Wake* translations available to date—the latest of which include Dr. Chong-keon Kim’s *Complete Works of James Joyce Translated into Korean*<sup>6</sup> and Dai Congrong’s first instalment of her Chinese translation, reported as a bestseller in the British media when it first hit the shelves in Beijing in 2013, although the translator is yet to announce when this work will be completed.<sup>7</sup> A new Italian translation was also commissioned in February 2015 with Enrico Terrinoni, known for his award-winning Italian translation of *Ulysses*.<sup>8</sup>

I would argue that the issue we have to contend with is not that the *Wake* is untranslatable, but rather that its multilingual composition and its rootedness in the singularity of literary engagement have shaken and shattered traditional theories and practices of translation to their core. Robbert-Jan Henkes and Erik Bindervoet, the renowned “Dutchifiers” of *Finnegans Wake*, have even suggested that translation is the most effective mode of reading this text:

Trying to understand [the *Wake*], we soon found out, took such pains, even with the *Annotations* and other reference guides that we found, that you might as well really translate it at the same time. No, it was worse still: the

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<sup>5</sup> F. R. Leavis, “James Joyce and the Revolution of the Word,” *Scrutiny*, no. 2 (1933): 197.

<sup>6</sup> According to Patrick O’Neill, Dr. Kim’s translation of the *Wake* was actually completed as early as 2002 (incidentally, at the same time that Robbert-Jan Henkes and Erik Bindervoet published their complete Dutch translation), but it is possible that the original version has been revised for inclusion in the 2012 collection. “Joyce’s Complete Works Translated into Korean,” *James Joyce Quarterly Blog*, November 4, 2014, <http://jjqblog.wordpress.com/2014/11/04/joyces-complete-works-translated-into-korean/#comment-760>; Patrick O’Neill, *Impossible Joyce: Finnegans Wakes* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 21.

<sup>7</sup> Jonathan Kaiman, “*Finnegans Wake* Becomes a Hit Book in China,” *The Guardian*, February 5, 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/feb/05/finnegans-wake-china-james-joyce-hit>; Sheng Yun, “Short Cuts,” *London Review of Books*, April 3, 2014, <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v36/n07/-shengyun/short-cuts>.

<sup>8</sup> James Joyce, *Ulysses*, trans. Enrico Terrinoni (Newton Compton, 2012).

only way to understand how Joyce builds puns, sentences and story lines was to recreate them into a Dutch equivalent.<sup>9</sup>

Not only is the *Wake* translatable, they claim, but engaging in translation may even be necessary for comprehension. So, with this promise of possibility in mind: What are the appropriate and effective methods of transposing this unprecedentedly multilingual text into new linguistic and cultural spaces? Translators and scholars are long overdue an open collaboration on the project of re-examining existing theories and practices of translatorial engagement, and *Finnegans Wake* would make an excellent case study with an impact across linguistic, cultural, and ethical borders.

## II. Methods of translating Wakese

As is characteristic of this text, questions and answers alike become slippery and spectacularly expansive, which can put us in all manners of interpretative and ethical dilemmas. A translator's attempt to pinpoint any one of the *Wake*'s languages in order to transpose it into a new linguistic-cultural space inevitably compels her or him to grasp it as a single and bounded linguistic system that can be differentiated from any of the "other" languages or patterns found in the text. It is part of a translator's practice to systemise their own readerly experience of the original into categories that can be transferred or transposed into the space of the target language, which in itself is singularly cultured, historicised, politicised, and poeticised. One of the key problems for *Wake* translators is how to categorise the permeable, variously stylised, and boundlessly intertwined languages, registers, and poetic "materealities" of Joyce's text before those can be re-constellated into a translation: how do we determine the primary, or central, or "major" language of the original, as opposed to the secondary, or off-central, or "minor" languages that constitute the multilingual element? Is the *Wake* made up of a single "major" language, accompanied by multiple "minor" languages; can there be multiple major languages in the text; or are all of its discernible languages and registers minor?<sup>10</sup> When, or if, a translator comes

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<sup>9</sup> Katarzyna Bazamik, Erik Bindervoet, and Robbert-Jan Henkes, "Hier Komt Iedereen: An Interview with Erik Bindervoet and Robbert Jan-Henkes, the Dutchifiers of *Finnegans Wake*," Journal article manuscript, courtesy of Robbert-Jan Henkes and Erik Bindervoet (Warsaw, Poland, 2004), 2.

<sup>10</sup> More broadly, it is also worth questioning whether the act of translation, and translating a multilingual text like the *Wake* in particular, even necessitates a categorical separation between major and minor languages. The ethics of that kind of analytical move certainly calls for careful consideration, because the act of determining that one language outweighs another theoretically suggests that one voice, one narrative level, one culture or political mode, etc. also bears more

to some provisional answers to these questions, how does s/he then proceed to transpose them into a new, singular textual-linguistic space?

Megan Quigley quotes Beckett, the first writer to attempt a translation of the *Wake*, as saying that “it was impossible to read his [Joyce’s] text without understanding the futility of the translation.”<sup>11</sup> And yet the Beckett and Péron Frenchification of “Anna Livia Plurabelle” (resurrected in their translation as “Anna Lyvia Pluratsel’f”) did remain an influential, albeit unfinished, approach to future undertakings of the task. Because Joyce changed his mind about endorsing “Anna Lyvia Pluratsel’f” shortly before it was to be published in *Bifur*,<sup>12</sup> some scholars and translators have dismissed it as a viable methodological model for future projects to follow. But Quigley maintains that “Joyce could not have dismissed Beckett and Péron as his principal translators because of the quality of their work: Beckett and Péron’s ‘second translation’ is virtually interchangeable with the published version,”—which Joyce actually called “one of the masterpieces of translation” in a letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver<sup>13</sup>—“it is merely shorter.”<sup>14</sup> The French incarnations of *Anna Livia Plurabelle* produced in Joyce’s lifetime have been thoroughly studied,<sup>15</sup> so I will not deal with their textual particularities here. Instead, as will become apparent in the upcoming sections, the linguistic focus of this chapter will pertain to two little-known translations of the *Wake* into Russian: Henri Volokhonsky’s *Wéïk*

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significance or power than another. In other words, a translator’s methodological treatment of a text’s language(s) or register(s) influences the ethics of the text, and subsequently the gains and losses of the translation. As a side note on the political charge behind the major-minor distinction, the Dutch translators have said, albeit rather tongue-in-cheek, that Dutch and Polish *Wake* translators are “in the same boat, in the same *bateau ivre*” in that they are “representatives of the ‘little languages’ as they are called nowadays called (sic) in our economically unified Europe.” We might indeed be inclined to weigh the political, ethical, and artistic value of translating a major-language work into a “minor,” or “little,” language. Erik Bindervoet and Robbert-Jan Henkes, “*Finnegans Wake* in Dutch, Dutch in *Finnegans Wake*, and What to Do with It” (Journal article manuscript, courtesy of Robbert-Jan Henkes and Erik Bindervoet, Cracow, Poland, July 2004), 1.

<sup>11</sup> Megan M. Quigley, “Justice for the ‘Illstarred Punster’: Samuel Beckett and Alfred Péron’s Revisions of ‘Anna Lyvia Pluratsel’f,” *James Joyce Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (April 1, 2004): 128, doi:10.2307/25478072.

<sup>12</sup> Eugene Jolas qtd. in *ibid.*, 471. This belief is based on the fact that Joyce withdrew “Anna Lyvia Pluratsel’f” when it was on the verge of publication in *Bifur*, and then proceeded to endorse another collaborative Frenchification by Philippe Soupault, Ivan Goll, Paul Léon, Adrienne Monnier, and Eugene Jolas, based on Beckett and Péron’s work.

<sup>13</sup> Letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver, March 4, 1931. James Joyce, *Letters I*, ed. Stuart Gilbert, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (New York: The Viking Press, 1966), 302.

<sup>14</sup> Quigley, “Justice for the ‘Illstarred Punster,’” 474.

<sup>15</sup> Daniel Ferrer and Jacques Aubert, “Anna Livia’s French Bifurcations,” in *Transcultural Joyce* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 179–86; Geert Lernout, *The French Joyce* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990); Kim Allen, “Beckett, Joyce, and Anna Livia: The Plurability of Translating *Finnegans Wake*,” in *Translation Perspectives XI: Beyond the Western Tradition*, ed. Marilyn Gaddis Rose (Binghamton, NY: Center for Research Translation, 2000); W. V. Costanzo, “The French Version of *Finnegans Wake*: Translation, Adaptation, Recreation,” *James Joyce Quarterly* 9.2 (Winter 1971): 225–36.

*Finneganov* and Konstantin Belyaev's "Anna Livia Plurabelle." At this point, I would like to briefly consider some of the translatorial methods that various practitioners have employed in order to establish some context for the more hands-on analysis of the Russian translators' approaches later in this chapter.

Studying the *Bifur* proofs, annotated with Beckett's, Perón's, and (in one script) Joyce's comments and corrections, Quigley observes that "rather than literally translating *Finnegans Wake* into French, Beckett attempted to recreate the text in French, playing with French homophones, portmanteaux, and riddles and undermining signification in French just as Joyce did in English."<sup>16</sup> Kim Allen has further commented that in "Pluratsself" Beckett "keeps proper names Irish, and also keeps the sounds of the original for the most part," although apparently he also "does not play as much with the French language as the reader might like and the text might require."<sup>17</sup> It seems that Beckett practised what he would preach in his contribution to *Our Exagmination: The Wake's* linguistic materiality (we could call it its Shklovskian "stoniness") should be recognised as an intrinsic characteristic of the text's design. This was not something for the translator to ignore, even though the act of translation inevitably transforms, perhaps sometimes deforms, the source text. Based on Allen's assessment, it appears that Beckett and Perón preserved key cultural markers, such as Irish proper names, in their translation, which would have helped maintain a mirroring link between Joyce's "Plurabelle" and their "Pluratsself." This not only created navigational landmarks for the reader looking at both versions side by side, but it also infused the Francophone text with the cultural Irishness and Anglophonics of the original, thereby allowing the translation to embody the multilingualism of the text while referencing its own derivative character—that is, its dialogic relationship with the source text.

Beckett and Perón's methodological approach shows a particular tact of translatorial integrity and responsibility. Even though Joyce reportedly withdrew his endorsement of "Pluratsself" because "The translation is not yet perfect,"<sup>18</sup> their effort to maintain the multilingual materiality and cultural Irishness of the source text implicitly upholds particular ethical and artistic values that are not always maintained by other Joyce translators. To take an example, *Ulysses* has been

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<sup>16</sup> Quigley, "Justice for the 'Illstarred Punster,'" 474.

<sup>17</sup> Allen, "Beckett, Joyce, and Anna Livia: The Plurability of Translating *Finnegans Wake*," 430.

<sup>18</sup> Cited in Quigley, "Justice for the 'Illstarred Punster,'" 471.

translated into Dutch three times<sup>19</sup> and into Hungarian three times,<sup>20</sup> while at least twenty attempts at a Russian translation have been documented, with three separate editions of the complete Russian *Uliss* appearing in 1989, 1993, and 2001.<sup>21</sup> Each of these translation projects had differing interpretations of the linguistic and cultural demands of their target languages and intended readerships. Henkes and Bindervoet, who have translated the *Wake, Ulysses, Dubliners, and Portrait* so far, have openly criticised what they have deemed to be the serious shortcomings of the two Dutch *Ulysses* translations preceding theirs on the basis that their predecessors prioritised the fluency, or “communicability,” of the relocated literary language, rather than its multilingual poeticity or materiality. American translator Lawrence Venuti explains that such translatorial approaches capitalise on “the communicative function of language..., which demands that literary form be not only immediately intelligible, needing no special cultural [or academic] expertise, but also transparent, sufficiently realistic to invite vicarious participation.”<sup>22</sup> Thus a reader with an average fluency in folk and popular culture, and an average level of literacy and education, should be able to find the translation palatable; and if they do, then the text may be considered to be democratic: an appeal to—or perhaps an accommodation of—the estimated abilities and comfort levels of the domestic public. In order for a translation to achieve this level of discursive fluency—of such “superb, arrogant ease”<sup>23</sup>—and to “produce the *illusory* effect of transparency” (my emphasis), it must adhere, Venuti argues, “to the current standard dialect while avoiding any dialect, register, or style that calls attention to words and therefore pre-empts the reader’s identification.”<sup>24</sup>

<sup>19</sup> By John Vandenbergh in 1969; Paul Cleas and Mon Nys in 1994, and Henkes and Bindervoet in 2012.

<sup>20</sup> By Endre Gáspár in 1947; Miklós Szentkuthy in 1974; and András Kappanyos, Marianna Gula, Dávid Szolláth, and Gábor Kiss in 2010. For a comparative analysis of these texts, see Erika Mihálycsa, “Translators Up a (Plum)Tree: (Food)Notes to The Translation of the ‘Sandwich Passage’ into Hungarian and Romanian,” *Scientia Traductionis*, no. 8 (2010): 147–74.

<sup>21</sup> The first complete Russian translation of *Ulysses* appeared in 1989. It was initiated in 1970 by V. Khinkis, who invited S. Khoruzhii to join the project soon after. After Khinkis's death in 1981, Khoruzhii completed the translation on his own and oversaw its first publication in the literary journal *Inostrannaia literatura* in 1989 and its second publication in book form by Respublika in 1993. In 2001, Khoruzhii published a fully revised new edition of the translation, this time taking full credit for its authorship. Ekaterina IŪ. Genieva, IŪ. A. Roznatovskaia, and IŪ. G. Fridshtein, eds., “Dzheims Dzhois v russkikh perevodakh i kritike,” in “*Russkaia odisseia*” *Dzheimsa Dzhois* (Moskva: Rudomino, 2005), 139–49; “‘Uliss’ Dzhois v Rossii,” *James Joyce (1882-1941): James Augustine Aloysius Joyce*, accessed June 16, 2015, <http://www.james-joyce.ru/ulysses/info5.htm>.

<sup>22</sup> Lawrence Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 12.

<sup>23</sup> Robbert-Jan Henkes and Erik Bindervoet, “Why We Needed a Third Dutch Translation of *Ulysses*,” *Scientia Traductionis*, no. 12 (2012): 75.

<sup>24</sup> Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation*, 12.

According to Henkes and Bindervoet, when Joyce's reader is confronted with a lucid, fluently and effortlessly readable translation, this diminishes the significance of the source text's delicate multilingual nuances and essential stylisations. "Most readers in Dutch stop reading the translation, they don't stop reading *Ulysses*," they claim:

But when this wondering, clueless, bored reader will revert to the English, he will find out that Joyce on each and every occasion most certainly made a sentence that was telling and beautiful at the same time, more meaningful than the 'to get on with the story' layer that Claes and Nys managed to grasp. Their translation lacks everything which makes *Ulysses* into the richest and funniest book on earth (except maybe bits of *Finnegans Wake*).<sup>25</sup>

In this article, Henkes and Bindervoet compare several textual examples from *Ulysses* across three Dutch translations. In their assessments, they consistently conclude that the earlier translations lacked sufficient attention to the materiality, musicality, rhythmicity, and playfulness of Joyce's poetic language. Vandenberg, the first translator to publish a complete Dutch *Ulysses*, receives the charge of not knowing "too well what he is saying," having enthusiastically but unconfidently produced "a wobbly result" that succeeded in bringing *Ulysses* to the Dutch literary market without fully understanding it.<sup>26</sup> Henkes and Bindervoet read the Claes/Nys translation, "in contradistinction," as a text exuding self-assurance through its use of a tidy, grammatically correct, and clarificational form of its domestic register, wherein "textual problems disappear because they are not seen" and "everything is made understandable, even more so than in English." As an example, Henkes and Bindervoet offer "plump" Buck Mulligan and "fearful" Kinch from the opening page of "Telemachus," which Claes/Nys translate as *dik* and *bang*: words "so bleak as to be almost parasitical. If Joyce wanted to write 'fat' and 'scared', he probably would have found the right words." Furthermore:

They have no ear for music; 'Eumaeus' they translated in grammatical, proper, clean, only slightly faulty Dutch, not much different from the rest of the book and their preferred style of translating, and a far cry from the *Catalogus Errorum* in which every sentence is at fault; there is no attempt in

<sup>25</sup> Henkes and Bindervoet, "Why We Needed a Third Dutch Translation of *Ulysses*," 75.

<sup>26</sup> "The sticker that was handed out in 1969 to every buyer of the Dutch *Ulysses*, saying *Ik heb Ulysses helemaal gelezen*, 'I read *Ulysses* from beginning to end', conveyed the enthusiasm at the time, but the wobbly result would have been better excerpted with a bonus sticker *Maar ik snapte er geen hol van*, 'But I didn't quite get it.'" Henkes and Bindervoet, "Why We Needed a Third Dutch Translation of *Ulysses*," 75.



the 'Oxen of the Sun' chapter to follow whatever development of prose literature. On every page the reader will ask himself, occasion after occasion: why on earth did or would Joyce write such a journalist sentence down, with only the bare statement. And why on earth would I want to read this?<sup>27</sup>

A particularly interesting example discussed in this article is Joyce's "Bald deaf Pat brought quite flat pad ink. Pat set with ink pen quite flat pad. Pat took plate dish knife fork. Pat went" (*U* 11.847)<sup>28</sup> and "Bald Pat at a sign drew nigh. A pen and ink. He went. A pad. He went. A pad to blot. He heard, deaf Pat" (11.822), wherein "Monosyllabism seems to be the leading stylistic feature."<sup>29</sup> Henkes and Bindervoet show that Joyce's technique here has posed some peculiar translatorial challenges due to the fact that Dutch grammar demands a "lengthening of the adjective" in relation to its noun, which should technically make it impossible for the Dutch translator to render a streak of monosyllabic words without breaking the grammatical rules of the target language. They observe that neither Vandenberg nor Claes/Nys manage to see the monosyllabism all the way through as they choose to maintain the grammatical soundness of their Dutch usages. Henkes and Bindervoet, however, critique their predecessors for this and argue that, in order for the translation to maintain its integrity in relation to the original text, the domestic rules have to be broken: "you have to do it wrong to do it right." So,

To do justice to the monosyllabism we [Henkes and Bindervoet] introduced two proverbial expressions for Pat's portrait: the bald nit (*de kale neet*), for someone who is very bald (or poor), and the deaf pot (*potdoof*), for someone who is as deaf as a post: *Neet pot Pat bracht zeer plat blok inkt. Pat deed bij inkt pen zeer plat blok. Pat nam bord schaal mes vork. Pat ging. And: Op een wenk schoot neet Pat toe. Een pen en inkt. Hij ging. Een blok. Hij ging. Een blok met vloei. Hij had pot Pats oor.*<sup>30</sup>

Henkes and Bindervoet passionately defend the irrevocable significance of the poetic materiality of Joyce's language in a way that would eventually carry over into their translation of the *Wake*. They consistently emphasise the value of the bodily fabric of the text, its musicality and rhythmicity, while maintaining a flexible awareness of its multifarious referentiality without constraining their translation too tightly within the bounds of Joyce's semantics. They do not at any point diminish the significance of semantic value, but owing to how fundamental they find Joyce's multilingualism to

<sup>27</sup> Henkes and Bindervoet, "Why We Needed a Third Dutch Translation of *Ulysses*," 75.

<sup>28</sup> James Joyce, *Ulysses: The Corrected Text*, ed. Hans Walter Gabler (New York: Vintage, 1986).

<sup>29</sup> Henkes and Bindervoet, "Why We Needed a Third Dutch Translation of *Ulysses*," 78.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

be, their translations' loyalty to the original texts at times yield on the semantic level in order to materialise as closely to the materiality of the original text as possible.

For example, Henkes and Bindervoet report that, while they maintained the original's referentiality by retaining nearly all of the allusions listed in McHugh's *Annotations* in their Dutch *Finnegans Wake*, they also occasionally applied what they have termed their "geographical method," through which they domesticated *Wakean* Irish names and places into forms of "Dutch equivalents." The rationale behind this method was to make the text accessible to Dutch-speaking readers in ways that they imagined approximated how Irish English readers would experience Joyce's text. If they were stylistically able to incorporate references to "things that everybody knows, nursery rhymes for instance, or should know, like Michiel de Ruyter or Jan Vermeer, things that really don't need to be annotated," they would choose them instead of applying the geographical method. Behind either strategy was the goal to avoid the need for a Dutch version of the *Annotations* because "in that case we might as well stop translating and start writing our own *Finnegans Wake*."<sup>31</sup> Thus they invented a unique method of domesticating the multilingualism and polyreferentiality of the *Wake* without assimilating it into an oppressive monolingual regime.

Henkes and Bindervoet have criticised the translatorial approaches of practitioners like Claes/Nys or Vandenberghe because they see the 1969 and 1994 Dutch translations of *Ulysses* as examples of excessive, corrective, and at times reductive and exclusionary control over Joyce's text, to the detriment of the work's linguistic plurality and peculiarity—its inextricable Joyceanness. They argue that, unless the translation is at least as linguistically and formally experimental as the original, it cannot be deemed a translation—just a tedious piece of misinformation, and a reflection of translatorial inadequacy cloaked in brazen confidence (arrogance even) performed via illusory transparency and assimilationist fluency.

Patrick O'Neill observes in his pioneering comparative study of an extensive selection of *Wake* translations, *Impossible Joyce*, that:

A primary focus of interest for students of Joyce in translation has been that Joyce, especially in the Italian version, but also to some degree in the French, emerged as being much less interested in producing a translation 'faithful' to

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<sup>31</sup> Bindervoet and Henkes, "FW in Dutch, Dutch in FW," 8.

the original than in providing, as one scholar phrases it, 'a similarity of reading experience even at the expense of semantic equivalence.'<sup>32</sup>

The previous chapter demonstrated this point in action through some examples of how the Joyce/Nino Frank Italianification of "Anna Livia Plurabelle" handled the transfer of Swahili stylisations. Certainly translators like Beckett, Perón, Soupault, Goll, Monnier, Jolas, etc., who had access to "the Maestro's" commentary and guidance, based their methodological approaches on the author's expressed artistic intents and desires. Maria Jolas recounts the collaborative, reflective nature of the endeavour in *A James Joyce Yearbook* (Paris: Transition Workshop, 1949):

Léon read aloud the English text and I followed the revised French version. Occasionally Léon would pause over a particular phrase, I would read out the translation, and a discussion would follow. With Mr. Joyce's approval, we rejected everything that seemed to us to be contrary to the rhythm, the meaning, or the word-metamorphosis, after which we tried to suggest a translation. Mr. Joyce would point out the difficulties and we would each look for equivalents until we found a better balanced phrase or a stronger word.<sup>33</sup>

However, translators picking up the task after Joyce's lifetime get to work with the benefit and bane of creative and ethical freedom. As one critic has put it, "Translators seem to have two options while struggling with *Finnegans Wake*: either they try to approach the text as far as possible, or they go beyond Joyce."<sup>34</sup> Translators like Dieter H. Stündel or Philippe Lavergne, who have both conquered the titanic feat of completing full translations of the *Wake* in German and French respectively,<sup>35</sup> have been criticised by scholars and fellow practitioners for their unbridled singular approaches to Joyce's text. Friedhelm Rathjen, another German *Wake* translator, has accused Stündel for "completely misunderstand[ing] the *Wake* in that "he follows his spiritus rector Schmidt by commenting on the text, adding punctuation in order to clarify the syntax and, finally, willfully going beyond the text

<sup>32</sup> Patrick O'Neill, *Polyglot Joyce: Fictions of Translation* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 195.

<sup>33</sup> Qtd. in Quigley, "Justice for the 'Illstarred Punster,'" 484n10.

<sup>34</sup> Jörg W. Rademacher, "Two Approaches to *Finnegans Wake* in German: (Mis)appropriation or Translation?," *James Joyce Quarterly* 30.3 (Spring 1993): 484.

<sup>35</sup> James Joyce, *Finnegans Wehg: Kainnääh ÜbelSätZung Des Wehrkess Fun Schämes Scheuss*, trans. Dieter H. Stündel (Darmstadt: Häusser, 1993); James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, trans. Philippe Lavergne, *Du monde entier* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984).

by introducing feats of his own imagination.”<sup>36</sup> Meanwhile, Lavergne, though graciously recognised by the likes of Derrida for his “nonetheless commendable translation,”<sup>37</sup> has taken some questionable liberties with the source text, such as excluding “the various notes found in the ‘Nightletter’ chapter”<sup>38</sup> (Lavergne maintains some though not all of them, and they are listed as a-b-c-d, rather than 1-2-3-4). Tim Conley especially challenges the translator on his “prefatory note to that chapter, in which he seeks to explain its unusual page layout.” The critic points out the irony of the translatorial choice to arbitrate the form of this chapter through an interruptive editorial note, considering that this part of the text is heavily and multilingually annotated for creative as well as comic and satirical effect:

That this note is itself announced with the kind of Latin shorthand that the *Wake* tends to parody (‘N.B.’) and placed above rather than below the translated text may tempt readers to suppose at first glance that it is some device of Joyce’s, perhaps part of the generally strange spatial distribution of words in this chapter....The structural understanding conveyed here is not suggestive but assertive, definite: the who, what, and where of the entire chapter seem incontrovertibly laid out for the reader. Yet the comfort of these stage directions is short-lived, for the reader may well discern their ambiguities and ambivalences. For example, one might wonder *who* is doing this ‘arbitrating’ at the foot of the page.<sup>39</sup>

A most unforgivable translatorial crime here is the curtailing and indeed obscuring of the voice of Issy, which illuminates the footnotes Lavergne chose to truncate. Conley actually suggests that “Lavergne is often deaf to Issy’s voice....and she has a significantly muted presence in his translation,” which bears critically and ethically questioning, since it apparently “does not seem to be because he is unaware of her: for example, Lavergne’s translation of the phrase ‘I was so snug off in my aphilster’s creedle’ (276F5) pointedly marks the speaker as female: ‘J’étais si envelopée de ma croyance aux apôtres’ (430Fa).”<sup>40</sup>

Dai Congrong, the scholar currently commissioned to complete a Chinese translation of the *Wake*, has reflected in interviews that at times her translation serves

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<sup>36</sup> Cited in Rademacher, “Two Approaches to *Finnegans Wake* in German: (Mis)appropriation or Translation?,” 484.

<sup>37</sup> Jacques Derrida, “Two Words for Joyce,” in *Post-Structuralist Joyce: Essays from the French*, ed. Derek Attridge and Daniel Ferrer, trans. Geoff Bennington (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 159n10.

<sup>38</sup> Tim Conley, “‘Avec Hésitance’: Lavergne’s Footnotes and Translations of *Finnegans Wake*,” *Scientia Traductionis*, no. 12 (2012): 23, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5007/1980-4237.2012n12p20>.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Conley, “Avec Hésitance,” 24n5.

to elucidate the original's multilingual peculiarities instead of risking misrepresenting the quality and coherence of her own text: “‘The things I lost are mostly the sentences, because Joyce's sentences are so different from common sentences,’ she says, adding that she often broke them up into shorter, simpler phrases—otherwise, the average reader ‘would think that I just mistranslated Joyce. So my translation is more clear than the original book.’”<sup>41</sup> Of course, in the same interview, she also talks about taking liberties with Chinese grammar in some instances, because the *Wake*'s formal flexibility and irreverence invites translators to push at those boundaries.

Suffice to say that every *Wake* translator has approached the questions of methodology differently, although, as a general rule for the Russian translations that I will explore in some detail here, English has been treated as the centralising “major” language of the original, and any languages determined to be other-than-English have been treated as part of a broadly conceptualised multilingual strategy of style. This has enabled Volokhonsky, for example, to Russify his *Wéik Finneganov* by channelling his perception of the original's English into the translation's Russian and to semantically and poetically do away with most of the other languages and registers perceptible in Joyce's text (or occasionally to freely depart from Joyce's text altogether), as I will demonstrate in the next section. Henkes and Bindervoet have said in interviews that “the *Wake* is essentially an English book. (We should never forget),”<sup>42</sup> but nonetheless through and within their “Dutchification”<sup>43</sup> they have developed a complex system of translation, organised into twenty-nine methods, that prioritizes *Wakean* multilingualism as an integral and irreducible aspect of the text. In treating the *Wake* as “basically an English book” that occasionally features “Anglified” Dutch, Henkes and Bindervoet have reworked Joyce's *Wakese* spin on their translation's target language into “a kind of Dutchified English.” “As for other languages than Dutch or English,” they continue, “we

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<sup>41</sup> Kaiman, “*Finnegans Wake* Becomes a Hit Book in China.”

<sup>42</sup> Henkes and Bindervoet, “FW in Dutch, Dutch in FW,” 6. That said, I picked up the question of the *Wake*'s “central” language with Robbert-Jan Henkes at the James Joyce Italian Foundation conference in Rome on February 2-3, 2015, and this time, nearly eleven years after the above-quoted interview, he shared that his opinion had shifted since. Calling the *Wake* “basically an English book” is a theoretical oversimplification that he would no longer endorse, although it might also have been a necessary stepping stone in the process of actualising the translation: while a theoretically-minded reader must perpetually problematise such encompassing and universalising premises, the translator's task demands a commitment to a limited number of linguistic and methodological choices. Every word choice and translatorial premise gets picked out of a proliferating number of possibilities that might be graspable in theory but are impossible to implement wholly and simultaneously in practice.

<sup>43</sup> James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, trans. Erik Bindervoet and Robbert-Jan Henkes (Amsterdam: Athenaeum, Polak & Van Gennep, 2002).

preserved them as much as possible. Only if there was English around, we wetted our pencils and went for it.”<sup>44</sup>

In a 2004 interview for the Polish journal *Literatura na świecie*, Henkes and Bindervoet talk about the earliest stages of their process. They started by consulting various sources of elucidation (e.g. McHugh’s *Annotations, The Wake Newsletter*, and Campbell and Robinson’s *Skeleton Key*), plot summaries and analyses (e.g. James Atherton’s *The Books at the Wake* or Anthony Burgess’s *Shorter Finnegans Wake*), as well as various biographical and historical sources about Joyce, such as the Ellmann biography, the *Letters*, and “the many memoirs that were written, especially about his [Joyce’s] time on Europe’s mainland (for instance *A Portrait of the Artist in Exile*, edited by Willard Potts).”<sup>45</sup> After these initial stages of research, the Dutch translators dug deeper into the “*Wake-safe*” via David Hayman’s *First-Draft Version of “Finnegans Wake”* and ultimately the facsimiles held in the *James Joyce Archive*, which gave them a key to “understanding” the text, starting from “the first germ of thought that [Joyce] wanted to express” as their stepping stone and subsequently building up their translation narrative layer by narrative layer.

Apart from that, many difficulties we managed to resolve when we discovered that someone in the course of the fifteen to twenty transcriptions had made a mistake: we discovered 2208 very probable typo’s that Joyce never saw or overlooked or didn’t care about, but for us were vital in understanding the words and sentences in question. From that point onwards, genetic criticism became our favourite criticism, and we fell completely for the ‘intentional fallacy’: what did Joyce mean, what did he want to say or convey.<sup>46</sup>

They developed a complex translatorial strategy based on gradual semantic, phonological, and poetic-material layering via a total number of twenty-nine methods.<sup>47</sup> During this process, their archival research yielded a substantial list of transmissional departures and textual variations that were incorporated into the Dutchified *Wake*—Henkes and Bindervoet working “as if we were already translating a kind of ‘corrected text,’” although they left the “English version,” which was laid out alongside their translation, untouched at this point.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Bazarnik, Bindervoet, and Henkes, “Hier Komt Iedereen,” 6.

<sup>45</sup> Bazarnik, Bindervoet, and Henkes, “Hier Komt Iedereen,” 2.

<sup>46</sup> Bazarnik, Bindervoet, and Henkes, “Hier Komt Iedereen,” 3.

<sup>47</sup> Erik Bindervoet and Robbert-Jan Henkes, “Twentynine Methods to Translate *Finnegans Wake*, Developed in the Course of Seven Years” (Book section manuscript, Amsterdam, 2005).

<sup>48</sup> Bazarnik, Bindervoet, and Henkes, “Hier Komt Iedereen,” 3–4.

The Dutch translators' "narrative layering" strategy counteracts an alternative option of elucidatory narrative centralisation, or containment, which has been undertaken by other *Wake* translators. The Russian translations I discuss below offer a useful representation of this bipolar spectrum of translatorial approaches, with Konstantin Belyaev adhering more closely to Henkes and Bindervoet's approach and Henri Volokhonsky inclining towards linear containment and elucidation.

### III. The Russian translations in critical context

Leo Knuth's 1972 report shows one example of numerous translation roundtables and workshops, regularly mobilized at Joyce conferences worldwide, wherein the importance of translatorial collaboration has been emphasized and reinforced in practice as well as theory. Although the individual translation projects differ in the specific languages, readerships, and cultures that they target and from which they emerge, carving out a space wherein Joyce translators, as well as scholars and committed readers, can exchange knowledge and interrogate the specific demands, limitations, and opportunities afforded by their target languages has been instrumental in the development of effective and innovative methods of translation applicable to any translation project, be that in Joyce studies or, potentially, beyond. To date, such initiatives to cultivate an international culture of translatorial collaboration in the Joyce community have enjoyed the input of Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Brazilian Portuguese, Catalan, German, Swiss German, Polish, Romanian, Hungarian, and Dutch translators, among many others. Occasionally these events have yielded publications that are continuously proving invaluable to scholars and practitioners of Joyce translation. Notable examples include two Joyce-themed issues of the Brazilian translation studies journal *Scientia Traductionis*<sup>49</sup> and the tenth issue of the Joyce Studies in Italy series, entitled *Joyce and/in Translation*,<sup>50</sup> as well as volumes like *Transcultural Joyce*.<sup>51</sup> These collaborative

<sup>49</sup> Mauri Furlan, ed., "James Joyce & Tradução," *Scientia Traductionis*, no. 8 (2010), <https://periodicos.ufsc.br/index.php/scientia/issue/view/1590>; Mauri Furlan, ed., "James Joyce & Tradução II," *Scientia Traductionis*, no. 12 (2012), <https://periodicos.ufsc.br/index.php/scientia/issue/view/1951>.

<sup>50</sup> Rosa Maria Bosinelli Bollettieri and Ira Torresi, eds., *Joyce And/in Translation*, Joyce Studies in Italy 10 (Roma: Bulzoni, 2007).

<sup>51</sup> Karen R. Lawrence, ed., *Transcultural Joyce* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

efforts have created a precedent, and in some ways a methodological model,<sup>52</sup> for Patrick O’Neill’s timely and important contribution, *Impossible Joyce*, which examines excerpts from twenty-eight *Wake* translations. The author states from the outset that his analysis is intended as a brief, “comparative consideration,” rather than in-depth textual analysis of the individual excerpts, and, similar to the above-mentioned collective volumes, he invites his readers to participate in the analytical process and to continuously develop the points that his study initiates. By O’Neill’s own admission, “the comparative readings here...are limited entirely to versions [of *Wake* translations] in western European languages.” And, as the case in point for my intervention, he goes on to qualify: “Where versions are provided in eastern European languages (Russian, Polish, Czech, Romanian, Hungarian, Finnish), they are intended largely—though admitting of occasional exploratory forays—for the interest of readers more competent than the present writer to deal with them with an appropriate level of linguistic and cultural detail.”<sup>53</sup>

Despite its natural limitations in geographical and linguistic scope, *Impossible Joyce* is a pioneering contribution to the study of Joyce translations, since the overwhelming majority of existing scholarship in the field chiefly deals with *Ulysses*, followed by *Portrait*, *Dubliners*, and *Chamber Music*, while only a relatively modest number of ideally enthused translators and translation scholars have engaged with *Finnegans Wake* in depth. Russian literary artists, translators, and translation scholars in particular have shown an overbearing interest in *Ulysses*, *Dubliners*, and *Portrait*. An impressive and versatile body of translation work in Russian has also been produced on *Chamber Music*, *Pomes Penyeach*, select critical writings by Joyce, and even *Giacomo Joyce*.<sup>54</sup> Yet only four attempts at Russifying the *Wake* have been published to date, three of them by established poets: the earliest recorded effort was Andrey Sergeev’s translation of “The Ballad of Persshe O’Reilly” (*FW* 44.22-47.29)<sup>55</sup>; this was followed by Henri Volokhonsky’s *Wéik*

<sup>52</sup> Another notable inspiration for O’Neill, particularly in terms of comparative methodology, appears to have been Fritz Senn’s *Joyce’s Dislocutions*, ed. Jean Paul Riquelme (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984). Senn’s influence was likely to also have set a precedent for O’Neill’s earlier study of Joyce translations, which was not limited to *Finnegans Wake*: Patrick O’Neill, *Polyglot Joyce: Fictions of Translation* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2005).

<sup>53</sup> O’Neill, *Impossible Joyce*, 33.

<sup>54</sup> For an extensive (although inexhaustive) list of Russophone critical engagements with, and translations of, Joyce’s works, see Ekaterina ĪU. Genieva, ĪU. A. Roznatovskaia, and ĪU. G. Fridshtein, eds., “Dzheims Dzhois v russkikh perevodakh i kritike,” in “*Russkaia odisseia*” *Dzheimsa Dzhoisa* (Moskva: Rudomino, 2005), 139–279.

<sup>55</sup> Originally published in *Zapadnoevropeiskaia Poeziia XX Veka* (Moskva: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1977) and currently available online via the online journal *Vek perevoda*: Andrey Sergeev,



*Finneganov*,<sup>56</sup> which inexhaustively traverses across *FW* 3.1-171.28<sup>57</sup>; Konstantin Belyaev's concurrently published translation of an excerpt from "Anna Livia Plurabelle" (*FW* 209.18-212.19)<sup>58</sup>; and Dmitry Smirnov's "Tri kvarka dlia mastera Marka," based on "—Three quarks for Muster Mark...make his money and mark!" (*FW* 383.1-14).<sup>59</sup> Sergeev's and Smirnov's contributions have been classed as poems in Russian literary culture, as testified by the types of publications in which they originally appeared (an anthology of West European twentieth-century poetry and a bilingual [Russian and English] volume of Joyce's collected poems respectively), which suggests that, in Russian literature, the *Wake* occupies a genre that places it closer to *Chamber Music* than to *Ulysses*.

Ekaterina Genieva's important volume, "*Russkaia odisseia*" *Dzheimsa Dzhois* (2005) (*The "Russian Odyssey" of James Joyce*), a collection of dramatically truncated excerpts from critical and biographical essays, translations, interviews, and letters by Russophone writers reflecting on Joyce, paints a picture of a Western modernist widely admired for his capacity for realism, artistic innovation, and verbal dexterity, and equally scorned by some for the same: Shklovsky is seen here comparing Joyce and Tolstoy as "ingenious writer[s]" whose art rests simultaneously upon the sustenance and destruction of canonical stylistic, linguistic, mythological, and historical principles.<sup>60</sup> Meanwhile, Nabokov sings *Ulysses*'s praises in a fragment from an impassioned 1953 lecture on "Masters of European Prose," wherein he reflects on the Irish writer's extraordinary art of realism and calls it in a later interview "that most transparent of novels."<sup>61</sup> In another piece, Nabokov

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"Ballada O Khukho O'V'orttkke (Zloslovie Khosti Po Povodu Grekhopadeniia Khamfri Irvikera)," Vek Perevoda, accessed June 6, 2016, <http://www.vekperevoda.com/1930/sergeev.htm>.

<sup>56</sup> The most recent version of this text is now available as part of Volokhonsky's collected works: Henri Volokhonsky, "Wéik Finneganov: opyty otryvochnogo perelozheniia rossijskoiu azbukoï," in *Sobranie proizvedenii: perevody i komentarii*, ed. Illy Kukuia, vol. 3, 3 vols. (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2012), 81–136. However, it was written between 1995 and 2000, in which time it was published serially and eventually in book form. The translation has a significant writing and publication history, which I discuss in further detail below.

<sup>57</sup> O'Neill erroneously cites the scope of *Wéik Finneganov* as *FW* 3-168, which would be the end of Book I, Chapter 6, but Volokhonsky also got started on the "Shem the Penman" chapter (I.7) and included it in his translation, albeit unfinished. *Impossible Joyce*, 20.

<sup>58</sup> Konstantin Belyaev, "Pominki po Finneganu: Apologiia perevoda," *Soiuz Pisatelei*, 2000, <http://sp-issues.narod.ru/2/index.htm>.

<sup>59</sup> James Joyce, *Stikhotvoreniia*, ed. G. Kruzhkov (Moskva: Raduga, 2003). It is worth noting that three of these four translators were working on the *Wake* at the same time: although Smirnov's "Tri kvarka" only appeared in print in 2003, his translation was done in 1999, concurrently with Belyaev's "Anna Livia Plurabelle" and at a time when Volokhonsky had just published his *Wake* transposition in serial form in the Russian literary journal *Mitin*.

<sup>60</sup> Ekaterina I. Genieva, I. A. Roznatovskaia, and I. G. Fridshtein, eds., "*Russkaia odisseia*" *Dzheimsa Dzhois* (Moskva: Rudomino, 2005), 120.

<sup>61</sup> Genieva et al, *Russkaia odisseia*, 108.

expresses his unyielding scorn for *Finnegans Wake*, which he considers a “formless, grey mass of subsumed folklore, not a book but coldish pudding, an incessant snore in the next room, most aggravating to the insomniac I am.”<sup>62</sup>

The aggressive editorial intervention<sup>63</sup> into an otherwise rich anthology renders *Ruskaia odisseia* a sketchy portrait of a Western modernist intended for a popular Russian-speaking readership. It offers little in the way of textual analysis. The most academically-minded part of this volume is its bibliography and index (both so extensive that they constitute nearly half of the book), wherein the editors have compiled an abundant bibliography of Russian-language criticism and translation of Joyce’s works, including an alphabetized list of known Russophone Joyce critics and translators. Yet even this valuable catalogue seems to shortchange *Finnegans Wake*, since Konstantin Belyaev’s important rendition of I.8 is missing from it, and none of the above-listed Russian transpositions of the *Wake* are discussed in the volume.

The apparent scarcity of scholarly and translatorial engagements with the *Wake* in Russophone literature testifies to the importance of rediscovering, critically rethinking, and re-contextualizing these texts, which are rapidly becoming more difficult to obtain as, with the exception of Volokhonsky’s *Veik Finneganov* and his popular interviews available online, they have all gone out of print.<sup>64</sup> Thus Slavonic studies and translations of Joyce’s final work prove to be a relatively small component of an already niche field, and interventions with the *Wake* through the minute number of Slavic languages that use the Cyrillic alphabet are even fewer. Although Volokhonsky and Belyaev were aware of each other’s (and Sergeev’s) work on the *Wake*, they produced their translations independently of one another,

<sup>62</sup> Genieva et al, *Ruskaia odisseia* ” 109.

<sup>63</sup> *Ruskaia odisseia* shows substantial editorial cuts made to every essay in the collection, including the accounts by filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein, who personally knew and admired Joyce, and has written extensively on the narrative design of *Ulysses* and the *Wake*, which he deemed to be groundbreaking examples of literary works exercising cinematographic narrative techniques. Eisenstein’s valuable theoretical discussions of the *Wake*’s portmanteau and its relationship to the filmmaker’s use of montage have been completely omitted from *Ruskaia odisseia*, wherein the editors have allowed only the occasional passing mention of the *Wake* and instead prioritize Eisenstein’s thoughts on *Ulysses* and *Portrait*, as well as his biographical recollections of Joyce. For an English translation of Eisenstein’s theorization of the *Wake*’s portmanteau, see Sergei M. Eisenstein, “Word and Image,” in *The Film Sense*, ed. and trans. Jay Leyda (Orlando, FL: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1975), 1–65.

<sup>64</sup> With the exception of Belyaev’s *ALP*, the *Wake* Russifications discussed here can currently be found on various Russian-language websites, such as <http://www.james-joyce.ru>. However, these online sources are not authorized or properly edited, and therefore they are full of typographical errors and inconsistencies in comparison with the original print versions of the texts. Incidentally, Genieva’s *Ruskaia odisseia* is also available on <http://www.james-joyce.ru>, but the online source similarly suffers from numerous errors.

and none of these four Russian translators are known to have been involved with the international Joyce community. Their work is therefore largely unknown in Western literary scholarship, and no detailed comparative study of their translations exists in either English or Russian.<sup>65</sup>

Even *Impossible Joyce*, which is exclusively dedicated to the *Wake*, leaves the Russian translations at the periphery of Anglophone Joyce scholarship. O'Neill references Volokhonsky's *Wéik Finneganov* and Belyaev's "Anna Livia Plurabelle" in his useful chronology of *Wake* translations published up until 2012 (14-22), but, from these, he involves only Volokhonsky in his comparative analysis and discusses him only briefly. Moreover, O'Neill's limited grasp of Russian at times triggers erroneous statements, or "misobservations," on the translation's language and thus remains a largely unreliable account of these modest but significant engagements with the *Wake*.

My comparative analysis of Volokhonsky's and Belyaev's *Wake* "Russifications" in this chapter will offer some access to an important but largely obscure cultural and linguistic component of Joyce studies for the benefit of Anglophone scholars and translators interested in Joyce's most famously multilingual, and infamously challenging, work. Through a close textual analysis of representative examples, I critically consider how each translation can be read, theorised, engaged with, and contextualised within the scope of Anglophone Joyce studies. I will show how these texts radically recodify the *Wake* into a globally minor graphological system—the Cyrillic alphabet—and thereby dislocate the readerly experience both linguistically and culturally from Western translatorial spaces. For the purposes of this chapter, I will limit my textual analysis to Volokhonsky's and Belyaev's *Wake* translations, but I will also ensconce my readings of the linguistic, stylistic, and methodological particularities of these works within some broad

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<sup>65</sup> Henri Volokhonsky's *Wéik Finneganov* has occasionally been mentioned in Russophone interviews and reviews, but all popular sources of this kind refer to the work only superficially. The most detailed scholarly analysis of *Wéik Finneganov* available appears in a doctoral dissertation by Anton Mosyagin, although Mosyagin's work has not been published to date and, while most of the dissertation is accessible via his (no longer updated) personal website, the particular chapter dealing with Volokhonsky is no longer accessible. Finally, a recent postgraduate paper by Natalia Lameko at Belarusian State University makes a brief comparative mention of Volokhonsky and Belyaev's translatorial engagements with Joyce, although this intervention does not offer any detailed analysis of the translations either. Anton Mosyagin, "Mezh"iazykovaia omonimiia kak problema transformatsii avtorskoï kartiny mira pri perevode" (Interlingual Homonymy as a Problem in the Translational Transformation of the Authorial Worldview) (Doctoral Thesis, University of A. M. Gorky, 1999), [http://mosyagin.narod.ru/dip/d\\_i.htm](http://mosyagin.narod.ru/dip/d_i.htm); Natalia Lameko, "Metamorfoza kak element mifopoétiki Dzheimsa Dzhoisa" (Metamorphosis as an Element of James Joyce's Mythopoetics) (Belarusian State University, 2014), <http://elib.bsu.by/handle/123456789/103445>.

comparative references to other prominent translations of Joyce's text in order to place them in conversation with a Western critical context. My comparative analysis will consider some ways in which the distinct graphological, grammatical, syntactical, phonotactical, and ultimately cultural particularities of the Russian language and Russian literary culture have influenced Belyaev and Volokhonsky's translatorial choices and strategies.

#### IV. Henri Volokhonsky's *Wéik Finneganov* (1995-2000)

##### *iv.1. Background, publishing history, and textual presentation*

Henri Volokhonsky, brother of Larissa Volokhonsky of the famous Pevear-Volokhonsky (P/V) translatorial duo,<sup>66</sup> was born in 1936 in Leningrad (present-day St. Petersburg).<sup>67</sup> Today he is regarded as a major figure in Russian literature, known for his poetry, songs, and translations of chiefly classical and religious texts. His "attempt at a partial transposition" of *Finnegans Wake* is the most substantial translation of this text currently available in Russian. Before it was finally published in book form by Kolonna Publications in the year 2000,<sup>68</sup> the work appeared serially in the Russian literary journal *Mitin* (similar to the way *Work in Progress* once appeared in *transition*), which ran idiosyncratically titled excerpts between 1995 and 1999, all currently available via the online archive *Vavilon*, the official website of a literary youth group of the same name, which partly serves as a "virtual anthology of contemporary Russian literature (with an emphasis on poetry)."<sup>69</sup> *Vavilon*'s presentation more closely resembles the way in which Volokhonsky's text presumably appeared in serial form in *Mitin* in the late 1990s, as it breaks down the work into shorter, titled excerpts, occasionally (though not always) identified by the page ranges of their equivalents in Joyce's text and always by the full citation details of the respective *Mitin* issue where they were originally published. *Vavilon*'s presentation thus helps the reader get a sense of the chronology of Volokhonsky's process and adds a further quirk of the transposition by identifying each section with

<sup>66</sup> David Remnick, "The Translation Wars," *The New Yorker*, November 7, 2005, <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2005/11/07/the-translation-wars>.

<sup>67</sup> Henri Volokhonsky, *Sobranie proizvedenii: perevody i komentarii*, ed. Illy Kukuia, vol. 3, 3 vols. (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2012).

<sup>68</sup> Henri Volokhonsky and James Joyce, *Wéik Finneganov: opyty otrivochnogo perelozheniia rossiiskoïu azbukoï* (Tver: Kolonna Publications, 2000).

<sup>69</sup> "Vavilon: Chto éto takoe?," *Vavilon*, 1997, <http://www.vavilon.ru/xplain.html>.

a title, which is purely of Volokhonsky's (or perhaps the editors') invention and may serve as a tool of interpretation in future engagements with *Wéik Finneganov*.<sup>70</sup>

Volokhonsky's text is also available through an alternative online source on *Mitin*'s official website. Here the translation presents on a single, undated webpage as a complete rendition of *Wéik Finneganov* in plain text, wherein the end of each individual (untitled and undesignated) excerpt is marked with a triple asterisk. Joyce's original text is not shown for comparison and the respective pages from the Anglophone *Wake* are not listed here. However, this version does include a preface by Volokhonsky—a rare instance of the translator's own, albeit brief, commentary on his efforts with the *Wake*—which is not featured in *Vavilon*'s archive.<sup>71</sup>

The most prominent problem with *Mitin*'s web version are its numerous, apparently inadvertent, typographical errors: there are two apparent errors already in the first two lines, with “береговой”/“beregovoï” (the adjectival form of “shore”) appearing as the less easily explicable “берой”/“beroi” (not an existing word in Russian, although a *Wake* reader could read it as “герой”/“geroi” [hero] with a *b*; yet even on the assumption that a multilingual technique could be at play here, Volokhonsky's reader would still be hard-pressed to make sense of something akin to “from bero swerve” in this context), and “возратных”/“vozzratnyh” erroneously standing in for “возвратных”/“vozzvratnyh.” The *Mitin* web version in fact appears to be a replica of the 2000 Kolonna Publications edition, as both versions seemingly share these errors.

Further apparently inadvertent inconsistencies across different publication media show up in the slight shifts in the title of Volokhonsky's work: the earliest excerpts printed in *Mitin* were cued by the title “Из Финнеганова Уэйка”/“Iz Finneganova Wéika” (From *Finneganov Wéik*), while the Kolonna edition featured as *Wéik Finneganov*. To add to the confusion, Patrick O'Neill comments on “the interlingual title of Henri Volokhonsky's Russian *Finneganov Wake*,” which he

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<sup>70</sup> For example, the transposition based on the Mamafesta at *FW* 104.1-107.7 is named simply “Anna”; the section based on “Tap and pat and tapatagain...down Keysars Lane. (Trite!)” (*FW* 58.23-61.27) is identified as “Pokazaniia” (“The Testimonies,” or “Testimony”); the Prankquean becomes “Oslushnitsa” (“Prankster” or “Mischief,” conjugated as a feminine noun and implying a touch of infantilism as the word “oslushnitsa” is usually used to refer to a naughty child). Somewhat less easily explained is the choice to call the excerpt from “So there you are now there they were, when all was over again...by the waters of babalong” (*FW* 94.23-103.11) “Oni i ona”: “They and She.” And the section at *FW* 79.14-80.19, “Ladies did not disdain those pagan ironed times...So pass the pick for child sake! O men!” comes to be affectionately known as “Katiia,” that is the Russian name for “Kate.”

<sup>71</sup> “Arkhiv: Mitin zhurnal v 1985-2001 godakh,” *Izdatel'stvo Kolonna publications, Mitin zhurnal*, 2005, <http://kolonna.mitin.com/archive.php>.

attempts to argue bears symbolic significance in that it is “unambiguously a plural ‘Finnegans’ wake.”<sup>72</sup> O’Neill’s bibliography cites the Kolonna edition as his source, but according to all of the records that I’ve been able to access for this title, including the Russian State Library catalogue, Volokhonsky’s book-form transposition is called *Wéïk Finneganov*; and either version of the title is quite unambiguously singular, rather than plural as O’Neill inexplicably suggests.<sup>73</sup> Most recently, Volokhonsky’s *Wéïk Finneganov* was included in his *Collected Works* (*Sobranie proizvedenii*), published in three volumes in 2012. According to the publishing house editor, Dmitry Volchek, the 2012 rendition constitutes the “final, amended version of the translation.”<sup>74</sup> Although it appears that at least some of the typographical errors from the Kolonna edition have also carried over into the 2012 reprinting, I have used the latest version of the text for my analysis.

The subtle changes that occur with every shift of medium and reading space point to the dynamic life of the text, which engages a variety of readers in creative conversation within a variety of spaces and settings, thus remaining slippery to the grasp of any single theoretical approach or interpretation. This factor in literary engagement becomes even more elaborately complicated by the multilingualism of the text, because the multilingual stylisations of Joyce’s *Wake* challenge the efficiency, as well as the artistic and discursive value, of the translator’s strategic priorities and methods. The multiple reincarnations of Volokhonsky’s transposition raise questions about the impact of the re- and dislocation of the conceptual form of the text from one linguistic space to another, as well as of its materialisation and re-materialisation on and through different platforms and media. The transition of the text from a piecemeal presentation in a journal series into a contained, bounded, and uninterrupted book form now also presents digitally through websites that offer almost no details about their editors’ or typesetters’ decisions towards the specific presentation formats they have chosen. There are obvious differences in both content and presentation among these various re-framings of Volokhonsky’s text, and they all have the capacity to influence the reader’s experience and interpretation of the transposition. Furthermore, the fact that none of the published versions of

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<sup>72</sup> O’Neill, *Impossible Joyce*, 28.

<sup>73</sup> The plural form of the singular, masculine adjective “Finneganov” would be “Finneganovy.”

<sup>74</sup> Dmitry Volchek, “Re: Vopros o ‘Wéïka Finneganova,’ perelozhenie A. Volokhonskogo,” November 4, 2014.

Volokhonsky's *Wéik Finneganov* offer a comparison with Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*<sup>75</sup> speaks to the translatorial ethics of this transposition: it is not a text strictly in conversation with the *Wake* it emerged from, and it does not explicitly engage with either the literary culture or history of Western modernism beyond drawing initial inspiration from it. Rather, Volokhonsky's transposition invites the reader to consider it in isolation from its "source" and stands in relation to its contemporaneous *Russian* literary culture (as in the case of the serialised *Mitin* version, wherein Volokhonsky's text appears in the context of modern Russian poetry, fiction, and criticism). In 2004, Volokhonsky even collaborated with Leonid Fëdorov, a vocalist for the Russian "avant-jazz" band Auktyon, to create an audio recording of *Wéik Finneganov* with an original musical accompaniment, which allows the transposition to depart further from Joyce's *Wake* and instead place itself in conversation with Russian avant-garde musical-poetic culture. As such, Volokhonsky's transposition comes to function not strictly as a loudspeaker for Joyce's work in Russophone spaces, but rather it speaks to the possibilities of contemporary creative expression in Russian, which I would argue also becomes apparent in some of his translatorial choices. As to the success or failure of this feat, "let the reader be the judge," in Volokhonsky's own words.<sup>76</sup>

Volokhonsky has publicised very little about his translatorial methodology and has remained vague about the motivation behind this significant effort. We know from his preface to the 2000 and 2012 editions that he was using McHugh's *Annotations*, which made a significant number of historical, multilingual, and cultural references from the original text available for him to use in his Russification. And yet Volokhonsky consistently overlooks the narrative, semantic, and phonological simultaneity of Joyce's text: he rarely attempts to either convey the linguistic and cultural multivalency of the *Wakese* or to devise similarly expansive Russophonic alternatives. His translatorial methodology seems primarily inclined to: elucidate through linguistic domestication (that is, to strip away most of the multilingual complexity of Joyce's text in an apparent effort to "clarify" what the translator deems to be the core meaning embedded in the *Wakese*); neutralise the

<sup>75</sup> As several other known translations do, such as the trilingual edition of *Anna Livia Plurabelle* edited by Rosa Maria Bollettieri Bosinelli, Luigi Schenoni's incomplete two-volume Italian translation, or the Dutch *Finnegans Wake* by Robbert-Jan Henkes and Erik Bindervoet, which even matches the original in page count. Joyce, *Anna Livia Plurabelle nella traduzione*; James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake: Libro primo V-VII*, trans. Luigi Schenoni (Milano: Mondadori, 2001); James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake: Libro secondo, III-IV*, trans. Luigi Schenoni (Milano: Mondadori, 2011); Joyce, *Finnegans Wake [Dutch Trans.]*.

<sup>76</sup> Volokhonsky, *Collected Works*, 3:83.

cultural referentiality of the original; establish a narrative linearity by choosing to convert what he perceives as English into Russophone semantic equivalents without accounting for the loss of poetic and semantic value born out of Joyce's multilingual puns and portmanteaux; and occasionally to correctively editorialise, particularly in instances where Joyce's text carries Russophone multilingual stylisations. I will demonstrate how these transpositional moves manifest in a few examples from *Wéik Finneganov*. Then I will go on to show some instances where Volokhonsky has deliberately departed from Joyce's text for poetically productive ends, as well as some examples of him exercising multilingual techniques upon the Russian language not strictly as a mode of translation but rather as a move towards original poetic expression.

#### iv.2. A closer textual analysis of Volokhonsky's *Wéik Finneganov*

Let us take a look at some of Volokhonsky's translatorial solutions to the first few lines of the *Wake*:

riverrun, past Eve and Adam's, from swerve of shore to bend of bay, brings us by a commodius vicus of recirculation back to Howth Castle and Environs.

Sir Tristram, violer d'amores, fir'over the short sea, had passencore rearrived from North Armorica on this side the scraggy isthmus of Europe Minor wielderfight his penisolate war: (*FW* 3.1-6)<sup>77</sup>

бег реки мимо Евы с Адамом, от бер[егов]ой излучины до изгиба залива просторным пространством воз[в]ратных течений приносит нас вспять к замку Хаут и его окрестностям.

Сэр Тристрам с виолой д`аморе из-за ближнего моря прибыл назад пассажиром транспорта Северной Арморики на эту сторону изрезанного перешейка в Европу Малую дабы самолично вести пенисолированную войну на полуострове:<sup>78</sup>

<sup>77</sup> For ease of comparison, the line breaks in this quotation have been laid out to correspond to those in the 2012 version printed in Volokhonsky's *Collected Works/Sobranie proizvedenii*.

<sup>78</sup> Because the *Wake* is multilingual, its language is graphologically and phonologically non-standard and changeable, which further carries over into its translations to varying degrees. Therefore all quotations from Volokhonsky's and Belyaev's *Wake* translations will be quoted in their original Cyrillic form and accompanied by transliterations. In the present quotation, textual variants from *Vavilon* are given in square brackets. Volokhonsky, "Wéik Finneganov: opyty otryvochnogo perelezheniia rossiiskoiu azbukoï," 84; Henri Volokhonsky, "Dzheims Dzhois v perevode Anri Volokhonskogo: Iz Finneganova Wéika," ed. Dmitry Volchek, *Mitin Journal*, no. 53 (1996): 138–46, <http://www.vavilon.ru/metatext/mj53/joyce.html>.



beg reki mimo Evy s Adamom, ot ber[egov]oĩ izluchiny do izziba zaliva prostornym prostranstvom voz[v]ratnyh techeniĩ prinosit nas vspiat' k zamku Haut i ego (pron. 'evo') okrestnostiam.

Sér Tristram s violoĩ d'amore iz-za blizhnego (pron. 'blizhneva') moria pribyl nazad passazhirom transporta Severnoi Armoriki na etu storonu isrezannogo (pron. 'izrezannava') peresheika v Evropu Maluiu daby samolichno vesti pe-nisolirovannuiu voĩnu na poluostrove.<sup>79</sup>

The prevalent translatorial strategy here appears to be elucidation through linguistic domestication: Volokhonsky's text offers a linear narrative level in near-standard Russian, revealing with the opening sentence that "the run of the river past Eve with Adam, from the coastal swerve to the bend of the bay, through the commodious space of the (re)turning tide [or 'stream'] brings us again to Howth [or perhaps 'Haut'] castle and its walls." The transposition subtly departs from what would be a standard modern Russian formulation primarily through its non-normative word order. The delay of the primary action, "brings us again to Howth castle and its walls," slows down the pace of the sentence and renders a kind of heavy, hyperbolic, poetically archaic style reminiscent of classical heroic myths. The translator achieves this effect simply by preserving the word order of Joyce's text, thus forging a method of translation through an interlingual exchange between the original and the transposition—that is, by allowing the Russified *Wake* to inherit the syntactical structure of a standard English sentence.<sup>80</sup> Volokhonsky also enacts a clever transpositional solution to "Eve and Adam's," which I will discuss in some detail shortly. However, an overwhelming majority of the multilingual and cultural nuances of Joyce's text get lost in translation and remain without similarly layered

<sup>79</sup> This transliteration follows the Romanization conventions of the Library of Congress. However, it is crucial to note that the LoC Romanization table draws a strictly visual equivalence between Roman and Cyrillic symbols, and as such it does not account for the phonological variations that might occur in certain symbol combinations in the Russian language. Because the phonological manoeuvres of Joyce's multilingual techniques are so complex and essential to the reader's engagement with the *Wake* and its translations, my transliterations of quotes from Volokhonsky's and Belyaev's texts occasionally depart from the standard Romanization conventions in order to approximate the phonology of the translations as closely as possible. In the present instance, I have wholly adhered the LoC conventions because the translator does not make notable use of Joyce's phonology here. However, readers attempting to sound out the transliteration may wish to note that in Russian the letter "o" is pronounced as a curt "ó" when stressed and as "a" when unstressed. For example, "violoĩ" here is pronounced "viólaĩ" because the stress falls on the second syllable, as it would in the English "viola." Similarly, when the letter "g" is preceded and succeeded by vowels (e.g. in the Russian word "ego," meaning "his"), "g" comes to be pronounced as "v" (i.e. "ego" is sounded out as "evo"). In the three instances where the phonology of Volokhonsky's text is affected by this rule, I have supplied the phonological transliteration in brackets within the quote.

<sup>80</sup> By this I mean to say that the syntactical structure of this sentence in Joyce's text is based on standard English grammar. I am *not* suggesting that the language of the *Wake* is itself an example of standard English.

Russophonic counterparts. The references to Giambattista Vico, Vico Road in Dalkey,<sup>81</sup> or the cyclical motions of time, human history, and the *Wake* itself within Joyce's "commodius vicus of recirculation" all drop out of the Russified rendition. HCE's initials in "Howth Castle and Environs" also become obsolete as Volokhonsky ignores the capitalisations (an unfortunate habit that he maintains throughout his entire text) and instead renders the phrase simply as "Howth castle and its walls." In addition, whereas Joyce's original choice of the word "environs" encompasses the broader landscape holding and surrounding Howth Castle, the Russian transposition ("окрестностям"/"okrestnostiam" or "окрестности"/"okrestnosti") refers more specifically to the castle walls, thereby obscuring the broader geographical and cultural "environs" of Howth Castle. One redeeming quality of Volokhonsky's diction in this instance is the word "крест"/"krest" (cross) hidden in "окрестностям"/"okrestnostiam." He also transposes Joyce's "penisolate" (war) into an almost exact parallel, "пенисолірованнiу" (воiну): although "penisolate" and "пенисолірованнiу" might look quite different to readers unfamiliar with Russian, Volokhonsky actually preserves Joyce's neologism and only translates the inflection (the English *-ate* becomes the Russian *-irovannu*, which is a combination of multiple inflections indicating the feminine, nominative form of the adjective). This produces a neologism in Russian which, similar to the original, turns "penis" into an adjective—i.e. it is a war of phallic egos. Volokhonsky thus preserves some of the strangeness and playfulness of the original verbal construct, although the phonological resonance between "penisolate" and "peninsula" in English does not carry over into the Russian "пенисолірованнiу" and "полуостров" (peninsula). The translator therefore included the standard Russian word for peninsula (полуостров) at the end of the paragraph to read: "the penisolate war on the peninsula."

*iv.3. Comparing Volokhonsky's "Евы с Адамом"/"Evy s Adamom" to Joyce's "past Eve and Adam's"*

In Russifying Joyce's "Eve and Adam's" in the above-quoted passage, Volokhonsky constructs the subtly variegated "Евы с Адамом"/ "Evy s Adamom." Here the preposition "с"/"s" signifies both "of" and "with" (or "and"), and this quite

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<sup>81</sup> McHugh, *Annotations*, 3.

elegantly transfers the possessive value of the “s” in “Adam’s” to the translation’s preposition without losing the original semantic value of the word “and.” What the Russification does lose is the original’s reference to Dublin’s Church of Adam and Eve (whose name would translate into Russian as “Церковь Адама и Евы”—that is, “Tserkov’ Adama i Evy”). McHugh also cites a “tavern of the same name” on the site of the church, which the Russian transposition fails to contain on account of the fact that the Russian language is not able to retain the liberal ambiguity that in this instance comes naturally to English: in English, we can colloquially refer to a place as “Eve and Adam’s” without having to specify that it is a church, a tavern, or indeed a residence (the Garden of Eden is, after all, Eve and Adam’s first family home); Eve and Adam’s could be any one of those things, or, in the case of the *Wake*, it is all of them at once. English makes this possible because the English possessive “s” sits at the tail end of the phrase, which opens it up to new verbal additions (e.g. “...church,” “...tavern,” “...home”). In Russian, the possessive value belongs to the preposition (and is further signalled by inflections in the nouns and adjectives), which sits right in the middle of the phrase, attached to the words that immediately precede and succeed it, and is thus locked away from any other implied or potential additions. Should we attempt to place a new word immediately after the preposition, we would extinguish the syntactical relationship between Adam and Eve and replace it with a new relation between Adam and the new object. In this respect, English grammar and syntax allows for a kind of ambiguity that enables a proliferating semantic layering and simultaneity. In Russian, this proves to be much more difficult to achieve because of the grammatical demands of the language. The consequences of this “loss in transposition” are not insignificant—as the Russification does ultimately surrender the original’s locatedness in Dublin, as well as the affectionately satirical synonymity between churches and pubs in Ireland—but, broadly speaking, such losses are also unavoidable in the practice of translation. As Volokhonsky himself declares in his brief epilogue to his *Wéik Finneganov*, different parts of the text call for variable translational approaches; and, in the present excerpt from his transposition, he appears to have chosen domestication over minorisation, semantics over materiality, and a prevalence of monolingualism over multilingualism.

*iv.4. Comparing Volokhonsky's “с виолой д`аморе”/“s violoi d'amore” to Joyce's “violer d'amores”*

The original Italian name of the musical instrument “viola d’amore” (viola of love) is retained in Volokhonsky’s Russification (“viola d’amore” happens to be a foreignism of general usage in Russian as it is in English). By virtue of its linguistic locus, Volokhonsky’s text opens itself up to semantic expansion into hidden or potential Russian words or verbal elements, such as the “mope” (visually transliterated “more” and pronounced “móryeh”) contained in “аморе”/“amore,” wherein “море”/“more” means “sea.” “С виолой да море”/“s violōi d’amore” could be read colloquially as “with the viola and the sea” or an exclamative “with a/the viola and, what is more, the sea!” On the other hand, the Russification obliterates the French “violer,” stealing away with it the multilingual layering and the expression “the violence of love,” or “the violation unto love.”

Nonetheless, “s violōi d’amore” still retains the Italianness present in the original and as such it can be seen as a Russo-Italian hybrid, readable as “with the viola of the sea” (wherein the preposition “da” becomes the Italian “from” or “of”). Furthermore, the multilingualism of the phrase as it appears in Volokhonsky’s text creates a poetic coincidence of “love” (from the Italian “amore”) and “sea” (from the Russian “moryeh”) within the same verbal unit, “amore,” which effect is much more lucid in the Russian transposition than it would be in the original (unless, of course, the reader happens to approach the original with Russian on her or his mind).

The original’s “violer” can also be read as “the one who violates” and “the one who plays the viola,” and “d’amores” can be pronounced as “demure,” yielding the phrase “the demure viola player.” In the original, “violer d’amores” is surrounded by commas, which predisposes it to being read as an epithet describing “Sir Tristram.” Volokhonsky’s text forgoes the punctuation altogether and thereby abandons these grammatical and syntactical possibilities, or at least chooses not to accentuate them.

Notwithstanding Volokhonsky’s authorial intent, successes, and shortcomings, his seemingly conservative transposition can appear in a wholly different light with some creative readerly engagement. For example, “Сэр Тристрам”/“Sér Tristram” initially appeared to me like a straightforward translation of the English “Sir” into the Russian “Sér” (standardly spelled in *Wéiik Finneganov*). Yet Patrick O’Neill suggests that there might be a comedic twist to Volokhonsky’s “Sér Tristram”: “Among more adventurous versions,” O’Neill writes, “Volokhonsky’s ‘Ser’ suggests a mischievous amalgamation of an English Sir and a

Russian ‘cheese’ (*syr*).<sup>82</sup> Before encountering O’Neill’s interpretation, it had not occurred to me to relate “Sér” to “сыр”/“syr” (cheese). If I must read into this fairly standard word, I would be more prone to amalgamating “Sér” with adjectives that could potentially serve as viable descriptors for “Tristram,” such as “серой”/“seroi” (grey), “серый”/“seryi” (figuratively pale, wan, cloudy), or even a shortened version of “серьёзный”/“ser’ëznyĭ” (serious). Perhaps none of these readings were intended by Volokhonsky (or Joyce for that matter), nor do they bear any particularly pivotal narrative or poetic value. However, it is theoretically—and ethically—important for *Wake* readers and translators to exercise a daring hospitality and open-mindedness when engaging with Joycean multilingualism—to embrace the pleasurable and sometimes painful or absurd experience of that candid engagement with both an expected and an unexpected otherness.

Of course, it is also important for *Wake* readers and translators to entertain the text’s proliferating interpretative possibilities with a balance of open-mindedness and restraint. O’Neill’s reading of “Сэр Тристрам”/“Sér Tristram” is naturally liberated by the interpretative possibilities fostered by his estrangement from the Russian language in a way that my reading is not. Because I relate to the materiality and semantics of Russian on an intimate, near-native level, I may be prone to overlooking the multilingual potentiality or subtle referential layering of apparently standard Russian diction. However, while such moments of readerly hospitality to difference are profoundly valuable, they are not always well placed, as in the case of Cheese Tristram, which does not appear to bear any reference to the rest of the passage at all, or indeed anything we might know about Joyce’s Tristram or the mythical, non-*Wakean* Tristan. Nonetheless, O’Neill’s questionable reading of “Сэр”/“Sér” identifies another potential instance of wordplay here: “Tristram” as “Tri-stran”: “three sides” and “three countries,” speaking to the linguistic, symbolic, and historical multiplicity of Tristran’s character.

The potential successes or shortcomings of Volokhonsky’s alleged translatorial choices—his readerly *and* writerly strategies— notwithstanding, the *Wake* remains a text actively inviting of its readers’ singular contributions to the event of dialogic literary invention. The question of whether or not Volokhonsky would have intended to convey all of the meanings that emerge from a readerly engagement with his text cannot invalidate the creative outcomes of that singular

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<sup>82</sup> O’Neill, *Impossible Joyce*, 69.

engagement. Although *Wéik Finneganov* displays a systematic neutralization of the original's multilingual properties and functionality, and it flattens out an overwhelming number of the multiple, expansive, and simultaneous narrative and semantic levels of Joyce's text, Volokhonsky's transposition nonetheless retains the *Wake*'s default ideological predisposition to readerly participation in the process of literary invention.

Perhaps Volokhonsky's own ideological predispositions have led to his anxious tendency to correct and contain the original's polyvalency of meaning into a strictly linear semantic and narrative flow. In an interview for Radio Svoboda, given three years after the publication of *Wéik Finneganov*, he explains that he "doesn't understand" how any of the other *Wake* translations of which he was vaguely aware at the time were at all possible to do. Here Volokhonsky alludes to a French translation done in Joyce's lifetime, and an Albanian translation, but he does not discuss either with any specificity; and he adds that he has "heard that there is something like a German translation," but "how that was done, I don't understand. This text is incredibly difficult to translate. What I have done is not a translation in the classical sense, but it is an exercise around [translation]."<sup>83</sup> In discussing why he hasn't published a Russophonic rendering of I.8, the well-known and widely translated "Anna Livia Plurabelle" chapter, he responds by attempting to summarise the story: HCE "has been arrested in the park for some immodest reason. He has done something with some young woman. But what he's done, how he's done it, and whether he's even done it at all is never made clear." He further adds that "the difficulty lies in that most of the *meaningful words* in this excerpt present as names of rivers. Translating this is incredibly difficult" (my emphasis). Volokhonsky's apparent discomfort with the ambiguity and semantic layering of the *Wake* can, on the one hand, be laid to rest as an understandable struggle with the challenges with which the text invariably presents its translators. However, the lengths to which his transposition goes to slash away the majority of multilingual effects in Joyce's text, often without cultivating alternative takes on those expansive stylisations, suggest that *Wéik Finneganov* is rather an attempt at an elucidation of *Finnegans Wake* for the benefit of Russophone readers—as well as, perhaps, an experiment of personal artistic development for the translator—rather than a translation showing an in-depth understanding of the complex value of multilingualism in Joyce's text. In that

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<sup>83</sup> Dmitry Volchek, "Stikhi i pesni Anri Volokhonskogo," July 21, 2003, <http://www.svoboda.org/content/transcript/24200160.html>.

respect, it merits a comparison with *The Skeleton Key* (although not too strictly, as Volokhonsky does make some admirable stylistic moves in his use of poetic form and the inherent materiality of the Russian language in his transposition) and leaves this reader wanting of yet more stylistically daring and multilingual attempts at a *Wake* transposition.

## V. Konstantin Belyaev's "Anna Livia Plurabelle": *AIII* (1996-97, 2000)

### *v.1. Background, methodology, and publishing history*

The other notable attempt at a *Wake* translation into Russian comes from the Ukrainian poet, philologist, translator, and essayist Konstantin Belyaev (b. 1971 in Sosnovka, Lvovska region, Ukraine<sup>84</sup>). His contribution appeared in the second issue of the Russian literary newspaper *Soiuz Pisatelei* in the year 2000 as part of a heavily annotated article titled "Pominki po Finneganu: Apologiia perevoda" (*Finnegans Wake: An Apologia for the Translation*), featuring: a bilingual (English and Russian) rendition, entitled "Анна Ливия Плюрабелль"/"Anna Livia Plurabelle" (henceforth referred to as *AIII*), of an excerpt from I.8: "Well, arundgironnd in a waveney lyne...life past befoul his prime" (*FW* 209.18-212.19); a plot summary of the translated passage; a reference list of secondary sources; numbered elucidations in the style of McHugh's *Annotations*; brief commentary on some existing *Wake* translations, including Volokhonsky's; an overview of Joyce's style and technique, plus a list of major characters, themes, and motifs; and an extensive discussion of Belyaev's translatorial methodology and vision for the future of *Finnegans Wake* in Russian-language literature.

In his "Apologia," Belyaev goes to great lengths to detail his very particular and deliberate vision of what a *Finnegans Wake* translation should look like. He concerns himself not only with how the text should be handled by the translator but also how it should be shaped and presented for the reader, whom Belyaev frequently invites to participate in the process of literary invention. He urges his reader to keep the list of elucidations nearby while reading *AIII*, which immediately sets this text apart from both Volokhonsky's transposition and the original, since Joyce's *Wake* does not come accompanied by any annotations or elucidations, or at least not in the

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<sup>84</sup> "Konstantin Belyaev (Contributor's page)," *Soiuz Pisatelei*, accessed December 12, 2014, <http://sp-issues.narod.ru/belyaev/index.htm>.

same book (although modern editions, such as the 2012 Oxford World Classics referenced here, do supply editorial notes, textual variants, and plot summaries).

Every translator seems to handle the issue of presentation idiosyncratically. The German, Italian, and Dutch translations mentioned here, as well as Volokhonsky's Russian or Philippe Lavergne's French transposition, do not include any elucidations or plot summaries. However, Henkes and Bindervoet, Belyaev, Schenoni, and Bosinelli, for example, all shape their translations as bilingual (or, in the case of the Bosinelli edition, trilingual) texts, offering the reader the opportunity to compare the translation with the original text. This reinforces the argument that a *Finnegans Wake* transposition defies traditional notions of what a translation should be and what purpose it should serve. A *Wake* translation is not an equivalence of the original, or strictly an elucidation (although, as previously discussed, some translators do use the transposition as an opportunity for interpretation, clarification, and/or simplification), but it is a new and original text that remains in perpetual conversation with the Joycean original that inspired it. Henkes and Bindervoet are especially adamant about the importance of shape and form as they claim that "In the *Wake* there is no such thing as coincidence any more. It is no coincidence that the book has 628 pages: it was designed like that because it is a circle. It is a thing in itself, maybe even *the* thing in itself (in an Immanuelistic way, du côté de chez Kant)."<sup>85</sup> Notably, Henkes and Bindervoet have also issued a Dutch equivalent to McHugh's *Annotations*—the *Finnegancyclopedie* (2005)<sup>86</sup>—but that is again a separate book and relates to their translation somewhat differently from the way Belyaev compels his reader to use his extensive treasury of elucidations.

While the Russian translator places his reader in conversation with the interpretative moves of existing *Wake* scholarship, the Dutch translators instead append their work with a list of textual variants gathered from their archival research. This difference in presentation points to a difference in translatorial priorities, and possibly even a subtle form of cultural difference that I will return to. At this point, let us look at Belyaev's presentation more closely.

## v.2. Belyaev's "Apologia": Its structure and presentation

<sup>85</sup> Bazarnik, Bindervoet, and Henkes, "Hier Komt Iedereen," 5.

<sup>86</sup> Erik Bindervoet and Robbert-Jan Henkes, *Finnegancyclopedie* (Amsterdam: Athenaeum-Polak & Van Gennep, 2005).



All throughout, Belyaev's "Apologia" is embellished with footnotes. The complete presentation (apologia and commentary) is bursting at the seams with annotations as the author footnotes even his endnotes. Most of these notes are lengthy and packed with Joyce trivia (e.g. Belyaev mentions the 1928 recording of Joyce reading from *Anna Livia Plurabelle*, as well as the early French and Italian translations of the *Wake*, although he does not cite his sources for either of these findings), accompanied by the translator's divergent, occasionally inessential, and at times amusing opinions about other commentators' engagements with Joyce's work. He critiques Volokhonsky's effort with particular force, claiming that "HV"

tumble[s] along, for the most part conveniently inaccurately, without making an effort to incorporate the various metatextual meanings, subtexts etc. Why is that? Because the myth of the principal impossibility of a normal translation of *Finnegans Wake* has ensconced itself here [in Russia] in a most obnoxious fashion... Even JJ himself—albeit a myth-lover and –maker—could not have dreamed that his book would become surrounded by such myths.<sup>87</sup>

Joyce's original text and Belyaev's translation are presented side by side. In this form, both texts come to 167 lines, which start to run more or less in parallel around lines 119-20. Joyce's text comes to 1,170 words in relation to Belyaev's 845 words, which comparison in itself points to the translation's notable employment of portmanteaux, which I have found to be very resourceful and will demonstrate through some examples in the next section.

Following is a summary of the characters, themes, and plot in the translated passage, as well as a brief note on Joyce's narrative design and how the translator has attempted to transmit it into his Russophonic rendition, namely through an adherence to Joyce's stylistic "concept," rather than strictly semantic content. Belyaev appends this discussion with his translation of the opening lines of I.8 as a way to illustrate how the typographical presentation of Joyce's text traces an image of the riverly delta (also ALP's siglum):

O  
 tell me all about  
 Anna Livia! I want to hear all  
 about Anna Livia. Well, you know Anna Livia? Yes, of course, we all know Anna  
 Livia. Tell me all. Tell me now. You'll die when you hear. (*FW* 196.1-6)

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<sup>87</sup> Belyaev, "Apologia," n2.

О  
 Расскажи мне всё про  
 Анну Ливию! Хочу услышать всё про  
 Анну Ливию. Ты что же, знаешь Анну Ливию? Ещё бы, все мы знаем  
 Анну Ливию. Расскажи всё-всё. Расскажи скорей. Умрешь, как услышишь.

О  
 rasskazhi mne vsë pro  
 Annu Liviïu! Khochu uslyshat' vsë pro  
 Annu Liviïu. Ty chto zhe, znaesh' Annu Liviïu? Eshchë by, vse my znaem Annu  
 Liviïu. Rasskazhi vsë-vsë. Rasskazhi skoreï. Umrësh', kak uslyshish'.<sup>88</sup>

Here Belyaev offers a brief interpretation of the significance of ALP's siglum and the "O" in "O / tell me all about / Anna Livia! I want to hear all..." (*FW* 196.1-3), after which he proceeds to narrate a *Skeleton Key*-style plot summary of the passage translated as *A/III*. This summary is rather a transposition that differs from Belyaev's "translation" chiefly in length (it comes to only 313 words) and by its omission of most proper names and multilingual stylisations. Yet this re-transposition retains the translation's musicality, lyricism, and aesthetic value. I would compare it to Volokhonsky's *Wéik Finneganov* for its poetic and elucidatory functionality, although that manner of elucidation by centralisation around a single language and narrative level remains both critically and ethically problematic if treated as a definitive text. Finally, Belyaev concludes the article with a declaration of surrender to the impossibility of adequately translating *Finnegans Wake* and of heady encouragement for both readers and potential translators to have a hand at the rewarding task regardless: "Every opportunity to translate—even separately—the ingenious delirium of *Finnegans Wake* into comprehensible language is doomed to failure (and on that note: there isn't a living translator [that has been able to transpose] Joycean into unJoycean...)."

The "Apologia" ultimately arrives at the somewhat controversial—and probably tongue-in-cheek—conclusion that Joyce was "an adherent to a creator's total control over [his] creations by means of hypertext," and then proceeds into the commentary section, entitled "Sut' & forma"/"Substance & Form," which carries, most notably, 281 elucidations for his readers to consult in parallel with his translation of *FW* 209.18-212.19. This appendix also includes an annotated reference

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<sup>88</sup> Belyaev, "Apologia," 3.

list of works<sup>89</sup> upon which Belyaev has based his own translation and commentary, and one that he deems essential for anyone attempting to translate *Finnegans Wake*. Also supplied here are: a key to navigating through his translation in its current form; an additional character list (he specifically names HCE, ALP, Shem, Shaun, Issy, and Mamalujjo); and a brief description of the concept of the Joyce-Carollean portmanteau, of which this Russian translator makes thorough and resourceful use. Finally, in a footnote to the appendix, Belyaev outlines his translatorial methodology, which, as previously observed, in some ways resonates with Henkes and Bindervoet's twenty-nine-method approach, although the Dutch translators' overall effort and achievement is, in fairness, incomparable to Belyaev's outstanding but modest attempt. The translatorial methodology behind *A/III* is outlined as follows:

Firstly, we need to account for the existing thesauri [and sources of elucidation] in order to try and decipher what the author has encoded into the text (i.e. to put it simply, read the book in the way that you would read any other—interpret the meaning and purpose of the text as best you can); secondly, translate the code into more or less comprehensible language, excepting all of the dark, impenetrable, absolutely untranslatable—and there are such!—fragments (this is the drafting stage; the most difficult part...); thirdly, rhythmicize the text that is now taking shape—thereby attempting to transmit the peculiar, strictly JJ-characteristic twinkling meter, discernible from the novel's very first to its very last word, from the 'riverrun' to the 'the'; fourthly, recodify your text anew in order to *obscure* what has been gained so laboriously, and ideally do not stray from the rhythm, subtext, and punning methodologies of JJ himself! (The dark, impenetrable, absolutely untranslatable points can be tackled via the transplant method—that is, the employment of word fragments that are analogous to the author's usages in other, similar instances, and ones that have been elucidated, thank God, by the efforts of some or other Joycean. Of course, all such instances must be flagged up in the comments! The approach might be dubious, yes...But what else is there to do? Otherwise you'd never move on.) Finally, fifthly, once

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<sup>89</sup> The following editions are listed in this order: 1. James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (London: Penguin Books, 1992); 2. Bernard Benstock, *Joyce-again's Wake: An Analysis of "Finnegans Wake"* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1965); 3. Vincent John Cheng, *Shakespeare and Joyce: A Study of "Finnegans Wake"* (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1984); 4. Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (Oxford, New York, Tokyo, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1983); 5. Adaline Glasheen, *Third Census of "Finnegans Wake"* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977); 6. Clive Hart, *A Concordance of "Finnegans Wake"* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1963); 7. Roland McHugh, *Annotations to "Finnegans Wake"* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991); 8. William York Tindall, *A Reader's Guide to "Finnegans Wake"* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1969). Each entry is annotated with a brief summary of the work's content and how it has been used in the making of Belyaev's translation. Belyaev's elucidations also include a number of references to Joyce's *Ulysses*, which is cited elsewhere in this appendix as the 1993 Russian translation by Victor Hinkiss and Sergey Horouzhnyi: Džeims Džojs, *Uliss*, trans. Victor Hinkiss and Sergey Horouzhnyi (Moskva: Respublika, 1993). Konstantin Belyaev, "Sut' & forma," *Soiuz Pisatelei*, 2000, <http://sp-issues.narod.ru/2/index.htm>.

again decipher your re-codification in the comments: carefully, discerningly, with organization and measure, sometimes extrapolating...; sometimes skipping details (let readers think for themselves: the keys to—given!); sometimes, remaining aware of the translator’s, and commentator’s, current helplessness (after all, perfection is unthinkable...). Anyone who’s interested is invited—not only to read but to co-create, which is an even better possibility for the future: a collective translation of the novel.<sup>90</sup>

As previously suggested, Belyaev’s methodology aligns with a broader strategy of translation that involves establishing a zero narrative level (for Belyaev, this is a combination of steps one and two of his methodology; for Henkes and Bindervoet, it is “the first germ of thought that [Joyce] wanted to express” as gleaned from their study of the facsimiles available in the *JJA*) that becomes gradually layered in the course of extensive scholarly research and perpetual revision. “[W]e had continually to revise our translation,” Henkes and Bindervoet reflect, “and the further we came, the more we had to change in our previous chapters. So as we worked the work became more instead of less!”<sup>91</sup> Belyaev aligns himself with this experience, as his methodology outline shows. His response to the problem-become-opportunity of the *Wake*’s ever-expanding and shifting translatorial possibilities is to meticulously lay out every detail of his research that helped him compose his own translation, accompanying that with two different reference lists of secondary sources and research tools (in print and online), and subsequently to invite the community of *Wake* readers to pick up the task where he has left off.

It is significant, perhaps even politically so, that the Russian translator displays a complete lack of confidence in his findings, relying almost exclusively on the existing, notably all Western and Anglophone, *Wake* scholarship to guide him. He does not question the validity of those sources in the way that he tears apart his Russian colleagues (i.e. his tirade against Volokhonsky) but accepts their conclusions as a given that ultimately constitutes the foundation of his understanding of the text. The Dutch translators, on the other hand, embark on the project as critically discerning scholars and originators from the outset. Instead of accepting their text as was originally available, typographical errors and all, they went back to

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<sup>90</sup> Belyaev, “Apologia,” n1. All translations from Russian are mine unless otherwise indicated. The word “obscure” here stands in for Belyaev’s “о<sup>н</sup>епон<sup>я</sup>т<sup>и</sup>ть/о<sup>н</sup>епон<sup>я</sup>т<sup>и</sup>т<sup>ь</sup>,” which can literally be read as “to strip of meaning” as well as “to render [something] incomprehensible.” The semantic tension borne by the Russian “о<sup>н</sup>епон<sup>я</sup>т<sup>и</sup>т<sup>ь</sup>” is significant (and quite Joycean to boot) in that it carries the action of semantic impoverishment and positive stylisation: The translator speaks of a language that is both deprived of meaning and swelling with creative ambiguity.

<sup>91</sup> Bazarnik, Bindervoet, and Henkes, “Hier Komt Iedereen,” 7.

the source—the archival evidence—and eventually established themselves as authorities in the discipline, rather than remaining well-meaning but dependent readers. Among the possible reasons for this difference in textual approach and self-confidence, which I would suggest is culturally rooted at least in part, might be the issue of practicality: a couple of already established literary translators of the Western world, who are physically located in the vicinity of several major European universities that are leaders in Joyce scholarship, and being just a train ride away from the international network and research facilities of goldmines like the Zürich James Joyce Foundation, places Henkes and Bindervoet in a relatively advantageous position for the task. In the late 1990s, someone like Belyaev, a writer and translator oscillating between Ukraine and Russia, would have been hard-pressed to access the kinds of contacts and resources that were available to his colleagues in Amsterdam at that time. It would be reasonable to suggest that the Russian translators have simply done their best with whatever sources were accessible to them at the time when they were working with the *Wake*. And yet this difference in the objective, practical limitations or opportunities that all translators encounter in variable degrees points to an inevitable, and profoundly significant, embodied or material difference, perhaps even a cultural-linguistic hierarchy, between translation projects, wherein geography, the particularities of a language, political climate, financial resources, and access to education and new research all become critical factors that influence the final product of the literary translation. Thus the linguistic transposition that we understand as a translation is not merely an abstract recodification of a disembodied work of the imagination: rather, a translation inevitably causes a geographical, political, cultural, and even economic shift that invariably influences the particularities of the text and exposes its singularity, perpetual growth, and changeability.

### v.3. *A/III: trans(formu)lation and methodology*

*A/III* bears little resemblance to Volokhonsky's largely monolingual, unannotated, and scarcely referenced transposition. Belyaev retains the multilingualism of Joyce's text with remarkable resourcefulness and richness, and

displays a far more textually involved and informed translatorial approach, which draws extensively on existing *Wake* scholarship.<sup>92</sup> Occasionally, Belyaev punctuates his commentary with clusters of question marks and baffled exclamations (e.g. his elucidation to “C<sub>3</sub> peduncle” (*FW* 211.29) reads: “Perhaps someone out there might know what this is on about?”<sup>93</sup>; or “Pettyfib’s Powder” (*FW* 210.31): “Pettyfib—??? Who’s that?” (elucidation 127)]<sup>94</sup>, but, nonetheless, he omits nothing.<sup>95</sup> When in doubt, he phonologically transcribes the original text into Cyrillic and flags up the difficult phrase or verbal unit in a footnote. This method, which I call the “transcription method,” generally works for him because the bulk of his chosen passage is comprised of proper names, whose various cultural, historical, intertextual, and intratextual layers and connotations can quite straightforwardly be elucidated in the “Substance and Form” subsection of the “Apologia,” a lot of which draws heavily on McHugh’s *Annotations* and, sometimes, Adaline Glasheen’s *Third Census*.

For example, he transposes “Johnny Walker Beg” (*FW* 211.13) directly into Cyrillic as “Dzhonni Uokeru Begu”/“Джонни Уокеру Бегу” (*A/III* line 45), which only subtly varies from the original in that the Russian usage is conjugated into dative form (as would be grammatically appropriate and standard in Russian in this context) and is therefore pronounced slightly differently as “Dzónni Wuókerou Bégou.” Within *A/III* itself, “Dzhónni Wuóker Bég” presents chiefly as a proper name that is notably foreign and does not pun on any additional parts of speech in Russian in the way that it does in English: for example, in English, Walker can be both a name and a noun for someone who walks; or Johnny can be read as Johnny

<sup>92</sup> I would also venture to guess that, at the time of production of each translation (which was approximately concurrent—Volkhonsky reportedly laboured over *Wéik Finneganov* between 1995 and 2000, and Belyaev dates his efforts at 1996-97 and 2000), the younger author’s command of English may have been somewhat more advanced. In fact, *Finnegans Wake* appears to be Volkhonsky’s sole attempt at translating English according to *Mitin Journal*’s bibliography of his works and his *Collected Works*. “Henri Volkhonsky: Bibliografiia tvorchestva,” Online journal, *Mitin Journal*, accessed December 18, 2014, <http://www.mitin.com/people/volohon/>.

<sup>93</sup> Belyaev, “Substance & Form,” elucidation 215.

<sup>94</sup> “Петтифиба—??? Кто таков?”/“Pettifiba—??? Kto takov?”

<sup>95</sup> It is likely that Belyaev has found names/phrases like “Pettyfib’s Powder” difficult to understand and translate because the portmanteau “pettyfib” contains the culturally specific colloquialism “fib,” whose meaning might be obvious to native Anglophone readers (hence McHugh does not elucidate it) but can easily perplex non-native Anglophones like this translator. Clearly, non-native English readers are not the target audience of McHugh’s *Annotations* as he rarely elucidates *Wakese* that sufficiently (also a relative notion) approximates English. This touches on the issue of how a readership can and does shape the form, style, presentation, language, and other fundamental characteristics of a text. Inevitably authors, translators, and/or editors establish a target audience that becomes implicit in their strategies of transposition and textual presentation, which then has the capacity to betray some cultural, or perhaps even ideological or political, bias.

Walker the whiskey, John the Baptist, John Walker who founded the Church of God (Walkerites) in Ireland in 1804,<sup>96</sup> or even as the colloquial usage of the name as a reference to an everyman (Here Comes Everybody). The translated text becomes semantically expansive primarily through Belyaev's elucidation, which mentions most of these references and explains what the verbs "to walk" and "to beg" signify in English. He adds an extra note on Begge the Irish wine merchant, invoking HCE in his role as a pub owner; Walker as a reference to Mamalujo; and explains that Johnny Walker the whiskey is an echo of the "water of life" that brings Tim Finnegan back around from the dead at his wake.<sup>97</sup> In this case, Belyaev's elucidation appears to be drawn exclusively from Glasheen's *Third Census*.<sup>98</sup> For the Russian reader, however, not even the biblical connotations of the name John come as naturally or matter-of-factly as they might for the native Anglophone reader, since the Russian equivalent of "John" is "Йоан"/"Йоан" (pronounced "Yoán"<sup>99</sup>), which neither looks nor sounds anything quite like Belyaev's "Dzhonni"/"Джон(ни)." Perhaps the most redeeming quality of Belyaev's "Dzhónni Wuókerou Bégu" lies in the incidental coincidence between the English verb "to beg" and the Russian noun "бег"/"beg," which means "run" or, depending on context, "escape." Thus Joyce's begging walker becomes a runner in Belyaev's Russophone space, and therefore the translatorial solution in this case succeeds in retaining at least part of the linguistic immediacy and activity embedded in the original. Nonetheless, what the English-speaking reader can experience as a semantically, culturally, historically, and inter- and intratextually expansive verbal sequence reads, for the most part, as an estranging foreign name to Belyaev's Russian reader.

An advantage of Belyaev's transcription method, in combination with the deliberate format in which the translation is presented, is that a direct phonological transposition of the original has a good chance of avoiding any major losses in semantic value, provided that the reader has just enough patience to consolidate the translation with the hundreds of notes accompanying it, as well as enough familiarity with, and/or understanding of, the stylistic and narrative functionality of Joyce's text

<sup>96</sup> David Hempton, "Walker, John," ed. S. J. Connolly, *The Oxford Companion to Irish History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>97</sup> Belyaev, "Substance & Form," elucidation 81.

<sup>98</sup> Adaline Glasheen, *Third Census of Finnegans Wake* (University of California Press, 1977), <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/JoyceColl.GlasheenFinnegans>.

<sup>99</sup> That said, the Russian equivalent of John, "Yoan," sounds suggestively similar to Joyce's Yawn. This observation still does not pertain to Belyaev's text because, in *A/III*, "Johnny" is transcribed to be pronounced as "Johnny" and not "Yonni"; however, this does point to the creative possibilities of the comparative approach to *Wake* translations.

to allow the reader to discern, and hopefully enjoy, the original text's poetic expansiveness. However, it remains debatable whether Belyaev's diligent annotations suffice to convey the narrative layering, poeticity, or emotional tug of cultural and inter-/intratextual recognition that Joyce's text can offer the Anglophone reader. With this in mind, though elucidations might add something to the literary experience, a translator's excessive reliance on them possibly points to a fundamental lack in the translation itself.

Belyaev makes an effort to assist his reader by further elucidating most, if not all, portmanteaux, as well as neologisms that are too multilingual or otherwise estranging for the monolingual Russophone reader to interpret independently. However, even though in theory preservation of Joyce's phonology should also be able to preserve the connotations of the original diction, the transposition into a new linguistic space and, notably, graphological system (something that the Italian, German, French, Dutch, or even Polish translators do not have to contend with) does ultimately transform both the material qualities and semantic capacity of the text, which sometimes results in the kind of loss in translation that the translator would have been trying to avoid in the first place. For example, Belyaev translates Joyce's "meerschaundize" (*FW* 210.2) simply as a phonological rendition in Cyrillic: "мершондиз"/"mershondiz" (*АПП* line 28). On the one hand, "mershondiz" does not semantically reference, look like, or sound like any existing word in the Russian language. It loses part of the original's multilingual element since the Germanic "sch" equivalent of the English "sh" collapses into the unambiguous and irreplaceable Cyrillic "ш"/"sh,"<sup>100</sup> while the English "meerschaum" (pipe) and "Meerschaum," the German noun for "sea foam," which is most explicitly invoked by the visual appearance of Joyce's "meerschaundize," becomes completely absent from "mershondiz." Looking closely at the visual aspect of Belyaev's diction, the reader might spot "Shaun" ("Шон"/"Shon" in Cyrillic) in the middle of "мершондиз"/"mershondiz," and perhaps even venture to invoke the French "mer" ("sea") in relation. Thus the transposition manages to retain some of the multilingualism and intratextual referentiality of Joyce's text, but it fails to achieve the light-footed multilingual wordplay of the original (whose phonology successfully

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<sup>100</sup> As previously mentioned, very few modern languages use the Cyrillic alphabet, which appears to bear some influence on the translator's practice. Translators working in variations of the Roman alphabet can afford far more numerous and flexible interlingual puns and formulations (i.e. the phoneme *sh* can be spelled variously as *sch*, *ch* [as in the French *chéri*], *š*, *sc* [as in the Italian *scienza*], and so on), whereas Cyrillic can afford interlingual slippages only between a small number of Slavic languages (Russian, Bulgarian, and partly Macedonian).



evokes the English “merchandise” and therefore works even if the reader remained oblivious to the multilingual semantics, whereas Belyaev’s solution requires an elucidation in order to become meaningful to the Russophone reader) and does not gain anything beyond what Joyce has already put forth more elegantly. In this respect, Belyaev’s transcription method, although a safe solution in instances where the translator finds himself in a bind, sometimes loses more than it can gain.

It is important to note, however, that these relatively unremarkable translatorial solutions serve as a last resort. Belyaev has employed the transcription method chiefly as a way to retain as much from Joyce’s text as possible in spite of the translator’s occasional failure to pinpoint a meaningful interpretation of the Wakeese or to devise a Russified rendition that is at least as layered and evocative as the original. This sets him apart from someone like Volokhonsky, who simply omits those parts of Joyce’s text that he finds impenetrable. Generally, Belyaev manages to formulate some notably creative neologisms that are just as layered and poetically daring as Joyce’s. He makes thorough use of portmanteaux, all of them packed with literary, cultural, and historical allusions, as well as intratextual references. Many of them are multilingual. He also rigorously maintains Joyce’s manner of embedding river names in the language of I.8, although the translator does allow himself some room for improvisation and variation in the specific names, languages, or other external or intratextual references that he uses. He explains in the “Apologia”:

The formal requirements of the chapter—which includes some several thousand river names, which JJ poured into this already semantically overflowing text (of course, in the translation nearly all of these have been replaced by different ones—except for the concept [which has been preserved]...The concept—that matters more than the particularities, isn’t that right?

As the forthcoming examples will show, Belyaev’s translation remains true to form in frequently capturing the phonological patterns of the original text—particularly the whispers, wish-o-whooshes, liquid consonants like *l*’s and *r*’s, and diminutives that materially evoke the presence of Issy or other of ALP’s children. The translator also remains particularly diligent in embedding Shem’s and Shaun’s names wherever possible, which could be due to the fact that Russian is phonologically rich in fricatives and can therefore allow for a lot of translatorial flexibility with fricative-rich Wakeese verbal units or phrases. Let us look at an example:

a guilty goldeny bellows, below  
me blow me for Ida Ida and  
a hushaby rocker  
Elletrouvetout for Who-is-  
silvier—Where-is-he?

одуванцев, винзелья библяей,  
облияй мя облаяй мя, Иде Иде и  
колыбельну, хошь бы и  
Ельтруватур, Тому-кто-всех-  
сильверней — Где-ж-он?<sup>101</sup>

The translation can phonologically be transliterated as follows (with the Cyrillic reiterated for comparison):

adouvantsev, vinzelya beblyeyai,  
abliyai mya ablayai mya, Ide Ide i  
kalaibel' nou, khosh' bai i  
El'trouvatour, Tamou-cto-vsye-  
sil'vyernyei—Gde-zh-on?<sup>102</sup>

одуванцев, винзелья библяей,  
облияй мя облаяй мя, Иде Иде и  
колыбельну, хошь бы и  
Ельтруватур, Тому-кто-всех-  
сильверней — Где-ж-он?

This excerpt soundly represents Belyaev's mantra that "the concept...matters more than the particularities" in that he takes some liberties with the semantics while keeping his text remarkably similar to Joyce's in phonology, multilingual wordplay, and narrative layering. The translation successfully embodies the "liquid" materiality of Joyce's text by maintaining the clustered recurrence of approximant consonants and the overall phonological patterning of the original phrasing. Compare: "a **guilty goldeny bellows, below me blow me**" to "adouvantsev, vinzelya beblyeyai, abliyai mya ablayai mya." In this example, Belyaev echoes Joyce's "ellow," "il," and "me" with "elya," "lyeyai," and "mya"; and "below" and "blow" are transposed as "abliyai"- "ablayai," which preserves the material-poetic mirroring of the original pair. The translation even maintains the slant-rhyming we see in the original's "guilt" and "gold" with "adouvantsev" and "vinzelya." To achieve such formal and material similarity to Joyce's text, Belyaev makes some concessions to semantic equivalency: for example, "abliyai" (the material echo of "below") means "wash over me," and "ablayai" (relating to "blow") means "enchant me." Meanwhile, the semantic value of Joyce's "guilty" gets embedded in the portmanteau "vinzelya," containing: the Russian word for "guilt" ("vina"/"вина"); the Russian and Italian for "wine" ("vino"/"вино"); the Russian "zelya"/"зелья," meaning "herbs" or, possibly,

<sup>101</sup> Joyce's text, as quoted here, reflects how it appears in the "Apologia." Probably by accident, he appears to have omitted a few commas, as the 1939 text reads: "a guilty goldeny bellows, below me blow me, for Ida Ida and a hushaby rocker, Elletrouvetout, for Who-is-silvier — Where-is-he?" (*FW* 211.34-36). The line breaks are not Belyaev's but mine, used to show the verbal parallels between the Anglophone and Russophone texts.

<sup>102</sup> Because phonology constitutes the focus of my analysis of this passage, my transliteration departs from the LoC Romanization rules and instead prioritises sound over convention.

a herbal beverage or soak; “venzelya”/“вензеля,” which can mean “monogram” or, when part of the colloquial expression “pisat’ venzelya”/“писать вензеля” (literally “writing monograms”), it equates to the Anglophone colloquialism “legless,” referring to someone who is stumbling around drunk, i.e. “writing monograms” with their feet dragging on the ground; and “veselya”/“веселья,” meaning “fun.”<sup>103</sup> Belyaev lists these embedded semantic values in an elucidation, even though practically all of them draw on the Russian language and, in theory, should be accessible to the Russophone reader. Nonetheless, the portmanteau is inventive and suggestive enough to continue to grow beyond the translator’s generous notes: readers who have got the hang of how to productively engage with *Wakean* wordplay might also visualise HCE in Belyaev’s wine-sodden monogram; similarly, the proximate references to wine, stumbling, having fun, and dancing carries an echo of the song motif “Lots of fun at Finnegans wake.” Thus Belyaev’s portmanteau “venzelya” is his purely original invention that successfully transposes his conceptual understanding of Joyce’s multilingual technique and style into a Russophone linguistic space.

Joyce’s “Elletrouvetout” (*FW* 211.35) also re-emerges in *A/III* as a multilingual portmanteau, “Ельтруватур”/“El’trouvatur,” which simultaneously draws and expands upon the original text. Beyond the radical recodification into Cyrillic, Belyaev’s Russification introduces only minor changes to the original text, but his subtle departures still merit a mention. Elucidation 232 here lists all of the relevant notes from McHugh’s *Annotations*, such as the French “elle trouve tout” (she finds all) and the Italian “trovatore” (troubadour; also Verdi’s opera *Il Trovatore*). Since the translator has primarily employed his transcription method for this portmanteau, McHugh’s elucidations remain pertinent for the translation. In this instance, Joyce’s diction may arguably be just as estranging to a monolingual Anglophone reader as the Russification would be for the monolingual Russian reader, which seems to render the use of the transcription method more appropriate here than in the previous examples. Yet Belyaev’s choice to render Joyce’s “trouvetout” as the minutely reimagined “trouvatour” sets the translation apart from the original somewhat more significantly than it might seem: although this is not mentioned in the elucidation, it appears that “trouvatour” aims to invoke the Russian usage of the word “trouver”/“труппер,” meaning “bard” or, indeed, “troubadour.”

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<sup>103</sup> Belyaev, “Substance & Form,” elucidation 227.

This usage is literary, as opposed to colloquial, and thus bears an air of archaic loftiness that is estranging in its own right, not least because it is a French foreignism that has become adopted into literary Russian. Yet, even in this ironic and roundabout manner, Belyaev's revision slips a minute but significant space of homecoming, or recognition, for the Russian-speaking reader in an otherwise wholly non-Russian multilingual portmanteau.

## VI. Afterword

At the translation roundtable of the VIII James Joyce Italian Foundation Conference in Rome, which I attended on February 2-3, 2015, the tone proved to have shifted significantly since Knuth's 1972 account of Trieste. The general feeling among panel members in Rome was indeed one of constructive *optimism*, as Robbert-Jan Henkes and Erik Bindervoet reflected *back* on their triumphantly complete, widely successful translation of the *Wake*, which work is currently informing their forthcoming Dutch translation of *Dubliners* and their new, corrected edition of *Finnegans Wake*, forthcoming in 2019. Meanwhile, Enrico Terrinoni, who, following the success of his *Ulisse* in 2012, had just been officially commissioned to embark on a new Italian translation of the *Wake*, dived into the deep end of the discussion on new or possible translatorial methodologies by reflecting on his considerable experience of transposing Joycean multilingualism in his previous project. By stark contrast to the Trieste panel of 1972, wherein the "purpose of a translation" had been deemed to be "to transfer the author's intent to the mind of the reader,"<sup>104</sup> the Rome panel conversed on the implied premise that there was no single or universal "point of departure" (to use Knuth's language) for the task of translating *Finnegans Wake*, just as "equivalence" (in a strictly theoretical and disembodied sense) no longer constitutes an either useful or necessary aspiration for the translator. Through an example from his translation of "Oxen of the Sun," Terrinoni opined that if Joyce's reimagined usage of Old English was satirical towards *English* literature and political-cultural history, then it would not make sense to equivocally satirise Italian literature through Dantesque Italian in the translation. He thereby suggested that the task of contemporary Joyce translators is to transpose the multilingual, polycultural, and narratively proliferating readerly experience of the

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<sup>104</sup> Knuth, "The *Finnegans Wake* Translation Panel at Trieste," 266.

original text into new linguistic and cultural spaces that are, in themselves, understood to be singular and ever changing. The objective of the 2015 translation roundtable was not to establish a centralising and cross-linguistically equivalent standard to which scholarship might measure the satisfactoriness of any particular *Wake* translation; rather, the current aim was to share in the diverse practical experiences of reading and writing through *Wakean* multilingualism with consideration for the singular limitations of, and creative opportunities afforded by, each target language in light of its specific readership and translatorial objectives.

The spirit of optimistic, open-minded collaboration infused the conversation at the Rome roundtable. The multiplicity of languages, literary cultures, readerships, and their singular demands and creative capabilities—all of which are qualities pertinent to the language of the *Wake* itself as much as to the practice of translation in general—were treated as points of potentiality, rather than as obstacles; and, as such, today's leading Joyce translators showed themselves to be embracing, and perpetually searching for, the new—perhaps yet unknown or even unimagined—methodological strategies and considerations that each new language would introduce to the global roundtable. My present intervention with two Russian translations of the *Wake* has offered some needed access into a target language and a translatorial culture that has never before had an opportunity to contribute to this international project of collaboration in Joyce scholarship. As we cultivate a hospitable space within this critical environment for previously isolated European languages to become productively engaged in the conversation, we are opening the door to an expansive array of other locally specific and globally significant translation projects (the 2013 Chinese translation of the *Wake*, for example) that Anglophone Joyce studies are yet to thoroughly explore or develop the theoretical language to discuss. The potentiality of such intercultural collaboration, which takes seriously the singularity, changeability, and individual and cultural diversity of readerly and translatorial experiences, promises some exciting prospects for the future of Joyce and translation studies, as the work remains ever in progress.

## Chapter 4. Towards an Ethics of Multilingualism through *Finnegans Wake*<sup>1</sup>

### I. Introduction

In her article “A Search for the Viscous and Sawdust: (Mis)pronunciation in Nabokov’s American Novels,” Maria Kager shows Nabokov berating himself for his Russophonetic English pronunciation. His most colourful self-deprecations crop up in letters to friend<sup>2</sup> and fellow writer Edmund Wilson: a native English speaker, who seems to have openly fuelled those insecurities with consistent correctives. Kager observes that Nabokov “frequently comments on his insecurity with regard to writing in English and refers to his English as ‘my pidgin,’ ‘my imitation English,’ or ‘my pigeon-English,’” and she quotes him writing to Wilson: “I have been pining away ever since the chairman of a women’s club where I had been reading my verses said with a lyrical leer: ‘what I loved best was the broken English.’”<sup>3</sup> Nabokov extrapolates this more sentimentally in his authorial afterword to *Lolita*:

My private tragedy, which cannot, and indeed should not, be anybody’s concern, is that I had to abandon my natural idiom, my untrammelled, rich, and infinitely docile Russian tongue for a second-rate brand of English, devoid of any of those apparatuses—the baffling mirror, the black velvet backdrop, the implied associations and traditions—which the native illusionist, frac-tails flying, can magically use to transcend the heritage in his own way.<sup>4</sup>

I speculate that Nabokov’s ethical condemnation of his own linguistic performance must have been at the root of his open distaste for *Finnegans Wake*: a work he once called a “formless, grey mass of subsumed folklore, not a book but coldish pudding,

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<sup>1</sup> An early version of this chapter was published as an article in the 2016 issue of *European Joyce Studies*: Boriana Alexandrova, “Babababblin’ Drolleries and Multilingual Phonologies: Developing a Multilingual Ethics of Embodiment through *Finnegans Wake*,” *European Joyce Studies* (June 2016): 90–104.

<sup>2</sup> For a glimpse into their friendship, see their letter exchange published across two 1965 issues of *The New York Review of Books*: Edmund Wilson, “The Strange Case of Pushkin and Nabokov,” *The New York Review of Books*, July 15, 1965, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/1965/07/15/the-strange-case-of-pushkin-and-nabokov/>; Vladimir Nabokov, “Letters: The Strange Case of Nabokov and Wilson,” *The New York Review of Books*, August 26, 1965,

<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/1965/08/26/letters-the-strange-case-of-nabokov-and-wilson/>

<sup>3</sup> Maria Kager, “A Search for the Viscous and Sawdust: (Mis)pronunciation in Nabokov’s American Novels,” *Journal of Modern Literature* 37.1 (2013): 79–80.

<sup>4</sup> Vladimir Nabokov, “On a Book Entitled *Lolita*,” in *Lolita* (London: Penguin Books, 2000), 316–17.

an incessant snore in the next room, most aggravating to the insomniac I am”<sup>5</sup>; and it may have limited his view of *Ulysses*, which he deemed a strictly realist novel.<sup>6</sup> His painstaking efforts to carve hard boundaries in-between the languages of his own literary practice, categorising Russian as an impermeable other to English and vice versa, appear to have made unbearable his experience of the *Wake*'s multilingual flexibility: he judged its troubling of linguistic, cultural, narratological, and ideological boundaries as an example of “formlessness,” a failure to exercise authorial control, and a failure to inspire readerly confidence in the text's meaningfulness. Nabokov's monolingual ethics produced boredom and resulted in a violent rejection of a text that had resisted his methods of reading. As such, they prove to be of no use, to say the least, to readers interested in creatively engaging with the *Wake*, and furthermore show themselves to be deeply problematic in light of more progressive critical theories of ethical engagements with difference.

When we conceptualise a language as a unitary structure, a unified “self” that poetically or symbolically embodies a single, discernible, bounded ideology and culture, we risk obscuring the permeability, hybridity, flexibility, and changeability of language, as well as the singularity of linguistic engagement. Joyce's readers are ever at pains to pinpoint the exact quantity and quality of the languages found in his works: when Bloom misspeaks “*Bella poetria!*” instead of “*Bella poesia!*” in “Lestrygonians,” should we regard that as Italian, albeit “broken” Italian? Or is it rather Italianified English, since “poetria” resembles “poetry” so closely? If we encountered this phrase in *Finnegans Wake* (whose multilingual design obscures linguistic, cultural, and semantic boundaries so fundamentally that multiple, and often contradictory, narrative levels can run simultaneously within a single utterance), could we categorise it as either English or Italian, or even pidgin, in good faith? What are the ethics of reading “*Bella poetria!*” as a site of Bloom's failure—to speak correctly, to make himself understood, to creatively engage with a language in which he is uneducated but has rather experienced as musical, gastronomic, and sensual pleasure?<sup>7</sup>

Chapter 2 of this thesis posed a peculiar methodological challenge that pertains to this study as well as any critical engagement with literary multilingualism: How do we locate the boundaries and establish the material,

<sup>5</sup> Genieva et al, *Russkaia odisseia*, 109.

<sup>6</sup> Genieva et al, *Russkaia odisseia*, 108.

<sup>7</sup> Refer to chapter 2 of this thesis for a more detailed discussion of Bloom's material engagement with Italian.

cultural, ideological, and other such characteristics that distinguish one language from another? Or, to put it in another way, how do we *identify* a specific language or register—one that bears distinctive cultural, phonological, ideological, geographical, or even class qualities—in a multilingual text so that we may critically allocate and analyse it? The following extends to various studies of multilingual literature beyond Joyce, but *Wake* scholarship in particular reveals a tendency to ask or imply these questions, often without questioning the theoretical or ethical implications of drawing interlingual and intralingual boundaries within a text that is not so much *multilingual* (i.e. a horizontal assortment of multiple *distinct* languages or allusive linguistic fragments) as it is *polylingual*: that is, a singular,<sup>8</sup> semantically, phonologically, temporally, and narratologically layered text with a rich capacity for change and proliferation. Counting the number of languages contained in *Finnegans Wake* has proven impossible to do (or at least impossible to do accurately) because this text is not a sum of multiple, isolated, differentiated parts. Rather, polylingual writing emerges from what Caribbean poet M. NourbeSe Philip calls “the continuum of expression” between languages:

In the absence of any other language by which the past may be repossessed, reclaimed and its most painful aspects transcended, English in its broadest spectrum must be made to do the job. To say that the experience can only be expressed in standard English (if there is any such thing) or only in the Caribbean demotic (there *is* such a thing) is, in fact, to limit the experience for the African artist working in the Caribbean demotic. It is *in the continuum of expression* from standard to Caribbean English that the veracity of the experience lies.<sup>9</sup>

Philip’s poetic interest focuses on the politics and stylistics born out of the interlingual relationship between British English and Caribbean English (both being widely encompassing and flexible linguistic categories). Moreover, even though her intervention is regionally specific, it touches on broader issues of literary multilingualism and polyculturalism pertaining to *Wake* as well, both in terms of poetic style and because Joyce, too, was a postcolonial writer. More specifically, Philip troubles the power structure that English (standard, mainstream, or, in some localities, Queen’s English as discussed in chapter 2) has come to represent within

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<sup>8</sup> Here as everywhere throughout this thesis, the term “singular” implies “changeable”—that is, a variability contingent on shifts in the temporal, spatial, cultural, psychological, etc. context of the literary event.

<sup>9</sup> Marlene NourbeSe Philip, *She Tries Her Tongue, Her Silence Softly Breaks* (Charlottetown: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 18; second emphasis mine.



global literary and political discourses, and in her poetry she exercises an ethics of writing that draws on the idiocultural singularity and multilingual speech of the postcolonial body: a body occupying and voicing a multilingual locality (Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago), and a body speaking in tones, a musicality, and an idiom that are neither English nor unEnglish. This body voices itself authentically through the “continuum of expression” enabled by inter- and intralingual speech and writing. “The veracity of experience,” and what Philip calls the “i-mage”—the authentic self materialising through poetic language—emerges not out of a stable and bounded linguistic or cultural structure imposed from without, but out of the space where permeable subjects, as well as languages, encounter one another. Here the authentic, palpable, and, as Audre Lorde would suggest, *ethical* creative event occurs in a space that is hospitable to difference: “Difference must be not merely tolerated,” Lorde writes,

but seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a *dialectic*. Only then does the necessity for interdependency become unthreatening. Only within that interdependence of different strengths, acknowledged and equal, can the power to seek new ways of being in the world generate, as well as the courage and sustenance to *act where there are no charters*.<sup>10</sup>

Despite their differing contexts and purposes, the theoretical language of these texts reveals some poignant parallels: Philip unlocks her singular poetic power within the “continuum of expression” between English—a language historically imposed on her literary heritage through colonisation—and the “Caribbean demotic,” which has developed out of the hybridisation of various languages either brought up in or brought into the region.<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, Lorde identifies the ethical necessity of the creative “dialectic” within her own culturally specific space of difference: she was a black lesbian feminist in a predominantly white, heterosexual body politic.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Audre Lorde, “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House,” in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches by Audre Lorde* (Berkeley: Crossing Press, 2007), 111; my emphasis.

<sup>11</sup> These include indigenous Amerindian languages, African languages that arrived with slavery, Indian languages like Bhojpuri and Hindi, as well as Spanish, French, and English. Lise Winer, *Trinidad and Tobago, Varieties of English around the World 6* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1993), 8–11.

<sup>12</sup> “The Master’s Tools” essay, delivered as a panel contribution at the Second Sex Conference in New York, September 29, 1979, was Lorde’s response to the political, cultural, racial, and class inequalities palpable within feminist politics in her time. She observes the ethical necessity for feminist politics and theory to include the voices of “poor women, Black and Third World women, and lesbians.” Yet she notes at the start of her talk that “I stand here as a Black lesbian feminist, having been invited to comment within the only panel at this conference where the input of Black

Together, these feminist writers establish an ethical approach to both language and political activism that resists the assimilationist drive of the monolingual paradigm; that views difference (be it cultural, bodily, or linguistic) not merely as an incurable problem but rather as a ground of creative relating; and which relinquishes the need or desire for total control over an-other. Philip's response to the inevitable postcolonial question of what to do with the coloniser's language, English, which is imbued with the ideological discourse that documents and perpetuates imperialist violence, is to puncture the divisive boundaries that demarcate that "Other" language from her own—to step outside of the binary opposition between self and other,<sup>13</sup> to transcend the unequal power relation between "language" and "dialect," and to claim a live, creative space for the postcolonial body's singularity within the dialectic:

It is not sufficient... to write only in dialect, for too often that remains *a parallel and closed experience*, although a part of the same language. Neither is it sufficient to write only in what we have come to call standard English. The language as we know it has to be *dislocated and acted upon*—even destroyed—so that it begins to serve our purposes.<sup>14</sup>

Rather than fawning on the corrective assimilationism of the monolingual paradigm (as Nabokov seems to have done), or colluding with the self-perpetuating crisis of warring binary oppositions by picking one language out of a pre-determined selection (as in the Shem-and-Shaun-like struggle between wa Thiong'o and Achebe), Philip chooses to take ownership of her poetic language in a way that ethically illuminates Joycean multilingualism, too. The postcolonial writer's dialogic engagement with the imperial register can be traced as early as that fateful scene in *Portrait*, where Stephen thinks of the language of the Dean of Studies as "his *before* it is mine"—"I have not *made* or *accepted* its words."<sup>15</sup> In his writing, he rather "makes" a poetic language in a dialogic interlingual exchange, as "*Ivory, ivoire, avorio, ebur*" materially stylises English to produce: "*The ivy whines upon the wall / And whines and twines upon the wall... Lord Almighty! Who ever heard of ivy*

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feminists and lesbians is represented. What this says about the vision of this conference is sad, in a country where racism, sexism, and homophobia are inseparable." Lorde, "The Master's Tools," 110.

<sup>13</sup> This binary opposition is well illustrated by the iconic ideological debate between Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Chinua Achebe on the political and artistic bearing of the English language on African literatures. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, "The Language of African Literature," in *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (Zimbabwe: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1994), 4–33; Chinua Achebe, "Politics and Politicians of Language in African Literature," in *The Education of a British-Protected Child* (New York: Penguin Books, 2009), 96–106.

<sup>14</sup> Philip, *She Tries Her Tongue*, 18; my emphasis.

<sup>15</sup> Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, 205; my emphases.

whining on a wall?.”<sup>16</sup> The transformation triggered by the multilingual encounter is both material and semantic, as in this scene English adopts the musicality and texture of other languages while “ivy” becomes both the plant and the exotic material, ivory (one sourced through colonial violence, no less). That scene in *Portrait* embodies the multilingual encounter between English and Stephen’s own, singular poetic register in a way that Philip’s interlingual “continuum of expression” and Lorde’s “creative dialectic” illuminate with an ethical dimension and a political perspective that widens the reach of Joycean multilingualism.

Lorde and Philip conceptualise the refusal to adhere to a single language or identity already structured, bounded, and controlled outside of their own bodies, accepting the transformative effects of an-other (language) on the self while actively, creatively touching and transforming that other in return. The ethical choice for both writers becomes the entry into a space wherein subjects and languages are understood to be permeable, and open to continuous transformation through mutually creative engagement with one another and the shared space itself. Lorde’s important call for “the courage and sustenance to act where there are no charters” becomes an ethical response—perhaps even *the* ethical response—to the perpetually moving, changing, and transmaterialising singularities of texts, subjects, and the spaces of their creative encounters, which bears particular significance in a postcolonial context, and particularly as we consider the potential of the *Wake* to act as a “global” text.

In the multilingual space of the *Wake*, grammatical rules, geographical and temporal charters, interlingual boundaries, the variable accents that readers may bring to the literary event or invent in the course of creative engagement, the multifarious phonologies of the text itself, and its cultural, historical, and symbolic nuances shift: the singularities of all these components come to transform, transition, and transmaterialise in the event of reading. The poetic language of the *Wake* is perpetually redrawing its charters, and that unprecedented linguistic flexibility enables the text to proliferate semantically, phonologically, and narratologically. *Wakean* multilingualism teaches its readers productive and pleasurable ways of engaging with difference without assimilating it into familiar (and potentially oppressive) linguistic and ideological structures. This makes the *Wake* an intrinsically ethical text. This chapter will develop some new theoretical approaches

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<sup>16</sup> Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, 193.

to that multilingual ethics, which should hopefully inspire some alternative ways of engaging with global, postcolonial, and multilingual literatures beyond Joyce studies as well.

## II. The multilingual dialectic: Revisiting Bakhtin

The Lorde-inspired concept of the “multilingual dialectic” clearly recalls Bakhtin’s dialogic imagination, which, as discussed at length in earlier chapters, constitutes one of the earliest and most significant theories of modern literary multilingualism. However, similar as they may appear, Lorde and Bakhtin diverge in their ethical visions of difference and subjective/linguistic permeability, and it is important to consider how this divergence reflects back on *Wakean* multilingual ethics. At this point, as we continuously cultivate an ever-growing, ever-transforming sense of ethical responsibility in relation to reading the *Wake* (and, indeed, any text), let us revisit Bakhtin’s concept of the dialogic imagination, which has opened up so many valuable creative pathways for thinking about Joycean multilingualism thus far.

In previous chapters, I used two major components of Bakhtin’s multilingual theory in my analysis of the *Wake*’s poetic language. The first was Bakhtin’s position that “[t]he new cultural and creative consciousness lives in an actively polyglot world,” wherein national languages, “territorial dialects, social and professional dialects and jargons, literary language, generic languages within literary language” and so forth all coexist in a “process of active, mutual cause-and-effect and [external and internal] interillumination.”<sup>17</sup> This premise supplied the basis for thinking about *Wake* as a multivalent but unified narrative system, wherein multilingualism plays an irreducible part (as opposed to simply supplying stylistic ornamentation that can safely be discarded or undermined in translation, either into other languages or into monolingual plot summaries). The second was his concept of narrative stylisation, defined in *The Dialogic Imagination* as “an artistic representation of another’s linguistic style, an artistic image of another’s language,” which culminates in the novel through an interillumination with the

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<sup>17</sup> Bakhtin, “Epic and Novel,” 12.

“contemporaneous language” of the styliser (i.e. the author): this dialogic process “creat[es] specific resonances between the stylized language and the linguistic consciousness contemporaneous with it..., which expresses not only a stylized but also a stylizing language- and art-intention.”<sup>18</sup>

In chapter 2 of this thesis, Bakhtin’s notion of narrative stylisation productively accentuated the fictionality of the languages, language fragments, registers, and various types of discourse that Joyce weaves into his multilingual texts, including *Ulysses*, the *Wake*, and even *Dubliners*. The concept offered a useful terminology to theorise what I coined in that chapter as the “iconic” and “vehicular” functionalities of the different languages identifiable in those works. In an analysis of literary style, Bakhtin’s theory has thus proven immensely productive. However, as we move towards a consideration of multilingualism as an ethics of reading, we must also account for the ethical and theoretical limitations of his particular approach to the dialogic imagination.

Bakhtin’s vision of literary multilingualism rests on a number of normativising assumptions about the substance and purpose of modern literature, as well as what types of bodies and languages can participate in the literary event. Firstly, he treats authorial intent as a determining factor in prose writing<sup>19</sup>: it is presumed throughout *The Dialogic Imagination* that the author is an able-bodied male<sup>20</sup> who writes with a clear, determinate discursive intent, which organises and systemises the language of the novel into a mirror image of an objective reality. Bakhtin determines that the purpose of literature is to offer a faithful representation of the objective world, and he judges the novel form to be the superior literary genre that is best equipped for the job, in great part thanks to novelists’ strategic use of heteroglossia. On the one hand, Bakhtin presents heteroglossia, both within and beyond the novel, as linguistic interanimation, which constitutes a cosmos of multiple “internally variegated languages” that are “dialogically coordinated.”<sup>21</sup> However, his notion of literary multilingualism ultimately becomes subjected to the

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<sup>18</sup> Mikhail M. Bakhtin, “Discourse in the Novel,” in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Michael Holquist and Caryl Emerson Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 362.

<sup>19</sup> One of the fundamental premises of *The Dialogic Imagination* is that the novel form, objectified as a realist work of prose, counteracts the idealisation of language and literary subject matter performed by poetic forms (e.g. the epic poem).

<sup>20</sup> The reasons for picking up this aspect of Bakhtin’s idiocultural perspective will become clear in the course of this chapter as I move on to consider readerly engagement with the *Wake* through the scope of gender and disability theory.

<sup>21</sup> Bakhtin, “Discourse in the Novel,” 296.

author's "art-intention": "[A novelist] can make use of language without wholly giving himself up to it, he may treat it as semi-alien or completely alien to himself, while *compelling language ultimately to serve all his own intentions*. The author does not speak in a given language..., but he speaks, as it were, *through* language, a language that has somehow more or less materialized, become objectivized, that he merely ventriloquates."<sup>22</sup> Thus, even while arguing that different languages, registers, and styles of discourse can "interanimate" and dislocate one another—that they are permeable and interactive—Bakhtin does not directly address the creative potential of the dialectic beyond authorial intent or control. He builds his theory of novelistic discourse on an objectification of that dialectic, rather than a direct, embodied engagement with it. The absence of the reader figure leaves a significant gap in Bakhtin's analytical framework. His exclusive attention to the determinate, structural, and replicable aspects of the literary event ultimately fail to account for the variability, changeability, and indeterminacy so intrinsic to reading *Wakean* multilingualism.<sup>23</sup> As such, the ethically and politically oriented work of writers such as Philip and Lorde, alongside a number of other feminist, queer, and disability theorists I will engage with throughout this chapter, can offer a far more encompassing and productive approach to understanding the *Wake's* particular multilingual creativity and ethics within a postcolonial and global literary context.

### III. The *Wake's* multilingual ethics through embodiment

#### iii.1 *Theorising embodiment*

"It is true that 'the things' in question are my own, that the whole operation takes place (as we say) 'in me,' within my landscape, whereas the problem is to institute another landscape."<sup>24</sup>

An active and hospitable readerly engagement with the *Wake's* multilingualism predisposes the conditions for new ethical approaches to difference—including the potential difficulty of encountering difference carried by

<sup>22</sup> Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," 299–300; my emphasis.

<sup>23</sup> As shown in examples throughout this project, each literary event is weathered by variable factors, such as the time and place of reading; the continuum of the reader's conscious and unconscious thoughts, emotions, and associations; a person's particular mode of reading, be that quietly to oneself or aloud in a reading group or onstage in an interpretative performance; the reader's singular bodily disposition, multilingual repertoire, or idiocultural specificity, etc.

<sup>24</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "The Intertwining—The Chiasm," in *The Visible and the Invisible*, ed. Claude Lefort, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 141.

literary language and embodied by the reader her- or himself. The materiality of Joyce's poetic language confronts the reader with the pleasures and challenges of such encounters with otherness that take place as much in the public sphere (to the extent that languages and literacy are learned, not in-born: we adopt them through education and social interaction) as within our own bodies. Reading is a bodily activity, and the *Wake* in particular is a text that needs to be read aloud—a text that demands to be *embodied*.

Some of the most adamant critics and allies of *Wakean* multilingualism alike have been known to exercise what Janet Price and Margrit Shildrick, in their essay “Bodies Together: Touch, Ethics and Disability,” call the “denial of the body,” which expresses itself in the encounter with difference. “The issue of bodily difference—read as impairment,” they argue,

is positioned as a ‘problem’ for [the disabled body] alone, and the engagement of others, whether read as assistance or interference and control, *is distanced*. It is almost as though the body were simply a more or less troublesome possession that had little to do with one's own sense of self, still less played any part in the instantiation of other selves. In disability politics, and to a large extent in theory, that *putative split between mind and body* has been perpetuated to the extent that the body is seen simply as the focus of discriminatory practices on the part of wider society which limit the possibilities open to its owner.<sup>25</sup>

In literary criticism, this concept becomes manifested in theoretical moves that overlook the material singularity of both text and reader, or indeed fail to critically account for the fact that reading is a bodily activity that does not produce strictly replicable or predictable outcomes (interpretative, experiential, creative, etc.). Disability theory resonates with multilingual engagement in that it critically accounts for the presence of the body within discourse: through this theoretical scope, language and text become more than disembodied, unified ideological systems and instead are considered in dialogic relation to the body, with all of its idiocultural singularity, unpredictability, and changeability.

The *Wake's* multilingualism has persistently endured corrective centralisation through various, intently monolingual critical and readerly accounts that have attempted to establish a single “coherent” and “comprehensible” (to whom?) narrative plot and structure, a cast of characters, and primary (as opposed to

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<sup>25</sup> Janet Price and Margrit Shildrick, “Bodies Together: Touch, Ethics and Disability,” in *Disability/Postmodernity* (London and New York: Continuum, 2002), 67.

secondary or ornamental) languages, symbols, historical connotations, and events. For example, Margot Norris's *The Decentered Universe of "Finnegans Wake"* (1976)—a pioneering theoretical analysis of the *Wake*'s poetic language—reads Joyce's multilingual stylisations as a "bizarre, distorted language," an "interference" obstructing the flow of information between text and reader, and as something that fractures the structural and syntactical integrity of English (albeit to productive ends).<sup>26</sup> C. K. Ogden treated the multilingualism of *Wake* on the basis of a similar premise in his 1932 transposition of "Anna Livia Plurabelle" into Basic English: "Where names of rivers have been used simply for their sound they are put into the Basic story without any change, and underlined. Words from Latin and other languages are given in the same way."<sup>27</sup> In other words, the Basic English transposition was almost completely stripped of the multilingualism of the original and, where multilingual elements did make the cut (although, notably, those surviving elements were only proper names and Latin words, suggesting that Ogden gave Latin a different relational status to that of any other non-English language he could identify in the text), they were explicitly demarcated, placing a special emphasis on the *difference* between Basic English and *Wake* ("two languages," he called them), and ultimately between monolingual and multilingual writing, whereby the multilingual narrative was the one positioned as the "other."

These examples reveal a subtle theoretical predisposition that, inadvertently or otherwise, treats the difference of an-other as impairment and thereby a problem that needs to be controlled or corrected. As Price and Shildrick suggest, "For those who perceive themselves as matching the norm, there is a drive to mastery of the other," which in the context of disability stems from a systemic "denial of [the] subjectivity [of the disabled or what may be perceived as 'different' bodies] and almost exclusive focus on the possibilities of 'mending broken bodies.'"<sup>28</sup> This manner of relating establishes a complex of power relations, enabled and perpetuated by a series of prescribed boundaries that we internalise and repeatedly exercise in social as well as literary spaces.

One could argue that an inanimate object like a text cannot, and perhaps should not, be compared to the dispositions of disabled bodies in either social or theoretical spaces. I would posit, however, that in the event of reading, the text

<sup>26</sup> Norris, *Decentered Universe of Finnegans Wake*, 131.

<sup>27</sup> C. K. Ogden, "James Joyce's 'Anna Livia Plurabelle' in Basic English," *transition*, no. 21 (March 1932): 259.

<sup>28</sup> Price and Shildrick, "Bodies Together," 63.



materialises through and within the body of the reader, and therefore the act of literary engagement has to be theorised through embodiment. The *Wake* is a text that deliberately accentuates and capitalises on its own poetic materiality, or its own poetic bodyliness. How we choose an appropriate accent in which to perform this text, or the “right” rhythm to read it in, or even what we deem to be the language in which the book is written, are all routine questions that are unanswerable if we consider the cultural, linguistic, and bodily diversity of Joyce’s readers. In this respect, disability theory offers a discerning theoretical language that enables us to talk about embodiment as a pivotal ethical and stylistic issue in literary engagement and invention. As Price and Shildrick put it (with an implicit nod to Merleau-Ponty),

The disintegrity and permeability of bodies, the fluctuations and reversibility of touch, the inconsistency of spatial and morphological awareness, the uncertainty of the future, are all features that may be experienced with particular force in the disabled body, but they are by no means unique to it.<sup>29</sup>

Although these authors do not explicitly refer to the relationality of reading in this instance, their argument does invite us to think about the dynamics of touching in social and theoretical spaces, and the perpetually shifting boundaries that are garnered and reinforced within those spaces.<sup>30</sup> When boundaries are “hard,” they have the capacity to segregate, stabilise, form power relations, and potentially violate the singularity of the bodies that they work to contain and “correct.” So in the context of the *Wake*, when we run into the boundaries between ourselves and the text-as-other, we have the choice to succumb to disappointed expectations and abandon the conversation altogether; we may attempt to assimilate, and potentially deform, an-other subject or language within a familiar, hard-bounded structure; or we can reach for that other by analysing the constitution and functionality of our boundaries, re-evaluating their placement and texture, and considering the creative potential of becoming hospitable to difference, while equally searching for a hospitable place that we may inhabit or connect with in an-other. Simply put, being able to read *Finnegans Wake* unencumbered by a frustration with its multilingualism requires a re-evaluation of our readerly habits and methods.

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<sup>29</sup> Price and Shildrick, “Bodies Together,” 74.

<sup>30</sup> Indeed, Margrit Shildrick’s independent work does concern itself with the theoretical and ethical issues arising from embodied engagement with literature and discourse. I will revisit her to touch upon her more textually-engaged theoretical work in the course of this chapter.

This chapter will explore some of the ways in which we, as readers, are able to engage with the *Wake*'s complex, multilingual narrative from within the singularity of our bodies, considering the diversity of bodies and the importance of embodied experience in readerly engagement. To begin this exploration, I will revisit the phonological signatures of several of the book's major actors, particularly ALP and Issy. I will use the incestuous I.6 passage following the tenth quiz question—"What bitter's love but yurning, what' sour lovmutch but a bref burning till shee that drawes dothe smoake retourne?" (143.28-29)—as a primary textual example. Through an analysis of the conversational dynamics and power relations among the different bodies, voices, languages, and registers represented in the passage, I will discuss the text's ethical poetics and multilingual performativity. Ultimately, I would like to demonstrate through the practice of embodied reading that the multilingualism of the *Wake* is not merely a stylistic fancy or a means of "systematic darkening,"<sup>31</sup> but rather it has the capacity to touch us and to illuminate things that disembodied methods of reading may otherwise leave in the dark.

### *iii.2 Multilingualism, monstrosity, and concorporeality*

As explored in chapter 2, phonological signatures are one of the integral multilingual techniques that enable *Wake* characters to become poetically embodied beyond semantic reference in the text. These recurring rhythmic, phonic, visual, and phonetic patterns serve as marks of identification as well as instruments of character development. Phonological signatures aid the reader in navigating through the complex multilingual fabric of the narrative and also form a crucial new dimension in the reader's ethical and creative engagement with the text. They are traditionally regarded in *Wake* criticism as manifestations of character voices, as in the case of HCE's guilt-ridden stammer. Here I will push this concept even further to argue that phonological signatures also signal that a particular character is speaking, is being spoken to or about, or is speechlessly present, as in the case of the multilingual registers associated with Issy.

Issy's Swiftian "little language," which occasionally descends into outright baby talk, and ALP's lisp constitute some particularly potent examples of phonological signatures with pronounced ethical and political significance. As

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<sup>31</sup> Bishop, *Joyce's Book of the Dark*, "Finnegans Wake," 4.

previously shown, ALP's register is woven of phoneme clusters dense in approximant, or "liquid," consonants such as *l* and *r*, as well as onomatopoeic renderings of water, which symbolise her bodily and connotative fluidity. Meanwhile, Issy as the little raincloud, Nuvoletta, frequently appears with her entourage of rainbow girls (sparkling droplets of rain), all of which suggests that the *Wake's* varieties of "liquid" languages can also become indicative of several of the book's female characters. Thus, through the sheer materiality of language, even in moments of semantic ambiguity or apparent obscurity, these characters become phonologically embodied in the text: "Tell me till my thrillme comes" (148.2), "Paa lickam laa lickam, apl lpa!" (298.1), or "And they leap so looply, looply, as they link to light" (226.25-26). Through their distinctive phonologies, these characters become linked, and the boundaries between their voices, identities, bodies, and spatial-temporal landscapes show themselves to be permeable.

The multilingual motif "mishe mishe" (3.9) or "*Misi misi!*" (148.1) onomatopoeically invokes ALP's lispings "pigeony linguish" (584.4) along with the sounds of Liffey/Livia's riverly landscape: winds whispering through the "meadowgrass and riverflags, the bulrush and waterweed" (207.2-4), birds whooshing through the air, ALP's long, red tresses brushing together like tree leaves, and so on. Through its multilingual referentiality, the motif also voices the Irish "mise," meaning "I" or "I am"—in other words, ALP literally identifying herself—and the Irish English "whisht," meaning "hush" or "shut up!" So every time we encounter the phrases "whish, O whish" (407.11), "waitawhishts" (345.11), or even the "Highbosomheaving Missmisstress Morna" (189.25), we are experiencing a textual embodiment of Anna Livia. ALP's phonological signature thus renders her body inseparable from her culturally rooted register. Through her lisp, her body becomes one with her speech. The poetic rendering of that lisp enables the body of the character to circumvent the abstraction of descriptive semantics and materialise in a complexly onomatopoeic, culturally and temporally specific register. It also alludes to the aesthetic and semantically transformative changes that every reader advertently or inadvertently creates as s/he singularly embodies literary language in any event of reading.

As we venture to perform the text, *we* come to embody ALP's speech. We acquire her accent, her rhythm and vocabulary; our reading flows when she flows, and we lisp, repeat ourselves, stammer, or stumble when she does. Inadvertently, even as we fully embody our own singularity—that is, our own peculiar accents,

spoken registers, and material or hermeneutic predispositions—we become infused with an-other body: a fictional body that is also, in some small or great part, a historical body<sup>32</sup>; and, at the same time, we become infused with the body, or materiality, of the text. In return, as those “other” bodies, spaces, and temporalities inhabit us, we come to inhabit them because their ability to voice their presence in the world through their modes and manners of speech depends upon our ability and desire to render them, as well as upon the performative choices that we make in the event of reading.

Thus the act of reading and performance engages multiple bodies, spaces, temporalities, and languages in a centrifugal process of *transmaterialisation*: the abstract qualities of language, such as syntax or semantics, materialise in the reader's holistically embodied performance; the graphic form of language transitions into a mental, phonological, and gestural form; the temporality of memory becomes complicated as historical and mythological events leap into the immediate moment of the act of reading; while the body of the reader succumbs to the holding influence and transformative effects of the text within the singularity of the reading event. In that process of centrifugal transfer and exchange, boundaries become increasingly permeable. And, as we stretch, permeate, or even puncture these boundaries, we have the potential to cause what Price and Shildrick call “the breakdown of normative certainty,” manifesting itself in the “failure to hold in place the boundaries that are usually so well practised that we can take them for granted.”<sup>33</sup>

The text's demand to embody and be embodied—to touch and be touched—is an ethical gesture that tests literary engagement as an act of hospitality to otherness. Transmaterialisation, as a concept, is influenced by the works of

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<sup>32</sup> My use of the term “historical” here refers to the (in no way exhaustive or definitive) possibility of reading a character like ALP in conversation with the literary, cultural, political, and even biographical imagery that the text may potentially conjure up. For example, Joyce wrote to Italo Svevo in a letter from February 20, 1924 that he had “given the name of Signora Schmitz”—that is, Livia Svevo, Italo Svevo's spouse—“to the protagonist of the book I am writing,” thereby formulating a historical-biographical basis for the character. In the biography, Ellmann also quotes from an interview Joyce apparently gave to an Italian journalist: “They say I have immortalized Svevo, but I've also immortalized the tresses of Signora Svevo. These were long and reddish-blond ... The river at Dublin passes dye-houses and so has reddish water. So I have playfully compared these two things in the book I'm writing. A lady in it will have the tresses which are really Signora Svevo's.” It could also be said that ALP is a character written in the past while simultaneously becoming perpetually rewritten in the present, through the creative dialectic transpiring in the event of reading. Stuart Gilbert, *The Letters of James Joyce*, vol. 1, *The Complete Letters of James Joyce* (New York: The Viking Press, 1966), 211–12; Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce*, Second Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 561.

<sup>33</sup> Price and Shildrick, “Bodies Together,” 68.

phenomenologists such as Merleau-Ponty and Susan Cataldi,<sup>34</sup> who have directly inspired Margrit Shildrick's transdisciplinary theoretical writings, tackling the ethical issues arising from the encounters between bodies and discourses. Her interests encompass a variety of medical, literary, theoretical, and creative narratives, and as such her work is truly unique and impactful across several disciplines, including but not limited to bioethics, disability theory, philosophy, and feminist phenomenology. In particular, her concepts of "monstrous corporeality" and "concorporeality" offer a discerning theoretical language for the multilingual ethics of the *Wake*, which I will briefly explore throughout the rest of this section.

These concepts are traceable to Judith Butler, particularly her position on the unseverability of language from the body: "language and materiality are not opposed, for language both is and refers to that which is material, and what is material never fully escapes from the process by which it is signified."<sup>35</sup> Shildrick extrapolates this premise in her own phenomenological re-evaluation of the ethics of certain medical practices, such as organ transplantation<sup>36</sup> and corrective surgical interventions into the bodies of conjoined twins,<sup>37</sup> whereby she explores the emotional and psychological depth of the subjective experiences of patients coming to share or fully embody the bodily tissue of other human beings. Through her original theoretical frameworks, discursive "embodiment" takes on a deep, literal significance. Indeed, what would we make of our objectified notion of "otherness" or "difference" if we were able to locate its presence not simply near us but within us? What would we make of our embodied experience of a language if we recognised that it contains the syntactical, phonological, cultural, or ideological "organs" of other, "foreign" languages?

Shildrick's "monstrous corporeality" and "concorporeality" emerge from an ethically-minded critique of what she describes as "the modernist phantasy" constructed by Cartesian discourse. Descartes's philosophical distinction between body and mind ("I think, therefore I am") underpins the idea that the "subject"

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<sup>34</sup> Cataldi's *Emotion, Depth, and Flesh: A Study of Sensitive Space. Reflections on Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy of Embodiment* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993) is one of the earliest and most influential feminist re-imaginings of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of "the flesh of the world" and intersubjective (or cross-bodily) "transitivity" as conceived in *The Visible and the Invisible*, ed. Claude Lefort, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968).

<sup>35</sup> Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits Of "sex"* (Abingdon, Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2011), 37–38.

<sup>36</sup> Margrit Shildrick, "Visceral Phenomenology: Organ Transplantation, Identity, and Bioethics," in *Feminist Phenomenology and Medicine* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2014), 47–68.

<sup>37</sup> Shildrick, "You Are There Like My Skin."

(which encompasses “bodies of knowledge and bodies of matter”<sup>38</sup>) is autonomous, definable, predictable, and bounded: the “normative subject” as conceived by the Western philosophical discourses she problematizes “is marked by the closed skin boundaries of the body”; it represents the fantasy “of a stable, autonomous and singular human subject as the centre of the logos; of a self that is foundational without being embodied; and of a body whose morphological integrity is so unquestioned that it may be forgotten, transcended.”<sup>39</sup> We could compare this conceptualisation of “the normative subject” to the discussion of narrative fluency and communicability of translations explored in chapter 3: while there may be both practical and ideological justifications for containing “bodies of knowledge” such as texts (and the “bodies of matter” who read them) within the clearly defined structural boundaries of a single standard, replicable, and unified language form (this is, in other words, the monolingual paradigm revived), such discursive practices fail to do justice to bodies that disrupt, defy, or simply do not fit into the normative mould. Shildrick’s problematization of normative subjectivity creates a discursive space dedicated to bodies that logocentric philosophical discourses have traditionally excluded. She envisions a discursive practice that is hospitable to variability and changeability—indeed, to monstrosity: “Above all,” she writes, “it is the corporeal ambiguity and fluidity, the troublesome lack of fixed definition, the refusal to be either one thing or the other, that marks the monstrous as a site of disruption.”<sup>40</sup> The *Wake*’s peculiar multilingual design, wherein no single language appears in isolation from an-other (the reader can never clearly differentiate Dutch from German, or English from Russian, in the text), embodies precisely that fluidity and ambiguity that disarms all normative or universalising definitions of what either languages, literary texts, cultures, or readers should be or should do. As explored through various critical perspectives and modes of textual engagement in this thesis, there lies immense creative and scholarly value in doing justice to the *Wake*’s multilingualism as well as the vast bodily, intellectual, linguistic, cultural, economic, and contextual diversity of Joyce’s readers. Through the works of feminist and queer theorists such as Shildrick and Butler, I also aim to show the ethical value of embodied, multilingual engagement with this text.

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<sup>38</sup> Shildrick, “You Are There Like My Skin,” 161.

<sup>39</sup> Shildrick, “You Are There Like My Skin,” 160.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

iii.3 *Comprehending the monster*

As readers of Joyce, how do we come to terms with our yearning for familiarity and recognition when the multilingual text is asking us to hospitably contain its uncontrollable difference within our own landscapes (to use Merleau-Ponty's terms)? And how can we ethically theorise, translate, and do justice to a text that breaches *our* personal boundaries—a text that has the capacity to creatively inspire as much as to offend, and even hurt? “The difficulty, as I understand it,” suggests Shildrick,

lies in the notion—indeed the reality—of hybridity, for despite an everyday acknowledgement of our external communication and connection with others, the psychosocial imaginary maintains the illusion that each embodied subject is self-complete and occupies a clearly demarcated territory sealed by the boundary of the skin. The body that is less than bordered, distinct, and wholly itself is the matter of deep anxiety, literally the stuff of nightmares or horror movies where alien elements may breach the boundaries of the body to effect a mode of concorporeality that subverts the embodied subject from within.<sup>41</sup>

Because counting the languages of the *Wake* and meticulously translating its multilingual elements has served as an important strategy for Joyce's scholars and readers trying to come to grips with the text,<sup>42</sup> it seems intuitive to engage with *Wakean* multilingualism as if it is a sum of multiple languages, registers, accents, styles of discourse, and fragments thereof, rather than as a unified and yet permeable, interactive whole—“Wakese.” Indeed, the prospect of a leaky, unstable, and unpredictable text wherein each line can split off into multiple discursive and metadiscursive layers, only to encounter and become further moved and proliferated by the shifting complexity of the reader's own singularity, can be a terrifying experience—and certainly one for which critics are only beginning to cultivate a theoretical language. The language of the *Wake* renders it a non-normative text, whose resistance to standardisation has turned it into a “monstrous” text for many readers.

A key ethical challenge, which is also a practical one, is objectification that simultaneously results from and enables a distancing away from that otherness which

<sup>41</sup> Shildrick, “Visceral Phenomenology,” 58.

<sup>42</sup> *The Wake Newslitter*, McHugh's *Annotations*, and *FWEET* are prominent examples of such study guides, as are the various standalone lexicons of non-English words in the text, such as O'Hehir's *Gaelic Lexicon*. The practice of splitting up and Anglifying the *Wake*'s multilingual elements is also standard in *Wake* reading groups.

feels too foreign for comprehension: structures of sameness—of self-constitution through recognition or mirroring—such as national or cultural affiliation, moral values, linguistic identification (as in the ways we identify languages by, and correctively maintain their adherence to, standardised vocabulary, phonology, grammar, and script), and so on struggle to grasp an-other without assimilating them into familiar frameworks. Yet assimilation requires a correction of an-other, which functions as an exercise of power over difference as opposed to a dialogic transformation. To reiterate Cixous, “the most difficult thing to do is to arrive at the most extreme proximity while guarding against the trap of projection, of identification. The other must remain absolutely strange within the greatest possible proximity.”<sup>43</sup> Enacting such disassimilative proximity in our reading practices constitutes an important aspect of multilingual ethics, and yet a difficult thing to sustain consistently and absolutely when we are dealing in language.

The only way we *can* relate through language is to translate it: in order to be able to touch and be touched by literature, to dialogically relate with otherness, we have to locate the familiar within it—the thing that we can recognise at least in part and to which we can respond. This is why *Wokean* multilingualism can create meanings and experiences despite its originality and incomparability: strange phrases and neologisms open themselves up for recognition and productive interpretation because, though they rarely look like any words we have seen before, they always *sound* like something familiar—even if that subjective sense of familiarity becomes completely constructed by the reader. In a similar vein, a translator has to identify, however idiosyncratically, the language of the text in order to be able to transfer it into an-other language. Doing justice to difference thus inevitably necessitates a recognition of its differentiation from the familiar. It is the slipperiness of this perpetual, dialogic process of transmaterialisation that can foster uncertainty, anxiety, and potentially a desire to control the monstrous text through assimilation. In Shildrick’s terms,

It is, then, the failure of the monster to occupy only the place of the other that betrays the fragility of the distinctions by which the human subject is fixed and maintained as fully present to itself and autonomous. In collapsing the boundaries between self and other, monsters constitute an undecidable absent presence at the heart of the human being. Alongside their external manifestation, they leave also a trace embedded within, that, in Derridean

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<sup>43</sup> Cixous, “The Author in Truth,” 171.



terms, operates as the signifier not of difference but of *différance*. What is at stake throughout is *the risk of indifferenciation*.<sup>44</sup>

Within the scope of relational ethics and ethical embodiment as explored by Merleau-Ponty, Shildrick, Butler, Lorde, and many others, there lies a clear ethical problem in the act of “monsterring” an other—in this case a multilingual text that many readers find difficult, exhausting, and in various ways painful to read. When or if embodied, empathetic relating becomes too painful for the individual reader at a particular moment, a self-distancing is and should be an ethical option. To refuse a tired reader the right to rest from a demanding relational engagement would enable a different kind of ethical and bodily violence rooted in ableism, and that is not an ethics I would stand for.

The ethical problem of some *Wake* criticism that I would rather wish to address lies in those acts that attempt to universalise and institutionalise the rejection or objectification of difference through theoretical systems devised to repeatedly and sustainably control and stabilise the unruliness of the monster instead of hospitably engaging with it. For example, F. R. Leavis’s problem with *Work in Progress* was rooted in a culturally specific tradition of corrective reading—which, in his *Scrutiny* review, materialises in the distressed refrain: “Why is Joyce not Shakespeare?”; or C. K. Ogden’s aspiration to creating a universal language, Basic English, that would concern itself not with beauty, poetic adventure, creativity, or literary singularity but “rather with economy of material, with the reduction of mnemonic machinery, and with the provision of an analytic instrument at once simple, serviceable, and sufficient.” In his 1931 book *Debabelization*, which appears to have been written as a promotional pamphlet for his invention of Basic English, he does concede that “This does not mean that the international language is expected to have the *perfection of mathematical symbolism*, but it must be progressively felt as moving in that direction.”<sup>45</sup>

Clearly *Wakean* multilingualism failed Ogden’s test of discursive legitimacy from the outset. One could argue, of course, that Joyce’s multilingual project simply differs from Basic English in function and purpose—one is an artistic endeavour and the other an economic tool of communication—and therefore the two do not stand to be compared. However, Ogden did compare his linguistic-universalisation project with *Work in Progress*, and he even conceptualised *Wakean* multilingualism as an

<sup>44</sup> Shildrick, “You Are There Like My Skin,” 163; my emphasis.

<sup>45</sup> Ogden, *Debabelization*, 21–22; my emphasis.

international language that was akin to Basic English: “If we prefer to imagine that [English] will gradually absorb other languages in virtue of its adaptability, flexibility, and analytic simplicity—taking what it needs *from all*, we get what may be called *Pasic*: a foretaste of such a language may be found in the later work of James Joyce.”<sup>46</sup> In his writings, Ogden regards *Wakese* as a type of globalised English, as well as a kind of natural linguistic progression of globalisation as an economic, social, and political phenomenon. He sees English as a world language whose absolute reign is in fact only a matter of time, and he chose to seize that 1930s moment to optimise the language for that purpose, thereby disregarding multilingual experiments like Joyce’s for their ineffectual performance in that regard and instead offering the tidy, 850-word structure of Basic English as the remedy against the threat of global instability and unruliness. The economic and political necessity of such a universal language stands undisputed in his view: “The so-called national barriers of today are ultimately language barriers. The absence of a common medium of communication is the chief obstacle to international understanding, and therefore the chief underlying cause of War. It is also the most formidable obstacle to the progress of international Science, and to the development of international Commerce.”<sup>47</sup> He posits, therefore, that “it is the business of all internationally-minded persons to make Basic English part of the system of education in every country, so that there may be less chance of war, and *less learning of languages—which, after all, for most of us, are a very unnecessary waste of time.*”<sup>48</sup>

Ogdenian ethics thus dictate that the diversity, complexity, pleasures, and difficulties of multilingualism are at best irrelevant and at worst—dangerous obstacles to world peace and economic prosperity. He imagines that a fixed and unchangeable linguistic system operative on a global scale is actually possible, and that the reason why it has not been successfully implemented to date is that the perfect universal language simply has not been designed yet. He, therefore, offers his own design, which he argues meets all of the standards of brevity, clarity, learnability, and coherence modelling the successful universal language. Unfortunately for Basic English, its fundamental premise is unrealisable in practice as speaking bodies inevitably transform the languages with which they engage. The imperialist (and implicitly eugenicist) ideology underpinning Ogden’s construct

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<sup>46</sup> Ogden, *Debabelization*, 15–16.

<sup>47</sup> Ogden, *Debabelization*, 13.

<sup>48</sup> Ogden, *Debabelization*, 11–12; my emphasis.

invites a resistance to the transmaterialisation and perpetual changeability of living speech, which is in fact always multilingual, even if it can sometimes appear otherwise. Jespersen, whose work significantly influenced Joyce's as discussed in chapter 1, also advocated the need for an international language,<sup>49</sup> but he simultaneously acknowledged the transformative dialogic relationship between languages and speaking bodies:

people keep many of their speech-habits, especially with regard to articulation and accent, even while using the vocabulary, etc., of the new language, which thus to a large extent is tinged by the old language. There is thus created what is now generally termed a *substratum* underlying the new language. As the original substratum modifying a language which gradually spreads over a large area varies according to the character of the tribes subjugated in different districts, this would account for many of those splittings-up of languages which we witness everywhere.<sup>50</sup>

Ogden's treatment of language as a disembodied, mechanical system, and his handling of multilingual difference as impairment and a dangerous monstrosity that needs to be controlled and corrected, thus stands to affect the living bodies who speak in language. The reductive value system that underpins the universalisation of Basic English acts as an assimilative projection on the bodies that voice, write, inhabit, and reversibly create and engage with languages and literature, as well as with each other *through* languages and texts. Ogden's theory exposes the ethical difference between acts of *using* language and acts of *embodying* language; *using* a body compared to *inhabiting* and *empathetically relating* to a body. In an ethical reflection on reading and embodying *Wokean* multilingualism, such an utilitarian approach to language must be problematized. This also illustrates how Shildrick's theoretical frameworks prove so illuminating in a discussion of the multilingual ethics of Joyce's monstrous text: "Just as feminist phenomenologists have challenged the assumption of a gender-neutral, ageless and universalised body as the centre of lived experience, so too we may gain further insights by theorising non-normative morphology, not as a failure of form"—which is how Ogden conceived of the unruly multilingualism of global communication—"but as an-other way of being."<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Jespersen, *Language*, 9.

<sup>50</sup> Jespersen, *Language*, 191–92.

<sup>51</sup> Shildrick, "You Are There Like My Skin," 161.

In her introduction to *She Tries Her Tongue*, M. NourbeSe Philip conveys the bodily impact of assimilative violence of and unto language through her own concorporeal form of postcolonial discourse—merging poetic with essay form, and the critical with the creative:

What happens to a language that is withheld or only used in a particular way with its users—does it become dissociated?

—one level business

—one level orders, commands, abuses, brutality

—one level education to a specific purpose and level

What of celebration?

What of love?

What of trust between individuals?<sup>52</sup>

While Shildrick identifies the fear of indifferenciation in the compulsively controlling, assimilative discourses that sustain the construct of the “normative subject,” Philip warns of the danger of dissociation, which can lead (and indeed historically has led) to violence and cruelty. Language becomes a tool of power—“one level orders, commands, abuses, brutality”—when we dissociate it from its viscerally transformative impact on the body. Therefore an ethics of multilingualism must be an ethics of pleasure, of hospitality to difference, of celebration of diversity, and of openness to change and unknowing, an empathetic relation to the unknowability of otherness, for “the greater violence would be to assume that the particularity of the other is within our grasp, that the place of the other is fully accountable from the outside.”<sup>53</sup>

#### iii.4 Ethical encounters with the Wake

The implications of the ethical tension between embodied and disembodied readings become palpably evident through the multilingual particularities of the “answer” to the tenth quiz question in I.6: “What bitter’s love but yurning, what’ sour lovemutch but a bref burning till shee that drawes dothe smoake retourne?” (*FW* 143.28-29). This passage is infused with sexual violence and incest, and yet it has been romanticised by several canonical Joyce scholars as playful and flirtatious<sup>54</sup> or

<sup>52</sup> Philip, *She Tries Her Tongue*, 22.

<sup>53</sup> Shildrick, “You Are There Like My Skin,” 161.

<sup>54</sup> For example, in John Gordon’s “*Finnegans Wake*”: *A Plot Summary*. Moreover, in their 1982 plot summary, *Understanding Finnegans Wake*, Danis Rose and John O’Hanlon similarly read this

has been cautiously ignored (as in Campbell and Robinson's *Skeleton Key*). Arguably, these readers were able to distance themselves from the interpretative and emotional difficulty of the text because they dismissed the narrative significance of its multilingualism—after all, Gordon's *Plot Summary* and the *Skeleton Key* are attempts to control the narrative(s) of the *Wake* by editing away its multilingualism in the latter or containing it within an unaccountable critical narrative in the former. And, as demonstrated in chapter 2, Issy, who is the “answer” to the tenth quiz question, often speaks without being named, so in some instances the reader can only recognise her by her phonological signature. This passage, therefore, cannot be read either ethically or analytically without engaging with its poetic language in an embodied and hospitable way. Owing to the nature of its dramatic content, this passage also carries some particularly strong examples of the paradoxical encounter between the danger and necessity of exercising a readerly ethics of embodiment.

This passage dramatizes a conversation between an overbearing male figure, who physically, linguistically, and ideologically intrudes upon a younger, smaller, and thus vulnerable female figure. The text does not identify her by name but rather conveys the presence of a little feminine body by the use of liquid, at times pidginy, “little language”: Issy's phonological signature. As the language of the passage appears relatively semantically accessible to the Anglophone reader, the depth and significance of its multilingual design can seem easier to overlook. Because of that, there lies a particularly pivotal ethical problem if we choose to demote the passage's multilingualism as secondary or ornamental and instead engage chiefly with its Anglophone components—which indeed is something that this passage generally permits. From the outset, the “answer” is narrated in little language, with a semantically evoked patronising message densely woven of diminutives: “I know, pipette, of course, dear, but listen, precious! Thanks, pette, those are lovely, pitounette, delicious!” (*FW* 143.31-32). This signals Issy's phonological signature but at this point it is not spoken or written in her voice: At this moment, the narrative

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passage as a dialogue between Issy and her mirror image, narrated chiefly in her own voice. They suggest: “She puts on her lipstick, pursing her lips in the mirror, saying: ‘Move your mouth towards minth, more, precioucest, more on more! ...’ It is her tete-a-tete with herself, over whom she is incurably jealous and impossibly erotic.” John O’Hanlon and Danis Rose, *Understanding Finnegans Wake: A Guide to the Narrative of James Joyce's Masterpiece* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1982), 94. In his *Reader's Guide to FW*, Tindall reads the tenth answer as “a dialogue between Shaun and Isabel,” who he suggests are represented as lovers despite also being brother and sister (116). Tindall recognises the Swiftian reference embodied in Issy's “little language” but he also problematically characterises her as a vain, flirtatious ingénue—“Her chief interest outside loving is clothing” (117)—and he even goes so far as to say, dismissively, that “Isabel, wherever she appears, is a constant bonehead.”

language is rather mirroring her voice. Like Swift writing his diminutive letters to Stella while she is not seen writing back,<sup>55</sup> the speaker is reflecting the presence of the sexualised girl in the specific register that he adopts especially in order to address, attract, and control her:

I bet you use her best Perisian smear off her vanity table to make them look so rosetop glowstop nostop. I know her. Slight me, would she? For every got I care! [I can pay my club like she.] Three creamings a day, the first during her shower and wipe off with tissue. Then after cleanup and of course before retiring. (143.36-144.4)<sup>56</sup>

It is significant that this excerpt reads as almost perfectly standard English, when it simultaneously is not. The multilingual design shines through every off-beat moment that sounds grammatically or syntactically incorrect, or in some way semantically ambiguous. The phrase “rosetop glowstop nostop” in particular acts as a subtle, almost inaudible interjection, reminiscent of Nuvoletta’s parenthetical interruptions to the “Mookse and the Gripes” fable later in the same chapter (that is, before she snatches the storyteller’s attention and concludes the fable in her own voice). And just as Nuvoletta will have to fight for recognition in the company of “obliviscent” “memmer” (*FW* 158.4, 158.5), the yet-unnamed Issy here iconically, speechlessly sits at her vanity table, smearing on lipstick while a paternal male figure, HCE, is watching her, disciplining her, touching her through his patronising tone and sexual innuendo, and consuming her voice in his dominant Anglophone register.

“[R]osetop glowstop nostop” contains a multilingual encounter as the grammatically off-beat and semantically ambiguous “pidginy” formulations rip through the fabric of standard English to materially expose the unarticulated sexual violence. The transgression of Issy’s boundaries materialises in the building tension in the repetition of “... stop! ... stop! ... stop!” A significant, and disturbing, coincidence of contraries occurs in the last verbal unit, “nostop,” which simultaneously contains the standard English imperative “no, stop!” and the pidgin

<sup>55</sup> Interestingly, in the earliest published versions of Swift’s letters to Stella from 1766, 1768, and 1784, editors Deane Swift and John Hawkesworth “used their editions to ‘improve’ upon the original letters, correcting the ‘little language’ ... which mimics infantile speech patterns, and omitting passages that they felt detracted from the clergyman’s dignity.” Abigail Williams, “The Difficulties of Swift’s Journal to Stella,” *Review of English Studies*, no. 62 (2011): 759, doi:10.1093/res/hgr009.

<sup>56</sup> James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, ed. Robert-Jan Henkes, Erik Bindervoet, and Finn Fordham (Oxford: Oxford World’s Classics, 2012). The square brackets contain the textual variant, which the editors omit in the main body of the text in this edition and include in their “Selected Variants” list on pp. 631–46. The current variant is sourced from the James Joyce Archive, vol. 49, pp. 479 and 478, and is listed on p. 635 of this edition. All such textual variants hereafter will appear square-bracketed in the quotes drawn from the *Wake*.

formulation “no stop,” meaning “don’t stop!” This paradoxical ambiguity is a characteristic feature of the *Wake*’s polyvalency of meaning, as both readings coexist tensely and simultaneously. Some readers might only pick up on one of them, and that in turn queries the ethics of reading, and even embodying, a textual manifestation of sexual violence with the potential of letting it go completely unnoticed. When mouthing and voicing the phrase, the reader’s lips pucker in the shape of a kiss. Embodying this language forces the reader to simultaneously invite the kiss and painfully resist it through the refrain “... stop! ... stop! ... stop!” The kiss becomes both a desire and a violent intrusion, and the reader gets caught in the precariousness of the text as the hospitality we carefully cultivate in our relation to poetic language opens us up to a forcible rupture of the boundaries that otherwise allow us to maintain a “safe” rhetorical distance from that violence.

As the scene develops, the tension escalates with Issy attempting to speak up through the dominant register:

Ha! O mind you poo tickly. Sall I puhim in momou. Mummum. Funny spot to have a finge! I’m terribly sorry, I swear to you I am! May you never see me [in my figure how I sleep gracefully] in my birthday pelts seenso tutu and that her blanches mainges may rot leprous off her whatever winking maggis I’ll bet by your cut you go fleurting after with all the glass on her and the jumps in her stomewhere! Haha! I suspected she was! Sink her! (144.34–145.4)<sup>57</sup>

Her presence is reflected in the baby talk directed at her—“I mind you poo tickly”—and subsequently in the inward roll of her infantile speech, “Sall I puhim in momou. Mummum.” Indeed, this growingly multilingual, interruptive register stretches the boundaries of onomatopoeic expression in that it not only renders the *sounds* of a muted mouth but it physically stuffs the reader’s mouth with dumbing, infantilising, and thereby disempowering language—in the way that HCE is stuffing Issy’s mouth with a finger, or another obtrusive object, through which she is attempting to speak without success. Once again, the text forces the reader into a position of embodying disempowerment, while paradoxically acting as the agent of that violence.

Through the act of linguistic embodiment, the reader becomes hospitable to the violence of the text. Such a forcible rupture of bodily boundaries between characters, and the reader and the text, further raises the question of what ethical, interpretative, theoretical, and stylistic implications may arise when the reader puts a

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<sup>57</sup> Textual variant listed in square brackets and sourced from JJA 47:76, 47:96. See “Selected Variants,” p. 635.

foreign object (such as a foreign language) in her or his mouth. Some playful and deeply suggestive allusions to these issues materialise in the following lines:

My Eilish assent he seed makes his admiracion. He is seeking an opening and means to be first with me as his belle alliance. Andoo musnoo play zeloso! Soso do todas. Such is Spanish. (144.10-13)

The register of this excerpt appears to be a mixture of baby talk and pidgin English, which the speaker ultimately claims is not English at all but is, in fact, Spanish. These lines show a gradual collapse of interlingual boundaries with what starts off as a heavily accented, pidgin form of English, embodying a speaker who is struggling with the pronunciation of standard English words (e.g. “My Eilish assent,”<sup>58</sup> which draws on “my English accent” visually, “my Irish accent” phonologically, and even “my hellish [or ‘ellish] accent/ascent”) and is employing non-standard grammar (“makes his admiracion” overrides what would be a more standard formulation, such as “pleases him” or “would please him,” “makes him admire me,” “makes him adore me”), possibly because she is a child or a foreigner (let us remember here that Issy’s mother, ALP, is also a foreigner of sorts, who speaks in “pigeony linguish”) who is still learning how to speak the language. With the following sentence, the text becomes even more semantically ambiguous by virtue of its non-normative formulation, as well as the semantic and syntactical gaps it manifests.

By “gaps” I mean the language’s quality of creating “unfinished sentences within a sentence,” such as the phrase “He is seeking an opening...,” which leaves the reader wondering: what is the nature and quality of this “opening”? Is it an opening in a physical space? Is it a metaphorical opening in language, in Issy’s speech, in her mental ability to internalise and comprehend his language? Or is it a literal opening in her clothes, or in her mouth or another body part that he is seeking to “block”<sup>59</sup>? Further, “means to be the first with me as his belle alliance,” an allusion to the Battle of Waterloo, also known as *La Belle Alliance*, functions as something akin to a pidgin formulation in terms of the loosely and variably positioned word order and grammatical structure. The multilingualism of the phrase

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<sup>58</sup> Note also the pun on “accent” with “assent” and “ascent,” suggesting that acquiring an acceptable English accent is an act of compliance and a rise towards an abstract, perhaps political or even moral, ideal.

<sup>59</sup> The term “block” seems particularly appropriate in this context, as a double entendre playing on the act of putting words in Issy’s (and the reader’s) mouth, which has the potential to impede her speech or block out her voice, as in “Sall I puhim in momou. Mummum,” and the slang term for sexual penetration as used in Joyce’s December 9, 1909 letter to Nora. James Joyce, *Selected Letters of James Joyce*, ed. Richard Ellamnn (London: Faber, 1975).



punctures the normative boundaries of standard English and thus accommodates several different statements simultaneously and equivocally, including, for example, “he wants to be my first (lover or husband),” “he wants to be the primary man in my life (as either a husband, a male sibling or a guardian could be),” and “the first thing he intends to do is be with me.” The Waterloo reference also suggests that her body is a battlefield—she is “*his* belle alliance” (my emphasis); and indeed, because this is a text, her body is linguistic: her body is language, and her language is a bloody intercultural power struggle. Thus the fracturing of syntactical and interlingual boundaries opens up semantically and formally creative gaps in the fabric of the narrative, which predisposes it to further expansion and enables it to accommodate a growing polyphony of registers, voices, and layers of meaning.

The boundaries of pidgin syntax in this scene disintegrate and subsequently transform into lisping baby talk (“Andoo musnoo play zeloso!”), which phonologically approximates English<sup>60</sup> but is a nearly complete graphological departure from (standard) written or literary English. Following that, “Soso do todas” wholly leaps out of Anglophone space and leaves the reader searching for an alternative linguistic landing. The narrative voice points to Spanish as a potential home for the phrase (“Such is Spanish.”), which could be believable to readers who are not fluent in the language but who may detect a touch of a Spanish phonological iconicity. However, this phrase inhabits the space within the boundaries of Spanish as hesitantly as “My Eilish assent he seed makes his admiracion” inhabits standard English. *FWEET* “translates” “soso” to mean “dull” or “insipid” in Spanish; “do” reportedly signifies the English preposition “in,” also from Spanish; while “todas” is listed as the Portuguese word for “all.” In an ethically slippery move, we could convert “Soso do todas” into standard English to yield a statement like “Dull in all”<sup>61</sup> (admittedly a phrase not entirely lacking in poetic charm), but to do so would not only obliterate the semantic expansiveness and poetic dynamism of the multilingual phrasing—this method of translation would flatten out Issy’s peculiar manner of speech and effectively efface her material presence from the narrative. Moreover, the iconic phonology that the speaker describes as “Spanish” is not only *not* a standard

<sup>60</sup> The multilingual formulation carries meanings like “And you must not play jealous” (“zeloso” being the Portuguese word for “jealous”) and “And you must not play zealously.” It should also be noted that “musnoo” could be read as both “must not” (or “must no” in a pidgin formulation) and “must (k)now,” which again in a pidgin formulation would be able to signify all meanings simultaneously: “And you must know/no play jealous/zealous.”

<sup>61</sup> *FWEET* also interprets this as a reference to the English proverb “Moderation is everything,” potentially revealing an additional layer of meaning. Raphael Slepon, “Finnegans Wake Extensible Elucidation Treasury (*FWEET*),” updated October 19, 2013, <http://fweet.org>.

or in any way fluent form of Spanish, but it is an effect of Issy's lisping baby talk. This material overlap between baby talk, Spanish, and Portuguese infantilises the multilingual element and thus positions it in a power struggle with English, which imposes an implicit corrective standard of speech in this passage. Therefore any attempt to contain, correct, or stabilise the multilingual register would result in a significant loss of semantic and poetic value. This is a deeply troubling move. It is also a compromising mode of reading, because the multilingual stylisations here are not only aesthetic and characterisation devices, but they evoke the relational dynamics between the characters. A material, embodied engagement with the multilingualism of the text thus reveals that its stylistic value is never purely aesthetic: rather, it creates distinct narrative levels, flowing through and within each other in a complex, non-linear, and perpetually shifting temporality.

As I've previously outlined, "little language," in its capacity as Issy's phonological signature, is a coincidence of contraries: it poetically alludes to Issy's presence in the narrative, and to that extent one could argue, as several scholars have done,<sup>62</sup> that utterances like "Of course I know, pettest, you're so learningful and considerate in yourself, so friend of vegetables, you long cold cat you!" (145.8-10) are spoken in her voice because of the use of diminutive verbal forms like "pettest," which recalls Swift's nickname for Stella, "Poppet," while also associating this girl-character with an "inarticulate" animal (perhaps a pet cat) in a gesture of apparent affection. However, this register is simultaneously a language put upon the character, and a language through which she gets put upon. Just as babies would not necessarily choose to speak in baby talk, but rather it is grown-ups who, from a position of power, have invented, designated, and perpetually reinforced baby talk as the appropriate register to use with children and pets, so it would be equally dubious and ethically problematic to presume that "little language" should be read exclusively in Issy's voice.

As the storylines unfold, the narrative language flips back and forth between Anglophone and pidgin formulations, which often bear the qualities of child language or otherwise mouth-filling, "speech-impeding" multilingual stylisations. For example, compare the relative ease or difficulty with which an English-speaking reader may embody the following exchanges: "I haven't felt so turkish for ages and ages!" and "Mine's me of squisious, the chocolate with a soul"; or "That's rights,

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<sup>62</sup> See for example: Gordon, *"Finnegans Wake": A Plot Summary*, 155.

hold it steady!” and “Leg me pull. Pu!”; or even more tellingly: “Sall I puhim in momou. Mummum” versus “I’m terribly sorry, I swear to you I am!” The passage dramatizes a dialogue that manifests itself both semantically and materially, through the text’s multilingual design. The register holding a particular utterance is telling of the disposition of the character that embodies it: it suggests where that character stands in the power relation to another character, in the way that the various languages and registers evoked in the text occupy different, and potentially changeable, positions of power within the narrative. Issy’s attempts at speaking for herself manifest in lispings pidgin formulations that can be evocative of baby talk in their syntactical “infantilism,” and that manner of speech gets systematically silenced by literally muting the character’s (and the reader’s) voice with mouth-filling language (“Mummum”), shushing (“Sht!” and “Peppt!” [144.17], “Listen, loviest!” [144.20], “For creepsake don’t make a flush!” [145.33], “Sh! nothing!,” “Wait! ... Hoost! Ahem!” [147.9-11], “Sh sh!” [148.4], and finally “Shshshsh! So long as the lucksmith. Laughs!” [148.32]), and correctively reinforcing through repetition the acceptable, comprehensible language form, which Issy is pressured to adopt so as to make herself understood: “Move your mouth towards minth, more, precioucest, more on more! To please me, treasure! Don’t be a, I’m not going to! Sh! nothing! A cricri somewhere!” (146.30-33). Consequently, we may read the following excerpt as Issy succumbing to the pressure put upon her language and asking to be “transnamed”—translated and renamed—so that she may finally be recognised:

Bite my laughters, drink my tears. Pore into me, volumes, spell me stark and spill me swooning. I just don’t care what my thwarters think. Transname me loveliness, now and here me for all times! (145.18-21)

This “assent” raises further troubling questions towards the ethics of centralising the *Wake* around a single language, syntactical system, or linear plot summary, or attempting to harden the boundaries that delineate the characters, languages, times, spaces, storylines, and other variable attributes of the book.

As boundaries break, or are forcibly broken, between languages, registers, and styles of discourse; between fictional bodies; between the text and the reader’s body in the event of literary engagement; between the reader’s singular sense of ethics and discursive “safety”; as well as within challenging, or even disturbing, scenes and ideas, the experience of *Finnegans Wake* actively, incestuously, and

irrevocably “challenges our preferences and preconceptions, ... stretches our powers of thought and feeling, [and] resists the encompassing grasp of our interpretive techniques.”<sup>63</sup> An embodied engagement with Joyce’s multilingual text compels the reader to become hospitable to otherness—that is, the otherness of the text and the holistic otherness that every body negotiates across personal boundaries—and to bear the mental, emotional, and physical consequences of that empathetic act. An ethics of embodied reading cultivates an awareness of the intimate encounter with the singularity of literary language as it transpires within one’s own body and in the present moment. This necessitates what Marian Eide calls “the immediate ethical responsibility in an intimate act of interpretation,” which, as she proposes, “may also constitute a public or [even] political intervention.”<sup>64</sup> We may take this further to suggest that the embodied rendering of the text is not a mere ventriloquy or a recollection of another, distant time, voice, or space, but rather the act of reading renders the occurrence of those “others” a *current* event, which brings us to further considerations of how an embodied reading may influence, and potentially transform, a person’s ethical and creative engagement with literature. As we become aware of the permeable boundaries between bodies in our shared spaces, we open up to the possibility that our reading habits and methods could have ethical, political, and even bodily consequences both within and beyond the event of reading.

#### IV. Multilingual homecoming: Encountering the familiar

It is important to note that the politics and ethics of engaging with the *Wake*’s multilingualism (as a form and style of writing) fit productively within the scope of postcolonial literature, as evidenced by its intimate relation to the multilingual works of poets like M. NourbeSe Philip. This connection, although explored in essay collections such as *Joyce, Imperialism, & Postcolonialism*<sup>65</sup> or *TransLatin Joyce*,<sup>66</sup> is yet to be fully accounted for, which may be due to the geographical distance between these writers, as well as a broad critical tendency to categorise, historicise, and

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<sup>63</sup> Derek Attridge, “Ethical Modernism: Servants as Others in J. M. Coetzee’s Early Fiction,” *Poetics Today* 25, no. 4 (2004): 654, <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/poet/summary/v025/25.4attridge.html>.

<sup>64</sup> Marian Eide, *Ethical Joyce* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 84–85.

<sup>65</sup> Leonard Orr, ed., *Joyce, Imperialism, & Postcolonialism*, 1st ed, Irish Studies (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2008).

<sup>66</sup> Brian L. Price, César Augusto Salgado, and John Pedro Schwartz, eds., *TransLatin Joyce: Global Transmissions in Ibero-American Literature*, First edition, Literatures of the Americas (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

nationalise Joyce as a canonical Irish, European, Western-modernist, and Anglophone writer in a way that Caribbean artists such as Philip, Kamau Brathwaite, or Linton Kwesi Johnson are not. This is despite the fact that these Caribbean writers are as geographically, culturally, linguistically, thematically, and stylistically different from each other as they are from Joyce, while at the same time Ireland, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, and Jamaica all share a history of colonisation that has directly influenced their writers' multilingual practices and concerns, and particularly their complicated relationships with English, both as a language and an ideological power structure.<sup>67</sup>

In a postcolonial context, Joyce's literary uses of multilingualism, both in *Ulysses* and in the *Wake*, become as much acts of political resistance and ethical querying as they are modes of stylistic innovation. We recirculate again to that crucial quote from *Portrait*, which Joyce scholars consistently reference when interrogating questions of the author's national, linguistic, and cultural identity, his exile from Ireland, and the suspended potentiality of homecoming traceable in his works:

The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine. How different are the words *home, Christ, ale, master*, on his lips and on mine! I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit. His language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words. My voice holds them at bay. My soul frets in the shadow of his language.<sup>68</sup>

Some critics have read these lines—perhaps wishfully—as Joyce confessing through Stephen a desire to renationalise his sense of self through a revolt against the English literary tradition here personified by the Dean of Studies and Ben Jonson. Seamus Deane, for example, opines that Joyce and Yeats, although admittedly divergent in their artistic practices and politics, “are both nationalist writers who have imperial ambitions and who recognize that this apparent anomaly, which is also a dialectic, is historically inescapable”—the anomaly here being the “allegorical relation” between

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<sup>67</sup> Postcolonial writers' engagements with the English language as a literary structure of colonial power are poignantly discussed further in Salman Rushdie, “Introduction,” in *The Vintage Book of Indian Writing, 1947-1997*, ed. Elizabeth West (London: Vintage, 1997), ix – xxiii, as well as in the written debate (also perhaps a provocation and rebuttal) between Chinua Achebe and Ngugi wa Thiong'o in: Chinua Achebe, “Politics and Politicians of Language in African Literature,” in *The Education of a British-Protected Child* (New York: Penguin Books, 2009), 96–106; Ngugi wa Thiong'o, “The Language of African Literature,” in *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (Zimbabwe: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1994), 4–33.

<sup>68</sup> Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, 205.

“[w]orld civilization” and “national culture,” which Deane argues emerges particularly in late Joyce:

The story of the nation is the story of the Empire and vice-versa. Power relations are reversed. This Irish discourse demonstrates the Babel out of which English emerged and to which it will return. It refuses privilege to all established order and grants primacy to its originating confusion. From Joyce, especially the Joyce of the *Wake*, it is but a short step to postmodernist celebration of difference, otherness, and the refusal of the grand imperial narratives that effect their ideological aims by erasure or diminution of these primary conditions of heterogeneity. Yet the *Wake* is indeed, like *Ulysses* a great narrative. It exploits the miscellaneous for the sake of an ultimate ordering.<sup>69</sup>

Deane’s reading belongs to a school of criticism that, advertently or otherwise, seeks to re-appropriate Joyce into an Irish literary tradition re-invigorated, and partially invented, by the Revival. It recognises the cosmopolitan multiculturalism embodied in his late works but ultimately counterpoises Joyce’s multilingual *chef-d’œuvre*, the *Wake*, against a British English literary tradition, effectively turning him into a misunderstood Revivalist. This is despite the fact that Joyce not only left Ireland voluntarily—he was not “exiled” in the way that other modernists, such as Thomas Mann or Hannah Arendt, were forced out of their birthplaces by political forces or threats of violence—but he made no effort to return after his last visit to Dublin in 1912. Moreover, he criticised the Revival’s efforts to renationalise Ireland’s literary history, and the only Revivalist writer in whom he eventually showed an active interest was J. M. Synge, arguably because he practised his own brand of multilingual politics as he chose to write in neither English nor Irish (in which he never became fully fluent, though he recorded his learning efforts in his travelogue, *The Aran Islands*<sup>70</sup>) but in a language which, as Alan Titley suggests, “appears to be English, but it is an English once or twice removed. What precisely it is removed from is not that clear either.”<sup>71</sup> In 1903, Joyce met Synge in Paris<sup>72</sup> and took an interest in his work, eventually translating *Riders to the Sea* into a multilingualised

<sup>69</sup> Deane, “Imperialism/Nationalism,” 366.

<sup>70</sup> John Millington Synge, *The Aran Islands*, ed. Tim Robinson (London: Penguin Books, 1992).

<sup>71</sup> Alan Titley, “Synge and the Irish Language,” in *The Cambridge Companion to J. M. Synge*, ed. P. J. Mathews (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 92.

<sup>72</sup> Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce*, Second Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 124.

Italian with Nicolò Vidacovich.<sup>73</sup> Therefore Taylor-Batty's take on the Revival question seems more sensible to me:

Joyce was very aware of the efforts of Irish Revivalist writers to reforge such an 'essential' connection between culture and native language, but critiqued such cultural nationalism, not only by exposing the bigoted nationalism of a character like the Citizen in the 'Cyclops' chapter of *Ulysses*, but in a style which (in 'Cyclops' and elsewhere) itself poses a fundamental challenge to any notion of linguistic 'purity,' 'origins' or 'rootedness.'<sup>74</sup>

I would argue that conceptualising *Wakean* multilingualism strictly as a site of revolt—a move *against* the English language rather than *for* a different way of engaging with language, or a site of loss and mourning rather than of innovative discovery and pleasure—limits the artistic and ethical potentiality of the text.

Renationalising Joyce poses a risk of pulling him back into a structured, monocultural, and to an extent fictionalised notion of tradition, albeit one seen as strictly separate from the British English literary tradition; and that seems to restrain the hospitality to difference that multilingual texts like *Ulysses* and the *Wake* invite.

Nationalisation is a politicised and ethically consequential approach to literature that is indeed significant and necessary, particularly as a way to do justice to the particular historical heritage of texts. In *James Joyce and Nationalism*, Emer Nolan cautions us not to “neglect the *specific history* which [Joyce] draws into his writing in order that it might be transcended at the level of form,”<sup>75</sup> and indeed overlooking the specificity of Irish history in Joyce's literary responses to it would make for an ethically irresponsible and insensitive readerly approach. My invitation to the reader is rather to maintain an awareness of that specificity while also avoiding assimilating the text's response into a single and fixed geographical, national, or indeed linguistic framework, because that, too, brings about a set of ethical issues that should at the very least be queried. Just as language has an ideological makeup, so does the act of nationalising and thereby geographically positioning a writer impose a corrective frame of reference on readers' understanding of and engagement with his works. If we identify Joyce as an Irish writer, his decision to emigrate from

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<sup>73</sup> Jolanta Wawrzyczka, “Translation,” in *James Joyce in Context*, ed. John McCourt (Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 132. Of course, I use the term “Italian” loosely here because, as Wawrzyczka outlines, the register of Joyce and Vidacovich's translation was at least as multilingual as Synge's original Irish English text.

<sup>74</sup> Taylor-Batty, “Protean Mutations: James Joyce's *Ulysses*,” 114.

<sup>75</sup> Emer Nolan, *James Joyce and Nationalism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 141; my emphasis.

Ireland automatically deems him an exile, and exile, as explored in the introduction, is widely—sometimes unquestioningly—treated as a site of loss, mourning, and crisis even though it is not always so.

Mallarmé's aptly-named essay, "The Crisis of Verse," conveys that deeply rooted notion of writing as a site of linguistic crisis, which emerges from the failure of the monolingual paradigm to realise the promise of full, seamless, sublime sense of belonging, recognition, and rootedness in a hospitable, maternal identity (a national, cultural, or ideological identity). He mourns that "languages, which are imperfect in so far as they are many, lack the supreme language," and "the immortal word, the diversity of idioms on earth, prevents anyone from proffering the words which otherwise would be at their disposal."<sup>76</sup> For Mallarmé, whose vision was influential and attuned to the collective Western modernist imagination,<sup>77</sup> the literary space is a place where language perpetually, fundamentally fails to attain poetic perfection, ideal identification, and sublime communicability. His concept of a "supreme language" represents the pre-Babelian condition: an unattainable, and yet compulsively sought-after, mythological ideal—something paradoxically mourned as lost when it has never even been possessed. For Mallarmé, the remedy for this fundamental "failure of language" (and of multilingualism) to attain discursive perfection is *poetry*, which becomes an act of resistance against imperfection. And Taylor-Batty takes him up on this as a way to reach for her own theoretical premise about multilingualism, based on Shklovsky's *ostranenie*: "We have become so used to the concept of estrangement," she writes,

and the analogous term 'defamiliarisation' has entered our critical vocabulary so seamlessly, that it is easy to forget how extraordinary Shklovsky's theory really is: he seeks not to alleviate but to *perpetuate linguistic crisis*, and to induce in the reader an experience of linguistic alienation.... And as 'foreignness' becomes not so much the problem as the solution, so poetic language must be foreign to the reader, even to the point of semi-comprehensibility.<sup>78</sup>

Taylor-Batty aligns herself with Shklovsky's theory of estrangement in ways that are deeply suggestive and important for both Joyce scholars and theorists of multilingualism. For example, the "perpetua[tion of] linguistic crisis" resonates with (or perhaps implicitly bounces off of) John Bishop's notion that, through the

<sup>76</sup> Cited in Taylor-Batty, *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction*, 19.

<sup>77</sup> Taylor-Batty elaborates on this in "Modernism and Babel."

<sup>78</sup> Taylor-Batty, *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction*, 23; my emphasis.



multilingualism of the *Wake*, Joyce exercised a style of “systematic darkening” as a performative gesture towards the book’s subject matter: the night.<sup>79</sup> Paired with *ostranenie*, such a reading can also be pertinent to a postcolonial reading of Beckett, as in, for example, works like *Not I*, which literally, linguistically, and performatively *darkens* the stage and darkens language comprehension, thereby darkening our experience of the world as we know it.<sup>80</sup>

However, conceptualising multilingualism as a mode of “*perpetuat[ing] linguistic crisis*” is not ethically or theoretically inconsequential. It creates a theoretical premise that essentialises the trauma of multilingual writing and reading: the estranging, exiling, disorienting, and sometimes painful, experience that multilingual writing purportedly seeks to elicit. This approach to multilingualism participates in a theoretical narrative that manifests the foundation of early postcolonial theory: the narrative of exile, of loss, what we grieve when we migrate into a world of difference, and how our yearning to fill the void from that loss might become a fount of artistic creativity and inspiration—that is, while we simultaneously accept *and* deny the fact that the void can never be filled.

In a way, my concept of “multilingual homecoming,” cultivated through an engagement with *Wakean* multilingualism, is a gesture towards estrangement—a *reparative* gesture that follows the rupture and lack induced by the post-Babelian crisis. It speaks to a subtle overlap between rupture and repair, or obscurity and illumination, which Judith Butler addresses in a somewhat different context in *Precarious Life*:

Perhaps...one mourns when one accepts that by the loss one undergoes one will be changed, possibly for ever. Perhaps mourning has to do with agreeing to undergo a transformation (perhaps one should say submitting to a transformation) the full result of which one cannot know in advance. There is losing, as we know, but there is also the transformative effect of loss, and this latter cannot be charted or planned. One can try to choose it, but it may be that this experience of transformation deconstitutes choice at some level.<sup>81</sup>

The important ethical moments pertaining to my own thinking on readerly engagements with *Wake* here lie in Butler’s conveyance of the *indeterminacy* of

<sup>79</sup> Bishop, *Joyce’s Book of the Dark*, “*Finnegans Wake*,” 4.

<sup>80</sup> For some deeply suggestive estranged readings of Beckett and Joyce, see Colleen Jaurretche, ed., *Beckett, Joyce and the Art of the Negative*, European Joyce Studies 16 (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2005), <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10380641>.

<sup>81</sup> Judith Butler, “Violence, Mourning, Politics,” in *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London and New York: Verso, 2004), 22.

acts of relating, and of the transformative potential of an act of hospitality to an otherness that is yet unknown, uncharted, and possibly ungraspable.<sup>82</sup> It is also important to recognise that estrangement and homecoming are part of a dialogic complementarity that maintains a continuous and changeable process of readerly engagement: they serve as acts of recognising where we were at shifting points in the past (in individual and collective memories), where we are now (collectively and singularly), where we are likely to go next (the probable future), as well as where we want to be (the conditional/desirable future).

Throughout *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction*, Taylor-Batty talks about the creative potential of estrangement in terms of the non-native speaker or reader's experience of English, whose detachment from the foreign tongue liberates her or his engagement with it, and she thereby capitalises on the creative potential of the gaps or absences—of semantic ambiguity and *lack*—occurring in readerly engagements with a foreign language and a multilingual text alike. Her approach to multilingualism does not ultimately fetishise loss, but her willingness to largely overlook the *Wake* as a unique space for multilingual engagement (one that is significantly different from *Ulysses*) suspends a number of possibilities of productive theoretical and ethical engagement with Joycean multilingualism.

With the following examples, I will explore the concept of multilingual homecoming as a complement, rather than an opposition, to estrangement. Multilingual homecoming here manifests a gesture to that potentiality for transformation and a yearning to “come home” into a space of familiarity and illumination—a backward glance into the future, as it were—which I would suggest is an important and necessary move that we must make as we transition from the estrangement we might experience in the space of difference into a *different* form of illumination.

When a familiar phonology reoccurs in the *Wake*, as in a recurring motif or an iconic manifestation of a language as discussed in previous chapters, the reader has the potentiality to experience recognition: that is, to participate in an intimate and trusting mode of relation to the text. In my own linguistic engagement with the *Wake*, for example, when elements of Bulgarian diction and Slavonic phonology

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<sup>82</sup> This is also a moment to reiterate Shildrick's cautionary admonishment against assuming that “the particularity of the other is within our grasp, that the place of the other is fully accountable from the 'outside.'” Margrit Shildrick, “You Are There Like My Skin: Reconfiguring Relational Economies,” in *Thinking through the Skin*, ed. Sara Ahmed and Jackie Stacey, Transformations (New York and London: Routledge, 2001), 161.

crop up in my readerly experience, I feel a peculiar joy and satisfaction—what might momentarily feel like an “answering clarity,” to borrow the words of poet Christopher J. Matthews<sup>83</sup>—as well as a sense of achievement for my ability to translate these subsumed multilingual meanings, which are coveted because they are so rare and which I know are not accessible to every *Wake* reader. Some examples of Bulgarian stylisations cropping up throughout the *Wake* include: “and the suburb’s formule why they provencials drollo eggspilled him out of his homety dometry narrowedknee domum” (FW 230.4-6; my emphasis); “a soulnetzer by zvesdals priestessd” (234.15); or “if Lubbernabohore laid his horker to the ribber, save the giregargoh and dabardin going on in his mount of knowledge (munt), he would not hear a flip flap in all Finnyland” (245.13-16).<sup>84</sup>

For the purposes of this discussion, let us take a closer look at the following: “Yasha Yash ate sassage and mash. So he found he bash, poor Yasha Yash” (240.1-2).<sup>85</sup> This example contains a comic overabundance of repetitiously lispng, rhyming Slavonicisms: it abounds with clusters of fricatives (*s*-es and *sh*-es), which are so typically associated with Slavic languages that, even if this line made no sense to the reader, it could still materially convey an iconic sense of Russian, Polish, or another iconic Slavic language. Through its poetic materiality and repetitive form, this *Wakean* phrase (reminiscent of a nursery rhyme or a tongue twister) structurally grounds us and so liberates the semantic possibilities of our reading. Suddenly the line shifts from nonsense into new-sense; our interpretative methods overcome our dependency on semantics and instead begin to capitalise on the poetic materiality and the primacy of the reader’s linguistic experience of the text.

Here repetition functions like the cradle-turned-rocking chair in Beckett’s *Rockaby*: it creates a hypnotic environment of safety for the reader, “holding” and enchanting us in the recurrence of familiar phonemes, rhymes, and patterns. In this intimate space, the inter- and intralingual boundaries in the text blur into an amalgam of Bulgarian/Slavic, English, Irish English, even Hebrew, and possibly other

<sup>83</sup> Christopher Matthews, Personal Interview, June 21, 2009.

<sup>84</sup> Here “ribber” echoes the Bulgarian “riba” or the Russian “ryba” (fish); “dabardin” invokes the Bulgarian “dobar den” (good day; good afternoon), which does not appear either in McHugh’s *Annotations* or in *FWEET*.

<sup>85</sup> For an extensive treasury of Slavonicisms in the *Wake*, plus some biographical and genetic investigations into their integration into the *Wake*, see Petr Skrabanek, *Night Joyce of a Thousand Tiers: Studies in Finnegans Wake*, ed. Louis Armand and Ondřej Pilný (Prague: Litteraria Pragensia, 2002); and Bernd Engelhart, “... or Ivan Slavansky Slavar’ (FW: 355.11): The Integration of Slavonic Languages into Finnegans Wake,” in *Genitricksling Joyce*, ed. Sam Slote and Wim Van Mierlo, *European Joyce Studies* 9 (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1999), 135–44.

languages and registers that one might not be able to readily pinpoint. Any *Wake* reader would have fluctuating degrees of familiarity and estrangement with the various languages, registers, and phonologies that are embedded in the text. And if we are emotionally engaged with, or triggered by, one familiar register (in the way that Slavonic would be for a native speaker of Bulgarian), this will also amplify our relational experience of the “foreign” register(s) as well (Hebrew, for example). Thus when I encounter my mother tongue in the *Wake*, I experience a sense of *homecoming* in relation to the whole multilingual space, including any languages there that might otherwise be estranging to me. The Slavonic phonology and syntax, what would be deemed a *minor* multilingual stylisation compared to more prevalent and complex linguistic references in the text (such as English, French, German, or Italian), becomes the lantern that illuminates the semantic darkness of the text.

“Yasha Yash” further conveys an act from the earliest, primary care experiences that a reader can have: the experience of eating. When we read it aloud, the text literally gets us to mouth the motions of chewing, or talking through a mouthful. Even if the minor language here, Bulgarian, does not become apparent to some, the text will still put the language in the reader’s mouth. Thus in reading and mouthing the text, the reader comes to intentionally and unintentionally embody its hidden multilingual semantics: in this case, the Bulgarian word for “eat” in “Yash”; “yash” means “eat!” the imperative, which derives from “yam,” “to eat.” Thus when the materiality of the text brings a primal bodily experience into the multilingual space, the reader “comes home” into an experience that is both linguistically and embodiedly familiar—hospitable. The reader is able to experience a holding familiarity and safety in a space of difference.

Multilingual homecoming can be read as an echo of narratives of homecoming into expatriate spaces when in exile. We might compare it to the experience of overhearing someone speaking our mother tongue when we’re abroad: it tantalises us with its promise of familiarity, of the cradling comfort of recognition, and of the safety of *knowing* and presuming with a reasonable degree of accuracy in a foreign place (or in a multilingual text, as the case may be). In practice, however, that experience of homecoming can only be momentary, and the gift of its promise of a return to safety and predictability is elusive.

As such, multilingual homecoming is part of a broader and more complex readerly ethics of multilingualism, and as a theoretical and ethical concept, it must remain only a *transitional* one. It makes an ethical move that seeks to *repair* the loss

that the reader might suffer in a space of exile—as in the space of the multilingual text that, through estrangement, destabilises our expectations and preconceived methodologies of reading. But this reparative move still threatens to dissipate the moment we surpass the object of recognition as we continue to read and inevitably read past that illuminating home register, which, within the scope of this concept, is still aspiring to a desire for monolingual familiarity, sovereignty, and boundedness when it can never really be so.

The bigger argument I am moving towards is that of a newly cultivated theory of multilingual ethics, which concerns the *Wake* as much as any other work of literature. Multilingualism is neither only or even chiefly a means of “systematic darkening,” a device made to perpetuate exile or estrangement. The transformational encounters that multilingual texts make so apparent are, in fact, fundamental to all literary engagement as they urge us to re-evaluate our existing methods and ideologies of reading.

## V. Multilingual encounters: A brief epilogue

The final scene I would like to address here—in a move of opening out into, rather than concluding, this exploration of the ethical potentialities of multilingual reading—appropriately materialised in a collective textual engagement with fellow Joyceans at a conference in Rome in 2015. In my talk, I had discussed several appearances of Bulgarian in the *Wake*, and after the presentation John McCourt challenged the idea that my textual examples were Bulgarian-inspired. He in fact read them as Slovenian, which is not surprising, considering that he teaches in multilingual Trieste, where people speak chiefly Italian and Slovenian. Jolanta Wawrzyczka also responded by suggesting that those *Wakean* Slavonicisms could easily be regarded as Polish. What we experienced in this collective reading exemplifies what I would call a multilingual encounter: we approached the multilingual text in a search for its Slavonic fragments and tones, and while we all agreed that those elements were present, and while our “translations” of those elements coincided, we diverged in our self-identifications in relation to the text. Within the same verbal units, we perceived different linguistic iconicities. Thus, while we would have agreed on the “meanings” of the multilingual elements, they inspired tangibly different cultural, as well as emotional, experiences in us. Each

reader experienced a sense of homecoming through the identification of Slavonicisms in the text, but each “came home” into a different language.

On the one hand, this type of encounter with an-other is unique to the multilingual space of the *Wake*: the interlingual and intralingual boundaries that would normally help readers identify the point where one language ends and another begins are not merely blurred in this text but they are perpetually shifting, depending on the multilingual repertoire, as well as modes of pronunciation and performance, that each reader brings to the literary event, which all hinges on the dialectic flowing between a reader’s conscious and unconscious, determinate and indeterminate, interpretative choices and emotional responses to the experience. This type of encounter would occur differently in the reading of multilingual texts such as Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* or Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*,<sup>86</sup> both of which interweave words and culturally resonant phrasings from Igbo in the former and Hindi, Urdu, and Hindustani in the latter into chiefly Anglophone texts. In Achebe’s and Rushdie’s works, the non-English language elements are demarcated through italicisation and, in *Things Fall Apart*, a glossary of Igbo words. In both cases, the authors (in their critical introductions) and the publishers (in their typographical presentations) expose the boundaries between the languages represented in the multilingual narratives, which stabilises the readerly experience of multilingualism there as the texts do not leave questions of linguistic identification ambiguous or fully dependent on each reader’s singular engagement, in contrast to the *Wake*.

To take *Wakean* Slavonicisms as an example again, the ambiguity materialising in a multilingual encounter with other readers, who approach the text through linguistic repertoires and language-based experiences different from “my” own, is enabled by Joyce’s liberal use of what Petr Škrabánek identifies as “panslavonic” words: that is, words “with similar or identical spelling or pronunciation and various shades of meaning,” which can be found in most, if not all, Slavic languages.<sup>87</sup> He reports that, at the time of compiling his “Slavonic Dictionary” for *Finnegans Wake*, there were approximately 1,260 common panslavonic words in existence, with 350 of them sharing an identical meaning across different Slavic languages. Therefore he observes that “We encounter considerable difficulties in trying to allocate any panslavonic word used in

<sup>86</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (London: Penguin, 2006); Salman Rushdie, *Midnight’s Children* (London: Vintage, 2008).

<sup>87</sup> Petr Škrabánek, “Slavonic Dictionary,” in *Night Joyce of a Thousand Tiers: Studies in Finnegans Wake* (Prague: Litteraria Pragensia, 2002), 12.

*Finnegans Wake* to an individual Slavonic language if the context or a special spelling are not helpful.”<sup>88</sup> This puts the conference discussion above in perspective as, even with the help of archival evidence such as word lists from Joyce’s notebooks,<sup>89</sup> the problem of language identification remains. Furthermore, Wawrzyczka suggested in that conversation that languages which use the Cyrillic alphabet (such as Bulgarian, Russian, or Macedonian) might be at a peculiar disadvantage compared to Roman Slavic languages (such as Polish or Slovenian, among many others): the *Wake* is written exclusively in Roman script, which means that any Bulgarian or Russian words that structurally and/or phonologically approximate other Slavic languages can easily be “misidentified” (if such a thing is possible in the *Wake*) or can slip into the panslavonic category. Script thus creates a peculiar interlingual power struggle, as in the case of a language like Bulgarian, which is not only Cyrillic but is also a relatively minor (i.e. lesser-known and less widely spoken on a global scale) language compared to Russian, which is the most commonly spoken and politically empowered Slavic language in the world. Therefore, since it is unlikely for the majority of *Wake* readers to recognise or even acknowledge a language as minor as Bulgarian in the text, the voices of such minor, invisible languages in a multilingual narrative remain dependent on the readers who happen to singularly experience their presence.

This brings us once again to the significance of the ethical encounter with difference in a multilingual space. The multilingual encounter, as an embodied readerly experience and an ethical concept, pertains to how we engage with the *Wake* in both our private and collective reading spaces. It urges us to question the ethical and practical implications of attempting to solidify, universalise, or institutionalise our singular interpretations of the text when its peculiar mode of multilingualism radically destabilises the categories that normally enable identification and linguistic, cultural, national, or political segregation. Furthermore, this ethical mode urges us to consciously recognise, and potentially engage with, not only our senses of self and our senses of the text, but also to allow for our private experience of the multilingual text to become hospitable to the singular experiences of other readers. M. NourbeSe Philip’s thought again resonates here:

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<sup>88</sup> Škrabánek, “Slavonic Dictionary,” 13.

<sup>89</sup> As cited in a different context above, evidence of Joyce’s treasury of Slavic words used in (or potentially intended for) the *Wake* is collected and discussed in Engelhart, “‘... or Ivan Slavansky Slavar’ (FW: 355.11): The Integration of Slavonic Languages into *Finnegans Wake*.”

The African in the Caribbean and the New World is as much entitled to call the English language her own, as the Englishman in his castle. However, just as we have had to make that i-mage our own, so too must he be made to acquire our i-mages, since we are both heirs to a common language, albeit to different linguistic experiences. Our experiences have touched, in both negative and positive ways, and we remain forever sensitive to each other through the language.<sup>90</sup>

Similarly in the multilingual space of the *Wake*, there is a strong ethical urge to reconsider the nationalisation of Joyce's final work as belonging to a single, bounded, major linguistic-cultural space (be that English or Irish English). Instead, a multilingual ethics of reading invites us to empower the rich diversity of languages, subjects, and bodies, as well as modes and possibilities of readerly engagement upon which, as we have seen throughout this thesis, the text creatively capitalises and to which it shows a generous hospitality.

The broader multilingual-ethical model towards which I am striving does not only tolerate or evade but fully accepts the joys *and* growing pains of exercising an ethics of embodied hospitality in relation to an-other. It urges us to ask ourselves: What is estranging, what is different, about this text? Where is the pleasure in my engagement with its difference, and how can I become fully hospitable to it? How can I be present and embodied in the event of literary engagement, even if nothing in this space feels comfortable, familiar, or certain? To allow that multilingual ethics to thrive and show its full theoretical potential means to approach *Wakean* multilingualism as a means of pleasure and illumination, rather than a distortion or a tool of "systematic darkening." It means re-evaluating how we believe literary language should behave, what we believe literature can do, what our role, as readers, has been in the triumphs or shortcomings of literary texts, and what our role can be in the events of literary engagement, which are inevitably also events that shape and transform our languages, our politics, our histories, and our selves.

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<sup>90</sup> Philip, *She Tries Her Tongue*, 21.



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