

Translators, Titles, Texts: Reading the First Two Words of *Finnegans Wake*¹

Patrick O'Neill
Queen's University, Canada

James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* (1939), 628 pages long, contains roughly 168,000 words. The present paper very modestly limits itself to only two of these words, the first two, the title, thus generously leaving roughly 167,998 words for others to wrestle with. Despite the modest scope of the undertaking, however, it is very obvious that those first two words are particularly important, for every literary title, including of course every translated literary title, implies and in principle encourages a particular attitude on a reader's part to the text as a whole. To speak of translations in the case of *Finnegans Wake*, of course, is essentially just a metaphor, for there is a very obvious sense in which Joyce's final text cannot be translated at all, but can only be rewritten. The metaphor is a practically useful one, however, and it is convenient to speak of *Finnegans Wake* translations as if such a thing were indeed possible in the first place.

Readers' difficulties (and pleasures), indeed, and most especially would-be translators' difficulties (and pleasures?), begin with the title already, provocatively lacking as it does the apostrophe expected by most readers. Richard Ellmann wrote in the first edition of his admirable Joyce biography that Joyce's planned title "was to be *Finnegans Wake*, the apostrophe omitted because it meant both the death of Finnegan and the resurgence of all *Finnegans*" (1959: 556). In the second edition, twenty-three years later, he more inclusively lists the most striking features of the title planned by Joyce as being that "*Finnegans Wake* contained the double entendres of wake (funeral) and wake (awakening or resurrection), as well as of Fin (end) and again (recurrence)" (Ellmann, 1982: 597). Indeed, as Fargnoli and Gillespie (1995: 76) crisply phrase it, the title *Finnegans Wake* "implies the plurality of identity and the polarity of opposites". While all of these

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comments are perfectly accurate, however, they are still far from being the whole story, especially when it comes to translation.

To begin with, why might a hypothetical reader entirely new to Joyce assume that there was in fact a missing apostrophe? The title, after all, can be read as a perfectly grammatical English statement that some group of people called "Finnegan" wake, possibly from sleep, possibly from inertia, possibly even from death. For most readers, however, Joyce's title does indeed suggest "Finnegan's wake," certainly for those readers who remember the comic nineteenth-century music-hall song "Finnegan's Wake," in which a drunken Irish builder's labourer, Tim Finnegan, falls from a ladder, apparently to his death, but who revives when accidentally splashed with whiskey in the course of his wake. A wake, meanwhile, as helpfully defined by the Oxford English Dictionary, is "the watching (especially by night) of relatives and friends beside the body of a dead person from death to burial, or during a part of that time; [also] the drinking, feasting, and other observances incidental to this. Now chiefly Anglo-Irish or with reference to Irish custom."

The title, however, could obviously also imply a wake not just for a single Finnegan but for a plurality of Finnegans, a plural "Finnegans' wake." It could also be taken as a call addressed to all Finnegans currently asleep ("Finnegans, wake!") as well as already anticipating the success of that call, as all "Finnegans" do indeed "wake." A reference is also suggested to the legendary Irish hero Finn mac Cumhail (Joyce's Finn MacCool), dead and buried for centuries already but destined in folklore to come back to life again in Ireland's hour of greatest need. And perhaps that hour is even already at hand, for "Finn again's wake," employing a now obsolete sense of the adjective rather than the noun wake, suggests that Finn is indeed once again "wake," namely awake. And many critics have noted that while French *fin* means "end," Latin *negans* means "denying," thus punningly suggesting that what may appear to be an end may in reality be not just an end but also a new beginning. Finn's legendary return will accordingly be reflected by the circular structure of Joyce's text.

The flauntedly challenging title thus plays – and all, apparently, for want of an inconspicuous apostrophe – on singularity and plurality, nouns and verbs, grammatical correctness and all other fixed categories, certainty and uncertainty, history and legend,

stasis and change. In so doing it immediately throws down the interpretive gauntlet: the text, like the title that introduces it, will clearly be reconstructable (if at all) only by the most vigorous co-constructive efforts of its readers – preceded, of course, where appropriate, by the vigorous co-constructive efforts of its translators. Variations on the title that are helpfully provided in the text of *Finnegans Wake* itself include, among others, "Finn again's weak" (FW 93.35), "Wimmegame's fake" (FW 375.16-17), "Quinnigan's Quake" (FW 498.06), and "the Phoenician wakes" (FW 608.32) – as well as, somewhat further afield, "pinnacle's peak" (FW 70.12), "jibberweek's joke" (FW 565.14), and "for Fullacan's sake" (FW 531.26).

So what is a beleaguered would-be translator (acting as if translation were possible) supposed to make of all this? Joyce's missing apostrophe liberates a spectacular vein of possible meanings in its various translations, the degree of complexity of which has tended to increase with the years. To summarize, translators have a good dozen quite different understandings to choose from as a preliminary basis for rendering Joyce's extremely slippery title. The result will only rarely capture more than two or three of the implications of Joyce's extravagantly polysemous challenge to the translator's art – other than the fact that any title containing the word *Finnegans* (and there are those that do not) can also be taken to include potential reference to the hero Finn, to French *fin*, to English *again*, and to Latin *negans*. Translators' interpretive options include the following:

Option 1: Assume that since the title is clearly untranslatable, it is best left untranslated.

Various translators, understandably, choose to treat the title as untranslatable: thus, to name just a few examples, Philippe Lavergne's French (1982), Luigi Schenoni's Italian (1982), Erik Bindervoet and Robbert-Jan Henkes's Dutch (2002), Marcelo Zabaloy's Spanish (2016). How does a reader who is a speaker (perhaps even a monoglot speaker) of the relevant target language react to this title? Certainly, the foreignness, the otherness of the text is advertised from the start. Also perhaps the notion that the title, which has by now acquired international cult status, is "already translated." This assumption, however, involves introducing the translated text by an overtly foreign element, one that is potentially even more immediately disorienting in the target language than in the original.

Option 2: Assume the grammatically correct sentence "Finnegans wake," where "wake" is a verb and "Finnegans" its plural subject, suggesting that Finnegans of all sorts (whoever they may be) wake up from sleep, or inertia, or even death.

The missing apostrophe is a warning shot across the bows of new readers – except, of course, for those readers who see the title as grammatically a perfectly correct sentence. A new reader previously unacquainted both with Joyce's text and with the existence of the music-hall song "Finnegan's Wake" would in principle have no reason not to assume this option. Despite this, however, no translator in any language appears to have chosen this option.

Option 3: Assume "Finnegan's wake," suggesting a funeral vigil for somebody called Finnegan.

This variant, undoubtedly the most generally popular, teasingly appears at one point in the text itself, reincorporating the missing titular apostrophe, as "lovesoftfun at Finnegan's Wake" (FW 607.16) – where the reference is clearly both to the music-hall song and to Joyce's own text. Many renderings in various languages choose to go with this option, but we can limit ourselves here to considering just a few examples that introduce some interesting implications.

The title of Dieter Stündel's 1993 German rendering, *Finnegans Wehg*, conflates a rhyming echo of the English wake with German Weh (woe) and Weg (way), with perhaps a faint echo of German wecken (to wake someone up). Strikingly, since German, unlike English, does not use an apostrophe to signal a genitive case, the lack of an apostrophe in the German (as opposed to Joyce's) title does not involve any element of textual play, but is merely reductive, producing an unambiguously singular "Finnegan's." The neologism *Wehg* might also be seen as jocularly referring to the translator's own "woe" as he struggles to find a "way" through the dense thickets of Joyce's text. Umur Çelikyay's Turkish rendering of Book I in 2016 adopts a similar titular strategy to Stündel. This version appeared as *Finneganın vahi*, "Finnegan's woe," where the noun *vah* both means "woe" and suggests an interlingual echo of the English "wake" (Fenge, 2016: 2; Bayramova, 2016: 5), while the possessive markers *-nın* and *-ı* indicate an unambiguously

singular "Finnegan's." Bertil Falk's 2013 Swedish rendering of the opening chapter employs the unambiguously funeral title *Finnegans likvaka*, "Finnegan's wake," literally Finnegan's "corpse (lik) watch (vaka)." As in the case of Stündel's version, the lack of an apostrophe is again merely reductive, definitely indicating a singular "Finnegan's."

Moving further afield linguistically, Chong-keon Kim's Korean rendering of *Finnegans Wake* appeared in 2002 under the title (as romanized) *P'inegan ūi kyōngya*. "Finnegan" becomes "P'inegan" since the letter *f* does not occur in Korean and is replaced in foreign words and names by an aspirated *p*; "ūi" is a possessive particle, and "kyōngya" is the normal Korean term for "wake." The title thus literally means "Finnegan's wake," in a funeral sense – but different cultural implications are introduced, in that the Korean wake custom involves staying all night at the house of the mourners, while the festive character of an Irish wake is absent.

Option 4: Assume a plural "Finnegans' wake," suggesting a funeral vigil for at least two Finnegans.

André du Bouchet's 1957 French rendering of selected excerpts appeared as "Les veilles des Finnegans," a pluralized "Finnegans' wake," the plural *veilles* even suggesting plural obsequies for plural Finnegans. The title of Alberte Pagán's 1993 Galician translation of the first two chapters as *Velório de Finnegans* literally suggests a plural "Finnegans' wake," a funeral wake for plural Finnegans, but plays on the fact that *Finnegans Wake* is frequently referred to in Spanish as "el Finnegans," much as English-speaking readers refer to "the Wake." Eleftherios Anevlavis's 2013 Greek *I agrýpnia ton Fínnegan* (Η αγρύπνια των Φίννεγκαν) is similarly a pluralized "Finnegans' wake," a funeral wake for plural Finnegans.

Between 1996 and 1999 Henri Volokhonsky translated into Russian some forty pages of excerpts from the *Wake* in a literary journal under the title *Iz Finneganova Weika* (Из Финнеганова Уэйка), where "Finneganov" is a singular "Finnegan's" and "Weik" is the English word *wake* written in Russian phonetics. A collected edition of the same excerpts appeared in book form in 2000 as *Weik Finneganov* (Уэйк Финнеганов), where the reversed word order of the title and the now possibly also adjectival use of "Finneganov"

idiomatically combine, as I am informed by Russian colleagues, to mean primarily a singular "Finnegan's wake" but also to imply the possibility of a plural "Finnegans' wake."

Moving far afield linguistically once again, in 2012 a Chinese version of Book I by Dai Congrong appeared. Translating the Wake into Chinese involves perhaps completely insuperable difficulties, and the difficulties begin, of course, with the title, which Dai renders as Fēnnígēn de shǒulíng yè (芬尼根的守灵夜). The first three Chinese characters of the title (芬尼根) individually mean "fragrant, nun, root," and the difficulty of construing the meaning of the three together is a clue that they transliterate a non-Chinese word or name. Here, combining as Fēnnígēn, they suggest a phonetic rendering of "Finnegan" – either singular or plural, since Chinese nouns generally do not have singular and plural forms. The fourth character [的, de] is a possessive marker similar to the apostrophe as used in English (though dispensed with in Joyce's own title), and the last three characters [守灵夜, shǒulíng yè] translate as "night deathwatch." Dai notes in her introduction that she considered leaving out the last character (夜, yè), meaning "night," since the original title does not explicitly mention a time of day, but eventually chose to include it because "night" connotes not only finality but also the expectation of daybreak (Yee 2013:205).

Option 5: Assume "Finnegan's wake," suggesting a maritime metaphor, as in the wake of a ship.

While André du Bouchet's 1957 French rendering of selected excerpts is unambiguous as to the funeral context, as we have seen, his earlier translation of excerpts, published in 1950 as "Dans le sillage de Finnegan", is equally unambiguously maritime in sense, suggesting following "in Finnegan's wake, in the wake of Finnegan."

In an interesting variation on this option, Juan Díaz Victoria's 2009 Spanish translation of the opening chapter uses the title Estela de Finnegan. The term estela, like the English stela (both derived from Latin stela), suggests a commemorative marker for Finnegan, gone but not forgotten, a monument to his memory. It also means a "track" or "trail" or "wake" in the maritime sense, and is employed here, as the translator indicates (Victoria, 2009: 1), to

highlight the fact that a translation, whatever its intentions, ambitions, and achievements, ultimately never has any choice but to follow in the wake of its original.

Option 6: Assume a plural "Finnegans' wake," likewise suggesting a maritime metaphor, and following in the collective wake of more than one Finnegan.

I am not aware of any translator having chosen this option.

Option 7: Assume the command or exhortation "Finnegans, wake!," a call to all Finnegans to wake up, to stop sleeping, presumably to undertake some unspecified action.

Again, I am not aware of any translator having chosen this option.

Option 8: Assume "Finnegan's awake," he is neither sleeping nor dead.

This understanding of the title involves not the noun wake but the now obsolete adjectival usage of wake, as listed in the Oxford English Dictionary, meaning awake. A number of translators thus opt for a singular Finnegan who either wakes or is already awake: Jozef Kot's 1965 Slovak version of the opening two pages uses the title *Finnegannovo prebúdzanie*, literally "Finnegan's awakening," and Roberto Sanesi's 1982 Italian rendering of a single page uses the title "Il risveglio di Finnegan," also literally "Finnegan's awakening," though in Italian allowing also for "Finnegan's revival," as if from the dead. Endre Bíró's 1992 Hungarian *Finnegan ébredése* translates excerpts from, literally, "Finnegan's awakening," and Jacek Malicki's 2001 Polish rendering of excerpts uses the title *Przebudzenie Finnegana*, again literally "Finnegan's awakening" (from sleep).

Option 9: Remembering the same obsolete adjectival usage of wake, assume "Finnegans awake," involving at least two Finnegans who are neither sleeping nor dead.

A complete Turkish translation by Fuat Sevimay appeared in 2016 as *Finnegan Uyanması*, where the noun *uyanma* means "awakening" and "Finnegan" is consciously

ungrammatical. The noun *uyanması*, with the singular possessive suffix *-sı* literally means "his awakening." But by employing the name "Finnegan" without an appropriate possessive suffix, whether singular or plural (*-nın* or *-lar* respectively), Sevimay "echoes the obscurity of the original by creating a structure that permits either meaning" (Fenge 2017: 2). *Uyanma* also includes the noun *anma* ("commemoration"), thus suggesting a sense of remembrance (Fenge 2017: 2), Finnegan remembered.

Option 10: Assume "Finn again's (a)wake," implying that Finn MacCool is once again awake, as legend predicted.

I am not aware of any translator having taken up this option – but Joyce himself was pleased to receive an early review of *Finnegans Wake* from Helsinki, where clearly, as he puns on two separate occasions in correspondence, "the Finn again wakes" (Joyce, 1966: 463, 466).

Option 11: Assume, as in option 1, that the original title should remain untranslated, but transliterate it into the relevant target language.

In one sense this is the same as leaving the title untranslated, but new and potentially interesting cultural resonances may come into play. All three existing Japanese translations, for example (Naoki Yanase, 1993; Kyoko Miyata, 2004; Tatsuo Hamada, 2012) appeared under the transliterated title *Fineganzu ueiku* (フィネガンズ・ウエイク). A Japanese wake, however, is not called a *ueiku* (ウエイク) but a *tsuya* (通夜), literally "passing the night," and the ceremonial formalities and social conventions involved are quite different from those of an Irish wake.

Similarly, a newspaper obituary of the Egyptian Joyce scholar Taha Mahmoud Taha recorded in 2002 that he had also completed an Arabic translation of the *Wake*. This translation does not seem ever to have actually appeared, but its intended title is recorded as having been a phonetic transliteration of the English title, *Finnegans Wake* (فينيجانز ويك) (Battuti, 2012). Once again, however, there is no equivalent in the Arabic Muslim tradition of an Irish funeral wake, the deceased being typically prepared for burial with only family

members in attendance, after which a ma'tam or "funeral ceremony" takes place to accompany the actual burial.

Unlike a traditional Irish wake, alcohol plays no part in either of these ceremonial occasions.

Option 12: Assume none of the above, and rewrite the title altogether.

This final option allows for more uninhibited use of the principle that *Finnegans Wake* cannot in fact be translated but can only be rewritten. In many ways this is the most interesting of the available options – and the results are certainly the most adventurous.

Donaldo Schüler's evocative 2003 Portuguese title, *Finnicius Revém*, is borrowed, in an act of homage to its original coiners, from the Brazilian brothers Augusto and Haroldo de Campos (1962: 13), whose Portuguese rendering of excerpts from the *Wake* appeared in book form in 1962 as *Panorama do Finnegans Wake* but employed the phrase "Finnicius Revém" as an internal title. That title, as used by Schüler, can be read as combining "Finn" and suggestions of "Phoenicians" (Portuguese *fenícios*) and Phoenix (Portuguese *fénix*), not to mention an "end" (French *fin*, Portuguese *fim*, Latin *finis*, English *finish*), all of which "comes again" (Portuguese *revém*) as if in a "dream" (French *rêve*), reflecting Joyce's own reported statement that one of the many things he wanted to convey in the *Wake* was what goes on in the mind of a dreamer. The invented name *Finnicius*, while evoking Finn MacCool, also suggests the Brazilian personal name *Vinicius*, evoking a Brazilian *vinho* ("wine") in at least partial substitution for the Irish whiskey that brings an ever-thirsty Tim Finnegan back from the dead.

The playful title of a subsequent children's book by Schüler, meanwhile, loosely based on elements of the *Wake*, *Finnício Riovém* (2004), actually improves further on his earlier title. The first word, *Finnício*, now includes *início* ("beginning") as well as *fim* ("end"), *Finn*, and "Phoenician"; while *riovém* includes not only *revém* ("comes again") and thus by implication the suggestion of a French *rêve* ("dream"), but also *rio* ("river"), and thus *Anna Livia Plurabelle*, the iconic river that flows through Joyce's text from its non-beginning to its non-end.

One year later than Schüler's five-volume rendering, Hervé Michel's 2004 French rendering of the title very overtly acknowledges and even flaunts the impossibility of translation rather than rewriting in the case of *Finnegans Wake*. His highly idiosyncratic online *Veillée Pinouilles* (also referred to by the quasi-mathematical formulas $V \text{ i} \pi n 0$ and $\sqrt{\text{i} \pi n 0}$) renames Finnegan as "Pinouilles." Michel himself describes in his online introduction the process of free association that led to the name: the name Finnegan suggested to him the term *finocchio* (an Italian slang term for a male homosexual), which suggested the puppet *Pinocchio*, which suggested *pinuche* (colloquial French for red wine), which eventually led to *Pinouille*. The title as a whole is readable as flamboyantly combining *veillée* as a funeral "wake"; mathematical pi (3.14159 ...) as a finally indeterminable quantity; colloquial French *pine* (for *pénis* "penis") describing the renamed Finnegan as a "prick"; and colloquial French *nouille* describing him also as a "stupid dope"; while the final -s both suggests a plural "Finnegans" and echoes the overtly ungrammatical character of Joyce's final -s.

Finnegan renamed as *Pinouille* is therefore just a "stupid prick," suggesting in passing both his sexual misdemeanours and their associated lack of good sense, while the echo of the French *Pinot* grape evokes the proverbially alcoholic nature of an Irish wake. *Veillée Pinouilles* is described on its decidedly baroque title page as an "intraduction et contraduction de *Finnegans Wake*," suggesting a translation (*traduction*) that will have some claim to be an introduction to *Finnegans Wake* but, like any other would-be translation of that text, will be essentially also a contradiction in terms. The overall endeavour is humorously attributed to the efforts of one "Halphé Mihcel," an Hervé Michel orthographically discombobulated by his extended translatorial dealings with ALP (Halphé) and HCE (Mihcel).

Michel's title thus retains the concept of a funeral wake (*veillée*) but entirely rewrites Joyce's use of "Finnegans" and abandons its multiple associations and implications by a process of almost entirely unrelated free association. The intention here is clearly to provide a similarity of reading experience for a French readership, but the most obvious similarity between the two titles is in fact the shared willingness to play flamboyantly on the possibilities of language.

A flamboyantly opaque rendering of the title is Afonso Teixeira Filho's *A noite e as vidas de Renatos Avelar* ("The night and the lives of Renatos Avelar"), employed as the title of his 2008 Portuguese rendering of the first chapter. "Renatos Avelar", like "Finnegans Wake", uses thirteen letters. "Renatos" is explained by the translator as conflating birth (Italian *nato* "born"), death (Greek *thanatos*), and rebirth (Italian *renato* "reborn"), while "Avelar," otherwise a not uncommon Portuguese surname, here conflates the Portuguese verb *velar* ("to wake, to observe a vigil") and, contributing a highly idiosyncratic note, a partial anagram of the name of Eamon De Valera (1882-1975), former revolutionary and later President of Ireland, here presented as father to the rebirth of the Irish state (Teixeira Filho, 2008: 202). The tongue-in-cheek title has of course the associated effect of directing its potential readers away from the dense knot of textual allusions associated with the names of both Tim Finnegan and his legendary avatar Finn MacCool. It also raises in particularly graphic form, as in the case of Hervé Michel's *Veillée Pinouilles*, an inescapable initial question for any literary translator, namely the degree to which it is legitimate or desirable to ring extravagant titular changes, however clever, on the original title of a literary work.

The title of Krzysztof Bartnicki's complete 2012 Polish translation, *Finneganów tren*, suggests a "funeral lament" (a *tren*, from Greek *thrênos*, a "funeral lament") for either a singular Finnegan or for plural Finnegans. In modern Polish the ending *-ów* denotes a genitive plural; in earlier forms of the language, however, the ending *-ów* denoted in the case of certain possessive adjectives a masculine singular (where in standard modern Polish *-owy* is used), achieving an elegant combination of singularity and plurality.

For a Polish reader the term *tren* is evocative of one of the major highlights of Polish Renaissance literature, namely the *Treny* (Lamentations) of the sixteenth-century poet Jan Kochanowski, written in 1580 on the death of his daughter. A secondary connotation of *tren* is the "train" of a dress, especially of a wedding dress, flowing in the wake of its wearer like the wake of a ship. A third meaning of Polish *tren*, as also of English *train*, is the flamboyant tail plumage of a peacock. Both of these latter meanings suggest the lots of fun that may also be had at Finnegan's translated wake, even despite lamentation. The archaic but less multiply evocative Polish noun *bdyn*, meanwhile, refers specifically to a funeral "wake." Wishing to retain the complementary echo, Bartnicki parodically

employed the title *Finneganów bdyn* for a compilation of textual variants published simultaneously with *Finneganów tren* – the two volumes sharing an identical cover design echoing that of Joyce's original *Finnegans Wake*.

A first selection from Andrey Rene's online Russian translation-in-progress appeared in 2016 under the title *Na pomine Finneganov* (На помине Финнеганов). The traditional Russian translation of the title *Finnegans Wake*, outside of Joycean circles, is *Pominki po Finneganu*, "Finnegan's wake" in the funeral sense. Rene explains in a private communication that his own title *Na pomine Finneganov* – a pleasing trochaic tetrameter – plays on the interrelationship of the nouns *pomin* ("prayer for the dead") and *pominki* (a funeral "wake"), the verb *pomint'* ("to remember"), and the colloquial phrase *legok na pomine*, the equivalent of "talk of the devil," implying "and he's sure to appear." The title thus suggests more narrowly something like "Praying for Finnegan" and more broadly something like "Praying for Finnegan as we remember him – and, wake or no wake, we'll probably see him back again, resurrected."

The latest translated title of the *Wake*, as of this writing, is Adam Roberts's *Pervigilium Finneganis* (2019), that of a rendering in quasi-Latin, in collaboration with Google Translate, and essentially a joke, as Roberts freely acknowledges. The title parodically reflects that of the anonymous Latin poem, possibly datable to the fourth century, *Pervigilium Veneris* ("The Vigil of Venus"), celebrating the imminent arrival of spring and the rebirth of nature under the beneficent influence of the goddess. As Roberts notes, however, a *pervigilium* was also the vigil or wake observed as part of Roman funerary practice, thus permitting his parodic title to refer simultaneously both to death and to rebirth. One notes that the modern colloquialism *perv*, as in *pervert*, also resonates in the context of HCE's unspecified but dubious activities in the Phoenix Park.

The German translator Friedhelm Rathjen deserves to be given the last word. The playful title of his 2012 collection of some two hundred pages of excerpts in German translation is *Winnegans Fake*, drawing on Joyce's own phrase "Wimmegame's fake" (FW 375.16-17) and humorously making the point that translators of *Finnegans Wake* may very well "win" some translational battles and will undoubtedly lose a great many more (such as, for example, not getting even the first word – or, indeed, even the first letter – of the title

right). And however impressive their wins may turn out to be, they will also inevitably produce a Wake that is fake. Rathjen's title, while clearly also a joke, is a particularly interesting one in that while it is certainly no longer Joyce's title, and certainly also not in any sense a translation, the playful exchange of the two word initials makes very clear that it should be read as a translation – while simultaneously acknowledging that any attempt to translate Joyce's final text, beginning with the title, will inevitably remain merely a would-be translation.

One final question suggests itself, of course, namely what evaluative criteria one might use to suggest which of these possibilities is a "good" or even the "best" translation. Traditional faithfulness to the original? Retaining as many of the implications and connotations of the original as possible? Attempting to provide a similarity of reading experience? Entertaining the reader by a playfully flaunted display of ingenuity that rivals Joyce's own display of ingenuity, outjoycing Joyce, so to speak, dancing at the Wake? Different translators' titles, as we have seen, imply widely different answers. In conclusion, however, it is surely fair to say that whatever option a particular translator might have chosen to use as a basis for translation, readers in any language are guaranteed at least one thing: lots of fun at Finnegans Wake, starting no later than the title.

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Tradutores, títulos, textos: a leitura das duas primeiras palavras de Finnegans Wake²

Patrick O'Neill, Queen's University, Canadá

Tradução de Vitor Alevato do Amaral
e Isabela Martins (Labestrada/UFF)³

Finnegans Wake (1939), de James Joyce, contém cerca de 168.000 palavras em suas 628 páginas. Este artigo se limita, modestamente, a apenas duas delas, as duas primeiras, que formam o título, assim deixando generosamente em torno de 167.998 palavras para outros enfrentarem. Apesar do âmbito modesto da tarefa, é bastante óbvio que essas duas primeiras palavras são particularmente importantes, visto que qualquer título literário,

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