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«It can't be all in one language»:
Poetry and «Verbivocovisual» Language in
Joyce and Pound

T HIS COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS of Ezra Pound's and James
Joyce's poetic language stems from a more general reflection on
a significant peculiarity of modernism, namely the concoction
of several artistic techniques employed in writing (such as the musical
or the painterly ones) and the consequent modernist emphasis on the
plastic and sonorous qualities of language. These are inextricable
components within the literary discourse of numerous authors who,
like Joyce and Pound, stressed on the inadequacy of verbal language
as the only instrument to recreate and reshape reality. As a
consequence, they turned their attention to other forms of expression
deriving from different cultures, different historical periods, different
linguistic approaches and different artistic methods pertaining also to
visual arts and music. In Canto LXXXVI, Pound declared that no
single language is exhaustive and that «it can't be all in one language»
(Pound 1975: p. 583), an assumption which states the need of different
idioms but also of different modes of expression to be used
compendiously in order to achieve a comprehensive knowledge. James
Joyce, besides the need of what Ellmann called «a language which is
above all languages» (Ellmann 1959: p. 410), also spoke of a
«lexinction of life» (FW, 83.25)[1], a «lexical extinction» which indicates

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[1] All parenthesised references to *Finnegans Wake* refer to the 1975 edition and follow
the page/line convention of Joycean criticism.

that verbal language alone cannot fulfil the broader scope of recreating reality through the aesthetic process and, therefore, asserts the urge of an interaction of techniques within a trans-medial-language.

Such an interdisciplinary method derives, amongst other sources, from French symbolist poets such as Stéphane Mallarmé and Guillaume Apollinaire who had already attempted at enlarging the communicative potential of language. They underlined the importance of the visual aspect of the poem, as well as its sounds and melodic composition which, in their turn, ceased to be merely decorative and ornamental elements and became poignantly instrumental in the construction of meaning. The famous statement by Mallarmé about the impersonality of the artist («L'œuvre pure implique la disparition élocutoire du poète, qui cède l'initiative aux mots», *Crise de vers* [1897], Mallarmé 1998/2003: p. 211) led to the vital and dynamic value that also modernist authors conferred to words and to their capability of generating multiple levels of meaning both (typo)graphically and acoustically. The relationship between word and image, as well as between word and sound, became extremely relevant in authors such as Joyce and Pound in whose writings words were considered as instruments to be moulded in order to shape and recreate reality. In Pound, for instance, starting from his early imagist experiments, one notes how the ingenious use of spaced typography was meant to separate out the rhythmic units of poetry to achieve both a particular rhythmical phrasing and the overlapping of verbal and visual language. Similarly, his research on Troubadour and Chinese poetry brought about, in the *Cantos*, the use of actual musical notation as a structural principle for – and «spatialization» of – language. The example of music arose the concept of *polyphony*, the sound of several voices singing at once, «not of one bird but of many» (Canto LXXV)[2], a technique which, as in Bakhtin (1984), informs both modernist narratives and poetry, where numerous voices and fragmentary echoes from different cultures and languages participated in the semantic organization of the texts. Similarly to Mallarmé, both Pound and Joyce advocated a new conception of poetry, a new way of describing

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[2] As argued by Mark Byron, the violin line of Janequin's «Le Chant des Oiseaux» in Canto LXXV, enlightens Pound's interactive/polyphonic method by framing the theme of singing within the actual musical score. The score is then to be read also as a theme or quotation, as an element of music history and as an element of personal memory (see Byron 2002).

time and space, both interpreted in their aspects of simultaneity and interruption. Joyce was initially influenced by Wagner's research of a *Gesamtkunstwerk*[3], a total work of art, which, in Joyce's writing, was meant as a mixture of several literary styles, enacting (and enacted by) all possible linguistic artifices. At the same time, imagist principles, being against a mellifluous musicality in poetry, specified that the real poetic characteristics – which Pound envisaged in Joyce's *Chamber Music* – were precision, hardness and sobriety. This kind of poetry, as T. E. Hulme had already suggested (Whitworth 2001), had both musical and «sculptural» qualities, a definition that echoes Pound's description of Joyce's *Dubliners*. In 1915, in fact, Pound highlighted and praised the exactness and the hardness of the collection of stories by Joyce:

> It is a joy then to find in Mr Joyce a *hardness and gauntness*, «*like the side of the engine*»; efficient, clear statement, *no shadow of comment*, and behind it a sense of beauty that *never relapsed into ornament* […] For ourselves we can be thankful for *clear, hard surfaces*, for an escape from the softness and mushiness of the neo-symbolist movement […]. (Pound 1970: p. 32-33, my italics)

The metaphors are centred on the plastic and sculptural qualities of Joyce's prose and, besides shedding further light on Pound's enthusiasm about *Chamber Music*, they seem to refer to Hulme's distinction between romanticism and classicism. The author, a renowned influence on Pound, praised classical verse for its «accurate, precise and definite description of things as they really are» (Hulme, in Whitworth 2001) and he pointed at the differences between «geometrical art» and «vital art». The former, as in Egyptian and Byzantine traditions, was characterized by sharp angles and straight lines and thus in open contrast to «vital art» (i.e. Romantic), which was merely an approximation to reality with its curves and blurring nuances. The same romantic/classical antithesis is retraceable in Joyce's early writings, in which he also praised classical values:

> [Classicism] is a temper of security and of satisfaction and patience. The romantic temper […] is an insecure, unsatisfied, impatient temper which sees no fit abode here for its ideals and chooses therefore to behold them under *insensible figures* […] The classical temper on the other hand, ever mindful of limitations, chooses rather to bend upon these present things and so to work upon them and fashion them that the quick intelligence

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[3] For a more exhaustive analysis and thorough treatment of the subject see Cianci 1996: p. 338-353, to which I am deeply indebted.

may go *beyond* them to their *meaning* which is still *unuttered*. (Joyce 1959: p. 78)

Classicism is praised for its awareness of limitations and for the respect of the meaning of things which is to remain «unuttered» and not expressed by the creation of «insensible figures». The stylistic method denounced by Joyce is very similar to what Pound underlines in his early review of *Dubliners*, in which a negative emphasis is given to «impressionist writing», a post-romantic attitude which *mimics* painted landscapes:

> There is a school of prose writers and of verse writers whose forerunner was Stendhal and whose founder was Flaubert. The followers of Flaubert deal in exact presentation […]. There is another set, mostly of verse writers who try *to imitate* in words what someone has done in paint. Thus one writer saw a picture by Monet and talked of «pink pigs blossoming on a hillside», and a later writer talked of «slate blue» hair and «raspberry flanks». These impressionists who write in imitation of Monet's softness instead of writing in the imitation of Flaubert's definiteness are a bore […]. (Pound 1970: p. 28)

Pound shows his aversion to the imitative style typical of Romanticism, since his aim in writing, as well as Joyce's, was not *to imitate* reality and natural phenomena, but to recreate their essence in the awareness of linguistic limitations. He doesn't claim a separation of writing and painting but rather a close connection of their aesthetic principles and, similarly, he praises the elimination of moral reflection and «representation» in favour of direct recreation, as expressed by the reference to a parallelism of all arts in the continuation of the passage:

> The spirit of a decade strikes properly upon all of the arts. There are «parallel movements» […]. The mimicking of painting ten or twenty years late, is not in the least the same as the «literary movement» parallel to the painting movement imitated. The force that leads a poet to *leave out a moral reflection* may lead a painter to *leave out representation*. The resultant poem may not suggest the resultant painting. (Pound 1970: p. 28)

In the evolution of his literary method, Pound continually stresses on the poetic creation which contains three concurrent articulations: *melopoeia*, which he derived from the union of «motz et son» in Troubadour poetry and which is the physical sound-pattern of the verse; *phanopoeia*, the creation and revelation of the images which create the mood of the poem through their visual potential (as in Chinese poetry); *logopoeia*, the progression of the intellect, the

meaningful rhythm caused by *melopoeia* and *phanopoeia* which stimulates emotional or intellectual associations in the reader (Pound 1954: p. 23-25). The three «creations», considered equally vital for the recreation of meaning, echo several definitions in *Finnegans Wake* such as «graphplot» (FW, 284.7) and «poetographies» (FW, 242.19), which underline the simultaneous spatial and temporal arrangement of literature, and «verbivocovisual» (FW, 341.19), which embraces the three categories of sound, image and language simultaneously enacted. Moreover, soon after a quotation on Coleridge, Joyce speaks of «a sing a song a sylble; a *byword*; a sentence with surcease; while stands his canyouseehim frails shall fall» (FW, 129. 7-9). The sentence triggers a complex web of meanings that revolve around the concurrence of sound («sing», «song» and «sylble», a combination of «syllable» and «Bible»[4]) and image («canyouseehim»; «byword», i.e. «embodiment» and «personification» but also «along the word», «through the word», «created *by* the word»). Most significantly, in the continuation of the passage, Joyce creates another *mot-valise*, «allphannd» (FW, 129.17), which strikingly echoes Pound's ideas on creation because of its simultaneous presentation of «phan», «sound» and «alphabet». Creation for Joyce is to be achieved through *all* the letters of the alphabet, all the revealing expressions of languages, their acoustic potential and image-creating ability. It has to atomistically incorporate all the smallest particles of meaning coming from countless historical and geographical sources and, in addition, it must have the power *to write itself,* to generate other meanings, different from the original one bestowed by the creator: «creator he has created for his creatured ones a creation» (FW, 29.14). Such a concept, as argued by John Bishop, derives from Giambattista Vico's *The New Science*, where the philosopher accounts for the original creation of nature and of language:

> Since human nature and nations evolve interdependently with language, Vico conveys their commutual coming-to-be by weaving through *The New Science* an assemblage of words originating in the same aboriginal root gen- («to come to be») whose meaning is also evolution. Uttered in the darkness of prehistory by descendants of Vico's first men, the syllable generates over generations and in all the nations of the gentile world, a diverse vocabulary whose meaning is the genesis of human nature. Joyce succinctly comments in *Finnegans Wake* that «the world,

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[4] The Bible was a thematic and stylistic source for all of Joyce's works, including *Chamber Music*. Here, as I'll explain in the course of the essay, images from *The Songs of Songs* are employed to refer to their original symbolic meanings.

> mind, is, *was and will be writing its own wrunes for ever*, man, on all
> matters that fall under the ban of our *infrarational senses»* (FW, 19.35) –
> where the appositional equations of «world», «mind», «man» and his
> «runes» replicate the vision of *The New Science*. (Bishop 1986: 184-185)

Joyce's theory of creation, which goes back to consider ancient runes and visual inscriptions, is thus shaped by Vico's speculations on genesis and «poetry», a term that he uses in his etymological sense of «poiêsis», i.e. «making» or «creating». Significantly, Vico also questioned the dichotomy between senses and abstraction in a passage which famously influenced Joyce but which also echoes, although indirectly, Pound's imagist theories and its refusal of abstraction in favour of an objective presentation of physical phenomena through vibrant words:

> Ma, siccome ora per la natura delle nostre umane menti, troppo ritirata da' sensi nel medesimo volgo con le tante astrazioni di quante sono piene le lingue con tanti vocaboli astratti, e di troppo assottigliata con l'arte dello scrivere […] ci è naturalmente negato di poter formare la vasta immagine di cotal donna che dicono «Natura simpatetica» [...] così ora ci è naturalmente negato di poter entrare nella vasta immaginativa di que' primi uomini, le menti de' quali di nulla erano astratte, di nulla erano assottigliate, di nulla spiritualizzate, perché erano tutte immerse ne' sensi, tutte rintuzzate dalle passioni, tutte seppellite ne' corpi. (Vico 1977: 265)[5]

Pound and Joyce show a similar evolutional process in their poetics. Starting from their early experimental writings focusing on sensorial experiences (imagist poems and epiphanies), they both turned their attention to the original language of men, to its communicative force and to its visual/tangible potential. This is plainly expressed in Pound's *ideogrammatic technique*, which derives from Chinese pictorial poetry, and in Joyce's *etymological method*, which points at those micro-units of language (both phonetic and graphic) that contain the whole of history and humanity. The fragmentary language of Joyce, similarly to the one of Pound, considers the metonymic elements of language that are mostly charged with etymological history and, by

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[5] «But the nature of our civilized minds is so detached from the senses [...] by abstractions corresponding to all abstract terms our language abound in, and so refined by the art of writing […] that it is naturally beyond our power to form the vast image of the world [...] It is equally beyond our power to enter into the vast imagination of those first men, whose minds were not in the least abstract [...] because they were entirely immersed in the senses, buffeted by the passions, buried in the body». (Vico 1984: p. 378, quoted in Bishop 1986: p. 181)

combining them in innovative constructs, it aims at recreating, both synchronically and diachronically, the whole history of mankind.

Although Joyce's early experiments with language were not as radical as his later production, both in the prose of *Dubliners* and in the poetry of *Chamber Music*, one can envisage the seeds of his future operational and generative language. Besides *Dubliners*, Pound praised also *Chamber Music* and he inserted its last poem «I Hear an Army» in *Des Imagistes* collection, fascinated as he was by some of its attributes that were very similar to the ones advocated in Imagism. *Chamber Music*, a collection of 36 poems, deals with the experience of love of a young poet, ranging from the youthful passion of an idealised sentiment to the more mature and complex experience of failure, loneliness and isolation. From a thematic point of view, the collection anticipates many of the central subjects of Joyce's later production[6], such as the frustrations of love, the role of the poet and of social censure. At the same time, the poems also anticipate the later stylistic experimentations on the abovementioned mixture of sound and visual devices. Starting from the title, the collection presents music as one of its major themes which, in fact, appears numerous times in the poems in the guise of piano playing, harps, singing voices, noises and silences. In addition, the verse possesses a strong musical quality since Joyce intended the poems be set to music and wrote them with a tenor's vocal range in mind[7]. Thus the *pathos* and *bathos* in the climax of the experience of love are mirrored by the *crescendo* and *diminuendo* of a chamber music suite, i.e. «music that develops a serious idea through various phases» and that, as Finney has argued, «has not only surface meaning but also depths that one understands gradually» (Finney 1985: p. 12). As in real chamber music, Joyce's collection shows a cyclic development that consists of more than a single movement and, therefore, it is to be read in its entirety, like a large musical form where each poem is but a fragment of a more general and complex

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[6] The fact that Joyce considered *Chamber Music* as a phase of his literary career is manifest in a letter to his brother: «I don't like the book but wish it were published and be damned to it. However it is *a young man's book*. I felt like that. It is *not a book of love verses at all*, I perceive» (Ellmann 1966: II.219).

[7] «I hope you may set all of *Chamber Music* in time. This was indeed partly my idea in writing it. The book is in fact a suite of songs and if I were a musician I suppose I should have set them to music myself», Letter to G. Molyneux Palmer, 1907 (Gilbert 1957: I. 67).

mosaic. Such a fragmentary nature, which will culminate in *Finnegans Wake*, leads to a composition which, although mainly shaped through a musical technique, is not limited to music but also incorporates literary and visual devices to form a more ambitious, all-encompassing, «verbivocovisual» mosaic. The first song, for instance, presents ideal love in a triumph of idyllic and melodic sounds intertwined with simple but striking natural images:

> Strings in the earth and air
> Make music sweet;
> Strings by the river where the willows meet.
>
> There's music along the river
> For love wanders there
> Pale flowers on his mantle,
> Dark leaves on his hair.
>
> All softly playing,
> With head to the music bent,
> And fingers straying
> Upon an instrument.
> (Joyce 1995: p.1)

The rhythm follows the sequence of the musical phrase while the natural images are juxtaposed in order to stimulate the reader's visual response. Similarly, in the third song the poet is captured while watching the sky and, simultaneously, while hearing the night wind and a harp's melody:

> At that hour when all things have repose,
>   O lonely watcher of the skies,
>   Do you hear the night wind and the sighs
> Of harps playing unto Love to unclose
>   The pale gates of sunrise?
>
> When all things have repose do you alone
>   Awake to hear the sweet harps play
>   To love before him on his way,
> And the night wind answering in antiphon
>   Till night is overgone?
>
> Play on, invisible harps, unto love,
>   Whose way in heaven is aglow
>   At that hour when soft lights come and go.
> Soft sweet music in the air above
>   And in the earth below.
> (Joyce 1995: p.3)

In the second stanza he witnesses the emerging of dawn, an image that intensifies his awakening to love and underlines a perceptual experience that ends in the epiphanic vision of light and in the all-inclusive music in «the air above and in the earth below». Although the metre is Elizabethan, and the structure rather simple and fashioned on classical models, one can note the same immersion in the senses advocated by Imagism, as well as the sensuous imagery created by the combination of *melopoeia* and *phanopoeia*. Without any moral or abstract commentary, the natural images are so masterfully interwoven with the theme of music and with the actual musicality of the verse that the reader experiences a whole perceptual activity although the poem may appear simple and merely decorative. *Chamber Music* offers instead a wide range of poetical diction which varies extensively from the first Elizabethan songs to the last ones which imitate decadent and French verse. The theme of love seems to be the unifying structural motif of the collection in which style, ranging from decorative simplicity to artificial complexity, changes according to the mood of the speaking voice and to its awareness of the sentimental journey through love and disillusion. The two final songs, the most dramatic and mostly charged with sound and visual effects, are then symbolic of the sense of ending and death typical of any human experience, including, as Carla Marengo Vaglio argues, the conclusion of the literary work. According to the critic, the anticipation of Joyce's mature work is evident not only in the architectural structure of the work but, more importantly, in Joyce's «mastering of the *stylistic variation* that, far from being exclusively musical and decorative, configures the work as a *recapitulation* and *summa* of the love poems of all ages» (Marengo Vaglio 1977: 48-49, my translation and my italics). This early epic ambition is further notable in the several intertextual references which range from Pre-Raphaelite poetry («Silently she's combing»), to Jonson («When the shy star goes forth in heaven»), Yeats («Who goes amid the green wood»), Coleridge and Shakespeare («Though leanest to the shell of night») and *The Songs of Songs* in «My dove, my beautiful one». This, according to Joyce, was the central song of the collection since the poet approaches the actual experience of love:

> My dove, my beautiful one,
>   Arise, arise!
>   The night-dew lies
> Upon my lips and eyes.
>
> The odorous winds are weaving

A music of sighs:
    Arise, arise,
My dove, my beautiful one!

I wait by the cedar tree,
    My sister, my love.
    White breast of the dove,
My breasts shall be your bed.

The Pale dew lies
    Like a veil on my head.
    My fair one, my fair dove,
Arise, arise!
(Joyce 1995: p.14)

The concentrated images sufficiently imply the feelings without the need of any overt expression and without indulging in overt conceptualism. They are deeply rooted in a total sensory experience: smell («odorous winds»), touch («the night-dew lies upon my lips and eyes»), sight («white breast of the dove») and hearing («a music of sighs»). Amidst these sensuous images, the poet is located by a cedar tree in the first line of the second stanza. The line, considering that the song was for Joyce the central one, could be seen as the central line of all the collection so as to render the tree a semantically charged image which informs not only *Chamber Music* but also Joyce's general poetics. As stated above, the cedar tree comes from *The Songs of Songs* where, due to its majestic and forceful shape, it symbolizes durability and everlasting fragrance. Considering the inter-textual reference, a technique which will become predominant in Joyce's later work, the image/quotation could be seen as a precise indication of the nucleus of Joyce's method. The fertile tree is thus a symbol of the ramifications of meanings created by the intersection of linguistic registers, of visual *phanopoeia* and musical *melopoeia* and, most importantly, it mirrors Joyce's historical structure of language and literature in which every particle gets endlessly charged in meaning and needs to be further juxtaposed or recombined in order to achieve not only a recreation of reality but rather a «concreation» (FW, 581.29): a creation made of several concurrent elements, a «compendious» of simultaneous meanings (Pound 1934: p. 101).

The considerations about language and interactiveness of meanings in Joyce are also applicable to Pound's poetry, especially because of the similar evolution of their methods. Starting from the truthfulness of the early imagist experiments, Pound's poetics extents to the Chinese

translations of *Cathay* and further broadens to the complexity of the late *Cantos*, in which the Chinese ideogram («a new Greece in China», Pound 1970: p. 215) is adopted as a graphic mark of meaning and, more relevantly, it becomes a structural technique for the whole collection, a compositional theory that guides all poems. According to Ernest Fenollosa, the Chinese ideographic method was to be celebrated for its ability to preserve the original nature of language, of a language made of shorthand images and pictures of actions and processes in nature. As such, metaphors were possible because they were immediate and far from abstraction, they followed objective relations in nature. Contrary to the phonetically written word which «does not bear the metaphor on its face» (Fenollosa 1936: p. 25), ideogrammatic writing not only «absorbed the poetic substance of nature and built with it a second work of metaphor» but, for Fenollosa, it was able «through its very pictorial visibility, to retain its original creative poetry with far more vigour and vividness than any phonetic tongue» (*Ibid.*: p. 24). Besides this pictorial visibility, Pound was also fascinated by the expressive power of Chinese sounds whose rings and tones could also improve his search for *melopoeia* and achieve that quality of hearing that he didn't want to separate from the image-making element of *phanopoeia*, as clearly argued by Michael Ingham (Ingham 2001: 236). The combination of auditory and pictorial elements in Chinese language was the perfect instrument to achieve a «verbivocovisual» poetry that had to present meaning in a paratactic form, directly to the eyes and to the ears of the readers. These principles, later enacted and explored in *Cantos*, are functional in Pound's early poetry as well. The famous «In a Station of the Metro», for instance, presents the same pictorial image-text composition thanks to the typographic layout which separates both the units of sound rhythm and the ones of the images, so as to become an image-centred reflection on the underground crowd visible and audible on the page. Similarly, the early poem «L'Art, 1910», inspired by Roger Fry's epochal exhibition «Manet and Post-Impressionism», condenses the same interactive and multi-sensorial principles, although in their still embryonic level:

L'Art 1910

Green arsenic smeared on an egg-white cloth,
Crushed strawberries! Come, let us feast our eyes!
(Pound 1990: p. 18)

The poem, as argued by Reed Way Dasenbrock, «places the poet or speaker and his interlocutor at an exhibition» (Dasenbrock 2001: p. 227). From a visual point of view, it highlights the intense colours of post-impressionism thanks to their direct association to arsenic and strawberries, while the vibrant language («smeared»; «crushed») involves the shock value that those paintings had at the time. Moreover, the forceful rolling assonance of the *r* at the beginning of the two verses offers the reader an acoustic visualization which mimes the powerful experience of a «feast» for the eyes. The poem, as in Joyce's «verbivocovisual poetographies», could be said to offer also a «feast» for the ears, as well as «a feast of languages»[8], a mixture of visual, acoustic and literary language that doesn't imitate a painting but is able to recreate the same effect on the reader. As in *Cathay*, these early poems illustrate how emotional and pictorial effects could be intensified when the relations between images remain obscure and left to the reader's own interpretation. They also mirror the interest of Pound in the *unity of image* in Noh Plays[9] and, especially, his fascination with Fenollosa's notes on Chinese poetry. Both Pound and Fenollosa saw in the ideogram a way of escaping Western abstraction and metaphorical construction of meaning. The primitive ideograms, as well as the ancient runes and hieroglyphs for Joyce, were composed of concrete things and juxtaposed images, complex units in which the pictorial representations could engender a poetic compound out of the interaction of tangible living fragments. Being «*a verbal idea of action*» (Fenollosa 1920: p. 9, author's italics), the ideogram became for Pound extremely relevant not only as a graphic instrument to spatialize and visualize the poem but also, and more importantly, as a stylistic method to achieve authenticity. Such a method, applied thoroughly in *Cantos,* resided in the analysis of the individual components and then on the construction of a new hybrid made of the several metonymic fragments in an internally allusive mosaic of associative meanings. The dynamism of the pictorial ideogram, of its multilayered sense, resides in the active participation of the interpreter and, as such, it sheds light on the primary function of *translation* for Pound. In addition, it explains the aim he was pursuing while incorporating different languages, quotations and symbols in *Cantos* (similarly to *Finnegans Wake*). Here, stratification and the overlapping of different

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[8] The expression was used by Giorgio Melchiori in the homonymous work to indicate the countless linguistic intersections enacted in Joyce's style (see Melchiori 1995).

[9] See Kenner 1971: p. 282-283.

registers beyond the verbal, are a direct consequence of Chinese pictorial writing which offered Pound a possibility to explore a variety of multi-layered models of literature and to achieve what Leo Frobenius called a universal *paideuma*, «the tangle of the inrooted ideas of any period» (Xie 2001: p. 218). Similarly to the stratification of meaning examined by Frye in medieval allegories, modernist texts such as Pound's and Joyce's, are orders of «coexistent data» which require an active and interpretative reading, as illustrated by Mitchell:

> Literature in a pictographic script like Chinese, highlights the experience of spatial, pictorial form at the primary level of deciphering, while phonetic alphabets tend to «background» the spatial dimension, bringing it to the fore only in special experiments like concrete poetry. (Mitchell 1980: p. 550)

Pound's poetry is thus able to simultaneously present a spatial and a temporal experience thanks to the «intermediality» of his language and to its capacity of melting *phano-*, *melo-* and *logopoeia* in a more general artistic discourse which finds its roots in the Chinese ideogram. The same spatial juxtaposition is then employed in Pound's use of ancient quotations and translations within the poems. To translate, as argued by Xie following the Latin etymology (*interpres*, «intermediary»), was for Pound to be «in-between» several languages, glyphs and cultures and «to lead across» them new possibilities of meaning (from the Latin etymology of «to translate», i.e. *traductio*, «leading across»). He recognized the «temporal gaps between the different layers of language and epoch […] and the only way to bridge these gaps was to create a lingua franca by juxtaposing the various idioms and make them interact» (Xie 2001: p. 217). Pound was interested in making the reader participate in a multi-sensorial experience comprising the history of language and literature, of visuality and of musicality, and to achieve a stratified open meaning which could be easily described by Frye's words:

> The word meaning or dianoia conveys the sense of simultaneity caught by the eye. We listen to the poem as it moves from beginning to end, but as soon as the whole of it is in our minds at once we «see» what it means. More exactly, this response is not simply to *the* whole *of* it, but to *a* whole *in* it: we have a vision of meaning or dianoia whenever any simultaneous apprehension is possible. (Frye 1957: p. 77-78)

Frye's emphasis on the expression «a whole in it» accurately describes the infinite potential of meaning-generation both in *Cantos* and in *Finnegans Wake*. As for the former, the concept can be better exemplified by quoting two of the late *Cantos* which poignantly refer

to what Pound had already called a «compendious» (Pound 1934: p. 101). In Canto LXXXI, soon after a reference to *hypostasis*, the literary personification of an abstract concept, Pound suggests the gradual experience of light and participation in the «invisible» character of nature («first came the seen, then thus the palpable»):

> Saw but the eye and stance between the eye
> Colour diastasis
> Careless or unaware it had not the
> Whole tent's room
> Nor was place full of Ειδώς
> interpass, penetrate
> casting but shade beyond the other lights
> sky's clear
> night's sea
> green of the mountain pool
> shone from the unmasked eyes in half-mask's
> space.
> (Pound 2005: p. 93)

The stanza is a vortex-like juxtaposition of images that, in their disrupted meaning, reveal the gradual perceptual experience of the speaker and the achievement of the epiphany («shone from the unmasked eyes in half-mask's space»). The term «diastasis», in Greek «separation», alludes to the «being-in-between» of a translation that disentangles various meanings and then makes them interact by juxtaposition. *Translation* becomes thus an all-encompassing experience meant to pierce and «penetrate» the whole of reality in all its domains, from the natural to the linguistic. In Canto CXV, a striking image reveals the same *compendius* of experiences, and ends in the overlapping of reality and vision:

> A blown husk that is finished
> But *the light sings eternal*
> A pale flare over marshes
> Where the salt hay whispers to tide's change
> Time, space,
> Neither life nor death is the answer.
> And of man seeking good,
> Doing evil.
> In meiner Heimat
> Where *the dead walked*
> *And the living were made of cardboard.*
> (Pound 2005: 97, my italics)

«The light sings eternal» ideally indicates the spatio-temporal combination of *logo-*, *melo-* and *phanopoeia* and recreates the multi-

sensorial experience of the speaker, as well as the endless hermeneutical process of the reader. In addition, the final reversal of «concrete death» and «abstract life» is able to suggest a peculiar link between Pound's ideogrammatic method and Joyce's etymological one. As convincingly suggested by Bishop, Joyce ideologically linked the sound of *phonetics* to the quintessential nature of *phantasm*, *phenomenon*, *phantasmagoria*, i.e. the production of multiple images, both real and abstract:

> For the clearer of the air from on high has spoken in tumbuldum tambaldam to his tembledim tombaldoom worrild and, moguphonoised by that *phonemanon*, the unhappitents of the earth have terrerumbled from fimament unto fundament […]. (FW, 258-20-23)

The passage acoustically reproduces the sound of the thunder after which *phenomenal* reality comes to light. All the words involved in *phonemanon* derive from the Indo-European root «bha» which, through history, has grown into the Greek «phônê» («to talk») and «phôs» («light») and then into terms such as *epiphany*, *phonology*, *phonetics*. Therefore the compound *phonemanon* embraces, along history, the meanings of *light*, *sound*, *particles of meaning-sound* («phoneme») and *phenomenon* (from «phainomenon», «that which appears» or «that which has been brought to life») and suggests an articulated experience of sight, hearing and vision. The same combination of sound and vision is readable in another passage, in which the references to «eyefeast» and to the East trigger a connection to Pound's ideogrammatic method:

> Ars we say in the classies. *Kunstful* we others said. What ravening shadow! What dovely line! Not the king of this age could richlier *eyefeast* in *oreillental* longuardness with alternate nightjoys of a thousand kinds but one kind. (FW, 357. 15-19)

While «kunstful» means «full of art» (from the German «kunst»), the rich *eyefeast* happens through the well-preserved («long guarded» or even written on a «*long* board») *sounds* of the East («oreillental» melts the French «oreilles» with «oriental») and suggests the same all-inclusive reality and the «hueful panepiphanal world» that Joyce recreated linguistically:

> […] all too many illusions through *photoprismic* velamina of *hueful panepiphanal world* spectacurum of Lord Joss, the of which *zoantholitic furniture* from mineral through vegetal to animal, not appear to full up together fallen man than under but *one photoreflection of the several iridals gradations* of solar light […]. (FW, 611.13)

The world is protected by a membrane, a veil («velamina») that art has to pierce in order to bring the whole world to light by using a comprehensive «furniture» of all physical, historical and anthological (zoantholitic») elements. The hyperbolic passage could easily describe Pound's *Cantos* as well, although in another section the reference is unmistakable:

> to give more *pondus* to the copperstick he presented (though this seems in some *cumfusium* with the chapstuck ginger which, as being of sours, acids, salts, sweets and bitters *compompounded*, we know him to have used as *chaw-chaw* for bone, muscle, blood, flesh and vimvital) that whereas the *hakusay* accusation againstm had been made […]. In greater support of his word (it, quaint anticipation of a famous phrase, has been *reconstricted out of oral style into the verbal for all time with ritual rhythmics* (FW 35. 35-36; 36. 1-10)

Although the effect is ironical for the mixture of «Confucio» and «confusion», as well as for the pun on «pound/pondus» and the overlapping of «haiku» and «accusation», the word *compompounded* strikingly condenses Pound's «compendius» and Joyce's «concreation»: a language which is «reconstructed» and «re-constricted» in order to comprise, compound and propound a kind of (maybe pompous or pomposo-sounding) hyper-composite poetry.

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