

Cosmopolitan multilingualism

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In times of nationalism, false patriotism, and secessionism, fortunately cosmopolitanism is still argued and not only in reference to Enlightenment studies!

It also occurred in ancient times. Cicero, in his *Tusculanae disputationes*, reminds us that Socrates, when questioned about his nationality, used to answer “mundanus”, citizen of the world.

Being cosmopolitan certainly does not mean to repudiate one’s roots; as Paul states, it isn’t we who bring our roots but our roots that bring and sustain us.

It could be interesting to find out whether people’s roots have a common, archetypal basis. Writers such as Schurè in “*The Great Initiates*”, linguists (Semerano in ‘*The Origin of European literatures*’), poets (Pound, Joyce in ‘*Finnegans Wake*’, Eliot), psychoanalysts and mythologists (Jung, Grof, Campbell) have ventured on this difficult task.

I have tried to develop this idea in my ‘*Interior Mind*’, here reproduced.

*With the Golden Bough, you enter
the earth wide opened mouth
to the subterranean sky,
to the very end of darkness
and hollow, under the dull light
of the black sun
you pass oceans of shadows,
beaches of fallen leaves,
the Angelus Novus who lets not looking backwards
people cross - you overtake the Father,
enlightened by fires of future lives,
pointing to the ivory door of misleading dreams.
An interior, hidden mind spreads around the universe -*

*if eyes opened even for a moment,
they could see how things really are:
slow drops of rain on a window pane.*

If we admit that some archetypal ideas are common among our planet inhabitants, then we can state, in the sense meant by Borges, that just one “Book” has been written, as an evidence of the original and permanent cultural unity of the world and it contains all the chaotic fragments ever thought of and written by people searching for the deep truth of things...

Different languages can be approached and mixed together to transmit something that apparently is far in space and time: if we try to translate, for instance, the first verses of *Genesis* or any other holy texts in two or three languages, we realize that the new and different

sounds, irrespective of our linguistic knowledge, suggest new, universal, cosmic vibrations that the original version didn't succeed in transmitting.

In any case they reveal the complexity of reading different levels.

*and the land was left barren
et les ombres noires
enveloppaient les profondeurs
et aura divina
super oceani undas*

[and the land was left barren,
the depths enveloped in black shadows,
the divine aura
on the ocean waves]

(see: <http://www.wordswithoutborders.org/article.php?lab=Genesis>
Engl. Transl.:Liliana Lo Giudice, French tr.: Rosa Maria Costa)

Beyond the real linguistic contamination, it is easy to be aware of that, even simply translating a poetic fragment in a succession of two or three languages, such as English, French, and Italian. Here are some examples: a few lines “broken” from Virgil’s Aeneid and a famous eclogue written by the same poet. The context does not matter any more, every new autonomous “nucleus”, quite transformed in Japanese haiku, lives a renewed life inside a renewed cosmic image.

Tempus (*Vergilius, Aeneis X, 467-468*)

stat sua cuique dies

*breve et irreparabile tempus
omnibus est vitae*

tutto è scritto,
anche il tempo breve
e senza ritorno
dell'uomo

everything is written,
also man's brief,
no returning time

chacun a son destin
et le temps de l'homme
est bref et sans retour

Evening (*Vergilius, Bucolica I, 82-83*)

*et iam summa procul villarum
culmina fumant*

maioresque cadunt altis de montibus

umbrae

già si vede il fumo delle case

e alte ombre
scendono da alte montagne

and the smoking houses already visible
while long shadows come down
from tall mountains

et déjà on voit la fumée des maisons
et des ombres grandes
descendent de hautes montagnes

(see

www.scriptamanent.net/scripta/public/dettaglioNewsCategoria.jsp?ID=1000657

or www.litterae.net/Trad%20Virgil.htm ; Engl. Transl.: Laura Costantini, French tr.: Rosa M.Costa)

In conclusion another multilingual experiment of mine shows the result of putting together, in a common archetypal idea, lines of different authors such as Virgil, Dante, and Blake. Mingling their original works, followed by an Anglo-Italian translation (English for Virgil and Dante, Italian for Blake), the result goes beyond a simple intertextual proposal, typical of comparative literatures: it appears like only one hand writing different compositions, in spite of a distance of several centuries and kilometres.

In my work *Kamm Alem* I have exactly tried to develop this experimentation and decided to entitle this fragment “*As if a dream*”.

As if a dream (come in apparenza di sogno)

(*Virgilio, Aeneis VI, 893-898; Dante A., Divine Comedy, Inferno XXXIV, 139;*

W.Blake, The Book of Thel, Thel's Motto)

*like a reflection in a glass,
like shadows in the water
like dreams of infants
like a smile upon an infant's face
sunt geminae Somni portae
quarum altera fertur cornea
quae veris facilis datur exitus
umbris
altera candenti
perfecta nitens elephanto
sed falsa ad caelum mittunt
insomnia Manes-
his ubi tum natum Anchises
unaque Sibyllam prosequitur
dictis portaque emittit eburna
e quindi uscimmo a riveder le stelle*

(come riflessi sul vetro
come ombre sull'acqua
come sogni di bambini
come il sorriso di un piccolo viso
there are two Dream doors;
the real shades can easily go out,
through the horny door-
Manes send lying dreams to the world,
through the snow ivory door...
yet talking, Anchises takes his son
 and Sibyl through the ivory door
 and lets them out
then we went out to see the stars)

(see: <http://www.mid.muohio.edu/segue/index.htm>; Engl. Tr.:Liliana Lo Giudice).

[Guido Monte, *Per un multilinguismo cosmopolita*, 2005,
translated from the Italian by Liliana Lo Giudice]