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21

**LANGUAGE
AND LANGUAGES
IN JOYCE'S FICTION**

Edited by
Serenella Zanotti

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TRANSLATING JOYCE'S "MUSICAL" LANGUAGE:
"THE DEAD"

Introduction

In this article I am interested in discussing how some stylistic features of "The Dead", in their acoustic and rhythmic aspects, can be perceived as "musical", and how a stylistic approach to the text which relies on the comparison between language and music may help the translator in addressing some of the difficulties of its translation. The translation of Joyce's texts is particularly challenging, especially when, as Fritz Senn states, Joyce's language approximates the condition described by Samuel Beckett in that "his writing is not about something; *it is that something itself*", as in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* (Beckett 1972: 14; Senn 1984: 4). Although Joyce's earlier works are usually considered less problematic in this sense, among the stories in *Dubliners* "The Dead" may pose the translator some difficulties due to the poetic language which characterizes it. Scholars in fact have often considered "The Dead" particularly lyrical. Richard Ellmann, for instance, states that, "in its lyrical melancholic acceptance of all life and death offer, 'The Dead' is a lynchpin in Joyce's work" (*JJII* 252). Where the difficulty of translating this lyrical aspect of "The Dead" is concerned, Tim Parks affirms: "the intensification of the poetic register throughout the text naturally reaches its climax in the final paragraph where it now becomes all too easy to see how impossible it would be to achieve the same effect in any translation" (1998: 71). If, as Parks states, "comments on the evocative nature of Joyce's work are commonplace", but "little appears to have been said about the kind of difficulties this function of literature can present in translation" (Parks 1998: 75), this article attempts to partly contribute to this investigation by ad-

dressing the difficulties of translating the “evocative nature” of “The Dead” from a stylistic and “musical” perspective.

My translation approach to “The Dead” is initially based on Boase-Beier’s theory of a “stylistically aware reading” for translation. According to Boase-Beier, “much of what goes beyond the immediate and obvious meaning of lexis and syntax of the source text is in its style” (Boase-Beier 2006: 112), and the translator must rely on style in order to convey the “literariness” of the ST. In her view, the translator, who is firstly a reader of the ST, has an important role in interpreting and conveying the style of the original in the TT for the target reader to experience it. In this article, relying on my position as a reader of both the target and the source texts, and a translator, I intend to present an account of my stylistic analysis of the last paragraph of “The Dead” – where “the intensification of the poetic register throughout the text naturally reaches its climax” (Parks 1998: 71) – and of the corresponding passages in two published Italian translations of the story, which will then be used as a starting point for my own translation of the text. In this analysis, I am particularly interested in showing how some stylistic choices may be described in musical terms.

Talking about music in a Joycean context is a particularly delicate task, mainly because of Joyce’s own attempt to imitate music through language in “Sirens” – “a chapter that is generally taken to represent one of Joyce’s most daring experiments with the musicalization of language” (Rabaté 1982: 82) – and because of the many references to real songs that are present in his works. If, as Jean-Michel Rabaté points out regarding “Sirens”, “no one will agree on the term “musicalization”” (1982: 82), and Joyce’s texts have been analysed from several musical perspectives (e.g. in their structural form or in their content), my attempt to make reference to music in order to address the difficulties of translation in Joyce’s “The Dead” needs to be further delineated. With “musical” – e.g. in “musical language” – in this article I am referring to what in his seminal 1813 essay on translation Schleiermacher defines as a “musical element of language” – an element which “reveals itself in rhythm and alterations of tone” of the ST (Schleiermacher 2012: 52) – and which can be said to characterize Joyce’s poetic language. The understanding of “musicality” as a quality of poetic language is not unusual in a Joycean con-

text. Although it is only in relation to “Sirens” that Joyce’s intention to emulate music is explicitly declared by the author, several scholars have investigated how music is present in the form and content of other Joyce’s works. Timothy Martin, for instance, states that music can be found in most of Joyce’s texts, and “certainly, there is a musicality reflected in the tonal and rhythmic qualities of Joyce’s language” (Martin 2009: 279). Regarding “The Dead”, in particular, in *Music and Language in Joyce’s “The Dead”* (1994) Mosley states that its final section “strives to be musical in both its form and content” (Mosley 1994: 195). Although the comparison of literary language with music is usually understood as metaphorical in nature (e.g. Prieto 2002), as we will see in the following paragraphs, some concrete similarities between the verbal and musical codes – like those pointed out by Sidney Lanier in *The Science of English Verse* (1880) – can be addressed when trying to describe and translate the “evocative nature” (Parks 1998: 75) of Joyce’s ST.

The Science of Rhythm: the “musical” patterns of poetic language

In order to show how I perceive the “musicality” of the last paragraph of “The Dead”, I draw on some findings of the *Science of Rhythm*, a 19th century non-academic science which also studied the rhythmic similarities of music and language. In particular, I focus on the theory presented by Sidney Lanier in *The Science of English Verse* (1880). The influence of the *Science of Rhythm* and of Lanier’s theory in Joyce’s aesthetics has firstly been considered by William Martin in *Joyce and the Science of Rhythm* (2012). While in his study Martin investigates “the impact of rhythmic science on Joyce’s critical and creative writings”, suggesting an analysis of the texts focused on “the study of (1) discourse, (2) influence, and (3) stylistics” (2012: 27), my purpose here is to apply Lanier’s rhythmical theory to a stylistic reading of “The Dead”, in order to define the characteristics of what I describe as Joyce’s “musical language”.

In his study, Lanier investigated how the perception of language is characterized by rhythmic principles that are similar to those perceived in music. Since words are sounds produced by a “reed-instrument which can alter the shape of its tube (the buccal cavity)” (Lanier 1880: 50), their

sonic material might be compared to the sonic material of music. The postulate of Lanier's theory is that acoustic perception also takes place during silent reading. Several later studies on *auditory imagery* have confirmed Lanier's hypothesis, explaining how the duration, pitch and timbre perceived when reading silently maintain the acoustic qualities they have in real perception, thanks to the activation of the auditory cortex in the decoding of verbal meanings (e.g. Hubbard 2010; Perrone-Bertolotti et al. 2012).

Relying on the concept of "compound rhythm" by Herbert Spencer, Lanier defines the rhythm of music, prose and poetry as the result of the superimposition of multiple rhythmical layers. In any form of acoustic perception, a "primary rhythm" (Lanier 1880) is perceived whenever a sequence of sounds and silences is present; in music, thus, primary rhythm is given by notes and silences, while in the English language it is given by words and silences, which are graphically represented by blank spaces. In order to understand a sequence of sounds, the mind needs to organize them in rhythmical patterns; the organization is carried out with reference to the four parameters of sound, duration, intensity, pitch and timbre. The result of this organization is a perceived "secondary rhythm" (Lanier 1880) of the same sonic material; in the compound rhythm of any sonic material, each parameter of sound contributes to a different layer of secondary rhythms. In poetry, in prose and in music, the authors can use several musical or poetical devices to pre-organize the secondary rhythms of their texts, relying on expedients that influence the parameters of duration, pitch or timbre.

Several of the "musical" patterns which Lanier states to be important for determining the "secondary rhythms" of the text may be considered significant also from a stylistic point of view. According to Boase-Beier, when reading the ST, the translator has to pay particular attention to foregrounded elements (Boase-Beier 2011: 119). The process of foregrounding is defined through Mukařovský's words as the "deautomatization" of some linguistic elements of the text, used to "place in foreground the act of expression...itself" (Mukařovský 1964: 19) and to attract the reader's attention. One of the modalities through which the linguistic devices of literary texts are often foregrounded is repetition (Boase-Beier 2011: 61). Among the linguistic elements that might be

foregrounded, I list below the ones which may be considered significant in creating secondary rhythms according to Lanier's theory. Because each phoneme has its peculiar timbre (Houtsma 1997: 110),¹ devices such as alliterations, rhymes, assonances and consonances, or a remarkable vowel and consonant texture create rhythmical patterns which have a bearing on the timbre of the text. Although it is not frequently named this way, the timbre of each phoneme depends physically on the instantaneous shape and length of the vocal tract and of the air flow pulse. Repeated words and sentences influence the rhythmical duration of the text. *Intonation units*² modify the pitch of the text; with *intonation units* I am referring to prosodic units with one or more picks of intonation which characterize spoken language, and which are signalled in written texts through punctuation. The intonation or pitch of the text is modified also through emphatic groups – such as unusual word order, or peculiar word plays which condition the mental articulation of the sentences.

A comment on the “musical” nature of the rhythmic devices mentioned above seems necessary at this point. With respect to “Sirens”, in his seminal essay *The Silence of The Sirens* (1982), Jean-Michel Rabaté affirms that although “the sound effects and the rhythms are of course dominant” in the episode, they do not “absolutely require a musical vocabulary to be accounted for” (1982: 84), since the vocabulary of classical rhetoric is sufficient to describe them (1982: 82-83). Rabaté's statement on “Sirens” springs to mind when a comparison between music and language is made in the way it is in the above paragraphs, and the need to address music in this context therefore needs to be justified. Although in describing the “musico-stylistic”³ devices that may contribute to the

¹ In *Pitch and Timbre: Definition, Meaning and Use* (1997), Houtsma writes: “The timbre, although not commonly named this way in speech literature, is different for each phoneme and depends physically on the shape of the glottal air flow pulse and the instantaneous shape and length of the vocal tract (throat, oral and nasal cavities)” (Houtsma 1997: 110).

² Spoken language is characterized by prosodic units called “intonation units”, with one or more picks of intonation. Each of them is characterized by a peculiar melodic movement in its final part, and they are separated through pauses (Lanier 1880; Chafe 1988; Knowles 1987).

³ With “musico-stylistic” devices, I am referring to those “foregrounded” stylistic expedients which can be said to be “musically” significant in a literary text according to Lanier's theory.

rhythm of a literary text I have myself employed terms like “alliteration”, “assonance”, or “consonance”, I argue that a comparison between the acoustic signifier of music and language, like the one suggested by Lanier (1880) and aimed at identifying how the stylistic expedients used in the ST may be significant in creating different layers of rhythm, as happens in music, is particularly helpful in addressing the “evocative nature” (Parks 1998: 75) of Joyce’s texts. This approach in fact provides the translator with the means not only to define the poetic language of the ST in a non-arbitrary way (e.g. relying on his/her ear) – as Rabaté’s “simple rhetorical tropes” (1982: 82) would certainly do as well – but also to overcome what is defined as the “impossibility” (Parks 1998: 73) of translating all the stylistic expedients that seem to contribute to the lyric nature of “The Dead”: if the translator is able to perceive the text as composed of different rhythmical layers – given by stylistic devices that influence the pitch, timbre, and duration of the text – and thus to determine a “hierarchy of values” (Jakobson 1997:6) among the expedients used, as we will see in the following paragraphs, it will be easier for him/her to make decisions on the elements to sacrifice or to privilege in translation in order to maintain the “evocative nature” (Parks 1998: 75) of the ST in the TT.

“Musical” analysis of the stylistic patterns of “The Dead” and its translations

In the last paragraph of “The Dead”, which is copied in the table below, several expedients which are foregrounded through repetition are influential in creating secondary rhythms. In the sound texture, the consonants /f/ and /s/, which are the initial consonants of the key-words “fall” and “snow”, are repeated respectively 22 and 30 times; their repetition is particularly significant since it may also be attributed an iconic value. In fact, the flow of air of the repeated fricatives creates the perception of a delicate and muffled recurring sound in the reader’s mind, which may remind him/her of the softened sounds in a snowy place. These repeated consonants affect the timbre of the text. This acoustical perception is also emphasized through the recurrence of the non-turbulent airstream typical

of the approximant consonants in “snow” and “fall”: [the labio-velar approximant] /w/ and [the lateral approximant] /l/. The iconic properties of these phonemes are particularly noticeable in the text, since they recur mainly in contexts related to the falling of the snow: in the description of the snowfall – “softly falling , the snow falling faintly” – in Gabriel’s perception of the snowflakes – “He watched sleepily the flakes” – or in his psychological reaction to the snow – “His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly”. These consonants sometimes create alliterations, as in “soul swooned slowly”, “falling faintly”. Even though alliterations are less present in the paragraph, they also affect the timbre of the text in a “musical” way. For space reasons, in this context I am mainly focusing on the consonants, which more easily find correspondents in the Italian language. However, it is worth saying that some vowels like /ɔ:/ of “fall” and the diphthong /əʊ/ in “snow” also play a significant role in the timbre of the ST, and they also might have a phono symbolic value, increasing the melancholic atmosphere of the scene.

Another significant stylistic expedient which influence the timbre of the paragraph is the recurrence of internal rhymes and assonances in the last sentence of the story: “slowLY/ faintLY/ falLIng”, “discENT([di'sent])/ END([end])/ dEAD([dɛd])”. These expedients also condition the intonation of the sentence, since the reader might perceive the end of an intonation unit in the correspondence of each rhyme or assonance, as is the case after punctuation signs.

Although the sound texture, alliterations and rhymes play a remarkable role in determining the “musicality” of the passage, other rhythmical patterns are created by the recurrence of words – e.g. “snow”, “fall” – and by the repetition of phrases in chiasmic form – “falling softly/softly falling,” “falling faintly/faintly falling” (Fishelov 2013-2014: 265) – which both influence the parameter of duration, according to Laniér’s scheme.

A few light taps upon the pane made him turn to the window. It had begun to snow again. He watched sleepily the flakes, / silver and dark, / falling obliquely against the lamplight. The time had come for him to set out on his journey westward. Yes, / the newspapers were right: / snow was

general **all** over Ireland. It was **falling** on every **pART** of the **dARK** central plain,/ on the treeless hills,/ **falling softly** upon the Bog of Allen and,/ farther **westward**,/ **softLY fallIng** into the **dark** mutinous Shannon waves. It was **falling**,/ too,/ upon every **pART** of the lonely churchyARD on the hill where Michael Furey **lay** buried. It **lay** thickly drifted on the **crooked crosses** and headstones,/ on the spears of the little gate,/ on the barren thorns. His soul swooned **slowLY**/ as he heard the **snow fallIng faintLY**/ through the universe (/) and **faintLY fallIng**/ like the descENT ([di'sent])/ of their last END([ɛnd]),/ upon all the living and the dEAD ([ded]) (D 194)⁴.

Table 1. The last paragraph of “The Dead”

Some of the “musico-stylistic” elements identified above have already been discussed by Parks in his comparative analysis of the last paragraph of “The Dead” with Papi and Tadini’s translation⁵ in *Translating Style* (1998). According to Parks these poetic effects are “impossible” to translate in Italian in totality:

Any translation of such a text is bound to be a series of defeats and small consolatory victories. The differences are all too evident: the loss of alliteration (except in the brilliant ‘ascoltava la neve che calava lieve su tutto l’universo’ – he listened to the snow falling light on all the universe), the impossibility of following the play of inversions with verb and adverb (‘falling softly’, ‘softly falling’ – ‘falling faintly’, ‘faintly falling’),[...] again the way the assonance of ‘His soul swooned slowly’ disappears in ‘E l’anima gli si velava’ (And his soul faded), and so on (Parks 1998: 72-73).

⁴ I signalled the consonants which are significant for the timbre of the text in bold, underlined the repeated words, used slashes to signal the intonation units and capital letters to signal assonances and rhymes. I also highlighted in grey the repetitions of phrases in chiasmic form. The same graphical expedients are used in the analysis of the Italian translations and in my own version.

⁵ Joyce, James (1976). *Gente di Dublino*, trans. Marco Papi and Emilio Tadini, Milan: Garzanti.

While, following his analysis, Parks argues that the “differences” between the poetic effects of the ST and the Italian target text are “too evident” and a loss of “lyricism and poetic effect” (1998: 73) in the translation of “The Dead” in Italian is inevitable, in the following section of this article, questioning this assumption of “untranslatability”,⁶ I will consider other Italian translations of the paragraph which have not been analysed by Parks, in order to see whether the “musical” elements that I have identified in “The Dead” have been addressed differently by other translators – eventually suggesting a new translation of the paragraph where I try to reproduce the “evocative nature” of the text through a “musical” approach. As a result of what Patrick O’Neill has defined an “almost obsessive fascination of the Italian Joyce system with *Dubliners*” (2005: 66), “The Dead” has been translated many times into Italian, starting from the 1933 translation by Annie and Adriano Lami for *Corbaccio*, through to the mid-century translations for *Einaudi* (1949) and *Rizzoli* (1961), respectively by Franca Cancogni and Margherita Ghirardi

⁶ Parks also mentions some other stylistic elements that contribute to the “evocative nature” of “The Dead” and that are not maintained in Papi and Tadini’s version. Even though some of these elements may also be considered influential in the rhythm of the text according to the parameter of duration (e.g. “dark”, “lay”), they have not all been taken into account for their musicality in this article due to space limitation. However, I would like to comment here on the translatability of a few of them. Parks, for instance, signals an “inability to repeat [in Italian] the eloquent way the symbols of snow and death are tied up with the supremely passive verb ‘lay’ (‘where Michael Furey lay buried. It lay...’ translated with ‘era’ – was – and ‘s’ammucchiava’ – it settled/heaped up)” (Parks 1998: 72-73). As Franca Cavagnoli states in *La voce del Testo* (2012: 31), however, the Italian verb “giacere” [lay] can be used in the TT every time that “lay” is used in the ST, maintaining the original connotation of the passage – the effect can be seen in my version where I followed Cavagnoli’s suggestion to repeat “giacere”. Moreover, it is not impossible to translate into Italian passages where Joyce “insert[s] the adverb between the verb and its object (‘He watched sleepily the flakes’)” (Parks 1998: 72-73) – e.g. “Osservò assonnato i fiocchi” (Brilli 1988: 207), where “sleepily” is rendered with the adjective “assonnato” and inserted between verb and object – or to repeat some significant words – “Joyce repeats a number of words obsessively (‘dark’ three times, translated with a different word on each occasion)” (Parks 1998: 72-73) – as Benati does with “dark[scur*]” in his version (1994). In this context, we can probably assume that, in line with the contemporary translation practice, Papi and Tadini may have attempted to create lyricism in the TT by relying on target oriented poetic devices rather than by imitating those of the ST: what Parks defines as “inability” or “impossibility” to translate certain stylistic devices may actually be the result of a conscious decision on the part of the translators.

Minoja, or Papi and Tadini's 1970 version for *Garzanti* – analysed by Parks –, to the more recent translations by Claudia Corti (2012) for *Marsilio Editori* and Maurizio Bartocci's version for *Bompiani* (2018), among others. A complete study on the “musicality” of the Italian translations of “The Dead” would imply considering all these versions. However, for the purposes of this article, in which the Italian translations are not compared in order to assess their quality – which is in any case recognized as particularly high – but to help me develop my argument and, subsequently, to reproduce my perception of the “musicality” of the ST in my own translation, and because of space restrictions, I will take into account just two of them: Attilio Brilli's translation for *Mondadori* (1988) and Daniele Benati's translation for *Feltrinelli* (1994). The two versions are copied below.

Un picchiettare somnesso sui vetri lo fece voltare verso la finestra:/ aveva ricominciato a nevicare. Osservò assonnato i fiocchi neri e argentei che cadevano obliqui contro il lampione. Era giunto il momento di mettersi in viaggio verso occidente. Sì,/ i giornali dicevano il vero:/ c'era neve dappertutto in Irlanda. Cadeva ovunque nella buia pianura centrale,/ sulle nude colline;/ cadeva soffice sulla palude di Allen e più a ovest sulle nere,/ tumultuose onde dello Shannon. Cadeva in ogni canto del cimitero deserto,/ lassù sulla collina dove era sepolto Michael Fury. S'ammucchiava alta sulle croci contorte,/ sulle pietre tombali,/ sulle punte del cancello,/ sugli spogli roveti. E la sua anima gli svani adagio adagio nel sonno/ mentre udIVA liEVE cadERE la

Un leggero picchietto ai vetri lo fece girare verso la finestra. Aveva ripreso a nevicare. Guardò insonnolito i fiocchi,/ scuri e argentei,/ che scendevano obliquamente contro il lampione. Era venuto per lui il momento di andare a ovest. Sì, i giornali avevano ragione:/ nevicava su tutta Irlanda./ Cadeva la neve in ogni parte della scura pianura centrale,/ cadeva soffice sulla torbiera di Allen e soffice cadeva più a ovest,/ sulle scure e tumultuose acque dello Shannon. E cadeva anche su ogni punto del solitario cimitero sulla collina in cui giaceva il corpo di Michael Furey. S'ammucchiava fitta sulle croci piegate e sulle lapidi,/ sulle lance del cancelletto e sui roveti spogli. E pian piano l'anima gli svani lenta/ mentre udiva la nEVE cadERE stancaMENTE su tutto l'universo e stancaMENTE cadERE,/

<u>nEVE/</u> sull'universo,/ e <u>cadERE</u> <u>liEVE/</u> come la discESA della loro estrEMA fine sui vivi e sui morti. (Brilli 1988: 207-208)	come la discesa della loro fine ultima,/ su tutTI i vivi e tutTI i morTI. (Benati 1994: 209)
--	--

Table 2. Two Italian translations of the last paragraph of "The Dead"

Both translators seem to have tried to convey the overall sound texture of the last paragraph of the story, despite the difficulties inherent in the usage of a different phonetic system. However, depending on the translator's choices of semantic equivalents for the keywords "fall" and "snow", the timbral texture of the versions is modified in a more or less "musical" way. While "snow" can only be translated with "neve" and "nevicare", since no other word expresses the same meaning in Italian, the verb "fall" can be rendered in different ways. In the translations considered, two lexical alternatives are "scendere" and "cadere". Different past forms for these verbs have also been used: the infinitive terminating in "-ere" or the imperfect past terminating in "-eva/evano".

Brilli always uses the verb "cadere", but alternates the infinitive form "cadere" with the imperfect past "cadeva". While "cadere" does not have timbrically significant consonants, even though it half-rhymes with "neve", the imperfect past "cadeva" may be considered a better "musical" choice. In fact, "cadeva" contains the fricative /v/, which is a valide alternative to /f/, a phoneme with the same place and manner of articulation of the /f/ in "fall". Moreover, as Franca Cavagnoli states in *La Voce del Testo* (Cavagnoli 2012: 30), by using "cadeva" the translator could have created an assonance and consonance with "neve", which Brilli does not. The assonance in "cadeva" and "neve" also reflects the similarity of the vowel /ɔ:/ of "fall" and the diphthong /əʊ/ in "snow". Benati occasionally takes this opportunity: e.g. "Cadeva la neve in ogni parte della scura pianura centrale".

In order to translate "fall", Benati uses the verb "cadere", alternating the infinitive "cadere" or the imperfect past "cadeva", as we have seen, but he also uses the verb "scendere", in the imperfect past plural form "scendevano". Although the choice of using different semantic equivalents somehow reduces the "musicality" of the TT because it fails to reproduce some word patterns of the ST, we might be able to identify

some reasons for his decision. In fact, “scendevano” has significant timbrical qualities, since it reproduces “ev”, as “cadeva”, and begins with the palate-alveolar sibilant /ʃ/, which maintains the voiceless and fricative quality of /f/. Thus, it might add an interesting “musical” effect to the text. However, although /ʃ/ seems a valid alternative to /f/, this sound would be too noisy if repeated every time that “fall” is used in the ST, because it adds sibilant sounds which are sufficiently rendered through the use of /s/ in other words.

A second element that is worth considering here, is the translators’ rendering of the chiasitic phrases “falling softly/softly falling” and “falling faintly/faintly falling”. “Softly” and “faintly”, like “fall” and “snow”, have a significant timbrical value in the ST, because of the repeated sounds /s/, /f/ and /l/. Brillì’s semantic equivalents for these terms are equally significant for the timbre of the TT: “soffice” for “softly” maintains most of the sound texture of the original word, and “lieve” for “faintly” contains both /v/ as a substitute for /f/, and /l/. It also contains the pattern “ev”, which creates an assonance with “neve” and “cadeva”. While Benati also uses “soffice”, he prefers the long and heavy adverb “stancamente” for “faintly”. “Stancamente” does not have a significant timbrical texture *per se*, nor in relation to the other words used. Moreover, as we will see, it is not the best choice for reproducing the rhymes of the last sentence.

The chiasitic phrases have an additional “musical” significance, since they create a secondary rhythm perceived according to the parameter of duration. In this sense, it might be important to maintain their inverted repetition. While Brillì chooses a significant timbrical texture, he does not repeat “softly falling”. Interestingly, he maintains the second chiasitic repetition. Benati, instead, maintains the repetition of both chiasitic phrases.

Finally, I will consider the last sentence of the paragraph, where the presence or absence of rhymes, and their position in the text may affect the “musicality” perceived in the TT. In Brillì’s version, the assonances and rhymes “udiva”, “lieve” and “neve” are significantly positioned; hence, the Italian reader can perceive part of the original rhythm in “mentre udIVA liEVE cadERE la nEVE/ sull’universo/, e cadERE liEVE”, which, in my analysis, is comparable to “as he heard the snow

fallING faintLY/ through the universe/ and faintLY faLLing”. However, some “musical” differences between the ST and TT can be found in the very beginning and in the last part of the sentence: “e la sua anima gli svani adagio adagio nel sonno” is much longer than “His soul swooned slowly” and, while “slowLY/” rhymes with “faintLY”, “sonno”, which also does not have a corresponding element in English, is not connected with any other word in the text. Moreover, despite Brilli’s “musical” choice of the assonance “discESA/estrEMA” in the last part of the sentence, the position of these words and the absence of the original comma in the TT make the target reader perceive a unique intonation unit – “come la discESA della loro estrEMA fine sui vivi e sui morti” – instead of the two harmonious phrases perceived in the original – “like the descENT of their last END/, upon all the living and the dEAD”.

Benati’s version of the last sentence is also characterized by rhymes and assonances, which are sometimes “musically” significant. In particular, the rhymes “tutTI/morTI” somehow compensate for the loss of the assonances and rhymes “descENT”, “END” and “dEAD”. Moreover, maintaining the comma after “ultima”, Benati maintains the original pause in the last part of the sentence, which was lost in Brilli’s version. However, in the first part of the sentence the assonances between “neve”, “cadere” and “stancamente” are less effective than the ones chosen by Brilli, due to the heaviness of the adverb “stancamente”: “mentre udiva la nEVE cadERE stancamENTE/ su tutto l’universo/ e stancamENTE cadERE” .

Conclusion: A re-translation of the last paragraph of “The Dead” through a “musico-stylistic” approach

As a conclusion, in order to show how a “musical” approach may be viewed as helpful in addressing “The Dead”’s “evocative nature” (Parks 1998: 75), following my “musical” reading of the style of the ST and relying on what I considered the most significant “musical” choices by Benati and Brilli, I would like to propose a translation of the last paragraph of the story.

Dei leggeri tocchi sul vetro lo fecero voltare verso la finestra. Aveva ri-
 preso a nevicare. Osservò assonnato i fiocchi,/ scuri e argentei,/ che ca-
devano obliqui sotto la luce del lampione. Era venuto il tempo di mettersi
 in viaggio verso occidente. Sì,/ i giornali dicevano il vero:/ la neve copri-
 va l'intera Irlanda. Cadeva per ogni dove nella scura pianura centrale,/ sui
colli spogli,/ cadeva soffice sopra il Bog of Allen e,/ più a occidente,/ sof-
fice cadeva dentro le scure onde tumultuose dello Shannon. Cadeva,/ pu-
 re,/ per ogni dove nel cimitero solitario sul colle dove Michael Furey gia-
ceva sepolto. Giaceva ammicchiata sulle croci curve e le lapidi,/ sulle
 lame del piccolo cancello,/ sui roveti sterili. La sua anima lenta svan-
IVA, mentre udIVA la nEVE che cadEVA lieVE/ sull'universo/ e che
lieVE cadEVA/ come la discESA della loro fine estrEMA,/ su tutTI i vivi
 e i morTI.

Table 3. My translation of the last paragraph of “The Dead”

In order to translate “fall”, I used the imperfect past “cadeva/no”, instead of the infinitive “cadere” or the imperfect past “scendeva/evano”, because I preferred to convey a timbre similar to the /f/ of “fall” through /v/ rather than through the palate-alveolar sibilant /ʃ/, which could be too noisy if repeated, or relying only on the half-rhyme “cadere/neve” for timbrical effects. I also chose to always repeat the same semantic equivalent when a word was repeated in the ST, for both “fall” and other words in the paragraph – e.g. “scuri/a” for “dark” and “giaceva” for “lay” – in order to better convey the duration patterns of the ST. Regarding the timbre of the phrases which are repeated in chiasitic form in the ST, I used “soffice” for “softly” as Benati does, and “lieve” for “faintly” as Brillì. As with the repeated words, I maintained the chiasitic repetition of these phrases. Considering the last sentence, I chose “udiva” for “heard”, and I used the imperfect past “svaniva” instead of the remote past “svani”. These choices allow me to maintain more rhymes and assonances in the Italian version – and hence to retain the same *intonation units* of the ST – and to compensate for the loss of the rhyme “slowly/faintly”. Moreover, I relied on the assonance “cadEva”, “discESA” and “estrEMA” to reproduce the rhythm of the last part of the sentence. As Benati does, I also used the rhyme “tutTI/morTI”, but I chose not to repeat “tutti” twice,

since in the ST “all” is not repeated. I also changed the word order so that significant assonances and rhymes might have the same position that they have in the ST.

Although a “musicality” is pursued here by focusing on style and sometimes a more musical equivalent has been given preference over a more semantically-accurate one (e.g. “estrema” for “last”, instead of “ultima”), the overall meaning of the passage and of the single words has not been neglected. In this context, because of space limits, I was not able to comment on some other “musico-stylistic” elements of the last paragraph of “The Dead” and on my consequent translation choices; however, in my version graphical devices (cf. Scott 2012a; 2012b) are used to emphasize musical patterns. This is also meant to make some of my decisions evident to the reader who may be interested in them. While the stylistic choices that I made may not be considered musical by other readers or translators, they are in line with my analysis of the ST and represent my musical interpretation of the selected passage. Moreover, while my strategy in translating this passage has been to consider the “musical language” of the ST as one of the main “dominants” (Jakobson 1987: 5) and to reproduce it through a *source oriented* translation, other strategies may be considered equally accurate or even more valid for translating the text, and other “dominants” may be given more attention, especially when the whole text is considered, and not only the last paragraph of the story.

As a final comment, I would like to point out that, in order to achieve what I define as “musicality” in my translation of the last paragraph of “The Dead”, I have chosen to rely on several elements of Brilli’s and Benati’s translations. While Brilli and Benati might have had different goals in translating the story, their decisions have sometimes been particularly helpful in guiding my own choices. In this sense, in line with some recent thoughts in Translation Studies (e.g. Massardier-Kenney 2015) that reflect on Berman’s idea of “retranslation” (2018; 1990), I do not consider “retranslation” as an ameliorative process which aims to replace previous versions of the same text in the TC, but as a reiteration of the ST in another culture and from a different perspective – a process which does not necessarily deny previous translations’ achievements.

In this sense, dismissing the ideas of “linear progress of translation” and “lack” in “first translations” that have usually been associated with Berman’s theory (Massardier-Kenney 2015), and following Brisset’s statement that “l’*inachèvement* caractérise la (re)traduction parce qu’il est le propre de toute construction, de toute représentation au sens que ce terme a pris dans notre modernité, celui d’une *totalisation* (2004: 44)”, I consider my own version as one of the many possible and necessarily incomplete retranlations of the closing paragraph of “The Dead” – one in the “multiplicity, and plurality” (Massardier-Kenney 2015: 81) that a new understanding of “re-translation” seems to imply. In my particular reiteration of the ST from a different perspective, I have tried to render the “evocative nature” (Parks 1998: 75) of the paragraph through a combined stylistic and “musical” approach – in line with some “Science of Rhythm” principles – in order to show how a comparison with music may be considered helpful in addressing some of the difficulties of the translation of the text’s poetic language. In this sense, my version does not aim to be “total”, but rather is to be considered as necessarily characterized by some forms of “*inachèvement*” (Brisset) – which may also precisely depend on the decision to adopt a “musical” focus in the translation of the text.

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