

Poetic as Encyclopedic: The Prose Poetry in Reunifying Enlightenment

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1. Mallarmé's prose poetry

1.1 The early "Frisson"

As a development of Baudelaire's theorized experiment, Stéphane Mallarmé's prose poem, "Frisson d'hiver," is characterized by three stylistic features: repetition, self-reflection, and clarity.

The repetition is marked, since the tragic expression in three words, "toiles d'araignées," is foregrounded by parentheses three times in the restricted framework of the snapshot narrative.

As for self-reflection, it is concretized in various forms in the poem: for instance, the dialogic structure posited by the separate paragraphs, the deictic stress on the mirroring object ("Cette pendule de Saxe"), and the intertextual retrospection.

Mallarmé's readable poem can easily be recognized as a reworking of the prose poetry by Baudelaire, this poet of "frisson nouveau," the qualification by Hugo since 1859.¹ The notable place name in the poem, "Venise," may be viewed as an anagram of "Paris." Moreover, the key phrase in the Mallarmé poem, "ta glace de Venise," represents a paraphrase of *Le Spleen de Paris*, the general title of Baudelaire's collected prose poems. The word "Spleen" puns on "screen," a sort of mirror, or "glace" in French.

Baudelaire's general title, "Le Spleen de Paris," which posited the prose poetry as a highlighted everydayness, initially appeared in the February 1864 issue of the journal, *le Figaro*.

Mallarmé's prose poem, "Frisson d'hiver," was written in 1864 and published in October 1867 under the title of "Causerie d'hiver."² The wintry poem ironically typifies the author's early career under the strong influence of Baudelaire. According to Henri Mondor and G. Jean-Aubry (1950), the influence represents Mallarmé's Baudelairean enthusiasm ("sa ferveur baudelairienne").

Particularly, the second-to-last stanza in the Mallarmé piece is a conscious adaptation of Baudelaire's verse entitled "L'Invitation au voyage" and his poem in prose named "Un hémisphère dans une chevelure." The Mallarmé stanza develops Baudelaire's motif of the conceptus bathed in the amniotic fluid by the expression, "sur l'antique tapis couché, la tête appuyée parmi tes genoux charitables dans ta robe pâlie, ô calme enfant."³ According to Helen Abbott (1972), a suite of furniture in "Frisson d'hiver" connects itself to Baudelaire's prose poem entitled "La Chambre double."

Another prose poem entitled "Plainte d'automne," which was written in 1863 in London,⁴ makes a diptych with "Frisson d'hiver" in a mirroring supplementation for spatializing each verbal text. Originally named "L'Orgue de Barbarie," "Plainte d'automne" was published in July 1864 with the dedication to Baudelaire. According to Bertrand Marchal (1933-34), "Plainte d'automne" presents a very Baudelairean flavor ("un goût très baudelairien"), related to "Frisson d'hiver" in the philosophy of domestic furniture

(“cette philosophie de l’ameublement domestique”).

In a letter to Henri Cazalis dated July 1864, Mallarmé expresses his ideal for poetic totalization, as follows: “Toi seul, Edgar Poë, et Baudelaire, étiez capables de ce poème qui, comme certains regards de femme, contient des mondes de pensées et de sensations” (Mallarmé, 1998 *Œuvres*: 661).

The exceptional readability of Mallarmé’s two early poems constitutes a motive for this article. The poems are in an unexpected translatability, which seems even suspicious, or intended, to the readers: they are used to the challenge from the ambiguity of Mallarmé’s other works.

Though apparently clear and poor, the Mallarmé poems become meaningful, when the reader figures out their intertextual connection with the Baudelairean prose poems. In other words, the Mallarmé poems reinstate themselves, appropriating the images and meanings from the precursory Baudelairean pieces. The prose poetry, or “poème en prose” in French, represents a genre that Baudelaire consciously set up in the middle of the 19th century, hinted at by an obscure model written by Aloysius Bertrand.⁵ The Mallarmé poems thus present an image of a minimum developing to a maximum; a word brings forth an expansive book.

All of Mallarmé’s prose poems were collected under the general title, “Anecdotes ou poèmes,” and were published in 1897 as a part of his volume entitled *Divagations*. The collected 13 poems in prose span the whole of the poet’s career with the early readable pieces and the esoteric works in his veteran phase. The conscious unification of the two distinct kinds of works by the poet himself may be viewed as his indication that language represents a substituting oneness, which equalizes readability, esotericism, prose, and poetry.

In view of the author’s above implicit intention in 1897, which presumably characterized every kind of component including his early prose poems through revision, the quotation of his prose poems in this article is from the definitive 1897 version.

The revision is, however, minor, leaving the first version’s motif intact.

According to Mondor and Jean-Aubry (1549), Mallarmé’s early career brought 7 poems in prose. Among those, the two pieces discussed in this article, “Frisson d’hiver” and “Plainte d’automne,” cooperate to make up a poetic cosmos filled with the Baudelairean reminiscences, which is expanded from, and simultaneously contracted to, the furnished salon of the solitary speaker as Baudelaire’s heir. The other 5 pieces deploy the human drama in everyday occurrences. It should be noted that the complicated style that characterizes Mallarmé’s veteran phase is more or less seen in the 5 pieces. In particular, the poem named “La Pipe” represents the transition from the poet’s early phase to his late one with a slight twist of syntax noted by the repetition of the noun “travail” in the first short sentence; “La Pipe” was published in 1868, the year in which the poet wrote his first piece in an esoteric abstraction, entitled “Sonnet allégorique de lui-même.” A possible hypothesis is that the lack of fixed formality in the prose poetry paradoxically becomes a pressure on the expression to be sophisticated.

As for “Frisson d’hiver,” the poem’s apparent, or structured poorness makes the reader surmise that it is positively sought for by the speaker: the apostrophic narration from within indoors, the partiality of the plot without any dramatic happening, and the reinforcement of the self-effacing imagery embedded in the shining furniture to be seen as a mirror. The blank between the 10 short stanzas in juxtaposition also contributes to increase the image of insufficiency. Furthermore, the poorness is reinforced by the esotericism of the terms related to the imported ornaments such as the Saxon clock (“pendule de Saxe”), the old German almanac (“vieil almanach allemand”), and the Venetian mirror (“ta glace de Venise”) with the faded frame in the shape of coiled snakes (“guivres décorées”). The exotic names impress the reader, who is to be frustrated by the unfamiliar names’

semantic vacancy.

The poorness paradoxically demands the reader's compensating responses. Concurrently, the criticism inherent in prose poetry takes the form of self-abnegation in Mallarmé's seemingly poor piece.

From the beginning, however, the initial word of the piece's title, "Frisson," promptly leads to Baudelaire's prose poems in dramas and events, which are collected under the title, *Le Spleen de Paris*. "Frisson" is a pseudonym of Baudelaire.

The anecdotal pieces of Baudelaire's collection pivot on the interaction of human agents with the background of the French capital, which was being rapidly modernized. The dualism is a semantic pillar of the prose poetry in twofold form, which is represented by each poem's title in the following parentheses: old and new ("Le Vieux Saltimbanque"), here and beyond ("Any where out of the world"), Paris and the province ("Assommons les pauvres!"), men and women ("Le Fou et la Vénus"), madness and sanity ("La Chambre double"), mechanical and organic ("Mademoiselle Bistouri"), culture and nature ("Le Port"), and death and life ("Le Tir et le cimetière"). The collection of 50 pieces manifests Baudelaire's ambition for setting up an encyclopedia in the domain of poetry for modernizing an enlightenment to be an everyday advancement and salvation. The readable human drama serves as an engaging lesson for pursuing life, which foregrounds the logicity of prose.

Baudelaire's collection of prose poems was published in 1869. In 1862, however, the poet had published 20 pieces, as well as the preface to *Le Spleen de Paris*, in the journal called *La Presse*, which, according to Mondor and Jean-Aubry (1550), must have been read by Mallarmé. The follower wrote his first poem in prose in 1863.⁶ Baudelaire's 20 pieces published in 1862 are enough to make up the modern panorama in a Parisian diversity, including the poems entitled "Le Mauvais Vitrier," "Le Vieux Saltimbanque," and

"Un hémisphère dans une chevelure."

The three reflective objects in the Mallarmé piece, "Frisson d'hiver," represent a symbolic device to appropriate the miscellaneous components for Baudelaire's world in the form of mirrored reflections. The objects are a clock in metal ("Cette pendule de Saxe"), a decorative mirror ("ta glace de Venise"), and an old and polished chest ("Notre bahut"). As in a camouflaged laboratory, the three shiny pieces of furniture try to concentrate the diversified world, which actually revolves around the flaming ball, the sun. The speaker orders the reader to witness the reflection, saying: "contemple comme ce feu rougit son triste bois."

The speaker's apparent modesty is dubious; the seemingly monotonous description of a wintry salon is full of intertextual reminiscences. The curtains ("les rideaux amortis") are also suspicious; if they are opened, a fantastic play may begin. Mallarmé's prose poem is a camouflaged version of an encyclopedia. That is a reason for the short poem's division into many paragraphs, which are colored by the alternating tones in questions, answers, and descriptions. The vibrant tonal change involving the use of parentheses animates the described objects in words. Death and life are amalgamated. Both the words in the title, "Frisson" and "hiver," designate an airy, and thus cosmic expansion. The poem's apparent poorness is the airiness in transparency.

The form of the short Mallarmé piece in separate paragraphs with surrounding intertextual echoes corresponds to that of the marine shelter, Venice. The speaker of the Mallarmé poem remains indoors in the same way as the oceanic town. As with Baudelaire's prose poems collected under the title, *Le Spleen de Paris*, Mallarmé's poem in prose seeks to grow, rooted in the earthly basis, this origin of human bodies, according to the Bible as resources of civilization including intertextuality.

The Mallarmé poem's intertextual connection with the Baudelairean model foregrounds the twofold form of prose poetry. Nevertheless, the

distance between the Mallarmé prose poem as a core of poeticity and its intertexts as a prosaic outer world retards the interweaving of prose and poetry within the Mallarmé text. In other words, the reason for writing in prose would seem difficult to figure out in Mallarmé's prose poem, without recognizing its intertextual connection with the Baudelairean prototype.

The distance as the insufficiency of the Mallarmé text embodies, nonetheless, the text's potential to be verbally actualized. Mallarmé's juvenilia may be viewed as a manifesto for his future development, which is realized by his late esoteric texts with internalized semantic blanks. The manifesto and the prose poetry overlap, both seen as midway works, or an encyclopedia at the world's forefront.

1.2 The developing antagonism in "Plainte d'automne"

Another of Mallarmé's prose poems in his early phase, entitled "Plainte d'automne," is constituted equally by the accumulating paradox in which conflict silence and expressiveness. The paradox is to be ascribed to a literary one: the rivaling of tacitness and the emitted words.

The paradox is first concretized by the concluding word of the initial sentence: "la solitude." The expression, "la solitude," means to keep quiet without any interlocutor, though the expression itself is issued. The solitude is foregrounded by the following explanation of the meaning of the word "seul (solitary)."

In the same vein, the speaker is solitary ("seul") and quiet, though he is surrounded by many books ("des derniers auteurs") that convey plenty of information. The books themselves do not make sound but the readers imaginatively actualize the books' inner voices. The books are silent but vibrant in the same way as a cat ("chat") in a silent eloquence ("un compagnon mystique," "un esprit"). The final verb of the poem's first paragraph is "bégaié," meaning "to stammer." The subject of the

verb is impersonally poetry ("la poésie").

The second paragraph provides the literary conflicts with a physical expansion. The inaudible voice in books liberates itself into the musical movement of an organ ("murmurait"). The organ sounds all the more resonant because it is with the qualification for liveliness, "de Barbarie." The ethnic word, "Barbarie," denotes wildness, used as a common noun. The entire poem's first title is "L'Orgue de Barbarie" in a defamiliarizing ethnicity. According to Abbott (196), the focused instrument corresponds to a barrel organ.

The musical sound accompanies that of the piano and the violin, though the accompanied sound is only imaginary, following the principle of paradox from the first paragraph. The linguistic signs as the material for the Bible are also physically expanded by the procession of acolytes including the speaker's dead sister, Maria, in the prose poem. Maria is an inspirational sign, or a privileged word for a creative beginning as rendered in the Bible. The poem begins with the phrase, "Depuis que Maria m'a quitté."

The organ's musical sound induces the speaker's dreams, in which plenty of images, these subconscious signs, present information in the same way as words.

The organ's expressiveness is emphasized at the end of the poem by the ironical expression, "l'instrument ne chantait pas seul."

The silent expressiveness embedded in signs is challengingly evoked at the beginning of the poem by the initial word of the title, "Plainte (Lament)." The first summary involves the conventional contrast of prose for reading in silence and poetry for singing in voice.

Mallarmé's early prose poem in verbal paradoxes is set up as an everyday anecdote in a Parisian life in Baudelaire's way. The Mallarmean keyword, "chute," gathers expanding conflicts into an earthly depth, thereby subsuming two conflictual paragraphs into a piece of poetry in an incantation for development. The desired construction is

symbolized by the furnished apartment in which the speaker textures his dreams.

In Mallarmé's two poems in prose, the real world is implied, or rather, set up as the everyday form of prose. Furthermore, in Mallarmé's early career, the outside as reality corresponds to the predecessor Baudelaire's poetic world as a systematic civilization enmeshing vulgarity, ethnicity, and transcendency. In the two poems, the apparent semantic insufficiency foregrounds the detailed ordinariness. Nevertheless, the insufficiency represents the Baudelairean legacy as potentiality, which was to be actualized by the follower Mallarmé, or is to be fulfilled by the reader's intertextual superposition. In the restricted framework of poetry, the form and the meaning, or the signifier and the signified, closely interact.

The poetics of the two poems in prose in expanding details is based on metalepsis: metalepsis as the usage of minimized symbols, which are confounded with metonymies in the sense of the accidental contingences.⁷ Though the Mallarmean poetry as a whole takes metalepsis as its constitutive principle, his early poems in prose emphasize his poetics of contraction with the developing semantic absence, which challenges interpretation and evaluation. Interpretation is more or less necessary for both poetry and prose, whereas evaluation is a task of prose for reasoning in the syntactical development.

The contraction in prose makes Mallarmé's two early prose poems a cooperative manifesto for setting up the poet's new art: the purification of the Baudelairean world, which is itself a replacement of the Latin art.

The purification is focused by the poems' reflecting props, the shined pieces of furniture that mirror and concentrate the diversity of the surrounding world. In other words, the immovable Mallarmé furniture reflects and purifies Baudelaire's small pieces of furniture in transfer, which include the human actants in the Parisian life. The Mallarmé poems in prose are thus characterized by duality

and repetition in the same way as translation.

As for the Latin art, the speaker/author of the poem, "Plainte d'automne," indicates that his favorite literary work is the Latin poetry in its final phase ("la poésie agonisante des derniers moments de Rome"). Furthermore, Baudelaire's succeeding art in the 19th century French decadence may be ironically qualified as the rejuvenated Latin, or "le latin enfantin des premières proses chrétiennes" in the terms of the prose poem's speaker/author. His expression for the barbarian threat against the Roman empire, "l'approche rajeunissante des Barbares," connects the qualification "young" ("rajeunissante") to the French poet, as his name, "Baudelaire," may be viewed as an anagram of "Barbares." French is, in fact, one of the Romance languages.⁸

The manifesto is partial and metaleptic as a blueprint for artful organization. In Mallarmé's early prose poems, theory and practice become identified to set up the poems' syntactical continuity. The motif of the two poems, i.e., the daydreaming in a shelter, this overdetermined combination of the real and the fictional, may be viewed as a poetic recreation of Baudelaire's speculation on the possibility of the prose poetry in his preface to *Le Spleen de Paris*. Baudelaire posits that the prose poetry was a dream of all the poets around him. Moreover, the Mallarmé prose poems and the Baudelaire preface share the firstness, in that the former is the poet's juvenilia and the latter is placed at the head of the Baudelaire collection.

Then, the prose poetry constitutes itself as a continuous replacement, or translation, that dissolves the identity of each sign to be a single word in a circulative oneness.

The requirement of evaluative interpretation regarding Mallarmé's two poems in prose is paradoxically ascribed to the poems' unusual clarity, which can be appreciated as an airy expansion skillfully but unrecognizably supplied by the author himself. The furnished salon is poised in an everyday world of prose poetry, without being

fantastically or uncannily evaporated.

The readers, especially who are challenged by the esotericism of Mallarmé's work, would feel relieved to grasp the self-contained information of the surface level, i.e., the mimetic description of the everyday ornament, without searching for further meanings with intertextual connections.

The semantic depth and width is to be conveyed by other texts, concerning Mallarmé's two early prose poems; their surface meanings and their implications are kept at a distance from each other. Moreover, the conveyance, or the intertextual supplementation, is assumed only by the reader acquainted with the Baudelairean network. With a logical, thus authentic procession for story-telling in an implied semiotic theory, the Mallarmé prose poems nonetheless direct the reader to figure out the generic context of the poems themselves.

Mallarmé's prose poems as a translation of the Baudelairean prototype demand a further task of translation/interpretation of the reader facing Mallarmé's unexpectedly easy texts.

The unexpected clarity may be viewed as Mallarmé's strategy, i.e., the conscious act as translation. The easy texts push the reader to read them with the supplementation from the Baudelairean architexts. In other words, Mallarmé's prose poems represent an apparatus to appropriate Baudelaire's preceding works from which Mallarmé's sublimated art is to spring up. Baudelaire's equivocal symbol, cat, is given the adjective meaning "pure" in "Plainte d'automne," rendered as "(le) pur animal." The prose poem, which is more voluminous than the traditional form of poetry, is at least capable to make the reader imagine the soar of the Mallarmean sublimation from the Baudelairean base. Moreover, both the two poems aim high from the earthly site: "Frisson" with the continuous apostrophe and "Plainte" in search of the sacred soul, Maria. The poems' art of reflection also aims for launching.

Sublimation equals purification, making transparency. The latter is synonymous

with lucidity, i.e., readability/translatability. Mallarmé's transparency in his early two prose poems is substituted for his originality in the art of sublimation that consists in reflection and conceptualization.

The externality of the semantic depth and width in Mallarmé's prose poems, which is expressed as their purified image in an airy expansion, was eventually internalized as the blocking blank between words in the scrambled syntax of the poet's late works including his criticism on art.

Then, the early clarity and the late ambiguity are one and the same, as both represent Mallarmé's originality. The characteristic of the prose poetry as a manifesto for new creation is emphasized by the whole collection of Mallarmé's prose poems that indicate his two aspects of poetics: sublimation and mystification.

The readability of Mallarmé's prose poems is part of modernization aiming for individuality and originality, which is codified in a nationalistic tenet, "Ce qui n'est pas clair n'est pas français." The initiative Cartesian emphasis on clarity was pushed by the French revolution seeking for absolute equality as an early modernist achievement. Baudelaire's freed musical prose shares the dream for equality, i.e., the respect for each individual, while contradictorily searching for the individual liberation of verbal expression.

According to the *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (Simon 665), "the actual beginnings [of the prose poem] are in that 18th-c. France where the Academy's rigid rules of versification were driving many a potential poet with a taste for individuality into prose."

The conflictive matching of equality and freedom, which appear to go together both as ideals of individualization, results in the clarity of the continuous rendition for the 50 pieces in *Le Spleen de Paris*: equality as the understanding of all readers and freedom as the writer's right to lengthen his poem, which is the prose form itself.

In poetry, in general, the freedom of expression

limitlessly allowed to the writer is only the lengthening of the syntactic line. The breaking of grammar, which includes the oxymoronic combination of words attempted by Mallarmé in his veteran phase, threatens the communicability of verbal rendition. The linguistic convention, which hinders the individual freedom of expression, is for enabling reading, thus guaranteeing equality among readers. Baudelaire's dream for free prose is literally utopian.

Singularity as freedom is not equal to plurality as equality, because plurality is a collective singularity. Freedom thus conflicts with equality.

Articulated by the inactive speakers, who mingle aristocracy with ordinariness in a furnished salon of bourgeoisie, Mallarmé's early prose poems are posited as distant echoes of the modernist struggle for fusing equality and freedom, or plurality and singularity. The two prose poems' speakers are sedentary at the center of each poetic world, thus symbolizing the prose poetry, this intertwined duality, of which the inspired drive dashes the shafts of words in a seemingly spontaneous prose form.

2. Theorizing the prose poetry

2.1 Baudelaire's poem in prose

According to Baudelaire's definition, the prose poetry is not a simple juxtaposition of prose and poetry but an intricate combination, or rather, an inseparable amalgam of prose and poetry under the general title, *Le Spleen de Paris*. The totalizing amalgam may be viewed as representing modernity as a developing singularity. Fundamentally, poetry and prose share the verbal expression, or rather, language as a whole.

In the preface to *Le Spleen de Paris*, Baudelaire's first and last collection of his prose poems, the poet manifests his intention to set up a free style of poetry characterized mainly as "musicale." Since conceptual meanings are not conventionally attached to the musical

sound, Baudelaire's prose in poeticalness, which is exclusively musical ("une prose poétique, musicale"), is apparently just intended to be acoustically, or sensually aestheticized.

His concern with the semantic sphere of the poems is glimpsed in the preface, as is discussed later in this section, but the concern is eclipsed by his preoccupation with the formal aspect, expressed as "mouvements," "ondulations," and "soubresauts":

Quel est celui de nous qui n'a pas, dans ses jours d'ambition, rêvé le miracle d'une prose poétique, musicale sans rythme et sans rime, assez souple et assez heurtée pour s'adapter aux mouvements lyriques de l'âme, aux ondulations de la rêverie, aux soubresauts de la conscience?

Under the dominance of music, then, Baudelaire's term, "prose," assimilatively means a sort of poetry, which is often compared to music, in the same way as the Mallarmé poem's title, "Prose."⁹ Subsequently, the unifying expression, "une prose poétique, musicale," corresponds to "a musical poem."

The semantic clarity, which is demanded of prose for ordinary communication, is not mentioned in Baudelaire's preface. His prose poems collected as *Le Spleen de Paris*, are, however, highly readable, similar to Mallarmé's two early poems discussed above but different from the latter poet's late esoteric poems in prose such as "La Gloire."

In more detail, Baudelaire's manifesto for prose poetry, which is entitled "À Arsène Houssaye" as a preface to the collection, begins with the excuse for the lengthiness of his prose poems and ends with the confirmation of the acoustic dominance in his poems. Concurrently, the manifesto as a summary of his new poetics concentrates on presenting the invention's formal characteristics, which are subsumed as musical and visual ("pittoresque"). The musical and the visual are assimilative, both presupposing sensory reception and causing

synesthesia.

Concerning the semantic content, the poems' music is to convey the movement of the poet's mind. In addition, the modernized Parisian life is to be depicted. Nevertheless, the interrelation between musicality and obscurity, which is pushed to the fore by Mallarmé's late poetry, is apparently not considered in Baudelaire's manifesto.

Though Baudelaire's theorization regarding the semantic sphere of music is not detailed, the relation between the content and the expression in his prose poems is summed up by the word "traduire (translate)." According to the poet, the semantic content of the poems, such as the evocative cry of a worker ("toutes les désolantes suggestions que ce cri envoie"), is translated into the musical prose ("une *chanson*" or "une prose lyrique"). Moreover, his prose poetry is for describing the modern life in Paris ("la description de la vie moderne"). By the word "traduire," the poet thus means the interchangeability between the semantic content and its expression, which are to be fused into the musical stream. The music itself is continuous with, thus possibly part of, its expressed content, because the music represents the movement of the poet's mind, i.e., thoughts and feelings, the semantic material of his poem. Precisely, as mental movements, thoughts and feelings are both semantic and formal, simultaneously corresponding to the signified and the signifier.

Then, the content, the expression, and the musicality may be inseparable, being essentially one and the same. The trilogic cognates share, in fact, physicality. They really exist and can be known and felt. Baudelaire's implied semiotics is similar to the concept of C. S. Peirce, which ontologically equalizes the signifier and the signified to be both interpretants.

Baudelaire's pursuit for the continuous exchange of signs represents a modernist obsession for eternalizing the secluded self, which constituted a cause of the French revolution for freedom and equality.

The stylistic feature of Baudelaire's prose poems, i.e., the bounce by the descriptive words' tonic accents presumably under the influence of the English meter, may be considered as an attempt to overcome the linearity of prose to expand the sphere for the poems' signification.

Baudelaire's utopia of freed musical prose comes from his idealization of translation, which was taken by him as an identification of two signs to be directly fused into one. In case of the translation of mental movements to linguistic signs, it is a substitution and not an identification, because linguistic signs have their own system for making sense, which is independent of mental movements. The relationship between the linguistic signs and the mental movements is arbitrary. Translation unveils cultural/communal arbitrariness whereby the individual members of the community cannot control their cultural whole, which paradoxically consists of the members. Nevertheless, all entities including language and mind are fundamentally connected with the potential for overcoming arbitrariness and realizing fusion, sharing presence. Activated from the conscious surface, translation is a step for communal harmony, scrambling the arbitrariness destined to cultural community.

The distinction between prose and poetry should thus be ascribed to the level of communicability, as both are essentially continuous, though communicability depends on the cognitive conditions of both the writer and the reader.

Subsequently, the prose poetry, or rather, the poetry in prose in the Baudelairean vein, represents the superposition of two words to be fused into a single word. The two superposed words correspond to the signifier and the signified of a sign, which are one but separately caught, or "cri (cry)" and "suggestions" in Baudelaire's terms. The single word as a result of fusion represents the second signifier, or "music" in Baudelaire's term.

On the other hand, a poem in general may be viewed as a development of a single word. The development equals the second signifier, whereas

the developed single word represents the signifier and the signified of a sign, which are one and so grasped.

2.2 The expansion of the Baudelairean genre

For clarifying the nature and the significance of Baudelaire's prose poetry, the emergence and the subsequent development of his genre in a non-Western area, i.e., Japan, may be considered as an epitomized case. The country is in the Far East in its insular seclusion, which renders itself as a homogenized terrain for the external genre's genuine and quick dissemination.

The genre of prose poetry was inaugurated in Japan at the beginning of the 20th century under the influence of the Western counterpart begun by Baudelaire. The inauguration of the genre is an outcome of intercultural transmission, i.e., a translation in a broad sense, which is a characteristic of modernity. The Japanese reformers sought for a poetic form by which they could freely express themselves. The modernization had just finalized its first stage in the country with the establishment of the capitalist system shortly after the Russo-Japanese war in 1904 and 1905.

Following the Western model, the Japanese modernization was consciously begun with the Meiji Restoration in 1868 under the auspice of the government. The accelerated cultural reform included that of poetry in general. The traditional shortness of Japanese poetry, represented by the 17-syllable *haiku* and the 31-syllable *waka*, was lengthened to make a free-verse form with repetitive line divisions.

The Japanese poet's intensified consciousness of oneself pushed him/her further to seek for a poetic form allowing vaster freedom of expression, which led to the emergence of prose poetry without line divisions in the Baudelairean way, leaving the question whether the prose form is really free or not. In an influential propaganda delivered at that time for the liberation of the poetic form, the word to be translated as "myself" is repeated obsessively

four times in a key sentence.¹⁰

The Japanese case typifies the heightened consciousness of oneself, which delivered the genre of prose poetry to be traced back to the Baudelairean prototypes.

It should be noted, however, that the convergence of poetry and prose on the form of literary essay, or lyrical prose, traditionally existed in Japan. The tradition of lyrical prose began with the success of the subjective report of seasonal views entitled *Makura no soushi* (*A Booklet for Pillow*), the collected essays in the 10th century, which are contemporary with *The Tale of Genji*, the oldest novel. The essay tradition gave a backbone to the new poetry genre called "bibun" ("beautiful prose"), which also emerged around the beginning of the 20th century under the modernizing reformation in the country.

The subsequent development of the Japanese prose poems needs to be delineated, though the delineation to be detailed will be left as a task for another article.

3. *The Waste Land* as a prose poem

3.1 The paradoxical volubility

T. S. Eliot's long poem in book form, *The Waste Land*, represents a convergence of heterogeneous conflicts: lyrical and mimetic, emotional and rational, subjective and objective, natural and cultural, self-indulgent and pedagogic, colloquial and literary, Germanic and Latin, writing and reading, and so forth. Furthermore, the poem's textual body is expanded by the scholarly end notes. The text is in English, though with many foreign words and miscellaneous jargons. The accumulation of interpretations around the long poem since its publication in 1922 is thus predictable. With the continuation of new readings, the poem is still enlarging its scope of meanings and images. According to Michael Coyle (1966), "The legendary difficulty of *The Waste Land* is an integral part of the poem."

A possible clue for elucidating the long poem's structural principle is the concept of prose poetry, this textual duality. Any cosmos, or enlarged oneness, is a convergence of dualism.

Eliot's own notion of poetry as a dualistic whole is indicated in the umbrella image of Dante's panorama in his essay published in 1920, as follows: "But poetry can be penetrated by a philosophic idea, it can deal with this idea when it has reached the point of immediate acceptance, when it has become almost a physical modification. If we divorced poetry and philosophy altogether, we should bring a serious impeachment, not only against Dante, but against most of Dante's contemporaries" (Eliot, *Sacred* 138).

In a neat division for the numbered five sections, T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* is in a unified diversity. The skillful unification would not have been realized without Ezra Pound's intervention. Nevertheless, in order to measure the aesthetic power of the text, *The Waste Land*, the analysis of the text itself is required first, with the problem of authorship put aside. Despite the requirement, however, the basic question of authorship haunts the reader/interpreter of *The Waste Land*, since the text probes fundamentals such as the correlation between death and life.

In an attempt to conscientiously explain the unexpected cruelty of April, the poem's initial flow is a romanticized stretch of prose, which is studded with the sentimental keywords, "Lilacs," "Memory," "spring," and "rain." The poem's beginning sentence, which is lengthened by three present participles, foregrounds the volubility of the quintet poem as a whole, though the volubility is shadowed, or rather tightened up, by the imposing keywords that contribute to make the piece as a circulatory oneness, charged with evocative images. The first scene of the reviving earth is resumed at the end of the poem. The first section, which begins with the scene of revival, is entitled "The Burial of the Dead."

The keywords reinforce and even absorb the

lyricity embedded in the long poem's voluble style, which is an example of the Wordsworthian "spontaneous overflow" as an essence of lyricity.¹¹ In a skillful balance of iteration and flow, the beginning sentence pushes the reader to take *The Waste Land* as a whole as an example of prose poem, not a simple "poetic prose."¹² In the sentence, volubility is leveled with, or rather, fused into implicitness.

Concurrently, the summarizing keywords may be viewed as the textual outposts of the hidden words for the productive five elements. *The Waste Land* consists of five sections, each of which may be considered as an expansion of each name of the five elements, i.e., "tree," "fire," "earth," "metal(-gold)," and "water," as is discussed in chapter 4 of *A Flowering Word* (137-38).

In addition, the first sentence dashes in a streaming line with the main construction in simplicity, "A is B." The line explodes, as it were, a modernist thunderbolt like Mahler's symphony, *Das Lied von der Erde* (*The Song of the Earth*). The expected continuation of the sentence's speedy flow is represented by the linearity of the long text as a whole, which is posited by the frequent line division.

The linearity is highly acceptable for the reader, since it has the image of following the law of gravity, vertically streaming. Furthermore, it imposes the first restricted construction, "A is B," in "April is the cruellest month," as the main structure of sentences for *The Waste Land* as a whole.

In Eliot's original draft, the first notable sentence is not placed at the head of the poem, but at the beginning of the second part of the first section. The previous first part is deleted and unpublished.

The term "volubility" is used to designate a characteristic of Eliot's prose poetry, thereby escaping the pejorative nuance of the word "prosaism." To be voluble is to be long and generative in a deep breath to become a book. The long poem, *The Waste Land*, typifies Eliot's

poetry in its voluble verbalism, which forcefully goes beyond the line division of the free-verse style. His long line of prose generally represents, however, a continuation of simple sentences, each in a construction of “A is/do B,” which is possibly with adverbial phrases, but without subordinate clauses.¹³ In that construction, the modifying phrase attached to the main clause can be negligible as secondary echoes, which prolong the power of the clause in concision. The echoes thus are one of the sources of volubility.

In *The Waste Land*, the simplicity dominates the first section from the streaming head, which is gravitationally imposing, and is emphasized by the complicated long sentence at the beginning of the second section. The simplistic domination comes back with the short imperatives in conversation in the following stanza and is fixed by the assignation scene in a quick report in the next third section. The simple sentence imposes itself by the English tonic accents, of which the bouncing is reinforced by the sentence’s restricted framework.

All of Eliot’s poems may be gauged by the concept, “poem in prose,” which is to be a unified balance of implicitness and expressiveness, or imaginary and philosophical, as is implied in the structure of the term that symmetrizes “poem” and “prose.” In Baudelaire’s initiative concept, “poem” and “prose” are to be unified as a melody (“une prose poétique, musicale”). In contrast, the “poetic prose” may involve any kind of words in suite. Following that criterion, one of the most successful expressions is *The Waste Land*’s initial one, beginning with “April is the cruellest month.” The head of the expression is in four-beat, which maximizes its poetic force in the succeeding conceptual stream with the four summarizing words. Another four-beat model in a concentration of a half-alexandrine is: “We are the hollow men.” Eliot’s poetry and his criticism are cognate and interactive, suggesting his background of philosophy.

The first stanza of *The Waste Land* is

foregrounded as a heterogeneity of volubility: exposition, explanation, narration, and conversation. The speech acts in saturation make up a partial novel with poeticity.

In a unifying symmetry with the same conflict of death and life, the first stanza of the final fifth section consists of the defamiliarizing combination of a long sentence and a short one, though the length is dissimulated by the repetitive line division. The division tends to block the reading, confusing the reader to wonder how to combine the short lines. In particular, the fourth line, “The shouting and the crying,” is challenging; at first it seems to be a subject coming after the long adverbial phrase, but it finally needs to be taken as an absolute nominative.

The above stanza is intact by Pound’s intervention. Nevertheless, a question arises, regarding whether the stanza corresponds to the beginning stanza of the initial section by Eliot’s first intention. The question involves the basic structure, or the drive to make up the text as a whole. Concerning the fact that the two stanzas are in a visible symmetry in the published version, it may be suspected that the intervener Pound’s suggestion played a decisive part, though the final decision must have been made by the author Eliot. This problem of authorship will be discussed later in this section.

The first confusion of the fifth section’s first stanza is pushed by a twisted phrase without any period around a Roman name, Coriolanus. The phrase is all the more puzzling, placed in a paraphrase of unfamiliar Sanskrit words. Between the beginning confusion and the second one on the Shakespearean name, Coriolanus, the readable short lines are superposed in a sedentariness of Oriental imagery consummated by the expression, “the sound of water.”

It should be noted that the first imposing confusion is productive, because it causes verbal images for interpretation in the brain of the reader, who expects to dissipate the confusion by the help

of the following information offered by the still continuing text. The subsequent Oriental imagery in meditateness increases the first productivity with its intriguing unexpectedness.

Moreover, the generative volubility has paradoxically been emphasized by the sudden juxtaposition of mid-textual images in the previous sections. The popping images may be called flashbacks, which represent a modernist apparatus for capturing a privileged moment: for example, the ironical parallel between the hyacinth girl and Madame Sosostriis, the abrupt superposition of Lil, the fallen woman without teeth, on an aristocrat with jewelry, the unforeseen designation of the crowded megalopolis as “Unreal,” and the unanticipated identification of the obscure speaker with a mythological figure, “Tiresias.” The shadowy figure foregrounded by the initial “T” may be viewed as a symbol of production, the motif of the long poem in volubility. The androgynous figure also symbolizes the amalgamated genre of prose poetry. Furthermore, Tiresias as a prophet goes with the prose poetry as a manifesto for experimentation. All the four flashbacks are originated in Eliot’s draft for *The Waste Land*.

The above scenic superposition has been prepared from the poem’s beginning, which is foregrounded by the oxymoronic combinations of words: “April” and “cruellest,” “breeding” and “dead,” and “Winter” and “warm.”

The conflictive imagery is subsumed by the duality between the mass and each individual on London Bridge, this enduring symbol of modernity. The qualification with the initial “U,” “Unreal,” represents a pivot around which revolves modernity as a combination of plurality and singularity. The unreal city, London, embodies both a dream garden and an exhausting crucible, while simultaneously indifferent but exclusive for the author as an outsider. In London, the author Eliot was free from native duties but without an authentic career path. In that sense, the city means a waste land for the author himself as an unreal member of the poetic

world. The fictive inside and the mimetic outside are also in a conflict to be dissolved.

Eliot’s volubility is traced back to his simple construction of sentences, which is represented by *The Waste Land*’s beginning, “April is the cruellest month.” The Eliot sentence’s simplicity in “A is/ do B” produces volubility in two directions: the lengthening of the text and the juxtaposition of content words. The lengthening is actualized by the superposition of sentences, as their simple construction can be easily copied for the author and highly accessible for the reader. In addition, the author is a critical reader of his own poem. The juxtaposition is triggered by the accumulation of content words that dissimulates the inconspicuous copulas between the words. In the simple structure of sentences, the copulas tend to be ignored, since they are only with the fixed and well-known function of connecting the content words. In terms of style, *The Waste Land* is also in unity.

3.2 Baudelaire’s archetypal *Spleen*

The Waste Land may be traced back to Baudelaire’s prose poetry, *Le Spleen de Paris*, in the same way as the Mallarmé poems. From the original draft, the first section of *The Waste Land* is ended with a quotation from Baudelaire’s first collected poems, entitled *Les Fleurs du mal*. The quotation corresponds to the last line of the dedicatory poem, “Au Lecteur.” Eliot’s *Land* and Baudelaire’s *Spleen* share the secondness, the former as the modernist masterpiece that follows Baudelaire’s *Fleurs*, the latter as the second collection for Baudelaire. In terms of popularity in the modernist domain, any other work, except James Joyce’s novel, *Ulysses*, could rival the two works of poetry, Baudelaire’s *Fleurs* and Eliot’s *Land*; both caused sensation, the former as an illegal volume, the latter as an esoteric charisma.

Essentially, *Land* and *Spleen* share the antagonism imposed by the first fatal conflict between sadism and masochism, which is to be ascribed to the conflict between life and death. In *The*

Waste Land, the beginning and most resonant phrase is: “April is the cruellest month.” The Baudelairean work’s general title, *Le Spleen de Paris*, is for darkening, or rather, quenching the glorious capital’s brilliancy. Both the words, “Spleen” and “Paris,” are forceful with the plosive [p].

In its stimulative antagonism, *The Waste Land* leads the reader to the depth of human life. The fundamental conflict, i.e., that between the prose poem’s horizontal volubility and its tendency toward semantic depth as symbolism, is stabilized, or rather, created by other miscellaneous conflicts that make up the poem.

In the prevailing antagonism, the reader is induced to see through the poem’s verbal flow the basis of the human consciousness, a kind of waste land, from which the linguistic expression grows out. The poem’s semantic production is triggered by the physical drive in heterogeneous conflicts with weight. In addition, the drive is reinforced by the expressions at the surface level that expose the depth of life such as the risky sled-riding of Marie and the degenerated teeth of Lil. The thrush to the essence of human life prepares the source of popularity of *The Waste Land*, a canon of modernist art, in an image of perfection encompassing both the vertical and the horizontal.

3.3 The Pound intervention

In the poem, the bird “thrush” is given the status of philosopher to become a “hermit-thrush.” The philosopher-bird is the motive for the appearance of the religious river in India, “Ganga.” The Oriental imagery begins from the expression, “the sound of water,” in section 5, line 352, which is connected to the following “cicada.” The image is Japanese, presumably coming from *haiku* poetry. A model of *haiku* poetry compares the sound of cicada to that of water penetrating rocks.¹⁴ The rock plays a key role in the final fifth section of *The Waste Land*. The traces of the Japanese *haiku* may be from Ezra Pound, the adviser of the prose poem, though the section’s *haiku* imagery as a whole is

originated in Eliot’s draft.

After the intervention of Pound, *The Waste Land* was set up, as it were, as a trimmed Japanese garden, giving a clear impression, as is indicated by many critics.¹⁵ It should be noted, however, that the intervener Pound did not fiddle individual sentences, except the uninfluential number of minor changes, but just removed weak blocks of redundant stanzas. In Michael Coyle’s view,

As published, *The Waste Land* presents no unnecessary word. Despite the numerous and lengthy cuts that Eliot made at Pound’s suggestion prior to publication, it is missing nothing important to the design of the poem. (158)

Through the Pound intervention as slimming, the volubility characteristic of Eliot’s expression is, in a sense, hindered by the intervener’s preference for concision that produced the epoch-making diptych, “In a Station of the Metro,” based on a *haiku* poem.¹⁶ Eliot’s volubility is marked by the fact that the quantity of the first section in his original draft is reduced to its half after Pound’s intervention. Another typical example is Pound’s reduction of Eliot’s long phrase, “coming back out of the Transport Corps,” to “demobbed.”

The volubility inherent in *The Waste Land*, which can be seen both in its original drafts and in its published version, is essentially different from the clear-cut frame that has appeared with Pound’s intervention. They keep their distance from each other; Eliot’s prose has a tendency to be lengthening in the form of accumulated sentences, whereas the frame given after the intervention corresponds to the partial erasure of Eliot’s expanded text. Especially, the unexpected shortness of the fourth section in 10 lines, which is more restricted than a sonnet form, would let the reader suspect the modification by an editor, even if the reader did not know Eliot’s original draft. The exclusive distance makes the reader think of the decisiveness of the Pound intervention, though it is reported that the author Eliot and the adviser Pound worked together

for the elaboration of *The Waste Land*.¹⁷

The Pound editing and/or suggesting may be posited as the actualization of a digestible work equalizing poetry and prose, i.e., outside and inside, both in quantity and quality. Pound's poeticity appearing in *The Waste Land* through his intervention is exceedingly concise, though the visibility of the added poetic excess is reduced by Eliot's shortened text with the suppressed but visible tendency for volubility.

Nevertheless, the remarkable combination of poetry and prose in *The Waste Land*'s successful verses such as those of its first stanza foretells Pound's intervention that put the external cast for overall balance on *The Waste Land* as a whole. Pound just elicited the potential merit of Eliot's verse as a poem in prose. By Pound's intervention, the internal balance of Eliot's prose to be traced back to its structure of "A is/do B" is expanded to the symmetry between the Eliot text in its entirety and the outside world represented by the blank of book pages.

The Waste Land's two directions are subsumed by the flowing volubility of emitted words and the vertical thrust to the semantic boundary between the animate and the inanimate. Subsequently, the conclusive duality is to be traced back to the revised work's overall equalization of poetry and prose.

Furthermore, the duality is dissolved in the text's unity, which is manifested by the general title,

The Waste Land.

Another factor for making *The Waste Land* a unified source of possibility is the textual circulation overarched by the symmetry between the head of the first section and that of the final fifth section. The circulation may be viewed as intended in Eliot's original drafts, since the fifth section's defamiliarized religious words are presaged in the supposedly previous section, which is numbered 4.¹⁸ In Eliot's drafts, the number is given only to the echoing section, entitled "Death by Water." The numbering of 4 and the partial title, "by Water," support the theory that the fourth section embodies an expansion of the word "metal(-gold)," the fourth name of the five Chinese elements in a circular oneness: "by Water" means "near Water," i.e., "next to the fifth section representing the final element, 'water.'"

In addition, the repetition of meaningful expressions in different sections such as "Unreal City," "So rudely forc'ed," and "Jug" testifies to the author's intention to make a circular unity of *The Waste Land* from the draft stage.

The informativeness of the prose poetry is demonstrated by the samples of the three major poets, Baudelaire, Mallarmé, and Eliot. As a manifesto for the cultural diversity to be globally harmonized, the prose poetry asserts its total unity in duality as an avant-gardist example of communicative innovation.

Notes

- 1 The pseudonym, “frisson nouveau,” is given in Hugo’s letter to Baudelaire dated 6 October 1859.
- 2 The bibliographical information is from Marchal 1334.
- 3 As for “Un hémisphère dans une chevelure,” Mallarmé reworked the entire poem, which is subsumed into the quoted expression. The Baudelaire poem’s first stanza, which has strong echoes in Mallarmé’s expression, however, is as follows: “Laisse-moi respirer longtemps, longtemps, l’odeur de tes cheveux, y plonger tout mon visage, comme un homme altéré dans l’eau d’une source, et les agiter avec ma main comme un mouchoir odorant, pour secouer des souvenirs dans l’air.” Baudelaire’s another poem entitled “L’Invitation au voyage” begins with the doubled apostrophe, “Mon enfant, ma sœur,” which may be considered as transferred to Mallarmé’s expression.
- 4 The bibliographical information is from Marchal 1333.
- 5 In Baudelaire’s preface, Bertrand is ironically qualified as famous (“fameux”) for the reason that the poet was well-known in Baudelaire’s literary circle.
- 6 The bibliographical information is from Marchal 1333.
- 7 Jonathan Culler presents a definition of “metonymy” as “accidental connexion.” See Culler 212.
- 8 Baudelaire himself reveals his interest in the late phase of Latin literature, of which the language is, according to him, suitable for expressing the modern emotion. Refer to the note to his poem entitled “Franciscæ meæ laudes,” which is cited in Pichois 940.
- 9 Mallarmé’s late poem called “Prose” embodies a prolongation of ordinary prose by the repetitive line division.
- 10 See the article by Souma Gyofu, entitled “Shikai no konponteki kakushin,” of which the reference and the discussion are in Takeda, “Emergence” 154-55.
- 11 For Wordsworth’s concept on the lyrical poetry, see Takeda, *Human* 103-04.
- 12 According to the *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (Simon 664), “If it [the prose poem] is any longer, the tensions and impact are forfeited, and it becomes—more or less poetic—prose.”
- 13 Quantitatively speaking, the number of sentences, which are to be seen in the structure of “A is/do B,” amounts to 238, i.e., 78% throughout *The Waste Land*.
- 14 A representative piece of Basho, a major *haiku* poet, is as follows in a translation by Takeda: “Quiet... / The sound of a cicada / Seeps into the rock.”
- 15 See, for example, Coyle 158, Ellis 60, and Longenbach 453.
- 16 For the creating process of the short poem, see Pound, “Vorticism” 465-67.
- 17 For their reported cooperation, see Longenbach 453.
- 18 The echoes are heard in the mythological terms “Hyades” and “Dry Salvages” in the draft of section 4. Also, the image of the female hairs compared to flowing music appears in both the sections’ drafts.

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