

MANIFESTO OF HAIKU POETRY IN THE ITALIAN LANGUAGE

CASCINA MACONDO

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*This Manifesto of Haiku Poetry in the Italian language
summarises the ideas and thoughts of Cascina Macondo on the art of writing Haiku.
Other schools may have their own experiences and opinions which could differ from ours.*

We therefore state that

1) **HAIKU definition by Cascina Macondo**

*The haiku is a poem made up of three lines of 5-7-5 syllables. It must contain the **Kigo** (a reference to a season) or the **Little Kigo** (a reference to a part of a day)*

2) **SENRYŪ definition by Cascina Macondo**

The Senryū is a poem made up of three lines 5 -7-5 syllables which does not contain either the Kigo or the Little Kigo

3) **HAIKAI definition by Cascina Macondo**

The Haikai is a poem made up of three lines of 5-7-5 syllables with a humoristic, comical connotation. It can or it cannot contain the Kigo or the Little Kigo.

*It cannot be confused with the Haiku which contains the feeling **Karumi** (softness, lightness, innocence, the small smile, the little irony, the little humour, the light vision, childish, free from culture and technique). In the Haikai the humoristic element is considered fundamental. The following poem is a *Senryu* which contains a *Karumi* feeling.*

*mio malgrado
ho pisciato qualche volta
nel lavandino*

(Pietro Tartamella)

*Against my will
I sometime peed
In the sink*

The following poem is a Haikai with a strong comical connotation

*Mordo la mela
e subito me ne accorgo:
c'è mezzo verme!*

(Pietro Tartamella)

*I'm biting an apple
Immediately I realize
There is half of a worm!*

4) HAIBUN definition by Cascina Macondo

It is a poem made up of prose and haiku or senryu. Usually it is the report of a trip. The prose text is simple and essential. The haiku texts are not the summary of what has been written in the prose but they add different meanings. Basho's Haibun are very famous.

5) HAIGA, definition by Cascina Macondo

It is any poem (Haiku, Senryu, Haikai) linked to an image. The image can be a photograph, a drawing, a picture, a film or any other type of "image".

6) GIANUHAIKU definition by Cascina Macondo

It is a poem proposed in the 70's by Pietro Tartamella. It is made up of two Haiku, Senryu or Haikai strongly linked to each other. The first haiku is called "main", the second "frontal". The main haiku is made up of 5-7-5 syllables. The frontal haiku is composed of the same letters (not syllables) which are used in the main haiku. The frontal haiku could not have the 5 - 7 - 5 syllables structure. The second haiku, the frontal one, explores the transversal, semantic subjects and the meanings hidden in the sonorous substance of the main haiku. Here are two Gianuhaiku by Pietro Tartamella.

Haiku Principale

*Abbandonato
Un guanto sulla neve.
Dov'è la mano?*

Main Haiku

*A glove left
On the snow
Where is the hand?*

Haiku Frontale

*Un tabù: Eva
bada al mondo.
Sete allungavo, nonno.*

Frontal Haiku

*A taboo: Eve
takes care of the world
I extended thirst, grandpa*

Haiku Principale

*Già abbozzato
tra le ginocchia il cesto.
Raggi di giunchi.*

Haiku Frontale

*Ogni lite schiocca
giù draghi, cigni.
A bozze ora battagli.*

Main Haiku

*Already a roughcast
The basket between the knees
Rushes rays*

Frontal Haiku

*Each argument
gives dragons, swans.
Now you fight with proofs*

The frontal haiku in English is the translation of the Italian frontal haiku. *It is not the anagram of the main English haiku.*

7) **HAISAN definition by Cascina Macondo**

It is a poem made up of three lines.

The word is composed of the first part of the word Haiku: **HAI** and of the word **SAN** which in Japanese means three. Simply it means “three lines”. The free Haiku do not respect the syllables and the Kigo. It is a better term than “*pseudo-haiku*” or “*semi-haiku*” or “*haiku impuro*” which somehow embody a negative connotation and that define the writer who was trying to write a haiku and who did not succeed. The word that we propose does not have a negative connotation. It respects the choice of those writers who want to write modern haiku with free syllables and who do not want to be necessarily linked to the season. We think it is important to give dignity to this form of poetry which many western and Japanese poets have freely chosen. It is also important not to call these poems haiku.

We believe that the term **HAISAN** is appropriate and that it mirrors the will of the Haijin who have chosen this way.

- 8) the Haiku **must** consist of 3 verses
- 9) the first verse **must** consist of 5 syllables
- 10) the second verse **must** consist of 7 syllables
- 11) the third verse **must** consist of 5 syllables

12) **THE CONCEPT OF HYPERMETRE VERSE**

A *hypermetre* is a verse containing one more syllable than it should contain. The classic rule states that the first verse of a Haiku must contain 5 syllables. A verse such as the following:

“*vedendo morire*” (*Looking at....dying*) has 6 syllables

ve – den – do – mo – ri – re
1 2 3 4 5 6

Relative to how the first verse of a Haiku should be, according to the classic rule of 5 syllables, this verse is a hypermetre. It has one extra syllable.

Cascina Macondo believes that the haiku should not have hypermetric lines unless it is leaded to "normality" under the effect of specific metric phenomena.

13) THE CONCEPT OF A HYPOMETRIC VERSE

A *hypometric* verse is one which contains one syllable less than it should. The classic rule states that the second Haiku verse must contain 7 syllables. A verse such as the following:

"lontana la sera" (The evening far away)

has 6 syllables

lon – ta – na – la – se – ra
1 2 3 4 5 6

Relative to how the second verse of a Haiku should be, according to the classic rule of 7 syllables, this verse is a hypometre. It has one less syllable.

Cascina Macondo believes that the haiku should not have hypometric lines unless it is leaded to "normality" under the effect of specific metric phenomena.

14) SYLLABLES, COUNTING ACCORDING TO SPELLING AND COUNTING ACCORDING TO METRE

In counting the syllables we must distinguish between the actual number of syllables, counting according to *spelling* and counting according to *metre* (which takes into account truncated verses, verses where the accent falls on the third to last syllable, interspersal sinaleph, crasis, hiatus etc.). We believe that in a Haiku composition the author should have the freedom to count the syllables as he or she wishes: **by the spelling or by the metre**. We feel the metric method is to be preferred. We feel that the possibility of counting by the spelling method could be useful in saving certain beautiful Haiku which would otherwise not come within the classic form for the want or addition of one syllable.

15) CRASIS

Where within a verse there is crasis, one less syllable can be counted. Syllables can be counted both by spelling and by metre (in both cases, reading aloud could give slightly different scanning and a slightly different rhythm). To clarify this concept let us take the following verse:

lasciami andare (Let me go)

If we count by the spelling, there are 6 syllables :

la – scia – mi – an – da – re
1 2 3 4 5 6

If we count according to the metre, a CRASIS forms between the syllables *mi^an* (which becomes a single one) and the verse has 5 syllables.

la – scia – mi^an – da – re
1 2 3 4 5

If in a line there are two proparoxytone words, only the last proparoxytone word at the end of the line can be counted with the exclusion of one syllable. For a example:

“come le soffici nuvole”

grammatically, it is made up of 9 syllables

co-me-le-sof-fi-ci-nu-vo-le
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

They become 8 if we count them metrically

co-me-le-sof-fi-ci-nu-vo-le
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Because the last word, being a proparoxytone word, can be considered without one syllable

We do not share the ideas of those authors who consider this line as made up of 7 syllables. They believe that another syllable can be eliminated because the word “soffice” is also a proparoxytone word.

18) STRESSED ON THE FOURTH LAST SYLLABLE WORDS AND STRESSED ON THE FIFTH LAST SYLLABLE WORDS

We could not find in any grammar books or metric books specific indication about the treatment of words which are stressed on the fourth and on the fifth last syllables and which are located at the end of the verse. Cascina Macondo believes that they should be considered as proparoxytone words therefore they should be counted by leaving out one syllable.

19) REPETITION OF WORDS WITH THE ACCENT ON THE LAST SYLLABLE

If at the end of the line there are two words with the accent on the last syllable only the last word at the end of the line can be increased with one syllable. It is an exception to this rule when at the end of the line there are two identical words with the accent on the last syllable; when the same word is repeated.

can-tò-can-tò
1 2 3 4

it is a line of 4 syllables if we count them grammatically

can-tò-can-tò...
1 2 3 4 5

it is a line of 5 syllables if we count them metrically
because the last word has the accent on the last syllable

It can also be counted as a 6 syllable verse if we had one more syllable for both words with the accent on the last syllable

e-can-tò...-can-tò...
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7 syllables

20) REPETITION OF PAROXYTONE WORDS

If at the end of a line there are two consecutive and identical paroxytone words it can be considered with one less syllable. For example

Parlare, parlare

is a 6 syllable verse

But it is a repetition as if in the continuum parlatum we had

Par-là-re-par là-re

The second syllable “par” which is repeated at the end of the first word it diminishes so much the intensity (also because the words are identical) that the verse can be considered as made up of 5 syllables

21) REPETITION OF PROPAROXYTONE WORDS

If at the end of a verse there are two proparoxytone words only the proparoxytone word at the end of the line can lose one syllable. An exception to this rule is when at the end of the line there are two identical proparoxytone words. We have the repetition of the same word.

nuvole nuvole is a 6 syllable verse

nu-vo-le-nu-vo-le it becomes of 5 syllables if we consider that it ends
1 2 3 4 5 with a proparoxytone word

nu-vo-le-nu-vo-le it becomes a 4 syllable verse because the same
1 2 3 4 proparoxytone word is repeated twice

In this case we have more space for three more syllables in the verse. This could help the haiku. Thence we could write:

Le mie nuvole nuvole we consider the verse made up of 7 syllables

22) DOUBLE VOWELS

The line “*mare e terra*” it can be made up of 4 syllables if we consider the crasis between the final “e” of *mare* and the other “e” conjunction: *ma-re^e-ter-ra*

The word “*maree*” (plural of *marea*) is made of 3 syllables: *ma-re-e*

The two final “e” must be considered as separate syllables (we apply the hiatus rule). It cannot be considered a crasis also because the second “e” has got a separate function (it indicates the plural).

According to Cascina Macondo’s rules two double vowels inside the word are considered as separate syllables, thence as a hiatus.

pur-pù-re-e *co-rià-ce-e* *e-gè-e* *fèr-re-e* *a-za-lè-e*

con-tè-e *or-chi-dè-e* *e-brè-e* *e-tè-re-e* *dè-e*

rò-se-e *li-vrè-e* *zì-i* *pi-go-lì-i* *ci-go-lì-i*

cin-guet-tì-i *fru-sci-i* *ri-u-sci-i* *cu-cì-i* *squit-tì-i*

The word *pur-pù-re-e* has got 4 syllables.

Only if it is at the end of the verse we can consider it as a trisyllable, it is a proparoxytone.

The word *ma-rè-e* has got 3 syllables

If it is at the end of the verse it remains a trisyllable, because it is a prooxytone word.

25) ANASINALEPH (REGRESSIVE INTERVERSAL SINALEPH)

The syllable with which the hypermetric verse begins gets absorbed, forming a crasis, by the final syllable of the preceding verse. In this case the verse which was hypermetric is no longer so.

*Mille cose la sera (In the evening I still have a thousand things to do)
ancora da fare*

counting by spelling :

mil-le-co-se-la-se-ra 7 syllables
an-co-ra-da-fa-re 6 syllables

if they were the last two verses of a Haiku we know that that of 7 syllables is correct. The other, according to the rule, should be of 5 syllables. Counting the syllables not by the spelling but by metre, we have the phenomenon of *anasinaleph* where the last syllable of the word “se-ra” forms a crasis with the first syllable of the next verse, (*an-co-ra*), and assimilates it within itself, removing it from the count of the last verse; bringing it back within the rule.

mil-le-co-se-la-se-ra ^an 7 syllables
co-ra-da-fa-re 5 syllables

26) EPISINALEPH (PROGRESSIVE INTERVERSAL SINALEPH)

The final syllable of a hypermetric verse merges with the first syllable of the following verse and is contained by it. The verse that was previously hypermetric will now be counted with one syllable less. Let's take these verses by *Tartamella*:

<i>un canto qui mille farfalle piccole alzano al cielo</i>	<i>A thousand little butterflies here lift a song to the sky</i>
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counting the syllables by spelling would give:

un-can-to-qui 4 syllables
mil-le-far-fal-le-pic-co-le 8 syllables
al-za-no-al-cie-lo 6 syllables

It would therefore not be a classic Haiku. But if we count the syllables by metre we have:

<i>un-can-to-qui</i>	5 syllables (the final word of the verse is truncated and can therefore be counted as having one extra syllable)
<i>mil-le-far-fal-le-pic-co-le</i>	8 syllables
<i>al-za-no^al-cie-lo</i>	5 syllables (because of the crasis the syllable <i>no ^ al</i> merge into one)

It would still not appear to be a classic Haiku because the second verse has 8 syllables. It only seems to be so. Because of the *episinaleph* in fact the final syllable “le” of the word of the second verse “pic-co-le” merges with the first syllable of “al” of the last verse (*al-za-no*) and is included by it. It is as if:

mil-le-far-fal-le-pic-co- 7 syllables
le^al-za-no^al-cie-lo 5 syllables

It is a perfectly valid classic Haiku. In this Haiku, by ending the second verse with a word accented on the third to last syllable, we only had to remember that words accented on the third to last syllable at the end of a verse can be counted with one less syllable. The Haiku is within the classic form even without considering *episinaleph*. The *episinaleph* allows the moving of the syllable to the next verse *even if the word is not accented on the third to last syllable*. If Tartamella had written “mille piccole farfalle” (last word with accent on the penultimate syllable) it would have been possible to move the syllable “le” of the word “far-fal-le”, to the next verse.

27) COMPENSATION

This is a phenomenon of metre where the final syllable of a verse which finishes with a proparoxytone word can be counted as belonging to the next verse, *even if no crasis is formed*. Let's look at these verses:

Dopo i fulmini restano (*After thunderbolts*
Cirri d'oro *small golden clouds*)

Do-po-i-ful-mi-ni-re-sta-no 9 syllables
Cir-ri-d'o-ro 4 syllables

Because the first line ends with a proparoxytone word its last syllable can be counted as if it was part of the next line. For example

Do-po-i-ful-mi-ni-li-re-sta- 8 syllables
no-cir-ri-d'o-ro 5 syllables

Because of the crasis *po^i*, the first line is made up of 7 syllables as it is usually required in the second line of the haiku.

The difference between *episinaleph* and *compensation* is minimal: both allow the transposition of a syllable to the following verse, but the *episinaleph* can act even in a verse which does not end with a word accented on the third to last syllable, as long as the next verse begins with a vowel, because it has to form a crasis. *Compensation* instead, allows the moving of the syllable only if the last word of the verse is accented on the third to last syllable, even if the first syllable of the second verse does not begin with a vowel.

28) ECHOSYLLABLE

Truncated words from a metric point of view, which are found at the end of a verse, can be considered as having an extra syllable. eg.

egli mi portò (He took me
lontano lontano far away, far away)

e-gli-mi-por-tò 5 syllables when counting by spelling
lon-ta-no-lon-ta-no 6 syllables when counting by spelling

but could also be:

e-gli-mi-por-tò 6 syllables when counting metre (because the last word is truncated)
lon-ta-no-lon-ta-no 6 syllables when counting by spelling

but could also be:

e-gli-mi-por-tò 5 syllables when counting by spelling
(...)-lon-ta-no-lon-ta-no 7 syllables when counting by metre (because the invisible syllable which follows the truncated word can be considered as belonging to the next verse)

29) CONSOCRASIS

if a verse ends with a word where the accent falls on the penultimate syllable it can draw to itself, from a point of view of metre and in when spoken, the first syllable of the following verse, (in particular if this is a monosyllable which ends with a vowel: **chi, che, ci, di, da, do, le, la, lo, mi, ma, me, te, ti, si, se, so, sa** ecc, or if it is an open syllable at the beginning of the word and with the same syllable can end many Italian words) as if the word with the accent on the penultimate syllable were to have the accent on the third to last syllable, thereby omitting to count a syllable in the next verse. Let us look at the following Haiku by *Tartamella*:

schizzo improvviso
di birra dalla lattina
teste all'indietro

A sudden splash
of beer from the can
backward heads

schiz-zo^im-prov-vi-so 5 syllables with crasis. The verse ends with a word where the accent falls on the penultimate syllable.

di-bir-ra-dal-la-lat-ti-na 8 syllables
te-ste^al-l'in-die-tro 5 syllables with crasis

It is not a regular haiku. But the syllable of the preposition “di” at the beginning of the second verse moves to the verse above and by putting itself after the word “improvviso”, which has the accent on the penultimate syllable, transforms it in one with the accent on the third to last syllable, as if it were “improvvisodi”. We would therefore have:

schiz-zo^im-prov-vi-so-di 5 syllables with crasis and consocrasis
bir-ra-dal-la-lat-ti-na 7 syllables
te-ste^al-l'in-die-tro 5 syllables

The Senryū now appears regular with 5, 7, 5 syllables. The consocrasis is similar to the anasinaleph. The difference is that the anasinaleph moves the first syllable of the preceding verse forming a crasis between the vowels. The consocrasis displaces the first syllable from one verse to the preceding verse even if there is no crossing of vowels, because the word at the end of the preceding verse behaves as if accented on the penultimate syllable. In fact consocrasis is the inverse phenomenon to compensation.

30) BILOCAZIONE

The adjective “**mio**” is made up of two syllables: “**mi-o**”. The orthographic rule of the Italian language says that: the vowels “*i-u*” plus the vowels “*a-e-o*” produce a hiatus if the vowels “*i-u*” are tonic. The tonic accent in “**mio**” is on the “**i**”. If the tonic accent is on the vowels “*a-e-o*” you have a diphthong (the two vowels are together and they become one syllable) as in the word “**pio-ve**”. In the continuum parlatum, for example, in “**mio padre**” the tonic accent on the “**i**” of “**mio**” disappears making the two vowels “**i-o**” into atonic vowels. As if “**miopadre**” was one word with the tonic accent only on “**a**” of “*pàdre*”. The sound is different from “*mìo pàdre*”. If we follow the bilocazione made by Cascina Macondo a line as this one can be considered as if it was made by 3 or either 4 syllables.

The pronoun “**lui**” is made up of two syllable “**lu-i**”. The Italian grammar rules says that two vowels as “*i-u*” produce a hiatus (separate syllables) if the first vowel is tonic.

The adjective “**druido**” is made up of 3 syllables “**dru-i-do**”. If the two vowels are atonic they produce a diphthong. The name “*Luisella*” is made of 3 syllables “*Lui-sel-la*”

In the continuum parlatum there is not a clear distinction. The past tense of the verb to be “**fui**” is made up of two syllables. Although if we say “**fui preso**” it follows the scheme of the word “*Lui-sel-la*” as if we had one word with the tonic accent on the “**e**” of “**pré-so**”: “**fuipréso**”. A word which contains 3 syllables.

The pronoun “**io**” contains two syllable “**i-o**”. But the sequence “**io dico**” can be considered a trisyllable “**io-di-co**” and not a quadrisyllable as if it was one word with the tonic accent on “**i**” of “**di-co**”: “**iodico**”. In the acting and in the continuum parlatum there is a difference in the rhythm. We can use the bilocazione when the words are in the line. At the end of the line they follow the general rule.

“*nella mia casa*” (At my home)

it can be counted as: *nel-la-mi-a-ca-sa* (6 syllables)
but also with the bilocazione *nel-la-mia-ca-sa* (5 syllables)

If the adjective “*mia*” was at the end of the verse:

“*nella casa mia*”

We cannot apply the bilocazione

The verse would be: *nel-la-ca-sa-mi-a* (6 syllables)

We can apply the Bilocazione to the diphthongs which contain the vowels “i”, “u”
 For the Haiku, Tanka, Corbelli and in general for poems which contain a few vowels Cascina Macondo’s choice is to allow two different syllables division according to the needs of the verse (in particular with bisyllabic words such as **mio, tuo, suo, due, lui, via, dio, dia, zio, zia, pio, pia, bio, bue, bua, lia, brio, trio,exc**). The aloud reading will consider such choice.

con-mi-o-padre 5 syllables

can-to-mio-padre 5 syllables

tu-e-le-lau-di 5 syllables

al-le-tue-lau-di 5 syllables

il-su-o-pa-ne 5 syllables

con-il-suo-pa-ne 5 syllables

da-mi-o-zi-o 5 syllables

ve-do-mio-zi-o 5 syllables

31) ANACRUSIS

In metre *anacrusis* allows us to discount one or two initial arithmetic syllables of a verse.
 It occurs when the next syllables of a verse are organised in a precise rhythmic cadence (trocheo, giambo, dattilo, molosso etc.). In this case the first or second syllables of the verse are not counted. This verse, for example:

Il sole risplende e i suoi raggi d'amore ti parlano

is a verse of 18 syllables, if we count by spelling.

Il-so-le-ri-splen-de-e-i-suoi-rag-gi-d'a-mo-re-ti-par-la-no

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18

If we count by metre instead, and consider the crasis formed between “de^ei”, it becomes a 16 syllable versee.

Il-so-le-ri-splen-de^ei-suoi-rag-gi-d'a-mo-re-ti-par-la-no

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

The syllables go down to 15, if we consider that the verse ends with a word accented on the third to last syllable.

Il-so-le-ri-splen-de^ei-suoi-rag-gi-d'a-mo-re-ti-par-la-(no)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 (16)

From the point of view of the spoken word or “*continuum parlato*” (or even *cantato e recitato*) the syllables are organised according to a grouping of 3 syllables with the accent on the antepenultimate syllable:

(Il) sóleri – splèndeeisui – ràggida – móreti – pàrlano

So as to be organised in this sequence the syllables need the exclusion of the first syllable made up of the article “Il”. In this case, because of the *anacrusis* effect, that first syllable is

not counted. The verse therefore has 14 syllables.

We feel that even if only rarely and in special cases, in the composition of Haiku you should be able to use *anacrusis*.

32) PROPER NOUNS

In Haiku we accept a verse which goes over the established syllables **only if it contains** a proper noun of person, thing, animal where mentioning it is essential.

33) A HAIKU MUST BE AUTONOMOUS.

in the sense that the meaning must be understood in the three verses. It therefore hardly needs a title. Many write Haiku where the meaning only becomes clear to us from the title.

We do not approve of this system. Cascina Macondo holds to the principle that **HAIKU must not have a title**. We feel that the Haiku has to be a finished and complete poem whose meaning, beauty and understanding must transpire from the three verses which it consists of alone. Purely for the practical purposes of their management and classification may participants of the *International Haiku Contest* of Cascina Macondo send their compositions in with a title which must simply be THE FIRST VERSE OF THE HAIKU ITSELF.

34) A Haiku is not a *definition*

35) is not a *moral lesson*

36) is not a *philosophical thought*

37) is not an *abstract thought*

38) is not a *play on words*

39) is not a *rhyming game*

40) is not a *aphorism*

41) is not a *maxim*

42) is not a *sentence*

43) is not a *proverb*

44) is not a *thought*

45) is not an *idea*

46) The purpose of Haiku is **not to amaze** with strange or ambitious metaphor.

47) The more *simple and clean* a Haiku is, the more beautiful it is. By “*clean*” I mean not having grammatical parts at the end of each verse (*articles, prepositions, conjunctions...*)

- 48) **Haiku is concentration**
- 49) **Haiku** is a real *poem* within 17 syllables
- 50) **Haiku** is a lyrical poem
- 51) **Haiku** is pure concreteness
- 52) **Haiku** is a poem of “*things*” of “*facts*”. It is bare and simple reality
- 53) Haiku it is not a *means*, but the *end*. It is not part of the poem, it is the poem
- 54) Haiku photographs with its *simplicity and essentialness* a *detail*, actually experienced, lived, observed, of our life, of nature, of our experiences ...
- 55) **THAT WHICH IS HAPPENING IN THIS PLACE, IN THIS MOMENT**
The poet Basho, to explain to us what the Haiku is says: *The Haiku is simply that which is happening in this place, in this moment*”.
Let us not forget that the Haiku is a poem strictly related to Zen meditation. The perception, the flash of illumination of Zen is reflected on the Haiku.
- 56) **SEMANTIC TURN AROUND**
Of course we must remember that the Haiku must include a “*semantic turn around*”. The first verse introduces a situation, the next two verses contain a semantic turn around. Or the first two verses introduce a situation, the last verse contain a semantic turn around. A third possibility is that there is a chain reaction, or rather that there is a growing (or decreasing) through the three verses, each resulting in a turning around of the other.
- 57) **SEMANTIC PREGNANCY**
The semantic pregnancy is the quantity of information that the 17 syllables of the haiku contain. The higher is the semantic pregnancy the stronger, the richer and more powerful is the haiku. Be careful: we do not have to forget the other important aesthetic principle of the haiku: *simplicity!* If we have to choose between a high semantic pregnancy which can be artificial and a low semantic pregnancy which is simply and concretely expressed, it is better to choose the latter. When the poet Basho said that the haiku is a real poem expressed with 17 syllables he referred to the high quantity of contents and information which flows into the reader’s mind when he “understands” the haiku. The semantic pregnancy is what the haiku can “say” and paradoxically it is what the author did not think to say.
“Third International Haiku Contest, Cascina Macondo”, haiku by *Elisa Spiga*” 8th grade, Scuola Elementare *Parini*, Torino

*Le coccinelle
nel prato affollato
nere e rosse.*

Ladybirds
15

In the crowded field
Black and red

The first and immediate impression is of a nice, simple and natural spring vision. The beauty of the ladybirds and their black and red spots are caught and photographed by the little girl. But the field is crowded. There are people around the ladybirds; probably there are barbeques, tablecloths and baskets for the Easter Monday outing. Maybe there are children who play and ran. The little girl is attracted by the small colourful insects and she forgets everything else. But the haiku says a lot more. The adjective “crowded” becomes synonymous with “danger”: a lot of people around, walking, running, jumping and playing could smash the small animals. Thence the black and red dots embody different meanings. If by accident a child steps on a ladybird, he would kill it! The black colour also becomes “death”, “mourning” and the red colour can stand for “blood”.

With the first reading the haiku is full of *Wabi* feeling (the unexpected, the awakening of the attention). After the second reading the haiku is also full of *Aware* (nostalgia, transitoriness) and of *Yugen* (the mystery, the uncatchable beauty which surrounds things).

The adjective “crowded” could also refer to the “life” inside the field: to the ladybirds, the ants, spiders, pebbles, flowers, petals, clovers, wasps, flies and mosquitos. This interpretation, the previous one and many more that can be done represent the “*semantic pregnancy*”. Probably Elisa did not think about these contents when she wrote the haiku although the haiku itself contains them!

58) KIGO

According to the classical rules of the haiku the 17 syllables must contain “an information” which refers to a season. It can be a piece of fruit, a feast, an event or something which reminds of a season (chestnuts, wheat, poppies, a butterfly, snow, carnival, brown leaves etc). According to Cascina Macondo the **kigo** or the **little kigo** are necessary. If there is not the kigo or any reference to the season the haiku will be called **Senryū** and if the haiku is comical it will be called **Haikai**. Nevertheless we share Basho’s idea which says that “the haiku it is simply what happens here and now”. The important elements are “here” and “now”, “a place” and “a time”. Both information must be contained in the haiku. With these two, specific information the haiku is “concreteness”. Probably, at the beginning even the kigo had this aim but its rigid application which refers uniquely to the seasons could limit the haiku

59) LITTLE KIGO

We have seen that “Kigo” means “season”. In the classic Haiku Kigo is obligatory. We have also seen that the rule of Kigo aims at reminding the poet that its composition must refer to a concrete reality, to the **here and now**. The Kigo is circular. The seasons in fact follow each other beginning all over again into infinity. They contain the idea of *sabi*, of *wabi*, of *aware*, of *yugen*. The seasons contain a lyrical idea.

Cascina Macondo simply calls **LITTLE KIGO** something which refers to the “day”. In fact we see a plausible resemblance between the passing of days and the passing of the seasons. The days too, taken one by one, follow each other and start all over again to infinity, with circular motion, just like the seasons. But their duration is more ephemeral (dawn, morning,

midday, afternoon, sunset, dusk, evening, night, sunrise, dawn...). In Basho’s teaching

(“*Haiku captures in its essence that which is simply happening here and now*”) we feel that what we understand to be truly important is the **here and now**. **LITTLE KIGO** is a concept that we feel to be acceptable and in no way contradicting Basho’s teachings. For us a Haiku is therefore valid even if it does not contain Kigo. But it must contain **little kigo** (temporal reference to a part of the day) and at the same time a reference to a real place.

A Haiku such as the following by *Gariele Saccavino*:

*Notte infame:
nel frigo solo l’eco
d’un uovo sodo.*

*How dreadful this night:
in the fridge only the echo
of a hard-boiled egg.*

According to the classic criteria it should not be considered a Haiku, because it does not contain a season. According to our decision it is a perfect Haiku. It contains the **here** (fridge = concrete place) and it contains the **time** (the little kigo, reference to a time, to a part of the day = night)

60) **MAIN FEELINGS WE CAN FIND IN THE HAIKU**

The reading and the comprehension of a haiku can reveal a specific feeling. The haiku itself contains this feeling. The reader perceives the particular mood as if he was floating in the amniotic liquid. In the haiku we can find many moods. They can be in the haiku all at the same time or separately. There are many shades and the reader often does not perceive the border between the different feelings

61) **SABI - SILENCE:**

is the feeling of great solitude, of great silence, peace, limitless calm; the feeling of detachment, of non-possession. But it is not sadness itself, just contemplation, solitude, so vast and all encompassing as to give the sensation that what is being contemplated and the contemplator are one and the same.

*Il ladro
ha lasciato la luna
nella finestra
(Ryôkan)*

*The thief
Has left the moon
In the window*

62) **WABI – THE UNEXPECTED, THE AWAKENING OF ATTENTION**

it is that of the state of mind produced by something which suddenly appears in our consciousness. It is the element which wakes us from sadness, from greyness, from those moments when life doesn't seem to have any meaning. Then, in the very moment this depression invades us, this melancholy feeling hits us, when nothing has significance and everything seems so ordinary and sad and absurdly far away... suddenly something *unexpected* appears which makes us *look* with fierce intensity. It attracts our attention. And we "*recognise it*" in its entirety and universality. That small event becomes large and luminous in front of our eyes. It brings us back to life.

*Sotto i miei passi
solo il fruscio si sente
di foglie secche.*

(Hisajo)

*Under my footsteps
only the crisp sound
of dry leaves*

63) AWARE – NOSTALGIA, THE TRANSITORY NATURE OF THINGS

a Haiku can be permeated with feeling, the feeling of *aware*. The feeling of nostalgia, of regret, of time passing, the transience of things, the futility of our worrying, the dispersing of the world, of things disappearing.. But there is no suffering; it is not the feeling of irreparable loss. It is rather the understanding of transience, the mature awareness of simply belonging to it. The universe resides in detail, in the particular, in the tiny event, apparently insignificant, as the container of the universe itself. One thing.

*La voce del fagiano.
Quanta nostalgia
per mio padre e mia madre.*

*The cry of the pheasant
How much I miss
My father and my mother*

(Basho)

*Se ne va la primavera,
tremando, nell'erbe
dei campi.*

*Springtime is leaving,
trembling in the grasses
of the fields*

(Issa)

64) YUGEN –MYSTERY, THE INAFFERABLE:

is the feeling of mystery, of indecipherable beauty which covers everything, even the smallest, it is the world's energy pulsing everywhere, it is the wonderful, the amazing, the splendour of things, it is the sensation of the universal, of the magic and complexity of life. It is a bit like the "Great Spirit", the "Wakan-Tanka" (Great Mystery)" of the American Indians, present in every thing.

*Fra le erbe
un fiore bianco sboccia.
Ignoto il suo nome.*

(Shiki)

*Among the grasses
A white flower blooms
unknown Its name*

65) HOSOMI - SOFTNESS

It is the feeling of softness, of the fine, delicate, sentimental and gentle vision

*accostati al bar
si baciano manici
curvi di ombrelli*

Pietro Tartamella

*close to each other
In the caffè curved umbrellas sticks
kiss each other*

66) KARUMI - LIGHTNESS, INNOCENCE

It is the feeling of lightness, of innocence. It is the little smile, the small irony, the small humour, a light vision, childish, free from culture and technique

*bimbe sedute
sullo scivolo vanno
coricandosi*

Pietro Tartamella

*Little girls
seated on the slide
are lying down*

67) SABISHISA - SADNESS

It is the feeling of sadness, of melancholy, of nostalgia, of depression

*mi abbandono
stanco di tuoni e nuvole
mi abbandono*

Pietro Tartamella

*I let myself go
sick of thunderbolts and clouds
I let myself go*

68) SHIORI - SHADOW

It is the feeling of shady things, of death, of cold, of immobility, of the humid which oozes with tempers

*l'amico interrano
fra i cipressi l'ombra
di una fontana.*

Pietro Tartamella

*They bury my friend
Near the cypresses the shade
of a fountain*

69) IF WE CAN WRITE TEN HAIKU

The poet Basho used to say: “ *Whoever writes five good Haiku in his life can consider himself a Haiku writer. If he can write ten, he is a master of Haiku*”. It is a hyperbole of a thought, but we agree in substance. We don't trust those who write thousands of Haiku.

70) THE HAIKU PICKS OUT THAT WHICH IS ASLEEP

The Haiku picks out that which is asleep, that which is covered by a veil, surrounded by mist, by the day-to-day, by the ordinary, by repetition, and it awakens it.

71) AN EMPTY MIND

To capture the essence of Haiku, and to be able to begin writing some nice ones, we have to be able to achieve *an empty mind*. To be able to abandon ourselves, remove all thoughts, ideas, pre-conceptions. *To be able to look at things for what they really are.* (**Sonomama** is the Japanese word for this concept). If there are no mental or ideological super-structures, if there is fluidity and simplicity, if we are in a state of “*grace*”... (which comes from emptying the mind), if we are really “*listening*”...only then can we see things in their essence. This state of grace produces a “great silence” around us. A mental and physical emptiness spreads. In that emptiness and in that extraordinary silence a deep perception of reality stands out with all its clarity, producing that “*explosion of light*” that is the ultimate aim of Haiku. The moment in which the Haiku is “comprehended” a whole poem pours over us. In that precise moment we feel filled with a great clarity and a great awareness. A sense of *compassion* surrounds us.

72) EXPLOSION OF LIGHT

We also feel that the reading aloud of Haiku has to be done by trying to create the same conditions of mental and physical emptiness. Ritual silence, scanning, slowness, to facilitate, permit, reach, through the Haiku, that *explosion of light*.

73) IT IS NOT ONLY A LITERARY VALUE

We think that in order to approach this type of composition, to commit ourselves to its understanding, to fully understand its, its value, the attitude of the mind needed to compose really beautiful ones, means to face a challenge, to undertake a real task of self-discipline. Above all it requires an extraordinary exercise in learning how to separate the essential from the superficial, the concrete from the useless and the superfluous. Reaching *simplicity* and stating the *substance* of an experience is that which characterises a Haiku. It is not only a literary value. For this reason every year we suggest an *International Haiku Contest*. For this reason we invite anyone to undertake this literary *genre*. This is why we teach it in schools, to children, to adolescents. This is why we plan initiatives for its diffusion.

Pietro Tartamella

“Non seguire le orme degli antichi, ma quello che essi cercarono”

(Matsuo Basho - 1644/1694)

“Do not follow the footprints of the ancients, but what they were seeking”