

The Disjunctive Dragonfly: A Study of Disjunctive Method and Definitions in Contemporary English-language Haiku

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Pleasure is the pleasure of the powers that create a truth that cannot be arrived at by reason alone, a truth that the poet recognizes by sensation. The morality of the poet's radiant and productive atmosphere is the morality of the right sensation.

— Wallace Stevens (1958, p. 58)

Introduction

Over the half-century in which the literary tradition of Japanese haiku has migrated, transformed and burgeoned as an English-language literary form,¹ it is surprising to find that only a handful of primers have been published explicating haiku compositional style in any detail. Recently, closer attention has been paid to the worldwide genre, as witnessed by an upsurge in international conferences, Web sites and haiku anthologies. In order to further validate and exemplify haiku as expressed in English, investigations into the language-style and linguistic properties of haiku seem timely. While generalist definitions concerning the *what* (definitions of the form²) and *why* (e.g. historical analyses) of haiku³ have become familiar reading, the *how* of haiku method in English has not yet received much attention. How is it that haiku *do* what they do, particularly in English: affect the reader in a manner unlike any other poetic form? The following study seeks to address this question by examining modes of disjunction as a means of determining authorial language and creative methodology. By comparing and contrasting modes of disjunction with the prevailing concept of juxtaposition (or superposition), it is hoped that ideas such as the insufficiency of “one-image” haiku, and the limits of “proper haiku,”⁴ may be re-examined.

Genre Definition

The Problem of the Modern

Existing haiku primers, mainstays of genre definition, are oriented toward beginner-poets, providing introductory overviews of the history of Japanese haiku with examples of classical and late Meiji-era haiku predominating. The (neo)classical Japanese haiku up to Masaoka Shiki (1867-1902) has served as the aesthetic basis and standard model for composition — historically, such models have been sought for validation. A main element of constraint acting on contemporary haiku composition has emanated from Shiki's nineteenth century western-realist-inspired compositional guidelines,⁵ though current practices are of course also based upon dissimilar sources. Nonetheless, Shiki's realist dicta for the beginner-poet regarding the composition of *shasei* (“sketch of life”⁶) haiku seem to predominate. Selective editorial sensibility on the part of a small group of influential editor-critics has also played a role. Consequently, English haiku experimentation has been restricted in terms of access and publication, as Mountain (1980) and others⁷ have pointed out. The century-old modern Japanese haiku tradition as it might be applied and practiced has been inaccessible to most poets writing in English: “*gendai*” that is, *contemporary* Japanese principles and techniques of haiku, have yet to be properly integrated and valued in English haiku composition and thought. It may also be said that the era when the English haiku itself might provide an effective, autonomous aesthetic basis for critical judgment has yet to arrive.

Genre Evolution

It is possible to follow the arc of genre evolution, beginning with Henderson's 1958 *Introduction to Haiku*,⁸ and then to his 1967 *Haiku in English*, followed by Higginson's *Haiku Handbook* (1985), which offers the reader a variety of English and other-language haiku and a brief overview of modern Japanese haiku.⁹ While such works have spurred the popularization of the genre over the last few decades, there are to date no major publications focusing on techniques as they have evolved over the last half-century. Perhaps because the market for haiku primers is small and more-expert poets comprise an even smaller group there has been no further evolution — for instance, a

primer explicating *gendai* haiku approaches and aesthetics, as can be easily found in Japan.¹⁰ In fact, haiku techniques involving metaphor, allusion, psychological projection, mytheme (qualities evident in both contemporary and classical Japanese haiku) have been critiqued as improper to English haiku form, as Shirane (2000) has discussed. Over the years, “official” definitions of haiku have been challenged with little effect¹¹ though recently, fresh approaches are again being considered.

A comparative study shows that the Haiku Society of America (HSA) journal *Frogpond* (an important North American haiku journal) has made recent strides regarding *shasei* innovation;¹² nonetheless, diversity and experiment in major publications seem to have diminished compared to that of some decades past, a time when the continuum of haiku included notable poets outside the dedicated haiku genre, such as Allen Ginsberg and John Ashbery. The influential North American Journal *Modern Haiku* some time ago adopted a generally conservative view of the limits of haiku form, in terms of seasonal reference, *shasei*-realism, restriction of allusion, psychological interiority, need for clear juxtaposition, restriction of surreal elements. Some new and older voices too are now challenging this situation, suggesting that definitive definitions of haiku may be impossible,¹³ and arguing that “standard” guidelines, such as those advanced by the HSA and *Modern Haiku* are problematic (Sato, 1999a; Mountain, 1980, 2003). Supporting this new trend is the fact of increasing international communication — haiku are now shared worldwide through the medium of English, providing alternative ideas as well as images. A number of skilled North American haijin have also been evolving new techniques, some of which will be presented here.

Approaching Disjunction

Historical Overview

The following brief historic examination focuses on experiential descriptions of haiku made by “two men who may be called pillars of the Western haiku movement . . .” (HSA, p. 2). R. H. Blyth writes in *History of Haiku* that the haiku connotes “‘a shock of mild surprise’, a stab of enlightenment . . . what distinguishes haiku from other forms of poetry is [its] physical, material, sensational character.” (1963a, pp. 2-3). In beginning his *An Introduction to Haiku*, Harold Henderson emphasizes association and suggestion, indicating that the haiku is a poem that “has to depend for its effect on the power of suggestion,” in that “only the outlines or important parts are drawn, and the rest the reader must fill in for himself” (pp. 2-3). Taken together, in their mission of delineating and explicating to the West the nature of haiku as a distinct genre of Japanese literature, three primary functional qualities (out of a variety) can be discerned: shock, surprise and absence. From the inception of the English-language tradition, these stylistic determinants have presented somewhat mysterious (unspecified) properties of disjunction, characterized by either an irruption of habitual consciousness (shock, surprise), and/or reversal of expectation (absence, lack of definite image) in the haiku aesthetic. The sense of disjunction has been subsumed in English under the concept of *kireji* (the “cutting word” a fundamental concept of Japanese haiku), and juxtaposition, both of which will be discussed shortly.

The idea of disjunction can be equally applied to poetry in general; what is significant for haiku particularly are those types of disjunction used, whether there may be consistent disjunctive styles, and the frequency of occurrence and quality of instances occurring in a single haiku, versus poems in other genres. The extent to which terms such as shock, surprise and absence should properly be ascribed to Japanese haiku is beyond the scope of this paper. What seems relevant to the movement in English is that the foundational terminology presented by Blyth, Henderson, and others revealed a new and exciting aesthetic — new ways of thinking about what a poem could be, and also about what a poem could be for: how it could affect the reader, bringing forth fresh experiences of reality into consciousness.

Disjunction, Juxtaposition and Superposition

Juxtaposition and Superposition as Defined in English

Disjunction is not a term historically applied to haiku. Haiku elements deemed to be semantically or imagistically non-sequential have been conceptually defined by the terms “juxtaposition,” “superposition” or “superposed (section).” The most familiar term, juxtaposition, is illustrated below in the definitions of Lanoue and Spiess:

Though it can be presented on the page in three lines, a haiku structurally consists of *two parts with a pause in between*. Its power as poetry derives from juxtaposition of the two images and the sense of surprise or revelation that the second image produces (Lanoue, 2003, para. 4, italics added).

A nonideational, breath-length poem *aesthetically juxtaposing sensory images*, usually including natural existences tinged with humanity or faint humor, that evokes intuition of things' essentiality (Spiess, quoted in Gurga, 2000, 75, italics added).

The necessity for juxtaposition, as implied in the above definitions, rests on the use of *kireji* in the Japanese haiku; *kireji* will be discussed separately later. "Superposition," a term advanced by Ezra Pound as a motif of Vorticism remains resonant as an influence in haiku (and in poetic thought generally). Rachel Blau Duplessis, commenting on Pound's well-known "In A Station of the Metro," debatably accepted as haiku these days, writes:

The apparition of these faces in the crowd :
Petals on a wet, black bough . (Pound, 1913, p. 6)¹⁴

Two discourses — documentary/social (which is abstract or realist) and lyric/poetic (symbolist) are brought into one configuration and are made to interact. "The 'one-image poem' is a form of superposition, that is to say, it is one idea set on top of another" (Duplessis, 2001, p. 89; quoting Pound, 1914, p. 467).

Duplessis suggests that "two discourses" become "one configuration" and "are made to interact". Does the concept of superposition alone explain why "one configuration" presumably arises in the reader's mind? What is the alchemy which welds the dialectic of "two discourses" into a "one-image poem;" what draws the two images into fusible interaction, forcing or forging coherence? It may be that coherence occurs in the above poem *through the disjunction of images caused by what is absent*. Let us view the above poem as a near-approach to the habitually expected — the prosaic sentence — adding the missing elements needed to create normative sentence structure:

The apparition of these faces in the crowd: [they are (like/as if)] petals on a wet black bough.

In the "filled in" example, although the connective phrase "they are (like/as if)" has been added to the end of line one, two separate and distinct images remain (apparition of faces / petals on a bough). A juxtaposition between these two images occurs due to the colon, which creates two separate (dependent, juxtaposed) clauses. However, the property of disjunction has been practically eliminated through the addition of the personal pronoun and *be*-verb: adding these grammar parts *imparts an identity to the relationship* between the two separate images. (The extra addition of the overt simile or metaphoric "like/as if" does not appreciably magnify or diminish this fact.)

The point here is that superposition (or juxtaposition) alone does not intrinsically provide poetic power. The force of disjunction acting on the reader's consciousness is the primary motif impelling successful juxtaposition (superposition). Notably, most haiku structures mime or deform prosaic sentence structure, as a formal element — allowing for haiku play. As an aspect of this play, the experience of disjunction, paradoxically, can generate or compel coherence. As can be seen in the above "filled in" model, which has juxtaposition with only very weak disjunction, lacking disjunctive power the sense of poetry is lost. Particularly in haiku, the reader enters the disjunctive "gap" (or gaps) and in a sense re-authors the poem.

Superposition

The term "superposition" (synonymous with juxtaposition), as used to describe a basis for haiku, has been recently presented in English via Kawamoto's *The Poetics of Japanese Verse*, which examines Japanese haiku technique, form and meter in some detail. He illustrates the primary appeal of haiku:

The main appeal of a *haiku* lies in the operation of a dynamic segment, which — while drawing the reader's interest through powerful stylistic features — remains only a single layer that offers little indication of the poem's overall significance (or else gives only an

ambiguous clue). . . . We will refer to this part as the “base section.” Similarly we will use the term “superposed section” to refer to those evocative phrases which . . . work upon and in conjunction with the base sections in order to furnish the reader with clues to the poem’s overall significance. . . . A segment of the base [may] simultaneously function in the role of the superposed section (Kawamoto, 2000, pp. 73-4).

This is a refinement which takes us further into method — a “dynamic segment,” known as the base section of the haiku, draws interest while paradoxically withholding significance — this relates well with Henderson’s “only the outlines.” Kawamoto incorporates the idea of absence into the dynamic segment, which “offers little indication of the poem’s . . . significance” or imposes ambiguous clues. The “superposed section” is “evocative” (coherence or resolution may be implied); nevertheless, readers must arrive at their own sense of how the haiku coheres. Notably, in describing the superposed section, we find it contains not a single “phrase” but rather “evocative phrases:” there is a notion of plurality. As well, “a segment of the base may function in the role of the superposed section” — this description invites a conception of superposition as a technique that is motile, nuanced and diverse, when compared with other extant English-language descriptions of juxtaposition.

As Kawamoto indicates, juxtaposition alone is not enough to confer poetic power. Incompleteness, absence and ambiguity are necessary; these are properties impelling disjunction. Because modern haiku is primarily text-based, the means for creating disjunction involves the application of literary-poetic techniques.

Having parsed and contrasted in brief the concepts of disjunction and juxtaposition, it might be asked, if disjunction is in principle more fundamental than, and necessary for, juxtaposition in haiku, then in terms of the action of the haiku on a reader’s consciousness, is it possible for a haiku to possess little or no imagistic *juxtaposition* (for instance, in a so-called “one-image” haiku), while still having a strong sense of *disjunction*? And further, is it possible to create haiku of excellence in this manner? In the next sections, such haiku examples will be provided. First, an exegesis of a “one-image” haiku will be presented, followed by haiku with commentaries, in order to present a disjunctive nomenclature and typology.

The term “one-image” is a bit of a misnomer, as in most cases the reader can find more than one image in such haiku. As applied by Spiess, “single image” (1976, p. 27) or one-image haiku, a term used by others, implies something rather different than Pound’s sense of image-overlay, as discussed by Duplessis. One of the basic requirements for the English-language haiku has been determined as a necessity for the polar “juxtaposition of two [and only two] entities” (2001, p. 60), that is, objects or images, in the poem. Single (or one-) image haiku, and other types as well, do not accede to this juxtapositional requirement; let us consider the matter further from the perspective of disjunction.

The Disjunctive Dragonfly

In this section, a “one-image” haiku will be considered in detail.

my fingerprints
on the dragonfly
in amber

Jim Kacian’s haiku, which won Third-Place in the 2003 Kusamakura International Haiku Contest, contains a selection of elements based on an inward poetic aesthetic; the main images are novel and captivating; in terms of images alone, this is a fine microcosmic *shasei*, much in the manner Shiki has elucidated: at first glance, the haiku presents a realistic impression. However, this haiku goes beyond *shasei* and realism, utilizing four modes of disjunction, which may be termed “perceptual disjunction,” “misreading as meaning,” “disjunction of semantic expectation,” and “linguistic oxymoron.” We can find no *kireji* or clearly defined “traditional” juxtaposition of images in this haiku; in its form, the haiku is strikingly similar to a simple declarative sentence. What makes this short declaration an excellent haiku?

Semantically, haiku, as mentioned above, often mime or deform prosaic sentence structure (a proposition or complete thought—as discussed in Pinker, 1994). It may be said as well that a sentence (proposition) need not be formed only of prose. At the beginning of a sentence, we habitually recognize a noun following a first-word pronoun as subject, and then we look for a verb — last, an object. This structure follows the standard SVO form of

English. The above haiku puns upon or irrupts habitual constructions of a sentenced idea (a textual proposition) in several ways. First, “my fingerprints on the dragonfly” is a highly idiosyncratic imagistic collocation — fingerprint-on-dragonfly approaches the surreal, the monstrous, or the taxidermic. In any case, the image is an irruption of naturalism. At the same time, our suspension of disbelief is sorely tested. Perhaps we misread the collocation? Overall, the play between reading and misreading, between the plain existence of nouns as known things, and the strangeness (idiosyncrasy) of collocation creates a *perceptually disjunctive* tension, resulting in a form of semantic paradox which can be called *misreading as meaning*, as the process of misreading, in itself, powers the reader's poetic experience and the poem's significance. Actually, misreading as meaning occurs at a number of levels in the poem, as will be further illustrated.

Next, *semantic expectations* are overturned. At the beginning of a typical sentence, we habitually recognize a noun following a first-word pronoun as subject and then we look for a verb — last, an object (as in “Her shoes are black.”). This structure follows the standard SVO form of English. The subject (fingerprints) needs or seeks an object. The second line of the haiku may (impossibly) take on a verbal quality, due to expectation, or becomes simply a question mark, an unknown, while in the third line we find a definitive preposition and strongly placed “final” object (“in amber”). Semantically then, “fingerprints...in amber” may tend to be what is first cognized as a subject-object pair. This is the implicit semantic expectation. But, how can a fingerprint be in amber, which is often thought of as a kind of rock? Does the poet mean inside, within? We expect that fingerprints, which can only exist in relation to surfaces, be *on* surfaces, not in them. So, the fingerprints (as subject) carry definitive existence, yet our semantic expectations are overturned, as the relational object (“in amber”) is in doubt.

This haiku acts like a set of nested Chinese boxes. There are layers of image-complexes, each created by an active misreading. Experiencing the misreadings is great reading fun, creating a subtle nuanced humor, which does not diminish over several re-readings — as our habitual language expectations reassert themselves strongly. The world created by the haiku seems to hover between the realistic and fantastic or surreal. The haiku idea gradually congeals much like tree sap into amber; our attention is clarified, caught and fixed within, the poet's fingerprint upon it, as the dragonfly becomes the subject of “in amber” and we realize that the fingerprints only *seem* to be on the dragonfly, as the poem's protagonist gazes acutely through the translucent gold substance, perceiving both fingerprints and dragonfly as an overlaid landscape. Finally, we can picture the poet holding the amber, the amber itself and the dragonfly within. The reader's experience crystallizes as a metaphor of the geologic processes of deep time to which the poem alludes. This reading process may only take a few seconds, yet the disjunctions remain as landmarks or “markers” indicating coherence.

The process of entering and imbibing this haiku is multiple, full of accident, incident and play. As with many of Kacian's haiku, typical descriptive analytical devices such as the parsing of fragment and phrase, juxtaposition, etc., seem reductive, if applied as formal determinants. In fact, we can locate no precise *kireji* or juxtapositional polarity. A further level of disjunction (of semantic expectation) has to do with the prepositions. “Fingerprints...in amber” would normally collocate with “on” (not in). There is a *linguistic oxymoron*, in that “on (the)” is ascribed to the dragonfly; likewise this fingerprinted dragonfly (seeming a dead or trapped creature) wants to be “in” something (but “on” is ascribed to it instead). So, there is a dual-disjunctive quality of linguistic oxymoron concerning these two prepositions, which comprise the entirety of the poem's prepositions. Each of the paired nouns may desire the neighboring preposition more than its own. This disjunctive quality makes the prepositions very active and intriguing in function — something difficult to achieve in English haiku.

There are several varieties of disjunction used in excellent haiku, and perhaps additional modes could be teased from the above example. Importantly, disjunction is not, strictly speaking, paradox or juxtaposition, because the effects are not cognitively dualistic — the alchemy is that of *impossibles*, not polarities. Disjunction, as intended, serves to indicate a poetic process happening in the reader's consciousness — disjunction is motile: it has no fixed point of realization. Disjunctions appear and fall away, alternately reveal and hide themselves, depending upon the moment of reading.

A Typology of Disjunction

Space does not permit a lengthy demonstration of disjunctive typology. It is hoped that the manner of discovery presented may be easily enough applied by the sensitive reader — readers are no doubt natively aware of disjunction in haiku, but have not had an available nomenclature to articulate types. In addition to the above four types just described (perceptual disjunction, disjunction of semantic expectation, misreading as meaning, linguistic oxymoron), the following 13 types form additional tentative categories. Each set of examples is preceded by a

category “signpost” titling the most prominent disjunctive quality (as haiku typically contain more than one “moment” and type of disjunction), followed by a comment.

Imagistic Fusion

my head in the clouds in the lake

(Ruby Spriggs in Kacian et al, 1998)

the shadow in the folded napkin

(Cor van den Heuvel, 1977)

forgotten for today by the one true god autumn mosquito

(Lee Gurga in Gordon, 2003)

autumn mist oak leaves left to rust

(Marlene Mountain, 2003)

Imagistic fusion compresses semantic meaning, images, rhythm, and sometimes orthography, interrupting the reader’s habitual means of parsing phrases and images. The disjunctive aspect fuses disparate images into one complex, while at the same time, paradoxically, creating separations due to reading/misreading. So, “head-clouds-lake” in Spriggs becomes a multiple reflection of self as experienced in the evoked scene *and* cross-layering of sky / self-as-mirror-image / water, *and* consciously remains text, due to the idiosyncratic sense of velocity obtaining in the single short line. It seems van den Heuvel’s “the shadow in the folded napkin” hovers in its own shadow: as though the text shadows its representation — imagistic fusion combines with one-line brevity to create a sense of insubstantiality in the read text. A unique, collocatively fused image, “one true god autumn mosquito,” and the introjection of “the one true god” as subject is highly disjunctive in Gurga; semantic expectation is artfully reversed as the poem’s object remains unknown until the last word of this longer one-liner. The fusion of the impossible collocation “mist oak” creates a strong disjunction in Mountain — a nuanced sense of misreading quickly evolves, aided by the repeating strong-weak cohesive rhythmic pull of “autumn mist oak leaves.”

Imagistic fusion works quite effectively with the single line and shorter haiku, as the velocity of the eye scanning across the text often enhances the technique.

Metaphoric Fusion

the river

the river makes

of the moon

(Jim Kacian in Mainichi Shimbun, *Anthology*, 1997)

In this unusual example, the (seeming) juxtaposition of the first-line fragment with the following phrase is interrupted as one discovers the first line is not the alpha but rather the omega-point of the poem (reversing semantic expectation). A second reading may yield a sense of three disjunct fragments without juxtaposition (a poem made only of fragments). Considering the last two lines as the phrasal element (the superposed section), out of what seems textually and imagistically to be two rivers and their juxtaposition, a fusion arises as synthesis: the naturalistic river in the second line metaphorically “makes” of the moon a second river (the river of the first line); finally, natural and metaphoric images combine, resolve and fuse into the traditional image of moon on water: moon river on “river” river. In this way, a poem which at first glance may seem elemental and static releases a flowing metamorphic power, quite in keeping with its riverine imagery; a highly nuanced haiku, informing our understanding of the relationship between realism and metaphor. Experiencing this haiku, readers may find it difficult to understand proscriptions which warn against the use of metaphor. Metaphor has given us some of the best English haiku — usually however, metaphor must be given through the sense of disjunction rather than through grammar parts.

Another example of metaphoric fusion occurs in Virgilio’s “lily” haiku further below, which uses the disjunctive technique of rhythmic substitution to impel the imposition of an “impossible” metaphoric reality — this haiku has for some decades been considered among the most influential in the tradition.

Symmetrical Rhythmic Substitution

letting
the cat in
the fog in

(Vincent Tripi in Ross, 1993)

an empty elevator
opens
closes

(Jack Cain, 1969)

Rhythmic repetition combines with lineation, creating disjunctions yielding a light, humorous effervescence. In the above examples brevity also plays a role. “Substitution” refers to word substitutions occurring in symmetrically repeated rhythmic patterns. Neither of these haiku contain *kireji* in the traditional sense. Rather, the symmetrical substitution evokes a quality of superposition (image layering) and jump-cut, filmic “snapshot” action, as cat/fog, and opens/closes arise both as identities (two sides of the same coin), and are paradoxically separated by the disjunctive technique. These haiku contain not one but two juxtapositions, of varying intensity.

Concrete Disjunction (orthography, punctuation, placement) and Rhythmic Disjunction

a barking dog
little bits of night

breaking off

(Jane Reichhold in Ross, 1993)

fog.
sitting here
without the mountains

(Gary Hotham in Kacian et al, 1998)

stuck to the slab
the i
of the frozen f sh

(David Steele in Kacian et al, 2002)

There have been numerous orthographic concrete experiments relating to lineation, phrase, word, and letter placement. The above haiku were chosen for ease of reproduction on the page, as well as effectiveness. Reichhold’s haiku extends the idea of *kireji* past the breaking point, to create a broken-off fragment — the concrete disjunction pulls the image/line fragment back into the poem. Beyond the obvious orthographic pun, the broken-off third line has a sonic dimension as “breaking” has assonant rhyme and similar rhythm to “barking,” so it seems the broken night is, at the same time, the “bark bark” of a dog. This is strongly emphasized by the circularity of the poem, which knits together the broken fragments of both “night” and the third line. Hotham’s haiku seems at first glance to have merely replaced the usual dash or colon signifying *kireji* with a period. However, the use of a period for *kireji* in the first line is idiosyncratic and creative. Its use, combined with extreme concision, propositionally yields a one-word, three-letter sentence. Thus the fog, as an image, splits off from the rest of the haiku, returning to settle as elemental weather all about the following phrase. In Steele’s haiku the I (eye) of the fish seems to be misplaced! Each of these haiku has a strong sense of rhythmic disjunction, a natural consequence of concrete disjunction.

The Impossibly True

A spring cliff –
in my cup
tears of a bird

(Koji Yasui, 2003)

Lily:
out of the water . . .
out of itself.

(Nicholas Virgilio, 1963)¹⁵

Sucking in the blue sky
a cicada hole
disappears

(Natsuishi Ban'ya, 1999)

The interjection of an “impossible” image may be one of the distinct features separating *gendai* haiku style from the *shasei*-oriented neo-classical: realism is imploded. Or is it? Realism itself is a form of appearance; the “real” is given not only by objective sensation (hearing, seeing, touching, etc.), but also by the way in which sense data are synthesized in consciousness to create “real” experience. Just as a dream can be sensed as vivid reality, it is not only the “outer” senses alone that dictate “the real.” Internalized judgments (“stances”), subtle though they may be, existentially validate experience. Poetry in its widest sense deforms or irrupts habitual literalism — challenging or irrupting habitual validations of the “real.” In the school of Archetypal Psychology, James Hillman discusses the ego (the sense of literal “I-ness”) as the literalizing function of the psyche — stating that the ground of psychic life is not literal. Hillman advances the crucial point that mind is fundamentally poetic and metaphoric in nature.¹⁶ This may be good news for poets, providing a clue as to why haiku often impart a powerful and nearly instantaneous reality-sense. As well, what may be taken as literal reality by one culture, or one individual, may not be literal (that is, “real”) to another — haiku “realism” is not ultimate truth, or a best representative of sincerity by any means, as some North American critics have implied.¹⁷

What the above haiku provide is an imagistic paradox generating a deeply inward psychological, philosophical and/or mythic contemplative sense. The key disjunctive aspect in these haiku is the cutting edge between the reader’s knowledge of the impossibility of the superposed images and the contrary sense, brought by poetry, that the resultant whole is real (true) and believable. Literal and metaphoric sensibilities cannot entirely merge (except mystically or pathologically), yet paradoxically, in these haiku they present as such. Haiku of the impossibly true reveal that real-ism is a subset of reality. It is notable in this regard that “poets such as Wallace Stevens use the word ‘reality’ without shame, acknowledging that ‘its connotations are without limit.’”¹⁸ Incorporating realism within a larger field, haiku of the “impossibly true” penetrate to the deeper layers of identity and self, providing a glimpse of the ground of poetic being — “poems that create a truth that cannot be arrived at by reason [or realism] alone” (Stevens, p. 58).

Displaced Mythic Resonance and Misplaced Anthropomorphism

I shall help the dawn
give birth
to its colors

(Alain Kervern in WHA, 2003)

Entering a dream
of that Great Fish of the South
wanting to cry out

(Natsuishi Ban'ya, 1999)

coming to rest
the tossed pebble
takes a shadow

(Bruce Ross in Kacian, 1998)

Living in an age of logical positivism we live in an age between myths, an idea which Joseph Campbell pursued in his later work, *Inner Reaches of Outer Space*, suggesting that the future holds a return to mythic thinking which will incorporate science into its wider skein. Poetry easily enters the mythic dimension, as its roots are preternaturally

archaic — poets continually return to origins, do “violence” to language (irrupt, deform), in order to “give purer meaning to the words of the tribe” (Mallarmé, 1999, p. 92), an idea discussed at length by Octavio Paz (1991). Mythic *resonance* in haiku is displaced because our cultural concepts of the real tend to determine helping “the dawn give birth” or the “Great Fish of the South” as “only” imagination, yet haiku form and intention gives these motifs something more: a mythic landscape evinces belief, perhaps subconsciously. One of the dynamic properties of haiku is the ability to rapidly, shockingly irrupt habitual thought. Here, this poetic power becomes marvelous, as fundamental cultural assumptions are challenged by a deep, some would say healing, archaism. Helping “the dawn give birth” hints at shamanic reality, while a “tossed pebble” anthropomorphically “takes a shadow” for its own, as if possessing autonomous choice and will. While this image may superficially be attributed to a naïve sense of childlike projection, it is the disjunctive, paradoxical sense of the image being both a kind of fancy and sincere seeming that allows the anthropomorphic metaphor to rise above pathetic fallacy, expressing an elemental poetic sense. The focus of “taking” in Rosses’ haiku provides a stronger anthropomorphic sense than animism might allow (see “elemental animism” below); in such haiku, whenever a natural element possesses an anthropomorphic aspect it will also, intrinsically, exhibit the quality of animism.

Each of these haiku contains both mythic and anthropomorphic qualities, though to differing degrees. Ban’ya’s haiku seems primarily mythic: the protagonist enters a dream of the mythic image itself. This sort of haiku has typically been dismissed as “deficient” due to reliance upon the surreal (i.e. lacking in substantial, believable images to base sensation upon); however, the impact of a realized mytho-archaic reality is undeniable. The haiku succeeds brilliantly, presenting a novel mythic aspect of “the impossibly true.”

The Unsatisfactory Object

Athlete’s foot itches –
still can’t become
Hitler

(Hoshinaga Fumio, 2003)

leaves blowing into a sentence

(Bob Boldman in van den Heuvel, 1999)

In these haiku, the object cannot possibly satisfy the subject. Beyond the obvious pun, Hitler, an object of both “athlete’s foot” and the implicit “I” in Hoshinaga’s haiku, stretches the subject-object continuum. The playfully dark and ironic metaphor of “becoming Hitler” remains disjunctive, allowing a sense of depth to enter the haiku, a depth partly created through allusion (a quality heretofore proscribed for haiku). Due to itchy feet, the author cannot smartly click his heels or march in goose-step: the poem presents a disturbing psychosocial complex indicating the will to power or assumption of dictatorial authority which often remains hidden in persons or society. In Boldman, we can see the outer reality of leaves blowing into a shape, say a line, but to become semantic stretches the sense of subject-object agreement. Both of these haiku, through their use of unsatisfactory objects, activate intertextual metaphor, a sense of metaphor which is neither in the text nor psychologically reachable as a firm conclusion.

Pointing to the Missing Subject

he said he could not gather
peonies in meadows –
Geraldine does not live

(Shyqri Nimani, WHA Online, 2003)

counting down the goodness of man:
from the sixth
obscure

(Hoshinaga Fumio, 2003)

The focus-point of these haiku seems to be on a subject that is either indistinct or missing: the subject is not allowed or able to solidify or cohere. A very difficult technique, as an indistinct subject will in general create a haiku lacking in poetic direction — it will be unclear what images to base sensation upon. In the first haiku, a “not” at the top and

bottom of the poem frame the peonies with absence. The suddenness of the name of the departed as the first word in line three shocks: the name is both a presence and absence. We cannot image who the subject “he” actually is; as well, the sudden shift from passive/past to active/present voice is irruptive. In this powerful meditation on death, the mentioned yet missing subject reaches us beyond image or name — this haiku is an offering to life attended by deeply felt tragic emotion. Hoshinaga’s haiku, ending with “obscure” seems to echo with multiple dimensions of obscurity — of goodness and its measurement, of finding goodness, and the sense that, in the human realm, such findings may be uncomfortably moot. The obscurity of the subject is instigated from the unusual syntax of the leading phrase “counting down the goodness,” an idiosyncratic collocational phrase combining counting with an uncountable noun, an ironic pun. “Sixth” is significant: it is definite, but to what type of subject does it refer, exactly? Again we see a successful use of allusion in Hoshinaga’s style. The mystery of the subject as well as the content and sense of deep questioning in the haiku keeps the reader involved.

Register Shift

winter
in a world of one color
the taste of peaches

(Wendy Smith in Kacian et al, 2002)

in my ordinary clothes
thinking ordinary thoughts –
peach blossoms

(Hosomi Ayako, in Kacian et al, 1997)

Here the linguistic concept of register shift (register, i.e. when context results in a commonly recognizable speech style) is used to indicate a sudden irruptive shift in the perceptual landscape of the haiku. Haiku normatively have juxtaposition, which also creates a sudden conceptual shift, but in this case, register shift implies something more innovative. In Smith’s haiku, the fragment *and* first line of the phrase lead to a vast world of white snow (or simply, white) but the last line creates a register shift from seeing to taste, winter to summer, white to peach, external to internal: changes of poetic register. Similarly, the symmetrical rhythmic substitution occurring in the first two lines of Hosomi’s haiku moves from outer garments to psychological interiority, and in the last line irrupts into the unadorned (exterior) blossom. In both haiku, the disjunction of register shift lends resonance to a poetic fusion: there is winter, white, in the taste of peaches; “ordinary mind” clothing peach blossoms.

Elemental Animism

Between two mountains
the wings of a gliding hawk
balancing sunlight

(David Elliott in van den Heuvel, 1999)

last piece
of a jigsaw puzzle ...
filling in the sky

(John Stevenson, in Kacian et al, 2001)

clouds
blowing off the stars

(Penny Harter in van den Heuvel, 1999)

Elemental animism is somewhat related to displaced mythic resonance and misplaced anthropomorphism, in that natural elements such as clouds, trees, weather, stars, etc., which are habitually taken in western culture to be dead, without soul, inanimate, become animated. The quality of animation may be quite subtle, as in Elliott’s haiku; we can say that the hawk simply does “something” with sunlight, as the poet or reader perceives it subjectively. However, there is a nuance — the verb also ascribes to sunlight an improbable quality, being balanced (as a compound noun), which, lying autonomously in the third line, lends a subtle sense of animism. Likewise, the improbability of the sky being “filled in” creates animistic nuance. Last, the more overt pun of “clouds blowing

off...stars” carries an anthropomorphic as well as animistic aspect — one “elemental” acting animistically upon another.

Irruptive Collocation

Table 1 lists unusual, idiosyncratic and creative collocations occurring in the 26 haiku presented above:

Table 1. Example Collocations

Word Collocations	Phrasal Collocations
mist oak fog. sitting cicada hole sixth obscure balancing sunlight	fingerprints on the dragonfly tears of a bird out of itself help the dawn takes a shadow sucking in the blue counting down the goodness

Collocational function in haiku is the subject of a separate, ongoing study. Preliminary results indicate that unusual, creative and idiosyncratic collocations occur at a higher frequency per total number of words in the haiku genre than in other poetic forms. The usage and frequency of collocational types may prove to be a defining feature of the genre. In whatever type of literature, such collocational types, particularly idiosyncratic and creative types, are disjunctively irruptive in function.

Disjunctive Qualities

In this paper, 17 disjunctive types have been presented. They are shown in Table 2, along with a tentative functional definition of disjunction:

Table 2. Disjunction: Functional Definition and Types as Applied to Haiku

Definition:	Disjunction: The root-semantic-linguistic principle impelling juxtaposition, superposition, possessing multiple types, each type relating to specific poetic and formal functions and techniques which irrupt habitual consciousness and/or concept; may supervene more traditional functional stylism, such as fragment/phrase, juxtapositional duality and <i>kireji</i> .		
Disjunctive Types (in presented order):			
1) Perceptual disjunction	5) Imagistic fusion	9) Rhythmic disjunction	13) The unsatisfactory object
2) Semantic expectation	6) Metaphoric fusion	10) The impossibly true	14) Pointing to the missing subject
3) Misreading as meaning	7) Symmetrical rhythmic substitution	11) Displaced mythic resonance	15) Register shift
4) Linguistic oxymoron	8) Concrete disjunction	12) Misplaced anthropomorphism	16) Elemental animism
			17) Irruptive collocation

Disjunction, *Kireji* and Haiku Form

“Language-form” Kireji: Dynamism and Intertextuality

As has been shown in the above examples, disjunctions, whether they are semantic, metaphoric, collocational, imagistic, orthographic, rhythmic, mythic, existential, etc., create in the reader’s mind what may be

termed *language-form kireji* — irruptive elements that create degrees of dislocation, segment images, pose absences, or delimit mere outlines, thereby impelling juxtapositions (plural as well as singular). Notably, such juxtapositions may rest upon “impossibles” rather than polarities between image-complexes. As Kawamoto suggests, that most important technical aspect, interplay of dynamism and significance, may occur intertextually, a process occurring *between* reader and poem.

The dynamic of disjunction affects the action of metaphor and allusion — which generally succeed as intertextual implication, rather than being overt (the addition of the terms *like* or *as (though/if)* are usually unsuccessful). Haiku dynamically cohere through disjunction, and generally speaking do not avoid, temper or support disjunction with conceptual “handles,” such as overt simile, metaphor, explanation, philosophizing, as in other poetic forms. As a result, *by disjunctively irrupting habitual thought in a highly concise manner, haiku achieve a powerful contextual paradox*, challenging the literal and engaging an active “re-authoring” of the poem by the reader.

Language-form Kireji: Emulation and Sensibility

Emulation and imitation are dissimilar.¹⁹ When Blyth and Henderson translated the Japanese haiku, they usually replaced the *kireji*, an evocative *word*, with punctuation, or utilized lineation alone to indicate the cutting word. Direct imitation of *kireji* is not *linguistically* possible for English haiku; however, an application of analogues miming the function of the original is a possibility. By emulation is meant *mimesis*, literally, the replication of the “animate sense,” sensual life, or activity residing in the original.²⁰ Virgilio’s “lily” haiku, recognized as one of the best representatives of the genre, uses a colon *and* stretched ellipsis *and* a period, creating a secondary pause after the second line, and then ending with a final stop. We can appreciate how well this works in English, yet it has no obvious linguistic counterpart in Japanese: an example of a creative approach to *kireji* arriving in a new language.

A variety of novel techniques have likewise been applied in English relating to modes of *language-form kireji* — a sense of *kireji* which arrives through (multiple) disjunctive qualities. Looking through haiku journals, there are a substantial number of haiku without punctuation — *kireji* are signaled from within the text. Because the division caused by “traditional” *kireji* rests upon processes of irruption and disjunction, we can look to these deeper fundaments, in terms of emulation. What is relevant is that a “B-should-equal-A” type of obvious or direct-imitative analogue — the replacement of, say, a (Japanese) *ya* with a dash, or lineation — may certainly be effective, but this one mode of emulation is not necessarily the “model” emulation, if our concern is to emulate *mimetic sense* — the spirit of the original, rather than the flesh.

Kireji in English look and act differently from *kireji* in Japanese; poets have been exploring and experimenting with the plastic sense of *kireji*-disjunction for some time, and various disjunctive methods have been divined. In English, “cutting” techniques are diverse; each technique offering its own unique qualities: a singular *kireji* creating a singular juxtaposition is not a given. It is worth mentioning that contemporary and older modernist (*kindai*) Japanese haiku also use *kireji*-analogues such as extended breaks between words, unique rhythms, idiosyncratic collocation, etc., to create effects similar to many of the example-haiku presented above. Consequently, disjunctive techniques may effectively supervene formalist ideas of juxtaposition and formalistically conservative (direct-imitative) emulations of *kireji*.

Expansive Definitions

Disjunction as Literary Dialogue

When considering the wider field of North American literature, as an imported literary form, haiku has remained on the margin, though we may find the haiku aesthetic by innuendo — as haiku has had a major impact on the arts. Nonetheless, core issues of haiku, such as the manner in which the haiku aesthetic relates with poetic form, are usually discussed using exclusive Japanese terminology with reference to (neo)classical Japanese models. Such practices have created an intellectual chasm, orphaning the genre. Viewing haiku through the lens of disjunction finds contiguity with prevailing literature, without the need to limit comparative poetic models outside the haiku genre to the “near haiku” or haikuesque. For example, a disjunction of unsatisfactory object can be found in the following excerpted examples of poems by two Hispanic poets:

Like wet cornstarch, I slide
past my grandmother's eyes.

(Lorna Dee Cervantes in Purves, 1993)

in your home
we were cast
as rugs

sometimes
on walls

(Francisco Alarcón in Purves, 1993)

In the first two lines of Cervantes' poem "Refugee Ship," "slide" has several layers of meaning, in terms of who's doing the sliding (the grandmother or the poet), and of allusion; in the second example, Alarcón's "Letter to America," the same disjunctive technique catalyzes poetic power. In both cases, the direct use of simile and metaphor is obvious. These poems are not haiku, yet similar disjunctive techniques are shared with the haiku form — finding such continuities may provide for cross-pollination of genres, aiding exploration and experimentation. As well, further studies of the English haiku may eventually yield unique perspectives illuminating other genres. Technical comparisons can easily be drawn, as disjunctive technique is a *sine qua non* of modern poetry.

Making it New

Whatever particular aesthetic style one feels is best or most proper, those involved in appreciating and composing haiku have long been dedicated to the haiku spirit, as Basho first exemplified. Ideas of disjunction, particularly as methods that contrast with or supervene stricter views of juxtaposition, one-image haiku, *kireji*, etc., will not appeal to everyone. And, there is a danger in losing poetic power through loose definition, in containers which do not properly support haiku form. Strong or multiple disjunction can certainly produce terrible poetry, as disjunction is not a formula, merely a variety of sensed qualities and techniques. The goal of introducing disjunction is not to supplant traditional concepts, but to add dimension, to allow for variation and experiment — in keeping with the spirit of Shirane's recent definition of haiku:

Echoing the spirit of Basho's own poetry . . . *haiku in English is a short poem, usually written in one to three lines, that seeks out new and revealing perspectives on the human and physical condition, focusing on the immediate physical world around us, particularly that of nature, and on the workings of the human imagination, memory, literature and history.* . . . this definition is intended both to encourage an existing trend and to affirm new space that goes beyond existing definitions of haiku (Shirane, 2000, p. 60).

Looking at the haiku presented in the sections above, it can be seen that they diverge variously from those definitions given by Lanoue, Spiess, and the HSA (see Endnote 2), taken as a group. Considering the latter definitions briefly, Spiess' inclusive definition, that haiku "usually [include] natural existences tinged with humanity or faint humor, that evokes intuition of things' essentiality," is difficult to discern as to specifics. What exactly are "natural existences"? What does "tinged with humanity" or "intuition of . . . essentiality" mean in the context of philosophy or literature, let alone haiku? The HSA definition mentions that the English haiku is a "foreign adaptation" of the Japanese, without hinting at the unresolved imponderables implicit in adaptation, and defines the Japanese haiku as "recording the essence of a moment keenly perceived," an ascription surprising to encounter: the last two decades of English-language research contravene its implied limits (that haiku is basically an "essence" of a keen "moment"). The HSA definition was first published in 1973, prior to the introduction of newer research materials — as such, its characterization is understandable; yet why has the definition remained unaltered, over the last 20 years? Lanoue's definition follows the prevailing view of juxtaposition as a fundamental basis, limiting haiku functionally; his statement, "though it can be presented on the page . . . in three lines" implies something more definitive concerning lineation than convention — which is all that three-line lineation is. Shirane indicates the concept of range ("usually . . . one to three lines"), which seems preferable — in any case, there are about as many four-line as two-line haiku, a minority of five-line and "other" haiku. Lanoue also defines the necessity for a revelatory "second image," conceptually limiting experiment and imagination; there are many exceptions.

It has been suggested that although definitions in English use Japanese terms and concepts, such definitions are not attempting to define Japanese haiku, but are only used to define English-language haiku via allusion to Japanese haiku. Nonetheless, as long as the English haiku are validated *through linkage* to Japanese haiku principles and traditions, any definitional statement which speaks for Japanese haiku fundamentals deserves to be critiqued regarding cultural reductiveness and ethnocentrism.²¹ A particular danger is that of cultural reduction. The issue of the history and use of *kigo* (and *kidai*: seasonal topics in Japanese haiku) is virtually untranslatable out of the Japanese, due to both language (kanji issues) and complex literary-cultural contexts.

While it may be possible to craft emulative definitions of haiku in English based upon the sensibility of a specific Japanese author or school of haiku (e.g. Shiki's realist *shasei*), just as in Japan, Japanese haiku probably cannot be defined in English — certainly not in a sentence or two. In virtually every aspect of haiku (form, metrics, content, *kireji*, *kigo*, etc.) the Japanese genre from Basho onward reveals complexity and creative experiment, marked by a diversity of schools and sensibilities. One school or style cannot definitively be said to be more “proper” than another.

Disjunction and the Sense of Depth

While there is much to be garnered from the Japanese tradition, the English-language tradition has arisen in a separate literary environment, with its own influences, needs and concerns. This paper has sought to address the problematics of definitional restriction, technique and validation of the contemporary English-language haiku through an examination of disjunctive modes, for the purpose of providing new perspectives for its analysis and composition. Disjunctions cut across fragment/phrase and formal *kireji* parsing: a haiku may cohere through its disjunctive attributes alone. This fact might seem paradoxical, but if so, it is neither an imagistic nor juxtapositional paradox; rather, the paradox is that a large measure of the poem's coherence is achieved through disjunction itself. Disjunction invites supra-realist possibilities — its contextual field is as wide as consciousness: the magnetism and play of disjunction-versus-coherence is a taproot of haiku.

Disjunction has at least three arresting qualities: centrifugal force (the reader is thrown out of the poem and image, even out of language), gravitational force (the reader is drawn into interior contemplation), and misreading as meaning (a falling out of, and recovery of meaning). Disjunctive method relates to the *kireji*-concept as “language-form” *kireji*, helping to catalyze the reader's aesthetic perception of haiku as an art form; and disjunction also activates the sense of depth. Mistake, breakdown, irruption: these attributes partake of the wound, whether that wound be to habit, form, function, or stable reality. As has been brought to light in the field of depth psychology, it is through such wounds that we deepen.

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Endnotes

¹ “It was roughly the decade of the 1950s that saw the real beginning of what may be called the haiku in the Western world” (HSA, 1994, p. 5).

² The frontispiece of each HSA Frogpond journal gives a definition: “1. An unrhymed Japanese poem recording the essence of a moment keenly perceived, in which Nature is linked to human nature. It usually consists of seventeen *onji*. 2. A foreign adaptation of 1, usually written in three lines totaling fewer than seventeen syllables.” (It should be noted that “*onji*” is an archaic linguistic term. Since being supplanted by the 1930s, it has become virtually unknown in Japanese.)

³ “Haiku” will henceforth indicate “English-language haiku” throughout.

⁴ From a lecture by Hiroaki Sato (1999b), in which “proper” is described in broad strokes: “American haiku writers have tended to move in one direction . . . [they] have tended to move with a few guiding principles, while Japanese haiku writers have not.

To judge by the HSA definition, one of the principles for American haiku writers is associated with Zen-like enlightenment ('the essence of a moment keenly perceived'); it is as if the brevity of the form has to be equated with the temporal briefness of the matter to be described" (p. 1). Also see Spiess, 2001 and Gurga 2000, for their delimitations of "proper."

⁵ Selected haiku in the influential journal *Modern Haiku* are mainly of the realist *shasei* variety. This approach was recently defended by an essay in the *Modern Haiku*, advancing the idea of a triune hierarchy or schema of haikai: at the top "haiku," followed by "senryu," and at the bottom "zappai," "seventeen syllable poems that do not have proper formal or technical characteristics of haiku . . . if we look at all of what is presented today as 'haiku' a large number of so-called haiku are, like zappai, imaginative or imaginary" (Gurga, 2000, pp. 62-3). As many haiku in contemporary styles often utilize imaginative or imaginary elements (surreal, psychological, mythic dream, etc.) and such categories of haiku are unmentioned, the implication is that they fall into "zappai" at the bottom, a trash bin of what are referred to as "pseudo-haiku . . . lacking formal elements." To be useful, Gurga's idea will need to take into account the concepts and techniques of modern Japanese haiku, and consider as well that there are varieties of 5-7-5 Japanese poems which cannot always be objectively categorized as either haiku/pseudo-haiku/non-haiku: such determinations depend upon sensibility rather than an single exact standard. "A popular [Japanese] TV program starts off each morning by introducing haiku sent in by viewers – but calls these haiku "5-7-5" (rather than haiku), presumably to avoid pedantism and encourage participation" (Gilbert and Yoneoka, 2000, p. 76); such cases demonstrate a *positive* denial of haiku-as-genre in order to avoid such thorny issues as schemas determining haiku propriety. The use of "zappai" as an English term implying a verity in Japanese haiku sensibility seems questionable.

⁶ *Shasei* (commonly translated as "sketch of life") refers to Masaoka Shiki's concept of *tokyoakkan byousha* (objective description). Shiki's haiku philosophy is indelibly linked to realist-inspired haiku, which includes the first and second stages of his critical development: *shasei* and "selective realism." His third stage, *makoto*, indicates a potential increase in subjectivity, yet still in relation to realist determinants. Shiki died young and unfortunately his doctrine of *makoto* was not fully articulated. One wonders what he would have made of Ogawara Seisensui's free-style haiku movement, begun in 1909, and the multitude of evolutions of haiku form and thought that were to follow throughout the next century. It is worth noting that "Shiki wrote more and more poems based on *shasei* as he grew older" (Ueda, p. 15). A detailed account of Shiki's critical evolution can be found in Ueda, 1983 (also see Anakiev, 2003).

⁷ Analyses of this point may be found in Shirane (2000) and Sato (1999).

⁸ Cf. "Henderson's [1958] *Introduction to Haiku* . . . has remained an excellent beginning source for understanding Japanese haiku and by extension for determining what English haiku might be" (HSA, 1994, p. 6).

⁹ In the last two years, primers have been published by Bruce Ross, Jane Reichhold and Lee Gurga. *Gendai* haiku concepts and technique, or validating commentaries based upon non-*shasei* haiku, are not presented in the above volumes.

¹⁰ A Japanese-English bilingual primer relating to the history and nature of *gendai* haiku is available from the Modern Haiku Association of Japan (2001). *Gendai* approaches are considered part of the haiku literary culture of present-day Japan, and have been integrated into children's education, as in the book *haikukyouushitsu* [Haiku classroom], for Elementary School children learning haiku (Natsuishi, 2002).

¹¹ Mountain writes: "I find it odd . . . that after all these years there are still those who 'push' certain Japanese rules and moods. It is one thing to study the various eras of haiku and related genre — they and the poets are different — and quite another to *pick-and-choose aspects from the past and expect them to apply to all contemporary writers around the world*. While debate can be a great learning experience I will always wonder what Western haiku would be today had it gotten started in other ways — lineation and [syllable] counting only two of the problematic areas (1992a, p. 5). "*The later terms 'political haiku' and Rod Willmot's 'psychological haiku' did a lot of good for haiku. They were ways of speaking to so-called new content, feelings and attitudes which had begun creeping into pure haiku (of which there are none) . . . Given the complexity of adopting even adapting any foreign art it seems that we would have been better served in haiku had final-sounding definitions come after a larger body of our work*" (1992b, p. 99). Swede's indicative research was gathered from two surveys conducted in 1980 and 1997, concerning lineation. He writes: "Despite the efforts of some to promote one-, two-, and four-line haiku as well as visual [concrete] haiku, the combined use of these forms has actually gone down . . . to an overall average of 6.6%" (1997, p. 71).

¹² The following is a quantitative and qualitative comparative analysis of the two large-circulation North American haiku journals, regarding *shasei*. Both journals present a majority of *shasei* haiku. The present results are indicative only. The term used for qualitative analysis, *tsukinami*, is a Japanese critical term first coined by Shiki. *Tsukinami* is defined as: stale, mundane, hackneyed, formulaic. Surveying the latest available *Modern Haiku* (34:3) Autumn 2003, and *Frogpond* (26:3) Autumn 2003, five categories were determined: 1) total haiku listed in the section(s) "Haiku and Senryu," 2) *shasei*, 3) *tsukinami shasei*, 4) non-*tsukinami shasei* (non-formulaic *shasei*; *shasei* with innovative disjunctive elements), 5) non-*shasei*. (Note: inferior senryu are included in category 3.) "Translated Haiku" sections were not included, as this study focused on editorial selections from poets writing in the English tradition who submitted haiku for editorial consideration — in order that editorial values might be discerned. (It can be mentioned that the above *Modern Haiku* journal contains only *shasei* haiku in the "Translations" section. *Frogpond* does not have a translation section in their issue, above.) The "non-*shasei*" category contains formal and/or content elements (psychological, animistic, etc.) putting them outside of the *shasei*-oriented field. Counts can be considered approximate; numbers are rounded-off to the nearest whole number. *Modern Haiku*: 1) 146, 2) 139, 3) 133, 4) six, 5) seven. Non-*shasei* haiku = 3%. *Tsukinami shasei* = 91%. Non-formulaic *shasei* = 3%. Total *Shasei* = 95%. *Frogpond*: 1) 149, 2) 124, 3) 71, 4) 53, 5) 25. Non-*shasei* haiku = 17%. *Tsukinami shasei* = 48%. Non-formulaic *shasei* = 36%. Total *Shasei* = 83%.

Considering the excellence Shiki demanded, *tsukunami* judgments here are likely to be forgiving (cf. Ueda, 1983. pp. 19-28). The above statistics appear similar over the last few years, anecdotally. It may be seen that both journals contain, overwhelmingly, *shasei haiku*, but there are significant qualitative differences, with *Modern Haiku* being excessively formulaic and hackneyed, where *Frogpond* shows innovation. *Frogpond* contains approximately 360% more non-*shasei* haiku (25 versus seven) than *Modern Haiku*, though the total number remains relatively low. Individual qualitative determinations are, naturally, debatable.

¹³ “My current definition of haiku is that haiku can no longer be defined” (Mountain, 1992b, p. 99). “Today it may be possible to describe haiku but not to define it” (Sato, 1999a, p. 73).

¹⁴ The lines have no spaced-out words in the 1916 version. The most commonly published revision (Pratt, p. 50) of the poem uses a semi-colon. Whether a colon or semi-colon is used, the issues concerning superposition (juxtaposition) and disjunction remain essentially the same.

¹⁵ “[This haiku] has very possibly had more influence on the direction taken by Western haiku than any other single haiku” (Haiku Society of America, 1994, p. 9).

¹⁶ “Soul is imagination . . . releasing events from their literal understanding” (Hillman, 1983, p. 27; 1989, p. 122); reality is imaginal, a “seeing through: . . . the subject studying itself by means of the fictions and metaphors of objectivity” (*Ibid*, 1989, p. 18); “the most fecund approach to the study of mind is through its highest imaginal responses” (*Ibid*, p. 10); imagination has itself been articulated as “the poetic basis of mind” (*Ibid*, p. 10).

¹⁷ Recently, Terry Eagleton critiqued realism: “If realism is taken to mean ‘represents the world as it actually is’, then there is plenty of room for wrangling over what counts in this respect. . . . Artistic realism, then cannot mean ‘represents the world as it is’, but rather ‘represents it in accordance with conventional real-life modes of representing it’ . . . the world is itself a matter of representation. . . . To describe something as realist is to acknowledge that it is not the real thing. We call false teeth realistic, but not the Foreign Office. If a representation were to be wholly at one with what it depicts it would not be representation. . . . No representation, one might say, without separation. . . . all realist art is a kind of con trick . . . realism is calculated contingency. . . . representational art is from one viewpoint the least realist of all, since it is strictly speaking impossible. Nobody can tell it like it is without editing and angling as they go along (Eagleton, 2003, pp. 17-19). For a reconsideration of the relationship of the concrete and abstract in English haiku, see Rowland (2002).

¹⁸ Rian Haight, quoting Wallace Stevens (1958, p. 24). Personal communication, November 13, 2003.

¹⁹ In the English-language haiku an example of where an imitative idea has failed is syllable-counting. Five-seven-five syllable counting began as an idea of imitation, but was found to be a poor emulation of the original. This discovery was not suddenly brought to light by scholars, or if so, was not promulgated — it was made serendipitously by poets, who began using fewer syllables in their haiku, intuitively. It has now been shown that the use of fewer syllables serendipitously provides a more proper emulatory template of the Japanese haiku than the “traditional” 5-7-5 count (Gilbert and Yoneoka, 2000).

²⁰ “The essence of mimesis is somatic, visceral, a shared physic element wherein we feel the action, the wounding, the marking of a body, in our own being” (Slattery, 2000, p. 13). “Whalley refuses to translate mimesis as ‘imitation,’ and instead keeps the transliterated Greek because the English noun seems to denote an object of some sort, while Aristotle’s word refers to a process, not a product” (Richter, 1998, para. 2).

²¹ Critiques dealing with ethnocentrism in the haiku tradition, particularly focusing on issues of Orientalism as regards Western representations of Japanese culture, have yet to appear (cf. Said, 1978, 1993).

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