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# MEANING-MAKING THROUGH MONTAGE IN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE HAIKU

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**Abstract:** This paper explores meaning-making in English-language haiku through the lens of Sergei Eisenstein's theory of montage and cognitive semiotics, an emergent interdisciplinary field for the study of meaning. The driving force behind meaning-making in English-language haiku is the technique of juxtaposition. The effect resulting from the juxtaposition of images in this genre of poetry is similar to that which arises from the collision of shots in montage.

**Keywords:** English-language haiku, meaning-making, poetic montage, juxtaposition, image schema, iconicity.

*From our point of view, [haiku] are montage phrases. Shotlists.*  
(Eisenstein 1929b)

*The haiku has this rather phantasmagorical property:  
that we always suppose we ourselves can write such things easily.*  
(Barthes 1983)

*The brevity of the haiku is not formal;  
the haiku is not a rich thought reduced to a brief form,  
but a brief event which immediately finds its proper form.*  
(Barthes 1983)

## 1. Introduction

In this paper, which adopts insights from cognitive linguistics and linguo-semiotic studies, meaning-making in English-language haiku is viewed as a cognitive-semiotic process

termed "poetic montage". The term has been drawn from the theory of montage developed by Soviet film director and theorist Sergei Eisenstein. He believed that a film's structure should be built through juxtaposing unrelated, contrasting elements (Aitken 2001: 27). Despite the fact that it was American director D.W. Griffith who actually invented the montage technique, through intercutting several parallel actions in a motion picture (Pavlou 2018), (inspired, in its turn, by Charles Dickens' novels (Odin 1989: 69)), it is Eisenstein's understanding and definition of montage which have become widely accepted.

The term "montage" is reminiscent of Eisenstein's engineering background: he borrowed the notion from industry, where it means "assembly of machinery, pipes, and machine tools" (Aitken 2001: 27). Nevertheless, montage theory was given an impetus by Japanese culture, more specifically haiku poetry. Eisenstein was inspired by this lyrical mini-poetic form known for its ability to pack in a number of ideas and thoughts via a limited number of vivid nature images. His definition of montage reads that it is "combining shots that are *depictive*, single in meaning, neutral in content – into *intellectual* contexts and series" (Eisenstein 1929b: 30). According to the filmmaker, montage is the main aesthetic principle of cinematography and art in general (Eisenstein 1934: 3-5). This research has shown that the main principles of Eisenstein's theory of montage are applicable to the exploration of the process of meaning-making in English-language haiku.

Today haiku may be regarded not only as one of the most popular literary genres among poets and readers around the world but also as a unique and even highly 'addictive' form of poetry. Having originated as early as the late 15<sup>th</sup> century in the East and reaching its peak of popularity through the efforts of Matsuo Basho in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, nowadays it has become a truly global poetic phenomenon (Gilbert 2003; Swede 2000b: 14). Even though English-language haiku has not attained the same status in English literature as,

for example, the sonnet, it keeps paving its way steadily to the canon of English poetry (Swede 2000a: 6).

Haiku written in English is developing in a new lingua-cultural environment (Шершньова 2013: 7, 96), but it continues to share some of the remarkable features which constitute "the brain, heart, and lungs" of its Japanese counterpart (Swede 2000b: 14). Among these features are brevity, natural imagery, directly-observed experience, and simple language, as well as the technique of the juxtaposition of a couple of poetic details, the interaction of which results in an "Aha!" moment. The latter refers to the experience of sudden insight called *satori* (□ ㇿ) in Zen Buddhism, a philosophy underlying oriental haiku (Marsh, *s.a.*: 1). Despite their miniature and rather unconventional form, haiku poems written in English resonate for many readers across the globe.

The question of how a surprisingly limited number of items of simple imagery generates meaning and evokes a strong emotional response in the reader has proven a fascinating challenge for scholars and haiku enthusiasts. As for oriental haiku, the system of writing is helpful in this regard. Known as *kanji* (□ □ ; [kãnz̃i]), Japanese writing may produce a strong visual impact, as it comprises three different types of signs, or scripts: Chinese logographs; syllabary for words of purely Japanese origin; and syllabary for words of foreign origin aside from Chinese. They can all be used to represent the same phonological text; therefore, the choice of signs and their distribution in the text can assist the poet in creating multiple layers of meaning (Hiraga 2005: 10). Because of graphical elements used in logographs and calligraphy, Japanese haiku displays features of visual poetry (Shershnova 2013: 48), one that is meant not only to be read but also seen.

Fig. 1 below features haiku by Takahama Kyoshi (1874-1959), which demonstrates the inherent visual appeal of this oriental genre of poetry. The hybrid nature of the Japanese

writing system significantly complicates translation of haiku (Wakabayashi 2016: 177), as practically no any other language has the same "potential for orthographic flexibility" as Japanese (Robertson 2015: 205).

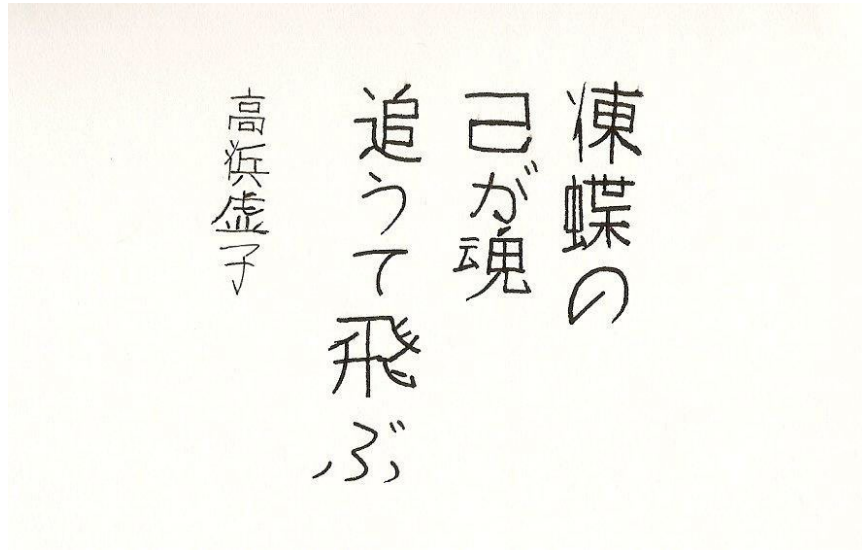


Figure 1. Haiku by Takahama Kyoshi (*Deviantart* 2011)

Considering the extensive visual repertoire of Japanese writing, the reader of oriental haiku may be regarded as a viewer as well (Bohn 2011: 83). Conversely, Western writing, which is based on the Latin alphabet, is far from being regarded as visually prominent. As opposed to logographs, its letters and words have very little aesthetic appeal. Nevertheless, English-language haiku also comes with its own effective tools for creating rich poetic meaning, which accounts for the continually-growing interest in this genre.

The meaning-building capacity of English-language haiku is tightly linked to the technique of image **juxtaposition**, which has been borrowed from Japanese haiku. Juxtaposition entails putting two distinct images side by side (Müller et al. 2017). Fig. 2 below demonstrates the technique of the juxtaposition of two disparate images – those of a cat and the tail of a tuna. Each image has a strong presence within the frame. American fine artist DeRemember (2015) employed this technique to illustrate the well-known idea

"You are what you eat"; in doing so, she has created an ironic and playful concept of a mermaid cat.



Figure 2. "Cat & tuna" (DeRemer 2015)

The technique of juxtaposition has always been an inherent feature of English-language haiku, where it allows for the creation of new, ambiguous, or unexpected meanings, too. According to Ferris Gilli (*s.a.*), a well-known American haiku poet, juxtaposition in this genre "creates a binding of two images, the combination of which is stronger and more elucidating than either image alone". In a normative English-language haiku (a three-lined verse), the division, also known as *the cut*, between two semantically separable parts is placed after either line one or line two, thereby marking a clear pause between them. The two parts are set in not only a 'tense' but also often surprising relationship (Müller et al. 2017: 1-2).

Kacian (2006), another notable American haiku poet, publisher, and editor states that this special relationship is the very feature which invites the reader to construct meaning when reading a given haiku poem. The juxtaposition of two images is likely to evoke memories, emotions, and associations shaped by the reader's own experiences, which help them bridge 'the gap' which has been left out intentionally by the haiku author.

In cognitive linguistics, a concept commonly used for referring to a supporting structure for all human knowledge, reasoning, and experiences is an **image schema** (Johnson 1987;

Turner 1996). When reading an English-language haiku poem, establishing a complex relationship between its juxtaposed verbal images requires the activation of familiar image schemas (Шершньова 2013: 209); hence, juxtaposition becomes the driving force behind meaning-making. According to White (2013: 156), juxtaposition is a means of iconicity ("iconisation by means of juxtaposition"). The latter, from Pierce's theory of signs, denotes the relationship of similarity between the form of a sign and its meaning (Nöth 1999: 613). Studies demonstrate that iconicity is not only evident at all language levels including phonological, morphological, lexical, and even syntactical (Hiraga et al. 2015), but it is also defined as "part of our cognitive and biological make-up" (Volkova 2018: 460). Therefore, the process of 'recognising' image schemas and their interaction with each other should be considered the highest degree of iconicity.

The novelty of the paper lies in its contribution to the study of meaning-making as a multi-semiotic phenomenon through exploring contemporary English-language haiku. In my thesis "Image-building in English oriental poetic miniatures: A cognitive-semiotic perspective" (Шершньова 2013), I put forward the notion of **schema iconicity** for denoting the highest degree of projecting the source domain (form) onto the target domain (meaning) to explain the process of image-building in English-language haiku. In the present research, which adopts some of the findings of the thesis, the process of establishing links between image schemas operating within a given English-language haiku poem has been named **poetic montage**, drawing from Eisenstein's filmmaking practice. The term encapsulates the essence of meaning-making in this poetic genre and attests to the originality of the research. Its pilot results were presented at the "Culture and cognition in language 2: The significance of context for human conceptual system" conference, hosted by the Institute of English Studies at the University of Rzeszov, Poland, in April 2019, and published in the conference proceedings (Shershnova 2019). The following chapter proposes a theoretical and methodological framework used to validate the rationale behind approaching meaning-making in English-language haiku

building on Eisenstein's theory of montage and the most recent achievements in cognitive semiotics.

## 2. Material and methods

The **aim** of this research is to explore the process of meaning-making in English-language haiku as poetic montage – a cognitive-semiotic process culminating in an "Aha!" moment as a result of resolving hidden dualism between images juxtaposed in the poem. The main **research question** addressed in the paper concerns a correlation between the technique of juxtaposition and the process of poetic montage in English-language haiku. In other words, the question is how the technique of juxtaposition contributes to rich emergent meaning in this genre of poetry. Based on the assumption that relationships between laconic images in English-language haiku are grounded in image schemas, the **hypothesis** of the research paper is that meaning-making results from bridging the gap between the poem's juxtaposed images through the cognitive-semiotic process of poetic montage.

### 2.1 Rationale for the study

The present study demonstrates that the technique of juxtaposition used by English-language haiku poets works similarly to the principle of montage in a motion picture. Eisenstein (1944: 239) called cinema "the art of juxtaposition". He viewed montage as "an idea that arises from the collision of independent shots – shots even opposite to one another" wherein "each sequential element is perceived not *next* to the other, but on *top* of the other" (Eisenstein 1929a: 49). Such superimposition, or counterpoint, of a series of elements of the same dimension creates an entity of "a new, higher dimension" (ibid.).

The figure below, taken from Eisenstein's essay "A dialectic approach to film form" (1929a: 54), shows how two independent primary pieces collide thereby resulting in a new concept:

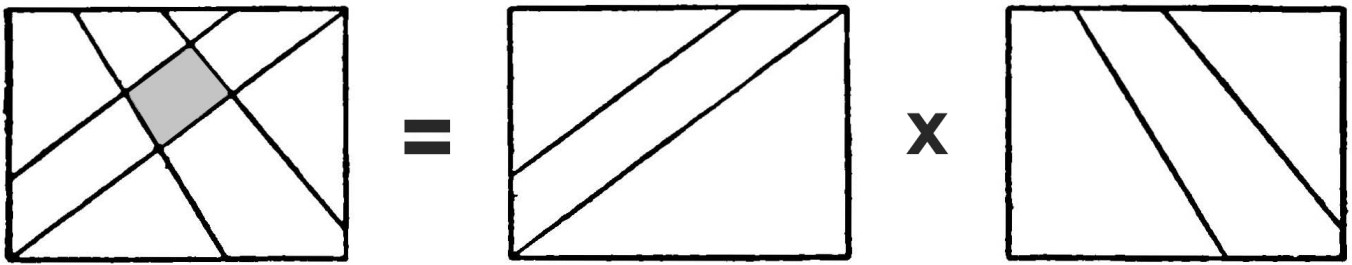


Figure 3. A graphical representation of montage

The effect of montage in general terms is illustrated by the grey area which appears at the intersection of two entities as seen in the square on the left in Fig. 3. The theorist criticized his opponent, Lev Kuleshov, another Soviet filmmaker, for viewing shots as *elements* of montage; for him, each film shot was rather a montage *cell* (or *molecule*) (Eisenstein 1929a: 50, 53). Hence, he was advancing the idea of montage as the collision, not a simple linkage, of several cells, and "[f]rom the collision of two given factors *arises* a concept" (Eisenstein 1929a: 37). This idea sets the stage for this research: juxtaposed images in an English-language haiku poem can also be viewed as "cells" that produce meaning through a complex and often unexpected interaction with each other, and in this way trigger an emotional response in the reader.

Regardless of the extent to which this interaction may seem unanticipated to the reader, images in English-language haiku are juxtaposed in a way, which, according to Cariello (2010), "reveals their previously unarticulated associations". Associations of this type can be understood in terms of static and dynamic image schemas (Шершньова 2013: 48), skeletal patterns which guide people's sensory experience and cognition (Turner 1996: 16). The alignment of these image schemas is an innate complex process that contains "an iconic moment" (Hiraga 2005: 6). The iconicity which emerges in English-language haiku as the result of recognising image schemas embodying the relationships between juxtaposed images can be termed schema iconicity (Шершньова 2013: 191). Basically,

as stated previously, iconicity should be viewed not only as a feature of a linguistic sign; it is a process of fundamental importance to human cognition.

This assertion calls for the development of a cognitive-semiotic paradigm for analysing relationships between images juxtaposed in English-language haiku, in order to arrive at a full understanding of poetic montage as the main principle of meaning-making in this genre of poetry. A cognitive-semiotic approach has been applied by contemporary scholars to study the mechanisms of narrative multidimensionality (Vorobyova 2017b), the structure of ethnocultural experience in Amerindian prose (Volkova 2018), imagery as a universally central dimension in the production of poetic meaning (Brandt & Brandt 2007), paradoxicality in contemporary American poetic discourse (Marina 2018), and metamorphosis formation and functioning in English poetic texts (Moskvichova & Suvorova 2017). More so, the paradigm has proven effective in the analysis of Japanese haiku, with a particular emphasis on iconicity, an important principle of logographic writing, and its link with metaphor (Hiraga 2000; 2002; 2005; 2006).

A cognitive-semiotic approach to analysing a poetic text is justified by the phenomenon of *multimodality*, an inbuilt feature of poetic discourse which always implies an array of various semiotic codes (Воробйова 2012: 9). Multimodality offers the idea of "meaning-making as a multi-semiotic phenomenon" (Nørgaard et al. 2010: 30; Vorobyova 2017b: 99). Notably, Eisenstein's cinematographic theory has served as a theoretical background to studies focused on Basho's poetics (Shirane 1992), as well as on reading, writing, and interpreting Japanese haiku in general (Chen-ou 2013; Chen-ou 2014; Myers 2009). It has been identified that oriental haiku not only combines literary and visual arts but also displays features of cinematography, because it creates meaning through different semiotic modes simultaneously.

As for contemporary haiku written in English, a number of noteworthy studies exploring this poetic genre have primarily focused on its evolution in the English-speaking world, its pioneers, and most prominent contributors (Hakutani 2009; Kacian 2018; Swede 2000a); key genre features (Swede 2000b); imagery (Cariello 2000; Rowland 2013); season reference (Higginson 2007); "a haiku moment" (Gilbert 2009); similarities and differences between Japanese and English-language haiku (Gilbert 2007; Gilbert & Yoneoka 2000); and even the role of haiku in teaching English as a foreign language (Iida 2010; Myers 2009).

The most recent and undoubtedly revolutionary approach to studying meaning-making in English-language haiku has been initiated by a group of researchers including Geyer, Guenther, Kacian, Liesefeld, Müller, and Pierides. Together they have set up an interdisciplinary project "Haiku and the brain", aiming to combine the efforts of poets and cognitive scholars to investigate the construction of meaning during the process of reading a three-line English-language haiku. The researchers have applied neuroscience, cognitive, and behavioural methods (Geyer et al. 2018; "Haiku and the brain" 2018; Müller et al. 2017). Their initial findings demonstrate that eye movements during the reading of an English-language haiku combined with memory and subjective rating of comprehension metrics drawn post-reading reflect the process of meaning construction and even the depth of processing (Müller et al. 2017: 2). The project underpins, on the one hand, a deep interest in English-language haiku, a genre combining features of two cultures, and on the other hand, highlights the necessity to employ multidisciplinary tools for elucidating the question of meaning-making in this literary genre.

This paper adopts a multidisciplinary approach, integrating notions, tools, and methods which have originated within the cognitive-semiotic paradigm and Eisenstein's cinematography aesthetics, in order to explore the process of meaning-making in the genre of English-language haiku. The term "poetic montage" emphasises the multimodal nature

of this poetic form. The chosen multidisciplinary approach is instrumental in explicating the hidden peculiarities of the process of deriving meaning in a genre which skillfully weds poetic traditions of two polar cultures.

## *2.2 Literature review: Theory and key notions*

As stated above, Sergei Eisenstein (1898-1948) drew the main principles of his montage theory from Japanese culture. He claimed that montage was the quintessence of the entire Japanese culture, one full of an endless number of cinematographic traits (Eisenstein 1929b: 28). The film director was interested in the creative potential of the Japanese system of writing, as he believed it performed not only its denotative but also a depictive function. Even though Japanese logographs have become considerably formalised since their inception (2650 B. C.), they have always maintained a noticeable degree of iconicity (Hiraga 2005: 4). To Eisenstein, as to Pierce, iconic thinking was "first and foremost about a set of relations" (Kibbey 2005: 138-139). What particularly struck Eisenstein about Japanese written language was that the combination of two simple logographs, each denoting an *object*, resulted not in their simple sum but in something of a new quality – an abstract *concept* (Eisenstein 1929b: 30). The term which is commonly associated with this phenomenon, or method, is the ideogram. In logographs, for example, the combination of the symbol for a dog and the symbol for a mouth would stand for "to bark" while a mouth plus a bird – for "to sing" (ibid.). Thus, through the ideogram, one can express something that would be graphically undepictable otherwise.

Eisenstein (1929b: 30) stated that the principle of the ideogram was ideal for cinema, because it helped to show complex abstract notions with a maximum of laconism by means of montage – "the creative juxtaposition of images" (Kibbey 2005: 138). In his movie *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), shots featuring a civilian crowd running down the Odessa Steps create tension by means of the ideogram hence montage (Fig. 4-6):



Figure 4. Soldiers marching down the Odessa Steps



Figure 5. A boy shot by the soldiers



Figure 6. The boy's mother in despair at seeing her son bleeding

Montage in this scene, devoid of any dialogue, is realized through the juxtaposition of heterogeneous shots, which allows the audience to observe the scene from multiple viewpoints rather than perceive it from a single perspective. A person is physically unable to simultaneously observe several objects, places, and individuals. In a motion picture, however, montage provides the possibility to manipulate time and space (McVey 2010).

The sequence of diverse shots juxtaposed in the scene (Fig. 4-6) creates new context and bolsters the emotions of fear, anger, shock, etc. in the viewer. Thus, a powerful emotional effect is derived not from the content but rather from the manner in which the director has edited the elements of the scene.

The principle of montage, according to Eisenstein (1929b), when applied to poetry, could maximize its potential for expressiveness. Haiku is the Japanese poetic genre which is built on the same principle of 'denotation by depiction' (Eisenstein 1929b: 35). The combination of two or three simple material details "blurred in *emotional quality*" yields a product of psychological nature – "an *imagist* effect" (ibid., 31). This way, a concept, which is only "a bare formula", becomes adorned; hence, it becomes verbalised and transformed into an image (ibid.). Analysis of one of Matsuo Basho's classic haiku (translated into English by Robert Hass) presented below illustrates this idea:

*autumn moonlight –  
a worm digs silently  
into the chestnut*

(Matsuo Basho, *s.a.*)

Pointed images such as *autumn moonlight* and *a worm* would be referred to by Eisenstein as shot lists superimposed on each other, hence juxtaposed. Each image retains a certain degree of autonomy, a typical feature of any haiku. The reader of the poem is unlikely to anticipate the image of *a worm* after encountering the image of the *autumn moonlight* in the opening line; therefore, contrast between the two images becomes immediate. Nevertheless, a gap between these incongruent images nurtures the idea of the universal law of harmony in nature, where plants, animals, and planets co-exist despite their fundamental differences, and are all indispensable elements of the macrocosm.

This interpretation is in line with another essential feature of haiku, viz., its ability to show "appreciation for small mysteries" and "small yet inspiring incidents in everyday reality"

(Sekine 2006). It is also in accordance with Eisenstein's understanding of montage as conflict (1929b: 38). A hidden dualism between seemingly unrelated images produces a vivid emotional experience, and for Eisenstein, emotions were a kind of universal language used to depict abstract ideas in art (van Schlun 2017: 77). However, Eisenstein was not the only Western artist who had derived inspiration from the ideogram method and Japanese haiku for cultivating aesthetic and creative expression.

American poet Ezra Pound (1885-1972), the pioneer of Imagism, a poetic movement of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, was the forerunner of the ideogram method in English poetry. Though he worked more than a decade before Eisenstein, he also viewed the genre of Japanese haiku as a medium for presenting complex ideas through a language stripped of superfluous qualities, unlike that which had been commonly used in old traditional poetry. For him, Imagism was synonymous with superimposition of simple, easy to comprehend images aimed at representing an important abstract idea (Üstün 2012: 3). Pound was to a large extent inspired and influenced by the creative potential of oriental poetry.

As in Eisenstein's aesthetics, lying at the heart of Pound's ideogram method, which he championed in his book "The ABC of reading" (1960), is the principle of juxtaposing vivid and sensory images for rendering much more complex notions. He arrived at this understanding of the method by exploring the formation and functioning of the Chinese word "East" (東). He viewed it as a result of "super-position" of the signs "tree" (木) and "sun" (日) hence the "sun tangled in the tree's branches, as at sunrise, now meaning 'the East'" (Pound 1960: 21). The poet used the word "super-position" to refer to juxtaposition (Bohn 1997: 39). To further explain this principle, he detailed how a Chinese person would define the colour red – with the help of "abbreviated pictures" – roses, cherries, iron, rust, and a flamingo (Pound 1960: 22). Thus, according to the poet, abstract

and complex ideas are made up of components which are simple, familiar, and independent of each other, e.g.:

ROSE CHERRY

IRON RUST FLAMINGO

Pound found logographic writing extremely poetic. He emphasized the importance of visual presentation in poetry (Stark 2012: 151) and believed one who could write in a simple language, free of trickery, should be referred to as a true poet (Hakutani 2009: 77). The idea behind Imagism, which he promoted, was that using as few words as possible "maximizes and intensifies meaning" (ibid.). For this reason, Pound was genuinely interested in Japanese haiku, which through brevity and juxtaposition could serve as a contour of a poet's thought, a moment experienced and depicted in a miniature poem, with an emotion attached to it (Шершнёва 2013: 28). Pound's two-line verse "In a station of the metro" (1913) is considered to be the first haiku-like poem ever written in English:

*The apparition of these faces in the crowd;*

*Petals on a wet, black bough.*

(Ezra Pound 1912)

The two-line poem contains two principal images – *faces in the crowd* and *petals on a bough* – characterized by straightforward language, definiteness, and precision, features which have always been central to the genre of haiku. It is hard to say which image is dominant over the other because it is their superimposition, or "super-position", in Pound's parlance, which produces an image of a new dimension – "a crystallised moment" (Simpson 2004: 111), or "an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time" (Pound 1913: 200). This resultant image encodes the author's idea of both the beauty and temporality of life: the image of flower petals which are stuck on a wet tree branch and whose life is coming to an end is parallel with the image of people's faces which the speaker is observing in the underground. The faces of the people seem to disappear as quickly as the petals of the wet flower fade (Шершнёва 2013: 28). The juxtaposition of a few seemingly unrelated, conflicting but concise images in this haiku creates an

interaction which gives rise to an image of a new dimension, one that encapsulates a set of emotions and feelings, such as sadness, humility, and melancholy. A complex relation between two autonomous images, *faces in the crowd* and *petals on a bough*, functions as a basis for a more subtle, abstract idea, or a bare formula, in Eisenstein's terminology.

As a poetic genre celebrating expressiveness through brevity, haiku in English has already thrived for more than 100 years since Pound's first attempts to adopt this oriental poetic tradition. Despite a varied understanding of the genre over this period of time, the quality of haiku in English has always remained stable (High 2012: 9). Contemporary English-language haiku is characterised by an even greater degree of laconism than its "forefather", Ezra Pound's poem "In a station of the metro". Today it may contain even fewer than ten words, but it displays the same simplicity of construction, precision, and striking economy of image. The latter, however, does not affect the capacity of English-language-haiku to speak directly to the reader and build a "haiku moment", e.g.:

*onion skin*

*I open myself*

*to the rain*

(Bill Pauly 2016)

As can be seen, the poet does not reveal much and omits punctuation marks; therefore, he leaves space for interpretation by the reader. Is the speaker just crying while cutting onions, or is it the raindrops that are touching their faces, or both? The poet endows the verse with simple tactile imagery; nevertheless, it is rather their juxtaposition that produces an impact on the reader.

English-language haiku by David Cobb, a prominent British haiku poet, conveys the magic of the moment of a beautiful 'metamorphosis' of tree buds into sparrow. Even though the adjective *sudden* is used in the second line, the reader is unlikely to anticipate the end of the depicted event, which makes it even more memorable and charming:

*on the misty pear*  
*all of a sudden buds*  
*burst into sparrows*

(David Cobb, *s.a.*, 19)

Russian formalist Victor Shklovsky (1917) stated that "poets are much more concerned with arranging images than with creating them and introduced the notion of "defamiliarisation", or "ostranenie", to refer to the artistic technique of presenting familiar things in strange ways in order to enhance the audience's perception of well-known things.

When reading an English-language haiku, it is up to the reader to establish links between the image of the onion skin, the speaker, and the rain, or between the images of a misty pear, buds, and sparrows. The process may require a great deal of cognitive effort, and not each haiku may work for each reader, just as with any other genre of poetry. What makes English-language haiku stand out, though, is its meaning-making capacity: its rigorous choice of words can result in a pleasurable ambiguity which calls for the reader's experience to fill in the gap conceived in a given poem. According to a renowned American poet and publisher of haiku poetry, Michael Dylan Welch (2009), the "leap that occurs in the space between the poem's two parts" grants energy to an English-language haiku. This energy is an essential part of the poem's meaning. The next subchapter describes the methodological framework designed for exploring the peculiarities of meaning-making in English-language haiku.

### *2.3 Methodological framework*

For addressing the central question of this research, viz., how the technique of juxtaposition contributes to rich meaning in English-language haiku, a multifaceted approach has been adopted, encompassing concepts of Eisenstein's montage theory and the most recent trends in cognitive semiotics. The process of meaning-making in haiku written in English will be explained through the theories of conceptual metaphor,

conceptual blending (conceptual integration networks), and mental spaces as developed by cognitive linguists Fauconnier and Turner (2002). Moreover, meaning-making in English-language haiku will be explored through the application of the theory of iconicity, borrowed from semiotics, based on the idea of conceived similarity to varying degrees between the form of a sign (a target domain) and its meaning (a source domain).

Research has shown that English-language haiku is generally free from such conventional stylistic tools as metaphor, with its core feature of blending two concept domains into one figurative expression (Harbus 2012: 57). Conceptual blending theory is closely linked to conceptual metaphor theory wherein an invisible, complex subject matter (a target domain) is understood in terms of a more concrete and recognizable subject matter (a source domain), hence mapping. However, conceptual blending goes beyond the idea of unidirectional mapping and provides "a way of understanding networks of cross-domain mappings in the construction of meaning" (ibid., 57).

Conceptual blending theory has proven more useful in analysing expressions which only "technically qualify as metaphors", and the process of mapping across domains has been defined by cognitive linguists as "the universal capacity of the evolved human mind", language, thought, and communication, hence all human cognitive processing (ibid., 57). Thus, conceptual blending theory allows more in terms of exploring meaning as an online-process: as a four-space model, blend "can account for phenomena that are ignored or hidden in the two-domain model", the framework of conceptual metaphor (Grady et al. 1999: 102). This theory is instrumental in explaining how "counter-factual or hypothetical scenarios are created and integrated in information processing" (Harbus 2012: 57). According to Turner (2002: 10), conceptual blending is a mental operation entailing the combination of "two mental packets of meaning – two schematic frames of knowledge or two scenarios" which "selectively and under constraints" creates a third packet of meaning, one that has "new, emergent meaning". In general, conceptual blending is a basic

and universal mental function which allows for the integration and blending of ideas to give rise to new concepts. The language of haiku written in English is simple and devoid of poetic trickery, but the cut that divides the poems into two "energizing" parts creates a gap, or incompleteness, in Grady et al.'s (1999) parlance. Filling out the "incompleteness" of English-language haiku culminates in the emergence of meaning of a new dimension, and this cognitive process can be explained by means of a blend, a four-space model.

Fauconnier's theory of mental spaces, in its turn, underpins the theory of conceptual metaphor and blending. The theory states that mental spaces are interconnected structures built up from the information available in one's working memory in response to linguistic stimuli (Fauconnier1997); they are utilized and modified in the process of meaning-creation on-line (Harbus 2012: 53). As mentioned above, the idea of blending is based on an inherent human ability to resolve unrelated pieces of information (input spaces) into a new knowledge (a blend) which cannot be construed from any of the constituents alone (ibid.). The blended space develops ideas, emotions, and inferences which modify the initial input spaces and change or challenge them, ultimately resulting in an emergent structure of its own (Hiraga 2005: 38-39). Thus, the theories of conceptual metaphor, conceptual blending, and mental spaces can serve as an ideal methodological framework for elucidating the process of meaning-making in English-language haiku. Mental spaces built from haiku's two major parts are juxtaposed, projected onto each other, and interact, thereby creating an emergent meaning; this idea resonates with Eisenstein's principle of montage as the collision of two given factors.

According to haiku researcher Hiraga (2005: 38-39), the process of conceptual projection is motivated by image schemas. The term "image schema" is going to be employed in this paper as an equivalent of Eisenstein's term "bare formula", which he used for referring to the complex idea realised through the collision of two autonomous depictive elements in cinema, poetry, and art in general. Image schemas, for example, SYMMETRY,

CONTAINER, BALANCE, RESISTANCE, FORCE, etc., are "mimetic mental representations of sensory perceptions and constitute imagic iconicity" (Hiraga 2005: 39). Simple image schemas combine into more complex ones (Johnson 1987: 126; Lakoff 1987: 372; Turner 1996: 16), which contributes to their infinite number. Moreover, image schemas are "at once visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, and tactile" (Gibbs & Colson 1995: 349). Research has shown that image schemas ground the relationship(s) between two concept domains of English-language haiku, which explains the way in which clear-cut images in this genre of poetry not only interact but also generate meaning of another, higher dimension.

Hence, what Eisenstein would refer to as a "bare formula" which is "adorned" in a poetic text, in this research focused on English-language haiku is understood as an image schema. Image schemas exist as "continuous and analogue patterns beneath conscious awareness, prior to and independently of other concepts" (Hampe 2005: 1). With reference to Hiraga's (2005: 6, 38) idea that there are iconic moments in the alignment of image schemas, this process is reminiscent of mapping and conceptual blending where a relatively abstract phenomenon is understood in terms of a more structured one and input spaces interact and are projected onto each other. At this point, the theories of conceptual metaphor, blending, mental spaces, and iconicity intersect and account for the process of meaning-making in English-language haiku as poetic montage.

### **3. Results and discussion**

Meaning-making in English-language haiku occurs through poetic montage, as it is dependent on and reinforced by the technique of juxtaposition, promoted by both Pound and Eisenstein. The English-language haiku given below will be analysed to show how juxtaposition of a couple of simple images generates a 'bigger' idea which does not arise from any image outside the context of the poem, e.g.:

*rainy pavement –  
our big umbrella  
blooms every puddle*

(Mark Rutter 2008)

In this haiku, the poet juxtaposes the image of a rainy pavement and the image of puddles which seem to be blooming due to their reflection on the rainy pavement under the speaker and their companion's umbrella. The pictures in Fig. 7 below could illustrate the sequence of images encountered by the reader.

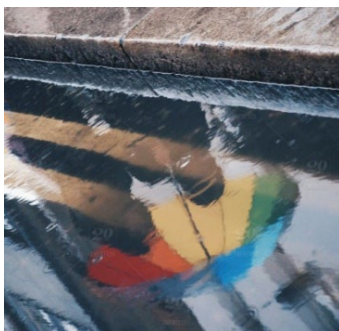


Figure 7. The sequence of images in Rutter's haiku  
(*Soundcloud* 2018; *Twenty20* 2019; *Wallpaper* 2013)

While *rainy pavement* might trigger associations with dull colour, the image of blooming puddles is likely to render feelings quite opposite to those experienced initially. The verb *bloom* entails bright colours and elevated mood because it is closely related to flowers.

In the poem, the moment of juxtaposition is punctuated by means of a dash at the end of the first line. However, it is in the third line where juxtaposition becomes evident, because the middle line appears to be rather neutral in meaning, while the third line is a pivot. Such a delayed effect contributes to the poem's tension, the latter being an integral part of montage. The tension occurs as a result of two conflicting ideas – rainy weather and bright colours. The question to answer here is how the reader is engaged into the process of "literary text disambiguation", in Vorobyova's (2017a: 428) parlance, thus, how the reader establishes a correlation between the two disparate images, how they actually become one, and how the reader eventually draws meaning out of this.

Based on conceptual blending theory, the meaning created by the human brain is more than the simple sum of its constituent parts. Through the selection and combination of the familiar and new information, image schemas shaped by our sensory experience and background knowledge are integrated, thereby giving rise to new concepts (Harbus 2012: 52).

While reading the haiku poem above, several relatively simple image schemas become activated: OBJECTS, embodied by the rainy pavement, umbrella, and puddles; MOTION and PROCESS, suggested by the speaker and their companion's walking through puddles in the rain; and ITERATION, implied by the pronoun *every* encountered in the closing line. A more complex image schema is aligned when the OBJECTS *umbrella* and *puddles* 'interact': the umbrella makes puddles *bloom*, hence turning them into something reminiscent of flowerbeds, whereby the image schema TRANSFORMATION comes into

play. This image schema is activated in both the source domain (*blooms*) and in the target domain (the umbrella makes puddles look like flowerbeds).

We are most interested in the image schema TRANSFORMATION, which arises due to the conflict between *rainy pavement* and blooming puddles. The juxtaposition of these two images results in an 'incompleteness' that has to be filled out by the reader. According to Eisenstein's theory of montage, it is the superimposition of two independent elements which produces new meaning and generates insights. The model of blending developed by Turner and Fauconnier (1995) has been used to test the hypothesis of this research stating that poetic montage is a process in English-language haiku which allows for meaning to be construed from two contrasting juxtaposed images.

As shown in Fig. 8 below, the source domain is made up of three input spaces, one presented by *rainy pavement* (input 1), another one by *umbrella* (input 2), and one more by blooming puddles (input 3). These are vivid and rigorously chosen images, which, with reference to Hiraga's idea (2005: 39), form the basis for imagic iconicity. Input 2 and Input 3 are placed into a bigger circle to suggest the idea of a 'bigger' image – puddles blooming under the speaker and their companion's big umbrella. The arrow connecting input 2 and input 3 is labelled TRANSFORMATION: the latter is the image schema that embodies the interaction between the image of a big umbrella and that of puddles in the rain (the umbrella makes each puddle bloom).

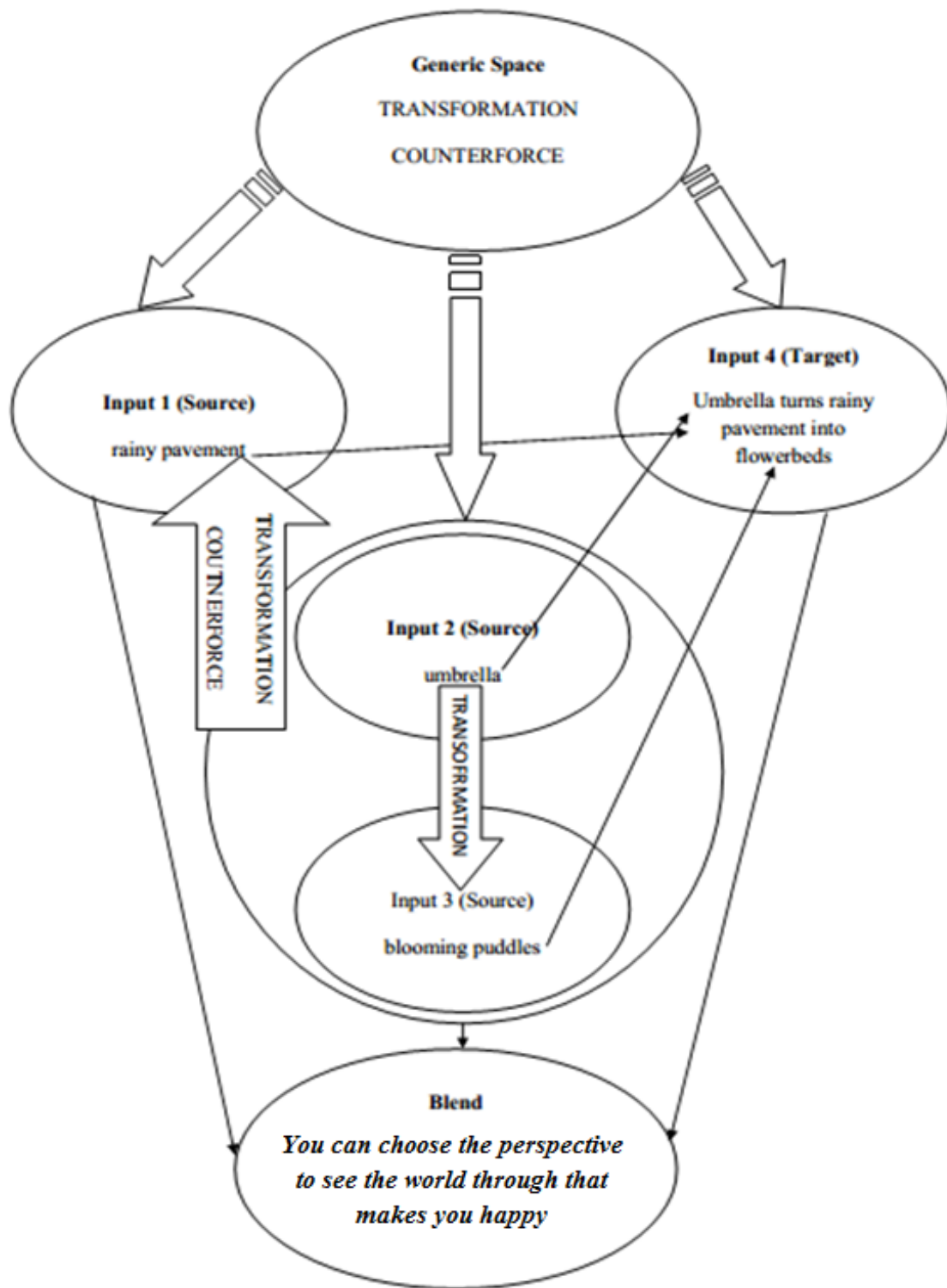


Figure 8. The model of blending for Mark Rutter's haiku

The same image schema is aligned for the interaction of input 1, on the one hand, and inputs 2 and 3, on the other hand: blooming puddles tend to change the way the pavement

looks in the rain. Therefore, the image schema TRANSFORMATION is placed into a generic space because it reflects an abstract structure shared by inputs 1, 2, and 3.

Another image schema, which not only reflects relations between images in the source domains but also, and perhaps more importantly, signals juxtaposition between the images of a rainy pavement and blooming puddles, is that of COUNTERFORCE. The image of puddles changing their colour under the big umbrella appears emotionally stronger than that of a rainy pavement. The target domain demonstrates the interaction of all three source domains: under a big colourful umbrella, puddles in the rain resemble blooming flowerbeds.

The blend, as a newly emergent space, creates a meaningful bridge between all the mental spaces and graphically illustrates the process of poetic montage. The new idea generated by the interaction and juxtaposition of the poetic details in a verse as small as this might not seem brand new: nevertheless, it is the perspective through which we choose to look at the world which actually matters and which can make us happy. However, the way in which the poet of the haiku reminds us of this truth is remarkably delightful, and this re-discovery ultimately leads to the "Aha!" moment.

#### **4. Concluding remarks**

English-language haiku is a genre of poetry with oriental roots and which is thriving in the English-speaking world today. As a miniature poem, it resonates for many readers and poets across the globe. The process of meaning-making in this unconventional genre of poetry has raised interest in a number of scholars.

Given that contemporary linguists view meaning-making as a multi-semiotic phenomenon, the article suggests a multidisciplinary approach, integrating notions, tools, and methods employed within the cognitive-semiotic paradigm and borrowed from

filmmaker Eisenstein's cinematography aesthetics, to elucidate the complex process of meaning-making in English-language haiku. Specifically, this paper has explored the process of meaning-making through the lens of Eisenstein's theory of montage as well as the theories of conceptual metaphor, conceptual blending, mental spaces, and iconicity within cognitive semiotics, an emergent interdisciplinary field for the study of meaning.

My reasoning concerning the process of meaning-making in English-language haiku is in line with Eisenstein's definition of montage as the collision of independent shots which always entails conflict, an underlying principle of the dialectal nature of cinema and art in general. It is through the juxtaposition of conflicting shots that a film scene can produce strong meaning and introduce new insights; juxtaposing disparate images in English-language haiku helps achieve the same effect of intensifying meaning and generating new knowledge; therefore, the process of meaning-making in English-language haiku has been termed poetic montage in this paper.

The term "poetic montage" accurately describes the essence of meaning-making in English-language haiku. It may be defined as a cognitive-semiotic process of establishing connections between juxtaposed images (through the cognitive processes of mapping, conceptual blending, and iconicity), thus drawing parallels between the experience of nature as described in the poetic text of haiku and the reader's own experience, and which is followed by the evocation of a strong emotional response to the depicted 'event'. The gap that occurs between the poem's two juxtaposed parts endows an English-language haiku with certain 'energy', a crucial part of the poem's meaning-making capacity.

Taking into account the idea that the relationships between juxtaposed laconic images in English-language haiku are grounded in image schemas, the research has proven the hypothesis that the gap between the images juxtaposed in the poem contributes to the "Aha!" moment, an experience of sudden insight resulting from bridging this gap through

the cognitive-semiotic process of poetic montage. Establishing the types of poetic montage in English-language haiku calls for further research in regards to meaning-making in extraordinary genres of poetry such as English-language haiku.

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## Résumé

English-language haiku as a miniature genre of poetry with oriental roots has raised interest in readers, poets, and scholars across the globe. This paper is focused on meaning-making in this genre of poetry, which is thriving in the English-speaking world today. The aim of this research is to explore the process of meaning-making in English-language haiku as poetic montage. The main research question addressed in the paper concerns a correlation between the technique of juxtaposition and the process of poetic montage in English-language haiku. The paper adopts a multidisciplinary approach, integrating notions, tools, and methods which have originated within the cognitive-semiotic paradigm and Eisenstein's cinematography aesthetics, for elucidating the question of meaning-making in this unconventional literary genre. Based on the idea that the relationships

between juxtaposed laconic images in English-language haiku are grounded in image schemas, the research has proven the hypothesis that that the gap between the images juxtaposed in the poem contributes to the "Aha!" moment, an experience of insight resulting from bridging the gap through the process of poetic montage. Poetic montage is the term that describes the essence of meaning-making in English-language haiku and should be defined as a cognitive-semiotic process of establishing connections between juxtaposed images (through the cognitive processes of mapping, conceptual blending, and iconicity), thus drawing parallels between the experience of nature as described in the poetic text of haiku and the reader's own feelings and experience, and which is followed by the evocation of a strong emotional response to the 'event' depicted in the poem.

**Key words:** English-language haiku, meaning-making, poetic montage, juxtaposition, image schema, iconicity.

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