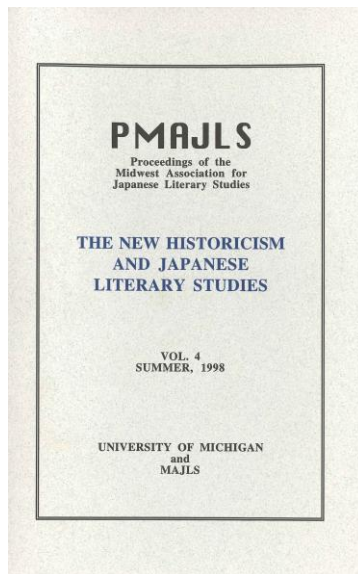


“Superposition, Montage, and Dialectics in Haiku,
Pound, Eisenstein, and Benjamin”

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Superposition, Montage, and Dialectics in *Haiku*, Pound, Eisenstein, and Benjamin

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It is often said that the Japanese premodern sensibility has much in common with (Western) modernist and so-called postmodernist sensibilities (two vast, complex, and controversial terms, below combined into one word: (post) modernism). We can easily appreciate this if we recall the late 19th-century French *Japonisme* and its influence on such modern artists, poets, and critics as Manet, Monet, Gauguin, Van Gogh, Yeats, Pound, Fenollosa, and Eisenstein, or if we reflect for a moment on the striking similarities between, for instance, Buddhist philosophy and the French thinker Jacques Derrida's deconstruction.¹ Buddhism, a key part of the foundations of Japanese culture and literature, can be seen as a deconstruction of the metaphysics of the Atman and the Brahman in ancient Hinduism.

Thus it should surprise no one if *haiku*, as a premodern Japanese literary genre, can be shown to contain many elements that overlap those of (post) modern sensibilities. My paper will examine in what sense *haiku* is or is not (post) modern. More specifically, I will compare the techniques/ideas of *haiku* with those of the "superposition" (*kasane*), montage, and dialectics of (post)modernist poets and film directors such as Ezra Pound (1885-1972) and Sergei Eisenstein (1898-1948).

In examining these issues, I will build on the pioneering work of such critics as Earl Miner and Makoto Ueda in an attempt to

¹ See, for instance, Robert Magliola, *Derrida on the Mend* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue UP, 1984).

address issues they left largely unexplored.² I will not only deal with similarities between the techniques/aesthetics of *haiku* and Pound's and Eisenstein's superposition, montage, and dialectics, but also with crucial differences between the underlying sensibilities of *haiku* and (post)modernist art.

Is *haiku* dialectical? In what sense? How is this related to (post)modernism? In exploring such questions, my paper will also touch on issues such as Bashō's *zōka/jinen* (autopoietic system),³ *michi* (way), and *fueki ryūkō* (changelessness and

² See, for instance, Makoto Ueda, *Zeami, Basho, Yeats, Pound: A Study in Japanese and English Poetics* (London, The Hague, Paris: Mouton, 1965), Earl Miner, *The Japanese Tradition in British and American Literature* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1958), and Earl Miner, "Pound, *Haiku*, and the Image," *The Hudson Review*, IX (Winter 1956-57), 570-84 reprinted in Walter Sutton, ed., *Ezra Pound: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963).

³ Bashō's *zōka/jinen*, in my understanding, is a topologically self-referential composite of human beings and nature (ecosystem), which, I think, is a kind of autopoietic system, a system which "defines" its boundary through the production of its own constituent elements which in turn produce this very same self-defining process, thus forming a (topologically) self-referential loop in the productive (and destructive) process. In this system, the eye of the observer who, for instance, observes as a bystander the interactions between a homeostatic open system (the conventional image of an organism) and the environment (ecosystem) is built into the system itself as both its part and its own product. The observer thus can never "stand outside" the autopoietic system as an objective bystander, because this system does not have an inside or outside in the three dimensional tempo-spatial sense. In this system, the outside and the inside are self-referentially and topologically connected as in the Klein bottle. Is this kind of self-referentiality not none other than that of nature/*jinen* (or the "womb") conceived in terms of its autogenetic process (a kind of Spinozan *natura naturans* or nature naturing)? For more on autopoiesis, see Humberto R. Maturana, *Autopoiesis and Cognition: A Theory of Living Organization*, ed. by Milan Zeleny (New York: North Holland, 1981). For its applications to sociology, law, etc., see, for instance, Niklas Luhmann, *Essays on Self-Reference* (New York: Columbia UP, 1990) and Gunther Teubner, *Law as an Autopoietic System*, tr. by Anne Bankowska and Ruth Adler; ed. by Zenon Bankowski (Oxford, UK; Cambridge, USA: Blackwell, 1993).

change/vogue) and Walter Benjamin's *passage* (arcade/passage=way), *Aura*, and origin (*Ursprung*).

These topics are vast and complex, and might easily demand monograph-length treatment. My paper is thus a seminal work for later, fuller discussions of these topics, and will summarize my general argument and focus on a few key issues such as superposition, dialectics, and montage in *haiku* and (post)modernism. Unless otherwise specified, the *haiku* I will discuss in this paper are those of Bashō (1644-94), and the English translations of the *haiku* and other passages quoted are mine.

Pound and *haiku*

Pound's ideas on superposition and image in relation to *haiku* are expressed as follows:

The "one image poem" [i.e., *hokku* or *haiku*] is a form of super-position, that is to say it is one idea set on top of another. I found it useful for getting out of the impasse left by my metro emotion. I wrote a thirty-line poem, and destroyed it because it was what we call work "of second intensity." Six months later I made a poem half that length; a year later I made the following *hokku*-like sentence:--

"The apparition of these faces in the crowd:
Petals, on a wet, black bough."⁴

Makoto Ueda comments on Pound's idea of superposition:

People's white faces are moving in a confused stream on the dirty, dimly lighted platform of a subway station. They are beautiful in a strange way. The unique quality of this beauty cannot be defined or described in ordinary

⁴ Ezra Pound, "Vorticism," *Fortnightly Review*, 102 (Sept. 1) 1914, 467.

explanatory words. So Pound brings in the image of petals on a wet, black bough and super-imposes it over the image of faces in the crowd. The latter image, with its feeling of pale and delicate yet animated loveliness, covers the former image and gives it a clear delineation. The face image actively responds to the flower image which falls upon it with full force. This kind of vital interaction between images is essential to an imagist poem.⁵

Pound further defines the image as "an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time. . . . It is the presentation of such a "complex" instantaneously which gives that sense of sudden liberation; that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits; that sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the presence of the greatest works of art."⁶ Pound's ideas of superposition and image seem to concur with Bashō's idea of "*fueki*/constancy and *ryūkō*/change," as expressed, for instance, in the following remarks recorded by Doho Hattori, one of his disciples:

In the Master's art there is that which remains unchanged for thousands of years; there is also that which shows a temporary change. Every one of his works is ascribable to the one or the other, and these two qualities are the same in essence. This common essence is a true "poetic spirit". One does not really understand the *haiku* unless he knows the permanent style. The permanent style is the one which is firmly based on the true poetic spirit, irrespective of the writer's time or of the contemporary fashion . . . On the other hand, it is a principle of nature that things change in numerous ways. In *haiku*, too, nothing new will be born unless it transforms itself with time.⁷

⁵ Ueda, op. cit., 109-10.

⁶ Pound, "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste," *Poetry*, March, 1913, 200-201.

⁷ Translated and quoted by Ueda, op. cit., 36.

In my interpretation, Bashō's *fueki ryūkō* is a kind of "dialectical synthesis" of binary pairs such as constancy/noumenon and change/phenomenon, *ga* (classical courtly elegance) and *zoku* (the mundane/vulgar), *seitō* (orthodoxy) and *hi-seitō* (unorthodoxy), old/past and new/future, and the unconscious/death and consciousness/life.⁸

In "Decentering of the Image: The 'Project' of 'American' Poetics?," Joseph Riddel writes: "The unconscious has no time, nor any object. It is displaced as time, as consciousness, and thus as a movement of images."⁹ This seems what Pound's definition of image as "an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time," as well as Bashō's "dialectical synthesis" of *fueki* and *ryūkō*, means, and this probably is what Pound and Bashō tried to effectively utilize in their poems.

Furu-ike ya,
kawazu tobikomu
jumps in;
mizu no oto

The old pond:
A frog
The water's sound.

Shizukasa ya
iwa ni shimiiru
semi no koe

The silence:
The cicada's voice
Penetrates the rock.

Fueki or the timelessness and objectlessness of the unconscious resonates through the montage-like arrangement of the concrete

⁸ For a succinct discussion of Bashō's *fueki ryūkō* in its relationship to *fuga* (poetic spirit) in English, see, for instance, Ueda, op. cit., 36-37.

⁹ Joseph Riddel, "Decentering of the Image: The 'Project' of 'American' Poetics?" in Joue V. Harari, ed., *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell UP, 1979), 341.

and seemingly disjointed/fragmentary images of these *haiku*.¹⁰ This seems to be the crux of Bashō's version of superposition, which also underlies other superpository elements of *haiku* in general, such as syneesthesia and interpenetration of human beings and nature:

Umi kurete	Dusk over the sea,
kamo no koe honokani	The seagull's voice is
shiroshi	Faintly white.

Botan kitte	Having cut the peony,
ki no otoroeshi	He felt exhausted
yūbe kana	That evening. (Buson) ¹¹

In spite of these similarities between the "dialectical" superposition of (Bashō's) *haiku* and that of Pound, however, there seems to be a crucial difference between the two, or put differently, between the premodernity underlying *haiku*'s superposition and the modernity underlying Pound's version of superposition. I think the difference can be described as the presence or absence of modern technology and machines based on the notion of linear time and homogeneous space (which is connatural with the dualistic, binary oppositional sensibility,

¹⁰ The unconscious, like other terms/concepts used in this paper such as *fueki ryūkō* and *jinen/zōka*, ultimately defies linguistic explanations. Quoting Mumon (a Chinese Zen monk, 1183-1260), Hofstadter, for instance, succinctly describes the perennial dilemma and paradox that my paper also faces: "It cannot be expressed with words and it cannot be expressed without words." (Douglas R. Hofstadter, *Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid* [New York: Vintage Books, 1980], 253.) "It" and "words" in Mumon's statement seem to respectively correspond to Riddel's "unconscious" and "image," and, by extension, to Pound's "idea" and "image" and Bashō's *fueki* (eternity/noumenon) and *ryūkō* (change/mode/phenomenon).

¹¹ Hagiwara's translation based on that by R. H. Blyth, *Haiku*, III (Hokuseidō, 1952), 289.

espoused by Plato and further promoted by thinkers such as Descartes, a chief ideologue of modernity), and their corollaries such as the Enlightenment, the industrial revolution, and the rise of the capitalist bourgeoisie--some of the main ingredients of Western modernity, most of which are naturally missing in Bashō's time.

What is notable of Pound's superpositional imagery is its predilection for a dualism of idea and image, a reflection of the Plato-Cartesian dichotomy of mind/subject and body/object. Comparing the idea of intensity in Vorticist art to that of Cartesian analytical geometry in its formula of circle $(x - a)^2 + (y - b)^2 = r^2$, Pound further argues:

[The formula] is the circle. . . . It is the circle free of space and time limits. It is the universal, existing in perfection, in freedom from space and time. . . . The difference between art and analytical geometry is the difference of subject-matter only. . . .

Great works of art contain this fourth sort of equation [of circle]. They cause form [i.e., image] to come into being. . . .

The image is not an idea. It is a radiant node or cluster; it is what I can, and must perforce, call a VORTEX, from which, and through which, and into which, ideas are constantly rushing.¹²

This dualism of idea and image seems to be reflected in Pound's technique of superposition, which he found not only in *haiku's* superpository imagery, but also in the juxtaposition of image and idea in the Chinese "ideogram."¹³ In his "Pound, *Haiku*, and the Image," Miner points out that in Pound's

¹² *Fortnightly Review*, op. cit., 469. Underlining Hagiwara's.

¹³ See Earl Miner, *The Japanese Tradition in British and American Literature*, op. cit., 127-34.

superposition the "expository" lines are clearly set off from, and superimposed on, the apposite image.¹⁴ Some of the examples Miner cites are as follow (underlining Hagiwara's):

Three spirits came to me
 And drew me apart
 To where the olive boughs
 Lay stripped upon the ground:
Pale carnage beneath bright mist.
 ("April")

She passed and left no quiver in the veins, who now
 Moving among the trees, and clinging in the air she
 severed,
 Fanning the grass she walked on then, endures:
Grey olive leaves beneath a rain-cold sky.
 ("Gentildonna")

As a bath tub lined with white porcelain,
 When the hot water gives out or goes tepid,
 So is the slow cooling of our chivalrous passion,
 O my much praised but-not-altogether-satisfactory
 lady.
 ("The Bath Tub")

Related to Pound's separation of idea and image seems to be the subject (mind) vs. object (body) dichotomy as seen in the clear-cut use of the human and non-human agents and objects in the preceding and following *haiku*-like poems by him:

Green arsenic smeared on an egg-white cloth,
 Crushed strawberries! Come, let us feast our eyes.
 ("L'Art, 1910")

The gew-gaws of false amber and false turquoise
 attract

¹⁴ Miner, op. cit., 122-23.

them.

"Like to like nature": these agglutinous yellows!
("Women Before a Shop")

O fan of white silk,
clear as frost on the grass-blade
You are also laid aside

("Fan-Piece, for her Imperial Lord")

In contrast to this, *fueki* (subject/mind/idea) and *ryūkō* (object/body/image) are at once different and the same in *haiku*, or more specifically in Bashō's *haiku*, as they are based on the non-dualism of subject/human and object/nature in *jinen/zōka* (a topologically self-referential "composite" of nature and human beings) just as the "two sides" of the Möbius band are in fact one and the same. Reflecting the autogenetic *jinen* (lit. by-itself-so), *haiku* is "impersonal" and events take place by themselves without the agent. If a human agent seems to be present, it is superimposed on, and further is (animistically) merged with, the objective surroundings:

Botan kitte	Having cut the peony,
ki no otoroeshi	He felt exhausted
yūbe kana	That evening. (Buson)

Tsuka mo ugoke	Move, the burial
mound!	
waga naku koe wa	My wailing voice [is]
aki no kaze	The autumn wind.

In Buson's *haiku* on the peony, the second line in the original Japanese literally reads "The *ki* (or *chi* [matter-energy] in Chinese) became weak," and the (human) subject/agent of lines one and two is not stated, and thus syntactically it reads as if the evening in the last line is the subject/agent of the two verbs in the first two lines. Also obvious is the animistic merger/superposition of the human agent and the natural objects in Bashō's *haiku* on the burial

mound.

It seems that Pound's superposition and other modernist devices akin to those of *haiku*, such as intertextuality (*haiku*'s *honkadori* or allusive variation), the inter-genre theory of Vorticism,¹⁵ and syntactical fragmentation and condensation not only reflect the disjointed and alienating situations of his times, but they were also his conscious and subconscious attempts at deconstructing and overcoming the alienating effects of the homogeneous, linear time and space in (Western) modernity, the culmination of the Western metaphysical tradition, the "will to architecture/construction," according to Kōjin Karatani.¹⁶ Like his fellow modernists, Pound seems to have tried to restore to the culture of his time non-linear, non-homogeneous space and time which would be filled with vivid life-force. The irony and dilemma of Pound and other modernists were that their attempts had to be carried out through the same ingredients as those of what they regarded as the ailing and alienating modern situations:

¹⁵ The Vorticists's unifying theory of different genres of art does not seem to have resulted in the superpositional blending of literature and other arts as seen, for instance, in that of *haiku*, calligraphy, and *haiga* (*haiku* painting):

Thus, [Wyndham] Lewis's abilities in these two arts [i.e., literature and painting] did not lead him to try to create a "composite art," in W. J. T. Mitchell's phrase, a combination or melding of the two arts, nor do they make his work in one art resemble the other. On the contrary, his ability to write a story about that beggar made his painting [of the beggar] less literary, made it, in his words, more of a "painter's painting." (Reed Way Dasenbrock, *The Literary Vorticism of Ezra Pound & Wyndham Lewis: Towards the Condition of Painting* [Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1985], 15.)

This difference between *haiku*'s superposition and that of Vorticism may parallel that between Bashō's "dialectical superposition" and that of Pound: Pound's superposition is dualistic, whereas Bashō's, non-dualistic.

¹⁶ See Kojin Karatani, *Architecture as Metaphor: Language, Number, Money*, tr. by Sabu Kosho and ed. by Michael Speaks (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The MIT Press, 1995).

violence, destruction, and fragmentation in nature both inside and outside human being.

Not surprisingly, therefore, Pound's version of superpository poems lacks *haiku's* animistic affinity with nature, the sense of four seasons.¹⁷ This animistic affinity, I think, is what animates *haiku* and gives rise to its aesthetics such as *fueki ry2kō*, *mono no aware* (pathos/sadness of things), *wabi* (beauty of poverty), and *sabi* (desolate beauty) (both *wabi* and *sabi*, as well as *mono no aware*, are basically untranslatable, but both are "negativistic" aesthetics of downfall and centripetal sensibility, being associated with such concepts/elements as old age, (impersonal) loneliness, austerity, poverty, down to earthness, simplicity, lack, asymmetry, indirectness, rust, shabbiness, defeat, darkness, silence, and ultimately death and merging with nature, with a tinge of humor permeating all of these).¹⁸ Pound's nature is inevitably mediated through modern technology and machinery as seen, for instance, in the metro poem. Discussing Pound's epic ambition in

¹⁷ Miner, for instance, comments on Pound's "Fan Piece, for her Imperial Lord" quoted above:

How then does this poem differ from *haiku*? First, *haiku* are nature poems, and exclude such topics as love complaints, which are considered the proper province of thirty-one syllable *waka*. Second, Pound's suggestion of the season (frost suggests autumn) lacks the over-riding importance of nature which is characteristic of *haiku*. . . . What Pound's poem "lacks," and indeed what it does not pretend to have, is a centuries-old tradition of nature symbolism and a poetic practice to express it, as well as a language highly developed for brief, suggestive, and allusive poetry. (Miner, "Pound, *Haiku*, and the Image," Walter Sutton, op. cit., 124-25.)

¹⁸ Most of Bashō's *haiku* exemplify the aesthetic of *wabi* and *sabi*, but to add one more example:

Nomi shirami
uma no shito suru
makura moto

Fleas, lice,
The horse pissing
Near the pillow.

his *Cantos*, Sicari writes:

One must recall that Pound begins his "poem including history" [i.e., *The Cantos*] amidst the devastation of the First World War. As technological advances once deemed blessings and certain signs of progress turn [sic] monstrosously on their creators, it was only logical for Pound to conclude that civilization as the West had seen it had developed only to destroy itself, and that a new way of organizing a culture must be found by the artists.¹⁹

We should note the predominance of the explosive imagery of modern machinery and gadgets in many of the modernist/avant-garde movements of the early 20th century West in general. The violent, destructive, and explosive iconoclasticism of Vorticism, founded by Pound and Wyndham Lewis, is typically expressed in the title and the iconoclastic manifestos of the first issue of its magazine *Blast*.²⁰

¹⁹ Stephen Sicari, *Pound's Epic Ambition: Dante and the Modern World* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 4.

²⁰ See, also, the following remarks by Harry D. Harootunian:

We are to read [the cultural discussions that took place in Japan before the Second World War] not as romantic or even nostalgic reactions to Western instrumental reason, which was named "traditionalism," but as modernist attempts that sought in repetition an apparent difference that might, according to Gilles Deleuze, "take the place of identity and negativity, of identity and contradiction." Although much of this modernist discussion was marked by political conservatism (revealing a kinship with the Western turn of mind, "modernists against modernity," as Raymond Williams describes it), it is possible to read this episode in Japan's history, and indeed any comparable one in the history of capitalist modernization, as an effort to "blast" the continuum by recalling a moment of difference from the past and resituating it in the present to interrupt the chain of signification. (Harry D. Harootunian, "The Benjamin Effect: Modernism, Repetition, and the Path to Different Cultural Imaginaries," Michael P. Steinberg, ed., *Walter Benjamin and the Demands of History* [Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1996], 64.)

In "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) compares the fundamental difference of cinema (or the camera operator) and painting (or the painter) to that of surgery (or the surgeon/operator) and exorcism (or the exorcist/shaman). In Pound, too, there is machine/urban life mediating between himself as poet/artist and the world around him. Bashō, however, was still in a time where animistic, shamanistic sensibilities persisted, so that he could say, "Learn about pines from pines, and about bamboos from bamboos."²¹

Eisenstein's montage and dialectics

The crucial importance of machinery and its correlates of Western modernity also seem to separate Bashō's version of superposition and montage from those of Eisenstein, who, judging from the words such as "imagism" and "superposition" used in his writings, probably knew directly or indirectly of Imagism/Vorticism and of Pound's ideas on *haiku*. Eisenstein's ideas on montage, superposition, and dialectics in relation to *haiku* and Japanese culture can be surmised from the following passages:

The *haiku* is a concentrated impressionist sketch:

A lonely crow
On leafless bough,
One autumn eve.

Basho²²

²¹ Doho Hattori, *Sanzoshi*, translated by Ueda, op. cit., 38.

²² Sergei Eisenstein, "The Cinematographic Principle and the Ideogram," Sergei Eisenstein, *Film Form and the Film Sense*, ed. and tr. by Jay Leyda (Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, 1957), 31. As in Pound, Eisenstein was also fascinated by the superpositional/montage effects of Chinese ideograms:

From our point of view, these [*haiku* and *tanka* by Basho, Buson, Hitomaro, etc.] are montage phrases. Shot lists. The simple combination of two or three details of a material kind yields a perfectly finished representation of another kind--psychological.²³

Eisenstein characterizes montage as a collision of two pieces/shots in opposition to each other:

[F]rom the collision of two given factors arises a concept. . . .

[M]ontage is conflict.

As [*sic*] the basis of every art is conflict (an "imagist" transformation of the dialectical principle).²⁴

Eisenstein, then, argues that just as the series of explosions of an internal combustion engine drive forward its automobile, the dynamics of montage serve as impulses driving forward the total film.²⁵

As in Pound, we also notice a dualistic tension and collision of human rationality/industry and nature in Eisenstein:

Because the limit of organic form (the passive principle of being) is *Nature*. The limit of rational form (the active principle of production) is *Industry*. At the intersection of Nature and Industry stands *Art*.

For example: the picture for water and the picture of an eye signifies "to weep"; the picture of an ear near the drawing of a door = "to listen" . . . It is exactly what we do in the cinema, combining shots that are *depictive*, single in meaning, neutral in content--into *intellectual* contexts and series. (Ibid., 30.)

²³ Ibid., 32.

²⁴ Ibid. 37-38. Underlining Hagiwara's.

²⁵ Ibid. 38.

The logic of organic form vs. the logic of rational
form yields, in collision,
The dialectic of the art-form.²⁶

Like Pound's superposition of image and idea, Eisenstein's montage is characterized by explosive dialectics and a dichotomy of nature and human rationality, which are dialectically mediated by modern machinery and technology. One of the numerous examples of Eisenstein's explosive montage is that of the egg-shaped face of *Ameno uzume*, an ancient Japanese goddess of mirth and fertility, montaged with a Baroque Christ (who appears to be exploding in the radiant beams of his halo), thus producing the effect of an instantaneous burst of a bomb (Figure 1). On the whole, Eisenstein's montage and dialectics seem to be described as, so to speak, an inverted tree of historical dialectics, the successive collisions and synthetic explosions of whose branches are expected to drive history up to its culmination in a communist utopian state (Figure 2).

²⁶ "Dialectic Approach to Film Form," op. cit., 46. See, also, the following passages from Eisenstein:

Unarmed with the method of Marxism-Leninism, without our present state of social development and, finally, without the still so little used marvel of human genius and technology--the cinema--we could never peer with such dissecting precision into the most secret organism of form. (Eisenstein, *Psychology of Composition* quoted in Håkan Lövgren, *Eisenstein's Labyrinth: Aspects of a Cinematic Synthesis of the Arts* [Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1996], 18.)

What we need is science, not art. The word creation is useless. It should be replaced by labor. One does not create a work, one constructs it with finished parts, like a machine. Montage is a beautiful word: it describes the process of constructing with prepared fragments. (Notebooks from 1919, cited by Shklovsky and quoted by Jacques Aumont, *Montage Eisenstein*, tr. by Lee Hidreth, et al. [Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1979], 150.)

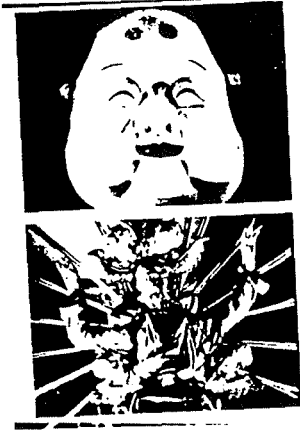


Figure 1

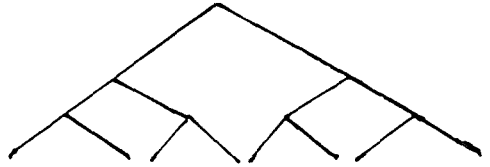


Figure 2

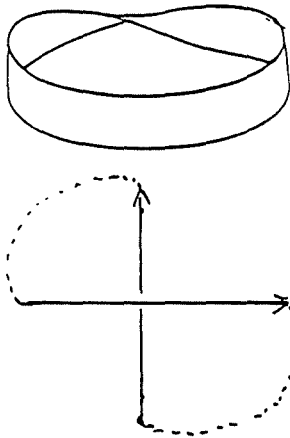


Figure 3

While Pound's and Eisenstein's notions of epic and history are predominantly explosive and centrifugal, their centrifugal explosions are ultimately inseparable from some centripetal elements. What Sicari calls Pound's epic ambition in his *Cantos* (a "poem including history"), for instance, centers on the wandering, epic hero, a polysemous personae, a palimpsestic/superpositional composite of traditional epic heroes such as Dante's Ulysses, Aeneas, and Dante himself in his *Divine Comedy*. As such, Pound's epic hero's wandering journey can be seen as a spiritual quest for, and a Neo-Platonic return to, the lost home/origin/paradise/Eden/"womb"²⁷ and in this sense it resembles, at least on the surface, Bashō's centripetal wandering journey/quest into, and merger with, nature (*jinen*)/"womb" as exemplified, for instance, in his travel literature *Oku no hosomichi* (The Narrow Road into the Deep Interior). Bashō's *fueki ryūkō*, then, is a "metaphysics" of nature/*jinen* (or what he calls *zōka*).²⁸

²⁷ For comparative discussions of Pound's and Dante's epic wanderers' Neo-Platonic quests for the origin, see Sicari, op. cit., 3-16.

²⁸ I think that whether or not *jinen/zōka*, and its cognates such as (*Tendai hongaku shisō*, (the philosophy of original knowledge without beginning and end), *nyoraizō shisō* (the philosophy of the womb of the Thus-Come One), *sōsoku funi ron* (the philosophy of non-dualism), and Kitarō Nishida's *basho* (topos, an appropriation of the Platonic *chora*), is an autistically closed and homogeneous tempo-spatiality, as Kōjin Karatani, Shirō Matsumoto, and others would argue, is a debatable issue. It seems to me that *jinen*'s tempo-spatiality is a topological one as in the Klein bottle or an autopoietic (self-producing) system (see note 3), and thus it defies a mere three dimensional argument of whether *jinen* is a closed or open system. How could the non-dualism (not monism) of *jinen* be homogeneous? It becomes homogeneous when it is viewed only in the monistic, three-dimensional tempo-spatiality, in which the so-called eternal now is conceived as the cross/identity of (linear/horizontal/*zoku*) time and (vertical/eternal/*ga*) (non) time. In the *sōsoku funi ron* (or Bashō's *fueki ryūkō*) (nondualism) of *jinen*, the cross/identity of the two kinds of time is "put under erasure" as in the topological "cross/identity" of the "two sides" of the Möbius band (Figure 3). It seems to me that the former type of identity generates Poundian/Eisensteinian superposition and dialectics, while the latter, Bashō's superposition and "dialectics."

Womb sensibility can also be seen in Eisenstein's lifelong interest in the religio-mystical sense of ecstasy, which became particularly strong and pronounced in the last decade or so of his life. Håkan Lövgren explores and detects in Eisenstein's seemingly materialist, scientific dialectics and montage hidden impulses for what Eisenstein called the "pre-logical" and the "primitive/sensuous,"²⁹ necessary ingredients, it seems to me, for

The issue of responsibility (*sekinin*) and ethics, the lack (or ambiguity) of which is often ascribed to the putative homogeneity of the *funi ron* of *jinen*, should also be considered from this topological perspective. In *jinen*, with a Möbius band-like topological twist ("negation") built into itself, no two beings, be they human animals or non-human animals, are seen as straightforwardly identical/connected in the three dimensional tempo-spatiality, but they are seen as "identical" and "connected" in, so to speak, the topological tempo-spatiality of *jinen*. The concentrated, but narrow and hierarchized sense of responsibility (e. g., the responsibility, first, of humans to humans, then, of humans to non-humans) arises in the three-dimensional (i. e., anthropocentrically homogenized) tempo-spatiality, whereas a seemingly unfocused, but much more cosmic and non-hierarchical sense of responsibility would be possible only in the topologically non-dualistic tempo-spatiality such as *jinen*. It is in this context that we should read, not distracted by such surface/Confucian words as *iteki* (barbarians) and *chōjū* (birds and beasts) in another of his travel literature *Oi no kobumi* (Essays from a Traveler's Book-Satchel), Bashō's *haiku* that follows:

Saru o kiku hito
sutego ni aki no
kaze ikani

Those who listen to the monkey's cry.
How about the autumn wind,
Blowing onto the deserted baby?

Michinobe no
mukuge wa uma ni
kuware keri

The rose of Sharon
On the roadside was eaten
By the horse

Musasabi no
kotori hami oru
kareno kana

The flying squirrel
Is crunching the small bird
On the withered moor. (Buson)
(Tr. by Blyth, *Haiku*, IV, 286.)

²⁹ See Lövgren, op. cit., 18-19. See, also, the following passage:

"Agressivity" and "dynamism" were key concepts in Eisenstein's cinematic thinking during the 1920s. This was the expansive period of Soviet cinema, when the social conflicts and contradictions of

a kind of Nietzschean ecstatic dialectics of the Apollonian and Dionysian principles. Lövgren also points out that Eisenstein's idea of ecstasy and repetition/resonance echoes Leonard da Vinci's Neo-Platonic mystico-mathematical philosophy of micro-macro correspondence of human being and the universe/nature.³⁰

prerevolutionary Russia, and their resulting revolutionary events, were still the subject of bold artistic experimentation. . . . In the 1930s, however, this revolutionary steam was diverted in various "folk pipes", national social and industrial projects on the basis of "socialism in one country", and Eisenstein replaced his idea of the intellectual film with, among other things, the broader and perhaps more vague concept of "ecstasy", that was presented as both a precondition for creative artistic work and an effect of this work. (Lövgren, op. cit., 13.)

³⁰ Ibid. 25-26. See, for instance, the following passage from Lövgren:

Eisenstein defines his nonindifferent nature [the title of a collection of his essays, exploring concepts of ecstasy and *pathos*, mathematical and geometrical relations such as the golden section, and their functions in aesthetic and natural phenomena] as the "musical component", generated by that "emotional landscape" which constituted the ecstatic basis for his silent films such as *Bromemosets 'Potemkin'* (The Battleship 'Potemkin'). The "inner plastic music" of this emotional landscape is above all a matter of creating resonance through repetition and "chiming" (*perezvon*). By describing the repetition of visual motifs in art as the equivalent of an echo or chiming, that is, auditory occurrences, Eisenstein drew the conclusion that art approaches a fundamental mode of interaction among natural phenomena--resonance. . . . Thus, the "emotional landscape" in Eisenstein's silent films and the other works of art analyzed by him, is based on a primarily auditory/tonal and temporal phenomenon in nature, resonance, which is abstracted into an artistic device, the repetition of motifs at certain visual/formal (and, in film, temporal) intervals. (Ibid. 26.)

Eisenstein's idea of nature and *pathos* seems to come very close to Bashō's *jinen/zōka* and *mono no aware* (pathos of things) when he says:

We traced this process in Eastern painting from the invisible coexistence of man and landscape in a plastic metaphor, from the visible--in the traditional landscape drawing of the philosopher immersed in a contemplation of nature, and from the material--in the landscape of the painted kimono that clothes a real person.

Everywhere this was the emotional landscape, dissolving into itself the human being, or more precisely:

This kind of micro-macro correspondence and repetition seems to be exemplified in Eisenstein's "kangaroo formula," which is based on the metaphor of the nested-box (or superpositional) image of generations, and which he used to explain his idea of ecstasy. Lövgren summarizes this formula as follows:

This metaphor contains the three stages in Eisenstein's conception of the ecstatic build-up:

- 1) the image of a womb with an embryo (the pouch with the baby kangaroo[]),
- 2) the sudden burst/birth (the crawling out of the pouch),
- 3) resulting in a new individual of the same species (another kangaroo).³¹

From Eisenstein's ideas of ecstasy, we can surmise that his theory of the dialectical montage of successive collisions and explosions, which are expected to culminate in the communist utopia/paradise, is a scientific/geometric sublimation of his idea of religio-mystical and psycho-sexual ecstasy. Underlying the montage explosion of *Ameno uzume*, the goddess of fertility (Figure 1), for instance,

Everywhere the emotional landscape turns out to be an image of the mutual absorption of man and nature one into the other.

And in this particular sense, the actual principle of emotional landscape bears the imprint of the inspiration of *pathos*. (Eisenstein, *Nonindifferent Nature*, tr. by Herbert Marshall [Cambridge; New York; New Rochelle; Melbourne, Sydney: Cambridge UP, 1987], 359.)

In the final analysis, however, Eisenstein's nature, like his montage and dialectics, crucially differs from Bashō's *jinen/zōka*:

And the nonindifference of our own human nature, participating in the great historical act of the best part of humanity--is the invincible guarantee of the undying essence of the great arts, glorifying with every means available to it the greatness of Man--the maker and the creator. (Ibid. 396, the last lines of his *Nonindifferent Nature*.)

³¹ Ibid. 29-31.

seems to be an ecstatic bursting/birth (procreation/fertility) of his kangaroo formula.

Thus we can detect womb sensibilities underlying the superposition, montage, and dialectics in Pound, Eisenstein, and (Bashō's) *haiku*. One significant difference between Pound's and Eisenstein's womb sensibility and that of Bashō, however, is that while the former is ultimately centrifugal, the latter is centripetal, or rather non-centrifugal. In the Poundian and Eisensteinian schema, the "womb" as the Platonic *cave/chora/receptacle/matter* (=mater=mother) is to be penetrated, impregnated, but finally transcended or left behind. Pound's epico-historical ambition reminiscent of the epic, heroic journeys of Aeneas (who founds Rome after negotiating a series of tempting and dangerous chthonic feminine powers), Dante's Ulysses (who, unlike Homer's Odyssey, goes beyond the Gibraltar, the "birth canal" of the Mediterranean), and Dante himself (who also ascends heaven after his chthonic descent), and Eisenstein's ecstasy in the explosive birth in his kangaroo formula which is analogous to his revolutionary, dialectical montage all seem to testify to the schema. In both Pound and Eisenstein, the feminine is a passive heroine or a dangerous temptress to be taken, subjugated, and left behind by the active hero; she is the (back)ground/nature where the hero's epico-historical quests, be they spiritual or material, are enacted. In Bashō's womb sensibility, the poet's quest, if anything, is a self-realization through an ultimate self-effacement and merger into *jinen*. Both Pound's and Eisenstein's sensibilities are not incompatible with the Empire State Building, while Bashō's *haiku* goes well with a shabby grass-thatched hut in the mountains on a rainy night with a poor, but contented old hermit

peacefully sitting in it.³² It is this difference, I believe, that distinguishes Pound's and Eisenstein's version of superpository/montage dialectics and that of Bashō's: the former is mediated by the third term, be it the triangular point of synthesis, truth, ultimate goal of history, or God the Father, whereas in the latter, such mediatory/teleological terms are, if not negated, deconstructively placed under erasure. Both Pound and Eisenstein, and for that matter, many of their contemporary modernist artists, are ultimately Neo-Platonic and, by extension, Platonic/Hegelian, whereas Bashō is non-Platonic/non-Hegelian.³³ (As such, Pound's epic wanderer's Neo-Platonic

³² See, for instance, the following Chinese poem by a Zen monk Ryōkan (1758-1831), whose centripetal aesthetic sensibility largely overlaps with *haiku's wabi and sabi*:

Shōgai mi o tatsuru ni monouku	Reluctant lifelong to advance in
	the world,
tōtō tenshin ni makasu	Nonchalant and abandoned to
	nature's course,
nōchū ni sanshō no kome	Two quarts of rice in the bag;
rohen ni issoku no takigi	A bundle of firewood by his hearth.
tare ka towan meigo no ato	Who cares for the trace of <i>satori</i> or
	delusion?
nanzo shiran myōri no chiri	Who worries about the dust of fame
	and profit?
yau sōan no uchi	In the grass-hut in the night rain,
sōkyaku tōkan ni nobu	He stretches both legs leisurely.

(Toyoharu Tōgō, tr., *Zenshaku Ryōkan Shishū* [Ryōkan's Chinese Poems, Fully Translated into Modern Japanese], [Tokyo: Sōgensha, 1975], 101. English translation Hagiwara's.)

³³ Roland Barthes detects in Eisenstein's montage a non-Platonic, non-Hegelian element in what the former calls the "obtuse meaning," which is devoid of the signified as in, according to Barthes, *haiku*. See Roland Barthes, "The Third Meaning: Research Notes on Some Eisenstein Stills," Roland Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*, tr. by Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 52-68. See also the following passage from Barthes:

The still offers us the *inside* of the fragment. In this connection we would need to take up--displacing them--Eisenstein's own formulations

return to the origin/Paradise/"womb" can be seen as Oedipally mediated by the patriarchal God/Logos.)

Benjamin, Pound, Eisenstein, and Bashō

Walter Benjamin's ideas on the Paris *passage*/arcade (present-day shopping mall) and *Aura* seem to shed a new light on the issues of superposition, montage, dialectics, and "womb sensibilities" in Pound, Eisenstein, and (Bashō's) *haiku*. Here are a few passages (numbered by Hagiwara for reference) from his work:

- 1) And how else can we treat the *passage* than as a building in which we live once more as in a dream the lives of our parents and grandparents just as the embryo in its mother's womb relives the life of the animal? <Stroller>³⁴

when envisaging the new possibilities of audio-visual montage: ' . . . the basic centre of gravity . . . is transferred to inside the fragment, into the elements included in the image itself. *And the centre of gravity is no longer the element "between shots" - the shock - but the element "inside the shot" - the accentuation within the fragment . . .* . . . [The still] is not a specimen chemically extracted from the substance of the film, but rather the trace of a superior *distribution* of traits of which the film as experienced in its animated flow would give no more than one text among others. The still, then, is the fragment of a second text *whose existence never exceeds the fragment*; film and still find themselves in a palimpsest relationship without it being possible to say that one is *on top of* the other or that one is *extracted* from the other. (Barthes, "The Third Meaning," op. cit., 67.)

It seems that what Barthes is envisaging through such words as "the obtuse meaning," "the still," "the fragment of a second text *whose existence never exceeds the fragment*," and "a palimpsest relationship without it being possible to say that one is *on top of* the other or that one is *extracted* from the other" largely overlaps with what Bashō envisaged through *fueki ryūkō* and his *haiku*. I have yet to ponder on the possible connection between Barthes's "obtuse meaning" and Eisenstein's ecstasy in his "kangaroo formula" as well as between the former and autopoiesis (see note 3).

³⁴ Walter Benjamin, *Das Passagen-Werk*, D 2 a, 1 (Walter Benjamin *Gesammelte Schriften*, V-1 [Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1982], hereafter GS).

2) Remarkably, just like this world, the passage, in its origin [Ursprung], is bound up in plant existence. (*Das Passagen-Werk*, F 4, 1. Underlining Hagiwara's.)

3) We define *Aura* [in nature] as a unique phenomenon that remains far, no matter how near it may be. One summer afternoon, while quietly resting, one follows a mountain range on the horizon or a tree branch that casts its shadow onto one's rest--this is to imbibe the *Aura* of the mountain range or the tree branch. (*Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit* (The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction), GS I-2.)

4) What a child (and an adult in his vague remembrance) found in the folds of its mother's old dress in which it buried its face when clinging to her skirt--this is exactly what the present work must contain. <Mode> (*Das Passagen-Werk*, K 2, 2.)

5) The dialectical image is a sudden flash. As a flashing image in the now [*Jetzt*] of intelligibility, the past existence is captured. Since salvation is done in this, and only in this, way, it can be done only in the image which will be lost, becoming unsavable in the next moment. (*Ibid.*, N 9, 7.)³⁵

Underlining Hagiwara's. Unless otherwise specified, the source for the subsequent quotes from Benjamin is from this edition. I wish to thank Professors Margaretmary Daley, Peter Yang, and Jutta Ittner for their kind help and suggestions in my translation of Benjamin. All the responsibility for the translations, however, is naturally mine.

³⁵ Compare this with the following:

If you get a flash of insight into an object, put it into words before it fades away in your mind. (Bashō's words recorded by Doho Hattori, *Sanzoshi*, quoted by Ueda, *op. cit.*, 39.)

[T]he association through (noncontemplative) involuntary memory is, as Proust himself describes it, precisely the apprehension of "a fragment of time in the pure state" for "a moment brief as a flash of lightning" (Remembrance 3: 905). Benjamin was simultaneously

6) Should awakening be the synthesis between the thesis of dream consciousness and the antithesis of waking consciousness? Then the moment of awakening would be identical with the 'now (*Jetzt*) of intelligibility,' in which things assume their true, that is surreal, countenance. (*Das Passagen-Werk*, N 3 a, 3, quoted by Bernd Witte, *Walter Benjamin: An Intellectual Biography*, tr. by James Rolleston [Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1991], 27.)

7) In the idea "eternal return," the historicism of the 19th century is to be overturned. According to this idea, any traditions, including the latest one, will end up being something that has already taken place in the night of time immemorial. By this, tradition will assume the character of phantasmagoria in which ur-history [*Urgeschichte*] is staged in the most modern costume. (*Das Passagen-Werk*, D 8 a, 2. Underlining Hagiwara's.)

8) One tends to believe the number of prostitutes to be enormous because in a fantasmagoric space produced by their constant walking back and forth over the same place their number appears to multiply infinitely. There is another reason for this illusion: the prostitutes put on a great many costumes for disguise in one night. <Mode> (Ibid. O 6 a, 2.)

9) Before they decided to build the Industry Palace, there had been a plan, modeled after the Crystal Palace, to cover a part of the Champs-Élysées, together with its trees. (Ibid. F 6, 4. Underlining Hagiwara's.)

10) Basically, the issue here is the earliest phenomenon of

describing such a "lightning flash" in the "profane illumination" of the surrealists (GS 2: 297); the interruptive force of an objectively constituted image-as-lightning-flash would later become Benjamin's principle metaphor for the dialectical image (e.g., GS 5: 576, 578). (Max Pensky, "Tactics of Remembrance: Proust, Surrealism, and the Origin of the *Passagenwerk*," Michael P. Steinberg, ed., *Walter Benjamin and the Demands of History* [Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1996], 173-74.)

the principle of montage.³⁶ Concerning the construction of the Eiffel Tower: "Here, the sculptural vividness becomes silent in favor of the extraordinary tension of spiritual energy which forms the inorganic material energy into the smallest, most effective forms, and which connects them in the most effective way. . . . Each one of the 12,000 metallic parts and the 2,500,000 rivets are precisely defined to the millimeter. . . . There, too, thought governed the muscles power, and thought transformed this muscle power into secure frameworks and cranes." (A. G. Meyer, *Iron Building*, 93) (Ibid. F 4 a, 2. Underlining Hagiwara's.)³⁷

11) The street leads the stroller (*flaΔneur*) to a vanished time. To him any street is a downhill. This slope leads him down, if not to the Mothers, then to a past which, not being his own private past, can be all the more charming. (Ibid. M 1, 2.)

12) Landscape--indeed Paris becomes a landscape to the stroller. Or more exactly, to him this city becomes separated into dialectical poles. It appears to him as a landscape, while it embraces him as a room. (Ibid. M 1, 4.)

From these passages, which I arranged imitating Benjamin's montage style, we can surmise that his *passage* is a kind of *chora/womb* (See 1), 4), 11) and 12)),³⁸ where the primordial past

³⁶ Benjamin undoubtedly knew about Eisenstein's montage because he often commented on and wrote about Russian cinema, including "The Battleship Potemkin." See, for instance, his *Moscow Diary* (*Moskauer Tagebuch*) (GS VI), ed. by Gary Smith; tr. by Richard Sieburth (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard UP, 1986), 28 and 106 and "The Present Situation of the Russian Cinematic Art" (*Zur Lage der russischen Filmkunst*) (GS II-2).

³⁷ Cf. the passage quoted from Eisenstein's "Notebooks from 1919" in note 26.

³⁸ It is debatable if this *chora* is a mere Platonic *chora*, passive matter, a receptacle of spermatik logos (*logos spermatikos*). As I will shortly

(*Ursprung*), or *fueki* in Bashō's term, and the future/mode, or Bashō's *ryūkō*, form a dialectical and utopian meeting or synthesis/awakening in the cinematic phantasmagoria of sleeping and waking (See 5), 6), and 7)). There is even a modern version of religious aspirations in such forms as the Eiffel Tower (See 10)) and the (divine/holy) light shining down from above through the *passage's* modern glass roof (See 9)). We may see some analogies between Benjamin's *passage* and *Aura* (See 3)), which include such images and elements as *passage* (way), *flaΔneur/stroller* (See 11) and 12)), plants (See 2), 3), and 9)), animals (See 1)), and prostitutes (See 8)) and Bashō's time and topography, a kind of tempo-spatial passage where the old aristocratic/imperial *ga* centered on Kyoto intersect, in dialectical tension, with the new shogunal/mercantile *zoku* in Edo.³⁹ It is this superpositional and "dialectical" tension of the old/constancy (*fueki*) and the new/change (*ryūkō*), it seems, that engenders Bashō's *haiku* such as:

Takotsubo ya hakanaki yume o natsu no tsuki	The octopus trap: Fleeting dreams Under the summer moon
Hitotsu ya ni yūjo mo netari hagi to tsuki moon	In the same house Courtesans also sleep: The bush clover and the moon

discuss, Benjamin's *passage* seems to be closer to Bashō's *jinen/zōka* (see note 3).

³⁹ For my discussions of *ga-zoku* tension in Bashō in the present paper, I am largely indebted to Haruki Katsuhara, "Haikai no jūhasseiki: kindai Edo ki/Tokyo ki no <naibu> kūkan" (Haikai's 18th Century: The <Internal> Sapace in the Modern Edo/Tokyo Eras) in Takahito Momokawa, et al., *Edobunka no henyō: jūhasseiki nihon no keiken* (Metamorphoses of the Edo Culture: Experience in the 18th Century Japan) (Heibonsha, 1994), 73-117.

Tabi ni yande
yume wa karen o
kakemeguru

Ill on a journey;
Dreams run around
Over a withered moor⁴⁰

Tentative Conclusion

Both Pound's superpository dialectics and Eisenstein's dialectical montage, while tapping their energy from the womb sensibility as seen in the Poundian epic hero's wandering journey and Eisenstein's ecstasy in his kangaroo formula, are inseparable from the iconoclastic/Dionysian/centrifugal blast or the *Ameno uzume's* egg-shaped face exploding like a bomb, symbolic of the explosions of World War I and the Russian Revolution in the age of modern machinery and technology. Pound turned this explosive energy into his politico-epical ambition to envision an ultimately teleologic history of his own, and Eisenstein, into his dialectical montage as a driving force, an internal combustion engine, of a history of revolution. The iconoclasticism of Bashō's *fueki ryūkō*, on the other hand, is non-centrifugal or even centripetal, if any, as expressed in the plopping sound of the frog jumping in the quiet olden pond or the cicada's voice penetrating the rock and further enhancing the surrounding silence. In Bashō's *fueki ryūkō*, there is no sense of history dialectically and centrifugally developing and structuring itself toward a grand cause and goal. Herein lies the crucial difference between Pound's and Eisenstein's superposition, montage, and dialectics and those of Bashō.

Benjamin's *passage* and *Aura*, though overlapping with Poundian and Eisensteinian superposition, montage, and dialectics, seem to come very close to the sensibility of Bashō's *haiku*. In Pound and Eisenstein, the womb sensibility/energy of

⁴⁰ Hagiwara's translation based on that of Blyth, *op. cit.*, 288.

jinen/nature was ultimately dialectically "sublimated" into a telos, whereas in Benjamin's non-teleologic dialectics it seems to play a central role. We can see numerous parallels between Benjamin's version of dialectics and that of Bashō's *haiku*: Benjamin's eternal return (see passage 7)) and Bashō's *fueki ryūkō*, which in turn deploy themselves in such parallels as the "epiphanic/Messianic (destructive/revolutionary)" meeting of the *Ursprung/Urgeschichte* (Bashō's *fueki/ga*/tradition/eternity) and the mundane, "fragmentary" minutiae such as the folds of the mother's old dress (Bashō's *ryūkō/zoku*/mode/transience),⁴¹

⁴¹ The mother's "old" dress, just as Bashō's old pond (see his *haiku* on the old pond and the frog), seems to dialectically/superpositionally partake of both eternity/*fueki* and transience/*ryūkō*. See also the following passages:

The act of construction, as Benjamin was to envisage it, involved what Jacques Derrida later would identify as a "double reading" that would simultaneously see the fragment in relation to its "text of origin" and yet grasp it "incorporated in a whole and different totality." (Harootunian, op. cit., 64.)

Space-time comprehends both the spatial and temporal juxtapositions that occur when many different, many useless things are jammed together in a small place, and when marginal businesses open and close without much thought to remodeling. It changes commodities back into their natural counterparts, or better, allows an older, occluded affinity between the commodity and its natural counterpart to be glimpsed once again. Racks of cheap colored canes and umbrellas recall the phalanxes of ancient armies, or reedy thickets; papier-mache souvenirs jostle with boutiques where "combs swim frog green and coral red, as in an aquarium," and "trumpets turn into shellfish." . . . (5: 1042). Reflected and fragmented by dirty plate glass, by countless self-multiplying mirrors, things in the old passage begin to wink and mutter, become phantasmagoric in the other sense, not as sensation but as sensing, magically half-endowed with the ability to communicate. . . .

"Passagen" perhaps comes closest to what Benjamin had originally described as a "dialectical fairy-scene" (*dialektische Feerie*), in which the enchanted appearance of phantasmagoric capitalism could, as transience deprived it of the mythical Schein of perpetual newness, emerge as a collection of dialectical images. (Pensky, op. cit., 166-67.)

Benjamin's *chora*-like passage and Bashō's passage into (and in) *jinen*/womb (e.g., the *haiku* on the octopus trap and the courtesans in the same house), and Benjamin's phantasmagoria of dream and awakening and Bashō's dream as expressed, for instance, in the *haiku* on the octopus trap and the withered moor.

These parallels also point to the lack of the sense of linear progress of history in both Benjamin's and Bashō's versions of dialectics. In both Benjamin and Bashō the dialectical "meetings"/superpositions of *fueki/ga* and *ryūkō/zoku* or of *Ursprung* and mode, etc. are not so much three dimensional as topological, devoid of both the Poundian involvement in fascism and the Eisensteinian commitment to revolutionary historicism (another type of fascism/totalitarianism?). It is also this non three dimensional, topologically palimpsest/superpositionary dialectics, it seems, that renders the tempo-spatiality of Benjamin's *passage* and Bashō's *jinen* nonhomogeneous,⁴² deconstructively defusing

From these passages, we can see that the fragments of the modern, artificial, and fashionable reproductive technique could palimpsestically/superpositionally acquire an animistic *Aura* akin to Bashō's *haiku*. In this sense, Benjamin's eternal return in the age of mechanical reproduction is connatural with Bashō's eternal return (or *fueki ryūkō*).

⁴² I am also indebted to Ryōsuke Ōhashi, "Itan to seitō: Bashō no haikai o tōshite" (Unorthodoxy and Orthodoxy: Through Bashō's *Haiku*), *Nihon bungaku to bukkyō* (Japanese Literature and Buddhism) V (Iwanamishoten, 1994), 229-321 for a non-homogeneous reading of Bashō's *haiku*, especially those on the octopus trap and the courtesans and the bush clover. See, for instance, the following from Ōhashi:

While in the trap (lit., jar), the octopus sees the outside moon light, and it also sees the trap under the moon light, the absolute other. It sees that the bottom of its selfhood is an abyss. Thus the octopus will also attain a new view on the "other" in general. (Ōhashi, op. cit., 317.)

Comparing Bashō's *haiku* on the courtesans and the bush clover in the *Oku no hosonichi* with that on the deserted child (see note 28) in the *Nozarashi kikō* (The Moor-Exposed Skeleton Diary), Ōhashi continues:

the (Oedipally) triangular tension, confrontation, and explosion/destruction of the Poundian and Eisensteinian totalitarian (and patriarchal) dialectics which primarily takes place

In contrast to [Bashō's detached attitude toward the deserted child], Bashō in the *Oku no hosomichi* faces the courtesans staying in the same house with such phrase as "the bush clover and the moon." Autumn has come, and the bush clover on its own has bloomed, while the moon on its own has ascended in the autumn sky. The bush clover and the moon are totally different existences, and they are the other to each other. And yet, both meet within the same autumn, forming it together. Bashō, who dwells in journey, and the courtesans, who, lamenting their sinful and shameful occupation, have gone on a pilgrimage to the Ise shrine, are total strangers to each other, and yet as wandering travelers, they are in the same world, possessing the same selfhood. . . .

The logical structure of orthodoxy and unorthodoxy boils down to the question of grasping "self." We can now see the structure of "self" as that in which self and the other merge while in confrontation. To borrow Kierkegaard's words, that kind of "self" is a "relationship which relates to the self itself." As an existential structure, it is to get outside while staying in the ego's shell. The German word "*Ek-sistenz*" which means "existence" originally means "to stand outside oneself." For self to know the original self-identity is to break the shell of the self identity to meet the other, to assume this other as self. The original "self" is unorthodox to oneself, and in this self as the unorthodox, it is connected to the absolute other. A is non-A. (Yhashi, op. cit., 318-19.)

The tension of self (orthodoxy/*fueki*) and the other (unorthodoxy/*ryūkō*) and the concomitant "existential" shattering/explosion of the self's shell/"womb" as expressed in Bashō's *haiku* is at the same time the ecstatic merger of the self and the other. A (*fueki*) is non-A (*ryūkō*) in the topologically non-homogeneous tempo-spatiality of *jinen/zōka* (the octopus, the sea, the summer moon, bush clover, the autumn moon, Bashō, the courtesans, etc.). Both Eisenstein's ecstasy (*ekstasis*) in his "kangaroo formula" and Pound's ecstatic vortex, on the other hand, take place in the primarily three-dimensional dualistic arena of tension, confrontation, and explosion/destruction. The latter version of praxis may seem more actual, powerful, and effective than the former, were it not likely to be doomed, as Adorno and Horkheimer, for instance, argue in their *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, to a vicious circular struggle of the subject/master and the object/slave which engenders in its process not only such overtly "actual and powerful" phenomena as religious persecutions, the holocaust, concentration camps, and the atomic bomb, but also more covertly oppressive and exploitative, but none the less vicious, phenomena such as hierarchizations by what Bourdieu calls symbolic capitals and powers.

in the three-dimensionally homogeneous tempo-spatiality of history.

Be that as it may, there are of course tremendous differences between Bashō and Benjamin. Benjamin's epiphany/awakening of *Ursprung* (primordial past) has to be done in and through the overwhelmingly mesmeric modern/urban situations such as the cornucopia of fetishistic consumer goods, the phantasmagoria of cinema (Eisenstein's montage now is effectively used for TV commercials and MTV), and modern architectures such as the *passage* and the Eiffel Tower. While Bashō also stood in the intersection of the old and elegant aristocratic *ga* aesthetic as exemplified, for instance, in the linked poetry and the new, mundane *zoku* sensibility of the "mass culture" of the mercantile Edo, his age did not know the explosion of modern technology and machinery.

Hence, the politico-historical, Judeo-Christian, epistemologico-ethical urgency in Benjamin, the urgency which can also be detected in many other modernists such as Eliot, Pound, and Eisenstein, but which is largely lacking in Bashō's sense of "history" and "ethics." See, for instance, the following passages from Steinberg and Harootunian:

Historical knowledge is an epistemological as well as ethical challenge. More exactly, it is a hermeneutic challenge. Benjamin's austerity informs decisively the redemptive, corrective agenda of his historiography. He indeed wants to give voice to those deprived of voice, in the past as in the present and future.⁴³

In recognizing the unevenness of development, we willingly declare our complicity in reading the text of history for the difference it offers our own present. The

⁴³ Michael P. Steinberg, "Introduction: Benjamin and the Critique of Allegorical Reason," Steinberg, *op. cit.*, 3.

responsibility Benjamin envisaged for the historical materialist was the act of participating in such a blasting operation if history was to qualify as a practice. In a number of places, Benjamin had proposed the necessity of bringing to light the new in the repeatedly the same, extracting difference from similitude, in order to project a revolutionary program directed towards a consciousness of the present that explodes the continuum of history.⁴⁴

We, thus, can say that Benjamin further pushed, if topologically in a very different direction/dimension, some of the issues shared by Pound and Eisenstein, such as superposition, montage, and dialectics, seeking for a radical "solution" to the now long-standing problems of modernity and modernization, problems which were engendered by the Newtonian-Cartesian homogeneous tempo-spatiality, as exemplified in the "techniques of reproduction (and destruction)" in virtually every field of human activities, be they in art, education, politics, economics, not to mention science and technology. More than half a century after Benjamin, these problems, which were overwhelming even for Benjamin and his time, have still exponentially become complex and intensified to such an extent that one now cannot help posing a question: Will the so-called high technologies such as virtual reality, genetic engineering, and cyborg technology which seem to emancipate humans from premodern fetters and miseries, even while restoring the animistic/shamanistic non-homogeneous sensibility to humans in the so-called postmodernity and yet also appear to be inseparably intertwined with homogenizing capitalism, will these technologies prove to be conducive, or even amenable, to Benjamin's version of dialectical awakening not to mention that of Bashō?

⁴⁴ Harootunian, *op. cit.*, 69.