

ARTICLE

Two modern poems with a strong religious message

John A. F. Hopkins*

Independent Researcher, Tokyo, Japan

Abstract

In this essay, two renowned modernist poems – T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) and Miyazawa Kenji's *Haru to Shura* (1924) – were explored. Both may include ethical aspects, but their religious component is more prominent. The aim is to discover how this component functions in each text. Eliot's poem needs no introduction, but Miyazawa, though famous in Japan, is much less so in the English-speaking world. To analyze the texts, my expanded version of M. Riffaterre's semiotic theory of the structure of modern poetry was used. According to the theory, a modern poetic text is generated by two underlying 'matricial' propositions, each of which produces a set, or paradigm, of variant images having the same underlying semantic structure. This paradigmatic method of signifying is a characteristic of modern poetry. Each matrix is reconstructed by the reader from a comparison of the images of each set. The matrices are linked syntagmatically in a variety of relations, such as negation or difference of scale. The bimatricial text (subject–sign) has an intertextual counterpart (object–sign) of similar structure but different lexicon. The interpretant of these two complex signs has a sociolectic counterpart of similar lexicon but different structure. The semantic contrast thus established produces innovation, which is the other distinctive feature of modern poetry. This theory will be applied to Eliot's and Miyazawa's poems to investigate the roles of religion in them.

Keywords: Religion; Semiotics of poetry; *The Waste Land*; *Haru to Shura*

***Corresponding author:**John A. F. Hopkins
(jafh@sky.plala.or.jp)

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1. Introduction

Although research into the relation between literature and ethics is apparently increasing, one problem with ethics is that they may vary with the tenets (and folk beliefs) of a given society.^a This would require a comprehensive knowledge of the society from which the literary work derived. Even if we are dealing with a contemporary society, the moral system on which ethics are based can vary with the extent of the society concerned — one thinks of the differences between Japanese and American society, for example, when it comes to same-sex marriage. Currently, the Japanese government's position is that such marriages are unethical, and therefore illegal, though this situation seems on the brink of change.

We may say that Japan is an example of a society in which a strong ethical system exists mostly without religion. That would be to assume that Japanese Confucianism

^a Refer to the link: <https://archive.pagecentertraining.psu.edu/public-relations-ethics/ethical-decision-making/yet-another-test-page/the-difference-between-ethics-and-religion/>³

is basically not a religion, but rather a system of rules for social behavior (Confucianism is “built in” to Japanese society, but hardly ever discussed openly in this day and age. It should be noted that the ethical system of Mahayana Buddhism is taught to some extent in high schools).

Religion, on the other hand, although it usually has an ethical component, is of much broader application, the major religions retaining the same values across national and cultural boundaries. A deeply religious person may be unethical in some ways, for example, in their treatment of small children. However, their religion – whether Pure Land Buddhism or Christianity – may remain the same or very similar across geographically wide areas. One thinks of Pure Land in Japan and in Vietnam, for instance, and Roman Catholicism in the same two nations. While on the religious level, similarities abound, once again, when it comes to ethics, there is likely to be strong influence from national folk and other traditions.

In this essay, two renowned modernist poems — T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* (1922)¹ and Miyazawa Kenji’s *Haru to Shura* (Spring and the Shura, 1924)²—are explored. There may be ethical aspects in both, but both also share a strong religious component, which is, moreover, part of their semiotic structure. The aim is to discover how this component functions in each text. Eliot’s long poem needs little introduction, but Miyazawa, although famous in Japan, is much less well known in the English-speaking world. His poem is quite syncretic, in combining Christian and Buddhist aspects, in a less superficial way than Eliot’s combination of Hinduism and Christianity.

1.1. Note on Eliot and *The Waste Land*

This section occasionally refers to a previous article, “A semiotic key to *The Waste Land*.”^a The poem is long, at 433 lines—unfortunately, too long to quote in this article.^b

Commentaries on Eliot’s poem, like that of Loughborough University, tend to characterize the text as a depressing depiction of England post-World War I (cf. link to undated website <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/subjects/english/undergraduate/study-guides/the-waste-land/#>). For example, most commentaries seem to take a cue from the title. This is, in fact, quite unnecessary when we consider that one of Eliot’s earlier titles was *He Do the Police in Different Voices*, which reflected the different vignettes of English society found in the first two sections of the text.^c True, most of these are downbeat in tone, if not quite depressing. But Eliot was a deeply religious man

^b Readers can refer to the website (<http://www.bartleby.com/201/1.html>) for the text.

^c Eliot is quoting from Dickens’ *Our Mutual Friend*. Cf. Booth, 2001.

(whose interests were not confined to Christianity), and many of his poems have an explicitly religious subject—cf. *Choruses From “The Rock.”* *The Waste Land* is no exception: Clearly Christian images or vignettes are scattered throughout the text. The conclusion from a previous article⁴ is that the text is built on two overarching propositions, like Miyazawa’s. One of these, certainly, involves the depressing lives of faithless protagonists, who are mostly taken from English society, from the lowest level to royalty. However, the other proposition involves the rehabilitative power of the Christian message; the resurrected Christ himself appears in lines 359 – 365. This duality of topic, in fact, recalls the *Choruses* mentioned above.

1.2. Note on Miyazawa and *Haru to Shura*

Miyazawa Kenji (1896 – 1933) was a Japanese novelist, poet, and children’s literature writer who lived mostly in Iwate Prefecture, quite far northeast of Tokyo. He was a school teacher in agricultural science, a vegetarian, cellist, devout Buddhist, and utopian social activist. A poet from an early age, he wrote both tanka and free-form modern verse. Little published during his short lifetime, his self-published collection of modern poems under the title of *Haru to Shura* became well-known later in the 20th century. The poem treated here is 52 lines of free verse with the same title as the collection, of which it is the keynote text. Its dual overarching theme subverts the normal sociolectic role of Spring (the season of burgeoning nature), as well as that of the Shura (a negatively marked minor Buddhist deity). Miyazawa’s Spring is a dark, depressing season; by the same token, the poem’s Shura – though a lesser deity of the world above – is a positive character compared to the humans in the text.

2. Indirection and modernism

2.1. Symbolism, indirection, and modernism in Eliot’s poem

According to the semiotic theory of the structure of modern poetry detailed in many previously published articles and books (and treated here in Section 3), each of the above-mentioned overarching propositions generates a paradigm, or set, of images, which in *The Waste Land* often expand into vignettes occupying a considerable number of lines. (The time-honored term “image” was used partly because it is used by Riffaterre in more recent work. There, he is dealing with imagery in modern poetry, where it is non-literal but figurative, and refers to other images in a paradigm generated by an overarching proposition, or ‘matrix’, which may operate text-wide).

To quote Eliot himself, from his 1921 essay on *The Metaphysical Poets*, “poets in our civilization... must

be difficult. Our civilization comprehends great variety and complexity.... The poet must become more and more comprehensive, more allusive, more indirect, in order to force, to dislocate if necessary, language into his meaning.”⁵(l.164, 287, &289) This is plainly a programmatic statement regarding modern poetry. Indirection certainly has not been the foundation of much of the postmodern verse written since the 1970s. The latter typically uses direct signification, each text often being a virtual mini-narrative, making direct reference to events in the extra-textual world. Eliot’s text, by contrast, does nothing of the sort on the level of the individual image.

The mimetic identities of Marie in Part I, “staying at the arch-duke’s” as a child, that of Tiresias in Part III, or Phlebas the Phoenician in Part IV, are immaterial to the underlying signification of the text as a whole. Eliot himself notes that Mr Eugenides, the currant seller, “melts into the Phoenician sailor”, and, regarding the feminine characters, “all the women are one woman” (line 218). Although there is indirection (symbolism) on the level of the individual image, each image generated by one of the overarching matrilineal propositions (MPs), in a semiotic sense, may function as the subject-sign of any other “object-image” in the same paradigm, or set. On the level of a given paradigm of images, its generating proposition often makes a mimetic (i.e., non-symbolic) statement, which is linked by a syntagmatic relation to the other proposition.

The critic Cleanth Brooks used the term “parallelism” instead of “paradigm” over 80 years ago, but in any case, expressed surprise that this structural aspect of Eliot’s poem so often went unnoticed (cf. Brooks 1939).⁶ More recently, Seamus Perry, in his small book devoted to *The Waste Land*, does not mention either of these terms. His criticism stems from the lit-crit tradition, after all. But he does briefly refer to the body of the poem as “a wilderness of individualities”—which would apply to our MP no. 1, adding that “it glimpsed the transformative power of a ‘surrender’ to something greater,” which would apply to our MP no. 2.⁷(l. 120) These ideas will be developed further in Sections 3 and 4.1 below, on semiotic theory.

Modernism in European poetry has its roots in the work of mid-late 19th-century French poets such as Baudelaire⁸ and Rimbaud,⁹ with Victor Hugo being an important precursor, as Michael Riffaterre has shown (cf. Riffaterre 1970).¹⁰ Eliot was profoundly influenced by Arthur Symons’ *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* (1895), which he discovered in 1908 while at Harvard.

2.2. Modernism and Miyazawa Kenji

As mentioned in Section 1.2, the Spring depicted in many images in *Haru to Shura* is a dark, negative Spring.

Likewise, the Shura himself, normally a negative minor Buddhist deity, is at least more positive than the peasants he spies below from his dwelling in the clouds. This kind of subversion of the sociolect is inherently modernist.

Issue no. 18 of the Kamakura poetry journal *Shi to Fantasy* (Poetry and Fantasy) featured *Haru to Shura* as its main topic. This visually interesting journal printed the full text of the poem in color with illustrations, and three essays by commentators more or less associated with Miyazawa. Unfortunately, these short essays pay little attention to the poem itself, preferring to relate details of Miyazawa’s brief and rather tragic life. One mentioned his beloved fairytale, *Ginga Tetsudô no Yoru* (Night on the Galactic Railway), which is mostly irrelevant to our poem. None mentioned modernism, let alone the kind of subversion noted above.

Umehara Takeshi’s notes¹¹ are among the most recent specific treatments of at least parts of this poem. His approach to Miyazawa’s poetry in general evinces a refreshing disenchantment with most past readings, quite justifiably, in the light of the autobiographical kind of approach mentioned above. He insists that “No one has yet known how to read correctly these poems of Miyazawa’s.”¹¹(p.207)

3. Bimatricial theory of the semiotic structure of modern poetry

3.1. Two matrices

The semiotic theory of the structure of modern poetry employed in this essay will be a considerably modified version of the theory of Michael Riffaterre, as described in *Semiotics of Poetry*¹² and elsewhere. Contrary to Riffaterre, the process of interpreting a modernist poem will entail a search for two underlying propositions that generate the whole text. These are what he calls “matricial” concepts, each of which underlies a set of images which run throughout the text, or which sometimes occupy only a part of the text. These images, therefore, share a propositional structure, which generally does not appear on the textual surface. The “ungrammaticality” (or catachresis) of the surface structure of these images signals that they are generated by an underlying proposition that represents the matrix. Their surface structure may seem to refer to disparate sociolectic phenomena, but this kind of reference is fallacious. The matrix is found by the reader’s comparison of images in order to put together their common semantic features. On the intra-textual level, if we take two images, one is the subject—sign of the other, its object; their interpretant is the matrix.

To hark back to Eliot’s term (cf. Section 2.1), the semantic “indirection” of these images can take several forms, which are classified as follows: (i) Metaphor, or

lexical collocations that are “ungrammatical” (catachrestic) in terms of sociolectic conventions, (ii) prosodic features of verse, which are often absent from prose poetry or *vers libre*, and (iii) syntactic and other formal parallelism.

3.2. The intertext

In seeking to reconstruct the matrix, the reader may appeal to the authority of an “intertext,” a structural model that may be found in other—usually pre-existing—texts or works of art. In Riffaterrian terminology, the term “structure” always has the sense of the semantic structure of an image or matrix, which gives it its character as a poetic sign. To take a Riffaterrian example of two variants of a shared text/intertext matrix, the first may involve a camel “crossing the trackless sands of the desert,” the second involving a ship “furling the briny deep.” Both variants are built on the common MP that “a trusty conveyance bears human beings across a large and dangerous expanse.”^{13(L. 142)}

3.3. The interpretant

On the supra-textual level, the primary text is the subject-sign of the Peircean triad, the intertext as its object, and these two signs yield an interpretant, which is an amalgam of the features of both subject and object. In his mature theory, Riffaterre retains the classic Peircean definition of the interpretant: It is a mediating proposition given rise to in the mind of the reader by a comparison of text and intertext.^{14,15}

It is important to note that the semiotic structure of the text, according to Riffaterre’s theory, is impervious to any influence brought to bear by the reader. The latter’s contribution to the interpretive process begins with the considerable effort involved in reconstituting their common underlying structure from a comparison of the images of the textual surface. Riffaterre terms this “retro-reading,” since only after all the ungrammatical figures of the text have been taken into account, regardless of their linear order, can their underlying structure be discerned.

In stressing the invulnerability of the text to any input by the individual reader, Riffaterre is only fitting his theory to the kind of material he is dealing with: the modernist text does not lay itself open to modification by the reader. Instead, though Riffaterre is far from making this point, it sets out to change the reader’s preconceptions regarding reality. The role of the intertext as a model is important in this regard, since it overdetermines the semiotic structure of the primary text. The originality of the latter consists in its having a unique vocabulary, set into a propositional framework that is generally homologous with that of an intertextual model. Thus, the reader of modernist texts requires a certain degree of intertextual background

knowledge, in addition to an alertness to the existence of textual and other literary or sociolectic vocabulary that will influence his lexical choice as he seeks to formulate a matrix.

3.4. Intertext and sociolectic context

Even while acknowledging the notion that the intertext detailed in Section 1.2 may constitute a sort of ‘literary context,’ in its role as structural model, it is an important part of the theory that a text also possesses a context in the narrower sense mentioned above, i.e., a proposition homologous with the matricial structure of the text on the level of vocabulary. The proposal rests on the assumption that poetry communicates, not only in relation to other texts, but also in relation to that sociolectic background – or sociolectic context (SC), which the reader brings to it. For example, if the primary text compares the power of human intelligence unfavorably to the power of nature, the SC of this message includes these same lexical elements, which, however, are not related in the same way as in the primary text. Thus, we have similarity on the lexical level and contrast, or change, on the structural level. This notion that the modernist text is able to effect a change in the preconceptions of the reader is underscored by the work of Juri Lotman¹⁶ and Umberto Eco.^{17,18}

The primary reason for proposing the existence of an SC is the notion that, for the reader to be able to adequately interpret the semiotic structure of the modernist literary work, he must first set it against the familiar structures of the semiotic framework of the sociolect within which he normally communicates.

4. The Waste Land

4.1. Background of the poem

It will not be necessary to add to the notes in Section 2.1 regarding the tendency among critics to take a cue to the poem’s meaning from its title. The catachresis of the first line (“April is the cruellest month...”) immediately puts the reader on notice that this is going to be a modernist text. Not only will there be catachresis/ungrammaticality, but images will be arranged paradigmatically into sets, one generated by MP1 and the other by MP2. The protagonists of vignettes generated by MP1 will be not only be disappointing, but spiritually impoverished. Those of MP2 will be associated with the rehabilitative power of Christianity.

Even though in line 2, lilacs bloom, there is still a reason why April is called “cruel”. As we map the images/vignettes onto each other in order to find their common semantic features, we begin to realize that the darkness, aridity, and disappointing nature of these vignettes have

a spiritual cause. Even in the Marie image (lines 13 ff.), what matters is the mental/spiritual attitude of the protagonist. In this case, Marie has to forget her fright and hold on tight to the sled. At the same time, she is a bored aristocrat.

There is no space to catalogue each and every image and literary allusion in the text. Instead, certain key images or vignettes in order to search out their common significance in the case of each matrix.

As for the way ethics are treated in the poem, the treatment of this will involve only a few line references, as it soon becomes evident that questions of spirituality/religion are much more important.

4.2. Images or vignettes generated by MP 1

Lines 10 – 18: In the Marie episode, the aristocratic German girl talks about a sled ride with her cousin, the archduke. This activity seems to be simply a symbol for the life of bored aristocrats with no particular occupation. Line 18: “I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter” is typical.

Lines 35 – 42: The Hyacinth girl episode; things have changed over a year between her and her beau:

–Yet when we came back, late, from the hyacinth garden,
Your arms full, and your hair wet, I could not
Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither
Living nor dead, and I knew nothing...

Here, there is no direct reference to any particular girl or to any particular flowers; what is referred to *indirectly* be other images of the same set involving a disappointed, disillusioned women.

For example, in the immediately following vignette, Mme Sosostris is the untrustworthy clairvoyant, “forbidden to see” (line 54) the content of certain cards, and who herself does not trust contemporary society (lines 58 – 59).

Lines 60 ff.: The lines present a dreamlike sequence in which the crowd of people flowing over London Bridge are either already dead or virtually dead. The fact that they sigh every so often indicates the latter: these are the spiritually dead.

Lines 77 – 106: This is a royal vignette from Roman and Egyptian history (The opening lines, “The chair she sat in, like a burnished throne/glowed on the marble,” apparently recalls a scene from Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra*.) The opulent scene, the description of which carries on for many lines, cannot disguise the fact that, in the world of such protagonists exists the rape of a princess by a king.

Another such vignette is in lines 107 – 138, about

which there are conjectures that this is a scene from Eliot’s unhappy marriage. Once again, the woman featured is disappointed. She accuses her husband of “knowing nothing” (lines 121 – 123).

Lines 139 – 173: No longer so young working-class women chatting in a neighborhood pub, as related by Lil’s friend. Her advice to Lil is to “make yourself a bit smart” because her husband is coming back from the army. This whole scene is rather sordid; Eliot seems to have included it to symbolize the spiritually bereft lives of the lower classes (this is just after World War I, after all).

Lines 182 – 186: The first line of this section refers rather directly to Eliot’s treatment for depression in Lausanne, where he was also writing this poem. The repeated “Sweet Thames” seems to be a desperate call to something familiar for psychological sustenance. The end of this section (“but at my back I hear/The rattle of the bones...”) seems like a premonition of death. In any case, there is no spiritual life here.

Line 189: An occurrence of the “Fisher King” legend, where the king’s wound causes his lands to become desolate. This situation is perhaps closest in the poem to its title.

Lines 196 – 201: This facetious reference to a “Mrs Porter” is nothing more than a small vignette about prostitution.

The following section about Mr Eugenides and his invitation to a homosexual weekend is just the second installation in a series of vignettes about irregular/unconstructive sex. As views on the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender society change, this vignette may no longer seem negative, but it was so at the time of publication.

“The typist home at teatime...,” lines 222 – 256: This section, already mentioned, is another in the same set.

Lines 279 – 305: The Elizabeth and Leicester episode: In these four sections, Eliot is showing us how sex without love is ultimately self-defeating and disappointing.

Lines 308 – 310: Coming at the end of the poem’s Fire Sermon chapter, line 308 (“Burning burning burning burning”) recalls the Buddha’s view of the eternally renewed lower world of Samsara.

Lines 311 – 321: Section IV of the poem; this is about death from hazardous occupations (in the days of sailing ships, there were many fatal shipwrecks).

Lines 322 – 328: This section, properly generated by MP2, is about the Crucifixion. The following two lines are generated by MP1 (lines 329 – 330). The rest of this page and the following page down to line 375 symbolically depict a dry, rocky landscape reminiscent of Israel. Let us

note the cities enumerated in line 374: “Jerusalem Athens Alexandria”.

It is in this landscape that we have the dramatic “Road to Emmaus” section that is generated by MP2 (lines 359 – 365). This sort of natural environment is the opposite of well-watered England or Japan. If this is a psychological landscape, water is a symbol of spiritual nourishment, which is lacking.

Lines 385 – 389: The “empty chapel” in line 388, which has no windows, symbolizes the way deserted churches are increasing in number throughout Europe.

Line 426: Amid a section generated by MP2, this is a sudden standout line from MP1, possibly symbolizing the vanity of the financial center of London (the City).

4.3. Images/vignettes generated by MP 2 (those having a religious or spiritual component)

The reader has the impression that these images are fewer in number than those generated by MP1. This has no doubt underscored the conclusion that MP1 rules the overall significance of the poem. However, their number is in fact almost the same: 19 images to matrix no. 1 and 18 to matrix no. 2. Because Eliot no doubt wished to avoid all semblance of preachifying, religion-related images are made especially indirect, and quite difficult to identify. Some of them appear suddenly in the midst of an MP1-generated section.

Many critics, waylaid by the many allusions of Eliot’s text, tend to look for a “protagonist” in the various vignettes. In fact, there is only one protagonist in the images generated by each matrix: that of MP1 is a plural human protagonist in that “faithless humanity in general” is the subject; that of MP2, by contrast, is a divine protagonist, one capable of rehabilitating humanity from its situation of spiritual “drouth.” The use of the last term represents the aridity of the negative landscape towards the end of the text (lines 322-374).

First, the reference to Ezekiel 2:6 in line 20 (“Son of man”) points us to the MP2-generated lines 27 and 28 (“your shadow at morning...”). Lines 21 – 24 are in the same symbolic setting as the arid landscape of MP1 later in the text; yet lines 25 – 26, which are taken from Isaiah 32:2, represent a spiritual call. Isaiah has the expression “rivers of water in a dry place.” Eliot’s “Red Rock” recalls Isaiah’s “great rock in a weary land.”

Lines 100 – 103: This is about Philomel’s change into a nightingale after being raped by her sister’s royal husband. Yet the part “yet there the nightingale/filled all the desert with inviolable voice/and still she cried” represents a positive turn of events, and so is generated by MP2.

Line 182: “by the waters of Leman I sat down and wept...” could be a divine moment of humility in the midst of the poet’s rehabilitation, or it could be just the depression talking. Either way, it is a sudden appearance of a quite different scene from the preceding and following ones.

Line 263: (“Where fishermen lounge at noon...”); I doubt whether this is an allusion to the ‘Fisher King’ myth. It seems more a reflection of the symbol of Christ (a fish), coming as it does immediately before the line about Magnus Martyr, which Eliot called “one of Wren’s most beautiful church interiors.” It is worth adding that St Magnus is the guild church of the Worshipful Company of Fishmongers.

Lines 322 – 328: There is a contrast between Christ’s passion, Crucifixion (symbols of the night in the Garden of Gethsemane; cf. Matt. 26: 36 – 46), and death, and ordinary faithless Man (“We who were living are now dying...”).

Lines 331, 338, 346, and 349: “Here is no water...” and “If there were water...” express a longing for spiritual nourishment. (Line numbering is confusing around lines 348 – 349.) The longing for “water” continues to line 358, interspersing the “liquid” notes of the hermit-thrush (line 357).

Lines 359 – 365: Here is perhaps the major Christian vignette in the poem, where the risen Christ is walking along the road to Emmaus beside two disciples (not members of the 11): “There is always another one walking beside you...”

Lines 390 – 394: The cock standing on the roof tree recalls the night before Jesus’s capture, symbolizing the passion and the way Peter denied any association with Christ three times until the cock crew. Lines 393 – 394: Finally, the lightning and thunder bring rain, symbolic of spiritual nourishment. Himavant (line 397) is a Hindu God, a personification of the Himalayas.

Line 398: “The jungle crouched, humped in silence.” This is no longer the arid landscape of previous sections. The reader may wonder at the close proximity of “the jungle” to the Himalayas, but tropical rainforest grows in the foothills of the eastern and central Himalayas.

Line 400: The thunder speaks in the word “DA,” which is the root of the verb “to give.” This is reflected in the immediately following *Datta*. The question “what have we given?” is tantamount to “How unselfish have we been in giving of our talents (in the monetary sense also) to the world at large?”

The “moment’s surrender” of line 403 implies a surrender of the self to love, to God. The prudence in the next line is a worldly prudence, which tends to argue

against such giving. This sort of giving is certainly not the kind of action that is “found in our obituaries.” (line 406)

Line 410: The next time the Thunder reverberates “DA”, it speaks the word “*Dayadhvam*”, which means something like “sympathise with, have compassion on”. There are so many events in our world of death involving genocide—e.g., among Palestinians in Gaza, among the Rohingya in Myanmar, and elsewhere that we become used to turning a blind eye. To have compassion on the victims means to trouble your heart on a daily basis. But this is something which true sympathy cannot avoid—perhaps at the cost of personal mental well-being.

Lines 416 – 422: Coriolanus is here to remind us of the importance of contrition, which he famously showed in giving in to his mother’s pleas not to attack Rome, allied with the Volscians.⁷(lines 112-113) There is, thus, an echo of Psalm 51:17: “a broken and a contrite heart” is the key (line 411 ff.) to divine forgiveness in the Judaeo-Christian tradition.

Lines 417 – 422: “DA”—*Damyata* (control). Eliot harks back to his sailing days, and to the married couple section, thinking wistfully that if only he could manage his wife the way he used to manage a boat, her heart would have been “beating obedient/to controlling hands.” The notion of control extends to self-control and a certain asceticism, which is very important to the main religions.

The next three lines, referring to the Fisher King, virtually encapsulate the whole poem. The question the protagonist asks himself is: “Shall I at least set my lands in order?” (l. 425). It is assumed that with divine help, his life and his world in general can be “set in order.” Line 427: The Italian, translated, means “And then he stepped back into the fire which refines,” where Arnaut Daniel gladly returns into the fire of Purgatory. The following words in line 428 mean “when shall I be as the swallow?” In other words, “when shall I be able to fly free as easily as a swallow?”. The reference to “Le Prince d’Aquitaine” recalls the poet Nerval, who is described as a swallow by Gautier, a bird who was “all wings and no feet.”

Line 426: The protagonist reminds himself that the familiar world around him (“London Bridge is falling down...”) is, after all, going downhill.

Lines 430 – 431: “These fragments” refers to positive qualities and possessions which the protagonist has been able to retain. The world’s reaction may be to think that he is mad, but this does not concern him. As far as the world in general is concerned, it’s mad to be enlightened.

The final line (“*Shantih*”) chanted three times means “great peace”—peace in body, mind, and soul, being the formal closing to an Upanishad.

4.4. MPs 1 and 2: Faith and contrition

MP 2 reminds us that the key to forgiveness is contrition. How does ‘contrition as the key’ require us to modify our MPs? It appears that what is in need of modification is not MP2, but rather MP1. If the Voices of society suffer from a lack of faith, it is surely because, unlike Coriolanus, they are not sufficiently contrite. In his taking pity on Rome, Coriolanus is the model of contrition, which is the key element enabling the Voices of society to recognize the salvific action of Christ, the divine teacher (cf. lines 411 ff.). To summarize the structure of both matrices: MP1 represents a great range of secular Voices of society who lack contrition for their sins, while MP2 represents the rehabilitating power of divine compassion, which (intermatricular relation) can act on society. This compassion — acting because of personal contrition — is none other than the Creator’s love for His creation.

4.5. Intertext of *The Waste Land*

The intertext, as object-sign of the primary text (Eliot’s poem), is indicated fairly clearly in the text. In Section 4.4, it is noted that, as early as line 20, Eliot uses the term “Son of man,” which recalls God’s call to Ezekiel, whom He wishes to send to deter the Israelites from their rebellious ways. It might be added that Cleanth Brooks and others, as early as 1939, noted that “Israel,” standing for the world in general, had become “thoroughly secularized.” As the Jews of the Old Testament are repeatedly called to order by the prophets for their ungodly ways, “Israel” may indeed be an intertextual equivalent of the many “Voices” of MP1 of the text, and so we have an Old Testament counterpart for our first matrix.

As far as the second matrix is concerned, the expression “Son of man” immediately recalls Christ’s characterization of himself. The intertextual counterpart of the poem’s MP2 is thus clear, supported by Eliot’s references to the Passion and Christ’s post-resurrection appearance on the road to Emmaus. This combination gives us a two-part biblical counterpart of the primary text. I.e., the Jews of the Old Testament, who are repeatedly called to order by the prophets for their ungodly ways, are the intertextual counterpart of the Voices of Parts I to IV of Eliot’s text (MP1). By the same token, in the New Testament, God sends His son as a spiritual teacher whose ultimate sacrifice has the power to set humankind, in general, back on the straight and narrow path to *Life* (MP2). The two intertextual propositions are linked by the New Testament Gospel message’s potential to ‘reset’ humankind from the spiritually error-prone world of the Old Testament in line with the order of the New Covenant.

It is worth pointing out an essential difference between the Biblical intertext and Eliot’s poem. In the latter, the

rehabilitation of mankind is only potential. The current contentious state of our world bears witness to the great difficulty of attaining that rehabilitation. In the Biblical intertext, by contrast, rehabilitation has already taken place, although mankind often does not realise it.

4.6. Interpretant

On the supra-textual level, the interpretant is the mediating compound proposition that is abducted by the reader through the comparison of text (subject–sign) and intertext (object–sign). It constitutes the third sign that completes the triad of signification.^{15: *Writings*, Vol. 2: 223}

The relation between the primary text and intertext evidently has the character of Greimas' semiotic square (A is to B as A' is to B').^{19(p.138)} For example, the relationship between MP1 and MP2 of the text is analogous to that between the corresponding matrices of the intertext. This relation is, once again, that the divine protagonist (subject of MP2) acts with compassion (predicate), on (linking preposition) the secular subjects suffering from a lack of faith, in such a way as to restore to them a rehabilitating faith (predicate of MP1). Thus, in the interpretant, faith takes the place of contrition in MP2 of our text, though with the implication that contrition is a precondition for faith.

4.7. Sociolectic context and perceptual change

That many of the poem's readers may have been irreligious would explain the many interpretations which have steered clear of its Christian and Hindu content. Reluctance to recognize its profound religiosity is only to be expected in the overwhelmingly secular world which Eliot depicts, with such rich humor and irony.

The majority of his readers themselves, therefore, supply the SC of the poem. Those who are unwilling to acknowledge the presence of Eliot's chosen divine protagonist — the Christ figure, the lone pilgrim who appears and disappears at will, both before and after death — are evidently willing to cling to the multifarious secular world of the first four parts of the poem. If human life is indeed a pilgrimage, many pilgrims focus rather on the journey, losing sight of its end. These are the kind of pilgrims one finds in Chaucer: cynical, salacious, and thoroughly worldly. Chaucer, in fact, turns the idea of the pilgrimage on its head, colorfully reflecting the way many people choose to live. These pilgrims are, in fact, closer to Eliot's many Voices of society; a much-married "wife", a priest who can tell a risqué tale, a hypocritical friar, are, after all, more sympathetic characters to people in general than their ascetic, other-worldly counterparts could ever be. The difficulty of a truly religious life renders it uncongenial to many. Thus, the many voices of society

are generally unconcerned with religion, just as they are in MP1 of Eliot's poem.

They have plenty of substitutes for God or Brahman, as the case may be. At the high end of the market, the plethora of beautiful but highly extravagant luxury goods is nothing short of amazing. Thus, our SC will be one in which these goods — which so many people spend so much time lusting after and enjoying — take the place of Eliot's divine protagonist. These goods are, of course, quite unable to act on human society with compassion, although they may provide temporary solace and reassurance. Not to be discounted is the aesthetic enjoyment and exercise afforded by, for example, a high-quality bicycle. A racing canoe or racing yacht would also be candidates. Unfortunately, when human beings are in need of spiritual solace, such beautiful objects are of little use. When depression strikes (as it seems to have struck both Eliot and first wife Vivienne), those worldly goods are revealed as, literally, in-animate, i.e., they have no soul. As such, they are incapable of acting on us (the Voices of society) with compassion. The operative concept which distinguishes our interpretant from the SC is thus soul. If we admit that we have an immortal soul, then Eliot's linked MPs carry a powerful, highly constructive message. But when we are feeling soulless, bereft, depressed, the beloved mock-divine objects which surround us, like worldly ambitions, are, once again, unable to act on our souls with compassion.

In this way, the SC is seen to have virtually the same lexical content as the interpretant of text and intertext, but the syntagmatic relation linking its two MPs differs clearly from that of the interpretant. It is this negative difference which has the power to effect a change in our preconceptions concerning the relative roles of protagonists like Eliot's, and of our lives in human society, and their many bells and whistles. One possible result of this perceptual change might be to cause us to re-evaluate the lifestyle of communities like the Amish. This is no more than a suggestion. Yet, the various movements in Western society since the early 20th century, in the direction of a simpler life in closer contact with the forces of nature, testify to the strength of Eliot's message.

5. Haru to Shura

5.1. Background to the poem

Haru to Shura is the ninth poem among 19 with the same general title in the second volume of the Collected Works (*Zen-Shū*, 1988 [1973]). It was self-published in 1924, and is unquestionably Miyazawa's most published poetic work since. In this section, the mechanism which makes this poem thoroughly modernist in the innovative nature of its propositions and in the surface opacity (or

“ungrammaticality”) of its images is discussed. The word *shura* in the title needs some explanation. First, Miyazawa was a devout Buddhist. According to the traditional Buddhist theory of reincarnation, all living things are bound to be reborn into one of six realms of existence; The *ashura* represents the realm of contentiousness, selfish desires. For this reason, in its normal Japanese sociolectic usage, the word *shura*—without the “a”—means “fighting,” or “struggle,” etc. These sociolectic meanings of *ashura* and *shura* notwithstanding, Miyazawa’s Shura is, rather, an observer of the human scene from on high whose disappointment at the lack of response from humankind causes him to self-sacrifice (voluntarily disintegrate) at the poem’s end.

The translated text is based on the Japanese original in Miyazawa ² (pp. 20-22). The Japanese-character text is given in the Appendix (A1) at the end of the article. The bracketed subtitle is in English in the original. Line beginnings have been indented in the Appendix in order to represent the wave-like format of the original between lines 13 – 37; certain other lines are indented one space for the same reason.

5.2. Text of *Haru to Shura* in English translation

Spring and the Shura (1922)
(mental sketch modified)

- 1 From the mental image’s grey steel^d
- 2 Tendrils of the akebi-vine wind to the clouds
- 3 Clumps of bramble and rotting swamplands:
- 4 A wide prospect, a flat prospect, of nothing but sanctimoniousness^e
- 5 (It is the time when, denser than the flute music of noon,
- 6 Flecks of amber fall from the sky)
- 7 The bitterness—and the blue—of anger!
- 8 Through the bottom layer of light of the April atmosphere
- 9 Spitting to himself, grinding his teeth, he comes and goes
- 10 “I am a solitary Shura”^f
- 11 (The scenery wobbles through his tears)
- 12 Setting a limit to the visibility of the shattered clouds

^d Miyazawa’s term is a compound, literally ‘heart-forms’ or ‘mental images,’ ‘fantasies.’ The subtitle of the whole ‘*Haru to Shura*’ collection is ‘Shinshō Sketches’: ‘sketches of mental images.’

^e *tengoku*: Also translatable as ‘hypocrisy.’ This reading has a deeply ironic echo of the word for ‘heaven.’

^f I have used a capital S for ‘Shura’ throughout in all cases where it assists in distinguishing the hero of our poem from the concept of ‘shura,’ or ‘shura’—nature in general. Quotation marks have been added for all cases of the Shura’s speech.

- 13 In the sparkling sea of the heavens
- 14 The sacred crystal breeze blows to and fro
- 15 The ZYPRESSEN—Spring in a single row:
- 16 Though they drink in the ether blackly
- 17 And from their dark ranks
- 18 Even the shining snowy ridges of Tian Shan can be seen^g
- 19 (In waves of mirages and white polarized light)
- 20 The True Word has been lost
- 21 The clouds disperse and fly through the sky
- 22 “Aa! thus through the bottom of the shining bowl of April
- 23 Passionately grinding my teeth, I come and go
- 24 I am a solitary shura.”
- 25 (The pearly clouds flow by
- 26 Where, in this Spring, does one bird sing?)
- 27 When the sun’s orb shimmers bluely
- 28 The Shura blends with the trees
- 29 From heaven’s dazzlingly collapsing bowl
- 30 The throng of black trees stretches away
- 31 Their branches sadly proliferating
- 32 From this landscape in which everything is double
- 33 From the treetops of this forest in mourning^h
- 34 Ravens flutter into flight
- 35 (When the atmosphere finally clears
- 36 And the cypresses stand silent against the sky)
- 37 A figure makes its way through the golden grasses
- 38 Unmistakably a human form
- 39 “Wrapped in his straw cloak, the peasant looks at me
- 40 But can he really see me
- 41 In the depths of this blinding atmospheric sea?”
- 42 (The colour of sadness is deep, deep blue)
- 43 The ZYPRESSEN sway quietly
- 44 Birds again cut through the blue sky
- 45 (The True Word is not to be found here
- 46 The Shura’s tears fall to earth)
- 47 Returning to the skies to catch his breath
- 48 His lungs contract palely
- 49 (“May this body be scattered into fragments of the sky?”)
- 50 The small branches of the ginkgo glow once more
- 51 The ZYPRESSEN finally blacken
- 52 Sparks of cloud rain down

^g Lit. the ‘heavenly mountains,’ a mountain range west of China across which the famous Tang priest San-zō (in the Japanese reading) journeyed in order to bring back the Buddhist scriptures deemed essential to the development of Mahayana Buddhism in China, and subsequently Korea and Japan.

^h ‘mourning’: *sō-shin* generally has this meaning, but there is a possible paronomasia here: this might also be ‘the [Shura’s] dejected spirit.’

5.3. Religion in *Haru to Shura*: fabula and matricial structure

It seems unlikely that Miyazawa knew *The Waste Land* when writing *Haru to Shura*. That could explain the aspect of a linear story (fabula) which remains in the text. One might say that the first images are scene-setting, in preparation for the appearance of the Shura in lines 7 – 10. Yet, one could also say that the portrayal of the dark scenery of the earthy peasants' springtime habitat (matrix no. 1) alternates with the movement and words of the Shura among the clouds (matrix no. 2). The latter images are assigned to MP2 because they are more surprising and novel in concept. The fact that the Shura's emotions develop, from the anger of his first image (lines 7 – 11) to his disappointment at the failure of the peasant to recognize him (lines 40 – 41), may seem to have aspects of a fabula. Yet if one considers that teeth-grinding and anger are simply normal attributes of an ashura, we may say that the entire text is about a meeting between this spiritual creature and the soil-focused peasants.

Getting away from the fabula view of the text is line 6 ("Flecks of amber fall from the sky"), which seems like a variant of line 52 (the sky in the form of "sparks of cloud"), where the Shura self-destructs. There is thus a strong tendency for the text to be paradigmatically arranged, rather than syntagmatically strung together in linear form.

5.4. Matricial structure

5.4.1. Images generated by MP 1

MP 1 sets the scene in lines 1 – 6: "nothing but sanctimoniousness" is found in the peasants' landscape.

Image no. 2 begins at line 12, continuing to line 20. It is symptomatic of the human society visible to the Shura that "the True Word has been lost." The latter expression recalls the name of the ancient *Shingon* sect of Japanese Buddhism, which literally means "True Word". Even though this may not be Miyazawa's own sect, Nichiren, it is a very powerful statement in Buddhist terms of the state of the agricultural human society where Miyazawa lived. This expression is repeated in line 45 towards the end of the poem, occasioning the Shura's tears.

Lines 47 – 52 blend the two matrices (lines 50 – 51 return to MP1 in portraying the sad landscape), although MP2 predominates, with its depiction of the Shura's self-sacrifice. It is really not necessary to enumerate the remaining images generated by MP1: images of a dark spring proliferate throughout the text. The common content of these images: this is a dark and sad landscape because the humans of the peasants' world will not communicate with the divine.

Miyazawa uses the German word for cypresses three times: *ZYPRESSEN* in capitals. It is surely not by chance that this recalls the English word 'depressing'.

5.4.2. Images generated by MP 2

To return to MP2, let us note line 28: "The Shura blends with the trees". So he has in fact descended into this intermediate world between his cloudy abode and the peasants' muddy fields. In other words, the Shura makes every effort to enter the humans' world. Line 44 is a vivid image characterizing this world: in the ordinary sociolect, blue skies are a metaphor for happiness, but in this peasants' world, blue skies and flying birds have the opposite meaning. These are sad skies, and sad birds who do not sing.

As far as the Shura is concerned, lines 45 – 46 include the final statement of the absence in this environment of the "True Word." The Shura is in tears as a result. Throughout the text, it has been the Shura who one-sidedly attempts to contact humankind. Line 49, his suicidal prayer, is his only possible answer: he becomes "sparks of cloud" which fall to the ground. This is his final, tragic gift to man. According to the True Word, there should be frequent communication between the human world and the divine. This is absent, Miyazawa seems to say, from this agricultural world in a region of Japan far from Tokyo. It may be said that, in the world in general, despite the efforts of the major religions, there is insufficient communication between humanity and the divine. So MP1 and MP2 may be summarised as: the peasants' lack of interest in the divine world (MP1) causes the *Shura* (intermatricial relation) fatal disappointment, and his self-destruction is a final gift to mankind (MP2).

5.4.3. The intertext

If the Shura's sacrifice recalls Christ's Crucifixion and death, it may well be due to the strong influence of a Christian friend of Miyazawa's: Saitô Shûjirô.²⁰ If this is so, it would have a strong link with Eliot's poem and its Christian component. Clearly, the Shura's sacrifice is a religious event. Likewise, the peasant's unwillingness to look upwards diligently is more of a religious failing than a mere ethical one. So *The Waste Land* and *Haru to Shura* are quite similar in regard to MP1 and its link with MP2: there is a human lack of will to make contact with the divine. In *The Waste Land*, there is the rehabilitating Christ figure (the 'road to Emmaus' section, lines 359 – 365) in relation to the great world-focused majority. In that section of the poem, Christ is a shadowy figure who is 'seen but not seen.' This closely parallels the way in which the Shura is not really seen by the peasant below.

This thematic analogy remains as an example of the international nature of semiotic structure in modernist

poetry. Both poets held long-lasting religious convictions—Eliot in Anglo-Catholic Christianity and Miyazawa in Mahayana Buddhism—which strongly influenced the propositional content of their poems. *Haru to Shura* came out just 2 years after the first publication of *The Waste Land* (in English), seeming to make any question of direct influence unlikely (a Japanese translation by Ueda Tamotsu came out in 1938, 5 years after Miyazawa's death).²¹ Yet, in a broad thematic sense, Eliot's poem could be an intertextual model of Miyazawa's.

The countryside on which the Shura looks down is a wasteland of the spirit, being populated by earthy peasants with no interest in spiritual things. If the Shura's action seems more positive than Christ's in Eliot's poem, we must remember that the shadowy figure encountered by the disciples on the road to Emmaus is, after all, the resurrected Christ, who has already willingly 'self-destructed' by death on the Cross.

The essential structure of any intertext must serve as a model for the textual matricial structure of our text: Man (in general) refuses the message of the being who could save him, obstinately clinging to his own mindset, thus causing his would-be savior suffering. The poem's propositional structure implies that, if only mankind would take the trouble to acknowledge the Shura's existence, it would gain access to that higher world consistently symbolized in the text by 'light' imagery. It is as though we have a reminder that, although mankind may be more or less uninterested in higher things, the natural environment is full of signals of their existence. As we have seen, Eliot places such signals from time to time in *The Waste Land*.

5.5. Interpretant and sociolectic context

5.5.1. The interpretant

In both Miyazawa's and Eliot's poems, rather than the compassion of the divine being, what counts is Man's unwillingness to 'hear', to take seriously, the True Word, in the most generalized meaning of that term. It does not necessarily refer to any particular scripture, but in the background lie the sutras of Buddhism and the Christian gospels. The interpretant, then, consists of (MP1), the difficulty that Man finds in recognizing the divine, and of (MP2), the sacrifice, because of this human blindness, of a being linked to Mankind who exists beyond the human world. Let us note that the intermatricial relation remains constant: it is the idea that the unreceptive attitude of Man provokes the sacrifice of the divine being. Given that *The Waste Land* is the intertextual model of *Haru to Shura*, it should be no surprise that their interpretants closely resemble each other.

5.5.2. Sociolectic context and perceptual change

To return to the poem's title, this is an encapsulated version of the text's matricial structure: the Shura is seen to represent something like a hope for human interest in higher things; this particular *Haru* is then the negative Spring of unheeding humanity. A complete reversal of the Japanese sociolect's image of that season.ⁱ

The SC, on the other hand, is precisely the sociolectic reading of the title taken out of the poem's context; this is unfortunately abetted by not a few published Japanese-language commentaries. According to this reading, of course, Spring can only be good, and our Shura has the conventional negative meaning of ashura. It is important to note that, according to convention, "Spring" is read as a figure for the world of mankind (MP1), and the Shura as a figure for a higher form of existence. Thus, the SC retains its character as a kind of 'context' of the interpretant, containing lexically similar expressions which are, however, related in a very different way. The conventional view of the components of the SC is that the Spring/Man's world is morally superior to an ashura-like existence; this is radically reversed by the matricial structure of the poem.

6. Conclusion

If we were concerned with ethics rather than religion, it would not be difficult to see, from a comparison of our two poetic texts, that they constitute a minor part of both poems. *The Waste Land*, being longer, has more scope for developing ethical commentary. This can be observed in (i) line 71: "That corpse you planted..." (ii) lines 99 – 102, echoed in lines 203 – 206: the rape of Philomel, (iii) lines 201 – 214: The homosexual Mr Eugenides' surreptitious invitation to the poet would have been unethical in Eliot's time, (iv) lines 222 ff.: The sexual assignation of "the typist home at teatime" with "the young man carbuncular" (line 231) is unethical according to stricter moral tenets, (v) lines 279 – 299: The Queen consort and her unethical tryst with the Earl of Leicester, and (vi) line 307: "to Carthage then I came" is the first part of a quotation from the *Confessions of St Augustine*, which continues: "where a cauldron of unholy loves sang all about my ears".

In this case, each of the "unethical" sections contributes a negative marking to the image in question, and therefore also to the main matricial structure of the text. The "typist home at teatime" section (lines 222 ff.) is a case in point: the callous attitude of the "young man carbuncular" to the typist adds to the negative marking of the entire vignette.

ⁱ Cf. the depressing Spring of other poems in the series, e.g., the short poem *Shunkô Juso / Spring Curse* (lit. 'Curse of the Spring Light'): 'Spring is disgusted with its grasses and ears / Beauty disappears' (Miyazawa 1988: 23, lines 6 and 7).

In *Haru to Shura*, on the other hand, the image of the Shura “Spitting to himself, grinding his teeth”, is not ethically negative, as it simply adds to the image of the Shura under emotional duress. The latter has to be extreme in order to cause him to self-destruct at the end of the text.

When it comes to the ratio of MP1-generated images to MP2 images, the two poems are similar. With eighteen/nineteen of each in *The Waste Land*, we find about six of each in *Haru to Shura*. (I say “about” because images generated by both matrices are combined in some cases.) Each image can be ‘mapped onto’ other images generated by the same matrix. All images share quite a lot in common. For example, if the first four lines of *Haru to Shura* are generated by MP1, then this image packs a lot of information relative to that matrix: not only is this a spacious landscape, but “tendrils of the akebi-vine wind to the clouds.” This last statement is clearly ungrammatical, but it does indicate to the reader that the peasants’ landscape, though basically negative in all other images, is to some extent connected to the world in the clouds above.

6.1. The challenge of accepting innovation

The word “modern” features often at the beginning of this essay. Why I chose Eliot’s and Miyazawa’s texts is because both are modernist, displaying the paradigmatic arrangement of images/vignettes that is characteristic of modernism in poetry. The other characteristic, of course, is innovation, which derives from the contrast between the SC and the interpretant of the text and its intertext. Innovation in Miyazawa’s poem is perhaps easier to spot than in Eliot’s text. That is because the roles of the Shura and the peasant are quite plainly reversed early in the poem. The SC only serves to emphasize their normal sociolectic roles. Without a theory such as ours, however, it is surprising how many critics managed to stay on the sociolectic level. This means they somehow missed the self-destruction of the Shura at the end of the text. It is interesting how images involving the Shura act as preludes to that self-sacrifice. Whether he is spitting and grinding his teeth as a matter of habit, or simply very anxious that the peasant should be able to spy him among the clouds, his whole being is deeply tied up with the need to make contact with humanity in the world below.

This need inevitably recalls that of Christ, who was often deeply disturbed by the lack of understanding and faith of his compatriots, sometimes including his own disciples. In the end, his ultimate sacrifice was made because of a misunderstanding of the majority of Jewish people around him, in particular the Pharisees of the Temple.

It seems that the influence of Miyazawa’s Christian friend, Saitô Shûjirô, was deeper than most critics notice.

One could even call *Haru to Shura* a decidedly syncretic poem, blending Buddhist and Christian ideas. This blend by itself is innovative and therefore modernist, but of course, the overarching matrilineal structure is highly innovative also. To reverse the ordinary sociolectic roles of *Spring and the Shura* is apparently too innovative for many readers: this reversal prevents them from getting to grips with the poem.

6.2. Self-sacrifice

It is possible to say that MP2 in the *Shura* has more dramatic action, at least within the much shorter confines of its text, than in *The Waste Land*. Self-destruction is more striking than simply being a presence walking alongside two disciples. But, of course, the Passion, Death, and Resurrection are implicit in the road to Emmaus scene (ll. 369 ff.). And, in fact, the last lines of *The Waste Land* do have some drama, in (the outstanding 12th century troubadour) Arnaut Daniel’s stepping back into the fire that refines (line 427: “*Poi s’ascose nel foco che gli affina*”). Certainly, the Shura’s sacrifice happens in the text, although it’s a gift that is not received by mankind. In *The Waste Land* we have the resurrected Christ, which reminds us that the divine gift to mankind is always with us.

6.3. The message of each poem is conveyed differently

We noted in Section 5.5.1 that, “in both Miyazawa’s and Eliot’s poems, the interpretant consists of (MP1) the difficulty Man finds in recognizing the divine, and (MP2) the sacrifice (an intermatrilineal relation) because of this human blindness, of a being linked to Mankind who exists beyond the human world.” But in each poem, the sacrifice of the divine being is conveyed differently.

In *Haru to Shura*, the sacrifice occurs actually in the text, and is dramatic and quickly over. It is as though there is an abrupt collision between the divine and humanity, with man’s unreceptive attitude provoking the sacrifice of the divine being. *The Waste Land* treats the relationship between the divine and humanity rather differently. Since Christ has been resurrected, he remains always with us if we will only seek him. Contrition is after all the ‘key’ (cf. lines 411, 413, and 414). Near the end of the text, Arnaut Daniel’s stepping back into the refining fire suggests that there are ways of atoning for man’s sins. Like Arnaut, we have to be prepared for a stint in Purgatory.

Line 429, near the end of the poem, is problematic in this context: “*Le Prince d’Aquitaine à la tour abolie*”. Is this simply an example of “fragments I have shored against my ruins” (line 430)?

I.e., to summarize: (l. 426) the City of London will come to a bad end;

There is always the opportunity of Purgatory (recalling Arnaut) as atonement;
When will I be able to fly free as a swallow?
Nerval's problematic poem (poet trying to reconstruct his identity threatened by madness?).

To take the last line first, it is worth remarking that Nerval's poem is a sonnet, perfectly rhymed and in almost perfect alexandrine metre. If this is the work of a convalescing madman, he has not lost his touch as a versifier. In the same vein, Arnaut Daniel was a poet praised by Dante, and, incidentally, by Ezra Pound. It should be mentioned that Dante called him "il miglior fabbro,"²²(*purgatorio*, C. XXVI: 117) as this accolade is borrowed by Eliot for his dedication of the poem to Pound. The lack of an overt Christian reference in these final "fragments" and its ceding of that place to Arnaut illustrate how Eliot takes a more modernist approach to a paradigmatic order of images in the text. The leading Christian reference instead takes place in lines 359 ff. The images—of either matrix—may theoretically be read in any order. This explains why the expression "Son of man" comes in line 20, and another important religious reference in lines 359 ff. In this sense, Miyazawa does take a more fabula-biased approach, in giving his poem a dramatic ending. Thus, Eliot's is structurally the more modern poem, although Miyazawa's is more intensely religious.

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Both the poems analysed in this study can be found through these references: (i) Eliot, T. S. *Collected Poems*

1909 – 1962. 1983 [1963]; London: Faber and Faber, and (ii) Miyazawa Kenji. 宮澤賢治全集 (Collected Works of Miyazawa Kenji), 1988 [1973]; Vol. 2. Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō.

Further disclosure

The author worked as Associate Prof in the Department of literature, College of Humanities, Tamagawa University, Tokyo, Japan from 1982 until 1991, and as Professor from 1991 until 2007.

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Appendix

A1. Original Japanese text of Miyazawa's *Haru to Shura*, 1924 (formatted horizontally)

春と修羅

(mental sketch modified)

心象のはいろいろはがねから

あけびのつるはくもにからまり

のぼらのやぶや腐植の湿地

いちめんのいちめんの詔曲模様

(正午の管樂よりもしげく

琥珀のかけらがそそぐとき)

いかりののがさまた青き

四月の気層のひかりの底を

唾し はぎしりゆききする

おれはひとりの修羅なのだ

(風景はなみだにゆすれ)

砕ける雲の眼路をかぎり

れいらうの天の海には

聖玻璃の風が行き交ひ

ZYPRESSEN 春のいちれつ

くろぐろと光素を吸ひ

その暗い脚並からは

天山の雪の稜さへひかるのに

(かげらふの波と白い偏光)

まことのことばはうしなはれ

雲はちぎれてそらをとぶ

ああかがやきの四月の底を

はぎしり燃えてゆききする

おれはひとりの修羅なのだ

(玉髓の雲ながれて

どこで鳴くその春の鳥)

日輪青くかげろえば

修羅は樹林に交響し

降りくらむ天の椀から

黒い木の群落が延び

その枝はかなしくしげり

すべて二重の風景を

喪神の森の梢から

ひらめいてとびたつからず

(気層いよいよみわたり

ひのにもしんと天にたつころ)

草地の黄金をすぎてくるもの

ことなくひとのかたちのもの

けらをまとひおれを見るその農夫

ほんたうにおれが見えるのか

まばゆい気圏の海のそこに

(かなしみは青々ふかく)

ZYPRESSEN しずかにゆすれ鳥はまた青ぞらを截る

(まことのことばはここになく

修羅のなみだはつちにふる)

あたらしくそらに息つけば

ほの白く肺はちじまり

(このからだそらのみじんにちらばれ)

いてうのこずえまたひかり

ZYPRESSEN いよいよ黒く

雲の火ばなは降りそそぐ