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Attention, Reflection, and Contemplation: Approaching the Divine through Romantic Poiesis

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**Attention, Reflection, and Contemplation:
Approaching the Divine through Romantic Poiesis**

An Honors Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements of Honors Studies in English

By

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English

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The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they reveal knowledge.
They have no speech, they use no words;
no sound is heard from them.
Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.
Psalm 19.1-4

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For this reason, the album suggests important facets of artistic production in the context of the modern world. *The Secret Life of Plants* represents art as a creative medium by which Wonder establishes formative ideas about the universe's origins and about life itself within an ever evolving society. Like Wonder's album, poetry is a part of a larger natural landscape and itinerary of image-making. According to Scott Knickerbocker, language, in any form, conforms to expressions of nature. As much as tangible objects like grass and trees constitute our environment, "language and culture emerge from our biological, social, natural existence" (Snyder 17). The appearance of natural landscapes within art mediates language and culture, further drawing a common thread between Wonder's flora-themed album and the study of poetic landscapes, coined as 'ecopoetics' in academic circles. Meanwhile, as previously represented by the criticism of Wonder's album, the complicated relationship between artistic, poetic landscapes and the modern world arises.

According to art critic and philosopher Walter Benjamin, in his essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," art was never the same after the onset of the modern world. Writing in 1935, Benjamin recalls how historical and technological advancements affected the mechanical reproduction of art, and emphasizes the effects of the growing representational accuracy in reproduced art. For example, lithography provided print artists "for the first time to put...products on the market" and "illustrate everyday life... in daily changing forms" (Benjamin 2). As also demonstrated by the "Secret Life of Plants," the modern world provides artists opportunities to reflect their surrounding environments accurately. Though blind, Wonder had the technology to understand life-producing forces like never before. To write the score of a film he could not see, Wonder, using a four-track recorder, listened to the documentary producer Michael Braun explain "what was happening on-screen" in the right

channel “while engineer Gary Olazabal would count down the number of frames in the sequence in his right” (Beta).

In this paper, I suggest that certain forms of poetry possess a similar capacity to expose and express unseen messages of divine language. Within this paper, my first objective is to highlight how poetry can function as a medium of divine *poiesis*, meaning the poet or reader’s revelatory process of forming knowledge about the divine, or God. According to Thomas Martin’s extensive study of divine revelation in literature, revelatory processes can also be “associated with literature” as it attends to, reflects on, and contemplates the “nature of things” (Martin). Thus I attend to poetic devices for accurately reflecting divine ideas, such as cataphatic, apophatic, and iconoclastic poetic strategies. Inspired by Christian and Neo-Platonic traditions, cataphatic and apophatic approaches are concerned with defining the divine through positive and negative theological approaches. A cataphatic posture is concerned with thinking and saying divine “Being” through representational and revelatory language. One aspect of Wonder’s production process functions as an analogy to a cataphatic poetic process. Relying on the voices retelling the documentary’s narrative content and structure, Wonder draws upon cataphatic or positive representations in order to effectively render for himself an image of plant life. An apophatic poetic posture, by contrast, “affirms the ultimate ineffability of the transcendent” through a “series of restrictions,” or unsaying (Sells 3). One way to glimpse the apophatic potential of Wonder’s project is to recall that his soundtrack is the expression of what a blind man sees.

Within modernity, rapid reproduction improves the accuracy of reproduced images, but as Benjamin suggested what is lost is the “presence of the original” image, and its authenticity (3). Part of what contributed to art’s value previously was its place within the “fabric of

tradition”—the magical and religious rituals that “made it an object of veneration” (6). But the modern commodified production of images comes at the expense of the sacred art, which contributes to an increasing sense of disillusionment in the modern world. Today, humanity is the audience of a picture show, full of commodified images competing for our attention and consumption. Yet, despite the obstacles presented by modern reproduction, as shown by *The Secret Life of Plants*, there are still ways to orient oneself toward things that cannot be seen directly.

Often the techniques of the said and the unsaid work together, and the rest of this paper will explore ways in which poets embrace iconophilic or iconoclastic postures toward divine *poiesis*. One objective will be to focus on the arrangement of an abundance of images into itineraries and poetic landscapes. Another objective will be to demonstrate how these patterns of cultivation can be related to a divine *poiesis*. Through poetry, there are ways of *attending to*, *reflecting on*, and *contemplating* divine images that can return us to forms of participation with the sacred. First examining poetic attention, I identify poets who demonstrate an attachment to rhythms of the divine voice through what the poet William Wordsworth refers to in his poem “Expostulation and Reply” as a kind of “wise passiveness,” to either sacramental or sublime images. Then in poetic reflection, I identify the poetic cognitive return to divine ideas, using language to grasp “something *as* was it is” (Taylor 6). Subverting the adverse effects of becoming mesmerized by the abundance of images in modernity, poets model active ways the individual may grasp the original divine idea as it appears in its original form. Finally, in contemplation, poets evidence the voice of the divine, representing in the poetic landscape the “force capable of bringing about fluctuations in reality” and as “a force independent of one’s desire to elevate it (Stevens viii).” Beyond even the human production of images is evidence of

the divine voice or unalterable patterns of the universe. Thus, I will look to the work of John Donne, Gerard Manley Hopkins, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, for representations of a devotional return to the sacred. In addition, providing a necessary contrast for navigating the poetic landscape is the iconoclastic work of John Keats, Percy Bysshe Shelly, and T.S. Eliot. These poets lean more toward the apophatic and for them the deep truth may indeed be imageless. Nevertheless, although the rhythms of modernity may encourage us to become passive to the hypnotic qualities of reproduced images, in a variety of ways both sets of poets can help us recognize and recover ways of reorienting ourselves within the world.

On Attention

"Can I have your attention?"

This familiar question is productive whether over an intercom, in public or academic settings, or large or small groups. Turning heads, silencing voices, collectivizing people, the word attention compels us to give something, to open up to another voice, to the "I" who speaks. Naturally, our words have the same capacity of drawing attention without asking for it. Whether read, heard, spoken, or written, language interrupts routines, habits, and typical life practices. Yet, when organized as poetry, language carries an authority, "a reach" (Alford 10) similar to that of the previous question spoken over an audience. Without any explicit demand, the reach of poetic language is attentive, "both phenomenologically and etymologically," becoming a conscious experience and evident of original meaning. According to the philosopher and phenomenologist Edmund Husserl, attention in a poetic sense implies a physical act of tending, or "tensing-toward" (Ferrarello 165). We all have encouraged our friends to read beyond the first few chapters of our favorite book or watch more than the first fifteen minutes of a movie, "Just give it a minute. You just have to *get into it*." The desired experience is one of pleasurable immersion or even mesmerism. Nevertheless, negative aspects of mesmerism can arise. Growing up with the introduction of social media, I can remember a time before the general public carried smartphones—before it was the source of constant and instantaneous communication. However, from where I sit writing this paper, more than half of the students in a library are scrolling on their phones. Daily, we find ourselves in a mindless scroll on Instagram, attending to countless pictures, stories, and profiles.

Likewise, positive and negative experiences of attention occur within poetry. When attending to poetry, one can get into it, pursue a story, making themselves available to the voice

of the other. While this can be a positive experience, others may get lost in the abundance of iconic images. Thus, poetry that asks for readers' attention to images of the divine—images of the unseen yet real—invoke either intense feelings of awe or disenchantment. Further, I argue in this chapter that through poetry, we may attend to moments of *divine poiesis*, encountering experiences of image-making and formation on behalf of the unseen other. Nevertheless, this chapter will evaluate attention to the divine in poetry through forms of mesmerism invoked by poets and the ways one may open up to the voice of the other. Looking at common poetic approaches to attention, I examine poets' sacramental and vacant postures from the works of John Donne, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and John Keats.

Looking first to the *Holy Sonnets*, here John Donne appeals to Christian forms of divine gnosis and knowledge of the divine, evidencing a theologically cataphatic, positive attention experience in poetry. Furthermore, Donne's devotional statements in the *Holy Sonnets* are intended to not just "allow a speaker to think a Christian doctrine but to think it with cognitive certainty," which appears "when the speaker experiences it as a thought occurring to him" (Marno 5). Thus, with the capability of prompting the reader's subconscious acceptance or belief of doctrine, Donne's new poetic landscapes appear familiar to readers.

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow,
And soonest our best men with thee do go,
Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.
Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well
And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally

And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

In the sonnet "Death be not proud," Donne establishes a familiar poetic environment appealing to a fear familiar to most, death. With his strategic use of tone and simultaneous use of cataphatic and apophatic approaches, Donne demonstrates an enticing example of attending to divine ideas. With an allusion to Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, Donne identifies the recipient as death and builds a poetic environment fashioned after a letter. Alluding to Paul's declaration that "the last enemy to be destroyed is death" (*New International Version*, 1 Cor. 15.26), the speaker states, "death shall be no more" (Donne 14). From the first line, Donne establishes a tone of confidence in conviction. Evoking the original and well-known sin of pride, Donne presumptively convicts death of two things, (1) taking glory from God and (2) a false sense of achievement. For example, some glorify death, seeing it as "mighty and dreadful," but according to Donne, this thought is misplaced, for death is not so (line 2). Within this line, Donne demonstrates skill in constructing a belief cognitive certainty. Donne does not didactically address the audience with the burden of convincing them not to give death glory or credit in power. He does not have to. Instead, Donne states his argument as pure fact, prompting the reader's rapport. The poem's form reinforces Donne's strategy. Sitting together in the second line, the reader visually groups the words "mighty and dreadful" (2) with what death isn't, rather than visually associating death with its standard social register.

Having established a confident tone around conviction, Donne simultaneously performs negative and positive theologies as he builds upon the reader's anticipation of death's fate. First, the poem undoes death, declaring it cannot kill people (4) nor rest and sleep (5). Instead, death is a "slave to fate" (9). Further, Donne prompts and performs a positive theology of life, declaring all that death is not. If death is not powerful, something to fear, nor eternal, the reader presumes

that the only eternal reality is life. Finally, full circle and compatible with the statement proven last, that life is the only eternal reality, Donne reaffirms the previously mentioned doctrine, "the last enemy to be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15.26). Thus realizing the fate of death, the reader's anticipation also comes to an end. A common feature of Donne's other works, the purpose for developing the anticipation is to create surplus affective energy within the reader. Although this energy might not arrive at a sublime experience or divine poiesis, the energy once discharged helps reinforce the reader's habitual pursuit of attendance. Conclusively, Donne's production of cognitive certainty in poetic attention demonstrates attention Husserl described as a physical act of attending.

This physical act of attending is essential for poets constructing poetic landscapes. However, as demonstrated by Donne, the poetic strategies employed for prompting the reader's attunement are not always obvious, even if the poem is devotional, a way of worshiping God. This is also the case for the English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who heavily influenced the Romantic literary movement. Coleridge identifies the evidence of the other amidst distractions of the Modern world in the poem "Frost at Midnight." However, in the poem's first stanza, he does not yet evidence any affectionate devotion to the divine voice but instead attends to animated images. In *Aids to reflection*, written as a manual to church leaders for navigating the modern world, Coleridge calls these animated images the correspondent subjective, the "stirrings of the heart" prompted by God (129). Though devotion is not immediately explicit, Coleridge evidences the presence of the divine other within the poem's landscape, likely modeling the process of attunement to divine stirrings. This "secret ministry" is invoked in the poem's first line.

The frost performs its secret ministry,
Unhelped by any wind. The owlet's cry

Came loud—and hark, again! loud as before.
The inmates of my cottage, all at rest,

Have left me to that solitude, which suits
Abstruser musings: save that at my side
My cradled infant slumbers peacefully.
'Tis calm indeed! so calm, that it disturbs

And vexes meditation with its strange
And extreme silentness. Sea, hill, and wood,
This populous village! Sea, and hill, and wood,
With all the numberless goings-on of life,

Inaudible as dreams! the thin blue flame
Lies on my low-burnt fire, and quivers not;
Only that film, which fluttered on the grate,
(lines 1-15)

As Coleridge attends to various objects, this force behind the frost permeates through the social and natural environment. However, for Coleridge to attend to this force, there are necessary preconditions for attunement when living in the modern world. The first essential precondition to attunement is silence. Written from his perspective after the birth of his son Hartley, Coleridge sits up at night in "extreme silentness" (10), taking in his surroundings as his "cradled infant slumbers peacefully" (7). Though the setting is quiet as his family is asleep, the silence disturbs Coleridge and captures the necessary state of availability in attending to inexplicit force. Coleridge represents silent images as louder, as demanding more attention than images typically more distracting within the Modern world. For example, in contrast to the technically quiet but figuratively loud frost is, the "populous village...with all the numberless goings-on of life" is as "inaudible as dreams" (11-13). Subverting the reader's understanding of these distractions, Coleridge intends to communicate that for something like frost to be loud or necessary for the poetic attunement, one must get out of the modern world's mundane routines

and away from the high volume of people's voices from the village. Thus, Coleridge signals the second precondition as the subversion of mediums of dialogue. As one turns a radio dial navigating through the static, Coleridge attunes himself to a channel where he only receives the frequencies from the stirring force or the voice of the other. Likewise, if not attuned to the channel of the correspondent subjective, Coleridge would not receive information imparted by the divine.

Nevertheless, when getting into the landscape or attuning to the right channel of the natural world, Coleridge begins recognizing the other. However, instead of a voice, the other expresses itself in various images like the frost, a calmness, and the steady, "thin blue flame" (13) on the fire grate. As Coleridge attends to these animated images, he leans into a new frequency. After tending toward the natural frequency, the rhythms, or animated images, are personified and relational. Coleridge attributes intentionality to the thin blue flame as it "lies" on the "low-burnt fire, and quivers not" (13-14). Along with the images' embodied and human-like character is their unified affective nature. The Frost "performs its secret ministry" on Coleridge (1) like a pastor. The calmness exasperates or "vexes meditation" on Coleridge (8-9) like a charmer. Working in unison, the animated images influence and instruct the reader in ways that reinforce a heightened state of attention. As the poem continues, these images evolve into the voice of a familiar other, one which will ultimately lead readers toward the process of poetic reflection, which I will describe in the next chapter. Nevertheless, with respect to poetic attention itself, Coleridge models (1) the posture necessary for attending and (2) that the voice of the other is entrenched in various images within the poem.

While Coleridge models the speaker straining to attune to the voice of God, other poets like Gerard Manley Hopkins pursue experiences of attention through assertive acts of devotion.

Hopkins expresses explicit devotion in "Let Me Be to Thee As The Circling Bird" ("Let Me Be"), a sonnet dedicated to the divine "Thee" (1). Like Coleridge, Hopkins relies on animated images for approaching the divine. However, instead of parsing God's voice from patterns naturally occurring in his surroundings, Hopkins strategically asserts animate images within the poetic landscape for cultivating the reader's attention. As a sacramental poet from the Victorian era, Hopkins is concerned with presenting animated images as unified. In "Let Me Be," the unified animated images contribute to a metaphor of attunement, as they are experiencing a kind of poetic and thematic attunement through unification.

Hopkins likely combines his poetic strategy with figurative devices because of the nature of attention. Citing Simone Weil, Thomas Pfau states that attention "consists of suspending our thought, leaving it detached, empty, and ready to be penetrated by the object... [or] to receive into itself the being it is looking at, just as he is." (Pfau 145). Thus, we suspend our thoughts when attending to an object, ready to submit to its images. These images just so happen to be intertwined with each other. Therefore, the reader accepts the unified images as their own, demonstrating a form of submission and active participation within the poem.

Let me be to Thee as the circling bird,
Or bat with tender and air-crisping wings
That shapes in half-light his departing rings,
From both of whom a changeless note is heard.
I have found my music in a common word,
Trying each pleasurable throat that sings
And every praised sequence of sweet strings,
And know infallibly which I preferred.
The authentic cadence was discovered late
Which ends those only strains that I approve,
And other science all gone out of date
And minor sweetness scarce made mention of:
I have found the dominant of my range and state —
Love, O my God, to call thee Love and Love.

Nevertheless, Hopkins intertwines his poetic strategies with figurative devices in multiple ways. First, Hopkins signals the intertwined nature in his transition from devotion to animated images. Moving from "Thee," Hopkins focuses on the images of a bird and a bat in flight. Hopkins animates the images in relation to God as the "circling bird" and "bat with tender and air-crisping wings" ("Let Me Be" 1-3). Through this transition, Hopkins models the critical element of attention. As suggested by Thomas Pfau, "attention appears wholly entwined with the particular situation that calls for it... and has not received it" (Pfau 145). This immediate shift from the designation of devotion to Hopkins's model for attunement models the entwined nature of the creature images with appealing to God. Thus, because the reader's attention prompts their submission to the images, Hopkins causes the reader's consideration of circling or approaching God as the flying creatures did.

Emphasizing their entwined nature with God, the animated images display attunement in their natural behavior. As the "circling bird" and bat "that shapes...his departing rings" exhibit cyclical and habitual movement behaviors, what draws the creatures together is song. From both bird and bat, "a changeless note is heard" (*Let Me*, 4). A bird's appearance, song, and motion gave it a "dynamic" and unique appeal (Cafferata 31). Thus highlighting a difference in their postures of attention, Coleridge exhibits an act of active listening, whereas Hopkins's poem is in the register of song and dance, of coordination. Further, the bat and bird's movement and song seem inherently intertwined in the first four lines, and it is not by coincidence. Sound is a binding or attuning force for the circling creatures within the poem. As they sing, their movement merges.

Like Coleridge, Hopkins finds animated images within the natural landscape as connected, working together, and a part of the voice of the other. Through the alliteration and the

rhyme of vowels, Hopkins often attempts to invoke the movement and incant the song of flying creatures, especially birds (Cafferata 33). However, in Coleridge's poem, the sound is a binding force between the speaker and the voice of the other. Whereas, in Hopkins's poem, sound is a binding force between the birds to each other and the reader to the poem. Using alliteration and rhyme as a figurative device, Hopkins recreates a sonorous experience comparable to the note sung by the creatures. Only by leaning into the poem, by attending to these devices, does the reader access the auditory elements of the intertwined nature. As the speaker attends to the unified images, they become sacramental, demonstrating Hopkins's approach to poetics. According to Christian tradition, a sacrament is 'a thing subjected to the senses, which has the power not only of signifying but also of effecting grace' (Schwartz). By taking part in a sacrament, an individual performs worship. Therefore, as Hopkins unifies the images, and thus signals his blessing, the attuned reader has the opportunity to participate in an act of worship through the poem.

Nevertheless, Hopkins further develops the animated images, adding more layers that illuminate the second implication of attention according to Thomas Pfau's definition—the unreceived situation. The particular unreceived situation is the individual's attunement to God. Thus, as represented by Hopkins, through submission to additional layered images, one may tune into a home key—God. In addition to figurative language, Hopkins capitalizes on temporal images to help the reader attend or open up to the same attuning process exhibited by the flying creatures. Compatible with Weil's comment on attention, Hopkins's addition of images cultivates a suspension of thought within the reader, allowing the penetration of divine ideas. Against the backdrop of "half-light" or dusk is the bat's "air-crisping wings" forming "departing rings" ("Let Me Be" 2-3). The bat's crisp wings invoke a tangible and audible quality of the circling behavior

that happens at night, later in the day when a moving animal in the sky is difficult to see. As previously stated, the creature's movement merges, presumptively producing the visualization of the creatures as flying together or even at the same time. However, although the bird and bat share analogous movements and unending songs, they fly at different times. Also, Hopkins leaves room for the creatures to fly distinctly within their own environmental contexts. For example, the bird's circling behavior is explicit, whereas the reader must deconstruct the bat's circling behavior through the features of its wings (and the fact that it is nocturnal). Unless attuned to the poem, the temporality of the poem—the creature's timebound commitment to their distinct, natural instincts contained within the fleeting images of creatures midflight—is not obvious to the reader because of Hopkins's emphasis on the creature's unity.

As the images are different from what they seemed, Hopkins suggests attunement is not about being indistinguishable. In fact, attunement is the cohesive movement of distinct objects. Nonetheless, the temporal images are as valuable as they are surprising to the reader. If the reader remains surprised by images, they will anticipate the different phases of the poiesis experience. Surprised by the inexplicit differences of the flying creatures, the speaker is suspended by thought yet available to what they do not yet know. Further, the reader is also available to receive the particular unreceived situation, such as the perception of grace, which Hopkins desires to impart as an act of devotion to God and gift for the audience. Reinforced by Hopkins's devotion, poetic limitations, and desire to build poetic anticipation further is his intent to spur the reader's attunement to God through temporal images. Along with all effects in the poem—the asserted sacrament, anticipation, surprise— these forces work within the reader to shape their posture of attention. Signaled by movement in scenes, Hopkins indicates the "active constitution of a new object" can make "explicit and articulate what was" his experience of God

(Pfau, 147). Hopkins's desire to replicate the creature's relationship with God manifests in the poem, actively transmitting attuned, animated images to the attending reader.

Hopkins's poetic transmission is a model, or new object, drawing on the bird's movement for habitually approaching God through iconic images, reinforcing his sacramental objective. However, Hopkins is aware of his poetic limitations. Lines 1-4 of the poem function to produce images for the reader's attunement, though leading to Hopkins's situational objective of speaking to God, they are "no more than an indeterminate horizon" (Pfau 147). Aware of his own limitations, Hopkins cannot guarantee his nor the reader's reception of iconic, animated images that require unpacking. Hopkins cannot force the reader to lean in, to stretch toward images, nor can he dictate divine revealed knowledge. So, as soon as the reader makes sense of the flying images, the focus of the poem goes from flying creatures to Hopkins's musings about finding his "music in a common word" ("Let Me Be" 5). The images of the winged creatures end abruptly. The shift to personal testimony represents a new process of attunement and reflection, which surpasses the experience of attention. Though the testimony does not follow the ritual steps typical of the sacramental process, it presents a new way of relating to the divine. Hopkins draws out the reader's anticipation of divine knowledge in this transition. And, in a new way, the poetic experience becomes the melodic sound to which the reader must attune their sensorium. Hopkins employs the strategy to turn the reader's attention outward- away from her own "interests." Where we *take* an interest in the subject, attention "is something we can only give" (Pfau 149). Therefore, the turbulent abandonment of the iconic images, Hopkins's transition to an iconoclastic approach, signals a necessity of aesthetic disinterest— a turning away from the world's distractions, from an abundance of images— for the realization of the experience of poiesis.

However, some poets find the opposite is true; only through the continual production of images is the progression of poesis possible. According to some poets, one can produce their own aesthetic, poetic landscape through images. The posture of this poetic approach centers around the driving force behind divine poesis, or in this case, the absence of it. Contrasting Donne, Coleridge, and Hopkins, poets like John Keats question whether the force behind poesis is imageless and vacant. Therefore, the process of poetic attention becomes an attempt to produce its own force. In his poem "Ode to a Nightingale," Keats invites the reader to experience the speaker's internal environment and attention to sublime ideas through transitory images like the passing of time and physical landscapes. Displaying that a present and temporal posture are necessary for the reader's attention to divine gnosis, Keats creates an environment where time passes with the progression of each line. Beyond lyrical identity, creating this dimensional landscape, where space and time are woven together, is valuable so readers can inhabit a (virtual) poetic environment with their senses. Consider the poetic environment established by Donne—the landscape that builds the anticipatory threat of death ends when the image of death ends. With no threat of death by the end of the poem, and a gained understanding of eternal life, the reader experiences a sacramental devotion offered by the unseen other. However, in Keats' production of an aesthetic, the virtual environment does not promise the reader safety from the unseen other. Instead, the poetic environment is something the reader must learn to attune themselves to and then retreat from. The virtual environment becomes a site and spring board for flights of fancy. Thus, Keats provides a different experience of attention, placing the responsibility of attunement on the reader.

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:

'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thine happiness,—
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.
(lines 1–10)

An experience of attention, space, and time is being constructed in the poem's first stanza. Each line of the poem indents to the right of its predecessor, comprising eight stanzas in ten pentameters. The strict and methodical structure pairs well with the speaker's aching heart and "drowsy numbness" just "one minute past" experiencing the happiness of the nightingale ("Ode to a Nightingale" 1,4). Impressed upon the reader is the speaker's fleeting experience with divine happiness. Next, Keats combines this image of passing time with the evolving environment. With each passing line, the speaker is farther away from the nightingale's "melodious plot" (8). Along with constructing a poetic landscape, the poem invokes a rhythm and cadence that accent the devolving physical landscape discussed in the poem through the passing of time and sound. What once was the speaker's lively, abundant vision of summer and attention to divine images, carried in the song of a nightingale, disappears out of thin air. Like the other authors, Keats's poetic experience with attention builds through anticipation. However, Keat's unmet expectations carry out the poetic process in a less sacramental way. Since the poem is not devoted to the voice of the other or God, but the bird controlled by Keats, the poet possesses authority over his and the reader's attunement. Thus, Keats leverages the reception of any new image. Undoing any potential for life in the environment, Keats constructs a dark landscape so the reappearance of the bird seems sublime.

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim:
(lines 11–20)

Along with the devolution of the speaker's vision and images of a glorious physical environment comes the chaos within the speaker's mental environment. As the speaker yearns for the wine cooled within "the deep-delved earth / Tasting of... the country green" and "beaker full of... the blushful Hippocrene" (11-16), the poem's temporal, transient posture continues, and the boundaries between the speaker's external and internal environments blur. The poem's form overlays blurs a physical environment with a poetic environment, thus signifying aesthetic, poetic production. The image of literal wine and the image of a beaker of poetic inspiration parallel one another. Additionally, the lines containing each image are the only lines distinguished by the speaker's exclamations, "O, for a draught of vintage" (11) and "O, for a beaker" (15). Scott Knickerbocker, in his introduction to ecopoetics, claims that "language is part of nature" (4), and "like imagination and the body, language rises unbidden" (Knickerbocker 4). The speaker fully adopts the language as a part of nature, using words to express and represent his internal imagination. Appealing to multiple senses, tastes of flora, images of "the country green," and "...Dance," as well as the sound of "Provençal song" are poetic representations of the speaker's internal muse and aesthetic poiesis experience ("Ode to a" 13-14). Likewise, the

language representing the speaker's dissatisfied imagination is comparable and nearly indistinguishable from the speaker's environment.

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.
(lines 21–30)

Therefore, the speaker attempts to use the blurred lines to his advantage. Keats's speaker believes that if language can construct its own environment, it can recreate the previous divine experience. Recreating the divine experience creates aesthetic, divine virtuality, which serves as a bridge between poetic attention and reflection, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

Therefore, as poetic language has a transporting quality, the speaker's goal is to utilize language as a medium for realizing the divine ideas previously experienced with the nightingale. However, before the speaker can recreate his own environment, he must leave his current environment.

Through poetic language, the speaker takes an interest in leaving "the world unseen" and fading "away into the forest" of a divine experience ("Ode to a" 18-19). This desire for disappearance signals the speaker's attempt to use transience as a poetic device for achieving his own divine poiesis. The parallel language connecting the second and third stanzas reveals that the speaker desires to fade away with the bird (20) as much as he desires to dissolve from the status quo (11). Between each stanza, the speaker also demonstrates a movement of attention, from the memory of poiesis to his poetic exercise.

encounters "thee" again as a tender night (35). However, the speaker's poetic imagination is limited. Comparable to his original reverence, the speaker finds himself removed from a cosmic scene he constructed. The "thee" is surrounded by the "Queen-Moon...on her throne," surrounded "by all her starry Fays" (35-37). The majesty surrounding "thee" is majestic, likening itself to the authority and sovereignty associated with a divine God. The very object of the speaker's attention, "thee," remains an external being, regardless of the medium being words or the physical environment. Speaking to his position, "here there is no light, / Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown" (37-38). Nevertheless, the utility of temporality in a divine space is not something the speaker can, merely through interest, successfully and intentionally utilize within the poetic imagination. The poet cannot force the appearance of divine gnosis, represented by light or sound, over which he has no authority. Keats evidences the need for a mechanism capable of preparing the set and setting of the surrounding's realization. Thus, Keats integrates the positivity of Hopkins's sacramental poetics while also valuing the negative attention suggested by Coleridge's silent ministry. "Ode to a Nightingale" offers the reader a series of vivid imagery that one must ultimately abandon, returning to their self. With the responsibility of returning to the self, Keats achieves his version of attunement. Learning when and how to immerse oneself in the poetic process, and when to detach from it, the reader may navigate the modern world in a multitude of images.

Conclusively, the process of immersion seems the most significant to the attention process. As discussed by Simone Weil, there is a necessary suspension of the self and passivity to an abundance of images of the divine other. Suspension and passivity can be threatening in a world where many images seem harmful; however, the two approaches demonstrate how passivity does not always result in disillusionment. First, some poets show submission to the

sacramental through cataphatic processes. For example, taking advantage of the reader's potential passiveness, Hopkins's cataphatic approach echoes presents sacred and devotional rituals of the past. This approach results in the reader's consciousness of their state of reception regarding divine ideas. Hopkins explains that an essential part of attending to divine ideas is recognizing if one has received them before or not. However, in this experience of self-evaluation, the threat of the poetic landscape does not have to be threatening. Instead, the poetic experience and passivity to images are simply vehicles for conveying the implications of submitting to a world already made of images.

Donne, Coleridge, and Keats thus simultaneously employ cataphatic and apophatic approaches for expressing how the reader may attend to unseen patterns. For Donne and Coleridge, what is left is an invitation from the divine voice to reflect on divine ideas. For Keats, what is left is a form of vacancy, thus encouraging the reader to refine their attunement practice for themselves. Nonetheless, in either case the states of attention achieved by readers can serve as a precedent to a subsequent stage of reflection, which can help us glimpse something that can only be viewed indirectly.

On Reflection

According to Greek mythology, the story of Medusa lives in infamy. Cursed by Athena, Medusa lived as a Gorgon confined to the cave, and those who made eye contact with her were turned to stone. When Perseus, the son of Zeus, decided he would slay her, his solution resided in the power of reflection. Using the gift of Athena's bronze shield, Perseus locates Medusa in the shield's mirrored reflection. Looking indirectly at her, Perseus was able to slay Medusa, contain the horror of her venomous visage, and thereby, according to at least some versions of the myth, release from her body Pegasus or the image of a winged imagination.

As in this Greek myth, in poetic reflection one must look indirectly to orient oneself to an unseeable image. Poetic reflection, like textbook reflection, resembles a mirroring function. The Oxford Dictionary defines reflection as "the throwing back by a body or surface of light, heat, or sound without absorbing it" ("reflection, n."). This textbook definition identifies the elements of reflection that represent original images. Though the original image is not the same as its mirrored semblance, a reflection carries across or reconsiders an integral aspect of the original image. Understanding the relationship between the original and its representation, involves a process that is "inseparable from descriptive language" and develops a "sensitivity to the issue of rightness" (Taylor 6-7). According to Johann Gottfried Herder, an eighteenth-century German philosopher of language, culture, and theology, poetic reflection is about reacting and, through language, grasping "something *as* what it is" (qtd. in Taylor 6). This chapter will show how reflection occurs through poetry according to Herder's definition and will highlight the indirect approach to grasping the likeness of unseeable divine images through the cataphatic works of poets like Gerard Hopkins and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Introducing the work of Percy Bysshe Shelley, I will also evaluate the reflective experience of more iconoclastic works.

In a letter to Robert Bridges in 1887, Gerard Hopkins includes the sonnet “Harry Ploughman” as a demonstration of reflection. In the letter, Hopkins explains that he wrote the poem to function as an icon, as “a direct picture of a ploughman, without afterthought” (*The Letters of* 263). In the first 12 lines, the sonnet is representational in nature as the description of Harry Ploughman appeals to every sense— sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste.

Hard as hurdle arms, with a broth of goldish flue
Breathed round; the rack of ribs; the scooped flank; lank
Rope-over thigh; knee-nave; and barrelled shank—
Head and foot, shoulder and shank—
By a grey eye’s heed steered well, one crew, fall to;
Stand at stress. Each limb’s barrowy brawn, his thew
That one where curded, one where sucked or sank—
Soared or sank—,
Though as a beechbole firm, finds his, as at a roll-
call, rank
And features, in flesh, what deed he each must do—
His sinew-service where do.

Displaying a visual approach to the unseeable, Hopkins demonstrates a possible approach to reflecting the original image (the figure of Harry Ploughman that inspires the poem) by displaying an indirect sense experience. In Hopkins’s initial description, Harry Ploughman is animated by an assortment of typically inanimate objects. Readers need to assemble the moving parts into a “roll-call” that sees “in flesh” the whole body-in-parts to see Ploughman. First, invoking the speaker’s visual senses is the physical description of Harry Ploughman with arms hard like “hurdle” fences, a lean frame showcasing his “rack of ribs,” thighs like ropes, and “barrelled” calves (“Harry Ploughman” 1-3). Though Harry’s arms remain an object of focus primarily appealing to the visual senses, they are wrapped in the breath of a “broth of goldish flue” (1-2), invoking a sense of smell and taste. Next, touch shows in the

characterization of Harry's legs in terms of the clothing roped and barreled around them. Finally, while articulating the unified force of Harry's muscles, the speaker attributes their coordination to a "roll call," appealing to a sense of sound (9). Nevertheless, Hopkins intends to evoke a sonorous experience in readers, one that can at least momentarily alter their sensorium, and considers the designed "rhythm of this sonnet," to be "altogether for recital, not for perusal" (*The Letters of 263*).

Hopkins intends to invoke a sensory experience, but such an invocation needs the reader's active participation. It is this back and forth between the projection of poetic language and its readerly reception that also animates Herder's definition of poetic reflection. In the representation of Harry Ploughman, "the force of his (Hopkins's) soul operates freely" within a "whole ocean of sensations" (qtd. in Taylor 9). Within the ocean of sensations that flow from the animation of Hopkins's poetic imagery, a focal point can only be found through the reader's active participation, in this case through recitation. By using active recitation to help realize a vision of the sensory experience, the reader satisfies Hopkins's goal for the ploughman "to be a vivid figure before the mind's eye" (*The Letters of 263*). After all, for Hopkins, sound was the sense that brought Harry to his attention. Fitting into Herder's definition, Hopkins exemplifies that reflection requires the individual to "be conscious of its own attentiveness" (Taylor 9). Thus, Hopkins displays how consciousness of the unseeable comes from reflecting upon the whole, as it is suggested through the mediation of the parts.

Stemming from his conscious attentiveness of Harry Ploughman, Hopkins's objective with the poem is to influence the reader and listeners, passing on a particular posture of attention. Here Hopkins evidences his distinct cataphatic approach. By offering the reader a posture of attention to model, Hopkins suggests the reader can participate in memory of Hopkins's

experience or of Hopkins's own prototype, Christ. Informing sense experience through figurative images, Hopkins offers his virtual, vicarious, reflective approach to poetry as a strategy for sympathy, one which suggests opportunities for witnessing an always present but normally unseen, animating spirit.

In "Harry Ploughman," for instance, our view of the Ploughman will become vivid only if we are able to tap into and draw from our own memories of previous sense experience. This muscular icon of a man can then cohere within the reader's mind's eye as a unified, living, breathing, tangible force. Synthesizing sense experience into an image, Hopkins displays a cataphatic approach to divine reflection because the reader can apprehend directly many features of the original image. When prompting active participation, the iconic image functions as the appearance of a sacrament, a potential medium through which readers may reflect on the presence of the divine as it is animated in images. However, the symbolic appearance of the sacrament is different from an active participation in its experience.

Hopkins displays the difference between the appearance of a sacrament and a participation in its experience. The difference parallels the distinction between poetic itineraries for navigating multiple images and a fixation on a single image. Hopkins dwells on various images in order to locate the reflection of a divine focal point. Consequentially, Hopkins indicates how and why a single icon used for translating images across a medium of poetry is often insufficient for poetic reflection. What is needed is the sacramental landscape—an environment or world in which to participate.

Perhaps the sacraments of Christ best display the difference between appearance and experience. Catholic doctrine upholds the sacrament of the Eucharist through bread, meaning the image is not just a symbol of Christ's body but literally is Christ's flesh. Translating to

Hopkins's sacramental poetics, the reconstructed reflected focal image of the unseen is not just a symbol but the actual likeness of the divine. Thus, one may perceive the image of bread as a sacrament, symbolizing the body of Christ. However, this symbolic experience is different from apprehending a relationship with Christ substantiated by his body as it appears poetically.

However, the single image or static icon suggested by a poem like "Harry Ploughman" is only one way for Hopkins to construct cataphatic images through which one may glean a divine focal apprehension. The poetical implication for multiple animated images is their implied production of a single (observing) apparatus, which carries the gaze beyond the focus of a particular icon. In his poem, "Let Me Be to Thee as The Circling Bird," Hopkins displays how many animated images can contribute to a single sacramental apparatus.

Let me be to Thee as the circling bird,
Or bat with tender and air-crisping wings
That shapes in half-light his departing rings,
From both of whom a changeless note is heard.
I have found my music in a common word,
Trying each pleasurable throat that sings
And every praised sequence of sweet strings,
And know infallibly which I preferred.
(lines 1-8)

Moving from attention to reflection in lines 5-8, the speaker also moves from circling images, which communicate this idea of refinement through habit, to his experience of finding his music in a "common word" ("Let Me Be" 5). Hopkins floods the reader with multiple moving images but hones into the speaker's personal experience, demonstrating reflection as attending to the sensation of the reflective apparatus. With the risk of overwhelming the reader, drowning them in images, Hopkins pursues the process with the hope that the reader finds salvation in gleaning the reflection of the divine. Thus, in "Let Me Be" Hopkins delves into

cinematic, animated images to display the inner workings of the divine reflective apparatus, contrasting “Harry Ploughman” iconographic appearance of the sacramental experience. To go beyond the appearance of the sacramental icon, Hopkins employs music as a device for orienting the reader within the reflective apparatus.

The authentic cadence was discovered late
Which ends those only strains that I approve,
And other science all gone out of date
And minor sweetness scarce made mention of:
I have found the dominant of my range and state —
Love, O my God, to call thee Love and Love.
(lines 9-14)

Music is an animated icon through which the speaker dwells in a moment of alertness. Sound implicates multiple senses in waves that one can hear and vibrations one can feel. Therefore, as the speaker begins “trying each pleasurable throat that sings” (6), he displays a process of attuning to a reflective apparatus. Discussing the “cadence ...discovered late” (9), the speaker emphasizes the importance of attunement amongst interrupting “strains” (10), competing with “other science all gone out of date” (11) and mistaken for “minor sweetness” (12).

As previously mentioned, Hopkins identifies the possibility of drowning in an abundance of animated images. However, in this poem, as the speaker parses “every praised sequence” (7) or the images before his senses, a cataphatic synthesis of images also reveals an organized focal point. Finally, as a product of attunement, the speaker states, “I know infallibly which I preferred,” representing a glimpse of divine reflection (8). Understanding the dynamic use of senses, Hopkins weaves together memories of sound, demonstrating the aspect of attunement critical in discerning the features of the divine reflection and thus participating in a poetic apparatus. This is one reason for Hopkins’s intention that “Harry Ploughman” be read aloud and

for his fixation on the “authentic cadence” within “Let Me Be To Thee As the Circling Bird.” Thus, similar to partaking in communion for a sacramental experience of the divine body, the reader’s participation in the poetic apparatus itself becomes the medium of transference.

Furthermore, the process of divine attention, when the speaker’s attention moves from internal to external, combined with the reflective reconstruction of animated images, previews divine reflection as it is imparted to an audience. For example, Hopkins expresses his own experience of reflective poesis observing birds and further works out his personal revelation in a devotional poem, “The Windhover.” Aware of his fixation on the poem’s subject, a falcon, Hopkins is also bombarded with animate visual images that he must make sense of.

I caught this morning morning’s minion, king-
dom of daylight’s dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn falcon, in his riding
Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding
High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing
In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,
As a skate’s heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl and gliding
Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding
Stirred for a bird, – the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!
(lines 1-8)

In part due to the complex visual images, what the falcon represents is highly debated within academic criticism. However, given the topic of poetic reflection, I adopt Hinda Hollis’ interpretation of the falcon, inspired by a cross-analysis of Hopkins’s poem “The Wreck of Deutschland.” Although many associate the falcon “with something good and worth admiration,” seeing “it as a symbol for Christ,” Hollis departs from this view and identifies two birds in the invocation of the falcon. The first bird, represented as a pillar of strength as “daylights dauphin,” is a falcon representing “Isaiah’s ‘son of the morning,’ who boasted that he would ‘ascend into heaven’ and would exalt his own false ‘throne above the stars of God.’ (Hollis 437). The second,

smaller bird, is the falcon's victim. Consider Hollis' following analysis of "the rein of a wimpling wing" ("The Windhover" 4).

When a horse rings on a rein, the line runs taut between the horse and its handler. The term is one from manège in which "ringing a horse" means to cause it to circle on a long rein. Instead of thinking of the falcon's wing acting as a rein, imagine instead a tiny sparrow or similar bird that a Windhover might feed upon, and the line between the small bird and the falcon acting as a rein upon which the falcon is circling his prey. Visually this makes more sense. Significantly, there is no possessive pronoun used to introduce the wimpling wing, leaving the possibility open that this wing belongs to another bird (Hollis 437).

The dichotomous interpretation of the two birds is valuable because it shows that Hopkins intentionally builds tension between what Hollis calls the ecstasy "of the (falcon's) chase" and a stirred heart toward the victim (Hollis 438). Hopkins employs the literary device of epic simile when characterizing each bird, animating images by vividly recalling memories of his own bodily experience. Nevertheless, the dichotomous images and their representation within the poem suggests some of the tension between cataphatic and iconoclastic (or apophatic) poetic approaches.

Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume, here
Buckle! AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion
Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!

No wonder of it: shéer plód makes plough down sillion
Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,
Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion.
(lines 9-14)

As a prince of daylight, representing Hopkins's perspective toward an iconoclastic poetic approach, the falcon is steady as an ice skater's heel when it "sweeps smooth on a bow-bend" ("The Windhover" 2-6). "Stirred" by the "mastery" of the Falcon, Hopkins muses on the achievement of aesthetic production typical to the poetic approach of vacancy, which I will discuss in detail later. However, recalling my discussion of aesthetic production from the previous chapter "On Attention," the aesthetic production of audible images relies on the poet's autonomy and power to create new landscapes. This view, however, conflicts with the submission typical to Hopkins's sacramental process. "As the (poem's) octave progresses, another interpretation is mounted onto the first," signaling the second bird's ultimate domination of the first bird (Hollis 436-437). Representing grace and submission, the second bird prevails when Hopkins expresses that the Falcon buckles and does not compare to "the fire that breaks from" Christ "a billion / Times told lovelier, more dangerous" ("The Wind Hover" 10-11). With the doubled meaning of join together and break apart, the word "buckle" (10) implies a tension between Hopkins and the seductive qualities of poetics, which is represented by the falcon. In terms of poetic reflection, Hopkins unexpectedly models how one survives the temptation of poetic seduction by submitting to and breaking from a series of images. For Hopkins, enduring the abundance of images can lead to an experience of grace: "AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion / Times told lovelier."

The final stanza further supports Hopkins's devotion to sacramental poetics. Despite the falcon's previously produced spectacle, Hopkins states, "No wonder of it" (12), reducing the bird's exemplary nature. What the poem's last stanza may be suggesting is that with work all plowed soil has the potential to produce "sillion / Shine" (12-13). According to Hopkins's perspective, all images participate in qualities imminent to Christ; his original image, which is

elucidated in Hopkins's coined term *inscape*, and is best described as "the cosmic patterns behind all forms," used to uncover the "deep affective meaning in patterns of human language sound" (Wimsatt 96). Therefore, even in an abundant or random sequence of static, iconic images, the reader has the potential to glean eternal truths.

Nevertheless, other Romantic poets' reflective experiences demonstrate a search for divine patterns through less sacramental approaches. For example, Samuel Taylor Coleridge suggests a version of *inscape* through sensuous imagery, much like Hopkins. However, to Coleridge, *inscape* is "the idea that is intimated and epitomized through aesthetic, symbolic content" sustained by literary symbols (Cheyne 7). Granted, Coleridge's concept of the symbol is more concerned with the patterns inherent to poetic attention. Therefore, Coleridge is more concerned with reflecting an apparatus through memory than through sacramental devotion, as demonstrated by Hopkins.

However, as Coleridge's symbol identifies patterns within attention that can be carried over to reflection, he evinces the possible modality, or overlap, between the two experiences. Consider the habits of attention in "Frost at Midnight." Two critical events preceded Coleridge's reflection: the elimination of social distraction through poetic attention and the subversion of dialogue mediums. In the poem, landscape provides a necessary contrast for the elimination of distractions typical of the modern era. The affective qualities of the natural poetic landscapes became Coleridge's focal point. Coleridge reconstructs images for poetic reflection different from Hopkins. Unlike Hopkins, Coleridge attends to images that appear like vivid memories. For

example, as the original setting in “Frost at Midnight” evolves, Coleridge reimagines what he sees in the moment in relation to memories of what has been.

Yet again, sound is the vehicle for transmitting the reflection. The eternal rhythm or sound of God’s voice previously discussed in “Attention” extends through Coleridge’s memories and into the third stanza. Recalling a past divine experience “at school,” Coleridge would daydream “Presageful...to watch that fluttering *stranger*” (“Frost at Midnight” 25-28). Recalling his teenage years, Coleridge falls into a rhythm of daydreaming when he longs for “his sweet birthplace, and the old church-tower” (29-30). The trance contributes to a sense of time travel, which is also aided by the old church bells’ sound and its ability to stir memories of young Coleridge (32). The repetitions of rhythms are devices for participating in the larger, divine rhythm. In a letter to his friend Joseph Cottle, Coleridge articulates that all poems and narratives, like this rhythm, are a part of a “great Cycle” that inevitably becomes a part of a “Whole...Eternal Present” (*The Letters of 263*). Therefore, Coleridge achieves his objective in the reflective process of contributing to the possibility for participating in the inevitable divine rhythm of the “one life” through his production of poetic repetitions. According to Coleridge, participation in this process is realized by the poet’s (or his reader’s) “primary imagination,” which is their “living power” as a “prime agent of all human perception” participating “in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM” (*Biographia Literaria* 204).

Nevertheless, Coleridge uses memory to echo his previous participation in this larger rhythm and thus instances reflection when he shifts the poem’s focus to Hartley. In the third stanza, he shifts his attention to the “Dear Babe” whom he hopes will similarly be oriented toward God.

Dear Babe, that sleepest cradled by my side,
Whose gentle breathings, heard in this deep calm,

Fill up the intersperséd vacancies
And momentary pauses of the thought!
My babe so beautiful! it thrills my heart
With tender gladness, thus to look at thee,
And think that thou shalt learn far other lore,
And in far other scenes! For I was reared
In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,
And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars.
But *thou*, my babe! shalt wander like a breeze
By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,
Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores
And mountain crags: so shalt thou see and hear
The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
Of that eternal language, which thy God
Utters, who from eternity doth teach
Himself in all, and all things in himself.
Great universal Teacher! he shall mould
Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask.

(lines 45-65)

Referring back to the memory of the “sweet” yet haunting and stirring church bells, this sound, this image, was also a prophecy of “like articulate sounds of things to come!” (“Frost at Midnight” 34). Memory, as a placeholder for the “secondary imagination,” functions as the “echo of the former, coexisting with the conscious will...differing only in *degree*, and the *mode* of its operation” (*Biographia Literaria* 204). Thus poetry, like memory, is another medium in which one hears the secondary echoes and repetitions of the primary divine rhythm. Nevertheless, this experience becomes a tool utilized by Coleridge for the present. Memory offers a bridge between the imaginative faculties and “the generation of new and unperceived objects and experiences” (Alford 130). In this case, Coleridge’s past experience is in his expectation of a visitor, like “the *stranger*” (“Frost at Midnight” 27), like God. Despite the ironic, literal difference between the two audiences, Coleridge “hoped to see the *stranger’s* face”

(42) like he longed to see “Townsmen, or aunt, or sister more beloved” (43) because they shared something in common. This memory echoes Coleridge’s anticipation and relationship with someone relationally familiar yet physically distant.

Therefore, the fourth stanza’s devotion to Hartley shifts from Coleridge’s relation to God to his child’s relation to God. The intentional shift signals Coleridge’s intent to utilize a memory for imparting or transferring his past experience to his son. However, Coleridge is aware that mesmerism is insufficient for imparting experience to Hartley. Knowledge of the divine is not a concept to know but a *someone* to know and interact with. Therefore, Coleridge emphasizes the necessity of Hartley’s individual pursuit by encouraging him toward an experience of attunement and relationality with God. Parallel to his experience with a divine internal rhythm pointing to God, Coleridge hopes Hartley attunes himself to the “breeze” (“Frost at Midnight” 55) of the natural world so he can “see and hear / the lovely shapes and sounds intelligible / Of that eternal language, which thy God / Utters” (59-62). Coleridge intends to pass along this necessary anticipation because *by giving something, we are made to ask about the divine rhythm*. In the same way God, the “great universal Teacher...shall mould” (64) and Hartley’s spirit, Coleridge desires to mold Hartley’s focus and therefore cultivate within him the habit of anticipation Coleridge found so essential to relating with the divine.

Much like Coleridge, Percy Bysshe Shelley is interested in recreating and reinhabiting experiences of reflection. In 1816, Shelley wrote “Mont Blanc: Lines Written in the Vale of Chamouni” to reflect the scenery of the Chamonix Valley. Shelley’s experience of reflection

appeals to the senses while studying the hidden patterns of physical and poetic landscapes. However, one significant difference from Coleridge is that Shelley's reflective approach assumes the deep truth is imageless and vacant. Shelley features an iconoclastic approach to animated images that represents "an attempt to confront and resolve" poetic environments that are "a threat to consciousness" and attempts "to resolve this threat to the imagination" (Mitchell 15). These images are threatening because they represent the kind of disappointment that comes from an exposure with the sublime. As previously displayed in "Ode to a Nightingale," authors tasked with reproducing an aesthetic poetic landscape around vacancy may obsess over the previous sublime experience. The entire landscape of the poem revolved around a divine experience the speaker lost. For Shelley, the threat lies in the challenge of reflecting the same power Mont Blanc has on the public. Shelley wants to show that he understands what contributes to the notoriety of physical landscapes and poetic landscapes alike. Shelley's resolution to the threat is the production of an aesthetic, poetic environment equal in threat to the original environment. Therefore, in the first stanza, Shelley presents the threat of Mont Blanc.

The everlasting universe of things
Flows through the mind, and rolls its rapid waves,
Now dark—now glittering—now reflecting gloom—
Now lending splendour, where from secret springs
The source of human thought its tribute brings
Of waters—with a sound but half its own,
Such as a feeble brook will oft assume,
In the wild woods, among the mountains lone,
Where waterfalls around it leap for ever,
Where woods and winds contend, and a vast river
Over its rocks ceaselessly bursts and raves.

Upon seeing the mountain Mont Blanc in the valley of Chamonix, Shelley feels vulnerable immersed in "the everlasting universe of things" ("Mont Blanc" 1). Through the terms used to describe his physical and poetic environment, Shelley reveals his unique

understanding of internal patterns. The interpretation of the poem's internal patterns influences how its animated images and reflective production are reconstructed in the mind of the reader. Comparing images accumulating within a poem, Shelley presents the image of "a feeble brook" (7) developing into a "vast river" (10) capable of "bursting through these dark mountains" (18).

Thus thou, Ravine of Arve—dark, deep Ravine—
Thou many-colour'd, many-voiced vale,
Over whose pines, and crags, and caverns sail
Fast cloud-shadows and sunbeams: awful scene,
Where power in likeness of the Arve comes down
From the ice-gulfs that gird his secret throne,
Bursting through these dark mountains like the flame
Of lightning through the tempest;—thou dost lie,
(lines 12-19)

Like Coleridge and Hopkins, Shelley represents inscape or an internal pattern by describing the Arve as the medium through which "Power...comes down" (16). The physical environment is the veneer to the intentionally capitalized "Power," the source of Shelley's attention and divine reflection. Therefore, Shelley utilizes various visual and sound images to build the poetic environment. For example, grounding his version of inscape in the Ravine of Arve, Shelley addresses it as "Thou many-colour'd" then as a "many-voiced vale" (13). Shelley fulfills the reconstruction process through the abstraction of contained images though there is not one image he focuses on as compared to the other poets.

Thy giant brood of pines around thee clinging,
Children of elder time, in whose devotion
The chainless winds still come and ever came
To drink their odours, and their mighty swinging
To hear—an old and solemn harmony;
Thine earthly rainbows stretch'd across the sweep
Of the aethereal waterfall, whose veil
Robes some unsculptur'd image; the strange sleep
Which when the voices of the desert fail

Wraps all in its own deep eternity;
(lines 20-29)

Throughout the second stanza, Shelley's view of the unseen pattern resolves differently than the resolutions of Coleridge and Hopkins. In his reflection of the Arve river, Shelley references the unseen as the "unsculptured image" in the surrounding "giant brood of pines" (20) of which generations "still come and ever came / To drink their odors" (22-23) and "To hear" their swinging, "an old and solemn harmony" (24). In Shelley's poetic landscape, there is no single source for the multitude of colors and wind, the magnitude of the trees, or the curious voices of previous generations. Thus clarifying Shelley's abstraction of Mont Blanc's physical characterization is his beliefs about the origin of the universe and one's ability to understand it. According to Shelley, physical landscapes like the Arve River and Mont Blanc are unsearchable and incomprehensible. Observers of the river or mountain cannot point to the origins of its wonder. No one knows where the colors came from, how trees started growing around it, nor the first voices praising the mountain's majesty. Therefore, in his version of inscape, Shelley models a pattern beneath the abundance of images, but at the heart of this pattern is a vacancy. Much like physical landscapes, poetic landscapes and traditions are unsearchable. As Shelley searches for an internal pattern to the natural world, his reference to the "unremitting interchange" (39) between "mind and nature is also presented as a dynamic relation between mind and medium" (Verdun 161).

Thy caverns echoing to the Arve's commotion,
A loud, lone sound no other sound can tame;
Thou art pervaded with that ceaseless motion,
Thou art the path of that unresting sound—
Dizzy Ravine! and when I gaze on thee
I seem as in a trance sublime and strange
To muse on my own separate fantasy,
My own, my human mind, which passively

Now renders and receives fast influencings,
Holding an unremitting interchange
With the clear universe of things around;
One legion of wild thoughts, whose wandering wings
Now float above thy darkness, and now rest
Where that or thou art no unbidden guest,
In the still cave of the witch Poesy,
Seeking among the shadows that pass by
Ghosts of all things that are, some shade of thee,
Some phantom, some faint image; till the breast
From which they fled recalls them, thou art there!
(lines 30-48)

Displaying the dynamic relationship between mind and nature is the speaker's relationship with the natural world. For example, the river is the source of a sublime trance for the speaker ("Mont Blanc" 36). However, the speaker's sublime experience is not accredited to the tameless sound of the Arve but to the speaker's "own separate fantasy" of mind (37-38). The speaker does not submit to the landscapes as previous speakers did in the previous sacramental works. Thus, the relationship between mind and medium arises. Looking at this scene through the lens of poetic reflection, Shelley models the imaginative mind's critical role in simultaneously experiencing the images of the physical landscape and informing the sublime poetic experience. Thus, this scene depicts Shelley's posture of poetic reflection and his intent to represent the imaginative mind's power.

Shelley's intent lies in his recognizing the poetic potential of remaking one's own imaginative environment. Shelley relies on the impression of the external environment but "focuses more directly on creative production—the 'tribute' itself than on defining so specifically the activity of the mind through the senses" (Verdun 159). In contrast to the other poets, Shelley's objective is *poiesis* for praxis. As suggested earlier, the unceasing power of the Arve river inspires the speaker's sublime trance. Yet, it is this trance that the speaker uses for

informing his “own separate fantasy” or own poetic landscape. Also observable in the different drafts of the poem, Shelley projects his aesthetic environment as a surrounding to the vacancy he finds at the heart of Mont Blanc. For example, the inclusion of the following words, “harmony,” “solemn,” and “A loud lone sound,” in the original and final draft reveal Shelley’s desire “to find a place for these words even before he knows for sure what exactly they will depict or imitate” (Verdun 168). Though elusive and subtle, Shelley still wants a harmony to organize the whole. During the drafting process, Shelley “seeks an aural intensity to be a sign of physical force,” rearranging the words with the intent of “rhyming and forging some connection between the river...with the sound of the Arve” (Verdun 168). Shelley demonstrates poetic reflection and production as it precedes the furtherance of the landscape’s meaning. Thus, one implication of approaching poetic vacancy for praxis is that one cannot know or pursue the necessary initial poiesis experience. As seen in the sacramental works of Hopkins, submitting to the poiesis experience permits a particular relationship with the divine and a habitual itinerary for reapproaching divine revelation. For Hopkins, images present a ritual opportunity for reapproaching God. For Shelley, experiencing the sublime is abstract, unpredictable, and not sacramental. Though unsearchable, the vacant posture cultivates a habit of patience and responsibility within the poet and audience, a negative capability that was also indicated by Keats’s experience of sublime attention.

Conclusively, each poet presents constructs a poetic landscape with what Coleridge describes as reflective “crag” (“Frost at Midnight” 56,59). Representing Herder’s definition of the reflection experience, the poets trace patterns within their reflective experiences and intentionally fall into the weeds of poetic landscapes. All the poets capitalize on sense experience and reconstruct animated images for mediating the imminent qualities of reflection. Captivated

by iconic images, Hopkins reflects divine patterns through sacramental submission. Through memory, Coleridge participates in and informs experiences of reflection. Shelley searches poetic boundaries through praxis. Nevertheless, the essential difference between their beliefs about the reflective imagination emerges in their ability to relate to the divine. For Hopkins and Coleridge, a deep truth arises with a cataphatic poetic landscape devoted to the divine voice or transmitting the divine experience to others. However, Shelley responds to large animated images differently, employing an iconoclastic landscape that surrounds a vacant center. Nonetheless, the core of the poetic experience remains a concern for poets, helping to inform the process of poetic contemplation, which will be the subject of the next chapter.

On Contemplation

Through experiences of attention, a procession of poetic images can captivate our hearts and minds. In our best attempts at describing these images, we can even see beyond them by reflecting upon them. In poetic attention, it is the garden Keats yearns to return to. In poetic reflection, it is the answer to one's ask. Then, often unexpected, in a moment of imaginative production or reception, the curtain is pulled back in an apocrypha-like revelation. In such moments of poetic experience images contract, they align, saying the unsayable. It is the "*aporia*—the unresolvable dilemma—of transcendence" (Sells 2). Within poetics, this event occurs in experiences of contemplation.

In terms of my argument, contemplation best adheres to Michael Sells' description of *apophasis*, the unsaying or speaking away, where expression is "a function of the frequency and seriousness with which the language turns back upon its own propositions" (Sells 3). Therefore, this chapter on contemplative language attends to poetic representations of unsaying, focusing on evidence of apprehension rooted in reflective environments presented by Gerard Hopkins and T.S. Eliot. For Hopkins, the experience is largely marked by distinct theophanies of grace, whereas Eliot's iconoclastic approach is defined by the simultaneous use of decaying and appropriated sacramental images. Representing two approaches, the intuition of a deep truth or of profound vacancy, Hopkins and Eliot display the tensions and signifying stress of distinct contemplative views. Thus, since contemplation is not just seeing, but participating in an unsaying of what cannot be said, they also represent different approaches to grace.

With an intuition of a deep truth, Gerard Hopkins contemplates the unsayable in a sacramental approach. Hopkins contemplative poetry treats the ineffable name as the "force

capable of bringing about fluctuations in reality” and as “a force independent of one's desire to elevate it. It needs no elevation” (Stevens viii). Reconciling his limitation as a poet with his mediative attempt to communicate the language of God, Hopkins adopts a prophet like role. In "The Wreck of Deutschland," Hopkins mediates divine language as he recalls the shipwreck and death of five Franciscan Nuns. Hopkins addresses the poem to the memory of the nuns who were aboard the *SS Deutschland* after being exiled from Germany by the Falk Laws. In the poem, Hopkins's body becomes a landscape. Seeing God's Spirit, a spirit of animation, a real yet "uncreated grace" abiding in the individual, Hopkins appeals to its capacity to dwell in created landscapes of land or body.

Hopkins capitalizes on the way scripture draws parallels between the land and body under the authority of God's Spirit. Recognizing these parallels is necessary for understanding the significance of Hopkins's representation of the Spirit from scripture. First, according to the first two chapters of Genesis, the Spirit of God is attributed with the creation of order from chaos, generating light and life (Gen. 1.1-3). Furthermore, in the first stanza of "The Wreck," Hopkins's body is compared to the landscape God's Spirit created.

Thou mastering me
God! giver of breath and bread;
World's strand, sway of the sea;
Lord of living and dead;
Thou hast bound bones & veins in me, fastened me flesh,
And after it almost unmade, what with dread,
Thy doing: and dost thou touch me afresh?
Over again I feel thy finger and find thee. (lines 1-8)

According to Hopkins, the Spirit, "hast bound bones & veins" (5) and "fastened...(Hopkins's) flesh (5)," bringing order to Hopkins's body, which resembled the pre-

created world of chaos as "World's strand" and "sway of the sea" (3). Created by God's Spirit, the two environments—body and land—stand parallel to one another, are of similar make, and are similarly subject to being "unmade" by "Thy doing" (6-7). Thus, through the mediation of his body, Hopkins claims the divine affectively created him and nearly de-created him. As a creating and contracting force, God moves within Hopkins's inner being. After nearly undoing of him with dread, it is God's finger that touches Hopkins afresh (7). Back and forth, "over again" (8), it is God who moves through Hopkins. Further, alluding to the ocean through which God's brooding Spirit established order to creation, adds meaning to the human body through which God also touches and breathes, instating order. Through these parallel images, the unsayable maintains the affective and negative actions that Sells explains is central to an apophatic experience. The poem's form and Hopkins's subject lap like a wave—expanding and retreating to its original form or focus, demonstrating what it means to double-back. Thus, Hopkins signifies the divine works through mediated space, though is not bound to it.

Further, possessing a mediated body through which God's Spirit moves, and the unsayable speaks, Hopkins displays a sympathy with the deep truth central to sacramental experiences of contemplation. The same spirit that creates and destroys is Hopkins's "giver of breath and bread" (2). Appealing to the symbol of bread, Hopkin invokes a biblical image indicative of God's eternal provision (Exo. 16) and a sacrament of Christ's body (Mat. 26.26). Hopkins invokes scripture to show the spirit's relational qualities. Reinforcing the spirit's affectionate qualities as a *someone* to communicate with when pained by the death of the nuns, Hopkins asks, why does "thou touch me afresh" (7)? Touched by God, Hopkins admits, "Over again I feel thy finger and find thee" (8). Hopkins figuratively models a relationship between God and himself through a question and personification, suggesting the relational character of an

unspoken voice, God's Spirit. Moreover, Hopkins's body stands as the poetic medium through which God communicates through touch, demonstrating an incarnational language embodied by touch.

However, along with his physical body, Hopkins also represents the spirit moving in poetic bodies comprised of sight, sound, and written words. Invoking his own body, Hopkins shows how poetic language is a living body through which the spirit speaks, while also highlighting the shortcomings of poetry that is formally static. Hopkins expresses unsayable sayings manifesting in poetry while comparing himself to Moses.

I did say yes
O at lightning and lashed rod;
Thou heardst me truer than tongue confess
Thy terror, O Christ, O God;
Thou knowest the walls, altar and hour and night:
The swoon of a heart that the sweep and the hurl of thee trod
Hard down with a horror of height:
And the midriff astrain with leaning of, laced with fire of stress.
(lines 9-16)

Hopkins draws upon imagery inspired by Exodus 9.23 when Moses holds his staff upward and "the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the earth" when the Israelites were trying to escape Egypt. Repurposing the image of Moses holding his staff to the sky, connecting the heavens to the earth, Hopkins as the speaker says "yes" to "lightning and lashed rod" (9 – 10). He also compares natural elements raining down to the elements that "hurl...hard down with a horror of height" from the heart "laced with (the) fire of stress" (14-16). The presumption is that in great desperation for divine deliverance, Hopkins's "yes" or admission is the lightning rod and medium through which he connects with God. Like Moses, Hopkins

connects and evidences his connection with the ineffable divine voice through the medium of his body, suggesting it as a medium through which heaven meets earth, where the unsayable meets the sayable.

In the stanza above, the poem models the speaker as a fluid landscape through which one experiences divine grace through the spirit. To Hopkins, an experience of grace is "a world charged with God" and is "closely reminiscent of energy" such as the lightning previously mentioned (Yates 22). Compatible with this belief, patristic Greek fathers understand the spirit as an uncreated divine grace, an "energy or procession of the divine nature as communicated to creation" (Yates 22). Within this context, the presence of grace as uncreated energy in Hopkins's body represents the undoing feature of contemplation. Nonetheless, Hopkins's belief that "through the activity of the Spirit, creation participates in divinity" (22), aligns with the presentation of his body as a landscape that participates in divinity when the Spirit is present. Hopkins's experience demonstrates a kind of bodily experience as a feature of sacramental contemplation. Consequently, our animation, contributing to creation, participates in divinity through the activity of the spirit. The poem functions like a sacrament, leaving the remnants of images, as the basis for rituals, through which the unsayable, the spirit, has moved before. The evidence of this shows in the devolution of Hopkins's commitment to images representing language's capacity for enchantment, when using poetic "wings that spell" ("The Wreck" 12) out experiences as iconic images.

Hopkins use of Exodus imagery also strategically prepares his argument about the potential of sacramental poetics. Previously comparing himself to Moses, Hopkin also compares his poetic contemplation to Moses' reception of the divine knowledge for writing the ten

commandments. Inspiring the ten commandments, the spirit once pursued relationship with the Israelites through the law, with the objective of producing faithfulness and relationship through obedience to habits and rules. However, written on stones tablets, the ten commandments alone only offered an iconic experience of attention or reflection. Thus, sacramental poetics is one way to ritualistically reinforce useful habits of attending to images and reflecting on memories of the divine. However, the sheer pursuit does not guarantee the shock and awe of saying the unsayable. Similarly, in the third and fourth stanzas of “The Wreck,” Hopkins represents the implications of iconic images, inspired by the spirit through a poetic representation of divine undoing.

The frown of his face
Before me, the hurtle of hell
Behind, where, where was a, where was a place?
I whirled out wings that spell
And fled with a fling of the heart to the heart of the Host.
My heart, but you were dovewinged, I can tell,
Carrier-witted, I am bold to boast,
To flash from the flame to the flame then, tower from the grace to the
grace.

I am soft sift
In an hourglass—at the wall
Fast, but mined with a motion, a drift,
And it crowds and it combs to the fall;
I steady as a water in a well, to a poise, to a pane,
But roped with, always, all the way down from the tall
Fells or flanks of the voel, a vein
Of the gospel proffer, a pressure, a principle, Christ's gift.
(lines 17-32)

The poem's Exodus-inspired physical setting prepares Hopkins's argument that sacramental iconic images are insufficient for maintaining a relationship with God. Adopting the

theme of undoing that also occurs in the Exodus narrative, Hopkins explains the shortcomings of his poetic production. The speaker is troubled to find salvation through his faculty as a poet. Hopkins is conscious of his desperation and searches for security. To find safety from the "hurtle of hell" and the frown on God's face, Hopkins desperately employs words as a poetic device, or "wings that spell" to flee "with a fling of the heart to the heart of the Host" (17-20). Clinging to any available place, the speaker is desperate for safety or securing the sublime experience in the landscape of his words before it falls away from God's presence as a symptom of idolatry. One risk of sacramental imagery is that the undefined image of God can become imprisoned within the limits of a stagnant idolatry. Michael Sells explains that the static image of God is "the God of one's belief, a delimited God that one mistakenly worships as the transcendent (Sells 99). Nevertheless, the tension Hopkins experiences within his need to believe is in rescuing experiences of the divine from this static, idolatrous image of God. Despite Hopkins's attempts to use language to elevate himself to safety, he is "soft sift" sand in an hourglass, falling down a wall ("The Wreck" 25-28). The collapsing nature of sand represents Hopkins's lack of power to say the unsayable on his own without the previous presence of the lightning from heaven, or presence of the spirit.

However, ending his experience of sacramental idolatry, by the end of the poem, the spirit impresses grace upon Hopkins by the end of the poem. Important to note is Hopkins's circumstance of mourning the death of five innocent women. Their death at sea is the pretense of Hopkins frustration with his poetic power and mortality, demonstrating that desperation stands as a necessary condition for Hopkins's need to believe in an idol of God. Therefore, the use of water imagery is a mark of Hopkins's desperation when he compares himself to "water in a well, to a poise, to a pane" (29). In addition to desperation, however, water represents the chaotic and

immersive waters controlled by the spirit, as previously mentioned. So, when water dripping down a wall, like blood running through a vein, rushes into Hopkins as “the gospel proffer, a pressure, a principle, Christ's gift” (30-32) of grace, the reader should assume the presence of the spirit. The poetic significant is that the touch of the divine is unprompted and on the other side of Hopkins’s admission of poetic incapability and resign, substantiating Hopkins’s belief in the invisible other, of the deep truth.

Furthermore, the experience of grace through the invocation of water is intentional and baptismal. Likely haunted by the image of drowning people, Hopkins appeals to an idea discussed in the book of 1 Peter in chapter 3, which discusses that it is better to be put to death in the body and made alive in the spirit like Christ. For context, the chapter goes on to explain that after Jesus was made alive, “he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits” of those who died during the flood in Exodus and saved them through water, a symbol of salvific baptism (1 Pet. 3.18-21). Nevertheless, in stanza 33, Hopkins utilizes this symbolic baptism to represent the new life of those lost at sea.

With a mercy that outrides
The all of water, an ark
For the listener; for the lingerer with a love glides
Lower than death and the dark;
A vein for the visiting of the past-prayer, pent in prison,
The-last-breath penitent spirits—the uttermost mark
Our passion-plungèd giant risen,
The Christ of the Father compassionate, fetched in the storm of his strides.
(lines 257-264)

According to Hopkins, for those who died, “for the listener” or the “lingerer” (259), there is a “mercy that outrides” (257) the chaotic waters. The mercy is from Christ, and compares to the grace Hopkins previously received. Like Hopkins’s experience with grace, a “vein” extends

to “The-last penitent spirits” (261). Presumptively, even in chaotic destruction and death, those aware of their desperation and repentant received salvation, or eternal life. The allusion is poetically significant because it represents God’s undoing in Hopkins’s circumstances and in poetry. According to Hopkins’s narrative, God undoes creation, allowing the death of those at sea, while simultaneously granting eternal life to those same people. Within the poetic structure there is a similar pattern of undoing and recreating. Hopkins’s poetic retreat is positioned between Hopkins personal experience with grace and his reemphasis of mercy. In stanza 24, Hopkins briefly returned to his own situation, away from the thought of the wreck and “the prey of the gales,” where he “was under a roof” and “at rest.” By this comment, Hopkins shows a sign of poetic resignation. He tries to not think about the event, yet without attending, reflecting, and contemplating the event, Hopkins would never understand the extension of grace to others. Without the experience of contemplation, there would be no opportunity for the new life or redemption of iconic images like death and destruction.

Like water, wind is a force in which animation occurs. Wind becomes a focal point within Hopkins’s poem and worth considering for those interested in understanding the critical force behind contemplation. Wind, like water, recalls the charged force behind fixed landscapes of land and body, the spirit. Along with the spirit, wind signals Hopkins’s learned submission to the changing landscape and textual prompts. After Hopkins’s second grace experience and confrontation of idolatry, he muses on the security of the gift of grace, which permeates through the rest of the poem. Hopkins’s embrace of grace's security signals his submission and thus the evolution of his identity, or sanctification, defined by Christ. This embrace marks a learned submission to the environmental conditions of God and textual prompts. Transitioning to the

fifth stanza, Hopkins reinforces his submission to the authority of grace by acknowledging the force behind grace as wind, representing the spirit.

I kiss my hand
To the stars, lovely-asunder
Starlight, wafting him out of it; and
Glow, glory in thunder;
Kiss my hand to the dappled-with-damson west:
Since, tho' he is under the world's splendour and wonder,
His mystery must be instressed, stressed;
For I greet him the days I meet him, and bless when I understand.
(lines 33-40)

Moreover, Hopkins uses wind-like imagery to discuss submission to grace and the signifying stress of the uncreated, unseen spirit. This submission shows through Hopkins's faith in God's sovereignty. Faith is first presented through wind-imagery as Hopkins confirms the active and living power of the Spirit, 'wafting him out' of "lovely-asunder / Starlight" ("The Wreck" 33-34). The image of Hopkins wafting or breathing in is an acceptance of God and an allusion to God's breath as characterized in Genesis. According to Genesis chapter one, God's Spirit appears in the Hebrew noun *ruakh*, translating to breath, "the invisible life-energy of a person," or wind, "an invisible power that animates human breath and all creation" ("God's Spirit in Creation"). According to the creation narrative in Genesis chapter one, God's Spirit, his breath, or *ruakh*, brought order to chaos. After the fall in chapter three, *ruakh*, God's Spirit reappears as "cool of the day" in which Adam and Eve fear "the sound of the LORD God" (Gen. 3.8). Later in Genesis 8, the noun *ruakh* appears in verb form as *rîah* when God breathes in, or wafts, in the pleasing aroma of Noah's faithfulness after the flood. In verb form, the word carries the meaning of acceptance in perception. Likewise, Hopkins breathes in his surroundings and accepts grace from the spirit that established such chaotic circumstances in the first stanza.

Then, abandoning the iconic image of wind, Hopkins's faith appears in the "glow" of the "glory in thunder" ("The Wreck" 36), extending the evidence of the spirit in different, although previously employed, images. Kissing his hands to the stars as a signal of praise to God in heaven ("The Wreck" 33-35), Hopkins mimics Moses, who "spread out his hands toward the LORD," causing the thunder, hail, and rain to cease from destroying the Egyptian's land (Exo. 9.33). Reusing the previously mentioned images, Hopkins holds a faith posture like Moses, but the result is different than before. Instead of destruction, the submission is associated with divine protection and further demonstrates the redemption of iconic sacramental poetics. The redemption of iconic images by the spirit testifies to Hopkins's view that the divine is mediated in physical and poetic landscapes.

Nevertheless, contrasting Hopkins's approach to contemplation is T.S. Eliot's approach is toward vacancy. Similar to Hopkins, "The Waste Land" presents an environment of desolation and despair as a source of tension for the speakers. Yet, where Hopkins's body is extended into a poetic environment, Eliot's environment is in search of a poetic body to concentrate and identify its meaning. From the second stanza, the speaker appeals to desolate physical landscapes for explaining his contemplative experience, and he has no hope for life or fruitfulness. Therefore, the sympathy with the divine, previously represented by Hopkins, is inaccessible, represented as arid and remote.

What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,

And the dry stone no sound of water. Only
There is shadow under this red rock,
(Come in under the shadow of this red rock),
And I will show you something different from either
Your shadow at morning striding behind you
Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;
I will show you fear in a handful of dust.

(lines 19-30)

Wrought with desperation, Eliot's speaker is uniquely fond of memories. The nostalgic tone builds, prompting a soliloquy of questioning lament from the speaker. Rhetorically, the speaker questions, "what are the roots that clutch, what branches grow / Out of this stony rubbish?" ("Waste Land" 19). The speaker's questions imply a reaching toward sympathy, for the experience of touch represented in "The Wreck." The contemplative implication of poetic vacancy; however, is that there is no voice to answer.

The unanswered grievances sets up Eliot's poetic transition to iconic biblical images associated with the land. One way to highlight vacancy is organize a poetic surround around it, so that the poem becomes a landscape—a medium for a host of potential meanings. At first, the speaker's landscape is characterized by the "dead tree (that) gives no shelter, the cricket no relief, / And the dry stone no sound of water (23-24). The setting compares to signs indicative of the world's end in Ecclesiastes where "the grasshopper drags itself along" and "mourners go about the streets" (Ecc. 12.5). Eliot borrows images of the world's end from the twelfth chapter of Ezekiel because he needs to communicate a divinely inspired exile. The images surrounding the divine, as prophesied by Ezekiel, are thus appropriated for poetic utility. Moreover, Eliot illuminates his intent in building an aesthetic environment, the Waste Land, in his provocation of the audience. Mimicking chapter two of Ezekiel, when God calls Ezekiel the "son of man,"

commanding him to communicate divine messages to the Israelites, Eliot's speaker calls "you" the son of man ("Waste Land" 21). Echoing God's command to Ezekiel that he must speak the prophecy to obstinate Israelites, the poetic speaker's use of the pronoun "you" requires a level of responsibility from the "you," which could be the poem's original speaker or the reader. Unlike Hopkins's intimate embrace of various sacramental images for the poetic landscape, Eliot's strategy is apophatic and iconoclastic. Subverting the iconic gaze, Eliot uses a "heap of broken images" (22) to challenge the speaker or audience to retreat or work to alter their understanding of the appropriated images. Specific to this subversion of images, according to Eliot, the speaker or audience should liken themselves to a prophet responsible for their poetic environment. Eliot demonstrates an iconoclastic subversion of sacred images, simultaneously undoing sacred images while affectively producing his contemplative poetic landscape.

Nevertheless, the result of image appropriation in poetic contemplation is disorientation. As Eliot invokes the amount of images necessary for building poetic environment of the Waste Land, the speaker and audience can make sense of the abundant images. Eliot represents this disorientation through dialogue in the poem's second section, "A Game of Chess."

"My nerves are bad tonight. Yes, bad. Stay with me.

"Speak to me. Why do you never speak. Speak.

"What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?

"I never know what you are thinking. Think."

I think we are in rats' alley
Where the dead men lost their bones.

"What is that noise?"

The wind under the door.

"What is that noise now? What is the wind doing?"

Nothing again nothing.

"Do

“You know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you remember
“Nothing?”

I remember
Those are pearls that were his eyes.
“Are you alive, or not? Is there nothing in your head?”
(lines 111-126)

Exhibited in the dialogue between two speakers is Eliot’s intentional poetic production of disorientation. A wealthy, unnamed woman, surrounded by luxury, impatiently wrestles with feeling secure and searches for intimacy. Before dialogue, the speaker queues the audience into her internal anxiety as she yearns for intimacy, neurotically asking and demanding of her male counterpart, "stay with me" (111) and "what are you thinking of? What thinking? What?" (113). A war veteran, the male counterpart, captures the tension inherent to the speakers' dissatisfaction: "I think we are in rat's alley," / Where the dead men lost their bones" (115-116). The response captures the grim reality of the modern world following World War I, where soldiers returned home and experienced a lack of purpose within mundane routines. Though safe from physical violence, both characters are self-involved and disillusioned by their internal motivations. Their uncorrelated remarks exemplify “the standardized, denatured life of the civilized masses” in the modern world (qtd. in Bukowski 259) and the “decline in the attentional capacities of both interest and receptiveness, yielding a pervasive condition of boredom” (Bukowski 259). In effect, the poem’s production of images corresponds to an intentional production of boredom.

Through the aesthetic production of decaying images for the poetic environment of “The Waste Land,” Eliot achieves his objective of simultaneously undoing the original images by creating the poetic landscape. Further, the form of the dialogue compliments the poetic formation of disorientation, while visually highlighting the limitations of Eliot’s aesthetic production of the

contemplative experience. The dialogue gradually shifts toward the right margin with the female character's growing concern about the wind. However, the male character is apathetic to the wind, for the force that moves him is the memory of the eyes of his friends that died during the war ("Waste Land" 125). Additionally, the poem's new form highlights the force, or lack thereof, compelling the characters. Both characters relate an internal absence in sentiments about their experience with relationships. Though their conversation seems disjointed, the concept of lost friends and the concept of wind are similar: moving, motivating, and purpose-giving forces. By the end of the characters' conversation, there is no resolve to fill the visual or internal void—just tension from their lack of self-awareness. The characters do not attribute their inner emptiness to a lack of spiritual potency, which becomes an abundant source of purpose by the poem's end. Further, their lack of consciousness displays that the poet's capacity to invoke divine language falls short of producing sympathetic images in the contemplative experience. Poetic images prompt the characters' desperation, but the feeling of absence cannot evidence the unseen presence of the Divine. Like Hopkins, Eliot concedes the limitations of relying on iconic images. Only capable of producing the iconic environment of the Waste Land, Eliot demonstrates an environment of complete disorientation.

Completely overwhelmed by the excess of iconic images representing death, Eliot signals that the poetic landscape, the Waste Land, needs a sympathetic experience in the third section, "The Fire Sermon." Within Eliot's poem speakers develops a desire for security from the presence of a divine spirit, much like Hopkins's desire after his experience with idolatry. The natural progression of "The Waste Land's" multitude of images represents the locomotive nature of a poetics within which both the poem's personas and its readers can lose themselves. With the production of bored and apathetic speakers, Eliot confronts the reader's *need* for interest in the

Waste Land. The dazed and confused speakers reflect and recall divine images from scripture, showing a reliance on divine sympathy and salvation from idolatry.

The river's tent is broken: the last fingers of leaf
Clutch and sink into the wet bank. The wind
Crosses the brown land, unheard. The nymphs are departed.
Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song.
The river bears no empty bottles, sandwich papers,
Silk handkerchiefs, cardboard boxes, cigarette ends
Or other testimony of summer nights. The nymphs are departed.
And their friends, the loitering heirs of city directors;
Departed, have left no addresses.
By the waters of Leman I sat down and wept . . .
Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song,
Sweet Thames, run softly, for I speak not loud or long.
But at my back in a cold blast I hear
The rattle of the bones, and chuckle spread from ear to ear.
(lines 173-186)

Again, critical to Eliot's appropriation of biblical images is the use of theophanic language as a strategy for inspiring the boundaries of vacancy in the Waste Land. Eliot's production of images of need and desperation hinges on an allusion to Psalm 137, when the Israelites exiled to Babylon cry in remembrance of Jerusalem. The psalmist describes the Israelites looking to Jerusalem as a source of praise because it was where God's Spirit dwelled within the temple (Psa. 137). Confirming the analogy between the river and the temple, the speaker states, "the river's tent is broken" ("Waste Land" 173). When Babylon pillages the temple, it seems as if God's Spirit has left along with the source of eternal life. Similarly, Eliot's speaker mourns the loss of a life source with the pillage of the river of Thames. In the past, the river was a testament to life, contaminated with "empty bottles, sandwich papers... Or other testimony of summer nights," but now as the river is void of garbage, it is also void of the

evidence of humanity ("Waste Land" 177-179). Thus, the continuation of the speaker's interest in the Waste Land relies on the appropriation of concern based on salvation and divine sympathy for an environment.

Like Hopkins, amongst the decay and destruction of stagnant landscapes, one of "The Waste Land" speakers fixates on "the unheard wind" as an active force moving within his midst. The wind is a distracting image to the speaker, demanding attention and influencing the speaker's motivations. Like Hopkins, Eliot invokes the image after a statement of nostalgia and desperation to signal a form of embodiment that maintains a sensitivity to the poetic environment. Nevertheless, in appropriating a need for a life source, Eliot evidences an ironic reliance on theophanic experiences as the wind image continues into the shortest section of the poem, "Death by Water."

Phlebas the Phoenician, a fortnight dead,
Forgot the cry of gulls, and the deep sea swell
And the profit and loss.

A current under sea
Picked his bones in whispers. As he rose and fell
He passed the stages of his age and youth
Entering the whirlpool.

Gentile or Jew
O you who turn the wheel and look to windward,
Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and tall as you.
(lines 312-321)

Matching Hopkins's appeal to baptism, Eliot introduces the images of death by drowning and the undoing of a body. Transitioning to this section, Eliot signals the abandonment of disorientation, as he stresses death and disillusionment amongst the abundance of images. In a way, the scene represents the speaker (or reader) drowning in a turbulent environment of iconic

images. The extended use and characterization of the wind represents the consuming nature of images as it manifests in “whispers” that picked apart the bones of Phlebas the Phoenician. However, maintaining an aesthetically productive approach to constructing the contemplative process, Eliot combines the image of baptism with the mystical images surrounding sorcery. Echoing the prophetic tarot readings of Madame Sosostris from the first section, "Burial of the Dead," the death of Phlebas by chaotic waters develops and fulfills the prophetic potential established in the poem's beginning. Combining images of baptism and sorcery, Eliot communicates the inevitability of undoing by death.

Nevertheless, drawing upon the biblical image of baptism, Eliot suggests we can still access new life in the midst of death and redeem the image of wind. In the fifth section, “What the Thunder Said,” Eliot demonstrates this new life through images of new life and wind.

In this decayed hole among the mountains
In the faint moonlight, the grass is singing
Over the tumbled graves, about the chapel
There is the empty chapel, only the wind's home.
It has no windows, and the door swings,
Dry bones can harm no one.
Only a cock stood on the rooftree
Co co rico co co rico
In a flash of lightning. Then a damp gust
Bringing rain
(lines 386-395)

As stated before, Eliot's reliance on appropriated images grants him potential access to iconic images of grace, which have been stripped of their sacramental value. Having constructed desire within the speakers, an opportunity for new life, and presence of the spirit as wind in the Waste Land, Eliot reproduces the experience of contemplative grace. Pulling from the previous invocation of the prophecy of Ezekiel, the Waste Land reflects the product of exile—death.

Musing on this biblical story, Eliot's focuses on "the empty chapel" where the wind resides, and "dry bones" absent of life. However, just as God commands Ezekiel to prophesy the dry bones to come to life, as soon as the speaker announces the unpronounced "flash of lightning" and "a damp gust / bringing rain," signifying the unsayable divine experience.

Then spoke the thunder

DA

Datta: what have we given?

My friend, blood shaking my heart

The awful daring of a moment's surrender

Which an age of prudence can never retract

By this, and this only, we have existed

Which is not to be found in our obituaries

Or in memories draped by the beneficent spider

Or under seals broken by the lean solicitor

In our empty rooms

DA

Dayadhvam: I have heard the key

Turn in the door once and turn once only

We think of the key, each in his prison

Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison

Only at nightfall, aethereal rumours

Revive for a moment a broken Coriolanus

DA

Damyata: The boat responded

Gaily, to the hand expert with sail and oar

The sea was calm, your heart would have responded

Gaily, when invited, beating obedient

To controlling hands

I sat upon the shore

Fishing, with the arid plain behind me

Shall I at least set my lands in order?

London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down

Poi s'ascose nel foco che gli affina

Quando fiam uti chelidon—O swallow swallow

Le Prince d'Aquitaine à la tour abolie

These fragments I have shored against my ruins

Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo's mad againe.

Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata.
Shantih shantih shantih
(lines 400-434)

Representing contemplative mastery, Eliot signals the combination of divine and secular images. Weaving together disparate images and meanings in order to construct an aesthetic experience of contemplative grace, Eliot ties together images of new life through baptism, the spirit moving through the wind, and through a depiction of grace influenced by Hinduism. Through Hindu mythology from the second Brahmana, Eliot depicts grace through an allusion to the gods of the Hindu pantheon advising mankind to possess self-control, compassion, and generosity.

Ending the dry spell of the Waste Land, the thunder repeats "DA" three times, accompanied by the phrases Datta, Dayadhvan, and Damyata (400-419). With each corresponding phrase, a voice speaks through the wind-like elements of grace, presenting the *gift* of surrender (404), sympathizing with those imprisoned by the Waste Land (415), and finding affections for "controlling hands" that are "expert with (the) sail and oar" (420-423). Nevertheless, new life according to Eliot looks like learning to navigate the chaotic waters of iconic imagery. Poetic navigation comes from the iconoclastic approach, allowing the individual to poetically appropriate, reshape, and undo images for the purpose of constructing a contemplative experience of grace. In the final stanza, confirming this advantage of poetic utility, and despite any arising destruction from an abundance of iconic images represented by the Waste Land, the speaker states, "These fragments I have shored against my ruins." Despite the depths of chaos, grace prevails under the affection of Eliot's controlling hands, emphasizing that even

within a turbulent, and often vacant, modernity new life can be found through the cultivation of experiences of contemplation.

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