ABSTRACT

“The darling child of speech”: Gerard Manley Hopkins’s Pedagogy of Poetic Performance

Elizabeth E. Travers, M.A.

Mentor: Joshua King, Ph.D.

Gerard Manley Hopkins takes pains in his letters, sermons, journals, and notes to facilitate his readers’ experience of his poetry by advocating vocal performance. This study considers Hopkins’s thoughts on poetic performance and what they mean for good poetic pedagogy, especially for undergraduate readers. Hopkins’s poetry is particularly useful for a study like this because of its broad appeal and because, as I argue, Hopkins wrote his poetry with a specific “pedagogy” in mind. Thus, I begin with Hopkins’s pedagogy of poetic performance, explore its development in his other writings, and provide both a theoretical and theological framework for vocal performance of his poetry. With this study, I propose new lines of influence and draw from these studies practical conclusions about performing Hopkins’s poetry in the undergraduate classroom.

"The darling child of speech": Gerard Manley Hopkins's Pedagogy of Poetic Performance

by

Elizabeth E. Travers, B.A.

A Thesis

Approved by the Department of English

____

Dianna Vitanza, Ph.D., Chairperson

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
Baylor University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
of

Master of Arts

Approved by the Thesis Committee

____

Joshua King, Ph.D., Chairperson

____

Kristen Pond, Ph.D.

____

Natalie Carnes, Ph.D.

Accepted by the Graduate School
August 2015

____

J. Larry Lyon, Ph.D., Dean

Page bearing signatures is kept on file in the Graduate School.

Copyright © 2015 by Elizabeth E. Travers

All rights reserved

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS vi
CHAPTER ONE 1
Learning to Speak: Hopkins's Pedagogy of Poetic Performance 1
The Actualization of Poetry 5
The Performance of Poetry 18
The Physicality of Poetry 24
CHAPTER TWO 32
Created to Praise: Hopkins's Theology of Language and Performance 32
Reading the World as Word 33
Writing the Wor[l]d 48
Speaking the Wor[l]d 53
Interpreting the Wor[l]d 57
CHAPTER THREE 61
Reading with the Ears: Hopkins's Performance Pedagogy in Practice 61
Setting the Classroom Stage 65
Lesson One: "Pied Beauty['s]" Dappled Rhythms 69
Lesson Two: The Drama of "The Starlight Night" 77
Lesson Three: Close Reading for Performance 88
Lesson Four: Performance 93
Conclusion 99
BIBLIOGRAPHY 101

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Works by Gerard Manley Hopkins

[CW i] *Correspondence: Volume I 1852-1881.* Ed. R.K.R. Thornton and Catherine Phillips. The Collected Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins. 2013.

[CW ii] *Correspondence: Volume II 1882-1889.* Ed. R.K.R. Thornton and Catherine Phillips. The Collected Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins. 2013.

[J] *The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. Ed. Humphry House and Graham Storey. 1959.

[LI] *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges*. Ed. C.C. Abbott. 1955.

[LPM] *The Later Poetic Manuscripts of Gerard Manley Hopkins in Facsimile*. Ed. Norman H. Mackenzie. 1991.

[MS. P] Hopkins, George Herbert. "Spring." 1877. MS. Harry Ransom Center, Austin, TX.

[PIII] *The Poetical Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. Ed. N.H. MacKenzie. 1990.

[S] *The Sermons and Devotional Writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. Ed. Christopher Devlin, S.J. 1955.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A work like this requires a community. I'm grateful for the many friends who felt the inexplicable urge to feed me regularly, as well as the frequent commiseration with fellow graduate students in various stages of scholarly distress. Prisca Bird and Colin Beynon get top marks for their unfaltering (and unflinching) friendship that manifested itself in long evenings of prayer and conversation about Hopkins, writing woes, and paper deadlines. Sara Kelm and Joanna Rempel-Knighten kept me company for hours and hours of writing; Paige and Paul Gutacker talked through my ideas with me when I thought I didn't have any left; and Rachel Griffis's thoughtful and insightful suggestions helped me tackle my revisions. Amazingly, my mother and father never wearied of reading my work, encouraging me in my scholarship and offering counsel when needed. They are my best and most loving critics.

Of all those in my faithful band of friends and family, Dr. Joshua King deserves my deepest thanks. Dr. King gently but firmly molded me as a scholar, student, and writer. He patiently answered my many questions and always provided sound, prompt advice. More than that, I am grateful for Dr. King's care, encouragement, and grace. Under his mentorship, I always felt as though I could succeed.

DEDICATION

To my father, Michael, in whose face Christ plays.

CHAPTER ONE

Learning to Speak: Hopkins's Pedagogy of Poetic Performance

Gerard Manley Hopkins's curious poetry invites a wide range of study. Literary scholars mine Hopkins's inventive language and rhythms for meaning, looking for the key to his poetry's elusive inscape. Theologians find in Hopkins the echoes of Duns Scotus, John Newman, and St. Augustine, as well as the philosophical influences of Plato and Parmenides. And undergraduates often encounter Hopkins first in ponderous literature anthologies where his vigorous poetry surprises them. How else could an obscure Jesuit poet unpublished in his lifetime be so very alive in a world so very different from his own? This question leads to an exploration of the ways Hopkins's readers encounter and experience his poetry. Readers better understand his poetry on Hopkins's own terms by reconstructing and heeding the guidance and instruction he has provided in his letters, lecture notes, author's notes, and journals. With such a wealth of commentary, a pedagogy, of sorts, can be reconstructed that may help undergraduate instructors usher students of Hopkins's poetry into a fuller experience of his poetic voice and world. Thus, the questions this study seeks to answer are how Hopkins facilitates the reader's experience of this vitality, how his theology informs his practice, and what these ideas could mean for good poetic pedagogy, especially for the undergraduate reader.

Hopkins's poetry is particularly useful for a study like this because of its broad appeal and because, as I have mentioned and will argue, Hopkins wrote his poetry with a specific "pedagogy" in mind. As he writes in an 1885 letter to his brother Everard,

"Poetry was originally meant for either singing or reciting.... [Mental performance] is not the true nature of poetry, the darling child of speech, of lips, and spoken utterance: it must be spoken; till it is spoken it is not performed, it does not perform, it is not itself" (CW ii 747-8). This study will begin with this statement and explore its development in Hopkins's other writings, particularly his letters, journals, and lecture notes. In drawing all of Hopkins's comments on voiced performance together, I hope to present Hopkins's ideas as a cogent, well-developed poetic pedagogy that, ultimately, has implications for our understanding of Hopkins's theology and anthropology. To explore these implications, I will argue that Hopkins's idea of poetic performance derives from an Augustinian concept of language as a necessarily communal act. Hopkins's devotional poetry therefore invites engagement and performance with a liturgical end: communal worship. His poetry is, thus, open for oral performance and, in being performed, also has the capacity to perform upon readers in much the same way that ritualized, liturgical language does upon the speaker or reader. For readers of Hopkins's poetry to actualize the text, they must use the tools Hopkins gives them to facilitate their experience. These include not only the metrical notations he provided but also the "cues" he gives them within the poems themselves – gaps of meaning, defamiliarized language, patterns of alliteration, onomatopoeia, compressed syntax, echo and repetition, and meter.[1]

Together, a study of Hopkins's theory of performance and theology of language will provide a framework for a critical and pedagogical reading of two of his works, "Pied Beauty" and "The Starlight Night." While it is difficult to choose two poems out of

[1] In *The Printed Voice of Victorian Poetry*, Eric Griffiths refers to I.J. Gelb's seven "prosodic features": "pitch, pace, volume, pronunciation, stress, juncture, and intonation" (18). The cues I list are some of the ways Hopkins attempts to communicate these extra-textual elements.

Hopkins's extraordinary body of work, these two poems may open up more readily to analysis for performance because of their accessible length, relative familiarity in the undergraduate classroom, and because of the type and concentration of poetic effects in each. In turn, from the theory, theology, and analysis will be drawn a set of principles for performance pedagogy in the literature classroom, as well as examples of practical applications of these principles. This study will be a departure from the current critical discourse concerning Hopkins's prosody and language, which often focuses on explaining and understanding his complex metrical techniques, and will instead emphasize Hopkins's insistence upon voiced performance, expand upon some familiar lines of influence, and draw from these studies some practical conclusions about the importance of performing Hopkins's poetry in the classroom.

Hopkins's letters often show him working out his ideas of rhythm and meter, poetic purpose, and reader interpretation. Thankfully, a wide corpus of Hopkins's correspondence exists, especially as pertains to his poetry. Hopkins's epistolary legacy makes his poetry more accessible, illuminating sources of inspiration, explanations of metrical notations, and even suggestions for response and performance. It is this latter purpose with which I am concerned in this study, for Hopkins offers students and teachers of his poetry a thorough and practical poetic pedagogy. His ideas of speech and performance, as presented in his letters, suggest that readers have the best access to his poetry when they respond to it through performance and recitation.

Nowhere does Hopkins synthesize his pedagogy most thoroughly as in his November 1885 letter to his youngest brother, Everard, a prominent artist for *The Graphic*, a popular London magazine. This long, conversational letter covers much

ground. In it, Hopkins discusses his recent reading material (*Ecce Homo* and *Literature and Dogma*), critiques one of his brother's recent engravings, and offers a surprisingly well-developed theory of poetic performance. It is apparent from the letter that Hopkins had sent a copy of his poem "The Loss of the Eurydice" (1878) to his brother and that they had been conversing about the rhymes and rhythm in it. Everard seems to understand his brother's attempts to "get at" something new, and Hopkins is grateful, saying, "I am sweetly soothed by your saying that you cd. make any one understand my poem by reciting it well. That is what I always hoped, thought, and said; it is my precise aim" (CW ii 747). He then elaborates on the performance of art, discusses his principles for recited poetry, and speculates on the possibilities of recited poetry as a developed performance art:

> Every art then and every work of art has its own play or performance. The play or performance of a stageplay is the playing it on the boards, the stage: reading it, much more writing it, is not its performance. The performance of a symphony is not the scoring it however elaborately; it is in the concert room, by the orchestra, and then and there only. A picture is performed, or performs, when anyone looks at it in the proper and intended light. A house performs when it is now built and lived in. To come nearer: books play, perform, or are played and performed when they are read; and ordinarily by one reader, alone, to himself, with the eyes only. This reacted on the art: what was to be performed under these conditions for these conditions ought to be and was composed and calculated. Sound-effects were intended, wonderful combinations even; but they bear the marks of having been meant for the whispered, not even whispered, merely mental performance of the closet, the study, and so on…. This is not the true nature of poetry, the darling child of speech, of lips and spoken utterance: it must be spoken; till it is spoken it is not performed, it does not perform, it is not itself. (CW ii 747-8)

Hopkins offers three general principles for the performance of his poetry in this dense passage: 1. Audience actualization of art requires presentation; 2. Poetry has its own,

particular “play” or “performance,” just like other works of art, and 3. Poetic performance requires the physical voice. I will address each one in turn.

The Actualization of Poetry

The first principle implicit in Hopkins’s theory of poetic performance is that the actualization of a work of art occurs in the presentation of it. Presentation of any work of art, even visual, requires an audience to receive it and is, thus, an act of community between the artist, the work of art, and the receiver. The fullness of a work of art, therefore, occurs not in the medium itself (the text, the paint, the script, etc.), but in the space between the medium and the receiver. It occurs when a work of art is presented and its “soul,” to use one of Hopkins’s terms, is sent forth. This accords closely with Hopkins’s ideas of instress (the defining internal energy or singular impression of a thing) and inscape (the characteristic form and design of a thing), for as the voice of a speaker presents the poem to an audience, the sound of the voice becomes a vehicle for the inscape of the poem to be translated to the listener. The listener would access the inscape of the poem affectively as the weight of the sounds descends and strikes the ear with that which only “heart heard” and “ghost guessed,” as Hopkins says in “Spring and Fall.” The poem, “Spring and Fall,”[2] embodies this artistic principle in its form and content:

> Margaret, are you grieving
> Over Goldengrove unleaving?
> Leaves, like the things of man, you
> With your fresh thoughts care for, can you?
> Ah! As the heart grows older
> It will come to such sights colder

[2] As presented in Catherine Phillips’s 2002 Oxford World’s Classics edition. Unless otherwise noted, all poetry quotations come from this edition.

By and by, nor spare a sigh
Though worlds of wanwood leafmeal lie;
And yet you *will* weep and know why.
Now no matter, child, the name:
Sorrow's springs are the same.
Nor mouth had, no nor mind, expressed
What héart héard of, ghóst guéssed:
It is the blight man was born for,
It is Margaret you mourn for. (lines 1-15)

The poem is written in sprung rhythm, which allows greater rhythmic variety than standard rhythm, since it only counts stresses as necessary to the meter, not syllables. "Spring and Fall" begins with a falling rhythm and four stresses, and thus four feet, per line ("MARgarET, ARE you GRIEVing" – line 1). By the end of the poem, and after a tortuous bit in the middle, the base rhythm flip-flops to an essentially rising rhythm ("It is MARgarET you MOURN for" – line 15) finished by a forgotten fall as the last two lines end on unstressed syllables and so return to an "uncounted" falling rhythm ("BORN for" and "MOURN for" – lines 14-15). The triple tension in the lines among the falling rhythm established at the beginning, the rhythmic interruptions of the middle, the new rising rhythm, and, finally, the haunting fall at the end of the last two lines reveals a narrative subtext to the poem: although the poem is about grief, loss, sadness, and death (whether of another, one's own hopes, or simply the falling leaves), the rising rhythm belies the irrepressible hope of spring, life, rising, and even resurrection. Yet, the final fall at the end of lines 14 and 15 evokes the Fall of Adam and Eve, a reminder of mortality amid the splendor of resurrection. Importantly for my point here, Hopkins effects the rhythmic turn from "fall to spring" as he wrestles for the words to describe the innate sorrow of the world. It does not matter where the sorrow springs from, he tells Margaret, or even what the source of that sorrow is called; no one has ever been able to

think or speak the right words to describe the "blight man was born for" (line 14). Conceptually and rhythmically, the turn from fall to spring occurs between the author/poem and the receiver/reader. The reader struggles with the rhythmic clumsiness of the line "Nor mouth had, no nor mind, expressed," attempting to express that which "héart héard of, ghóst guéssed" (lines 12-13). As readers struggle, they are given the opportunity to apprehend that sorrow affectively, not just cognitively, while the rhythm itself works the same effect physically. Catherine Phillips's version, as quoted above, retains the important accentual marks above "héart héard of, ghóst guéssed" as a guide to this key rhythmic turn. Although certainly engaging even when printed as text with little to no performative guidance, the poem *presented* to an audience would enable a performer to embody this tension, creating a vicarious experience for the listeners.

Audience actualization depends, therefore, on presentation of the text and, subsequently, the audience's awareness of Hopkins's efforts to guide performance. Until recently, however, readers of Hopkins's poetry have not had full access to his friendly guidance. This is an important omission because the link between "the prosodic features of language and intelligibility," Eric Griffiths reminds us, "demonstrates a link between what might be thought of as the 'form' and the 'content' of an utterance, a link existing in the material medium of the language" (19). Because it exists in the materiality of language itself, this link between prosody and sense (or, that which includes but is not just semantic meaning) is a physical one, embodied as it is by speakers and listeners. I will take up the physicality of poetic performance later, but I note it here because it emphasizes Hopkins's belief that the actualization of his poetry best occurs when offered from a performer or reciter to an audience.

Although Hopkins took pains to guide his readers – friends, family, students, and critics – his poetry has had a difficult history of presentation for audience reception. A study of "Spring" across three of the major editions shows Hopkins's editors struggling with the tension between presentation of the poetry as a written text and Hopkins's own presentation of his poetry as a spoken text. Rejected during his lifetime, his poetry was initially anthologized by Bridges after his death with the works of other contemporary poets in order to "test the waters" of its receptivity. By placing his works adjacent to works by other, better-known poets, Bridges perhaps unintentionally positioned Hopkins's poems to be read "in the voice" of other poets – an unfortunate byproduct of anthologies. Since the time of these first publications, Hopkins's poetry has required a nearly eighty-year public "negotiation" during which editions of his poetry and various editors have navigated the Scylla and Charybdis of public reception and the purity of his texts and intentions. Editorial choices from Bridges's first full edition (1918) to the most recent edition by Norman Mackenzie (1990) have either obscured or illuminated Hopkins's principles of poetic performance. The increased attention to his rhythmic markings for scholarly study in the latest editions, I would argue, marks Hopkins's poetry for a new turn towards aural reception by performance in the undergraduate classroom.

Bridges's 1918 edition functions as both a memorial to his dead friend, who never found fame during life, and as a means of winning acceptance for Hopkins's odd poetic style. Catherine Phillips, in the Notes on the Text for her 2002 Oxford World's Classics of Hopkins's poetry, points out Bridges's difficulties with Hopkins's choices of grammar, rhyming, meter, and figurative language, which he feared would make Hopkins's poetry less accessible to a wider, more popular, audience (xxxix). Bridges's concern for

contemporary taste was not unfounded for Hopkins's poetry rarely met with enthusiasm. In his 1990 edition of Hopkins's poetry, Norman H. MacKenzie reminds us, "Neither Robert Bridges nor Coventry Patmore sympathized with Hopkins's own layouts, or his imperfectly achieved efforts to indicate to the reader the musical effects in his mind" (PIII liii). Patmore deplored the metrical marks as unnecessary, and Andrew Lang, another contemporary literary critic, dismissed Hopkins poetry as odd (CW i 354). By removing these obstacles, Bridges hoped to appeal to broader poetic taste while still preserving much of the surprise and linguistic playfulness that comprises Hopkins's appeal.

Bridges knew more intimately than most, however, the importance of performance in accessing the inscape of Hopkins's poetry because Hopkins himself had told him. Hopkins wrote to him in at least two different letters, saying, "The rhythm of this sonnet…is altogether for recital, not for perusal…" (CW ii 896) and "To do the Eurydice any kind of justice you must not slovenly read it with the eyes but with your ears, as if the paper were declaiming it at you. For instance the line 'She had come from a cruise training seamen' read without stress and declaim is mere Lloyd's Shipping Intelligence; properly read it is quite a different thing. Stress is the life of it" (CW i 296). In an 1883 letter to Coventry Patmore, Hopkins emphasizes the importance of spoken stress, saying, "Stress appears so elementary an idea as does not need and scarcely allows of definition; still this may be said of it, that it is the making a thing more, or making it markedly, what it already is; it is the bringing out its nature" (CW ii 629). Reading with the ears, as Hopkins terms it, reveals stress, both bringing the line of poetry to life and making it less familiar to the ear. A line from Lloyd's Shipping Intelligence is lifelike but

also familiar; by dramatizing the line, however, ordinary information becomes dramatic action – a tightly compressed narrative told through a series of dynamic emphases. Reading poetry without verbal emphasis repulses the reader, Hopkins acknowledges to Bridges in an April 1879 letter: to read "as one commonly reads whether prose or verse, with the eyes" is to be "struck…aghast with a kind of raw nakedness and unmitigated violence" (CW i 355). Nonetheless, Bridges privileged acceptance over presentation – a perhaps necessary choice at the time but troubling in light of Hopkins's many attempts to guide reception – and in so doing revealed the tensions inherent in Hopkins's poetic style: A style in need of such guidance might never achieve its purpose without the presence of its creator, and such guidance may preclude diversity of interpretation.

Hopkins's attempts to guide his reader's reception of his poetry caused Bridges significant editorial difficulties. This becomes clear when contrasting Bridges's setting of "Spring" to an 1877 holograph of the same (referred to as MS. P)[3] and to another undated holograph. The 1877 holograph faircopy shows a particular stanza arrangement of two quatrains and two tercets. The poem has been marked for musical setting, which Hopkins's sister Grace, Lady Pooley, presumably would have done (LPM 112), and features a number of musical terms and metrical instructions. The instructions, which head the poem, prescribe "unfolding rhythm, with sprung leadings: no counterpoint." Marked along the left-hand margin of the poem are instructions to play the first two stanzas *staccato*, or in short, sharp bursts, and to play the final tercets *rallentando*, or with a gradual slowing of tempo (much like the more commonly used term *ritardando*).

[3] This manuscript is available for study at the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas in Austin.

The other holograph of "Spring," probably also referenced by Bridges, features different metrical instructions from MS. P: "standard rhythm, opening, with sprung leadings" is written over Hopkins's original description, which reads, "trochaic measure increasing to dactylic, afterwards iambic" (LPM Plate 298). This version of the poem omits the expressly musical notations but preserves the use of the great colon, the circumflex, and the slur.[4] In addition, the stanza arrangement features one octave followed by two tercets. A contrast of Hopkins's attempts to describe and communicate his metrical intentions for readers, composers (Grace), and performers illuminates his understanding of both poetic performance – using common literary metrical terms such as "trochaic," "dactylic," and "iambic" – and of musical performance – such as "counterpoint," "rallentando," and "staccato." In both cases, Hopkins emphasizes the drama of the poem. Additionally, and perhaps more surprisingly, these metrical notations demonstrate Hopkins's implicit awareness of diversity in poetic reception and interpretation. Set in two different ways by the author's own hand, "Spring" has the capacity to be interpreted musically (as song) and rhetorically (as speech). Similarly, by presenting two different line settings (two quatrains and two tercets and one octave and two tercets), Hopkins demonstrates awareness that there are different realizations of poetic form and that they can affect voice – a difficult path for Bridges to navigate. In both cases, the poem must be presented – or offered in performance – to an audience in order to realize the narrative and dramatic potential of these symbols.

---

[4] These marks come from Hopkins's own metrical notation system, which Catherine Phillips has compiled and explained in the Oxford World's Classics edition of Hopkins's poetry. The great colon (:) indicates a "stress on either side of the colon; a sprung opening, i.e. a great colon at the beginning of a line indicates a stress on the initial syllable;" the circumflex (~) stretches one syllable into almost two; and the slur (   ) placed between two syllables combines them into one (307).

"Spring," as presented in the published 1918 edition, shows that Bridges has taken liberties with the poetic form, altering the stanza form into an octave and a sestet – the common form of a Petrarchan sonnet, which would have fit the "traditional" understanding of poetic structure for the general reading public of the day. An 1877 transcription of Bridges's shows the rearrangement (LPM Plate 301), and the version printed in the 1918 edition also uses this stanza form. According to MacKenzie's description of Bridges's transcription, Hopkins corrected punctuation errors and changes Bridges made. Not all of Hopkins's corrections, however, reflect his original holographs, and some of these corrections have been altered by Bridges for the edition. Bridges has removed Hopkins's metrical notations in full for the 1918 edition, as he does for all the poems in his first edition, and he establishes a stanza form on the page not reflected in either Hopkins's holographs or his own transcription. "Nothing is so beautiful as Spring," begins the poem, and Hopkins proceeds to fill the readers' ears with spring sounds: "…thrush / Through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring / The ear, it strikes like lightnings to hear him sing" (lines 3-5). The "lightnings" of sounds are created by the frequent elision of syllables that Hopkins's holographs present in the first eight lines ("the echoing" in line 4, for example), and they slow in the second half of the poem (the last six lines) as Hopkins locates Eden as the source of this energy and jubilance of spring life, pushing the reader to grasp it before it falters. Bridges's presentation of "Spring" removes the elision of syllables, presenting the poem chiefly as a printed text and removing evidence of the physical voice in a poem filled with lush sounds and descriptions of sounds.

Along with his concern about stanza form and appearance, Bridges's letters reveal him worrying about the arrangement, typeface, and setting on the page and how these would influence appreciation. In letters spanning February to April, 1918, Bridges expresses his aesthetic concerns, from the length of Hopkins's name on the title page (a short name would be "easier to deal with artistically") to the look of the poems on the page ("That terrible 'Deutschland' looks and reads much better in type") to his assessment of the volume itself, which he declared a "very pretty book" and a "handsome book" (Bridges 725-731). All of these changes indicate, as Phillips proposes, that Bridges "…was less concerned to present an accurate version of the poems as Hopkins had left them than to win acceptance for the poetry. Consequently, he chose those versions or combinations of them that he thought most appealing" (xxxix). Published in a limited release at only 750 copies, Bridges's "handsome" edition is, it seems, a work that did justice to his dead friend's genius – his chief concern (LI xx, n. 2). Bridges – the professional poet, the poet laureate – memorializes his friend, even as he struggles to introduce him to the world.

Bridges's work collating transcriptions, transcribing manuscripts, deciphering countless revisions, interpreting authorial intent, and marketing the work of Hopkins set a precedent for a number of editions throughout the twentieth century. These editions presented Hopkins's work for audience reception in much the same way as Bridges's original edition. In 1930, Charles Williams edited a second edition for Oxford University Press, which is a near copy of the 1918 edition and continues Bridges's practice of editing for memorialization and acceptance. Bridges died on April 21, 1930, before he could see the publication of the second edition. The timing of both Bridges's death and

Williams's critical introduction in June explains why Williams takes such pains to credit Bridges's work on the original edition and why he terms his second edition "a reprint of the book which Dr. Bridges made" (ix). Williams continues the practice of memorialization started in 1918 by Bridges, although his edition is, in many ways, a memorial to Robert Bridges, not as poet, but as the editor of Gerard Manley Hopkins. A glance at "Spring" in the second edition supports this analysis, as Williams maintains all changes Bridges made. However, expansion of the available poetic corpus, although small, the larger print run, and the comparatively smaller price of the volume contributed to the success of the edition and wider readership.

After Williams's "Bridges Reprise," which the writer of a September 23, 1949, book review in the *Times Literary Supplement* points to as the beginning of Hopkins's ascendency, when he "really began to have his vogue" (616), William H. Gardner edited the third edition, published in 1948. Like Williams, Gardner keeps Bridges's original typesetting of "Spring," making no significant changes to the actual poem other than placing it in a new position between "The Starlight Night" and "The Lantern out of Doors." His edition represents the first significant departure from Bridges's method of presentation by placing the early poems in the front of the volume and is the first edition annotated for reader understanding. In his introduction to the edition, Gardner avers that he can do this because Hopkins has "attained the status which gives a psychological or biographical as well as literary importance to all his utterances…" (xiv). No longer do audiences doubt Hopkins's importance as a poet by reading his earlier, immature works first. Rather, his reputation is fully established, making the progression of his poetic voice of use to the reader who wishes to understand the poetry.

In 1967, Gardner and Norman H. MacKenzie collaborated on the fourth edition for Oxford, which became the most thorough edition at its time and marked a shift in purpose to study. Their place in time allows them to be the first to take a retrospective look at previous editions and to find them wanting. By identifying numerous errors in the second edition, and by revisiting Hopkins's original manuscripts for variant readings, Gardner and MacKenzie introduce, for the first time, the idea of restoration and "true readings." As a result, they replace some of Bridges's emendations with many of Hopkins's manuscript versions, creating a bridge between two editorial purposes: student study of a text, as presented in Gardner's third edition, and interpretation, as presented in the next edition by Catherine Phillips.

Phillips's 1986 Oxford Authors edition, republished in 2002 as an Oxford World's Classics edition, took a markedly new approach. Her arrangement "discards the subsections in which the poems have previously been placed and presents them in chronological order" (xl). Rather than presenting the poems as parts of a poetic arc, Phillips presents them as part of a biographical and ideological narrative. R.K.R. Thornton praises this arrangement in *The Review of English Studies*: "The way that individual poems and fragments strike off each other…makes one wonder what would appear if we tried to present all his writings, letters, sermons, poems, in one chronological order" (460). In addition, Phillips includes a "briskly efficient" critical introduction (Thornton 460), a timeline of life events, notes that verge on commentary, and, most notably, extensive excerpts from Hopkins's journals and letters. These excerpts "indicate the striking brilliance of Hopkins's mind" (Thornton 460) and invite the reader to experience Hopkins's development of ideas over time as he worked them out in theory –

to friends and his journal – and in practice – in his poetry. Phillips's presentation of "Spring" also illustrates her interest in a multi-faceted understanding of Hopkins. It is presented, for the first time, with the same stanza arrangement as the 1877 manuscript version analyzed at the outset of our discussion. She, unlike any others before her, maintains one of Hopkins's line arrangement options by using two quatrains and two tercets. Phillips's version of "Spring" also makes a first attempt to ease the reader into an understanding and use of Hopkins's metrical markings. Although reduced, Phillips adds the key stress marks made by Hopkins on his manuscript. These, and Phillips's other editorial decisions, as discussed above, allow the reader to begin the process of interpreting Hopkins's work in light of his life and ideas – a process that necessarily follows acceptance and understanding.

The latest scholarly edition, produced by Norman H. MacKenzie in 1990, sets out to "take into account all the manuscripts, and include the editor's interpretation of the author's prosodic intentions" (qtd. from flyleaf). It also includes extensive annotations, facsimiles of key works, extensive biographical information, detailed commentary, and cross-references to MacKenzie's staggering collection of reproductions in his two-volume *Poetic Manuscripts of Gerard Manley Hopkins in Facsimile*. This 545-page edition is the first organized around Hopkins's prosody and the first to consider the recursive and abbreviated nature of Hopkins's work. MacKenzie includes key rhythmic notations, as marked by Hopkins in his working manuscripts, and also presents variant readings of these manuscripts side-by-side. Richard Jenkyns, in his 1991 review of MacKenzie's edition, recognizes the importance of this unparalleled work. Writes Jenkyns, "In MacKenzie's extraordinary edition, the poems appear (more or less) as

Hopkins wrote them, covered with slurs, accents, pause marks. It does not look pretty on the page, but that is in a way the point: like musical notation, all these signs are means to an end, instructions for a performance that is intended for the ear, not the eye" (41).

In keeping with his emphasis on Hopkins's prosody, MacKenzie presents "Spring" as offered in MS. 1 (LPM Plate 298), with an octave followed by two tercets and b rhyme indentations. Unlike Phillips, who returns to the stanza form of the poem copied for Grace, Lady Pooley, MacKenzie uses the manuscript that Bridges would have seen and reintroduces Hopkins's characteristic musicality. Although removing the heading instructions, MacKenzie does make more extensive use of metrical marks than in any previous edition, and the slur and the circumflex are abundant. The important addition of these prosodic features marks a turning point in Hopkins studies that should be noted and advanced. Where is the Hopkins of "the ear, not the eye?" Although there are a few noteworthy performances of Hopkins's poetry, such as Richard Burton's gorgeous recitation of "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo,"[5] there exist no formal, authoritative "prompt copies" of Hopkins's poetry to synthesize his thought, purpose, and style. While these previous editions have memorialized Hopkins, aided appreciation of his poetry, improved understanding of it, and prepared it for popular, scholarly, and undergraduate study, today's readers enjoy a position in time that allows consideration of new pedagogical approaches to his poetry that may, in fact, be closer to his original intent and help them hear Hopkins's words anew – through recitation and performance.

[5] A free version of this performance is available to view on www.youtube.com.

The Performance of Poetry

If other works of art have their "play" or "performance," poetry, Hopkins argues, must have one, too. This is the second principle he offers for poetic performance: Poetic performance does *not* consist in 1.) reading with the eyes only, 2.) whispering the text to oneself, or 3.) "mental performance of the closet" (CW ii 747). While these, he explains later, may be permissible once a reader has "first realised the effect of reciting" (CW ii 748), this is not the nature of verse. Susan Chambers, in her article "Reading Poetry Wrong: Prosody and Performance," interprets this as a license Hopkins allows in his dogmatic assertion that poetry be read aloud because of the "distance between contemporary rhythmic expectations and tastes, on the one hand, and the kind of work he was producing, on the other" (109). Argues Chambers,

> Even as he [Hopkins] seems to want to constrain the performer's latitude for interpretation far more severely than his own analogies with music and drama would dictate, he nevertheless understands that the sound of poetry read right need not be a sound that is made out loud. There is a space within his conception of poetry for the possibility of reading both silently and right, as long as the reading is based in memories of masterful recitation and the full appreciation of its power. (109)

Chambers is right when she says that Hopkins allows license for the experienced reader and that reading with the "inner ear of the mind" is something he accommodates. But, she, like Yopie Prins whom she cites earlier in her article, insists that "voice" in poetry is metaphorical (110).[6] However, it is hard to see from Hopkins's writings how the voicing

[6] In her article "Voice Inverse," Yopie Prins asks, "why must sound be attributed to a speaker in order to be understood as meaningful?" and "why do we insist on reading literally what the Victorians understood to be a metaphor?" (44-7), especially when the "auditory effects [of Victorian poetry] often seem to exceed the speaking voice" (45). Victorian poets never intended their poetry to be a chiefly aural experience, but, rather, they invert the speaking voice, translating it back to print again. Even the invention of and fascination with voice recordings in the Victorian era may be read not as proof that they prized aural reception but as proof that Victorian poets insisted on *seeing* the spoken voice. Prins sees the Victorian preoccupation with voice as self-reflexive. I, however, see Hopkins's insistence on the voice as a religious

of a text is *chiefly* metaphorical to him. Rather, he emphasizes and reemphasizes the physicality of poetry in his writing, even going so far as to say that he composes aloud and only writes it down “with repugnance” (CW ii 883). While Chambers’s argument is a helpful way to understand the voicing of a text that can never be performed the way the author intended it, Hopkins himself requires more of his readers and asks them to try.[7]

That Hopkins prized the sounds and aural texture of the spoken word over the mental word in the experience of poetry is evident from the earliest journals and papers. In an early diary entry from September 24, 1863, Hopkins meditates on the onomatopoeic qualities of sturdy English words like “crack, creak, croak” and “crook, crank, kranke, crick, cranky” (J 5). Later in the same series of entries, Hopkins speculates on the associations between “flick, fillip, flip, fleck, flake” (J 11). The vowel changes among fleck, flake, and flick, he observes, describe a matter of degrees in the same root meaning: “to touch or strike” (J 11). So, he says, “flick means to touch or strike lightly as with the end of a whip, a finger etc. To fleck is the next tone above flick, still meaning to touch or strike lightly…but in a broader less slight manner. Hence substantively a fleck is a piece of light, colour, substance, etc.… Flake is a broad and decided fleck, a thin plate of something, the tone above it” (J 11). His conjecture is telling, for not only does he attend to the similar shapes of the words – that is, the similarities in spelling and

---

necessity and quite literal. His anxiety is not for the eye but for the ear as the access point for apprehension of and participation in the divine in art and nature.

[7] Derek Attridge presents the two sides of the wider debate in contemporary scholarship in his 2013 book *Moving Words: Forms of English Poetry*. In his chapter on “Sound and Sense in Lyric Poetry,” he looks to two poets – Don Paterson and J.H. Prynne – at opposite ends of this issue. Paterson argues for the importance of actual sound in poetry while Prynne, like Chambers, is more interested in “mental ears” (85). The debate raises questions about authorial intent and whether insisting on spoken sound in poetry consequently requires knowledge of authorial purpose. In trying to hear the poem, are readers trying to hear the poet’s voice?

consonant use – but also to the degrees of sound indicated by vowel changes, which he calls "tone." Changes in meaning are described as changes in tone, which calls to mind musical chromatics. He connects the physical size and properties of the objects referred to by the words with the shifting vowel sounds and root consonant sounds. The three are a whole, and the whole of the world, he seems to be saying, is linguistic, which is in harmony with a traditional Christian theology of the word: that God spoke the world into being and that, thus, the world is a verbal act of God.

For Hopkins, the sounds of words – over and above the mental word – may have embodied real properties of objects and acts and would have been highly *suggestive*, calling to mind, almost unconsciously, the essence and inherent identity of a thing. In *The Tenth Muse,* Cary Plotkin examines Hopkins's interest in the "onomatopoetic theory" in light of the current philology of the day, particularly that of Hensleigh Wedgwood and Frederic Farrar, proponents of the onomatopoetic theory, and Max Müller, who pejoratively called it the "*Bow-wow theory*" (qtd. in Plotkin 26). At issue in this debate, says Plotkin, was "the relation between language and representation, or the immanence of meaning" (27). Müller, unlike Farrar, Wedgwood, and Hopkins, it would seem, saw no link between the sign and its referent (Plotkin 27). The onomatopoetic theory, however, presumes an inherent relationship between the sound of the sign as it is uttered and the sound the object(s) make in the world. Thus, Hopkins's love for words and enthusiasm for the sounds of words is inextricably linked to his belief that the sign is not arbitrary (Plotkin 28). This, it has been often observed, is a theological matter for Hopkins because the immanent meaning of language is closely linked to Christ's creative work in Genesis 1 and his Incarnation, as told in John 1.

Plotkin defends Hopkins's views of language as consonant with the common view of many in Victorian England, even though it has its source in a "classical or premodern episteme" (29). The nineteenth-century had not forsaken this view of language, and even philologists like Müller have trouble removing themselves from these ideas (Plotkin 38). Indeed, Plotkin observes that while much of Hopkins scholarship has focused on the influences of Ruskin and Scotus upon Hopkins's philosophy of language, "neither bears on the purely verbal element that never ceased to occupy Hopkins, whether as a philologist, a theoretician of poetic practice, or a poet" (39). In Plotkin's view, Müller's idea of a primitive, primordial law that "everything which is struck rings" explains this aural element of Hopkins's language (38). This law, argues Plotkin, describes the "'speaking' proper to natural objects, the propriety of the sound or name they emit when struck, in relation to their no less proper activity, 'selving'" (39). So, the Hopkins of 1863, a young student at Balliol College, Oxford, was not out of step with his time, and his experiments with words and roots in his diaries reveal a sensitivity to the connection between sounds and meanings in the English language that would influence the way he shaped meaning within his poetry. Instead of an arrangement of sounds arbitrarily linked to meaning, words, and more particularly the sounds of words, become a way for Hopkins to access the essence of the world – God himself, the ground of reality. Word-sounds, along with rhythm, form the center of Hopkins's poetic rhetoric because they are linked, albeit incompletely, to the essential character of objects and the natural patterns of the world. This may be a starting point for understanding why he shapes his poetic descriptions as he does and provides a theoretical basis for a reading of his poetry that prizes the lush, natural energy of the English language.

Hopkins's early diary entries take a decided turn around January 1864. He leaves behind his frequent onomatopoeic studies – only to be revisited infrequently in the next two years – for experiments in verse and drama and, as is more common in his later journals, descriptive studies of beauty in nature which express keen observation and a well-trained ear. With this marked shift, Hopkins turns from the conscious study of sounds on the word level to the use of word-sounds in combination with others to describe a particular sensation or apprehension of beauty, again emphasizing the performance of sound in the construction of sense. An early example explores a beautiful sunrise. Hopkins jots down four descriptions, the first of which may serve as a miniature study in his construction of sound-sentences: "Till in the eastern seas there rise the lustrous (*or* splendid) sails of morn" (J 17). The image is maritime: The sky, as Hopkins notes at the end of the line, is the sea; the rays of the sun at dawn are the sails. The rising of the sun is like the unfurling of the sails on a ship. The sound-sense of the line rests in the repetitive pattern of the sounds of the letter "s" within words, beginning words, and ending words. Hopkins works out the progression of consonant sounds: st – s – z –z – str – s (or, s) – s – z. The rhythmic pattern also matches Hopkins's sound pattern, and each syllable with an "s" is accented, leading to a triple emphasis ("lustrous sails") after a caesura. The compilation, repetition, and pattern of sounds in the line create a rhythmic rise and fall that may imitate the rise and fall of the sea and the pitching of a ship upon the waves. The sounds build and release, constricting with the consonant clusters and releasing into an s and then z. The variety of "s" sounds may also be onomatopoeic, suggesting the sound of a calm sea at dawn and the gentle unfurling of sails in a light breeze. The sun makes no sound when it rises, of course, but by crafting such a sound

pattern, Hopkins suggests that the *feeling* of the dawn is like the *feeling* produced when a ship on a calm sea unfurls its sails. What is impossible to apprehend as sound in the world – the rising of the sun – Hopkins translates into a sound pattern designed to produce the same affect in listeners and readers. While not all of Hopkins's efforts in his diaries to describe the world around him are so consciously constructed, all of them, like this one, show him searching for words that best create both picture and sound "images."

Such description and analysis reveal the difficulty of Hopkins's urging that poetry have its own "play" or "performance," for approaching his poems as written or printed texts to be *declaimed* or *recited* highlights a dissonance between printed words (which have no sound) and their potential sound, which can be realized in a myriad of ways. Eric Griffiths studies this dissonance in his book *The Printed Voice of Victorian Poetry*. Here, he notes the tensions inherent in the practice of printing poetry. Writes Griffiths,

> Whatever else poetry may be, it is certainly a use of language that works with the sounds of words, and so the absence of clearly indicated sound from the silence of the written word creates a double nature in printed poetry, making it both itself and something other – a text of hints at voicing, whose centre in utterance lies outside itself, and also an achieved pattern on the page, salvaged from the evanescence of the voice in air. (60)

Poetry printed on a page, says Griffiths a little later, suffers from a "lost community" of poet and reader as the poet ultimately feels his or her failure to communicate the "voice in air" and the reader feels his or her failure to reimagine the author's voice entirely (61). This tension is regularly evident in Hopkins's poetry and in his correspondence. Interestingly, Griffiths makes note of the humbling effect this tension has had upon poets like Yeats, Coleridge, Browning, and others. He quotes Yeats writing to Bridges, saying, "I chiefly remember you asked me about my stops and commas. Do what you will. I do

not understand stops. I write my work so completely for the ear that I feel helpless when I have to measure pauses by stops and commas" (qtd. in Griffiths 62). This same humility is evident in Hopkins's letters. However, rather than a "do what you will," Hopkins does what he can to accommodate his voice to his readers and critics.

The Physicality of Poetry

Hopkins's third principle is one that has been visited and revisited in this chapter: that poetry is "the darling child of speech, of lips, of spoken utterance" (CW ii 747-8). The implicit extension of this statement has also already been introduced: that performance – recitation or declamation – of poetry is and must be for Hopkins *physical*. It is an act of the body that, because humans are whole beings in Hopkins's theology, has psychological, moral, and spiritual implications. What the moral human body does, therefore, has the capacity to shape our desires. James K.A. Smith approaches the same question of the body's relationship to the mind, spirit, and culture in his 2009 book *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation*. Liturgy, which Smith defines most broadly as forms of worship, is an "identity-forming practice" (35). It is also cultural formation and "a 'hearts and minds' strategy, a pedagogy that trains humans as disciples precisely by putting bodies through a regimen of repeated practices that get hold of hearts and 'aim' the loves toward the kingdom of God…. We worship before we know – or rather, we worship in order to know" (33-4). Essentially, in Smith's anthropology, what one does (volition) shapes what one loves. He moves beyond post-Enlightenment, Cartesian categories of man-as-thinker to man-as-believer to man-as-lover. He calls it a "stunted anthropology that fails to appreciate that our primordial orientation to the world is not knowledge, or even belief, but *love*" (46). Only an

anthropology "which accords a more central, formative place to embodiment" – the locus of love – truly engages the whole person (46). When the whole person is at work in ritual, the body becomes reconnected to the thoughts of the mind, the emotions of the heart, and the words of the mouth. So, the rituals enacted by the individual body within community have the ability to shape knowledge, belief, *and* desire.

Hopkins engages the liturgical[8] possibilities of poetry when he speculates on poetic recitation as a performance art, imagining recited poetry as an act of performance that could be even more beautiful than music. He emphasizes the physicality of the voice, but also entertains the possibility of recorded performances. As he writes to Everard,

> Perhaps the inflections and intonations of the speaking voice may give effects more beautiful than any attainable by the fixed pitches of music. I look on this as an infinite field and very little worked. It has this great difficulty, that the art depends entirely on living tradition. The phonograph may give us one, but hitherto there could be no record of fine spoken utterance…. Incalculable effect could be produced by the delivery of Wordsworth's Margaret…. With the aid of the phonograph each phrase could be fixed and learnt by heart like a song. (CW ii 749)

Recitation of poetry, Hopkins says, no longer has a living tradition in nineteenth-century Great Britain, perhaps because of the loss of the oral tradition in poetic delivery.[9] Rather,

---

[8] "Liturgy" means "a work of the people," the most literal translation of the original Greek *leitourgia*. It has also been translated as "public service" (as in the *Oxford English Dictionary*). I use it here to refer to a communal act requiring use of and participation in audible speech. The term also has important religious connotations, especially for Hopkins, who would have participated regularly in the Liturgy of the Catholic Church. As such, "liturgy" is a communal response to an apprehension of the divine – an act of public worship, not just public service.

[9] It seems from this passage that poetic recitation and aural reception were not common and that the practice itself did not have a well-developed theory of performance. However, the Victorians loved public recitation and reading aloud, especially of prose works by authors like Charles Dickens. Philip Collins helpfully points to a rich history of public recitation in a short pamphlet published for The Tennyson Society in 1972. He points to the popularity of the theatre and the theatrical, as well as the general Victorian fascination with the solo virtuoso – "a soloist occupying the attention usually given to a company of actors, and in a single programme showing (perhaps) comic, tragic and pathetic powers, and speaking in the voice of dozens of characters" (25). Collins's pamphlet deals primarily with elocution, however, and a distinction might be made between Victorian elocution and Hopkins's ideas of poetic performance: While elocution focuses on proper pronunciation and proper speaking in order to train the voice well, poetic performance, for Hopkins, focuses primarily on the drama of words and rhythm.

Hopkins lives in a post-printing press world, where words have become textual commodities, and in a world just developing and using recording devices. Hopkins has hopes, however, that the phonograph could create and extend this "living tradition" if the art were studied and developed carefully.

This speculation raises an important question about the physicality of the voice: does the mechanically mediated voice, as in a phonograph recording, enable the same liturgical experience as the embodied, present voice? In her article "Voice Inverse," Yopie Prins discusses the famous phonograph recording of Robert Browning reciting a line of his own poetry. The phonograph, she argues, created an estrangement from physical sound because it presents "technologically mediated voices" (47). She reads these "acoustic inscriptions" (47) as "disembodied" reproductions that are "detached" from the speaker (48-9). The wax cylinder further detaches the voice from the body, she argues, because it creates visible impressions of the voice. Thus, while audio is often thought to draw listeners nearer to an author's voice, Prins argues that Victorian poets, like Browning, were more aware of "voice" as a self-reflexive entity intended to reach beyond speech or, as Prins says, "in excess of what can be spoken" (52). Hopkins, it seems, has a more literal understanding of what the phonograph could do for recited texts, at least according to this letter. Recordings, he speculates, would enable closer study of poetic texts, allowing listeners to internalize lines as they would songs heard over and over again. The image of the wax cylinder covered with indentions that make sound visible to the eye may be a helpful analogy, actually, for thinking about the role of the voice: The recording inscribes the lines upon the heart of the listener upon repeated encounters. The phonograph recording, however, does not replace the embodied

performance of the text. Hopkins does not demand authoritative recordings be imitated, but rather, he hopes the phonograph will instruct listeners in the art of recitation and aid in the memorization of texts. As with instruction in any art, imitation is simply the starting point; individual invention and interpretation is the ultimate end.

As presented in the analogy of the phonograph, Hopkins believed the physical intonation of poetic lines could leave a physical impression on listeners and readers alike. He speaks about this as the "rhetorical" nature of his poetry, drawing an important connection between poetic art and the ancient art of persuasion, which has implications for understanding the role of the physical voice in the liturgical act of poetic recitation. In an oft-quoted letter to Robert Bridges from August 1877, Hopkins writes about his choice to use sprung rhythm in "The Wreck of the Deutschland," trying to "convert" his friend to an appreciation of the strange rhythms. Hopkins encourages Bridges to read "The Wreck of the Deutschland" again, this time aloud, in order to get the sense of it, and to not allow his initial distaste of the rhythmic novelty to get in the way of encountering it honestly. Far from claiming to have invented sprung rhythms, Hopkins points to its prior existence in the natural rhythms of the world around him. It is, he writes, "…the native rhythm of the words used bodily imported into verse" and "the nearest to the rhythm of prose, that is the native and natural rhythm of speech, the least forced, the most rhetorical and emphatic of all possible rhythms, combining, as it seems to me, opposite and, one wd. have thought, incompatible excellences, markedness of rhythm – that is rhythm's self – and naturalness of expression…" (CW ii 281-2). That he calls sprung rhythm "the most rhetorical and emphatic of all possible rhythms" highlights his interest in the physicality of words because it acknowledges the impressions of sound on the body. Indeed, his use

of sprung rhythm and his word choices can, perhaps, be considered part of a "poetic rhetoric" because of their power to make impressions of that which exceeds speech upon the listener and, thus, to persuade.

In an 1886 letter to Richard Watson Dixon, Hopkins explains that by "rhetoric" he means, "all the common and teachable element in literature, what grammar is to speech, what thoroughbass is to music, what theatrical experience gives to playwrights" (CW ii 800). In other words, it is the "charpente": the framework, the plan, and the structure of the poetic piece (CW ii 800). Artfully constructed with the elements of public speech and calculated to move an audience as it is heard, Hopkins's poetry is like rhetoric in its traditional sense: It is addressed to an audience in order to persuade. Its rhetorical nature also suggests two possible postures: either as a listening audience or as a declaimer or reciter of his words.[10] By declaiming or reciting the text, says Hopkins, "the strange constructions would be dramatic and effective" and the listening audience would be invited into the experience of the poem as receivers (CW ii 918). Simultaneously, the oratorical reader would need to adapt to the poem's point of view(s) as deliverer and, thus, interpret it according to his/her understanding of its rhetorical effects. Its rhetorical nature, for Hopkins, is not separate from its "naturalness of expression," and, in fact, this is the very source of its rhetorical qualities. Poetry like this, Hopkins tells Bridges, "is

[10] While Hopkins's poetry may be best received in community, as I will discuss in Chapter Two, Hopkins does not limit reception to community. He offers the possibility that a receiver of his poetry may be both speaker and audience, even simultaneously. Indeed, Hopkins's instructions to Bridges to read "with the ear and not with the eye" suggests that Bridges would have read the text aloud to himself. There must, then, be some value in the voiced text, even when it is voiced in isolation. A precedent for this activity exists in the religious practice of voiced, individual prayer. By praying aloud, the individual externalizes thought and, in so doing, separates the self temporarily in order to access a grace accessible only through the act of giving out. The praying soul may then receive back his/her own voice transformed to a higher instress. Whether communal or individual, however, the voiced text must still be presented in body.

less to be read than heard" (CW i 282), either by declamation or recitation – both terms he uses to describe the process of presenting poetry orally.

The rhetorical qualities of speech refer to those elements of speech that have the power to persuade listeners. However, imaginative literature and poetry do not persuade in the same way that propositional and expositional texts do. Instead, they create opportunities for persuasion by inviting readers and listeners into a lived experience. The physicality of the voice – as James K.A. Smith conceives it – has the ability to make impressions upon listeners and, thus, to open opportunities to shape loves. Love, in turn, results in action. Persuasion is, therefore, not an act of tyranny or coercion. Instead, it is an act of free will on the part of the recipient or listener. The performer and the text present the occasion for persuasion, but the listener must actively receive the impressions of the voice – that is, adopt a posture of voluntary openness – in order to be persuaded. This has important implications for the question of authorial intent and reader freedom raised implicitly in the whole of this chapter: does Hopkins force his own readings upon his listeners by guiding the voicing of his texts, or does he allow for a diversity of interpretation within an established framework? Is reading his poetry an act of tyranny on his part or an act of free will on the part of the reader? Understanding his texts as both liturgical and rhetorical – which he gives readers permission to do in his letters – helps readers hold in balance both the power of speech to impress listeners and the participation required by both performers and listeners to interpret that speech.

Conclusion

Hopkins maintained that his poetry needed to be physically performed with the voice to be understood and appreciated fully, and he believed performance, of some kind,

could illuminate the beauties of his poetic diction, rhetoric, and meter, which in turn could open the door to experience, which in turn would lead to an apprehension of meaning. Performance, he believed, could open possibilities for response. Whether Hopkins is reaching back to a time in English history when poetry was, in fact, largely delivered orally, or if he is ahead of his time technologically, he is, at the very least, attempting to reimagine his culture's assumptions about poetry, authorship, and even interpretation. In May 1878, Hopkins sent Bridges "The Loss of the Eurydice," cautioning him to avoid the same mistakes he made reading the "Deutschland." He reiterates his assertion that his poetry must be read over and over again, and he encourages Bridges not to just read it, but to study it. Writes Hopkins,

> Granted that it [the "Deutschland"] needs study and is obscure, for indeed I was not over-desirous that the meaning of all should be quite clear, at least unmistakeable [sic], you might, without the effort that to make it all out would seem to have required, have nevertheless read it so that lines and stanzas should be left in the memory and superficial impressions deepened, and have liked some without exhausting all. I am sure I have read and enjoyed pages of poetry that way. Why, sometimes, one enjoys and admires the very lines one cannot understand…. (CW i 295)

The experience of the poem, Hopkins seems to be saying, is as important as an apprehension of the semantic meaning of words, and is made possible when, with repeated reading and reading aloud, the shape of the poem is imprinted in the memory and its impressions are "deepened" in the reader. The words, to use a metaphor from scripture, are thus "hidden in the heart" (Ps. 119.11) where they will work into the consciousness of the individual and crystallize into felt and/or cognitive meaning. Although abstract, this experience is well known by many readers and writers of poetry, and Hopkins finds it essential to the understanding of his own poetry. This experience is aided, says Hopkins in another letter to Bridges, by reading it "with the ears" (CW i 355).

Hopkins wants his reader to *invest* in the poem, to believe that its sounds and rhythms have something to teach and to say, and to let it do so, even if imperfectly.

CHAPTER TWO

Created to Praise: Hopkins's Theology of Language and Performance

Hopkins scholarship generally recognizes at least three major theological and philosophical influences present in Hopkins's works: that of Duns Scotus, Ignatius of Loyola, and St. Augustine. While much attention has been extended to the influence of these three writers on Hopkins's poetry and ideas, little contextualization has been given for Hopkins's theology of language. Here, the works of St. Augustine may prove helpful. Rather than direct allusion and reference, Hopkins's works frequently use Augustinian patterns of thought and interpretation. While there are no direct references to *De magistro*, *De dialectica*, or *De doctrina christiana* – three primary works dealing with language – Hopkins had an acquaintance with the works of Augustine and drew upon them regularly, as he did with Scotus and Loyola, for the formation of his theology[1]. Augustine's exploration of language in *De magistro*, *De dialectica*, and *De doctrina christiana*, among other works, provides a context for Hopkins's outworking of a similar theology of the word. This context places Hopkins within a larger theological and hermeneutic tradition, which, in turn, helps readers better understand the importance of community in spoken poetic performance. Augustine's writings may be used, therefore, as an interpretive lens for readers that may help them participate more fully in Hopkins's work.

[1] James Finn Cotter, Jeffrey B. Loomis, and Joshua King, among other scholars, note Hopkins's frequent engagement with and use of Augustinian thought. I will discuss these scholars throughout the chapter.

Like Augustine, Hopkins wrestles with both the glory and the ruin of language (its adequacy *and* inadequacy), adopting and enacting the view that language is good but limited, that its limitations require an act of accommodation for true understanding, and that accommodation invites acts of corporate praise. Hopkins resolves these tensions, importantly for this study, by extending Augustine's belief in the necessity of an interpretive community. Hopkins emphasizes the importance of performed poetry as a voiced act of praise made within a community. As Augustine writes in Book I of the *Confessions*, "Yet still man, this small portion of creation, wants to praise you. You stimulate him to take pleasure in praising you, because you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they can find peace in you" (1). Hopkins shares Augustine's anthropology, believing that man was made to praise God. An Augustinian anthropology results in an Augustinian view of language as both good but also fallen, informing the theology behind Hopkins's idea of embodied poetic performance. Hopkins's thoughts on language explain his insistence on voiced delivery of his poetry and his hopes for reader reception. Thus, in this chapter, I use Augustine's theory of language to illuminate Hopkins's theology of the word, its effect upon his poetry, and his extension of that theology to oral performance.

Reading the World as Word

Hopkins adopts an Augustinian approach to language, demonstrating a conviction of its goodness, sacramentality, and liturgical importance in public worship, even as he acknowledges its limited capacity for conveying truth. In Hopkins's view, creation is a speech act. Because it is created, the world is finite, with limited access to the full reality present only in God. This speech act is an act of accommodation on God's behalf for

humans, opening up a relationship with humanity that results in praise. Likewise, Gerard Watson sees Augustine's view of language as an indication of this worldview. "As a Christian teacher," writes Watson, Augustine "…saw all the world as a sacrament or sign of a hidden reality, and among the signs the most striking were words. The world process itself could be seen as a gradually unfolding sentence, a sentence whose full meaning only God could see, but which by the very fact of its fragmentary and puzzling nature stimulates us to keep on searching for the ultimate meaning" (5). These same ideas appear in Hopkins's prose writings, particularly his journals, notes, and spiritual writings.

Jeffrey B. Loomis emphasizes Augustine's theological influence upon Hopkins. In *Dayspring in Darkness* (1988), Loomis draws a direct line from the exegetical methods of Origen and Augustine to Hopkins. These methods account for Hopkins's sacramental view of the world and, thus, his concept of inscape. Hopkins, writes Loomis, sees the world in terms of a "husk" and a "kernel," images for the sacramentality of the world. Thus, a person is "one who germinates Christ within the soul, proving his or her own outer self to be a dark 'husk,' but still only a 'husk' surrounding a hidden divine 'kernel' of sacramental grain. To Hopkins, God seems always both transcendent and immanent – but most fully immanent in a sacramental, because a spiritually fruitful, soul" (19). The "husk-kernel" rule, says Loomis, guides Hopkins's interpretation of the world and is a hermeneutical key to his poetry, for it explains why "this receptive transubstantiationist valued inner sacramental *substance* more than accidental outer *species*" (9). Hopkins adopts Augustine and Origen's exegetical rule of the inner and the outer (kernel and husk). This, in turn, shapes his "reading" of the world's "book" (creation) and, by extension and analogy, his own textual creation – poetry. He thought of

his poetry as sacramental, as in Augustine and Origen's more capacious definition of "sacrament" as an outward and visible sign through which is perceived an unseen grace. In Hopkins's incarnational poetics, the poem is a kind of sacrament through which is perceived its inscape. Inscape, in the analogy, must then be a grace.

In his sermons and devotional writing, Hopkins frequently expresses the language's potential for goodness through its analogy to creation. Like the world, the word is an expression of God. In his August 7, 1882, notes to the "First Principle and Foundation," Hopkins writes, "God's utterance of himself in himself is God the Word, outside himself is this world. This world then is word, expression, news of God. Therefore its end, its purpose, its purport, its meaning, is God and its life or work to name and praise him. Therefore praise [is] put before reverence and service" (S 129). Thus, language, as analogous to God's outworking of his nature in the world, has the capacity for great glory. Yet, Hopkins is also aware of the world's ruin. In an 1880 sermon on "Divine Providence and the Guardian Angels," he writes,

> …search the whole world and you will find it a million-million fold contrivance of providence planned for our use and patterned for our admiration. But yet this providence is imperfect, plainly imperfect. …[E]verything is full of fault, flaw, imperfection, shortcoming; as many marks as there are of God's wisdom in providing for us so many marks there may be set against them of more being needed still, of something having made of this very providence a shattered frame and a broken web. (S 90)

The beauty and glory of the world lies in its "contrivance" and pattern, Hopkins says here, but, too often, these patterns fail, becoming "shattered frame[s]" and "broken web[s]." He attributes the glory of the patterns in this world to "providence," that outworking of God's wisdom in the shaping of the world. Within these shapes, frames, and plans, however, are imperfections. Yet, this is a *felix culpa* for Hopkins: the fall of

Adam and Eve is fortunate because “if we were not forced from time to time to feel our need of God and our dependence on him, we should most of us cease to pray to him and to thank him… And God desires nothing so much as that his creatures should have recourse to him” (S 90-1). The imperfection of the world and the flawed patterns retain something of their goodness while reminding Hopkins of his need for a mediator – Christ and, in this particular sermon, the saints and angels. While Hopkins’s immediate concern here is nature, language is an implied part of the created order he references, especially given his theology of creation as a verbal act of God. Hopkins was a keen observer of creation and his journals show his efforts to capture his experiences of beauty in words. Indeed, anyone as attuned to the patterns of language as Hopkins seems to be in his journals must have known its faults and inconsistencies as well.[2]

Hopkins’s theology of the word results in a discontent with his ability to define verse and to communicate his innovative rhythmic intentions, as well as the failure of poetic language to produce identical experiences within various readers. Hopkins tries to define verse in his lecture notes entitled “Poetry and verse.”[3] These notes would have been written for his lectures, Graham Storey speculates, during his time as Professor of Rhetoric at Manresa House, Roehampton, so they would have originally been intended for Jesuit seminarians. Storey notes that these musings would have been the direct result of his official teaching duties (J xxvii). In these notes, Hopkins’s definition of what makes poetry distinct requires qualification and explanation, and, in an effort to capture all that poetry is and can be, he struggles to communicate his meaning. He writes,

---

[2] See Hopkins’s early journal entries on the onomatopoeic qualities of language and his extensive word lists.

[3] These notes are undated, but Graham Storey places them around 1877 as part of the same series of lectures as “Rhythm and the other structural parts of Rhetoric—verse” (J xxvii).

> Verse is (inscape of spoken sound, not spoken words, or speech employed to carry the inscape of spoken sound – or in the usual words) speech wholly or partially repeating the same figure of sound. Now there is speech which wholly or partially repeats the same figure of grammar and this may be framed to be heard for its own sake and interest over and above its interest of meaning. Poetry then may be couched in this, and therefore all poetry is not verse but all poetry is either verse or falls under this or some still further development of what verse is, speech wholly or partially repeating some kind of figure which is over and above meaning, at least the grammatical, historical, and logical meaning. (J 289)

Although Hopkins means to emphasize the sound of poetry as the key to his definition of verse, he reaches for some figure or pattern beyond the words. To use his terms, he reaches for something "over and above its interest of meaning" or "over and above" the "grammatical, historical, and logical meaning" (J 289). This echoes a phrase from the second book of *De doctrina christiana* where Augustine writes, "a sign is a thing which, over and above the impression it makes on the senses, causes something else to come to mind as a consequence of itself" (II.1.1). For Hopkins, "inscape" exists over and above the poem, and the inscape of a poem points within toward itself and then upward to Christ (Cotter 116). Yet, Hopkins does not use any of these words, neither does he resort to theological language in these notes. Instead, he relies on ambiguity and repetition, betraying an anxiety about the precision of words. He qualifies and hedges his definitions in an effort to accurately communicate the essence of poetry, but language limits him.

In his early diaries, as in his lecture notes, Hopkins wrestles with Augustine's paradox from *De magistro*: Nothing can be learned without language, but language ultimately fails to represent reality. Thus, language is good but insufficient to access fully that to which it points. Hopkins fills these early diary entries with attempts to root the meanings of words in sounds and to construct a linguistic structure based on the shifting

vowel “pitches” in like words.[4] He also constructs a taxonomy of the word in an early set of personal notes from February 9, 1868. Hopkins’s taxonomy exemplifies the belief that words carry meaning and that they carry something beyond meaning, or what he calls “prepossession.” Hopkins separates a word into three functions or categories:

> A word then has three terms belonging to it…– its *prepossession* of feeling; its *definition, abstraction, vocal expression or other utterance*; and its *application*, ‘extension,’ the concrete things coming under it. It is plain that of these only one in propriety is the word; the third is not a word but a thing meant by it, the first is not a word but something connotatively meant by it, the nature of which is further to be explored. But not even the whole field of the middle term is covered by the word. (J 125, emphasis mine)

None of these three terms adequately define what a word actually *is* to Hopkins. The three together hint at a whole definition, and he attempts to describe the relationships among the three, saying, “the word is the expression, *uttering* of the idea in the mind. That idea itself has its two terms, the image (of sight or sound or *scapes* of the other senses), which is in fact physical and a refined energy accenting the nerves, a word to oneself, an inchoate word, and secondly the conception” (J 125). Here, he splits the word, or the sign, into two pieces – the image and the conception. The image he defines as concrete and very individual: Each person sees something else in his or her mind. Writes Hopkins, “All words mean either things or relations of things: you may also say then substances or attributes or again wholes or parts. Eg. Man and quarter. To every word meaning a thing and not a relation belongs a passion or prepossession or enthusiasm which it has the power of *suggesting* or *producing* but *not always or in everyone*” (J 125, emphasis mine). This is the sticking point for Hopkins: “prepossession” is not static. It

[4] See the discussion of Hopkins’s view of language as onomatopoeic in Chapter One. Also, see Hopkins’s diary entries from September 24, 1863 to January 23, 1866.

does not communicate the same thing to every person. Thus, when using language to teach another person, there is no assurance that the prepossession within one mind will be adequately communicated to another's mind.

While Hopkins's theology of the word results in discontent, it also resolves that discontent. Here, again, Augustine proves helpful. Rather than eliminating the possibility of adequate communication from one to another, the inadequacy of language actually invites a community to participate in its interpretation. Augustine uses this central paradox in *De magistro* to identify several ways in which language fails to communicate reality: there is a gap between signs and what they signify. Interpretation of signs requires direct experience with the external world, and without direct experience, words themselves are not enough to communicate that reality – they are both necessary and inadequate. As Louis Mackey observes, "the sign is not the signified, and its meaning is never given in, with, or under the sign itself. Every sign therefore requires interpretation, but the interpretation would have to rest its authority on a prior knowledge of the signified, so that in the last instance nothing is learned from the sign as such" (57-8). Luke Ferretter also interprets Augustine as meaning that signs do not impart knowledge but "provide us with the stimulus to discover it" (259). He argues that Augustine's Christology allows him to conceive of language as both present and absent – as both capable of carrying meaning yet always finite. This is possible because God's character is the ground of reality and God is a Trinity – forever and always in communion. Because language is "fragmentary" and "gradually unfolding" (Watson 5), and because it is an expression of God's character, it requires community. Thus, writes Ferretter, "For Augustine Christian truth inheres not in abstract propositions but in the interpreting and

practising community of the church" (265). Likewise, for Hopkins, community occurs in the Church, the body of Christ, and in collective ritual acts of faith and praise. Hopkins's theological emphasis on collective ritual acts is reflected in his belief that poetry must be performed. Performance, like a corporate ritual act, is an act of community: it requires a deliverer and a receiver.

As both a teacher and a priest, Hopkins pondered deeply the importance of revelation and community in interpretation. As a priest, Hopkins demonstrates an appropriate concern for the spiritual welfare of those under his charge, and his sermons are "living lessons" in his belief in the necessity of accommodation for access to truth. Indeed, Hopkins toils in his sermons in order to communicate to his hearers what spiritual truths he had apprehended in his own mind. His spiritual notes, likewise, show him reaching, straining, for the theology and vocabulary to communicate his experience with God in nature, in sacrament, and in the Church. To observe his thought at work in his writing, it is worth turning to his work as a priest – his sermons and spiritual notes. In the writings remaining from Hopkins's work as a priest, he expresses and takes up an Augustinian belief in the need for the "inner word" of revelation, the necessity of accommodation (a pedagogical must), and the importance of community in reception and interpretation. Cotter recognizes this parallel in *Inscape: The Christology and Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. He writes, "The *De Magistro,* which Hopkins seems to have used in arriving at his own theory of language, treats of the connection between words, signs, and things, and like the poet in his own search for meaning and myth, calls on Christ in the inner man to be teacher and oracle of truth" (116). Cotter develops this thought briefly in a discussion of the pattern of "ascent" in the *Confessions*. Rather than

ascending to the Father directly, writes Cotter, Augustine believed that man "turns within and discovers him in the inner self; then man mounts back through creatures to the creator, or, rather, all reality becomes his potential field of knowledge of the One" (116). This all takes place, says Cotter, through the mediation of Christ himself. Because language is limited, the poet must be taught, in the inner part of his soul and by Christ himself, to praise. Thus, the progress of the poet toward truth is the same as the progress of the soul toward beatitude – at the end of both of which Christ is found.

Because words in and of themselves are not enough to point to essential truth and transcendent realities – because they merely point to what is rather than being what is – humans must be taught to know truth by that which is not bound by words. For Augustine, this is God himself in the persons of the Holy Spirit and Christ. To show this in *De magistro*, Augustine brings his interlocutor Adeodatus to confront a central paradox. Augustine questions Adeodatus's assumptions about the nature of words and language in order to show the inconsistencies in his ideas, and there is a moment of *aporia* for Adeodatus as he faces an impasse and contradiction. The *aporia* is caused by the paradox that "nothing is taught without signs" and "nothing is learned by means of them" (Mackey 57). If both of these propositions are true, then how can anything be known about reality? Along the way to his answer, Augustine makes an important and careful distinction: signs do not teach about reality, rather prior knowledge of reality teaches individuals how to interpret signs. Writes Augustine, "When a sign is given to me, it can teach me nothing if it finds me ignorant of the thing of which it is the sign; but if I'm not ignorant, what do I learn through the sign? …I learned that it [the word] was a sign when I found out of what thing it is the sign – and, as I said, I learned this not by

anything that signifies but by its appearance. Therefore, a sign is learned when the thing is known, rather than the thing being learned when the sign is given" (10.33.114-34). Thus, truth is not taught by means of words but by means of the "inner light of Truth," that is "the things themselves made manifest within when God discloses them" (12.40.31-9). Individuals are not taught by this inner light simply for themselves, however. In Augustine's theology of the sign, the knowledge of the thing signified exists in one individual to be communicated to another by means of the sign. As he writes in *De doctrina christiana,* "Nor is there any other reason for signifying, or for giving signs, except for bringing forth and transferring to another mind the action of the mind in the person who makes the sign" (2.2.3). Thus, as individuals acquire inner illumination – an act of divine accommodation for Augustine – they, speaking to others, stimulate others to know and to seek the same inner illumination.

Hopkins's own doctrine of accommodation derives from his sacramentalism and his theology of the Great Sacrifice, just as Augustine's derives from his theology of the Incarnation. The Great Sacrifice is Christ's Incarnation and crucifixion – his perpetual self-gift to humanity through which he gave up his place at the "right-hand of God the Father" (the Apostles' Creed) and took on the "form of a servant" (Philippians 2.6-8). Hopkins works out this doctrine in his notes on "Creation and Redemption: The Great Sacrifice" from November 8, 1881. Here, he connects accommodation with grace. Hopkins writes,

> In going forth to do sacrifice Christ went not alone but created angels to be his company, lambs to follow him the Lamb…first to the hill of sacrifice, then after that back to God, to beatitude. They were to take part in the sacrifice and he was to redeem them all, that is to say / for the sake of the Lamb of God who was God himself God would accept the whole flock and for the sake of one ear or grape the whole sheaf or cluster; for redeem

> may be said not only of the recovering from sin to grace or perdition to salvation but also of the raising from worthlessness before God (and all creation is unworthy of God) to worthiness of him, the meriting of God himself, or, so to say, godworthiness. (S 197)

Christ's self-gift in the Incarnation and crucifixion is the ultimate act of accommodation of the Father to humanity because it makes humanity worthy of God. Later, in the "First Principle and Foundation," Hopkins writes, "God's utterance of himself in himself is God the Word, outside himself is this world. This world then is word, expression, news of God. Therefore its end, its purpose, its purport, its meaning, is God and its life or work to name and praise him" (S 129). Thus, in these two passages, Hopkins teaches that the Incarnation of Christ creates a glorious and eternal progression of sacrifice, mediation, communication, interpretation, and praise. Similarly, in her explication of Augustine's argument from *De trinitate*, Mary T. Clark summarizes Augustine's belief in the word as an expression of the Incarnation. Writes Clark, "Just as in human communication the spoken word follows the mental word conceived by thinking, so Christ as the Word of God took flesh to communicate with human persons. He is the exemplary cause of creation and salvation" (93). The intersection of God and human history in the form of Christ is the linguistic parallel and fulfillment of God's creation of humanity and history in Genesis 1. What happens in John 1 echoes and fulfills God's work in Genesis 1. Significantly, both of these passages present God's work, in creation and in the Incarnation, as verbal actions. Not only that, they are *uttered* verbal actions. God speaks the world into being in Genesis 1, and in John 1, the Word of God is made flesh – the sign is made the referent.

Because speech is analogous to the Incarnation, and thus follows a pattern of accommodation, it can be an act of grace. Hopkins further emphasizes the parallel

between the grace in the Incarnation and human language, specifically the act of praise for which he believes humans were made, in "On Personality, Grace and Free Will." He writes, "For grace is any action, activity, on God's part by which, in creating or after creating, he carries the creature to or towards the end of its being, which is its selfsacrifice [sic] to God and its salvation…. All is done through Christ…. It is as if man said: That is Christ playing at me and me playing at Christ, only that it is no play but truth; That is Christ *being me* and me being Christ" (S 154). Grace, for Hopkins, must lead the created being into and toward its purpose, which, as already noted, is praise of its Creator by the realization and expression of its individual inscape. Hopkins often captures the movement of grace towards praise in his poetry by patterning sounds, meter, and words in such a way as to enable the reader to hold the poem's inscape, an act Joshua King addresses in "Hopkins' Affective Rhythm: Grace and Intention in Tension." Here, King proposes that sprung rhythm is "a means for apprehending and recommending to a reader kinds of affective and cognitive experience" (209). The performance of sprung rhythm, argues King, is closely linked to "an experience of grace" and Hopkins wishes to "guide his anticipated reader's rhythmic voicing into an impression of grace" (209). King draws a line from Hopkins's words in "Creation and Redemption: The Great Sacrifice" to Augustine's comments in the *Confessions* about time, showing that the theology behind this impulse may have its roots in Augustine's thought. Through spoken utterance made in time, says King, humans may feel "present, affective stresses of God's grace" (210). These grace-conveying utterances are also, in Hopkins's theology, acts of worship, for "all creation is God's speech act, caught and uttered back to him by humans in

correspondence with his grace" (King 213). The perfect end of the creature is to praise its creator by giving back to Christ the unique image of himself imprinted upon it.

When an individual voices words to another thoughts are projected to them insofar as is possible, and, as Augustine says in *De trinitate*, "We may compare the manner in which our own word is made as it were a bodily utterance…with that in which the Word of God was made flesh" (15.9.20). Ferretter further explicates Augustine's thought thus:

> Augustine…writes that there is a likeness of the Word of God in the inner word of the mind, which occurs not only before it is uttered but also before the images of its uttered sounds are thought of. [The] word is the thought of a known thing, corresponding in form to the known thing. Speech and other bodily signs signify it in order to make it known to a hearer…. The sacramental metaphor Augustine previously used to describe the relation of the word to language is developed here into a metaphor of the Incarnation. (261)

As the Incarnation was for mankind, so the utterance of thought is for others. Thus, interpretation is a communal act. Christian truth – or, Truth for Augustine – is a dynamic thing, accessed through and in the Body of Christ, or the Church itself.

For Hopkins, as for Augustine, the communal nature of interpretation reflects upon and clarifies the doctrine of the *imago Dei*. Throughout his poetry, sermons, and letters, he connects the need for audience or community in performance and interpretation with the image of God in man. In "As kingfishers catch fire," Hopkins imagines the play of Christ's image reflected in the faces of humans. Writes Hopkins in the last lines of the poem, "…Christ plays in ten thousand places / Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his / To the Father through the features of men's faces" (lines 12-14). These lines suggest that humanity's action of participatory praise displays Christ in this world. Humankind expresses Christ in a diversity of ways, and there are as many

different aspects of Christ's nature as there are people in the world. More than this, Hopkins says, the reflection of Christ's image and person between and among people is an ongoing and necessary activity. The "just man" performs a series of ongoing actions through which Christ himself plays out in praise to the Father -- "the just man justices," "keeps grace," "acts" (lines 9-12). Tellingly, this play of reflection is not just visual but also, and chiefly, verbal. "Each mortal thing…speaks and spells" and cries "*What I do is me: for that I came*" (lines 5-8). Via the instress of reflecting Christ to one another in word, deed, and being, humans display their own inscape – or, as James Finn Cotter says, "the design and pattern that is Christ in the world and in one's self" and "the design of the Word stamped into his material creation" (75-6). This aesthetic is also Augustine's, says Cotter. He points to Augustine's words from *The True Religion* where he says, "With a knowledge of this Trinity proportioned to this life, we can see beyond the shadow of a doubt that every intellectual, animate, and corporeal creature has its existence, in so far as it exists, its proper nature, and its perfectly ordered career, from the creative power of this same Trinity" (qtd. in Cotter 80). The pattern stamped on creation and on "ten thousand faces" is that of the Trinity, itself an image of eternal communion and community.

Hopkins's images in "As kingfishers catch fire" depict the way Christ's followers, the Church, embody Christ in this world. In a sermon delivered for the fourth Sunday after Easter (1881) at St. Francis Xavier's in Liverpool, Hopkins attributes the work and presence of Christ in the individual to the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, he says,

> …makes Christ known by living in his Church, he makes his temple in Christian hearts and dwells within us…. [T]he Holy Ghost makes of every Christian another Christ…; passes like a restless breath from heart to heart and is the spirit and the life of all the church: what the soul is to the human

> body that, St. Austin says, the Holy Ghost is to the Church Catholic, Christ's body mystical. If the Holy Ghost is our spirit and our life, if he is our universal soul, no wonder, my brethren, no wonder he is our Paraclete, to lead us and to lift us and to fire us to all holiness and good, a Paraclete in a way too that Christ alone could never be. On this great mystery no time is left to dwell: I leave it for your thoughts to ponder. (S 99-100)

Hopkins emphasizes the movement of the Holy Spirit in and among the members of Christ's body, the Church. This is necessary, he says for the life of the body. In the notes to this section, Christopher Devlin points out that Hopkins was ahead of his time theologically in his commitment to the Church as "Christ's body mystical" (S 281). However, Hopkins's ideas have a precedent in the sermons of St. Augustine ("St. Austin"), whom he quotes here. The passage quoted comes from St. Augustine's sermon for the Day of Pentecost (267.4).[5] Here Augustine addresses those in the church who are complaining that they have received the Holy Spirit but have not been given the gift of tongues. He reassures his audience of the work of the Holy Spirit despite the absence of this particular outward sign by drawing an analogy with the soul: If the soul quickens all the parts of the body and gives to each part its distinct function, then the Spirit of God in the church quickens some to miracles, others to tongues, others to chastity, and so on. Augustine extends the analogy to encompass a negative example as well: if a part is cut off of the body, it dies; if members of the Church become heretics, they are cut off and die. To continue alive in the body of Christ, says Augustine, "hold on to loving-kindness, love truthfulness, long for oneness" (273). Edmund Hill and John Rotelle point out that Augustine's exhortation attributes two qualities to the Church – "charity and unity (loving-kindness and oneness) – and "one for Christ: truth (truthfulness)" (274). Augustine, like Hopkins in his sermon, emphasizes the horizontal orientation of the Holy

[5] Edmund Hill and John Rotelle, the editors, date this sermon in the year 412.

Spirit in drawing together the members of the Body of Christ into cooperation, conversation, and interaction with one another. The Church can function in no other way than together and towards a common life in Christ.

Writing the Wor[l]d

Not only does Hopkins adopt Augustine's view of language in his theology and spiritual writings, he enacts it in his poetry. His poetic content and form express his anxiety with the paradox of language and the need for accommodation, while his frequent calls to devotion and worship emphasize the participatory nature of language and thus the necessity of community in interpretation. Hopkins's own words indicate that he believes there is a reality beyond the poem to which the words, form, and sounds point. Yet, like Augustine and St. Paul, he is confronted by his inability to approximate that reality in speech. To accommodate to his readers, however, Hopkins suspends the opposition of sound and sense in his poetry. He eliminates the opposition of sound and sense first in his word choice. When he wants a particular word, he wants it not just because of its sound but because its sound is its sense and its sense is its sound. In this way, spoken word and written word inch closer to one another. In a letter to Robert Bridges from 1882, Hopkins writes about his "Echoes," as he calls "The Leaden Echo" and "The Golden Echo":

> I cannot satisfy myself about the first line. You must know that words like charm and enchantment will not do: the thought is of beauty as of something that can be physically kept and lost and by physical things only, like keys; then the things must come from the *mundus muliebris*; and thirdly they must not be markedly oldfashioned [sic]. You will see that this limits the choice of words very much indeed. However I shall make some changes. Back is not pretty, but it gives that feeling of physical constraint which I want. (CW ii 550)

In reflecting on his word choice, Hopkins struggles for the physicality of the sign – the transubstantiation of his words. He enacts this in the first lines of "The Leaden Echo" where he writes, "How to keep – is there any any, is there none such, nowhere known some, bow or brooch or braid or brace, lace, latch or catch or key to keep / Back beauty, keep it, beauty, beauty, beauty,…from vanishing away?" (lines 1-2). In these lines, Hopkins stretches language to the breaking point: He uses a list of objects that almost robs them of their semantic meanings – bow, brooch, braid, brace, lace, latch, catch, key. The words seem to take on no meaning of their own. The word "bow" does not seem to *mean* "bow." In fact, the words signify on both levels, and Hopkins manages to create two planes of meaning, like clefs in a musical score. Hopkins retains the semantic meaning of the words by using them all as images for catching and keeping. He supersedes the semantic meaning as each word gives way to the next, and, thus, as each effort to catch and to keep disintegrates. Placed next to one another with no syntactical cues, the words also seem to mean only in relation to the sounds of the other words around them. Thus, the echo builds and resolves through the disintegration of sound-word-idea barriers.

Hopkins also stretches the poetic line in "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo" to its breaking point. The first line above goes on past the margin on any printed page, wrapping three lines in the Norman Mackenzie edition. Although three lines on the printed page, it is one poetic line – a barely contained riot of rhythm and anxiety. Hopkins thus holds the reader in suspense, trapped in time and bound by an inability to apprehend the line fully. He places the reader in a position he believes created beings already occupy in this world. Indeed, Hopkins does not pretend to "perfect congruence of

sign and referent" (Miller 5). Rather he fully embraces and even creates their divergence by reimagining common speech patterns and syntax – an action that effectively blurs the distinction between the sounds of his words and their sense to his readers. He pushes the physical limits of language – their sounds – and the semantic limits of language – their sense – in order to communicate meaning on multiple levels. Indeed, the inscape of the poem, being something of the divine, cannot be accessed without multiple levels of meaning. As Hopkins's language in "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo" intensifies, it risks sounding like nonsense to the reader accustomed to proper syntax. He undermines his reader's ability to understand the significance of the poem. In so doing, Hopkins reinforces the meaning of the lines: that beauty cannot be caught and kept.

Another way Hopkins enacts his anxiety about words can be found in his experimentation with cynghanedd – a Welsh poetic form that relies on "repetition of word pattern, rhyme, balance, and consonantal chime" (CW i, see n. 2, p. 286). His experimentation makes use of mid-line rhyme. In the same 1882 letter to Bridges, Hopkins works through the rhymes and images of an early draft of "The Sea and the Skylark," a poem he wasn't particularly pleased with. Writes Hopkins, "The sonnet you asked about is the greatest offender in its way that you could have found. It was written in my Welsh days, in my salad days, when I was fascinated with cynghanedd or consonant-chime, and, as in Welsh englyns, 'the sense,' as one of themselves said, 'gets the worst of it;' in this case it exists but is far from glaring" (CW ii 551). Although Hopkins is reflecting back on this sonnet with some gentle self-deprecation, he calls attention to his early efforts to get sound and sense to collide. The early draft of the poem referenced here contains the lines, "Left hand, off land, I hear the lark ascend / With rash-fresh more,

repair of skein and score, / Race wild reel round, crisp coil deal down to floor, / And spill music till there's none left to spend (CW ii, see n.9, 553). The lines are clunky, the rhythm insecure. However, the words "rash-fresh more" stop the reader short. Why these sounds in these words at this moment? Hopkins reflects on his choice of the words "rash-fresh more," helpfully illuminating the play of meaning at work:

> "Rash-fresh more" (it is dreadful to explain these things in cold blood) means a headlong and exciting new snatch of singing, resumption by the lark of his song, which by turns he gives over and takes up again all day long, and this goes on, the sonnet says, through all time, without ever losing its first freshness, being a thing both new and old. (CW ii 551-2)

Hopkins combines "Rash" and "fresh" to create a new word with a particular musical quality. The play of meaning in these words and the new word thus reverberate with the clash of sound and the host of meanings attendant upon the original words. As a result, the original words both lose their meaning and gain meaning when they are combined in this new way, opening up a diversity of interpretation. Ellsberg comments on this play of meaning, saying, "Hopkins exercised rhetoric to the point where the flexibility of words, their stretch and 'reach,' could be restored. It was Hopkins' express intention that the reader be arrested by those qualities of words which were independent of their dictionary definitions" (46).

In "As kingfishers catch fire," Hopkins introduces a different play with words: he turns the noun "justice" into an intransitive verb, questioning its meaning and grammatical purpose. The *aporia* in this poem occurs between the first and second stanzas:

> Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
> Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
> Selves – goes its self; *myself* it speaks and spells,
> Crying *What I do is me: for that I came.*

> I say more: the just man justices;
> Keeps grace: that keeps all his goings graces;
> Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is –
> Christ…. (lines 5-12)

A sonnet in form, this poem turns on the first line of the second stanza. It is the *volta* after which the central "problem" of the sonnet is resolved. Hopkins neatly places his transformed noun/verb at the end of this line where it can both reflect backward upon the previous stanza and forward to the resolution. Hopkins's "new" word, mined from the debris of a broken grammar, blurs the line between action and description – a common move in Hopkins poetry as he turns from regarding objects to directing his readers to action (cf. line 11 of "Pied Beauty" where he urges readers to "Praise him"). Thus, the turning point in this poem uncovers an absence of meaning – the place where "justice" used to have a definition according to its sound and sense but where, in its place, a new object begins, for which the words have not yet been given.

In enacting a view of language that acknowledges its goodnesses and failures, and in providing a remedy for its limitations in the accommodating work of Christ in the inner man, Hopkins invites the reader to devotion and, thus, transformation. The only response to the "unselving" of the self is, for Hopkins's Catholic, Christian imagination, worship. He imagines this response in "The Starlight Night," an exuberant little sonnet that causes this response. "Look at the stars! Look, look up at the skies!," he cries, directing our eyes upward in a posture of adoration. Hopkins's description of the stars is extravagant: "fire-folk," "bright boroughs," "circle-citadels," "diamond-delves," "elves-eyes," "gold…quickgold," "wind-beat whitebeam," "airy abeles," and so on to a crescendo (lines 2-6). This play of rhyme and sound throws forth its sense as the words glance off of one another in a call and response. Margaret Ellsberg refers to this as

Hopkins's "sacramental language," noting that "the divine manifests itself in concrete things through sacraments; poetry, through such devices as symbolism and metaphor, condenses an unseen reality into words. For Hopkins…poetic words shared the responsibility and power of sacramental words" (47). In ascribing this symbolic power to Hopkins's words, however, Ellsberg misses the other half of the truth: man's eye can never pierce Paul's dim glass; rather, God must accommodate himself to man, choosing to bind himself within a broken system.

Speaking the Wor[l]d

Hopkins extends Augustine's ideas about language by insisting on the voicing of words in poetry as a means to engage the interpretive community by activating the instress of the words, and thus, the inscape of thought. Hopkins used the term "inscape" to describe that individual identity of an object, being, or text connected to God Himself as the center and ground of all being and existence – a diversity of individuality expressed within a unity of being[6]. Cotter sees inscape as the expression of union with Christ. He writes,

> Hopkins found inscape in every facet of created reality, whether the creator be God or man, the object an ash tree or a poem. Both artifact and nature embody the uncreated and creating Word-made-flesh at work in the universe. At the apex and center of that universe emerges the mind of man, the *imago Dei* and microcosm of creation. In all things made, the poet sought union with the divine maker's mind, for man's intelligence itself reflects and even contains – and more perfectly – the same Christ within as shone without. (143)

[6] Hopkins's concept of inscape, as is widely noted, is derived from Duns Scotus's notion of haecceity. Christopher Devlin's notes to the *Sermons and Devotional Writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins* indicate Hopkins believed that "the beauty of co-ordinated nature is a reflection of the beauty of God the Son who is the pattern for creation – 'prima species primaque pulchritudo'" (343).

A little later, Cotter defines the shape of inscape as “form as well as content, structure as well as tone…poetical intention, the aim and purpose of the poet in his poem” (144). This poetic, and Christological, core is reached by means of a force or stress created within the reader – the “instress” – by the individual qualities of the poem.

King comments similarly on Hopkins’s poetic intention, although in order to emphasize the activation of grace by Hopkins’s poetic stress and strain. King identifies inscape as the pattern that holds the instress in tension and instress as a “discrete unity of energy maintained by God’s stress and engaged by the mind’s ‘energy’” (211). Hopkins’s “sprung experiments in ‘St. Dorothea,’” says King, “[connect] the stress of grace to an anticipated reader’s breathed pulses when voicing poetic rhythm. After working this association into a full prosodic intention – and encountering the clash between his intention and real readers’ inclinations – Hopkins makes the conflict between inclination and intention implicit in his theology explicit in the practiced tension of sprung rhythm” (233). The stress created by the poem’s metrical inscape and the reader’s inclinations, King says, has the ability to result in an experience of grace as the reader is confronted by his/her “divided will” (233). This confrontation of expectation – the “natural” reading of the lines – and reality – Hopkins’s intention for the lines – may agitate the reader, resulting in an experience of dissonance between the two wills which could then lead to a moment of grace as the reader submits to and “receives” the stress of the poem.[7] Hopkins links this energy, this “instress,” to language in his notes from February 9, 1868, which I

[7] In his study, King raises an important question that has bearing on the place of diverse readings. He asks whether Hopkins’s metrical marks in fact force his will upon the reader, and, if so, whether this creates an impression of tyranny rather than grace. Hopkins’s mastery of his art does create this dilemma. However, he himself was keenly aware of the danger that he might fall more in love with his own voice and prevent readers from hearing Christ’s (see discussion of Lucifer on pages 55-6). As a result, perhaps, Hopkins makes much room in his poetry for diversity, indicating an openness to diverse experiences of his poetry.

referenced earlier as an example of his struggle with the limitations of language. He writes, "…the word is the expression, *uttering* of the idea in the mind. That idea itself has its two terms, the image (of sight or sound or *scapes* of the other senses), which is in fact physical and a refined energy accenting the nerves, a word to oneself, an inchoate word, and secondly the conception" (125). By dividing the idea behind a word into sense and thought, Hopkins makes room for the force, or energy, of words that is both affective and cognitive.

Unlike Cotter, King recognizes, importantly for this study, that realization of this experience comes from the reader's performance of Hopkins's "affective rhythm" (209). By extension, the opportunity for instress is created by the voicing of the poem aloud to an audience, even if that audience is just the individual reader.[8] Performing sprung rhythm allows its tensions to be physically felt by both reader and listener. Readers experience conflict as they resist the "natural" qualities of speech (King 233) while listeners experience its stress as they, too, modify their expectations, accommodating the conflicting and layered rhythms. Similarly, readers and listeners may experience the instress of Hopkins's poetry, especially in a poem like "The Starlight Night," as they hear the mounting alliterative patterns. Layered alliteration may create a sense of tension as it creates couples and groups of ideas. For example, in "The Starlight Night" the line "Down in dim woods the diamond delves…" (line 4) stresses the pattern and nature of the inkiest parts of the night skies, identifying the hard, dark "d" with the mysterious and unfathomable. Similar groupings of words by repeated consonant sounds may also create force of thought and intention with a sense of inexorability. In "God's Grandeur," for

[8] See footnote 9 from Chapter One where I discuss the possibility of a reader also being simultaneously his or her own audience.

example, the repeated and varied “s” sound presses upon the reader and listener who speak and hear, “All is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil; / And wears man’s smudge and shares man’s smell: the soil / Is bare now…” (lines 6-7). Listeners identify the “s” and “sh” sounds with the man’s sinful imprint upon the world, and the regular and varied repetition of the sound forges a sense of threat and doom. These literal, physical emphases created by alliteration lead to apprehensions of spiritual truth – the smudge and smear of one’s own sins and the light of Christ in darkness – as reader and audience engage their senses, affections, and mind.

In his analysis of the fall of Satan from “Creation and Redemption: The Great Sacrifice,” Hopkins presents a negative example of the power of vocalized, communal performance of poetry. Writes Hopkins,

> This song of Lucifer’s was a dwelling on his own beauty, an instressing of his own inscape, and like a performance on the organ and instrument of his own being; it was a sounding, as they say, of his own trumpet and a hymn in his own praise. Moreover it became an incantation: others were drawn in; it became a concert of voices, a concerting of selfpraise, an enchantment, a magic, by which they were dizzied, dazzled, and bewitched. They would not listen to the note which summoned each to his own place and distributed them here and there in the liturgy of the sacrifice; they gathered rather closer and closer home under Lucifer’s lead and drowned it, raising a countermusic and countertemple and altar, a counterpoint of dissonance and not of harmony. (S 200-1)

Lucifer sinned, according to Hopkins here, by performing his own particular instress for himself. In an earlier comment on the same, Hopkins notes that Lucifer entered into a covenant with God “as a chorister who learns by use in the church itself the strength and beauty of his voice” (S 179). The trespass was not that he expressed his own particular beauty but that he “became aware in his very note of adoration of the riches of his nature” and, rather than offering a sacrifice of praise with such beauty, “[prolonged] the first note

instead and [was] ravished by his own sweetness and dazzled" (S 180). Lucifer failed to give glory back to the author of his instress. Rather, he performed to his own praise and glory. Similarly, rather than uniting the community in a give and take of thought and sound that then mounted up to praise of God, Lucifer involved others in his self-praise. Instead of a song crafted to lead each individual creature further and further into its own particular expression of itself, Lucifer drowned out their voices with his own, pulling them into his own song. The result, to extend the metaphor, was a one-note tune. In leading them into his own song, Lucifer denies them their own harmony. In his notes on this section, Devlin observes that Hopkins identifies inscape with beauty when, earlier, he had identified inscape with "nature or essence." Writes Devlin, "The two are the same in an exemplarist context. The beauty (*species*) and the specific essence (*species*) of a creature both derive from its being a likeness (*species*) of some aspect of the Divine Essence" (301, see n. 1). Lucifer denies each creature the ability to "derive from its being a likeness" of God by abusing his power of speech and song.

Interpreting the Wor[l]d

This negative example of the power of speech and song raises a question implicit in the claims of this chapter: Does Hopkins allow for a diversity of interpretation in insisting that his poetry be read and performed aloud? In crafting his poetry with such meticulous attention to and care for the stress, rhythm, and sound of the line, does he imagine readers capturing his own essential experience and interpretation of his own poetry? Or, is he able to conceive of multiple, although guided, interpretations that derive from a similar foundational understanding of line and sound?

According to Hopkins's ideas of instress as discussed above, the force and energy of a word, a line, a poem, or even a creature, is a unique expression ultimately pointing, and directing praise, to God. Although he writes in his letters about recordings of performed poems that could teach and guide others to correct recitation, Hopkins expresses delight in the variety of individuality and interpretive possibility in the world. In fact, the central rhetorical gesture in "Pied Beauty," a poem I will examine in the next chapter, is toward the particularities of created things and their place within the world's "scape." From a list of "dappled things" – itself an image of variegation and changefulness and dynamism – Hopkins moves to a statement of their place and purpose, saying, "All things counter, original, spare, strange…/ He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change" (lines 7-10). The play of creation's variety is juxtaposed against the immutable glory of its author. The final line of the poem is an abbreviated imperative, "Praise him" (line 11). As each creature plays out its individuality before its creator, it utters back to God the praise he deserves for fathering it out of his infinite but unchanging person. Similarly, in "The Golden Echo," the counterpart to "The Leaden Echo," Hopkins balances the fear that beauty may vanish by exhorting the reader to "Give beauty back, beauty, beauty, beauty, back to God beauty's self and beauty's giver" (line 19). Beauty, in its multiplicity of manifestations, cannot be kept, Lucifer-like, for one's self. Instead, it must be sent back to the giver where it finds both its source and its end.

In Hopkins's retreat notes from 1881 and 1882, his meditations on Ignatius's comments on the Incarnation leads to a meditation upon the possibilities of the world, which he imagines as a pomegranate. Ignatius's comment upon the capacity and scope of

the world leads Hopkins to write, “This suggests that ‘pomegranate,’ that *pomum possibilium* [fruit of possibility]. The Trinity saw it whole and in every ‘cleave,’ the actual and the possible. We may consider that we are looking at it in all the actual cleaves, one after another. This sphere is set off against the sphere of the divine being…. Yet that too has its cleave to us, the entrance of Christ on the world. There is not only the pomegranate of the whole world but of each species in it, each race, each individual, and so on” (S 171). Although Hopkins seems to mean this primarily as a way to understand the dialogue between free will and providence, the image itself indicates that there are a diversity of possibilities available within one foundational possibility. In the next paragraph, Hopkins writes of the redemption of the fallen world, indicating a connection between possibility and the redemption of the world by the personality of the Trinity. Writes Hopkins,

> The Trinity made man after the image of Their one nature but They redeem him…by bringing into play with infinite charity Their personality. Being personal They see as if with sympathy the play of personality in man below Them, for in his personality his freedom lies and this same personality playing in its freedom not only exerts and displays the riches and capacities of his one nature…but unhappily disunites it, rends it, and almost tears it to pieces. One of Them therefore makes Himself one of that throng of persons, a man among men, by charity to bring them back to that union with themselves which they have lost by freedom and even to bring them to a union with God which nothing in their nature gave them. (S 171-2)

Humanity’s freedom is that which opens them up to infinite possibility – the cleaves of the pomegranate – but as individuals use their free individuality for sin, they tear human nature in pieces (again, Hopkins’s sacramentality comes out here). Christ is therefore made man, and the Word is made flesh that humanity might be reunited with their essential selves and, in so doing, be brought closer to blessedness. The infinite, positive

possibility of the Incarnation seems to open up, for Hopkins, into beatitude, or praise. So, diversity of intention and realization may be possible in performed speech, according to Hopkins's theology of diversity and unity, but it must also have its ground in the purpose of the work of poetry, which for Hopkins is praise of Christ. Said another way, diverse interpretations must lead to praise for Hopkins. Thus, the chapter comes full circle, arriving back at Augustine's idea of man's calling ("vocation" in its vocal sense) to praise the Creator. As the individuality of each person is called forth by the Incarnation of Christ to be sent back again in praise, so voiced poetry calls forth its own instress to be sent out to a receiver and mounted, ultimately, to praise of its author – Christ.

CHAPTER THREE

Reading with the Ears: Hopkins's Performance Pedagogy in Practice

At the beginning of this study, I suggested that Hopkins's beliefs about poetry, performance, and language should affect pedagogy in undergraduate literature classrooms. Although it has its own set of constraints, the classroom is an interpretive community within which Hopkins's poetry can be audibly performed and his theory of poetic language engaged. In this chapter, I imagine the classroom as a hospitable context for performance and interpretation, and, in so doing, I attempt to answer three questions: 1. Can Hopkins's beliefs about language and poetic performance be applied in the classroom without alienating those who do not share his beliefs? 2. If so, what specific constraints does the classroom context impose on interpretation?, and 3. What techniques might instructors use to teach performance of Hopkins's poetry?

If Hopkins believes readers best respond to his poetry via voiced acts of praise, does he allow readers who do not share his religious beliefs or loyalties the full experience of his poetry? Or, like Lucifer, who drew others into "a concerting of selfpraise" (S 200), is he guilty of forcing praise from unwilling readers? Anyone teaching Hopkins should reckon with his theology and anthropology, as discussed in Chapter Two, in order to best present him in the classroom. Even teachers closest to Hopkins's beliefs must wrestle with the distance between Hopkins's hopes for his poetry and the reality that students who encounter Hopkins's poetry in classrooms, even in Christian colleges and universities, may not share his desire to praise his God.

Hopkins sets a precedent for an answer to this question: He regularly turns to individuals with different beliefs for criticism, counsel, and interpretation. He entrusts his poetry, as well as his best advice on how to read his poems, to men outside his faith tradition, including Robert Bridges and Canon Richard Dixon. He also entrusted interpretation of his poetry to his mother and sister, who were High Anglicans, as he often sent them copies of his poems to set to music. Yet, all of these individuals were, to Hopkins, outside the true Church and thus outside of the faith. Although they were part of the Anglican tradition, and a part of the larger Christian tradition, Hopkins's Catholicism placed him at some great distance from them. Hopkins's place in time also affected the nature of his Catholic beliefs: the nineteenth-century was a time of deep conservatism in the Catholic Church, and Hopkins converted to Catholicism during a flurry of renewal. Even his reasons for converting distance him from these individuals: when he could no longer be assured that the Anglican Church possessed the authority to administer the sacraments effectually, he had to leave.[1]

Although Hopkins's move to the Catholic Church was final and thorough, his letters give indications that he grieved the separation and did not see those friends and family outside the Catholic Church as faithless. Indeed, Hopkins frequently expresses sadness in his letters, journals, and poetry that this change put family and friends at a distance. On 7 November 1866, Hopkins wrote to his mother, lamenting her response to his conversion, saying, "Your letters, wh. shew the utmost fondness, suppose none on my

[1] In a pained letter to his father (16-17 October 1866) shortly after announcing his conversion, Hopkins writes, "But you do not understand what is involved in asking me to delay and how little good you wd. get from it. I shall hold as a Catholic what I have long held as an Anglican, that literal truth of our Lord's words by which I learn that the least fragment of the consecrated elements in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar is the whole Body of Christ born of the Blessed Virgin, before Which the whole host of saints and angels as it lies on the altar trembles with adoration…. But, as Monsignor Eyre says, it is a gross superstition unless guaranteed by infallibility" (CW i 115).

part and the more you think me hard and cold and that I repel and throw you off the more I am helpless not to write as if were true. In this way I have no relief. You might believe that I suffer too" (CW i 127). In other, similar letters, he expresses a desire that his family understand, and he grieves that his conversion has created division. He demonstrates a conciliatory attitude towards his sister's fiancé, for whose soul he prays although he knows him to be outside the Catholic Church. He writes, "I said mass for Henry Weber this morning and during the mass I felt strongly those motions from God (as I believe them to be) which I have often before now received touching the condition of the departed, by which was signified that it was well with him" (CW ii 580). Hopkins's gesture indicates that he does not believe Weber to be eternally lost, despite his place outside the Catholic Church. Still further, Hopkins's letters to Bridges about "The Wreck of the Deutschland" illustrate his trust that division of belief does not necessitate the obliteration of fellowship, perhaps even most vividly for my point here about performance. In a letter from 21 August 1877, Hopkins urges his friend to read "The Wreck of the Deutschland" aloud and to pay attention to its aural qualities, believing that such study will be worthwhile despite the fact that the very last prayer of the poem is something Bridges would never pray: that Catholicism would return to England as the primary religion.[2] Bridges *cannot* respond to this poem in praise, but Hopkins still believes his friend will be "more pleased with it" (CW i 282) by performing it aloud. Hopkins's desire that those outside the Roman Catholic Church, and thus outside his

[2] In the final stanza, Hopkins expresses the hope that the reward for such tragedy will be "Our King back, Oh, upon English souls! / Let him easter in us, be a dayspring to the dimness of us, be a crimson-cresseted east / More brightening her, rare-dear Britain, as his reign rolls…" (lines 276-8).

faith, appreciate and interpret his poetry testifies to his trust that his poetry could be apprehended and actualized even apart from complete doctrinal agreement.

By setting a precedent for interpretation of his poetry outside of his own belief system, Hopkins allows the possibility of actualization by those who do not wish to follow him into praise. While this alleviates the pressure of performance to lead to praise every time a Hopkins poem is read, it does not fully account for the constraints of the undergraduate classroom. A further question must still be asked: Is the classroom the right place to expect or require the kind of actualization for which Hopkins ultimately hopes? While Hopkins does not address this question explicitly, his lecture notes – which probably guided his teaching – suggest an appropriate sensitivity to the rhetorical situation of the educational space. His notes lean on definition, technical detail, explanation, and application. Never do they fall into exhortation, personal observation, and depiction. These remain the province of his letters to friends, journals and diaries, and poetry. Rather, his lecture notes portray a Hopkins interested in equipping students with the right tools for poetry reading and interpretation not a Hopkins interested in inspiring or evoking the hoped-for response. Even his notes on "Rhythm and Other Structural Parts of Rhetoric – Verse" avoid metaphysics. Although an argument from silence, and although we do not know how these notes figured into his actual lessons with students, the sharp distinction of purpose between his pedagogical approach to his close friends and family and his pedagogical approach to his lecture notes illuminates a capaciousness to Hopkins's pedagogy that instructors may find helpful.

Hopkins creates a hospitable space for friends and family to encounter his poetry by sharing poetry and ideas about the interpretation and performance of poetry with them.

Extending Hopkins's gesture to students and imagining the literature classroom as a site of hospitality opens instructor and students to an experience of Hopkins's poetry that is both guided and discovered, a parallel approach Hopkins used extensively in his letters. Imagining the literature classroom as hospitable is not incidental. Rather, the way instructors take the time to imagine their classrooms matters for students' experience of literature. Hopkins's pedagogy, along with his hospitable invitation to others to experience his poetry, is a "living lesson" in the kind of classroom environment where students may encounter Hopkins's poetry more fully yet reserve the right to go only so far and no further.

Setting the Classroom Stage

Scholars have noted that poetic performance has the power to shape individuals. It taps into a basic need for uttered expression and, in so doing, has the capacity to shape individual identity. In *Making Poetry Matter: International Research on Poetry Pedagogy*, editors Sue Dymoke, Andrew Lambirth, and Anthony Wilson present a collection of essays by poetry scholars and educators. The essays in the third section of the book, "Speaking Poetry and Listening to Poetry," help instructors consider the effects of spoken and heard poetry on students. The first essay in this section considers the impact of spoken poetic performance on preadolescents, for example, and although far outside the age-range of this study, Janine L. Certo's observations have much to teach about human nature. She observes that preadolescents report that "their poetry reading performances brought forth feelings of pride, exhilaration, a literate identity, and, for some, an understanding of genre" (105). Poetic performance, argues Certo, gives children "the rhetorical power to use words in new ways" and the opportunity to "discover what

language can do" (106). Certo believes that "when the poem meets the body, children have a new literary experience. The poem becomes felt, seen and heard through their body for a completely fresh interpretative event" (107). Instructors desperate for students to appreciate poetry may find those statements justification enough to incorporate performance into the literature classroom. Even better, however, such comments suggest an innate need and appreciation for poetic performance as an identity-shaping tool and as a means of personal growth – valuable goals for all classes.

Scholars also argue that verbal language mastery and experimentation are social practices. As Julie Blake notes, poetic performance "is about how teachers support young people in encountering poetry first hand, as a lived, embodied experience, co-constructed in the here-and-now by the poet and the reader. This is a position that entails young people learning to read poetry by reading poetry, and being guided to pay close attention to the way in which the poetic voice is realized in the deployment of its language" (139). Likewise, Dana Gioia, poet and champion of Poetry Out Loud, the national recitation contest sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts, says in an audio presentation ("The Power of Poetry") that poetry reading provides a key for mastering language, stocks the mind with images, trains our emotional intelligence, and enlarges our humanity. While these are not conventional classroom outcomes, they are starting points for understanding why performance matters, and, more specifically, why performance of Hopkins's poetry matters. Hopkins's poetry lends itself to outcomes like these because of his emphasis on the individual inscape of all created beings – from humans, imprinted with that which makes them wholly unique, to poems, crafted with an inner pattern and landscape of sound that communicates its "thisness." Language, and the use of language,

is connected to the constituting of the individual. Because of its rich sounds, compression of thought, and fraught images, poetry is an intensification of the power of all language.

Instructors of literature survey courses face the challenge of introducing students to great literature, imparting some sense of its significance, challenging students to think critically about form and content, and, hopefully, instilling a love for literature in the process. Some may say that those outcomes set the bar too low. In universities with a standard general education or liberal arts curriculum, however, students across a wide range of disciplines sit in these classes. I do not think this has to be a problem. In a survey course, students and instructor alike stand at a distance from a huge swath of texts and time, survey the landscape, and look for broad patterns and principles. Adopting this posture presents students with the opportunity for *encounters* with literature of all types. Instructors then challenge students to question texts, to make meaning independently, and even to question their own interpretations. Special topics courses focus on author, genre, time period, or theme and, thus, allow students and instructor to dig more deeply. Students question more deeply and more specifically in such courses.

Teaching Hopkins for performance can happen in both the lower-level survey course and in the upper-level special topics course if the pedagogical approaches chosen possess the innate capacity to contract and expand based on course purpose, student ability, and instructor interest. Thus, the approach I suggest in this chapter is simply a beginning. In what follows, I sketch a unit on performance, featuring Hopkins, for use in the survey classroom, and I consider options for expansion in the special topics course. It is also a beginning, I hope, to further conversation about what this kind of instruction could look like in both contexts. Thus, the lessons and readings I present here by no

means represent the only or best way to teach Hopkins or to teach performance of his poetry. Instead, I hold these out as an invitation to other instructors – certainly more experienced than me – to contribute their own ideas. In so doing, I fully acknowledge that I am not the first person to think how marvelous it would be to voice Hopkins's poetry in the classroom and that there may already be others interested in making performance a widespread reality and new standard for poetry pedagogy.

I envision a unit on Hopkins's poetry taking shape in four phases, culminating in oral performance. In the first phase, students will be given the opportunity to hear and feel the difference between metrical reading of Hopkins's poetry and rhetorical reading. In the second phase, students will learn to read Hopkins's poetry for the drama of the sounds rather than, primarily, for the drama of the content, a key for understanding Hopkins's peculiar sound patterning. In the third phase, students will close read a Hopkins poem for performance and create a "prompt copy" of the poem, which they will then use in the fourth phase – oral performance. Throughout my discussion of classroom procedure and the critical readings that follow, I will use three terms to describe readings of the poems. Two of these terms are used by Hopkins – rhetorical reading and metrical reading – and the third I use here as a term of convenience – conversational reading. By "conversational" I mean the least "stressy" or emphatic of reading types and that which does not impose on the words any stress beyond their usual spoken accent. By rhetorical I mean a dramatic reading of the lines in order to emphasize some matter of form or meaning. I take this definition from Hopkins's comments about the rhetorical nature of sprung rhythm (referenced in Chapter One).[3] Scholars such as Michael D. Hurley and

[3] Sprung rhythm is, writes Hopkins, "…the native rhythm of the words used bodily imported into verse" and "the nearest to the rhythm of prose, that is the native and natural rhythm of speech, the least

Peter Groves use the term "rhythmic" to convey much the same sense as Hopkins does in the term rhetorical. The most emphatic reading, and thus the most at odds with a conversational reading of the lines (although not always), is the metrical reading, which reveals the underlying structure of the poem.

Lesson One: "Pied Beauty['s]" Dappled Rhythms

Primary Pedagogical Approach

In "What Sprung Rhythm Really Is Not," Michael D. Hurley considers the distinction between metrical and rhythmic reading of Hopkins's poetry. He writes,

> Metre is almost always an imperfect expression of performance rhythm, but that is the point: metre expresses something coincident with and contingent to, but qualitatively different from, rhythm; i.e. the *pattern* of rhythm. Effects arising from secondary or 'hovering stress' may yet, and may best, be accounted for in rhythmical terms through, for instance, phrasing by degrees of stress…that may be used to compare stress nuance with the line's metrical scansion. (86)

In another article, "Darkening the Subject of Hopkins' Prosody," Hurley again remarks, "In so far as meter is an abstract and polarized representation of rhythm, it does not provide a perfect account of that rhythm. This inherent limitation underlies the qualitative difference between rhythm and meter: the former represents the flow of stress in time; the latter, patterns of parallelism in this flow" (492). Metrical reading and rhythmic, or what Hopkins calls "rhetorical" reading in his lecture notes on rhythm, are both complementary and distinct, and the sensitive reader of Hopkins's poetry notices the tension between the two readings almost immediately in a poem like "Pied Beauty." In

---

forced, the most rhetorical and emphatic of all possible rhythms, combining, as it seems to me, opposite and, one wd. Have thought, incompatible excellences, markedness of rhythm – that is rhythm's self – and naturalness of expression…" (CW ii 281-2).

this poem, Hopkins forces the metrical pattern to either contract or expand to accommodate missing or added syllables. These missing or added syllables are not, according to Hopkins, counted in the scanning of the meter, leaving the metrical pattern intact but the rhythmic pattern, seemingly, in a shambles. The effect is of experiencing the poem on two "planes," as it were. Although Hopkins says in the "Author's Preface" to MS B, which he sent to Coventry Patmore, that sprung rhythm cannot counterpoint, the reader's experience of the tension between meter and rhythm is akin to this poetic device of "mounting" a secondary meter on top of and simultaneous to the running meter.[4] For example, in "The Starlight Night," which *is* counterpointed standard rhythm, the first line leaps and dances over what might be three different kinds of metrical feet –a trochee ("LOOK at"), iambs ("the STARS"), and possibly a spondee ("LOOK, LOOK"). The second line of the poem clarifies which of the three possible metrical feet in line one is actually the running meter with iambs ("o LOOK at ALL the FIRE…"), and the third line introduces the counterpoint again with an iamb ("The BRIGHT") followed by a trochee ("BORoughs"). "Pied Beauty," however, is sprung, paeonic. Unlike "The Starlight Night," the tension in "Pied Beauty" is created as the lines contract and expand over the stresses. For example, line one contains nine stresses, lines two and three expand to twelve, line four contracts back to nine, line five expands again to eleven, and line six contracts to ten. Despite the variation in length, all these lines contain the same number of stresses (five), as per Hopkins's instructions about scanning sprung rhythm. Yet, Hurley clarifies that a poem written in sprung rhythm "cannot be directly

[4] See Hopkins's words quoted in MacKenzie's edition: "If…the reversal is repeated in two feet running, …it must be due either to great want of ear or else is a calculated effect, the superinducing or mounting of a new rhythm upon the old; and since the new or mounted rhythm is actually heard and at the same time the mind naturally supplies the natural or standard foregoing rhythm, …two rhythms are in some manner running at once and we have something answerable to counterpoint in music" (PIII 116).

'counterpointed' because it is non-predictive, because it resists reflecting to a single, staple rhythmical pattern. It can therefore be far *more* flexible, and so *more* subtle in its evolving shades of emphasis" ("Rhythm" 87). This juxtaposition of the "expected and the actual" (Groves 100) is what lends poetry its beauty.[5]

Although Hopkins says it is simple, sprung rhythm has the capacity to be exceedingly complex, not least because of Hopkins's own conflicting descriptions, as Hurley points out in "Darkening the Subject of Hopkins' Prosody." The undergraduate reader who encounters Hopkins in a survey course generally lacks the vocabulary to discuss or understand these nuances.[6] However, sprung rhythm, despite the existing debate about its nature, is the source of the peculiar energy and passion of Hopkins's poetry, which readers *can* experience without trying to grasp the entire scholarly debate about meter. Additionally, performance encourages students to feel the contrasts between meter and rhythm and they learn to appreciate the vigor and life given the lines by the interplay of both. Thus, the first objective of this lesson is to help students see and feel sprung rhythm, even if mastery is not possible, and encourage an accompanying rhythmic sensitivity.

A second objective of this lesson is to lead students to an appreciation of the multiplicity of voices available in the reading of any one poem. Learning to listen is just as important as learning to speak when it comes to the performance and interpretation of

---

[5] In "On the Origin of Beauty: A Platonic Dialogue," Hopkins establishes a principle for rhythm as "likeness tempered with difference" (101). The deeper aesthetic principle is that of contrast.

[6] British comedian Stephen Fry has an amusing take on sprung rhythm that might even be worth sharing with undergraduates before this lesson. In *The Ode Less Traveled* -- a poetry primer for "amateurs" – Fry writes, "It is possible that you came across this mysterious Jesuit priest's verse at school and that someone had the dreadful task of trying to explain to you how sprung rhythm worked. Relax: it is like Palmerston and the Schleswig-Holstein Question. Only three people in the world understand it, one is dead, the other has gone mad and the third is me, and I have forgotten" (106).

Hopkins's poetry – especially since he desired poetry interpretation to be a communal act. As Blake argues, reading poetry aloud to one another "is deeply ethical in its educational context: it is about learning to listen to another's voice, a listening that is deeply attentive, empathetic and present. It is about so much more than whether there is or isn't a metaphor in line three" (139). When students learn to listen to others' voicing of the poems, they receive the instress of the poem in new ways, perhaps transforming their apprehension of the lines and thus of the poem's patterning. Hopefully, listening to others will also complicate their rhetorical readings of these poems, leading to discussion about the implications for meaning and interpretation. This and the previous objectives can be met in the first lesson in a unit either specifically on Hopkins's poetry or more generally on poetic sound. A survey course instructor would want to approach this unit as an opportunity to introduce students to the distinction between meter and rhythm, to the peculiarities and problems of Hopkins's sprung rhythm, and to the initial experience of reading a Hopkins poem aloud.

Procedures

The first lesson begins with a problem of form and leads to a problem of interpretation. After assigning "Pied Beauty" for reading, instructors should set up class in two segments: during the first half, students will revisit "Pied Beauty" orally in pairs or groups, depending on class size, and during the second half, the instructor will lead students in a conversation about a few exemplary rhythmical and metrical features and issues in "Pied Beauty." This deductive approach has at least three benefits. It allows students to experience the poem naturally and to question their own experience of it before being asked to take a more technical, specialized approach for which they may not

have the appropriate educational background and vocabulary. Secondly, the rhetorical reading will also open questions of interpretation, which can be readily extended to the second half and addressed via the metrical reading. Lastly, this approach requires students to begin reading poetry aloud as early as possible in the unit so that they can begin to realize the benefits of spoken performance before being introduced to the technicalities of scansion. Instructors of a special topics course might extend this lesson by asking students to practice scansion of sprung rhythm on their own after an introductory lesson so that they can develop a better sense of the differences between metrical patterns and rhythmic emphasis.

At the beginning of the class, briefly introduce students to "rhetorical," "metrical," and "conversational" readings. Then, arrange students in groups or pairs and ask them to read "Pied Beauty" aloud to one another. As they read, encourage them to record their readings using whatever personal devices they may have access to – mobile phone (the Voice Memos application on iPhone is excellent), laptop computer, or other recording device. Then, have them play back their recordings and mark the rhetorical emphases they gave each line. They can create these descriptive readings using whatever marking system works for them (just like Hopkins). They should listen for stress, pauses, tone, and pace. Marking stress will be sufficient to see the point, but students are encouraged to consider many elements of sound. The more they entertain, the more specific their descriptions will be and the more practice they will have learning to listen in new ways to poetic lines.

Instructors should then lead students in a discussion about their various readings of the lines, using student recordings to tease out the differences among "rhetorical,"

“metrical,” and “conversational” readings. A helpful way to set up the discussion would be to lead students in an analysis of the poem via a rhetorical reading that integrates examples of metrical difficulties. Provide students with a visual representation of a sample rhetorical reading. A basic rhetorical reading of “Pied Beauty” *might* look as follows:

> GLOry be to GOD for DAPPl’d THINGS
> For SKIES of COUP-le-COLour as a BRINDed COW
> For ROSE-moles ALL in STIpple upon TROUT that SWIM;
> FRESH-FIREcoal CHESTnut-FALLS; FINCHes’ WINGS;
> LANDscape PLOTted and PIECED – FOLD, FALlow, and PLOUGH;
> And ALL TRADES, their GEAR and TACKle and TRIM.
>
> ALL things COUNTer, orIGinAL, SPARE, STRANGE;
> WhatEVer is FICKle, FRECKled (who knows HOW?)
> With SWIFT, SLOW; SWEET, SOur; aDAZzle, DIM;
> He FATHers FORTH whose BEAUty is PAST CHANGE:
> PRAISE HIM.

Because of the repetition of “all” in the poem, I have emphasized it each place it appears, even though that rhetorical choice may run counter to a conversational reading. By repeating “all,” Hopkins wants to draw readerly attention to the universality, and unity, of beauty in creation. In fact, this is a “sound-image” of the poem itself: the unity of the poem is held together by the interplay of universality and diversity, and this is evident even in a rhetorical reading of the lines. Line one begins with falling rhythm only to turn heel in lines two and three to a rising rhythm. The voice wants to emphasize the first syllable of the fourth line (“Fresh”), despite the underlying demands of the meter to drop the syllable and maintain the rising rhythm. The tension between the meter and the voice in line four foreshadows a return to falling rhythm in line five. Line five, however, introduces three rhetorically stressed syllables in a row – “PIECED – FOLD, FALlow…” – although, again, the meter resists this. The rhetorical effect is a ritardando – a dragging

of the line. This effect occurs again in line nine with four stressed syllables in a row – "With SWIFT, SLOW; SWEET, SOur…." As this "experiment in metre" (CW i 308) speeds up and slows down, the whole is unified by carefully placed rhythmic "handholds" for the reader to grasp. These handholds maintain the thematic unity of the poem and resist the pressure of the varying meter. The repetition of "all," as mentioned before, achieves this unity, as do the pauses allowed at the end of each line (marked by semi-colons) and the emphatic lists, which allow the reader to gather him/herself before the song of praise picks up speed again. These effects, pulled out rhetorically, ground the poem and keep its experimentalism from destroying the desired sense of ordered variation.[7] By sensing these "handholds" verbally, the reader is ushered into the inscape of the poem – a sound and word picture of the world in its endless variation and perfect order.

Students will likely need help understanding why their rhetorical choices matter and how they create meaning from the lines, as the sample reading above does. To facilitate a class discussion about these readings, consider asking where students struggled to decide how to voice a line and if their group members or partners voiced it in other ways. As students explain what difficulties they encountered, guide them to think about the implications of their decisions for the interpretation of the poem. As with any aural art, a sensitive ear may be both innate and learned, therefore some students may

[7] In his letter to Everard (5-8 November 1885), which I discussed in Chapter One, Hopkins argues that sprung rhythm avoids destroying the meter. He writes, "…sprung rhythm makes verse stressy; it purges it to an emphasis as much brighter, livelier, more lustrous than the regular but commonplace emphasis towards, not up to the more picturesque irregular emphasis of talk – without however becoming itself lawlessly irregular; then it would not be art; but making up by regularity, equality, of a larger unit (the foot merely) for inequality in the less, the syllable" (CW ii 748). Thus, according to Hopkins, the irregularity of syllabic stress, which I note in my reading of "Pied Beauty" is not unlawfully irregular because it is structured and regularized by the equality of the feet. However, it must also be noted that these "regular" feet are also being stretched in "Pied Beauty."

struggle to hear the differences in their readings. Several professional recordings of Hopkins's poetry exist, in addition to a number of musical settings of his poetry, that may help students hear more marked differences. [8]

Another way to help students understand how rhythm makes meaning is to invite them to question a particular metrical choice. In Hopkins's notes to "Pied Beauty" from MS A, he prescribes that, "when the last syllable of a word has an l or n preceded in pronunciation by a dull pass-vowel (as dappled, bitten) this last syllable is not so much a syllable by itself as strengthens the one before it, so that the true scansion is – 'dappled : things' etc. But when a vowel begins the next word, the syllable counts" (LPM Plate 310). Point students to the first line and explain that Hopkins wants the line to move swiftly over the second syllable of "dappled" to the last word "things." The result is nearly a spondee (two stressed syllables in a row). Ask: How does the loss of the second syllable in "dappled" affect the line? Encourage students to voice the line according to Hopkins's instructions, to help one another imagine the rhetorical effects, and to discuss the difficulties of presenting such a line.

Assessment

Assessment for poetic performance differs from conventional[9] poetry pedagogy because the expected outcomes differ. For this classroom approach, instructors may want

[8] Actor Jeremy Northam reads Gerard Manley Hopkins's poetry for Naxos AudioBooks's Great Poets series. Although Northam's quiet voice lacks the power of Richard Burton's reading of "The Leaden Echo" and "The Golden Echo," Northam's interpretations smooth out the lines and give a sense of gentle undulation to the rhythms. Additionally, Richard Austin reads Hopkins's poetry on a 2003 album entitled *Back to Beauty's Giver*. His readings of "Pied Beauty"and "The Windhover" are available on *Victorian Web*. English composer Benjamin Britten has set some of Hopkins's poetry to music, most notably "God's Grandeur," and singer-songwriter Sean O'Leary has several folk settings of his poetry.

to consider using formative assessment over summative assessment. They can ask students to reflect on their experiences during each half of the class and either write or, in keeping with the multi-modal approach, record a reflection. If students choose to record a reflection, encourage them to create a "rough draft" so that their recording can proceed without the pitfalls of inexperienced extemporaneous speaking. Also, students who record may find it useful practice for the fourth section of the unit, which includes oral performance and an "actor's talk" about the rhetorical choices they made in the course of their delivery. A reflection can also be an opportunity to encourage students to consider the importance of the different postures they inhabited while completing this activity: they listened to another's voice, heard their own voices, listened to recordings of their own and another's voice, and played the role of translator, turning sounds into text. Asking them to think about these different postures and their experience with each one may generate useful conversation about the power of embodied speech.

Lesson Two: The Drama of "The Starlight Night"

Primary Pedagogical Approach

Students learn to treat poetry as an embodied verbal act when they learn that sounds tell a story just as much as words and sentences do. In his "Preface" to the Poets on Poets blog,[10] Jerome McGann writes,

---

[9] I use this term as shorthand for pedagogy that approaches poetry first as written texts to be decoded through a close reading of *textual* devices. I do not mean it to diminish the importance of this practice but to set pedagogy of performance apart as something as yet uncommon in the undergraduate classroom.

[10] Poets on Poets is an online publication by the University of Maryland and part of *Romantic Circles*, a "refereed scholarly Website devoted to the study of Romantic-period literature and culture."

> To begin [learning poetry] again, forget about the meanings, they come along for the ride (they come with the territory). The poem is a musical score written in our mother tongue. Our bodies are the instruments it was made for. …The basic structure [of a poem] is like a double helix – one strand is linguistic – a syntax and a semantics – the other is prosodic, made of rhythmical and acoustic units (metre and rhyme). …The two play off each other, and while every poem permits a personal inflection of its elements, your freedom is constrained. That constraint is telling you to pay attention to what you're doing.

McGann acknowledges that sound units push semantic meaning to the background, foregrounding the *felt* narrative created by the sounds. In some ways, this felt narrative is inaccessible via syntax and semantics. It is created by the sounds that are part of words and sentences, and by the patterning and accumulation of sounds in words and sentences – but not by the language's grammatical sense. Michael Hurley argues that a "successful audible reading depends absolutely on the successful interpretation of a poem's aesthetic identity" ("Audible" 393). Certainly a key part of that identity is sound. Charles Bernstein, in *Close Listening: Poetry and the Performed Word*, agrees and urges readers to see poetry in this perspective, saying, "One goal I have…is to overthrow the common presumption that the text of a poem – that is, the written document – is primary and that the recitation or performance of a poem by the poet is secondary and fundamentally inconsequential to the 'poem itself'" (8). Because poetry is usually encountered first as printed text on a page, this requires an act of imagination. Poetry readers must purposefully imagine poems as spaces for sound to unfold, subordinating the semantic reflex. Impressionist paintings require an analogous activity, but with sight rather than hearing.Viewers must suspend the reflex to look at the parts for immediately recognizable symbols and shapes. Instead, the parts of the painting – the brushstrokes – must be viewed as a whole for the painting to form a recognizable image. Impressionist

paintings are best viewed from a distance, which allows the eye to see the parts all at once. Similarly, poetry's sounds must be read "from a distance": the reader steps back from the urge to read for syntactical sense and allows the sound-sense to do its work. Instructors may want to draw upon this analogy when introducing this approach to poetry. It may help students recognize that the drama of the sounds takes place in the space between the poem as delivered and the listener who receives it, for, as Susan Stewart says, "the willed production of sound always is in tension with the involuntary aspect of hearing" (41). As the listener receives the sounds – whether from another individual or from themselves – they are being presented with a sound narrative that they must interpret. The narrative is constructed simultaneously as it is presented and as it is interpreted.

The terms "sound narrative" and "sound story" require some explanation and justification. These terms describe nothing unusual or new. Michael Hurley refers to this phenomenon as the "acoustic logic" of a poem ("Audible" 399). Likewise, Bernstein notes a similar concept in *Close Listening*, calling it an "audiotext" (13). The "audiotext…is a semantically denser field of linguistic activity than can be charted by means of meter, assonance, alliteration, rhyme, and the like…. The poetry reading is always at the edge of semantic excess, even if any given reader stays on this side of the border" (13). The sound-story created by an author's aural choices in a poetic text can exist, then, in two places: in the visual expression of the sounds (the text on the page – alliteration, assonance, etc.) and in the performance, which disrupts "rationalizable patterns of sound through the intervallic irruption of acoustic elements not recuperable by monologic analysis" (Bernstein 13). By this, I take Bernstein to mean that performance

cannot be analyzed the way a text can. No abstract, visual notation system exists that can capture every shift in tone, pitch, and pace. In addition, these aural elements vary with every reading when delivered in a live performance. Because no visual system can represent the experience of the performance, listeners must *enter into* the unfolding sounds, perhaps mostly on a subconscious level. The narrative unfolds aurally and "rather than looking at the poem – at the words on a page – we may enter into it, perhaps to get lost, perhaps to lose ourselves, our (nonmetrical) 'footing' with one another" (Bernstein 11). Bernstein calls attention to the extra-metrical sound effects in poetry, which students should attend to in conjunction with meter, rhyme, alliteration, and other such abstract patterns. All of these contribute to the "sound narrative" for a poem's sounds, like a written story, occur in time and are translatable into meaning. Thus, I define a "sound-story" or a "sound narrative" as an aural pattern with a beginning, middle, and end. It has an "acoustic logic" to it (Hurley "Audible") and a telos – that is, it is working towards something – and is open to comprehension and interpretation.

Hopkins also refers to this concept in his lecture notes on rhythm and in his frequent use of terms like "inscape" and "figure of spoken sound"[11] in his letters and journals. I do not mean to reduce the concept of "inscape" by applying it here, but I think the concept helpfully elucidates what I interpret as a "sound story" that instructors want their students to learn to "read." The inscape of the poem refers to its individual patterning, and the more highly wrought, says Hopkins, the more inquiry a work of art sustains. The more highly ordered, the "further up" and the "further in" to its pattern a

[11] Hopkins defines verse as "figure of spoken sound": "Verse is speech having a marked figure, order/ of sounds independent of meaning and such as can be shifted from one word to others without changing" (J 267).

reader can go. As he writes in his notes from 9 February 1868, "The further in anything, as a work of art, the organisation is carried out, the deeper the form penetrates, the prepossession flushes the matter, the more effort will be required in apprehension, the more power of comparison, the more capacity for receiving that synthesis of…impressions which gives us the unity…" (J 126). God's creation is the example of infinite "organisation" and "form" which creates "unity." Thus, patterns in nature often tell theological narratives to Hopkins.[12] Hopkins believes the same of metrical patterns. He characterizes the narratives of prosody in "Rhythm and Other Structural Parts of Rhetoric-Verse" where he says that, "feet and rhythms have their particular character" (J 274). The iambic he characterizes as a meter of dialogue (J 274). The iambic tells the "story" of conversation. Hence, the iambic is well-suited to the rhetoric of drama. The trochaic, says Hopkins, is "tripping…it runs. It suits brisk narrative…especially when not doubled" (J 274). The "story" the trochaic tells is of an exciting adventure, an event, an interesting moment. It is very present. The doubled trochaic, however, is "grave and monotonous" (J 274). Its sound-story is of past events remembered; the mesmerizing rhythm of memory. Hopkins does not seem to mean these to be prescriptive ("use the doubled trochaic only to evoke memory!") but as observations, descriptions of moods and feelings with which the rhythm connects. These descriptions and Hopkins's interest in the onomatopoeic qualities of words come from a similar impulse: they both indicate his belief that sounds depict, describe, and mirror reality.

[12] James Finn Cotter explores Hopkins's search for patterns in nature in *Inscape; The Christology and Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. Cotter uses the example of Hopkins's notes on the pattern evident in the oak tree – a system of spokes radiating from a knot in the center. Writes Hopkins, "the star knot is the chief thing: it is whorled, worked round, a little and this is what keeps up the illusion of the tree" (qtd. in Cotter 271). Comments Cotter, for Hopkins, "[t]he Alpha of this unity was not in the things themselves, which are ever 'falling away' into multiplicity and nothingness. The cosmos coheres in the immanent presence of the One" (272).

How can an abstract concept like this be used in the classroom? This lesson is designed to "tune the ear" to Hopkins's poetry and to give students practice in reading his sound narratives with their ears. It is a meaning-making activity as well, as it strives to enter into, comprehend, and interpret the narrative of sound that Hopkins has crafted. As with any art or discipline, practice is necessary to achieve mastery. Thus, students will spend a good part of this lesson listening – to themselves and to others – as Hopkins's poetry is read aloud. They will also spend a good part of this lesson considering the sounds of his poetry – the brushstrokes, as it were – so that they can then step back and hear the whole story. The discipline of attending to the sound patterns at work in Hopkins's poetry and of working to interpret them together has the added benefit of teaching students to practice attentiveness. Attentiveness is a scholarly virtue. As students learn to listen, they learn how to attend and to what they should attend, making them better listeners for later in-class performances and, ultimately, better learners.

Procedures

Although primarily discussion-based, this lesson in the "drama" of sound should begin with reading aloud. Instructors may want to have students read "The Starlight Night" aloud early in the class period in order to warm them up. It may be helpful during the "warm up" to point students to Hopkins's strategies for crafting these sound stories: alliteration, combination and compounding of words, sound clusters, and the like.[13] After "tuning the ear" to Hopkins's poetry at the beginning of class, provide students with

[13] It may be helpful during the "warm up" to give students a brief explanation of the poem's meaning. This will help students focus on the sounds without the understandable frustration of not "understanding" the poem. Instructors can also use this as an opportunity to point out that there is a fuller story, as "sound story," opened up by performance.

copies of “The Starlight Night” in Hopkins’s own hand. I recommend Plates 289 and 288a from *The Later Poetic Manuscripts in Fascimile*. Plate 289 includes Hopkins’s note that it should be read “slowly, strongly marking the rhythms and fetching out the syllables” (LPM 99). Plate 288a displays Hopkins’s drafting process, as well as some of his metrical marks. Along with a standard printed version, these manuscript versions give students an accessible entry point to reading with their ears. Discuss Hopkins’s markings: What do they mean? How can readers comply with these instructions? What does it sound like to “fetch out the syllables”? What does Hopkins give in MS 288a to help readers understand his intent?

Students should then read “The Starlight Night” to one another in pairs or groups – each student should read it so that the poem is heard twice (depending on group numbers) and uttered once by each. Encourage students not to read the poem as they listen to others recite it so as to focus solely on sound rather than understanding. Encourage them, also, to listen for repeated sounds and to make a mental note of which ones they hear most often. Also, allow students to revel in the poem, vocalizing the lines or words – repeatedly, if they like. This would be a good opportunity for instructors to point out that Hopkins uses a very English vocabulary in his poetry. He consciously avoids words with Latin or Greek roots and privileges the short, solid, earthy words that derive from Anglo-Saxon. The deliberate choice to use the vernacular crafts an experience of place carried, imaginatively, by the words themselves. Once they have had the chance to vocalize the sounds, lead students in a discussion of their characterization. Starting with general questions and progressing to specific questions will ease students into the conversation, starting with their own experience and working backwards into the

poem itself. Although poetry inhabits more than individual experience, the self is the individual's most immediate access point to the world. Instructors should structure their questions according to the needs of their particular classrooms, but a guiding list might look as follows:

- What did you notice about the sounds in the poem? Which consonant sounds stood out to you? Vowel sounds? What lines or words did you find the most beautiful? Were there any sounds or lines that made you uncomfortable?
- Then ask, where does Hopkins use hard sounds? Soft sounds? Why? What sounds does he use at the beginning of the poem? At the end? What patterns of alliteration and assonance does he create in the middle of the poem?
- As the discussion moves into specific questions, consider asking: does Hopkins use the "d" sound in line four? How does the "d" sound depict the "dim woods"? Why "d"? What other words begin with "d"? Do they have similar connotations, even if their definitions are wildly different?

Through these questions, and others like them, students can imagine the connection between sound and meaning. Hopefully, they will discover the worlds sound creates and take the memory of these sound stories into their own interpretative performances of Hopkins's poetry.

"The Starlight Night" spins an astonishing sound-story of Christ's miraculous presence in this world and is one of Hopkins's most ecstatic declarations of the sacramentality of creation. Hopkins imagines the heavens as a barn, through the boards of which Christ, his mother, and the saints shine. Earth is made heavenly, certainly, and heaven is also brought to earth. The poem is, naturally, intensely visual – the first seven lines are a litany of images and metaphors for the stars. As rewarding as a visual analysis is – and such an analysis has an important place in reading Hopkins's poetry, despite my

emphasis on performance here – it is only one way to access the poem's narrative. The sounds of the poem depict this narrative just as much as the images do:[14]

> Look at the stars! Look, look up at the skies!
>   O look at all the fire-folk sitting in the air!
>   The bright boroughs, the circle-citadels there!
> Down in dim woods the diamond delves! The elves'-eyes!
> The grey lawns cold where gold, where quick-gold lies!
>   Wind-beat whitebeam! airy abeles set on a flare!
>   Flake-doves sent floating forth at a farmyard scare!
> Ah well! it is all a purchase, all is a prize. (lines 1-8)

When, as Hopkins suggests, the syllables are fetched out, the first two lines convey excited anticipation. In line one the trochee ("LOOK at") counterpoints the iambic pattern ("the STARS"), calling attention to the imperative, which begins softly and ends with a hard, emphatic "k." Uttered aloud, the first sounds of the word could be barely vocalized – almost lost – until the word resolves with the "k." One can almost imagine a musical crescendo upon the word. The repetition of "look" – four times in the two lines, three in the first one alone – hints at materialization, at something barely voiced coming into being. The sounds are gathered together, as it were, until they coalesce to an emphasis. Hopkins then layers sounds, as a symphony composer might, through his litany of the stars. He calls them "fire-folk," "bright-boroughs," "circle-citadels," "diamond delves," "elves'-eyes," "gold," "quickgold," "wind-beat whitebeam," "airy-abeles," and finally "flake-doves" (2-7). He leaps from soft ("fire-folk" and "circle-citadels") to hard consonants ("bright-boroughs" and "diamond-delves") and across bright ("fire" and "diamond") and dark ("gold" and "doves") vowel sounds; he lingers over warm sounds

[14] For examples of some fine acoustic analyses of Hopkins's poetry, see Michael Hurley's article "The Audible Reading of Poetry Revisited." Hurley analyzes "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo," a short section from "The Wreck of the Deutschland," and parts of "The Windhover."

("delves") and skips over cold ones ("eyes").[15] His use of these sounds is not random. The items he calls his reader to "look" at are offered to the ear in pairs of sounds beginning with the alliterative "fire-folk" – [f-f]. Three more sets of consonant alliteration follow: [b-b] [c-c] [d-d]. The alliteration alternates between "soft" consonants, such as the f and c (pronounced as *s*), and "hard" consonants like b and d. The second d begins the word "delves," which signals a shift from alliteration to assonance as the vowel sounds are repeated in "elves" at the end of line four. In line five, Hopkins continues the pattern of assonance, repeating the "ol" sound in "cold" and "gold" three times. Line five resolves with a nod to line four as "lies" rhymes with "eyes." Line six shifts again to alliterative pairs with "wind-beat whitebeam" – a compressed version of lines two, three, and four, which alternates between soft and hard consonant sounds. Line six ends, however, with vowel repetition, as in line five: "*air*y abeles set on a fl*are*." Finally, line seven returns the listener to the acoustics of lines two, three, and four with the reintroduction and reemphasis of the f, d, and s (see "circle-citadels" in line three): [f-d] [s] [f-f] [f-s]. The final s sound begins the word "scare," which is the rhyme to "flare" in line six. The sounds imaginatively depict the Incarnation of Christ in this world as he descends from heaven to earth and, literally, is made material – is made man. The alternation of alliterative sounds at its most basic level creates contrast, indicating that the ground of creation's beauty is in its contrast. Christ's nature itself is the contrast of two complete realities: he is both fully God and fully man.

[15] By dark, bright, warm, and cold, I mean the timbre of the vowels. Dark and warm vowel sounds are often produced at the back of the throat, and, when singing, these colorations are achieved by singing "from the chest." On the other hand, bright and cold vowel sounds are often produced at the front of the mouth and, thus, are achieved in choral music by singing "from the head." In addition, timbre is often determined by voice type: tenors and lyric sopranos tend to produce brighter vowel sounds because their voices are lighter; basses and contraltos tend to produce darker vowel sounds because their voices are heavier.

Leading students through a reading like this can generate discussion of pattern and discussion about narrative. This is where the interpretive possibilities multiply and where learning moves from analysis to synthesis. It may be sufficient to ask students in a survey class to attend to the sounds, trusting that the recursive nature of memory and education will do its work and circle back to this practice someday. In a special topics course, however, students can be expected to make meaning creatively. Thus, while an instructor may choose to lead a survey class in his or her own reading of Hopkins's sound narrative – as I demonstrated above – students in a special topics course may be expected to craft their own narratives together. Furthermore, some students, particularly those who are musical or who enjoy reading, will readily understand this lesson. Many, however, may never have thought about sounds this way. It may be helpful to remind them that this kind of engagement with poetry requires an intentional act of imagination, and that this discipline is *learned*, like all disciplines, through practice. The reward of practice is a new mastery of language and a new attunement to the world that makes individuals more fully present in it. Not every student will get or want this. However, the classroom is an ideal place to create the opportunity.

Assessment

Like Lesson One, this lesson is about formation not summation. The discussion and practice of this lesson is designed to prepare students for the summative work of Lessons Three and Four where they will practice crafting their own interpretive sound stories and sharing them with the class. However, this is also the most difficult part of the unit because it is so foreign to students. Therefore, instructors might want to ask students to complete another brief reflection – as they did for Lesson One. I would recommend

that this reflection, if and where possible, be an oral presentation, either to the instructor or to the class as a whole (again, depending on the students). This could be completed quickly at the beginning of class or during office hours as a brief conference. I advocate oral presentation because it is an extension of the lesson's emphasis on oral performance and because it gives students practice articulating abstractions directly to another individual (when writing a reflection, the paper becomes a mediator between instructor and student). Asking each student to share one or two insights from their experience will both help them think critically as they listen, read, and discuss, and will give the instructor a chance to assess understanding. Ultimately, Lesson Three, Close Reading for Performance, is a natural assessment for the discussions in Lesson Two.

Lesson Three: Close Reading for Performance

Primary Pedagogical Approach

Great poetry rewards close reading, and performance pedagogy does not have to eliminate this practice. Rather, a close reading for performance adds to the analytical possibilities. In such a reading, sounds, rhythm, and meter are put in dialogue with image, syntax, and diction. Together, they create meaning for the presenter and the listener. If, as Bernstein has said, the written text of the poem is not primary and the performance of the poem does, in fact, constitute the poem itself, then close reading must account for both dimensions.

It seems counterintuitive to require students to create a textual reading for an aural experience. This is a key question for this lesson: Where does the text exist? Does it exist in the written codes – the letters, words, metrical marks, performance notes – or does it

exist in the presentation? A performance pedagogy like the one that Hopkins presents to Everard seems to indicate that it exists in the presentation. Practically speaking, however, such texts are irrecoverable and ephemeral. They last for the time it takes to deliver them, and they are never reproducible because they are shaped as they are delivered. Educators and students alike, however, tend to desire something tangible to prove or justify that an educational experience has taken place and shaped students (hence, assessment). Pure performance pedagogy makes that difficult. Yet, Hopkins accounts for the necessity of the written text, even in the delivery process. In his letter to Everard, discussed in Chapter One, Hopkins makes a distinction between performance – as something that is both done to the poem and that the poem itself does when uttered – and study, which is something done to the text of the poem. In making this distinction, Hopkins creates a dual approach that accommodates the process of creating a performance text to the human need for visual cues and verbal prompts. To help students inhabit the space between the text and the performance, I suggest having them close read a Hopkins poem of their choice – privileging sound and rhythm – and creating "prompt books" for their performances. Performance is never a totalizing act (Bernstein 9), and so these prompt books are not total representations of their future performance. However, they can help students fill the gap between study and delivery by providing a record of their interpretive choices.

Procedures

For this section of the unit, students will be asked to choose a Hopkins poem from a series of two or three Hopkins poems required for everyone to read. By limiting the number of poems to choose from, instructors can ensure that all students will have the same familiarity with the texts. Students should read their selected poems closely for its

sounds and rhythms and create an interpretive version of it that they can use as a cue for their final performance. I have called this a “prompt copy” because it is an annotated version of a text for performance. A prompt copy is a highly individualized text, and, as such, students should be encouraged to experiment with the text and with their own marking systems. Prompt books are commonly used by stage managers of theatre productions. They contain all the blocking notes, sound-effect and staging directions, and director’s notes. A prompt book is the authoritative compilation of all the visual and auditory cues needed to create a particular performance. Actors and actresses, too, will mark up script copies as they rehearse, noting interpretive choices and changes along the way. Charles Dickens, who was well-known and loved in the United States for his public readings, created a prompt copy of *A Christmas Carol,* which he used during his public readings. The pages are pasted onto larger pages to accommodate (copious) annotations, and he has marked passages to skip and those to read aloud. Where he has removed text from the printed version and created a gap in the narrative, he has crafted explanations or transitional copy. He also includes notes to himself in the margin and sometimes marks rhetorical emphases. This copy is currently in the collections of The New York Public Library, and a digital version is available online for students who might want a visual example. Students should be cautioned that this prompt copy is for a prose reading and that annotations for a poetry reading follow their own conventions. For example, whereas Dickens’s prompt copy notes places of emphasis, omission, or addition, Hopkins’s annotated poems sometimes indicate pace (“ritardando” in “Spring”), meter, and sound effect (“staccato” in, again, “Spring”), and other such performance aids.

Students should complete their prompt copy in two recursive phases. During the first phase, they read and reread the poem, analyze its sounds, and annotate it for sense – as constructed by both sound and image. This is a first draft that should help them form an interpretation from which they can work to construct a rhetorical reading of the poem for performance. The second phase is the "final" draft – that is, the copy that best represents the rhetorical choices they have made for their upcoming performance. Generally speaking, a rhetorical reading is an act of interpretation and should draw out, as I mention earlier, some matter of form or theme for the listener (as I did with "all" in "Pied Beauty"). Prompt copies are designed to start student performers thinking about the whole world of the poem, including (but not exclusively) such matters as,

- Where to pause
- Where best to draw breath
- Where to read over the ends of lines and why
- Where to elide syllables
- Where to create musical effects, such as staccato emphases or abrupt *sforzando* accenting (and how does the rhythm of the line help determine these effects)
- Volume of words and lines (*decrescendo*, *crescendo*)
- What matters of form or theme to rhetorically emphasize
- How to relate performance to meaning
- What kind of movement to give the lines – slow, rapid, measured, lilting, driving, marching?
- If the poem is in sprung rhythm, where do the lines seem to "spring"? Can this be rhetorically communicated?

I also recommend that students follow Dickens's example and leave plenty of margin space around their text to mark notes. Students may want to double or triple space their versions of the poem, and perhaps even enlarge the font size, so that they will have room to make notes within the lines and above the words themselves. Students should provide a "key" to their markings in order to help readers and listeners interpret their intentions.

Students in a special topics class might extend this activity by spending time with the available manuscripts of their chosen poems. MacKenzie's *Early Poetic Manuscripts in Facsimile* and *Later Poetic Manuscripts in Facsimile* are worth using in the classroom if instructors want students to grapple with Hopkins's "voice" as they search for their own. Reading these manuscripts can also provide upper-level students with new ways to imagine the performance of poetry. Hopkins's markings are rarely consistent, and he experiments with different terminology and marking systems. Using the manuscripts, students can see Hopkins striving to create a vocabulary for poetic performance – which does not have its own – out of the languages of music, prosody, rhythm, and rhetoric. Instructors might consider using this as a research component for the course. Students can compile all of Hopkins's notes from his letters and manuscripts about whichever poems they have selected and synthesize these for an "ideal" performance. Students will find that a research activity like this will quickly complicate their readings of the poems. Completed in tandem with their own interpretive performances, "ideal" readings can open discussion of author intent and author presence in the text and in performance.

Assessment

Instructors can evaluate student prompt copies to see if they have met the primary objectives:

- Have students demonstrated an adequate attempt to analyze sounds as well as images?
- Have students demonstrated an adequate *imaginative* engagement with the poem? That is, have they demonstrated a willingness to experiment with their own marking system and interpretive choices?
- Have students adequately identified and rhetorically emphasized some matter of form or theme as part of their interpretation?

Lesson Four: Performance

Primary Pedagogical Approach

Students will use their prompt copies to guide their performances during this phase of the unit. Such a thoughtfully constructed performance aid that has either been reviewed by the instructor or discussed with the class, or even another student, can help students avoid poetry performances that may become maudlin or overdone, which Yvor Winters deplores in “The Audible Reading of Poetry,” a chapter in *The Function of Criticism*.[16] Winters writes,

> In general I think the world would be well enough off without actors: they appear to be capable of any of three feats – of making the grossly vulgar appear acceptably mediocre; of making the acceptably mediocre appear what it is; and of making the distinguished appear acceptably mediocre. In any event, they cannot read poetry, for they try to make it appear to be something else, something, in brief, which they themselves can understand. (85)

Winters laments that readers of poetry often treat it as dramatic prose, assuming that it conveys meaning the same way but is just a little more artfully arranged. Therefore, when they try to perform poetry, they end up crafting a drama where none exists. The result may be an awkward attempt to incorporate gesture and movement into the performance (a misunderstanding of the word “performance”), as well as a distractingly emphatic reading. These pitfalls exist because readers fail to see where the drama truly lies – in the

[16] Winters did not appreciate Hopkins’s experimentalism. In this same chapter, he writes, “A more or less recent poet who went farther than any other has gone in deforming the inherent rhythmic elements in our language and so rendering the structure of his poems indecipherable is Gerard Manley Hopkins…. Hopkins was an eccentric and extremely egotistic man, and he worked in isolation. He apparently failed to realize that his own dramatic and musical deformations of language were not based on universal principles but were purely private” (86). This scholarly curmudgeonliness could probably be dismissed, but it is worth noting that Winters finds Hopkins’s meter deformed and therefore unable to be articulated effectively in spoken performance. Winters seems to prize poetry that narrows the gap between internal pattern and rhetorical emphasis. I would argue that Hopkins’s poetry is actually *more* effective *because* it widens the gap. Readers and students receive multiple impressions from the delivery of the lines, and the gap creates more room for inquiry and interpretation.

sounds, as seen in Lesson Two. Bernstein agrees, in principle, with Winters. In *Close Listening,* he attributes the power of audible poetry to its astonishing *lack* of dramatic spectacle. The aesthetic of poetry reading, he finds, rests in the "profoundly anti-performative nature of the poetry reading" (10). Bernstein describes its value thus:

> In an age of spectacle and high drama, the anti-expressivist poetry reading stands out as an oasis of low technology that is among the least spectaclized [sic] events in our public culture. Explicit value is placed almost exclusively on the acoustic production of a single unaccompanied speaking voice, with all other theatrical elements being placed, in most cases, out of frame. The solo voice so starkly framed can come to seem virtually disembodied in an uncanny, even hypnotic, way. …[T]he emphasis on sound in the poetry reading…physically connects the speaker and listener. (10-11)

Thus, for Bernstein, poetry reading creates an intimacy between speaker and listener that spectacle does not allow. Theatrical gesture and acting impose distance, whereas the simple uttering of words, unaccompanied by visual ornament, draws the listener *in* to the poem and close to the reader. Bernstein implies that the distance that is aesthetically pleasing in theatre – the raising of the fourth wall and the othering of the audience – is not pleasing in poetry reading because it imposes an aesthetic that the nature of poetry does not allow.

Hurley takes up Winters's complaint (as quoted above) in his essay "The Audible Reading of Poetry Revisited" and extends it to the "relentless drive towards scientificity" that he finds in linguistic studies of prosody (407). Hurley is sympathetic to Winters's perspective, but qualifies it heavily to account for the poetry of Hopkins, which defies Winters's desires for effective meter. If poetry reading is maudlin and overdone, Hurley says, it is so because "the poem's 'meaning,' crudely conceived of as mere paraphrasable sense, is drawn out" which "inevitably distorts, anamorphically, its formal features, such

as metre, lineation, and rhyme, that must also affect how and what the poem 'means'" (394). These must be attended to and, adds Hurley, Hopkins's poetry demands that readers attend to the "spring" in sprung rhythm. While Winters advocates a dignified, "formal" presentation style, Hurley acknowledges that sprung rhythm demands spring, but without approaching excess. He recommends, through a thoughtful analysis of Richard Austin's readings of Hopkins's poetry, attention to the acoustic logic (or what I call the "sound-story") of the poem, allowing it to unfold, while resisting the urge to over-emphasize for the sake of performance. Although these standards may seem impossibly high for classroom encounters with Hopkins's poetry, these are matters worth raising, discussing, and attending to in the classroom, as students will only develop mastery once they know what to look and listen for.

Hopkins, too, gave thought to what he meant by "performance."[17] In a letter to Bridges about "The Loss of the Eurydice," he says to read it with the ears, "as if the paper were declaiming it at you" (CW 296). In another, later letter to Bridges, he speaks about the advantages and beauties of plainsong as a model for recitation, which Pamela Coren addresses in her article "Gerard Manley Hopkins, Plainsong and the Performance of Poetry." When Hopkins writes to Bridges that the "only good and truly beautiful recitative is that of plain chant," Coren takes him to mean that it is the best recitative for poetry performance. She bases this inference on two grounds: that Hopkins considered plainchant to be "a natural development of the speaking, reading, or declaiming voice, and has the richness of nature" (CW ii 948) and that the characteristics of plainchant open

---

[17] Many of these I reference in Chapter One where I argue that Hopkins wanted his poetry performed audibly. Here, I summarize them to consider how Hopkins imagines performance: Is it a dramatic recitation, such as Winters deplores? Or, is it a formal affair? Does he want the reader to chant the lines or spring with the sprung rhythm?

it to this kind of analogy. Plainchant, writes Coren, “expresses the rhythm of the phrase it articulates and reserves the stress for the most important syllables” (272). It is controlled by “the breathing rhythms of the voice and the accentual rhythms of the language it delivers. The phrase itself is the speaker, part of a linear structure moving to and from moments of pause and silence” (Coren 271). Plainchant is also one of the most spare of musical forms, which connects it closely with what Bernstein has identified as the aesthetic of poetry – its intimacy – and one of the most flexible forms: plainchant stretches and contracts to accommodate the sometimes widely varying number of syllables in the lines.

Coren’s argument is appealing because of its link to communal, ritualized language. Plainchant is the musical form of religious communities; it is a feature of the liturgical forms and practices of the Catholic and Anglican churches. As Coren points out, “the tradition of chant remains an oral, learned, group experience, not a literate one” (281). However, what plainchant does not allow is an exuberance such as Hurley identifies in Hopkins’s sprung rhythm. It may be able to accommodate frequent back-to-back emphases, but does the liquidity of the plainsong line eliminate the capability for surprise, which Hurley insists is inherent in sprung rhythm? I would suggest that the sense of measured momentum in plainsong is actually caused by the lack of wide variation in notes and not by the rhythms of plainchant itself. Instead, the rhythms allow for emphasis, and when the musical notes are “removed,” and the practice applied with the spoken voice, the rhythm is “freed” and feels less inexorable and more surprising. Although instructors may never explicitly teach students to perform in this way, I believe plainsong is a useful pedagogical analogy for recitation that helps balance Winters’s

distrust of melodrama, Hurley's insistence on dramatic emphasis, and Hopkins's desire for both drama and dignity. Plainsong's use of accentual rhythms, its flexibility in accommodating varying numbers of syllables per line, and its use of pauses suit it well as an analogous performance type for Hopkins's poetry. If the musical form of plainchant smooths out the lines too much, perhaps a spoken form (without the relative invariation of musical notes) would both provide the restraint necessary to avoid melodrama and the dignity necessary to the essential aesthetic of poetry.

Procedures

Before asking students to perform, instructors should spend some part of Lesson Four discussing the tensions between theatrical performance and poetic performance. Leading students in a discussion of the differences, as explored above, will help them think critically about their performance choices. In addition, I recommend playing several recitative performances of Hopkins's poetry,[18] as well as some musical settings. Benjamin Britten, Samuel Barber, and folk musician Sean O'Leary have all created musical interpretations of his poetry that students may find interesting. If instructors wish to talk about plainsong as a principle for recitation, they may consider, again, playing samples in class and pointing out its salient characteristics. This wide exposure to the interpretive possibilities of Hopkins's poetry can help students develop an ear for that recitation or performance that most resonates with listeners and that best "fetches out" the sound-story Hopkins wants to tell.

[18] See footnote three in this chapter for some recommended recordings.

Although student performances will vary widely in technique (and proficiency), instructors can offer a set of principles, and examples of each, drawn from the theoretical discussion above, to guide performance:

1. Resist the urge to exaggerate the rhythm. Attention to rhythm should be subtle, not overpowering.
2. Attend carefully to lineation as an aesthetic and aural choice on the part of the author. Line breaks, again, do not have to be exaggerated, but they should be recognized.
3. Revel in the sounds and "fetch out" the syllables.
4. Let an audible reading of a poem be informed by the poem's beauty. For example, if it is a poem full of contrasts, then contrasting sounds should be emphasized. Where the rhythm is even, the voice should be even. Where the rhythm is surprising, the voice should surprise.
5. Perform without acting.

Assessment

The objective of this oral performance is for students to "combine apprehension of authorial intention and reader-response" in some way (Blake 124). This may look vastly different for each student, and students, of course, will have varying degrees of success. However, instructors should keep this objective in mind and allow it to drive assessment. To do so, instructors should listen *believingly*.[19] That is, they should assume that students *have* accomplished this in some form and listen intently for evidence. This posture empowers students and accepts that the oral performance, as Bernstein says, is not a totalizing experience or a demonstration of mastery but a learning tool.

To assist assessment, instructors may want to consider asking student performers to include a short, five-minute explanation of their oral interpretation after their readings. This "actors talk" would give students a chance to explicitly state which matter of form

[19] Composition theorist Peter Elbow calls this "the believing game." See "The Believing Game or Methodological Believing."

or theme they wanted to draw out in their interpretation and to explain the choices they made in the process. Allowing students to "defend" their performances like this both helps them think critically about their own choices and gives listeners access to their intent as "authors" of that performance – a luxury readers do not have with Hopkins himself. Classmates should also be encouraged to evaluate the performance according to the performance principles offered above. To reinforce what they have learned, plan a class discussion that would draw on peer observations and ask students to write the last reflection on the experience of performing. This last reflection might be written in the form of a blog post or other web page content. Students can post them to an online class discussion board or blog. Ultimately, however, performance should be about pleasure: learning how to take pleasure in sounds and learning how to give pleasure with sound. Students will, hopefully, take delight in their readings.

Conclusion

I have structured these lessons on theory, and they need classroom use and study in order to evaluate – insofar as is possible – their effectiveness. However, while classroom studies may generate data about student participation, discussion, and understanding, they will never tell instructors about the intangible outcomes of poetry participation. Those teachers and professors leave to life outside the classroom. Thus, our posture towards our students in the classroom is one of invitation and, as they leave the interpretive community of the classroom, one of hope – hope that students will have gathered a new harvest of words, sounds, and ideas from Hopkins and from one another and that, in so doing, they will begin to attend, a little more closely than before, to the sounds at play in the world around them. Although students may not follow Hopkins

from mindfulness to praise of God, they may come to a fuller realization of the capacity of poetry to shape them as individuals and, like the bell in “As kingfishers catch fire,” help them “find tongue to fling out broad [their] name[s]” (line 4).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Works by Gerard Manley Hopkins

[CW i] *Correspondence: Volume I 1852-1881.* Ed. R.K.R. Thornton and Catherine Phillips. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013. Print. The Collected Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins.

[CW ii] *Correspondence: Volume II 1882-1889.* Ed. R.K.R. Thornton and Catherine Phillips. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013. Print. The Collected Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins.

[J] *The Journals and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. Ed. Humphry House and Graham Storey. London: Oxford UP, 1959. Print.

[LI] *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges*. Ed. C.C. Abbott. London: Oxford UP, 1955. Print.

[LPM] Mackenzie, Norman H. ed., *The Later Poetic Manuscripts of Gerard Manley Hopkins in Facsimile*. New York: Garland P, 1991. Print.

[MS. P] Hopkins, George Herbert. "Spring." 1877. MS. Harry Ransom Center, Austin, TX.

[PIII] *The Poetical Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. Ed. N.H. MacKenzie. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990. Print.

[S] *The Sermons and Devotional Writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. Ed. Christopher Devlin, S.J. London: Oxford UP, 1955. Print.

II. Other Editions of Gerard Manley Hopkins's Poetry (in chronological order)

Bridges, Robert, ed. *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. London: Oxford UP, 1918. Print.

Williams, Charles, ed. *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins.* 2nd ed. London: Oxford UP, 1930. Print.

Gardner, W.H. *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. 3rd ed. London: Oxford UP, 1948. Print.

Gardner, W.H. and Norman H. MacKenzie, eds. *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. 4th ed. London: Oxford UP, 1967. Print.

Phillips, Catherine, ed. *Gerard Manley Hopkins*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986. Print. The Oxford Authors.

III. Other Sources

Attridge, Derek. *Moving Words: Forms of English Poetry*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013. Print.

Augustine, Saint, Bishop of Hippo. *Against the Academicians and The Teacher* [*De magistro*]. Trans. Peter King. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1995. Print.

---. *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*. Trans. Rex Warner. New York: Penguin, 2001. Print.

---. *On Christian Doctrine* [*De doctrina christiana*]. Trans. D.W. Robertson, Jr. New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1958. Print. Library of Liberal Arts, 80.

---. "Sermon 267: On the Day of Pentecost." *Sermons on the Liturgical Seasons, 230-272B*. Trans. Edmund Hill. Ed. John E. Rotelle. New Rochelle, New York: New City Press, 1993. Print. The Works of Saint Augustine, III.7.

---. *The Trinity* [*De trinitate*]. Trans. Stephen McKenna. Washington: Catholic University of America P, 1963. Print. The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation, 45.

Bernstein, Charles. "Hearing Voices." *The Sound of Poetry / The Poetry of Sound.* Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2009. 142-8. Print.

---. Introduction. *Close Listening: Poetry and the Performed Word*. Ed. Charles Bernstein. New York: Oxford UP, 1998. 3-26. Print.

Blake, Julie. "Commentary: Poetry as a Matter of Spokenness." *Making Poetry Matter: International Research on Poetry Pedagogy*. Ed. Sue Dymoke, Andrew Lambirth, and Anthony Wilson. London: Bloomsbury, 2013. 138-42. Print.

Bridges, Robert. *The Selected Letters of Robert Bridges*. Ed. Donald E. Stanford. Newark: U of Delaware P, 1983.

Certo, Janine L. "Preadolescents Writing and Performing Poetry." *Making Poetry Matter: International Research on Poetry Pedagogy*. Ed. Sue Dymoke, Andrew Lambirth, and Anthony Wilson. London: Bloomsbury, 2013. 105-15. Print.

Chambers, Susan. "Reading Poetry Wrong: Prosody and Performance." *English Language Notes* 46.1 (2008): 105-11. *EBSCOHost*. Web. 29 May 2015.

Clark, Mary T. "*De Trinitate*." *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine.* Ed. Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001. 91-102. Print.

Collins, Philip. *Reading Aloud: A Victorian Métier*. Lincoln: Tennyson Research Centre, 1972. Print. Tennyson Society Monographs, no. 5.

Coren, Pamela. "Gerard Manley Hopkins, Plainsong and the Performance of Poetry." *The Review of English Studies* 60 (2008): 271-94. *Oxford Journals*. Web. 17 Dec. 2014.

Cotter, James Finn. "Hopkins and Augustine." *Victorian Poetry* 39.1 (2001): 69-82. *JSTOR*. Web. 27 Dec. 2014.

---. *Inscape: The Christology and Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. Pittsburgh, PA: U of Pittsburgh P, 1972. Print.

Elbow, Peter. "The Believing Game or Methodological Believing." *Journal of the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning* 14.1 (2008-9): 1-11. Web. 26 Feb. 2015.

Ellsberg, Margaret. *Created to Praise: The Language of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. New York: Oxford UP, 1987. Print.

Ferretter, Luke. "The Trace of the Trinity: Christ and Difference in Saint Augustine's Theory of Language." *Literature & Theology* 12.3 (1998): 256-67. *Oxford Journals*. Web. 27 Dec. 2014.

Gioia, Dana. "The Power of Poetry." Online audio clip. *Poetry Out Loud*. The Poetry Foundation. Web. 7 June 2015.

Griffiths, Eric. *The Printed Voice of Victorian Poetry*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1989. Print.

Hart, Kevin. *The Trespass of the Sign: Deconstruction, Theology, and Philosophy*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1989. Print.

Hurley, Michael D. "The Audible Reading of Poetry Revisited." *British Journal of Aesthetics* 44.4 (2004): 393-407. *EBSCOHost*. Web. 4 June 2015.

---. "Darkening the Subject of Hopkins' Prosody." *Victorian Poetry* 43.4 (2005): 485-96. *JSTOR*. Web. 29 May 2015.

---. "What Sprung Rhythm Really Is Not." *Hopkins Quarterly* 33.3-4 (2006): 71-94. *EBSCOHost*. Web. 29 May 2015.

Jenkyns, Richard. "Wings That Spell." Rev. of *The Poetical Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins* by Norman H. MacKenzie. *The New Republic*. 7 Oct. 1991: 37-42. *ProQuest.* Web. 12 Dec. 2013.

King, Joshua. "Hopkins' Affective Rhythm: Grace and Intention in Tension." *Victorian Poetry* 45.3 (2007): 209-37. *EBSCOHost*. Web. 29 May 2015.

Loomis, Jeffrey B. *Dayspring in Darkness: Sacrament in Hopkins.* Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 1988. Print.

Mackey, Louis. *Peregrinations of the Word: Essays in Medieval Philosophy*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1997. Print.

Miller, J. Hillis. *The Disappearance of God: Five Nineteenth-Century Writers*. Chicago: U of Illinois P, 2000. Print.

Morgan, Edward. *The Incarnation of the Word: The Theology of Language of Augustine of Hippo*. London: T&T Clark International, 2010. Print.

Perloff, Marjorie and Craig Dworkin. "Introduction: The Sound of Poetry / The Poetry of Sound." *The Sound of Poetry / The Poetry of Sound.* Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2009. 1-17. Print.

Plotkin, Cary H. *The Tenth Muse: Victorian Philology and the Genesis of the Poetic Language of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois UP, 1989. Print.

Prins, Yopie. "Voice Inverse." *Victorian Poetry* 42.1 (2004): 43-59. *ProjectMuse*. Web. 19 May 2015.

"Rare Masterly Beauties." Rev. of *Gerard Manley Hopkins, 1844-1889* by W.H. Gardner. *Times Literary Supplement*. 23 Sept. 1949: 616. Print.

Smith, James K.A. *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009. Print.

Stewart, Susan. "Rhyme and Freedom." *The Sound of Poetry / The Poetry of Sound.* Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2009. 29-48. Print.

Thornton, R.K.R. Rev. of *Hopkins, the Self, and God* by Walter J. Ong; *Gerard Manley Hopkins: The Critical Heritage* by Gerald Roberts; and *Gerard Manley Hopkins* by Catherine Phillips. *The Review of English Studies* 39.155 (1988): 459-461. *JSTOR*. Web. 12 Dec. 2013.

Vander Lei, Elizabeth. "'Where the Wild Things Are': Christian Students in the Figured Worlds of Composition Research." *Mapping Christian Rhetorics: Connecting Conversations, Charting New Territories*. Ed. Michael-John DePalma and Jeffrey M. Ringer. New York: Routledge, 2015. 65-85. Print.

Watson, Gerard. "Saint Augustine's Theory of Language." *The Maynooth Review: A Journal of the Arts* 6.2 (1982): 4-20. Web. 29 May 2015.

Winters, Yvor. *The Function of Criticism: Problems and Exercises*. Denver: Alan Swallow, 1957. Print.