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"A sister calling:" Intersubjectivity in Hopkins's *The Wreck of the Deutschland*

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ABSTRACT

We know from Gerard Manley Hopkins's own comments that his poetry provided a means to express his Jesuit spirituality. In *The Wreck of the Deutschland* (1918) he makes the shipwreck a focus for his meditation on the meaning of suffering. At the heart of the poem stands the tall nun, whose cry to Christ provides a focal point for Hopkins's creative powers. His ability to imaginatively project himself into the scene of her suffering unfolds a key element of the poem. The tall nun is the nexus between heaven and earth, a bridge between the world of the flesh and the world of the spirit. In his struggle to understand the nature of her subjectivity, Hopkins comprehends the truth about the immanence of God and his own subjectivity.

KEYWORDS: Gerard Manley Hopkins, *The Wreck of the Deutschland*, intersubjectivity, suffering, meditative technique, anagogy

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「一位修女的呼喚」：霍普金斯《德意志號沉沒記》中的主體間性

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摘　要

從傑拉德．曼利．霍普金斯本人的評論中，我們得知他的詩歌為其耶穌會靈修提供了一種表達途徑。在《德意志號沉沒記》（1918）中，他將海難事件作為沉思苦難意義的核心焦點。詩的中心人物是一位高大的修女，她向基督發出的呼喊成為霍普金斯創作能量的凝聚點。詩人以想像力將自身投射進她受苦的情境之中，從而展開了詩中一個關鍵要素。這位高大的修女是天地之間的樞紐，是肉身世界與精神世界之間的橋樑。在努力理解她的主體性本質的過程中，霍普金斯領悟了上帝內在臨在的真理，也同時理解了自身的主體性。

關鍵詞：傑拉德．曼利．霍普金斯、《德意志號沉沒記》、主體間性、苦難、默觀技法、靈意詮釋

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We know from Gerard Manley Hopkins's own comments that his poetry provided a means to express his Jesuit spirituality. In *The Wreck of the Deutschland* (1918), he makes the shipwreck a focus for his meditation on the meaning of suffering. At the heart of the poem stands the tall nun, whose cry to Christ provides a focal point for Hopkins's creative powers. His ability to imaginatively project himself into the scene of her suffering unfolds a key element of the poem. The tall nun is the nexus between heaven and earth, a bridge between the world of the flesh and the world of the spirit. In his struggle to understand the nature of her subjectivity, Hopkins comprehends the truth about the immanence of God, his presence in the created world, the Real Presence that links humanity to his eternal transcendence.

Intersubjectivity has a variety of meanings and applications. The term is a coinage of the philosopher Edmund Husserl in his *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology* (1960). The Fifth Meditation, "Uncovering the Sphere of Transcendental Being as Monadological Intersubjectivity," considers how "I can experience any given Other not only as himself an Other but also as related in turn to *his* Others and perhaps with a mediatedness that may be conceived as relatable—related at the same time to me" (130). Husserl posits "an open plurality of men . . . as subjects of possible intercommunion" (130) which he "designate[s] as transcendental intersubjectivity" (130). The *Cartesian Meditations* derives from lectures given by Husserl in France in 1929, so the term "intersubjectivity" is not one used by Hopkins. Nevertheless, it can be a useful tool for examining the development of Hopkins's *The Wreck of the Deutschland*. According to *The Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion* (2014), a basic definition is "the interchange of thoughts and feelings both conscious and unconscious between two person or 'subjects,' as facilitated by empathy" (Cooper-White 1183). Within a theological context, Joseph A. Bracken offers a useful focus on a process "in which objectivity is achieved through ongoing communication between diverse subjects of experience" (382). Although Bracken posits a direct communication between two subjects, Hopkins's use of contemplation to connect to the tall nun's circumstance is a catalyst for moving beyond their individual subjective experiences of the wreck toward an understanding of the larger reality, the Eternal Eucharist, that lies beyond it. Intersubjectivity enables Hopkins to perceive the anagogical significance of their shared encounter.

As is well-known, Hopkins struggled with the relation between his poetry and his vocation. Before entering the Jesuit novitiate, he burned his poetry, believing it interfered with his discernment of the religious life. Seven years later, in 1875, his father superior suggested he write a poem on the shipwreck of the German ship, the Deutschland. This permission gave him the opportunity to reconcile his Jesuit spirituality with his poetic imagination, as well as incorporating the influences of his study of the medieval Franciscan theologian, Duns Scotus. The resulting poem makes use of key elements from both his poetic and religious thinking.

Since Hopkins can be approached from both a literary and a theological perspective, his use of the theology of Duns Scotus is one key element needed for understanding his work. The medieval Franciscan theologian has a special resonance in the poem, since the nuns whose suffering inspired Hopkins were Franciscans. Hopkins refers to "father Francis" (line 177)[1] and "these thy daughters" (181) in a direct statement, but he also imbues the poem with concepts that emerge through his study of Scotus. Two main ideas underlie Hopkins thinking as expressed in the poem. His personal concept of instress found resonance in Scotus. Hopkins asserted that stress "is the making a thing more, or making it markedly, what it already is; it is the bringing out of its nature" (Thornton and Phillips 2: 629). In addition, he believed "that all things are upheld by instress and are meaningless without it" (Higgins 311). As Austin Warren notes, Scotus influenced Hopkins in "undertaking the philosophical validation of the individual . . . Scotus insisted that each individual has a distinctive 'form' . . . a *haecceitas*, or thisness, as well as a generic *quidditas*, or whatness" (170). Hopkins related his study of Scotus to his concept of the inscape (Warren 171), which I will discuss below. Michael Sprinker is not convinced that Scotus's idea of *haecceitas* is relevant to *The Wreck of the Deutschland*, however. He argues "*haecceitas* is not the equivalent of selving in Hopkins, for the being of self is not merely subsumed in 'the great monochromatic abstraction of being' as it is in Scotus. For Hopkins, being can in fact be said not to exist at all except in the differentiated beings who exist at any given moment" (106). Bernadette Waterman Ward furthers this point in arguing that " 'essence' must be distinguished from the individuating principle, *haecceitas*. . . . But, although Hopkins believed in such essences. . . he believed

[1] All references to the poem are from *The Poetical Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, edited by Norman H. MacKenzie, Oxford UP, 1990, pp. 119-28.

the deepest selves of other creatures inaccessible to anyone but God" (159-60). The poem, I would suggest in turn, relies on the intersubjectivity of discrete individuals in order to approach their essential natures. As Walter J. Ong clarifies,

> inscape refers to the utter individuality and distinctiveness that marks each individual existence, its "thisness," *haecceitas*. Instress refers to the fusion of the inscape of a given being with a given human consciousness in contact at a given moment with that being in all its uniqueness. (156)

Hopkins emphasizes the paradoxically relational nature of the individual self, transmuting Scotus through his own concepts of inscape and instress.

Hopkins is further influenced by Scotus's doctrine of the relationship between the Incarnation and time, the reality of Christ's eternal presence. John Robinson, in his study of Hopkins, *In Extremity: A Study of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (1978), observes that Hopkins reflects Scotus "in saying that Christ's incarnation is central in God's communication with man because it is the fulfillment of God's creative purpose" (114). Jeffrey B. Loomis also notes that Hopkins follows Scotus in "emphasiz[ing] Christ's incarnating activity in matter as far back as the Creation" (72). This concept of the Incarnation leads to an understanding of time that Hopkins develops through his reading of Scotus. Virginia Ridley Ellis explains that "Hopkins' view was that Christ existed as wholly God in 'eternal' time; . . . he existed also in 'angelic' time; . . . finally, he entered earthly time as fully man at the Incarnation. . . . Hopkins believed with Scotus that the Incarnation was planned even before the creation of man" (107). This understanding of Christ's relation to time is central to Hopkins's use of the Real Presence in the poem. Since, according to Scotus and Hopkins, Christ always exists, he is always present. Eleanor McNees observes that "Hopkins presses for a tangible manifestation of Christ" (86). At the heart of the poem the Franciscan nun has an experience of the Real Presence, a manifestation of Christ's incarnational activity. Critics disagree as to whether Hopkins believes there was a physical apparition or not, but all would concur

as to the spiritual presence of Christ.[2] Her cry of recognition resonates in the poet, who experiences contact in a given moment, not just with the subject Self of the tall nun, but with the Incarnated Self of Christ. As Angus Easson proposes, Hopkins presents an experience that "propels us on to glimpses of the beatific vision, of God in his glory" (65). In his contemplation of the event, Hopkins achieves an intersubjective connection that transcends time and place and enables the individual to participate in the fullness of union with Christ.

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[2] Elizabeth Schneider first proposes that in the poem Hopkins implies that the nun experiences an apparition of Christ walking on the water towards her. She argues that the 14 stanzas that follow the tall nun's cry "embody the suggestion that a miracle had occurred, that during the night of terror at sea Christ appeared to the nun, not as a subjective or imagined vision but as a real miraculous presence" (116). Paul L. Mariani agrees with this reading, asserting "Schneider is essentially correct in her reading of the ode, for at this point all of the imaginative theological play on the Word comes down to this: the Word *is* Christ, with a human personality and nature, who actually walked across the breakers of the Kentish Knock on that particular stormy December night in 1875" (67). John Robinson concurs, saying of Schneider's original argument "To my knowledge her idea has not been warmly received; there are some apparent difficulties in the way of its acceptance, but it seems to me that she is right. The teaching about the incarnation in Part the First is there to provide for what is, in effect, another incarnation in Part the Second" (116). On the other hand, Norman H. MacKenzie declares,

> I am sorry not to be able to accept her theory. The emphasis in stanzas 29 to 31 is not on any physical shape seen by the nun, such as Dr. Schneider's theory might appear to entail. The poet seems even to withdraw somewhat from the implication in the preceding stanza (as it is ordinarily interpreted) that she had been privileged with a mystical vision of Christ. Instead, he praises the sensitivity of the heart and the divinely oriented mental sight which enabled her to decode the jumble of violent sensations impinging on her. (50)

Similarly, John T. Netland argues that in stanza 28

> the context clearly indicates that this stanza depicts their deaths, those frantic moments in which, gasping for breath, they see at first indistinctly the image of Christ, but as they cross over the threshold of death, they see the Master, himself, the once unnameable now fully revealed. They have crossed over that passage from death to the afterlife, from behind the barrier of human incomprehensibility to an unobstructed and undeconstructable vision. (198)

From a similar perspective, Eleanor McNees suggests that Hopkins is focused on the Real Presence, asserting:

> the accidents of bread and wine do not conflict with the substance of Christ's body in the Eucharist; instead they suggest what is beyond sight on a higher level. The actual wreck serves Hopkins as a commemorative Last Supper in which the nun's dying words pierce through earthly reality to a world beyond death. This second realm can only be conveyed to the reader through the "accidents" of language. The nun has moved beyond these accidents to true identification with Christ. (90)

This idea would mean that the experience of the nun functions on an anagogical rather than a literal level.

Since Hopkins transmutes Scotus's thinking about the individual, it will be useful to consider Ong's examination of Hopkins's concept of the Self to clarify the nature of intersubjectivity in his work. At the heart of Hopkins's understanding of the Self is his belief that "all things have their fullest meaning and selfhood in relationship to Christ" (Ong 25). This notion in its very construction points to the reality of intersubjectivity made possible by the presence of Christ to the tall nun in the storm and to Hopkins in contemplative projection into that moment in the storm. The Self is incomplete, except in relation to the Other, Christ, thus the fullness of Self is always relational. Ong further points out that "for Hopkins, the creation of the universe is centered ultimately in God's bringing into being interiorized, utterly differentiated human selves" (Ong 27). This interiorization and differentiation set up a situation in which the individual Self is always in tension with its singular nature and its need for the Other, for the fullness of Christ, to attain completeness. In addition, the human Self is aware of what Ong refers to as "a border . . . separating the 'not-I' from the 'I'" (Ong 29). The selves remain separate yet are bound through their shared awareness of their need for relationship to Christ. As Ong observes, "for Hopkins the 'inscape' of a being, however individualized, moves outward by its 'instress' to register in human consciousness. All beings have a kind of outreach, and especially to human beings" (Ong 37). This outreach lies at the center of *The Wreck of the Deutschland*.[3] The poetic persona recognizes in the tall nun a complementary subject being, and she in turn becomes a gateway for the poet to experience the completeness of selfhood. He is a self "joined in its isolation with other isolated and yet intersubjectively related selves" (Ong 53), yet their isolation is overcome, not by direct contact with each other, but by a kind of suspension of time. Ong discusses the nature of eschatological time: "the time in which the resurrected Christ now lives . . . a time which is curiously both future to us and present to us, for the resurrected Christ lives both in eternity (which we feel as

[3] Easson sees the same tension in the larger context. He contends that "duality is one key at least to the poem. Duality, an opposition lies in storm and wreck set against the peace of Hopkins's Welsh haven, yet the nuns and Hopkins are drawn together in their Catholicism" (65). Jerome Bump points to "Hopkins's love of vertical correspondences" (101) and "the coalescence of subject and object" (103) while also noting "an 'unresolved dualism' in the poem" (103). This drawing together and vertical correspondence are part of the process of attaining intersubjectivity. Joseph M. Bizup notes Hopkins's "belief that the material world. . . can provoke a metonymic or sacramental experience of connection with the divine" (136). The connection at the subjective level enables awareness of objective reality and the anagogical meaning of the experience.

future, though it is not) and in the now that human beings know" (51). As we will see, the tall nun's cry opens a window for Hopkins to see anagogically into the eternal now where Christ exists, providing a momentary vision that Ong describes as "the unity of isolated persons with one another in Christ" (53). Although union with Christ is the essential end, the tall nun is the effective means to achieving this goal. The mystery of their intersubjectivity provides the impetus the poet needs to recognize grace.

For *The Wreck of the Deutschland*, Hopkins made use of both literary and theological elements. Hopkins found a source of poetic perception in the concept he referred to as "inscape," a term that he develops to express his theological understanding in a literary way. As Warren explains, "'inscape' stands for any kind of formed or focused view, any pattern discerned in the natural world" (171). As Peter Milward clarifies, "by 'inscape' he meant the individual form, shape or essence of things, which is brought into vital act or being by 'instress'" (7). Inscape and instress must function together. As DuBois asserts, "'instress' holds a double meaning, indicating at once the force of being which upholds the inscape and effect of observing the inscape on the beholder" (12). The poem, then records a process of being and becoming in the poet who responds intersubjectively to the inscape of the tall nun. Warren further explains that an inscape "is not mechanically or inertly present but requires personal action, attention, a seeing and a seeing into" (171). The key element of inscape, then, literally involves insight, and the challenge for the poet is to express the inscape in words.

A second key element, contemplation, enables the transition from the inscape through the insight to the inspiration. The technique of the medieval mystics, such as Julian of Norwich and Richard Rolle, of imaginatively projecting themselves into seminal scenes from the life of Christ or the Virgin, serves Hopkins in the composition of *The Wreck of the Deutschland*. In his commentary on the *Spiritual Exercises*, Hopkins notes that Ignatius does not seem to make a distinction between meditation and contemplation. Jude V. Nixon and Noel Barber in their notes in *Sermons and Spiritual Writings* (2018), explain that while

> meditation is a cognitive process . . . , contemplation indicates an imaginative exercise; the subject matter is the mysteries of Christ's life into which one enters imaginatively. An essential

> ingredient of contemplation is that it is affective—it is not simply a case of imagining but also of being moved to sorrow, joy, and to greater faith, hope, and charity. (430)

Julian of Norwich demonstrates this technique in her First Revelation when she sees the blood trickling from under the crown of thorns and her heart is filled with joy at an awareness that she has been shown the Trinity. Hopkins similarly in his contemplation of the wreck sees through the tall nun's inscape to the anagogical meaning of her experience. Their experience is intersubjective because Hopkins's imaginative exercise allows him to share her awareness of the Real Presence and her glimpse of the Eternal Truth intersects with his search for the same understanding. Together the inscape and spiritual practices awaken Hopkins's poetic voice.

In the opening stanzas of the poem, we can see the action of the two techniques. The first part of the poem begins as a meditation not just on the wreck, but on the purpose of suffering. The opening stanza begins with an affirmation of God's mastery of the poet and the world in the exclamation "Thou mastering me / God" (Hopkins, line 1-2). As Ellis notes, "master" is a word that Hopkins brings into the poem, again and again (70), since it denotes the fundamental relationship between Hopkins and the Trinitarian God, and indeed, between all of Creation and God. God is the master and all of creation is subject to him. This subordination of the human subjective self through the ongoing and ever present "mastering" of God reveals Hopkins's sense of intersubjectivity. As Bracken notes, "intersubjectivity implies simultaneity between two or more concurrently existing subjects of experience" (389). Because he shifts from meditation to contemplation in the second part of the poem, Hopkins is able to experience the tall nun as a concurrently existing subject. Elizabeth Schneider sees an additional implication "that what has happened in one soul may happen in all" (113). Hopkins will need the intersubjective connection to the tall nun to reach toward comprehension of the objective reality of God. The declaration of God's mastership lays down the pattern that permeates the rest of the work. Ellis notes that "the opening stanza comes close to being a microcosm of the entire poem" (70). At the heart of the poem and of creation, the poet finds the "Lord of living and dead" (Hopkins, line 4) and recognizes he is "bound" (5) to him in his very being. God is "giver of breath and bread" (2), of life and the means of sustaining life, but also of the

bread of the Eucharist that incarnates the relationship between God and man. The stanza continuously juxtaposes the concrete physicality of the poetic persona, the "bones and veins" of his "flesh" (5) with the power of the Creator who gives (2), binds, (5), fastens (5) and "after it almost unmade . . . / Thy doing" (6-7). The Creator is active and in control, not only of the poet's physical self, but also the world and the sea (3). God is master because he makes and unmakes. The poet acknowledges his subordinate position and asks "dost thou touch me afresh?" (7), beginning the inquiry into his response to the wreck of the Deutschland. The answer to that inquiry is already contained in the first stanza of the poem: "Over again I feel thy finger and find thee" (8). The following meditation will have at its core the knowledge of God's "finger" (8) touching poet and victim alike. Ellis refers to the image of God's finger deriving from "the Ignatian image for the creative, active agency of God . . . and specifically it is the image of the pressure of grace" (70). The touch of God's power controls life and death, but it also opens the way for the subject to link to the object.

In the second stanza of the poem, recognizing the absolute power of God in the world, Hopkins confirms "I did say yes / O at lightning and lashed rod" (line 9-10). The stanza presents Hopkins's spiritual struggles. The poetic "I" affirms his response to God's call, even as it reflects his awareness of the awfulness of God's power. The poet does "confess / Thy terror" (11-12) not in words alone, but "truer than tongue" (11). The poet's knowledge is subsumed in God's omniscience that "knowest the walls, altar, and hour and night" (13) of the poet's religious experience. The inscape emerges in "The swoon of a heart that the sweep and hurl of thee trod / Hard down with a horror of height" (14-15). The poet sees the movement of God in the pattern of the natural world and his response is emotional: a swoon of both delight and horror at the immensity. This awareness of the dual nature of his response to the power of God leaves the poet "laced with fire of stress" (16) and "astrain" (16) with the tension. The stanza records the poet's subjectivity confronting and affirming God's objective reality.

In continuing his meditation on the creature's relation to the Creator, stanza five focuses on the beauty of God's creation and the poet's joyful response to it. He repeats the phrase "kiss my hand" (line 33, 37) as his reaction first "to the stars" (34) and then to the "dappled-with-damson west" (37). Here he focuses on the loveliness (34). This response to the beauty of the created

world is straightforward and understandable, but as Norman H. MacKenzie notes, "the fifth stanza begins a synthesis which occupies the rest of Part the First—an examination of the two contrasting modes in which the mysterious God, hidden within creation heightens our awareness of Himself" (36). Not only is God the lord of the beauty of creation, he is master of the destructive power of the forces of nature. The God who is lord of living and dead, of power and might, offers insight into his objective reality through our contemplation of all the dimensions of the natural world. Hopkins explains, "Since, tho' he is under the world's splendor and wonder, / His mystery must be instressed, stressed" (line 38-39). The reality of God lies "under" or within the natural world, not exactly hidden, because it is available for us to observe and respond to, but mysterious in its comprehensive fullness. John T. Netland notes that Hopkins believed that the "mysteries of God were imparted through special revelation, but the corollary to that instress must be a willing observer ready to 'stress' and perceive the reality of those mysteries" (190) What we observe is only a fragment of the totality. That fragmentariness is why the mystery needs to be both instressed and stressed. The terms suggest movements both in and out. Instress is related to Hopkins's idea of the inscape, that the patterns found in the world reveal both an interior and exterior truth. There is a continuous movement from internal recognition to external response. As a part of creation, we contain the mystery that is "under the world's splendour and wonder" (Hopkins, line 38), but the fullness of that ultimate reality remains hidden to our subjective nature. As Paul L. Mariani observes, "Still we do not always see this" (54) indwelling God. Nevertheless, we can participate in the movement of recognition and response because of what Mariani refers to as "an insight into reality freely given by God" (54). Hopkins concludes the thought of this stanza with "I greet him the days I meet him" (line 40), implying that, while the reality is always present, he does not always meet it. His response, however, is to "bless, when I understand" (40). Again, his understanding is limited in time, but his response is a recognition of the truth that God always makes available. Joshua King observes that Hopkins holds the conviction that "humans are intended to interpret temporally and spatially distended impressions of the world's energies into spoken utterances, through which may be felt present, affective stresses of God's grace" (210). Hopkins figures himself as a subject searching for the object at the heart of his existence. The glimpses he is afforded through his contemplation of the natural world provide a measure of

understanding, but as he grapples with the more difficult question of the meaning of suffering, his singular and limited understanding requires additional help, found through the agency of the wreck of the Deutschland.

The ten stanzas of Part the First focus on the stress caused by the tension between God's power and mercy, preparing for the specific focus on the shipwreck. Stanza 11 provides a transition between the general and the specific subjects, opening with a contemplation of the destructive force of Death, personified as an agent of violence. Ellis declares that "the purpose of stanza 11, like that of the whole of part I, is to give us the wider spiritual meaning behind the particular wreck, in this case to warn us of the universality of death" (88). The Death who speaks in the opening three lines aligns himself with violence in the naming of his instruments: the "sword" (Hopkins, line 81), the "flange and the rail" (82), as well as "flame / Fang, or flood" (82-83). Recalling from stanza 1 that God is lord of the living and the dead, and from stanza 5 that God underlies all of creation, the poet must wrestle with the question of death as a part of the mystery of God's reality. In particular, "storms bugle his fame" (84), pointing to the storm that wrecked the Deutschland as an inscape that needs to be instressed and stressed. Death alerts us to this reality, but as the poet notes, "*we* dream we are rooted in earth" (85). The beauty of the natural world leads to an easy recognition of the reality of God, but we refuse to acknowledge the truth that "Flesh falls within sight of us" (86), lost in a dream that keeps us focused on our subjective, limited natures. Like flowers, we "Wave with the meadow, forget that there must / The sour scythe cringe, and the blear share come" (87-88). The cycle of growth, harvest, and planting found in the natural world should enlighten us to our own place in the cycle, but we "forget," denying the larger reality of God's eternal presence in our focus on our earthly existence. Here Hopkins aligns himself with all of humanity with his use of the first-person plural "we." He, as we all do, has difficulty grasping the meaning of death, of reconciling God's beauty and his power. Our subject natures struggle with our subordination and require grace to aid us.

Making use of medieval contemplative techniques that enable Hopkins to imaginatively project himself into the scene, Part the Second continues with a description of the ship's journey, the storm it encounters, and its striking of the Kentish Knock, a sandbar off the coast of England. Hopkins received copies of the newspaper accounts from his mother (Thornton and Phillips 1: 248) which provide details he uses to envision the situation. He focuses his attention on five

German Franciscan nuns who were on the ship because new anti-Catholic laws in Germany had led to their exile. In particular, the newspapers tell of a six-foot tall nun, whom the survivors describe as calling out "Christ come quickly" (Mariani 49). Hopkins refers to her as a "lioness" (line 135), a "prophetess" (136) with a "virginal tongue" (136) and it is she who becomes the focal point of his meditation on the wreck.

In stanza 18 the poet reflects on the effect the tall nun has on him, even though he is "all alone" (line 139). In spite of the fact that they have no direct contact, they experience an intersubjective relationship mediated by Christ's presence to both of them. Just as Hopkins' heart is "touched in your bower of bone" (137), so is the tall nun, a reminder of their shared physical natures. Hopkins makes a series of interrogative statements that are punctuated as exclamations, a grammatical technique that can turn doubt into certainty, culminating with the assertion "make words break from me here all alone, / Do you!" (139-40). This statement reveals the essence of their intersubjectivity. As Hopkins interrogates his heart's response to his contemplation, he recognizes the tall nun as a creative force who "makes" words, but also compels them. Those words "break from" the poet, bursting forth, but also with the connotation of unmaking related to the wreck that inspires them. The words of the poem are a direct result of the force of the words of the tall nun acting on Hopkins' heart. Without her there is no poem, thus she functions as a catalyst for his heart, the "mother of being in me" (140). They share a "heart" (140) that is capable of "uttering truth" (141). Easson suggests that Hopkins sees "himself and the tall nun [as] both sufferers in storms and proofs of the hope, in the love and majesty of Christ" (66). This shared experience forms the intersubjective connection and the tall nun's words are the impetus for his own. MacKenzie observes that

> the poet belittles himself to highlight the nun's bravery. It is his *heart*, not the lady, who is in a sheltered bower, and in tears. But on both these dedicated Christians the extremity of circumstance impinges with a pain close to pleasure . . . compelling them into words, which though addressed to Christ, will be overheard by many. (42)

Hopkins recognizes that the tall nun provides him with the catalyst he needs to redirect his heart, which goes "unteachably after evil" (line 141), toward the

"never-eldering revel" (143), the eternal source of life and truth. Mariani sees this stanza as a point where "a deep religious calm surfaces" (60), providing "an emotional release" (61). In fact, the stanza ends with a statement punctuated as a question: "the good you have there of your own?" (Hopkins, line 144). The questioning that seemed to become certainty at the beginning of the stanza is now a truth that needs further discernment. The poet questions how "revel" (143) and "glee" (144) can emerge from destruction. The paradoxical "exquisite smart" (138) encapsulates this mingling of pain and pleasure, the fruit of his contemplative technique. The poet is left to seek the good within himself, but through the agency of the tall nun.

In stanza 19 the tall nun becomes the link between heaven and earth, life and death, Hopkins and God. He names her as "Sister" (line 145) in both her vocation and in her relationship to him. She is "a sister calling / A master, her master and mine" (145-46) and he makes an association between their shared subjectivity as servants of the same master, as children of God, as those who share a vocation and who call out in the same voice. MacKenzie details how in the midst of the storm that threatens the lives of passengers and crew, the nuns refused places of relative safety in the rigging so that others might have them (28).[4] The nuns stayed in the interior of the boat, which was continually inundated by the waves of the storm, and Hopkins describes how the "brine / Blinds her; but she that weather sees one thing, one; / Has one fetch in her" (line 148-50). The repetition of the word "one" emphasizes the singleness of her vision. The nun's vision is focused on the divine master of the sea and storm and her sense of unity with that master connects her to the poet and to all who hear "the call of the tall nun" (151). As Loomis notes, "to Hopkins the nun's essential symbolic value is that she could read, and speak, the power of Christ the Logos" (74). Her voice reaches out as "she rears herself to divine / Ears" (Hopkins, line 150-51) and Hopkins hears as well, bound to her across space and time in the moment of epiphany. As the tall nun experiences the divine presence, she draws Hopkins's meditative focus with her.

[4] Ann Marie Klein notes that Hopkins's thought moves from a consideration of possible self-interested motives the tall nun might have for her cry to a recognition that "the Tall Nun rises above natural inclination in order to respond, not only to reason which points to the infinite Good as lovable in and of itself, but also to the perfection of reason by faith through which she identifies the Divine Person of Christ as the one to be supremely loved" (25). Her willing sacrifice is a reflection of her faith, which Hopkins links to in sharing her perception of the immanence of Christ.

Stanza 20 through 23 place the nun in a specific historical context, coming from Germany (Deutschland) on the Deutschland, "double a desperate name!" (Hopkins, line 155) and "Banned by land of their birth" (162). Hopkins connects them to past German religious figures, Saint Gertrude and Luther (157), as well as their "father Francis" (177). These specific historical references provide a continuum of opposing forces that begin "From life's dawn" (159) with a reference to Abel and Cain (160) and continues to the nuns' experience of being "Loathed for a love men knew in them" (161). In addition to the emphasis on binary tension between opposing forces, the number five also takes on significance. The tall nun "was first of a five" (153) and in stanza 22 five is the "cipher of suffering Christ" (170), a reference to the Five Holy Wounds. The fact that there are five nuns connects them to the Holy Wounds and the stigmata of their patron saint, Francis, who bore similar wounds. He can rejoice ("Joy fall to thee, father Francis" [177]) because of "these thy daughters" (181) who "Are sisterly sealed in wild waters" (183).[5] The contemplation of the wounds of Christ, as well as the suffering of the nuns directs the poetic attention from the historical context toward a glimpse of the eternal reality. The tall nun provides the link between the literal and the anagogical.

The poet makes explicit the joining of their subjectivity in stanza 24. In this stanza he brings his poetic persona forward again. At the time of the ship's destruction, he comments that

> Away in the loveable west,
> On a pastoral forehead of Wales,
> I was under a roof here, I was at rest,
> And they the prey of the gales. (line 185-88)

In contrast to the darkness, danger, and suffering those on the ship experience, he was safe and dry on the opposite side of Britain during the storm, unaware of their condition, but now bound to them through his awareness of and connection to the nun's subjectivity, the instress of her inscape. In fact, his safety and security are only relative. Linked now in their intersubjectivity, they

[5] As John E. Keating observes about the nuns, "the number five assimilates them to the five wounds of Christ . . . The deaths of the nuns, like the wounds of Christ, may be superficially attributable to men's malice; but men are only the instruments of a providence which they attempt to thwart" (85). Hopkins sees the larger pattern of God's will reflected in the pattern of fives linking Christ, St. Francis, and the nuns.

together face the reality of suffering in the world and contemplate the manifestation of God's power. Ellis notes that "for the nun then, and for the poet—again the two crucial experiences are fused—motivation, understanding, revelation do not spring from rational reasons, natural impulses, even religious beliefs: their source is direct spiritual vision, literally direct in her case, imaginatively so in his" (113). Her call "O Christ, Christ, come quickly" (Hopkins, line 191) initiates the poet's question of the meaning of her suffering and the suffering of all. He notes the paradox at the heart of her cry: "The cross to her she calls Christ to her, christens her wild-worst Best" (192). The tall nun embraces the suffering that lies at the heart of salvation. It is here that the Real Presence is revealed. McNees argues that Hopkins uses "linguistic transubstantiation to reveal the hidden similarity and simultaneity of apparently separate substances" (93). In calling on Christ, the tall nun calls for and embraces the cross, grasping the worst in order to be possessed by the Best. Her complete acceptance of this paradox generates a response of both acceptance and questioning in the poet-contemplator.

The poet's response develops in the next stanza, where he asks the question at the heart of his reflections: "What did she mean?" (line 193). Even as he wonders about her meaning, he also acknowledges "The majesty" (193). He sees that she has reached a level of insight that he must try to understand. Ann Marie Klein asserts that "her virtue facilitates her discernment of God's graces" (30). He wonders "Is it love in her of the being as her lover had been?" (Hopkins, line 195). Her love for her spouse as a bride of Christ is one possible answer to the meaning of her call, but Hopkins offers another meaning as well: "Or is it that she cried for the crown then, / The keener to come at the comfort for feeling the combating keen?" (199-200). His series of questions demonstrates the complexity of the mystery at the heart of Christian suffering. Robert J. Boyle suggests that "Hopkins is not dealing directly with the problem of suffering, but with the answer to that problem" (333). Hopkins sees that the tall nun calls out in anticipation of the meeting with her Bridegroom that she will achieve by means of "lovely Death" (line 196), but perhaps she also calls out for the crown of martyrdom. As John E. Keating observes, "stanzas 25-27 are concerned with two questions: Was the tall nun's cry a petition to share in the Passion of Christ? Or was it a petition to be delivered from suffering and so to enter upon the joys of Heaven? In stanza 28, the poet rejects both of the solutions suggested by his questions and embraces a third solution" (90). This

questioning allows Hopkins to expand his awareness of the paradoxes generated by his contemplation of the wreck and the tall nun's response. The comfort could come by means of the combat and it is in questioning her motivation that the poet can more fully understand his own struggles.

In the second half of stanza 25, he compares her joyous response in the face of death to the apostles in the gospel story of the storm on the lake at Gennesareth, noting that they were "else-minded" (197), by fearing to perish. The story of the storm at Gennesareth derives from the gospels of Matthew (8.23-27) and Mark (4.35-41). Hopkins seems to have Matthew 8.23-27 in particular in mind, since he quotes the disciples as awakening Jesus with "*We are perishing*" (198) as they do in Matthew's version. The stories of Jesus calming the storm are paralleled in the gospels by the narratives of Jesus walking on the water. In view of the critical discussion that surrounds the question of whether an apparition of Christ appeared to the tall nun, the connection to Matthew 14.22-33 and Mark 6.45-52 also becomes relevant. In Matthew's version, as Jesus walks across the water through the storm, Peter asks to be able to walk to Jesus on the water, but becomes frightened and must call out to be saved. In Mark's version, Jesus identifies himself and then enters the boat, but the disciples "understood not concerning the loaves; for their heart was blinded" (Mark 6.52). In the storm on the sea that Hopkins contemplates similar fear, uncertainty, and ignorance are operative. The patterns of the gospels are recapitulated in the wreck of the Deutschland, but because of the agency of the tall nun, her call and recognition of Christ's Real Presence pointing him toward the object they both desire, the poet's mind is opened to the meaning of events. More than a literal apparition, she experiences the anagogical reality of Christ's action in the storm. He acknowledges that he has been motivated by the same fear, but now has the inspiration of the tall nun to help him expand his comprehension of what his own struggles and dangers mean.[6] He cannot completely answer the question of what she meant, but his

[6] In discussing the two parts of the poem in the light of Scotus's concept of the will, Klein observes the first part's focus on the poet and the second on the "influence of the nun's courageous act of faith" (22). She argues that the two parts "illustrate two inclinations of the will: the natural proclivity to self-preservation and self-perfection, and the innate freedom to attend to a wider set of goods for the benefit of other" (27). The direction of the poem is a movement toward the wider goods that goes beyond their subjectivity to the true object that lies above. As James Finn Cotter, suggests "the nun inscapes the risen Jesus in the storm" (*Inscape* 150). Hopkins's will aligns with the tall nun's will in their discernment of the immanence of Christ, a glimpse of the Beatific Vision.

recognition of and sharing in her subjectivity provides him with a glimpse of what she saw and an impulse to respond in the same way.

After questioning the meaning of the tall nun's cry and of her suffering, the poet attempts to clarify his own response and express a further answer to what she meant. In stanza 28 his broken syntax reflects a struggle to interiorize the vision she has given him:

> But how shall I . . . make me room there;
> Reach me a . . . Fancy, come faster—
>
> Strike you the sight of it? look at it loom there,
> Thing that she . . . there then! the Master (Hopkins, line 217-20)

In the first line he expresses the need for integration, for finding room in himself for the truth he glimpses through the intersubjectivity he shares with the tall nun. In the second line he invokes "Fancy," his imagination; only by joining his poetic vision of the tall nun's experience to his spiritual insight about God's objective reality can he get to the essential meaning at the center of his meditation. He has a glimpse through the tall nun's eyes of "the only one, Christ" (221). Now the unity invoked in stanza 19 emerges as the immanence of Christ "*Ipse*" (221), himself. He is the "King, Head" (221) who reconciles "living and dead" (223), Hopkins and the sister calling. He will "do, deal" (223) and "in his triumph" (224) will come judgment ("doom") (224). The power lies in Christ revealed through the series of strong verbs: "cure," "cast," (222), "lord it" (223), "ride" and "despatch" (224). The salvific action derives from Christ, and the poet and the tall nun unite in their vision of his power and presence to save and judge. Netland observes that "*Ipse* also marks the transition of the nuns' perspectives . . . as they cross over the threshold of death, they see the Master, himself, the once unnamable now fully revealed" (198). Because Christ is present to the tall nun, he is present to Hopkins. John E. Keating explains, "the nun's words express an all-comprehending inscape of Christ, an inscape which transcends any self-regarding view of him, any limiting of him to the role of redeeming victim or heavenly rewarder" (94). The chaos of Hopkins' language reflects the chaos of the storm, but at its heart is the true vision of the tall nun pointing the way of understanding to the poet. As James Finn Cotter notes, they experience the Christ "who lives in glory and acts in time, a God

immanent in nature and yet transcending nature" ("Hopkins" 22). She is the mediator who opens the way for the revelation of Christ present in the storm and in the suffering in the world. Her redemptive suffering reflects the eternal sacrifice of Christ.

Hopkins reaffirms the accuracy of the tall nun's vision, returning to the image of the heart, when he declares "Ah! There was a heart right!" (line 225). Their shared heart, their intersubjectivity, enables him to recognize the truth in her and beyond her the fullness of Truth. He emphasizes the unity of her vision in her "single eye" (226) Again her singleness of sight guides his own understanding of the truth revealed in her experience. Most importantly, she "Read the unshapeable shock night / And knew the who and the why" (227-28). He connects reading and knowing, demonstrating that her vision answers the key questions of who and why. Mariani suggests that Hopkins is

> praising and admiring her for having had her heart poised in the right direction, for having the "single" (healthy, undeviating) eye. She read and interpreted the chaos . . . and saw its real meaning. . . . She uttered the Word which all heaven and earth mutely proclaim because they were created and are sustained as a by-product in time of God's own selving when He worded Himself. (68)

MacKenzie concurs, declaring that she sees "the hidden unity in which evil is constrained to contribute towards good" (51). The doubt and uncertainty the poet has experienced finds its resolution in her transmission of the Logos. The poet declares her "The Simon-Peter of a soul" (line 231). The reference to Peter comes primarily from Matthew 16.13-20, where Simon declares Jesus' messianic identity and Jesus names him Peter, the rock. Hopkins's further reference to the "Tarpeian-fast" (232) rock links the two rocks with their connotations of steadfastness. In addition, the reference to Peter can direct us back to the Gospel narrative where he tries to walk to Jesus across the water. The tall nun is Peter perfected, steadfast enough to successfully navigate and negotiate the chaos of the storm. Not only does she arrive at knowledge of the truth herself, she becomes a "beacon of light" (232) to reveal that truth to others, to the victims of the storm and to Hopkins. She transmits the revelation, lighting the way for all subjects to see the objective truth at the heart of the mystery.

Hopkins closes the poem with an invocation to the tall nun, the "Dame, at our door / Drowned" (line 273-74) and asks her to "Remember us in the roads the heaven-haven of the reward" (275). He is confident that her suffering has brought her to redemption and just as she became an intercessor in his meditation on the wreck, she can now be intercessor for all of England, calling "Our King back, Oh, upon English souls!" (276). Through the invocation, he is led back to the vision at the center of his poetic meditation, that Christ is "a dayspring to the dimness of us" (277). Through the use of "easter" (277) as a verb, Hopkins makes the action of Christ an on-going reality, the objective truth only dimly seen by our subjective natures. The last line piles up the sense of subordination through the use of multiple possessive nouns: "Our hearts' charity's hearth's fire, our thoughts' chivalry's throng's Lord" (280). All we can possess is our subservience to our Lord and King, shared with all who acknowledge his Real Presence in the world. The call of the tall nun provides the catalyst for Hopkins to glimpse the reality at the heart of his subjective existence, the transcendent, anagogical meaning. The inscape emerges in his effort to express the insight her singleness of vision provides. Through their intersubjectivity, the pattern of suffering exposes the eternal Eucharist, already always present, needing only the poetic voice to hear a sister calling and to answer yes.

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