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Getting Back to (Human) Nature: Personality as Sacrament in G. M. Hopkins

The sonnets of Gerard Manley Hopkins’ *annus mirabilis* are justly famous. These poems, sometimes referred to collectively as the “nature sonnets” and all written within a seven-month span in 1877, are remarkable as exquisite celebrations of the natural world. But they are also vivid realizations of the dormant creative power which developed during Hopkins’ self-imposed abstinence from poetic composition following his entry into the Society of Jesus. This silence, born of the perceived incompatibility of artistic production with his priestly vocation, ends only when he is able to join obedience to his muse with obedience to the Church. Although he was not exactly commanded to write the “The Wreck of the Deutschland” and found his impetus in his superior’s casual remark that the five nuns drowned in the disaster might be commemorated with an ode, this symbolic gesture of authorization is significant for Hopkins precisely as a symbol. The “Wreck” convinced Hopkins that a synthesis of artistic production and sacerdotal duty was possible. The nature sonnets, written in the year following the composition of this ode, can thus be read as both a poetic and a personal experiment, a tentative extension of Hopkins’ self-dispensation to write poetry. Taken together, these poems form an answer to Hopkins’ implicit question: what other subject falls under the aegis of priestly obedience?

Hopkins finds such a subject in the natural world. Following the psalmist’s example, he sings of creations that tell of the glory of their Creator, of a world “charged with the grandeur of God.” However, a subtle evasion can be detected in Hopkins’ choice of a fit poetic subject, one registered in “God’s Grandeur” itself. After considering nature’s potential power to give luminous glimpses of God, the poet asks: “Why do men then now not reck his rod?” (P 139). The question is not merely rhetorical. In “The Wreck of the Deutschland,” Hopkins boldly justifies the ways of God to man, but in the sonnets of 1877, he shies away from justifying the ways of man to God; man’s first (and ongoing) disobedience is a painful blight of which Hopkins’ muse declines to sing. Indeed, this plaintive question of “God’s Grandeur” suffuses all the sonnets written by Hopkins in that year: why, he wonders, does man’s sin mar the world’s beauty?

Since man’s concupiscence would cast a shadow over creation, Hopkins can achieve unalloyed praise of nature only in those poems in which human nature can be hidden from view. In the sonnets that do not contain an explicit prayer for his reclamation, man is all but effaced. In “The Starlight Night,” only the saved souls of men appear and, even then, only with the poem’s last word, “hallows” (P 140); in “The Windhover,” apart from providing metaphors to describe the kestrel (“dauphin,” “chevalier”), the human figure can only be detected implicitly behind the final glint of the plodding plough (P 144); in “Pied Beauty,” man is seen only in his effect on the fields: “plotted and pieced—fold, fallow, and plough,” and the tools of his trade: “gear and tackle and trim” (P 144); finally, in “God’s Grandeur,” man’s labour and its destructive results are simultaneously disclosed: man “smear[s]” and “sear[s]” the world with his “smudge” and “smell” (P 139). It is significant that, in every example but the first, man’s residual appearance is mediated by his labour, a task which recalls the post-Edenic curse that man earn his bread by the sweat of his brow (cf. Gen 3:19); and both “Spring” and

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1 In 1877, Hopkins wrote eleven of his best-known sonnets: “God’s Grandeur,” “The Starlight Night,” “As Kingfishers catch fire,” “Spring,” “The Sea and the Skylark,” “In the Valley of the Elwy,” “The Windhover,” “Pied Beauty,” “The Caged Skylark,” “Hurrahing in Harvest,” and “The Lantern out of Doors.” It should be noted that this last poem, though written in the same year, is not a nature sonnet.


3 *The Poetical Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, 139. This text, abbreviated as P, will be cited hereafter in parentheses; wherever possible, Hopkins’ accents, marks, which this edition reproduces, have been preserved.
“The Sea and the Skylark” refer to the Fall explicitly in their sestets. Thus, although all creation is “counter, original, spáre, [and] strange,” only man, with his mercurial free will, is “fickle”; marked by the macula of his original sin, only man is “freckled” (P 144).4 What the poet says of his host in “In the Valley of the Elwy” is true of all humanity within the created world: “the inmate does not correspond” (P 143). The paradox of Hopkins’ nature sonnets, then, is that while human nature must be concealed, this very omission renders the poet’s praise of nature incomplete. Man, after all, is not just a part of nature, but its pinnacle, “life’s pride and cared-for crown” (P 143). The very thing which should complete the poet’s catalogue of creation must thus be excluded; what Hopkins, in a later poem, calls “love’s worthiest.../World’s loveliest—men’s selves” (P 183) must remain out of sight.5

“As kingfishers catch fire,” however, offers a crucial counterexample to the elisions listed above. The “just man” who appears in the sestet of this poem magnifies the process of selving outlined in the octave: he not only “goes [him] self” but “Keeps gráce” (P 141). The just man of this nature sonnet does what mankind should do in every nature sonnet; the apex and perfection of creation, he reveals the Creator in whose image he has been made. But even though man is represented here only by a single moral exponent—and this only after the self-conscious declaration, “I say more” (P 141)—, his emergence is not simply an anomaly, an unrepeated poetic experiment. Rather, the poem looks forward to the solution that Hopkins will eventually develop in response to the poético-theological impasse he encounters in the nature sonnets. While Hopkins, in this poem, praises only a single perfect moral person, he will eventually expand the scope of his encomium to embrace humanity as a whole.

In two poems written in 1879—“Henry Purcell” and “How all is one way wrought”—, Hopkins discovers a way to revel in human nature, uninhibited by the qualification of moral caveats. While man can appear in the 1877 sonnets only through his bad effects and utilitarian artifacts, in these two poems, the products of artists—Purcell’s music and an architect’s building—are precisely what allow the poet to encounter each artificer’s essential qualities. And, as these artistic creations disclose their human creators, so their distinctive personalities ultimately tell of their own Creator as well. These two poems, then, complete the project of praise which Hopkins’ nature sonnets leave unfinished, as human nature finally becomes a conduit for the communication of God’s glory.

Finding Purcell’s “forged feature”

If it is only the “just man” of “As kingfishers catch fire” who can appear in the nature sonnets, it might seem strange for Hopkins to write an entire poem in praise of the “divine genius” (P 157) of the Baroque composer, Henry Purcell. A Protestant, Purcell bears no obvious resemblance to the moral exemplar of the previous poem; in fact, this sonnet even begins with a quatrain wherein the poet prays for the composer’s soul. Despite his lack of conspicuous sanctity, however, Purcell can be the object of Hopkins’ praise because, as he says in the prefatory prose argument, Purcell has “uttered in notes the very make and species of man as created both in him and in all men generally” (P 157). But this explanation is even more remarkable: not only can Hopkins glorify a composer whose heterodoxy deserves damnation, but from Purcell’s music-mediated spirit he receives both the haecceity and quiddity—the thinness and the whatness—of Purcell in particular and of all men in general. The

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4 For an account of the philosophical rigour of the seventh line of this poem, and the extensive theology which is distilled in the words “pied” and “freckled,” see Joaquin Kuhn, “The Completeness of ‘Pied Beauty’,” 683ff.

5 The absence of the human person can also be demonstrated in two other nature sonnets, although the oclusions are more difficult to detect. In “Hurrahing in Harvest,” the omission of man is hidden in plain sight: his absence is recognized as the very thing that the vista was lacking: “These things, these things were here and but the beholder/ Wánting” (P 149). In “The Caged Skylark,” the displacement of the human figure is even more subtle. Ostensibly, this poem deals with man directly, but the poet’s focus is actually trained on the incorruptible body of the resurrected saint—and even this is only approached through allegorical images drawn from nature: the skylark and, in the poem’s last lines, “meadow-down” and a “rainbow” (P 148). While “The Caged Skylark” remains a poem about man, nature provides the metaphorical mask behind which he is obliged to appear.
whole of mankind can be known, Hopkins asserts, through this composer’s part.

Interestingly, however, the claim that Purcell communicates a knowledge of “the very make and species of man” appears nowhere in the sonnet itself and seems to be Hopkins’ retrospective realization, a belated appreciation of Purcell’s power that is apprehended only in the aftermath of the poem itself. How Hopkins actually makes this move from the one to the many is a perplexing question which I will take up shortly; for now it is sufficient to note that, in his actual verses, Hopkins only claims that the composer’s personality—his “rupt self” and “forg’d feature” (P 131)—is accessible through his music.

The sestet of the sonnet articulates how such a revelation of self is possible. It begins with the exclamation:

Let him o’er with his air of angels then lift me, lay me! only I’ll
Have an eye to the sakes of him... (P 131)

Hopkins’ use of the word “sakes” here is significant. In one of several letters written in explanation of this sonnet, Hopkins defines the word “sake” as “the being a thing has outside itself,” and gives as examples: “a voice by its echo, a face by its reflection, a body by its shadow, a man by his name, fame, or memory.” Thus, by interpreting Purcell’s song as a sake, Hopkins connects the composer’s artistic production with his innermost self. Moreover, if a thing’s emanated being—its echo, reflection, shadow, or reputation—is taken to be an epiphenomenon of an antecedent self, then such sakes are also traces which can be traversed towards their origin; the attentive perceiver, in other words, can discern the self which the sake implies.

That Hopkins believed an artist’s self could be communicated through such radiated remainders is evident from another letter, written around the time of this poem’s composition, in which he discusses his own aims in poetic production. Hopkins writes that, just “as air, [or] melody, is what strikes me most of all in music...so design, pattern or what I am in the habit of calling ‘inscape’ is what I above all aim at in poetry” (L 66). But if inscape is what Hopkins attempts to embody in his poetry, it is also what he seeks out in other poets and artists (“what strikes me most of all”); thus, Purcell’s utterly distinctive melody, “his air of angels,” is the personal pattern or inscape taken by Hopkins as a token of his interior. Seen as an outward sign of his inward genius, this pattern can manifest the composer’s “arch-especial...spirit” (P 157) to the attentive perceiver; the inscape of Purcell’s art is the vestigial mark that the listener can use to discern the creative personality which produced it.

To achieve such a revelation of Purcell’s personality, however, Hopkins must listen, as it were, against the grain: the composer’s individuality and distinctiveness is communicated quite apart from his intention, and the poet gleans it from his music only through a sustained—and almost subversive—act of attention. Indeed, Hopkins makes this very point in a prose summary of the poem offered to his friend, Robert Bridges, a few years later. He states that:

while [Purcell] is aiming only at impressing me his hearer with the meaning in hand I am looking out meanwhile for his specific, his individual markings and mottings, “the sakes of him.” It is as when a bird thinking only of soaring spreads its wings: a beholder may happen then to have his attention drawn by the act to the plumage displayed. (L 170, my emphasis)

In another letter to Bridges, written while Hopkins was composing his Purcell sonnet, Hopkins praises Bridges’ just-published volume of poetry as bearing “the stamp of character,” and being “marked with character...and human nature” throughout (L 72). This remark is telling insofar as it illustrates Hopkins’ application of the same hermeneutic he employs in his Purcell sonnet to another artist, and shows how fully he adopts a receptive, discriminating posture which seeks to discern the self behind—or better, within—the artistic artifact. In his sonnet, the poet can be found by Purcell’s ‘forg’d feature’ because he has already crossed the composer’s musical purpose by seeking to grasp the personality that shows itself therein.

6 Gerard Manley Hopkins, The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges, 83; this text, abbreviated as L, will be cited hereafter in parentheses.

7 In his next letter, dated a week later, Hopkins mentions that he has “two sonnets soaking,” (L 75); Abbott suggests these poems are “[p]robably Dun’s Sentari’s Osfare and Henry Purcell” (73a).
Hopkins’ intuition of Purcell’s personality in this poem anticipates the formal definition of the concept that he articulates in his 1881 set of reflections, “On Personality, Grace, and Free Will.” Here, Hopkins develops a definition of personality which draws upon his notion of particularity or “pitch.” Hopkins first defines pitch as the distinctiveness by which “being differs from and is more than nothing and not-being,” an individuality illustrated grammatically “by the English do (the simple auxiliary)...So that this pitch might be expressed, if it were good English, the doing be, the doing choose, the doing so-and-so in that sense.” Then, after connecting his definition of pitch with Duns Scotus’s notion of haecceitas, Hopkins asserts that “such ‘doing be’, and the thread or chain of such pitches or ‘doing-be’...is self, personality” (§151). Personality, then, is a free creature’s achievement of his own pitch of particularity. And when a man’s distinctive pitch of personality is realized in an outward sake—as it is in Purcell’s music—then the very personality of the artist can be communicated through that artifact.

Hopkins’ 1881 reflections also help explain how he can glimpse human nature as a whole through the personality of Purcell. In the passage which immediately follows the above quotation, Hopkins compares the totality of all possible worlds to a pomegranate which God apprehends as a whole but which we see “as one cleft and the life of each person as one vein or strain of colour in it” (§151). Through Purcell’s utterly distinctive achievement, Hopkins seems to glean, from the single strain of his personal “cleft,” an intuition of this whole—what Hopkins elsewhere in this essay calls its “‘burl’ of being” (§155). However, the process whereby the synecdochal part of Purcell reveals human nature as a whole is never stated explicitly and it is adumbrated only darkly by Hopkins’ remarks here; and, in the poem’s prose argument, the connection between the general and the particular is simply asserted. Yet, despite the obscure means by which it is achieved, the insight into human nature that Hopkins receives through Purcell’s music remains significant. For, from this revelation, Hopkins not only catches sight of the composer’s personality, but from an individual vein of humanity, he (somehow) glimpses human nature as such.

Reading Pater’s Palimpsest

The hermeneutic of personality that Hopkins deploys in his poem on Purcell is implemented in another poem written within a few months of this sonnet. In “How all is one way wrought,” Hopkins begins to praise a beautiful building and then suddenly turns to the architect’s “song” which the building embodies:

How all is one way wrought!
How all things suit and sit!
Then ah! the tune that thought
Trod to that fancied it.9

In the same way that, in his Purcell sonnet, Hopkins begins to discern the distinctive “sakes” of the composer through his melodies after a similar exclamation, the poet here strains to hear the silent music of the artist’s self that the stone building embodies. With the ejaculation, “Then ah!”, the poet takes the first step away from the artifact and towards the personality behind it. But whereas, in the Purcell sonnet, the poet simply revels in his discovery of the personality that the composer’s music contains, in this poem, Hopkins meditates on the meaning of this mediated encounter with human nature. The imaginative sequence of the Purcell sonnet is, thus, inverted: while Purcell’s personality is simply communicated in spite of the “outward sentence” which “low lays him” (P 131), the same discovery of artistic self-disclosure now prompts the poet to face the question of the artist’s personal morality directly. How is it that the artist’s inscape can be celebrated if the state of his soul cannot?

8 Gerard Manley Hopkins, The Sermons and Devotional Writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins, 151. This text, abbreviated as S, will be cited hereafter in parentheses.

9 Gerard Manley Hopkins, The Major Works, 145. Since there is no fair copy of this poem, and the poet made no final arrangement of its stanzas in his draft, the ordering of the poem is a matter of interpretation. I here follow the arrangement that Phillips proposes. This text, abbreviated as M, will be cited hereafter in parentheses.
To resolve this dilemma, Hopkins first imagines artistic creation as an activity “below” the threshold of moral judgement. To be morally neutral, however, this act must also, in a certain sense, be “unfree”: the faculty of free will which appears at the end of the poem can have no part in the creative process itself. Put differently, the tune that creative thought treads to, and the building which is its echo, must obey the same non-volitional imperatives that “each mortal thing” does in the octave of “As kingfishers catch fire.” Here, the artist, too, cries, “What I do is me,” (P 141) dealing out the being that dwells inside him as he does. As the second stanza of the poem declares:

Nor angel insight can
Learn how the heart is hence:
Since all the make of man
Is law’s indifference. (M 145)

The artist’s act is inscrutable to the unembodied intellect because neither abstract nor moral laws govern its production. Instead, the artistic tokens of the self adhere to the contingent, incarnate necessities of their own creator’s character, the inner music of their human maker’s mind.

The necessary nature of the artist’s act is stressed again in the fourth stanza, in which the poet maintains that the architect was not free

...because
His powers seemed free to play:
He swept what scope he was
To sweep and must obey. (M 145)

Hopkins’ language here has an almost technical precision; in fact, he exactly anticipates the terminology which he will use in his 1881 essay on personality, quoted above. Despite the appearance of freedom, the artist’s powers are not “free to play” because he lacks what Hopkins will later call “freedom of play”: the freedom to choose between a range of options and alternatives (cf. S 147). The artist lacks this freedom because there is no other self for him to become.10 Indeed, the artist can only achieve what Hopkins will call “freedom of pitch” when his “freedom of play” is totally diminished. To realize his personality—to “do” his being—the artist must articulate the innate distinctiveness which he already possesses. Therefore, what seems to be the highest expression of the artist’s freedom is not an arbitrary achievement; rather, an artist’s creations are the required realizations of his own self. Art, as Hopkins imagines it in this poem, is a mode of translation, an ekphrasis of the artist’s own personality.

Expanding on this theme in the following stanza, the poet continues:

Though down his being’s bent
Like air he changed in choice,
That was an instrument
Which overvaulted voice. (M 145)

Here, the artist’s self is imagined as an instrument analogous to the “tucked string” of “As kingfishers catch fire” (P 141). An artist’s inclinations, his “being’s bent,” are not incidental: his proclivities illustrate his personality, and through the artistic “choices” that his work seems to embody, he actually reveals everything about his personality—but nothing about his moral character. Hence, when facing an artistic masterpiece, the poet, in the penultimate stanza, must pose the moral question directly, because it would not intervene otherwise; even at the utmost limit of aesthetic perfection, artistic selving remains morally neutral. Thus, the poet climactically concludes in the sixth stanza:

Therefore this masterhood
This piece of perfect song
This fault-not-found-with good
Is neither right nor wrong. (M 146)

10 This counterintuitive conception of artistic freedom is congruent with a distinction that Hopkins makes in an earlier passage in this essay in which he describes the “doing-be” of a being’s pitch: “Where there was no question of will [his pitch] would become mere fact; where there is will it is free action, moral action” (S 151).
Although Hopkins will end the poem with a moral exhortation, expanding its vision onto the ultimate horizon of faith, it is this stanza—which makes a firm separation of the technical perfection of artistic achievement from the realm of moral action—that stands as the centerpiece of the poem.

Such a bold separation is remarkable, especially given Hopkins’ embarrassment at man’s misdeeds in the nature sonnets only two years earlier; in fact, this firm distinction between moral and aesthetic perfection is almost without precedent. It is only the exceptional nature sonnet, “As kingfishers catch fire”—which has already emerged as an essential point of reference in my reading of the poem—that gives any hint of the solution that Hopkins here develops. Indeed, “How all is one way wrought” might even be read as an expansion of this sonnet’s octave, a poetic reprise which considers man only in the morally neutral mode of artistic selving. But where “As kingfishers catch fire” takes a moral turn in its sestet, this poem affirms, instead, that “good grows wild and wide, / Has shades, is nowhere none” (M 146). “How all is one way wrought,” then, enlarges the scope of Hopkins’ previous poem. While “As kingfishers catch fire” is punctuated by the apotheosis of man in Christ, the expansion of this poem is horizontal rather than vertical. After articulating the highest possibility of human nature in this earlier sonnet, Hopkins here acknowledges the abundant good that exists apart from absolute moral perfection.

Although the poet stages his reflections on morality and art as a response to the beauty of a building—and the anonymous creator it implies—, it is possible that a personal encounter may have been a more proximate prompt for the poet’s reflections. In 1879, Hopkins must work out for himself the difference between moral and artistic perfection, not because he is confronted by the personality of an absent architect, but because of his renewed acquaintance with Walter Pater. It is worth noting that “How all is one way wrought” exists only as a rough, disorganized draft written on the back of an invitation to dinner from Pater. Indeed, it is useful to think of Pater as both a literal and figurative palimpsest of the poem, because Pater, who had been Hopkins’ tutor at Oxford ten years earlier and whom he saw when he returned to Oxford in 1879, embodies the very distinction which Hopkins elaborates in this poem. Pater represents the kind of human perfection that would need to be elided in Hopkins’ earlier framework; his superb sensitivity never flourishes into moral perfection, nor is it obviously nourished by the Christian creed—yet his personality remains attractive in spite of this.

Pater’s palimpsestic presence not only offers a possible impetus for the poem’s reflection, but also helps to explain Hopkins’ connection of music and architecture. Pater’s famous declaration in *The Renaissance* that “[A]ll art constantly aspires towards the condition of music” (106) seems especially relevant since this poem stresses the musicality of the architect’s act to such an extent that the poem itself was first published under the erroneous title, “(On a Piece of Music).”

This misnaming, however—evidently born of the difficulty of distinguishing between vehicle and tenor in Hopkins’ extended comparison of these arts—is appropriate in its own way; Hopkins is, indeed, describing a piece of music, but it is one which the building itself embodies only imperfectly:

> Who built these walls made know  
> The music of his mind,  
> Yet here he has but shewn  
> His ruler-rounded mind. (M 145)

Although the medium of the building is too dull to truly capture the subtle tones of the artist’s self, it still encloses an echo of the primal melody which accompanied its creation. And, in acknowledging that the building is secondary to the actual song of the artist’s being, Hopkins, nevertheless, establishes their connection. In fact, by choosing to reflect on the disclosure of the artist’s self that is possible through what Goethe famously called the “frozen music” of architecture, Hopkins’ poem could even be read as a commentary on

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11 See P 409 for MacKenzie’s description of the manuscript.

12 MacKenzie, who also notes the relevance of Pater’s dictum in his notes, summarizes the history of the poem’s printed title in P 409.
Pater’s dictum; if art aspires to the condition of music, it is because it longs to return to its origins: the very song of the artist’s own self.13

**Personality as Sacrament**

In the two 1879 poems that I have considered, Hopkins is able to bring the human person into his poetic purview by discerning the personalities of artists which are communicated through their works. Even though it is facilitated only by art, this mediated encounter with human nature marks a crucial turning point in Hopkins’ poetic career. It remains only to identify the means by which this breakthrough is achieved.

Whether the concept of a “sacrament” is relevant to the reading of Hopkins’ poetry has been a matter of some debate. When, for example, Justus George Lawler states that his study will avoid “religious jargon or symbols...unless precisely defined and precisely applied,” he includes “sacramental” among the “omnibus topoi” he will eschew (29). His caution is well taken, but it is exactly as a “precisely defined and precisely applied” concept that this notion becomes useful in describing the advance which these two 1879 poems represent.

A sacrament, according to Duns Scotus, “is a sensible sign, ordered to the salvation of the wayfarer human being, efficaciously signifying—by divine institution—the grace of God, or a gratuitous effect of God.”14 This expansive definition does not contradict the more laconic formula which Hopkins would have encountered in the Catechism of the Book of Common Prayer, wherein a sacrament is defined as “an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace” (1357). Both of these definitions offer interpretive models which resemble the hermeneutic that Hopkins deploys in the poems discussed above: in each, art is the visible sign through which the invisible personality of the artist is disclosed. And, if the concept of a sacrament provides Hopkins with an archetype for his hermeneutic of personality, it becomes possible to read both of the foregoing poems in light of two pivotal developments in the history of sacramental theology.

One of the earliest of these developments emerges from the exchanges between the Donatists and St. Augustine on the subject of a sacrament’s validity.15 Not only does St. Augustine introduce “the distinction between visible rite and invisible effect,” but he also stresses that the validity of a sacrament is not dependent on the personal sanctity of its minister, since the “primary minister of the sacraments is God” (Auer 12, 102). The objective efficacy of a sacrament is, thus, said to derive from “‘the power of the completed ritual’ (ex operae operato)” (Vorgrimler 87, emphasis omitted).16 This emphatic distinction between the personal morality of the minister and the objective efficacy of the sacrament is exactly parallel with the one which Hopkins develops in “How all is one way wrought”: the morality of the artist does not need to be known, Hopkins asserts, because it does not impede the realization of the artist’s personality which his artistic creation embodies and communicates.

Although the validity of the sacrament does not depend on the sanctity of its minister, its efficacy does depend on the attitude of the recipient: “A validly received sacrament can...remain unfruitful despite its validity if the disposition necessary for the sacrament’s fruitfulness is lacking” (Auer 116, emphasis omitted).17 In other words, sacramental grace is only efficacious for the properly disposed recipient. As I have argued above, the achievement of such a disposition is precisely what Hopkins attains in his sonnet on Henry Purcell: a receptive attitude that can glean the composer’s personality from his art. To discern Purcell’s invisible self from the outward sake

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13 The phrase, “frozen music,” has been attributed to both Goethe and Schelling; see Conversations of Goethe with Johann Peter Eckermann, 303n. I am grateful to Joaquin Kuhn for bringing this phrase to my attention.

14 cf. Ordinatio Oecumenis IV.1,2, n. 9 in John Duns Scotus, Opera Omnia; this translation is given by Richard Cross, Duns Scotus, 136. Johann Auer identifies this passage as “[t]he first complete definition of a sacrament,” A General Doctrine of the Sacraments and the Mystery of the Eucharist, 12.

15 I am grateful to Alice Goodman for her helpful comments on this point.

16 For the historical development of the notion of the “objective efficacy” of a sacrament, see Auer 74-77.

17 For the historical development of the theology of sacramental reception, see Alexandre Ganoczy, An Introduction to Catholic Sacramental Theology, 62-68.
of his song, Hopkins adopts an attitude which enables such a reception of the composer’s spirit.

Of course, the import of this homology between these 1879 poems and the doctrinal developments concerning the recipient’s disposition and the minister’s personal sanctity should not be overstated. Yet, insofar as it accounts for the outright appearance of the human person in Hopkins’ poetry, this symmetry is significant. If sacramental theology does, indeed, provide him with a model for apprehending human personality, it is because personality, for the poet, is itself a kind of sacrament. Since the artist’s personality is God’s own creation, the human artist is, in a way, simply the minister of the divine artifact of himself. And God, who is both the source and summit of personality, reveals himself through the beings made in his “image and likeness” (Gen 1:26) whenever human perfection is achieved. Human personality, then, is the unparalleled place of God’s self-disclosure in the natural world; Hopkins’ ultimate figure of the sacred is the human figure.18

Nature and human nature, which are first brought together in “As kingfishers catch fire,” reappear again in one of Hopkins’ last sonnets, “That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire,” where they both feed the flame of “nature’s bonfire” (P 198). Although the regenerative power of nature is stressed in “God’s Grandeur,” here nature really is spent—but human nature is not. Nor is a natural image substituted for man’s final appearance, as it is in “The Caged Skylark.” No phoenix rises from the ashes of this apocalyptic poem; rather, it is man himself, the “immortal diamond,” (P 198) who emerges from nature’s final consuming conflagration. In the wake of its destruction, nature itself—broken down to its core components—is now incorporated into human nature in a conclusion which is also

Hopkins’ highest exaltation of humanity. The first chords of this triumphant crescendo are struck in 1879 when, in a pair of poems, Hopkins discovers that the personalities of artists can be received as gratuitous, sacramental gifts.

Bibliography


The Book of Common Prayer: With Notes Legal and Historical. 3 vols. Ed.

18 The theological dimension of Hopkins’ conception of personality is discussed by Devlin in his appendix, “Scotus and Hopkins.” Because personality is the manifestation of God’s own intention and design, the realization of personality, for both Scotus and Hopkins, can be seen “not only as a coming forth from God but as a going back to him” (S 349). Thus, both Scotus and Hopkins conceive of personality as a “movement from the ideal to the actual, and back from the actual to the ideal—though it is an ideal which can never be actually reached because it is identical with God himself and the processions of the Trinity” (S 350).
Father Hopkins' "Spring" dramatizes the celebration of the Resurrection of the Lamb of God, along with the returned greening of the landscape as well as the new birth of foliage, flowers, and fowl. Spring, of course, is the time that growing things grow again, the time for human revitalization, and the time of the Resurrection of Christ; for this speaker, the Resurrection is of greatest importance. It is no coincidence that Easter is celebrated in spring. The final two lines are anything but "loose-ended"; they neatly collect together all the imagery and devotion into a bouquet of prayer offered with a humble heart to the Divine Beloved. Personality development depends on the interplay of instinct and environment during the first five years of life. Parental behavior is crucial to normal and abnormal development. Personality and mental health problems in adulthood can usually be traced back to the first five years. Psychosexual Development. Psychosexual Development. Personality is dependent on the balance between excitation and inhibition process of the autonomic nervous system (ANS). Extraversion/introversion. One good element of Eysenck's theory is that it takes into account both nature and nurture. Eysenck's theory argues strongly that biological predispositions towards certain personality traits combined with conditioning and socialization during childhood in order to create our personality. Personality over a lifetime. Seeing a middle-aged man in a conservative business suit sitting next to a chap with blue hair and a silver ring through his nose highlights the fact that people live life differently. Personality may affect dress sense. It's often said that no two people are exactly alike, but according to one psychological theory, they can share one of 16 distinct personality types, which are formed by different combinations of personality traits. Experts say that we typically develop our personality type - our preferred way of doing things - through the course of our lives in response to our surroundings and experiences - school or work, for example. A common pattern is to develop the dominant aspects of our personality type - those that feel most comfortable - until middle age.